

The Morning Moot Newsletter

Fuck Potlucks

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*The cover image for today's moot was created by DALL·E, an AI Art platform that generates images using natural language processing. DALL·E created this image in the style of Tim Burton, Emily's artist of choice.



Pandemic anxiety aside, potlucks have always been a psychotically optimistic idea.

Part of the word itself indicates you're at the mercy of fate. Why knowingly take chances with food?

Look, I'm a clean chef. Yet no matter my prevention, there is an 80% chance that something I serve will have a hair in it. When it happens at my house, I apologize and remedy the situation—*would you like a fresh serving? You already got the one hair, so...* But if I bring “a dish to share” and I'm not witness, you're stuck navigating the most graceful way to slowly pull my long hair out of your mouth and hide it in a wadded cocktail napkin, while I'm smiling obliviously elsewhere, the spinach from your salad swinging from my incisors.

This politeness we all “bring to the table” at the horror gathering called a potluck is the root of everyone's dissatisfaction. Do you know how many servings of cheesecake I've “had to try” because someone detailed their labors with it? How many times I've obligatorily gagged down that sour “dessert”, my tongue rolling over the slop state of matter between solid and liquid that lacks the transparency of Jell-O?

Fuck cheesecake, it's all the same 1,000-calorie serving of flab that inspired a “Factory” restaurant chain to celebrate obesity. I digress.

You're right: I don't have to make anything, I can just “pick something up”, maybe a classy plastic clamshell of dry cookies to toss alongside your centerpiece. That'll really shine. Because let's face it, a potluck is also a bizarre ego competition, a way to solicit domestic compliments to feed fleeting self-worth. And to win, you must also consider aesthetics. I might know this from the times I enthusiastically brought olive tapenade to share, only to realize the resemblance to minced dirt. It's a hard sell *BUT I SWEAR IT'S DELICIOUS*. After leaving too many potlucks with the exact quantity of tapenade I brought minus the tapenade I ate myself, I got the hint. Even “successful” potlucks are far less satisfying than expected, because compliments on my cooking aren't self-actualizing, and talk about recipes is still excruciating small talk that drains my soul.

Don't forget: a beautiful potluck spread does not include your chipped mismatched plate from college. Bring your best so that when you're ready to leave the potluck first, you face another decision. Leave your best serving ware with a stranger and fret about asking for your plate back without sounding petty? Take your dish home early, depriving other guests of a dinner component? This conundrum is why I no longer

have my favorite bowl with the hidden message on the bottom, “*Now is probably the time to tell you I put LSD in the dip*”. Did the host ever reach the bottom of the tapenade to enjoy the joke? Was the bowl washed and returned to someone else? I’ll never know.

Just like you’ll never know exactly what’s in store for you at a potluck.

If you enjoyed today’s moot, follow Emily on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) and check out her [website](#). If you are feeling generous, consider giving to [Everytown for Gun Safety](#), Emily’s charity of choice.

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