

# Official ICS Contestant Rules



## 1. PARTICIPATION + ENTRY

**Adult:** Cooks must be active ICS Members and at least 18 years old.

**Youth:** Cooks must be active ICS Members 6 to 17 years of age and must prepare and cook their chili with parental supervision, but not parental participation.

**All Adult and Youth cooks must sign up through the ICS website to be recognized as official ICS members.**

### **ENTRY FEES**

ICS recommends requiring 2 gallons of People's Choice per contestant *with* entry fee(s), **OR** 4 gallons of People's Choice *without* entry fee(s).

#### Suggested Fees:

**Adult:** \$35 Traditional Red / \$30 Homestyle / \$25 Chili Verde / \$25 Veggie / \$15 Salsa

**Youth:** \$20 Traditional Red / \$20 Homestyle

## 2. COOKING CATEGORIES

**Garnishes should not be used in any category.**

### **ADULT CATEGORIES**

Traditional Red Chili is any kind of meat or combination of meats cooked with red chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. Beans and pasta are not allowed.

Homestyle Chili is a combination of beans cooked with red chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. Meat is allowed but not required. This is the same style of chili cooked and served as PEOPLE'S CHOICE.

Chili Verde is any kind of meat or combination of meats cooked with green chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. Beans and pasta are not allowed.

Veggie Chili is any kind of vegetable or combination of vegetables cooked with chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. The use of meat and meat byproducts are not allowed.

Salsa is any combination of chili peppers and spices. It must be entirely homemade.

### **YOUTH CATEGORIES**

Traditional Red Chili is any kind of meat or combination of meats cooked with red chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. Beans and pasta are not allowed.

Homestyle Chili is a combination of beans cooked with red chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. Meat is allowed but not required. This is the same style of chili cooked and served as PEOPLE'S CHOICE.

### 3. COOK-OFF PREPARATION

- A. The hosting organization will provide an area for each contestant to cook, however each contestant is responsible for supplying all of their own cooking supplies and utensils. You will receive specific requirements from each individual cook-off organizer upon successful registration.
- B. The ICS strongly encourages preparedness with a fire extinguisher and washing station, as these may be required by local laws.

### 4. FOOD PREPARATION

#### **Traditional Red, Chili Verde, Veggie:**

- A. No ingredient may be pre-cooked in any way prior to the commencement of the official cook-off. The only exceptions are canned or bottled tomatoes, tomato sauce, peppers, pepper sauce, beverages, broth and grinding and/or mixing of spices.
- B. Meat may be treated/marinated, pre-cut or ground but **MAY NOT BE PRE-COOKED** in any manner.
- C. All other ingredients must be prepared and/or chopped on-site during the preparation period.

#### **People's Choice/ Homestyle, Salsa:**

- A. People's Choice and Homestyle are the exact same chili. All cooks will prepare People's Choice chili (see #5), but choosing to enter the Homestyle competition category is up to each cook. Cooks must register for the Homestyle category prior to the start of the cook-off.
- B. Per ICS rules these categories may be prepared and cooked prior to the cook-off, however it is the responsibility of the cook to check with the cook-off organizer for each event as local laws may forbid advanced food preparation.
- C. The cook may also choose to prepare and cook these categories on-site during the preparation period.

### 5. PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Every ICS cook-off raises money for at least one charity or non-profit. This money is raised by selling tickets to the public that will allow them to taste People's Choice chili. Each contestant must prepare and serve People's Choice chili, unless the local law where an event takes place does not allow it.

**People's Choice follows the same ingredient rules as Homestyle chili. If you choose to enter the Homestyle category at an event, your Homestyle competition bowl must be the same exact chili you prepare for People's Choice.**

### 6. IT'S TIME TO COOK!

- A. A representative of the cook-off will conduct a contestant's meeting no later than 1 hour prior to the start of the competition cooking period. At this meeting instructions will be given and questions answered.
- B. The cooking period will be a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 4 hours. The exact starting and ending of each cooking period will be announced by the hosting organization.
- C. Cooking during the entire cooking period is at the sole discretion of the contestant.
- D. For each category a contestant competes in, they must cook a minimum of 32 oz. (Traditional Red, Verde, Veggie, and Salsa) and/or 12 oz. of Homestyle to be submitted for judging.

## 7. JUDGING

- A. Each cook will be assigned **one** contestant number and given one 32 oz. ICS competition cup per category and/or one 12 oz. Homestyle competition cup prior to the start of the cooking period.
- B. Cooks should verify that the number(s) on the bottom of their cup(s) is/are the same as their assigned contestant number.
- C. Each cook is responsible for delivering their cup(s) to the judging area at the end of each cooking period. Each cup must be filled to the bottom of the rim. Sharing or splitting chili for judging with another contestant will result in suspension of ICS membership for a minimum of one year.
- D. Cook-off judges will choose their top three to five bowls, per category, using the Judging Criteria below.

### JUDGING HOMESTYLE CHILI

Homestyle Chili is judged in two steps – first by public vote and second by the judges!

Step 1:

- A. A cook must register for the Homestyle category prior to the event, via the ICS website.
- B. Homestyle Chili must be the same exact chili served to the public during People’s Choice tasting hours. Any entry found to be different from the cook’s People’s Choice chili will be disqualified.
- C. Cooks of every cooking category will have the opportunity to receive voting tokens from the public. Every participating public attendee will have one token to give to their favorite chili.
- D. At the end of public tasting hours, all cooks must turn in their collected tokens to the judging area. Homestyle cooks must also turn in their 12 oz. Homestyle cup along with their tokens.

Step 2:

- A. The tokens turned in by Homestyle cooks will be counted and the top five bowls (determined by the highest token quantities), will move on to be judged by the event judges
- B. Cook-off judges will choose their top three to five bowls following the same judging criteria as outlined below.

### JUDGING CRITERIA

**Flavoring** – Chili should have good flavor with distinct chili pepper taste that is neither too hot nor too mild. The chili pepper taste should be obvious as well as balanced.

**Texture** – The texture of any meat, bean or veggie should not be too tough or too mushy. If they are, they have most likely been undercooked, overcooked, cooked too quickly or possibly over-marinated. Cut, size or shape of the ingredients should not be a consideration.

**Consistency** – The consistency of chili “gravy” should not be too thick nor too thin. Its texture should be a smooth mixture of ingredients and gravy, and never overly lumpy or overly dry.

**Spices** – Spices and herbs make an important contribution to the chili’s final flavor. They should permeate and accentuate the ingredients but should not overpower the overall flavor.

**Aroma** – The smell should be pleasing. A pleasing smell usually indicates the ingredients are properly cooked, well-combined and balanced.

**Color** –A reddish-brown hue is typically most desirable for any category using red chili peppers. A true-green hue is typically most desirable for Chili Verde. Color can vary considerably.