



# TASTE OF *BELONGING*

A collection of recipes & ways to  
strengthen community across differences

WELCOMING  
AMERICA 



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## Introduction

Have you ever taken a bite of something and been transported back to a moment in time? Perhaps the bite of a pie you had not tasted since your grandmother made it for you, or the waft of a simmering soup that elicits a fond, seemingly forgotten memory.

Likewise, food can set the stage for new learning. Trying new foods can teach us about the culture it comes from and the people who make it.

The presence of food sets the table for conversation and curiosity — two essential ingredients for building community among people who have different backgrounds and identities. Under the right conditions, food can be a positive entry point for activities and initiatives that decrease prejudice between different groups.

Welcoming America created this cookbook as a tool for meaningful connection across differences. We paired recipes from diverse cultures with activities that connect people around a shared table and get them working together on a common goal.

The three featured models apply the principles of intergroup contact theory, which we review in the next section. Each model has been tested in several regions of the United States, with people of various racial, ethnic, religious, and political identities and affiliations, and in all kinds of localities, from small to large cities and in urban, rural, and suburban settings. At the end of the cookbook, you will find an overview of additional promising community building models.

The recipes were submitted by [Welcoming Network](#) members and friends, sometimes passed down from the previous generation, some that have crossed borders and traveled thousands of miles. They remind us that food nourishes our bodies and spirits, and can help us feel we belong to a family, community, cultural heritage, or a nation.

If you're looking to build community and reduce prejudice in your own locality, we suggest two things. First, share this cookbook with a friend, colleague, grandparent, sibling, or neighbor. By doing so, you invite them to learn about the recipes and the people that prepared the dishes. Second, try one of the intergroup bridging models in your own community and find ways for the group to offer their own recipes from near and far.

Let's get cookin'!

### ABOUT WELCOMING AMERICA

Welcoming America leads a movement of inclusive communities becoming more prosperous by making everyone feel like they belong. We believe that all people, including immigrants, are valued contributors and vital to the success of our communities and shared future. [Learn more.](#)

# What is Intergroup Bridging?

Intergroup contact theory, as described by social psychologist, Dr. Gordon Allport, proposes that face-to-face interaction can decrease prejudice between groups.

According to [Dr. Allport](#), “Only the type of contact that leads people to do things together is likely to result in changed attitudes”<sup>1</sup>. Intergroup contact is especially likely to decrease prejudice between groups when it occurs under specific conditions.

Activities that incorporate these conditions are known as “intergroup bridging” activities. Intergroup contact theory<sup>2</sup> proposes that the following conditions should be met to allow for successful intergroup bridging to occur:

- 1 Members of the different groups must have **equal status**. One group cannot be treated as “less than” or “lower status” than any other, e.g. instructor/student relationship.
- 2 Members of the different groups must hold a **common goal** they wish to achieve.
- 3 Members of the different groups must agree to work together **cooperatively** to ensure that groups are not competing against one another.
- 4 There must be **institutional support**. This often comes from authority figures or group leaders.

In the following pages, we offer three intergroup bridging models that apply this theory, as well as other activities that can help you bridge gaps in your own community.

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1 Allport, Gordon. *The Nature of Prejudice: 25th Anniversary Edition*. London, England, Basic Books, 1979, p. 276.

2 Pettigrew, Thomas. “INTERGROUP CONTACT THEORY.” *Annual Review of Psychology*, vol. 49, no. 1, 1998, pp. 65–85.

## INCORPORATING FOOD IN INTERGROUP BRIDGING ACTIVITIES

While successful intergroup bridging activities do not require a meal, we suggest adding one! People hunger not just for nutritional sustenance but for love, respect, and fulfillment. Food feeds our bodies, and the experience of dining with others feeds our souls. So why not incorporate food in your quest to build bridges?

*“I realized very early  
the power of food to evoke  
memory, to bring people  
together, to transport you to  
other places, and I wanted  
to be a part of that.”*

.....  
Chef José Andrés

To learn more about intergroup bridging, [read this article](#) or visit the [publications page](#) of Professor Linda Tropp’s website for recent papers from her and colleagues. Also, check out the [Bridging Differences Playbook](#) for more information on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup bridging skills and strategies.

*Please note:* Intergroup bridging is not the right activity for every situation. For example, in a place where a group of immigrants has recently arrived and the local government has actively resisted or condemned their arrival, tensions or violence may be high between some long-time residents and newcomers. In this case, other strategic interventions may first be needed to de-escalate tension and violence, or may be used in tandem with intergroup bridging activities targeting different sets of residents who are ready to engage at this level.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Alisa I Kushner  
Lincoln, NE



# *KLINGERIS*

**THE STORY:**

This recipe is from Alisa's family's home country of Latvia where this dish was traditionally made in celebration of birthdays. The dough is braided and shaped in the infinity symbol, ensuring a long life. For other holidays such as Christmas, a loaf is made instead. For funerals, a simple circle rather than an infinity symbol is used to convey the completion of life.

Alisa says: "This dish reminds me of my Latvian heritage. It simultaneously brings back fond memories of my childhood and deep sadness that so many Latvians were forced to flee their home country if they wanted to survive. The special key ingredient is the saffron."

### MAIN INGREDIENTS:

2 teaspoons yeast  
½ cup warm water  
½ teaspoon saffron  
1 cup sugar  
1 cup heavy cream  
2 eggs  
2 teaspoons thin strips of lemon zest  
2 teaspoons thin strips of orange zest  
1 teaspoon cardamom  
1 teaspoon salt

½ cup (1 stick of butter, softened)  
5½–6 cups flour  
1 cup raisins (yellow/black/or both)

### TOPPING INGREDIENTS:

1 egg for egg wash  
¼ cup thinly sliced almonds  
*Optional:* Sugar and soft butter crumbled together and put over the top

### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Dissolve yeast in warm water with saffron and a pinch of sugar. Let it sit for five minutes.
2. Use a mixer to mix the bubbling mountain of yeast with the remaining ingredients in the bowl, only adding as much flour as needed to form a soft dough. Knead the dough for 10 minutes. The dough will continue to look sticky but not stick. It will be “tacky.” Let it rise for 1 1/2 hours or until doubled in bulk.
3. Then roll into 3 long logs that are long enough to braid, crossing the ends over each other to form a pretzel. Be sure to leave at least a fist-sized opening in each of the pretzel holes, or they will close-up when baked. Let it rise again for 30 minutes while the oven is preheating to 350°F. Brush the pretzel with a beaten egg and sprinkle with almond slices and the butter crumble if you desire. The egg will give it a shiny crust. Bake for about 45 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through.
4. Once it has cooled down a bit but is still warm, you can sprinkle powdered sugar on top. You can then put candles on it as you would a birthday cake. Enjoy!

### TRIED MAKING ANY OF THESE RECIPES?

Share a photo of the outcome on social media! Tag us [@welcomingusa](#) and use [#TasteofBelonging](#)

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Mahnaz M Shabbir  
Parkville, MO

# HYDERBADI CHICKEN BIRYANI

*(Mahnaz's version)*



**THE STORY:**

Hyderabad is a state in India. Before the British colonized India, Hyderabad was a separate country within India. It was ruled by Nizam and the cuisine was Mughal (combination of Indian and Iranian flavors). There are many origin stories of how this dish originated from the kitchens of the Nizam of Hyderabad. What we know for sure is that it is a staple that continues to be eaten on special occasions (Eid, weddings, birthdays).

Mahnaz says: “My mother is an expert at making this dish. She makes it elaborately, and there’s certainly no cutting corners. In fact, I remember my mother making this recipe and everyone complimenting her on the dish. Needless to say, I was hesitant to try to duplicate her masterpiece. Recently though, I made it for my mother (I had to do it without her watching because she would tell me I missed something). I received high marks from her, so I think I passed!

This is my U.S. version of a dish that is enjoyed by everyone. My sons are happy to know when I am making this dish. I hope to pass this on to the next generation. I’m sure there will be future modifications.”

### CHICKEN:

- 4 medium-size onions
- 1 tablespoon of garlic/ginger mixture
- 4 pounds of chicken breast cut into cubes
- 1 tablespoon of turmeric powder
- 1 tablespoon of cumin powder
- 1 tablespoon of coriander powder
- 1 teaspoon of cardamom powder
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon powder
- 1 tablespoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of black pepper
- 1 teaspoon of red pepper
- ½ cup of cilantro leaves finely chopped
- 1 cup of yogurt
- ¼ cup to ½ cup of oil

### RICE:

- 4 cups of basmati rice
- 5 cups of water
- 1 tablespoon of garlic/ginger mixture
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 3 cardamom pods
- 1 cinnamon stick
- ¼ teaspoon of crushed cumin seeds
- 2 tablespoons of oil

### COMBINING CHICKEN AND RICE:

- ½ tablespoon of saffron
- ½ cup of milk
- One onion or ¼ cup of fried onion (ready-made)
- ¼ cup of oil
- A sprinkle of cardamom powder and cinnamon powder

### YOGURT CHUTNEY:

- 1 cup plain yogurt
- Enough water so yogurt is smooth
- ¼ cup chopped cucumber
- ¼ cup chopped cilantro
- Add black pepper and salt to taste



*Continued, next page*

### **CHICKEN MIXTURE:**

1. Chop the onions into thin slices. Fry until golden brown.
2. Meanwhile, chop the chicken breasts into 2-inch cubes.
3. After onions are golden brown, add garlic/ginger mixture and fry until the mixture is cooked.
4. Add the chicken. Fry the chicken with the onion/garlic/ginger mixture until the chicken is brown and looks cooked.
5. In a separate bowl, add all the other ingredients listed under chicken preparation except for the cilantro leaves. Mix the ingredients until blended.
6. Add the mixture to the cooked chicken.
7. Stir well. You may need to add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of water so the mixture covers the chicken.
8. Stir again. Reduce heat and simmer for 20 minutes.
9. Stir and add cilantro leaves.
10. Cook until there's enough water that it looks like a thick stew. You don't want to have too much gravy.

### **RICE PREPARATION:**

1. Wash the rice and drain the water. Add the measured water. The trick here is to have one extra cup of water to the total number of rice cups.
2. Put in a rice cooker or cook in your preferred method.
3. Add oil, cardamom pods, the cinnamon stick, and cumin seeds.
4. Cook rice.

### COMBINING RICE AND CHICKEN INSTRUCTIONS:

1. While the rice is cooking, prepare the saffron mixture. To do this, blend the saffron, then put it in the milk and stir so that while the rice is cooking, this mixture is soaking up the saffron.
2. Once the chicken mixture and the rice is cooked, take a large aluminum roasting pan (like what you would use for roasting a turkey) and coat the bottom of it with oil.
3. Add rice to the bottom of the pan so it covers the entire bottom. Add the entire cooked chicken mixture. Add the rest of the rice over the chicken.
4. Add the saffron/milk on the top of the rice. Sprinkle cardamom powder and cinnamon powder. Add the fried onions.
5. Cover the tray with heavy-duty aluminum foil.
6. Bake at 350°F degrees for 30 minutes. When done, lift a corner of the aluminum foil to make sure there is steam coming from the tray. This is the way to make sure it is ready.
7. Remove from the oven. Stir the rice and chicken together so that the chicken mixture is throughout the rice and serve.
8. Combine all the yogurt chutney ingredients in a bowl and serve alongside the dish.



**SUBMITTED BY:**

Bomi Park  
St. Louis, MO



# 불고기 *BULGOGI*

**THE STORY:**

Bulgogi is a Korean dish. Traditionally, bulgogi is made with beef that's marinated in a soy sauce-based dressing, though there are versions of bulgogi that can be made with different proteins such as pork or tofu. Sometimes it's made with additional sauce (gochujang) for a spicy taste.

It's a common dish and typically present at celebrations and gatherings. Some Koreans might even say its familiar salty/sweetness is a comfort food.

As Bomi reflects, "Bulgogi is everyone's favorite or go-to Korean dish. It's such a good dish to introduce to anyone who's trying Korean food for the first time. I have many fond memories of eating bulgogi with my friends and family back home in Korea."

### INGREDIENTS NEEDED FOR 2-3 SERVINGS:

1 pound thinly sliced beef  
(or your choice of protein)

1/3 cup soy sauce

1/2 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon garlic

1 teaspoon ginger

4 tablespoons green onion/scallion —  
the white part

1/2 cup onion

1/2 cup carrots

1/4 cup chopped green onion —  
the green part

*Optional:* your favorite veggies/mushroom  
or noodles

### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Make the marinade with soy sauce, honey, finely chopped garlic, ginger, and green onion (only the white part!)
2. Pour the marinade into a bowl and combine with the protein (if you are using tofu: pan-fry the tofu first until it's crispy on the outside, then marinate).
3. Slice carrots and onions; chop the green parts of green onion and keep separate.
4. Stir fry with vegetable oil. Cook ingredients in the order of hard to soft (carrots > onions > protein). Cook the veggies with just a pinch of salt before adding the marinated protein.
5. Turn the heat off when carrots are cooked. Put the green parts of green onion in the pan to cook with the remaining heat.
6. Plate the bulgogi with cooked rice and enjoy!

*Tip:* The water that you used to rinse the rice can be used to adjust the saltiness or liquidity of the bulgogi. If you want to add noodles to your bulgogi, adding rice rinse water is a good way to help them get incorporated.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Krista David-Mercado  
Anchorage, AK

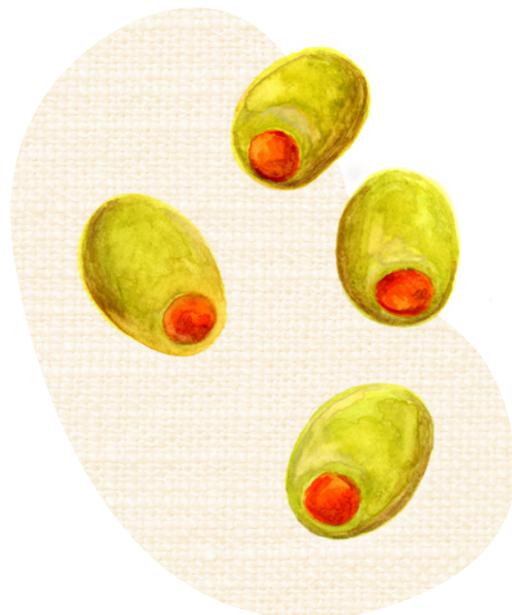


# GIBLET ADOBO ALA FILIPINA & ESPAÑOLA

**THE STORY:**

Adobo (a vinegar and soy sauce seasoned dish) comes from the Philippines. The Filipino method of cooking this dish can be traced all the way back to the pre-colonial Spanish era (mid 16th century). To this day, adobo is a favorite Filipino dish enjoyed any day of the week for lunch or dinner.

Krista says: “I personally tweaked the recipe to give it a more Spanish Mediterranean flair while still retaining its authentic essence. It evokes memories of those languid hot summer days — the sultry air seasoned with vinegar and garlic, yellow and orange bursts of mangoes and papayas on the dining table. I can still picture my Lola, an affectionate Filipino term for grandma, generously scooping chicken adobo on to our plates and lovingly urging us to eat, eat, eat.”



### MAIN INGREDIENTS:

1 pound chicken liver  
1 pound chicken gizzards  
5 bacon strips diced  
3 garlic cloves finely chopped  
¼ cup balsamic vinegar  
⅓ cup Worcestershire sauce  
2 tablespoons soy sauce  
2 tablespoons cooking oil  
¼ teaspoon coarse ground pepper  
¼ teaspoon salt  
¼ teaspoon dried thyme  
3 dried bay leaves

1 cup pimento-stuffed olives

1½ cup chicken broth

### FOR PRE-BOILING:

2 cups water  
3 dried bay leaves  
Pinch of salt  
Pinch of pepper

### GARNISHES:

Chopped scallions  
Fried garlic flakes  
Crushed red pepper flakes  
Jalapeño rings

### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Boil the gizzards with 2 cups of water, salt, pepper, and 3 bay leaves in a pot over medium heat for 35 minutes. Strain, drain, set aside.
2. In a copper pot or Dutch oven, add 1 tablespoon cooking oil and fry diced bacon until crisp. Remove from the pot and set aside.
3. Add another tablespoon of oil and pan-fry the boiled gizzards until slightly brown. Remove and set aside.
4. Add chicken livers and sear until golden brown. Move livers to the side of the pot. Add and sauté garlic until very lightly browned. Put the gizzards back in the pot; add Worcestershire sauce, balsamic vinegar, soy sauce, dried thyme, bay leaves, salt and pepper. Add chicken broth and stir gently. Transfer to a preheated 425°F degree oven and cook for an additional 30 minutes. If you prefer not to use the oven, you may leave it on medium heat on the stovetop and cook for 30 minutes.
5. When done, add olives and bacon bits, and let rest for 5 minutes before serving.
6. Garnish with recommended toppings: fried garlic flakes, crushed red pepper flakes, chopped scallions, and jalapeño rings.
7. As an appetizer, you may serve it with crusty sliced baguettes. As a main dish, serve over steamed rice, rice pilaf, couscous, or polenta.

## Promising Model #1: Intergroup Bridging in Community Gardens

A community garden can be an accessible space to bring newcomers and longtime residents together to work on a shared project and cultivate a sense of belonging. Many localities have a community garden or network of gardens, and others have resources to support residents in starting one.

Gardens are a natural venue for cultural exchange, teamwork, and relationship building, both through designing and maintaining the garden itself and in sharing meals and experiences with the food grown in the garden. Both newcomers and longtime residents can share their knowledge and talents while working together on common goals.

### CASE STUDY

#### REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT SERVICES & EDUCATION (RAISE) COMMUNITY GARDEN IN NOEL, MO

Noel is a small town of about 2,000 people in rural Southwest Missouri, where the meat processing industry employs many people who emigrated from other countries. Over time, RAISE found that longtime and newer residents of Noel had little meaningful interaction with one another in their daily lives, and this contributed to division and discrimination, particularly from longtime residents toward newcomers. As a result, RAISE expanded its mission to help encourage relationships between longtime and newer residents of Noel, with a goal to increase understanding and foster community development for all Noel residents.

With the help of a grant from Walmart and technical assistance from Welcoming America, one of RAISE's first intergroup bridging efforts was a community garden. Over nine months, RAISE developed a new community garden where residents of Noel could work and play together. Through gardening activities, residents who previously did not know each other connected through shared projects and developed leadership skills.



Common goals may include:

- Growing food for themselves, their families, or their communities.
- Exercising.
- Spending time outside, connecting to the natural world.
- Learning about gardening or foodways.
- Bringing new life to a vacant lot.
- Addressing food justice issues.
- Leadership development or social engagement for youth or older adults.

## Tips to Start Intergroup Bridging at a Community Garden

Think about these tips as you brainstorm how you might start an intergroup bridging project at an existing or new community garden. Each tip comes with an example from the RAISE case study to help inform your own plans.

### TIP 1: SPACE

*If your locality already has a community garden or garden network:*

Investigate your options. Some local government agencies and community development organizations, including many YMCAs, manage community gardens. Is there an existing garden you can join and help ensure that newcomers and longtime residents are fully included?

Some localities have garden networks that offer startup funding and technical assistance for new neighborhood gardens.

*If your locality does not have a community garden or garden network:*

Several organizations offer guides for starting a community garden, including:

- [Primer on turning a vacant lot into a garden by lobby.](#)
- Startup resources by the [American Community Gardeners Association](#) (ACGA), including step-by-step instructions and a how-to on garden politics.
- [Guide to land acknowledgments by the Native Governance Center](#) so you can check the ownership of the land before proceeding with any plans and consider an Indigenous land acknowledgment in your garden.

**RAISE EXAMPLE:** The local Noel Housing Authority gave RAISE access to over one acre of land in a vacant lot next to the Housing Authority. This was at no cost to RAISE, and the Housing Authority also paid for water and grounds maintenance.

## TIP 2: PARTICIPANTS AND PARTNERS

- It is important to find out who wants to participate and to contact local organizations that may have advice or would like to partner with you. Consider block associations, houses of worship, Cooperative Extension services (including Extension Master Gardeners), gardening societies, local government, local businesses, and nonprofit service providers. Partners can provide expertise, supplies, and connections to participants.
- When planning for a garden that will bring together longtime residents and newcomers who are not already in relationship, think about partners who can help reach these populations. Map out partners who serve your target participants, particularly those who can help you reach people who do not generally have an opportunity to meaningfully connect across differences.
- Remember that interest in a community garden is not a given, as people have varying time, energy, and life experiences. Never pressure anyone to participate.

**RAISE EXAMPLES:** RAISE partnered with the University of Missouri Extension, which provided guidance on what and when to plant. The local Walmart donated supplies, a church provided extra labor for heavy lifting, and a Southwestern Missouri artist made an entrance sign.

Since the garden was next to the Housing Authority, residents of the Housing Authority were able to easily participate in the project, which benefited both the Housing Authority and RAISE. This was also a social activity for residents who were excited about harvesting the food. The garden's proximity to the Housing Authority brought in both new and established residents of Noel who weren't familiar with RAISE or one another before the garden was built. RAISE invited immigrant residents that had previously accessed RAISE services, and many participated.

### TIP 3: CO-DESIGNING FOR INCLUSION AND ACCESS

By co-designing the project — talking with potential participants about their interests, what they would like to see in the garden, and how they would like to be involved — you can design a project that is accessible to participants. A few ideas to ensure the garden is accessible and inclusive to a diverse group include:

- Talk as a group about what everyone would like to plant, and make sure that plants that are lesser-known to some while loved by others get planted. For example, bitter melon is not well known in many parts of the United States, and yet it grows well in some U.S. growing zones and is a staple in many Asian cuisines.
- Use multilingual signage at the entrance to the garden and for plant identification.
- Host group events at different times of day and days of the week to allow for varying work and family schedules.
- Be sure that critical safety information is delivered in multiple languages by professional interpreters or translators.
- Design for wheelchair accessibility and other physical adaptations — [find out how with tips from ACGA](#).

**RAISE EXAMPLE:** The garden included crops well known among immigrant participants, some of whom grew these crops on a large scale in their countries of origin. A few of these plants were okra, radish, and squash. The garden also had staples of Southwestern Missouri like tomatoes and green beans. RAISE also hosted group events at different times and days of the week to accommodate varying work shifts at the meatpacking plant where many Noel residents work. Large events were held on Sunday, the only day of the week that the meatpacking plant was always closed.

#### TIP 4: CONNECTING WHILE GARDENING

A productive garden requires many tasks, from preparing the land to harvesting. Be sure to organize some of these tasks into group activities when multiple gardeners come at the same time. Otherwise, gardeners will not have a chance to interact if they are all working on their own at different times. During these group events:

- **Find ways to break the ice.** Conversation may not flow naturally, especially among people who have not met before. Spark conversation with questions like “What is your favorite vegetable, and how do you use it in your home cooking?” Make introductions between people who have something in common, such as a farming background or raising children around the same age. To go deeper, try storytelling activities such as those in the [Additional Community Building Models & Programs](#) section of this toolkit.
- **Get people working on projects together.** Pair two or more people together to solve a problem. Maybe your watering system is not working well, or a vining vegetable needs a new trellis. Having something specific to work on together can help people overcome social barriers, and is an important element of successful intergroup bridging [[see page 4](#)].

- **Plan ahead to avoid roadblocks that may keep people from interacting.** For example, if participants do not speak the same language, budget for interpretation to make sure that professionals can help participants communicate on site. Given the informal setting, multilingual volunteers can also be a good option here.

**RAISE EXAMPLES:** RAISE hosted group events for participants to:

- Prepare the land and build garden beds
- Sow seeds and plant seedlings
- Weed and water
- Plant an orchard
- Harvest
- Put the garden to bed for the winter
- Plan the next season’s garden

RAISE hired a part-time coordinator who was in charge of outreach, participant coordination, and organizing group events. In addition to this coordinator, a group of dedicated volunteers (both newcomers and longtime residents) served in a leadership role.

To help gardeners get to know each other, RAISE used the Story Stitch activity from Green Card Voices ([see page 57](#)).

## TIP 5: FOOD ACTIVITIES AND CELEBRATIONS

Community gardens take their share of work, and it is important to celebrate your successes along the way. Celebrations could include harvest festivals, potlucks, pumpkin carving, recipe sharing, communal cooking, canning, and seed swapping.

Activities like these help gardeners see how much they have accomplished and take new relationships to another setting where more conversations and common goals can be explored. You can plan activities around cultural holidays — ask gardeners for ideas, as many cultures have food-centric holidays. Many resources exist to help you plan garden activities, including:

- [American Community Gardeners Association](#), which has resources on how to cook and can fresh food harvested from your garden, as well as learning activities.
- Cooperative Extension services often offer recipes, food safety tips, and cooking demonstrations.

To learn more and access assistance to start your own intergroup bridging activity at a garden, [become a Welcoming Network member](#).

**RAISE EXAMPLES:** During [Welcoming Week](#), RAISE hosted a group event for gardeners to harvest, prepare, cook, and eat okra. The group picked okra from the garden and grilled it on-site, using recipes from gardeners and the University of Missouri Extension. Over 40 people attended, representing six countries of origin: Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Sudan, Somalia, and the U.S. A gardener who was familiar with preparing okra in his home country of Sudan led the way on the Extension recipes, along with gardeners from Mexico and the U.S. Other gardeners prepared a Mexican dish using okra, meat, and spices.

After planting apple, peach, and cherry trees for a new orchard at the garden during [Welcoming Week](#), gardeners watched a local pastor make apple butter on site. Twenty-five volunteers and gardeners sampled the apple butter and got a taste of this traditional spread from the region.

## Additional Resources

[Welcoming Economies Playbook](#), Urban and Rural Agriculture section (Welcoming America and Global Detroit)

[Video: Finding Common Ground in a Garden](#), featuring Common Earth Gardens, a program of Catholic Charities of Louisville with new and longtime gardeners

**SUBMITTED BY:**

George Zavala  
Coachella, CA

# GRANDMA ROSA'S TORTILLAS DE HARINA



**THE STORY:**

George says: “When I think of *the* quintessential ‘home cooked’ meal, I think of anything my Grandma Rosa made. She could do it all — cakes, chicken pot pies, casseroles, you name it. One staple that ranks above all of her signature dishes is her tortillas de harina (flour tortillas). They were the perfect combination of fluffy, soft, and flavor — similar to warm bread, but always better. The thought of her tortillas takes me back to how wonderful her house smelled from them constantly cooking on her comal.

After almost eight years since her passing, I’m happy to share this special recipe that my family holds near and dear. The tortillas I make never taste like hers, because her magic touch is missing. However, every once in a while, I’ll take a bite into one I’ve made and smile at the familiar taste of her cooking.

The great thing about her tortillas is that you can make burritos by filling them with chorizo and papas, refried beans and cheese, carne asada, carnitas, veggies, etc. You can use them as a side for any meat-based dish, or just roll them up with some butter. They’re incredibly versatile!”



### INGREDIENTS:

7 cups of all-purpose flour (plus up to 1 additional cup if needed)  
3 cups of boiling water (set aside)  
2 tablespoons of baking powder  
1½ tablespoon of salt  
3 tablespoons of lard (Grandma Rosa used Rex lard)

### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Begin by mixing all of the ingredients together in a large mixing bowl (except for water).
2. Add the boiling water, half a cup at a time, while mixing — make sure you don't add too much water because then it will be too watery. *Note: You can add additional flour during this step if you find your dough is too watery.*
3. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rise for about 10–15 minutes.
4. Roll the dough into little balls and roll flat with a rolling pin (you should be able to roll out approximately 20 tortillas).
5. Heat the rolled-out tortillas on a hot comal pan (smooth, flat griddle), making sure to flip after 15–20 seconds on each side.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Valerie Mills  
Atlanta, GA



# *PALAVER* *SAUCE* (aka Nkontomire)

**THE STORY:**

Palaver Sauce or Nkontomire is a Ghanaian delicacy from West Africa. It is traditionally prepared with the leaves of the cocoyam plant. Palaver colloquially means “troublesome” and it was said (in Valerie’s family, at least) that you could not eat it without getting the sauce on your clothes and making a mess! Usually, when the sauce is done, they add a hard-boiled egg to whatever starch accompaniment they are eating it with. For this recipe, Valerie uses a mix of spinach, turnip greens, and collard greens because she hasn’t found fresh cocoyam leaves in the U.S. yet!

For Valerie, this recipe reminds her of joy, contentment, sunshine, and family.

**TRIED MAKING ANY  
OF THESE RECIPES?**

Share a photo of the outcome on social media! Tag us @welcomingusa and use #TasteofBelonging

## INGREDIENTS:

1 cup of chopped frozen spinach  
1 cup of chopped frozen turnip greens  
1 cup of chopped frozen collard greens  
2 large onions chopped  
3 medium sized tomatoes chopped  
2 cloves of garlic minced/ground\*  
1 small ginger root minced/ground\*

1 habanero / scotch bonnet pepper  
minced/ground\*

6 tablespoons of palm oil\*\*

½ cup of ground pumpkin seeds, also  
known as Agushi

1 pound protein of choice cut up in medium  
size cubes. (Lamb is traditional but smoked  
fish, especially mackerel, is delicious. For  
vegetarians, substitute mushrooms of choice.)

Salt and black pepper to taste

\* Skip if you don't have a stomach for aromatic spices

\*\* You may use any oil of choice. It is traditionally made with palm oil.

## DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Season meat with salt and pepper (you can add any other seasonings of choice) in a medium-size saucepan.
2. With the stove on high heat, allow the meat to cook in its juices until grey and sizzling. Stir frequently so it does not burn or stick to the bottom of your saucepan.
3. Add palm oil (or your oil of choice), onions, tomatoes, ginger, garlic, and pepper to the meat and simmer for about 10 minutes.
4. Add spinach, turnip greens and collard greens all at once. Lower heat to medium and cover the pot as it cooks. Stir once in a while as leaves and veggies come together (about 10 minutes).
5. Mix ground pumpkin seeds with a quarter to half a cup of water so it forms a paste. Set aside.
6. If using smoked fish, add at this stage.
7. Drop the ground pumpkin seed paste, one spoonful at a time, into the sauce and cover the saucepan on medium heat for about 5–10 minutes.
8. Stir when the pumpkin seed paste seems like it is setting and looking like scrambled egg lumps. Allow to cook down on low heat until the meat is tender. Taste for salt and add more if needed. In about 15–20 minutes, your Palaver sauce should be done. A sign that you nailed it is when everything seems to have come together, meat is tender, the sauce is no longer watery, greens taste great, and a shiny film of oil can be seen on the sauce.
10. Enjoy with any of the following: boiled rice, fried ripe plantains, boiled plantains, boiled yam, boiled cocoyam, boiled yucca, or a bit of everything!

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Ali Aljubouri  
Atlantic Beach, FL



# BAGILA BIL DIHIN

*(Fried Eggs over Fava Beans)*

**THE STORY:**

Ali says: “Growing up in Iraq, I used to wake up every weekend to the smell of my mom cooking a special breakfast. Now, cooking with my family reminds me of my home country. We try to cook together on the weekends as it helps us share the culture, tastes, and music of home with our daughters.

This recipe is a simple dish but it gathers our big family together. When I feel homesick, I introduce my daughters to my home culture via food, and they help me from A to Z while we listen to Iraqi music. Through this dish, a lot of tears mixed with laughter have come along.”

### **INGREDIENTS:**

½ pound dried fava beans  
Juice from one lemon  
Dash of salt  
2 to 3 large pita breads, cut into large cubes  
3–4 tablespoons of vegetable oil  
½ onion, cut into thin slices  
2 tablespoons of mint, chopped  
3–4 eggs

### **DETAILED COOKING STEPS:**

1. Soak the fava beans in water overnight then drain.
2. In a pot, bring the beans to a boil with a dash of salt and lemon juice. Boil until softened (about 20 minutes), then remove the beans from the water, and set aside. Keep the water boiling over low heat. It is essential for the next step.
3. To prepare the bread, place the bread cubes in the boiling bean water and remove immediately (just dip once and remove), then place on your platter.
4. Pour the fava beans over the bread.
5. Heat the vegetable oil in a large skillet over low heat, add the onions and fry until caramelized.
6. Beat the eggs and pour on top of the onions without stirring.
7. Once the eggs have cooked through, place the fried eggs over the beans and pour any extra oil over the whole platter.
8. Top with chopped parsley.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Denis Peric  
Maryland

# SARMA

*(Sour Cabbage Rolls)*



**THE STORY:**

Denis says: “Sarma is a popular dish found in many homes during winter holidays in my home country of Bosnia, then Yugoslavia. It’s often made in big batches, too big for a small fridge to hold. Like many families, we kept it cold in a large pot on our apartment balcony. Some of my best memories are of sneaking a delicious bite out of the cold balcony pot. Warm or even cold, sarma is a special treat and reminds me of winter and family, and the meals we enjoyed together.”

This dish is common throughout the Balkans. It’s hearty and usually made during the winter at home, when you can soak the cabbage heads and preserve them in barrels. Today, you can find the cabbage for this recipe year-round in local Bosnian or Eastern European stores. They are delicious — especially if you are a meat-lover! Bacon is optional but recommended.

## INGREDIENTS:

Whole sour cabbage leaves — two jars  
or vacuum packs  
1 pound of ground beef  
½ cup of white rice  
1 season pack of “Fant” stuffed peppers  
and cabbage (also found in Eastern  
European stores)\*  
3 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

½ cup smoked bacon, finely diced  
6 slices of smoked bacon, cut in  
half-inch strips  
½ cup tomato sauce (optional)  
1 medium-size carrot, peeled and chopped  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
*Optional:* Bacon can be left out or substituted  
with another dried meat.

*\* Fant seasoning is also optional and can be substituted with a tablespoon of Vegea or simply some salt, pepper, and even paprika, to taste, but take caution not to over salt since the cabbage leaves are quite salty.*

## DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. In a mixing bowl, combine the uncooked rice, beef, half of the diced tomato, the chopped bacon (not strips), and mix together.
2. In a smaller bowl, empty the Fant pack and mix with about a half cup of warm water until it forms a paste. Then combine it with the meat and rice mixture, until all ingredients are well mixed. Again, you can sub this out with other spices to taste.
3. Remove the cabbage leaves from the jar. Rinse them briefly under cold water to remove some of the extra salt. Prepare the leaves by cutting out the thick stems (which make them difficult to roll) and cutting larger leaves into two pieces. A good size leaf should be a little bigger than a large hand.
4. On a flat surface, place about a meatball sized amount of filling inside a leaf, and roll it up into a small, burrito-like shape, folding in one side as you roll several times over, and closing the other side by tucking it in. Your sarmas should fit in the palm of your hand, be tube sized, and be well enclosed so juices stay inside when you cook it. Hold onto any extra leaves.

*Continued, next page*

5. In a large pot, heat oil on medium heat, and lightly sauté the remaining chopped tomato with carrots and half of your bacon strips. If you like, at this point you can add the optional tomato sauce and mix for 20–30 seconds more. Remove from heat.
6. Place the sarmas into the pot by laying them side by side and then stacking. Be sure to place the open edge facing down so the sarmas don't open when cooking. On the top layer, spread your remaining bacon strips. Also, if you have a few leftover cabbage leaves, place those on top to cover. Then, add cold water just until it reaches the top of your layers.
7. Cover with a lid and return to medium heat. As soon as the pot boils, lower heat to simmer. Simmer for 2.5 to 3 hours. Keep an eye on the water level; if it goes down, refill to the level of your stacks (but not above). A long simmer time is better; don't worry about overcooking.
8. The sarma can be served immediately or enjoyed the next day (even better).
9. Sarma is usually served with some of the juices and a tablespoon of sour cream, along with your favorite bread.
10. Enjoy! Prietno!

## Promising Model #2: One America Movement

*Empowering different faith communities to build relationships while working on common issues that matter to them*

The One America Movement combines relationship-building conversations with joint service projects to help bridge divides and bring people together. Most of its work involves bringing faith groups together, including evangelical Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Mormons, to promote a narrative of respect.

One America Movement's model combines three components: groups work together on a joint service project — such as helping in a soup kitchen — followed by a meal together and a facilitated conversation. The shared experiences are intended to build relationships.

While the event itself is essential, prep work and follow-through ensure that the event goes beyond one-time encounters to spark transformational relationships. Many groups later take on longer-term service projects together, helping make these relationships stick. With over a dozen local chapters, One America Movement and its staff act as facilitators, supporting the chapters as they build strong relationships and overcome division. Here's how they do it:

### Pre-Event

It begins with two religious leaders being willing to talk. Often, one religious leader learns about the One America Movement and, with the organization's support, seeks out another religious leader from a different faith tradition. The two typically begin by discussing their congregations, their sacred values, challenges they see in their community, and hopes for a partnership. From there, the One America Movement supports the leaders to identify goals, set ground rules, and determine how they can work to bring their two congregations together.

It can take a significant amount of time for religious leaders to form a trusting relationship — and that's okay. A solid foundation, built on trust and relationship, is key to long-lasting partnerships across religious, racial, and political divides.

Congregations also often have internal work to do. This work begins by understanding how our brains are wired for polarization and acquiring tools to resist toxic forms of division. The One America Movement works with these groups individually to process the neuroscience behind polarization, share sacred values, explore group dynamics and prepare to work together across divides.

## Event (Service Project + Meal + Facilitated Conversation)

Now that the religious leaders have built a bridge and prepared their congregations for this work, they plan their first event together. This first meeting is always a service project, something that gets people out of their heads and busy doing work together. Past events have ranged from building homes, to refurbishing rehabilitation centers, to collecting items for a women's shelter. What's important is that the

project puts both groups on equal footing, as peers working toward a common goal at a neutral location. This sets the stage for conversations that can build empathy and lay a pathway that is mutually beneficial and rewarding.

After the congregations have spent the day working together, it's time to wash up and sit down for a meal. These meals occur at the service project site. It's at this meal that the conversation often turns profound. Through a facilitated conversation, participants learn

### CASE STUDY

The work in Atlanta, GA began when one rabbi attended One America Movement's Religious Leader Training Program, which provides the knowledge they need to shepherd congregations through divided times. When he returned home, he gave a sermon that called his congregation to think deeply about what it meant to be a member of the community and how their synagogue interacted with those around them.

From there, a spark lit and he reached out to One America Movement again and got connected with an evangelical pastor in his area. At first, they started small, meeting over coffee.

Soon, the pastor and rabbi brought their congregations together to renovate a domestic violence shelter, share a meal, and participate in a facilitated conversation. From their first gathering, both congregations were moved by the experience and wanted to do more with the relationship.

Within a year, they held five joint events, including service projects and virtual meetings around difficult conversations on the U.S. presidential election and COVID-19 pandemic. They also attended each other's services and learned more about their traditions, culture, and values.



more about each other's lives — their families, routines, and the more sacred elements of their faith, culture and traditions. Because of the work they have done together, they can lean into their common concerns and hopes for their community without leaving their religious identity or values at the door.

## Post Event

After the service event, the One America Movement surveys participants to measure any change in perceptions. The data is provided to the religious leaders to explore which next steps to take. This decision is completely driven by the local leaders.

The goal of One America Movement's activities isn't just one event that changes how we see others, but rather, the formation of strong bonds that bring communities together in the long term.

Continued engagement can look different for each group. In the past, leaders have chosen to offer a faith 101 session where the other congregations come to learn the basic tenets of the other religion. Sometimes, leaders have swapped places in worship services or continued the dialogue through home dinner gatherings. After the initial engagement, One America Movement staff remain available to help religious leaders determine the appropriate resources and training for each congregation.

**Want to start bridging differences between faith communities with One America Movement's model?**

Reach out [here](#).

## Interested in Bringing This to Your Community?

Just like the case study in Atlanta, the work begins with one person being willing to take the first step. If you belong to a community of faith, start by having a conversation with your faith leaders. Are they interested? What concerns and hopes do they have? If you are a faith leader, is there another faith that comes to mind as a potential partner?

Leadership buy-in is critical and may require sustained discussions and planning before moving forward. As you identify partners, sign up for [One America Movement's training opportunities](#) to equip yourself to begin this work. Once you obtain buy-in from at least one faith leader, you can reach out to One America Movement staff. They will work with you to identify next steps and begin the process of fighting toxic polarization within and beyond your place of worship.

*Note: While the One America Movement works with congregations of different faiths, their model could apply to other groups. For example, a predominantly White church and a predominantly Black church could find this model helpful in their work toward racial healing. Likewise, this model could take shape among one group of people living with disabilities and another group that does not have a disability. Start within communities that you personally identify with so that you can serve as an agent of change from within.*

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Vanika Spencer  
St. Louis, MO



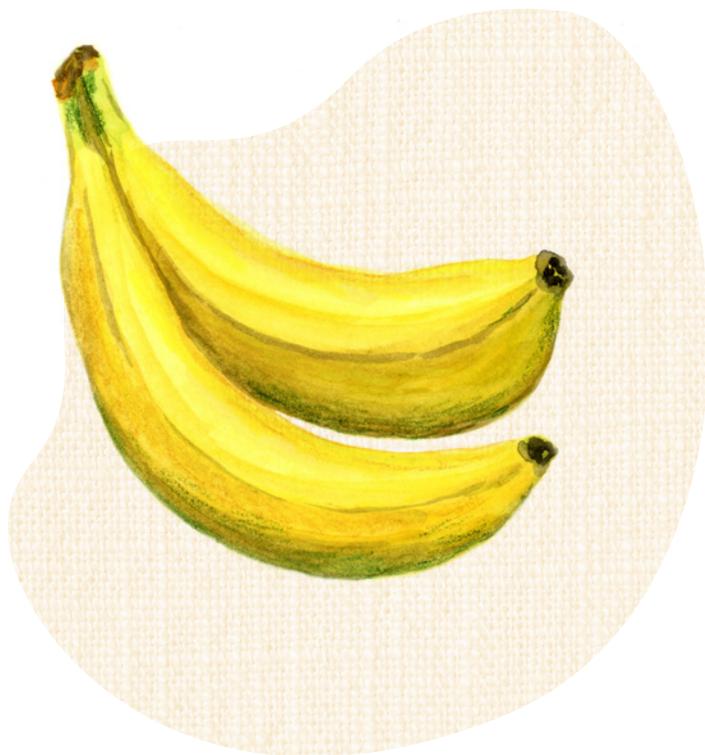
# GRANDMA TINY'S BANANA PUDDIN'

**THE STORY:**

Vanika recalls: “My grandmother would make this simple, inexpensive dessert for family cookouts during summertime. Cookouts usually happened once or twice a summer. We had an above ground pool in our backyard so when we were kids, the family gathered at our place. Parents would chow down on the deck or inside to avoid the Texas heat while us kids played in the yard and pool. I think it was my dad who got first dibs on Grandma’s desserts.”

### INGREDIENTS:

- 5 ounces of instant vanilla pudding mix
- 3 cups cold milk
- 4 bananas sliced
- ½ 12-ounce box of vanilla wafers
- Prepared whipped topping
- A dash of cinnamon
- A super cute apron



### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Put on your super cute apron and get ready to make a dessert everyone will love.
2. In a large bowl, beat the pudding mix and cold milk until smooth.
3. Line the bottom of a small square dish with vanilla wafers around the edge and bottom. Add half the pudding mixture and spread across, topped with a layer of sliced bananas and a dash of cinnamon. Repeat layers of vanilla wafers, pudding mixture, bananas, whipped topping (to the top layer, you should try to have at least three layers).
4. Top with more wafers, banana slices, and a bit more cinnamon to make the top look special. Refrigerate overnight before serving.
5. Enjoy!

### TRIED MAKING ANY OF THESE RECIPES?

Share a photo of the outcome on social media! Tag us **@welcomingusa** and use **#TasteofBelonging**

**FROM:**

Tenerife Island  
Canary Islands, Spain

# GOFIO



**THE STORY:**

This dish is over 100 years old and has deep historical and cultural significance. It dates back to the Indigenous people and ancient settlers of the Canary Islands. The location of the Canary Islands between the European and African continents led to commercial and cultural trade. The adoption of grains brought from across the sea (like corn and millet) reflect the trade that occurred.

Gofio was an indispensable ingredient for migratory boat trips and was used in times of war and economic difficulty, thanks to its nutritional content. Nowadays in Tenerife, Gofio is present in day-to-day life and at traditional festivals. This customary recipe has survived a long history, united by people across different continents separated by an ocean. Gofio is known in many places and across great distances.

## INGREDIENTS:

Toasted meal “Gofio”

“María” cookies

Queso blanco tierno, queso fresco,  
or a soft ball of mozzarella

Almonds

Water

Garlic

Honey

*Note:* For 4 and 1/4 cups of Gofio, you’ll use one pack of María cookies. The rest of the ingredients can be eyeballed.

## DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

### Part I:

1. Break the cookies and put them aside.
2. Cut the cheese into small pieces and put it aside.
3. Grind the almonds and put them aside.
4. In a large bowl, mix the cookies, cheese, and almonds with the gofio and set it aside.

### Part II:

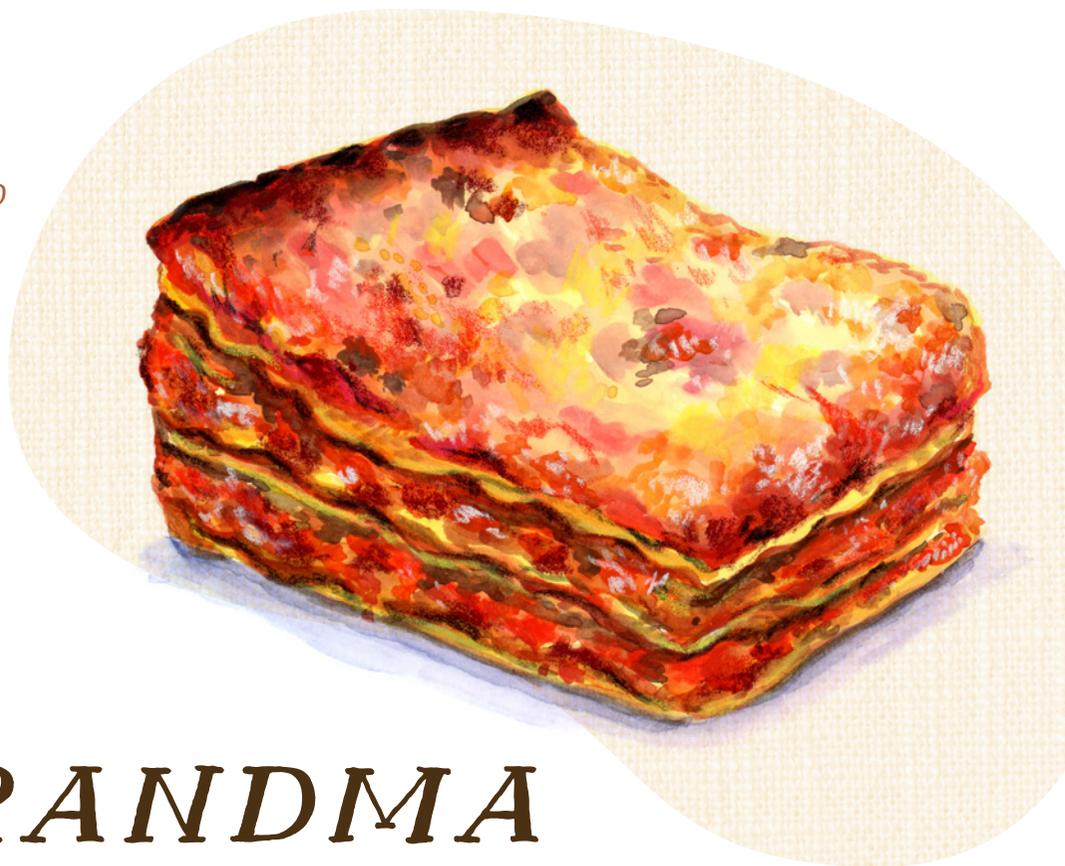
1. Mix honey and water, and add the crushed garlic. Then strain with a colander, saving the water mix, as you will add that gradually to the mix of toasted meal, cookies, cheese, and almonds while mixing and kneading the mixture.

*Notes:* Here is the real trick or “secret” to this recipe: depending on the taste you prefer, you can add more of any ingredient to end up with a distinct dish. Ideally, in the end, the Gofio is neither too dry, nor too wet so that the kneaded Gofio ball can be cut gently with a knife or bare hands. If it isn’t, you can add or reduce the amount of Gofio so that you end up with a fudge-like texture.

*Editor’s note:* Gofio as well as María cookies, made by Goya, can be found in most Latinx grocery stores.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Melissa Bertolo  
Dayton, OH  
(in memory of Alma Ryan)



# GRANDMA ALMA'S LASAGNA

**THE STORY:**

Melissa says: "This is my grandmother's recipe and is our family's go-to lasagna recipe. It's interesting that it uses cottage cheese, instead of ricotta. However, ricotta was harder to find when my grandmother was cooking meals for her family in the '60s. I think the cottage cheese is a really wonderful and inexpensive substitute!

This recipe reminds me of love and laughter. This is definitely a dish that we have when the whole family is getting together."

### SAUCE INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound Italian sausage
- 1 onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, diced
- 6 ounces of tomato paste
- 15 ounces of tomato sauce
- 15 ounces of canned tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoon basil
- 2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 bay leaf

### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Cook lasagna noodles until al dente

#### To make the sauce:

1. In a medium sized pan, over medium heat, brown sausage. Then remove from the pan and drain most of the sausage grease, leaving enough to cook the onion and garlic.
2. Sauté onion and garlic until onions are translucent.
3. Add tomato products and spices, and mix well.
4. Add sausage back to the pan and bring to simmer.

### FILLING:

- 1½ pounds of cottage cheese
- 8 ounces of shredded mozzarella
- 8 ounces of shredded parmesan
- 2 tablespoon parsley
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 eggs

### OTHER INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound lasagna noodles
- Extra shredded cheese to put on top of the lasagna

#### To make the filling:

1. In a large mixing bowl, mix cottage cheese, parsley, pepper, and cheese together.
2. Make well in cheese mixture and add eggs.
3. Mix all together.

#### Baking instructions:

1. In a 9 inch x 13 inch baking pan, layer lasagna noodles, cheese mixture, and then sauce. Repeat until you have used all ingredients.
2. Add additional cheese on top.
3. Cover with tin foil and place in the oven for 30 minutes.
4. After 30 minutes, remove tin foil and let bake an additional 15–20 minutes until the cheese is golden brown.
5. Remove from the oven and let rest for 15 minutes.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Isha Ahsan Lee  
Decatur, GA



# TIKKIS

**THE STORY:**

This dish is traditional Punjabi fare.

Isha says: “My mother used to make these for both Eids and everyone in our immigrant circle would be taken back to their childhoods with one taste. They are cheap, tasty, vegetarian, and feed a crowd. Variations and stir-ins are endless.”

## INGREDIENTS:

3 pounds russet, red, Yukon gold or mixed potatoes, peeled, ½ inch diced, and boiled in salted water until tender

1 tablespoon salt

¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper (or to taste)

1 finger hot chile, seeded and minced (optional)

1 tablespoon coriander seeds

1 teaspoon cumin

1 bunch scallions, sliced

2 garlic cloves, pressed

4 large eggs, whisked with water to create an egg wash

Oil for pan-frying

Mint and cilantro for chopped garnish (optional)

## DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Place cooked potatoes in a large mixing bowl and add spices and scallions. Mix to combine with clean hands or a large spoon. Some potatoes should remain diced and some should collapse, binding the mixture.
2. Taste. Adjust seasonings to taste.
3. Make 3 inch balls and press into patties. Line patties on a plate or sheet pan.
4. Heat ½ inch of oil in a broad skillet to medium heat.
5. Place egg and water mixture on a dinner plate.
6. Dredge potato patties in egg on both sides, placing in the heated oil in batches. Do not crowd pan.
7. Pan fry about a minute per side until brown and eggs are set.
8. Garnish and enjoy. They keep well in the fridge or freezer and are also delicious served cold.

## Promising Model #3: The Welcome Table

*Reflection and education to spark group action on equity issues*

The Welcome Table, run by The Winter Institute in Jackson, MS, begins with community building, reflection, and education (particularly about race, structural racism, privilege, and discrimination) to build relationships and create a sense of belonging. This is intended to spark collective action as the group looks outward to address an equity issue in their local community or organization. The program typically spans at least six months, with participants motivated to learn from the past and co-create the future.



The Welcome Table works with participants to help them:

- Understand the importance of listening, storytelling, and relationship building as prerequisites for producing real and measurable change
- Understand the consequences of the systems we have inherited in order to develop initiatives to redress inequities
- Become equipped with tools to accomplish the goals participants collectively identify to improve their communities

### How it works

#### GETTING STARTED

A local convener, often a community leader or someone who leads a nonprofit, museum, corporation, board of directors, or school, coalesces a group of up to 25 people who are interested in participating. That local convener contacts the Welcome Table team who present a written proposal. When the proposal is accepted, the two parties work to schedule a series of 90 to 120-minute meetings with the group. Most opt for six to eight meetings, but that number is flexible depending on the needs of each group, known as a “Welcome Table circle.”

At times, the circle is an ad hoc group of concerned community members who have a relationship to the convener or one of the other group members. These groups are generally voluntary and come from a personal motivation to build bridges or address an issue in the community. At other times, the convener may be an employer who requires employees to participate or offers the circle as a voluntary opportunity for employees.

Depending on funding available, there may be a fee for starting a Welcome Table circle — for example, businesses or organizations with discretionary budgets typically pay for the program. For community groups with little or no budget, the Winter Institute is sometimes able to donate services, with expenses covered by grant funding.

## **REFLECTION**

This first phase of the program focuses deeply on laying a foundation of community building and trust within the group. The process is led by skilled, experienced facilitators who work in pairs or a small team. Every initial session starts with an exercise around “The Guideposts,” the shared agreements that guide Welcome Table discussions. The process relies heavily on story sharing, using a story circle model in which each participant has equal time to share. For example, facilitators may pose the prompt, “Tell the story of your name,” which often elicits stories about family, adoption, immigration, slavery, and trauma. The facilitators rely on this foundation to help the group dig deeper into more challenging conversations, issues, and learning opportunities later in the process.

Sessions can be held in person or via a virtual platform such as Zoom. In-person sessions are most effective in a space that allows for chairs to be set up in a circle, with no tables or desks in the way. The physical space should be a neutral ground that allows for a variety of configurations and movement.

## **EDUCATION**

From the relationships and trust built in early sessions, peers continue to learn from each other and the facilitators about the ways in which structural racism, privilege, and discrimination have shaped all our lives. Sessions cover a variety of topics such as implicit bias, microaggressions, and important historical events. They also help demystify vocabulary so that participants learn how to communicate respectfully.

Because of the continued focus on community building and trust formation even beyond the earlier sessions, these more challenging topics can be open and honest, with an understanding that each person is an imperfect learner. The facilitators continue to reinforce listening skills and reflection.

## EQUITY ACTION

As participants deepen their understanding and nurture relationships with others across points of difference, they are asked to investigate their own organizations and community through the lens of inequity and injustice.

In these later sessions, groups develop shared goals, either through a project they'll embark on together or an equity plan with next steps for their organization. Facilitators lead participants through a process that helps them prioritize their own goals and focus on their particular community needs. The Welcome Table program doesn't provide funding or parameters for projects; the group is responsible for raising any necessary funds and setting their own timeline. Some projects require funds, while others are more volunteer-powered, advocacy-centered, or about shifting practices or policy.

Past groups have conducted civil rights driving tours, created a local pre-K readiness program, completed oral history projects, developed a coalition that created affordable housing options and homeownership training, built playgrounds and community gardens in neighborhoods that had none, launched a rural youth community center, and so much more. With new knowledge and deep relationships, participants embrace their power to find solutions that create communities where everyone belongs.

## Interested in Bringing This to Your Community?

Welcome Table circles can be a monthly or bi-monthly session format. One-time sessions are also available under special circumstances, such as a pilot to introduce an organization to the methodology.

To learn more and customize the Welcome Table model for your community, [click here](#).

**SUBMITTED BY:**

[The Sioux Chef's Indigenous Kitchen](#) by Sean Sherman with Beth Dooley. Copyright 2017 Ghost Dancer, LLC. All rights reserved. Used by permission of the [University of Minnesota Press](#).

# CEDAR TEA

**THE STORY:**

Cedar is a sacred tree and, like sweetgrass and tobacco, is part of many ceremonies. It's used to purify homes, in sweat-lodge ceremonies, and as a medicine. The tea of simmered branches is used to treat fevers and rheumatic complaints, chest colds, and flu. This brew is delicious warm or cold and is simple to make.

**INGREDIENTS:**

2 cups of cedar tea leaves  
4 cups of boiling water  
Maple syrup

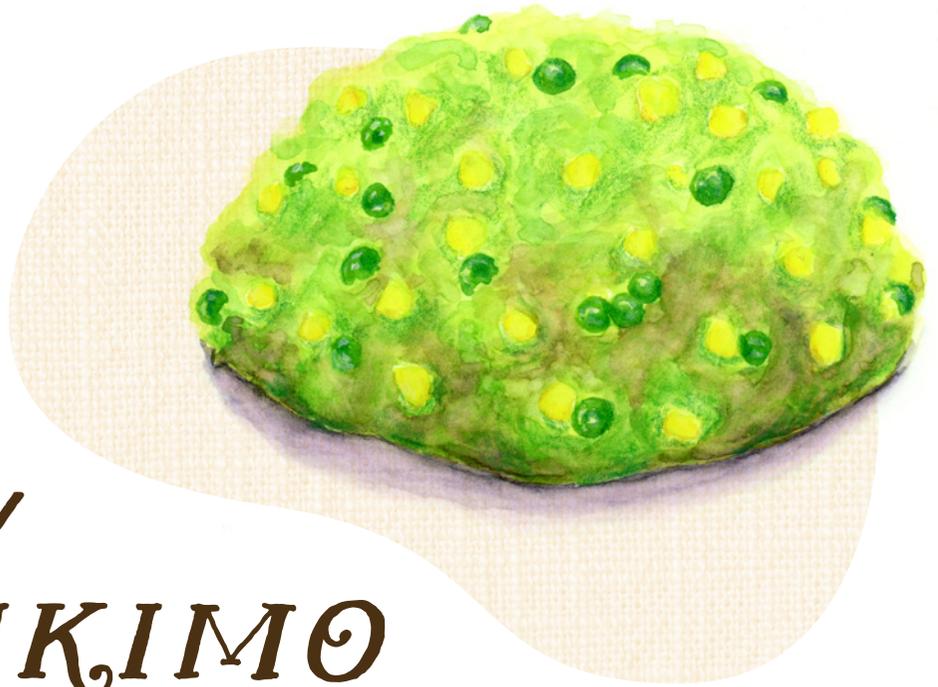
**DETAILED COOKING STEPS:**

1. Just simmer 2 cups of fresh cedar in 4 cups of boiling water for about 10 minutes until the water becomes a golden color.
2. Strain off the cedar.
3. Sweeten with maple syrup, to taste.



**SUBMITTED BY:**

Salome Mwangi  
Boise, ID



# TRIO/ MUKIMO

**THE STORY:**

This is a traditional Kenyan recipe, passed down from one generation to the next.

Irio means food in Gikuyu, the language of the Gikuyu people of central Kenya. Since they were predominantly farmers, this was a quick and easy way to make a meal. This dish can be made using beans instead of peas, and maize instead of corn.

In the past, people would leave the maize and beans boiling in a pot for the greater part of the day before adding potatoes. Sometimes, pumpkin leaves were added to the pot. They would then mash it and it would be eaten as a complete meal. This was a meal enjoyed on most occasions.

Salome says: “I remember my grandmother’s sister, who lived a long way away from my grandma. When she came to visit her sister, she would make this dish and pack it using banana leaves, and then place it in her purse. After they had greeted each other and shared the updates of their lives, they would sit down on a grassy slope, facing Mount Kenya, and slowly enjoy the meal together. They did not need utensils to enjoy it. Since I am named after my grandmother, I was included in their circle of love as they enjoyed the dish and each other’s company. I felt cherished, spoiled, blessed, and honored — all at the same time!”

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups organic green peas
- 1 cup organic fresh corn
- 4–5 large potatoes (russets)
- Salt (to taste)
- 1 large red onion
- 2 tablespoons coconut oil (or choice of cooking oil)

### DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. Boil the potatoes, peas, and corn together until they are cooked through.
2. Drain the water, then mash the potatoes, peas, and corn together.
3. Mash the mixture until the peas are well integrated into the potatoes.
4. Add salt, to taste.
5. Finely chop the onion.
6. Heat 2 tablespoons of coconut oil (or your choice of cooking oil) in a pan.
7. Once the oil is hot, add the chopped onion, and keep stirring to keep it from burning while caramelizing.
8. When the onions achieve a deep brown color, add them to the mashed peas, corn, and potatoes.
9. Mix thoroughly. Serve with beef or chicken, or keep it vegetarian.

#### TRIED MAKING ANY OF THESE RECIPES?

Share a photo of the outcome on social media! Tag us [@welcomingusa](#) and use [#TasteofBelonging](#)

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Shannon Hapgood Lubell  
Berlin, Germany  
(with attribution  
to Martha Lubell)



# *MATOO'S MATZO BREI*

**THE STORY:**

Shannon says: “My mother-in-law, Martha or ‘Matoo’ as she is called by my children, taught me how to make matzo brei while celebrating the Jewish holiday of Passover at her home outside of Philadelphia. During Passover, traditional bread is not eaten, so Jews have come up with creative ways to eat matzo or unleavened bread. Matzo brei is a simple classic.

Passover is my favorite Jewish holiday. Whenever I eat matzo brei, I remember the many years of celebrating Passover together with our extended family.”

### **INGREDIENTS:**

1 sheet of matzo  
1 egg  
1 tablespoon water  
1 tablespoon butter  
Salt & pepper

### **OPTIONAL EXTRAS:**

Applesauce, sour cream, sugar, syrup, cinnamon, apples, nuts... you can even get creative and add grated cheese or diced veggies.

### **DETAILED COOKING STEPS:**

1. Beat egg with 1 tablespoon of water and set aside.
2. Hold 1 sheet of matzo under running hot tap water for 20 seconds so it softens, but doesn't get soggy. Shake off the excess water and reserve the matzo.
3. Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a skillet or frying pan over medium heat.
4. Break the matzo into small pieces and place them in the skillet. Sauté the matzo pieces over medium heat for about a minute, until they are evenly coated with butter.
5. Pour the scrambled egg mixture over the matzo pieces. Stir the eggs with a spatula until they are well combined with the matzo. Fry, turning once, until golden and just cooked through, about 1 minute per side. As you are cooking, sprinkle in salt and pepper to taste. This would also be the time to add sugar if you want a sweeter matzo brei.
6. Serve the matzo brei immediately with a small side of applesauce and sour cream, or maple syrup if you like.

*Notes:* This recipe is for one person. For more servings, use 2 or more matzo.

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Antonio L. Veloso  
Swansea, MA



# PORTUGUESE SOUP

**THE STORY:**

Antonio says: “During my childhood, my mother made a soup that was similar to my version here. She often used a soup bone with some meat on it rather than the chouriço (pork sausage also known as chorizo in Spain or Mexico) which I don’t think was available in our community at that time. As a young adult living several summers at my grandmother’s home in Portugal, I experienced this soup more similar to my recipe. My grandmother grew her own collards and the chouriços were made from her pigs or a neighbor’s. In the community where I live, this type of soup is a staple in Portuguese restaurants, in homes, and it’s available at many Portuguese bakeries. My wife, who is not of Portuguese descent, tells me this is her favorite soup and looks forward to my making it often.

This recipe reminds me of my childhood memories growing up in a very diverse community in Bridgeport, CT. I tasted many different foods offered by neighbors and my customers. As a teenager, I worked in a small grocery store and delivered groceries to many families, many of them immigrants from different countries, along with African-American families in our neighborhood. I had the wonderful opportunity to eat some of their traditional foods and have always remembered how cooking and sharing food makes for a better world.”

## INGREDIENTS:

2–4 tablespoons olive oil  
4–6 medium potatoes peeled and diced  
1 medium or large onion diced  
2–3 cloves of garlic minced  
1 cup of celery chopped (optional)  
1 carrot chopped (optional)  
1 cup of white wine  
1 or 2 bay leaves  
4–6 cups chicken broth  
1 or 2 cups of water  
15-ounce can of cannellini or dark red kidney beans

Salt & pepper to taste

½ pound chouriço or linguiça, sliced crosswise into ¼ inch slices. (I use chicken or turkey chouriço or linguiça which my wife prefers. I remove the casing; you can also leave it on.)

About 1 pound or more of collard greens or kale. Wash greens well and remove the thick center stalks. Slice the greens by taking a few leaves at a time and rolling them up tightly. Slice greens into very thin strips and then cut the thin strips into shorter strips if they are too long.

## DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

1. In a pot that will hold approximately 6 quarts, turn on medium heat, pour in the olive oil and then sauté the onions, celery, carrots, and garlic. Add about a teaspoon of salt and ¼ teaspoon pepper.
2. Add about half the diced potatoes, the wine, and water. Cover and cook until the potatoes are tender.
3. Take the pot off the heat and using a hand blender or potato masher, or a blender, puree the vegetables and potato.
4. Return the pot to medium heat, add the chicken broth and bay leaves, bring to a boil, and then add the greens and the other half of the potatoes, along with the chouriço or linguiça.
5. Cover the pot and simmer until the greens are tender. Although it may seem like a lot of greens, once they are cooking, they shrink quite a bit. Take a taste and add salt and pepper as needed.
6. Finally, add the cannellini or kidney beans. Turn off the heat and let the beans heat through.
7. Serve in a bowl along with some good crusty bread and a glass of wine!

*Notes:* Use this as a guide and make whatever adjustments you like. I make this often and change it based on what I have available; sometimes less broth and more water, maybe a few drops of hot sauce, some folks like to add a cup of rice or pasta. Enjoy!

**SUBMITTED BY:**

Dauda Sesay  
Baton Rouge, LA

# CASSAVA LEAF STEW



**THE STORY:**

Cassava is one of Africa's most versatile foods and is widely consumed in North, East, South, and Western Africa. Its root can be pounded to make fufu (a soft and doughy staple made from boiled cassava) or eaten raw, boiled, or baked. The leaves of cassava roots are an essential ingredient in cassava leaf sauce and stew.

According to Dauda: "Cassava leaf stew is best described as a favorite staple food for Sierra Leoneans. It is such an essential contribution to the diet of my home country and the culture. Every Sierra Leonean, at home and abroad, rich or poor, eats cassava leaf sauce almost every day."

To prepare this delicious meal, chop, blend, or finely shred the leaves before cooking. You can also buy frozen ground cassava leaves in a pack.

## INGREDIENTS:

2 16-ounce packs of ground cassava leaves  
Palm oil or groundnut oil  
Coconut oil for more elegant flavor and taste  
Natural peanut butter (sugar-free)  
Ogiri (ground and blended sesame seeds)

Your choice of meat (beef, turkey, goat, chicken, shrimp, etc.)  
Smoked or fried fish  
Seasoning (Doli Maggi, star Maggi, Jumbo Maggi, and salt)  
Red or white chopped onions  
Habanero peppers

## DETAILED COOKING STEPS:

### Part I:

1. Wash meat, like chicken or fish, and cut into desired sizes.
2. Season the meat(s) with Doli, Jumbo, or star Maggi and sprinkle salt to your taste. Cook in a pot or pressure cooker until tender. Cook time may vary depending on the choice of meat.

### Part II:

1. Remove cooked meat(s) and put in a pan. Pour the flavored meat water into a bowl.
2. Add 16 ounces of palm oil into a medium cooking pot over medium heat. Pour 2 cups of the flavored meat water and then add chopped onions, smoked fish, and chopped habanero peppers (or substitute your choice of spicy peppers.)
3. Scoop 3 tablespoons of natural peanut butter and add to the pot. Stir with a clean spoon until all lumps disappear. Cook for about 2 to 5 minutes
4. Add the cooked meats, Maggi seasoning, ogiri (optional), or salt to your taste, and add some of the flavored meat water if the sauce is thicker. Let it cook for about 3 more minutes, mixing occasionally.

### Part III:

1. Wash the finely ground cassava leaves in a separate bowl and strain. Add the strained cassava leaves to the cooking pot and continue to cook; and if you are using shrimp or lobster, add and cook for about 10–15 minutes more. Mix occasionally and taste.
2. When the sauce is dry and juicy, it is ready.
3. Serve over rice, boiled plantain, or cassava roots. Yummy!

## Additional Community Building Models & Programs

There are many ways to build community and bridge differences. In addition to the intergroup bridging models in the “Promising Model” sections, here are more examples of community building, intrapersonal, and interpersonal bridging.

### Welcoming Week



Each September, thousands of people and hundreds of organizations take part in an annual series of events that seek to bring communities together and affirm the welcoming movement. From virtual panel discussions to in-person community events, Welcoming Week is an ideal time to put your intergroup bridging plans into action by hosting an event. Check out these examples from the [American Library Association](#) and the [American Alliance of Museums](#). Learn more [here](#).

### Meal + Conversation Models

#### CIVIC DINNERS

Atlanta, GA



Civic Dinners is a community engagement platform designed to bring people together for structured conversations on big issues. Conversations can be hosted virtually or in-person anywhere around the world. They involve 6–10 people gathering to discuss a specific topic, which can range from “Bridging the Racial Divide” to “Clean Energy for All.” Welcoming America has worked with Civic Dinners to host a conversation on [belonging](#). Hosts are provided with a set of questions to guide the conversation, including ground rules, facilitator tips, and follow-up emails. Learn more [here](#).

#### THE PEOPLE'S SUPPER

Herndon, VA



The People's Supper uses shared meals to build trust and connection among people of different identities and perspectives. Their work is born of a belief that “change moves at the speed of trust” and that trust moves at the speed of relationships. It is guided by a simple question: “What needs healing here?” Take a look at their suggested conversation-starters, guidelines and ground rules, facilitation tips, and resources [here](#).

### **PROJECT FINE, THE WELCOMING TABLE**

Winona, MN

The nonprofit, Project FINE, runs a program called “The Welcoming Table” which provides opportunities for the community to come together to share a meal and build cross-cultural relationships. Monthly dinners consist of short presentations and conversation starters to break the ice. See more [here](#).



prepare the meal and host these dinners in their homes, curating an intimate experience for guests. To compensate families for their time, hospitality, and food, they receive 100% of the ticket sales. Learn more [here](#).

### **THE BIG TABLE**

Louisville, KY

Each year, 2,000 folks come together for Louisville’s largest potluck. The goal is simple: engage with each other and leave as friends rather than strangers. Tables of eight are led by volunteers who sign up to invite participants, spread the word, and facilitate the conversation. There is no stage or program, allowing conversations to take center stage. Learn more [here](#).



## **Meal Kit Models**

### **RECIPES FOR WELCOMING, CITY OF PORTLAND OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY**

Portland, ME

In partnership with Wayside Food Programs, the City of Portland’s Office of Economic Opportunity took inspiration from meal kit services to deliver meal kits during Welcoming Week. Each kit included two recipes provided by Portland-based chefs and the ingredients to cook each meal. Local celebrity chefs hosted a virtual cooking demonstration during which participants could cook alongside them. Learn more [here](#).



### **REFUGEE IN HOME EXPERIENCES, BRIDGE**

Lancaster County, PA

In Lancaster County, PA, a former refugee from Somalia, Mustafa Nuur, launched Bridge, a social enterprise that brings together U.S.-born residents and former refugees for a cultural dinner experience. Refugee families



### **CROSS CULINARY KITS, IDAHO OFFICE FOR REFUGEES**

Boise, ID



The Idaho Office for Refugees in Boise created monthly cooking classes taught by neighbors with refugee and immigrant backgrounds. Each month, participants could order a \$25 kit with the ingredients (except perishable meats and pantry staples) needed to make a dish inspired by a local immigrant chef. The kits contained ingredients sourced from [Global Gardens](#) and nearby immigrant-owned markets. After receiving the kit, participants attended a live, interactive cooking class with the chef, where they learned how to make the dish as well as the history and culture surrounding it. Learn more [here](#).

### **Art & Sports Programming Models**

#### **EAST BOSTON MURAL**

Boston, MA



The City of Boston has a team of muralists and high school interns who contribute to the vibrant living walls throughout the city. Heidi Schork, Director of the Mayor's Mural Crew, painted a large mural depicting the morning routines of immigrant grandmothers living in Boston. To ensure that the image had accurate portrayals, she offered free painting classes during which grandmothers met each other and shared stories about their lives, their commonalities, and their differences. Community members submitted photos of their grandmothers, including those from Italy, El Salvador, and Guatemala. The images of these grandmothers and their stories informed the final mural design. Today, the mural lights up East Boston and the grandmothers reflect the city's vibrancy for all to see. Read more [here](#).

## ULTIMATE PEACE

The West Bank

Ultimate Peace uses ultimate frisbee to bring together disadvantaged youth from Palestinian, Arab Israeli, and Israeli Jewish communities to learn, play, and unite. The program produces shared experiences in which recreational enjoyment, personal reflection, culture sharing, and experiential learning are emphasized and balanced. The organizers believe that widespread changes in behavior require deep and enduring shifts in awareness. For example, since there is no referee, players on both teams have to acknowledge their differences on the field and come to an agreement on the way forward. Learn more [here](#).



## ESSENTIAL PARTNERS

Cambridge, MA

Essential Partners offers training, facilitation, coaching, and consultation to help people recognize and transform the self-perpetuating patterns that undermine effective communication and collaboration across differences of identity, belief, personality, and perspective. Through custom training programs, guides, and workshops, they equip people to live and work better together in community by building trust and understanding across differences. Learn more [here](#).



## Story & Dialogue Models

### NARRATIVE 4

New York, NY

Narrative 4 (N4) is a global organization driven by artists, shaped by educators, and led by students. N4's core methodology — the story exchange — is designed to help students understand that their voices, stories, actions and lives matter, and that they have the power to change, rebuild and revolutionize systems. N4's work focuses on the broad, yet intersecting, themes of faith, identity, immigration, violence, and the environment. N4 ambassadors around the world are creating tangible change with personal stories as their foundation. Learn more [here](#).



### STORY STITCH, GREEN CARD VOICES

Minneapolis, MN

Green Card Voices, together with 70 community members, created Story Stitch, a conversation card game. Their goal was to build deep connections between immigrants and their neighbors by telling stories, opening minds, and encouraging people to get to know one another. The [card game](#) is great for fostering a deeper connection and building empathy. To get the card deck, virtual Story Stitch kit (also available in Spanish, Arabic, Korean), or become a certified facilitator, click [here](#).



## More Resources

### Not yet ready to host an event? Join a training program:

**Welcoming America** offers workshops, webinars, and an annual conference for those working toward more inclusive communities. [Discover more.](#)

**Civility** offers multiple trainings to help people bridge divides. [Learn more.](#)

**Facing History** offers professional development opportunities for educators who want to heighten students' understanding of racism, religious intolerance, and prejudice, as well as promote greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities in a democracy. [Get involved.](#)

### Learn more with these suggested readings and tools:

**Building Meaningful Contact: A How-To Guide:** This guide produced by Welcoming America explores lessons from promising bridging models across the United States and delves deeper into a series of activities that the program, Welcoming Michigan, conducted in Macomb County, MI. [Click here to read it.](#)

**Bridging Divides, Creating Community: Arts, Culture, and Immigration** is a field scan written by John C. Arroyo, Ph.D., AICP, in partnership with ArtPlace America and Welcoming America. This field scan illuminates key priorities within the immigration sector and provides a framework for understanding the ways that arts and culture contribute to local, place-based immigration related outcomes. It is intended for artists and other arts and cultural stakeholders seeking to better understand and collaborate with a particular community development sector, as well as community development practitioners, policymakers, and funders who are interested in how arts and culture partners might further their work. [Click here to read it.](#)

**Bridging Differences Playbook:** As part of the Bridging Differences initiative at the University of California at Berkeley’s Greater Good Science Center, this playbook synthesizes the core skills and strategies for bridging political, racial, religious, and other divides to support positive dialogue, relationships, and understanding between groups or individuals. [Click here to read it.](#)

**The Nature of Prejudice** by Dr. Gordon W. Allport is the earliest analysis of contact theory, known as a classic in the social psychology field. [Visit your local bookstore to purchase your copy.](#)

**Crossing Borders: Building Relationships Across Lines of Difference** was developed by the Center for Community Change, Fair Immigration Reform Movement, and CASA. The guide is for leaders wanting to build bridges between immigrants and African Americans. Download the guide [here](#).

**More in Common** uses research to understand and interrupt the driving forces of “othering.” Learn more [here](#).

**Crossing Boundaries, Connecting Communities,** published by the Black Alliance for Just Immigration, provides a methodological analysis of 16 organizations that are building cross-racial alliances to strengthen integration of newcomers into communities. Discover the common themes and recommendations [here](#).

**The Othering & Belonging Institute** at UC Berkeley works to re-frame the public discourse from a dominant narrative of control and fear towards one that recognizes the humanity of all people, including the role of belonging. Explore the research and work of the institute [here](#).

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