

Your guide to department potlucks at MacEwan

What is a potluck?

A gathering of people for a communal meal where each person attending contributes a dish of food they've prepared at home to be shared with those attending the potluck.

Even though the university has a food service agreement, can we still have potlucks on campus?

Yes! Potlucks are a great way to get together as a group socially. Take care to be aware of those in your group who may have allergies or food intolerances or follow a specific diet like vegetarian, vegan, gluten free, pork free...etc.

Is there a limit to the size of group who can do a potluck?

No, but typically potlucks are held by departments, faculties or work areas, which can range from 5 to 20 people.

Where can potlucks be held?

All potlucks should be held in your work area or in a common space, enclosed area within your department.

Potlucks cannot be held in the university's special function areas such as cafeterias, Multipurpose Room, Paul Byrne Hall, Atrium, Heart, Nook, Galleria, CN Conference Theatre, Kule Lecture Theatre, Feigel Conference Centre or Allard Hall Atrium, as those are for events using MacEwan University catering services.

What about bringing in food that I've ordered from a restaurant or my cousin's catering company?

This type of food service does not qualify as a potluck since it is not the intent of a potluck and violates the university's food service agreement with our exclusive food service provider.

What about serving alcohol or if someone wants to donate a bottle of wine?

Alcohol is not permitted to be served, offered or consumed at potlucks. This contravenes both MacEwan University's Liquor Sale and Service Policy and Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) Regulations. According to AGLC regulations and university policy, all alcohol must be purchased by our approved caterer under our license #'s, served by a certified and trained server to ensure safe service and all AGLC regulations are met. If this license is contravened, the university risks a large fine and possible loss of our liquor licenses.

Steps to a Safe and Successful Potluck:

The primary concern at any potluck is to ensure safe food handling, preparation, and cooking practices are followed to avoid anyone from getting sick from foodborne illnesses (food poisoning).

1. Appoint a Food Coordinator

Have someone in charge of keeping track of items for your potluck, so they know who brought what dish and what the ingredients are just in case there's an allergy, reaction to or illness following the potluck.

Here is a guideline of common ingredients or their derivatives that cause adverse food reactions: peanuts, treenuts, sesame seeds, milk, eggs, fish-fin, crustaceans (crab, lobster, shrimp, crayfish and shellfish), clams, mussels, oysters, scallops, cinnamon, soy, wheat and sulphites.

2. Keep hot food HOT and cold food COLD

Hot Food: Heat to greater than 140°F/60°C for serving and do not keep the food at room temperature for more than two hours.

Cold Food: Keep cold food items at a temperature of less than 40°F/4°C and do not keep the food at room temperature for more than two hours.

REMEMBER: Food that has been at room temperature for two hours or more (including travel time) is unsafe to eat and cannot be "made safe" by reheating in a microwave, oven, by boiling or putting back in the fridge.

3. Keep your area clean

When preparing, cooking and serving your contribution to the potluck, remember to wash your hands. Make sure all surfaces and items being used for preparation or serving cleaning have been thoroughly cleaned and sanitized during preparation, service and during clean-up.

4. Enjoy your potluck

Just think of all the delicious food you'll try and amazing recipes you'll take home with you afterwards!