



Way Out West Fest Chili Challenge

Rules & Guidelines

Saturday, September 27, 2025

Participants	Area residents, non-profit organizations and businesses are welcome to participate. Spaces will be assigned on first come, first served basis.
Judging	Expect double-blind judging and a fan favorite vote!
Team/ Wristbands	Your entry fee allows a team of (4). Your wristbands allow you General Admission access to enjoy the festival after the competition is over. You may purchase additional wristbands for \$50 each.
Cost	Entry fee is \$250, which includes your health department permit from the City of El Paso. Payment link to follow – cash or check accepted too
Hours	Fan favorite judging will be held from 5:00pm-7:00pm and double-blind judging will begin at 5:30pm
Forms	Must complete registration form and health permit linked Health Permit Application
Location	Convention Center Lobby in Downtown El Paso – 1 Civic Center Plaza, El Paso, TX 79901
Set-up	May arrive between 9:00am-3:00pm – MUST be ready to go by 3:30pm for health inspector to check your booth
Parking	(1) parking spot will be offered per team – WEST lot behind Convention Center. You may unload on the 2nd ramp in West Lot and come through back of Convention Center

The following rules are to be adhered to by all cooks and/or their assistants.

1. Chili to be prepared before the actual cook-off. Each contestant must prepare one half-gallon for double-blind judging, and at least 5 gallons of PRECOOKED for the fan favorite judging. All chili must be homemade. Store-bought chili will be disqualified.

2. **Contestants** will be responsible for:

- Keeping all food items 6 inches off the floor
- Heating equipment (propane stove or crockpot) MUST inform the organizer if electricity is needed
- All food must be kept at a proper temperature throughout the time – Hot or Cold
- 3-5 clean and new serving utensils
- Napkins/ paper towels
- New, not used cutting board
- 1 bucket of clean water with a spigot for disposable cleaning (ex. Plastic gallon that comes with a spigot)
- 1 wastewater bucket must be twice the size of clean water container
- 3-compartment containers or buckets (wash, rinse, sanitize)
- 1 trash bin for waste
- You must bring ALL your equipment, ice chests, extension cords, fire extinguishers, food items, etc.
- All beef or protein sources must come from an approved USDA source (Sam's and Walmart are all good examples)

3. **Organizers and Venue** are responsible for supplying contestants with the following:

- 10x10 space with (2) 8ft tables and (4) foldable chairs
- 4oz. tasting cups and tasting spoons
- Voting boxes and tickets for fan favorite judging
- Prep kitchen facility
- Refrigerator and freezer holding storage in the Convention Center kitchen

4. Costumes and themes are not mandatory, BUT strongly encouraged! You must bring scissors, tape, and any supplies needed for your setup.

5. There will be a mandatory Cooks Meeting on Tuesday, September 23rd, at 5:00pm in the Convention Center lobby to explain the rules and judging procedures and conduct a walkthrough so you are fully prepared for the day of the event.

6. Please do not bring outside alcohol to the event. Alcohol is available for purchase at bars nearby.

7. May this be a fun and friendly competition!

Judging Procedure and Criteria

This Chili Challenge will use a double-blind judging procedure, with an independent non-participating coordinator.

- Competitor’s chili entries will be collected in standard containers identified only by a letter (A, B, C, etc.). (Cooks will receive these containers at the Cooks Meeting.)
- Coordinators will randomly assign a letter and competition chili container to each contestant, into which the contestant will put his/her competition chili and bring it to the collection table.
- Judges will not observe the collection process.
- Entries will be randomly assigned to two groups for the first round of judging. First-round judges will also be randomly assigned to each group.
- Judges will assess the chili entries on the following criteria:
 - The texture of the meat (not too tough or too mushy)
 - Good flavoring and chili pepper taste (not too hot or too mild)
 - Consistency of the mixture (Not too thick or too thin)
 - The blend of spices. How well have they permeated the meat?
 - Aroma.
- Five entries from each group will advance to the final round, with a new set of judges, who will select the winners based on the same criteria used in the first round.
- The fan favorite will be voted on by the guests who wish to participate. They will pay \$5 for sample cups and 5 voting tickets, and are allowed to choose how they distribute their voting tickets.
 - Boxes will be collected at 7pm and counted individually

For more information or questions: Please email kameron@ravemarketing.com or contact Ruben at (915) 203-0089

Prizes:

<u>Double-Blind Judging:</u>	<i>1st place winner:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free entry in next year’s challenge - A trophy belt & team medals - \$500 cash - Swag bags & bragging rights
	<i>2nd place winner:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trophy plaque & team medals - \$350 cash - Swag bags & bragging rights
	<i>3rd place winner:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Trophy plaque & team medals - \$250 cash

	- Swag bags & bragging rights
<u>Fan Favorite Judging:</u>	<i>1st place winner ONLY:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trophy plaque & team medals- \$300 cash- Swag bags & bragging rights



“Things are about to get spicy!”

I/ We have read and will follow the “official rules” and agree that the decision of the judges will be final. Cheating is not allowed, and if caught, you will be automatically disqualified and will not be allowed to return.

*Credit card payment to follow on epwayoutwest.com/chili-challenge-registration , or check/ cash is accepted. Please make out to **Rave Marketing & Events** and mail to **1407 N. Florence, El Paso, TX 79902**. Booth placement will be based on payment and on a first-come, first-served basis. You will receive an email confirmation, and organizers will be in contact with you ASAP.*

