



Most of us are shy, many of us lead single lives and even when we are together often go our own way. We all know about the problems in our society and don't need to be preached at about them. But inside almost everyone there is a notion that despite our differences, the ties that bind us are important.

The shared enjoyment of eating together, laughter, play, music and conversation bring us together and for all the fact that we are so fabulously different in our outlook and experience on many things, we know a simple truth - together we are strong. Wouldn't it be great if for just one day we remind ourselves about all that is good about us and bring about a moment that ignites a spark?

It may be tricky, it may feel slightly uncomfortable to start with. It takes a bit of courage to stop being a stranger. But think of the prize - to be able to walk down the street and into the wider neighbourhood and realise how many good people there are: people who, acting together, can create a real sense of community - a word that in Latin means; "together, in gift".

So... if you're up for it, try growing something, making something or generally getting stuck in for the Big Lunch. No one is going to tell you how to do it as your ideas will be perfect for you. If you want any prompting we've gathered together lots of ideas that might set you on the road for a day that at worst might be fun and at best could start to change your life in unexpected ways!

It's your party. All we're doing is giving you an excuse but if you need more than that, then there is a remarkable reason to hold your Big Lunch.

## **FAQ – A dozen killer questions we can conquer together**

### **What if they don't turn up?**

Relax, they will. The Beeb says 10 million rocked up to the Silver Jubilee. The average turnout for UK street parties is 80%. We've chosen Sunday 19th July, a day of rest, a day for family and friends, a day with stacks of daylight, the weekend before most schools break up and the most popular weekend for a knees-up in the country. If hands, heads and hearts align, we hope for 6 million, that's 1 in 10 of us. Expect more. You wait. We could make history together.

### **Still stuck?**

Bring a guitar. Get someone to play. People will sing and they will come, even the grumpy ones. Remember the Pied Piper.

### **How do I close the street?**

You need to apply to your Local Council's Highways Department or Events Team. We have also written to every Local Authority in the country and put them on red

alert for 19th July. If you can't use your street, try a communal garden, park or anywhere outdoors (just get permission from the relevant landowner). For more practical information, try our expert partner Streets Alive: [www.streetsalive.net](http://www.streetsalive.net)

### **Still stuck?**

The National Trust, The Church of England & many of the other big landowners have offered up their land for the day. Check our website for details or visit <http://www.landshare.net>

### **Where do all the cars go?**

We are on bended knee with supermarkets, DIY stores, NCP, 24/7 and other owners of large car parks to give up their spaces for free on the day. Rural folk, try the same tactic with a farmer's field. If you travel by horse, tether them up and scoop the manure onto a needy garden.

### **Still stuck?**

Our website will update with parking tips up to the last minute. Failing that, you could always turn your car into a work of art for the day.

### **What if it rains?**

Don't panic. Rain never stopped Glastonbury or Cliff Richard at Wimbledon. Wear a swimsuit, wetsuit or bin-bag. Learn to sundance. Haggle a Big Lunch Discount off a broly or a shower-proof poncho. Rig up a roof with a washing line and some PVC that has sat in the shed praying to be useful for years.

### **Still stuck?**

Imagine it'll be sunny. Lather up in sunscreen and use your broly as a parasol. Bring shades but remove when talking - eyes give away everything.

### **How do we organise the kitty?**

Good point. If everyone pays subs up front, it'll be a whole lot easier on the day. Our partner MasterCard are working on ways to set up a neighbourhood account with a pre-paid debit card. Priceless.

### **Still stuck?**

Have a whip round in the office. Have a garage sale (keep anything that looks musical). Find the richest person in the street and beg like no tomorrow. But, of course you can have a Big Lunch without having to raise any money.

### **What do we sit on and eat off?**

Use your own stools, chairs, crates, boxes, pouf or upturned buckets. Lug a sofa out. Or else B&Q, Homebase, Ikea, Sainsbury's & other good retailers are never far away and we've agreed some value-for-money essentials, such as barbeques, trestle tables, benches and chairs (try the cardboard one and get your neighbours to sign it). eBay is always worth a bid for a quid. Or try [www.freecycle.org](http://www.freecycle.org) and nab a street sofa for free.

### **Still stuck?**

Take one wallpaper table. Cover it with leftover wallpaper strips taped underneath.

Voila, one Big Lunch Banqueting table. Hit the breaker's yard for car seats - they make great armchairs.

### **Who cleans up and how do we reuse?**

Parties = mess. So let's ensure Sunday evening and Monday morning sings, not sulks. Share duties and marigold gloves (no-one wants prunes for hands). You wash, I'll dry. You do the empties, I'll compost the leftovers - there are tips on how to do this on our website. Recycle, freecycle. We're working with waste management at all levels. So do your bit and make your local all-in muck-in tuck-in warm our national soul.

### **Still stuck?**

Tell the council yourself that there will be extra rubbish. You can find the link to local special collections via our website. Or even hire a skip.

### **What about insurance and security?**

You can insure your street for as little as £80. It may be a pain but half of local authorities ask for public liability insurance and half don't. We've asked those that do to let it go where possible. So, let's not be irresponsible. To shore up the day, we have drawn up a plan backed by Local Government and DCLG to make all this legal stuff simpler. Security-wise relax. Research shows that trust grows and crime actually drops when a bouncy castle and DJ take to the streets. Throwing a party brings people together.

### **How can my school help out?**

Children, parents and teachers, The Big Lunch needs you! How? Well, you could grow cress in your old school pumps or start an allotment in a corner of the playground then invite in grandparents who "know how to grow". Or you could get the parents & teachers to do a sponsored leapfrog to raise money for the local old folks home. Or write a Big Lunch song and put it on our Big Lunch YouTube channel. There are no rules (yippee) but there are new lesson plans to tie with nature and local people approved by Mr Ed Balls (no sniggering). Teachers - you'll find these on our website.

### **Still stuck?**

Persuade your teachers to offer the playground and chairs if your neighbours can't use their street for the party on Sunday 19th July.

### **How do I get my work involved?**

The Big Lunch allows small businesses to have a big impact and big companies to have a humungous impact. Why not give your staff a day off, or badger your boss to? Friday 17th July is a perfect day those of us with a day off to prepare, rehearse and galvanise our street into action. Why not find some space in the car park or on the office or factory roof to grow food and flowers? You could lend desks to your nearest Big Lunch - it's about time they had a break from computers and "urgent" memos.

### **Still stuck?**

To really capture employee imagination, use the carrot of money - it always works

(and helps offset tax). Why not match the most innovative fundraising stunt? Imagine this is the new Red Nose Day and raise money for a community charity.

### **What about hospitals and prisons?**

Everyone's a neighbour. But we all live and work in different roles and environments where we can take part in The Big Lunch. As a doctor or nurse, you have enough on your plate, but a drop-in comedian can lift spirits no end on a ward. The same is true of an artist who paints caricatures of patients, or a school choir singing sea-shanties. Music and art are like rays of sunshine when you're ill.

As for prisons, why not take Liverpool's lead, plant an allotment, to freshen up the food (and mind), to kick-start a catering course, to give inmates a better chance when they leave. Or do as many prisons do - invite creative professional people to come in and talk about their craft and inspire, unearth and share hidden skills.

### **Still stuck?**

We nearly forgot. Lay on your own Big Lunch of course.

### **What do I do next?**

You're busy and July 19th is looming. To help you get there, there's a countdown calendar in the middle of this manual to stick up in your kitchen. If you fancy yourself as an organiser, artist, gardener or musician, that'd be great. Our website allows you to log in your postcode, connect with neighbours and tap into a wealth of ideas, links, plus all the latest on logistics.

**[www.thebiglunch.com](http://www.thebiglunch.com)**