

Not Your Usual Barkada Time



Hanging out with your friends can get predictable: the mall, video games at your house, movie night, or even going out of town. There's got to be something else to do aside from the usual!

These alternative *barkada* hang-out ideas are easy on the pocket, heavy on the memories, and are hands down feel-good experiences.

Backyard Camping

Going out of town is great, but it can get expensive and logistics can be a nightmare! Next time there's a long weekend, invite your friends to go backyard camping. All you need is a backyard, some tents, and sleeping bags and you're set to have a wacky camping trip without ever even needing to leave town! You can tell ghost stories by flashlight, make campfire treats like S'mores with a little toaster oven (don't forget the extension cord), and cook everything else with your family's outdoor grill. Best part is, you don't have to deal with digging a hole to go to the bathroom!

Progressive Dinner

Eating out with friends is a great way to spend time with them. But ever notice how going to nice restaurants can get expensive? Plus, it takes forever to decide on the right restaurant!

If you have a big *barkada* living in different areas, try the traditional progressive dinner: friends who all live in one area will prepare the first part of the meal in one of their houses. Then, everyone carools to go to the next house where the main dish will be served. This house-hopping keeps going until every course is eaten.

The best part of the progressive dinner is that the fun begins even during the preparation of the food! You don't have to be great cooks to do this. For example, the group in charge of starters can try the **Sweet Style Meat Crunch** — an easy take on the nachos that everyone loves to order at restaurants. The group taking care of the main course can do [Cheesy Eggplant Layers](#), a veggie version of lasagna.

It's a great way to eat and get together without having to go through the usual mall and restaurant route. Just make sure everyone pitches in for gas or take a nice, big van to transport everyone around. Plus, for the friends who seem to have a difficult time getting to the first area, they'll get the chance to catch up where they're nearest.

Volunteer

Do you and your friends love animals? Volunteer for Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) and spend an afternoon feeding cats, giving dogs a bath, and helping rescued animals get ready to find their new forever homes.

How about reading stories to little children with cancer? Get together to volunteer for Kythe or Cancer Warriors. You can even volunteer to paint the children's ward of a public hospital to brighten up their confinement days. Get in touch with Hands On Manila to discover many other volunteer opportunities.

There are many different ways you and your *barkada* can spend time together and even touch lives all at the same time. Just take a little time planning, get creative, and most importantly, enjoy! That's what friends are for, right?

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