How to run a Progressive Dinner

A progressive dinner is a fun way to meet a number of your neighbours in a group and get to know people better. Sharing the food preparation and hosting responsibilities also makes it more enjoyable! There are many variations on these planning ideas. Use this information as a starting point and do what works for you and your group.

The elements:

- A suitable date when the most people can come along. Choose a few dates and consider using Doodle Poll to survey your neighbours for the best date. Go with the date that suits the most people.
- The people: Invite a diverse mix of your neighbours to ensure that people get to know others they would not usually have dinner with. You might do an initial letter drop to ask for interested people to get in touch and share email addresses so you can estimate numbers before the planning begins.
- The food: Ask each person to bring a contribution to either starters, main or dessert.
- The host venues: Ask participants to volunteer themselves to be a host for one of the courses. The role of host the is to coordinate the meal contributions, provide the venue , glasses and plates. They may also provide a meal contribution and perhaps develop a theme for the course.

How it works:

1. Basically a progressive dinner is a moveable feast where people that live in the same neighbourhood either walk, cycle or drive (not ideal) between three homes (or more if your wish), enjoying a different course at each venue.
2. Choose a date and time that works for the hosts and most of the neighbours using Doodle poll as outlined above. Plan for approximately an hour at each of the three spots, so about three hours from start to finish. Also add about 10 minutes to walk or cycle between venues.
3. Once you have sent an initial invitation and have a list of who wants to participate and the hosts, you can decide on what course will be served where. Have one house serve appetizers/nibbles, the second house serve a main course, and the final house serve desserts.
4. You could assign a course to each person and ask them to bring a contribution to a specific course or ask them what they can contribute. The only danger doing it the latter way is that you may get 5 people who want to bring dessert but no one making a main meal! Many people are happy to be directed about what to bring to make planning easier.

5. Use the attached *Progressive Dinner Planning Template* on the page below to assign people to various food contributions.
6. To make it easier, ask participants to bring their own drinks along with them. Hosts should provide drinking glasses.
7. Depending on the number of people, you may decide to have the whole group move between the three houses or if the group is a large one, consider a joint starter and dessert course with a break out into smaller groups for main meal.
8. If you decide to break out into more venues for main meal, divide up people into groups. Set your groups up so that people are progressing to houses that are close together (easy walking distance).
9. Put participants in touch with hosts who could assist with ideas for what to bring.
10. Have everyone meet up at the appetizer/nibbles house (first stop), mingle and enjoy the various plates of food..
11. At about 10 or 15 minutes before the next course, the main course and dessert hosts leave the preceding house to theirs so they can take out or heat up dishes to be prepared for the wave of people walking to their house next.
12. Enjoy the walk between homes and being part of your neighbourhood.

For some more inspiration : http://recipes.howstuffworks.com/menus/how-to-throw-a-progressive-dinner-party.htm

Street by Street Progressive Dinner in action.

Hilton Progressive Dinner - February 2016

There were twenty adults, 14 kids, three courses and five homes. All the group were together for appetisers, they broke out to three different groups of 10-12 people for main meal and all came back together for dessert. The event started at 5.00 pm, and finished by 8.30 pm on a balmy Perth summer evening!