

# **Lunch with Interesting Persons: A Virtual Pizza Lunch with Interesting Persons**

**By**

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## **Introduction**

Food plays an important role in all our lives. Having a healthy lifestyle requires preparing nutritious food that takes considerable time and effort. For a lot of underprivileged families, cooking and consuming healthy food is a challenge with the financial condition of the household imposing both the husband and wife to work full-time with not enough time to cook healthy food. Therefore, the importance of healthy and nutritious food cannot be overstated. The idea of sharing meals with someone is a common theme around the world and is practiced by different cultures to commemorate important events, family gatherings etc. Also referred to as social eating, communal eating is an age-old tradition with different cultures organizing community events centered around making food for large groups of people and dining together. In many Indian festivals, the event is not considered complete unless food is served to all the guests. Dining as a social event used to create and nurture relationships has been an integral theme of human civilization from times immemorial. A study published in 2017 reported that communal eating provides social and personal benefits [Dunbar: 2017]. The study showed that people that eat socially more often feel happier and have a larger group of friends that they can rely on. People who ate together felt at ease with each other and developed a strong bonding. The potential benefits of communal eating have been identified as building strong inter-community relationships, strengthening existing friendship. Having discussed the importance of community eating, let's see how we can use that to improve the morale of the incoming Ph.D. students.

## **Statement of Problem**

Ph.D. programs attract students from all over the world. The students often leave the comfort of their homes to travel overseas in pursuit of knowledge and their desire to contribute to the state of the art in their chosen field. For many students that spent their entire lives in their home country, it might be a little challenging to get accustomed to the new place, the local culture and its lifestyle.

The goal of the ‘Lunch with Interesting Persons’ is to provide an opportunity for the young scholars to socialize with their peers with whom they are going to team up for class assignments, projects and research work in an informal and relaxed setting. The session will act as an icebreaker for the students in the Ph.D. program and provide a conducive environment to socialize and ask any questions to faculty and other students.

## **Methodology**

Our team is proposing a virtual Pizza lunch with interesting persons. There are several pizza restaurants or joints in Boise but after a market survey, we found out that the Mexican pizza is one of the best pizzas that we can get in Boise area. It comes in different sizes and flavors. We have also studied its ingredients and nutritional facts and it maintains a well-balanced diet as seen in Appendix A.

## **Organizing a Virtual Pizza Lunch**

Questionnaires will be prepared to gauge the culinary and dietary preferences of the participants. Based on the listed preferences by the participants, a survey of eating establishments would be performed with inputs from online reviews, word-of-mouth from local people. An appropriate location for ordering your pizza would be chosen by the team after taking into consideration the nutritional value of the pizza offered at the location, hygiene and the steps taken by the establishment to address COVID-19 concerns. An appropriate time for the lunch would also be chosen to ensure that every participant has gotten their pizzas delivered and ready to eat. All participants would be expected to login to Zoom at least 30 minutes before the lunch begins. After the lunch event is complete, a survey will be taken to get the participants’ feedback with questions focusing on the social and behavioral aspects in addition to the effect the event had on their mental health and well-being. The results will be documented along with the survey outcome to get a better understanding of the positive contribution of these lunch events.

## **Budget**

The team would need \$80 (\$30 for pizza testing and \$50 for survey) to carry out the project. The proposed amount is to enable the team to check out the locations on how best they maintain their restaurant amid the COVID-19 and to have a taste of their pizzas in order to select the right place where all the participants can order their pizzas from.

## References

Dunbar, R. I. M. (2017). Breaking Bread: The Functions of Social Eating. *Adaptive Human Behavior and Physiology*, 3(3), 198–211. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40750-017-0061-4>

## Appendix A

### Ingredients

1/2-pound ground beef	1 cup diced onion	2 cloves garlic, minced	1 tablespoon chili powder
8 grape tomatoes, diced	1 teaspoon ground cumin	1/2 teaspoon black pepper	1/2 teaspoon salt
dash cayenne powder	1 (16 ounce) can refried beans	4 (10 inch) flour tortillas	1/2 cup salsa
2 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend	2 green onions, chopped	1/4 cup sour cream (optional)	1/4 cup finely chopped jalapeno peppers

### Nutrition Facts

<b>Total Fat</b> 29g	<b>45%</b>
Saturated Fat 8g	<b>40%</b>
Trans Fat 0.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 40mg	<b>13%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 960mg	<b>40%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrates</b> 48g	<b>16%</b>
Dietary Fiber 9g	<b>36%</b>
Sugars 3g	
<b>Protein</b> 19g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	4%
Calcium	30%
Iron	20%

