



Competitive Cooking Team Rules and Regulations

1. There is a **MANDATORY COOKS MEETING** Thursday, August 27, at 6:00 pm. at **Bridgewater Place, 205 Bridgewater Road, Knoxville, TN 37923. NEW LOCATION!!**
2. A Wing is defined as any piece of the wing: drummie or flat or a full wing; drummie, flat and flap, cooked, flavored, and seasoned.
3. The wings for contest entry may not be pre-cooked, sauced, or maintained in any way prior to inspection at the beginning of the cooking contest. Use of anything pre-cooked will result in disqualification.
4. Each contestant competing shall supply all of their cooking ingredients, individual cooking devices (propane or charcoal), utensils, preparation tables, etc. *Sauce Only teams will not need cooking equipment.*
5. The only things provided to contestants by the Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival contest are a regulation cooking area, an eight-foot table, 10x10 tent, and raw wings. *Sauce Only teams will be supplied with cooked wings during the event.*
6. Each team may have up to nine assistants (ten total people) in their tent. At least one cook or assistant from each team **MUST** attend the mandatory cooks meeting.
7. Each contestant must comply with all applicable rules and regulations of the Knoxville and Knox County Health Department including but not limited to the following:
 - a. Meat must be at 35° F or less before cooking. Coolers with plenty of ice will keep it cold enough.
 - b. After cooking the wings, they should be placed in a covered container and maintained at a safe temperature until submitted to the judges.
 - c. Cleanliness of the cook, assistants, and contestant area is required.
 - d. NO live animals are allowed in the cooking area. This is grounds for disqualification.
 - e. Each

team MUST have hand cleaning capabilities. Soap and water or waterless hand cleaner is acceptable.

8. **Load-in will take place between 5:00-8:00pm Friday, September 4, 2026, and 8:00am-4pm Saturday, September 5, 2026. Teams are required to load-in on Friday and Saturday as no cars will be allowed on the lawn on Sunday. Teams with smokers are required to set up their smoker on Friday.** World's Fair Park Drive, and 11th Street will close down promptly at 7am Sunday and no vehicles will be allowed through once the road is closed. The festival will open to the VIP's at 2pm and to the general public at 3pm. The first band will start at 2:00 pm.
9. Live entertainment will be taking place during the festival from 2:00pm – 9:00pm.
10. No live bands or combos, etc., will be allowed in the individual cooking areas at any time during the event.
11. **Each contestant must check-in upon arrival at the Contestant/Vendor tent (Festival Lawn) or 11th Street Entry Gate (Performance Lawn) depending on where your tent is located (see map).**
12. Restrooms will be available around the Park.
13. Children may not be left unattended or unsupervised to roam the festival or its outlying areas.
14. **Trash cans/bags must be provided by each contestant.** A dumpster for trash will be on-site. Contestants will be responsible for cleaning up their area after the contest. Trash MUST be placed in the dumpster, not next to it. A separate \$100 refundable clean-up deposit is required. This will only be kept if your area is left unclean or damaged.
15. Teams must have used oil discarded before leaving. The contest will provide a receptacle for discard and oil dump should not begin until after festival has ended. **DO NOT pour oil on the curb or in the street.**
16. **Vehicles will be allowed to load-in inside the Park area between 5:00-8:00pm Friday and 8:00-4:00pm Saturday ONLY. Any Sunday load-in will require prior approval.**
17. **Vehicles will NOT be allowed back in the Park area after the contest for "load-out" until the fireworks have finished and the road is open, approximately 10:00pm. The area will be blocked off by security until then.**
18. The contest will take place at the World's Fair Park Festival and Performance Lawn near the Sunsphere.
19. The entry fee to the Big Kahuna Wing Contest & Labor Day Festival is \$300 for a 10' x 10' space. Larger spaces are available by ordering multiple 10x10 spaces. If for example the team requires a 10x20 space, then you should buy 2 spaces.
20. **CLEAN UP DEPOSIT.** It is the responsibility of each team to see that the contest area is cleaned, and all equipment removed from the site following the contest. At check in each team will be required to provide a \$100 check made payable to the Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival.

21. The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival Committee reserves the right to reject any application. If your team's application is not accepted, your fees will be refunded. No refunds of entry fees will be made once you have been accepted into the contest whether your team participates or not.
22. Space is guaranteed for the first 35 applications accepted by The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival Committee.
23. The team's captain will be held responsible for the conduct of his team and his guests. **Under NO circumstances are wings to be distributed without tickets (except VIP),** beverages (including alcohol) to be distributed (given away or sold) to the general public by the teams or their contestants. The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival Committee requests and requires that good taste be used with team conduct during the contest.
24. Team areas are assigned by the order of receipt of paid entry.
25. Each team should provide their own bucket of sand for cigarette-butt disposal within their individual team area.
26. Violations of rules and regulations of the contest will result in disqualification, expulsion, and/or disqualification from future participation in the festival.
27. Read and keep these rules of the Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival. If there are any questions or concerns, immediately contact The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival for clarification.
28. NO throwing of Frisbees, balls or any falling objects are allowed.
29. **NO glass containers,** only plastic and aluminum allowed inside the festival area, or in personal cooking area.
30. The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival will not be responsible for tents or other equipment left unattended before, during, or after the contest.
31. All teams must adhere to all electrical, fire, and other codes, by the city, county, state, and federal codes. **Each team must have an ABC 5lb minimum fire extinguisher of a 2A, 40bc rating. Teams frying must have a K-Class fire extinguisher.** Please check and make sure they are charged. **You will not be allowed to cook if you do not have an extinguisher.** All tarps and tents must be fire retardant with certification stating so. The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival can provide electrical power for your area for an additional fee.
32. Contestants may not sell food.
33. The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival reserves the right to make additional regulations as situations warrants. Decisions of the Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival Committee and Judges are FINAL.
34. Any questions regarding these rules and guidelines or judging rules should be addressed immediately to The Big Kahuna Labor Day Festival Committee.

World Food Championships E.A.T™ Sanctioned Contest

Cook's Meeting

Thursday, August 27th

Where: Bridgewater Place

- Judging for 2026 will follow a WFC Blind-Judging process.
- WFC will utilize up to 7 judging tables to ensure each competitor is judged fairly and timely.
- Each judging table will consist of 5 judges, and all judges will sample.
- Competitors will be required to provide a minimum of **10 wings per category*** (2 wings per judge at a table).
- WFC will distribute Competitor turn-in cards / box labels for each category you entered during the morning of the event. These cards will have your WFC assigned turn-in number for each category. *Your entry will not be accepted without this official WFC turn-in card.*
- The WFC turn-in card will include areas for your **Dish Title** (i.e., *Willy's Blackberry Habanero Buffalo Wings*) and **Dish Description** (i.e., *A sweet heat wet wing sauced with organic blackberry jam and finished off with a habanero infusion.*)
- Wing Categories include:
 - Buffalo / Overall
 - Smoker Division (wings must be at least 75% smoked)
 - Exotic
 - Creative Spicy
 - Creative Sweet

*Cooks have the option to compete in each category, but they are not required to compete in all of them.

*It's possible for competitors to win more than one category.

WING COMPETITION JUDGING SCHEDULE

9:30 - 10:00 am WFC Turn-in Cards Distributed

10:30 - 10:40 am Smoker Turn-in Window

11:00 - 11:10 pm Exotic Turn-in Window

11:30 - 11:40 pm Creative Sweet Turn-in Window

12:00 - 12:10 pm Creative Spicy Turn-in Window

12:30 - 12:40 pm Buffalo Turn-in Window

Note: Please walk the path from your booth site to the WFC Turn-In Table (under the viaduct for Festival Lawn and at the front gate for the Performance Lawn) before the event starts to gauge the time necessary for you to turn-in your category entry. The turn-in window for each category will be open for 10 minutes. Your entry will not be accepted before the window opens. Once the window opens, your entry can be accepted once it is placed on the Turn-In Table. *Bring your assigned turn-in card! Your entry will not be accepted without it!*

Prize purse:

- \$4,000 – Overall Big Kahuna Champion
- \$1,000 – Smoker Division Champion
- \$1,000 – Exotic Sauce Champion
- \$1,000 – Creative Spicy Champion
- \$1,000 – Creative Sweet Champion

The overall Big Kahuna Champion will be judged solely on the Original Buffalo category.

Notes to Competitors:

Entries will be BLIND judged by a panel of WFC EAT judges. ***You get to choose how to present them to the judges, in a box, with garnish or not.*** Additional key aspects include:

- Your TITLE and DESCRIPTION for your entry. This needs to be very insightful, and similar to what you would write for a restaurant menu if your wings were being served there.
- Each of the judges will sample your wings, so you need to have at least 2 wings per judge for their assessment.
- The judges will score you on the EAT Methodology, which stands for Execution (of your recipe flavors), Appearance, and Taste.
- Your entry will be judged on its own merits, and NOT compared to other competitor entries.
- EAT scores are weighted as follows: Execution (35%), Appearance (15%) and Taste (50%).
- A cooks meeting will be held on site on the day of the contest to go over any questions about this new process. The time and location of this meeting will be communicated to each team prior to arriving at the event.

E.A.T™ Judging Methodology

The E.A.T.™ Methodology is the World Food Championships' own proprietary scoring system and process that allows all WFC competition categories to be judged on the same criteria, in a consistent manner. Each entry will be judged on three key evaluation criteria: **Execution, Appearance and Taste**. The judges will give a score out of ten for each criterion, 1 being inedible, 10 being excellent.



EXECUTION: Did the dish come together? In your opinion, did the cook successfully accomplish their recipe describes? Does the dish meet the criteria of the specific category? Within a category, "Execution" is scored specifically based on the category in which it belongs. For example, if a Recipe Category competitor submitted a taco recipe but turns in taco soup, they should not score well for they did not execute the given recipe. "Execution" will be evaluated by the judge's interpretation of how the given recipe should look and be presented. Examples of why a judge might score poorly for execution may be a soggy bun on a burger or undercooked meat in a steak.

Specific category requirements/challenges will be detailed to the judges in the same manner that they have been detailed to the competitors. It will be up to the judges to determine the success of the competitor at accomplishing the requirements of the round.

APPEARANCE: Is it pleasing to the eye? Does it look appetizing? Do you want to take a big bite out of it right now? Although listed second, the criteria "Appearance" should be scored first based on the designated category. For example, a sandwich that looks like a soufflé should not score well. Secondly, only the primary dish is judged for "Appearance", meaning that sample dishes are not scored for its appearance since it may need to be portioned to fit on the turn-in tray. Judges will be instructed to base their assessment on the appearance of the turn-in but should also consider the overall presentation of its components. For example, a Barbecue Cheeseburger that is over-saturated in barbecue sauce, obstructing visuals on the burger, may be scored lower than a dish that presents the barbecue sauce, cheese and burger in a balanced and visually pleasing manner.

TASTE: Is it pleasing to the taste buds? Does it make you want to eat more? Is there an appropriate balance of flavor? The criteria "Taste" is defined specifically to the category in which it belongs. Judges will rate the dishes on a scale of 1, being inedible, to 10, being perfect. Additional "Taste" considerations will be based on the balance of flavors and ingredients used by the cook. Judges are instructed to NOT use personal bias when it comes to spicy or savory preferences. However, a Spicy Jalapeno Burger that is not spicy, but perhaps sweet due to another ingredient used, will score poorly compared to a dish that achieves the recipe's title and description.

Overall, E.A.T.™ category scores will be weighted as follows:

Taste – 50%, Execution – 35%, Appearance – 15%.

Weighting will be executed by the computerized scoring system and not by judges' determination. Judges are not allowed to use decimal scores; they must use whole numbers. Each entry will receive at least five total scores, with the lowest judges score being dropped. Once weighted factoring is applied, it's possible that a team's success may be determined by the ten-thousandth of a point, (82.0194 vs 82.0198) making it is rare to see a tie at WFC. However, if a tie does occur, the following totals will be compared in order, starting with #1, until the tie is broken:

1. Higher sum of Taste scores (after dropping the lowest cumulative score set)
2. Higher sum of weighted Taste and Execution scores (after dropping the lowest cumulative score set)
3. Higher of the lowest cumulative scores (score set that was previously dropped)

4. Higher Taste score from lowest cumulative score set
5. Higher weighted Taste and Execution scores from the lowest cumulative score set
6. Sum of cumulative scores, dropping lowest AND highest score set
7. Sum of Taste scores (after dropping the lowest AND highest cumulative score set)
8. Sum of weighted Taste and Execution scores (after dropping the lowest AND highest cumulative score set)
9. Computer-generated random sequence (coin toss)

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck!