



PHONE 214.421.8711

EMAIL mlinear@bigtex.com

P.O. Box 150009
Dallas, Texas 75315

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2025 BIG TEX® CHOICE AWARDS OFFICIAL RULES & REGULATIONS

Below outlines the Official Rules & Regulations for the 2025 Big Tex Choice Awards. Any questions about the rules or contest should be directed to the Concessions Department at the State Fair of Texas.

Eligibility & Rules

- **Missed deadlines or late delivery of food items within the scope of the current year's competition will deem the application disqualified for the current year's Big Tex Choice Awards food competition.**
- Concessionaires who have operated at the State Fair of Texas for a **minimum of one (1) fair cycle are eligible** to compete in the Big Tex Choice Awards food competition.
- Any items submitted to this food competition **must be NEW to the applicant's concession stand and NEW to the State Fair of Texas.**
 - The submitted food item must be one the applicant will serve during the 2025 Fair should the submitted item become a "Finalist" in this food competition.
 - Should the submitted item advance to the Semi-Finals in this food competition, the item will be featured in all the Fair's "New Food" collateral marketing material. ****Change for 2025** If the food item advances to the Semi-Finals, the item must be served during the 2025 Fair.**
 - The submitted item(s) must be one the applicant can produce in sufficient quantities during the Fair within one or more of an applicant's existing concession locations.
 - PLEASE NOTE: Concessionaires are strongly encouraged to create and produce an original item not seen at other fairs or events nationwide.
- **Any food item submitted to this food competition must be served during the Fair exactly as it is presented in this competition.** Plating and presentation for the competition must be exactly as it will be served during the Fair (e.g., if mint leaves are used as part of the contest presentation, mint leaves must be used during fairtime operations when serving to customers). No presentation enhancements can be used for the competition that will not be used on every serving during the Fair.
- **Any items submitted to this food competition may be prepared or developed for the applicant with a third party; provided, however,** that the third party is not directly competing in the food competition and is not involved with the presentation, preparation, or associated with media opportunities related to this food competition.



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- **Applicants may not change submitted food item(s) for service during the Fair.** Submitted items must remain consistent during the various stages of the competition, and continuing in the service of the item during the Fair. **Should an applicant alter or change the submitted item(s) during the run of the Fair, the applicant will be deemed ineligible to compete in the Big Tex Choice Awards food competition for the next two (2) consecutive years.**

Entry Process

- All entries to the Big Tex Choice Awards must fall into one of two categories – Savory or Sweet. Winners will be selected in the following award categories for the Finals.
 - **Best Taste – Savory**
 - **Best Taste – Sweet**
 - **Most Creative** (selected from all submissions that advance to the Finals)
- **Applications must be submitted to the State Fair of Texas by 11:59 P.M. on Wednesday, May 15, 2025.** DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME OR ANY IDENTIFYING WORDS OR PHRASES ON THE APPLICATION FORM. YOU MUST REMAIN ANONYMOUS UNTIL WE REACH THE FINALIST PORTION OF THE COMPETITION. READ AND FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS ON THE APPLICATION CAREFULLY.
- **No applications for the Big Tex Choice Awards food competition will be accepted after the deadline.**
- Applications can be submitted online at [BTCA 2025 Application](#). Note this is a private link, that should not be shared with others. You must enter the following password to access the application: (password will be provided via email).
- ****NEW**** During the application process for 2025, you will be required to submit an estimated price for your item. This will be reviewed by Concessions Dept. and PR Dept. We cannot set the price for your items but consider the affordability of your item for the Fair consumer. This competition is built to drive patrons to your location. We are happy to discuss pricing and best practices with you.
- Each applicant may submit a **maximum of two (2) entries for consideration in any given competition year.**

Selection and Judging Criteria

- The State Fair of Texas will select an **anonymous, internal judging panel to evaluate ALL the 2025 entries in a blind tasting.** The judging panel will not know the identity of the applicants until the list of Finalists is announced.

Round #1 – All Entries will be tasted.



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- The State Fair of Texas will consider all applications submitted by the deadline (listed above) in the first round of the competition.
- **The anonymous, internal judging panel will taste each qualifying food item submitted.**
- **Each application will be judged based on the following criteria:**
 - **Presentation of the submitted item.** Is it visually appealing and would a fairgoer want to order it if they saw someone with the item?
 - **Taste.** Does the item taste good? Is it something that Fairgoers will want to eat?
 - **Creativity.** Is this an item that will spark conversation? Is the item something that is unique and can only be found at the State Fair of Texas?
- Each of the criteria will be scored on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 being the top score). Each item will be assigned a weighted average based on the three scores. Scores will remain confidential.
- **After all entries are tasted and scored, the top 25 entries will become Semi-Finalists.** All Semi-Finalists will be notified by the Concessions Department and given instructions for the next steps of the competition.

Round #2 – Semi-Finals

- ****2025 Change** - If the item makes it to the Semi-Finals, it must be sold during the 2025 Fair.**
- **The judges will revote based on the top 25 Semi-Finalist and then, the 10 highest weighted averages will become Finalists and advance to the final round of the competition.** All Finalists will be notified by the Concessions Department and given instructions for the next step of the competition.
- **NO BRANDING IS ALLOWED** that could reveal the concessionaire's identity. This is a blind taste test. The judging panel cannot know the identity of the concessionaire. Additionally, the applicant will have one sample at the tasting that can be professionally photographed by the State Fair staff for use in promotional materials such as the website, Visitor Guide, and social media. All Semi-Finalists will be featured on State Fair communication channels prior to and during the Fair.

Round #3 – Finals

- The Finals of the Big Tex Choice Awards will be Thursday, August 21, 2025, at 2:00 P.M. **All Finalists will be required to prepare a “sample tasting” of the submitted items on August 21, 2025 – this year, we anticipate no more than 100 samples being needed.**
- If applicants are not willing or cannot provide samples for the finals or participate in potential media interviews, they will not be considered for the competition.



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- If applicants are not willing or cannot participate in scheduled PR/Media events, they should not consider entering the contest.
- **The Finals will be judged by a panel of local and national celebrities** selected by the State Fair of Texas. **The panel will score each application based on the following criteria:**
 - **Presentation of the submitted item.** Is it visually appealing and would a fairgoer order if they saw someone with the item?
 - **Taste.** Does the item taste good? Is it something that Fairgoers will want to eat?
 - **Creativity.** Is this an item that will spark conversation? Is the item something that is unique and can only be found at the State Fair of Texas?
- Each of the criteria will be scored on a scale from 1 to 10 (with 10 being the top score). Each item will be assigned a weighted average based on the three scores. Scores will remain confidential.
- **The entries with the highest weighted averages in the Savory Category and Sweet Category will be selected as the “Best Taste” Winners in those respective categories.**
- At the discretion of the State Fair of Texas, the allocation of winners in the categories of Sweet and Savory are subject to change based on the number of entries for each category.
- **The entry with the highest weighted average in the Creativity Category among all the entries in the Finals will be selected as the “Most Creative.”**
- Should there be any ties in the scoring for Best Taste, weighted averages from the Semi-Finals will be added to the weighted averages from the Finals to create a combined score and break any ties in the competition. There is a possibility of a finalist winning both Best Taste and Most Creative.

Notification of Applicants

All communications with the State Fair of Texas related to the Big Tex Choice Awards food competition are confidential. Applicants may not communicate with the media about their status in the competition or communicate on personal/professional communication channels (e.g., social media, blogs, email) about their participation in the competition. If an applicant releases any information about the competition as the process is taking place, the applicant will be disqualified and deemed ineligible to compete in the Big Tex Choice Awards food competition for a minimum of two (2) consecutive years.

Semi-Finalists will be notified by Monday, June 23, 2025.

Upon notification, the State Fair will issue a press release announcing the food items that are part of the Semi-Finals for the competition and the list of items will be showcased on



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State Fair communication channels. All concessionaires in the Semi-Finals are to remain anonymous and only the food items will be released.

Finalists will be notified by Monday, July 21, 2025.

Upon notification, the State Fair will work with the finalists to prepare for the media release and/or press conference announcing the Finalists. Applicants in the Finals are to remain anonymous until the press conference. At that time, concessionaire names and food items will be released.

- In the event of a formal press conference, Finalists may be asked to provide up to 100 food samples for the media to taste and one complete food finalist item to use for on-site photography.
- Finalists must stay after the competition reveal for interviews with media and should anticipate interview opportunities for the rest of the day and potentially the following week.