



A Relaxed Dinner

Four seated, voice-only games that fit between courses and never ask anyone to leave the table.

Players 4–10 at one table

Play time About 70 minutes in total.

Who it is for: A dinner table of adults, including guests who have only just met.

BEFORE GUESTS ARRIVE

- ☐ Read the quick rules for each game once before guests arrive.
- ☐ Choose one Conversation Ladder theme and five Would You Rather questions in advance.
- ☐ If you are playing Secret Word Detective, write one word per guest on a folded slip, or plan to whisper them.

AGENDA

- 1 Would You Rather** · 10 minutes · While drinks are poured
Five questions from the everyday-choices group. It needs no explanation and lets late arrivals join at once.
- 2 Secret Word Detective** · 25 minutes · Through the starter and main course
Hand out the words as the food arrives. The game runs in the background, so keep eating and talking.
- 3 Odd One Out** · 15 minutes · Between main course and dessert
Six sets. Reveal the secret words from the previous game first, so the table has one thing to follow.
- 4 Conversation Ladder** · 20 minutes · With dessert or coffee
One ladder only. Start the third rung yourself, and say again that anyone may pass.

HOST NOTES

- Nothing here needs standing, props or a cleared table. Phones can stay away apart from the host's.
- If the conversation is already flowing, skip a game. The plan is there to help the evening, not to run it.
- Times are editorial estimates. A table of ten will take longer than a table of five.

WOULD YOU RATHER — QUICK RULES

2–30 players · 10–30 min · No materials

1. The host reads a question with two alternatives.
2. Everyone picks one — there is no "both" or "neither".
3. Go around the table and give a one-sentence reason.
4. The person with the most unexpected reason reads the next question.

How the game ends: Stop after a set number of questions — eight to ten suits a dinner table — or when the main course arrives. Would You Rather has no natural winner, so announce "two more questions" to give the game a clear finish rather than letting it fade out.

SECRET WORD DETECTIVE — QUICK RULES

4–12 players · 20–60 min · No materials

1. Everyone gets a different secret word.
2. Carry on a normal conversation, and work your word in naturally.
3. If you think you heard someone's secret word, call "Detective!" and name it.
4. Right — you score. Wrong — the person you accused scores.

How the game ends: The game ends at a time announced beforehand — when the plates are cleared, or after twenty minutes. Everyone reveals their word, landed words are confirmed by the table, and points are totalled. The highest score wins the title of chief detective.

ODD ONE OUT — QUICK RULES

3–12 players · 10–25 min · No materials

1. The reader names four things.
2. Everyone silently picks the one that does not belong — and a reason.
3. Take turns making your case in one or two sentences.
4. The reader awards a point to the most convincing or most inventive argument.

How the game ends: Play until everyone has been the reader once, then total the points. For a quicker game, play six sets and stop. Ties are settled with one more set, judged by a player who is not involved in the tie.

CONVERSATION LADDER — QUICK RULES

3–10 players · 15–30 min · No materials

1. Choose a ladder — three questions on one theme, each a little deeper than the last.
2. Everyone answers the first rung in a sentence.
3. Climb to the second rung, then the third, with slightly longer answers.
4. Anyone may pass on any rung. The person with the last word picks the next ladder.

How the game ends: A ladder is finished when everyone has answered or passed on the third rung. Two ladders are plenty for one dinner — one between starter and main course, one with dessert. Stop while people still have things they want to say; the conversation will carry on without the game.

Times are editorial estimates, not test results.

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