



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

Entry fees for any adult or youth category are at the discretion of the individual cook-off organization, however per ICS rules a cook-off may not charge members more than \$45 per category.

ICS Suggested Contestant Entry Fees:

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

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

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).

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. This is also offered as a Youth category following the same rules.

Homestyle Chili is a combination of chili peppers, beans, various spices and other ingredients. Meat is allowed but not required. This category is also offered for Youth cooks, following the same rules.

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.

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.

ICS JUDGING PROCEDURES

The selection of winners at any ICS chili cook-off is extremely important. ICS sanctioned events must follow all rules and procedures outlined below. Failure to do so will result in revoked sanctioned status.

1. JUDGE SELECTION

1. The cook-off organizer is responsible for designating a Chief Judge (CJ). The CJ is responsible for everything associated with judging and shall have the final decision on all judging matters. The CJ must also appoint a qualified person to be the Chief Scorekeeper (SK) and must ensure this person understands and follows all rules and procedures.
2. The organizer and CJ will select all other judges needed for the event. No one may judge or break ties at any event where a relative or significant other is competing.
3. ICS recommends there be at least ONE judge for every TWO chili bowls, and a minimum of FIVE judges for each judging table, with the exception of when there are more than 20 bowls (see #6).

2. PREPARATION

1. The organizer must ensure all cook-off paperwork (ballots, contestant lists, etc.) sent to them by ICS is distributed to the appropriate person(s) on the day of the event.
2. The judging area should be positioned close to the cooking area for convenience in transporting competition cups, and must be long enough to place the cups 12 - 18 inches apart around the table.
3. Two additional tables are necessary for the collection of competition cups and for the Chief Scorekeeper.
4. Additional Supplies:
 - PALATE CLEANSERS are necessary to promote fair judging between tastings. The organizer must ensure there are palate cleansers at every judging table. We recommend flour tortillas (cut into bite-size pieces), sour cream, beer and bottled water.
 - PLASTIC SPOONS
 - EMPTY CONTAINERS to collect dirty spoons.
 - PENCILS
 - For a Salsa event, use TORTILLA CHIPS rather than flour tortilla pieces and place a spoon in each salsa bowl entry for judges to spoon salsa onto a chip for tasting.

COMPETITION CUP PREPARATION

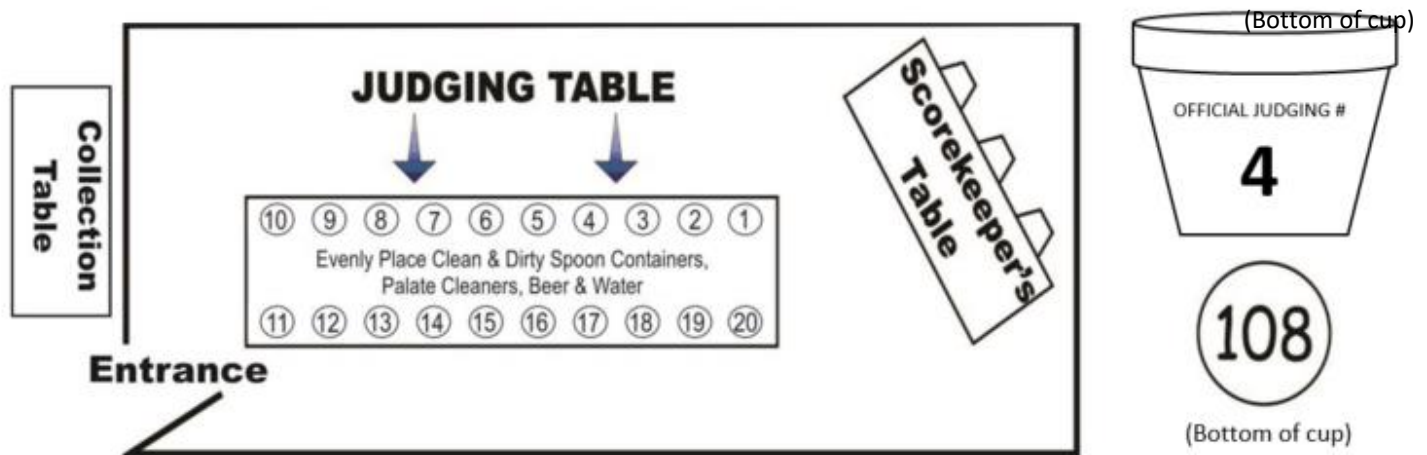
1. Contestants must use the official 32 oz. or 12 oz. ICS competition cups provided by ICS.
2. Prior to the start of the cooking period, the SK must assign each contestant one contestant number and make sure his/her cooking area is clearly identified with that number. The SK must also record the contestant's name and their contestant number on the ICS Contestant List, which must be returned to ICS after the event.
3. The SK is responsible for placing the contestant's number on the bottom of their competition cup(s) and ensuring each contestant receives this cup **at least 30 minutes prior** to the end of the cooking period. A contestant may have multiple cups, and each cup should have the same contestant number on the bottom(s).

3. RECEIVING THE COMPETITION CUPS

At the end of the cooking period, each contestant is responsible for filling their competition cup(s) to the bottom of the rim(s) with their competition chili and bringing it to the collection table in the judging area.

After all cups are turned in, the SK must randomly place each cup on the judging table(s) and then number the outside of the cups in counter-clockwise order, beginning with the number 1.

*Use of a BLACK felt permanent marker (chisel point, to prevent piercing the cup)



4. JUDGING

JUDGE'S MEETING

At least 30 minutes prior to the end of the cooking period, the CJ is required to hold a meeting with all judges. This meeting serves to educate all Judges on etiquette, technique, and procedures. No matter how many times someone has been a judge, they MUST attend this meeting.

1. 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.

2. Judging Instructions:

- a) Print name on the bottom right corner of ballot, and circle the number cup you begin tasting with.
- b) Do not talk or make any expressions/gestures as to avoid influencing the decision of another judge.
- c) Cleanse your palate between tastings with the SAME palate cleanser you began with - do not switch from beer to sour cream to water!
- d) Taste each cup with a CLEAN spoon. Re-taste as necessary.
- e) Record any comments next to the number that matches the Black number on the cup.
- f) Pick top three and record at bottom of ballot.
- g) Leave judging area after submitting completed ballot so the scorekeepers can work undisturbed.

3. Judging Homestyle Chili:

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 collect tasting tokens from the public.
- 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. Ties for the fifth spot should move forward.
- b) Cook-off judges will choose their top three to five bowls following the judging criteria as outlined above.

5. SCOREKEEPING – 20 cups or less

1. As the ballots are received the Chief Scorekeeper (SK) and assistant scorekeepers will award points to each 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place vote **next to the relative number on the ICS Master Tally Sheet.**
 - 3 points awarded to each 1st place vote
 - 2 points awarded to each 2nd place vote
 - 1 point awarded to each 3rd place vote
 - a) A written mark (such as a dot, plus sign, etc.) should be placed between all awarded points to prevent reading a first and second place vote as *32 points* rather than *3•2* (3 points and 2 points).
 - b) Commas should not be used as they can be mistaken for the number 1.
2. After all ballots have been recorded on the Master Tally Sheet, the SK must add the vote points and enter the total in the space provided. Advise the CJ once all winners have been determined.
 - **IN THE EVENT OF A TIE**, the CJ shall appoint three judges as "Tie-Breakers" who will taste only the cups involved in the tie. The cup receiving the most votes is declared the winner of that particular place, and the other cup is moved down one place. Ties are broken only for those places for which there are prizes and/or trophies
3. The WINNING cup numbers should be double-checked and verified. The SK should then refer to the Official Contestant List to determine the winner names/team name. Record the winners on the Official Winners' List, along with the cup number and prizes and/or trophies to be awarded.

6. SCOREKEEPING – 21 cups or more

In the event there are more than 20 cups to be judged, there should be Preliminary tables and a Final Table. Judges must also be split into groups: Preliminary Table groups (see below) and a Final Table group.

1. The minimum number of Preliminary tables is determined as follows:
 - a. **21 to 40 cups:** Two tables- tables “A” and “B.” Each table should have a clearly visible identifier of “A”, or “B”. Half of all cups should be placed on table “A” and numbered counter- clockwise beginning with the number 1. The remaining half should be placed on table “B” and begin numbering with the number 21.
 - b. **41 to 60 cups:** Three tables “A”, “B” and “C.” Each table should have a clearly visible identifier of “A”, “B”, or “C”. One third of all cups should be placed on each table. The cups on table “A” should be numbered counter-clockwise beginning with the number 1; Table “B” the same beginning with the number 21; and Table “C” the same beginning with number 41.
 - c. **61 or more cups:** One additional Preliminary table for each 20 cups, and continue using the next letter of the alphabet to designate each additional table. DO NOT use the letter “F” for a Preliminary table as that letter is always used to designate the “Final Table”. Follow same steps as above with dispersing and numbering.
2. Once all cups are turned in following the cooking period, the SK shall designate individuals to transfer the cups from the collection table to all Preliminary Tables, at random, until requirements above are met.
3. After the judges at each Preliminary Table have made their top selections, the SK shall record those votes on the Master Tally Sheet. The top five cups from each Preliminary table will move to the next round, the “Final Table.”
 - a. Ties are not broken at Preliminary tables, so it is possible that more than 5 cups advance.
4. **All cups transferred to the Final Table shall be stacked within a new ICS competition cup and re-numbered counter-clockwise starting with the number 1.**

*This Final Table number should be marked on the side of the new cup AND marked on the lip of the inside cup so that the contestant number, preliminary table number AND Final Table number are all on the original competition cup.



5. Proceed with normal judging procedures at Final Table to determine the winners!