

...Bringing people together...

...Turning food waste into  
Community Feasts...

...Sharing skills and stories...



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How to Set Up Your Own

people's  
kitchen

Step by Step Guide





# people's kitchen



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# Start Up Check List

A Building to use  
one day per week  
(or fortnight)

Surplus Food  
Provider

2-4 People  
Full of Energy &  
Community Spirit

That's it... Once you have those three,  
(and getting surplus is much easier than you think (pages 9-10))  
everything else just needs time to grow



At People's Kitchen we make a space for strangers to  
collectively nourish themselves and each other...  
It's a simple idea... and it's more than just food...  
...Together we make a sharing community...





# Our Mission



## ...Bringing People Together...

People's Kitchen is all about creating together. Everyone is welcome. We're not 'volunteers' and 'guests', we're just people who turn up and each play our part in improvising a feast.

## ...Turning Food Waste Into Community Feasts...

1/3 of all food in the UK is thrown away, food that could easily feed communities. In our own little way, we want to change that, transforming it into nourishing plant based food for all.

## ...Sharing Skills and Stories...

Our feasts are always hosted by amazing cooks, supporting everyone to make a menu between us with people collectively leading on different dishes, teaching each other along the way.





# People's Kitchen Principles



## We are all Teachers & Students

At People's Kitchen we all share skills and learn from each other

## Everyone Trades Something

You can help set up, peel, chop, cook, clean, wash, pack down or give a donation in return for an amazing buffet banquet  
We believe this is a great way to make a balanced community

## Our Feasts are Pay-What-You-Feel

You don't need money to take part and have an amazing meal

## Donations go to Local Projects & Spaces

We encourage those that can to donate & help support a local group

## We Save Food From Landfill

Collecting surplus from local shops  
Inspiring others to look at and reduce the food they waste

## Co-Create Nourishing Plant Based Dishes

Our Feasts aim to inspire others to cook and eat more vegan food, gently introducing it to people's diets  
**without judgement**

## Celebrate Diversity

We love to cook food from different cultures  
As such we wish our hosts to reflect the diversity of our dishes.  
We strive to employ people from different backgrounds, from the local area, those who maybe finding it hard to gain employment, and those who reflect our participants

## We are a Space for All

We do our best to bring together people from all walks of life,  
We know it's easier to take part if you're from certain communities, so we connect with Community Centres, GP Surgeries, Refugee Networks, Food Banks, etc, as well as promoting in local cafes, libraries, charity shops and online



To join People's Kitchen you just turn up on the day, (no booking needed) and the hosts support you in finding your part in our community feast



# Outline for a Community Feast

If you're reading this, it's most probably because you're thinking of setting up your own People's Kitchen Community Feasts. Congratulations if you are, cause it's takes a dedicated, caring person to get this far. You might want to run your kitchen at different times, but here's an overview of ours, just to show you how our day runs:

## 9-10.30am Collect Food Waste (More on page 9-10)

We collect from 2/3 local businesses early on a Sunday when it's best for them, (mostly imperfect fruit, veg and bread). We use a bike trailer, a car, or trolleys & public transport. The event is publicised on social media, inviting people to join. (You can also connect with charities like City Harvest, Fare Share, etc. who deliver surplus straight to your project - but they may need you to be a registered organisation and to fulfill certain storage requirements)

## 1.30pm Our 2-3 hosts arrive and open up the venue. (Venue info pages 7-8)

The surplus is dropped off, banners put up and cleaning starts

**2-2.30pm** 5-25 people turn up to help co-create a plant based buffet banquet. This is completely drop in, so we never know who will turn up. Boxes are bought from storage, an extra long communal prep table is set up, also an area for 4 commercial induction hobs, and a section for spices, dry goods etc. These are all in the hall, and we also have a small kitchen with an oven. All surfaces are cleaned, everyone washes hands, puts on aprons, and is given a brief health and safety overview. All surplus fruit and veg are sorted and washed



**2.30-3.30pm** Everyone starts coming up with a menu together. Buy more dry goods if needed. Chop up onions and garlic

**2.30-5.30pm** Match up those who simply want to chop, and others who are confident cooks. Support people to lead with dishes. Guide the variety of dishes, timings, and quantities, creating salads, dressings, roast vegetables, mains and desserts. (More food info on page 17-18)

**4.30-5.30** One or two people give out flyers around the local area, inviting passers by, and those in the park to join us for dinner. We put up our menu on social media and invite folks online. (More about spreading the word page 19)

**5-6pm** Finish cooking, clear up, wash up, Transform prep tables into communal dining. Dress the tables, (If it's sunny, set up outside in the park- a great way for more people to come and share dinner

**6pm** Dinner Guests arrive, People's Kitchen Welcome Speech, Ask for donations  
**6-7pm** Dinner

**7-8.30pm** Ask people to help tidy, wash dishes, and pack down

Everyone is welcome, and people naturally find their place, whether leading on a dish, washing up or chopping and chatting

There's nothing really like it, you don't need to be a great cook, or an extrovert, you can come by yourself and feel at ease and you can even come and practice your English





# Venue

Finding a venue can be difficult, especially if you don't have funding to hire a space.

It's all about developing relationships and partnerships...and this can take time.

Community Centres and Local Councils are a good starting point. You may need the Local Council to agree to waive a hire fee.

There's also Community Halls in Churches, but this may deter people of different faiths.

Some cafes, esp council ones, aren't open during weekends, and also there's Adventure Playgrounds and Primary Schools that can be approached.

Your People's Kitchen could be adding a new event for the community spaces and using resources on a day it would be closed. Also, if it's a charity, you could apply for People's Kitchen funding with them.

Community Centre

Church Hall

Primary Schl

Council Owned Venue

Cafe

Adventure Playground

Youth Centre



These are the basic needs for a venue:

## Venue Checklist

Indoor space that can be made into a cooking area for lots of people and into a large dining space

A venue that isn't being used one day of the week

Kitchen area with a deep double sink

Space to store equipment, or, ideally, where it can be used as a communal resource daily



# Getting Food Waste

Connect directly with local Organic Shops & Large Greengrocers

Contact City Harvest, Fareshare, The Felix Project  
(Organisations that redistribute food waste from supermarkets to charities)

Speak directly to Local Supermarkets

At People's Kitchen we usually build relationships with local shops. Businesses are happy to give food to good causes, esp as they pay to have waste removed. We just pick up on the morning of our feasts. If you want more formal relationships there are now lots of surplus food providers picking up from supermarkets and delivering to charities. You may need to be a registered organisation, and, if you're storing food, your facilities will be checked.



The food we collect is imperfect, a little bruised in places, wrinkled, maybe a mouldy piece in the packet of perfectly good fruit, over ripe, under ripe, has limp leaves, or is day old bread. It's all great to make a feast with



# Food Safety

When handling food for public use, especially food that's being prepared by people who simply pop in and take part, some really simple but effective rules should be set in place:

Store all equipment well. We keep ours in strong air tight storage boxes.

Always wash all table surfaces and sweep before starting the session

Tell Participants about Hygiene Rules

Wash Fruit and Vegetables thoroughly, removing mouldy or bruised parts. We work with surplus, imperfectly perfect ingredients, and nature easily shows what to remove. Simply use your sight, touch, smell and taste to judge.

As we don't use any meat, eggs or dairy we don't have to worry so much about ingredients sharing chopping boards etc

Communal cooking requires keeping a constant eye on hygiene. Thorough hand washing is the key to stopping bacteria and germs spreading. So, make sure everyone knows to wash before cooking, after breaks, or the toilet or blowing their nose, etc

Make sure people don't 'double dip' when tasting dishes whilst cooking. Use a spoon once, washing it each time



Provide a Catering First Aid Kit & make sure all cuts are covered with coloured plasters

There's a lot of chatting whilst people are prepping, and it can be distracting. Tell participants to be extra careful when grating and chopping

Keep hair bands and fabric scraps so people can cover their hair or tie it back

Have 2 Cooks Hosting with Food Hygiene 2

All young people to be supervised by their accompanying adult

Once food is made, cover, and keep to the right temperature until dinner is served

Make sure all knives are accounted for and never left unattended







## Equipment

A Deep Sink, ←  
 (Ideally a double sink)  
 3-6 Commercial  
 Induction Hobs-(Buffalo)  
 100l Plug In  
 Convection Oven  
 Or a 6 Burner  
 Commercial Oven

4 Large Induction  
 Pans and Lids (20-40l)  
 4 Medium Pans (10l)  
 A Set of 12 Knives and  
 Folding Case  
 15 Chopping Boards  
 Mixing/Serving Bowls,  
 in a variety of sizes  
 2 Large Colanders  
 Extra Large bowls  
 (for chopped veg, etc)  
 Plates, (+ maybe bowls)  
 Polycarbonate Glasses  
 Utensils & Cutlery  
 Storage Boxes  
 Dry Goods & Spices  
 Food Blender  
 First Aid Kit

Make sure all bowls  
 (& pans) graduate  
 in size so they fit  
 into each other  
 → That way, it'll be  
 really easy to pack  
 away and you'll save  
 on lots and lots of  
 storage space

↓ Ideally, it's best to set up People's Kitchen in  
 a community space where resources can be  
 shared, and used by all

When we started we asked for donations of  
 different equipment, and picked up plates,  
 etc at charity shops and car boot sales  
 So, it can be done with very little money

Funding bought the equipment listed,  
 which means you don't have to have a venue  
 with a big kitchen, you can easily use a hall as  
 a prep area, plug in hobs and an oven in one  
 area and have lots of space for 20 people to  
 cook communally

This list is in order of importance, and  
 obviously your People's Kitchen's needs may  
 defer from ours... It's simply a helping guide



# People's Roles

## Project Leader

At least 1-2 passionate, dedicated people to lead the project and to inspire others to be involved  
(Core Team)

## 2-3 Host Cooks/Chefs

For our sessions to run beautifully we need just the right type of people to host and hold the space. You need:  
Great people skills + a love for sharing cooking knowledge whilst inspiring others to lead  
A passion to teach + learn from others  
Food Hygiene Certificate Level 2  
A DBS Check (or willingness to undergo a check)  
A desire to champion vegetarian/vegan food  
To love improvising + problem solving on the go  
To be at ease with providing a safe space for a variety of different social, cultural and mixed ability needs to create collaboratively  
Ability to create dishes from different cultures  
An overview of Health and Safety requirements  
(Core Team)

## Food Pick Ups

People who pick up, deliver, stay to cook, or simply drop off. Best to have a team of regular helpers to choose from  
(Core Team)

## Choppers Cooks Diners Cleaners Up

(People who turn up on the day)

## Outreach

People to give out flyers, connect with local groups share events online. Participants to also each invite friends and place flyers in local spaces  
(Core Team)



# It's the Host Cooks that help make People's Kitchen a truly improvised, collaborative event

It would be easy to have someone leading the dishes for the whole feast, directing everyone else, but that isn't what we're about.

A great host knows how to bring the best out in those who turn up to take part, to suggest possible recipes if needed, but to also support others in sharing theirs. They know about making sure the dishes work well together, balancing timings and ingredients so the buffet is full of variety and flavours that work well together. It's good for the Project Leaders to have a list of Host Cooks and Food Pick Ups to chose from so that each feast has enough Core Team Members.





# Spreading the Word

## Make a Poster/Flyer

Put it all around your local area: Community Halls, Cafes, Libraries, Launderettes, Bike Shops, Garden Centres, Charity Shops, Doctor Surgeries, Connect with people who run Refugee Groups, Homeless Shelters, Day Centres, etc.

## Advertise on Social Media

It's easy to get certain demographics to join, but others will need lots of one on one outreach maybe even partnering up with already established groups, and overcoming barriers that may stop people attending (travel costs, etc)

## Write an article for the local paper

Ask people who come to your feasts to each take some flyers and put them in a local venue. Tell dinner guests to tell friends, share online, etc

Spreading the word is a constant challenge We'd love to use our online networks to help support new People's Kitchens, We can also help with making flyers, etc,

**On the day of the feast:**  
Give out flyers right by your venue. Speak to as many people as you can and invite them to dinner

### Share your event online

Place a banner outside your space, and a large board inviting people to come in and join the food prep & community feast



# Here's our Poster:



Would you like to spend a Sunday doing something different?

to peel, chop, cook & chat with others?  
make & share vegan/vegetarian dishes?  
transform surplus food into a Pay-What-You-Feel Feast...  
...that helps an Adventure Playground keep running?  
**It's easy... Just come along :**

**Grown Up Sessions** 1st Sunday of the month  
**Family Friendly Sessions** 2nd-to-last Sunday  
**Cook:2-6pm or Just Come Eat:6-7pm**

Contact [Kiran@madeupcollective.com](mailto:Kiran@madeupcollective.com)  
( [thepeopleskitchen.co.uk](http://thepeopleskitchen.co.uk)  [peopleskitchenfeasts](https://www.facebook.com/peopleskitchenfeasts) )

**Weavers Adventure Playground**  
Viaduct Street, Bethnal Green, London, E2 0DR



# Making a Space For All

Making a space for all is not as simple as just asking people from different social and cultural backgrounds, it's also understanding why people from different backgrounds may or may not feel able to attend, and trying to reduce that imbalance.

Our People's Kitchen in Bethnal Green has a neighborhood with a 30% Bangladeshi population, and yet we rarely attract Bangladeshi participants. This could be a cultural barrier, language barrier, the fact that most live in extended family networks and therefore have family responsibilities and eat together already.

To try to be more inviting we have spoken to people in Hindi, explained that we aren't about feeding just those in need, but a way of connecting communities, we've stated that our food is halal, and have also served dinner on the park throughout Summer, to make it easier to see what we're about.

But the simple fact is that more Bengalis would attend if they were able to see people like themselves already present.

It's a Catch 22 situation, and so we have started links with groups already set up, like Praxis, who provide support for migrants and refugees, and hope this may be a good starting point, which will inspire some of the wider Bengali community to join us for dinner.



## So, what can you do to make your People's Kitchen a space of equality ?

### Look at your power structures.

Lots of organisations run on a model of a more privileged group 'helping' a group 'in need'. At People's Kitchen we believe that we all come with needs, and, equally, with skills to share.

It makes sense to reflect diversity within those running your People's Kitchen, and to also employ people who are from your hardest to reach demographic, therefore making it more accessible from the outset.

### Understand the greater inequalities

People on benefits or with refugee status may not be able to attend simply because they can't afford the cost of travel. Offer to pay for travel for up to 10 participants, and factor that into your grant application.

Others may not be able to give up time unless there is a sense of training involved that may help with work opportunities. Offer Food Hygiene training for long term participants. You could also add in ESOL sessions before cooking.

If you want families to attend, maybe include a playworker

Pay those hosting sessions. Yes, you could run solely on volunteers, but your People's Kitchen could also be a platform for empowering people and providing a small income for great home cooks.

Speak to people one to one, go to food banks, day centres, etc and connect with people on an equal footing, understand what may make attending difficult and see if you can help.



**So, do you get funding, or not?  
That really is for each People's Kitchen  
to decide for themselves.**

We started on a £2,000 grant that bought pretty much all we needed second hand and then ran for 5 years with no funding. It's only in the last few years that we have paid those leading the sessions, sought funding for training, etc,

If you're not a constituted group/charity, getting grants will be a little difficult. There are local council community grants, or places like Awards for All, but the best option is to team up with a charity (maybe through using their building), or to do the paperwork and become a registered Charity or Social Enterprise.

You could also create fundraising events: Fine Dining Food Waste Feasts with entertainment and set ticket costs, fun runs, or run a crowdfunding campaign.

Raising money can be really tiring, if you have any further questions, or you'd like us to help with your People's Kitchen grant applications, just send an email to [kiran@madeupcollective.com](mailto:kiran@madeupcollective.com) and we'll see what we can do to support you.

## Funding



**We have applied for funding to cover:**

- Equipment Costs to Set Up People's Kitchen**
- Staff Wages**
- Utility Costs**
- Hall Hire**
- Food Hygiene Training**
- Posters/Banners/Flyers**
- Costs to Design this Guide**
- Outreach**



# Cooking a Feast

**Our Feasts are collaborative. We have 2-3 confident cooks to hold the space, and to lead on main dishes if needed, but the aim is to inspire others to collectively take responsibility. Here's some helpful tips:**

New people usually wish to be told what to do. Chopping garlic and onions is always a good way to put people at ease until they start to feel ready to take lead

There's set elements to each meal:  
Main dishes: *curry/stew/pie/bake, etc*,  
Rice/bulgar/cous cous, flatbreads,  
salads, coleslaws, sides: *dumplings, fritters, roast veg, etc*,  
desserts: *crumble, banana bread, fruit salads, cakes*. So, it's easy to offer roles within people's confidence levels.

People are more able than they believe, they just need some support. Sometimes it means running through a recipe, it can also be just giving encouragement.

If someone looks at the box of spices as soon as they first come, they know how to cook. Simply pair them with those who just want to chop.

Keep your store cupboard stocked with a wide range of spices, grains, lentils, oils, vinegars, sweeteners, sauces, flour, etc, to inspire dishes from many different cultures

With such an abundance of surplus, sometimes participants want to put it all in each dish. It's great to show how less is more, and how that creates variety



It's great having one dish that's really easy to make as a group, with lots of helping hands. Samosas, flatbreads, bhajis, fritters, dumplings, burgers, pancakes all are simple to make and show the fun of cooking together



An easy way to make sure the buffet has dishes that fit together is to have everyone write on the menu board as we go along, to maybe come up with a theme, and to have different textures and depths of flavour. Dressings, sauces and desserts always add extra flavour to a feast



# Serving a Feast

We love to make food for the eyes as well as the belly, with a vibrant array of dishes served beautifully

Everyone serves themselves

People are asked to consider others, to only take what you can eat, and the rest always ends up in containers for lunches the next day

Our Feasts start with a short speech about People's Kitchen. We then thank those who collaborated, ask folks to pay what they can and explain where the much needed money will go. (We always start the donation pot off with £15 in change) Dinner begins with an invitation to chat to those you don't know

