



BIG GAME

Party Planning



Winning Party Games

As riveting as any big game is, there are bound to be those who don't particularly care about the ins and outs of sporting events.

Here are some party games that everyone can enjoy.

FOOTBALL BINGO

Make up a variety of game cards with squares for things like scoring a touchdown, kicking a field goal, fumbling the ball, interceptions and more. Also shoot for less common things such as a team scoring a safety, a successful two-point conversion or a referee getting tackled. Don't forget the atmosphere, either. Wardrobe malfunction might be a popular square, as would fireworks, shots of people kissing in the crowd or celebrity sightings.

RATE THE COMMERCIALS

Make scorecards, 1-10, for your guests and have everyone rate the Super Bowl commercials. Have everyone hold up a card after the commercial ends. You might be surprised at how your friends rate each one.

TRIVIA

Hit the internet and find some interesting facts about the game. Try questions like:

When and where was the first half-time show?

Answer: The University of Arizona's Symphonic Marching Band, 1967.

How much does the Lombardi Trophy weigh?

Answer: Seven pounds.

What city hosted the coldest Super Bowl ever?

Answer: New Orleans.

Who was the first singer to perform at a halftime show?

Answer: Carol Channing, 1970.

FOOTBALL CHARADES

Draw up some cards with different football personalities on them. You can pick famous players or coaches, positions or even people commonly seen in the stadium, such as cheerleaders or hot dog vendors. Divide into teams and get to playing.

FOOTBALL TOSS

Set up buckets and toss in mini footballs for prizes. Or maybe just bragging rights. Totally up to you. You can go as big (five-gallon buckets and regulation footballs) or as small (party cups and ping-pong balls) as your space allows.

HOT SAUCE CHALLENGE

Kick your party up a notch by setting up a hot sauce challenge. Have everyone bring the spiciest sauce and rate them on taste, heat and more. Give out prizes for the winners of the best taste, the most heat and for the person who can eat them all without crying.

Dips to Dive Into

Make your party the play of the century with a table full of delicious dips for everyone to try. Here are some winning recipes.

PICKLE DIP

Makes about 2 ½ cups. Recipe is from Food Network.

Ingredients

12 ounces cream cheese, room temperature
 ¾ cup finely chopped dill pickles, about two large pickles
 4 ounces thick-sliced deli ham, finely chopped
 Black pepper

Directions

1. Combine the cream cheese, chopped pickles, ham and black pepper, to taste, in a bowl. Stir until well combined. Serve with crackers, sliced cucumbers or carrot sticks.

PIZZA DIP

Serves 16. Recipe is from Allrecipes.

Ingredients

8 ounces cream cheese, softened
 ½ teaspoon dried oregano
 ½ teaspoon dried parsley
 ¼ teaspoon dried basil
 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
 1 cup pizza sauce
 2 tablespoons chopped green bell pepper
 2 ounces pepperoni, chopped



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2 tablespoons sliced black olives

Directions

1. Mix together the cream cheese and herbs. Spread the mixture in the bottom of a 9-inch pie plate or a shallow, microwave-safe dish.
 2. Sprinkle ½ cup mozzarella and ½ cup Parmesan over the top. Spread the pizza sauce over that. Cover with remaining cheese, then top with green peppers, pepperoni and olive slices. Cover and microwave for 5 minutes.

CHEESY SPINACH AND BACON DIP

Makes about 32 servings.

Recipe is from Velveeta.

Ingredients

10 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
 1 pound Velveeta, cut into ½-inch cubes
 4 ounces cream cheese, cubed
 1 10-ounce can of diced tomatoes and green chiles, undrained
 8 slices bacon, cooked and crumbled

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on high for three minutes. Stop and

stir. Continue to microwave and stir at three-minute intervals until the mixture is well blended.

2. Pour the prepared dip into a slow cooker set on low to keep it warm for your party.

SAUSAGE LOVER'S DIP

Recipe is from Jimmy Dean.

Ingredients

1 package regular pork breakfast sausage
 1 10.75-ounce can condensed cheddar cheese soup
 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chiles, undrained

8 ounces cream cheese, cubed
 4 ounces shredded cheddar cheese

Green onions, for garnish

Directions

1. Cook sausage in a large saucepan over medium-high heat for 8-10 minutes or until thoroughly cooked, stirring frequently. Drain and return to the pan.
 2. Add the remaining ingredients and mix well. Cook over medium heat for 4-5 minutes or until cheeses are melted and the dip is heated through. Stir frequently.
 3. Serve with tortilla chips.

Make Clean-Up a Breeze

One of the worst parts of hosting a party is the clean-up after everyone's gone. But it doesn't have to be a pain. Here are some ways to make it easy on yourself the day after.

SET UP TRASH BAGS AND BINS

It may seem like a no-brainer, but not all your party areas may already have a trash can, or it may not be a large enough one for food or the crowd you plan to have. Set up dedicated trash bags or bins around the house and keep them regularly emptied.

GET READY FOR SPILLS

Spills are as inevitable as the thrills of the big game. Make a grab-and-go cleaning kit with everything you need to pick up spills quickly and treat stains thoroughly. A popular stain remover recipe is to mix equal parts hydrogen peroxide with Dawn dish soap in a spray bottle. Always color test your stain remover, even if it's a commercial product, before use.

USE DISPOSABLES

Stock up on paper and plastic cups, plates, napkins and more to make clean-up a snap. You can even use plastic table covers that you can toss into the recycling bin (provided it's free of food, of course). If you're



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worried about sustainability, choose brands that use recycled plastics and paper. This goes for cookware, too. There are several brands of disposable metal baking trays and slow cooker liners that will make cleaning up go a lot more quickly.

PREP FOR LEFTOVERS

Buy inexpensive take-out containers and let your guests take party leftovers home with them. They can pack their own plates on the way out; just remove the plates for eating off of and replace them with the

containers as the game winds down.

Have your own food storage ready for anything you want to keep.

HIRE A PRO

Book a professional cleaning

service for the day before and the day after your party. Make sure the cleaners know what to expect in your home; a reputable company will visit your home and give you a quote before the big day. Ask friends and neighbors for references.

Kick Off With Kids' Activities

Little hands can be big work at any party that's not expressly for them. Make sure to include the kiddos in your party planning so that everyone can relax and have a good time.

DECORATE CUPCAKES

Bake a couple of box cake mixes into cupcakes following package directions. Let the kids decorate them with frosting in team colors and candies. You can also do this with rolled sugar cookies. Just buy the tubes of dough, slice, bake and let the kids go nuts.

OUTDOOR GAMES

If weather allows, set up some of your favorite outdoor games and let the kids burn off energy in their own championship series. Some favorites are cornhole, horseshoes and volleyball. You can set up a scavenger hunt for the big day with prizes for the winners.

PINATAS

What kid doesn't love candy? Make it rain with a football-themed pinata. Designate a grown-up to supervise and let the kids flail away at half-time. They can spend the second half picking up and noshing all the candy.

SET UP A GAME ROOM

No, not that game. The other



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kind. Hook up a TV with a couple of your favorite game systems and have the older kids organize a Mario Kart tournament (or whatever the best family-friendly game is). Award prizes and throw the big kids some moolah for keeping everyone quiet while the adults watch the main event.

FLAG FOOTBALL

Run a flag football tourney. Designate a grown-up or two to watch over everyone and assign however many teams you have kids for.

Play until there's a champion. If you only have enough kids for two teams, make it a challenge. Instead of who

scores the most points, have them see who can throw the longest reception or who can run the fastest.

HIRE A BABYSITTER

Which brings us to the ultimate solution. Hire a babysitter and set up a play room just

for the kiddos.

You can ask all the parents to chip in and hire one or more (depending on how many kids you have) babysitters for the evening. Make sure there's some kid-friendly food available and let them run amok with their babysitters while the game is on.

Sandwiches that Score

Make a big impression for the big game with little sandwiches that would make Dagwood smile. These sandwich recipes are anything but basic and are guaranteed to have your guests cheering.

BAKED HAM AND CHEESE SLIDERS

Makes 24 servings. Recipe is from Allrecipes.

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup melted butter
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- 1 1/2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 1 tablespoons dried minced onion
- 24 brown-and-serve dinner rolls
- 1 pound thinly sliced cooked deli ham
- 1 pound thinly sliced Swiss cheese

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 9x13-inch baking dish.

2. Mix butter, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, poppy seeds and dried onion in a bowl.

3. Cut the rolls in half, then arrange the bottom pieces in a single layer in the baking dish. Layer half the ham, then the cheese, then the other half of the ham.

4. Place the roll tops on the cheese, then pour the butter mixture over the sandwiches. Bake for about 20 minutes or until the rolls are browned and the cheese has melted.



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Slice into individual sandwiches before serving.

HOT ITALIAN PARTY SANDWICHES

Makes 12 sandwiches. Recipe is from Taste of Home.

Ingredients

- 1 12-ounce package Hawaiian sweet rolls

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons prepared pesto
- 6 slices mozzarella or provolone cheese
- 6 thin slices deli ham
- 9 thin slices hard salami
- 6 thin slices deli pastrami
- 1 1/4 cups giardiniera
- 1/2 cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup fresh basil leaves

- 1/2 cup sliced red onion
- 1/4 cup prepared zesty Italian dressing
- Pepperoncini

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Cut rolls horizontally in half and place in a greased 11x7-inch baking dish. Mix the mayo and pesto, then spread it over the cut sides of rolls.

2. Layer the bottoms with mozzarella, ham, salami, pastrami, giardiniera, Parmesan, basil and red onion. Place the bun tops over the filling and press gently to flatten.

3. Bake for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and brush with the salad dressing. Return to the oven for about five minutes or until the cheese is melted. Serve with pepperoncini.

Grilling 101

If you're fortunate enough to live somewhere where the weather is warm for the big game, consider making it an outdoor barbecue. Set up picnic tables, lawn chairs and a projector so that everyone can watch the game while the food is cooked.

CHOOSE YOUR FUEL

Grills, generally speaking, come in two fuels: Charcoal and gas. There are also pellets, but we're going to deal with the two most popular types of fuels here. Each variety has its own fan base. Charcoal devotees love the charred flavor that comes with it. Gas enthusiasts point to the ease with which they can cook. It's up to you which one you prefer. Talk to the professionals at your local outdoor store for their best recommendations.

CHOOSE YOUR FOODS

Decide what you want your menu to be. Make sure you have options for everyone, including any vegetarians or guests with food allergies. Some veggie options could include plant-based burgers and sausages, or grilled veggie paninis.

MAKE A TIMELINE

When deciding what to cook, you need to make sure that it's not so labor intensive you can't enjoy the game or your guests yourself. If you've got your heart set on something that takes a lot of work, try to have it mostly done by

the time your first guests arrive so that you can spend time with them.

GET SAUCY

You can offer your guests different tastes by offering a grilled spread with a variety of sauces and condiments to fit every palette. Try different hot or barbecue sauces to tempt everyone into trying something new. Consider a white barbecue sauce instead of the traditional tomato-based sauces.

ALABAMA-STYLE WHITE BARBECUE SAUCE

Makes about 3 cups. Recipe is from Allrecipes.

- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup prepared extra-hot horseradish
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons prepared yellow mustard
- 1 1/2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder

1. Combine mayonnaise, vinegar, horseradish, lemon juice, mustard, black pepper, salt, cayenne pepper and garlic powder together in a bowl. Whisk until smooth.



Streaming the Big Game

Just because you've cut the cord doesn't mean you can't watch the big game. There are several streaming options available to watch NFL games, including the big game on Feb. 11.

The game will be televised nationally on CBS and affiliates, so if you have an over-the-air antennae, that is one solution for you. It will also appear on Univision for the first time, giving Spanish-speaking audiences an option for viewing as well.

For pure streaming, go to Paramount+, NFL+ or the NFL app for service. All those options will cost you. There's also a kid-friendly alternate broadcast on Nickelodeon, which may be a good idea for a kids' room TV.

There are some things you can do to ensure the best streaming experience for the big game. That includes making sure you have a secure, stable Internet connection before kickoff. You don't want to spend time on the phone with customer service while your guests wait.

Another thing to do before the party starts is to make sure that your streaming plan, whichever one you choose, includes the highest possible video quality that your television set allows. If your set's not 4K, for example, don't shell out



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for the 4K plan. If you do have a newer set, make sure your chosen plan matches your TV's capabilities.

If, for some reason, you're going to be using a tablet or a phone to stream the game,

make sure your app settings allow for the best video quality you can get given your connection. Check your settings if you use a separate device, such as Apple TV or Fire TV, to stream to your television.

Use a wired Ethernet connection, if you can, instead of Wi-Fi. That can net you a faster and higher quality stream than using Wi-Fi. If you have to go with Wi-Fi, place the router as close as you can get it to your

television set. Limit the number of devices you have online at one time (this may mean killing the Wi-Fi for your guests) or upgrade to a faster service from your Internet provider for a limited time.