

Three million bananas to fuel Olympics

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Stir fry: Over 15,000 athletes are coming from all over the world, many with their own very different food requirements.

Is food the key to world peace? With ten days to go before the Olympic Games open in Paris, chefs are preparing to cook 500 different dishes for the many athletes taking part.

What's happening?

At last the Olympic torch has reached Paris. Its journey had started at Olympia in Greece, where it was lit for the first time. It went to Athens, then to Marseille and even to Martinique. Now there are just days to go until the opening ceremony of the day.

The idea of the torch relay is to bring people together. France is a divided country, especially after the recent election.

Find out more

The Olympic Games are usually seen as being above politics. The events are supposed to bring people from all over the world together in peace.

Now, some think that world peace will not be found in the torch relay, but rather with the events' chefs!

The chefs' operation is a huge one. The dining hall in the Olympic Village is 220m long and 24m wide and can seat 3,500 people.

Some people say

"Food is not just fuel. Food is about family, food is about community, food is about identity. And we nourish all those things when we eat well."

Michael Pollan (1955 –), American journalist

What do you think?

It is divided into six restaurants, each serving a different type of food, from French or Asian to halal. Up to 40,000 meals will be served per day.

According to chef Jeff Leidy, bananas are athletes' favourite food: "We anticipate getting two or three million bananas."

There are many other people to be fed too, from staff to viewers. The head of the Paris Olympics expects 13 million meals to be served altogether.

Is food the key to world peace?

Some say

Yes! Eating together is something all countries and cultures have in common. Sharing food with someone else is one of the best ways of getting to know them.

Others think

No! Ordinary people might connect over food. But for world peace, we need politicians to solve huge problems around the world. Even the best meal will not stop wars.

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? - Do you like trying different foods? Will you watch the Olympics?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Who will do all the washing up? What will happen to the leftovers?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain and one thing we cannot say for sure about this story.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - A billionaire asks you whether he should spend his money on feeding hungry people or sending world leaders to lessons on how to agree. Think about what you would say.

5. Express

What do others believe? - What is the most delicious food? Take it in turns to say.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Imagine you are asked to design a menu for an Olympic banquet. Write it and decorate it.

Glossary

Olympic - Relating to the Olympic Games, which take place every four years.

Paris - The capital of France. In mythology, Paris was a Trojan prince who caused the war with the Greeks by stealing Helen, the beautiful wife of King Menelaus of Sparta.

Olympia - A town in western Greece.

Athens - One of the great city-states of the ancient world and the birthplace of democracy.

Marseille - A port city in southern France.

Martinique - A Caribbean island that is an overseas region of France.

Election - A vote in which someone is chosen to represent a group of people.

Halal - Meaning "lawful", a dietary rule followed by many Muslims. It includes rules on how animals should be slaughtered.

Anticipate - Expect something to happen.