



Horseshoe Nails Brigade



MatanzaFest Team & Judging Rules

These detailed rules are designed to ensure a fair, safe, and enjoyable competition for all participants, while also maintaining the cultural significance and traditions of the Matanza.

1. Team Composition and Registration:

- **Team Size:** Each team will determine the number of members it requires for the competition. Teams should designate a Team Captain who will serve as the main point of contact with event organizers.
- **Team Roles:** Teams must provide a list of team members, including their roles, upon registration.
 - **Team Captain:** Responsible for communication with event organizers and overseeing the team's activities.
 - **Head Cook:** Leads the cooking process, ensuring all dishes are prepared to the highest standard.
 - **Assistant Cooks:** Support the Head Cook with food preparation, cooking, and plating.
 - **Butcher:** The butcher is responsible for breaking down the carcass into the primal cuts (shoulder, loin, belly, and ham) and ensuring each cut is prepared correctly for cooking.
- **Registration and Entry Fee:**
 - Teams must register by November 13, 2024 to secure a spot in the competition.
 - An entry fee of \$250 is required to cover the Prize Money and supplies.

2. Ingredients and Preparation:

- **Cultural Reflection:**
 - The selection of ingredients, cooking methods, and any traditional elements incorporated into the dish must honor and reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Matanza tradition.
- **Primary Ingredient:** Pork must be the primary protein used in all dishes. Teams may NOT bring their own pork and must use pork provided by the event organizers. All pork will be USDA-inspected and approved.
- **Seasoning and Spices:**
 - Teams are allowed to bring their own spices, marinades, and seasonings, although a full spice pantry will be available at the event for free. However, these MUST be prepared on-site, unless approved by the event organizers beforehand.
 - Teams must disclose any pre-made marinades or sauces to the judges to ensure transparency.
- **Preparation Time:**
 - Teams can access their cooking stations as of 4am Saturday, December 7, 2024.



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- All preparation, cooking, and plating must occur within the event timeframe.
- A mandatory safety and rules briefing will take place before cooking begins.
- **Cooking Methods:**
 - Traditional Matanza cooking methods are strongly encouraged. These may include:
 - **Open-Pit Roasting:** Cooking the pork over an open flame in a pit or on a spit.
 - **Grilling:** Using a grill to cook pork cuts such as ribs, chops, or sausages.
 - **Stewing:** Preparing traditional stews such as pozole, using large pots or cauldrons.
 - **Smoking:** Slow-cooking the pork with wood smoke to infuse it with flavor.
- **Team Cooking Equipment:**
 - Teams must supply their own cooking equipment, including grills, pits, pots, and utensils.
 - The use of gas or electric grills is permitted, but open-flame cooking is encouraged.
 - Teams utilizing gas cooking equipment must have their setup inspected by the New Mexico LP Gas Inspector prior to starting their cooking process.

3. Food Safety and Cleanliness:

- **Certification:**
 - All teams must undergo training in food safety and cleanliness by the New Mexico Environmental Department (NMED) prior to the competition.
 - The Roswell+Chaves County MatanzaFest (RCCMF) coordinators will arrange for the training session with the NMED.
- **Food Safety:**
 - All teams must adhere to NMED food safety standards, including:
 - **Temperature Control:** Pork must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F (63°C). Temperature checks may be conducted by event staff or NMED Inspectors.
 - **Sanitation:** Teams must maintain a clean cooking area at all times. Handwashing stations and sanitizers must be used regularly.
 - **Cross-Contamination:** Separate cutting boards and utensils must be used for raw and cooked meats to prevent cross-contamination.
- **Cleanliness:**
 - Teams must keep their cooking area clean before, during, and after the event.
 - Waste disposal stations will be provided, and teams are expected to properly dispose of all trash, grease, and food scraps.
 - Failure to maintain cleanliness may result in point deductions or disqualification.



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4. Presentation and Judging:

- **Competition Categories:**

**TEAMS MUST PARTICIPATE IN ALL DISH CATEGORIES LISTED BELOW.
FAILURE TO ENTER ALL CATEGORIES WILL RESULT IN DISQUALIFICATION
FROM THE COMPETITION.**

- Pozole
 - Carnitas
 - Chicharrón
 - Carne Adovada
 - Mystery Basket
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- **Blind Judging:**

- Judges will sample entries without knowing which team cooked them. Each team will receive one container (per category) for their entry from their ambassador the morning of the competition.
 - These containers will be pre-labeled with the team's name and stall number. **DO NOT** remove this label. Each team will need to bring their samples to the check-in station in the Judges Tent at the times listed below. Once the sample is turned in, the sticker will be replaced with a code known only to the Teams and Judging Committee Chairwoman; the entries will also be checked.
 - **GARNISH IS NOT** allowed in the blind competition box. Placing anything other than the required dish or making any marks on any of the containers will result in immediate disqualification.
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- **Blind Judging Turn-In Times:**

- **Pozole:** 11:35am
- **Carnitas:** 12:20pm
- **Chicharrón:** 1:05pm
- **Carne Adovada:** 1:50pm
- **Mystery Dish** 2:35pm

- **NO LATE SAMPLES WILL BE ACCEPTED!**
- **COMPLETELY FILL YOUR CONTAINER!**
- **NO GARNISH OR MARKING ALLOWED!**



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- **Container Servings:**
 - Each team is required to prepare and present **one container for their entry per category** for the judges. (See Blind Judging).
 - The dish should highlight the team's culinary skills and creativity.
- **Public Servings:**
 - In addition to the plates for the judges, teams must prepare servings of their dish for the public.
 - Teams are required to utilize the entire pork provided by the RCCMF to create servings for the public. Portions should be appropriately sized and sufficient in number.
 - Public samples should be prepared with the same care and attention to detail as the judged plates, although they may be served in a more practical format for ease of distribution.

5. Judging Criteria:

- **Taste (45 Points)**
 - Flavor Profile: The dish should have a well-balanced flavor profile, with harmonious seasoning and the natural flavors of the pork shining through.
 - Depth of Flavor: Judges will look for complexity in the dish's flavor, where each ingredient contributes to a rich, satisfying taste experience.
 - Consistency: The flavor should be consistent throughout the dish, with no overpowering or underwhelming elements.
- **Texture (20 Points)**
 - Pork Tenderness: The pork should be cooked to perfection, with a tender and juicy texture that melts in the mouth.
 - Mouthfeel: The dish should have a pleasing mouthfeel, with appropriate textures that complement each other, such as crispness, softness, etc. where applicable.
 - Balance of Textures: Judges will evaluate how well the different textures work together, ensuring that no element is too dry, tough, or overly soft.
- **Creativity (20 Points)**
 - Innovation: Judges will look for innovative use of ingredients and cooking techniques that push the boundaries while respecting the Matanza tradition.
 - Originality: Dishes that offer a fresh take on traditional recipes or introduce new flavor combinations will score higher in this category.
 - Execution: Creative ideas must be well-executed, with a focus on delivering a dish that is not only unique but also delicious and well-prepared.
- **Aroma (15 Points)**
 - Smell: How appealing and aromatic the dish is. Aroma plays a large role in enhancing the flavor experience.
 - Balance of Fragrance: Ensuring that no one scent overpowers others.



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6. Judging:

- **Judging Panel:**
 - The judging panel will consist of 3 judges for each category, selected from a diverse group of culinary experts, local dignitaries, cultural representatives, and food enthusiasts. Judges will be chosen based on their knowledge of food, cultural traditions, and their ability to evaluate dishes impartially.
 - Each judge will be provided with a detailed scoring sheet that outlines the criteria and weight of each category.
- **Tasting and Scoring:**
 - Judges will taste each dish and score it based on the established criteria. Judges will take notes on the flavor, texture, creativity, and adherence to the matanza theme as they evaluate the dish.
 - Judges will confer after all dishes have been presented to discuss their scores and impressions. This discussion allows for a thorough evaluation and ensures that all aspects of each dish are considered.
- **Final Decision:**
 - The scores from all judges will be compiled, and the dish with the highest total score will be declared the winner in the respective categories. In the event of a tie, judges may engage in further discussion or conduct an additional evaluation to determine the winner.
 - Judges' decisions are final and will be announced during the awards ceremony.
- **Feedback:**
 - After the competition, teams may receive feedback from the judges, offering insights into what worked well and where there might be room for improvement. This feedback is intended to be constructive and help teams refine their skills for future competitions.
- **Awards Ceremony:**
 - The winners will be announced and awarded during the event's closing ceremony. Prizes will be given out for Overall Champion, Best in Category, Most Creative use of Ingredients and Techniques, and People's Choice, along with other specific awards as determined by the event organizers and sponsors.

7. Conduct and Sportsmanship:

- **Sportsmanship:**
 - Teams are expected to conduct themselves with respect and integrity at all times. This includes respecting other teams, judges, event organizers, and attendees.
 - Unsportsmanlike conduct, such as sabotaging another team's station or using inappropriate language, will result in immediate disqualification.
- **Team Conduct:**
 - All team members must remain within their designated cooking area during the event, unless accessing common areas such as restrooms or supply stations.



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- Team Captains are responsible for ensuring that all team members adhere to the rules and conduct themselves appropriately.
- **Compliance:**
 - Teams must comply with all instructions given by event organizers and safety officials. Non-compliance may result in point deductions or disqualification.

8. Prizes and Recognition:

- **Awards:**
 - Prizes will include cash awards and trophies, and other incentives provided by event sponsors, if applicable.
 - Cash Prizes will be awarded in the following categories:
 - **Overall Champions:** Given to the top three teams with the highest cumulative score across all categories:

▪ Best Overall Score	\$1,000.00
▪ 2 nd Best Overall Score	\$550.00
▪ 3 rd Best Overall Score	\$325.00
 - Trophies will be awarded to the remaining categories, including public categories.
 - **Best in Category:** Awarded for the most flavorful dish in each specific category.
 - **Most Creative:** Honoring the team that demonstrated the most creativity with ingredients and cooking methods.
 - **People's Choice:** Determined by public votes for the most popular dish.
 - **Recognition:**
 - Winning teams will be recognized during the awards ceremony and featured in post-event communications, including social media, press releases, and event recaps.

9. Disqualification and Penalties:

- **Grounds for Disqualification:**
 - **Non-Compliance:** Teams that fail to adhere to the rules, deadlines, or safety guidelines may be disqualified.
 - **Unethical Behavior:** Any unethical behavior, including tampering with another team's station, bribing judges, or using banned substances, will result in disqualification.
- **Penalties:**
 - Minor infractions, such as a minor breach of cleanliness or failure to present dishes on time, may result in point deductions rather than disqualification.
 - Repeat offenses or serious infractions will lead to disqualification at the discretion of the event organizers.



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10. Health and Safety:

- **First Aid:**
 - A first aid station will be available on-site for any injuries or health concerns. Teams should be aware of its location and procedures for accessing help.
 - Teams are encouraged to have a basic first aid kit at their station for minor injuries.
- **Fire Safety:**
 - Teams using open flames must have a fire extinguisher on hand and must follow all fire safety protocols.
 - Event organizers will conduct a safety inspection of all cooking stations before the event begins.

11. Registration and Fees:

- **Entry Fee:**
 - A non-refundable entry fee of two-hundred and fifty dollars (\$250.00) is required to participate. This fee helps cover the costs of event, prize money and supplies.
- **Registration Deadline:**
 - All teams must complete their registration by November 13, 2024. Late registrations may be accepted at the discretion of the event organizers but may be subject to an additional fee.
- **Cancellation Policy:**
 - Teams that need to cancel their participation must notify the event organizers at least 10 days before the event to be eligible to receive a partial refund.

12. Miscellaneous:

- **Event Schedule:**
 - A detailed event schedule, including setup times, cooking times, and judging times, will be placed on the website at least one week before the event.
- **Weather Policy:**
 - The event will take place rain or shine. In the event of severe weather, the event organizers will communicate any changes or cancellations as soon as possible.
- **Final Note:**
 - Participation in the Matanza competition is not just about winning; it's about celebrating cultural traditions, fostering community spirit, and enjoying the art of cooking. We encourage all teams to bring their best efforts and have fun!