# CULINARY COMPETITION

## Competitor Handbook

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## Welcome to the Inaugural Minneapolis Community Culinary Competition!

We have invited you to join us, Kelber Catering, because we are inspired by the creativity and passion that we see in our local farmers' markets, street vendors, and other home-based food businesses, and are excited to have you participate in this year's competition. This handbook contains everything you need to prepare, compete, and succeed.

Benefits to you, as a competitor:

- Personal development
    - Gain confidence in your skills
    - Receive professional and constructive criticism, focused on growth and improvement
- Professional growth
    - Network with other home-based and professional culinary professionals
    - Gain insights from other competitors and judges
- YOUR NAMED ITEM on a Minneapolis Convention Center Menu for a year!
    - The WINNER of the competition will have their item on the menu for an entire year
    - Kelber Catering will assist with naming the dish and creative marketing collateral to tell the winners food stories
    - $5,000 to the Winners in Professional and Novice Categories

# Event Date: December 10, 2026
# Location: Minneapolis Convention Center
# Check-in Time: 2:00pm
# Competition Start Time: 4:00pm

# 1. Competition Overview

### Mission & Purpose

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to celebrate culinary creativity, foster community engagement, and elevate local talent by providing a dynamic platform where food creatives of all backgrounds can showcase their skills, share their stories, and inspire others through the art of food.

### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this community culinary competition is to bring people together through a shared passion for food while supporting local chefs, promoting cultural diversity, and encouraging mentorship between seasoned professionals and emerging talent. Through friendly competition, collaboration, and innovation, we aim to strengthen community connections, highlight regional flavors, and create memorable experiences that nourish both body and spirit. Please note that your dish should be a dish that event planners and events for up to 3000 guests will enjoy through all the senses.

### Categories

Novice
Professional

### Judging Criteria

Competitors will be evaluated based on:

- Dish Complexity
- Presentation
- Flavor Profile and Variety
- Representation of the individual cook

(Refer to official rubric provided separately.)

# 2. Eligibility

- Age requirements: must be 18 or over
- Professional: Current or former Chef, Cook
- Novice: Someone who has never cooked professionally
- Required documentation with application on October 15, 2026: Resume or Bio on each competitor. This information will be fact checked for accuracy. Any incorrect information may result in automatic disqualification.
- Registration deadline **October 15, 2026**

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# 3. Competition Rules

## General Rules

- All competitors must check in by designated time
- Late arrivals may result in point deductions or disqualification
- Professional conduct is always required

## Food Safety

- Proper handwashing required
- Gloves required when handling ready-to-eat foods
- Time and temperature compliance mandatory (monitored by Kelber Catering Inc. Culinary team in conjunction with the Minneapolis Health Department)
- No cross-contamination
- Proper cooking techniques are to be strictly followed according to Minneapolis Health Department guidelines.
- No reduced oxygen packaging i.e. Cryovac packaging, or sous vide cooking is allowed.
- All proteins must be cooked to acceptable temperatures per Health Department regulations.

Failure to comply will result in disqualification.

# 4. Kitchen & Equipment

### Provided by Organizers

- Tables
- Basic prep area
- Standard kitchen equipment; grill, stove top, ovens
- Power access
- Sink access
- Refrigeration access
- Cutting Boards
- Bar Towels

### Competitors Must Bring

- Specialty tools
- Knives
- Small wares
- Plating materials
- 1 assistant or helper is permitted

All equipment must meet safety standards.

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# 5. Ingredient Policy

Competitors supply their recipe of ingredients prior to the competition entry deadline of October 15, 2026

If you are bringing ingredients:

- Must arrive properly labeled
- Your recipe Pre-prep guidelines must be strictly followed
- No pre-cooked proteins
- All items must be reviewed by Kelber Culinary Team and in Serve Safe guidelines

# Ingredient Policy continued:

**Protein Choices:**

**All submissions must be for lunch or dinner entrees**. All protein options should be affordable based on market price. If a more expensive protein is used a reasonable substitution should be available.

**Protein Choices Recommended:**

- Chicken
- Beef

- **Proteins choices to avoid:**
- Waygu beef
- Beef filet
- Lobster
- Sea bass
- *Octopus/Squid*
- *Wild Game*
- Pork should be avoided for religious and cultural observances
- If seafood is being used it should be considered sustainably sourced.

# 6. Competition Timeline

| Activity | Time |
|---|---|
| Check-In | 2:00pm |
| Kitchen Orientation | 2:15pm |
| Competition Start | 4:00pm |
| 15-Minute Warning | 5:30pm |
| Competition End | 6:00pm |
| Judging | 6:00pm – 7:00pm |
| Awards Ceremony | 7:15pm |

Late plating and presentation to the stage will result in point deductions

## 7. Plating & Presentation

- Number of plates required: (2)
- Portion size requirements
- Garnish your plate and present for photo opportunity and marketing purposes
- No external props allowed

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## 8. Judging Process

- Judging will be live by Kelber selected judges
- Judges may ask questions of the entrant live on stage
- Scores will be tallied by Kelber CFO and scores are final

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## 9. Awards

- 1st Place $5000 each category
- People's Choice $500.00 – determined by QR code voting on site
- KCI Scholarship Winner - $5000.00 to be awarded to a student who is enrolled or starting in a Minneapolis based culinary program

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## 10. Code of Conduct

Competitors must:

- Always demonstrate professionalism
- Always respect fellow competitors
- Follow all MN Food Safety Rules
- Accept judge feedback respectfully

Unsportsmanlike conduct will result in disqualification.

## 11. Media & Photography Release

By participating in the City of 10,000 Flavors, competitors grant permission for photography and media usage for promotional purposes.

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## 12. Contact Information

Competition Director: John Doody – Steering Committee Chair
Email: jrd31159@gmail.com
Phone: 612-759-4720

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