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## Chili and Wings - Game On!

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

When it came time to plan this year's party, I asked my kids if they had any ideas for this year's theme. My oldest son chimed up right away. "Chili and wings," he said without hesitation.

Okay, I love wings, too, but what about the couches, the furniture, the floors ...

The worry was for naught, because we bought a stack of 50 inexpensive, white wash clothes at K-Mart, soaked them in hot water and put them on the tables for quick and easy clean up!

My contribution to the chili side of the menu was white bean chicken chili. This recipe of my mom's is a takeoff on the Neiman Marcus Chili Blanco and it is delicious! For wings, we had three different types. A friend brought his Hoisin-glazed wings, and I made my hot 'n spicy wings (published previously in the Lamorinda Weekly), and the traditional Buffalo-style hot wings. I had never made them before, and they are so good! We always bake our wings, which seems to be easier ... and healthier than frying!

If you're planning a Super Bowl party this year, these dishes would be fun to serve. But, don't forget the washcloths!

Reach the reporter at: [suziven@gmail.com](mailto:suziven@gmail.com)

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Last year, when my kids came home from college and beyond, we started a fun, new tradition of having a great big potluck party so all of the old high school friends, parents and coaches could have the chance to catch up with one another.

As we all know, the time during the holidays really flies by, and it can be tough to make time for everyone on the list. This gathering is a great way for the kids to see their classmates, the parents to see the kids, the players to see the coaches, and these young adults to see their best friend's pesky younger siblings in an entirely different light! You get the idea. It's even fun to include a few grandparents on the guest list. You remember those favorite grandparents that attended every music, sport and theater event. They sort of became communal grandparents to the entire group over the years.

Last year our theme was a "soup kitchen" where we literally cooked up five different kinds of soup. Guests brought appetizers, salads, side dishes, bread and dessert. What a kick. One dad in the crowd came back and tried every single kind of soup! My son's French onion was the biggest hit, but we served up cauliflower cheddar, Hungarian mushroom, butternut squash and homemade chicken noodle.