

2025 Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition

BAR-B-QUE COOK-OFF

Rules & Regulations

NOTE: The Wharton County Youth Fair & Exposition will not be held responsible for theft or damages to equipment or personal items.

All teams must submit original signed entry form with the **\$250.00 entry fee**. Entry fee is non-refundable. Entries will be limited to the first 75 teams. **NO MORE THAN** two (2) spots per team name. No individual will be able to cook on 2 separate teams. To ensure your spot from last year, your entry must be at the Fair Office no later than March 4TH. The BBQ Committee will try to accommodate your request, however there are no guarantees.

A team consists of a CHIEF COOK and FOUR (4) ASSISTANTS. **Persons under twenty-one (21) years of age will not be eligible to enter the cook-off contest.**

The Chief Cook and 4 Team Members **may not** cook under more than 1 team name; that team can have up to 2 spots. This will be grounds for automatic disqualification.

1st Place Brisket Team with the Chief Cook + 1 more Team Member from Wharton County will represent Wharton County at the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo Championship Cook-Off in 2026. The Wharton County Go Texan Committee will be responsible for the entry fee into that cook-off; all other expenses will be the responsibility of the Team.

Check-In Time will begin Thursday, March 20th from 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm and Friday, March 21st from 9:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Each paid spot is provided a 40' across x 30' deep space. Each Team is allowed space for a pit, plus sleeping quarters, consisting of a motor home, pull trailer, or tent in the assigned space. **NEW FOR 2025 - ** ONLY 1 VEHICLE, IF BEING USED FOR SLEEPING QUARTERS, ALLOWED PER SPACE. IF vehicle(s) are not being used for sleeping quarters, they are not allowed inside the Cook-Off Spaces AND MUST BE OUT OF COOK-OFF AREA AFTER BY 5:30 PM ON FRIDAY.** EVERYTHING you bring must fit within your space including washer/corn hole games, etc. No electricity or water is provided.

The carnival parking lot is completely paved and you may not dig holes in the pavement. ALL TENTS REQUIRING STAKES MUST BE IN CEMENTED BUCKETS, OR OTHER MEANS OF STABILIZATION.

Each team will receive containers for entries. Each container will have a ticket marked category, which is affixed with tape. The chief cook is responsible for removing their portion on the ticket for safe keeping. The taped portion on the ticket must remain on the container with food entry. You must present this ticket to claim any prize when winning tickets are announced at the awards ceremony.

Fires for BBQ must be wood, wood substance or charcoal. **NO THERMOSTATICALLY CONTROLLED PITS ALLOWED! NO BATTERIES, NO WIRES, NO ELECTRIC OR PROPANE COOKERS ARE ALLOWED – example being Traeger – NOT ALLOWED! ALL PITS ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION.** Fires must be contained in a fire barrel twelve (12) inches below top of barrel that will be up off the ground at least twelve (12) inches. **EACH TEAM MUST PROVIDE A FIRE EXTINGUISHER**

NO VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED IN COOK-OFF AREA AFTER 5:30 P.M. FRIDAY, MARCH 21st UNTIL THE COOK-OFF IS OVER ON SATURDAY, MARCH 22ND UNLESS THAT VEHICLE (1 PER SPOT) IS BEING USED AS SLEEPING QUARTERS. THAT VEHICLE WILL NOT MOVE UNTIL SATURDAY AFTER AWARDS. PLEASE CONTACT COMMITTEE MEMBER FOR OTHER ARRANGEMENTS. VIOLATORS WILL BE DISQUALIFIED----NO QUESTIONS ASKED. In case of Emergency, contact a

committee person. Family and friends must park in the designated fair grounds parking area and enter through the main entrance only.

There will be a Chief Cook Meeting held at 6:30 pm on Friday March 21st inside Crescent Hall. Each Team must be represented! At that time, we will go over all rules, pass out food containers, answer questions and allow comments, complaints and concerns.

The chief cook is responsible for the conduct of his team. Each team is responsible before, during and after the cook-off in cleaning up assigned area. Please do not leave any loose or bagged trash at or around your assigned space. **PLEASE BRING YOUR OWN TRASH BAGS AND TRASH CANS.**

Any special entertainment (DJ or band) must be written on entry form. The band must be in the cook-off site by 5:30 p.m. **Friday, March 21st**, and will not be allowed to leave until 1:00 a.m. Saturday morning. Security will escort the band out of the cook-off area. The band must follow these rules. No Exceptions. **EACH BAND MEMBER MUST PAY TO ENTER THE COOK-OFF SITE.**

Quiet Time is Midnight, 12:00 am on Saturday – March 22nd and will be strictly enforced.

Excessive use of alcoholic beverages will be grounds for disqualification. Open bars will not be permitted. All beer must be brought in during check in **Friday, March 21st BY 5:30 PM.** Alcoholic beverages are not to distributed to the public.

NO GLASS CONTAINERS ARE ALLOWED - ALL TABC laws will be enforced at all times. NO PETS ALLOWED, except for Seeing Eye dogs. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Under no circumstances will any contestant or member of the public be allowed to bring into the cook-off contest area golf carts, motorcycles, carts, bicycles, roller skates or any other type of transportation with the exception of wheel chairs for handicapped individuals.

Contestants are not allowed to sell any food or alcoholic beverages to the public.

Jackpot: This will always be a DRINK Category, but may change every year. This year it will be an Alcohol Based Punch. Contestants may enter as many times as they wish at \$25 per entry. Entries will be judged on taste only. Entries can be frozen or on-the-rocks. The judges will be provided with ice upon judging to prevent entries from being diluted prior to sampling. **Alcohol based Punch must be mixed and prepared within your Cook-Off Space.**

Pinto Beans: Contestants must cook at least one (1) pound of pinto beans. No meat allowed in judging cup and nothing larger than a bean may be turned in. **Beans must be cooked within your Cook-Off Space.**

Chili: Contestants must cook at least one (1) pound of beef chili meat, or cubed chuck. **NO VENISON MEAT AND/OR BEANS IN CHILI. Chili must be cooked within your Cook-Off Space.**

Pork Rib: Contestants must cook at least one (1) slabs of pork ribs per paid space. No Baby Back Ribs allowed. Ribs must be raw; but can be pre-seasoned. No foil or garnish on entry at turn-in. **Pork Ribs must be cooked within your BBQ Space with wood, wood substance or charcoal. NO THERMOSTATICALLY CONTROLLED PITS ALLOWED! NO BATTERIES, NO WIRES, NO ELECTRIC OR PROPANE COOKERS ARE ALLOWED – example being Traeger – NOT ALLOWED! ALL PITS ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION!**

Chicken Category: Contestants must cook at least one (1) chicken per paid space. Chicken must be raw; but can be pre-seasoned. No foil or garnish on entry at turn-in. **Chicken must be cooked within your BBQ Space with wood, wood substance or charcoal. NO THERMOSTATICALLY CONTROLLED PITS ALLOWED! NO BATTERIES, NO WIRES, NO ELECTRIC OR PROPANE COOKERS ARE ALLOWED – example being Traeger – NOT ALLOWED! ALL PITS ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION!**

Brisket Category: You may tag up to Two (2) Briskets per paid space. Brisket(s) will be inspected and tagged at a designated time and location. Brisket(s) may be trimmed and pre-seasoning is optional at time of tag-in. No garnish on entry at turn-in. **Brisket must be cooked within your BBQ Space with wood, wood substance or charcoal. NO THERMOSTATICALLY CONTROLLED PITS ALLOWED! NO BATTERIES, NO WIRES, NO ELECTRIC OR PROPANE COOKERS ARE ALLOWED – example being Traeger – NOT ALLOWED! ALL PITS ARE SUBJECT TO INSPECTION!**

JUDGING:

Alcohol Based Punch: You will be given a 20 oz cup for turn-in. No decoration or extras are allowed for turn-in. IF serving on-the-rocks, do not turn in with ice. We will provide ice for the judges to prevent diluting prior to sampling. Judging will be Friday at 8:00 pm.

Chili: You will be given a 16 oz cup with lid for turn in. Judging will be Saturday at 11:00 am

Pinto Beans: You will be given a 16 oz cup with lid for turn in. No meat and nothing larger than a bean in cup at turn-in. Judging will be Saturday at 12:00 pm.

Pork Ribs: You will turn in 8 individual cut ribs. A hinged plate will be provided for turn in. No foil or garnish allowed in turn-in plate. Judging will be Saturday at 1:00 pm.

Chicken: You will turn in 1 Whole Half of Chicken. A hinged plate will be provided for turn in. No foil or garnish allowed in turn-in plate. Judging will be Saturday at 2:00 pm.

Brisket: Meat shall be cut from a tagged brisket. We will use the honor system, having a neighbor team come watch you cut from the tagged brisket. You will turn in 8 full slices cut ¼ inch thick. A hinged plate will be provided for turn in. No garnish allowed in turn-in plate. Judging will be Saturday at 3:00 pm.

Armbands will be given to a Team Member listed on the entry form at Check-In

AWARDS:

Awards will be announced immediately following the final judging of Brisket. Prizes will be awarded as follows:

1st Place Brisket – Cutting Board, Aprons; 2nd thru 5th Place Brisket – Cutting Boards

Cash for 1st, 2nd and 3rd Place in Brisket will be based on the number of Teams

Under 50 Teams (1st - \$1250, 2nd - \$750, 3rd - \$300)

Over 50 Teams (1st - \$2000, 2nd - \$1500, 3rd - \$1000)

1st thru 5th Place Chicken, Ribs, Chili and Beans – Cutting Boards

1st Place Jackpot – Cutting Board and ½ of Entries; 2nd – 5th – Cutting Boards

The Bar-B-Que Committee Chairperson reserves the right to make additional rules and regulations as situations may warrant.

Infractions of any of the above rules will be grounds for immediate disqualification.

