

2026 Chili Cook Rules

Saturday, September 12, 2026

Buchanan Park – Evergreen, Colorado



****Rules Are Subject To Change, up until the Chili Cooks' meeting held prior to the event start on the morning of the event.**

Set Up & Tear Down Information

1. **Early Set Set-Up is available on 3 – 6pm on Friday, September 11, 2026.** Take advantage of this time to unload your heavy, large items such as tent, tables, etc. if you like. You will be allowed to drive to your booth location on the grass (assuming that weather and turf conditions allow you to do so). Drop items in your booth space at this time, then set them up on Saturday morning.
2. **Event Day Set-up will begin at 6:30am on Saturday, September 12, 2026. YOU MUST CHECK IN AT "VENDOR CHECK IN" WHICH WILL BE LOCATED NEAR EVERGREEN PARK & REC DISTRICT ADMIN OFFICE PARKING LOTS (NORTH SIDE OF BUCHANAN PARK) TO RECEIVE YOUR ADMISSION WRISTBANDS.** Access is off of Bergen Parkway (see map). **THERE IS NO VEHICLE ACCESS TO THE EVENT FROM THE MAIN FRONT (SOUTH) ENTRANCE.**
3. **ADMISSION WRISTBANDS ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL OF YOUR TEAM TO ACCESS THE EVENT ON SATURDAY** – and this includes your set-up assistants. **THIS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED. NO EXCEPTIONS.** No admission wristbands are required on Friday.
4. Chili Cooks will be allowed to drive to your booth location (assuming that weather and turf conditions will allow you to do so), however access is minimal. Therefore we ask that you arrive on time for set-up, unload your items and then move to the designated off-site parking area as quickly as possible. **NO VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED BACK INTO THE EVENT AREA AFTER 9:00AM.**
5. **PARKING** – Parking in and around Buchanan Park is challenging. After unloading your items, you may park only in designated areas. There will be limited spaces available in the Buchanan Rec Center parking lots, however it is first come, first served. Come early to be among those who snag those spots. There are also several other areas available within short walking distance. We *highly* recommend that you take advantage of designated shuttle bus areas (see attached map). Do not park in fire access lanes or you will be towed.
6. Chili Cook Vendors must provide their own display tents/canopies, chairs, etc. Big Chili will provide Chili Cooks with ONE 8' table, tasting/sampling cups and napkins.
7. **Per new enforced safety rules and regulations from Evergreen Park & Recreation District AND Evergreen Fire Rescue:**
 - a. All tents **MUST** be weighted with at least 40 lbs. on EACH tent leg. This is safety code to secure the tent in case of high winds. If you do not have at least 40 lbs. on EACH tent leg, your tent will not be allowed. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
 - b. Propane tanks **MUST** be secured so the tank will not roll over. The easiest and most economical solution to this new requirement is to put your propane tank in a plastic milk crate and be placed on the ground (not on a table top).
 - c. All cooking tents **MUST** have a tag affixed to them stating it's made of fire resistant materials. If it's doesn't have the appropriate tag, find another tent that does.
 - d. It is **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** that each chili cook provide their own fire extinguisher (a 5 lb. Type ABC Fire Extinguisher).
 - e. Officials from Evergreen Fire Rescue will be onsite inspecting chili cook booths to ensure the requirements above are met.
8. We encourage you to create a visually pleasing booth area, with a sturdy 10' x 10' tent/canopy (no plastic tarps), good signage and a trash receptacle. **NO ELECTRICITY IS PROVIDED.** Come prepared! Colorado weather can change quickly. Come prepared to enjoy the sunshine, but throw in rain covers and tie downs just in case an unexpected storm rolls through!

9. Each chili cook will be provided with small 2 oz. chili tasting cups. Your samples to the attendees will be offered in these cups.
10. Tear Down will not be allowed until after the event closes. Vehicles will not be allowed in the booth area until event attendees have left and it is safe to allow vehicles access. Chili Cooks are most welcome to hand carry their equipment out to the parking area rather than waiting for safe access with a vehicle in the booth area.

Chili Cooking Rules

The Big Chili Cook-Off is not sanctioned or sponsored by the Chili Appreciation Society International (CASI) or any other cook-off organization.

1. **Chili Cooking Equipment** – Cooks are expected to provide their own propane cook stoves, serving utensils, pots, fire extinguisher, etc. There is NO ELECTRICITY AVAILABLE. Cooks will provide their own canopy no larger than 10' x 10'. No exceptions. Big Chili, Inc. will provide ONE 8' table, tasting/sample cups and napkins. Each cook is expected to utilize safe and clean stoves and other equipment. The cooking area must show itself to be a safe and clean cooking environment.
2. **Pre-Cooking Ingredients** – Commercial chili powder is permissible, however complete commercial chili mixes, e.g. “just add meat” mixes that contain pre-measured spices, are NOT permitted. Individual ingredients may be marinated, soaked (beans), chopped, cut or pre-cooked/browned prior to the event.
3. **Chili Cooked On Site** – Actual chili must be cooked and assembled on-site the day of the event. All chili must be prepared in the open (no cooking in motor homes, enclosed tents, etc.) ANY COOKS (OTHER THAN RESTAURANTS) THAT HAVE PREPARED CHILI WILL BE DISQUALIFIED FROM JUDGING AND VOTING.
4. **Restaurants** – Due to the increased quantities requested of them, restaurants may prepare their chili at their restaurant location and transport to the event site. Restaurant booths must be set up according to the set up schedule.
5. **Ingredients Not Allowed** - While we live in Colorado, absolutely NO cannabis and/or cannabis-related products are allowed in chili. This is a family event!
Also – do not make your chili so extremely spicy hot that you bring people to their knees or they pass out!! Seriously. You risk being immediately disqualified and removed from the event if you do.
6. **Sanitation** – Cooks are to prepare and cook chili in a sanitary manner, with a hand-washing station in your booth. This hand-washing station should consist of a 2-5 gallon water dispenser, soap, paper towels and a bucket to catch the drainage below the water spigot. If garnish (i.e. cheese, onions, etc.) is to be added to the chili samples upon serving, use gloves.
7. **Inspection of Cooking Conditions** - Cooking conditions are subject to inspection by the head judge, event director or health department official. Failure to comply is subject to disqualification.
8. **Cooks May Have to Taste Their Chili** – At the discretion of the head judge or his/her designee, chili cooks may be required to remove the lids from their chili cups and taste their chili prior to turning in for judging. If a contestant refuses, his/her chili will be disqualified.
9. **One Chili Per Entry** – Each head cook is responsible for preparing one pot of chili that he/she intends to be judged and turning in one judging cup from that pot. No more than one judging sample may be taken from any one pot. Cooks are asked to prepare 10 gallons or more of chili for the event. Restaurants are asked to prepare 12 gallons or more.
10. **Receiving Your Judging Cups** - Chili cooks must sign their secret number slips in ink with their first and last names at the time the judging cups are issued. Once the judging cups have been issued, each head cook is responsible for his/her judging cup. Cooks must not remove or tamper with the numbers on the outside of the cups. Any marked or altered cups must be replaced prior to turn-in time or it will be disqualified.
11. **Filling Your Judging Cups** – Judging cups will be filled $\frac{3}{4}$ full, or to the level designated at the Cooks' Meeting held the morning of event day.
12. **Chili Turn-In** – Chili will be turned in at the place and time designated at the Cook's Meeting held the morning of event day, or as otherwise designated by the head judge.

13. **Judging Rules** – A complete set of judging rules will be available to Cooks on the day of the event and will be reviewed at the Cooks' Meeting. A single score will be computed for each entry; with consideration given to the five criteria for scoring chili: Aroma, Consistency, Color, Taste and Texture. NOTE: HEAT is not a grading scale factor!!
14. **Penalties** – Failure to comply with event rules is subject to disqualification of that entry. The decision of judging officials is final. In the case of disqualification, the judge monitoring the event must immediately notify the head cook and give a reason for disqualification.

Showmanship Judging Criteria & Scoring

The award for Showmanship is voted on by the public. Theme, Action, Costume, Audience Appeal, and Booth Set-Up are all considerations that you will all be judged on. Don't forget that Big Chili Cook-Off is a family event. Lewd or obscene themes are prohibited! Alcoholic beverages may not be distributed to the public as part of the Showmanship effort.

Questions

Contact Annette Schavietello, Chili Cook Coordinator at annette.bigchili@gmail.com

NO PETS ALLOWED AT BIG CHILI COOK-OFF MUSIC & ARTS FESTIVAL!