



# Potluck

Adapted from "Community Conversations" by Paul Born

## Things to do Ahead of Time:

- ✓ Choose a time and location.
- ✓ Decide in advance how people will know what kind of dish to bring. There are two frames of thinking when planning a potluck:
  - 1) You can have people sign up ahead of time to bring certain items from certain food categories (salad, meat, dessert, etc) to ensure that you have a well-rounded meal.
  - 2) Or you can take your chances, let people bring whatever they want, and have fun with the surprise. This option requires that everyone involved has a positive attitude, no matter what variety (or lack of variety) of food shows up.
- ✓ Advertise and send out invitations for your potluck.

**Recommended Location:** School gymnasium or community hall (preferably a location with a kitchen)

**Recommended Time:** Evening or weekend; ask participants to arrive before the time you plan the meal to take place (ie: if you want to eat at 6pm, ask participants to be there at 5:30)

## Recommended Materials:

- ✓ Tables and chairs
- ✓ Paper plates, napkins, plastic cups, and cutlery
- ✓ Garbage bags

## Set-up:

- ✓ Show up early to set up tables and chairs.
- ✓ As participants enter, provide them with a name tag and have them sign-in with their name and contact information if they wish to be invited to more events in the future.
- ✓ On one side of the room set up a buffet table, with no chairs, for the food to go on. Put plates, napkins, and cutlery on one side of this table; this will be where the food line begins.
- ✓ As participants show up with their dishes, set them on the buffet table.
- ✓ Once everyone has arrived and the food is set out, have participants line up to serve themselves.
- ✓ Enjoy the food and conversation!
- ✓ Using paper plates and plastic cutlery makes for easy clean-up. Put some garbage bags around the room and have participants discard their plates and cutlery when they are finished eating.
- ✓ As people get ready to leave, make sure everyone goes home with their own dishes and make each family responsible for taking home any leftovers of the item they bring.



### Additional Ideas:

If you want to make sure you have all your bases covered, but find it is impractical to have people sign up ahead of time, try this: When advertising for the potluck, designate food categories based on first letters of last names. For example:

- A-G bring a meat/protein dish
- H-K bring a vegetable dish
- L-O bring a starchy side dish
- P-S bring a dessert
- T-V bring beverages
- W-Z bring bread, buns, etc.

You may ask participants to bring copies of the recipe for the dish they bring. This way, people with allergies or food sensitivities can check the ingredients. People can also swap recipes to try for themselves at home.

“When you bring food for others to share, something opens in your heart. Although there is no science to prove this, my experience with many of these meals has me convinced!” – Paul Born, *Community Conversations*

For some potluck recipes and stories, check out:  
[www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g4s22.html](http://www.tamarackcommunity.ca/g4s22.html)