









What does it mean to be  
a good citizen?





## Raise a Glass

While he was known as the pen of the Revolution and the author of our nation's mission statement, Jefferson was not known for being a great public speaker. In case you're more the "pen" than the "voice," we've provided a few cards with suggested toasts to help kick off your conversation, or to raise a glass at the end of the evening.

## Recipes

We've selected recipes from Monticello for you to use, if you're interested. (Of course, you can use these cards with takeout or any other food!) To find, print, or watch video versions of these recipes, scan the QR code below.



### **Yellow Wine Glass**

Toast Cards, to get things started. Raise a glass and set the mood!



### **Green Cabbage**

Appetizer Cards, to get everyone warmed up. These are low stakes questions to help participants get comfortable talking together. You can skip these if all your guests already know each other well.



### **Yellow Carrot**

Entrée Cards, to dig into the meat of the conversation. These questions go a little deeper. Be honest about your own opinions and open to what others share!



### **Blue Fig**

Dessert Cards, to reflect on the conversation. These questions are focused on summarizing what you heard and what you want to think more about.



### **Gray Spoon**

Back Burner Cards, when the pot has been stirred enough! Any participant can use a Back Burner Card at any time to redirect the conversation if they feel uncomfortable.



## Let's Talk

Conversations about society, politics, and community shape life in the United States. Thomas Jefferson understood this, and hosted dinners known for stunning food and sparkling conversation. While these dinners only lasted a few hours, the relationships built lasted much longer and were instrumental in building the young United States. Many of us hold strong opinions on these “civic issues,” which can make it hard to have constructive conversations about these topics, but it’s critical that we keep talking.

## Pull Up a Chair

Jeffersonian dinners usually had two courses, serving between 8 and 32 dishes followed by a wine course. Lively conversation continued throughout the entire evening. Rather than a typical dinner party, where there might be multiple conversations happening simultaneously at a table, a “Feast of Reason” relies on guests participating in one shared conversation. This kit is modeled after that conversational spirit. From the beginning, the United States has been a work in progress, shaped by the many people who pitch in to help us live up to the ideals in the Declaration of Independence. Your conversations are part of that story.

## How It Works

- The goal is to have a great conversation where you get to share your own ideas and learn about what your guests think.

*The goal here is not to convince anyone of your opinion!*

- Start by passing out the cards. Make sure everyone has at least **1 Appetizer, 3 Entrée, 1 Dessert,** and **1 Back Burner Card.** Feel free to use more cards if players wish.
- Players take turns asking the questions on their cards, moving around the table until all the Appetizer cards have been used. Do the same with Entrée and then Dessert Cards. Feel free to spend as long on each question as you’d like.
- Ideally, everyone should answer the question before you move on.
- Feel free to add your own questions! Just like a recipe, it’s ok to throw in your own spices, substitute menu items, and make this conversation your own.
- Anyone can use their Back Burner Card to change the tone or topic of the conversation if things are getting close to boiling over. Simply announce that you will be using your Back Burner Card, ask the question, and then move on to the next card when ready.

## What IS civics?

**It’s the individual and communal actions through which we shape our shared future, from politics to society.**

These activities are often thought about in terms of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, but we recognize that many groups were (and are) civically active long before they were granted citizenship in the United States. In fact, it’s often civic action that leads to citizenship!

## What You’ll Find

- 3 Toast Cards to get your evening started
- 9 Appetizer Cards to get folks warmed up
- 30 Entrée Cards to dig into civics
- 5 Dessert Cards to reflect on the conversation
- 4 Back Burner Cards, for when things start to boil over
- 1 Kids Table Card for younger friends

These questions were guided by the Arc of Dialogue, as developed for the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience. For more information about the work they do, visit [www.sitesofconscience.org](http://www.sitesofconscience.org).







Introduce yourself and share:

- Your name (if needed)
- Where you're from
- A favorite childhood food









If you could have dinner with anyone who has ever lived, who would you pick?

As President, Jefferson held at least three dinners a week so that every congressman could come to at least one.











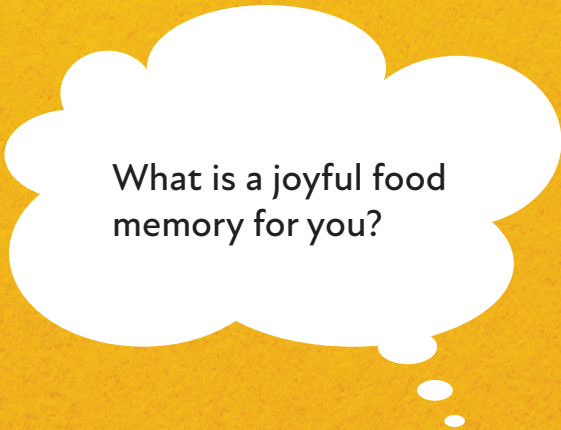
Where do you call home now?











What is a joyful food  
memory for you?











What country feels like home to you? Why?







*I disagree!*



*I agree!*



FEAST  
of  
REASON

*Hold on...*



*True!*



*Heck yes!*



?







What is a food that you hated  
as a child but love now?











Is there a peculiar food combo you love that others find strange?







# FEAST of REASON

I agree!

I disagree!

Hold on...

True!

Heck yes!

?







How would you rate the importance of food to your sense of identity (on a 1-10 scale), and why?









How would you rate the importance of civics to your sense of identity (on a 1-10 scale), and why?







# FEAST of REASON

I agree!

I disagree!

Hold on...

True!

Heck yes!

?





**Is there a beloved recipe that  
has been passed down to you?**

Have you altered this recipe?  
Was this a contentious decision?









**How does your upbringing or background influence your feelings around civics?**

How does your race or class influence your feelings around civics?









What does  
democracy  
mean to you?







# FEAST of REASON

*I agree!*

*I disagree!*

*Hold on...*

*True!*

*Heck yes!*

?





What are your hopes for your country?

How do you think these hopes can be achieved?









What makes you proud of your country?







# FEAST of REASON

*I agree!*

*I disagree!*

*Hold on...*

*True!*

*Heck yes!*

?





**What makes you ashamed of  
your country?**

How would you like to see this  
addressed?









What makes you feel connected  
to your country?







# FEAST of REASON

*I agree!*

*I disagree!*

*Hold on...*

*True!*

*Heck yes!*

?





What makes you feel disconnected  
from your country?







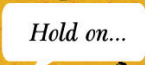


**What does the government  
owe us and vice versa?**

Does the government owe the  
same things to all people?









What does it mean to be  
a good citizen?









**Jefferson wrote that making sacrifices in order to come to a compromise for common purposes was reasonable.**

**Do you agree that it's best to do what you can, even if the end result isn't all you wanted to achieve?**









What does country mean to you?  
Nation? State?







*I agree!*

*I disagree!*

*Hold on...*

**FEAST**  
*of*  
**REASON**

*True!*

*Heck yes!*

?



**Is there a change you would make in the structure of the United States government?**

How do you think this could be accomplished?







# FEAST of REASON

*I agree!*

*I disagree!*

*Hold on...*

*True!*

*Heck yes!*

?





What has helped shape your thoughts about citizenship?









What has helped shape your thoughts  
about government?







# FEAST of REASON

!

I agree!

I disagree!

Hold on...

True!

Heck yes!

?





What role has food played  
in your civic identity?

The enslaved chefs at Monticello  
helped popularize many typical  
American dishes such as waffles  
and vanilla ice cream.









Can you share a time you felt government did its job well?

Can you share a time you felt government did its job poorly?









Is there a humorous food failure  
you're willing to share?









What would you like to further understand or explore about civics?









What cooking skill would you like to develop?

Enslaved chef James Hemings studied French cuisine in Paris for years while Jefferson was ambassador to France.







# FEAST of REASON

I agree!

I disagree!

Hold on...

True!

Heck yes!

?





What is your “recipe” to strengthen democracy for future generations?









Are there issues you feel should transcend partisan divides?

How do you think we can work toward making this issue less polarized?









What has helped you to better understand the viewpoints of others, even if you do not agree with them?









Did any of your own thoughts  
surprise you?









What did you hear from someone else  
that resonated with you?









*I'm hearing some passionate debate here, and I want to pull back a little. What ingredient do you think is the most important for what you're discussing? Let's focus on that as a group.*









*It sounds like what you're sharing is really important to your sense of identity, and I'd like to pivot a little bit and ask: Is there a food that's important to your identity? A secret recipe guarded by your family? A particular food that you eat to feel at home? A food that's important to your heritage or religious practice?*









*Let's let this pot simmer a little and turn up the burner on another question...*

*(Go ahead and move on to the next question around the table.)*









In his first inaugural address in 1801, Thomas Jefferson said “We have called by different names brethren of the same principle. We are all republicans: we are all federalists.” And while today none of us are federalists, the sentiment stands. Thank you all for joining this conversation about civics and for helping to remind each other that underneath our differing opinions is a desire to strengthen the underlying principles that guide American civics. To brethren of same principle and different names.









In 1824, American statesman Daniel Webster noted that Monticello dinners were “served in half Virginian, half French style, in good taste and abundance.” To food and opinions, in good taste and abundance.









Thomas Jefferson famously said, “Knowledge is power, knowledge is safety, knowledge is happiness.” May we use our knowledge to build power, safety, and happiness for all.







# KID'S TABLE



## Introduce yourself!

- What is your name?
- Where do you live?
- Who did you come with today?

What is a food you love, and why?

Is there a recipe or snack you like to make/cook yourself?

What did you do to help someone today?

Who are some of the people who are part of your community?

If you could make one family or school rule, what would it be?







*I agree!*

*I disagree!*

*Hold on...*

**FEAST**  
*of*  
**REASON**

*True!*

*Heck yes!*

?



What ingredients do you think are essential for our country to function?









What food do you think best represents your family, state, or country?









What is something about the United States that makes sense to you?









What is something about the United States that does not make sense to you?









Which two people do you think most need to sit down across the table from each other and share a meal?









How do you think this conversation will impact your civic life when you leave this table?









What did you hear from someone that you disagree with, but want to let simmer in your mind?









*So let's bring some of this energy back to the idea of a meal- Who is someone who probably disagrees with you, but you would still like to break bread with and discuss this issue?*









What is your favorite cuisine?

Jefferson loved French food, including macaroni and cheese.





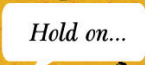




What food do you  
eat when you're  
stressed?









What food do you prepare  
for special occasions?

Chefs in the President's House  
served hand-churned ice cream in  
pastry shells still hot from the oven.

