

2025-2026 DISTRICT 5 4-H FOOD SHOW CONTEST INFORMATION

This contest challenges members to select and create a dish using healthy ingredients, and it allows them to demonstrate their kitchen skills and knowledge through a hands-on demonstration and quiz. Participants compete in one of four food categories: Appetizer, Main Dish, Side Dish, or Healthy Dessert.

Contest Date

- Friday, December 5, 2025

Location

Center High School
658 Rough Rider Drive
Center, Texas 75935

How to Register

- All registrations for the 2025-2026 District contests will be conducted on the Texas 4HOnline system. It is the responsibility of the 4-H member and their parent to ensure they are registered for Food Show on time, correctly, and the payment has been accepted.
- Enter individually on 4HOnline at <https://texas.4honline.com>
- Payments declined will need to be cleared and accepted BEFORE contest date in order for the contestant to be considered registered and eligible to participate.
- Contest Fee - \$20 per contestant
- Late Entry Fee - \$40 per contestant
- The general refund policy for 4HOnline is that no refunds are provided to a 4-H member or family once the registration is approved. In extreme circumstances, such as a death in



**DISTRICT 5
4-H FOOD
SHOW**

**OPEN TO ENROLLED DISTRICT 5
4-H MEMBERS**

- Junior/Intermediate Age Division - prepare dish AT HOME and bring to contest to be judged
- Senior Age Division - prepare dish onsite to be judged

2025-2026 Theme:
Food Truck Favorites

Categories:

- Appetizer
- Side Dish
- Main Dish
- Healthy Dessert

Prep and judging schedule to be released at a later date
Placings announced onsite at close of event

Register at
texas.4honline.com
\$20 entry fee
October 10 - Nov 13, 2025

Late entry \$40
November 14-17, 2025

Complete District Contest Rules at D54h.tamu.edu

FOOD SHOW CONTEST:
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2025
CENTER HIGH SCHOOL,
CENTER, TEXAS

Food Show is a qualifying event at the county level. Contact your local County Extension agent for more information.

If you need any type of accommodation to participate in this program or have questions about the physical access provided, please contact Carolyn Walton at carolyn.walton@ag.tamu.edu by November 13, 2025.
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
1710 N Hwy 3053 | PO Box 200 | Overton, Texas 75684
Tel. 903.834.6191 | Fax 903.834.7140
www.texas4-h.tamu.edu

the immediate family, severe illness/accident, or cancellation of an event, refunds will be provided, less any expenses already incurred by the event.

District Deadlines

- Regular registration is open from **October 10 to November 13, 2025.**
- Incomplete registrations (missing completed recipe form, payment declined, or registration not finished) will be deleted on November 14, 2025. Those still desiring to register will need to do so during the late registration period.
- Late registration – **November 14-17, 2025** (late fees apply).

Entry Divisions (grade by September 1, 2025)

- Junior Grades 3, 4, and 5
- Intermediate Grades 6, 7, and 8
- Senior Grades 9, 10, 11 and 12

Special Accommodations

- Any competitor who requires auxiliary aids or special accommodation must contact the District office at least 2 weeks before the competition or note such needs when registering on 4HOnline.

Participant Check-in

- All youth participants will need to check-in at the Help Desk located in the foyer at least 30 minutes before contest start time as listed in the schedule of events.
- Be sure to bring a donation for our D5 Council Officer Community Service Project!

Preliminary Schedule of Events

- A detailed schedule with time/room locations for each age division will be released mid-November. Check-in, preparation, and judging times for each age division will be staggered throughout the day with an awards ceremony conducted at the end of contest.
- **Junior and Intermediate Age Divisions – Preliminary Judging Schedule**
 - Heat 1: 8:00 – 9:30
 - Heat 2: 10:00 – 11:30
 - Heat 3: 12:00 – 1:30
 - Heat 4: 2:00 – 3:30
 - Awards at conclusion of judging
- **Senior Age Division – Preliminary Prep and Judging Schedule**
 - Group 1: 8:30 – 10:30
 - Group 2: 11:00 – 1:00
 - Group 3: 1:30 – 3:30
 - Awards at conclusion of judging



Electronic Devices

- No electronic devices or jewelry (except for medically required) is allowed in contest areas. This includes cell phones, smart watches, or other communication devices.

Contest Viewing

- Food Show contests will be closed to viewing. Parents/project leader may assist their youth member to the contest room door with supplies.

Awards and Prizes

- An awards ceremony will be conducted at the end of the contest period. Youth participating in the Food Show are encouraged to stay for the awards ceremonies. Youth placing, but unable to participate in the ceremony, will receive their award and prize from their county agent.
- 1st – 3rd places will be presented a rosette and a prize to be selected by recipient at time of ceremony.
- Placings for the Food Show will also be published via email and the District 5 4-H website one week after this event.
- Entry via 4HOnline gives permission to the District office to use the participant's name and/or photograph as needed for marketing and promotion purposes.

Scorecards

- Rankings, judges' comments, and other correspondence will be forwarded to the contestant's county Extension office. Please allow up to three weeks for processing.
- See attached contest scorecards.

Scoring

- See the 4-H Food Show scorecard in the Appendix for scoring criteria and areas of focus in which interview/judges' questions are generated.
- Juniors and Intermediates: There are a total of 100 possible points from presentation, quiz and knowledge showcases.
- Seniors: Total scores will be tallied from Presentation & Preparation scorecards as well as the quiz for a total of 125 possible points. The State 4-H Food Show contestant paperwork is available online at <https://texas4-h.tamu.edu/projects/food-nutrition/>

Questions Before Contest

- Contact your local county Extension agent for eligibility, participation, and county-level contest questions.
- Contact Carolyn Walton at the District 5 office at 903-834-6191 for registration questions.

Questions at Contest

- Please see help desk attendant located in the foyer.

County Entries

- Each county may submit one entry per food category per age division. See example below:

- In each age division there are four food categories. The county may enter 1 Junior for Main Dish, 1 Junior for Side Dish, 1 Junior for Appetizer, and 1 Junior for Healthy Dessert.
- This is the same for Intermediate and Senior age divisions.
- A total of 12 entries per county may be submitted for the district contest.

Food Show Components

- Each food show participant will complete/compete in each of the following components:
 - **Food Show Dish Presentation/Interview** (see specific information for each age division on the following pages)
 - **Skill Showcase** – Youth will demonstrate their knowledge of a skill assigned by the judges. All materials to demonstrate this skill will be provided and judges will score the skill based on correct procedures, safety, and other pertinent information related to the skill assigned. The skill demonstration will be designated during judging and will include a time limit.
 - **Knowledge Showcase** – Contestants will be given a 10-question quiz which will contain multiple choice and true/false questions in the areas of food preparation, food and kitchen safety, and general nutrition knowledge. Refer to the [Texas 4-H Food & Nutrition page](#) for resources.



2025-2026 Theme: *Food Truck Favorites*

- Get ready to fire up your creativity and cooking skills for the District 5 Food Show, featuring the exciting theme “Food Truck Favorites!” From gourmet tacos to sizzling stir-fries and mouthwatering health inspired desserts, food trucks bring bold flavors and innovative dishes to the streets – now it’s your turn to bring that energy to the kitchen!

Food Categories

- **Appetizer** – Traditionally an appetizer is a small dish or food that is eaten prior to the main course. When selecting recipes for this category, contestants should consider foods that are lower in fat, sodium, and calories so as to not ruin one’s appetite.
- **Main Dish** – The main dish is usually the heaviest, heartiest, and most substantial dish in a meal. In a meal consisting of several courses, the main dish is served during the main course and is the featured dish of the meal. The key ingredient is usually meat or another protein food, but they may contain other foods.
- **Side Dishes** – Side dishes are foods that are usually served along with a main dish or as accompaniments to the main course. Suggested dishes may include salads, cooked vegetables, cooked fruit, pasta or rice dishes, and/or combination vegetable dishes.
- **Healthy Desserts** – Healthy can still mean delicious when it comes to desserts. Dishes in this category should be served at the end of the meal or for special occasions. Contestants should modify traditional recipes with healthy substitutions and consider MyPlate and Dietary Guidelines when selecting recipes for this category.

Recipes



- Recipes should be written in the standard recipe format using the attached **Recipe Submission Checklist**. Nutritional analysis for recipe is not required and will not be judged.
- Contestants are **REQUIRED** to use the State 4-H Food Show paperwork forms. No photos or copies of recipes will be accepted. No copyrighted recipes should be used.
- When choosing a recipe, please keep in mind what ingredients will be available or in season for all levels of competition: county, district and state. Additionally, please remember that the goal of the food and nutrition project is to learn healthy eating skills and healthy recipe selection.
- No alcohol or ingredients containing alcohol may be used.
- Senior age division contestants, qualifying for the State food show, must enter the same recipe that they qualified at the District level.
- Contestant recipes will be uploaded in the 4HOnline system as part of the registration process. **Recipe upload instructions:**
 - Use the food show PDF fillable recipe form located on District 5 web page www.d54-h.tamu.edu
 - Use the name of the recipe as the file name – i.e., Grandma's Creamed Corn.
 - Do not use the member's name or the county as the file name.

Garnishes

- Only edible garnishes are allowed. Participants will be asked to remove any other material besides a serving utensil, napkin, and edible garnish from their serving tray.

Contest Room

- **ONLY THE CONTESTANT** is allowed in the contest room. All others must remain in the designated waiting areas or outside the building. Contestants can only be assisted with transporting boxes from parking lots to the contest room door.
- Contestants must check-in and check-out of the contest room.
- Contestants must prepare their own dishes.

Food Safety

- Contestants should wear clothing consistent with professional and safe food handling practices.
- Closed toed shoes should be worn.

Junior and Intermediate Age Divisions – General Information

- The Floor Monitor will inform each contestant when and where to take his/her dish to be judged.
- Time Schedule
 - Knowledge Quiz 10 minutes
 - Interview/Presentation 8 minutes total
 - Introduction 2 minutes
 - Q and A judges 3 minutes
 - Serving of dish 1 minute
 - Skill showcase 2 minutes

Junior and Intermediate Age Divisions – Contestant Presentation/Interview

- **Presentation and Introduction** – Each contestant will start with a maximum **two-minute** presentation to introduce themselves and their dish, reasoning behind selection of recipe, and how it relates to the theme.
- Judges will have the opportunity for a **three-minute interview** asking questions applicable to the attached scorecard. It includes, but is not limited to, basic nutrition, food safety, food preparation, age-related nutrition, as well as project experiences.
- At the end of the interview period, contestants will have **one minute** to serve the judges a portion of their dish. This allows the judges to visually evaluate the dish prepared. Contestants should practice proper food handling techniques when presenting food to the judges. Judges will not taste the food.
- The food should be presented in a serving dish with a serving utensil provided by the contestant. In addition, a napkin to lay serving utensil on is allowed. The dish should be presented to the judges as if it were about to be placed on a table for a family dinner.
- Contestants should serve judges what they deem is an appropriate serving size for evaluation purposes.
- Paper goods for these servings will be provided by the food show committee. Contestants will serve one serving to the judging panel, not a serving to each individual judge.
- If needed to safely transport the dish to the judging table, contestants should bring a serving tray. Serving trays will not be provided.
- Dishes will not be judged based upon display. Fancy or elaborate placement, linens, centerpieces, candles, etc. are not to be included with the dish as it is presented for judging interviews.
- Contestants should use only serving dishes and utensils appropriate and necessary to present and serve the dish to be judged.

Senior Age Division – General Information

- District food show contestants must enter the same recipe that they qualified with at the County level.
- Contestants must prepare their own dishes. Foods that are not part of the contestant's entry cannot be prepared in the Preparation Centers.
- Contestants should bring all ingredients in their original purchased or picked form (boxed, canned, on stalks, with stems, etc.). Contestants will prep ALL ingredients on site as preparation is now being judged.
- Final cooking and baking of all dishes must be done in the food preparation facility.
- Time Schedule

▪ Knowledge Quiz	10 minutes
▪ Preparation room	up to 2 hours total including oven use
• Oven use time	up to 60 minutes
▪ Interview/Presentation	11 minutes total
• Introduction	5 minutes
• Q and A judges	3 minutes
• Serving of dish	1 minute
• Skill showcase	2 minutes



Senior Age Division – Preparation

- **Kitchen Time Limits** - Contestants will be assigned specific preparation facility times and preparation time limits based on number of entries and recipes. Depending on the number of entries and recipes, contestants may be limited to 2 hours in the facility; this time limit will include final cooking and/or baking of their dish.
 - Contestants will not be permitted in the preparation areas before or after their specified times.
 - Contestants will be required to share a limited number of work surfaces, sinks, stoves, and refrigerators. Contestants should practice working in small spaces prior to the food show.
 - Should an unforeseen mishap occur, a contestant can remake their recipe within their allotted time and workspace only if the Kitchen Supervisor grants permission to do so.
- **Equipment** - Only hot plates or electric burners, refrigerators, electric tabletop ovens, microwaves, and worktables will be available on-site for contestants to use in preparing their recipes. Special equipment or appliances must be provided by the contestant. Equipment with open flames is not allowed.
 - Ovens in preparation area will be preset and labeled with cooking temperatures. Temperatures in preset ovens CANNOT be changed by contestants. Contestants who will be using an oven in the preparation of their dish are encouraged to bring an oven thermometer for use in the food preparation facility ovens.
 - All four food categories may use ovens during food preparation. However, oven time is limited to 75 minutes in all categories.
 - Contestants must provide cutlery, cutting boards, cleaning supplies, dish towels, paper towels, potholders, timers, ingredients for recipe and any appliances not listed above.
- **Safety** - Contestants should wear clothing consistent with professional and safe food handling practices. Closed toe shoes must be worn in food preparation area. Contestants may change their clothes prior to their scheduled interview if they choose; however, they will need to include this time in their assigned time limit.
- **Preparation Judging** - Contestants will be judged while preparing their dish in the kitchen area and MUST PREPARE ALL INGREDIENTS ON SITE. Ingredients SHOULD NOT BE PREPARED AHEAD OF TIME-this includes any pre-measuring, pre-slicing, pre-chopping, pre-cooking etc.
- This judging process will focus on food safety, equipment safety, proper cooking techniques, and sanitation around cooking area during and after preparation. Judges will ask questions, if necessary, during the process; therefore, contestants should be prepared to multi-task.

Senior Age Division - Food Show Interview



- Dishes prepared should utilize only ONE recipe and not multiple to create versions or options of the recipe. (Example: an appetizer recipe should only feature one version and not multiple).
- Contestants will be interviewed following completion of their assigned food preparation facility time.
 - The Kitchen Supervisor will inform each contestant when and where to take his/her dish to be judged. The judging order will be assigned by the food show committee and provided to participants prior to the district contest. Interview times may be adjusted on day of contest to accommodate schedule. Contestants should be prepared to interview earlier than their scheduled time if asked to do so.
 - **Introduction/Presentation** - Each contestant will start with a maximum **five-minute** presentation to introduce themselves and their dish. To earn maximum points, participants must use the 5-minute presentation to describe their inspiration in choosing their recipe, how recipe relates to the current food show theme, and the following areas of the scorecard: Knowledge of MyPlate, Nutrition Knowledge, Food Preparation, and Food Safety Concerns.
 - **Question and Answer** - Judges will have the opportunity for a **three-minute** interview asking questions applicable to the scorecard located in the Appendix. It includes but is not limited to basic nutrition, food safety, food preparation, chronic disease prevention, age related nutrition, or other areas of health, as well as project experiences.
 - **Serving** - At the end of the question and answer period, contestants will have **one-minute** to serve the judges a portion of their dish.
 - Contestants should practice proper food handling techniques when presenting food to the judges. Judges will not taste the food.
 - The food should be presented in a serving dish with a serving utensil provided by the contestant. In addition, a napkin to lay serving utensil on is allowed.
 - In some instances, it is not necessary to present to the judges the entire recipe. For example, if a recipe makes two loaves of bread, only one loaf needs to be presented for judging. Contestants should serve judges what they deem is an appropriate serving size for evaluation purposes.
 - Paper goods for these servings will be provided by the food show committee.
 - Contestants will serve one serving to the judging panel, not a serving to each individual judge.
 - If needed to safely transport the dish, contestants should bring serving trays. Serving trays will not be provided.
 - Fancy or elaborate placemats, linens, centerpieces, candles, etc., are not to be included with the dish as it is presented for judging interviews. Contestants should use only serving dishes and utensils appropriate and necessary to present and serve the dish to be judged.