



EXPERT ADVICE

Cold temps, freezing wind-chill and hypothermia-risking weather are no match for extreme tailgaters and their bags of tricks. When Jack Frost shows up to the party, masters of the parking-lot pilgrimage don't call it a day; they turn up the heat and call it Game Day!

BY CARRIE ANTON

Here are some tips for cold weather tailgating!

EATS WITH HEAT

Calorie counting and chilly weather don't mix. When the mercury takes a nose dive, ditch any thoughts of dieting and go for hearty foods and beverages that will warm you from the inside out. And don't forget to...

- 1. SPICE IT UP:** Capsaicin, a compound found in spicy foods such as chili peppers and chili-based seasonings, when eaten creates a warming effect in the body as it can cause the body's temperature to increase. When kicking up the heat of a recipe,

keep the spice level at mild or medium; any hotter and you run the risk of causing the body to sweat, which means damp clothing – a must-avoid for cold days.

2. **KEEP UP THE HEAT:** Warm dips such as queso, the spicy warm cheese that gives nachos a bite, may be a game-day must, but serve it up when it's freezing outside and you'll likely have a not-so-appetizing chilly clump for an appetizer. For dips that are meant to be served warm, encourage guests to take their chip straight to a heated crockpot. No electricity? Set up chafing dishes and canned-heat cooking fuel. When the food is hot, not only will it taste better, but your guests' bellies will be warmer, too.
3. **ALTER ADULT BEVERAGES:** Beers may freeze when exposed to the elements and do nothing to help maintain body heat. Instead of a cooler of drafts, go for thermoses of toddies and other hot drinks. Mulled wines, spiked cocoas and warm hard ciders are better mugs to chug in chilly temps.
4. **GIVE FOOD A HELPING HAND:** Making food easy to eat is essential when dining in the elements. Tailgaters' hands will be wrapped in gloves and mittens, which can be a challenge when using utensils. Serve up foods such as kabobs, burgers, sausages and bowls of soups, stews and chilies (since spoons are still doable), none of which need bare hands to eat.

CREATE COMFORT

A touch of ambiance here and there can go a long way toward adding warmth to an outdoor party space. That doesn't mean you need to break out the tiki torches and inflatable palm trees to trick your guests into thinking they're in a warmer climate. Still, having a few little extras on hand can help take the brrr out of brisk temps. A few include:

1. **LAP OF LUXURY:** Offer fleece, wool or faux-fur blankets in team colors for snuggling up under both before and during the big game.
2. **HOT STUFF:** Have disposable hand warmers on hand to give to your guests. Instruct them to wear the warmers in their pockets, gloves and shoes to get things really heated up.

3. **SOFT SPOTS:** Use lightweight pillows and foam cushions as seats that help keep bums safe from brisk breezes.
4. **MAKE A MOVE:** Sitting around is no way to warm up. Instead, start up a game of catch, cornhole or other physical activity to get the heart pumping and the blood moving.
5. **HEADS UP:** Sometimes staying dry is the best way to stay warm, so an overhead defense is essential. Tents, canopies and awnings often used for sun protection in warm weather can also be a barrier from the rain, sleet and snow that often come with cold temps.
6. **CENTRAL WARMTH:** When you simply need extra heat, a number of options are available. The most obvious is your grill. Invite guests to gather 'round for a group thaw. If you're the type of grill master who doesn't like too many cooks in the "kitchen," consider a portable, lidded fire pit, where guests can huddle around the bonfire before the ballgame begins. Or, why not go for heated centerpieces on folding tables. Mini propane options, similar to the larger variety used by restaurants with outdoor seating, provide heat that can't be beat.

Wear Your Warmth

The clothing you wear is the only thing standing between you and frigid temps. Baring skin in bad weather can lead to frost bite and hypothermia. Dress for the occasion using these stylishly safe tips:

1. **LAYER YOUR LAYERS:** Wearing lots of thick clothing may be warm but may make it hard to move. Be smart about your layers, and you won't have to feel bogged down by your attire. You need three basic layers:
 - **INNER:** The closest layer to your body should be made up of a material that wicks away moisture, keeping you dry. Wicking garments are typically made of synthetic materials.
 - **MIDDLE:** The next layer is used to trap and hold warm air. Look for layers made of wool and down or synthetics. On very cold days, you may want to do multiple

middle layers.

- **OUTER:** Water- and wind-resistant materials make up the last layer. The goal is to protect against cold-weather wind, rain, sleet and snow so that your middle and inner layers can remain dry and comfy.

2. EXTREMES AND EXTREMITIES: Heat can easily escape through your head, hands and feet, so keep them under cover. Pay special attention to your feet. If they get wet and cold, you'll feel the same way. Apply the layering rules to your feet, using waterproof shoes or boots as your outer protection.

3. BEER GEAR: If tailgating is your time to imbibe, you'll need gear that not only keeps you warm but also serves your day's purpose. Look for gloves and mittens where a can- or bottle holding koozie is built right in. Your hand will stay warm while your beverage stays chilled.

Cold weather can add a cool element to tailgating in the elements. After all, a party is all about the food you serve, the atmosphere you create and the attire required. Keep safety first, and the weather will only add to your tailgating talents!



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