

2013 Best Firehouse Chef Challenge Rules and Information

*Congratulations to the 2012 Best Firehouse Chef Challenge Champions
Firefighter Kevin Summers & Engineer Tom Chen!*

Application and Requirements

Teams must consist of two (2) actual fire department employees. An alternate may be listed on the application, in case one of the Team members is unavailable at the last minute. Amateur chefs only.

The Challenge Application is available online at www.bigfun.org or by contacting cakitchen@caexpo.com. Applications may be hand delivered to the Administration Office at 1600 Exposition Blvd., Sacramento, or mailed to California State Fair, Attention: Stephanie Jurkowski - California's Kitchen, PO Box 15649, Sacramento, CA 95852. Applications are due by Friday, June 28, 2013.

Spots in the Challenge are filled on a first-come-first-served basis.

Rounds

The Preliminary Rounds will take place on Saturday, July 27, 2013:

Round 1 at 11:00 am

Round 2 at 2:00 pm

Round 3 at 5:00 pm

The Final Round will take place on Sunday, July 28, 2013 from 11am-1pm. First place winners from the Preliminary Rounds will compete in the Final Round for the Golden Bear Trophy. *Please plan to arrive at the kitchens and check in with the Coordinator at least 30 minutes before your round is scheduled to begin.*

Awards

All participating Teams will receive placing ribbons after each round. The first place winning Team in the Final Round will receive the Golden Bear Trophy, our highest award.

Location

The Best Firehouse Chef Challenge will take place in the California Foodstyle Building, Expo Center Building 2. The kitchen set consists of three individual kitchens. The center kitchen is larger than the two side kitchens, and kitchens will be assigned randomly before each round.

Challenge Format

Arrive at the kitchens and check in with the Coordinator at least 30 minutes before your round is scheduled to begin. The MC will introduce the Challenge, Teams, and Judges when the round begins. The Mystery Bag will be revealed, which includes one or more surprise ingredients that must be used by each Team. The Mystery Bag ingredient(s) will change in each round. At the signals of the MC, the challenge will follow this format:

- **5 minutes** to “shop” from food carts in front of the kitchen set. More ingredients are available behind the set and will remain available throughout the round.
- **10 minutes** to prepare and set up the kitchens. This time is to preheat ovens and ranges, preheat water, organize equipment, etc. No cooking or food prep allowed.
- **60 minutes** to cook and plate the meal, which is immediately presented to the Judges for evaluation behind the scenes.
- While the Judges are evaluating the dishes, Teams will distribute the remaining food into small disposable dishes for the audience to sample, and begin to clean their kitchens. State Fair staff will be available during each round to gather equipment or ingredients and to assist in cleaning.
- The Judges will return to the kitchen set to deliver the final scores and announce the winner of that round. Ribbons are presented.

Equipment

Each kitchen is equipped with an electric range and oven, microwave, minifridge, sink, and electrical outlet. Shared equipment includes all of the tools and small appliances that are typically found in a home kitchen, e.g. bowl, pots and pans, baking sheets, cooking utensils, serveware, hand mixers, stand mixers, blenders, etc. At this time, we **do not** have the following equipment: rice cooker, food processor.

Teams are encouraged to bring their own knives and may bring their own specialized equipment.

Ingredients

To ensure fairness, Teams **may not** bring any ingredients. They must use only the ingredients provided by the kitchen, and they **must** incorporate the Mystery Bag ingredient(s) into their meal. The kitchen set is stocked with a variety of ingredients, including but not limited to: AP flour, cornstarch, sugars, baking ingredients, pasta, rice, bread, assorted fruits and vegetables, onions, garlic, assorted herbs, assorted spices, soy sauce, hot sauce, vinegar, red and white wine, assorted cuts of meat, cheeses, milk, cream, eggs, butter, cooking oil, olive oil.

Judging Criteria

- 15% **Presentation:** Portion size, harmonious use of garnish, use of color, food slicing/placement, etc.
- 40% **Content:** Prepared multiple complimentary dishes, use of ingredients, knife skills, cooking skills, creativity, seasoning, flavor development, temperature/doneness at time of service, nutritional balance.
- 10% **Use of Mystery Bag Ingredient(s) in each dish:** Prominence in meal and complimentary use with other elements.
- 20% **Work Habits:** Food safety and sanitation, organization of work area.
- 15% **Showmanship:** Professional and courteous with other Teams, communication with MC and Judges during competition.

Rules

1. **No alcoholic beverages may be consumed in the kitchens or behind the kitchen set. They may, however, be used as an ingredient. Failure to follow this rule may be cause for disqualification.**
2. **Due to California Fire Marshal regulations no open flame is allowed in the building, including portable gas stoves, hand torches and lighters.**
3. Your entry meal must be large enough to generously serve six people, however only **one** serving will be plated and presented to the Judges. The remaining food will be distributed as samples to the audience.
4. Your entry meal must consist of at least two dishes/courses, all of which will be presented to the Judges at the same time.
5. The Mystery Bag ingredient(s) must be used prominently in at least one dish. However, Judges prefer to see the ingredient(s) used in all dishes. Be creative!
6. The Fair will provide all ingredients. Teams may not bring their own ingredients.
7. Teams may bring personal cooking tools, including small specialty appliances.
8. Teams must report to the kitchen set in the Foodstyle Building (Expo Center Building 2) to check in with the Coordinator 30 minutes before their round is scheduled to begin.
9. Only the Teams are allowed behind the set due to limited space and food safety concerns.
10. Kitchens will be assigned by “the luck of the draw” before each round.
11. Kitchens must be cleaned at the end of the round before you leave so they are ready for the next event.
12. Teams may wear department t-shirts, aprons, or other firefighter paraphernalia, if desired.
13. Each Team member (except for alternates) will receive 3 Fair admission credentials and 1 parking credential to attend the Preliminary Rounds. The first place winners in each Preliminary Round will receive an additional 3 admission credentials and 1 parking credential to attend the Final Round.