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Serve up some fun at your Super Bowl party

BY TERI GREENE • FEBRUARY 2, 2011

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But Super Bowl Sunday -- this Sunday -- is a great opportunity to party.

Sure, it's one of the most laid-back of parties you can host, but that doesn't mean everything on your spread has to have come out of a crinkled bag from the grocery store.

The big game is an excellent excuse to cook up and eat some great casual snacks that will leave your guests cheering.

Because you want your party to be a hit, make it delicious. Because you want to pull off a memorable gathering for a bunch of distracted game-watchers -- in the middle of cold and flu season -- make it safe.

Feeding The Masses

When planning your party, a little preparation goes a long way, said Janet A. Johnson, regional extension agent with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System.

For instance, the cheeseburger bowl dip recipe featured here might not go far enough to satisfy a big crowd, but if you've got a smaller guest list, the dip, no matter how tempting, may end up sitting on the table a little too long.

Super Bowl party hosting is a little bit more precarious than organizing events that aren't on the biggest football game of the year. At your average get-together, food only stays out a couple of hours.

On this particular Sunday, unforeseen factors -- like overtime -- may call for a spread that lasts longer.

What's key, Johnson said, is catering to your crowd. When it comes to serving foods that are temperature-sensitive, have extra reserves of a specific snack in the fridge and bring them out (re-heating if necessary) when the original plates are emptied. If your party is small, you might half the recipe and make two separate dishes.

Balance Fun With Caution

One thing is for sure. At Super Bowl parties, snacks are definitely *not* the focus. Sure, people are grabbing at them like crazy. But the game, those hilarious commercials and fun banter usually take center stage.

That's why you need to take precautions, just as you would for a mid-summer picnic.

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This Cheeseburger Bowl Dip is sure to be a crowd-pleaser at almost any Super Bowl party.

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