

POTLUCK NATION: A CHECKLIST FOR ORGANIZERS

*We the People
of the United States, in order to form a more
perfect union, must get together and potluck.*

HOSTING POTLUCKS is a great way to fundraise, host speakers, or bring together people who don't yet know each other around a common goal. This checklist will help keep you organized as you plan your event.

STEP 1 DESIGN THE POTLUCK

- Choose a theme, if desired. This might include local food and farmer appreciation; stress relief and self-care for the modern age; racial justice; homelessness awareness; letter-writing campaigns to lawmakers; discussion about local environmental issues; “how to” seminars, such as “how to run for office.”
- Reach out to potential speakers.
- Choose a location. This could include private homes, religious buildings, community centers like the YMCA, yoga studios, off-duty restaurants, farms, park pavilions.
- Decide if you want to control the types of food people bring. For example, should it all be vegan? Do you want to create a list of the types of dishes people should bring and ask them to sign up? Or will you keep it open to chance?

STEP 2 ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE LOCATION

- Is there running water?
- Is there refrigeration?
- Are there bathrooms?
- Is there a fee for the space?
- Do you need permits?
- Where can food be served?
- What are the options for tables and seating?
- Where will garbage go?
- Can you recycle leftover containers and compost leftover food?
- What are the expectations for cleaning up?

STEP 3

CREATE AN INVITATION AND BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING

- Date, time, and place.
 - The intent or theme of the potluck, if there is one.
 - Information about the flow of the event, especially if there are to be speakers or if you plan to include an activity.
 - Information about what guests should bring. (This could include asking people to bring their own plates, utensils, and napkins as well as a dish. You might include a reminder to bring serving utensils, as well. And finally, tell people if they should bring a donation.)
 - Information about how guests should RSVP and whether they should tell you what they plan to bring. (You can do this over email, create a Facebook event, link to a document on a shared drive like Google Drive, or use a party-planning app, like Funnster.)
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STEP 4

BEFORE THE EVENT, GATHER THE FOLLOWING ITEMS (OR DELEGATE FOR OTHERS TO HELP YOU)

- Coolers, if necessary, for drinks and perishable food.
 - Chairs, if necessary.
 - Plates, cups, flatware, and napkins, unless you're asking people to bring their own.
 - Small signs and pens or markers so people can label the food.
 - Garbage bags.
 - Water jugs or canisters.
 - Equipment that might be necessary for the event, such as microphones for speakers and pens, postcards, and stamps for letter-writing campaigns.
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STEP 5

GET THE LOCATION READY FOR THE EVENT

- Create a clear kitchen workspace so people can finish their dishes as necessary.
- Think about the flow of the food. (For larger potlucks, you might want to divide up dishes by course or by meat dishes versus vegetarian.)
- Create an area for drinks that includes a large ice chest, cups, and bottle openers.
- As people arrive, ask them to label their dishes and to include whether they fit certain dietary restrictions, such as kosher or gluten-free or if they contain serious allergens, like nuts.
- Have a station with a sign-in sheet, so people can stay up to date about future events. Perhaps organize a table where people can leave business cards or other information about their businesses.