



BIG GAME
Party Planning

Your Party Playbook

Having people over to watch the Super Bowl? Whether you are planning a large soiree or inviting just a few people, there are many questions that need addressing.

Where will guests watch the game? Will there be more than one viewing area? What will they eat? To handle big-game hosting like a seasoned pro, you will need a party-planning playbook.

THE HOME FIELD ADVANTAGE

Hosting means you have the home field advantage — and nobody knows your house better than you.

Decide which rooms will be best for party-related activities and prep them appropriately. Bring in extra seating from other rooms in your house to keep people comfortable in your main viewing room.

STAY ON OFFENSE

Avoid party fouls by staying ahead of the game. Stock up on frequently used items such as ice, napkins and disposable cups. Clear out your refrigerator and garbage cans.

This is also the time to consider your parking needs. Will you have enough space in your driveway and along your street for people to park safely without blocking any of your neighbors?

RALLY YOUR TEAM

No party goes off without a hitch without strong teamwork. Will anyone be helping you with the party? If you have a family, get them to pitch in with the pre-party cleaning. If everyone is responsible for a room or two, the whole house will be clean in no time.

Designate someone to pick up any rentals you may need. If you have children, elect one of them to be in charge of any pets during the party. One person should never be doing all the work.

SET YOUR OWN GAME CLOCK

Keep your party running smoothly by always keeping one eye on the clock. Think about when you want guests to arrive, how you want to time the food, as well as how long you anticipate people will linger after the party is over.

You might want to set timers on your phone for important reminders, such as restocking food, so no part of your plan goes overlooked.



Planning a Big Game Menu

Of course the most important feature of a Super Bowl party is the game. The second is the food.

The menu for any party, but especially gatherings centered on sporting events, is central to its success or demise.

TAILGATING MENTALITY

Tailgating is a football tradition and one that typically happens at the field. But why not incorporate it into your party plan?

Invite people over an hour or so before the game begins and kick off the party with a barbecue. Light up the grill, put ESPN on the television for pre-game analysis, and organize a little game of touch football to get everyone's blood flowing.

SNACKS

Think finger food. You should avoid anything that requires utensils — although you might make an exception for forks.

The idea is to keep the food simple enough so that people can focus their energy on the game rather than on eating. But your menu should be expansive enough that guests can keep reaching for more.

BEVERAGES & ICE

Be sure to stock up on both alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages for your guests. If



you feel uncomfortable purchasing alcohol, it is proper etiquette to extend a BYOB invitation to guests.

Remember you can never have too much ice. It's best to calculate how much you think you'll need and then double it.

SAMPLE MENU

While quantity will vary

depending on the size of your party, here is a sample menu to work off of for your party — and to inspire ideas of your own.

- **Dips:** Everyone loves a good dip, and dips reign supreme at any sports-themed party. A good starter trio is a dill veggie dip, a sweet fruit dip and an onion chip

dip — all of which can be made at home or bought pre-made at the store. If you are feeling bold, offer a few more filling dips, such as buffalo chicken dip or a seven-layer taco dip.

- **Snacks:** These really just operate as vehicles for the dips. Think veggie tray, assorted cut fruits, a variety of chips

and pretzels.

- **Meats:** There should be at least two meat choices — think burgers and wings, hot dogs or even meatballs. (Best to keep foods finger friendly).

- **Desserts:** It's always a good idea to offer two: one with chocolate and one without. Also be sure to mind any food allergies in your crew.

Party Mistakes to Avoid

Super Bowl parties are one of the easier parties to host. The entertainment is built in, no fancy clothes are required and you can eat with your fingers.

Issues can arise, however. Avoid a party fumble by recognizing these five common mistakes.

Mistake #1: Putting all the food out at once

It is important to space your food to help keep the party going. This cues your guests that the party is coming to an end.

Saving the sweet treats until fourth quarter and putting on a pot of coffee gives your guests a silent cue to finish up any alcoholic beverages and enjoy the end of the game.

Mistake #2: Choosing food that is hard to eat

Avoid anything that requires a knife and fork. The best party foods are finger-friendly — making it easy to keep your eyes on the game instead of your plate.

Stick with foods that are familiar. You might be tempted to show off your culinary skills, but sports fans tend to gravitate toward fare they recognize. Unless you know your guests very well, pick another time to try out new recipes.

Mistake #3: Running out of seating

To put it simply, it's a long game and no one wants to stand — including you. Be sure there is plenty of comfortable seating for your guests.

Pull furniture from other rooms in your home or borrow chairs from a friend or neighbor. If you are borrowing, make sure that person is on your guest list.

Mistake #4: Forgetting about the mess

Any party produces a mess, but

parties where people eat with their hands, and have their attention focused elsewhere (ahem, the television) yields many sticky fingers. Keep plenty of napkins in easy-to-reach locations.

Stock up on trash bags and keep an eye on the bin so you are ready to replace it with a fresh bag when needed. If you really want to avoid the mess, provide guests with more than one trash disposal — placing garbage bins discreetly and strategically throughout your party space.

Mistake #5: Planning and prepping entirely on game day

Doing all of your party prep the day of the party is a guarantee you will either forget something, be too tired to enjoy yourself — or both. By the time the big day comes around, you should be past the “prep” stage and should simply have to put things together.

Make all dips and clean your home ahead of time. This should leave you plenty of time to enjoy the big game.

Entertaining Younger Guests



There is always a chance you might find yourself hosting younger guests — invited or not.

Whether you invited families with children or a babysitter canceled last minute on one of your guests, it is always a smart idea to plan a few activities.

Your younger guests are more likely to be less engaged in the game — especially for its whole duration — than your adult guests. Having some activities planned will keep little hands out of trouble.

TOUCH OR FLAG FOOTBALL

Before the Super Bowl begins or during half time, organize a touch or flag football game. This provides an outlet for kids to exert their energy outdoors in the fresh air.

Who knows, the kids might bring out the young spirit in many of your adult guests as well.

SUPER BOWL BINGO

Bingo pages are a fun way to keep the youngest in your group engaged in the game.

Create the pages yourself or download one of the many templates you can find for free on the Internet and set them out with football-themed stickers as markers.

FOOTBALL COLORING PAGES

Many children enjoy coloring. Set up a small table with football-themed coloring pages and jars of crayons.

Coloring pages can be printed from free online templates and can be a welcomed quiet activity to keep kids both occupied and entertained.

SUPER BOWL TRIVIA

After the game is over and everyone is enjoying dessert and coffee, split your guests into teams and set up a game of Super Bowl trivia.

Older children can be in charge of reading the questions and keeping score.

FLICK FOOTBALL

Help kids make small footballs out of paper (or have some pre-made) and create a contest to see who can flick their football the farthest. Offer a small prize to the winner.

Up Your Hosting Game

Whether this is your first time hosting a Super Bowl party or you do it every year, there are steps you can take to put your party at the top of the league.

Many times, the difference between a good party and a great one are the extra details. By thinking of every guest — including those not particularly into the game — you can turn a standard party into one your guests will talk about until next year's big game.

SET UP AN ALTERNATE PARTY SPACE

Let's face it, not everyone who accepts your party invitation will be interested in watching the entire Super Bowl.

It is important — both for you and your guests — to have a pre-designated space those guests can go to and with which you are comfortable.

Guests should not feel confined to one room of your home, and they should have a good time — no matter how they choose to spend it.

SET UP A PLAY BY PLAY

As host or hostess, your attention will be divided between the game and your guests — which will land you in the kitchen probably more than you would like.

Keep up with the game by setting up an extra device, such as a laptop or tablet with a game app, such as ESPN Gamecast or the CBS Sports app.

Station another device with

the same game-tracking app near the grill. If you really want to surprise your guests, put one in the bathroom.

RATE THE COMMERCIALS

Super Bowl commercials

have become an integral part of the game experience. Commercial breaks are no longer entirely spent taking restroom breaks and refilling plates and cups. It's a time when marketers pull out their

big game and supposedly offer the most creative commercials of the year. So design a way for your guests to rank them.

Create a scoring method and see if there is a consensus at the end of the party.



Super Bowl Commercials

Super Bowl commercial history also is a history of modern marketing as a whole.

The Super Bowl is not just a competition between two professional football teams but a battle among marketers. Big brands compete for exposure, consumer allegiance and the designation of the best Super Bowl commercial — also known as the Olympics of television commercials.

The Super Bowl spotlight can define a brand — but it wasn't always this way.

The American Marketing Association took a historical look at the cost of a 30-second Super Bowl spot from its inception to current day. Here is what they found:

1967

The first Super Bowl — the Green Bay Packers against the Kansas City Chiefs — garnered \$42,000 per 30-second spot.

1970

Just three years later, this price tag went up to \$78,000. This fee decreased briefly in 1971, but then jumped the next two years until surpassing the \$100,000 mark in 1974.

1980

By Super Bowl XIV, the cost of a short commercial reached \$220,000. Coca-Cola also



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launched a commercial that would change the way brands viewed Super Bowl marketing and convinced audiences that commercials were also entertainment. The now-iconic “Hey Kid, Catch” commercial featuring Pittsburgh Steelers defensive tackle “Mean” Joe Greene

helped set the stage for a new kind of Super Bowl marketing.

1981

The year the Oakland Raiders beat the Philadelphia Eagles 27-10, commercial spot prices jumped to \$324,000 — more than \$100,000 in one

year's time. Three years later, Apple would break all the rules and set a new tone for Super Bowl commercials with its Macintosh spot.

1988

This is the year commercial prices would double again —

reaching \$645,000.

1992

During Super Bowl XXVI, Nike paired “Air Jordan” with “Hare” Jordan — Michael Jordan and Bugs Bunny dominating a game of basketball thanks to the shoes. This concept extended the idea of using two American icons to market a product.

2001

The first year a Super Bowl commercial cost more than \$2 million and Britney Spears sold us Pepsi — continuing the tradition for the cola company to capitalize on beautiful stars to sell their product.

2010

Betty White laid the foundation for the popular Snickers campaign, “You’re not you when you’re hungry,” a campaign still active today and which has since featured other mega stars. Given the average Super Bowl commercial costs of the year, the candy company most likely doled out anywhere from \$2.5 to \$2.8 million. One year later, commercial costs would rise to the \$3 million marker.

2016

Super Bowl commercials reach an all-time high of \$5 million for a short spot. Mountain Dew also created #PuppyMonkeyBaby — a slogan perhaps full of nonsense but which kept people talking for months.

Super Bowl Stats

Whether you are a rookie wanting to boost your game knowledge or an aficionado looking to challenge your own Super Bowl fact prowess, these stats are just the ticket to keep the party interesting.

- According to ESPN, eight regular-season MVPs have made it to the Super Bowl since 2001, and all eight have lost.
 - The Pittsburgh Steelers have won the most Super Bowls at six.
 - There are 13 football franchises that have never won a Super Bowl: Tennessee Titans, San Diego Chargers, Philadelphia Eagles, Minnesota Vikings, Jacksonville Jaguars, Houston Texans, Detroit Lions, Cleveland Browns, Cincinnati Bengals, Carolina Panthers, Buffalo Bills, Atlanta Falcons and the Arizona Cardinals.
- The Detroit Lions, the Cleveland Browns, the Jackson Jaguars and the Houston Texans are the only teams to have never played in a Super Bowl.
 - The Minnesota Vikings, however, have played in four Super Bowls but have never led at any point during the game.
 - Tom Brady has more Super Bowl rings than any other quarterback (five) and the most Super Bowl MVPs (four) of any NFL player in history.
 - Over the course of the 2017 Super Bowl LI, 24 Super Bowl records were broken.
- The fewest points to ever be scored in a Super Bowl game was by the Miami Dolphins in Super Bowl VI in 1972. They scored 3 points.
 - The following year, the Dolphins would score the fewest points that would ever result in a win; the Miami Dolphins beat the Washington Redskins 14-7.
 - Of the top 10 most-watched American television programs of all time, nine of them are Super Bowl games. Super Bowl XLIX is the most watched U.S. telecast of all time, with a viewership of approximately 114.4 million people.