

Reflections and Results of Survey of Men who Cooked for the April 13, 2024 Men's UUAA Dinner

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Summary

This report provides thoughts on the food prep for the men's dinner, April 13 2024, and the results of a survey sent to all the cooks who brought a dish to the dinner.

We had nine people prepare a dish: Tom Reischl, Bill Cervený, Erik Stalhandske, John Erdevig, Tom Chettleburgh, Wren Hess, Gary Huffnagle, Allen Duncan, Russ Blaesing. All but one answered the survey. Overall it was a success—food was really good, a nice variety, and enough that no one was hungry. However, next time we would make more food to ensure sufficiency. All but one would make a dish and participate in this again. The overwhelming sentiment was positive about sharing our own good cooking, supporting the men's dinner, and being part of a larger event.

If there is a next time, we would initiate the dish coordination two to three weeks in advance. Sign Up genius had some glitches so would want to get those resolved or use different coordinating approach (e.g. google docs).

An interesting suggestion was to have a set menu for the evening, and cooks then choose different dishes to make. It was also suggested that cooking together would be enjoyable, but difficult logistically.

The following are summaries of responses to the specific questions.

1. What motivated you to make a dish and would you do it again?

Eight out of nine would participate again. They were motivated by: enjoying cooking and sharing good food (6), supporting the men's dinner, and because I asked them to help out (2).

2. How did it feel to participate in the event by bringing food?

Responses include: it felt good (5), felt part of something bigger than myself/contributed to an event (3), enjoyed watching people enjoy the good food, appreciated compliments on the cooking.

3. What went well with the coordination of this process, and what could we do differently?

Responses include: Sign up sheet helped in knowing what others were bringing and in planning (3) , Sign up Genius had glitches (4), should make more food next time (4), some dishes more popular so plan for this.

4. Any other comments—

Responses include: consider a fixed menu and cooks choose a dish to make, would enjoy if able to cook together, appreciate folks coordinating this (4), consider hosting a fall chili cook off, liked that we didn't spend a lot of money on mediocre banquet food, props that we minimized our waste, consider catering next year (1), get different desserts from tiramisu snacks.

SPECIFIC RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS. MEN'S SPRING DINNER MAY 2024

1. What motivated you to make a dish and would you do it again?

- I enjoy cooking and making people happy with good food. So yes, I would do it again.
- I enjoy cooking and wanted to contribute to the meal. I would do it again.
- I would love to bring a dish again if there were another dinner like this, I'm glad I could help out in a small way!.
- Thanks for the coordination Erik! Things went well. Marriane and I had fun making the rolls (the motivation) and they seemed to be enjoyed (none left).
- Truly enjoyed myself and sharing my catering knowledge and as well as knowledge of the kitchen from my FFN experience. I would like to make a dish next time.
- An easy and enjoyable way to support a worthy cause
- I signed up thinking it was a potluck. I brought a dish because I felt guilty if I didn't because I signed up.
- I was asked, seemed like a reasonable request and something I could do. Sure, I'd do that again.
- I was asked by Erik and wanted to help where I could. I guessed that vegetarian options might be in short supply and I'd had good experience making chili.

2. How did it feel to participate in the event by bringing food?

- It felt good, but the feeling was non unexpected.
- It felt good and I appreciated the compliments on the food I prepared. I also enjoyed watching people enjoy all the food. I felt part of something bigger than myself.
- Good to support an important event
- It felt good to bring a dish. Not so good with the shopping, making for at least 20, and cleaning up the kitchen after
- It felt like I made a small but meaningful contribution.
- It was a lot of fun. That said I may have been a little overwhelmed with everything else I was doing.

3. What went well with the coordination of this process, and what could we do differently?

- The sign-up genius was set up with incorrect limits (number of dishes), I think, but people just rolled with it. It was fine.
- I thought the sign-up sheet was a great idea. I might have encouraged more food production either with more cooks or larger amounts. I'd rather see food leftover than empty serving bowls and platters.
- I thought the sign-up form was helpful - I had been thinking of bringing a salad but saw others had that covered, so was fine bringing a baked good instead.
- All went well except I couldn't find the sign-up form.
- The sign-up genius had some glitches....but it all worked out
- The coordination was poor. I did not see a sign up or spreadsheet, or have any idea how many I was to make it for.
- I didn't have to do coordination, so that was good. I wasn't sure about bringing in a crock pot, but figured that out.

- Certainly some food items were more popular than others. Either we could plan on making more of these items or encourage men to select popular items to prepare.

4. Any other comments—

- Potluck is fun, but it might also be fun to try developing a more coordinated menu, as if we were creating a fixed menu at a nice restaurant (with vegan and meat options). (It would also be fun if we could cook together in a big kitchen, but that's just a fantasy). This is probably too much work for most people, but just an idea.
- Nope. Thanks for organizing all of this!
- Thanks for coordinating! It was delicious and a good time.
- Great bunch of guys.
- Thanks to all who planned, coordinated and worked to make it happen!
- Cater is cool with me. I agree with John--there was *enough* to eat, definitely not *plenty*. I opted for just a thin cut of pizza, because the other items were extremely low, and loaded up on my quinoa. I would have liked to try the salmon, but I felt guilty after taking a piece of pizza and seeing what little was left.
- I appreciate that we all chipped in to make the meal and didn't have to a) spend a lot of cash, b) eat boring or not so great "banquet food", and c) didn't generate a lot of waste. On that last note, those tiramisu snacks in disposable containers seem a rather wasteful way of distributing sugar. I believe they were also part of the previous men's dinner. Not a big deal, but notable.
- I could imagine doing something like a fall chili cook off, which is quite popular at my office.