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How to Host a Winning "Tailgate Party at Home" Party

When we think of tailgating, we picture football fans grilling, relaxing and eating near their vehicles just outside football stadiums across the country. Since many of us never make it to the game itself but instead watch the games from the comfort of our family rooms and big screen TVs, why not host a "tailgate party at home" party? When your favorite college or NFL team is playing over the weekend, just invite a few friends over to "tailgate" at your home. Nina Swan-Kohler, culinary professional for Burleson's Honey and author of the cookbook "Tailgates to Touchdowns: Fabulous Football Food," has developed a "game plan" and a "play-by-play" for hosting the perfect tailgate party in front of the TV set at home.

Playbook: Determine your guest list. Your party can be a great way to meet and make new friends so ask each of *your* friends to invite several of *their* friends, too. Next, select or create football-themed invitations. Purchase invitations at a local party store or, better yet, make your own on the computer using available clip art and borders. The nice thing about making and printing your own invitations is that you can create something unique for your group of friends. Invitations should be mailed (or e-mailed) at least one week prior to the game.

Winning Line-Up: Show your colors—and pull out all the stops. Fly your favorite team colors and

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HOW TO HOST A WINNING "TAILGATE PARTY AT HOME" PARTY, PAGE 2:

a team logo flag, if you have one. Use small team flags to line the street to your home. Wear a football jersey or sweater in your favorite team's colors. Drape inexpensive fleece blankets with football designs over the coffee table and over your serving table as tablecloths. Use any and all football-themed serving pieces you have collected through the years, or purchase new ones. If you use paper or plastic products (plates, cups, napkins, and so forth) purchase them in team colors, of course.

Play-by-Play: Greet your guests at the door, and make sure they know that you're glad they came! Let your guests know the "game plan" for the party (how soon you'll be eating, for instance), and give everyone a nametag so they won't have any problems remembering names. Offer your guests something to drink and direct them to the food . . . and by all means introduce them to your other guests.

Easy-to-"Tackle" Menu: Choose foods that can be made ahead, when possible. As the party progresses from pre-game to post-game, bring out various foods to keep your guests as excited about the party as they are about the big game. For example, serve assorted drinks and Sweet and Salty Snack Mix as your pre-game appetizer.

Bring out the Honey-Glazed Pigskins during the first quarter. Your guests can all "huddle" around as they watch the kick-off. During the halftime show, serve Herb-Rubbed Pork Loin with Balsamic Honey-Onion Barbecue Sauce and "Game Thyme" Biscuit Squares. Add crisp and crunchy coleslaw or raw veggies on the side, if you like. You may want to kick back and announce a "time out" from eating during the third quarter, but the fourth quarter promises to score big when you serve Football Snack Bars.

The memories made at your "tailgate party at home" party will truly be sweet—whether your team was victorious or not.

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HOW TO HOST A WINNING "TAILGATE PARTY AT HOME" PARTY, PAGE 3:

Sweet and Salty Snack Mix

Serve as a healthy snack or appetizer.

- 6 cups corn and rice cereal (*Crispix recommended*)
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1/2 cup pure clover honey (*Burleson's recommended*)
- 1 cup salted mixed nuts

Preheat oven to 325° F. Coat large shallow baking pan (15x10x1-inch) with cooking spray or line with parchment paper. Spread cereal in pan. In 1-cup glass measure, microwave butter on High until melted (about 30 seconds). Whisk in honey until combined well. Drizzle over cereal; gently stir to coat cereal. Bake 20 minutes or until cereal is light golden brown, stirring every 10 minutes. Remove from oven; stir in mixed nuts. Cool in pan on wire rack. Makes about 7 cups.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving

Calories – 164, Protein – 2.6g, Carbohydrates – 22g, Total Fat – 8g, Saturated Fat – 2.8g, Cholesterol – 8.7mg, Sodium -145mg, Dietary Fiber – .7g

Honey-Glazed Pigskins

- 1 jar (12 oz.) chili sauce
- 1 cup (12 oz.) pure clover honey (*Burleson's recommended*)
- 2 tablespoons prepared country-style Dijon mustard
- 1 package (8 oz.) fully cooked mini pork sausages (*Little Smokies recommended*)

In small saucepan, combine chili sauce, honey and mustard. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, about 10 minutes to blend flavors. Add pork sausages; heat through. Makes about 50 sausages or 12 servings.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving

Calories – 173, Protein – 3.6g, Carbohydrates – 29g, Total Fat – 5g, Saturated Fat – 2g, Cholesterol – 11mg, Sodium -629mg, Dietary Fiber – 2g

Microwave Directions: Place chili sauce, honey and mustard in 4-cup glass measure or 1-quart microwave-safe bowl. Microwave on High for 3 minutes or until bubbly. Drain liquid off sausages; add to honey mixture. Microwave on High for 2 to 3 minutes or until heated through.

Slow Cooker Directions: Place all ingredients in slow cooker. Cook on High setting for 2 hours.

Herb-Rubbed Pork Loin with Balsamic Honey-Onion Barbecue Sauce

The tangy sweet-sour flavor of this barbecue sauce will have you coming back for more.

Herb Rub:

- 2 teaspoons snipped fresh rosemary leaves (or 1 teaspoon dried rosemary leaves, crushed)
- 2 teaspoons snipped fresh thyme leaves (or 1 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed)
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt

- 1 boneless pork loin (2 to 2 1/2 lb.)

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HOW TO HOST A WINNING "TAILGATE PARTY AT HOME" PARTY, PAGE 4:

Combine Herb Rub ingredients; rub evenly onto pork. Preheat grill to medium-high. Place pork (fat side down) on grill and grill for 15 minutes on both sides to brown slightly (30 minutes total). Reduce heat to low (or place pork over indirect heat) and grill 35 to 45 minutes longer or until internal temperature reaches 160° F. Let rest 10 to 15 minutes. Cut into 1/2-inch slices; serve with Balsamic Honey-Onion Barbecue Sauce. Makes 8 to 10 servings.

Roasting Instructions: Preheat oven to 400° F. Place pork (fat side up) on rack in shallow roasting pan. Roast uncovered for 30 minutes. Reduce heat to 325° F. and continue roasting for 20 to 30 minutes or until internal temperature reaches 160° F. Let rest 10 to 15 minutes.

Balsamic Honey-Onion Barbecue Sauce:

2 tablespoons canola oil
1 1/2 cups finely chopped onion
1/2 cup balsamic vinegar
1/2 cup pure clover honey (*Burleson's recommended*)

In small saucepan, heat oil over medium heat, swirling to coat pan. Add onion; cook and stir 5 minutes or until onion is translucent. Stir in vinegar and honey. Heat to boiling. Reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve with Herb-Rubbed Pork Loin.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving

Calories – 262, Protein – 26g, Carbohydrates – 23g, Total Fat – 7.6g, Saturated Fat – 1.7g, Cholesterol – 78g, Sodium -261mg, Dietary Fiber – .8g

"Game Thyme" Biscuit Squares

3 cups buttermilk biscuit & baking mix (*Pioneer Brand recommended*)
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh parsley
1 teaspoon snipped fresh thyme leaves (or 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves, crushed)
1 cup sour cream
1/2 cup milk
2 tablespoons pure clover honey (*Burleson's recommended*)
2 tablespoons butter or margarine, melted

Preheat oven to 400° F. In large bowl, stir together biscuit and baking mix, parsley and thyme. In 2-cup glass measure, combine sour cream, milk and honey; stir into biscuit and baking mix mixture until dough forms a ball. Turn out onto surface dusted with flour. Knead 8 times. Place in 8x8x2-inch pan that has been coated with cooking spray. Using a knife or pizza cutter, cut dough into 9 or 12 squares. Drizzle with butter. Bake 18 to 22 minutes or until golden brown. Cover loosely; keep warm until serving time or reheat as needed. Makes 9 or 12 biscuits.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving

Calories – 227, Protein – 4g, Carbohydrates – 30g, Total Fat – 10g, Saturated Fat – 4g, Cholesterol – 12mg, Sodium -556mg, Dietary Fiber – .8g

Football Snack Bars

These bars are so full of "nutritional stuff," they make a great snack on the run.

1 cup pure clover honey (*Burleson's recommended*)
1 cup packed brown sugar
1 cup chunky peanut butter
8 cups crisp rice cereal

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In large microwave-safe bowl, stir together honey and brown sugar. Microwave on High for 3 to 5 minutes, or just until mixture begins to bubble, stirring every minute. Stir in peanut butter until well combined. Stir in cereal to coat. Coat large shallow baking pan (15x10x1-inch) with cooking spray. Firmly press mixture into pan. When cool, cut out football shapes using 3-inch football cookie cutters*. Decorate as desired. Makes 16 to 20 football bars.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving

Calories – 199, Protein – 4g, Carbohydrates – 33g, Total Fat – 6g, Saturated Fat – 1g, Cholesterol – 0mg, Sodium - 137mg, Dietary Fiber – 1g

*Football Cookie Cutters are available online at www.tailgatestotouchdowns.com. For more great recipes, visit: www.burlesons-honey.com.

To get more tasty tailgate recipes, order your copy of the "Tailgates to Touchdowns" cookbook today by shopping online at www.burlesons-honey.com or by writing to Burleson's Honey, PO Box 578, Waxahachie, TX 75168. This book provides a full menu of options for your football parties with recipes that are quick and easy to "tackle." Serving suggestions appear throughout the book, as well as beautiful photographs of nearly every mouth-watering recipe.

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