



YOUR LITTLE GUIDE TO

the big lunch
AT CHRISTMAS



Newham London



WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?



The Big Lunch at Christmas is about sharing food and friendship with people in your community over the festive season. It's a busy time of year, but for some it can feel quite lonely, so taking the time to say hello to a neighbour with a mince pie in hand, or inviting people to join a pot luck party where everyone brings a dish is a great way to keep connected over Christmas.

Every June, The Big Lunch brings millions of people together to share friendship, food and fun as the UK's annual celebration for neighbours and communities. It's a simple idea that has a lasting positive impact on those who take part. This year, we're encouraging people to join in with The Big Lunch at Christmas too, to celebrate our connections and keep our communities cosy.

Join in and share friendship, food and festive fun!





JOINING IN WITH THE BIG LUNCH AT CHRISTMAS



Hosting a Big Lunch at Christmas is the perfect opportunity for people to come together at a special time of year. Whether you're an individual, or part of a community organisation, local group or business there are lots of ways you can join in!

- ★ **Give the gift of time** to someone you don't know too well or haven't caught up with in a while. Pop the kettle on, grab a festive treat or two and take some time to chat.
- ★ **Host drop-in drinks** – share an invitation and get together over mulled apple juice or hot chocolate and a few festive snacks.
- ★ **Open up local community spaces** – bring people in from the cold for a cuppa and a conversation, or connect the different groups that use the space together.
- ★ **Share a Christmas roast dinner** – invite people to bring a different part of the meal and come together for a festive feast, with all the trimmings!
- ★ Be a secret Santa and **leave tasty treats** on doorsteps or on desks at work – perhaps chocolates, candy canes, or homemade cookies.
- ★ **Spare chair at your Christmas table?** Invite someone that lives alone to join you for a festive meal or two.
- ★ **Host a Christmassy activity** such as making mince-pies, cards or decorations – bring out the tea and cake and get crafting together.
- ★ **Donate your work Christmas do!** Instead of eating out, bring something to share together at a homemade buffet and gift the money planned for your team celebration to a local community group, good cause or someone who could benefit more.

Keen to join in but not sure what to do next? Here are five steps to get you started...



1. CHOOSE WHAT YOU'D LIKE TO DO

Mince pies with a neighbour, BYO festive buffet with volunteers, or sharing hot chocolate in the street with your local community – what you do is up to you, the important bit is bringing people together to grow connections.

Everyone you need for a Big Lunch is right on your doorstep. If you want a hand, chat to a couple people about the idea – you'll be surprised how keen everyone is to help.

2. DECIDE ON A DATE

Think about your community and who you're inviting – would a weekend, evening or lunchtime work best? December and the lead-up to Christmas can be a busy time for people, decide on a date and time as soon as possible so people can pop it in their diary, for those with quieter calendars it will give them something lovely to look forward to.



3. PICK A PLACE

Big Lunches can take place anywhere you can gather a group of people; a street, staff room, around a kitchen table, a park or community centre. Try and hold it somewhere that's accessible and welcoming to everyone.

During winter it's important to consider the weather, especially if you plan to be outside. A pop up shelter, warm blankets or a toasty fire can help keep people cosy.



4. SPREAD THE WORD

There are lots of ways you can let people know they're invited. You could put something on Nextdoor, or in a WhatsApp group, post invitations, pop up posters, ping an email or post on social media.

Check out our templates and edit them to suit your Big Lunch plans.

5. SHARE FRIENDSHIP, FOOD AND FESTIVE FUN!

The real magic at a Big Lunch happens when people start sharing conversation, take time to talk to each other and have fun together. It's all about bringing people together and making community connections – however you decide to join in remember to eat, chat and have fun!



★ TOP TIPS ★

Speak to local businesses to see if they can support in any way. They might be able to donate some food, share a space to get together or could even choose to pass on their staff Christmas meal budget to help.

Have a pre-party! Bring people together before the celebration to help make decorations or bake some treats – it helps build excitement, gets those conversations started and helps everyone feel part of it.

WARM UP CONVERSATIONS



Games are a brilliant way to break the ice, help people connect and have fun. They can be easy to prepare, inexpensive, and great for all ages. Here are some of our Big Lunch favourites for this time of year...

- ★ **Share stories and seasonal traditions** - what do you eat, play or do at Christmas?
- ★ **Crack-er Christmas joke** or two. Invite people to share their best (or worst) jokes to warm up conversations.
- ★ Play **What's in the stocking?** Hide random items in a stocking and invite people to feel the outside and guess what's inside.
- ★ See if people can think of a Christmas word for every letter of the alphabet with the **A to Z game**. The team who can do it the fastest wins!
- ★ Spark conversation and learn more about one another with **Christmas-themed human bingo** - can you find someone who's made mince pies, been carolling, or dressed up as Santa?
- ★ Mix people into teams and **have a quiz**. See if people know their Christmas trivia, can finish the song lyric or are able to name the festive film.
- ★ Pick a theme and play classic party games like **Pictionary or charades**.
- ★ You can't beat a bit of **festive fancy dress!** Encourage people to come wearing something Christmassy or fun - a jazzy Christmas jumper from a charity shop is a great conversation starter!



KEEP COSY



Decorations make Christmas time extra special and a few little extras can add to the joy and magic of your Big Lunch celebrations. Ask around and see what people might be able to bring to decorate the space or add to the festive atmosphere.



Fairy lights, lanterns and candles are a lovely way to add some sparkle, particularly if you're getting together in the evening.

Paper pom-poms, chains, and snowflakes are a great way to add colour for a celebration. You can rustle through your paper recycling too which means they're super cheap to make!

Collect some seasonal foliage for centrepieces, hang mini baubles from a branch to create a simple, effective festive decoration, or make orange pomanders to fill the air with the smell of Christmas.

If you're hosting outdoors, encourage people to wrap up warm and bring a blanket so they don't get chilly. See if anyone has a fire pit they could bring to help keep people really toasty or have a few hot water bottles ready for a cosy hug.

Music can help create a festive atmosphere. Put together a playlist, sing some Christmas carols or reach out to see if there are any musicians coming along who would like to perform.



For more ideas and inspiration visit [TheBigLunch.com](https://www.thebiglunch.com)





the big lunch
AT CHRISTMAS



PARTNERED BY



Enjoying food together is a great way to grow connections and get to know one another better.

Join us for some festive fun!

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