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Tailgate Game Plan

Tailgate-hosting tips from the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association

The basics of hosting a great tailgate are the same, no matter where you tailgate - a professional or college football game or a concert. To make sure you have a fumble-free tailgate party, HPBA offers these checklists for every level of tailgate-host.

The Rookie: If you've never planned a tailgate before, keep things simple the first season with the basics:

- The Equipment: Whether a grill, smoker or fryer, charcoal or propane make sure the its transportable
- Tools & Fuel: Grilling accessories, propane, or charcoal and charcoal starter, if necessary
- Set up: Table, chairs, cooler
- Food: Burgers, hot dogs, chicken, veggies, snacks, dips and dessert (keep the meat on ice)
- Drinks: Whatever quenches your thirst, and don't forget ice for the cooler!
- Other must-haves: plates, napkins, trash bags, cups and condiments

<u>Game day Regular:</u> For fans with tailgating experience from seasons of practice, remember there are always ways to shake-up your regular routine. Upgrade your tailgate with some new twists in addition to the tailgate basics!

- The Grill: Raise the stakes with a grill that has more room for more food
- Set up: Bring a grill pad and tools with your school colors and logo, or favorite NFL or other sport team paraphernalia
- Entertainment: Get pumped up with your team's fight song and/or alma mater
- Real Time Sports: Invest in a generator to hook-up your TV and stay up-to-speed with rival teams and all the stats

<u>Tailgate Fanatic:</u> For serious tailgaters only, friends and family are still talking about your past tailgates and will be first in line when the food comes off your grill!

- The Grill: Upgrade from a stand-alone grill and go all out with a tow-behind or attach-to-vehicle grill
- Vehicle upgrade: Rent a large van or RV, or bring multiple vehicles and claim two to three spots
- Bigger is better: Use large speakers and giant TVs
- Team spirit: Hang banners and team flags to show ultimate team spirit
- Theme team: Give your weekly tailgate a theme
- Food: Be adventurous! Take a risk and cook unique proteins with exotic spices to stand out from the crowd

For any tailgate:

- Know all the rules and regulations of the tailgate parking lot
- Make sure you have ample seating
- Provide plenty of room around the grill, smoker or fryer for the chef
- Get there early to set-up and get the grill, smoker or fryer going
- Most stadiums provide metal trash cans to place used charcoal. However, if you are tailgating at a stadium that does not, it is always a good idea to bring your own small metal can to place cooled coals

For more information, tailgate tips and recipes, visit HPBA at www.hpba.org, <a href="www.hp