

Cooking Corner: Super Bowl XLII calls for appetizing game plan

by Angie Gent

If you think the Super Bowl is only about the game, think again.

It's also about the grub.

In fact, 75 percent of Americans who watch the big game Feb. 3 will be munching while watching, according to the Alexandria, Va.-based Snack Food Association, a trade group representing the makers of snack foods.

BIG MIX FOR THE BIG GAME - This Chipotle-Honey Nut Mix is sure to be a hit at your Super Bowl party. CNS Photo by Manny Franco. You can't just put out some mixed nuts, chips and beer and expect your guests to be happy, however. To do Super Bowl XLII right, you need to deck out the place with a nice spread of spicy, tangy, salty, smoky and cheesy goodies. The best thing is, you needn't kill yourself to do it.

First, you need to have a game plan. Know how many people you'll be serving and how much time everything takes to make - or order.

Sandwiches and wings, two of the biggest football favorites, can be ordered from grocery stores and restaurants in advance, or you can make them yourself.

"You want to have something that people can just grab and watch the game," said Terry Baker, general manager of Mr. Mike's Catering in Canton, Ohio, home of the Pro Football Hall of Fame. "Wings are something that always goes good for something like that."

Baker suggests a simple recipe for killer wings: Dump some wings in a baking pan with lots of salsa and hot sauce and bake for at least two hours at 350 F. Figure at least a half dozen wings per person.

J.J. Magda, manager at Buffalo Wild Wings in Jackson Township, Ohio, has another suggestion.

"The best way to get sauce on a wing is to take a bucket or a Cool Whip container with a lid, put a bunch of sauce in there with the wings and shake it up," he said. "That's what we do."

Beyond wings, Magda recommends cheese and crackers, ribs and cocktail wieners as prime football food.

"Those little hot dogs, that's where it's at," he said, adding that a sauce of grape jelly and hot sauce is "awesome." "It's picnic food for guys." Baker suggests sandwiches, such as the sausage and pepper variety. He also recommends one other very important thing.

"Make sure you know where there's a drive-through close by," he joked. For something a little more adventurous than wings and sandwiches, try tackling these recipes.

SPICY CHILI BOWL

Bread bowl:

16-ounce round loaf of bread

1 1/2 cups shredded cheddar cheese

Olive oil

Chili:

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 pound Italian turkey sausage, removed from casing

1 (15-ounce) can black beans, drained

1 (15-ounce) can cannellini (white) beans, drained

1 (19-ounce) can chili without beans

1 cup prepared chunky salsa

Sliced green onions, for garnish

Shredded cheddar cheese, for garnish

Yields 4 entree-size or 18 appetizer-size servings.

Preheat oven to 350 F.

To make bread bowl: With large serrated knife, slice across dome of bread, about 1 to 1 1/2 inches from top. Carve out center core of bread to within 1 inch of bottom and sides, keeping loaf intact. Reserve tops and cores.

Cut reserved bread cores horizontally into 1/2-inch slices. Brush both sides of layers with olive oil. Cut layers into about 18 "paddles" that measure about 3 x 1 1/2 x 1/2 inch.

Place paddles on foil-lined baking sheet; sprinkle with cheese.

Brush inside of bowl lightly with olive oil. Place bowl on separate baking sheet.

Bake bowl and paddles in 350 F oven for 11 to 13 minutes, until golden brown and cheese is bubbling.

To make chili: Heat oil over medium heat in 3-quart saucepan. Add sausage and brown. Add black beans, cannellini beans, chili and salsa; cook until hot. Pour into prepared bread bowl. Garnish with onions and cheese. Place paddles around bowl. Serve immediately.

Nutritional analysis per appetizer serving: 200 calories, 15 g protein, 22 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 3 g fiber, 630 mg sodium.

- King's Hawaiian Bread.

CHIPOTLE-HONEY NUT MIX

Cooking spray

1/3 cup honey

3 tablespoons sugar

3 tablespoons walnut oil or vegetable oil

1 tablespoon canned chipotle chilies in adobo sauce, mashed into a puree

1 1/4 teaspoons salt

4 cups assorted nuts

Yields 4 cups.

Preheat oven to 300 F.

Line large baking sheet with foil or parchment paper; coat with cooking spray.

In large bowl, combine honey, sugar, oil, chili puree and salt. Add nuts, stirring to coat evenly. Spread nuts in even layer on prepared baking sheet. Bake, stirring once or twice, until nuts are glazed and golden brown, about 30 minutes. Let cool. Break apart, if needed.

Note: Nuts can be stored, after they are completely cooled, in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Nutritional analysis per 1-tablespoon serving: 68 calories, 2 g protein, 4 g carbohydrate, 6 g fat, trace cholesterol, 52 mg sodium.

- "Nuts: Sweet and Savory Recipes From Diamond of California" by Tina Salter with Steve Siegelman (Ten Speed Press; \$29.95).

ITALIAN BEEF AND BEAN STEW

1 (12- to 14-ounce) package dried bean soup mix with seasoning packet

2 pounds beef for stew, cut into 1-inch pieces

1 (14- to 14 1/2-ounce) can ready-to-serve beef broth

1 cup water

1/2 cup sun-dried tomato pesto sauce or spread

Salt and pepper, to taste

Yields 6 servings.

Cover beans from bean soup mix with water in large bowl. Cover bowl and soak beans overnight in refrigerator. Reserve seasoning packet.

Drain beans; rinse and pick over to remove any grit or shriveled and broken beans. Place beans, beef, broth, water and contents of seasoning packet in 4 1/2- to 5 1/2-quart slow cooker. Cover and cook on high for 5 to 6 hours or on low for 6 to 7 hours, or until beans are tender and beef is fork-tender. (No stirring is necessary during cooking.)

Stir in pesto; mix well. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve topped with additional pesto, if desired.

Note: For best results, do not lift the slow-cooker lid. Every peek allows heat to escape and adds 15 to 20 minutes to cooking time.

Nutritional analysis per serving: 409 calories, 38 g protein, 41 g carbohydrate, 10 g fat, 73 mg cholesterol, 11 g fiber, 795 mg sodium.

Cooking Corner: Super Bowl XLII calls for appetizing game plan by Angie Gent