

Official ICS Contestant Rules



1. GETTING STARTED

Adult Cooks: Must be active ICS members and at least 18 years old.

Cooks must register for their ICS memberships and sign-up for each cook-off through the ICS website, chilicookoff.com.

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

Cooks (or parents/ supervisors of) must register for Youth ICS memberships and sign-up for each cook-off by contacting Vickie: vmarnick@icschili.com.

Every adult and youth cook must be a member in good standing prior to the commencement of the cook-off.

PARTICIPATION

A contestant may compete in one or more cooking categories at each cook-off. If a contestant wins first place in a WCCC qualifying category, he/she may not compete in that category again during the same cooking season.

A cooking season runs from the day after the WCCC of the previous season to the day before the WCCC of the current season. *For example – If the WCCC is on October 1, 2050, the cooking season would begin the day after the 2049 WCCC to September 30, 2050.*

ENTRY FEES & PEOPLE'S CHOICE

Entry fees for any adult or youth category are separately collected by and at the discretion of the cook-off. ICS is the sanctioning body for cook-offs, which are organized by individuals not directly affiliated with ICS (unless noted).

ICS Suggested Contestant Entry Fees:

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

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

People's Choice Chili (PC): ICS requires PC per adult and youth contestant, not per category. The amount required will be determined by the individual cook-off. ICS recommends the requirement of 2 gallons with entry fee(s), OR 4 gallons without entry fee(s).

2. TYPES OF SANCTIONED COOK-OFFS

WCCC QUALIFIER - The event organizer must offer at least one ICS cooking category and meet the minimum cook requirements for that category (and each additional category if applicable). A minimum of 15 cooks per category are required for Traditional Red and Homestyle categories. A minimum of 7 cooks per category are required for Chili Verde, Veggie and Salsa categories. Any youth category must have a minimum of 5 youth cooks.

Winners: All will qualify for the WCCC.

LOCAL COOK-OFF - The event organizer must offer at least one ICS cooking category and meet the minimum cook requirements for that category (and each additional category if applicable). A minimum of 7 cooks per category are required for Traditional Red, Homestyle, Chili Verde, Veggie and Salsa categories. Any youth category must have a minimum of 5 youth cooks.

Winners- Traditional Red and Homestyle: Two Local Cook-off wins are needed to qualify for the WCCC. One Local Cook-off win will waive the winners' entry fee for the Last Chance cook-off in that category. If a Local Cook-off ends up with 15 or more cooks in Red and/or 15 or more cooks in Homestyle, the winner(s) will qualify for the WCCC of the current cooking season.

Winners- Verde, Veggie and Salsa: All will qualify for the WCCC.

3. COOKING CATEGORIES

CATEGORIES IN WHICH WINNERS ARE DETERMINED BY JUDGES

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 category is also offered for YOUTH cooks.**

Homestyle Chili is any kind of meat or combination of meats and/or vegetables cooked with beans, chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients. Beans are required. **This category is also offered for YOUTH cooks.**

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 byproduct is not allowed.

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

Note: Garnishes must not be used for any category. Rule of thumb- if an ingredient found on the top layer of an entry bowl cannot also be found mixed throughout the entire bowl, it is a garnish and is not permitted. If a bowl is delivered for judging with a garnish, the garnish must be removed by the Chief Judge. If for some reason the garnish cannot be removed, the bowl will be disqualified

CATEGORIES IN WHICH WINNERS ARE DETERMINED BY THE PUBLIC

People's Choice Chili (PC) follows the same ingredient rules as Homestyle. The use of beans is required. PC is required by all adult and youth contestants. See #5 for rules and exceptions.

4. 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 ingredients, supplies and utensils. Contestants 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.

5. FOOD PREPARATION

Traditional Red, Homestyle, 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 pre-cut or ground but MAY NOT be pre-cooked, treated, seasoned or marinated in any manner.
- C. All other ingredients must be prepared and/or chopped on-site during the preparation period.

People's Choice, Salsa:

- A. 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.
- B. The cook may also choose to prepare and cook these categories on-site during the preparation period.

6. PEOPLE'S CHOICE CHILI (PC)

Where an event allows [as is the case with most ICS events], event attendees may purchase tickets in order to taste chili prepared by the competing cooks – this chili is known as People's Choice chili (PC). Every ICS cook-off raises money for at least one charity or non-profit organization, partially due to the preparation and sales of PC.

- A. Every contestant (other than *salsa only* contestants) must prepare and serve People's Choice chili (PC), unless prohibited by the local law where the event takes place.
- B. Event organizers will decide the required quantity of PC per contestant. ICS suggests two (2) gallons when requiring an entry fee, or four (4) gallons without entry fee.
- C. If multiple cooks share one booth, each contestant must be prepared to show their own PC. The event organizer or Chief Judge has the right to disqualify any contestant who does not prepare the required quantity of PC. This is expected and supported by ICS.

7. 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 for each category will depend on the number of categories offered at each event. The typical cooking period is 3 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. to be submitted for judging.

8. DETERMINING THE WINNERS

People's Choice:

The chili that receives the highest number of votes by the public will win. The manner of voting as well as prize structure will be determined by the event organizer.

All other categories:

- A. Each cook will be assigned a contestant number and given one 32 oz. ICS competition cup per category prior to the start of the cooking period. (Smaller cups are permitted for salsa competitions.)
Each cook will receive as many cups as categories they are competing in. For example- if competing in four categories a contestant will receive four cups. Each cup will have their contestant number marked on the bottom.
- B. It is the contestant's responsibility to verify that the number on the bottom of their cup(s) is 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, per category, using the judging criteria below. Place levels and prizes are determined by each cook-off, but ICS requires a minimum of 1st, 2nd and 3rd places.