

How to run
a **Peace**
Feast

The logo consists of the text 'How to run a Peace Feast' in a dark blue, serif font. The word 'a' is smaller and positioned above 'Peace'. To the left of the word 'Peace' is a yellow circle with a green leafy branch extending from its top-left edge. To the right of the word 'Peace' is a red speech bubble. The word 'Feast' is positioned below 'Peace'.

by **Bridges for Communities**

**“I had a great evening,
lots of laughs and
great conversations
with people from other
cultures and faiths that
I wouldn’t have met
otherwise. My narrow
stereotype thinking was
totally challenged!”**

‘Hear about Hajj’ Peace Feast

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What is a Peace Feast?

History

The original Peace Feast vision came from the work of Peace Catalyst International, a U.S. non-profit whose founder Dr Rick Love inspired Sarah Evans in Cardiff and Dan Green in Bristol to start bringing people together around food in their cities.

Sarah and her husband Mark first began running Peace Feasts in Cardiff and they quickly proved to be highly popular. When Dan and Karen Green moved to Bristol after working in the Middle East for eight years, they set up the charity Bridges for Communities with a vision to foster friendships between people of different cultures and build peaceful and compassionate communities across the region. Dan and his friend Rizwan from the Bristol Muslim Cultural Society held their first Peace Feast as an experiment at a local restaurant and to their surprise, 60 people turned up and had a wonderful night. Peace Feasts took off from that moment on!

As interest grew from people in other cities, Bridges for Communities decided to enable other people to run Peace Feasts in their own communities. Using the lessons they had learned along the way, the Peace Feast movement was launched with 'Food,' 'Stories' and 'Friendship' as the three key foundation stones of every event. Where it goes from here is up to all of us to decide!

A Peace Feast brings people together from different cultures and faiths for food and friendship. There are three ingredients to the perfect Peace Feast.

Food

Everyone loves eating. Food is one of the best ways of bringing people together and demonstrating hospitality. Three courses makes it a real event, and gives time for friendships to flourish.



You may bring a caterer into a venue you already have access to, such as a community centre, school or place of worship, or you can book a restaurant to provide the food and venue together.

You don't need the most expensive food, three courses with fine flavours are better than one course with the fanciest cuisine. We always aim to balance quality with affordability. Remember to consider all dietary requirements such as halal or kosher, food intolerances and vegetarians & vegans.

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Stories

After the main course, a guest speaker or speakers shares their story. For many, this is the highlight of the evening. We encourage people to share stories which are both honest and hope-filled.

Some people might talk about their journey to the community, or a challenge they've overcome. Other Peace Feasts use music or dance as a form of storytelling. There are those which use a particular festival as a stimulus for stories and some that focus on a friendship between two people from different cultures.

There are many possibilities, so be as creative as you like. You can check out the different models on pages 10-18 and download the 'Speeches Guide,' from peacefeast.org

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Friendship

The ultimate purpose of a Peace Feast is to create the opportunity for people to build friendships with someone from another faith or culture. The other ingredients, food and stories, help to bring people together and get conversations flowing.

To help get conversations started, there are 'Food for Thought' questions for tables, (page 27) and ideas for follow-up (page 38).

A successful Peace Feast is one where people begin a friendship that continues long after the evening is over.

Why have a Peace Feast?

Over the last few years, there has been an unprecedented increase in the challenges our communities are facing. Increased movement of people due to war and conflict, rising inequality between rich and poor, more polarised political views and extreme media reporting are fuelling anxiety in individuals and putting the fabric of our society under increased strain.

While these issues can put pressure on local communities, we believe the opposite is also true. Resilient and compassionate communities can rise to and overcome these challenges together. We are convinced that spending time together, entering one another's spaces, and listening to each other has the power to reshape our cultural landscape for good. Peace Feasts are one of many movements in our nation aiming to fuel this spirit of friendship and understanding and build a brighter and more peaceful future.

We want to contribute towards a society that is more peaceful, more cohesive, where people are better neighbours to one another and where people who are new to that society are made to feel more welcome.

Dan Green

director of 'Bridges for Communities'
and co-founder of Peace Feast in the UK



The first time I came to a Peace Feast I didn't know anyone... I started talking and I met new people, I learned a lot from them and the next time I started volunteering. I felt, I'm home, even though it's not my country, I feel really good.



Bushra Alshihabi

Peace Feast volunteer

Peace Feast Models

There are many variations of Peace Feast and every event will be slightly different. Here are a few different models to get you thinking:

Model 1 Community Celebration



Model 2 Global Response



Model 3
Faith and Festival



Model 4
Peace Feast Mini



Model 1: Community Celebration

The 'Community Celebration' model aims to bring people together from different cultures in the same city. People may have lived and worked side-by-side for years but never had the opportunity to sit down and get to know people on their street. A Peace Feast can change that.

Easton Peace Feast @Baraka Community Café

Easton is a vibrant inner-city neighbourhood in Bristol with a soulful Caribbean influence, a strong Somali community and many other nationalities living and working side by side with other Bristolians. It's an exciting neighbourhood to live in and an ideal place to bring cultures together for a Peace Feast.

The newly opened Baraka Café in Easton Family Centre cooked up a sumptuous three-course vegetarian feast as Syrian music echoed around the room from the talented Dijwar Khalil.





Dijwar then shared his story of settling in Bristol after fleeing Syria, living with former mayor, George Ferguson and making friends in a new culture. Volunteers Mohammed and Bushra also shared powerful stories of moving to the UK from Syria and Eritrea and thanked everyone for making them feel welcome.

There were Jamaicans, Yemenis, Syrians, Iranians, Kurds, Swiss, Eritreans and Brits, chatting all night and building new friendships. A highlight of the evening was the spontaneous singing and dancing that took off when Dijwar played a song the Syrians knew, and the whole room got drawn into the celebration.



Model 2: Global Response

The 'Global Response' model is a compassionate reaction to a crisis in the news. When a nation is hit by a terrorist attack or a natural disaster, a Peace Feast can be a way of acting in the opposite spirit, of saying to the affected community, "We're here for you."

Peace Feast for Mogadishu @Barton Hill

In October 2017 two truck bombs in Mogadishu killed over 500 people and a group of friends wanted to stand in solidarity with the Somali community in Bristol. A delicious Somali meal was provided by popular caterers, 'The Somali Kitchen,' and our guest speakers Councillor Hibaq Jama and Abdul Ahmed shared their experiences of life in Somalia.

"What touched me deeply was members of other communities coming together in solidarity with my people in Mogadishu, Somalia. That was something unusual ... normally you see people denouncing violence or terror attacks only when those horrendous attacks unfold in a country in the western world. I believe what Bridges For Communities has done is monumental and I will never forget it. I am extremely thankful to organisers and all the attendees."

Abdul Ahmed

Chair of Bristol Somali Forum





“It was heart rending to listen to the personal accounts of how the attack in Mogadishu had affected members of Bristol’s Somali community. At other times it was uplifting to hear the determination with which people spoke about their aspiration to realise a more peaceful future. I met members of the Somali community with whom I am virtual neighbours but rarely have the chance to talk to. I also has the opportunity to talk with members of Bristol’s wider community, including a number of recently arrived refugees who also attended in solidarity. The warmth with which these hands of friendship were received was moving and for me, a clear example of how communities can support each other and be stronger for it.”

Martin

a resident of Barton Hill



Model 3: Faith and Festivals

The 'Faith and Festivals' model is a way of bringing different faiths together to honour and learn about each other. This can work well as a two-part Peace Feast, one hosted by a Muslim faith community at Eid and a follow up event by a Christian community at Christmas for example.

Christmas and Eid Peace Feasts @Churches and Mosques

Around 100 members of the refugee community in Bristol, mostly from Muslim background, were hosted by Severn Vineyard church to share a feast, hear about Christmas and listen to the gospel choir over traditional Christmas food.



The following year, seven small 'Sharing Ramadan' evenings were organised so guests could visit a mosque, often for the first time and hear about Ramadan from members of the Muslim community.

Another 'faith and festivals' idea is to choose a theme like 'Peace' and ask people from different faiths to share their perspective on it, you could even do Q&A afterwards to engage the guests.

Love thy Neighbour @Afendi Lebanese Restaurant

Afendi restaurant in Bristol served a hearty Lebanese feast, and inbetween courses guest speakers from the Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities shared their thoughts on the theme of 'Love thy neighbour'.

Rabbi Monique Mayer from the Progressive Synagogue, Pastor Owen Lynch from Severn Vineyard Church and Rizwan Ahmed from Bristol Muslim Cultural Society all gave thought-provoking talks which prompted many deep and inspired discussions.



Model 4: Peace Feast Mini

A Peace Feast Mini takes the ethos of a Peace Feast, with food, stories and friendships and brings it to a smaller group of friends, in homes, cafés, restaurants or parks.

Peace Feast Minis can be a good follow-up to a Peace Feast if you want to invest in a friendship you started on the night, or they can be a good way of building up to a Peace Feast. You may want to get to know someone from another culture on your street, so you could start with a Peace Feast Mini and in the future, you might end up organising a full-scale Peace Feast together in your community.

Peace Feast Minis



During the Covid-19 lockdown, Jenny and her husband Victor, from Bristol, organised a Peace Feast Mini with a family who are now close friends of theirs. A picnic in the park became a hearty feast, with Iraqi, Spanish, British and Polish cultures represented (in only six people)! With lots to talk about and many delicious recipes to try, it was a wonderful afternoon, relaxing together in the sunshine.

“A very enjoyable evening talking to different people, and the Baraka food was lovely.”

Baraka Café Bristol Peace Feast

Planning your Peace Feast

The following timings and actions are based on our experience, but are only suggestions – feel free to alter them and design your event however you see best for you and the communities involved!

6 weeks before

Book a venue and/or caterer and agree a price.

□ We recommend aiming for £10/person. Make sure all cultural and dietary needs are met such as kosher, halal, vegetarians & vegans, and allergies. We try to use local, fair-trade and free-range produce where possible.

□ Alcohol can be a barrier to some cultures and an extra cost, so try to avoid it if possible.

□ Find a musician, a photographer and one or two people willing to share their story.

□ Recruit some volunteers to help run the evening, we recommend roughly one volunteer per ten guests.

□ Calculate the ticket numbers and price to cover cost of catering, and any contribution to the musician/speaker or local charity, and build in a buffer for any unexpected expenses.

□ Create a way for people to buy tickets online and in person and make sure there is a cap so you don't overbook.

It's a nice idea to have a "Pay it Forward" ticket option, where guests can purchase an extra ticket in advance for refugees or people facing financial hardship. These can then be quietly allocated to specific people in advance. That way, nobody needs to know on the night who came with a ticket and who had a Pay it Forward ticket.

Promote the Peace Feast across different platforms in ways that different cultures can access, aim for an even split between different communities. This will require some targeted marketing. Remember, many people wouldn't come to an event unless they are personally invited.

1 week before

Check that the venue, caterers, musician, speaker, photographer and volunteers are ready, and they know what time to arrive.

Check ticket sales and adjust promotion accordingly, to make sure you have good representation from different cultures. Don't be afraid to invite people in person from your community, even if you don't know them really well.

On the night

Before people arrive



Everyone serving should aim to arrive at least an hour beforehand to set-up the venue, distribute resources, sound-check, and prepare to welcome guests.



The host runs through the evening with all the volunteers so everyone knows their role and the culture of the event is clear – serving others, having fun, building friendship.

19:00 - 19:20

As people arrive



Two or three volunteers welcome guests as they come in, check tickets and give each person a name badge. It's good practice to have volunteers from different cultures on welcome as this models the ethos of the event and puts guests at ease.



When guests write their name on the name badge, explain that later on someone will be taking photos to celebrate the evening and promote future Peace Feasts. If they want to remain anonymous, you can mark their name badge with a 'no photo' icon so the photographer can see, (no photo icon = ∅).

Point people to the drinks table and encourage them to sit with people they don't yet know. Alternatively, you may have roaming volunteers with a tray to hand out drinks. Remember alcohol can be a barrier to some cultures so we recommend soft drinks.

It's good to have a few volunteers whose role is purely to wander and chat to guests.

19:20 - 19:30

Welcome Speech

The host thanks everyone for coming and welcomes guests, it's good to attempt a few words in another language present, even if it's just "Hello and welcome."

If some guests are still learning English, consider having a translator to help host.

The host introduces the caterers, musician, photographer and/or speaker and gives a brief overview of the evening, pointing out the menu, sharing any 'food stories' about culturally significant or symbolic dishes and highlighting the 'food for thought' conversation starters. Most of all, they encourage people to make new friends and have fun.

19:30 - 20:00

Starters and Main Course

Volunteers bring starters to the table. You can decide whether to serve the main course at the table or have a buffet, but however you choose to serve, try to get people mixing and chatting. Remember to look after people with special dietary needs.



If you have a musician, they can play quietly in the background while guests are eating.

20:00 - 20:30

After the main course



Volunteers clear the plates from the main course (approx. 10mins)



The host introduces the speaker(s) and encourages guests to listen carefully.



Speaker(s) shares their story in whatever way they chose. The host will thank them and encourage the guests to show their appreciation. You might want some Q&A, but make sure guests are asking respectful questions. Often guests want to know, “How can we help?” or “How can we get involved?” You can always prepare someone in advance to think of a question, just in case the audience are particularly shy.

20:30 - 20:50

Desserts

☐ Serve desserts and hot drinks – we recommend encouraging people to stand up and come collect these from a buffet table, then going to a different table and meeting some new people.

20:50 - 21:00

Closing and Follow-Up

☐ The host thanks everyone one last time - caterers, musicians, speakers and volunteers, and thanks guests for coming.

☐ Encourage guests to swap contact details with new friends they've made, there's space on the back of their name badge to record someone's contact details.

☐ You may highlight another Peace Feast or encourage people to run their own.

☐ You may want to highlight something the speaker said or encourage guests to get involved with an organisation the speaker may have highlighted.

☐ Give people links to publicity where the Peace Feast will be celebrated, and where photos appear on social media and/or in a newsletter. Encourage guests to comment/share any publicity and contact the host if they want any photos taken down.

☐ Hand out feedback forms, explain that they are anonymous and ask guests to fill them out and give them back to a volunteer there and then.

Food for Thought

One of the keys to a successful Peace Feast is getting people talking. Meeting someone new or from another culture can be daunting and guests are often concerned about what to ask.

Having some questions on tables to prompt discussion is a helpful way of encouraging conversation. Below is our “Food for Thought” table questions which we’ve developed from previous Peace Feasts.



What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

What is your favourite food?

What is your favourite thing about the place where you grew up?

What three words would you use to describe your family?

If you could meet one famous person, who would it be and why?

Which person (or persons) have greatly inspired you in life?

Have you visited any interesting places recently?

What is your favourite festival or time of year?

If you won £1000 today, how would you spend it?

Could you teach me two useful phrases in another language?

What does your name mean?

What questions do you have about my faith or culture?

Photography Guidance

Taking photos is an essential part of Peace Feasts. It helps to celebrate the occasion, it's good fun for the guests, and photos communicate the ethos of Peace Feasts.

GDPR regulations state that if someone is identifiable in an image, that constitutes personal data and they have a right to opt out if they wish to. There are three ways to do this:

1

Have a sign as people come in explaining that photos are being taken, and they can opt out if they wish. Make sure the sign is in all languages that might be present.

2

When people register, they are given a name badge. The welcome volunteer will explain that photos will be taken and used in Peace Feast publicity. If they want to opt out of photographs, you can draw this symbol next to their name, Ø, so the photographer knows not to photograph them.

3

In the welcome speech, the host will explain all this and state clearly where photos will be shared on social media. Guests must know where they can find them online and who to contact if they want a photo taken down.

You can download the 'Image Guide' from peacefeast.org and give it to your photographer in advance.

Image Guide

for photographers

When it comes to taking photos remember the following things:

1

Having your photo taken can be intimidating, so put people at ease by smiling, being friendly, asking if you can take their photo, and thanking them afterwards. Some people may have a 'no photo' symbol on their badge.



2

Avoid photos of children unless they are in a photo with their parent or carer.

3

Faces capture the joy of the evening better than anything, so it's good to have some ones and twos as well as wider group shots.

4

Eating doesn't always present people at their best, so try to take photos before or after the meal. It can be tiring having your photo taken all the time, so aim for one or two 'bursts' then have a rest.



5

If you can adjust the depth of field so the background is blurred, that's preferable. Otherwise, have fun and be creative!

Image Guide

for photographers

When it comes to editing the photos and posting on social media:

A

Check to see if there is anyone with a 'no photo' symbol on their badge in the background of any image, so you can edit them out.

B

Choose photos that show people at their best.

C

Upload images and blog posts to your website or social media channels, tagging **@peacefeast** and using the **#peacefeast** hashtag.

D

Send the link to the guests so they can read the blog post, view the photos and contact you if they want a photo taken down.



**“Literally this is
like a dream come
true. Sharing love
and laughs with
incredible people.”**

**Cardiff Peace Feast with
Student Action for Refugees**


Budgeting

Peace Feasts are a real celebration but they should also be affordable, and balancing the two aims can be tricky. We recommend finding a caterer or restaurant that will charge no more than £10 a head. You may want to sell tickets at £12 to create a buffer for extra expenses, like a musician or room hire.




We recommend using an online ticket system such as Eventbrite but also having somewhere people can come to buy tickets in person, as this makes it accessible to everyone in the community. In either case, make sure you have contact details for each person, an email and/or phone number so you can send a reminder the day before the event and a follow-up message with a link to any photos taken on the night.





To help make it affordable to guests on lower incomes or to large families, you can have a 'Pay it Forward' option where guests who can afford an extra ticket choose to buy one for someone who might not be able to afford it. The 'Pay it Forward' ticket is then made available anonymously to someone who needs it.



In terms of catering, there are several organisations which model the ethos of Peace Feasts by working with refugees and marginalised people in their city, harnessing their culinary skills and using catering as a tool for empowerment and employment. It's worth researching your local area to find someone who might like to partner with you in a Peace Feast. There are some recommended caterers on the Peace Feast website, peacefeast.org

Safety Advice

Safety is of primary importance at a Peace Feast. The responsibility for well-being of guests and volunteers lies with the host, but the following can provide some guidelines to consider when planning a Peace Feast.

1

Does your caterer have a hygiene certificate, catering licence and business insurance?

Does your venue have a health and safety policy that you will need to abide by?

2

3

Has your venue been cleaned for traces of nuts, or have you informed people it may not be nut-free?

Are there fire extinguishers, smoke alarms and clearly marked fire exits?

4

If your Peace Feast is at a restaurant, they should have taken care of these requirements, but if you are using your own venue, you will need to make some checks.

It can be helpful to conduct a risk assessment in planning. On the following page is an example as a guide which you are advised to adapt to the unique needs of your venue and context.

Food Poisoning

Ensure food is in date, thoroughly cooked and hygiene procedures are followed, check the food hygiene certificate of your caterer.

Fire

Ensure there are at least two accessible fire exits and that hosts and volunteers can direct people to them. Check there are smoke alarms and fire extinguishers.

Allergic Reaction

Ensure there are 'free-from' alternative dishes, ask guests to contact in advance with details of food allergies and intolerances.

Loss or misuse of data

Follow GDPR rules, don't leave ticket/guest list unattended and destroy at the end of the evening.

Pre-existing medical condition

Have a designated first aider on site who can react to any pre-existing medical condition which might manifest during the event.

Photos shared without permission

Inform guests on arrival that photos will be taken. Give an option for guests to opt out of photos and signal this on their name badge so the photographer can see at the editing stage if anyone has accidentally appeared in the background. In welcome speech, remind guests that photos will be taken and share the location of any social media posts and contact details, so guests can request a photo to be removed if they wish. Photographer asks guests before taking a photo out of courtesy. See **Image Guide for Photographer (p29)**.

Disagreement between guests

Create warm and friendly atmosphere, provide culturally-sensitive table questions, model peaceful ethos through welcome speech and story-sharing, prepare volunteers to join in conversations if guests appear uneasy.

**“Powerful
reminder that
there is much
shared ground
between us.”**

‘Love thy neighbour’ Peace Feast

What next?

The night of the Peace Feast is only the beginning. Where you go from here depends on the follow-up.

It's essential to send some form of follow-up message to everybody to say a few important things:

1

Thank them for coming and encourage them to stay in touch with friends they made on the night.

2

Share the online location of the photos or stories so they have an opportunity to comment, and give the contact details of someone who can alter or remove photos if need be. Encourage guests to share the posts and their experience of the Peace Feast. Remember to tag **@peacefeast** and **#peacefeast**



3

Inform them of future events or ways to get more involved. The speaker may have highlighted an organisation or issue in their story and guests may want to help.

4

You can encourage people to run their own Peace Feast 'Minis' which take the culture and ethos of a Peace Feast gathering to smaller groups in homes or cafés. You can point people to the Peace Feasts Mini resources at peacefeast.org



5

You may also want to arrange a more structured form of follow-up. Below is an example from Bridges for Communities in Bristol, where Peace Feasts began in the UK – a number of people participating in Peace Feasts there have gone on to volunteer with the b.friend project. Most cities have similar organisations and schemes you could partner with or signpost people to if you do a little bit of local research.

b.friend

Bristol-based charity Bridges for Communities runs a befriending scheme where volunteers sign up to meet a refugee or asylum seeker once a week to offer support and a listening ear.

Refugees and asylum seekers can often feel deeply isolated and a friend who can offer even a small level of support and comfort can be transformational for people's mental health and wellbeing. People in need of support are referred to Bridges for Communities by other agencies or through Bristol City Council and then the charity arranges for the refugee and the volunteer to meet and get to know one another.





Volunteers have two free training sessions, but do not require any specialist skills as their role is to offer friendship, support and encouragement, rather than being an 'expert' to offer advice. For many, what starts as a voluntary commitment flourishes into lifelong friendships.

For more details see,

www.bridgesforcommunities.com/programmes/b-friend



Useful Resources

For other resources and ideas, including helpful guidelines for dialogue, GDPR rules on photos, printable name labels and downloadable poster templates, go to the Peace Feast website, peacefeast.org

Website

peacefeast.org

Facebook

Peace Feast

Instagram

@peacefeast

Twitter

@PeaceFeast



www.peacefeast.org