

Wichita Wagonmasters' Downtown Chili Cookoff

OFFICIAL RULES

(We hope you're impressed that we have "official" rules.
The Wagonmasters don't mess around with any ordinary rules.)

With teams from Kansas and surrounding states, the *Wichita Wagonmasters' Downtown Chili Cookoff* has been a Wichita tradition for well over 30 years. The Wichita Wagonmasters took over the event and brought it back to Downtown in 2005. Since then, the event has exploded with renewed enthusiasm from contestants and attendees alike.

The Wichita Wagonmasters was formed in 1974 to promote the good life in Wichita. The *Wichita Wagonmasters' Downtown Chili Cookoff* raises funds for our Good Life Grant program. Good Life Grants have been given to numerous non-profit organizations in and around Wichita who help abused and trafficked children; provide health care, food, and clothing; and address other vital community needs.

The Wichita Wagonmasters are proud to host the *Wichita Wagonmasters' Downtown Chili Cookoff*, an International Chili Society sanctioned chili cookoff that features competition in the following categories.

- ◆ ICS RED CHILI
- ◆ ICS CHILI VERDE
- ◆ ICS SALSA
- ◆ NO-BEANS ABOUT IT*
- ◆ ANYTHING GOES
- ◆ CHILI FOR CHARITY
- ◆ RESTAURANTS
- ◆ SHARON SAWYER'S PEOPLE'S CHOICE**
- ◆ BEST BOOTH**
- ◆ CECILLE KALLENBERGER'S TEAM SPIRIT **
- ◆ GRAND CHAMPION**

* Clever name, huh?

** Teams are automatically entered in and eligible for prizes in these categories except as stated below so keep reading!

Wichita Wagonmasters' Downtown Chili Cookoff "Official" Rules

We don't like rules any more than you do, but if you're competing in any of the ICS categories, pay close attention to these ICS requirements. They matter to ICS and that means they matter to all of us too.

- ◆ To compete in any of the three ICS competitions you gotta be an active ICS member and be at least 18 years old.

- ◆ We need your ICS membership number in advance so please be sure to include it on your entry form unless you're joinin' ICS for the first time.
- ◆ If you haven't ever been an ICS member and want to compete in an ICS category—no problem—just add the ICS membership fee when you send us your check and we'll send it to the ICS for you. (There's a place on the entry form for that.)
- ◆ We'll have a separate contestant list at the Cook's Meeting for the ICS categories. You gotta sign the list and write down your ICS membership number or we can't give you your ICS judging cups. There's info about the judging cups below.
- ◆ The winners in the ICS categories will qualify to compete in the World Championship Chili Cookoff!
- ◆ If there is any discrepancy between these "official" rules and the ICS rules, the ICS rules prevail in the ICS categories. You can check out the ICS rules on their web site.

Have we mentioned that we don't like rules any more than you do? It might be hard to believe that after you read these, but it's true. Anyway, here are some more "official" rules:

- ◆ We'll have a Cook's Meeting at 8:00 a.m. on the morning of the *Chili Cookoff* in the Judging Area. The head cook from each team really needs to be there (and what we really mean is "must") because . . .
 - We'll hand out the Cook's Packets.
 - We'll give you a 32 oz. judging cup for each category you entered. You gotta have those.
 - Cooks entering the ICS categories get an "official" ICS judging cup. You'll be the envy of all of the other cooks.
 - Your Top-Secret Contestant's Number will be on the bottom of each judging cup.
 - You can't mark, decorate, or otherwise alter the appearance of the judging cups.
 - The Cook's Packet will have the entry times for each category and they'll be posted outside of the Judging Area too.
 - You'll also get your Sharon Sawyer's People's Choice growler. More info about the growler later.

- We'll give any final instructions and answer all your questions at the Cook's Meeting.
- And, by the way, you can't come back inside the Judging Area after the Cook's Meeting except to deliver your entries.
- ◆ We're getting a little ahead of ourselves here, but each team has to deliver their chili or salsa to the Judging Area in the correct 32 oz. judging cup. Each cup has to have a secure lid and has to be filled to the bottom of the cup's rim.
- ◆ You gotta deliver your chili or salsa during the official time for that category. Late entries can't be accepted and entry times for some categories overlap.
- ◆ We'll mark the spot where you deliver your chili or salsa on a table just inside the Judging Area. Please make sure you put it in the right spot. We may not be able to tell if you put your cup in the wrong spot. (Some Wagonmasters might be able to tell the difference between red chili, green chili, and salsa—but they may not be able to tell the difference between your entries in "No Beans About It" and "Anything Goes.")
- ◆ The "cooking period" starts when we fire the cannon, which we'll do right at 9:00 a.m. The cooking period will be a minimum of 3 hours and a maximum of 4 hours.
- ◆ You can cook during the whole cooking period if you want to—or not; it's up to you. You just can't cook before that cannon goes "boom." Cooking chili before that will get you disqualified. We really hate it when that happens. (You can't cook any of your chili makin's before the cannon, but you can fry up a little bacon for your breakfast. Actually, why don't you fry up a whole lot while you're at it—the Wagonmasters love bacon. It's the candy of meats.)
- ◆ You gotta prepare your chili in your assigned booth using your own source of heat. (Lots of stuff about booths below so keep on readin'.) We think propane stoves are the Cat's Meow; all the coolest cooks use them. But you can use a charcoal grill or propane turkey fryer if you want to. You gotta bring all of your own utensils and stuff.
- ◆ If something bad happens, like we eat, er I mean spill your chili, one of the Wagonmasters may come running to ask for a second 32 oz. cup of chili or salsa. If that happens, he'll be running for a reason, so please be ready with more chili.

- ◆ So: “Each contestant must cook a minimum of two quarts of competition chili prepared in one pot which will be submitted for judging. Sharing or splitting Chili, Chili Verde, or Salsa for judging with another contestant for the purpose of increasing the number of entries in any event will result in suspension of ICS membership for a minimum of one year.” So there!
- ◆ Please cook a lot more than two quarts for Sharon Sawyer’s Peoples’ Choice chili competition. You need to have at least 10 gallons but you’ll want to have a lot more.
- ◆ If you’re entering more than one category you gotta use a different pot for each category and prepare all of the ingredients separately.
- ◆ If you put any alcohol in your chili or salsa, you need to post a sign saying so. That way the judges and the public know that eating your chili might get them drunk. (No sign is required for putting alcohol in your cook or team members.)
- ◆ “No ingredient may be pre-cooked in any way prior to the commencement of the official cookoff. The only exceptions are canned or bottled tomatoes, tomato sauce, peppers, pepper sauce, beverages, broth, and grinding and/or mixing of spices. Meat may be treated, pre-cut or ground. The ICS does not prefer one over the other. MEAT MAY NOT BE PRE-COOKED, in any manner. All other ingredients must be chopped or prepared during the preparation period.” We think this is what that rule means:
 - Cooking of meats and any fresh ingredients for chili can’t start before you hear the cannon. That means no pre-cooking of anything that goes in your chili.
 - You can’t start chopping or preparing fresh ingredients until the cannon booms either.
 - And you can’t open or “begin on-site preparation” of stuff that’s canned or bottled. That means canned tomatoes, tomato sauce, peppers, pepper sauce, beverages that are ingredients in your chili, beans if they’re allowed, and broth.
 - Here’s what you can do before the cannon goes off.
 - Meats can be pre-cut or ground and pre-treated.
 - You can grind and/or mix dry spices.
 - Adding “beverages” to your cook and team members before the cannon goes off is okay too.

- Some cooks have been known to fix a little breakfast for their team (and an occasional Wagonmaster). That's okay—especially the part about sharing with your favorite Wagonmaster. Just don't use anything from breakfast in your chili.
- ◆ You gotta make competition chili during the cooking period but you can make Sharon Sawyer's Peoples' Choice chili at home or wherever you make your chili. It needs to be "clearly marked as non-competition chili." Your Sharon Sawyer's Peoples' Choice chili has to have beans. It's an ICS Rule. Look it up if you don't believe us.
- ◆ Contestants are responsible for compliance with the Health Code.
- ◆ Public tasting begins at NOON and not before. TEAMS SERVING CHILI PRIOR TO 12:00 WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.
- ◆ Animals are not permitted in food preparation areas.
- ◆ The *Chili Cookoff* is an excellent place to obtain community recognition and goodwill for your business and to make positive contact with potential customers. However, contestants are prohibited from selling anything including food or beverages, at the *Chili Cookoff* site. Distribution of advertising materials or pamphlets without prior approval by the Wichita Wagonmasters is forbidden, except for non-profits entered in the Chili For Charity category.
- ◆ All Wichita Wagonmasters' decisions are final.

Category Definitions

These are the four categories that you gotta cook on site during the cooking period—that means only after we fire the cannon.

- ◆ **ICS RED CHILI:** This is an International Chili Society sanctioned category.
 "Traditional Red Chili is defined by the International Chili Society as any kind of meat or combination of meats, cooked with red chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients, with the exception of BEANS and PASTA which are strictly forbidden. No garnish is allowed."
- ◆ **ICS CHILI VERDE:** This is an International Chili Society sanctioned category.
 "Chili Verde is defined by the International Chili Society as any kind of meat or combination of meats, cooked with green chili peppers, various spices and other ingredients, with the exception of BEANS and PASTA which are strictly forbidden. No garnish is allowed."

- ◆ **NO-BEANS ABOUT IT:** This is not an ICS category. No Beans About It means any kind of meat or combination of meats cooked with chili peppers, pre-cooked or canned tomatoes, various spices, and other ingredients. You might have guessed that you can't use beans but you can't use pasta either. Both are not only forbidden, they're "expressly forbidden." That means that we really mean it.
- ◆ **ANYTHING GOES:** This is not an ICS category. As the name suggests, it's totally up to you. Entries in this category can have meat, chili peppers, pre-cooked or canned tomatoes, various spices, any variety of beans, pasta, and other ingredient; even garnishes are okay.

Entries in any of the following categories can be prepared in advance of the *Chili Cookoff*.

- ◆ **ICS SALSA:** This is an International Chili Society sanctioned category. "Salsa must be homemade by the contestant whose name and ICS # appear on the Contestant Application. It may be brought to the site that day or it may be prepared at the Cookoff."

You gotta have at least 2 cups of salsa for judging plus quite a bit more for public tasting. This category has been a great success, so plan accordingly. Please bring chips for public tasting.

The Health Department says that salsa has to be held at or below 41°F. They also recommend that servers wearing gloves prepare the chip with salsa for public tasting. No public dipping (or double dipping!)

THE SALSA CATEGORY IS NOT CONSIDERED WHEN SELECTING THE WINNER OF SHARON SAWYER'S PEOPLE'S CHOICE or the GRAND CHAMPION.

- ◆ **CHILI FOR RESTAURANTS:** Open to any licensed restaurant that wants to show off ~~its culinary prowess~~. (Someone let a lawyer get his grubby paws on these rules but we fixed it.)

- ◆ **SHARON SAWYER'S PEOPLE'S CHOICE:** Don't send chili in this category to the Judging Area because it's the "people's choice." Here's how it works:

In addition to all the other stuff you'll get at the cook's meeting, we'll give you a glass growler with your team number on the bottom. Each of the tasting kits sold to the public includes a bead and some other stuff. (In the past, we used a large bean that we sprayed with some paint. We plan to a bead from now on but the size and color will probably change from year to year.)

Whoever has the most beads in their growler wins the Sharon Sawyer's Peoples' Choice prize. (The schedule in the Cook's Packet says when you have to turn in your growler.) So invite your family, friends, and co-workers to help you win by collecting beads from the public in your growler.

Public sampling is a very important component of the *Chili Cookoff*. It draws the huge crowd that makes the *Chili Cookoff* a success. To win the Sharon Sawyer's Peoples' Choice Award you'll need enough chili. Please have at least 10 gallons available for public tasting but more is better. To win Sharon Sawyer's Peoples' Choice Award you'll probably need at least 15-20 gallons. Please only fill the 1 oz. tasting cups.

Chili that is only entered in this category can be prepared on site or it can be prepared in advance and brought to the *Chili Cookoff* if it meets health-code requirements. The ICS says it has to have beans in it.

Chili prepared in advance can't be submitted for judging in any other category (except Chili For Charity).

- ◆ **CHILI FOR CHARITY:** Chili For Charity is for non-profit organizations looking to win cash and gain exposure for their cause. This is the only category allowed to hand out promotional materials.

Stakes are high because the winning team gets a \$1,000 donation to their charity (and boasting rights for a year).

Teams that enter the Chili For Charity category are not eligible for Sharon Sawyer's Peoples' Choice but are automatically entered in the Cecille Kallenberger's Team Spirit, Best Booth, and Grand Champion competitions like all the other teams. More about that below so keep readin'.

Chili in this category can be prepared in advance and brought to the *Chili Cookoff* so long as it meets health-code requirements.

Non-profits are free to enter any other category but entries in other categories must meet all of the requirements for that category—like cooking their chili on site like everybody else.

Chili in this category is submitted to the Judging Area in 32 oz. cups just like other categories.

Non-cooking categories

As we said, the reason we do this *Chili Cookoff* is to raise money that we give to local non-profits. So the more people who show up and buy a \$5.00 tasting kit—and water, pop, or beer to quench the fire from your chili—the more money we raise to

promote the good life in Wichita. We understand that the public should come just to taste your amazing chili. But some people come because you help us make this one of the best parties in Wichita.

So, decorate your booth with a creative theme (that is appropriate for a family event) and dress up in costumes to match your booth's theme.

The Chili Potentate, the Potentate's court, and long-time *Chili Cookoff* officials (a/k/a geezer Wagonmasters) judge these categories. Judging begins at about 10:00 a.m.

Cecille Kallenberger's Team Spirit:

The Wichita Wagonmasters encourage you to have a cheering section to help generate excitement for spectators throughout the day.

Costumes: Matching T-shirts or aprons are fine, but judges are looking for splashy, colorful "uniforms/costumes" that represent the team name and theme.

Crowd Engagement: Playful antics that engage and entertain the crowd and create a sense of excitement will score well here.

Wichita Wagonmasters ask that all contestants be willing to be photographed and interviewed.

Best Booth:

Theme: Cleverness and a sense of humor will score well in this category.

Creativity: Judges will be looking for booth decor that conveys a theme and creates a memorable visual effect for the public.

Grand Champion:

The Grand Champion must win, place, or show in Cecille Kallenberger's Team Spirit or Best Booth. In addition, this is a "chili cookoff" so the Grand Champion must demonstrate the ability to make chili that's good enough to win, place, or show in at least one category. (Salsa is delicious but it ain't chili so it's excluded.) The Grand Champion is the team that does the best overall.

Judging

We ask volunteers from the community to sample each entry in each category and to record their impressions on a judging sheet. Then they rank their choices. If you want to, you can take a look at the judge's comments after all judging is complete and results are announced.

Judges will be told that they should vote for the chili, as defined by the ICS, based on the following major considerations:

- ◆ The principle ingredients in “chili” are meat or any combination of meats cooked with red or green chili peppers.
- ◆ Other ingredients such as beans, other spices, or pasta can be included but only as provided in the rules for each category.
- ◆ Judges are asked to vote based on the following major considerations:
 - **Good chili flavor:** taste is the most important factor. The taste should consist of the combination of the meat, peppers, spices, etc., with no particular ingredient being dominant, but rather a blend of the flavors.
 - **Texture and consistency of the meat:** Chili should have a good ratio between sauce and meat. It should not be dry, watery, grainy, lumpy, or greasy.
 - **Bite and blend of spices:** Bite or after taste is the heat created by the various types of chili peppers and spices. Chili should have a bite but not be too hot or too mild; it should be just right.
 - **Aroma:** Chili should smell good.
 - **Color:** Chili should look appetizing. A reddish brown color is good. Green is good too, but only if it's chili verde!

Based on http://www.chilicookoff.com/Event/Event_Judging.asp