

BLOCK PARTY USA GUIDE



How to Organize a Block Party (It's easier than you think!)



KEEP IT SIMPLE

No expensive venue. No decorations or favors. No elaborate menu. Nothing staged for social media consumption. Block parties are about putting away phones, meeting and enjoying neighbors, and fostering more free play for children.

DON'T GO IT ALONE

Reach out to a few neighbors and join forces to make planning easier.

SELECT A DATE

In my town, we designate two weekends bookending the summer as block party weekends, one in June and the other in September. If one of those weekends won't work for you or your neighbors, don't worry, as any date will do.

GO BIG OR GO SMALL

Invite the block, but if all neighbors can't make it, that's okay. Any block party, no matter how small, is better than no block party at all!

LOCATION

Some favorite block party spaces are adjoining yards, a common area, the end of a driveway, or a road. The more informal the gathering space, the less intimidating the event and the more people will come.

PERMIT

If you want to close the street, check in with your municipality to understand local ordinances. You may be required to secure a permit. Some municipalities have free block party supplies or offer town employees to stop by (fire trucks for kids to explore!).

NAME TAGS AND SIGN-IN SHEET

Wear a name tag to make connecting easier. Perhaps include a fun fact, such as how long you've lived there. Put out markers of different colors (even stickers). A sign-in sheet allows neighbors to share addresses, contact info, and if a child is available to babysit, pet sit, rake leaves, shovel snow, etc. Be sure folks know this info will be distributed to the group.

INVITE

Invite neighbors the old-fashioned way and drop off flyers to each home. Flyers created by children will help set the tone that the block party is a simple event where everyone is welcome. The flyer should include the date, time, location, your contact info, and a food plan.

MIXED AGES

You may be tempted to leave your teen or young adult at home. Instead, ask them to help carry out the cooler and encourage them to stay awhile. Block parties offer social connectedness – we could all use a heaping dose of that these days – especially because it's proven to help with stress, anxiety, and depression.

FOOD

Maybe take the potluck approach and encourage your neighbors to bring a favorite dish from their family table, past or present. Other options include rolling out grills for a barbeque and bringing sides, throwing an ice cream social, or just filling up coolers with drinks and gathering curbside to watch the sunset. Whatever works.

BUBBLES, CHALK, AND A KICKBALL

Other outdoor game ideas are cornhole, egg toss, hula hoops, Jenga Giant, jump ropes, and sack races. Raid your recycling bin and craft drawer for empty boxes of all sizes, cardboard rolls, string, pine cones, shells, and fabric remnants. Free play has all sorts of physical and mental health benefits, and it's just plain fun.

*Join the movement.
Be a well-being catalyst!*

"Block Party USA is a cure for our country's loneliness, social isolation, divisiveness, and the youth mental health crisis."

- VANESSA ELIAS, BLOCK PARTY USA FOUNDER

