

# Rah, Rah, Rah! Tips for a Healthy (yet delicious) Tailgating Party

*By Bill Bradley, Registered Dietitian and Cookbook Author*

Football, concerts, baseball games; tis the season for tailgating meals and parties! Nothing is more American than sitting in a parking lot with friends and family waiting for an event to start, eating nachos and burgers and drinking your favorite brew of choice. For those who make this a regular occurrence though, you may consider some healthier (but still tasty) choices. Here are some simple ways to make your tailgating party delicious, healthy and still loads of fun!

## 1) Go Orange, Go Yellow, Go Green!

My favorite decadent vegetables are squash, broccoli and sweet potatoes. These bright colored vegetables are packed with nutrients and taste amazing when cooked right and my favorite way to cook them is roasting them in the oven. Roasting causes the vegetables to caramelize making them super delicious! Sliced sweet potatoes roasted in the oven with spicy herbs; roasted squash with butter and cinnamon; and roasted broccoli “steaks” loaded with fresh garlic are all worthy of the tailgating experience. How to keep the vegetables warm? Roast them right before leaving for an event and then wrap them tightly in aluminum foil. Some people have a cooler for cold food and a cooler for warm food (it is insulated and works for cold or hot food). If you have a few bricks you can heat them in the oven, wrap them in towels and put them in the bottom of the cooler to keep things even warmer.

## 2) Keep it Fruity

We've all had an Aunt's fruit salad that's just a bunch of fruit cut up and put in a bowl. Although this is delicious and healthy, there are an amazing amount of fruit salads that will not only take care of your sweet tooth but are also quite decadent. I had one for Thanksgiving that I couldn't stop eating because it was so mouthwateringly delicious. Here it is: [Winter Fruit Salad with Maple Lime Dressing](#). Keep your fruit salad cold in an insulated cooler with an ice pack.

## 3) The Magic of Greek Yogurt

A good medium to high fat Greek Yogurt can easily take the place of sour cream so that you will get a healthier, probiotic filled dip that is still going to satisfy any dip lover. I like the tzatziki recipe that is included in this month's newsletter. Another favorite is this take on French Onion Dip: [French Onion Dip with Caramelized Onions and Greek Yogurt](#). Keep your dips cold with an insulated cooler and an ice pack.

## 4) Drink the Bubbly

Ok, I'm not talking beer, champagne or soda here. And, obviously, I'm not telling you to not drink beer at all, but if you are feeling especially thirsty, you might want to substitute some of the beer with water or seltzer water. I love seltzer water mixed in with small amounts of juices. My favorite mixes are seltzer with cranberry and orange juice or seltzer with grapefruit juice. Add a few ounces of juice to a seltzer and your drink may have 20-30 calories instead of 150-200 in a soda or a beer. Buying just plain water and/or seltzer and flavoring it yourself is the best choice as many of the pre-flavored drinks are full of chemicals and fake sugars.

## 5) Eat your Meat in a Crockpot.

If you love meat, then you are probably planning to eat it at your tailgating party. My suggestion here is to do what they would do in Mediterranean or Asian countries: Make a stew or a crockpot dish with meat plus a lot of other vegetables and some beans. The classic tailgating dish would be a meat chili. Here is a [Classic Beef and Bean Chili Slow Cooker recipe](#) that includes some great veggie toppings. Finally, it is best to purchase grass fed meat for any of your tailgating parties. Grass fed meat is higher in healthy fats and doesn't have the antibiotics contained in grain fed meat (which is most of what you get at the supermarket).

I hope you enjoy these suggestions and recipes and have a delicious tailgating season. May your team win!

