

How to plan a fun tailgate party

Written by Holyoke Enterprise

Are you ready for some football? The tailgate party is the ultimate rite of the season and the perfect way to show team spirit. But before you kick off a tailgating bash you need to be properly prepared to host your pigskin party.

Whether you're hosting a tailgate outside the stadium or simply throwing a party at home for the big game, here are a few tips to ensure it will be an event your friends and family remember:

—Plan that menu: It's all about the food, so be sure you have enough for everybody on hand. Do prep work in advance so you don't waste time and can join in the reveling. Make a list of everything you'll need—from burgers and dogs to plates, utensils, cooking gear and cleaning supplies. Fire-up the grill early, so food is ready at least an hour before game time.

—Get your party place in shape: Tailgating or entertaining outdoors? Quickly scrub down the grill, cooking utensils and portable furniture. Entertaining at home? Clean kitchen grease and grime or bathroom mold and mildew before guests arrive. Using a multipurpose cleaner and degreaser can save time, as it's great for both indoor and outdoor chores.

—Grab a choice spot: Tailgating veterans know to choose a choice spot in the parking lot to secure extra room for their shindig. That last spot in a row means more party space, as does any spot adjacent to a car-free or grassy area. If you are hosting guests inside your home, make sure there are plenty of seats with a great view of the game so everyone can see the action.

—Kick up condiments: Rough and tumble football fans like some heat, so don't just offer mustard, ketchup and mayo. Spicy peppers and relishes will give your grub an extra boost.

—Keep it dry: Always keep a tarp or tent on hand to protect your food, friends and fun should the weather turn.

—Clean up your mess: Leave your spot clean, just like mom always told you. Keep plenty of

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garbage bags available. A multipurpose cleaner and degreaser can help you quickly wipe down just about any surface.

Bottom line, it doesn't matter if you win or lose, it's how you prep for the game.