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# Chili and Wings – Game On!

By Susie Iventosch



Photo Susie Iventosch

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 class-

mates, 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, butter-nut squash and homemade chicken noodle.

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 wash-cloths!

## White Bean Chicken Chili

(Serves 10)

\*Note-I recommend making this at least one or two days ahead, as the flavor gets better and better each day!

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds dried white navy beans
  - 3-4 quarts chicken stock (keep an extra quart on hand in case you need more)
  - 2 large onions, chopped
  - 3 cloves garlic, pressed
  - 2-3 tablespoons olive oil
  - 4 7-oz. cans Ortega chilies, chopped
  - 2-3 tablespoons Masa Harina (corn flour for thickening chili)
  - 1½ teaspoons sea salt
  - 4 teaspoons ground cumin
  - 4 teaspoons dried oregano
  - 4 teaspoons ground coriander (or 1-2 tablespoons minced fresh cilantro)
  - 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
  - ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
  - 8 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cooked and diced
- Garnishes**
- 1 ½ cups grated Monterey or mixed Mexican cheese
  - 1 cup plain low-fat yogurt
  - ½ cup salsa
  - ½ cup snipped fresh cilantro

### DIRECTIONS

In a large soup pot, combine beans, stock and half the onion and garlic. Bring to a boil, uncovered. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for about 1½ hours, or until beans are just cooked through, adding more stock as needed. (I like them cooked just to al dente, because they continue to cook every time you heat the soup.) Set aside with remaining broth.

In a separate large skillet, heat 2 tablespoons oil and add remaining onions, garlic and chilies. Cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Add remaining tablespoon oil along with Masa Harina, herbs, spices and salt to onions and continue to cook until herbs begin to brown. This releases the flavors and also prevents the flour from becoming pasty in the soup.

Add pre-cooked, diced chicken and onion-herb mixture to the cooked beans in the pot, and stir well. Heat through and add more broth as needed or desired. I suggest refrigerating this soup for at least a day before serving.

When ready to serve, reheat and pour hot soup into cups or bowls, sprinkle with grated cheese, a dollop of yogurt, a spoonful of salsa and a touch of cilantro.

## Baked Buffalo-Style Hot Wings

(Makes 3 dozen)

### INGREDIENTS

36 chicken wings (both parts)

### Sauce

- 8 tablespoons (1 cube) butter, melted
- 12 tablespoons Louisiana hot sauce
- 8 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon Cayenne pepper

### Garnish

- Celery and carrot sticks
- Blue Cheese dressing

### DIRECTIONS

Mix all ingredients for sauce. Place chicken wings in a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid. Pour half the sauce over the wings and shake well. Marinate for at least two hours. Bake at 375° for approximately 1 to 1.5 hours, or until wings begin to get crunchy on the outside.

When ready to serve, heat remaining sauce and pour over wings. Serve with blue cheese dressing and veggie sticks.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net.

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... updated January 5, 2011 ...			
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