

2026 Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ

Contest Rules & Regulations Judging Procedures

The following rules, regulations, and judging procedures will be used at The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest.

The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest Rules and Regulations

- 1) The decision and interpretations of The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest Rules and Regulations (hereafter known as The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest Rules) are at the discretion of The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Representative. 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. 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, motorhomes, 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 the 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 and supplies. 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 extinguished, and all equipment must be removed from the site. It is imperative that the clean-up be thorough. Any team's assigned cooking space left in disarray or with loose trash, other than in trash containers, may disqualify the team from future participation at The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest.
- 6) Fires shall be of wood, wood pellets, charcoal, or gas. Electric heat sources are also permitted. Electrical accessories such as spits, augers, or forced drafts are permitted. No open pits or holes are permitted. Fires shall not be built on the ground.
- 7) All competition meats shall be inspected by the Official Meat Inspector during the times established by the contest organizer, but not prior to the day before judging. Once the competition meat has been inspected, it shall not leave the contest site. Cooking shall not begin until the competition meat has been inspected by the Official Meat Inspector. All competition meat shall start out raw. No pre-seasoned meat is allowed other than manufacturer-enhanced or injected products, as shown on the label, EXCLUDING but not limited to teriyaki, lemon pepper, or butter injected. Competition meat not meeting these qualifications shall be disqualified; given one (1) on all criteria by all three judges.
- 8) Parboiling and/or deep-frying competition meat is not allowed.
- 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 three judges.

10) The Three Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Meat Categories: CHICKEN: Chicken includes Cornish Game Hen and Kosher Chicken. PORK RIBS: Ribs shall include the bone. Country-style ribs are prohibited. BOSTON BUTT.

11) Judging is Saturday. The three (3) Backyard BBQ categories will be judged in the following order: Chicken 11:30 am, Ribs 12:00 noon, and Boston Butt 12:30 pm. Turn-in times will be confirmed at the Cooks Meeting. An entry will be judged only at the time established by the contest organizer. The allowable turn-in time will be five (5) minutes before until five (5) minutes after the posted time. A late turn-in time (after posted time) will receive a one (1) point deduction in all criteria. The meat will not be accepted after the 5-minute mark from each posted time.

12) Garnish is optional.

13) BBQ 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.

14) Entries will be submitted in an approved The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest numbered container, provided by the contest organizer. The number must be on top of the container at turn-in. One cook from each team is required to attend the Cook's Meeting at 7:00 pm Friday night before the competition. All meat will be inspected at this meeting, and cooking can start anytime after the cook's meeting.

15) The container shall not be marked in any way so as 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.

16) Each contestant must submit at least three (3) portions of meat in an approved container. Chicken may be submitted chopped, pulled, sliced, or diced as the cook sees fit, ensuring there is enough for three (3) judges. Ribs shall be turned in bone-in. Judges may not cut, slice, or shake apart to separate pieces. Boston Butt must be submitted chopped, pulled, sliced, diced or any combination as the cook sees fit. If there is not enough meat for each judge to sample, the shorted judge(s) will score one (1) on all criteria, and the judges having samples will change the appearance score to one (1).

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. Shirts and shoes are required to be worn at all times during the event.
- d. Sanitizing of the 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.

18) Contestants or Team members will be allowed to sell or distribute food from the competition area or set up a vendor booth at the designated Pine Tree Festival vendor area if they have registered to do so. If a team wants to sell food at the Pine Tree Festival, a vendor application must be returned along with the Backyard BBQ Cookoff registration form and payment.

19) 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 cook team is responsible jointly and severally for its head cook, its team members, and its guests.

a. Use of alcoholic beverages or public intoxication with a disturbance.

b. Serving alcoholic beverages to the general public.

c. Use of illegal controlled substances.

d. Foul, abusive, or unacceptable language or any language causing a disturbance.

e. Excessive noise, including but not limited to that generated by speakers, such as radios, CD players, TVs, public address systems, or amplifying equipment, will not be allowed during the event, designated to start at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 1st, and will last until 12:30 p.m. Saturday, May 2nd, unless otherwise determined by the event.

f. Fighting and/or disorderly conduct.

g. Theft, dishonesty, cheating, use of prohibited meats, or any act involving moral turpitude.

h. Unauthorized selling of food, beverages, or merchandise. Only teams officially registered as a Pine Tree Festival vendor may sell items to the public. Pine Tree Festival vendors selling in the cookoff area must display their vendor permit in a highly visible area. Any team not registered as a vendor or that does not have its permit visibly displayed will be disqualified and evicted from the event grounds if caught selling food.

h. Violation of any of The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest Rules above, save and except #9-13. Excessive or continued complaints from teams on any of the above rule infractions shall be considered grounds for immediate disqualification from the contest by Contest Representatives, Organizers, and/or Security. In addition, any violation of the above rules shall be reported to the Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest 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 future events for a period of time not to exceed five years. All complaints of disturbance or violations shall be reported to the Directors.

CLARIFICATION: If the product is turned in and is disqualified, it receives a one (1) in all criteria. If the team does not turn in a product or is disqualified and not allowed to turn in, that team's category is not

judged and receives no score. If a product is turned in and then disqualified for a late turn-in, no bone in ribs, etc., it is not judged and will receive a one (1) in all criteria.

JUDGING PROCEDURES: The Pine Tree Festival Backyard BBQ Contest judging allows for blind judging only. Entries will be submitted in an approved numbered container provided by the contest organizer. The container may be re-numbered by the Contest Representative or authorized personnel before being presented to the judges. Judges may not fraternize with teams on turn-in day until the conclusion of judging. Judging will be done by a team of 3 persons who are at least 16 years of age. 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. Each judge will first score all the samples for the 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 mat. The judge will then score each entry for taste and tenderness before moving on to the next entry. The scoring is from 9 to 4, all whole numbers between four and nine may be used to score an entry. 9 excellent, 8 very good, 7 good, 6 average, 5 below average, 4 bad. A score of one (1) is a disqualification and requires approval by a Contest Rep. Grounds for disqualification: All judges will give one (1) appearance for less than 6 samples of meat. All judges will give one (1) in all criteria for sculptured meat, a marked turn-in container, a foreign object in the container, and incorrect meat. All judges not receiving a sample will give a one (1) in all criteria. The weighting factors for the point system are as follows: Appearance – 0.5714, Taste – 2.286, Tenderness – 1.1428. If there is a tie in determining the 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place overall, the tie will be broken from the Taste Category of the score sheets: The scores will be compared (counting all three judges) for the highest cumulative scores in taste, to break the tie. If still tied, then a computer-generated coin toss will be used. The total points per entry will determine the champion within each meat category. Cumulative points for only the three (3) Backyard BBQ categories will determine the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place Champion, at the discretion of this organizer. The Champion in each meat category will be recognized, with prize money awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places based on overall score. CREED Rules are designed to be fair and equal to all cooks. The integrity of the Contestants, Judges, Contest Representatives, and Organizers is essential.