



MAKE IT MEMORABLE

As your plans get underway for joining in the 80th anniversary of VE Day celebrations, there are plenty of ways to make your event more memorable with a few little extras.

Turn a simple get-together into a more meaningful event with themed decorations, food, music, games and activities that add to the atmosphere, spark conversations and encourage everyone to join in. Here's how!

BUNTING AND FLAGS



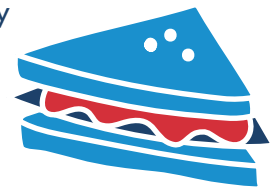
At The Big Lunch, we love bunting and nothing says community celebration or street party quite like it! String some up to add a splash of colour and choose red, white and blue or Union Flags designs for a classic VE Day look.

Fancy making your own paper flags? You'll find an easy template and instructions in your VE Day pack. Pop them into jam jars or empty vases to brighten up tables, or set up a 'Make Your Own Flag' station so guests can get creative on the day.

TEA PARTY TOUCHES

Embrace the charm of a classic 1940s tea party and bring a touch of nostalgia to your celebration. Check out your local charity shop for floral table settings, mismatched teacups and lace doilies to create an authentic vintage feel.

If you're serving finger food and bite-sized treats see if anyone has a cake stand to lend for the day – it's an easy way to add some style to your spread and a fun way to display different food. A few small bunches of fresh flowers will brighten the table and be a cheerful touch too.



STREET ART MURALS AND CHALK DRAWINGS

If space allows and you've got permission, why not collaborate with a local artist to create a VE Day-themed mural? This could capture iconic moments from the era, such as joyful street celebrations or symbols of unity.

Encourage your community to get creative and join in with chalk art on pavements. They could design fun vintage-style posters, write messages of peace or create a display of poppies as a tribute to those who served.

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We have our Big Lunch down to a fine art now – we know who can bring a big table, who has the gazebos and who will be bringing their special recipes. We have Becky from next door who makes her amazing baklava, and Jane down the road who makes strudel using apples from her allotments. Everyone has things they look forward to each year.

Helen, a Big Lunch organiser



RATION-INSPIRED RECIPES

Did you know that wartime apple pie used grated carrots to add natural sweetness when sugar was scarce?

Celebrate the creativity of wartime cooking and set a ration challenge as part of your get together. Can guests create tasty dishes using as few ingredients as possible – just like families would have done during the war?

VICTORIA SPONGE BAKE-OFF

Get ready for a bit of friendly competition with a VE Day-inspired bake-off. Invite guests to bring along their best Victoria sponge cake or put their own spin on a wartime-classic. Categories could include Most Traditional, Best Wartime Twist, or Most Creative Decoration – ask everyone to vote for their favourites and crown someone star baker!



STEP BACK IN TIME

Bring your wider community together by inviting local groups, veterans or historians to come and share stories from the 1940s. Set up a small space where people can add to a VE Day display with any memorabilia they have, such as ration cards, uniforms, old newspapers, wartime posters, letters and photographs. Creating a shared collection of memories and artifacts will bring history to life and help spark conversations.

TIME TO REMEMBER

Gather everyone together for a short speech or a moment of silence/reflection at your event to honour the significance of VE Day. This short pause allows guests to reflect on the sacrifices made during the war and to pay tribute to those who served.

GET FANCY

Encourage people to dress in 1940s inspired outfits or vintage fashion. Think uniforms, land girl overalls, tea dresses, or dapper suits and hats. If full fancy dress isn't for everyone, a splash of red, white, and blue will still add to the occasion!



COMMUNITY THANK YOU CARDS

Set up a station where guests can write or draw messages of thanks to veterans, active service members or those who keep the community connected today. Whether it's a heartfelt note or a colourful drawing, these messages can be displayed at your event or delivered to a local veterans' association as a token of appreciation.



PLAYGROUND FUN

Bring a sense of community to your VE Day celebration with classic, old-fashioned street games. These simple yet timeless activities from the 1940s are sure to bring people together for some light-hearted fun:

- ➔ **Hopscotch** – mark out a hopscotch grid with chalk and invite guests of all ages to have a go at this playground favourite.
- ➔ **Skipping rope challenges** – provide long skipping ropes and see who can jump the most times in a row or get a group together for some coordinated skipping fun.
- ➔ **Ball games and pavement play** – keep it simple with games that need just chalk, a ball and safe space (like a closed road). Mark out a giant noughts and crosses grid or get a game of hot potato going for all to enjoy.
- ➔ **Classic clapping** – invite everyone to join in the nostalgic fun of old-school playground rhymes and clapping games.
- ➔ **Tug of war** – a fun, energetic activity that brings people together for a test of teamwork and strength, perfect for creating some friendly competition and lots of laughs.

KEEP CALM AND QUIZ ON

Put everyone's knowledge to the test with a VE Day-themed trivia quiz. There's a readymade one in your VE Day pack or you can create your own. Include questions about VE Day, WWII history and wartime Britain, covering everything from rationing and famous speeches to popular songs of the era.

Team names, a quick-fire bonus round and small prizes for the winning team will add to the camaraderie!

BIG BAND BASH



Is there a local band or jazz ensemble you can invite to bring the 1940s vibe to life? Or how about a local dance teacher or group that could share a few classic moves like Lindy hop or Jitterbug?

Recreate the celebratory atmosphere of VE Day and get everyone moving with a lively 1940s dance-off. Set the scene with sounds of swing, jive, and big band music!

Whether you choose to recreate the vintage charm of the 1940s with a tea party, share stories through a memorabilia display, or host a friendly competition with wartime-inspired baking challenges, adding a little extra to your VE Day celebration will make it truly memorable.

By creating a fun day filled with food, music, games and activities, you'll not only bring people together but also inspire a sense of community and help everyone connect with the history of the day.

For more ideas and inspiration – including recipes, games and things you can do visit **TheBigLunch.com**

Celebrating VE Day's 80th anniversary.
ve-vjday80.gov.uk

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