

Super Bowl Party Pairings

Place your bets Green Bay Packers or Pittsburgh Steelers?

It's that time of year again where a lot of us die hard football fans will be glued to our televisions tomorrow for Super Bowl Sunday. Whether you are rooting for the Packers or the Steelers, like the over 100 million people that will be watching the game of the season, you're sure to be indulging in a lot of different foods and drinks.

An average of \$5.6 billion is spent on food, beer, snacks and related items for Super Bowl Sunday. Eleven million pounds of potato chips, 8 million pounds of tortilla chips, 8 million pounds of guacamole, 4 million pounds of popcorn and over 2 million pounds of nuts will be consumed during the game. The most popular food items will be chilli, pizza, salsa, ribs, wings and dips.

So what will you be drinking? By far beer will be king with an estimated 52 million cases being sold in the USA alone. With the large range of different foods, some beers and wines will pair better than others. Let's take a quick look at various food and beverage pairings for the big game.

The very popular chicken wings: If they are regular chicken wings splattered with spicy sauce go for basic ale or a fruity and somewhat sweet wine. The light effervescent and crisp taste of the ale will tame the spicy wings and not overpower your palate. The choice of an off dry wine with a lower alcohol level will do the same. For the beer, good choices would be Pump House Cadian Ale 6 x 341 ml \$12.49, Picaroons Dooryard Summer Ale 500 ml \$3.60 or the ever popular Moosehead Pale Ale 6 x 341 ml \$11.49.

If you're a wine lover like me, a nice Riesling or Gewürztraminer will do quite nice. Dr. Zenzen Noblesse Spatlese 750 ml \$12.49, Pelee Island Gewürztraminer 750 ml \$12.99 and Pierre Sparr Reserve Gewürztraminer 750 ml \$25.29 are good choices for those hot and spicy wings.

If you're more in the BBQ category (wings or baby back ribs) look more towards a Porter or Stout. The smoky, char flavours and dark fruity berry notes that you get from the BBQ sauce will be the major factors here. Porters with their smoky coffee notes and the rich creamy chocolate undertones that are dominate in Stouts pair nicely.

Propeller London Style Porter 650 ml \$4.49, Guinness Draught 330 ml \$2.29 and Picaroons Timber hog Stout 500 ml \$3.60 will gladly fill the bill.

In the wine category, look for Zinfandel, Shiraz or a full bodied and heavy Carmenere. Delicato Old Vine Zinfandel 750 ml \$14.99, Ménage a Trios Red 750 ml \$20.29, Wakefield Clare Valley Shiraz 750 ml \$18.29 and Korta Barrel

Selection Carmenere 750 ml \$16.99 will pair nicely. These four wines are all full bodied with various notes of ripe berry; rich cherry and chocolate hints with the Zinfandel and M nage a Trois, thick plum and pepper notes with the Shiraz and ripe blueberry, vanilla and smoky flavours on the Korta Carmenere.

If you're more into pizza; again regular ale will pair nicely. For the all meat or the works pizza you can try red ales such as Pump House Fire chief Red Ale 6 x 341 ml \$12.49, Garrison Irish Red Ale 6 x 341 ml \$12.49 or Picaroons Irish Red Ale 500 ml \$3.60.

With wines look no further than Italian wines, their made to pair with Italian fare. A nice Barbera d'Alba; Terre da Vino Barbera d'Alba 750 ml \$15.29 will go very nicely with plain cheese or tomato pizza. For the meatier versions or with more toppings look toward heavier bodied reds like Valpolicella, Montepulciano d'Abruzzo, Ripasso or Super Tuscan; Tommasi Valpolicella Classico 750 ml \$15.99, Exclamation Point Montepulciano d'Abruzzo 750 ml \$14.99, Monti Garbi Ripasso 750 ml \$25.29 and Sterpato Toscano IGT 750 ml \$22.79.

For those of you that like the Southern Hemisphere grub like nachos, fajitas, chilli or all that is in the Mexican category look more towards the Lager or Pilsner type of beers. Pilsner Urquell 500 ml \$3.25 and your ever popular Coors Light 12 x 341 ml \$19.49 are sure to tame that spicy kick of the salsa dip and cut through the richness of the cheese and sour cream. If you are more prone to like wine look at off dry to dry Rieslings; Dr L Loosen 750 ml \$16.79, Hardys Riesling Gew rztraminer blend 750 ml \$12.99 and Spy Valley Riesling from New Zealand 750 ml \$19.99 are sure to please. Note, if you are serving the ever popular guacamole dip try to find a nice crisp Sauvignon Blanc; Errazuriz Sauvignon Blanc 750 ml \$13.29, Les Fumees Blanches Sauvignon Blanc 750 ml \$13.79 or Oyster Bay Sauvignon Blanc 750 ml \$21.99 are all good choices with just a hint of herbal notes and a touch of citrus. The balanced acidity of these wines will cut through the creamy texture and accentuate the nuttiness of the avocado. If red wine is more to your liking fruity Zinfandel or thick Shiraz are perfect matches. Those mentioned above with the BBQ fare will fit the bill.

Depending what foods you'll be serving there are a lot of choices out there for your Super Bowl Party. So stock up the bar, fill the fridge, get that big recliner chair ready and make sure you have antacids for Monday! Here is my recipe for a vegetarian chilli sure to please even the carnivore in your life. Be sure to prepare it a day before, it gets better with time, and it freezes well. The only trick is to dice all the vegetables the same size so they cook evenly. This is a mild version, if you like it spicier you can up the quantity of dried pepper flakes and chilli powder.

Vegetarian Chilli (makes 24 cups, plenty to feed a crowd)

3 Tablespoon Olive oil

4 small onions diced fine
3 medium carrots dice fine
3 branches of celery dice fine
4 cloves of garlic chopped fine
2 green peppers diced fine
2 yellow peppers diced fine
2 red peppers diced fine
1 can or bottle 500mL Porter or Stout
2 Tablespoon tomato paste
3 cans of 796 mL (28 floz) diced tomatoes
1 can 540 mL (19 floz) tomato juice
1 can 540 mL (19 oz) chick peas drained and rinsed
1 can 540 mL (19 oz) white kidney beans drained and rinsed
1 can 540 mL (19 oz) red kidney beans drained and rinsed
1 can 540 mL (19 oz) black beans drained and rinsed

Spice mix

2 whole Arbol dried peppers
2 whole Chipotle peppers
1 whole Habanera pepper
1 whole Ancho pepper
1 whole Chilli pepper
¾ teaspoon pepper flakes
¼ teaspoon chilli powder
1 teaspoon dried oregano
3 teaspoons grounded cumin
2 teaspoons grounded coriander
½ teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons pepper
3 Bay leaves
1 stick of cinnamon
30 g bitter chocolate

Directions:

Heat a large casserole on medium.
Add olive oil, onions, garlic, carrots and celery.
Brown for 5 minutes.
Add the green, yellow and red peppers.
Add the spice mix and cook for 5 minutes.
Add the porter or stout and reduce to half.
Add tomato paste and diced tomatoes.
Bring to a simmer and reduce heat to low and cook for 2 hours or until carrots are tender. Retrieve the whole peppers (Arbol, Chipotle, Habanera, Ancho and Chilli), the cinnamon stick and Bay leaves.
Add the bitter chocolate and stir until melted.
Add the chick peas, kidney beans and black beans and heat through.

Adjust seasoning and serve with grated Cheddar or Monterey Jack cheese, sour cream and chopped fresh cilantro.

Written by Marcel Richard, Product Advisor, NB Liquor, Dieppe, NB