

Reading Town Meal – Workshops press release

Reading Town Meal to have more interactive workshops than ever before at Forbury Gardens on Saturday 28th September

The Reading Town Meal is a vibrant community-powered event celebrating the wonderful fruit and veg grown in and around Reading. The centrepiece of the event – the ‘Reading Hot Pot’ meal, is made from local growers’ donations, cooked by Reading College students, and aims to be served to around 1,000 people for free.

While enjoying the delicious meal you can get your toes tapping at the band stand, with local musicians performing all afternoon. Expect a Ukulele extravaganza, acoustic guitars, folk music and more! The family activity area will also be packed full of fun things for kids to get stuck into, as well as the host of community stalls and local producers around Forbury Gardens showcasing their work.

This year’s event has an all new line up of sustainability based interactive workshops as well as the EIT Food tent where you will find innovative activities all afternoon. Try immersive virtual reality headsets and find yourself surrounded by tomatoes or in a boat in Iceland fishing cod, while learning about the origin of foods. EIT Food will also be running their Zombie Attack Games of Food, where adults and children alike can try to escape zombies in limited time by solving nutritional and sustainable protein puzzles and riddles! This new project is set to increase individual’s overall knowledge and awareness of balanced nutrition and healthy lifestyles by playing these exciting escape games. While exploring everything on offer at the Town Meal you can also have a go at the EIT Food ‘Food Waste Hunt’ around Forbury Gardens, spotting the four most wasted foods in the UK.

You don’t want to miss out on this year’s workshops run by local organisations covering current sustainability topics. Want to learn more about what you can do in the face of climate change? Come along to Reading Climate Action Network’s workshop to hear about Reading Borough Council’s recent declaration of a climate emergency and what your role can be in mitigating climate change. The University of Reading and EIT Food will also be exploring controversial alternative sources of protein and the ubiquitous use of palm oil in very many foodstuffs and household products, in their workshop ‘Engaging with controversies in the Food System’. Food4Families will be putting on an interactive workshop on ‘Love Food, Hate Waste’ at the Town Meal, where you can learn more about the difference you can make by not wasting your food. To top it all off, after the ‘Reading Hot Pot’ has been served you can dive into making your own pizza with the very best local and organic ingredients at Tinka Tots DIY Pizza.

Make sure to join us at this year’s Reading Town Meal to see all the positive work being done in and around Reading on Saturday 28th September 12-4pm.

Games of Food:

- Project set to increase knowledge and awareness of balanced nutrition and healthy lifestyle through application of escape games
- Plays central role in education about smart food choices
- Engage people of all ages in solving food-related puzzles and riddles
- Zombie Attack – adults and children alike can learn about nutritional and sustainable protein choices while escaping zombies
- Each game 3-8 players search for clues and solve puzzles in order to escape the zombies within a limited time

Virtual reality:

- This year EIT Food debuted 'Future Kitchen' an exciting new virtual reality, video and animation series on FoodUnfolded
- Provides an immersive experience keeping you up-to-date on everything you need to know about food, including sustainability, the journey from 'farm-to-fork', eating healthy and cooking, and innovation in the food sector
- Find yourself surrounded by tomatoes or in a boat in Iceland fishing cod – an opportunity to discover the origin of food
- Explores the potential of virtual reality to connect people with food tech more effectively

Notes for editors:

1. The Town Meal Steering Group is organising this event and comprises: Food4Families (managed by Reading International Solidarity Centre (RISC)), Reading College, Reading Food Growing Network, Reading Borough Council Culture & Sport Services, True Food Community Co-operative and other volunteer members.
2. Food4Families aims to work with communities across Greater Reading to increase the amount of food grown locally and sustainably and has created 20 community gardens across Reading where people learn how to grow their own food under the guidance of professional tutors.
3. RISC is the biggest Development Education Centre in the UK, working with schools and community groups to build understanding of sustainable development and promote social justice.
4. Reading Food Growing Network aims to promote and expand locally grown food through sharing knowledge, information and ideas alongside advice and support to local growers
5. Reading College Hospitality, Travel & Tourism department are contributing their expertise and use of kitchen facilities where their catering students will prepare and cook the Town Meal, which they will then serve in Forbury Gardens.
6. True Food Community Cooperative is a social enterprise, owned and run by its members, that enables its members and others to buy affordable organic food and other produce and supports local food production.

7. Reading Borough Council is supporting the event through logistical advice and support.
8. EIT Food is Europe's leading food innovation initiative, working to make the food system more sustainable, healthy and trusted.
9. Each of the previous Reading Town Meals held in 2011 - 2018 have served over 500 people with a free hot lunch cooked from tasty local ingredients grown locally and filled Forbury Gardens with stalls and activities all celebrating local, sustainable food. A short film of the first Reading Town Meal can be seen here <https://vimeo.com/36269113>