2022 Rules and Regulations

1) The decision and interpretations of the Rip's Ribs Cook Off (RRCO) Rules and Regulations are at the discretion of the RRCO Contest Representatives at the contest. Their decisions and interpretations are final to the extent consistent with the rules.

2) Each team shall consist of a chief cook and as many assistants as the chief cook deems necessary. A team shall not compete in more than one RRCO contest under the same team name, on the same date. Chief cooks and/or assistant cooks may only cook for their designated team at the contest they are attending.

3) Each team will be assigned a cooking space. Pits, cookers, props, trailers, motor homes, vehicles, tents or any other equipment (including generators) shall not exceed the boundaries of the team's assigned cooking space. All seasoning and cooking of product shall be done within the assigned cooking space. Teams shall not share an assigned cooking space or cooking device.

4) Contestants shall provide all needed equipment, supplies and electricity, except as arranged for in advance. Contestants must adhere to all electrical, fire and other codes. A fire extinguisher shall be near all cooking devices.

5) It is the responsibility of the contestant to see that the team's assigned cooking space is clean and orderly following the contest. All fires must be put out and all equipment removed from site. It is imperative that clean-up be thorough. Any team's assigned cooking space left in disarray or with loose trash, other than at trash containers, may disqualify the team from future participation at RRCO events.

6) Fires may be of wood, wood pellets, charcoal, gas and/or electric. Electrical accessories such as spits, augers, or forced draft are permitted. No open pits or holes are permitted, except at the election of the contest organizer. Fires shall not be built on the ground.

7) All competition meats shall be provided by the Eastland Chamber of Commerce, except for meats used in the "People's Choice" competitions. Once the competition meat has distributed to the cooking teams, it shall not leave the contest site. Cooking shall not begin until the competition meat has been distributed to the cooking teams. All competition meat shall start out raw. Only meat distributed by the Chamber of Commerce may be used in the competition, however, cooking teams may cook other items during the day to sell or give away to attendees. Competition meat not meeting these qualifications shall be disqualified, not allowed to be turned in, and not judged, and receives no score. Meat that is provided to cooking teams will be distributed in a fair and equitable manner with regards to quantity and quality, with quantity depending on the capabilities of the cooking teams' equipment. Additionally, the organizer must specifically address on the team application how the meats will be distributed, the quantities of the meat to be provided, and when the meats will be distributed. If after receipt of their meat a team believes their meat is spoiled they should bring it to the attention of the reps. If the reps agree, the organizer must have additional meat on hand, of the same brand and quality, to replace.

8) Meat for the RRCO competition is St. Louis-style pork ribs to be cooked on a device defined in 6) above. Parboiling, Sous-vide, and/or deep-frying competition meat is not allowed. If any of the banned processes are discovered before the team turns in, the team will receive zeros. If discovered after turn-in, the team will receive a one (1) in all criteria for that entry.

9) Meat shall not be sculptured, branded or presented in a way to make it identifiable. Rosettes of meat slices are not allowed. Violations of this rule will be scored a one (1) on all criteria by all four judges.

10) Judging typically starts at 4:00 PM on Saturday. At that time, contest Reps will announce the sequence of cooking teams and their exact turn-in times. An entry will be judged only at the time established by the contest organizer. The allowable turn-in time will be from the time of announcement to five (5) minutes after the announcement with no tolerance. A late turn-in will not be accepted by a Rep and will receive a 0 (zero) in all criteria.

11) Sauce is optional. If used, it shall be applied directly to the meat and not be pooled or puddled in the container. No side sauce containers will be permitted in the turn-in container. Sauce violations shall receive a penalty score of one (1) on Appearance.

12) Entries will be submitted in an approved RRCO container, provided by the contest organizer. A number will be affixed to the top of the container at turn-in.

13) The container shall not be marked in any way to make the container unique or identifiable. Aluminum foil, toothpicks, skewers, foreign material, and/or stuffing are prohibited in the container. Marked entries or containers with the above listed material will receive a one (1) in all criteria from all Judges and will be disqualified.

14) Each contestant must submit at least six (6) portions of meat in an approved container. Ribs shall be turned in bone-in. Judges may not cut, slice, or shake apart to separate pieces. If there is not enough meat for each judge to sample, the shorted judge(s) will score a one (1) on all criteria, and the judges having samples will change the Appearance score to one (1) as a penalty.

15) "People's Choice" categories are a newer optional entry for RRCO contestants to participate in for a chance at cash pot prizes. It costs $10 per "People's Choice" category or $30 to participate in all four categories. The first place winner in each category will receive the cash pot for the corresponding "People's Choice" category and a trophy. The "People's Choice" category winners will be announced prior to the announcement of Rip's Ribs Cook Off winners during the award ceremony.

16) "People's Choice" Optional Categories include appetizers, beans, desserts, and meats (excluding St. Louis-style pork ribs/competition ribs). Entries will be turned into the same designated judging room as the Ribs competition inside the designated provided container with a color-coded ticket taped to the bottom for the corresponding category. Individuals from the community will sign up to judge in these 4 separate categories. We will provide the container and utensils needed for them to properly judge your item. There will be a total of 3 scoring judges and 1 alternate on standby for each category, so each "People's Choice" optional category entry needs to include at least 4 serving. Judges will follow the same scoring system as stated below in the "Ribs Judging Procedures". Please note, the "People's Choice" optional categories are not like the official Ribs portion of the competition and, therefore, judges are not required to eat the meat off the bone during any category and may take more than one bite while deliberating a score. Judges are not allowed to discuss any entry prior to the scoring cards being gathered by the judging room coordinator.

17) The following cleanliness and safety rules will apply:
a. No use of any tobacco products while handling meat.
b. Cleanliness of the cook, assistant cooks, cooking device(s) and the team's assigned cooking space is required.
c. Shirt and shoes are required to be worn.
d. Sanitizing of work area should be implemented with the use of a bleach/water rinse (one cap/gallon of water). Each contestant will provide a separate container for washing, rinsing and sanitizing of utensils.
e. First aid is not required to be provided by the contest, except at the election of the contest organizer.
f. Prior to cooking, meat must be maintained at 40° F or less.
g. After cooking, all meat: Must be held at 140° F or above OR Cooked meat shall be cooled as follows: Within 2 hours from 140° F to 70° F and within 4 hours from 70° F to 41° F or less
h. Meat that is cooked, properly cooled, and later reheated for hot holding and serving shall be reheated so that all parts of the food reach a temperature of at least 165° F for a minimum of 15 seconds.

17) There will be no refund of entry fees for any reason, except at the election of the contest organizer.

CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION & EVICTION of a team, its members and/or guests: A cooking team is responsible jointly and severally for its head cook, its team members and its guests.

a. Consumption and possession in public places - To the fullest extent the state alcoholic beverage code allows the city by ordinance to prohibit the consumption or possession of alcoholic beverages in Public.

b. Excessive use of alcoholic beverages or public intoxication with a disturbance.
c. Serving alcoholic beverages to the general public.
d. Use of illegal controlled substances.
e. Foul, abusive, or unacceptable language or any language causing a disturbance.
f. Excessive noise, including but not limited to that generated from speakers, such as radios, CD players, TVs, public address systems or amplifying equipment, will not be allowed during quiet time, designated to start at 11:00 p.m. on Friday night and will last until 7:00 a.m.
g. Fighting and/or disorderly conduct.
h. Theft, dishonesty, cheating, use of prohibited meats, or any act involving moral turpitude.
i. Use of gas or other auxiliary heat sources inside the cooking device.
j. Violation of any of the RRCO Cook's Rules above.

k. Excessive or continued complaints from teams on any of the above rule infractions shall be considered grounds for immediate disqualification from the contest by RRCO Representatives, Organizers and/or Security. In addition, any violation of the above rules shall be reported to the RRCO Board of Directors who may in addition to the above disqualification impose additional penalties upon the team, the head cook, and its members including but not limited to disqualification from competing in RRCO events for a period of time not to exceed five years.

All complaints of disturbance or violation of quiet time shall be reported to the Board of Directors.

CLARIFICATION: If the team does not turn in a product or is disqualified and not allowed to turn in or is late for turn in, that team's entry is not accepted and not judged and receives no score. If a product is turned in and then penalized or disqualified for any reason, such as no bone in ribs, etc., it will be judged and will receive a one (1) or ones (1s) in all criteria depending on the rule violation.

RIBS JUDGING PROCEDURES
RRCO sanctioning allows for blind judging only. Entries will be submitted in an approved RRCO numbered container provided by the contest organizer. The container may be re- numbered by the RRCO Contest Rep or authorized personnel before being presented to the judges.

1) Judges may not fraternize with teams on turn-in day until conclusion of judging.
2) Judging will be done by a team of 3 persons per table who are at least 16 years of age. RRCO Reps will determine the optimum number of tables of judges needed to properly judge the contest and will divide the entries equally between the tables. From the 1st round of judging, the top 5 scoring entries from each table of judges will move onto the final round of judging to get the official top 5 ranking for the RRCO cash winners. The final round of judging will consist of 3 judges, 1 from each original table and 1 additional judge from either table or an alternate on standby. Only Judges, Contest Reps and necessary support staff are allowed in the judging area during the judging process. No other activities are permitted in the judging area during the judging process.
3) Each judge will first score all the samples for appearance of the meat. The turn-in containers will then be passed around the table and each judge will place a sample from each of the containers in the appropriate box on the judging plate. Judges shall not lick their fingers while taking these samples; paper towels, non-scented wipes or damp wash cloths are preferred. The judge will then score each entry for taste and tenderness, before moving on to the next entry.
4) The scoring system is from 9 to 2, all whole numbers between two and nine may be used to score an entry. 9 excellent, 8 very good, 7 above average, 6 average, 5 below average, 4 poor, 3 bad, and 2 inedible.
5) A score of one (1) is a penalty or disqualification and requires approval by a Contest Rep. Grounds for penalty/disqualification: All judges will give a one (1) in Appearance for prohibited garnish, pooled sauce or less than 6 samples of meat. All judges will give a one (1) in all criteria for sculptured meat, a marked turn-in container, foreign object in the container, incorrect meat. All judges not receiving a sample will give a one (1) in all criteria.
6) The weighting factors for the point system are: Appearance - .5600, Taste – 2.2972, Tenderness - 1.1428.
7) The low score will be thrown out. Results will be tallied. If there is a tie in one of the prize categories, it will be broken, as follows: The scores will be compared (counting all three judges) for the highest cumulative scores in taste, then tenderness, then appearance. If still tied, then the low score, which was thrown out, will be compared and the higher of the low scores will break the tie. If still tied, then a computer-generated coin toss will be used. In the event of lost, destroyed or missing score cards the remaining score cards will be averaged in each category and those averages shall be used as the missing scores on replacement score cards. After there are three total score cards the normal procedure will be followed for dropping the low score. These scores shall be the official scores for all RRCO purposes.



Rip's Ribs Cookoff

Eastland, Texas

Official Rules and Regulations Judging Procedures

The following rules, regulations and judging procedures will be used at all RRCO Contests effective April 9, 2022.
The Eastland Chamber of Commerce, 209 West Main, Suite A, Eastland, Texas 76448

www.eastlandchamber.com/rips-ribs-cookoff/

(254) 629-2332