

# Quick Guide: Big Game!

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## Quick Tips

- Don't really "get" the game? Don't worry too much. Kick back and enjoy the exuberant theater that is football.
- Start the chicken wings hours before the kick-off. Easy in a slow cooker!
- The chili can be made ahead of time — even a day ahead — and reheated shortly before serving. To make it more of a meal, serve cornbread alongside piping hot bowls of chili. And don't forget shredded cheese, sliced jalapenos, and some sour cream, if you want to go all out.
- Hot dogs wrapped in refrigerated biscuit dough (the kind you buy in the store in a cylindrical package) make delicious pigs-in-a-blanket. If you want to change up this classic a little, substitute spicy or sweet sausages for the hot dogs. Serve grainy, full-bodied mustard for dipping.
- Make the cookies with sugar cookie dough and then decorate them to look like footballs. You'll need chocolate frosting (canned is fine for these) and some white icing for piping. Easy, easy easy!



### *Confused by football? We'll help!*

**D**on't know much about football? Want to watch the big game come February? Here's a quick guide to what many say is America's favorite sport.

#### **The Play**

The action takes place on 100 yards of the 120-yard field. The best vantage point to view the game is the 50-yard line.

The team possessing the ball tries to carry it for 10 yards before being stopped by the other team. The team with the ball has four tries to accomplish this play, which is called a down.

As long as they continue to make downs, the team marches down the field toward their opponent's goal line. If they propel the ball over the goal line, they score a touchdown.

The ball is advanced either on the ground (running play), or through the air (passing play). A fumble (dropping the ball) or an interception (the defensive team catches the ball) is called a turnover. When this happens, the defensive team controls the ball and roles are reversed.

If a team fails to get a first down in three tries, it often resorts to punting. A punter kicks the ball as far as possible toward the opposing team's end of the field.

This changes the possession of the ball. The other team is now on offense.

When a team gets close to the goal line, the place kicker might be called in to try for a field goal.

#### **The Game**

Every football game starts with the kick-off, which is determined by a coin toss.

The game is played in four 15-minute quarters, which are frequently interrupted by penalties, incomplete passes, and time-outs — and commercials. In real time, televised games take hours.

Points are scored by touchdowns (six points). The scoring team can then score immediately again by electing to let the place kicker try to kick the ball through the goal posts for an extra point. Field goals are three points.

Instead of a field goal, the scoring team can opt for a two-point conversion play, where they attempt to run a play from the two-yard line and move the ball across the goal line as though they were scoring a touchdown. A successful play earns the team two points for the play and six for a touchdown.

#### **The Team**

Jersey numbers have their own significance. The quarterback, the guy who works closely with the coach and who calls the plays on the field, usually wears a low number in the single digits or teens.

Wide receivers, the guys who line up at the line of scrimmage (the line of play at any given time), usually have numbers in the 80s.

Other players are defensive or offensive linemen.

In addition, there are numerous special players who play on "special teams" and have their own coaches. These guys kick the ball at kick-off, for field goals, or to punt. The head coach sends them on and off the field.

#### **The Weather**

A Florida team might play better in heat and humidity, but might not do well in a city like Denver where, at 5,000 feet, the air is thin. A strong, gusty wind will inhibit place kickers and punters from kicking the ball far or accurately.

Championship games typically are played in warm climates or indoor stadiums to mitigate extenuating weather conditions.

#### **A Final Note**

Football is a complex game that only aficionados and coaches fully understand. As a casual fan, you just have to kick back and enjoy the theater.



Whether you're hosting a party for the game or have offered to contribute some food for your neighbor's bash, here are four surefire dishes that will please everyone.

Who doesn't like messy, gooey nachos, piping hot chili, tangy chicken wings and tender pigs-in-a-blanket? Now imagine a big game party without at least one of these?

We've selected recipes for all four that will fit easily into your plans. For example, the chicken wings are made in a slow cooker so all you have to do is wait for them to be done. The chili can be made ahead of time and reheated. The pigs-in-a-blanket are a snap to make when you use packaged rolls, and the nachos are....well, messy and gooey. Just as you like 'em!

Make all four or just one or two. You'll be happy you made the effort!

## Party Food for the Game

*Perfect food for football fans!*

### The Good Host

Parties like this one are excuses to eat those foods we all love but usually avoid. Be sure you make a lot of food, and keep it coming as the game progresses. This is where a pot of chili kept hot on the back of the stove or a tray of pigs-in-a-blanket ready to pop in the oven at halftime is perfect.

Lay a paper or cloth tablecloth on a table or kitchen counter and arrange the food in an appetizing and orderly fashion. Set out small plates (paper plates are good bets) and lots of napkins. Be sure there are utensils so your guests can eat the chili or spear a chicken wing. When it comes to beverages, beer is the obvious choice, but don't forget about soft drinks, water, and wine, too. Keep everything chilled and nearby in the refrigerator or on ice in coolers. Provide beer mugs and large cups. Brew a large pot of coffee.

Your guests will want to keep track of statistics and trivia by logging on to various apps. They may want to tweet as the game progresses and otherwise use their handheld devices. Make sure your wifi is working — and maybe create a password for game day. (Cancel it after the party.)

## Slow-Cooker BBQ'd Chicken Wings

Serves 6 to 8

- 5 pounds chicken wings, tips cut off
- 12-ounce bottle chili sauce
- 1/3 cup fresh lemon juice (2 to 3 lemons)
- 2 tablespoons molasses
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons chili powder
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/4 teaspoon hot pepper sauce
- 2 to 3 sprinkles garlic powder
- Bottled blue cheese salad dressing, for serving (optional)
- Celery sticks, for serving (optional)



1. Put the wings in a slow cooker.
2. In a bowl, stir together the remaining ingredients. Pour the mixture over the chicken wings. Cook on low for 6 to 8 hours. (If you don't have this much time, cook the chicken on high for 2 to 3 hours.)
3. Serve the wings with blue cheese dressing and celery for Buffalo chicken wings.

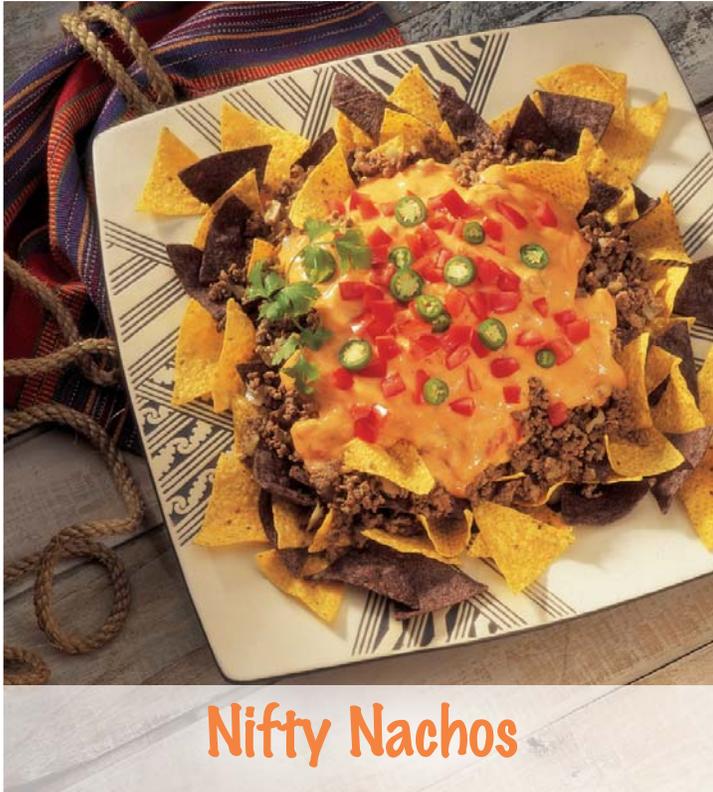


## Pigs-in-a-Blanket

Serves 6 to 8

- 8 slices American cheese
- 8 hot dogs
- 10-ounce package refrigerated biscuit dough
- Brown or yellow mustard, for serving

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Fold a slice of cheese around each hot dog.
3. Separate the biscuits from each other and flatten each. Put a cheese-wrapped hot dog on top of each flattened biscuit and wrap the dough around it. Repeat with the remaining hot dogs and biscuits.
4. Arrange the hot dogs on a baking sheet, seam sides down. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until the biscuit dough browns, the cheese melts, and the hot dog is heated through.
5. Cut the hot dogs in half and arrange on a serving platter. Serve with mustard for dipping.



## Nifty Nachos

Serves 8

- 1 can condensed Cheddar cheese soup, such as Campbell's
- 1/2 cup chunky salsa, such as Pace
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 pound ground beef
- 5 cups tortilla chips
- 1 ripe tomato, chopped
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and sliced (optional)

1. In a medium-sized saucepan, stir together the soup and salsa. Set aside.
2. In a large skillet, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Add the onions and cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until they begin to soften. Add the beef and cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon, until browned and no pink remains. Drain the fat from the pan.
3. Stir about 1/2 cup of the soup and salsa mixture into the skillet and cook until the beef is hot and bubbling.
4. Heat the remaining soup mixture over medium heat until very hot and bubbling around the edges.
5. Spread the chips on a serving platter and top with the beef. Spoon the hot soup and salsa over the beef and then top with the chopped tomato and the jalapeno, if using. Serve right away.

Note: Substitute a can of Campbell's Condensed Fiesta Nacho Cheese Soup for the cheddar cheese soup and salsa if you want to.

## Texas-Style Chili

Serves 6

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1/4 green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 tablespoons ancho chili powder, or your favorite type
- 1 1/2 tablespoons paprika
- 1 tablespoon cumin
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 2 1/2 to 3 cups beef broth or water
- Shredded Cheddar and jack cheese, for topping



1. In a Dutch oven or other large pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add the onion and cook, stirring, for 2 to 3 minutes or until the onions begin to soften. Add the beef and garlic and cook, breaking up with a wooden spoon until the meat browns.
2. Add the bell pepper, chili powder, paprika, cumin, salt, pepper and coriander. Stir well. Stir in 2 1/2 cups of broth or water, cover the pot, and cook over low heat for 4 hours. Check the level of the liquid and add more if needed. (You could need more than 3 cups.) Taste the chili and adjust the seasonings, as needed.
3. Serve the chili topped with cheese and spooned over rice or with cornbread, as desired. You could also stir in canned red or pink beans.



## Football Cookies the Kids Can Make

*Shaped like footballs, these cookies score big time!*

**F**ootball-shaped cookies will be the hit of any football game party. Best of all, they're fun and easy to make. Your kids can bake them in several flavors and then decorate them.

### Get Started

The fastest way to make cookies is to be organized with your ingredients and equipment. Make sure you have what you need for the cookies, as well as for the frosting of your choice.

You will need two or three baking sheets, wire cooling racks, a rolling pin, and a football-shaped cookie cutter. If you cannot find a football cookie cutter, fashion a sturdy template (make several) out of cardboard.

Pull out and butter the cookie sheets. Arrange the wire racks for cooling the cookies; and set out tools and accessories for decorating.

### Bake Super Footballs!

Flour an area of your countertop and roll out the dough. To prevent sticking, lightly rub the rolling pin with flour.

Dip the cookie cutter in flour, too, and then stamp out the cookies. Transfer them to the cookie sheets.

If you use a cardboard template, cut around it with a small, sharp knife. Carefully transfer the cookies to the cookie sheets.

As the first batch of cookies bake, re-roll the scraps and cut out more cookies. Handle the scraps gently. If you overwork the dough, the cookies will be tough.

### Decorate the Cookies

Frost the cooled sugar cookies with chocolate icing. Use storebought or make your own from confectioners' sugar, cocoa, and water or milk. Tint it with brown coloring, if you have it, to make it darker.

Use a piping bag or toothpicks for homemade confectioners' sugar icing. A tube of white decorating icing works well, also, for the laces on the top of the football.

Touchdown! The cookies are now official footballs suitable for snacking!



## Sugar Cookies

Makes about 6 dozen

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup unsalted butter, softened

1 large egg

$\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon pure vanilla extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda

Pinch of salt

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Butter 2 baking sheets.
2. In the bowl of an electric mixer, cream the sugar and butter until light and fluffy. Add the egg and vanilla and beat until well mixed.
3. In a large bowl, whisk the flour with the baking soda and salt. With the mixer on a low speed, slowly incorporate the flour into the cookie dough. The dough will be stiff.
4. Working with small amounts on a lightly floured surface, roll the dough into thin rectangles. Rub flour on the rolling pin to prevent sticking. Cut the dough into football-shaped ovals and then transfer them to the baking sheets. Gather the scraps of dough and roll them again.
5. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges. Let the cookies cool on the baking sheets for about 3 minutes before transferring them to wire racks to cool. Let them cool completely before decorating.