



# Creative Family Reunion Activities

Some family reunions may be more laid-back. They might be a family gathering where everyone is happy to just eat, catch up with each other and talk about future plans. Maybe talk about grandchildren, and what family members are up to.

But for bigger family reunions where your extended family from all around the country or overseas set aside a few days of the year to travel to the venue and be with the rest of the clan, well-planned and coordinated activities add to the excitement and the memories that will be forever remembered by everyone.

## Things to consider when choosing family reunion activities

Generally, activities should match the [family reunion theme](#). For example, a [Pirates of the Caribbean theme](#) could include pirate related activities. These would reinforce the theme while also providing enjoyment for everyone (even the spectators). Examples might include:

- treasure hunting
- sword fights
- a sea shanty sing off
- and a best dressed pirate beauty pageant

### **Themes shouldn't stifle your creativity**

A theme, however, is only a general guide and should not restrict you from doing other family reunion activities that may not necessarily be in line with the theme but are enjoyed by the family members. If you have an annual bonfire ritual on the last night of the reunion weekend, for example, don't hesitate to continue with that tradition even if you decided to try an "Under the Sea" theme this year.

### **Don't accidentally exclude people**

Activities should be age-appropriate and appeal to the widest range of ages and backgrounds as possible. To be on the safe side, always have an option of activities so no one is left behind or feels out of place because he or she is not participating in some way.

Challenging activities are fine for specific groups, but have activities appropriate for the entire family also.

## Showcase your master chefs

Recipes and secret ingredients abound in every family, and a reunion is an excellent way to put the spotlight on your family's treasured culinary delights.

### Cooking Showdowns

Reunions that are right around the major holidays (Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter) would be great opportunities for cooking showdowns; invite the family members who love to cook to a cooking competition where the rest of the family can taste and decide for themselves which ones they like best.

Keep the atmosphere light and jovial, however, so no one leaves feeling defeated; if possible, give awards and special recognition to all participants.

### Other ideas:

- **Pie eating contests** – Give awards to contestants who can stuff their faces with the most pie within a time period.
- **Test Your Heat Units** – For family reunions with Mexican, Cajun, or Middle Eastern themes, have a contest to see who can eat the hottest, spiciest item on the menu.
- **Chili Cook Off** – Many families pride themselves on their secret chili recipes- see who the true chili chief is!
- **Iron Chef (Family Edition)** – Have two finalist families battle it out in an [Iron Chef](#) competition.



## The family that bakes together...

Kids like to bake and whip up their favorite desserts, such as pies, cakes, and other sweet stuff. You can schedule an afternoon family reunion activity where the adults can pass on their baking skills and knowledge to the younger family members.



This is a great time for family bonding, and you are also passing on useful knowledge to the children. This also takes care of desserts for some of the meals for the reunion, and the kids would enjoy tasting their baked creations and hearing the comments of the rest of the family also (if the baked goods turn out to be edible).

#### Other Ideas:

- **Pizza Kitchen** – Each family gets a chance to make their own pizza.
- **International Confections** – Have each family try their hand at baking different regional confections such as [Baklava](#), [Briouats](#) and [Kulich](#).

## Know your family history

Many of the younger generation would benefit from knowing their family history and genealogy. Many don't know simply because they have not had the opportunity to really learn and discover their roots.

#### Share the photos

Family reunion activities can revolve around ancestors, family lineage, and important family milestones that would give the youngsters a deeper appreciation of their heritage. Bring out the old family photos and albums, and have adults and older family members share stories behind the photographs as well as introduce those in the photos who may no longer be around or have played significant roles in the family or society.

#### Giant family trees

The whole family can also help create a giant Family Tree: photos of each family and family member would be contributed, and the branches of the Family Tree would slowly be populated to show how everyone is related. Younger ones would especially be amazed at how the family has expanded and grown over the years once the Family Tree makes the genealogy much clearer.

#### Other Ideas:

- **Family scrapbook** – The whole family can contribute various mementos, photos, documents, and other things that can be kept in a family scrapbook. Every family reunion event, more stuff can be added to the scrapbook.
- **Ancestral tour** – A trip to the family's ancestral home or property can be scheduled. Older family members will tell stories of their favorite childhood hangouts, hobbies, and hiding places.