



2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown
Presented by Got To Be NC Agriculture
Rules for Competing Chefs

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association Chef Showdown is North Carolina's premier culinary competition open to all professional chefs and bartenders currently working in North Carolina; and distilleries based in North Carolina.

The 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown finale will take place Monday August 14, from 6:00 – 8:30 p.m., at The Pavilion at Angus Barn in Raleigh, NC.

Leading up to the finale there will be five preliminary rounds and two regional rounds of competitions for chefs. Please read this rulebook in its entirety, as it lays out what to expect through all rounds of the competition.

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Questions? Call or email Heidi Billotto, NCRLA Chef Showdown host and co-organizer, at 704-502-4439 heidibillotto@gmail.com OR Inez Nicholson, NCRLA co-organizer and NCRLA Communications and Events Coordinator, at 803-269-3804 or inicholson@ncrla.org.



1. About the North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association

The North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association is the uniting force of the North Carolina hospitality industry. The Association brings together restaurant and lodging establishments and partners who support our hospitality community. NCRLA impacts legislation and policies, cultivates relationships, and provides valuable resources to help members run their businesses.

2. General Competition Rules and Procedures

- North Carolina Chefs may apply to compete through an online application process at www.NCChefShowdown.com. Applications must be completed in their entirety.
- Applications will be accepted through **Monday, April 17**. NCRLA may extend the application period if necessary.
- Past chefs who have won the grand titles may not apply again until they are two years removed from their awards, even if they have changed venues/employers.
- Submission of participant application gives NCRLA the right to use each applicant's name, likeness, and background details as provided above for any promotional materials related to this event, including but not limited to use online, printed materials, video, social media, press releases, and advertisements. This information will also be shared with event sponsors.
- All participants agree to be photographed or taped for marketing or promotional purposes during the competition events.
- Competing chefs certify that they meet all eligibility requirements, and that participation is not in violation of any employment or other agreement.
- NCRLA requests high-resolution versions of logos for marketing and promotional use, and requests that the contestants and their employers commit to promote the 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown using both external and internal marketing channels.



- All participants will be asked to sign liability waivers at each venue. Every effort has been made to make all phases of this competition safe events; however, competitors waive all liability claims that may arise from participation in this event, including injury.
- NCRLA reserves the right to reassign dates or replace chefs should it become necessary (i.e. a chef must dropout, becomes ill, or is in violation of any competition rules, etc.)
- NCRLA will not be liable for cancellation or postponement in the event of acts of God or unforeseen national or regional events that are out of the control of organizers.
- If at any time, a participating chef is no longer available to compete, the chef or the restaurant must let NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers know immediately. Chefs and restaurants may not sub in another chef.
- In each round, it is imperative that chefs and their assistants comply with the current rules and regulations of the North Carolina Food Code. Proper safety and sanitation protocols should always remain a priority. Gloves must be worn during prep and service to judges and will be provided for your use in the kitchen. Please use processes in the competition kitchen that you would in your restaurant kitchen when serving the public.
- When applying, chefs must agree to be available the day of their specific preliminary and regional round as well as the finale event on Monday, Aug. 14, 2023, at The Pavilion at Angus Barn in Raleigh.
- Chefs who are entering to compete for the title of NCRLA Chef of the Year must present a savory dish. Chefs who apply to compete for the title of NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year must present a dessert.
- Savory or sweet, chefs must feature as many North Carolina proteins, produce, or products as possible in the dishes presented, at the preliminary and regional rounds of competition and at the finale event, highlighting local and regional farmers and producers on the plate.



- In order to assure there is a wide assortment of proteins and flavor in each round of competition, chefs will be asked to select from a choice of proteins as presented by the NCRLA. Protein requests in each round will be honored on a first come first served basis.
- Each competing chef may have one sous chef or assistant in the kitchen to help prep and prepare the food to present at preliminary and regional rounds, and the finale event.
- The top-scoring 20 chefs from the five preliminary rounds will receive the honor of being invited to compete in one of two regional rounds of competition. They will also be invited to participate in the 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown finale, where they will prepare and serve their dish in sample-sized portions to ~300 guests who will be in attendance.
- Scoring at the preliminary and regional rounds for the competing chefs at the finale will be based on the best use of Got to be NC North Carolina ingredients, execution, creativity, originality, presentation, and overall taste.
- Chefs will be introduced to the 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown competition sponsors who have agreed to help with product if a chef is interested. Use of these suppliers is not required nor will it be judged any differently than any other North Carolina products, protein or produce.
- Detailed parking information and load in and load out instructions will be shared with competitors prior to each event.
- The preliminary and regional events are not open to the public.

3. Preliminary Rules and Procedures

- The five preliminary rounds for the 2023 series will take place in one of five North Carolina regions. Chefs selected to participate in one of these rounds of competition will be notified on April 19.
 - **May 8:** Triad Region, Wilkes Community College Culinary School



- **May 15:** Mountain Region, Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College
- **May 22:** Coastal Region, Carteret Community College
- **June 12:** Triangle Region, Wake Technical Community College, School of Baking & Pastry
- **June 26:** Charlotte Metro Region, Central Piedmont Community College
- Chefs must submit the name and description of their dish and list of ingredients one week prior to their competition date. Adjustments may be made to the ingredient list as needed prior to judging.
- Chefs will be advised of the preliminary round results after June 26.
- At the preliminary rounds of competition, chefs will present to a panel of *three* professional judges. A chef will present every 15-20 minutes throughout the day. Each chef will be assigned a specific presentation time.
- Chefs must prepare *four plates*—three will be presented to the panel of judges and the fourth plate will be the photo plate, used for marketing and promotional purposes. Chefs must supply their own plates.
- For each preliminary and regional round of competition, chefs and their assistants are asked to arrive at the host venue 1.5 hours prior to their presentation time, unless another time frame is agreed upon by chefs and NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers.
- Chefs will be provided with a list of available equipment in the host venue kitchen. Otherwise, chefs are responsible for bringing their own ingredients, tools, and other specialty items required to create their dish.
- To save on time and kitchen space, it is strongly suggested that chefs come with mise en place and any other component of the dish that may take some time to bake, cook or freeze, already prepared.
- A dishwasher on staff at the host venue will be on hand and available to chefs.
- A server on staff at the host venue will be on hand to help the chef serve the judges.



- While the participating chef is presenting to the judges, the sous chef or assistant will be charged with cleaning the workstation and packing things up in a timely fashion, leaving the space in the same condition in which it was found.
- Chefs are solely responsible for cleaning their workstations and keeping up with all of their belongings.
- Chefs may bring guests to observe the presentation, take photographs, promote on social media, etc., however these guests *may not* share the food photos publicly until the final round of preliminary competition is over on June 26. This is to ensure fairness to all chefs.
- Participating chefs and their guests must leave the venue once an individual chef's presentation is complete.
- No reimbursements for product, travel, lodging, labor, or any other expenses accrued for participation will be offered by the NCRLA for the preliminary or regional rounds.

4. Regional Rules and Procedures

- The regional rounds for the 2023 series will take place in one of two North Carolina regions at these specific venues:
 - July 17: For Western NC, Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte
 - July 24: For Eastern NC, Wake Technical Community College, School of Baking & Pastry in Raleigh
- All the above rules in the preliminary rounds apply to the regional rounds of competition.
- At the regional rounds of competition, chefs will present to a panel of *four* professional judges. A chef will present every 15-20 minutes throughout the day. Each chef will be assigned a specific presentation time.



- Chefs must prepare *five plates*—four will be presented to the panel of judges and the fifth plate will be the photo plate, used for marketing and promotional purposes. Chefs must supply their own plates.
- Chefs who advance to the regionals may request to use the same protein as they did in the preliminary round, but they must make a different dish. Once again, proteins will be available on a first come, first served basis.
- Chefs must recreate their regional round dish at the grand finale, but may make seasonal changes as approved by the NCRLA. Details of the regional round dish and a list of ingredients and featured farms and producers at a specified date prior to each regional round.
- Based on regional scoring, the NCRLA Chef of the Year and NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year will be announced the evening of Aug. 14, 2023, at the finale event of the 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown.

5. Grand Finale Rules and Procedures

- All winners will be announced the evening of Aug 14, 2023. Contestants must be present to win.
- At the finale, all participating chefs will compete for People's Choice awards.
- In the finale, chefs will receive a grocery stipend of \$400 for savory chefs and \$300 for pastry chefs. To receive the grocery reimbursement, participating chefs will be sent a NCRLA reimbursement form, which is required to be returned to NCRLA **with receipts of purchased product** attached by September 4. Pre-payment is not available. Reimbursements will be mailed no later than September 13.
- Tickets for the 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown Aug. 14 finale may be purchased online at www.NCChefShowdown.com. There are no discounted rates available.



- Participating chefs and sous chefs are not required to purchase tickets for the event and each will receive one plus-one ticket to the 2023 NCRLA Chef Showdown finale.
- Chefs must check in at the venue, The Pavilion at Angus Barn, at the assigned time.
- All participants must be ready for photos and announcements at a specified time, at which time they may not leave the building until the completion of the event.
- Chefs are required to cook the same dish they did in the regional round, making seasonal changes as approved by the NCRLA.
- If needed, participating chefs traveling in from out of town may have access to the kitchens, coolers, and freezers at The Pavilion at Angus Barn. Those arrangements and specific needs will need to be made with Heidi Billotto two weeks prior to competition date.
- Participating chefs must be prepared to serve a sample-sized portion to ~300 guests.
- In addition to sourcing from local farms, chefs will be introduced to competition sponsors who would be delighted to provide North Carolina product for use in dishes served at the event. Use of these suppliers is not required, nor will it be judged any differently than any other North Carolina products, protein or produce.
- Chefs are responsible for bringing their own ingredients, tools and other specialty items required to create their dish.
- Chefs are encouraged to decorate booth/table space to represent their restaurants. The use of large signage and banners must be approved in advance by NCRLA Chef Showdown organizers.
- Electrical equipment, such as sous vide machines, popcorn machines, mixers, electric coil or solid burners or induction burners are allowed. A list of electrical needs is required to be given to Heidi Billotto on July 31, two weeks prior to the August 14 finale, and must be approved for use.



- A dishwasher on staff at the host venue will be on hand and available to chef, should chefs require dish washing.
- Chefs are solely responsible for their belongings.
- Reimbursement is NOT AVAILABLE for travel, lodging, labor, or any other expenses accrued for participation in the NCRLA Chef Showdown; however, NCRLA will do its very best to work with area hotels to provide lodging for chefs traveling from more than 60 miles away, at the very best discounted rates available. We will get information to all participants for whom this applies as soon as we have it in hand.

6. North Carolina Department of Agriculture Ambassadorship

The 2023-2024 North Carolina Department of Agriculture Chef Ambassadors will be announced at the finale.

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture's mission is to develop and expand markets through domestic and international channels for North Carolina's food, fiber, and forestry products.

Recognizing the valuable impact chefs throughout the state can have on the achievement of that mission, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture Markets Division has created a Culinary Ambassador Team. This team of talented culinarians will serve to support the department's efforts to promote the use of North Carolina food and beverage. Only six North Carolina chefs will be honored with the distinction of being awarded a spot on the team of culinary ambassadors each year.

The annual North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association (NCRLA) Chef Showdown



competition will serve as the mechanism to build this highly regarded six-member team.

As a part of the NCRLA Chef Showdown prize package, both the winner and the runner-up for the titles of NCRLA Chef of the Year and NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year, will be conferred with the prestigious position of North Carolina Culinary Ambassador.

With those titles, these chefs will be awarded the honor of wearing the coveted blue chef coat with the distinctive NC Culinary Ambassador logo. In addition, the People's Choice category winners for Best Savory Chef and Best Pastry Chef will be awarded positions as North Carolina Culinary Ambassadors. However, if the People's Choice award winners are the same as the first place and runner up of NCRLA Chef of the Year and NCRLA Pastry Chef of the Year, the competition third place runner-up for each title will be awarded the Ambassadorship. Chefs will serve as North Carolina Culinary Ambassadors for a one-year term, from August – July.

This elite team of chefs will be the culinary voice of the North Carolina Department of Agriculture. Their job: to advocate the use of North Carolina food and beverage products in restaurants and retail outlets across the state. The team will also assist in the department's marketing efforts on an as needed schedule, based on availability, thru cooking demonstrations, television and video appearances, educational discussions on healthy eating, seasonal recipe development and the general promotion of North Carolina's food and agricultural industries.