

FIESTA

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2024 Fiesta Cookbook Cook-off Competition

www.uh.edu/fiesta
April 18-20, 2024



Center for Student Involvement
Division of Student Affairs

University of Houston, Fiesta 2024, pg. 1

Welcome to the University of Houston's oldest programming tradition on campus! Below are the guidelines and regulations to participate in the Fiesta Cook-Off Competition. If you have any questions regarding information included in the Cookbook, please contact the Center for Student Involvement at 832-842-6245 or csi@uh.edu.

REGISTRATION

Forms

Every team must submit ALL of the online forms posted on the Cook-Off website, no later than the Head Cook's Meeting on Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 7:00pm. There will be no exceptions to this submission date.

Eligibility

Teams competing must be an alumni or community organization. No student cook-off teams will be allowed. Undergraduate students are not allowed to represent alumni or community organizations in any official Cook-Off capacity.

Cook-Off Teams

A team consists of a Primary Site Coordinator, Head Cook and assistants with a unique team name. The Primary Site Coordinator will be the liaison to the Center for Student Involvement and responsible for ensuring that all policies are adhered to for the event.

No team will be allowed to use the same name or a similar name as another team. (Example: Cougar Team #1 and Cougar Team #2 will not be allowed) The first team to register a name will be allowed use of that name. A team's Head Cook and team assistants will not be allowed to cook on more than one team.

SET UP / CHECK IN



Times

Teams must move in, set up, and check in during the following times:

Wednesday, April 17

9:00am – 7:00pm

Thursday and Friday, April 18 & April 19

9:00am – 3:00pm

Saturday, April 20

8:00am – 10:00am

There will be absolutely no traffic in the cook off area outside of these times. Vehicles will be provided a move-in pass upon arrival for team identification. If vehicles are not removed by the end of set-up times, teams will forfeit their security deposit. No exceptions will be made.

Deliveries

Cook-Off teams taking deliveries from external vendors must schedule delivery and set up by: **Thursday, April 18 at 3:00 pm**. Alumni/community members must be present for all deliveries. Undergraduate students will not be permitted to be on-site without official team representatives.

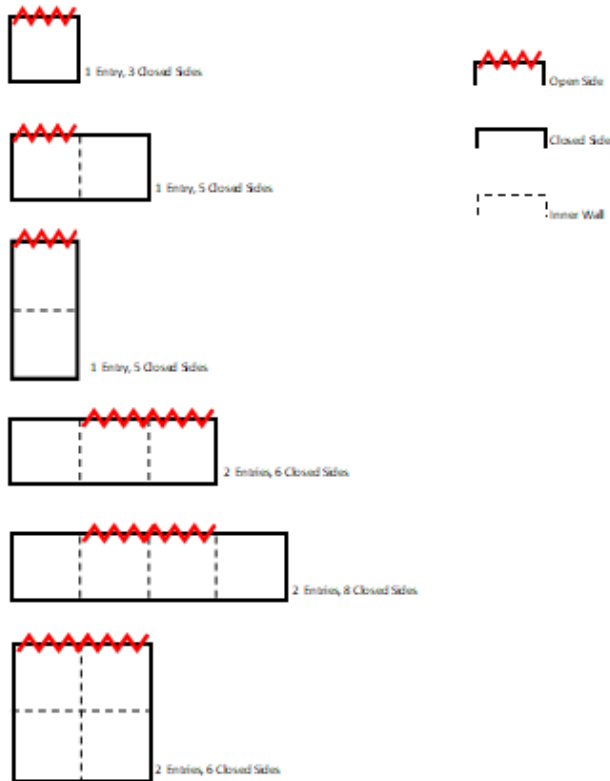
SITE AREA

- A. Responsibilities of the team:
 - Maintain their respective areas.
 - Keep their respective areas clean at all times.
 - Clean the working sites following the Cook-off contest.
- B. Trash:
 - Must be contained in plastic trash bags.
 - When full, placed in front of site before the close of each day. Trash receptacles for general use will be placed throughout the area; teams must furnish trash receptacles for their own areas.
 - As a courtesy to the event staff that will be collecting trash, please refrain from overfilling the bags with trash.

Failure to follow these rules will result in the loss of site security deposit.

- C. Each cook-off space is 35'x35'. Props, trailers, tents, coverings, or any other part of a contestant's equipment must not exceed the boundaries of the assigned space(s). There will be a limit of 4 spaces per team.
- D. No two-story structures are permitted unless approved by the University of Houston staff or designee, prior to the event. All structures must be at the approved height of 15 feet or less.
- E. All facades or temporary structures must be secured to the tent using metal straps.
- F. Balloons, inflatables, and/or other aerial objects may not be used by teams for identification, decoration, advertising, or any other purpose.
- G. Holes, dug pits, or open flames in boxes or other containers resting on or less than two feet above the surface are not permitted. Any equipment or devices that may damage the surface area of the contest site in any way are prohibited. All pits must be diapered to prevent damage to the surface of the parking lot.

- H. University administration has the right to prohibit or require the removal/cessation of any décor, signage, activity, or other materials/behaviors they determine to materially and substantially disrupt the event.
- I. Any cook-off team planning to build or construct any “front,” facade, or similar structure must submit a set of building plans, including drawings, to the University of Houston staff for approval by the Head Cook’s Meeting.
- J. Each team will be responsible for creating a clear and marked point of entry into their site. Site Number and Team Name must be properly and clearly displayed outside for the duration of the event.
- K. No two Fraternity Alumni Cook-off spots will be allowed to be directly adjacent or across from each other to prevent congestion at the site entrances and promote a safe flow of traffic.
- L. Tent configurations will be held to the below standards. Any other site configurations will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Approval must be granted by the Center for Student Involvement.



- M. Each team is provided a 20 amp electrical quad box. Additional electricity can be purchased from the Fiesta Association on the Registration form. Outside generators that are not a permanent part of the pit or motor home are not allowed.

Examples of common power requirements:

Barrel Fan - 8 amps

RV or Travel Trailer – 20 amps

Coffee Maker - 10 amps

PA Systems - 17 amps

Lamps and Lighting - 3 amps

Neon Lights - 5 amps

Microwave Ovens - 8 amps

Radio & Stereo - 4 amps

Refrigerator - 13 amps

- N. Power alleys must remain clear and free at all times. Teams may not store or set equipment, supplies, vehicles, etc., in these areas at any time or block access to a power alley. Any team blocking a power alley or access to a power alley will be asked to clear it without objection.
- O. Each team needs to provide at least two 10lb. fire extinguishers for each 30'X30' tent. Fire extinguishers must be ABC and easily accessed inside tent space, by order of the Fire Marshal. This is subject to change at the discretion of the University of Houston Fire Marshal's inspection of the tent.
- P. All contest areas must be handicap accessible.
- Q. Cook-off teams are not permitted to charge admission into individual sites or sell food or beverage on-site at Fiesta.
- R. Those individuals attending or participating in the contest and any related events must wear appropriate clothing at all times (no one will be allowed to attend or participate without shoes or being fully clothed).
- S. Any special entertainment (e.g. bands, promotions, skits, P.A. systems, jukeboxes, etc.) must be fully described in writing and submitted for approval to the Center for Student Involvement by April 1, 2024.
- T. Security and safety are the sole responsibility of the team. The University of Houston and the Fiesta Association are not responsible for theft of, or damage to, the property of a contestant, his or her team's members, or guests. Further, the University of Houston and the Fiesta Association are not responsible for any injury to any such person. Each cook-off team will be required to submit a Theft/Damage Waiver.
- U. If a team chooses to contract security for their site(s), this must be submitted in writing for approval to the Center for Student Involvement by April 1, 2024.

- V. A maximum of four team members will be allowed to stay overnight at their site by order of the University of Houston Fire Marshal. Up to four overnight passes will be issued to each team at the event for these team members. It will be the Primary Site Coordinator’s responsibility to make sure all guests are cleared out of the site by close of Fiesta every night. It will also be the Primary Site Coordinator’s responsibility to make sure any intoxicated guests are transported home safely. Sites will be inspected after closing time.
- W. Fire must be wood or of wood substances. Propane may be used ONLY to cook chili and Chef’s Choice. Contestants must take all precautions necessary to prevent fire hazards. All fires must be contained in a suitable manner. Contestants may be disqualified if precautionary measures are not followed or unsafe conditions exist.
- X. Cooking pits may be inspected at any time and teams may be subsequently disqualified if it is decided that the cooking pits are dangerous or a safety hazard.
- Y. Ash cans made of non-flammable materials must be provided by teams needing to dispose of wood or wood substances. Cans must be clearly marked as “ASHES ONLY.”
- Z. Waste Water should be contained in a gray water tank (if applicable). Teams requiring a gray water tank can rent from the Fiesta Association during registration.
- AA. Port-a-lets and hand wash stations are available for rental through the Fiesta Association during registration. No other companies are allowed to be used. Make every effort to have the appropriate number of port-a-lets for the comfort of guests and sanitation of team space.

Number of guests expected	Recommended Port-a-lets
<100	1
100	2
150	3
250	4

One hand-wash station is recommended for every 250 guests. All port-a-lets will be refreshed on Friday and Saturday morning of the event.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE POLICIES

- A. The Primary Site Coordinator will be held responsible for the conduct of their team and guests.
- B. Use of alcoholic beverages that is inconsistent with applicable federal or Texas law or University policy may be grounds for site shutdown, disqualification, and/or forfeiture of awards.

- C. Teams may not sell tickets to be redeemed for beverages, either prior to or during the event.
- D. Cook-off teams are NOT permitted to sell food or beverages on-site.
- E. The official event distributor will sell beer/wine to the public during the event. NO open bars will be allowed. (Teams may bring in a limited amount of canned beer to be consumed during setup only. A limited amount of beverages is recognized as an amount that will fit in one (1) cooler approximately 60 quarts in size, with the lid closed, per team.)

- F. Each day will have a maximum number of kegs and cases of seltzer that teams can purchase through the official event distributor for their site that cannot be exceeded.

Thursday	6 cases of seltzer	6 kegs
Friday	6 cases of seltzer	6 kegs
Saturday	6 cases of seltzer	12 kegs

- G. Each team will be required to have TABC-certified bartenders serving alcohol throughout the event. Individuals serving in this role will need to obtain TABC certification and participate in online training as directed by the official event distributor. These individuals will be the only approved servers for the team and must be on duty during all hours that the event is open.

1 site	Minimum of 3 bartenders
2 or more sites	Minimum of 6 bartenders

The official event distributor is also able to provide trained bartenders at the cost of \$40/hour per bartender.

- H. Teams are subject to inspection by University administration at any time. Those found in violation will be asked to remove the alcohol from the property, alcohol service will immediately cease for the remainder of the event, and may forfeit future invitations to participate in this event.
- I. Upon entrance to Fiesta, event staff (or designated persons) will check a valid driver's license or Texas ID for proof of age and identify legal age drinkers by the use of a wristband for all event attendees.
- J. Each team must comply with ALL pertinent laws and ordinances including, without limitation, the City of Houston and Harris County Health Department rules and the provisions of the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Code.
- K. There are very specific rules relating to the purchase and consumption of alcoholic beverages. The regulations of the alcohol policy are listed in the next section.

- L. Failure to comply with these rules will result in disqualification from the Cook-off competition, site shutdown, and/or prosecution by the University of Houston Police Department, the City of Houston Police Department, and the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission.

The Fiesta Association abides by the Texas Alcohol and Beverage Commission laws. (<https://www.tabc.state.tx.us/>)

Any violation of these laws is prohibited. Violators will be reported to the University of Houston Police Department.

- All beer/seltzer consumed on-site at Fiesta must be purchased through the official event distributor either before the event through pre-sale orders or at the event through the Chartwells Tent.
- You must be 21 years of age or older to consume beer/seltzer at Fiesta.
- NO alcohol beverages may be brought on to, or removed from, the premises by anyone. It is a violation of state law.
- All cook-off teams planning to serve beer/seltzer must complete and turn in an official *University of Houston Registration of Alcoholic Beverage Distribution* form. This must be submitted at least 15 business days before the event.
- For safety reasons, NO glass bottles will be allowed on the Fiesta site.

All beer/seltzer sales to the public will stop promptly one hour (Thursday/Friday 11:00pm, Saturday 12:00am) before Fiesta closes.

**Procedures for Distribution of Alcoholic Beverages at Student Events
(uh.edu/dos)**

1. Departments or registered campus organizations desiring to serve or consume any type of alcoholic beverage on campus must register their event in advance by means of the Registration of Alcoholic Beverage Distribution Form. Forms may be obtained from the Dean of Students Office and must be completed and filed in the Dean of Students Office at least 15 business days in advance of the event in order to permit time to clarify issues and to distribute copies of the registration to other university officials. Registration forms must be reviewed by the Dean of Students or designee. A signature from the Dean of Students or designee must be received prior to the beginning of Fiesta. Individuals within the department or organization must identify themselves as responsible for compliance with the University of Houston's policies on the distribution of alcoholic beverages as well as federal, state and local laws. A copy of the signed registration form for alcoholic beverage distribution must be available at the event as proof that registration was made.
2. Alcoholic beverages may be distributed within reserved cook-off sites between 5 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and between noon and 12 a.m. on Saturday.

3. Pursuant to this policy, cook-off sites may not have alcohol consumption be the main focus of the event. Any publicity for the event may refer to such beverages only as incidental to the event. Advertising will not portray drinking as a solution to personal or academic problems. Also, it may not promote gimmicks or games (i.e., “one charge for all you can drink,” “chugging contests,” “drink and drown contests,” etc.), which enhance irresponsible drinking.
4. Persons responsible for distributing alcoholic beverages must:
 - Be 21 years of age or older.
 - Check a valid driver’s license or Texas ID for proof of age and identify legal drinking age drinkers by the use of a wristband. Please note that this wristband is in addition to the wristband placed on individuals by Fiesta event staff upon entrance into Fiesta.
 - Post a sign at the point of distribution indicating “No alcoholic beverages may be consumed by anyone under age 21.”
 - Have non-alcoholic beverages available and displayed throughout the site(s) as prominently as the alcoholic beverages. A nonalcoholic beverage other than water must be available at no charge.
 - Stop serving alcoholic beverages one hour before the event’s scheduled conclusion or at 12 a.m., whichever is the earlier time.
 - Cease serving alcoholic beverages to any person who appears to be under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating substance, to the degree that he or she may endanger himself or another.
 - Take other appropriate steps they may identify to encourage the responsible use of alcoholic beverages at their event. This includes not allowing drinking games of any type (i.e. beer pong, flip cup, etc.).
 - Post a sign announcing their willingness to call a cab for those under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating substance.
 - Provide food items in sufficient amounts for the number of persons attending the function.

COOK-OFF COMPETITION RULES AND COOKING GUIDELINES

On-site Head Cook’s Meeting – Thursday, April 18, 4pm at Lilie Pad

At this meeting, the schedule for category turn-in will be reviewed and judging trays and containers will be distributed. For teams competing in the brisket category, briskets (two maximum) will be tagged at the meeting.

Double Number System - The system requires that two tickets bearing the same number be utilized, one firmly attached to the containers in a manner which hides the number and the other ticket easily removed by the cook for retention. Winners will not be revealed until time to announce each place in each category at the Awards Ceremony.

Judging Trays/Containers - All judging trays/containers will be passed out at the on-site Head Cook’s Meeting on Thursday at 4pm and shall be clean and free of any markings. Marked

trays/containers may be disqualified at the Fiesta Committee's discretion. Cooks are responsible for ensuring that the containers they receive remain clean and undamaged. If a container is lost or damaged, please see the Center for Student Involvement staff for a replacement.

Turn-in Process

Per the schedule below, all teams must turn in submissions in the judging trays/containers received at the on-site Head Cook's Meeting within the 15 minute timeframe at Lilie Pad. No late submissions will be accepted, resulting in disqualification from that category. Judging will begin after the 15 minute turn-in time period.

Turn-in Process for Brisket

At the on-site Head Cook's Meeting, teams will be assigned a 15 minute timeframe when cook-off staff will arrive to their site to verify brisket tags. Based on tag check time, teams will also be given a turn-in time.

After cook-off staff verify the tag number, teams must bring their submission to Lilie Pad by their designated turn-in time. No late submissions will be accepted, resulting in disqualification from this category. Judging will begin after at least half of the entries have been submitted.

Category Descriptions

Chef's Choice – Must be prepared from scratch. Chef's Choice cannot include: desserts or items in existing categories. Entries submitted from other categories will be disqualified. Teams may select the appropriate container during Head Cook's Meeting on-site. Submissions must be enough for 18 judges. No distinguishing garnishes will be allowed, and will be removed from the submission prior to judging.

Chili - Must be cooked from scratch. "Scratch" is defined as starting with raw meat. No marinating is allowed. Ingredients may be peeled, cut, or chopped ahead of time and brought onto site as long as they are raw. Commercial chili powder is allowed, but complete or commercial chili mixes, which contain several pre-measured spices, are not permitted. No fillers, beans, macaroni, rice, hominy, or similar items are allowed.

Fajitas – Can be beef, chicken, or a combination. No pre-marinating or pre-cooking is allowed prior to the start of the cook-off. Fajitas must be cooked on-site. Adequate meat for 18 judges should be supplied. No distinguishing garnishes will be allowed, and will be removed from the submission prior to judging.

Chicken – Must be two (2) fully jointed chicken halves (must include breast, leg, thigh, wing & wing tip). No Cornish Game Hens allowed. No pre-marinating, pre-seasoning allowed prior to the start of the Cook-off. No distinguishing garnishes will be allowed, and will be removed from the submission prior to judging.

Pork Spare Ribs – At least ten (10) full Pork Spare Ribs (St. Louis style acceptable). No Country Style Ribs or Baby Back Ribs are allowed. No pre-marinating or pre-seasoning allowed prior to

the start of the Cook-off. No distinguishing garnishes will be allowed, and will be removed from the submission prior to judging.

Beef Brisket – No pre-marinating or pre-seasoning of the meat is allowed prior to the start of the Cook-off. All brisket(s) must be cooked on site. No distinguishing garnishes will be allowed with the sliced brisket, and will be removed from the submission prior to judging. Please provide at least ten (10) full width slices (approx. ¼ to 3/8 inches thick).

TEAMS MAY BE SUBJECT TO RANDOM MEAT INSPECTION

Failure to follow these rules will result in disqualification of the category. If you have any questions concerning any of the cooking rules, please contact the Center for Student Involvement.

COOK-OFF JUDGING FORM

JUDGES NAME: _____ **TABLE NO.** _____

CATEGORY: _____ **CONTAINER NO.** _____

AROMA:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	_____
APPEARANCE:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	_____
TEXTURE:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	_____
FLAVOR:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	_____

(Please total your score) TOTAL SCORE: _____

CITY OF HOUSTON COOKING GUIDELINES

The City of Houston Health Department guidelines must be observed. Failure to comply may result in disqualification. Those serving food must observe the following guidelines:

- A. Keep all foods (ice, beverages, etc.) and utensils (cups, forks, spoons, foil, saran wrap, etc.) off the ground. Keep potentially hazardous foods, (meat, poultry, dairy, protein, potatoes, pasta, assorted sauces, etc.) cold (45 ° F or below) or hot (140 ° F or above). No exceptions!
- B. Everyone shall wear an effective hair restraint (hair net, baseball hat, scarf, etc.).
- C. Every site must have wash, rinse, and sanitize buckets for washing utensils.
- D. Each site must have hand-washing facilities.
- E. Food must be protected from consumer contamination (sneeze guards, lids, covers, etc.).
- F. Absolutely no eating, drinking, or smoking in areas where food is prepared or utensils are washed.

- G. Use only rapid reheating methods (stove, oven, or microwave) to reheat potentially hazardous foods. Do not use steam table pans, chafing dishes, crock-pots, or similar warming devices to reheat potentially hazardous food.

TROPHIES AND AWARDS

- A. Cash awards will be presented as follows: 1st Place Brisket \$1000, 2nd Place Brisket \$600, and 3rd Place Brisket \$400. In addition, 1st Place of each category will receive \$500.
- B. Trophies will be presented for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in each of the following categories:
- Chef's Choice
 - Fajitas
 - Chili
 - Pork Spare Ribs
 - Chicken
 - Beef Brisket
- C. Cook-off Grand Champion will be given to the team that scores the highest combined total in Chicken, Ribs, and Brisket and will be presented a trophy. If there is a tie for Grand Champion, the brisket score will be used to break the tie. If there is still a tie, the ribs score will be used next as the tie breaker. The chicken score will be used as the last tie breaker.

There will also be judging, selected by the Center for Student Involvement and Cook-off Staff in the following categories:

Best Overall Presentation

This is awarded to the cook-off team that has the best overall production. Decorations, food, entertainment, theme, site layout, site cleanliness, etc. are all taken into account by the judges for this award.

Bob Scharnberg Award

This is awarded to the Cook-Off team that is the most open and friendly toward its guests and visitors to Fiesta.

Trophies and Awards will be presented at the Awards Ceremony on Saturday, April 20 at 7pm in Willie's Theater of Fiesta City (*subject to change*).

TAKE DOWN/CHECK OUT

- A. Equipment will not be allowed to leave Fiesta until 8:00 am on Sunday, April 21. All equipment must be removed from the grounds by 6:00 pm on Sunday, April 21.
- B. Deposits will be returned after the event, on site, and after clean up. Please see the Center for Student Involvement to be checked out and to receive your deposit check contingent that no other violations are noted through the event.

PARKING

- A. Vehicles entering the contest area during set-up must unload and vacate the contest area immediately. Vehicles must remain on designated driveways at all times. Please help us keep the aisles clear.

- B. No vehicles will be allowed in the cook-off area after 3:00 pm on Thursday, April 18, 3pm on Friday, April 19, and 10am on Saturday, April 20. Only vehicles within the boundaries of cook-off site will be allowed.

- C. Vehicles will be provided a move-in pass upon arrival for team identification that must be prominently displayed. If vehicles are not removed by the end of set-up times, teams will forfeit their security deposit and will be towed at owner's expense. No exceptions will be made.

EMERGENCY PLAN

In the event of any type of emergency, it is expected that all participants, guests, and attendees follow the direction of emergency personnel and event staff.

Severe Weather Procedure

In the event of a severe weather emergency, patrons in the parking lots will be asked to seek shelter in the closest nearby buildings, as directed by event staff and emergency personnel. While under a shelter in place order, all Fiesta activities will be paused until an "All Clear" is given by emergency personnel.

Special Medical Emergency Procedure

In the event of a medical emergency, patrons should notify the nearest event staff member or visit the First Aid tent. EMS services will be located on site to handle medical emergencies for the duration of the event.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, April 17	
9:00am – 7:00pm	Move In
Thursday, April 18	
9:00am – 3:00pm	Move In
3:00pm	Vehicles Cleared & Tents Set Up
4:00pm	Head Cook's Meeting
5:00pm - 12:00am (Midnight)	Fiesta is Open
12:00am (Midnight)	Site Closed
Friday, April 19	
9:00am – 3:00pm	Move In
3:00pm	Vehicles Cleared
5:00pm - 12:00am (Midnight)	Fiesta is Open
5:45 - 6:00pm	Chili Turn In
6:00 - 7:00pm	Chili Judging
7:45 - 8:00pm	Fajitas Turn In
8:00 - 9:00pm	Fajitas Judging
12:00am (Midnight)	Site Closed
Saturday, April 20	
8:00am – 10:00am	Move In
10:00am	Vehicles Cleared
12:00pm - 1:00am	Fiesta is Open
11:30 - 11:45am	Chef's Choice Turn In
11:45am - 12:45pm	Chef's Choice Judging
1:00pm - 1:15pm	Chicken Turn In
1:15 - 2:15pm	Chicken Judging
2:30 - 2:45pm	Ribs Turn In
2:45 - 3:45pm	Ribs Judging
4:00pm	Brisket Tag Verification Begins
4:30 – 6:00pm	Brisket Judging
7:00pm	Awards Ceremony
1:00 am (Sunday)	Site Closed
Sunday, April 21	
8:00am	Move Out Begins
6:00pm	Site Closed

All of the judging will take place at the Lilie Pad. (Schedule is subject to change.)