

ACCENT

www.thejournalnet.com

COOKING FOR DUMMIES

A Super Bowl menu even a kitchen idiot can make

Men, don't rely on a significant others or Pizza Hut to cater your Super Bowl party. With a bit of planning and the easy recipes, even an amateur cook can pull together a bash that keeps guests munching during the big game.

Mexican pork and bean chili

Start to finish: 40 minutes

2 teaspoons olive oil
1 cup chopped yellow onion, divided
½ pound pork tenderloin, fat removed, cut into ½-inch cubes
1 celery stalk, chopped
1 small green pepper, chopped
2 cups canned red kidney beans, rinsed and drained
2 cups canned no-salt diced tomatoes
½ cup frozen or canned corn kernels (if canned, drain)
1½ tablespoons chili powder
2 teaspoons ground cumin
Salt and black pepper

In a large skillet, heat oil over high heat. Add the meat, celery, green pepper and all but 2 tablespoons of the onion. Cook five minutes, tossing to brown meat on all sides.

Add beans, tomatoes, corn, chili powder and cumin. Lower heat to medium and simmer 15 minutes. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Makes two large servings; double as needed.

"Prevention's Fit and Fast Meals in Minutes" (Rodale, 2006, \$19.95)

Creole curly fries

Start to finish: 15 minutes

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon Cajun seasoning
1 teaspoon salt
Half of a 28-ounce bag frozen curly french fries
Jarred chili sauce, for dipping

Preheat the oven to broil. Line a baking sheet or broiler pan with aluminum foil.

In a small bowl, whisk together the olive oil, Cajun seasoning and salt.

In a large bowl, combine the fries and oil mixture. Toss to coat evenly, then spread the french fries in a single layer on the baking sheet.

Place the pan 6 inches from the broiler and cook for nine to 11 minutes. After four or five minutes, use a spatula to flip the fries.

Serve fries immediately with chili sauce.

Makes four servings; double as needed.

"Sandra Lee Semi-Homemade 20-minute meals" (Meredith, 2006, \$19.95)

Chili-garlic shrimp

Start to finish: 20 minutes

1 pound peeled and deveined fresh large shrimp
1.6-ounce package buffalo wing seasoning
5 tablespoons unsalted butter
2 teaspoons bottled minced garlic
¼ teaspoon (or more, to taste) red pepper flakes
¼ cup coarsely chopped fresh cilantro
2 teaspoons lime juice
Lime wedges (optional)

Rinse the shrimp with cold water, drain and pat dry with paper towels. Combine shrimp and buffalo wing seasoning in a large plastic bag and shake to coat evenly. Set aside.

In a large skillet over medium heat, combine butter, garlic and pepper flakes. When butter has melted, increase heat to medium-high, being careful not to burn butter or garlic.

Add the shrimp when the butter begins to pop and sizzle. Cook and stir for four to five minutes, or until shrimp is opaque and cooked through. Be careful not to overcook.

Remove the pan from heat and stir in cilantro and lime juice. If desired, garnish with lime wedges. Serve hot.

Makes four servings; double as needed.

"Sandra Lee Semi-Homemade 20-minute meals" (Meredith, 2006, \$19.95)



Get away from the usual for this year's Super Bowl party menu. Mexican Pork and Bean Chili requires no expertise in the kitchen to put together. It's really fast, really easy and really good.

Real men don't order pizza

For the big game, take a giant leap ... into the kitchen

By HOWIE RUMBERG
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Super Bowl Sunday means one thing: It's time to throw your annual party that's as outrageous as the game is overhyped.

With the Indianapolis Colts at last in the mix, the hype will be even more over the top for Hoosiers.

That means you need food to match. And there's the problem: A beer bust and half-warm pizza just won't cut it this year.

Even if you're not the biggest Colts fan, chicken wings downed with Bud Light just don't seem appropriate when you're watching the game on your new envy-inducing wide screen.

Whatever the reason, it's time for a new game plan.

Don't get nervous; we're hardly talking sit-down dinner with cloth napkins.

Super Bowl Sunday still is the ultimate guy day, and the real reason you and your friends are getting together is to watch the game and hurl a few snarky remarks at the exorbitantly priced commercials.

So, while you're willing to cross the threshold and step into the kitchen — without the tether of a significant other's help — you want your menu to be easy to prepare and impressive to your guests.

By choosing idiot-proof recipes that cut corners with packaged foods, a few clever interpretations of old standbys and a spruced-up drinks menu, the only thing you'll be leaving to chance is the quality of the football.

"I think you want to keep it light, keep it easy, keep it simple. You want food that, think you spent hours on it but really only spent five, six minutes," says Food Network cook Sandra Lee, whose speedy cooking methods rely on incorporating prepared foods and seasonings.

Keep it light?

Fear not. No one's expecting you to put out a relish tray. There are several givens when you're getting a group of guys together to watch a major sporting event. Whether it's drinking too much or eating foods that would make a cardiologist cringe, they like to indulge.

For a classier and lighter substitute for potato chips, broil a batch of Creole curly chili fries using store-bought frozen spuds.

With a little creativity, that old standby buffalo chicken wing steps up, too. Using a packet of buffalo-wing spice, turn shrimp into a reasonable substitute for the messy favorite.

Still afraid of the kitchen?

Fire up the grill, long the domain of the man's man.

Brett McKee, chef-owner of Oak Steakhouse in Charleston, S.C., says grilling is absolutely the easiest way to go for beginner cooks, and it's convenient.

"Most people have these motherload grills right outside the sliding door. You throw the stuff on. People are passing you beers, you're looking at the TV, you're turning the meat; you're right in there."

As long as you've snazzed up the menu, dazzled your friends with some simple yet tasty treats, don't skimp on the drinks.

There's a whole range of microbrews and imported beers that will go nicely with your spread. And don't be afraid to make a batch of mixed drinks, too, said Matt Goulding, assistant editor and resident foodie at Men's Health magazine.

The choices are plentiful and the results could be memorable, especially if the Colts make the game another big blowout.

Slow down before buying crockpot: Use these tips

Fine Living Network

No, you haven't entered a time machine. Slow cookers, also known as crockpots, are making a comeback in kitchens all around the country.

The reason?

They are a quick, easy and inexpensive way to make tasty meals for the family, all without having to monitor the pot.

Here's what to look for when shopping:

- Look for a slow cooker that has a removable insert. This will make it much easier to clean the pot. You can also prepare food in it the night before, and then pop it in the fridge overnight.

- Oval cookers are more convenient than round ones because they can fit roasts and whole chickens better.

- If you are feeding a family of four or more, buy a slow cooker that is at least six quarts in size.

- Many of today's slow cookers come with a bevy of settings for everything from roasts to stews to desserts. The one feature we found most helpful is a cooker that automatically switches to "warm" once the cooking is done. Some cookers need to be turned to warm manually.

- When it comes to this appliance, we feel looks do matter. Because it will be sitting on your kitchen countertop for hours on end, choose a slow cooker you find esthetically appealing.

Come cooking time, here are some tips to getting the most out of your slow cooker.

- Don't spend money on the best cuts of meat. Slow cookers cook meat at low temperatures, 170 to 280 degrees. The low heat helps less expensive and leaner cuts of meat become tender.

- Don't open the lid or you'll allow the steam to escape, affecting cooking time.

- Unless you're having company for dinner, save yourself some time and effort and don't bother braising meat first.

- If you're using a regular (non slow cooker) recipe, reduce the amount of liquid by 50 percent.

Don't stir it. Removing the lid from a crockpot releases heat, increasing cooking time.

CLIPART.COM PHOTO

Don't rely on bleach to keep bathroom well-scrubbed

Home and Garden Television

The bathroom is not a fun place to clean, but, alas, it must be done. To make the work a little easier, try these ideas:

- To clean a vinyl shower curtain, toss it in the washing machine with a few towels, a cup of white vinegar and detergent. Air dry immediately.

- Bleach and powdered cleansers are two things you should not use when cleaning the bathroom. They are oxidized and won't clean effectively.

- A common mistake is to clean chrome, brass and enamel bathroom fixtures with a strong disinfectant cleaner. The best cleaner to use on these items is a neutral spray cleaner, which can be purchased at a janitorial supply house.

- Keep bath mats smelling fresh by mixing eight to 10 drops of essential oils with ½ cup of baking soda. Sprinkle the mixture over the mats, let them sit for an hour and then shake out.

- Spray the toilet with disinfectant cleaner. Allow to sit for three minutes, then wipe down. Address buildup with an acid bowl cleaner. Only a small amount is needed on a swab, and it's more effective than scrubbing with a powdered cleanser.

Clean buildup in a toilet bowl with a small amount of acid bowl cleaner on a brush, according to HGTV.

CLIPART.COM PHOTO