



— THE BIG LUNCH GUIDE TO —

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

*Everything you need to know to
plan a VE Day 80 celebration!*



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THE BIG LUNCH

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TUCK IN!



This May marks 80 years since Victory in Europe (VE) Day, when the Second World War came to an end in Europe. It was a historical day that sparked spontaneous celebrations across the nation as people from all walks of life came together.

What better way to commemorate VE Day 80 than by getting together with your neighbours and community to celebrate? Whether you're looking to honour the past, share local stories, connect with those around you, or simply enjoy a fun food-filled day with your neighbours, a Big Lunch is the perfect way to mark the occasion and join in!

Ready to get started? This guide is packed with tips and ideas to help you plan your VE Day 80 celebration – from choosing the right spot and deciding on decorations, activities, and games, to ensuring everything runs smoothly on the day.

Together, let's celebrate with a day of connection, commemoration and remembrance – just as communities did 80 years ago.



This year's VE Day anniversary is one to remember! While VE Day falls on 8 May, the celebrations start early – **bank holiday Monday, 5 May**, is all about bringing communities together!

WHETHER IT'S A SMALL GATHERING OR A BIG STREET PARTY, HERE ARE SOME SIMPLE STEPS FOR BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

CHOOSE A SPOT TO CELEBRATE!

Don't forget to check if you need any permissions for where your celebration is taking place and find out if there are restrictions you'll need to think about too.



VE Day celebrations can be held in all kinds of places and spaces! When deciding where to host your get-together think about how many people might come along and the kinds of activities you might do.

A residential road or cul-de-sac is perfect for a traditional street party, while a local park or green space provides plenty of room for larger groups, plus there's likely no need to close roads or move vehicles.

Community centres, village halls, car parks or school playgrounds are also great options. For a smaller gathering keep it simple and consider somewhere such as a garden or driveway.

Wherever you choose, make sure it's accessible and welcoming to everyone. If it's not taking place on your street, can people easily find it and get there, is parking available, will you need to think about access to toilet facilities and how might you plan around the weather?

Big or small, inside or out – choose a celebration spot that works best for your community.



SPREAD THE WORD

Think about whether you're inviting just your street, the wider community or a specific group. This will help determine the best way to let people know about your event.

Pop invitations through letterboxes, knock on doors and chat with people when you're out and about. If people have met a friendly face in advance, they're more likely to feel comfortable about coming on the day. Plus, we bet you'll find a few helping hands along the way!

Sharing the celebration details in a local Facebook or WhatsApp group can help save on printing while reaching even more people. If you're not already a member of Nextdoor, take a minute to sign up and connect with your community that way too.

Inviting the whole town? Put posters in windows and on community notice boards, ask nearby businesses to display one and get in touch with local press to drum up excitement!



Don't forget there are invitations, posters and a social graphic in your pack to help spread the word!



PITCH IN AND PARTY ON

It's easy for everyone to get involved with a community celebration. From food and cutlery, to chairs, bunting and entertainment – everyone has something they can bring to the table. You'll be amazed at how much can be gathered just by asking and it's a great way to get everyone involved right from the start.

Adding decorations, organising a few games or activities and playing music can make your VE Day 80 celebration more memorable too. Think flags, fancy dress, vintage 1940s style, or a simple red, white and blue theme. You could incorporate a wartime-inspired menu, a costume contest or a quiz about VE Day - there are endless ways to combine nostalgia with fun.

Everything you need is likely to be right on your doorstep. A quick shout-out might uncover décor people have tucked away, a local musician who could perform or someone with a collection of vintage memorabilia they'd be happy to display on the day.

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I'm so looking forward to getting my community together for a Big Lunch this VE Day. We're digging the bunting out and planning a street party, with everyone invited to join in and celebrate such an important moment in history!

— Nikki, Welling

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CLOSING A ROAD FOR YOUR VE DAY 80 CELEBRATION

HOW TO KEEP CALM AND CLOSE A ROAD

You can host a VE Day 80 celebration wherever works best for your community —on a quiet road, in a local venue or even on private land as long as you have the necessary permission.

If you're planning a traditional street party and need or would like to close a road, check with your local council and apply as early as possible. Many councils require 6-12 weeks' notice to arrange a temporary road closure.

For smaller street parties on residential roads, many councils only need to know where and when your event is happening. Some may even be able to provide road signs and waive application fees, so ask what's possible!

HOW TO APPLY

The best way to check road closure requirements is to contact your local council:

- **England or Wales** – follow the 'Organising a street party' steps on the gov.uk website
- **Scotland** – contact the Roads and Communities department of your local council
- **Northern Ireland** – visit your local council website and search for 'road closure for special events' guidance. Give yourself plenty of time as the process can take from 21 days up to 16 weeks.

If closing your road isn't an option, consider an alternative location:

- **Private land** – a driveway, garden, school car park or playing field (check with the owner, but no council forms needed!)
- **Indoor venues** – a village hall, community centre or even the local pub may be able to offer their space for free. Just ask—they might love to support a local event.
- **Public outdoor spaces** – a nearby park or community green space can be great outdoor alternatives.

Lots of local Big Lunch events take place without the need to close a road so don't worry if it's not possible – there's always a way to bring your community together!

COMMON MYTHS ABOUT ROAD CLOSURES

✘ IT'S TOO LATE TO APPLY

While councils set deadlines to help manage applications, we recommend contacting yours if you need flexibility – they may be able to help!

✘ IT'S TOO COMPLICATED

Councils are encouraged to take a 'light touch' approach for small scale community street parties, only requiring basic details. If excessive information is requested, you can challenge it.

✘ IT'S TOO EXPENSIVE

Some councils charge a small fee, but they are asked to keep costs low and sometimes waive them altogether.



NUTS AND BOLTS: LICENSING AND INSURANCE

A VE Day 80 celebration that is taking place in a large, outdoor space and is open to the general public will have different considerations to one that is a few people getting together in a private venue.

If you're unsure about any requirements check with your local council as early as possible in case you need to fill out forms, apply for permissions or seek any specialist guidance or advice.

Whilst everyone plays a part in their own safety at your event, it's important to help minimise potential risks by planning ahead and thinking about them from the get go.

KEY THINGS YOU MIGHT NEED TO CONSIDER:

- ➔ **Keeping structures safe** – ensure marquees, gazebos and decorations are safe and secure.
- ➔ **Supervising equipment** – monitor anything such as BBQs, bouncy castles and play equipment for safety.
- ➔ **Managing noise levels** – be mindful of neighbours and any local noise restrictions.

MYTH: YOU NEED LOTS OF LICENCES (FOR MUSIC, FOOD, DRINK AND FUNDRAISING)

- ➔ **Food safety** – according to the Food Standards Agency (FSA), one-off events like street parties aren't considered food businesses, so no licences or forms are required. Visit the FSA website for more information and guidance.
- ➔ **Music** – the Licensing Act 2003 states a music licence is not required for a street party or community event unless amplified music is a main attraction and it's been promoted as such.
- ➔ **Alcohol sales** – if you plan to sell alcohol, you may need a Temporary Events Notice (TEN). Check with your local council and licensing authority via the gov.uk postcode checker.
- ➔ **Fundraising** – most one-off event raffles, sweepstakes and tombolas don't need a licence as they are classed as 'incidental lotteries' and gambling regulations don't apply if the tickets are sold on the day and the prizes are worth less than £500 in total. Visit the Gambling Commission's website for full guidance and read the legal know-how.





MYTH: YOU NEED EXPENSIVE INSURANCE

There is no central government requirement for public liability insurance, but some local councils have their own policies so always check with them.


If you feel insurance is a good idea, shop around and have a look at the advice on the Street Party website and The Big Lunch website. Costs vary depending on the level of cover required and number of attendees, but you could split the cost among participants or ask for donations to help.

Even if insurance isn't required having cover can give peace of mind. While issues are unlikely, knowing you're covered allows everyone to relax and enjoy the event.

TYPES OF INSURANCE TO CONSIDER

✓ TIP:

If unsure, doing a simple risk assessment can help you decide whether insurance is necessary.

- ➔ **Public liability insurance**
Covers accidental injury to third parties (attendees, volunteers, or passersby) and damage to property during the event. Costs vary depending on the activity covered, event size and other factors.
 - ➔ **Employers' liability insurance**
Only required if your community group has legal status (e.g., a charity, CIC, or limited company) and employs paid staff (not just volunteers).
 - Hired in equipment insurance**
Some hire companies require proof of insurance before renting out chairs, gazebos, sound systems, or other event equipment. Check whether the hire company provides cover or if you'll need to arrange it separately.
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FOOD: SERVING UP SAFELY

Whether you're keeping it simple with sandwiches and snacks or planning a varied menu of global flavours, inviting people to bring food to share is a great way to get everyone involved.

If everybody is chipping in it's unlikely you'll have control over what's brought, however bearing a few things in mind will allow everyone to enjoy the celebration safely and ensure food is handled carefully.

HANDY TIPS TO HELP;

- ➔ **Label ingredients** – this is important to help guests with allergies or dietary restrictions. Have pens and paper to hand or encourage people to bring their recipes along – it's a great way to share ideas and inspire others!
- ➔ **Keep food fresh** – cover when needed, store perishable items in a fridge until the last minute and leave them out for as short a time as possible. If it's a particularly hot day make sure there's shade and a way to keep food cool.
- ➔ **Cook food thoroughly** – if you're preparing and cooking food at your event (e.g. a BBQ), check food temperatures and make sure it's cooked properly before serving. Take your time – don't rush, even if people are waiting.
- ➔ **Ensure things are clean** – keep utensils, bowls, surfaces and any other equipment clean at all times.

DO YOU NEED A LICENCE TO SERVE FOOD?

According to the Food Standards Agency (FSA), one-off events like street parties aren't usually considered food businesses, so no forms or licences are required.

For more guidance on food safety at street parties, visit the FSA website: food.gov.uk





EXTRA INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

For more ideas, practical tips and activities to help bring people together for your VE Day celebration, we've gathered a selection of useful places to visit to make planning even easier.

➔ Click the links if you're following digitally, scan the QR codes or search online if it's a printed guide.

CELEBRATING VE DAY'S 80TH ANNIVERSARY



Marking this significant anniversary, VE Day 80 events and activity will be taking place across the country. Find out how you can get involved and pay tribute. [Get involved – ve-vjday80.gov.uk](https://ve-vjday80.gov.uk)

CELEBRATION ESSENTIALS



The Big Lunch
TheBigLunch.com

LOCAL AUTHORITY REQUIREMENTS AND PROCESSES



Organise a street party
gov.uk



Temporary Events Notice (England and Wales)
gov.uk



Providing food at community and charity events
food.gov.uk



Apply to hold a street party
gov.uk



Fundraising and lotteries at events
gamblingcommission.gov.uk

Whether you're hosting a street party, organising a small gathering or simply taking a moment to reflect, every VE Day 80 celebration event plays a part in keeping the spirit of remembrance alive.

However you choose to take part, thank you for being part of this special commemoration.

Celebrating VE Day's 80th anniversary.
ve-vjday80.gov.uk

