

The Big Lunch – where will you have yours?



Today with just 50 days to go until the UK's annual get-together for neighbours, The Big Lunch is urging everyone across Edinburgh to get involved in this year's event on Sunday 1 June.

The Big Lunch is a very simple idea from the Eden Project. The aim of the Lottery-funded event, which is now in its sixth year, is to get as many of the 63 million people in the UK as possible to have lunch with their neighbours once a year. Free packs can be requested online, they include posters, invitations, an inspiration booklet and other materials to help organise your Big Lunch, so there's no excuse for Edinburgh residents not to get their community together for a day of friendship, community and fun this June.

Not started planning yet? Don't worry, there is plenty of time; Big Lunches can be big or small and can take place on a street, garden or community space, anywhere where neighbours can get together.

Getting your own Big Lunch off the ground is simple and inexpensive, people are the key ingredient, with those taking part creating friendlier communities in which they start to share more, from conversation and ideas to skills and resources. With 50 days to go, there's still time to contact your local council to apply for road closures with many tips for doing so available online at www.thebiglunch.com. In fact, organising a Big Lunch is easier than you think; all you need to do is follow a few simple steps:

1. Settle on a venue, anywhere from a street to a garden or local community space
2. If you're planning a street party, don't forget to apply to close your road (contact your local council for advice)
3. Invite your neighbours, with free invitations available in your Big Lunch pack Decide on who will bring what food, such as a bring-your-own picnic or a barbeque
4. Arrange your decorations and music, bunting templates are also included in the pack.



Robert Scott from Edinburgh, helped organise a Big Lunch for his local community last year and is urging others in the area to get involved. He said:-“It was a fantastic day for the community. We had around 300 people there and it was great to see everyone just coming together and getting to know each other or catching up with old friends. We want to put on more of these events in the future as gathering the community together like this rarely happens in the post-modern world we live in today. Gathering people together can have so many benefits, from chatting to neighbours people have not met before to helping people come out of their comfort zones and try something new, especially for those who may be living on their own, or who are socially isolated.”

So what are the benefits of having a Big Lunch? Research from The Big Lunch showed that over 60% of organisers say having an event in their community made them feel less isolated and 86% of the 3.65 million people that took part in last year's Big Lunch reported a positive long term effect in their neighbourhood as a result.

Emily Watts, Communications Manager for The Big Lunch in Scotland said:- “The Big Lunch is all about getting together and having fun. It doesn't have to be a big event, even a

small get-together in your garden or on your street is a great way to get neighbours talking, sharing conversation, skills, resources – and, of course, the vital ingredient – food! It's not too late to take part in this year's event on 1 June so why not sign up now for your free pack and get your own event started!"

Peter Ainsworth, *Chair of BIG*, explains: "It was inspiring to see so many communities coming together in 2013 over a bite to eat whilst enjoying their Big Lunch. The Big Lunch is a great way of helping people develop a much stronger sense of local community. That's what the Big Lottery Fund is proud to be supporting again in 2014."

The Big Lunch is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and partnered by Halifax, ASDA and StreetClub by B&Q. Big Lunches can be big or small and they don't need to cost much because everyone brings something to the table.

People are the key ingredient!

