

Who can host a potluck?

- Individuals
- Groups of Friends
- Community Groups
- Anyone desiring to strengthen and build relationships!

Why now?

Seventy percent of US citizens say they are anxious about the divisiveness in our country. Increasing numbers of people of all ideologies support or are willing to engage in political violence. Some public leaders are actively sanctioning violence. Many people in our communities want to do something but don't know what to do.

When people of diverse cultures, traditions, and identities gather together in public, people in the larger community breathe a sigh of relief. They begin to hope that we are not as divided as we feared and that we can relate to each other as human beings.

Why a potluck?

This toolkit provides guidance on how to gather people in your town or neighborhood for a meal to get to know each other. **No politics, no policy, no debates** – just neighbors meeting neighbors. Everyone loves sharing a good meal!

The impact of the event will go far beyond those who are invited. As you share photos and stories from your Potluck, others in the community will begin to feel more hopeful about our future together.

Basic Event Agenda

Outline

- 6:30pm | welcome and introductions as needed
- 6:45pm | first conversation - introductory stories
- 7:15pm | food
- 7:30pm | second conversation - table conversation
- 8:15pm | wrap-up
- 8:20pm | exchanging information with new friends or planning another get-together
- 8:30pm | event ends

Food

Consider how you want to serve the food. If you have a smaller group, you could consider sharing dishes around the table. However, buffet style can allow for the most flexibility around each person's dietary needs. Remember to label dishes with any ingredients that people may need or want to avoid (ex. gluten, dairy, pork, alcohol).

- Decide if the host will be providing a main dish(es) and/or beverages for the meal.
- Make sure that someone will be providing plates/bowls, napkins, cutlery, and cups.
- Ask that guests avoid bringing dishes that include alcohol, pork, or shellfish in consideration of others dietary needs - ***ask people attending to confirm dietary guidelines!***
- Make sure there are several vegetarian, vegan, dairy or gluten-free dishes if needed.
- Ask guests to bring a card (or provide blank ones) to list the dish's name and ingredients (so that people can comfortably navigate personal dietary needs).

Table Prompts & Questions

Introductory Stories

- Share your name.
- Share a few sentences about the tradition(s)/culture(s)/communities that you are a part of.
- What is your favorite dish or meal from your family/community traditions?
- What is something about yourself that you wish others knew? What is a question that you wish others would ask you?
- What is something that is currently life-giving, bringing you things like joy and energy, and/or life-taking, bringing you things like sadness and tiredness?

Table Conversation

- Tell a story about a time when you encountered something that was surprising or unexpected. How did it make you react?
- Tell a story about a time when you meaningfully connected with another person.
- How do you and your family most enjoy connecting to others and participating in the life of your community?
- Share a value that is meaningful to you and tell a story that helps others understand why it is important to you.
- What are your dreams for our shared community?

More Resources

Across the country we see so many people who report feeling distance growing between neighbors, groups, and communities. **America's Potluck** is a simple yet profound way to change that.

Gathering is a powerful tool – gathering with our friends and neighbors is a start. Doing the work to gather people from different cultures, traditions, and life experiences around a table is another step. When we gather around a table we can begin to rebuild trust and strengthen the social contract that holds us together.

Our full **Potluck Project Toolkit** offers step-by-step guidance to help you host meaningful gatherings that move beyond small talk into real connection and shared understanding. Download the free toolkit and join a growing movement of neighbors choosing to know one another, work together, and build communities where everyone belongs and everyone can thrive.

This work of building relationships is only possible when we work together. We are excited for this work to go far and wide to spread hope that we are not as divided as we fear and that our communities can change and will change at the pace of relationships.

Find more at
pathstounderstanding.org/potluck



Questions?

Email us at together@PathstoUnderstanding.org