

2023 Smoke Under the Oaks

LDRC¹ Rib Fest Competitor Rules

1. COMPETITOR – A competitor is any individual, group, restaurant, etc. hereinafter referred to as a team that will prepare and cook an entry or entries for the purpose of being judged according to LDRC Rib Fest rules at the Smoke Under the Oaks contest.
 - a. Each team will be comprised of a chief cook and up to three (3) assistants.
 - b. No team shall be permitted to cook in the contest as two separate teams using the same team name with a suffix or prefix.
 - c. No LDRC Board Member may cook in any category of the Smoke Under the Oaks BBQ contest.
 - d. No team shall enter more than one turn-in box per meat category in the contest.
 - e. Neither a family member of a competing cook team nor any cook team member may enter the judging area at any time during the contest.
 - f. All cook teams must have the chief cook or at least one representative of their team present at the Cook Team Meeting held on the evening prior to the contest. In the event this is not possible, the chief cook shall contact the Competitor Manager and inform them of their absence. Cook teams absent from the meeting accept all responsibility for understanding these rules and any changes to them that may have occurred. Violation of these rules may result in disqualification from this contest.
 - i. The chief cook or authorized team representative will be required to sign a copy of competitor's rules at the Cook Team Meeting.
 - g. Chief cooks and/or assistants may only cook for their designated team at the contest.
2. INTERPRETATION OF THE RULES – The decisions and interpretations of the Competitor Rules are at the discretion of the LDRC Contest representatives at the contest. Their decisions and interpretations are final to the extent consistent with the rules.

¹ LaBelle Downtown Revitalization Corporation (LDRC)

- a. No LDRC representative may deviate from nor change any contest rule during the contest.
3. EQUIPMENT – Any wood, charcoal, or wood pellet fired cookers (homemade or commercially manufactured) will be allowed in the contest. Each team will supply all of the equipment necessary for the preparation and cooking of their entry including a cooker, wood, charcoal, or wood pellets. Electrical accessories such as spits, augers, or forced draft are permitted. NOTE: Propane or electric is permitted only as fire starters, provided that the competition meat is not in/on the cooking device (refer to condition #4). The competitor manager has the right to inspect cooking equipment before and during the contest.
 - a. No team may share a cooker or grill with another team.
 - b. No open pits or holes are permitted. Fires shall not be built on the ground.
 - c. No electric, gas, wood, charcoal or wood pellets fryers are permitted during the cooking process.
 - d. If a generator is used as equipment, the noise cannot be more than 57 dB at rated load for the equipment. Additionally, it must be kept secured from the public in all directions.
4. COOKING FUELS – The only approved cooking media are wood, charcoal, or wood pellets. Gas of any kind or any electrical heating element may be used only to start the initial fire or to start burn barrels, charcoals chimneys, etc... A gas starter, gas flame, or electrical heating element may not be used in the cooker after the meat has entered the cooker or during the cooking process. Gas bottles must be disconnected from the cooker once the fire has started and must be removed from the immediate cooking area. A gas flame or electrical heating shall not be used in the cooker during any part of the cooking process (e.g. the fire goes out for any reason during the cooking process).
 - a. **Competitors must adhere to all electrical, fire and other codes. A fire extinguisher shall be near all cooking devices supplied by team.**
5. COMPETITOR'S SITE/COOKING AREA -Each team will be assigned a cooking space. All equipment including cooker, canopy/tent, trailer, tables, or any other equipment such as generators must be contained and secured within this space.
 - a. It is recommended that each team pitch a canopy within/over their space – display your team name and team number.

- b. Any cooking of the meat shall be done within the assigned cooking space.
 - c. Teams shall not share an assigned cooking space.
6. CLEANLINESS AND SANITATION – All teams are expected to maintain their cook spaces in an orderly and clean manner and to use good sanitary practices during the preparation, cooking, and judging process. All federal, state and local food safety rules and regulations must be complied with at all times.
- a. The use of sanitary gloves is required at all times while handling food.
NOTE: Failure to use sanitary gloves may result in disqualification.
 - b. No use of tobacco products while handling meat.
 - c. Shirt and shoes are required to be worn.
 - d. The work area (tables, etc..) of each team must be sanitized. It is recommended to use bleach/water rinse (one cap bleach per gallon of water) to sanitize the work station.
 - e. All teams should have a first aid kit. First aid is not required to be provided by the contest.
 - f. It is the responsibility of the chief cook to assure that the team's assigned cooking space is clean and orderly following the contest. All fires must be put out and equipment removed from the site. It is imperative that clean-up be thorough.
 - g. Any team's assigned cooking space left in disarray or with loose trash, other than in park/city trash containers, may result in a disqualification (even after awards have been announced) or prohibition to participate in future Smoke Under the Oaks contests.
7. COMPETITOR BEHAVIOR – A cook team is responsible jointly and severally for its chief cook, team members and guests. All teams, including members and guests, are expected and required to exhibit proper and courteous behavior at all times. Teams are expected to know and understand local laws and adhere to same.
- a. No alcoholic beverages will be distributed to the general public by cook teams.
 - b. Excessive or continued complaints to the competitor manager or any LDRC staff which are unfounded, unsubstantiated, or outside of the rules stated wherein may constitute grounds for disqualification and/or prohibition from participation in future contests.

8. MEAT INSPECTION – All meats must be USDA² or FDACS³ inspected and approved. No cooking of any entry is permitted until after inspection by the competitor manager or a LDRC-designated meat inspector.
 - a. All competition meat shall start out raw and once the meat has been inspected, it shall not leave the cooking space until judging.
 - b. Prior to cooking, all meat that is resting in preparation for cooking must be covered at all times.
 - c. All meats must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees F.
 - d. After cooking all meat must be maintained at a minimum temperature of 140 degrees F in a covered container until turned in for judging.
 - e. All entry ribs must have meat on the bone.
9. BARBEQUE – For the purposes of the Smoke Under the Oaks contest, cooking the competition meat can only occur on a device described in condition #3 and #4. Parboiling, sous-vide, and/or deep-frying competition meat is not allowed.
10. CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION AND IMMEDIATE EVICTION OF A TEAM AND/OR GUESTS
 - i. Serving alcoholic beverages to the general public.
 - ii. Excessive use of alcoholic beverages or public intoxication with a disturbance.
 - iii. Serving additional food items or side dishes to the public.
 - iv. Use of illegal controlled substances.
 - v. Foul, abusive, or unacceptable language or any language causing a disturbance.
 - vi. Fighting and/or disorderly conduct.
 - vii. Use of gas or other auxiliary heat sources inside the cooking device.
 - viii. Theft, dishonesty, cheating, use of prohibited meats, or any act involving moral turpitude.
 - ix. Excessive noise, including but not limited to that generated from speakers (radios, CD players, TVs, amplifying equipment) that creates a disturbance or nuisance at the contest.
 - x. Violation of any of the LDRC Rib Fest Competitor’s Rules above (#1-10).

² United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

³ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)

11. JUDGING – LDRC allows for blind judging only. Entries will be submitted in a turn-in box provided by LDRC contest staff. Only the entry to be judged is allowed in the turn-in box. Marking the box in any way shall disqualify the entry. This includes any handwriting or mechanically made mark inside or outside the turn-in box and extends to using toothpicks, skewers, or any other foreign material. Marked entries outside of the provisions under **PRESENTATION** will receive a one (1) in all criteria from all judges and disqualified. Each entry will be judged on:

a. **PRESENTATION:**

- i. Garnish is optional – if a garnish is used, it is limited to leafy greens and can be shredded, chopped, sliced, or whole leaves. No other types of garnishes are allowed – no other color than green or shades of green is allowed. “Prohibited” garnish shall receive a penalty score of one (1) on Appearance.

NOTE: If a garnish is not used, the team shall place one piece of aluminum foil inside the box to cover only the bottom of the turn-in box. Either garnish or foil will be used at the contest, but not both. If garnish is used, then foil will not be allowed in the turn-in box for any reason.

b. **TASTE/FLAVOR:**

- i. Ribs will be graded on taste. Sauce is optional. If used, it shall be applied directly to the meat and not be pooled or puddled in the turn-in box. No side sauce containers will be permitted in the turn-in box. Chunky sauce will be allowed. Chunks are to be no larger than a fine dice, approximately 1/8 inch cubed. Sauce violations shall receive a penalty score of one (1) on Appearance.

c. **TENDERNESS/TEXTURE:**

- i. Each entry rib must have texture when the judge picks up the rib and bites into it. The entry ribs must be tender, but not at the point the meat has fallen off the bone. Only pork ribs, meat on the bone, are to be provided for judging - no chopped, pulled, or sliced rib meat loose in the turn-in box allowed.

12. SCULPTING MEAT – The meat shall not be sculpted, carved, branded, or presented in a way to make it identifiable. Rosettes of meat slices are not allowed. Violations of this rule will be scored a one (1) on all criteria by all judges.

13. CAUSES FOR DISQUALIFICATION FROM JUDGING – An entry can be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

- a. There is evidence of marking or sculpting
- b. There is anything in the turn-in box beside the meat and garnish/one piece of aluminum foil (refer to **PRESENTATION**)
- c. There is evidence of blood such that the meat is uncooked
- d. There is not a minimum of five (5) separate and indistinguishable portions/ribs
- e. The entry is turned in after the officially designated time
- f. There are violations of the Cleanliness and Sanitation rules (e.g. failure to use gloves while handing food products)
- g. Not cooking the meat that was inspected
- h. Posting pictures, videos, or description of a team's turn-in box to social media or to a judge that is judging the contest before the awards ceremony

NOTE: If a team does not submit a turn-in box, or is disqualified/evicted and not allowed to submit, or is late for turn in, then the team is not judged and receives a zero (0) in all criteria. If a turn-in box is submitted and then penalized or disqualified for any reasons above, it will be judged and will receive a one (1) or ones (1s) in all criteria depending upon the violation.

14. Any competitor providing additional sauce or sauces for the ribs to the public must, at a minimum, have the sauce clearly labeled MILD, MEDIUM, or HOT. The sauces must be available in a sanitary container.