



# HOST TOOL KIT

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Resources are available for download at [www.canopynwa.org/feasts](http://www.canopynwa.org/feasts)

For additional information, please email  
[communications@canopynwa.org](mailto:communications@canopynwa.org)

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# INTRODUCTION

*Feasts with Friends is a unique dinner initiative designed to help breakdown barriers between refugees and non-refugees. Whether you're an organization, business, individual, or a group of friends, anyone can host a dinner, requiring only an open heart and a spacious table.*

*The goal is to mobilize communities to actively engage in welcoming and supporting refugees through dialogue, empathy, and action. All proceeds raised from these dinners are donated to Canopy Northwest Arkansas.*

## **Building Bridges Through Cuisine**

At Canopy NWA, we believe in the power of breaking bread together to bridge cultural gaps. Through food and conversation, guests will discover the narratives, traditions, and cultural legacies that refugees contribute to make our region the vibrant and diverse community it is today.

## **Explore, Connect, and Share**

Choose a country from the list of Canopy's clients' origins, and embark on a culinary journey. We provide you with information to research the chosen country and a sample menu. You can host a potluck or invite friends to help prepare the meal with you. Then, settle in for an evening of food, culture, and meaningful conversation.

## **A Recipe for Success**

To make your *Feasts with Friends* experience even more enjoyable, Canopy provides conversation cards, suggested music playlists from the country of origin, sample menus, and digital invitation templates.

Additionally, we provide downloadable information about Canopy's efforts in refugee resettlement in Northwest Arkansas and ways to get involved for your guests to take home.

## **Supporting Canopy**

*Feasts with Friends* doubles as a fundraiser for Canopy. To contribute to our mission, we recommend charging a minimum of \$45-60 per person as a donation to the organization. Your generous tax-deductible contribution will enable Canopy to continue its vital work in refugee resettlement, making a lasting impact on the lives of those seeking safety and a new home.

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## ABOUT CANOPY NWA

Canopy NWA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that was established in 2016 by Northwest Arkansas residents who sought to create a place of refuge for people fleeing persecution due to race, membership in a particular social group, political opinion, religion, or national origin.

Canopy's mission is to create a community where refugees are welcomed and equipped with all they need to build new lives. Since its inception, Canopy has welcomed over 500 refugees to Northwest Arkansas and strives to involve the local community in assisting these newcomers in rebuilding their lives.

Integral to achieving Canopy's vision of Northwest Arkansas as a welcoming haven for refugees is the emphasis on cultural orientation and integration. The organization envisions creating a network of compassion, support, and empowerment in the region. Initiatives like *Feasts with Friends* play a role in achieving this objective by nurturing community bonds and promoting an understanding and appreciation for diversity.

### ***Feasts with Friends* aims to:**

- Facilitate a rich cultural exchange by providing diners with the opportunity to share and learn about different cuisines, traditions, and customs.
- Establish a supportive network through communal dining, allowing refugees to build relationships, share experiences, and cultivate a sense of belonging.
- Promote integration by breaking down cultural barriers, fostering a sense of belonging, and enhancing connections for refugees within their new community.
- Strengthen community bonds by bringing together individuals from diverse backgrounds and encouraging understanding and friendship.

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## GUIDELINES FOR GROUP CONVERSATIONS

To cultivate open and authentic discussions where participants feel secure sharing their experiences and perspectives while remaining open to learning, adherence to the following guidelines is essential:

- Practice silent listening with the intent to understand, refraining from providing advice or attempting to solve others' challenges.
- Our purpose is not to convert one another; rather, we come together to listen, learn, and celebrate the uniqueness of our identities.
- When sharing, use "I" and "me" instead of "you" and "we" to convey personal perspectives.
- While everyone is welcome to share, there is no obligation for everyone to do so. Be mindful of your sharing to ensure that those who wish to contribute have the opportunity.
- Prioritize listening over being heard, acknowledging that we are all at different points in our journeys.
- Avoid tone policing or shaming individuals for language use. Focus on the heart and spirit of the communication.
- Speak your truth, recognizing that others are entitled to do the same. Embrace differences, practice active listening, build relationships, and learn from each other.
- Engage in respectful debates of ideas, refraining from yelling, shaming, name-calling, or personal attacks.
- Welcome negative emotions such as sadness, anger, frustration, despair, and resentment. Expressing emotions is encouraged, and our response is to embrace, not reject.
- Maintain confidentiality; everything shared within the conversations is treated as private.
- Relax and enjoy the experience!

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# HOSTING AN EVENT

## Determine your Date and Location

Create a pleasant and enjoyable atmosphere for your dinner party, ensuring that your guests have a great time. Choose a date when most of your intended guests are likely to be available. Check for any conflicting events or holidays. Choose a venue that aligns with the formality of your event. It could be your home, a friend's house, a restaurant, or a rented event space.

## Invite Your Guests

Tailor your guest list to include individuals whose values and priorities align with Canopy's mission.

## Create an Itinerary

*Sample*

6:00 pm Guests arrive and mingle, cocktails and appetizers served.

6:30 pm Dinner is served

6:45 pm Overview of Canopy NWA, Feasts with Friends, featured country

7:00 pm Introduce Conversation Cards

7:45 pm Dessert and Mingling

8:00 pm Thank you and Goodbyes

## Get Support

Assemble a team of supportive and passionate individuals, like friends and family, to enhance the experience for everyone, including yourself.

## Recommended Roles

**Host** - Responsible for facilitating the flow of the dinner from choosing the date, location and time to inviting guests.

**Set-Up Crew** - Responsible for setting up the space for dinner and conversation including arranging furniture, printing materials, decor and dinner/dessert supplies.

**Food Coordinator/Chef(s)** - Responsible for creating menu. Canopy recommends preparing meals with a new neighbor or supporting a refugee owned business when possible.

**Photographer** - Responsible for distributing and collecting signed release forms. (see Additional Documents) and capturing event photos and videos for Instagram. Be sure to tag @canopynwa and use #FeastwithFriends

**Clean-up Crew** - Responsible for clearing place settings throughout the event and helping clean up after the event has concluded.

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# SAMPLE INVITATION (EMAIL)

**Subject:** Let's Break Bread, Together!

Dear [NAME],

I hope this finds you well. I'm excited to invite you to a dinner event I'm hosting in support of Canopy Northwest Arkansas called, "Feasts with Friends." It would mean a lot if you could make it!

Event Details:

- What: Dinner, conversation, and connection
- When: [DATE AND TIME]
- Where: [LOCATION]

"Feasts with Friends" is a platform to explore the cuisine and culture of local refugees. The initiative encourages connections that foster a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, emphasizing a sense of belonging for everyone involved. You will also learn about refugee resettlement in Northwest Arkansas and the work that Canopy NWA is doing in our community.

I am asking for a donation of \$45 (\$60) for couples to attend the dinner. These funds will go directly to Canopy NWA. There is no "ask" at the event, just fellowship and a chance to learn more.

Please RSVP by replying to this email or calling [PHONE NUMBER]. I'd love to see you there!

Best,  
[Your Name]

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## SAMPLE THANK LETTER (EMAIL)

**Subject:** Thank you for joining Feasts with Friends – Resources Inside

Dear [NAME],

Thanks for making "Feasts with Friends" an unforgettable experience! Your presence meant a lot, and your commitment to creating a welcoming world for refugees is truly appreciated.

Here are some resources:

1. Stay updated with Canopy NWA by subscribing to their monthly newsletter.  
[Sign Up]
2. Explore volunteer opportunities with Canopy NWA. [Explore]
3. Consider creating a Co-Sponsor Team to welcome new neighbors to our region.  
[Learn More]

Your experience may inspire others. If you're comfortable, please share your event moments with Canopy NWA by emailing [communications@canopynwa.org](mailto:communications@canopynwa.org). Please be sure to complete the release form [Link to Release Form].

Once again, thank you for your support and participation in the Feasts with Friends experience

Warm regards,  
[YOUR NAME]  
[YOUR PHONE NUMBER]



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# CONVERSATION CARDS

## Instructions

Using the prompts on the Insightful Conversations cards, discuss the questions as a group. Each person will place one card at a time in the middle of the table and share their thoughts based on the card's prompt. Let the conversation flow as naturally as possible, and use the Conversation cards to bring new ideas or perspectives into the group discussion. Once all of the questions have been answered, move on to the next person's card.

Each card has a question from one of the following categories:



**Collective Interests** questions serve as a catalyst to ignite engaging conversations. By exploring shared passions, these inquiries break the ice and create an instant connection.



**Heritage and Culture** questions delve into the rich tapestry of an individual's lived experiences, painting a vivid picture of their background and identity.



**Community Engagement** questions, on the other hand, act as a powerful gauge of one's influence and contributions within their community.

These questions are designed to unlock meaningful insights and fostering a deeper understanding of the multifaceted aspects that shape a person.

## Sample Questions



What's a small daily habit that brings you happiness or a sense of accomplishment?



What is a typical family meal or dish from your cultural background that you love?



How do you support local businesses or organizations in your community?

### Insightful Conversations

Share a goal or aspiration you have for the next few years and the steps you're taking to achieve it.



Have you ever faced challenges or stereotypes related to your heritage, and how did you handle them?



What initiatives or programs do you think would most benefit your community, and how can you contribute to their implementation?



### Insightful Conversations

What's a place you've never been to but would love to visit, and what attracts you to it?



How do you navigate and balance multiple cultural identities if you have a multicultural background?



What strategies do you use to empower and amplify the voices of marginalized groups within your community?



### Insightful Conversations

Can you share a memorable moment from a recent trip or vacation you took?



Are there any particular family customs or traditions that hold special significance for you?



What are some ways you've found to bridge gaps or build connections between different groups within your community?



### Insightful Conversations

What is your favorite meal that your family makes together?



How do you celebrate or acknowledge your heritage in your day-to-day life?



How do you stay informed about the needs and concerns of your community members?



### Insightful Conversations

What's a piece of advice or wisdom that has stuck with you over the years?



How has your cultural identity influenced your career choices, hobbies, or artistic expressions?



How do you encourage civic engagement and participation among your peers or neighbors?



### Insightful Conversations

If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and why?



Can you describe a cultural dish or cuisine that you particularly enjoy and its significance in your heritage?



Are there any volunteering experiences that had a significant impact on your understanding of community needs?



### Insightful Conversations

What is something new that you learned this year?



Can you share a story or anecdote that highlights a unique aspect of your cultural background?



Are there specific causes or issues in your community that you are passionate about addressing?



### Insightful Conversations

Share a childhood memory that never fails to make you smile.



How do you engage with and contribute to the cultural diversity within your local community?



How do you balance your personal and professional commitments with your community involvement?



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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### How many guests should I invite?

Depending on the size of your venue, 5 – 15 guests is ideal. This helps to ensure meaningful conversations where everyone has an opportunity to engage.

### Who should I invite?

Feasts with Friends is a fundraising campaign for Canopy NWA so consider inviting individuals who:

- Have expressed interest in helping refugees
- Are involved in other volunteer or civic service activities
- Are members of faith, civic, or community organizations
- Are leaders in the community

### Will someone from Canopy attend my dinner?

You may request a representative from Canopy NWA to attend your dinner. \*Dinners must be within a 25 mile radius of Canopy's headquarters in Fayetteville.\*

### How do I create my dinner menu?

Canopy has provided a list of countries of origin for NWA's new neighbors. Simply select the country and download the .pdf for information about the country, recipes, and a Spotify playlist.

### Am I expected to cook all of this food by myself?

That is up to you. The beauty in Feasts with Friends is the flexibility. You choose the country of origin. You determine how the meal will be prepared, whether homecooked, potluck style, or even catered. In the spirit of community, Canopy does recommend connecting with someone from the country of origin to prepare the meal with.

### How much should I charge guests to attend?

Canopy NWA recommends a minimum donation of \$45 per guest. Use your discretion to determine what amount would make your guests most comfortable.

### How do I send payment to Canopy NWA?

Payments can be made online by visiting [CanopyNWA.org/donate](https://CanopyNWA.org/donate) and selecting Feasts with Friends in the drop-down menu. If guests are making payments directly to Canopy, remind them to put the dinner host's name in the memo.

For check payments, please mail to:

Canopy NWA  
attn: Development  
1142 N. Futrall Drive  
Fayetteville, AR 72703

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## HOST CHECKLIST

- Determine the country of origin for your Feast.
- Recruit a team to help with logistics.
- Create a guest list with consideration for the capacity of your space.
- Determine donation cost of dinner and how funds will be collected. Include this information in your invitation.
- Send out invitations well in advance, specifying date, time, location, and any dress code.
- Select a diverse and well-balanced menu based on the country of origin you have chosen.
- Be sure to consider dietary preferences and restrictions.
- Prepare a shopping list based on your menu.
- Purchase ingredients and any necessary party supplies.
- Plan a cooking schedule leading up to the event, considering preparation and cooking times for each dish.
- Download conversation cards and Canopy NWA handouts
- Set the ambiance with appropriate decor, music, and other details.
- Arrange seating to encourage conversation and interaction among guests.
- Set the table with appropriate dinnerware, flatware, and glassware. Consider adding decorative elements such as flowers or candles.
- Ensure that the meal is timed well to avoid delays.
- Stay flexible and be prepared to adapt to unexpected situations.
- Remember to enjoy the party and engage with your guests.
- Have a plan for cleaning up during and after the party.
- Thank your guests for attending before they leave.
- Send follow-up messages or thank-you notes after the event.