



Winedog Speaks

Food, Football & Commercials

Let me get this straight...I really want to be sure I'm getting it right. Millions of Americans will be watching a bunch of guys from Chicago try to clobber another bunch of guys from Indianapolis into oblivion somewhere in Florida. All of these men are multi-millionaires even though a fair percentage are functionally illiterate and some are living proof that if you have enough money you really can break all kinds of laws and get away with it. Oh, and during this network extravaganza we're not allowed to go to the bathroom during commercials because the best parts of the show are the commercials.

Does that about sum it up?

I've really tried to understand all of this over the last 30 years or so and I've even got a son who is a dyed in the wool fan. He has patiently taken me aside and slowly explained key details about the game and even tried to help me fathom something about a guy named Manning and a curse. I said, "Like when we watch those Harry Potter movies, right?" He gave me "that look", you know the one when you threaten to get out on the dance floor at a junior high school dance you're chaperoning and show everyone you can moon walk.

I know there are other males out there like me. Folks...I'm a marching band guy. I've always lived for the halftime shows. That's another sore subject, by the way. Here I am in the middle of a halftime show extravaganza a few years back, striving for some male bonding time with my then 10 and 12 year old sons when Justin Timbersomething starts ripping clothes off of one of those Jackson women. Real cool moment for dad and then the network has the audacity to say it was a wardrobe malfunction. I begin to believe that when someone in pro football gets hit really hard in the head and has to retire, they are offered a job running one of the television networks.

Well that's about all of the "rant" space I'm allowed and I do want to help you with some great snack ideas for this Sunday, whether you'll be watching the "big game" or the Paula Dean marathon on Food Network. Either way you gotta eat!

Here's my personal recipe for sloppy Joe's with a little kick that the whole family can enjoy. Don't be tempted to just grab some sloppy Joe canned seasoning. Cooking from scratch does not take a lot more time and the results are worth it.

Typhoon Sloppy Joe's

(Makes about 10 to 12 sandwiches)

1 medium onion, minced
1 red bell pepper, minced
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
3 pounds lean ground beef
½ cup dry red wine
½ cup light brown sugar
½ cup tomato ketchup
½ cup warm water
3 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
1 heaping tablespoon garlic powder
6 dashes Nanami Togarashi seasoning (you can substitute 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes)
Tabasco Sauce to taste



Sauté your minced onion and red bell pepper in vegetable oil heated to medium high just until the onions begin to soften, about 4 or 5 minutes, then set them aside. Put your ground beef into your large frying pan and brown it over medium heat. Pour off any fat that collects from the beef and add back in your onions and peppers. Mix in all of your remaining ingredients except for the hot sauce and bring everything to a steady simmer, continuing uncovered until most of the liquid has been cooked away, roughly 45 minutes, stirring occasionally. Season with your hot sauce if you like and serve heaped on warm Kaiser rolls.

I also think a platter of fresh fruit along with something interesting to dip the pieces in is a great addition to your snack menu for lots of obvious reasons. My mother has long used a recipe that we all love which she used to make using her own homemade coffee liqueur. I've made it since using Kahlua and loved the results. Here's the skinny on this one:

Gammy's Yummy Fruit Dip

8 ounces soft cream cheese
1 cup cool whip
1 cup sour cream
¾ cup light brown sugar
1/3 cup Kahlua

Combine all ingredients, cover and chill for at least 2 or 3 hours to allow the flavors to develop. Serve with sliced apples and pears, strawberries, bananas, and pineapple chunks.

I did do some in-depth research on what the professionals in the world of armchair quarterbacking recommend when you're gathering a group for an event like the Superbowl. This is their take on proper preparation.

Plan on having a large television for the serious football fans and arrange to have a portable television located closer to the food area where people like to chat, visit and just casually watch the game. You may prevent that potentially ugly situation when those who are laughing at the new Microsoft commercial interrupt a particularly brilliant observation by Boomer as to how to best use those timeouts. Stay more with finger foods like hot wings, nachos, barbecue meatballs, pork ribs, and the like. They're easy to manage and not quite as messy as more elaborate fare.

If you will be serving adult beverages I highly suggest that you stay away from hard drinks, particularly those exotic blender drinks. This is a Sunday situation and everyone has to be able to function on Monday along with the sticky mess you are left with in the kitchen from blender booboo's. Beer and wine make more sense and you really do need to remember the designated driver rule for your friends and family. Friends don't let friends drive when they have been drinking. Enough said!

Wishing all of you a wonderful Super Bowl Sunday and I hope you'll let me know if you have any questions or comments. We love to hear from you. Cheers.

Jerry Allison, a native of Warren County in Southwestern Ohio, has been in the fine wine and fine dining field for 29 years in the South Florida and Chicago markets. He writes a weekly syndicated column, manages a fine wine business and is the executive chef for Winedog Fine Wines and Catering Services. You can visit his column archive at www.winedog.com and take your comments and questions directly to him at 888-288-0668 or email him at winedog@winedog.com . He has resided with his wife and two sons since 1999 in the country outside of Morrow, Ohio.

