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SUPER SNACKS FOR SUPER BOWL

On Sunday, February 7th, almost all of America will be tuned in for Super Bowl XLIV. Playoff games are still in session, but regardless of who is on the field, the event is something you do not want to miss. There will be great entertainment from the pregame show, singing of the national anthem, as well as the performances at the half time event. Details are highlighted at <http://www.nfl.com/superbowl/44> Prior to the game every sports newscaster will give their predictions, bets will be made and parties will be in full swing. Even if you're not into sports, it's worth the watch just for the commercials and entertainment and a great reason to have a get-together!

For the party planner, the first objective is to decide on your menu. Pizza and Buffalo wings are a sure crowd pleaser. The fat conscious might try making hoagie sandwiches, using lean lunchmeats and low fat cheeses, served with reduced fat mayonnaise and mustard. See our sweet and tangy mustard recipe that follows.

Consider an assortment of dips (low-fat healthier versions) to fill that hearty appetite and sneak in some vegetables. Serve with snacks made with whole grain ingredients and raw vegetables. If you take a trip down the supermarket aisle you will find a greater assortment of crackers and snacks that are 100% or partially whole grains. Look for the whole grain stamp to simplify your shopping. The Whole Grains Foods Council provides a list on their website www.wholegrainscouncil.org of foods with the voluntary labeling.

Recipes are featured here for some of my personal party favorites. Should the weather be warm and grilling out is in your plans try our marinade for chicken.

If alcohol is on your menu remember those calories do add up. Alcoholic beverages are exempt from food labeling laws so it's not listed on the can or bottle. According to the USDA Nutrient Data Laboratory a 12 ounce can of regular beer has 153 calories, the lite version which is lower in alcohol content has 103 calories.

Have fun, designate a driver, and may your favorite team win!

MEXICAN LAYERED DIP

1 (16 ounce) can kidney beans, drained
1 (4 ounce) can green chilies, drained
1 (8 ounce) package Monterey Jack cheese, grated
1 large tomato, diced
1 medium onion, finely chopped
1/2 cup sour cream, optional

Drain beans and mash in blender or food processor. Layer beans in shallow round dish with chilies, onions, tomatoes, and grated cheese. Bake for 20 minutes until cheese is bubbly. Top with sour cream and serve with tortilla chips.

NOTE: To reduce sodium, rinse beans under running water and drain well before using.
To reduce fat, use reduced fat cheese, sour cream and tortilla chips.

SPINACH DIP

1 package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained
1 package vegetable soup mix
8 ounces sour cream
8 ounces plain yogurt
1 can water chestnuts, drained and chopped

Drain spinach well by pressing to remove the extra water. Mix together dry soup mix and sour cream. Add spinach and water chestnuts. Refrigerate at least 8 hours prior to serving. Just before serving, fold in plain yogurt. Serve with raw vegetables, wheat crackers, or chips. For an attractive display hollow out the center of a round loaf of bread and place spinach in hollow.

NOTE: To lower fat content use reduced fat sour cream and non-fat yogurt

MARINADE FOR CHICKEN

1 cup water
1 cup soy sauce
1/2 cup pineapple juice
1/2 cup oil
1/2 cup sugar
1 teaspoon fresh garlic
1 teaspoon fresh ginger

Combine ingredients and pour over chicken. Marinade for 1 to 4 hours. Discard marinade after use.

NOTE: To lower sodium use reduced sodium soy sauce.
To lower sugar use 1/2 cup Splenda artificial sweetener instead of sugar.

SWEET AND TANGY MUSTARD

1 (14-ounce) can fat free sweetened condensed milk
1 (8-9 ounce) bottle prepared spicy brown mustard
2 tablespoons prepared horseradish
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce

Stir together all ingredients until blended. Store in refrigerator up to 3 months. Serve with pretzels or egg rolls and as a sandwich spread.

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