

# Home Field Advantage

Tips and Tricks for Tailgating

←  
**AT HOME!**



# Home Field Advantage

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For many, football season symbolizes the transition from summer to fall- even if it's still 90° F outside. Whether you're an expert on the game or not, you can't deny that the hype every season can be infectious. From memorable plays to electric half-time performances, it's not only entertaining, but the perfect opportunity to host a party that stands out from the rest! Our top tip? A tailgate-viewing party crossover. That's right, we're throwing a flag on the play and bringing the tailgate indoors. Air conditioning, the best seats in the house (for free!), and the comfort of your own home – what's not to love? Homes.com brings you Home Field Advantage: Tips and Tricks when Tailgating at Home. This guide is your game day playbook with the inside scoop (literally) on taking your tailgate to the endzone.

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# Beer Guide

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For many football fans, a tailgate isn't a tailgate without their favorite beer. At the most basic level, beer is classified as either an ale or a lager depending on how it's fermented. Those two styles have hundreds of variations between them, giving just as many options to suit anyone's taste. Here are just a few of America's most-loved beers, with tips on the perfect food pairings for your tailgate:



## Light and Pale Lagers

Light to medium in body and color, these beers are highly carbonated and brewed for easy drinking. Alcohol content is between 3.5-5%, with subtle hop and malt flavors. There aren't many tailgate dishes these beers can't pair with, but they do particularly well with herb flavors and light foods like salads and grilled chicken.



## American Pale Ales (APA)

Medium-bodied and aromatic with a refreshing crisp, American pale ales are hop-forward and easy to drink. Citrus, pine, and floral notes are common to this beer, with alcohol levels typically ranging from 4-7%. APA's are best paired with sharp or smoky cheeses and grilled meats.



## India Pale Ales (IPA)

Typically characterized by their hoppiness, these intensely flavored beers can be an acquired taste and are best consumed at a slower pace. With alcohol levels between 5.5-7.5%, styles range from the bitterness of West Coast to fruit-forward New England, with hundreds of varieties in between to suit every palate. These beers can have a cooling effect when consumed, pairing well with spicy foods like tacos, or heavy foods like burgers or french fries.



### Belgian

The hardest to classify of the beers on this list, Belgian beers are as diversified as they are flavorful. Belgian whites, with their spicy and citrus flavors and lighter body, pair well with light seafood dishes like fish tacos. Rooted in centuries of brewing by monks, dubbels are typically heavier in body and color and their complex flavors pair well with barbecue and smoked sausage.



### Porters and Stouts

Full-bodied and dark, with notes of coffee or dark chocolate, these beers get their dark color from deep-roasted malts. Porters tend to be a bit lighter in body than stouts, and alcohol content for these beers can range from 4-12% depending on the style. These heavy beers are best consumed with rich foods like chocolate desserts or beef-based dishes, and aren't recommended for mass consumption.



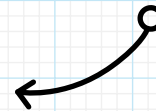
# Party Playbook



## Pregame:

- + 3-4 weeks out
- + Send out invitations via Facebook
- + Request the Monday after the big game off from work
- + Order any party decorations or team spirit wear
- + Double check that your cable or streaming service has the game available

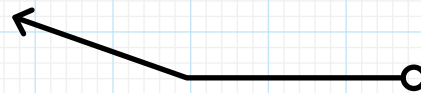
**NOT A MUST-HAVE,  
BUT DEFINITELY A  
NICE-TO-HAVE!**



## First Quarter:

- + Finalize your shopping list
- + Order or pick up any party decorations or team spirit wear
- + Let your guests know if they need to bring anything

**DON'T FORGET TO  
STOCK UP ON PAPER  
TOWELS, TRASH  
BAGS, AND OTHER  
BASIC NECESSITIES!**



**CHAIRS? SNACKS?**



## Second Quarter: 1-2 days out

- + Start prepping the food and chill the drinks
- + Clean the house and get furniture rearranged
- + Decorate, decorate, decorate



### Third Quarter: Morning of Game Day

- + Set food out on counters/tables
- + Pick up any stray belongings that escaped yesterday's cleaning
- + Get the TV going

*IF YOU'RE OUTDOORS, SEE PAGE 5!*

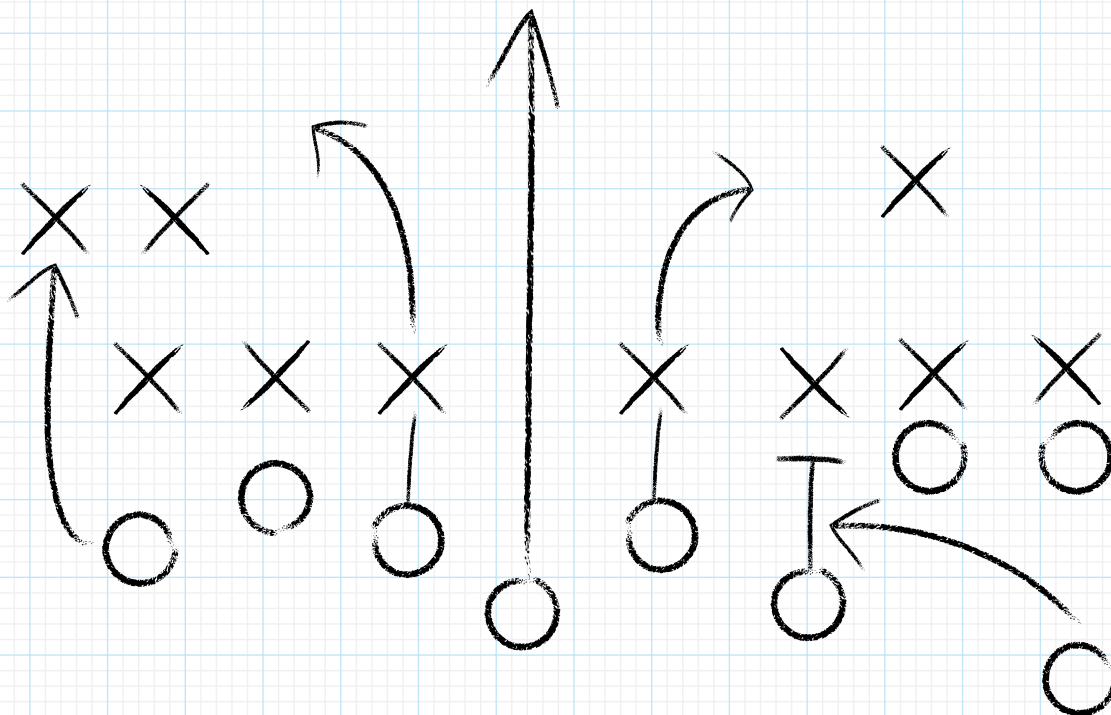
*FINGERS CROSSED YOU DID STEP 2 IN THE FIRST QUARTER!*



### Fourth Quarter: Game Time

- + Greet your guests
- + Watch the game
- + Celebrate how amazing your party turned out

*THE MOST IMPORTANT ONE!*





### COLLEGE FAVORITES

Jamin and Ashley Mills of [The Handmade Home Blog](#)

# The Handmade Home

Tailgating is a serious tradition passed down through the generations and it's all about fun rivalries, community, and enjoying the big game. It's a chance to take the day off, put your feet up, and truly revel in the season, but more than anything, it's about the love of gathering with people that we adore.

We love different takes on combining team colors and honoring friendships; and, at the end of the day, it's all about good food, great conversation, and memories for years to come. One of our very favorite things to do is walk around the tailgating areas to see the creative things that people come up with for their definition of a good time! So pull up a seat, fix yourself a plate, and let's get ready for football.

## Must-Haves



Cooler and Ice



Mesh Food Covers



Comfy Chairs

**DON'T FORGET ABOUT THESE GUYS, THEY ARE SO IMPORTANT WHEN HOSTING OUTDOOR TAILGATES!**

## Nice-to-Haves



Ultimate Tailgating RV



Cornhole



Face Paint

**PAINT THEM YOUR FAVORITE TEAM'S COLORS!**

Whether you went to a D1 school or just have family ties to one, tailgating to cheer on a college's team is no joke. To get prepared, this Auburn University household displayed their school's colors loud and proud. **Balloons** bring color to your tailgate while helping you stand out from the competition. Show your school pride with a **banner** representing your team, and don't forget to bring the spirit with your team's swag. Foam fingers, noisemakers, and stadium cups are just a few must-haves to bring your pre-game tailgate to the next level.







# Pepper Jack Tater tots

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## Ingredients:

2 cups of pepper jack cheese, cubed  
2 tsp. salt  
2 tsp. pepper  
1 tsp. garlic powder  
1/2 cup all purpose flour  
3 1/2 cups of shredded potato  
2 eggs  
Vegetable oil

## Instructions:

1. Add the flour, seasonings, and two eggs in a medium sized bowl. Mix together.
2. In a separate, large bowl, add the shredded potato. Pour egg mixture into the bowl with the shredded potato until you can form a ball.
3. Grab a small amount in your hand and flatten it into a disc shape. Place a piece of cheese in the middle and form the dough into a ball around the cheese. Set aside and repeat until you've used all the dough.
4. Heat a large frying pan over medium heat with a layer of vegetable oil covering the bottom.
5. Once oil is hot, add the potato balls and allow to brown on one side (4-6 minutes) before flipping. Cook for another 3-5 minutes on the other side.
6. Allow to cool. Serve and enjoy!

Source: The Handmade Home



## FAMILY FAVORITES

Jeremy and Katie Bower  
of [Bower Power Blog](#)

# Bower Power

Football season is upon us and that means everyone gets to score big with their tailgate parties! We absolutely love football in our family and the kids are no exception. Every tailgate party gives us a chance to fill our bellies, have some fun, and get in the spirit to cheer on our favorite team! But your party can be a big flop without a few essentials to keep your guests, and little ones, happy. We are here to share how we make every tailgate party a winner and every guest feel like an MVP.

## Must-Haves



Finger Foods



Cups with Lids



Kid-friendly Activities

**LESS MESS  
MEANS LESS  
CLEAN-UP**

**KEEP YOUR YOUNGER FANS  
OCCUPIED DURING SLOW PLAYS!**

## Nice-to-Haves



Kids Table



Team Spirit Items



Games

**GET THE WHOLE FAMILY IN THE  
COMPETITIVE SPIRIT!**

When passing along the tailgating tradition with your little ones it's important to remember that they might not be as excited for the actual game as they are for the celebrations and atmosphere leading up to kick-off.

When decorating for your tailgate at home, print out miniature "playbooks" for them to draw on or color.

Snacks should be kept on a separate table to make for easy serving (and monitoring) of any sugar-loving kiddos. **Disposable tableware** makes for easy clean-up when there are little ones in tow. Expert tip: consider buying affordable kid-friendly tumblers with lids to prevent any fumbles in the drink department, too.





# Bacon, Blue Cheese, and Buffalo Dip

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## Ingredients:

- 8 oz package cream cheese
- 4 cans drained cooked chicken
- 1/3 cup buffalo sauce
- 1/2 cup blue cheese dressing
- 2 cups shredded cheese
- 1/3 cup chopped bacon
- 1/4 cup blue cheese crumbles
- 1/4 cup chopped green onions

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
2. Combine cream cheese, chicken, buffalo sauce, blue cheese dressing, cheese, and bacon into a mixer. Turn on low setting, keep mixing until fully incorporated.
3. Pour mixture into a lightly greased baking dish. Top with blue cheese crumbles.
4. Place in oven for 20 minutes.
5. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Top with green onions and serve!

Source: Bower Power



### FAN FAVORITES

Matt and Jacque Knowlton  
of [The DIY Village Blog](#)

# The DIY Village

If you are from the south, tailgating is in your blood. Since Matt and I are from Tennessee, every August we get prepared for the excitement of football season. There are a few things you need to take your tailgate to the next level. A basic tailgating party is always a go-to when you want the benefits of being indoors but also the perks of tailgating in a stadium parking lot. Air conditioning, the best seats in the house, and unlimited snacks... how can you say no to tailgating at home? It's a great way to spend time and have fun with friends and family, whether you're cheering for the same team or not! With these tips, there'll be no interceptions at your next tailgate, only touchdowns.

## Must-Haves



Football Cable Package



Pre-game Beverages



Chips and Dip

**FOR THE FANS WHO WANT TO WATCH A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING!**

**THE MVP OF SNACKS!**

## Nice-to-Haves



Sharpie Marker/  
Placecards



Shade or  
Air Conditioning



Decorations

**TO KEEP TRACK OF WHOSE CUPS ARE WHOSE!**

Tailgating can be one of two things, extreme or simple. While you may not mind going all out for games against your team's biggest rivals, some games are more worthy of just hanging out with friends and family watching from the couch. The most important part of this tailgate-inspired party is to keep things simple. Disposable tableware keeps clean up to a minimum--find **fun and festive options** that combine style with functionality. Sprinkle some confetti onto the table and top it off with decorative **napkins** to complete the effortless but elegant look.





# Chili Cheese Layered Dip

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## Ingredients:

- 3, 8oz packages cream cheese
- 2, 15oz can chili with no beans
- 8oz sharp cheddar cheese

## Instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. In a 9 x 13 baking dish, evenly spread the cream cheese into the bottom of the dish.
2. Add both cans of chili to the dish and spread evenly. Top with cheddar cheese.
3. Place in oven for 20-30 minutes until the cheese is bubbly and starts to brown.
4. Let cool for 10 minutes. Serve with corn or tortilla chips!

Source: The DIY Village



# Homes.com

Now that you've mastered our tailgating guide like a football pro masters his plays, what's next? All season long you root for your team to make it to one final game – the BIG one. You know the one we're talking about. So why fumble now on your tailgating parties? Like the big game itself, expert preparation is the key to any successful championship event. Earn extra points with your guests and get them fired up with a delicious table spread and festive decor. Homes.com is breaking out all the stops to help you become a tailgating pro.

## Must-Haves



Open Floor Plan



Disposable Tableware



Designated Hashtag

**SO ALL OF YOUR GUESTS' PHOTOS CAN BE STORED IN ONE PLACE!**

**REARRANGE YOUR FURNITURE SO THERE'S PLENTY OF ENTRY AND EXIT SPOTS FROM THE VIEWING AREA TO THE SNACKS OR BATHROOM.**

## Nice-to-Haves



Surround Sound Speakers



Storage Space



To-go Containers

**FOR GUESTS TO EASILY STORE AND ACCESS THEIR PERSONAL BELONGINGS.**

**FOR GUESTS TO TAKE HOME LEFTOVER PARTY FOOD!**



The big game is finally here and it's time to end this football season with a bang. If your team made it to the championship, then it's time to bring out the big guns with a party to remember. Using wrapping paper in lieu of a tablecloth not only allows for easy cleanup but also ties your theme together. Add in extra touches of team spirit by setting some game-ready merch out for friends and family to have when cheering on their team.





# Home Field Nachos

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## Ingredients:

- 2 bags of tortilla chips
- 2 avocados
- Juice of 1 lime
- ½ tablespoon of garlic salt
- ½ cup monterey jack cheese
- ½ cup of cheddar cheese
- 1 lb of ground beef
- 1 package of taco seasoning
- 1 large tomato, diced
- ½ red onion, diced
- 1-2 jalapenos, de-seeded and sliced
- 1 can refried beans
- Sour cream for serving

## Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.
2. In a nonstick skillet, cook beef until brown. Stir in taco seasoning and cook about 3 minutes longer until beef is thoroughly cooked. Set aside.
3. Slice avocados and remove pit. Cut into .5" pieces.
4. Heat refried beans according to directions on the can.
5. On a large baking sheet (use multiple if needed), add desired ingredients in layers. Chips, ground beef, refried beans, cheese, tomato, onion, jalapeno.
6. Place in oven for 10 minutes.
7. Remove from oven. Top with avocado, sour cream, and other additional toppings if desired. Enjoy!

Source. Homes.com



We hope you've enjoyed our simply smarter approach to tailgating at home. While our guide starts you on the right path to becoming an expert host, our blog is home to even more entertaining tips and tricks.

The Homes.com [blog](#) offers resources for first-time and seasoned homebuyers, sellers, DIY-ers, investors, and more. We also have a Homes.com [how-to section](#) that will take you step-by-step through the homebuying, selling, renting, and financing process.

Keep up with us on social media!







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