

CARIBBEAN HOTEL ASSOCIATION

HOW TO CONDUCT A CULINARY COMPETITION

















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Recommendations to Conduct a Culinary Competition

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I. Introduction

The Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA) in its mission to improve, develop, and promote the Food & Beverage sector in the Caribbean Region has prepared this manual to help any organization that wishes to organize a high-standard food & beverage competition.

Except for the rules and scoring system, CHA encourages creativity in the process of designing an event. Although conceived principally for hospitality establishments in Caribbean destinations, this manual can serve as reference for other types of organizations and establishments, and other regions of the world.

Caribbean Cuisine is a rich mixture of flavors, colors, textures and aromas that has a distinct character and is as unique as the Caribbean Region and the various destinations the Region comprehends. Culinary competitions constitute a perfect vehicle to foster the evolution of the food & beverage sector. They also represent a unique opportunity to learn from other countries and colleagues. More importantly, these competitions contribute to showcase cuisine as a vehicle to promote the better understanding of regional residents and visitors.

II. Objectives of Food & Beverage Competitions

Culinary and bartending competitions can be conducted with various objectives in mind, the foremost important among these being that of raising performance standards and professionalism, both in terms of production and of service.

Other objectives that may guide this type of professional competition include the following:

- Provide a forum for food & beverage professional to obtain recognition for their performance.
- b) Serve as platform for culinary research & development.
- c) Encourage participants to continue polishing their professional skills
- d) Stimulate and promote the incorporation of local or specific ingredients to the culinary product.
- e) Select a group of outstanding professionals to serve as representatives for promotional or competitive ventures.

III. Types of Competitions

There are various types of food & beverage competitions:

National Competition

Usually conducted by hotel or gastronomic associations, this type of competition often serves to select members of a national culinary team.

Sub-Regional Competition

Sub-regional competitions can become the qualifiers for the Regional competition for Private Teams, and also a perfect opportunity to select team members for national teams, when no national competitions are held.

Regional Competition

The competition at the regional level has an extra degree of excitement and an increased level of competitiveness due to the larger number of participants.

The competition can be held using one or two categories as qualified competitors:

- <u>National Teams</u> as described above and sanctioned by the national hotel or gastronomic association.
- Private Teams

IV. Competition Format

There are various competition formats, among which we will mention:

Mystery Basket

In this format, the list of available ingredients to produce the dishes or menus is provided to competitors on site, right at the beginning of the competition. Whilst this format does not provide participants with an opportunity to practice their performance, the need to develop a working plan with little anticipation serves to challenge and demonstrate the participant's creativity, and constitutes a tougher testing of his/her culinary or bartending skills. The competition's organizers are entirely responsible for supplying the ingredients in the mystery basket.

Pre-Planned Menu

This format allows competitors to prepare and practice in advance, which enables them to polish their skills and improve their performance.

Ingredients for this format can be secured in either of two ways:

- Participants submit a list of ingredients to organizers, and the latter are responsible for securing these. The disadvantage of this procedure is that organizers are not always capable of finding all ingredients, not to mention the time and energy they have to dedicate to this exercise, and the higher cost associated to it.
- Competitors are entirely responsible for securing their ingredients. In such case, organizers can indicate places or suppliers, which competitors can contact to purchase required ingredients to be obtained on-site (in the case of regional competitions.)

V. Planning Committee

The planning or steering committee is formed by a group of volunteers and administrative staff that provide continuity and guidance to the event's organization. This group shall meet or communicate on a regular basis and work on aspects such as:

- Culinary matters
- Selection of judges
- Fund-raising
- Complementary activities (such as social and educational)
- Promotional activities

VI. Participants

In the past, the kitchen had been the focus of culinary competitions, with bar as an addition to the total competition. Today, food development has been significantly refined, and increasingly discerning customers regard the culinary as a comprehensive experience. Therefore, equal attention should be paid to the service component, which has resulted in the incorporation of the waiter service as one of the participating categories. Depending on the nature of the competition, judges will rate either individual performers or teams of food & beverage professionals. Whether individual or collective, positions to be judged shall include the following positions and recommended qualifiers:

Chef (one to several, depending on the competition's specifications)

Chef with a Minimum of 5 years experience overseeing a chef brigade, employed in the destination / region for a minimum of one year.

Pastry Chef

A Pastry Chef qualified professional with a minimum of 3 years of experience, or Chef in kitchen with a minimum of 5 years of experience one-year minimum of destination / regional experience and previous food competition experience.

<u>Waiter</u>

A Service professional with a minimum of 2 years-experiences in a national or regional establishment.

<u>Bartender</u>

A service or bar professional with a minimum of 2 years experience in a national or regional establishment.

Apprentice chef

Apprentice chef enrolled in a recognized program in the region or a national employed in a regional establishment for three-year maximum.

VII. Competition Categories

The various categories are open to all competitors, single or group, professional or apprentice, but requirements and awards differ for each. Some competing categories include:

- Cooking
- Pastry / Confection
- Showpiece / Cold Food
- Showpiece / Pastry
- Hot Food: chicken, pork, beef, and fish
- Ice Carving
- Edible Cold Food
- Dessert: Cold, hot, ice cream, etc.

Traditional competitions were more extensive with multi-course meals. Contemporary competitions have been simplified with a view to reducing costs, and transforming the format into one of faster implementation, so as to make it more exciting to spectators.

VIII. Registration and Rules

Application documents to be submitted shall include the following:

- a. Application forms see suggested forms A, A1, A2, A3 in appendix.
- b. Résumé of all competitors.
- c. Three (3) course menu detailed in the format attached for 10 portions, see suggested forms C1-C2-C3 in appendix.
- Pastry à-la-carte dessert for four (4) and a gâteau for eight (8) see suggested forms P1-P2.
- e. Service style and proposed equipment. Refer to suggested form S1.
- f. Rum, Vodka-based, and Non-Alcoholic Cocktail for a number of portions equal to the number of judges for the bartending category. See suggested forms B1, B2, B3.

Suggested Rules

- Chef(s) & Apprentice(s) will have access to station or kitchen. Stations can have twothree 8 ft. tables covered with waterproof cover. 3 cutting boards, 4 burner stoves, 2 trash containers one for trash, one for food surplus. 3½ to 4 hours preparation will be available, and the end of which the first course must be served. 20 minutes after the 2nd course will be served. 20 minutes after the desserts will be served. The time will be checked at the beginning of the service time at 3½ - 4 hours. At the end of service, a further 15 minutes will be available for cleaning and final kitchen judge's inspection.
- **Pastry Chef(s)** will have 4 hours for the production and display of the items. A baking oven, working tables, mixer, and refrigerator 40F Freezer at 30F and baking sheets should be available.
- <u>Service Professional(s)</u> will have a total of 1 hour to set 1 table of 4 complete and set the service miss en place. 15 minutes before service, guests are to be seated. Service will be judged to 45 minutes after desserts are served. Coffee and after-dinner liquors are required. Service shall include table serving, and, if appropriate, also wine recommendations.
- <u>Bartender(s)</u> have 10 minutes to set their stations and have 30 minutes to prepare 3 drinks, two alcoholic, and one non-alcoholic: one rum-Based, one vodka, and one non-alcoholic fruit or vegetable-based.

Please note that participants must receive clear indications as of whether they need to bring their utensils, china, and others, or whether these would be secured by organizers.

IX. Judging Criteria

The following are suggested performance elements to be evaluated at culinary competitions and the scores assigned to each.

Chef	
Menu Presentation and Execution	15 pts.
Sanitation	5
Organization ¹ and Leadership	5
Service expedience	5
Presentation ²	10
Use of specified ingredients	25
(common scores w/apprentice)	
Professional skills ³	10
Taste and texture ⁴	
(common scores w/apprentice)	25
TOTAL	100

Apprentice	
Menu Presentation and Execution	15 pts.
Sanitation Organization and Support Service support	5 5 5
Presentation Use of specified ingredients	10 25
(common scores w/chef) Professional skills Taste and texture	10
(common scores w/chef)	25
TOTAL:	100

Pastry Chef		Service Professional (Waiter)	
Recipe Presentation and	15 pts.	Check list of service	15 pts.
Execution			
Sanitation	5	Service technique	25
Organization and workflow	5	Personal style and service presentation	15
Creativity	20	Professional Product Knowledge	15
Use of specified ingredients	15	Sanitation	10
Professional skills	15	Organization	20
Taste and texture	25		
TOTAL:	100	TOTAL:	100

Bartender	
Recipe Presentation and	25 pts.
Execution	
Use of specified ingredients	15
Professional skills	15
Taste and Texture	25
Organization and workflow	10
Creativity and presentation	10
TOTAL:	100

 ¹ Considers work flow timing and follow up.
 ² Considers exactness, quality, creativity, quantity, consistency, uniformity, portion size.
 ³ Creativity, knowledge of culinary skills, and fundamentals, uniformity, knife skills, proper use of ingredients, display of various techniques.
 ⁴ Flavor, texture, ingredient compatibility, nutritional balance, right temperature.

X. Jury Selection

Jury selection is an important component of competitions as the experience and quality of the judge is of critical relevance to encouraging performance improvement and excellence standards.

Jury must be integrated by an ideal ratio of 1 judge to every 10 competitors, and each should have appropriate experience in the areas to be rated.

Competition Briefing

Judges must meet with participants prior to the beginning of the competition and provide them with a clear and detailed explanation of the competition rules, and clarify any doubts participants may have.

Debriefing Session

In order to promote performance improvement, it is recommended that once the competition is over, judges take time to meet with the group of participants and discuss or comment on their findings and evaluations, highlighting the most relevant aspects. This will help competitors identify areas to which they need to pay more attention in their future performance. Additionally, judges can comment on significant trends found in their evaluations.

Judges Report

It is recommended that a report summarizing competition activities is rendered at the end of the competition or at the awards ceremony by one of the judges of each competition area (food and beverage.)

XI. Complementary Activities

Complementary activities can be developed to meet strategic or budgetary objectives. Regardless of the driving force, organizers should not be obliged to realize these. Complementary activities should be incorporated into the competition's program only if they make business sense.

Trade Show

The incorporation of a trade show meets various objectives:

- a) Create purchasing opportunities.
- b) Generate additional revenues.
- c) Build up traffic.

It is important that proper programming is maintained so that trade show and competition do not interfere or compete among each other.

Workshops and Seminars

The inclusion of workshops and seminars, in all areas of food and beverage, will also work to attract participants and general public. Workshops and seminars also provide an opportunity for sponsorships. The target public of the event will determine the nature of the workshops and seminars:

• For professionals:

Should be focused on polishing their skills (professional and administrative.) Purchasing opportunities can be provided by foodservice and wine & spirits suppliers.

• For the general public:

Who is interested in learning more about food & beverage, either for pleasure, status, or because they have a professional or business development interest in the sector.

Some of the seminars may be offered by:

Local Organizations like chefs associations, government bodies, health and training institutions, and suppliers, to name a few.

<u>Regional Organizations</u>, such as higher education and training institutions, renowned chefs, and leading international culinarians.

XII. Budget

Preparing budgetary guidelines and carefully following these is of pivotal importance to the event's financial success. These guidelines must consider items, such as:

Income	Expenses
SponsorshipDay PassesRegistration Fees	Trade Show set-upTraveling ExpendituresFood Cost
 Accommodation Commission Ad Sales Sales Commissions Others 	 Printed material: program, certificates, menus, etc. Awards (medals, trophies, cash prizes)
	 Event Production (decoration, a/v, lighting, etc.) Judges and Speakers expenditures (Traveling, transportation, accommodation, meals, and others) Communications (phone, fax, E-Mail, etc.) Badges Meeting space rental Uniforms Transportation Others

XIII. Planning and Organizing a Competition

Site Selection

In planning a culinary competition there are certain important factors, which relate to the successful staging of the competition. These include:

- Location of the final competition
- Accessibility of the chosen location
- Space and size of the area
- Availability of adequate storage facilities

a. Size and facilities

The designated area can be a convention hall or large institutional school. This designated site should be large enough to accommodate a minimum of 8 work stations (in the case no kitchens are available,) measuring 10X10 equipped with, table top stove, two 4' work tables, cutting boards, etc. for mise-en-place. There should be easy access to a shared oven and water supply. The usage of dividers will further enhance the setting. There should be an adjoining area for serving with a display

table. Finally there should be a private room or area for judging, preferably away from the general public eye.

<u>b. Storage</u>

The need for adequate storage area is important to accommodate the Chefs supply of perishable and non-perishable items i.e. chill rooms and freezers.

c. Accessibility

This chosen site should be easily accessible both to the competitors and the general public (when open to the latter,) in terms of transport (air, land, or sea.) Teams should be comfortable and the perception of neutrality is important.

Seeking Support

Securing support from direct and indirect beneficiaries is also essential.

a. Government support

- Tourist Boards
- Agricultural, and other related offices
- Import/Export agencies
- Financial and funding institutions

For the government, culinary competitions are an excellent marketing tool. They expose, unearth and work to bring forth the culinary styles of any particular region. Culinary delights are also becoming an added attraction and an incentive to any destination, thus the destination's tourism product will be greatly enhanced. Sectors such as the agricultural, with products such as vegetables, fruits, poultry, beef and seafood, can benefit.

b. Educational Institutions

These may also gain from exposing developments of hospitality services, a key to any hospitality training and educational institutions. The endorsement of hospitality training institutions is a definite plus.

c. Hotel and food & beverage-related associations

Will create strong network bonds, which in turn create a stronger participation. Any chef bodies should be given a voice in all planning stages.

Sponsorship and Fundraising

Once a budget is outlined, it should be put forward from the earliest planning stages. Target Sponsors should be identified and presented with proposals. These may include:

Tourist Boards and Hotel Associations

They benefit enormously from the resulting exposure for the destination.

• The Private Sector

Such as purveyors of food and liquor supplies, the promotional value of their Participation is also very attractive.

• Manufacturers and Suppliers of Food Products

They also obtain promotional benefits from their participation.

• Support industries

Like gas, chemical suppliers and manufacturers, equipment suppliers and manufacturers etc.

Other Tourism-Dependent Industries

Airlines, hotel chains, cruise ships, tour operators, travel agents, etc.

Sponsorship packages based on support levels can be created to incite partners to participate according to their means and scope of their participation. The central idea is that the greater the contribution, the greater the exposure the company or organization will receive.

A proper proposal should be carefully prepared and submitted to the sponsors. It is important to bear in mind that submitting sponsorship proposals early in the prospective sponsor's financial year, will increase the possibilities the sponsorship proposal will have to obtain a favorable response. Some of the aspects sponsorship proposals should include are:

- a. The proposed format for the event.
- b. Sponsorship benefits:
 - Specific exposure
 - Networking opportunities
 - Business advantages
 - Promotional benefits

XIV. Event Promotion

Selling the Event

Once the event is packaged and all of the information is compiled into promotional pieces, the task of selling the event starts. Sponsors, competitors, general public, culinary and hotel associations, exhibitors (when applicable,) government, and media are among the most important target publics.

Participants are the main target. Most efforts have to be directed to the chefs, commis and service professionals as well as to the professional associations they belong to, and the institutions in which they are employed. It is equally important to motivate competitors and their employers, as this will result in a greater support. Some of the motivating factors include:

- Accreditation
- Professional Exposure
- The Competitive Spirit
- Cash Incentives
- Professional recognition and image
- Publicity

All materials directed to the participants should firstly highlight the credibility of the event. The professional standards (such as judging formats, competition criteria, jury, etc.) must also be clearly outlined.

In the case of employed professionals, it is as important to make employers aware of the benefits their staff's involvement in this type of events provides to their establishments.

General Public

Showcasing the event is again important both to the organizers and the participants. The public participation serves to create a background and can become a revenue source.

XV. Event Management

The true success of any event lies in how it is being managed once all the pre-planning has been accomplished. In staging any culinary competition the following must be considered:

- The layout of the chosen site is key; things cannot be too spread out. Proper programming and concentrated access will ensure that there is a comfortable flow for both participants and public.
 - \Rightarrow Final floor plan must be discussed and decided with planning committee.
 - ⇒ The placement of theme decor e.g. banners, sponsor publicity, plants, and others must be carefully planned and decided by planning committee.
 - ⇒ Cook off stations must be visible and easily accessible to both participants and public.
- Judging facilities must provide a private area for discussions and judging sheet preparation.
- The positioning of the trade show booths must be strategic and provide for a good flow of people without excluding from the cook off stations.
- Registration, reception and information area must be accessible and staffed with a team that can provide timely and accurate assistance to all attendees.
- All staff must be properly briefed and able to provide information and answer questions from all attendants. Staff should include:
 - \Rightarrow Coordinators for kitchens and back-of-the-house.
 - \Rightarrow Coordinators and scorekeepers for judges.
 - \Rightarrow Floor coordinators and team of runners for clean-ups.
 - \Rightarrow Stations responsible for entrants' numbers and identity.
- Excellent audio equipment and facilities.

- In house briefed professional photographers and video technicians. This will provide for the audiovisual presentation at the awards ceremony and for records for the organizers.
- Clear, well placed signs and highlighted program outline at the entrance to facilities.
- Proper planning of the event's timetable for social events.
- Judges kits complete with accurate sheets. Event coordinator should conduct note judges brief.

XVI. Awards Ceremony

This ceremony should carry all the pomp and splendor possible, as it is the culmination of all the creative energy and skills of the participants, judges, exhibitors and all the staff that has made the event possible.

Special highlight should be given to:

- Participants
- Judges
- Sponsors
- Hosts

Audiovisuals are to be used in a way that ensures a smooth flow and a dynamic presentation. The master of ceremonies/compere should also be dynamic clear and concise. The event should flow to a peak and end on a high note; this again, is possible with proper programming. The main address and awards handout should be as short as possible as well as the expressions of gratitude. Keep in mind that this is when chefs show their moment of glory.

XVI. Post-Event Promotion

As with most ongoing events after the main show all tends to be forgotten, but it is precisely then where promotional strategies are needed to keep the event alive until the next one takes place. Promotional efforts should be developed to keep each of the target publics informed of event developments.

- Competitors
- Winners
- Judges
- Sponsors
- General Public

The winners have to be reassured of what they have achieved and that their skills have been properly displayed. Recognitions should be given and reference made to the winners at every possible instance.

Sponsors should not be left hanging, there is a definite need for continuous work with them and a team should be created to do so. This is also a good opportunity to maximize the sponsors' exposure by recognizing their contribution to the event. Networking is key.

Appendix



FORM A (summary)

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Name of T	eam	:						
Chef:								
Work Place:								
Address:								
Phone:								
Person res	spons	sible an	d conta	act info	ormatio	on:		
Address:								
Phone:	()						
Fax:	()						
E-mail:								



FORM A1

CHEF'S APPLICATION

Name of T	Гeam	:					 	
Chef:								
Work Plac	e:							
Address:								
Phone:								
Person res	spon	sible an	id conta	act info	ormatic	n:		
Address:								
		````						
Phone:	(	)						
Fax:	(	)						
E-mail:								



## FORM A2

## **APPRENTICE APPLICATION**

Name of T	Team	:		
Chef:				
Work Plac	e:			
Address:				
Phone:				
Person res	spon	sible ar	d contact information:	
Address:				
Phone:	(	)		
Fax:	(	)		
E-mail:				



## FORM A3

## SERVICE PROFESSIONAL APPLICATION

Name of 1	Гeam	:						
Chef:								
Work Plac	e:							
Address:								
Phone:								
Person res	spon	sible ar	nd con	tact inf	ormatio	on:		
Address:								
Phone:	(	)			_			
Fax:	(	)			_			
E-mail:								



### FORM S1

## **SERVICE FLOW**

Equipment:

Service Description:

After Dinner Rum:

Completed By:

_____



# FORM C1

<u>First Course</u>	
Name of Dish:	
Portions:	
Ingredients:	Quantity:
Method:	
Completed By:	Team:



## FORM C2

<u>Main Course</u>	
Name of Dish:	
Portions:	
Ingredients:	Quantity:
Method:	
Completed By:	Team:



## FORM C3

<u>Dessert</u>	
Name of Dish:	
Portions:	
Ingredients:	Quantity:
Method:	
Completed By:	Team:



## FORM P1

Pastry à-la-carte dessert	
Name of Dish:	
Portions:	
Ingredients:	Quantity:
Method:	
Completed By:	Team:



# FORM P2

Pastry à-la-carte dessert gât	eau		
Name of Dish:			
Portions:			
Ingredients:	Quantity:		
Method:			
Completed By:	Team:		



## <u>FORM B1</u>

## BARTENDER

## Rum Cocktail

Name of Drink: Ingredients:

Method:

Bartender:



## FORM B2

## BARTENDER

### Vodka Based Cocktail

Name of Drink: Ingredients:

Method:

Bartender:



## <u>FORM B3</u>

## BARTENDER

	Non	Alcoho	lic C	ocktail
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Name of Drink: Ingredients:

Method:

Bartender:



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