

# Healthy Snacking Hacks for Your Tailgating Party

Let's be real, football is as much about the snacks as it is about the game. These tips will help you lighten up traditional game-day foods and keep your cravings in check.

## Grab a Plate



Mindless noshing throughout the day can make it hard for you to stay in touch with your hunger and fullness cues. [Research from the Cornell Food and Brand Lab](#) has shown that what you see on the plate has a big impact on how satisfied you feel—your brain is more likely to register that you've eaten something if it has had a chance to see it in front of you. That said, look before you leap. Scope out the spread to see what's available before you pile stuff onto that plate. Knowing what you want to prioritize helps you know what to skip or take smaller amounts of.

And beware: [Science also shows](#) that exciting TV (like you know, the most important football game of the year) can distract you from how much you're eating, so try to sit with your plate at the table while eating if at all possible.

## Be Wary of Chips and Salsa



Potato chips and tortilla chips have a funny way of disappearing while simultaneously making you feel like you haven't actually eaten anything. Try some whole-grain varieties that have more filling fiber, or scope out healthier bean-based and veggie-based chips.

What you dip those chips in counts too—not all salsas are created equal. While most are low in calories, they're often packed with sodium and less-than-fresh ingredients. Skip the jarred stuff and head to the refrigerated section to look for flavor-forward, artisanal varieties like [Rojo's](#) small-batch salsas. They're gluten-free and come in different flavors like [Fire Roasted](#) and [Mango Chipotle](#). You won't miss all the salt and preservatives, promise!

## Switch Up Your Chili



Chili provides a great combo of protein and complex carbs to give you slow-burning energy to last through the end of the final quarter. But it can also be high in fat and calories that you might want to "budget" for other foods. Lighten up your chili by swapping in turkey for the traditional beef or sticking with a vegetarian version. Do you like chili over rice? **Cauliflower rice** makes a tasty, lower-carb swap for regular white or brown rice. You can also top it with a dollop of plain Greek yogurt instead of sour cream to trim calories.

## Go for Homemade Guacamole



Nothing says "Super Bowl Party" like chips and guac (see: this **delicious game day guacamole**). Avocado is packed with heart-healthy fats and filling fiber. Homemade guacamole is super easy to throw together with a few ripe avocados, salt, lime or lemon juice, cilantro, and optional jalapeños or other peppers to add some heat.

All the good avocados gone? Head to the refrigerated section and scoop up a pack of peel-and-serve guac like **Wholly Guacamole**, which tastes homemade but doesn't have preservatives or artificial ingredients. (It also comes in a bunch of fun flavors like Sriracha, Chipotle Lime, and Margarita.)

Just keep in mind that portions matter if you're trying to lose weight. A two-tablespoon serving is **about the size of a golf ball** and provides about 50 calories and 5 grams of fat, plus a little fiber. Spoon some on your plate and dip from there instead of from the bowl—it helps you keep track of how much you've eaten.



## Bake Your Chicken Wings



"Chicken wings can be a healthy game-day crowd-pleaser if baked at home," says Abbie Gellman, R.D., a New York City-based registered dietitian, chef, and owner of [Culinary Nutrition Cuisine](#). Make your own spice mix so you can control the salt content and skip the flour coating to save calories and carbs. As for that blue cheese sauce? Gellman likes to swap in nonfat plain Greek yogurt for most of the mayo in her recipe to slash calories and fat while increasing the protein content. (If you want to skip the chicken altogether, try these vegan-friendly [Cauliflower Buffalo Wings](#).)

## Get Creative With Sliders



Sliders have a ton of flavor on their own, so you can limit the toppings. One of Gellman's favorites? [Herby Turkey Sliders with Salsa](#). (You can also go vegan with these brown rice and mushroom [pesto meatball sliders](#).)

If you're trying to limit dairy, swap traditional cheese for [Daiya](#), which is also gluten-free and soy-free. It melts like a charm and comes in cheddar, provolone and swiss.

Put some thought into the buns too. Whole wheat will give you more fiber, and cutting regular-size bread and rolls into smaller pieces will save you the stress of searching for the perfect minis. If you're going grain-free, mix things up with lettuce wraps, baked sweet potato rounds, or mini cauliflower pizza crusts to use in place of bread.

## Reinvent Your Nachos



Go heavy on the lower-cal toppings like salsa, peppers, onions, and shredded lettuce. If vegetarian nachos sound like sacrilege to you, make some pulled chicken in the [slow cooker](#) using a few chicken breasts and your favorite barbecue sauce. It's a flavorful, leaner option than pulled pork or ground beef. You also don't have to glob on the cheese—a light sprinkle over the dish will cover a lot of ground when it melts so you still get cheesy goodness for fewer calories.

Looking for a totally new (and healthy) twist? Try sweet potato nachos. Slice sweet potatoes thin, toss with some oil, and roast until crispy. Top with your favorite toppings and place under a broiler for a few minutes until the cheese melts. This recipe from [To Live and Diet In L.A.](#) is easily customizable. (Psst: Here are [8 Ways to Do Nachos Without Tortilla Chips.](#))

## Upgrade Your Veggie Platter



Think beyond celery and baby carrots with store-bought dressing. "I like to add protein, flavor, and texture to dips using foods such as edamame and beans with a variety of herbs and spices," says Gellman. For a quick and delicious hummus, add thawed edamame or any beans you like in a food processor, then add some garlic, lemon juice, cumin, parsley, salt, and pepper, or any other herbs and spices you like. (Grab Gellman's go-to [edamame hummus](#) recipe here.)



## Light Up Your Spinach Dip



Spinach dip may sound healthy thanks to those leafy greens, but the mayo or sour cream used in traditional recipes isn't doing your diet any favors. Swap in low-fat Greek yogurt for at least some of the heavy stuff—you'll get that same creamy texture with fewer calories, plus some extra protein.

## Fill Your Glass—With Water



The tip about alternating alcoholic drinks with water is a cliché for a reason: It works. "This helps keep your alcoholic consumption down," says Gellman. "Which means you'll consume fewer calories from alcohol, and you'll also have better judgment when going back for seconds."

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<http://www.shape.com/healthy-eating/diet-tips/healthy-snacking-hacks-your-tailgating-party>