



So how do we do it?

Every year we get questions about how the Chili Cook-Off is judged. What is the criteria? Is it fair? Can anyone cheat? The answers are simple, it is definitely fair and impossible to cheat.

Take a look at the criteria below and at a list of how the chili is judged. We have two chili officials and a chili police that check in each competitor, provide them with an official chili ladle, peoples choice jar and cook's cup. They check their ingredients, their gallons of chili and watch them throughout the cooking process to insure that everyone is "cooking by the rules".

Chili is turned in with the official cook's cup provided by the Chamber and they are turned in privately, away from the judges with numbers only, no names. Judges are from throughout the state and they do not have any idea whose chili belongs to who. The sheets are tallied behind locked doors by the chili officials who do not know whose chili is whose either. The winning numbers are read from the stage at awards time and it is not until then that anyone knows what number goes with the winning competitors.

Here are the criteria set forth by the Chili Officials:

- * No ingredient may be pre-cooked in any way prior to the commencement of the official chili cook-off. The only exceptions to the above rule would be 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. Meat may not be pre-cooked.
- * All other ingredients must be chopped or prepared during the preparation period.
- * No beans or pasta allowed
- * Contestants are responsible for supplying all their own cooking utensils, etc. Cooking area must be covered. The sponsors of the cook-off will provide an area for each contestant.
- * Judges are told there is one and only one criteria for judging chili: Vote for the chili you like best.

Here are the rules listed on the judges sheet:

* Fine chili should look good, smell good and taste good. Accordingly each cup of chili is to be judged on 5 criteria to arrive at one whole number score of 0-10 with 10 being the highest. The 5 criteria are:

Aroma - Red Color - Consistency - Taste - Aftertaste

- * Judge each chili on its own merit; do not compare. Make your decision the first time because the chili cannot be re-tasted after it is passed
- * Use a new spoon for each taste. Pace yourself because you have several chilis to judge.
- * Clear your palate between each tasting with the cheese/crackers and water provided.
- * Record your score on the blank that corresponds to the judging number marked on the exterior of the cup you are judging. Keep your judging sheet folded when not entering scores.
- * Do not talk to your fellow judges about chili or compare notes or scores during the judging. If you do you will be asked to leave the judging area and your score sheet will be disregarded.
- * When finished, re-check your score sheet. Make sure it is correct. The scores from the judges will determine the winners.
- * If you have a question please ask your table monitor.

So - there you have it. If you have questions or concerns please let us know and we will be glad to address them! Happy cooking!