

# BIG GAME

Planning Guide





# Serve Unique Dips

Chips and dip are a staple at Super Bowl parties throughout the nation. The snacks are easy to eat, require little cleanup and work as a tasty side for the main dishes.

When you're in charge of party planning, consider ditching the pre-made tub found in your grocery cooler. Instead, whip up a unique and delicious spin on a classic appetizer.

Before committing to a new recipe, check with your guests to find out if they are vulnerable to any allergens or have preferences about the foods they eat. If some are watching what they eat, consider using low-fat or healthier substitutes for specific ingredients. Creating a balanced menu can help your guests feel more comfortable and ensure everyone has plenty of variety for indulgence.



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## **BUFFALO CHICKEN DIP**

The ingredients you choose for buffalo chicken dip can make or break the dish. First, try to use a mild sauce, as a blazing hot mixture can alienate those who avoid spicy foods. Next, make sure to use a high-quality cut of chicken breast or shred the meat from a rotisserie birds. Combine these ingredients with cream

cheese, sour cream, blue and shredded cheeses. Complete the dip with light hints of lemon juice, scallions or green onions to give it a unique flavor profile. The best part about the meal is that it can be prepared and served from a slow cooker. Rather than serving with chips, offer vegetables like carrots or celery and toasted baguette slices.

## **S'MORES DIP PACKS**

Satisfy your guests' sweet tooth with a tasty alternative to a campfire classic. Rather than finding a suitable roasting stick, line aluminum foil with marshmallows, chocolate chips and strawberries. Stick them on the grill for about four minutes before serving. After a quick flash of heat, offer the individual

packets with graham crackers for dipping.

## **EVERYTHING BAGEL DIP**

While it's not the easiest dish to create, this everything bagel dip will become a crowd favorite and an expected staple for future parties. With a food processor, combine cream cheese, sour cream,

scallions, poppy seeds and garlic powder and your favorite seasonings. Once your ingredients are thoroughly blended, it should be cooled for at least half an hour before serving.

The dipping options are limitless, but sometimes include smoked salmon, tomatoes, cucumber and pumpernickel bread.





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# Clean your Party Space

Help your guests enjoy the game in a comfortable environment by ensuring your entertainment space is clean.

Plus, when your area is already tidy, it reduces the need for clean up once your friends and family leave. Consider these tips when preparing your home for a night of fun and football.

If cleaning isn't your greatest strength or you don't have time during a hectic schedule, think of calling in the experts. A professional service can be enlisted to scrub, dust and protect your belongings and declutter areas. If you have carpet, it can be beneficial to have it shampooed and layered

with an anti-spill treatment if guests drop food or beverages. For another level of protection, consider laying down rugs in high-traffic areas.

## **FOCUS ON MAIN ROOMS**

While most of the party will be conducted in the rooms with a television, don't forget to clean up other popular areas in your home. Guests will frequently visit the kitchen to reload their plates and make trips to the bathroom. Ensure that your floors are clean and prepared for muddy feet

that are common during February weather conditions. While you're in each room, consider putting breakable possessions somewhere safe.

While you hope your guests will be on their best behavior, an intense Super Bowl matchup may create a commotion that results in chaotic excitement.

## **REARRANGE FURNITURE**

If your watching space seems cluttered, consider making the room size more manageable before inviting a crowd. For instance, rearrange large couches across the area's perimeter and use independent chairs for extra seating. You may also choose to tem-

porarily remove large fixtures like hope chests or coffee tables to accommodate more guests.

## **CLEAN UP DURING THE GAME**

Encourage your guests to respect your home by cleaning up their plates and drinks throughout the event. Make sure they know the designated areas for different types of waste like recyclables or disposables. It's also a great idea to be ready to address spills by keeping a mop bucket and rags nearby. Consider using disposable cutlery or dishes to lessen your responsibility for cleaning after the game ends.



# Support your Local Pizza Place

Just like everything over the past year, big game get-togethers will look a little different in 2021. If you're used to hosting large parties, you may be opting to welcome a much smaller group into your home this year.

One thing hasn't changed: Celebrating would not be complete without pizza. And your local pizza establishments need your support this year more than ever before.

Be sure to devote some of your food budget to a local pizza or two on game day. You and your guests will be sure to enjoy the fresh, tasty treat while rooting for your favorite team.

## WHY ORDER OUT?

Speaking of teams, Americans seem to all be on "Team Pizza." Consumer spending on pizza delivery in 2019 reached \$11 billion in 2019, according to Statista. More than 200 million people eat frozen pizzas every year.

When you order out from your local pizza joint, you're more likely to find fresh, local ingredients. You're also doing more to support your local community, as research shows that local business owners re-invest more money into the



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local area versus big box stores.

## WHAT TOPPINGS SHOULD YOU TRY?

According to a recent survey reported in the Huffington Post, the most popular pizza toppings are pepperoni, sausage, mushrooms and bacon.

America's least favorite

options? Those would be anchovies, eggplant, pineapple and artichokes. Looking for something a little more unique on your pie? Try some cilantro, jalapenos, garlic or chicken.

Don't forget your dessert pizza, as many local pizza establishments may offer cinnamon- and vanilla-glazed options for after your main

course of more "traditional" pizza.

## CHOOSE CONVENIENCE

One big benefit of ordering from your favorite local restaurant is that many of them support easy, online or app-based ordering.

Intuitive and easy-to-use ordering systems make your

experience more convenient than ever before.

Picking up your pizza instead of having it delivered? Be sure to ask if you're expected to come into the store or if they will bring your order out to your vehicle for you. This will help you plan accordingly and know what to expect upon arrival.



# You Can Never Go Wrong with Wings

Is there anything easier to serve than chicken wings — especially when you're not the one making them? This fantastic finger food has long been a football-watching staple. In fact, wings are the most eaten food during the big game each year.

Why should this year's big game be any different?

Every year, the National Chicken Council (NCC) releases its annual Chicken Wing Report that projects how many wings Americans will consume during the Super Bowl weekend. Last year, a record-breaking 1.4 billion chicken wings were consumed during this time.

To get a better idea of just how much Americans love their chicken wings, NCC surveyed Americans on their eating habits last year. Roughly two thirds of Americans (65%) who eat chicken wings, responded that they like to do so while watching a major sporting event, such as the Super Bowl. Half (51%) claim that they believe chicken wings should be the official food of the Super Bowl, said the NCC.



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## **BONE-IN OR BONELESS?**

Your order of wings starts with one major decision: Bone-in wings or boneless wings? Both are great options and it usually depends on your personal preference, or the preference of your guests.

To be safe, it's probably a good bet to get some of each. Some places will give you a

split of half bone-in and half boneless for your order — which is a great option for a gathering.

## **MAKE YOUR OWN SAUCE**

Sometimes you just want your own sauce. See if your wings restaurant will let you order the wings without sauce so you can add your own.

Find a good recipe online that combines hot pepper sauce, vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, cayenne pepper and garlic powder. Add more of the spicier ingredients to give it an extra kick. Just be sure to let your guests know first.

## **CALL AHEAD**

Restaurants are traditional-

ly very busy on Super Bowl Sunday, especially with take-out orders. If you're making a big order for wings, it's best to call ahead of time to make sure you're not catching your local restaurant by surprise.

This common courtesy will help save time for both you and the restaurant's employees.



# Making Cocktails for the Game

Every big game shindig needs some fun cocktails (or mocktails if you're abstaining from alcohol). Fortunately, the internet is ripe with mixing ideas to impress your friends and family — no matter how small your gathering this year.

The key to mixing a great cocktail is to be creative and use fresh ingredients.

Check out these fun Super Bowl cocktail ideas and don't forget to visit your local liquor establishment for all of your mixing ingredients.

## BEER MARGARITAS

If you like beer and margaritas, why not combine them into a refreshing mixed drink? Take your favorite beer to the next level by combining it with the punchy satisfaction of a tangy margarita.

Follow this recipe from Food Network for the perfect Beer Margarita.

### Ingredients

1 lime  
1/4 cup of coarse salt  
2 bottles of your favorite beer  
1/2 cup frozen concentrate limeade  
1/2 cup chilled tequila  
ice cubes



### Directions

Rub lime wedges around rims of 4 margarita glasses. Dip rims into salt to coat lightly. In a medium pitcher, combine beer, limeade, and tequila. Fill prepared glasses with ice, then with margarita mixture. Garnish with remaining lime wedges. Serve immediately.

## FUN PUNCH

No matter how small your gathering for the game this

year, a tasty punch may be a touchdown for your Super Bowl weekend.

Check out this punch idea from the food website Delish.

### Ingredients

1 liter of lemon lime soda  
4 cups of seltzer  
1 bottle Prosecco  
1 cup vodka  
1/4 cup blue Curacao  
1 lemon  
3 cups ice

### Directions

Combine all ingredients in a punch bowl. Stir to combine and serve in glasses.

## BE A GOOD HOST

Let your guests know you plan to serve alcohol and be sure to find out what they prefer to drink ahead of time. Don't forget to advocate for responsible celebration, ensuring that your guests partake within reason and have desig-

nated drivers.

Plan ahead for a socially distanced event and make sure your guests are not gathering in close proximity to each other, like in a typical bar environment. Make sure your guests are not sharing drinks and refer to the gathering recommendations put out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention before planning your Super Bowl gathering.



# Support a Local Bar or Brewery

Your hometown bar has likely been hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic. Watching the big game there this year is a way to show support for the owners and employees who have struggled through 2020.

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Of course, it's important to follow all safety precautions outlined by your state, county and city officials. If you have the opportunity to support your local bar for the Super Bowl, respect social distancing and mask guidelines to ensure a safe, healthy environment for everyone watching the game.

## **CHECK ON CAPACITY**

States are implementing different capacity requirements for restaurants, bars and other gathering spots. Be sure you understand any local restrictions that may be in

place. Your local bars may only be able to allow a certain number of people through their doors.

It's better to call ahead to see how they are handling these types of restrictions so you're not surprised when you show up.

## **RESERVE YOUR SPACE**

If you're planning to watch the game with friends or family members at the bar, it's best to reserve space ahead of time. This lets the bar employees plan accordingly and make sure you've got enough space for social distancing.

It's never too early to start reserving space, especially if your local bar is a smaller establishment. The earlier you can lock down your spot, the better.

## **SHOP LOCAL BREWERS**

According to the Brewers Association, craft beer accounted for \$29.3 billion for the beer industry's \$116 billion market. The sector grew by about 6% in dollar sales growth in 2019. Offer your guests a variety of beverages by researching the participating city's local favorites.

If you happen to live near the

region that a Super Bowl team calls home, a visit to local breweries could make an exciting road trip. You may also get a chance to taste-test the different brews, IPAs and lagers they offer, making purchasing an easier decision. When you can't travel there personally, see if they can ship their brews to your location.

You can even find smaller "flight" glasses and give your guests the options of pouring smaller portions to try more of the selection. Think of ways to bring the brewery experience to your guests.



# The Home-Watching Experience

As Super Bowl Sunday nears, it's time to start putting the finishing touches on your home-watching experience.

Maybe you're planning on buying a new TV or surround sound system to really make the game fun this year.

Whatever your plans, keep in mind this time of year can actually be a good one to buy a new television due to it being just past the Christmas season when many Americans are in a bit of a spending freeze.

## TV RESEARCH

Planning on bringing home a big new TV for the big game? You're not alone. According to a 2019 NerdWallet survey, 17% of Americans planned on buying a new television for last year's Super Bowl. Retailers are likely providing deep discounts on "smart" big-screen TVs, especially model sizes between 49 inches and 65 inches.

Before you settle on a new TV, make sure you do your research first. Like with any big-ticket purchase, being prepared will make for a more positive shopping and buying experience.



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## FINDING A HOME THEATER SYSTEM

A new TV is great, but its built-in sound system isn't exactly top-notch. You can take your TV audio to the next level by installing a home theater system, which typically includes:

- A video source.
- A home theater receiver.
- Speakers, including a cen-

ter speaker, right and left forward speakers, right and left rear speakers, special effect speakers for Dolby, and a subwoofer.

Your local electronics store likely has plenty of options for you to look into.

## CONSIDER THE OUTDOORS

If you're fortunate enough

to live in a region with warm temperatures on Super Bowl Sunday, consider hosting your gathering outdoors.

Not only will this limit the risks of damage or accidents in your home, but your guests will also have ample room to network, play games and enjoy the festivities.

Ensuring your television screen is clear and unob-

structed from impeding tree branches or the sun's glare is critical. Consider finding a shady area in your yard's open area to produce a pristine view and ample space for guests to gather around. If most of your yard is sunny, you may find success in purchasing an anti-glare covering to apply to the screen during the daylight hours.