

# Cooking with Julia: Buffalo Wing Dip



Julia Hansen

"Is it a big game? Is it a big game?! It's the freakin' Superbowl!"

A few of my guy friends say this whenever they're excited about something, but this Sunday they would be absolutely right. Superbowl Sunday is a day I look forward to every year. Although I'm not a diehard football fan, I enjoy the game, the commercials, the halftime show, the parties and

the food. When else in the year are you encouraged to eat pizza, popcorn, chili, nachos, chicken wings and mini hotdogs in the same sitting? This year I'm thinking about passing around a bottle of antacids for dessert.

Did you know Superbowl Sunday is one of the biggest days for food consumption in the United States, second only to Thanksgiving? The California Avocado Commission reports that 8 million pounds of guacamole are consumed on game day. Also, Americans spend approximately \$50 million on food in the days prior to the game.

For the party at my house, some friends next door are bringing over their big high definition television. Friends who have since graduated are coming into town and others are making their signature dishes. The dish that is most anticipated by everyone is my friend Amanda's buffalo wing dip. Who needs to cook up chicken wings when you can have it all in a simple dip? When I asked her for this recipe, Amanda said she will be making a double batch for our party Sunday because last year the dip was gone so fast she didn't even get to try it. If you bring this dip to your Superbowl party you're sure to be a hit, just don't forget the tortilla chips!

## Ingredients:

- 2 8-oz. blocks of cream cheese
- 1/4 to 1/2 cup ranch dressing (or bleu cheese dressing)
- 3 whole chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- 16 oz. buffalo wings sauce (Frank's brand recommended)
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese

## Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Combine cream cheese and dressing in a pot over medium-low heat. Spread mixture evenly across the bottom of a 13x9-inch baking pan.
3. Combine the shredded chicken breast and the buffalo wing sauce. Layer chicken mixture on top of cream cheese layer in pan.
4. Sprinkle cheddar cheese over the top of chicken. Bake in 375-degree oven for 25 minutes. Serve with tortilla chips, celery, carrots or crackers.



## La Chica rubia finds the true meaning of "other"

I'm not used to standing out. I'm of average height, and I have average dirty-blond hair, an average complexion and average blue eyes. But in Mexico, I am far from average.

This was apparent the moment I set foot in Benito Juárez International Airport. As I awaited my luggage after the flight, I searched through the throngs of travelers to find the only — yes, the legitimate one-and-only — other blonde in the baggage claim area. As I rode the metro system in Mexico City that first week and navigated the tunnels of marble floors and walls, I was keenly aware of the other commuters' drifting gazes, the way their eyes quickly flitted away if I looked back. It wasn't a stare for staring's sake, either — it was a stare, not of disrespect, but of curiosity. So this is what it's like to be different. This is what it's like to be an "other."

Being an other has made me respond in ways I wouldn't have expected of myself. When I see someone else with light eyes, we almost always share a moment. A nod of the head, a little smile, a prolonged "you're-like-me" look. It's a kinship I can't explain. In museums or hotels, when I run into Americans, a necessary conversation ensues that inevitably leads (very quickly) to, "Which state are you from?" Then we talk about how we were familiar with the same small town outside Philadelphia or both experienced the Midwestern ice storm of 2002, and it feels like a little bit of home.

When I started class, I didn't think I was going to fit right in with the other international students. After all, I came here to immerse myself and become a fully-functional member of Mexican society, not

an exchange student groupie. But on orientation day, they became my new best friends. I don't even mind that in our group of 25 there is another Kelly. We're not all Americans, either. The second-largest majority is comprised of Mexican students from other states, but there also are students from Finland, Germany, South Korea, Switzerland and Chile. We are all friends out of necessity, out of a commonly shared status: We don't belong here, but we belong together.

Trying as hard as we can to rely only on our varying levels of Spanish fluency instead of our own respective languages, we make our way from one ancient building to another like ducklings, often following Jorge, our very knowledgeable friend from Chihuahua. He tells us the right things to shout during the Mexican folklore dances and which phrases we shouldn't ever say, a bit of knowledge that has already come in handy for most of us. We always

find ourselves combining three or four tables into a massive line to accommodate our group for an afternoon coffee or for a weekend breakfast at the zócalo, the town square. It's nice to have others with whom

to share important milestones such as buying our cheap, pay-as-you-go cell phones, riding the public buses for the first time, taking laundry to the lavandería or remarking in horror about how you're not allowed to flush toilet paper.

This isn't to say I haven't made Mexican friends. After only a week of classes, I have been invited to spend a weekend in Acapulco and saw "La Novia de mi Mejor Amigo" ("My Best Friend's Girl") with some people I had just met. The hospitality here knows no bounds. It's as if the whole country suddenly became my family, and I just have to meet everyone.

Finally, I'll finish off with some updates from last time.

Good news: The water doesn't cause as much of a problem as I had feared. I've had ice cubes (twice, by mistake) and ice cream, which doesn't have water in it anyway, and have yet to feel even mildly sick. Additionally, they understand me and I understand



Kelly Schute



them, usually. The coldest day so far was about 55 degrees, which sent everyone into apologies for the terrible and uncharacteristic cold. I just laughed.

Stay warm, Kirksville! ¡Hasta luego!

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