



Casserole Challenge

BAKING PARTY HOSTING GUIDE

Thank you for hosting a casserole baking party as part of our annual Casserole Challenge! We created this guide to provide you with helpful tips and tricks to ensure you have everything you need to host a successful gathering and that all your guests have everything they need to have the best experience.

BEFORE THE PARTY:

The experience starts as soon as you invite someone to your baking party. When creating your invite list, think about the goals for the gathering. Ask yourself these questions:

- Is one of the goals to create community?
- Are you inviting new people for the group to meet?
- Is this a closed invitation, or can someone bring a friend? Having the option minimizes people coming alone, which can be a barrier to attendance and engagement.
- Do you send the invite in an e-mail, a WhatsApp chat, a Paperless Post, or a personal call? You know how your group likes to communicate, so make sure to be consistent.
- How will you communicate important details leading up to the event? Sending important details out before the experiences is a great idea. Include information like the address, parking situation, and how to access your home.
- Are you serving food? Ask about allergies and other dietary requirements.

Taking these things into consideration early can make or break an experience for someone and can be a great planning tool as well.

DURING THE PARTY:

During the baking party, be sure to include these points in your introduction so everyone knows who you are and understands the meaningful purpose behind making casseroles.

Introduce Yourself:

Even if you know all the people joining you, it's still a good idea to introduce yourself to the group. Share your name and any other relevant information! We hope people will get to know each other while volunteering.

Introduce Our Agency Using This Information:

This is a gathering of the Macks Jewish Connection Network, an agency of the Associated. At The Network, we empower people to explore and deepen their own Jewish journeys—inspiring them to form lasting connections to a diverse, inclusive and vibrant Baltimore Jewish community. We do this by listening, connecting individuals and families, creating Jewish experiences like this one, and providing accessible Jewish resources.

Provide an Overview of Casserole Challenge:

Casserole Challenge has been an annual initiative of ours that has brought hundreds of volunteers together in service. Each Thanksgiving, hundreds of people come together to bake a casserole (or, three) for our annual Casserole Challenge. This initiative is all about lending a hand to feed thousands of children and adults in Baltimore facing food insecurity. Your effort can make a world of difference!

Engage in Meaningful Discussion:

Utilize the accompanying learning resource sheet to guide your party guests in discussion. Be sure to highlight the statistics regarding hunger in Baltimore City and the Jewish value.

Make Sure Your Kitchen is Set Up and Ready:

Having a clean, organized kitchen is super important. Here's some tried-and-true kitchen tricks to make your casserole party a breeze.

- **Mis en place:** A French word, meaning 'putting in place,' is the practice of having all your ingredients chopped, measured, poured, etc. before you start the actual cooking process.
- **Preheat your oven:** Set your oven to the desired temperature in advance. This way you can ensure that your oven is hot and ready to go when you are.
- **Organize your freezer:** Before guests arrive, make sure you have enough space to store all your casseroles until collection day on December 2.

AFTER THE PARTY:

Just because the casserole baking is over, it doesn't mean you can't stay in touch with your party guests! We are passionate about building community and forming connections and need your help in doing so. Here are some reminders of things to do after the party is over.

Send out a Thank You Message:

Whether through text, email, or a phone call, make sure to thank your guests for joining you in baking casseroles. In this message, include pictures from the event, the casserole recipe you made and your gratitude for being part of Casserole Challenge 2024 together.

Share Upcoming Events/Programs:

We don't want this party to be the first and last time someone participates in an experience with you. Be sure to share some activities coming up in your neighborhood, for your target audience, or in the Baltimore Jewish community.

Here are some upcoming agency experiences worth sharing:

- **Mitzvah Month:** Join us this December for Mitzvah Month, a month-long celebration of service and volunteering. There are many ways to be involved in this season of service; registration launches on Monday, November 18 so keep an eye out for more information.
- **Bunches of Lunches:** Our Bunches of Lunches program is all about lending a helping hand to combat hunger in our community. Each week we donate bagged meals to those in our community that could use the extra support. Join us in making a difference – one lunch at a time! Check out more information at: thejewishnetwork.org/volunteering/community/bunches-of-lunches/

QUESTIONS:

Thank you so much for hosting a Casserole Challenge Baking Party! We truly hope your party was a success.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns, please contact Alli at abberger@thejewishnetwork.org.

We'd love to share pictures from your event on our social media channels. Tag [@thejewishnetwork](https://www.instagram.com/thejewishnetwork) in photos you post, or email photos to Alli so we can share and spread the joy!



Louise D. and Morton J. Macks
**Jewish Connection
Network**
An agency of The Associated



The Associated
Jewish Federation of Baltimore