

Big Game

PARTY PLANNING





Avoiding a Big Mess

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Any big game party host should be prepared for a small mishap or two, including dropped food and spills.

But to reverse an old saying, you can have a Super Bowl party without something being broken. It just takes a little bit of preparation. Here's how:

CREATE MORE ROOM

You'd probably like to have additional space. People tend to bump into things, or each other, when they're in

close proximity. At the same time, however, you're not likely to undergo an extensive home renovation before this year's title game. So it's time to declutter. Rearrange your furniture to create a central gathering area, even if that means moving some bulkier pieces of furniture into the garage. (Safeguard any valuable or fragile items by storing them away, too.) Remove unnecessary items from walkways. But keep as many seating options as possible, including sofas, loveseats, recliners, stools and even folding chairs if necessary. Bean bags can be a fun option for kids. Sweep away everything on flat surfaces so there's room for snack foods and

drinks, including everyday items like mail, magazines, dishes and laundry.

ADDED PROTECTION

Protect your home by basically covering it with a layer of cloth, paper or plastic. Tablecloths will protect hard surfaces from stains, condensation and scratches made by drinks and appetizers. Disposable versions make clean-up a cinch. Identify areas where you know there will be heavy foot traffic and place runners or throw rugs to keep spills, dirt and excessive wear from affecting the carpet below. Go with plastic cups, since they're sturdier than glassware. In the event of a spill, remember to initially blot the

carpet with cold water to minimize the damage.

DON'T FORGET PETS

Between partygoer reactions to the game itself, the highly anticipated commercials and the raucous halftime shows, these big games can become quite loud. That kind of noise can be quite stressful for family pets, particularly for those who are shy or naturally anxious. They may react negatively by barking or even making messes of their own. So it's smart to keep them in separate areas of the home. Check in often and take them out for regular potty breaks. When it's all over, consider giving them a special treat!



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New Orleans-Themed Food

This year's big game is set to be played in New Orleans, which holds the record for playing host to NFL championship games.

The city is also known for its unique and flavorful cuisine. If you're looking to make your party complete, consider spicing things up with some of these local favorites!

PO-BOY

In other parts of the country, this kind of sandwich might be known as a hoagie or a sub. The difference is in the specialty bread and favored ingredients like fried shrimp. Unless instructed otherwise, they arrived "dressed," in the local dialect of New Orleans — meaning with lettuce, mayo, pickles and tomato.

GUMBO

This twist on a flavorful soup can be prepared in advance, making it the perfect party food. Shrimp,

chicken and sausage versions are the most popular local choices, but others are made with more exotic things like duck.

JAMBALAYA

The hardest part of about serving this at your big game party will likely be teaching everyone how it's pronounced. (It's "JAM-buh-LIE-uh.") Combine chicken, sausage, rice and special sauces in a cast iron skillet and let everyone serve themselves.

CAJUN SAUSAGE BALLS

Eat like a local by switching pork for alligator or using a special local recipe ("andouille"). Or just stir in some Tony's or Zatarain's seasoning to give it a little Cajun kick. Just be aware that partygoers might start throwing them at the TV if the score doesn't go their way.

RED BEANS AND RICE

The simplest of Louisiana's comfort foods, it features only red kidney beans and a few special spices over rice.

This is typically a staple of Monday meals in New Orleans, but when the big game is in town, there's an exception to the rule.

MUFFULETTA

A hefty sandwich that speaks to the deep roots of Italian-Americans in New Orleans, the muffuletta (pronounced "muff-uh-LAH-tuh") is made with salami, ham, salami, mortadella, Swiss, provolone and a special mixture of marinated olives and other pickled vegetables.

KING CAKE

When it comes to desserts, New Orleans is likely most closely associated with King Cake — a ring-shaped pastry that's traditionally reserved for Mardi Gras. But in a fun twist, the big game is coinciding this year with the pre-Lenten season — so dig in!

Dips to Light up Your Party

You can make a whole meal off a table full of dips. Finger foods are the perfect complement for a football watch party, especially the biggest one of the year.

Go beyond some of the old standbys with these recipes for success.

VIDALIA ONION DIP

Makes 32 servings. Recipe is from Allrecipes.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon butter, or as needed
1 1/4 cups chopped sweet onion, such as Vidalia
2/3 cup mayonnaise
2 cups shredded Swiss cheese

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Cook and stir sweet onion in hot butter until brown for 5-7 minutes and transfer to a bowl. Add the mayonnaise to the onion and stir, then pour into a 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Sprinkle the Swiss cheese over the mixture.

3. Bake in the preheated oven until the top is bubbling and lightly golden, about 35 minutes.

HOT CORN DIP

Makes 12-16 servings. Recipe is from Ree Drummond, The Food Network.

Ingredients

5 ears of corn, shucked



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Vegetable oil
Kosher salt
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
1/2 red onion, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 red bell pepper, seeded and finely diced
1 jalapeno pepper, finely diced (scrape out half the seeds and membranes)
1 8-ounce package cream cheese, room temperature

1/2 cup mayonnaise
1/2 cup sour cream
1 pound Monterey jack cheese, shredded, about 4 cups
2 scallions
1 4-ounce can diced green chilies
Chili powder, for sprinkling

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Heat a grill pan over medium heat or preheat an outdoor

grill. Brush the corn with vegetable oil and sprinkle with salt. Grill, turning, until slightly charred, about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool.

2. In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the onion, garlic, bell peppers and jalapeno. Stir and cook the veggies until they're soft and golden, about 5 minutes. Set aside to cool.

3. Cut the kernels off the cobs. In the bowl of a mixer with a paddle

attachment, combine the cream cheese, mayonnaise, sour cream and two-thirds of the cheese. Mix on low speed until combined. Add the scallions, veggie mix, corn and canned chilies with liquid. Mix until just combined.

4. Spread the mixture in a three-quart baking dish and sprinkle with the rest of cheese and chili powder.

5. Bake in the oven until bubbling and golden, 20 minutes or so.

Entertain with these Games

While the big game is on television, some fans can need distraction.

Set up these party games to make sure everyone has fun the whole evening — including the littlest football fans.

PIN THE FOOTBALL ON THE GOALPOST

Find some clear wall space and pin up a football field backdrop. In the same way you'd play "Pin the Tail on the Donkey," blindfold contestants, spin them around, and give them a paper football cut-out. The player to stick the football closest to the goalposts wins.

WING-EATING CONTEST

All you need for this game is a platter of wings, plenty of napkins and some empty stomachs. Set up a table and see who is hungriest for victory.

MAKE IT A COSTUME PARTY

Invite your guests to dress as their favorite celebrities. Have them vote for the best costume and give out prizes.

PLAY BIG GAME BINGO

You can make your own bingo cards or find a ready-made set. Think of squares such as "mascot citing" as well as football plays such as touchbacks. Put out highlighters or markers in team colors for your guests to mark their



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cards. Have prizes — get creative with fun prizes or gift cards to local restaurants. Have a whole separate card for the commercials.

CLASSIC PAPER FOOTBALL

Set up a tournament bracket and have paper football sets.

Winner takes all, or maybe just the last plate of wings.

COMMERCIAL RATINGS CARDS

Print out custom rating cards for guests to rate each commercial. Have someone keep track of the big winners for the night.

TRIVIA

Find the trivia master in your group and have them dive into football history for a trivia game. We'll get you started with these questions:

Q: How many teams are in the NFL? **A:** 32.

Q: Who was the first Black head coach to win a Super

Bowl? **A:** Tony Dungy.

Q: What is the last pick in the NFL draft traditionally called? **A:** Mr. Irrelevant.

Q: Which NFL team has the most Hall of Fame inductees? **A:** Chicago Bears.

Q: With which team did Joe Montana end his NFL career? **A:** Kansas City Chiefs.

The History of the Puppy Bowl

For some fans, the big game has nothing to do with the gridiron and everything to do with — puppies?

In 2005, Animal Planet aired the first Puppy Bowl, opposite Super Bowl XXXIX. Instead of football players, the Puppy Bowl features pets up for adoption from around the country. It consists of adoptable pups cavorting inside a model stadium with all the bells and whistles of the big game, including instant replays and player profiles.

Unlike the big game itself, the Puppy Bowl isn't live. It's usually filmed over three, eight-hour days, The Washington Post reported. And, over time, it's grown into a whole Noah's Ark. Not just puppies on the field, but kittens in the halftime show, and bunnies, pigs, hedgehogs, penguins and silkie chickens as cheerleaders.

A veterinarian is on site to make sure the pets are safe during play, as well as representatives from shelters and the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The puppies that appear are between 12 and 21 weeks old and must be well-socialized with people and other animals. Peanut butter, treats, dog food and toys are spread around the stadium to encourage the pups to move around. Puppies are given rest periods every 20 minutes.

Hamsters have also appeared in a blimp and Meep, a social media cockatiel, reported live from the sidelines. Puppy Bowls in years past have featured guinea pigs, screech owls and a chinchilla,

as well as armadillos and goats. There's a Puppy Cam attached to a pup's collar and cameras are also embedded in the field and in toys to give viewers the best views of the action on the field.

Each Puppy Bowl also has a Most Valuable Puppy; Puppy Bowl XX's top dog was Moosh, an Australian shepherd mix. In 2024, the Puppy Bowl drew 12.6 million viewers. The game has also spawned spin-offs.

Puppy Games aired on NBC alongside the 2008 Summer Olympics. The Dog Bowl, featuring the Oldies vs. the Goldies, aired several years the day before the Puppy Bowl. It featured adoptable older dogs.



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Cocktails for the Big Game

Super sips can make or break a great football party. Here are some recipes to make sure your big game soiree doesn't fall flat.

BEER MARGARITAS

Makes four servings. Recipe is from Sandra Lee, The Food Network.

Ingredients

- 1 lime, cut into wedges
- 1/4 cup coarse salt
- 2, 12-ounce bottles of beer, chilled
- 1/2 cup frozen concentrate limeade, thawed
- 1/2 cup chilled tequila
- Ice cubes

Directions

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

KITCHEN SINK

Recipe is from Liquor.com.

Ingredients

- 12 ounces apple brandy
- 12 ounces reposado tequila
- 9 ounces honey syrup (1/2 cup honey, 1/2 cup water, heated over medium heat and stirred until blended)
- 9 ounces lemon juice, freshly squeezed
- 16 pack of lager, chilled
- Orange peel, orange wheels, lemon peels and grated nutmeg, for garnish

Directions

1. Add the apple brandy, tequila, honey syrup, lemon juice and 9 oz. water into a large container and stir. Taste for balance.
2. Pour into a large serving bowl with ice. Top with beer to taste.
3. Garnish with citrus and grated nutmeg.

To serve, pour into a rocks glass over ice, top with more beer.

BOOZY DOLE WHIP

Makes three servings. Recipe is from Real Simple.

Ingredients

- 4 cups frozen pineapple
- 1 frozen banana, halved
- 1/2 cup coconut milk, chilled
- 1/2 cup coconut rum, chilled
- Fresh pineapple wedges, for garnish
- Coconut flakes, for garnish

Directions

1. Combine the pineapple, banana, coconut milk and coconut rum in a blender.
2. Pulse a few seconds at a time, scraping down the sides with a rubber spatula, until smooth but not liquefied.
3. Scoop into cups and garnish with pineapple wedges and coconut flakes.

SANGRIA

Makes three liters. Recipe is from Ree Drummond, The Food Network.

Ingredients

- 2 cups pineapple chunks
- 2 Granny Smith apples, cored and cut into cubes
- 2 unpeeled lemons, thinly sliced
- 2 unpeeled limes, thinly sliced
- 1 cup green seedless grapes
- 1 cup red seedless grapes
- 1 small unpeeled orange, thinly sliced
- 1.5 liters red wine, such as merlot or pinot noir, chilled
- 1.5 liters dry white wine, such as chardonnay, sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio, chilled
- 1 cup orange or citrus-flavored rum
- 1 cup orange or citrus-flavored vodka



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- 1 cup sugar
- Ice, for serving

Directions

1. Place the fruit in a large vat. Pour in the

red wine, white wine and the liquors.

2. Dissolve the sugar in a cup of water and add it to the mix. Cover and refrigerate the mix for several hours. Serve in glasses over ice.

After the Last Whistle

The big game has ended after plenty of fanfare for a new champion. All that's left to do is clean up what might be a huge mess left behind by friends and family who watched it all unfold at your house.

The task can be overwhelming — unless you're prepared:

GETTING READY

Long before the first kickoff, head to the store to stock up on all-purpose cleaner, stain-removal pens and air fresheners. Make sure you have plenty of trash bags and empty your vacuum cleaner. Retrieve a stack of dark towels, or buy some, since they're less likely to stain. Buy paper towels and put a roll in every room with a TV in case of an accident. For added convenience, place smaller trash bins that are typically found in bedrooms and bathrooms throughout the house. Using recyclable plates, dishes and utensils will simplify cleanup after the game.

DURING THE GAME

Cleaning up after the game actually starts while the teams are still playing. Plan to serve snacks in stages. That creates a livelier atmosphere and also offers more opportunities to tidy up along the way. Be on the lookout for used plates or tipped-over cups,

scheduling regular house-wide sweeps on a regular basis. You may even be able to address spills before the strains become permanent. Assign someone to monitor the trash bin as the game unfolds, so full bags can be promptly replaced. Put all of your essential cleaning supplies in a bucket that can be easily taken from area to area with ease. Spending a few minutes tidying up after each quarter will significantly reduce your post-game workload.

CLEANING UP

Once everyone has left, open windows to allow some fresh air into the home. Soak all of the dishes, cookware and glasses in water. Then take care of everything that can be thrown away or recycled. Begin in the room that's farthest away from the kitchen, working your way back. Next, tackle the stack of dishes in the sink. (Resist the urge to leave this for later, since you'll have more trouble with food and liquids once they're dried on.) Save cleaning the floor for last — then head to bed for some much-needed rest!



Hot Wings, Hot Game

Few dishes scream “game day” like a platter of crispy, saucy chicken wings. Whether you prefer them mild or mouth-blistering, these bite-sized delights are a must-have for any Super Bowl spread.

Let’s dive into what makes wings the ultimate football food and how to make them a touchdown hit with your guests.

THE SECRET TO GREAT WINGS

Chicken wings come in two main forms: bone-in and boneless. Bone-in wings are the classic choice, loved for their rich flavor and satisfying crunch. They’re best when fried to golden perfection or baked for a healthier twist. Boneless wings, often breaded chunks of chicken breast, are easier to eat and appeal to kids and adults alike.

The key to success? A killer sauce. Buffalo is a classic, blending tangy hot sauce with buttery richness, but don’t be afraid to get creative. Think honey garlic, teriyaki or even spicy mango habanero for something unique. Serve a variety so every guest can find their favorite.

SIDES AND PAIRINGS

Wings are stars, but they shine even brighter with the right accompaniments. Keep celery and carrot sticks on hand, along with a

duo of creamy ranch and blue cheese dips. Offer some hearty options like potato wedges or loaded nachos for variety.

Drinks are equally important. Beer is a classic companion, but don’t forget soft drinks, sparkling water and non-alcoholic options. Mocktails with a zesty lime kick pair wonderfully with spicy wings.

PRESENTATION IS KEY

Create a self-serve wing station that wows. Arrange wings by flavor on separate platters, labeled with creative names like “Blazing Buffalo” or “Garlic Gold.” Use small ramekins for dips to keep things tidy, and don’t skimp on napkins. Wings are wonderfully messy.

For an extra touch, tie the theme together with football-themed plates, napkins and serving trays. Mini goalposts as table centerpieces can add a playful vibe to your party spread.

Chicken wings are more than just a snack. They’re a Super Bowl tradition. With the right preparation and presentation, your wings will leave guests cheering long after the final whistle.



Pizza Perfect

No game day party is complete without pizza. Universally loved and endlessly customizable, it's the ultimate crowd-pleaser.

Whether you're crafting pies at home or ordering in, a little planning ensures your pizza game is as strong as your team's.

THE BASICS OF A GREAT PIZZA

A great pizza starts with the foundation: the crust. Thin and crispy, thick and chewy, or somewhere in between, the crust sets the tone for the entire pie. For a homemade option, store-bought dough offers convenience and flexibility. If you're ordering, look for pizzerias known for their quality ingredients.

Then, it's all about the toppings. Keep the classics — pepperoni, sausage and mushrooms — for the purists, but don't shy away from creative combinations. Think barbecue chicken with red onion, spinach with ricotta and garlic, or a zesty buffalo chicken pizza. Offering a mix of traditional and adventurous flavors will score big with your guests.

CUSTOMIZATION IS KEY

Pizza's versatility makes it a winner for gatherings of all sizes. Hosting guests with dietary restrictions? No problem. Opt for gluten-free crusts, vegan cheese or even cauliflower bases. Set up a pizza-making station if you're feeling ambitious, letting

everyone add their favorite toppings before popping pies in the oven.

Don't forget the dipping sauces. Garlic butter, marinara, ranch or even spicy honey can take each slice to the next level. Pair these extras with breadsticks or cheesy knots for a seamless side.

PRESENTATION AND PAIRINGS

Elevate your pizza setup with a thoughtful presentation. Serve pies on wooden boards or pizza stones for a rustic touch. Pre-slice them into manageable pieces, especially if other snacks are on the table. Label each pizza for easy identification and avoid the dreaded "What's on this one?" moment.

As for beverages, pizza pairs effortlessly with ice-cold beer, bold red wines or bubbly sodas. A creative drink option, like a basil-infused lemonade or Italian soda bar, adds flair to your event.

A SLICE OF THE ACTION

Pizza is the ultimate game-day MVP. It's simple, satisfying and offers something for everyone. With the right balance of flavors, presentation and sides, your Super Bowl party will be a championship-worthy event your guests won't forget.



Substantial Subs

Nothing fuels a Super Bowl party quite like a platter of hearty hoagies and subs.

Packed with flavor, easy to serve and perfect for sharing, these sandwiches are an unbeatable choice for feeding hungry fans. Whether you're building your own or ordering from your local sandwich shop, subs deliver big on taste and convenience.

STACKING THE PERFECT SANDWICH

The beauty of a sub lies in its layers. A fresh, crusty roll provides the foundation — sturdy enough to hold up to an array of ingredients without going soggy. Classic fillings like turkey, ham, roast beef and salami appeal to traditionalists, while grilled vegetables, chicken cutlets or spicy Italian meats cater to adventurous eaters.

Cheese is essential. Provolone, cheddar and mozzarella are go-to favorites, but don't overlook tangy options like Swiss or pepper jack for added zest. Pile on crisp lettuce, juicy tomatoes and onions for a fresh crunch, and don't skimp on condiments. Mayo, mustard, oil and vinegar or zesty aioli elevate the flavors to a championship level.

CONVENIENCE MEETS CROWD-PLEASING

For hosts who prefer hassle-free preparation, pre-made sandwich platters from a local deli or sandwich shop are a touchdown. Many shops offer customizable trays, letting you mix and match options to please every palate. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are also widely available, ensuring all your

guests feel included.

For larger gatherings, consider ordering a giant party sub, a visual and culinary centerpiece that's as fun to serve as it is to eat. Slice it into manageable portions, and let guests grab and go during commercial breaks.

SIDES AND SERVING IDEAS

No sub is complete without the right sides. Bowls of chips, pickles or a crisp coleslaw add texture and variety to your spread. For an elevated touch, serve mini sandwiches alongside soup shooters like tomato bisque or chicken noodle.

Set up a self-serve sandwich bar for a DIY twist. Arrange rolls, fillings, toppings and condiments in a buffet line, giving guests the freedom to create their ideal hoagie. Add some fun with themed options, like "The Blitz" for a spicy Italian sub or "The Hail Mary" for a loaded veggie sandwich.

SUPER SUB PROMOTIONS

Local sandwich shops are ready to help you gear up for game day. Many offer discounts on bulk orders or special deals on party platters. Look for coupons in your local paper or call ahead to place your order early. Supporting your neighborhood deli not only guarantees a delicious meal but also helps your community thrive.

With subs in hand, your Super Bowl party is bound to be a win. Easy to eat and packed with flavor, these sandwiches are the ultimate game-day champions.



Upgrade Your Viewing Experience

The Super Bowl isn't just a game. It's an event. With cutting-edge home entertainment technology, you can bring the stadium excitement into your living room.

From crystal-clear TVs to immersive sound systems, the right gear makes all the difference for game day.

THE LATEST IN TV TECHNOLOGY

The centerpiece of any Super Bowl party is the TV. Today's ultra-high-definition options offer stunning visuals that make every play feel like you're on the field.

4K UHD TVs: These remain the gold standard for picture quality. With four times the resolution of standard HD, they deliver crisp images and vibrant colors, ensuring you catch every detail.

8K TVs: If you're ready to invest in future-proofing, 8K TVs take resolution to the next level. They offer unparalleled clarity, making them ideal for tech enthusiasts who want the best of the best.

OLED and QLED Displays: OLED TVs provide deep blacks and exceptional contrast, while QLED models excel in brightness and color vibrancy — perfect for well-lit party spaces.

For larger gatherings, consider screen size. A TV over 65 inches provides an immersive experience, especially when paired with a high refresh rate for smooth motion during fast-paced action.

SOUND THAT PACKS A PUNCH

Great visuals deserve equally great sound. While TV speakers have improved, they often can't replicate the roar of the crowd or the crunch of a tackle. That's where external audio systems shine.

Sound Bars: Compact yet powerful, sound bars are easy to set up and deliver rich, room-filling sound. Look for models with Dolby Atmos for a 3D surround sound effect.

Home Theater Systems: For the

ultimate audio experience, a multi-speaker setup provides dynamic range and depth. Systems with wireless rear speakers are ideal for creating a surround-sound atmosphere without clutter.

Pair your sound system with a subwoofer to add heart-thumping bass that makes every touchdown celebration feel like it's happening right in your living room.

ACCESSORIES THAT ENHANCE THE ACTION

Beyond TVs and sound systems, a few smart upgrades can take your party to the next level.

Streaming Devices: If you're cutting the cord, streaming sticks or boxes ensure you won't miss a second of the game. Look for options supporting 4K content for top-tier quality.

Smart Lighting: Create a theater-like ambiance with adjustable smart lights. Sync colors with your team's jersey or dim the lights during dramatic moments.

Universal Remotes: Simplify your setup with a universal remote, eliminating the need to juggle multiple controllers.

SCORE BIG WITH DEALS

Electronics stores often roll out big discounts in the lead-up to the Super Bowl, making this the perfect time to upgrade your home entertainment setup. Look for bundle deals pairing TVs with sound bars or extended warranties for peace of mind.

With the right technology, you'll turn your Super Bowl party into an unforgettable experience. From dazzling visuals to immersive sound, today's electronics make hosting a winning game day a breeze.

