# The Big Lunch returns with celebrity chefs and sustainability at heart



The Big Lunch is set to make a vibrant return this weekend, inviting neighbours across the UK to gather for food and friendship on the 7th and 8th of June. The initiative, established by the Eden Project, has become synonymous with community spirit, growing into an annual celebration that saw over 10 million participants last year alone. This year, the event once again enjoys support from prominent organisations, including Co-op, Greene King, and the Pears Foundation. The simplicity of hosting – a table, chairs, and delicious food – encapsulates the essence of this occasion, emphasizing the importance of connection without the pressure of elaborate plans.

As The Big Lunch enters its 16th year, it champions not only the act of sharing meals but also the significance of fostering relationships that can combat loneliness and enhance community cohesion. Dame Prue Leith, a celebrated chef and television personality, is among the many advocates promoting this initiative, underscoring how communal gatherings can strengthen bonds and contribute to a more sustainable lifestyle. “We're often told to avoid overworking the dough,” she mentions, symbolizing the careful balance required in both baking and nurturing community ties. Her dedication to reducing meat consumption further highlights the environmental responsibility intertwined with these celebrations.

In the spirit of sharing, an array of delightful recipes has been curated, featuring culinary contributions from renowned chefs. Prue Leith’s watermelon and halloumi salad captures the essence of summer, combining vibrant colours and flavours designed to spark joy and conversation. Fellow chef Tom Kerridge’s hearty halloumi and aubergine burgers offer a healthy, satisfying vegetarian option, demonstrating that plant-based dishes can stand out at any gathering. Yotam Ottolenghi introduces a cauliflower, pomegranate, and pistachio salad, skilfully blending roasted and raw textures to create a refreshing addition to the table. This combination of flavours not only caters to diverse tastes but also reflects an increasing awareness around sustainable eating practices.

Moreover, the initiative's recipe search, which encourages community members to submit their own beloved dishes, serves as a platform for culinary creativity. This year, participants can engage with celebrity chefs like Ainsley Harriott and Briony May Williams, further enriching the event's offerings. This culinary collaboration not only inspires home cooks to explore new flavours but also deepens the connection to the community through shared experiences at the table.

The warmth and camaraderie fostered through events like The Big Lunch can lead to lasting friendships and a robust community spirit. Anecdotal evidence from participants suggests a noticeable uplift in social interactions and a greater sense of belonging following these events. As neighbours come together to share not just food but stories and experiences, The Big Lunch stands as a testament to the power of sociability, simplicity, and sustenance.

So, whether you are planning a grand street party or an intimate gathering on your doorstep, take the time to prepare and invite your neighbours. With a selection of delightful recipes to inspire your culinary efforts, this weekend's Big Lunch could become a cherished community tradition, bending the course of isolation into a shared journey of togetherness.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/recipes/big-lunch-recipes-prue-leith-ottolenghi-b2765601.html), [[2]](https://www.edenproject.com/mission/our-projects/the-big-lunch)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/recipes/big-lunch-recipes-prue-leith-ottolenghi-b2765601.html), [[4]](https://www.standard.co.uk/news/environment/prue-leith-phoenix-garden-people-london-oxfordshire-b1149201.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/recipes/big-lunch-recipes-prue-leith-ottolenghi-b2765601.html), [[5]](https://www.nationalworld.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/top-chefs-launch-nationwide-recipe-search-to-help-food-loving-brits-out-of-a-recipe-rut-5085946), [[6]](https://www.communityni.org/news/big-lunch-recipe-good-neighbourhoods)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/big-lunch/the-big-lunch-recipe-search), [[6]](https://www.communityni.org/news/big-lunch-recipe-good-neighbourhoods)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/big-lunch-resources/organise-a-big-lunch)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/food-and-drink/recipes/big-lunch-recipes-prue-leith-ottolenghi-b2765601.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.edenproject.com/mission/our-projects/the-big-lunch> - The Big Lunch is an annual event initiated by the Eden Project, aiming to bring neighbours together across the UK to share food and foster community spirit. Held on the first weekend of June, it encourages people to connect, celebrate, and make positive changes in their local areas. The event has grown significantly since its inception, with millions participating each year in various gatherings, from street parties to garden get-togethers. The Big Lunch focuses on creating friendships, reducing loneliness, and boosting community engagement.
3. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/big-lunch/the-big-lunch-recipe-search> - The Big Lunch Recipe Search is an initiative by the Eden Project to discover the UK's favourite shareable dishes. Collaborating with celebrity chefs like Briony May Williams, Dame Prue Leith, and Ainsley Harriott, the search invites home cooks to submit their go-to recipes, childhood favourites, and crowd-pleasers. The goal is to inspire people to try new dishes and share them at Big Lunch events. Winners have their recipes featured in an online cookbook and receive hampers and gift vouchers to support their Big Lunch events.
4. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/environment/prue-leith-phoenix-garden-people-london-oxfordshire-b1149201.html> - Dame Prue Leith, a renowned chef and television personality, has been actively involved in promoting The Big Lunch. She advocates for cooking with leftovers and reducing meat consumption to benefit the environment. Leith emphasizes the importance of sharing food and community gatherings, highlighting how such events can strengthen relationships and foster a sense of belonging. Her participation underscores the event's focus on sustainability and community engagement, encouraging people to come together and make a positive impact in their neighbourhoods.
5. <https://www.nationalworld.com/lifestyle/food-and-drink/top-chefs-launch-nationwide-recipe-search-to-help-food-loving-brits-out-of-a-recipe-rut-5085946> - In preparation for The Big Lunch, top chefs including Ainsley Harriott, Briony May Williams, and Dame Prue Leith launched a nationwide recipe search. The initiative aims to help people overcome recipe ruts by discovering new, shareable dishes. The search encourages individuals to submit their favourite recipes, with the goal of inspiring others to try new dishes and share them at Big Lunch events. This effort highlights the event's focus on community, sharing, and culinary diversity, aiming to bring people together through food.
6. <https://www.communityni.org/news/big-lunch-recipe-good-neighbourhoods> - The Big Lunch Recipe Search is an initiative by the Eden Project to uncover the UK's favourite shareable dishes. Supported by celebrity chefs like Dame Prue Leith, the search invites home cooks to submit their go-to recipes, childhood favourites, and crowd-pleasers. The aim is to inspire people to try new dishes and share them at Big Lunch events. Winners have their recipes featured in an online cookbook and receive hampers and gift vouchers to support their Big Lunch events, fostering community spirit and culinary creativity.
7. <https://www.edenprojectcommunities.com/big-lunch-resources/organise-a-big-lunch> - Organising a Big Lunch is a straightforward way to bring your community together. The Eden Project provides resources and guidance to help individuals plan events, whether it's a simple gathering with neighbours or a larger community celebration. The Big Lunch encourages sharing food, stories, and experiences, fostering connections and a sense of belonging. The event has been a catalyst for community engagement, with many participants reporting increased social interactions and a stronger sense of community following their involvement.