

Big Dippers and the Superbowl

Really, is there anything more pathetic than guys like me that have not watched a football game all season being invited to a Superbowl party and trying to interact with real, bona fide, died-in-the-wool fans? Other than my Winedog ball caps the only other one I regularly wear is from the Culinary Institute of America. You'd think that most of my friends would get the hint but then again, I've got a theory.

They don't want me at the party for "color commentary"; they want me to bring food.

Friends...don't be ashamed. People like me actually take that as a compliment. Remember that every Oscar Madison needs his Felix Unger. Statistics indicate that there are a substantial number of men out there that opt for the Food Network rather than ESPN and if you don't think that is macho enough then you've never watched Jacques Pépin bone an entire chicken in under 10 seconds. I'd "high five" him any day!

There are a bunch of really fun foods that beg to be served for Superbowl gatherings and I really thought long and hard about what would be fun to feature this week. I'm constantly reminded to "keep it simple" when my recipes come up with friends and when Wanda gives me that look at church during our weekly recipe conversation it usually means I was over the top the previous week. Well this week let's talk about dips.

I want to share a few real favorites and particularly ones you will find to be fast and simple to make.

Hot Artichoke Dip

(Serve with wheat thins or pita bread triangles.)



- 1 (14 oz.) can artichoke hearts, drained & chopped
- 1 cup mayonnaise (regular or low fat)
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon minced garlic

Preheat oven to 350°F and mix all ingredients until well blended. Place into 9 inch pie plate or medium oven proof casserole and bake for 20 to 25 minutes until lightly browned. Serve hot!

Scratch Onion Dip

(Serve with Frito Scoops or potato chips.)



2 tablespoons olive oil
1 ½ cups diced onions
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
1 ½ cups sour cream
¾ cup mayonnaise
¼ teaspoon garlic powder
¼ teaspoon ground white pepper
½ teaspoon kosher salt

In a sauté pan over medium heat add oil. Once heated add onions and ¼ teaspoon kosher salt. Cook the onions until they are caramelized, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat and set aside to cool. Mix the rest of your ingredients finally adding your cooled onions. Refrigerate for at least one hour, stir and serve.

Here's a real favorite that I've had great reactions to:

Crock Pot Reuben Dip

(Serve with your favorite cracker or lightly toasted cocktail rye bread.)

1 cup sauerkraut, drained
1 (8 oz.) pack of cream cheese
1 (6 oz.) pack of shredded Swiss cheese
6 ounces diced corned beef
2 tablespoons Thousand Island Dressing

Drain and rinse sauerkraut, mix with cream cheese and Swiss cheese. Add diced corned beef and Thousand Island Dressing. Cover and heat on low until the cheeses are melted, stirring occasionally to blend all ingredients. Serve while still warm.

Guacamole from Scratch

(Serve with your favorite brand of taco chips.)

3 Haas avocados, halved, seeded and scooped from peel
1 lime, juiced
½ teaspoon of kosher salt
½ teaspoon of ground cumin
½ teaspoon cayenne
½ medium onion, diced
½ cup salsa
1 teaspoon minced garlic
Tabasco to taste

In a large bowl place the scooped avocado pulp and lime juice, toss to coat. Drain and reserve the lime juice after all of the avocados have been coated. Mash the avocado with a fork or potato masher adding in the salt, cumin and cayenne. Fold in the onions, salsa and garlic. Add 1 tablespoon of the reserved lime juice and Tabasco to taste. Let set at room temperature for one hour and then serve.

Traditional Spinach Dip

(Serve with Triscuits, toasted bagel chips and Fritos Scoops.)

1 (10 oz.) package of frozen chopped spinach
1 ½ cups sour cream
1 cup mayonnaise
one 8 oz. can water chestnuts, chopped
1 package Knorr dry vegetable soup mix
3 green onions, finely chopped

Thaw and squeeze spinach until dry. Stir together spinach, sour cream, mayonnaise, soup mix, chopped water chestnuts, and chopped onions. Blend well. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Stir before serving.

If you'd like to offer your guests some really terrific wines for this Superbowl and enjoy pouring wines that taste like they should cost \$30 plus but can be purchased for less than half that price, I've got a great find for you. Joliesse Winery in California is part of the Boisset America group and they are producing bargain wines that are amazing in quality.

The **Joliesse Winery 2003 Merlot** is a rich, complex offering that is brimming with ripe currants, blackberry and cherry flavors, soft voluptuous tannins and a rich, even finish that is really hard to imagine given its price. Along with it comes the **2003 Joliesse California Chardonnay**, which offers lively fruit, a trace of vanilla and brilliant citrus tones in the finish. Both are terrific finds!

If you have questions or comments please let us know at 888-288-0668 or visit up on the web at www.winedog.com. Have great Superbowl Sunday. Cheers.