

BIG GAME

Party Planning



Big Game Party Checklist

So you're ready to play host — now what?

The teams, mascots and colors change. But certain elements must be in place each year.

You can create fun twists by developing a theme, or find offbeat things to do for those who don't have someone to pull for. But every one of these annual gatherings has to hit certain marks in order to come off without a hitch.

Here's a handy checklist for your big game party to make sure you don't end up forgetting one of these must-have items.

FOOD

Create a menu that can satisfy a diverse crowd, focusing on so-called “finger foods.” That means things that are easily picked up and eaten without utensils. So chips and dip, sandwiches, slices of pizza and wings. Purchase or make plenty of it, too. Set up a buffet-style table in a separate area so that fans can fill their plates away from the football action, then place small tables around the TV viewing areas. Have plenty of plates, cups, bowls and cutlery on hand. Save the breakable fine china for another day. Things will inevitably get knocked over. (Speaking of which, keep plenty of paper towels and napkins on hand, too.)

DRINKS

Stock up on a wide variety



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of drinks, including beer, seltzers and wine, but also soda, water, non-alcoholic drinks and caffeinated options since some of your guests may abstain. Bring in plenty of coolers, small tubs and buckets for the drinks, so they can be strategically placed

throughout the house. Bottle openers are also sometimes required, so you'll need a few. Finally, have lots (and lots) of ice on hand. You'll have to keep your coolers full, and some guests may want to add ice to their preferred beverages.

SETTING UP

Seating is the most important element to plan out, after food and drinks. Count your RSVPs and make sure you have more than enough seats for all of your guests. If you don't, ask friends to bring folding chairs or lawn furniture to the party.

Larger pillows, blankets and throw rugs can also create seating options on the floor. Then head out to a local party store for banners, streamers, fun decor like footballs or football-shaped balloons. Match the colors to the teams who are playing in the big game.

Upgrading Your Party Space

You don't want to disappoint when excited guests arrive

Let's face it, most of us don't have a living area designed for a big-game watch party.

But that doesn't mean you can't quickly upgrade the space with a few key purchases. Just beware, after making all the right moves, you might just become the neighborhood's permanent party spot.

BIG SCREEN

As they say, football is a game of inches. So that means you'll need a television that's large enough for everyone to catch every close call. Once you've been designated as this year's host, start watching for the huge annual sales associated with the year-ending championship game.

Remember that it is, in fact, possible to go too big. Your new TV has to fit into the entertainment space you already have, taking into account where guests will be sitting. Check out newer options like 4K if you've already got a pretty large TV. An upgrade might just be worth it.

Most big screens are best watched while they hang on the wall, so make sure you have a mount that can handle your new purchase — and a sturdy spot to attach it. Don't forget cable concealers too, since you'll want to conceal any unsightly wires.

TURN IT UP

Even the best big screens can't match the fidelity and power of a wireless sound bar. They add huge enhancements to the viewing experience at a typically affordable price, without running additional wiring through the viewing

space. The improved sound will bring everybody that much closer to the action. Those looking for still more power can add a wireless subwoofer. They are typically just as easy to set up, even if you procrastinate until game-day morning.

HAVE A SEAT

Take a hard look at where everyone will gather well in advance. If the room has only limited seating options, or simply feels too cramped, it may be time to purchase furniture that better suits the area. Local stores will often have great

deals this time of year. You can also explore lending programs that spread out the cost over a longer period time. If all else fails, consider rearranging the room on a one-time basis to create better viewing options. If needed, ask guests to bring portable seating options.



Party Planning Don'ts

Going overboard is part of the fun in hosting a great Super Bowl party

The best big-game get-togethers are streamlined events, without too much fuss.

So while it's easy to think of more and more options, or to micromanage every detail, that's not the pathway to a successful party. Instead, follow these simple guidelines and enjoy the game with the help of good grocery stores and restaurants in your area.

DON'T

Cook it all yourself. You don't have to make everything from scratch. Being stuck in the kitchen for days will only leave you worn out at kickoff. Pre-made items can save you lots of time and energy. Also, remember that most guests are going to bring a bag of chips, so you should focus on getting plenty of the best hot foods for your visitors to enjoy. If you have leftovers that you can share with guests as they leave, that's even better.

DON'T

Skimp on disposable products. If you want to make it easy on yourself, stock up on paper and plastic serving dishes and utensils before the Super Bowl. They make clean-up a lot easier, and your guests can get a clean plate every time they go back for more snacks instead of reusing a gross, dirty dish. You can look for



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recyclable products that are better for the environment.

DON'T

Run out of food or drinks before the end of the game. Part of the fun of the Super Bowl is overindulging in food with friends, something that

won't be unhealthy if you limit it to one special day. The Super Bowl only happens once a year, so enjoy the chance to feast at this all-American TV event.

DON'T

Forget the ice. You probably can not have enough ice for a

big-game party. Between trying to keep things cold in the cooler, the inevitable melting and a need for ice in a variety of other drinks, you're going to go through these cubes with lightning speed. And who wants to have to stop watching the game to make an ice run?

DON'T

Stress out. Guests won't have the fun they should if they see that you're worrying too much. If everyone is having fun, your job is done. And by relying on pre-made foods from restaurants and grocery stores, your job will be easy.

The Day's Other Games

What about guests who aren't interested in the title match?

Not everybody will arrive wearing team colors and ready to cheer.

Some of them are married to big fans, while others may be there simply to share in the company of friends and family. The lengthy broadcast often doesn't hold the attention of smaller children. Then there are those times when the contest itself turns into a snoozy blowout.

In every case, it's smart to have some fun alternative activities. With the right mix of games, puzzles and active-participation events, your party will be a hit no matter how the game goes.

FLAG FOOTBALL/ CORNHOLE

Active guests will love playing outdoors, weather permitting. Turning your party into an inside/outside event will also make sure that no one feels crowded throughout the day. Participants can take on the mascot of their favorite championship team, or create their own. Flag football, in particular, is a great way to burn off a kid's excess energy as the day goes on. But both corn hole and flag football can be enjoyed by people of all ages. Whoever wins can get a first pass at special food offerings or a selection of drinks. If you're particularly crafty, create a homemade trophy that



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can be passed around from year to year.

BINGO/OTHER GAMES

For your more relaxed guests, create a series of activities that can be played on a lawn chair or couch. Bingo and card games are timeless classics for a reason. Ask everyone

to donate a small amount to create a grand prize. They can even drop their cash into an actual football helmet. Set up a scoreboard for small wagers on elements of the big game itself, including quarterly, half and final scores as well as key moments like a trick play, missed field goal, safety or

interception for a touchdown.

KIDS STUFF

Games designed to entertain your youngest visitors can include a themed paper-mâché piñata. Shape it to look like a helmet, then decorate it when the opposing teams colors or logo. Fill it

with tasty treats or even small gifts. Let the smallest kids go first, while making sure everyone gets a chance to take a swing. You can also update the old Pin the Tail on the Donkey game by making a big-game version shaped like a helmet. Hold back a special dessert for the grand-prize winner.

Super Bowl Commercials

Sometimes, the television spots are better than the game itself

Ever wondered how this particular tradition began? It goes back to 1967.

Even during the first Super Bowl, the broadcast was about more than two pro teams competing for a trophy. Marketers quickly understood how important displaying their wares would be for an ever-expanding national (and then international) audience.

Today, plenty of people only watch for the commercials, broadly expanding the viewer base beyond football fanatics. In keeping, brands continue to spend more, and create higher-concept ads, in order to take advantage of the exposure — and create a huge post-game buzz.

The price for these 30-second Super Bowl ads has inevitably rose too, according to tracking details from the American Marketing Association. Here's what they found:

EARLY YEARS

The first Super Bowl pitted the Green Bay Packers against the Kansas City Chiefs and garnered some \$42,000 for a commercial. Just three years later, the cost of a 30-second spot had soared to \$78,000. Costs passed \$100,000 in 1974.

THE 1980s

A new decade saw the



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launch of “event” commercials, as Coca-Cola unveiled its “Hey Kid, Catch” ad featuring Pittsburgh Steelers defender “Mean” Joe Greene. Costs for a spot in that year’s Super Bowl reached \$220,000. By the very next year, pricing had climbed to \$324,000. Apple’s Macintosh commercial set new conceptual standards in 1984. Prices then doubled again in 1988, to

\$645,000 for a 30-second commercial.

THE 1990S-2000s

Michael Jordan’s commercials ruled the airwaves in the ‘90s, including crossover ads with Bugs Bunny. By 2001, when Britney Spears was a spokesperson for Pepsi, Super Bowl commercials cost more than \$2 million. It still felt like

money well spent, since the Super Bowl takes up 10 of the 11 most-watched slots in TV history. (The series finale of “MASH” is the lone exception.)

THE 2010s-2020s

Pricing continued to creep ever upward, as Snickers paid more than \$2.5 million per spot over the course of their

popular “You’re Not You When You’re Hungry” campaign, originally starring the late Betty White in 2010. By 2016, commercial costs had crossed \$3 million. The pandemic slowed some spending, as the 2021 game saw several advertisers trim their ad buys. Costs were still expected to hover around \$6.5 million for the 2022 contest.

When the Big Game Is Over

Here's what to do when the clock hits 0:00 and your guests leave

After the game, your house will have to return to its normal state, whether your team ended up raising the trophy or not.

Depending on the size of your big-game party, just getting started may feel overwhelming. But there is a certain rhyme and a reason when it comes to tackling the chores that follow to make the process simple and easy.

THE TRASH

Start by taking out the trash, before washing the dishes or wiping down the countertops. Carry a garbage bag throughout your home, picking up all the refuse as you go. Then make a second run focusing exclusively on recyclables like soda cans and beer bottles. Put the recycling away, but keep a trash bag out for anything else that needs to be tossed.

THE DISHES

Purchase a dish bin or two before hosting your party, so you have somewhere to put them besides the sink. This will free up space there, while also providing a place for the dishes to soak in hot, soapy water while you continue with your post-game clean up.

It can also be a good idea to buy disposable serving dishes to make the cleanup process even easier.



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THE LEFTOVERS

If it looks like you're going to have leftovers, begin boxing them up before the game ends so that your guests can take some home. Guests will appreciate being able to keep the fun going after they leave. Otherwise, place all remaining food in foil, plastic wrap or containers next.

THE STAINS

Few are the parties where something doesn't get spilled. Pretreat any spots you see on furniture, rugs or carpets, so the cleaning agent can start working while you continue other chores.

It's a good idea to make sure your cleaning supplies are fully stocked before hosting a party.

THE BATHROOM

Check on the guest bathroom often throughout the game. Afterward, wipe down the vanity and mirror while leaving a hard-working cleaner in the toilet bowl. Replace the hand towel and wash cloths, and wipe the floor before returning to scrub the toilet.

THE REST

Save the other flooring for last. Finish the dishes, remove the stains, wipe down the counter and take out the remaining trash first. Open the windows or turn on fans to air out the space. Once everything else is completed, it's time to enjoy your clean house with minimal work.

Healthier Alternatives

You can actually keep that New Year's resolution to eat better

Big game parties are often where plans to improve our diet go out the window.

But yours can be different. Offering a few alternative menu options can make a huge impact, even for those who aren't trying to limit their intake of unhealthy alternatives. They might just find that they like these new offerings.

Here are a few suggested things to serve, even if you still sneak in a few servings of high-calorie snacks for everyone to enjoy along the way.

TRY GOING LEAN

Burgers, brats and hot dogs are a staple at many gatherings, and yours may be no different. But consider leaner protein choices like chicken or turkey, which offer the same flame-cooked tastiness but with far fewer calories. There are also a wide variety of plant-based meat substitutes that can be surprisingly tasty. Consider using an air fryer, rather than cooking with grease. High-fat oils don't have to accompany the traditional snacks associated with the big game.

VEGGIE CRUNCH

Eating better is sometimes pretty easy. In fact, a lot of folks will dig into appetizers from a colorful vegetable tray when given the choice.



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Carrots, broccoli, yellow and green peppers, cauliflower and small tomatoes have become fixtures on these plates. Head to the produce section at your grocery store, a local farmer's market or organic store for the freshest selection. The greatest risk on your way to a healthier diet

here is actually the dips. You'll need a variety of them, so look for fat-free dressings and low-cal sauces.

MAKE IT HEALTHY

Honestly, it can be nearly impossible to resist chicken wings, various dips, and burgers while watching a football

championship game. So why not try healthier versions that everyone can enjoy – guilt free! Bake some cauliflower in olive oil, then toss it in hot sauce to create a veggie version of chicken wings that can also reduce inflammation and aid in digestion. A vegan nacho cheese option made

from carrots, potatoes and sunflower oil provides a terrific source of vitamins that the usual dip never could. Wrap your burger in a lettuce bun to lower the carbs. Or try a broccoli-substitute for guacamole that can lower rates of certain cancers. Call it "broccomole!"

Popular Food Choices

Make your party a hit with lots of delicious choices for guests

When it comes to planning a Super Bowl party, one of the most important considerations is the food. Here are some of the most popular food choices for Super Bowl parties, along with some tips for making them a success.

PIZZA

Pizza is a classic choice for any Super Bowl party. It's easy to order in large quantities, and there are plenty of topping options to suit everyone's tastes. To make sure your pizza is a hit, consider offering a variety of options, including vegetarian and meat-topped pies. You may also want to offer a few specialty pizzas, like buffalo chicken or BBQ pork, for something a little different.

CHIPS

Chips are another popular choice for Super Bowl parties, and there are countless flavors and brands to choose from. To make sure you have something for everyone, serve a variety of options, including traditional flavors like barbecue and sour cream and onion, as well as more unique options like jalapeno or buffalo chicken.

DELI SANDWICHES

Deli sandwiches are another easy-to-prepare option that are perfect for feeding a crowd. Consider going to your local



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deli for a tray of pre-made sandwiches, or they could give you a selection of meats, cheeses, and toppings, along with a variety of breads and rolls. You may also want to consider offering vegetarian options, such as grilled vegetable or hummus sandwiches.

CHICKEN WINGS

Chicken wings are a classic Super Bowl party food, and there are countless ways to prepare them. To make sure

your wings are a hit, consider serving a variety of sauces, ranging from mild to spicy. You may also want to offer a few different cooking techniques, like grilled or fried wings.

BURGERS

Hamburgers are another classic choice for Super Bowl parties, and they're easy to prepare in large quantities. Order burgers from your favorite restaurant, or grill up a variety

of burger patties, including beef, turkey, and vegetarian options. You'll also want to offer a selection of toppings, like lettuce, tomato, onion, and cheese, along with a variety of sauces and spreads. Don't forget the buns.

BRATS

Bratwurst, or brats, are another popular choice for Super Bowl parties. These flavorful sausages can be grilled, boiled, or even slow cooked in

a crockpot.

Serve a variety of bratwurst flavors, like classic pork, spicy sausage, or even vegetarian options. You may also want to offer a selection of toppings, like sauerkraut, grilled onions and peppers, and mustard.

There are countless food options to choose from when planning a Super Bowl party. By offering a variety of options and flavors, you can make sure there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Shop Local For the Big Game

Make a positive impact on your community

While it's easy to get caught up in the excitement of planning for a Super Bowl party, it's important to remember that our choices as consumers can have a significant impact on our local communities.

One way we can make a positive impact is by supporting local restaurants and grocery stores when shopping and planning for our Super Bowl parties. Here are a few reasons why supporting these local businesses is so important.

LOCAL MONEY

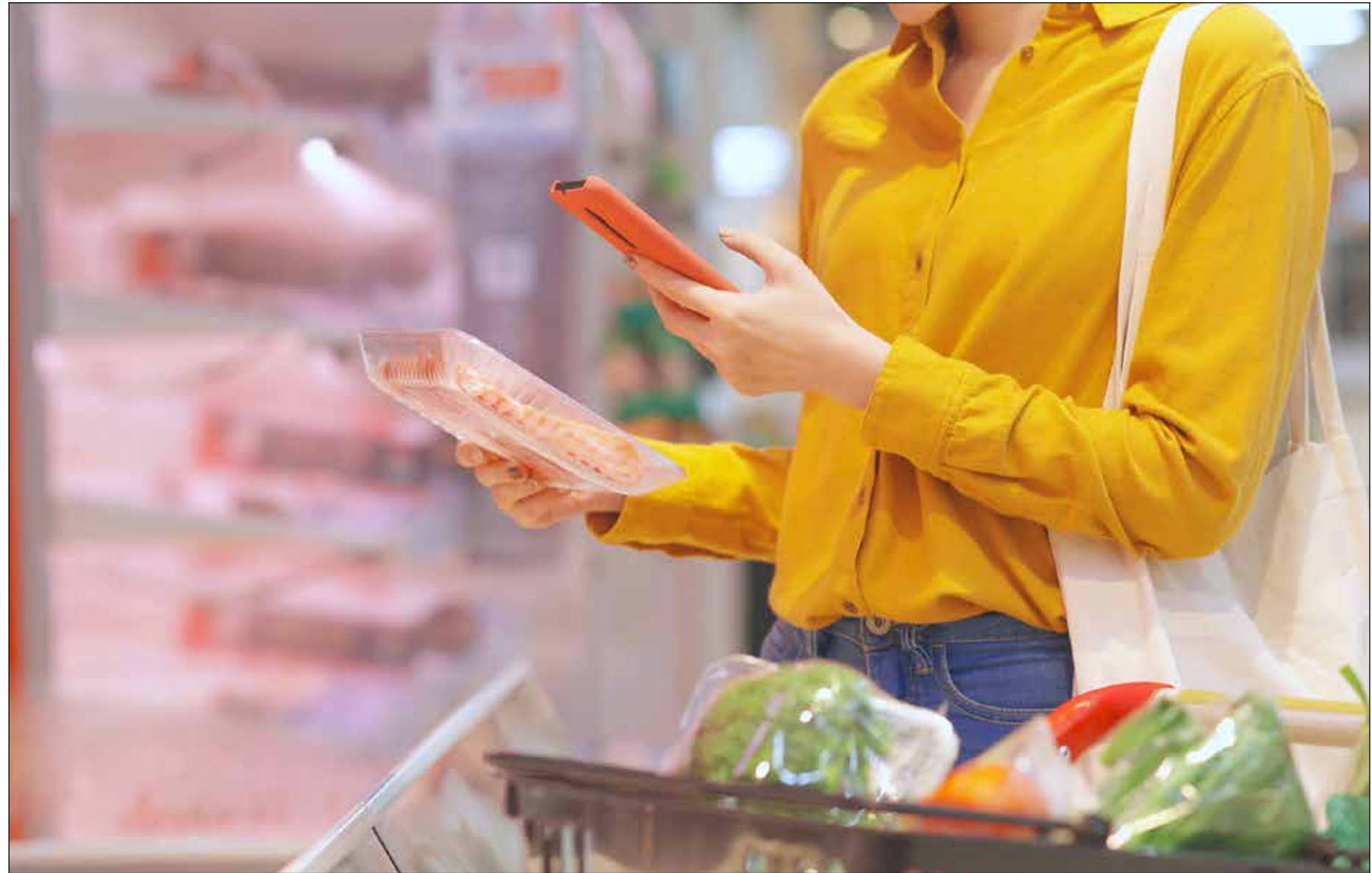
When we shop at local businesses, we're helping to keep money within our community. This is because local businesses are more likely to reinvest their profits back into the community, supporting other local businesses and organizations.

CREATES JOBS

Local businesses are often a major source of employment for people in the community. By supporting these businesses, we're helping to create and sustain jobs for our neighbors and friends. This is especially important in times of economic downturn, when local businesses may be struggling to survive.

STRONGER ECONOMY

When we shop locally, we're supporting the economic health and vitality of our com-



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munity. Local businesses generate tax revenue for the community, which can be used to fund important services like schools, police, and fire departments. Additionally, when local businesses thrive, it can lead to increased property values and a greater sense of community pride.

DIVERSITY

Local businesses often offer a wider range of products and services than large chain stores, which can lead to a

more diverse and vibrant community. By supporting these businesses, we're helping to ensure that our community remains unique and interesting.

ENVIRONMENT

Local businesses tend to have a smaller environmental footprint than larger chain stores. This is because they often source their products locally, reducing the need for transportation and helping to reduce greenhouse gas emis-

sions. Additionally, local businesses are often more mindful of their impact on the environment and may make an effort to reduce waste and use eco-friendly products.

BUILDS PERSONAL CONNECTIONS

When we shop at local businesses, we have the opportunity to build personal connections with the owners and employees. This can lead to a greater sense of community and belonging. Additionally,

local business owners are often more responsive to customer needs and may be willing to go the extra mile to ensure that customers are satisfied.

In the end, supporting local restaurants and grocery stores when shopping and planning for a Super Bowl party is important for a variety of reasons. It helps to keep money in the community, creates jobs, strengthens the local economy, helps the environment, and builds personal connections.

Choosing the Right Beer

Have a variety of options for pleasing your guests

The Super Bowl is a yearly event that brings friends and family together to enjoy some delicious food and drinks while watching the big game.

While there are many options for beverages to serve at a Super Bowl party, beer is often a fan favorite. However, with so many different types available, it can be tough to decide which ones to serve at your party. Here are some tips to help you choose the right kind of beer for your Super Bowl celebration.

PREFERENCES

The most important factor to consider when choosing beer for your Super Bowl party is the preferences of your guests.

If you know that most of your guests prefer light, easy-drinking beers, then it's probably best to stick with options like lagers or pilsners. On the other hand, if you have a group of craft beer enthusiasts, you may want to consider offering a selection of more unique and flavorful beers.

FOOD

Another important factor to consider is the food you'll be serving at your Super Bowl party. If you're planning on serving heavier, more hearty dishes like wings or nachos, you'll want to choose a beer that can stand up to those fla-



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vors. A robust stout or porter would be a good choice in this case. If you're serving lighter, more refreshing foods like salads or sandwiches, a crisp and refreshing lager or pilsner would be a better fit.

WINTER

The time of year can also play a role in choosing the right kind of beer for your Super Bowl party. Because the game happens in the winter, offer a selection of darker, more warming beers like

stouts or porters. These types of beers are often more rich and full-bodied, making them perfect for sipping on a cold winter day.

NON-DRINKERS

It's important to remember that not everyone at your Super Bowl party may be interested in drinking beer.

To make sure everyone feels included, consider offering a selection of non-alcoholic options like soda, iced tea, or lemonade. This will ensure

that everyone can join in the fun, regardless of their drink preferences.

VARIETY

Finally, it's always a good idea to offer a variety of beers at your Super Bowl party to cater to the different preferences of your guests. Consider offering a mix of light and dark beers, as well as a selection of both domestic and imported options. This will allow your guests to choose the type of beer that best suits

their taste.

Choosing the right kind of beer for your Super Bowl party can be a tough decision. However, by considering the preferences of your guests, the food you'll be serving, the winter season and the needs of non-drinkers, you can select a variety of beers that will please everyone.

Don't be afraid to experiment with different types of beer and offer a selection of both light and dark options to cater to everyone's tastes.