

Buc Days Food Challenge

2025 Rules & Guidelines

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General Information

May 10th, 2025 Food Challenge Schedule

Round 1 Check In	12:30 pm
Round 1 Contest Begins	1:10 pm
Round 2 Check In	2:00 pm
Round 2 Contest Begins	2:40 pm
Round 3 Check In	3:10 pm
Round 3 Contest Begins	3:50 pm
Awards on the Community Stage	5:00 pm

More than 100,000 youth participate in the different Food & Nutrition Projects, learning how to prepare nutritious and safe meals and snacks and adopt behaviors that can help reduce their risk for chronic disease. This contest challenges teams to create a dish using only a predetermined set of ingredients. From these ingredients, team members must identify and prepare the dish, then make a presentation about it to the judges. The objectives of the Buc Days Food Challenge Competition are as follows:

- Provide opportunities for participants to exhibit their knowledge and skill when preparing and presenting a dish
- Provide opportunities for participants to learn from other team members
- Promote teamwork
- Give participants opportunities for public speaking
- Provide leadership opportunities
- Give participants the opportunity to participate in a new, exciting, competitive event

Buc Days Food Challenge Rules of Play

1. **Participation:** The contest will be divided into three age divisions. Each team will have at least three (3) and no more than four (4) members. Teams may not include members in different age divisions (i.e., Juniors mixed with Seniors).
 - a. Junior Division (3rd, 4th, 5th graders only)
 - i. 8 years of age (in addition to being in the 3rd grade) and not over 10 years of age as of August 15th, 2024.
 - b. Intermediate Division (6th, 7th, and 8th graders only)
 - i. 10 years of age (in addition to being in the 6th grade) and not over 14 years of age as of August 15th, 2024.
 - c. Senior Division (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders only)
 - i. 14 years of age (in addition to being in the 9th grade) and not over 18 years of age as of August 15th, 2024.

2. **Eligibility:** Participation in the Buc Days Food Challenge is limited to TX resident students, who are enrolled in a Texas Youth Development program and are actively participating in the Food and Nutrition project. Exhibitors must be United States citizens and possess a valid social security number to be eligible for participation in the event. Exhibitors must be enrolled in, and attending, public or private elementary or secondary schools in TX. Students must be between the ages of 8 (in addition to being in the 3rd grade) and 18 on or before August 15th, 2023. Each 4-H, FFA, and FCLA member must be in good standing with its state and National affiliates. Involvement in international or national events does NOT disqualify otherwise eligible participants.

3. **Ineligible Exhibitors:** Participants are eligible by the Buccaneer Commission for participation in the event at the time that entries are received. Any CEA (County Extension Agent) who has a member who becomes ineligible to participate, for any reason, must provide written and signed notification to the appropriate Superintendent at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of any activity in which the ineligible exhibitor was to participate. If an exhibitor is determined ineligible, then the entry is ineligible.
 - a. Foreign Exchange Students: Non-United States citizens and Foreign Exchange students are ineligible to compete in the Buc Days Food Challenge. All contestants must be United States citizens and possess a valid social security number to be eligible for participation in the event.

4. **Registration:** Registration will be completed through our website at '<https://bucdays.com/buc-days-food-challenge/>'. Regular registration will be open in September of 2024. Registration will close when the event has reached capacity of 75 teams. Each team costs \$75, not matter if there are 3 or 4 members of the team.

5. **Exhibitor Code of Ethics:** The Buc Days Food Challenge is a family-friendly event. As such, an individuals' conduct as an exhibitor or patron should be exemplary, and violators are subject to disqualification or removal from Buc Days grounds. For more information on the Buc Days festival/ American Bank Center Exhibit Hall rules and regulations, please go to 'www.americanbankcenter.com/visitors-guide/' or '<https://bucdays.com/festival-grounds/>'.

6. **Attire:** Each team will have the option of wearing coordinated clothing, aprons, or hair coverings. Each team member is required to wear closed toe shoes and a hair restraint. Each team member must wear a hat, hair net and/or other type of hair restraint during the food preparation part of the competition.
7. **Photographs:** All photographs taken by the official photographer become property of the Buccaneer Commission. Unofficial (i.e. – personal) photographs may not be published without the written approval of Management. Contestants wishing to purchase photographs must contact the official photographer.
 - a. Commercial photography and filming are often conducted at the Buccaneer Commission. You may be depicted in photographs or video recordings or video recordings of any Buccaneer Commission event, and by entering the grounds/ American Bank Center and/ or competitive events associated with the Buccaneer Commission, you consent to the use of any depictions in connection with advertising, news reporting, public relations, webcasts or other broadcasts, or any other activities relating to the Buccaneer Commission, and you further release and waive all claims for compensation and any rights of review and approval, copyright, and right of publicity with respect to thereto.
8. **Electronic Devices:** No electronic devices or jewelry (except medically required) are allowed in contest. This includes cell phones, smart watches, or other communication devices.
9. **Resource Materials:** Printed resource materials will be provided at the contest. These include Choose MyPlate Mini Poster, Fight Bac - Fight Foodborne Bacteria Brochure, Know Your Nutrients, Food Safety Fact Sheet. No other resource materials will be allowed. Teams may not use their personal copies of the resources during the contest.
10. **Supply box:** Each team must supply their own equipment for the challenge. Teams may only bring the supplies listed in the contest supply box listed. Team boxes may be randomly selected for inspection at the time of contest check-in. Any extra equipment found during inspection will be removed from the team's supply box. Throughout the contest, teams that are in the possession of supplies not on the official supply list may be disqualified. Boxes must be completely closed, and all equipment should remain inside the box until the start of the contest. Supply boxes are limited to the following dimensions: 40" x 24" X 40". If box is on wheels, the height of the wheels is not included in the dimensions. The contest committee may measure any and/or all boxes to determine compliance to size. If boxes are out of compliance, teams may be disqualified. Teams are recommended to bring an empty box for used utensils and materials for a quicker and easier clean up process.

Buc Days Food Challenge Format

1. **Contest Format:** Each team will receive an information sheet with their contest category and "key" ingredient for that category (no ingredient amounts, recipe, or instructions will be provided at the station). The "key" ingredient will be representative of one of the following categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, Healthy Dessert. Teams will be randomly assigned to a category, with assignments revealed at the cooking/preparation station and/or during team orientation. Each team will be directed to a cooking/preparation station consisting of a table and electrical outlet. Unlike other Food Challenge competitions, the Junior Division teams are allowed to use a hot plate. There will be no penalty or extra points give to Junior Division teams who decide to use a hot plate. Only participants and contest officials will be allowed in food preparation areas.

2. **Grocery Store/ Pantry:** Teams will also be able to use items from a "pantry" they bring as a part of their supply box (see the supply box list for a list of allowable pantry items). Teams will have access to a "grocery store" of additional ingredients which should be combined with the team's "key" ingredient to create an original recipe/dish during the contest. Grocery store items will include items commonly found in grocery stores such as produce, canned goods, crackers, dairy products, water jugs, etc. Teams must select & use AT LEAST two additional items from the "grocery store" and will be provided the maximum number of items they can select during orientation. Teams will not be required to analyze cost of recipe, nor will this be included in the presentation or scoring of the contest. Contest currency and cost analysis have been eliminated.

3. **Preparation:** Teams will have 40 minutes to prepare the dish, plan a presentation, and clean up the preparation area. Each team will create an entire dish/recipe (not a full meal) using the provided key ingredient and grocery store items. Dishes/recipes created should include two or more servings. Teams should present the entire dish/ recipe to the judges and communicate during their presentation what an individual serving size should be. Teams will be responsible for determining the number of servings their dish provides. Teams should not create multiple dishes with their ingredients/pantry items.
 - a. Teams are challenged with being creative and developing their own recipe with the ingredients provided.
 - b. Teams will determine the exact amount of each ingredient used based on their original recipe.
 - c. The key ingredient provided to and/or grocery store items selected by each team may also be used to garnish the dish.
 - d. Note cards may be used to write down the recipe that the team invents, along with notes related to nutrition, and food safety. Teams should be exact on ingredients used, preparation steps, cooking time, temperature, etc.

4. **Food and Equipment Safety:** A safe and sanitary working environment must be maintained during the contest. Each station will have food and kitchen safety resources. Teams should follow the steps listed to ensure proper food and equipment safety is followed. Judges will be scoring teams on food and equipment safety during the preparation phase of the contest. Teams should also discuss safety steps used during the presentation phase of the contest.

Gloves: Gloves do not have to be worn throughout the contest; however, there should always be a barrier between your hand and any food touched. A barrier included gloves and/or cooking utensil. When wearing gloves, they must be changed between handling raw meats/ seafood; handling cooked items; and ready to eat items or raw vegetables to prevent cross contamination.

Hair Restraint: Each team member must wear a hat, hair net and/or other type of hair restraint during the food preparation part of the competition. Examples of acceptable hair restraints include hairnets, bandana with hair completely pulled back, Chef hat with hair restrained inside, or cap with hair completely tucked in.

5. **Nutrition:** Each station will have a variety of nutrition printed resources/references. Each team should highlight key nutrients in their dish and their functions during the presentation.
6. **Equipment Malfunctions:** Teams that may experience any equipment malfunction(s) may not replace the equipment with supplies from another team, leaders, volunteers, CEA/ASTs or contest officials. Team members must work together and be creative in completing preparation without the malfunctioning equipment
7. **Presentation:** Following the preparation phase of the contest, each team will give a 5-minute presentation to a panel of judges. Team presentations should include the criteria on the score card which includes Knowledge of MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines; Nutrition Knowledge; Food Preparation; Safety Concerns and Practices; and Serving Size information. Teams should remember that food appearance and quality; creativity used; and utilization of effective communication skills is also included on the score card. A copy of the score cards can be found at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition>.
 - a. A majority of team members should participate in the presentation.
 - b. To earn maximum points, teams must use the 5-minute presentation to address the following areas of the presentation scorecard: Knowledge of MyPlate, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, Safety Concerns, and Serving Size.
 - c. At the end of 5 minutes, time will be called – additional time will not be allowed. Judges will be allowed 3 minutes to ask questions. Judges will not ask questions related to what teams should have covered during the presentation. Judges' questions will be related to general nutrition, health, chronic disease prevention or others relevant to food and nutrition. Following questions, judges will have 4 minutes to score/write comments.
 - d. No talking or writing is allowed among any team members while waiting to present. Team members caught talking and/or writing will receive a warning. The second time, the team will be disqualified and asked to leave. Team members should not have pens or pencils in their possession while waiting to present.

Please note: Once the 40 minutes of preparation time expires, team members may no longer communicate with each other. Team members may study their notes individually.

8. **Clean-up:** Teams must clean up their preparation areas. Clean-up time is included in the 40-minute preparation allotment. Teams should plan to not have access to a kitchen facility; therefore, dirty dishes should be placed in a plastic container, bag, or box to be cleaned later. Left-over food should be disposed of in trashcans made available not in the bathrooms.
9. **Finished Dishes:** Finished dishes MAY NOT leave the preparation/judging areas. Dishes must be discarded after teams complete the judging process to ensure teams in following heats do not see what ingredients are available to gain an advantage.

10. **Tie Breakers:** The tie breaker sequence will be 1) Presentation score; 2) Preparation score; 3) Questions section of the Presentation scorecard.
11. **Awards:** Contestants must be present to receive their awards. Any remaining awards will not be mailed following the competition. Once announced, all contest results are final. A total of \$7,500 in prize money will be awarded throughout the event.
- a. A total of \$2,000 will be awarded to the top four (4) teams in the Junior Division (3rd, 4th, and 5th graders).
 - i. Grand Champion- \$800
 - ii. Reserve Grand Champion- \$500
 - iii. 3rd place team- \$400
 - iv. 4th place team- \$300
 - b. A total of \$2,000 will be awarded to the top four (4) teams in the Intermediate Division (6th, 7th, and 8th graders).
 - i. Grand Champion- \$800
 - ii. Reserve Grand Champion- \$500
 - iii. 3rd place team- \$400
 - iv. 4th place team- \$300
 - c. A total of \$3,500 will be awarded to the top four (4) teams in the Senior Division (9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders).
 - i. Grand Champion- \$1,200
 - ii. Reserve Grand Champion- \$1,000
 - iii. 3rd place team- \$800
 - iv. 4th place team- \$500

Supply Box List/ Pantry Items

Supply boxes are limited to the following dimensions: 40" x 24" X 40".

Each team will bring an equipment box containing only one each of the following items, unless a different quantity is noted:

- Beverage glass
- **NEW** Bench Scraper
- Bowls (up to 4 – any size)
- Calculator
- Can Opener
- Colander
- Cookie Cutters (up to 2 – team choice)
- Cutting Boards (up to 4)
- Disposable plastic spoons for tasting (no limit)
- Dry measuring cups (1 set)
- Electric Skillet
- Extension cord (multiple outlet or strip style)
(Teams should be certain the extension cord is compatible (2-prong/3-prong) with the plugs on their electrical supplies)
- First aid kit
- Food thermometer
- Fork
- Gloves
- Grater
- Hand sanitizer
- Hot pads (up to 5)
- Kitchen shears (1 pair)
- Kitchen timer
- Knives (up to 6)
- Liquid measuring cup
- Measuring spoons (1 set)
- Manual Pencil Sharpener
- **NEW** Meat Tenderizer
- Non-stick cooking spray
- Note cards (1 package - no larger than 5x7)
- Paper towels (1 roll)
- Pancake turner (up to 2)
- Pencils (no limit)
- Plastic box and/or trash bag for dirty equipment
- Pot with lid
- Potato masher
- Potato peeler
- **NEW** Rolling Pin
- Sanitizing wipes (1 container)
- Serving Dishes/Utensils
1 plate/platter
1 bowl
1 utensil
- Skewers (1 set)
- Skillet with lid
- Spatulas (up to 2)
- Stirring spoon
- Storage bags and/or containers (1 box)
- Tongs
- Toothpicks
- Two single-burner hot plates OR one double- burner plate (electric only!)
- Whisk
- Salt
- Pepper
- Oil (up to 17 oz)
- 1 jar of chicken bouillon
- 1 medium onion
- 2 cans (up to 16 oz) vegetables and/or fruit (*team choice*)
- Rice* (white or brown) or pasta* (up to 16 oz) (*team choice*) **must be uncooked/ dried*
- Cornstarch (up to 1 lb) or Flour (up to 1 lb) (*team choice*)