



2026 CHAMPIONSHIP CULINARY & BBQ COOK-OFF

RULES AND REGULATIONS

September 18 & 19, 2026

Fort Bend County Fair Association
4310 Hwy 36 South
Rosenberg, TX 77471
(281)342-6171
www.fortbendcountyfair.com

The Fort Bend County Fair Association (FBCFA) would like to welcome all Cook-off Teams to the Fort Bend County Championship Cook-Off. Your participation helps support the kids and the Fort Bend County Fair Scholarship Fund.

Chairman:

Matthew Bryson

Co-Chairmen:

Kris Abdi
 Don Faldyn
 Jared Graeber
 Richard Graeber
 Clifton Holik

Lil' Wranglers:

Clifton Holik

Directors-In-Charge:

Harvey Bryson
 Chase Raska
 Alfred Valdez

Important Due Dates:	
Date:	Item:
March 26, 2026	Deposit
June 18, 2026	Entry, Release, and Insurance Forms with Payment
August 5, 2026	Head Cook's Meeting
August 13, 2026	Pre-sale Alcohol Order and Port-a-can Rental
August 20, 2026	Rental Company List
September 10, 2026	Automatic Temperature Control Devices List and Security Form

All participants are subject to the Fort Bend County Fair Association General Rules and Regulations and the Cook-off General Rules and Regulations. Please see website for more details. www.fortbendcountyfair.com

General Public Hours

Date	Time
Friday, September 18, 2026	1:00 p.m. – 11:30 p.m.
Saturday, September 19, 2026	9:00 a.m. – 11:30 p.m.

A. **Entry**

1. Entry form and entry fee (See Fee Chart below) payment are due to the Fair Office by **June 18, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.** No partial payments will be accepted. This contest will be limited to space availability.
2. Once the entry fee is paid to the FBCFA for the contest, payments will not be refunded under any condition. In the event of an Act of God and the contest cannot be held, your prepaid monies will be credited to entry into the next rescheduled/scheduled Fort Bend County Fair Cook-off Contest.
3. Teams must have a **unique** team name. Team names may not be Acme Team #1 and Acme Team #2.
4. Team names may not be offensive and are subject to approval by the Fort Bend County Fair Board of Directors.
5. Team name changes must be submitted in writing to the BBQ Committee for approval.
6. The Head Cook’s meeting will be held on **August 5, 2026 at 6:30 p.m., in Building B**, and **one (1) unique team representative is required to attend and pick up the team’s packet. If a team representative does not attend the Head Cook’s meeting, your spot will be released on a first-come, first-serve basis.**

Fee Chart			
Item:		Fee:	Note(s):
Spaces 1 – 15	Size: 40’x80’	\$600.00/ea	Two(2) port-a-cans
Spaces 16 - 92	Size: 40’x40’	\$300.00/ea	One(1) port-a-can
Spaces 93 - 99	Size: 40’x120’	\$900.00/ea	Three(3) port-a-cans
Insurance		\$90.00	Per team
Additional Items:			
Port-a-can		\$150.00/ea	
Handicap Port-a-can		\$200.00/ea	
Hand Wash Station		\$100.00/ea	
250 gal Holding Tank		\$275.00/ea	

B. Team Spaces

1. Each paid entry entitles the team to one Cook-Off space. Spaces will be approximately 40' x 40', 40'x80', 40'x120' or as otherwise marked.
2. The team's equipment and décor must fit within the assigned space.
3. No parking outside of your designated area unless otherwise approved by the Chairman or a Director-in-Charge.
4. Each space will be supplied port-a-can(s) depending on size. (See Fee Chart) Due to being ordered well in advance of the event, any additional Port-A-Can requests must be purchased through the Fair Association no later than **August 20, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.** ("Extra Port-A-Can" section of the Entry Form).
5. All tents must be secured **via water barrels or concrete blocks. No stake-style tents will be allowed.**
6. Tents may not be taller than 15 feet in height.
7. Each team space must have perimeter fencing.
8. Electricity or water is not supplied by the Fort Bend County Fair Association.
9. Additional spaces may be purchased and will be awarded if available. This additional space **will not** allow the team to enter the additional cooking category contest. If you would like any special considerations reviewed as part of your entry, please write them on your entry form. They will be evaluated and applied if possible. If you would like to be placed on the waitlist for additional spaces, please email bbq@fbcfa.org
10. Maximum spaces allowed per team are four 40'x40', two 40'x80', or one 40'x120'.
11. Cook-Off layout is subject to change from year to year as Fairground improvement and Cook-Off enhancements proceed.

C. Team Members

1. A Cook-Off Team consists of a Head Cook and four (4) additional cooks.
2. Head Cook and Team Members may not cook on more than one team and must be in good standing with FBCFA.
3. The Head Cook of the team is responsible for the operation of the team space and all actions within or outside the assigned space(s) by the members or guests within the assigned space(s).
4. The Head Cook of the team must be physically present and available to the contest management if called upon.
5. Teams will be provided with five (5) season passes for team members to use when entering the admissions gate. Other parties attending your area are required to purchase Fort Bend County Fair gate entry tickets to enter the Cook-Off for Friday & Saturday. Season passes are available at the Fort Bend County Fair Office, or online at www.fortbendcountyfair.com
6. Wristbands will be given to the Head Cook and additional cooks listed on the entry form. Wristbands are required to be worn and do not grant gate admission.

D. Insurance

1. The Fort Bend County Fair Association (FBCFA) will not be responsible for accidents, theft, or damage to persons and/or equipment. A \$1,000,000 Liability Insurance Policy is required by all teams and must be purchased through the FBCFA Insurance Carrier. The

insurance policy will provide each team with the minimum insurance requirements for participation in this year's contest. The coverage provided is not an Accident, Group Medical, or Workers Compensation policy for team members. Certificates of Insurance coverage for teams from any other source will not be accepted.

2. Team must fill out and return the insurance policy application with the contest entry form in order to be entered. Charges for the policy are listed on the insurance forms. The single fee charged for this year will cover the team's spot(s).

E. Alcoholic Beverages and Ice

1. Due to the current Texas On-Premises Beer and Wine licensing of the Fort Bend County Fairgrounds, Beer and Wine **cannot** be brought into the fenced perimeter.
2. Beer and Wine **MUST** be purchased from the FBCFA. Pre-order pricing will be available.
3. **Pre-order alcohol must be paid in full by August 13, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.** It is recommended that you place your preliminary orders in advance of the Fair so that sufficient stock is on hand.
4. Hard liquor is permitted and should be brought in during the setup times.
5. No ice shall be brought onto contest grounds after Thursday.
6. Pre-sale beer orders will be delivered only on Thursday.
7. At no time may a person under the age of 21 be served or consume alcohol. The Fair prohibits minors consuming alcohol, even in the presence of a legal guardian.
8. Beer and ice may be purchased at the Committee Booth, Building D.

Beer and Ice Sales	
Date	Time
Thursday, September 17, 2026 - Pre-sale delivery only	1:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.
Friday, September 18, 2026	8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 19, 2026	8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m.

- * Beer orders must have 5 cases for delivery
- * Delivery of beer and ice will stop at 6:00 p.m.
- * After 6:00 p.m. teams must pick up beer and ice at the distribution locations.
- * No beer deliveries during turn-in times of contest

F. Set-Up

1. During the listed set-up times, only cooking equipment and drop-off will be allowed inside the gates.
2. Each team will receive two hang tags. Any vehicle, including bands and DJ's, entering the grounds must display the hang tag. If the hang tag is not readily visible on the vehicle, it will be removed immediately.
3. Parking outside of your designated area is prohibited. Any vehicle parked in the cook-off area after designated setup times will be towed away at the owner's expense. Parking spaces will be available for team members outside the Cook-Off area.

4. No vehicles other than travel trailers and motor homes may be left inside your cooking area. Any other vehicle to be used in a site must have prior approval by Committee Chairman or Director-in-Charge as cooking site decorations.
5. Once the gate closes there will not be any vehicle traffic allowed in or out (i.e., bands, DJs, or teams).
6. **All teams** must submit the Rental Company List to the Fair by **August 20, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.** (ie. Tent, camper, generators, etc.)

Set-up Times	
Date:	Time:
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, September 15-17, 2026	8:00 a.m. – 9:00 p.m. Drive through gates close at 8:30 p.m. No bands or other entertainment is allowed
Friday, September 18, 2026	8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. *No vehicles will be allowed*
Saturday, September 19, 2026	8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. *No vehicles will be allowed*

G. Equipment

1. The FBCFA will provide the space ONLY. Contestants must supply ALL necessary equipment and supplies. Props, trailers, tents, generators, coverings, and/or any other part of a team's equipment must not extend outside the boundaries of the assigned space unless approved by Committee Chairman or a Director-in-Charge.
2. Fuel kept on site must be in an approved DOT container and must be placed greater than 20 feet away from any fire or heat source.
3. FBCFA is not responsible for damage while moving items with a forklift or any other machinery.
4. Water is conveniently available to some sites and less conveniently available to others. If Fair water spigots are to be used, RV-type potable water hoses or other potable water-type containers must be used. Backflow preventers must be used at your connection.
5. **Gray water discharge is strictly prohibited.**
6. Competition grills/smokers must be in the team's assigned space and sharing of grills is not permitted.
7. Cords and/or hoses are not allowed to cross any aisles and leaking hoses will be removed.
8. Each team must have a First Aid kit.

H. Types of Cooking Devices Restricted

1. Open fires, fire holes, and dug pits are not allowed.
2. Electric or gas grills are only permitted for culinary competition. Automatic temperature-controlled devices (ATCD) will not be permitted for competition cooking. Any ATCD must be registered by contacting the Fair Office by **September 10, 2026 at 4:00 p.m.**
3. Fire barrels should have restrictive covers to arrest flames and are only acceptable if sufficient space is available away from tents or other flammable objects. Fire Barrels must not cause damage to asphalt or ground surfaces.

I. Fire Extinguishers – Minimum Requirements

1. One (1) 2A10BC type extinguisher is required in each 40' x 40' space and two (2) in each 40'x80' and 40'x120' spaces.
2. At least one 40BC type extinguisher is required in each cooking area within each space.
3. Where teams plan to use deep fat frying equipment using vegetable or animal oils and fats, it is required that at least one 2.5-gallon (6L) type K portable fire extinguisher be present.
4. All extinguishers must have a current date tag. Committee personnel will randomly inspect extinguishers. A team found without minimum extinguishers will be stopped from further cooking for their protection. ***Note: The Fire Marshal or Local Fire Department will be inspecting for adequate extinguishers.

J. Mobility

1. No public or private golf carts, ATVs, UTVs, or other motorized vehicles will be allowed inside the Fort Bend County Fair areas except for authorized Fair vehicles.
2. Motorized wheelchairs and mobility scooters are allowed.

K. Conduct

1. Head Cooks are responsible for the conduct of their team members and guests.
2. Teams may **not** charge door admission to their spaces during or before the contest. Teams wishing to operate their spaces as "Invitation Only" must secure their spaces with an appropriate number of uniformed officers/agents licensed by the State of Texas. Teams must submit the Security Form by September 10, 2026. Security officers must check-in with OEM before entering the cook-off.
3. Fair Directors, Cook-Off Chairmen, BBQ Committee, and FBCFA personnel/security with cook-off-related business are always permitted in all spaces with proper identification. Please advise your security personnel. Teams are **NOT** required to provide general access (non-business access) or food/other refreshments to committee members or staff. FBCFA reserves the right to search any item(s) brought onto the grounds, including bbq pits, RV/campers, trailers, and etc at any time.
4. Animals are NOT permitted in the Cook-Off area except for certified service animals.
5. Cookers will be allowed to spend the night starting Wednesday in their allocated spaces and must have a FBCF Cook-off wristband.
6. Only cooks listed on the entry form may enter after-hours beginning at 3:00 a.m. on Saturday. Cooks may bring in a bag. No wagons are allowed. No in-and-out privileges.
7. Walking around the cook-off area or other parts of the grounds after gate hours is strictly prohibited and will be monitored by grounds security.
8. Hauling items over fences and/or ladders against or over fences is not permitted. If found, the team will be disqualified.
9. Teams are prohibited to conduct raffles or drawings outside of team space.
10. Teams shall not display any political signage visible to the general public.
11. The Fort Bend County Fair logo is not to be used in any way without the written consent from the Fair Office.
12. If multiple teams combine to make a single area, conduct rules shall apply to all teams as one.

L. Personal Entertainment

1. Bands and team gathering/socializing will be allowed Friday and Saturday only.
2. **Bands do not get into the Cook-Off area for free.** They must purchase a ticket or have been supplied a ticket by the purchasing team.
3. Bands, DJs, and teams are not allowed to drive into the Cook-Off once the gates are closed.
4. For after-hours entry, bands/DJs must submit a request, in writing, to the Cook-off Committee no later than September 10, 2026.
5. Speakers must face inward to team space.
6. If the Cook-Off committee receives complaints that the music gets too loud, you will be asked to turn it down and you must comply. Excessive noise will be determined by Security Deputies, the Safety Committee, and/or the Committee Chairman or Co-Chairman of the event.
7. Pyrotechnics of any kind is strictly prohibited. All other types of tent entertainment e.g., mechanical rides, bounce houses, aerial identification etc. are not allowed.

****ALL MUSIC AND OTHER LOUD NOISE MUST CEASE BY 11:30 p.m. on Friday & Saturday. ****

M. Judging

The Cook-Off will be divided into 8 categories plus one optional category:

Culinary Judging: Pinto Beans, Beef Chili, Gumbo, and Beef Stew

BBQ Judging: Beef Fajitas, Chicken, Pork Ribs, and Beef Brisket

BBQ Sauce Jackpot Judging: (*Optional \$10.00 additional Jackpot fee per team.*)

All measures will be taken to ensure that judges will not know whose entry is being judged.

Judging fairness is our utmost concern. Judging will be divided into two rounds; Preliminary and Finals.

1. Culinary Division

A. Culinary judging will take place on Friday and Culinary awards will be distributed on Friday night at the Texas Stage after final scores are determined.

B. **Culinary Jackpot (Optional) is available for EACH culinary category. The cost is \$10 per category. Participation in the Jackpot is voluntary.**

The Culinary Jackpot Prizes will be awarded during the awards presentation.

Optional Culinary Jackpots are determined by the team with the highest placing in that category that has entered the Jackpot contest. Jackpots are 100% payout and the winner takes all. Teams wishing to enter the Jackpots must pay for their entries at the Head Cook's meeting the morning of the event.

2. BBQ Division

A. BBQ judging will take place on Saturday and BBQ awards will be distributed on Saturday at the Texas Stage after final scores are determined.

B. **BBQ Sauce Jackpot (Optional)** – The cost is \$10.00 to enter and winner takes all. Judging of BBQ Sauce will be held at 11:00 a.m. Saturday at BBQ Committee Booth. Judges will be randomly selected from the teams that enter this optional contest at the Head Cook's meeting on Saturday. The BBQ Sauce Jackpot Prize is determined by the number of entries and will be awarded during the awards presentation.

N. Contest Entries

1. No garnishes or condiments within containers will be accepted.
2. No markings, tin foil, competition tags, or other identifiable devices will be accepted inside or outside containers submitted for judging.
3. Only containers supplied by the Fort Bend County Fair Cook-Off Committee will be accepted for judging. If your container becomes damaged, another can be obtained as long as the container ticket and container are returned to the Cook-Off committee.
4. For the BBQ portion of the Cook-Off, teams are allowed to cook up to two (2) briskets, three (3) slabs of ribs, and two (2) whole chickens or four (4) halves.

****A representative from each team is REQUIRED to attend the MANDATORY Head Cook’s meeting at 10:00 a.m. both Friday and Saturday morning at the Committee Booth. There will be short announcements, comments, and the passing out of the containers during this time. If missed, the team will not be given containers ****

O. Preparations

1. Precooked and/or pre-seasoned meat and entries are not allowed. Pre-trimmed brisket is allowed. All entries, including culinary, must be inspected by a member of the Cook-Off committee ***before preparation*** and remain on-site after inspection.
2. **Food Source Sheet:** You must list the store where perishable foods were purchased. It is required by the City of Rosenberg Health Department and Fort Bend County Health Department for products cooked during the contest. These will be collected by Cook-Off committee members during meat tagging.
3. **Meat Tagging:**
 - A. All entry meat, except for fajitas, for Saturday’s contest shall be tagged **before** seasoning or cooking by the Cook-Off Committee.
 - B. Contestants may cook separate pieces of the same type of meat (e.g. two briskets, three slabs of ribs, and two whole chickens or four halves).
 - C. All entries must be cut from the tagged meat in the presence of the Cook-Off Committee.
 - D. Tags must be removed if an entry is being turned in or the entry will be disqualified. Teams are responsible for removing the tags. ****We suggest wrapping meat tags in foil PRIOR to cooking which helps make the tags easier to read after cooking****
 - E. Meat tagging will be located by the Committee Booth, Building D. Teams **MUST** have all culinary and BBQ meats during this time or it will not be accepted or tagged.

Meat Tagging Schedule	
Thursday, September 17, 2026	11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

P. Turn in Schedule

1. Culinary Cook-Off (Friday)

Head Cook’s Meeting – 10:00 a.m.

Category	Time	Entry
Pinto Beans	3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<i>No rice, noodles, or other garnishes. Nothing larger than the bean itself.</i>
Beef Chili	3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<i>No beans, rice, noodles, or other garnishes.</i>
Gumbo	4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	<i>No rice or other garnishes. Edible ingredients only.</i>
Beef Stew	4:45 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.	<i>No garnishes.</i>

2. BBQ Cook-Off (Saturday)

Head Cook’s meeting – 10:00 a.m.

Category	Time	Entry
BBQ Sauce	11:00 a.m.	<i>No garnishes</i>
Beef Fajitas	12:45 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.	<i>Shall contain only twelve slices for judges. No other garnishes.</i>
Chicken	2:15 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	<i>Shall contain only an un-sliced half chicken for presentation and 12 slices for judges with no other garnishes. Chicken may or may not have wing tips.</i>
Pork Ribs	3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<i>Shall contain only twelve sliced ribs with no other garnishes. St. Louis style is acceptable. Baby back ribs are not allowed.</i>
Beef Brisket	5:15 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.	<i>Shall contain only twelve slices for judges. No other garnishes.</i>

Q. Trophies & Awards

1. Trophies will be awarded to the Top Ten (10) places in each category for both the Culinary Division and BBQ Division with three (3) places for Showmanship.
2. Culinary Grand Champion and Culinary Reserve Champion teams are chosen from the highest overall score in the Culinary categories: Beans, Chili, Gumbo, and Beef Stew. In case of a tie between the Culinary Grand and Reserve Champion winners, the highest score in the Gumbo category will be used as a tiebreaker, then Beef Stew, then Beef Chili, and then Beans.
3. BBQ Grand Champion and BBQ Reserve Champion teams are chosen from the highest overall score in the BBQ categories: Beef Fajitas, Chicken, Pork Ribs, and Beef Brisket. In case of a tie between the BBQ Grand and Reserve Champion winners, the highest score in the beef brisket category will be used as a tiebreaker, then ribs, then chicken, and then fajitas.
4. Each category of the BBQ Division will receive cash awards as follows:

First Place Fajitas	\$250	First Place Brisket	\$1000
First Place Chicken	\$500	BBQ Reserve Grand Champion	\$1500
First Place Ribs	\$750	BBQ Grand Champion Team	\$2500

5. The Fort Bend County Grand Champion BBQ Team will receive five (5) FBCF BBQ Buckles and automatically be awarded entry and one set of contest entries into next year's Fort Bend County Fair BBQ Cook-Off contest. Said space and contest entries are non-transferable and may only be used by the Grand Champion Team.
6. Culinary awards will be distributed on Friday with the presentation of the Jackpot Prizes.
****Awards begin at approximately 7:00 p.m. ****
7. BBQ awards will be distributed on Saturday with the presentation for Showmanship.
****Awards begin at approximately 7:00 p.m. ****

R. Cook-off Site Tear Down

Teams will not be allowed to start dismantling before 12:00 a.m. on Sunday and no vehicles will be allowed in or out of the Cook-Off area before gates are unlocked Sunday morning at 8:00 a.m. Teams must remove all contents that were brought. **All tear-downs, including tents and campers, must be completed by 5:00 p.m. Sunday or it will become the property of the FBCFA. Each team will be responsible for rental company pick up and cleanup within their assigned space, or a clean-up fee may be assessed.**

S. No Shows

Teams that are unable to participate must notify the Fair Office in writing or the spot(s) will be forfeited for the next year.

T. Late Fees

A \$250 late fee may be assessed for incomplete forms, payment or entry paperwork, including deposits for the following year. Late entries are not guaranteed and will be reviewed case by case depending on availability.

U. Non-compliance Violations

Violations of rules will result in:

- a. First violation – Verbal or written violation letter
- b. Second violation – Fine dependent on violation(s).
- c. Third violation – Fine dependent on violation(s) or disqualification from contest and/or future contests.

V. Executive Decisions

All dates and times are subject to change. Cook-Off Contest Director and Chairman reserve the right to make additional rules, regulations, and amendments as situations warrant. **Decisions of the FBCFA Board of Directors are final.**