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Chow down with your kind of town
Chicago, Indianapolis offer good eats for Super Bowl

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INDY FOOD

The Indianapolis Colts are in the Super Bowl for the first time since the franchise downed the Dallas Cowboys to win Super Bowl V in 1971.

Of course, that was when they were the Baltimore Colts. The franchise hasn't been to the Super Bowl since it moved from Baltimore to Indianapolis in 1984.

So forgive us if it takes us a little time getting used to the idea — and finding a food specific to Indianapolis to serve at your Super Bowl party.

But, sure enough, there is one: the Breaded Pork Tenderloin Sandwich.

Advertisement It's quite a creation, and not one you're likely to find in too many other parts of the country, says Jolene Ketzenberger, a food columnist for the Indianapolis Star.

A boneless cut of pork is generally pounded flat (though other times they're thick) and breaded and deep-fried. They call it a sandwich, but the mammoth cut of meat barely stays within the confines of the bun.

"They're generally huge — much bigger than the buns they're served on," Ketzenberger says. "You usually find them at taverns and drive-in restaurants."

The Breaded Pork Tenderloin Sandwich isn't a complete culinary oddity here. Just think Chicken Fried Steak, except with a nice cut of boneless pork. Germans might liken it to the Weiner Schnitzel.

A GENERAL OUTLINE

The day before the Super Bowl, buy a 4- to 6-ounce cut of tenderloin and trim excess fat.

Lay the tenderloin over a large piece of plastic wrap. Using the flat side of a mallet, pound the meat flat, working from the thickest part in the middle out so that cut is of equal thickness.

Marinate the meat overnight in the refrigerator in a milk, egg and flour blend.

On Super Bowl Sunday, pour bread crumbs into a dish and coat the marinated meat in the crumbs.

You can use either a deep-fryer or a skillet. Using a deep-fryer, fill the fryer with cooking oil and heat to 365 degrees. Cook the breaded meat until golden brown.

If using a skillet, fill a wide pan with about a half inch of cooking oil and fry on both sides at about 365 degrees until golden brown.

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Drain the tenderloin on a paper towel and salt and pepper to taste. The bun can be of just about any variety. There really aren't any hard-and-fast rules. The bun can be proportionate with the meat or the meat can hang over a small bun.

Suggested condiments are mayonnaise, mustard, ketchup, sliced dill pickle, onion and lettuce. Not all at once necessarily, just depending on taste.

CHICAGO FOOD

How many times during these two weeks leading up to the Super Bowl have you heard it? And, admit it, you've said it yourself.

Da Bears.

You remember the "Saturday Night Live" skit of the early '90s.

Chris Farley, Mike Myers, Robert Smigel and George Wendt would down enormous amounts of sausage. Farley would play a guy who would suffer heart attacks in between predictions of who would win if the Chicago Bears took on a hurricane.

In honor of the Da Bears Guys (and with all proper respects to Chicago's deep-dish pizza) we bring you what surely was a favorite of theirs: the Chicago-style Hot Dog.

For help in determining what makes a perfect Chicago dog for your Super Bowl party, we enlisted the services of Kevin Sherfinski and Mitch Kite. The two Chicago natives have painstakingly put together a detailed Web site tribute to the Chicago dog — www.hotdogchicagostyle.com.

The hot dog is a full-course meal in itself.

To tamper with the formula is dangerous, Kite says, lest the dog lose all integrity.

"This is where we get serious," he says.

MUST-HAVE INGREDIENTS

All-beef dog, usually Vienna beef. Char-grilled or otherwise cooked in hot, but not boiling, water. Natural-cased dogs are preferable — most Chicagoland experts talk about the special "snap" you get when you bite into the meat.

Neon green relish. The relish is sweet and bright green. The specific Chicago kind might be hard to find here, but regular relish will have to suffice.

Steamed poppy seed bun. It's important that the bun is steamed and is strong enough to hold all the toppings without getting soggy.

Deli-style pickle spear. The pickle should taste closer to a cucumber than a typical dill pickle (which is more sour). The pickle should fill the bun and be as long as the dog.

Sport peppers (pickled serrano peppers). Usually two to three on a dog, depending on size. They should have a little "heat" but shouldn't overpower the dog.

Tomato wedges. Although there's some disagreement on how they're cut, wedges are better than slices or diced tomatoes.

Yellow mustard. Notice: Apply the mustard to the dog before any other condiments.

Celery salt. Very misunderstood, yet vital ingredient. It should be applied liberally and applied last.

Chopped onions. Nothing special. Don't even think about grilling them.

And, lastly, the ketchup. Or the lack of it, rather.

“It’s sacrilege to use ketchup,” Kite says. “It probably shouldn’t even be within 10 feet of the dog. Think restraining order.”

For more information on how to make a Chicago-style hot dog and for a history of the dog, go to www.hotdogchicagostyle.com.
