

Suggested Guidelines for Diversity Dinners
With Americans of Varied Heritages
Themes: Current Local & Global Social Issues
v5 10/99

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About our Conversations and Discussions. Let's all keep alert to what we are experiencing in our own lives and what we get from the press and media that we would like to bring up in the group. Let's encourage everyone who wants to speak and avoid having one or two people dominate. Hosts and others are encouraged to introduce a particular diversity topic of interest to themselves and to ask others to bring up social issues of concern to them. Share the kitchen work fairly and wait until all people are in the room to bring up big issues. Sometimes the discussion may be quite structured for part of the evening and a host or a designee may start and facilitate it. For much of the time the conversation will flow informally. We do not need to limit ourselves to a narrow set of topics. All of us are urged to bring up diversity and other topics that are of intense personal interest. Whenever such topics are introduced, take them seriously, listen carefully, ponder them, share your views, stick with the topic and explore all angles. Come back to topics explored earlier as you get more information and develop other perspectives. Usually only one conversation goes on at a time so that all can listen and participate and have the same shared exchanges and group experience.

Let's welcome and encourage curiosity in each other and be willing to share information and views about our backgrounds and cultures, including about our ancestral and current religions, beliefs, practices and patterns. Some inquiries may seem naive, strange or prejudiced. When so, let's be willing to both answer the question and also explain our reaction to it and why. Sometimes ignorance leads to not even knowing what questions to ask so do take the initiative to fill in the group on what you'd like people to know. If you wish, propose what to discuss another time!

About Logistics. Plan to attend every party! Pleasewrite down / phone in corrections and details to your roster information. You might want to make notes on the back of your roster to remind you who is who. Would you send a paragraph/page about yourself to share? To each of our dinners, always bring your social calendar and a DD Folder -- with your Diversity Dinner papers and particularly your Roster and Planner so that futureparties can be scheduled for nights convenient for you and all. Also bring any notes and clippings you have gathered to share with the group. To a party before you host, bring copies of written directions to your house; otherwise mail or give them by phone. Remember, people need to find you in the dark. Especially when the host home is outside of Naperville, others are encouraged to carpool.

At the current dinner party, the group must decide on the day, date, start time and host home for the next party (or two) spaced at four- to six-week intervals. Check your own calendar carefully when scheduling and mark it. The hosts or others are encouraged to initiate scheduling for the next dinner well before the end of the current party. Hosts should check by phone with anyone who will be absent from their party, speaking with them ahead to get possible and impossible dates for the next party. The hosts telephone everyone about three weeks before and again about three days in advance of their party to remind them to bring, food, calendar and DD folder.

If an unavoidable conflict arises for you after a party has been scheduled, call the hosts and ask their permission for you to call around to each of the others with possible alternate dates for the party. The entire responsibility for rescheduling will rest with you. Within a few days get back to the host to agree on exactly what date will be used and then call all participants to have them erase non-dates and to save the chosen date. Rescheduling is work. Choose dates carefully and commit to them -- even if other things come up. Our Diversity Dinners deserve to have priority! If you become ill or have a last-minute emergency, phone your hosts and explain if 1 or 2 must be absent -- giving for the upcoming party or two all Saturdays possible and impossible for you and several Fridays (7pm) &/or Sundays(5-6pm). Let the host know if and how you can be reached by phone while the party is going on and the next one is being scheduled.

About Hosting. Hosts make sure each of us knows what to bring. Keep menu items simple and not expensive. Try to balance out the cost and the work fairly especially among singles and pairs. Men as well as women are expected to plan and work. The hosts do set up and clean up by themselves before and after the party. Others bring food ready to serve attractively in your own dish which could be warmed by you in the host's microwave or oven. Each person readies, serves and clears his/her/their part(s) and supplies any condiments and utensils needed as discussed in advance with the host. Save together any food wrappers, trays and so forth that you bring putting your things together under the kitchen table or otherwise out of the way in order to leave counter and tabletop space available for preparation, serving and clearing. Take home in the same covering and carrying containers anything left. Do not throw away any food; if you will not use it, give it to others or to the host by setting leftovers in the refrigerator in whatever container you can find from the cupboard. After your course is over and others are up, get your things ready to take home and set them out of the way so you can just pick them up and leave easily.

The group is encouraged to linger and talk together as long as possible after dinner -- either around the table or elsewhere. If one or more people must leave earlier than others, they should simply be sure the next party is scheduled, tell the hosts and others not to get up or stop, say goodbye quickly, quietly gather their things from the kitchen and depart without assistance, seeing themselves to the door to avoid disrupting or breaking up the party. If at some point hosts need to have remaining guests leave, they will simply explain and help guests with their coats.

About Our Evolving Experience Together. As we go along, we will be able to shape what we do to meet the needs and interests of each and all of us. When you have wishes, needs, concerns, questions, ideas, please bring them up to me and to the whole group so we can be responsive. This will help us make Diversity Dinners thoroughly enjoyable and enriching.

'Glad you are interested in Diversity Dinners! *Stephanie*