

# BIG LUNCH STORIES FROM AROUND THE UK



The Big Lunch, an idea from the Eden Project delivered together with the National Lottery, gives neighbours across the UK the chance to gather in gardens, driveways, streets, parks and shared spaces for good food and good company. It's a simple idea that is owned by everyone and can be adapted to suit every community. In 2017 over 9 million people took part in a nationwide act of community, celebration and friendship.

## HERE'S WHAT JUST A FEW PEOPLE HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THEIR BIG LUNCH EXPERIENCES:

“ It was just good to get people out and get to know each other a bit better.  
**Lesley Hellon, Skye**

“ Most houses here have long-term residents who have been living here 20 or 30 years but nobody really knew each other. That all changed at our first Big Lunch. Now we have an annual day set aside for each other, we all know one another well and look out for each other. There's a real sense of community and belonging and security.  
**Brid Ruddy, South Belfast**

“ A Big Lunch is a simple bit of fun for no other reason than just bringing people together.  
**Jim Bowen, Clynfyw**

“ I live in a small square with 9 cottages and all the neighbours know each other to lesser and greater extents. For me it was a great way to solidify the micro-community we have here and keep all of us happy for the years to come. I'm doing it again as people have got used to the idea and I'd like to welcome the newbies into the square. I think it's a pretty special little place we live in (you'd never know it existed unless you took a wrong turn) and I wanted to celebrate that.  
**Nicole Burchett, Cardiff**

“ I've met loads of people through holding The Big Lunch. I don't regularly eat with my neighbours so it's a great opportunity to get together with the surrounding community. You get to speak with people who you wouldn't normally talk to and from all age groups. We've had lots of feedback from people who think the area is improving as a result. It makes people feel better to be more connected with their neighbours.  
**Gill Butler, Par**

“ We brought the community together with a Big Lunch because we'd had funding to put sports equipment into the local greenspace. It has created more networks and friendships which wouldn't have been developed previously. Through just sharing a cuppa and a cake people talked to each other and met new members of their community they would not have met before. It really pulled people together and has helped natural connections.

**Carmen Gillies, Moray**

“ The Big Lunch gives you an afternoon to invest in talking to your neighbours and that makes a real difference. Since The Big Lunch, people go out of their way to communicate with each other and you often see people talking in the street. We've got a real support network and we help each other out, with things like fixing bikes, IT problems and lifts to the shops.

**Helen Simmons, Newcastle Upon Tyne**

“ I decided I was going to hand write a letter to all my neighbours to say that we needed to put together some kind of community event. Once I sent out the letter I had two people within about half an hour knock on my door, wave the letter at me, and say, 'This is really nice - it's nice to meet you!' I volunteer for Age UK so I see a lot of social isolation in older people but that can happen in younger people too, living alone I kind of see that myself. I'm proud of the street and the way that everyone's got involved - the whole aim of the Big Lunch was to bring people together and that's what we've done.

**Laura Graham, Northampton**

“ I wanted to host a Big Lunch to help welcome newer members of our community, to help them meet other people, and to encourage interaction between people who otherwise wouldn't normally meet or see each other, despite living in the same community. Many of the events in our village are for fundraising for one thing or another, so it feels good to be able to offer an event that isn't in aid of anything; we're not asking for money for any given cause, we are simply inviting people to come and share a lunch together.

**Matthew Ruddle, Oxfordshire**

“ People jump in their cars and go off about their business; we wave and talk sometimes but rarely get together. The Big Lunch is one day where we spend the whole day together, working together to make sure everyone has a great time.

**Donna Saunders, Lee-on-Solent**

