NPR Listening Party Kit: January 2016

Pick a story, gather friends and spark thoughtful conversation through a shared listening experience.
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How to Host an #NPRLListeningParty
WHAT IS A LISTENING PARTY, ANYWAY?

Bring together friends for a fun, refreshing social experience that’s usually solitary: listening to radio stories.

At an NPR Listening Party, great audio storytelling gives you and your crew the chance to take a break from screens, listen together, and go deeper with thoughtful discussion and stories of your own.

It’s easy. All you have to do is:

- Pick a story
- Gather friends in a cozy place
- Hit airplane mode, listen and discuss!

Each month, our themed toolkit offers a section of stories curated to help spark discussion and includes conversation catalysts.

Show us how you #HostYourOwn #NPRListeningParty and together we can spread the mission of public radio for a more informed, engaged, and empathetic world.
HOW TO GET STARTED

1. **Pick a day and time.**

   Weekend brunch works great, as do weekday evenings. Consider other events happening in your community already and schedule around them so you don’t have to compete. We recommend carving out about 90 minutes for the whole event.

2. **Pick a venue.**

   We recommend hosting at your house to keep things cozy and casual. But if you have other ideas or access to an intimate space, go for it! Ideally, aim to keep the group no larger than 20 people so that everyone gets a chance to speak.
3. **Send your invite.**

You can use email, Facebook, or whatever you like. Please include the NPR Generation Listen logo or feel free to use our invite graphic. Have fun with it! A day or two before the Listening Party, send your guests a reminder to be on time and include any key information about arriving to / parking at your home, etc.

4. **Choose a story or podcast.**

Think about what will connect with the friends you’ve invited. You can choose one longer piece, or pair a couple of shorter segments. Generally aim for no longer than 45 minutes. Stories with a bit of tension or controversy make for a more lively discussion. Listen ahead of time and prepare some conversation starters to kick off your discussion. Also, consider which friends may have some interesting ideas to contribute based on subject matter expertise.
5 Prep the space.

Coziness is key. You want people to settle in – kind of like watching a movie. Put out lots of pillows and blankets. Keep the lighting soft. If possible, arrange seating into a circle, which will help conversation flow. It’s a good idea to have a focal point for folks to settle their gaze on (it may feel strange at first to not be looking at a screen). We also recommend setting out paper and pens so people can take notes and/ or doodle while they listen.

6 Mind the details.

Identify the device you plan to play the story from ahead of time. Make sure it’s fully charged and notifications are off. You may consider downloading the piece if your Internet is spotty. Make sure your speakers are powerful enough for everyone to hear with no problems. Oh, and stock up on some light snacks and drinks for folks to munch on.
QUICK CHECKLIST

☐ Set date + time
☐ Send invite
☐ Pre-listen to story
☐ Jot down a few discussion-starting questions
☐ Create a cozy feel where you’re hosting:
  ☐ Arrange seating in a circle if possible
  ☐ Pillows, blankets, comfy chairs
  ☐ Soft lighting
  ☐ Pre-download story or make sure you have solid Internet connection

☐ Turn off notifications on streaming device
☐ Set out some notepads and pens / markers
☐ Stock up on light snacks & beverages
☐ Know the room: are there some subject matter experts you can pass the ball to during the discussion?
☐ Snap some pics for the socials
☐ Be creative! Make your Listening Party uniquely yours
5 TIPS ON HOW TO MODERATE A CONVERSATION

with Guy Raz

NPR’s Guy Raz is an award-winning journalist and host of NPR’s TED Radio Hour

As a host and correspondent, he has interviewed and profiled more than 6,000 people that span the gamut from Jimmy Carter to Mark Zuckerberg to Taylor Swift. Suffice it to say, Guy is a true master of the art of opening people up. He was kind enough to share his top tips for moderating an incredible conversation.


Give something, get something. If you make yourself vulnerable, others will be willing to open up to you.

2. Be open and curious in your conversation.

Find moments of common experience whenever you can. (i.e. I like jazz! Me too!)

3. Acknowledge silences and awkward pauses.

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January’s Stories: Reflection, Habits & Transformation
How Can We Find More Time To Be Still?

Host: Guy Raz
on TED Radio Hour
Time: 11 min 15 sec

Did this piece resonate with you? Can you recall a time you made time to reflect on things - what did you discover? How do you find stillness in your life?

How You Can Harness ‘The Power Of Habit’

Host: Renee Montagne
on Morning Edition
Time: 7 min 47 sec

What is a keystone habit you want to change in your personal or professional life? What are possible ripple effects that changing this habit could have on your life?

Change Your Habits And You’ll Be ‘Better Than Before’

Host: Rachel Martin
on Weekend Edition
Time: 4 min 50 sec

How do you deal with inner and outer expectations? Which of the four types of people, as Gretchen Rubin outlines, do you identify with?
The Writing Exercise That Changes Lives
Why do you do what you do? What is the engine that keeps you up late at night or gets you going in the morning? Where is your happy place? What stands between you and your ultimate dream?

Heavy questions. One researcher believes that writing down the answers can be decisive.

Click on the icon to the the right to read the full article, then spend 15-20 minutes doing ‘The Writing Exercise That Changes Lives’.
Set the Tone with Music + Drinks
There’s an art to new beginnings. To make your foray into 2016 extra fresh, our friends at NPR Music have put together a playlist designed to help you welcome the new year - plus all the other newness you hope to cultivate (and sustain) over the next twelve months.
Welcome the new year with a classic cocktail. Perfect for sipping in a cozy place on a winter’s night, it may also help make you feel extra writerly for this month’s closing activity.

**Classic Manhattan from The Salt**

- 2 ounces of rye whiskey
- 1 ounce of sweet vermouth
- A dash of aromatic bitters
- 1 cherry

**Instructions:** Stir liquors and bitters in a mixing glass with ice. Strain into a chilled cocktail glass. Garnish with the cherry.

Not a Manhattan fan? Find some other options and learn about the Golden Age of Cocktails in America here.
visit our website for more information

generationlisten.npr.org/listening-party

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