



CRITERIA FOR CULINARY JUDGING



Judges are asked for input regarding the best qualities of the item entered and on how the item can be improved. We understand that feedback is important for exhibitors, but please note that judges have a limited time to write evaluations based on the volume of entries and spend an average of three to four minutes on comments.



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PRESERVED FOOD & LIQUEUR COMPETITION

Dried Fruit, Vegetables, Meat Jerky & Herb Blends

40%.....Texture

- Pieces should be uniformly dry throughout.
- Fruit and tomatoes should be leathery and pliable.
- If the piece of fruit is folded over itself, it springs back.
- Chewy and not sticky or brittle.
- Free from cores and objectionable seeds or peel.
- Vegetables should be brittle, crisp, tough or cracking hard-dry enough to rattle.

Herbs:.....Pulverize or become like dust when rubbed.

Leathers:.....Leathery, yet pliable. Not sticky, crisp or brittle. Rolls without tearing or breaking.

Jerky:.....Leathery, drier than fruit, but not brittle. Piece cracks but does not break when bent.

30%.....Color

- Characteristic of product. No excessive discoloration.
- Color uniform throughout container.
- Pretreatment, if done, is appropriate.
- Note: Game meat should be frozen to destroy parasites before making jerky.

10%.....Size and Shape

- Pieces in exhibit are uniform in size and shape.
- Leathers are uniform in thickness.
- Pieces are neatly cut with no ragged edges.
- Size is suitable for later use.

10%.....Packaging and Labeling

- Label is neat, clean and contains name of product, date dried, and method of drying.
- Appropriate size and material for product; airtight closure.
- If in jar, no cracks, chips or rust. Lid/band free of dents, rust, or corrosion; clean and easily removed.
- No foreign matter or visible moisture.

10%.....Flavor/Aroma

- Pleasant odor and flavor, characteristic of fresh food (except jerky).
- No scorched or musty odor. Jerky: not overly salty, smoky or spiced.
- Free from rancid flavor.

Marmalades, Preserves, Conserves & Spreads

25%.....Pack

- Processed in boiling water or steam canner with correct elevation adjustment made; no open-kettle canning.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).
- Liquid covers all solids with no floating pieces.
- Good proportion of solids and liquids.

25%.....Quality of Fruit

- Pieces uniform in size and shape.
- Fresh, natural color to fruit, uniformly translucent and characteristic of cooked product.
- Pieces retain shape; firm yet tender; free of mushiness; clean cut edges to cut pieces.
- Fruit free from discoloration, blemishes, bruises, brown or black spots, and insect damage.

25%.....Quality of Texture

- Free from any sediment, unintended seeds, peels or other particles such as fibers, core and strings.
- Free from foam and large amounts of trapped air; few bubbles.

Marmalade:.....small thin pieces, clear, thick syrup

Preserve:.....pieces firm and whole; clear, thick syrup

Conserve:.....jam-like, containing two or more fruits, may contain nuts, coconut, or raisins

Curd:.....an "acid" smooth consistency

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15%Container

- Vacuum-sealed.
- Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.
- New lid and band is free of rust; screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.
- Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.

10%Flavor/Aroma

- Natural flavor of the fruit; not too sweet or strong from overcooking
- No scorched or musty odor. Note: Tender and even distribution of citrus peels in marmalade.

Canned Vegetables, Fruit & Tomatoes

40%.....Pack

- Acceptable processing method used with correct elevation adjustment.
- Correct preparation procedures followed; correct type of pack (hot, raw) for processing method.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace.
- Liquid covers all solids with no floating pieces.
- Good proportion of solids and liquids.
- Free of fancy packs that interfere with heat penetration.

25%Quality of Product

- Pieces are uniform in size and shape when appropriate.
- Fresh, natural color to foods; characteristic of cooked product.
- Pieces retain shape; firm yet tender; free of mushiness; clean-cut edges to cut pieces; no split skins on beans or peas.
- Free from discoloration, blemishes, bruises, brown or black spots, insect damage, mold or other defects.
- Free of strings, fibers, unapproved stems, peels, cores and pits.
- Characteristic of optimum maturity.

25%Quality of Liquid

- Free from unnatural cloudiness or bubbling.
- Free from any or excessive sediment, floating food tissue, unintended seeds, peels or other particles.
- Free from large amounts of trapped air.

10%Container

- Vacuum-sealed, clean, clear-glass standard canning jar.
- Appropriate size jar for product.
- New lid and band is free of rust; screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.
- Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.

Jams

25%Color

- Fresh, natural color representative of dominant fruit; fruit pieces are translucent
- Color uniform throughout. Free of discoloration, especially from scorching.

25%Consistency

- Soft enough to spread; not runny or overly thick; not gummy or sticky.
- Fruit pieces are tender and hold their shape.
- Pieces of fruit are uniform in size.
- Fruit pieces evenly distributed throughout container.
- No separation or layering.

20%Clarity

- Translucent and not "muddy" or cloudy looking, even though there is no separated, jelled juice.
- Absence of crystals.
- Free of bubbles.
- Free of foreign matter (peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.

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10%Pack

- Processed in boiling water canner or steam with correct elevation adjustment; no paraffin allowed.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).

10%Container

- Vacuum-sealed.
- Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.
- New lid and band is free of rust; screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.
- Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.

10%Flavor/Aroma

- Natural flavor of the fruit; not overcooked, overly sweet or tart.
- No scorched flavor, no scorched or musty odor.
- Note: preserves must contain 1 ounce or more of the following: nuts, raisins or coconut.

Jelly

25%Consistency

- Firm enough to hold shape.
- Tender, not too stiff or tough but "quivery."
- Stays in one mass when shaken loose from jar and does not break.
- No separation or layering and holds a sharp edge when cut.

25%Clarity

- Free from cloudiness and fruit pulp (except pepper jelly).
- Absence of crystals.
- Free of bubbles.
- Free of foreign matter (peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.

20%Color

- Fresh, natural color representative of dominant fruit.
- Color uniform throughout.

10%Pack

- Processed in boiling water canner or steam canner with correct elevation adjustment made.
- No paraffin allowed.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace (¼ inch).

10%Container

- Vacuum-sealed with clean, clear glass standard canning jar.
- New lid and band free of rust, clean, unbent and easily removed.
- Label clean, neatly placed and contains name of product, date processed, processing method and time.

10%Flavor/Aroma

- Natural flavor of the fruit.
- Not overcooked, overly sweet or tart.

Pickles & Relishes

30%Pack

- Processed in boiling water or steam canner with correct elevation adjustment made and no open kettle canning.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace (½ inch).
- Good proportion of solids and liquids, then neatly packed.
- Liquid covers all solids with no floating pieces.
- Color and translucency uniform throughout the jar.
- Attractive, neat, space well used.
- Spices and seasonings attractive in pack and not overwhelming.

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20%.....Color

- Even color throughout the jar, characteristic of fresh product.
- No artificial coloring.
- Dill weed and spices visible.
- Cloves of garlic should be bright and not discolored.

20%.....Texture/Consistency

- Pieces appear plump, not shriveled or shrunken.
- No internal holes in pickles.
- No separation or layering.
- Firm for pickles and softer for some relishes.
- Food pieces cut or chopped attractively, not too fine in relishes.
- Free of defect spots on peel.
- Evenly distributed throughout container.
- Cucumber not too old and seedy.

20%.....Quality of Liquid

- Clear, no unnatural cloudiness, free of bubbles.
- Free of trapped air bubbles with no active bubbling.
- Free of sediment and foreign matter (stems, cores, peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.
- No oil is to be used.

10%.....Container

- Vacuum-sealed.
- Clean, clear-glass standard canning jar.
- Use appropriate size jar for available processes.
- New lid and band free of rust with screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.

Brined Olives

Table olives will be assessed on the following characteristics:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Visually appealing to eat. | • Acidity |
| • Absence of blemishes | • Saltiness |
| • Appealing color | • Residual bitterness |
| • Good flesh texture | • Absence of off flavors |
| • Olive flavor | • Overall flavor balance |

35%.....Flavor

- The olive should have an appealing fruit flavor, which for green olives often is a typical fermentation taste but retaining "olive" character, and for black olives is a stronger olive flavor.
- There should be no "off" aromas such as rancid, cheesy or fecal aromas.

25%.....Bitterness and Saltiness

- The olive shouldn't be bitter to taste but some bitterness can be balanced by the amount of saltiness and olive flavor.
- The level of salt governs the flavor of the olive and must be balanced with the bitterness and acidity.

20%.....Skin and Flesh

- The skin of the fruit should be fine, smooth and not wrinkled, yet elastic and resistant to handling damage.
- Flesh should be firm but not woody or granular.
- Green olives should have firm, crisp flesh.
- Ripe or black olives will have softer flesh due to the fruit being more mature than green olives; however, it shouldn't be soggy or flabby.
- The flesh should separate easily from the stone.

20%.....Blemishes and Color

- Blemishes should be absent; however, some white spots on green olives are natural, others such as gas pockets or blistering are caused by processing and organisms.
- Green olives should be bright green to a straw green color.
- Some dulling may occur after several months in brine. Lye treated green olives are very bright green.
- Olives turning color should be pale pink, and black olives vary from dark pink to black or wine color.



Salsa

30%.....Pack

- Processed in boiling water or steam canner with correct elevation adjustment made and no open-kettle canning.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace (½ inch).
- Good proportion of solids and liquids, then neatly packed.
- Liquid covers all solids with no floating pieces.
- Quality of product: color and translucency uniform throughout the jar.
- Free of discoloration and blemishes.

20%.....Color

- Even color, characteristic of cured or cooked product.
- Free of discoloration and blemishes.

20%.....Texture/Consistency

- Pieces appear plump, not shriveled or shrunken.
- Food pieces cut or chopped attractively.
- Evenly distributed throughout container.
- No separation or layering.
- Spices and seasonings attractive in pack and not overwhelming.

20%.....Quality of Liquid

- Clear, no unnatural cloudiness, free of bubbles.
- Free of trapped air bubbles with no active bubbling.
- Free of sediment and foreign matter (stems, cores, peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.

10%.....Container

- Vacuum-sealed.
- Clean, clear-glass standard canning jar.
- Use appropriate size jar for available processes.
- New lid and band free of rust with screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.

Chutney

American and European-style chutneys are usually fruit, vinegar, and sugar cooked down to a reduction, with added flavorings. These may include sugar, salt, garlic, tamarind, onion or ginger. Western-style chutneys originated from Anglo-Indians at the time of the British Raj recreated Indian chutneys using English orchard fruits—sour cooking apples and rhubarb, for example. They would often contain dried fruit: raisins, currants and sultanas. No yogurt chutneys.

30%.....Flavor

- Smoothness to the palate.
- No off flavors.

25%.....Appearance

- Even color, characteristic of cured or cooked product.
- No artificial coloring.
- Free of trapped air bubbles with no active bubbling.
- Free of sediment and foreign matter (stems, cores, peel, seeds, etc.) and mold.
- Free of discoloration and blemishes.
- Color is often dark but depends on ingredients and spices used.
- Free from any signs of scorching (burned flecks).

25%.....Texture/Consistency

- Pieces appear plump, not shriveled or shrunken.
- Food pieces cut or chopped attractively, not too fine in relishes.
- Texture of vegetable pieces is similar to that of relish, but the liquid is thicker.
- Has a similar consistency to jelly and salsa.

20%.....Pack & Container

- Vacuum-sealed.
- Clean, clear glass standard canning jar.
- Use appropriate size jar for available processes.
- New lid and band free of rust with screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.
- Headspace is appropriate.



Sauces & Condiments

35%Color

- Bright, attractive color; no artificial coloring used.
- Color uniform throughout.
- No darkening at surface.

35%Consistency

- Flows freely, not too watery. Smooth.
- May round up at edges like a fruit butter.
- Free from any or excessive sediment, no foreign matter (floating food tissue, unintended seeds, peels, or other particles such as dark flecks from scorching)
- No separation, layering or layer of fat.

20%Pack

- Acceptable processing method used with correct elevation adjustment and hot packs used.
- Jar filled to appropriate headspace.

10%Container

- Vacuum-sealed.
- Use clean, clear glass standard canning jar.
- New lid and band is free of rust with screw-band clean, unbent and easily removed.
- Label is clean and neatly placed and contains name of exhibitor.

Hot Sauce, Small Batch

Each hot sauce entry is judged in a blind tasting using a cup with the entry tag attached to represent each entry. Judges are not allowed to see any indication of the brand, owner, or manufacturer of the product.

25%Flavor

- The taste should consist of the combination of the peppers and spices, with a perfect blend of flavors and no particular ingredient being dominant.

20%General Appearance

- The right visual experience.
- Hot sauce should look appetizing.
- A red chili should have a rich, bright color overall, and a verde (green chili) should, of course, have a green color to it.
- Both should not have a grey hue but should peak your curiosity and cause you to impatiently want to taste it as quickly as possible.

20%Flavor Balance

- Use of heat and burn-to-flavor balance.
- The bite, or after-taste, is the combination of heat and flavor from the selected peppers and spices that lingers in the mouth after the sauce has been eaten.
- Note: will lose valuable points if it is not pleasurable to taste.

15%Texture and Consistency

- It should not be watery, grainy or lumpy.

10%Aroma

- Should smell good and give an indication of what's in store when you taste it.

10%Division Fit

- Overall impression and compliant for category.
- Note: Pack must follow USDA food preservation standards.

Liqueur

20%Nose

- Consists of four categories: aroma, faults, variety and intensity.

20%Palate

- Consists of four categories: complexity, concentration, fruit and length.

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20%.....Balance

- Refers to the juxtaposition of the liqueurs' component parts and is an expression of their harmony and ability to co-exist in a way that leads to the greatness of a liqueur.

20%.....Finish

- Consists of three categories: after-taste, balance and acid.

20%.....Appearance

- Consists of four categories: color, viscosity, brilliance and depth.

HONEY COMPETITION

Liquid Honey

Liquid honey is the way honey comes from the hive. Liquid honey yields a wonderful golden liquid. Fresh honey will be liquid since it was just extracted from the hives.

30%.....Density

- Honey variety will be considered.

30%.....Flavor

- Unwanted flavors: fermented, scorched, smoky or burnt.

25%.....Absences of Impurities

- Free from dirt, lint and wax.
- **Note: More than 50% crystallization will result in disqualification.**

10%.....Container Appearance And Cleanliness

- No cracks, dents or imperfections in glass and lid.
- Jar is clean on the outside.

5%.....Accuracy of Filling

- 8-12 ounces.
- Headspace and uniformity.

Creamed Unflavored Honey

Has a mild flavor, spreads like butter at ordinary room temperature and doesn't drip.

Creamed honey is really crystallized honey or granulated honey. Well-made honey possesses a creamy texture because the crystallization process has been precisely controlled.

30%.....Flavor

- Flavor not adversely affected by processing.
- Unwanted flavors: fermented, scorched, smoky or burnt.

25%.....Crystallization

- Smooth texture and fine crystals.
- Crystal sizes consistent.

20%.....Spreadable

- Easy to spread.

10%.....Absences of Impurities

- Free from dirt, lint and wax.

10%.....Container Appearance and Cleanliness

- No cracks, dents or imperfections in glass and lid.
- Jar is clean on the outside.

5%.....Accuracy of Weight

- 8-12 ounces.
- Headspace and uniformity.

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Comb Honey

Comb honey is intended for consumption, which still contains pieces of the hexagonal-shaped beeswax cells of the honey comb.

20%.....Neatness of Cut

- Cut is parallel and uniform.
- No crushed honeycombs.

25%.....Uniformity of Appearance

- Foundation straight (no wave) and level.
- Caps and other features uniform.

15%.....Absence of Uncapped

- All cells should have caps.

15%.....Cap Appearances

- White and clean caps.
- No travel stains or watery/wet caps.

10%.....Free of Granulation And Pollen

- Granulation can be disqualified.
- No excessive pollen present.

10%.....Container Appearance and Cleanliness

- No cracks, dents or imperfections in glass and lid.
- Jar is clean on the outside.

5%.....Accuracy of Weight

- 8-12 ounces. Uniform weight of each section.

Pure Beeswax Products: Lip Balm

30%.....Texture

- Balanced between waxy and greasy.

20%.....Scent or Flavor

- Appropriate for item.

20%.....Appearance

- Uniformity of fill and color, pleasing to the eye.

20%.....Packaging

- Ease of opening, ingredients listed, attractiveness.

10%.....Cleanliness

- No foreign matter visible on package or product.

Hand-Crafted Soap

20%.....Quality

- Hardness, free from white lye powder pockets, water cavities, and greasy areas.

20%.....Color

- Attractive color combinations, uniformity across bars.

20%.....Appearance

- Consistency of shapes, pleasing to the eye.

NOTE: No soda ash except as part of intended appearance.

20%.....Packaging

- Ease of opening, ingredients listed, attractiveness.

10%.....Scent or Aroma

- Appropriate for item.

10%.....Cleanliness

- No foreign matter visible on package or product.
- Jars and labels clean.



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Moisturizer

20%.....Absorption

- Without residual stickiness or greasiness.

20%.....Texture

- Creaminess, absence of lumps or watery areas.

20%.....Appearance

- Uniformity of fill and color, pleasing to the eye.

20%.....Packaging

- Ease of opening, ingredients listed, attractiveness.

10%Scent or Aroma

- Appropriate for item.

10%.....Cleanliness

- No foreign matter visible on package or product.
- Jars and labels clean.

SUGAR ARTS & CONFECTIONS COMPETITION

Sugar Arts

45%.....Overall Appearance

- Balance and eye appeal (15%);
- Color harmony (15%);
- Uniformity and consistency of pattern (15%).

30%.....Artistic Quality

- Difficulty of design (10%);
- Originality, creativity (10%);
- Craftsmanship (10%).

25%.....Neatness

- Texture of icing or sugar medium (10%);
- Uniformity of repeat pattern (10%);
- Base is clean and appropriate to design (5%).

Confections

30%.....Flavor

- Blended, high quality, pleasing.

30%.....Texture

- Crystalline: velvety and creamy.

25%.....Consistency

- Crystalline: firm, not hard or soft.
- Non-crystalline: should hold shape with no crystals.

15%Appearance

- Color, size and shape of pieces; non-crystalline-smooth.



COOKIES, BARS & BROWNIES COMPETITION

Cookies, Bars & Brownies

35%.....Flavor

- Natural flavor of ingredients; no off-flavor.

35%.....Texture

- Characteristic of type.

30%.....Appearance

- Outside: uniform, not too thick.
- Size: not to exceed 3.5 inches (except where different guidelines may apply).
- Surface: color and texture.

YEAST & QUICK BREADS COMPETITION

Quick Breads, Leavened & Unleavened Breads

30%.....Flavor

- Taste and aroma appropriate to item.

25%.....Texture

- No streaks or close grain, size, uniformity of cell walls and elasticity.

15%.....Crumb

- Color and texture.

10%.....General Appearance

- Shape, proper dome, smoothness, crust and color.

10%.....Lightness

- Product should have lightness appropriate for the product.

10%.....Crust

- Thickness, quality, crispness, tenderness and uniformity.

Muffins, Biscuits & Scones

30%.....Flavor

- Taste and aroma, sweet, nutty, well-balanced.

25%.....Texture

- No streaks or close grain, size and uniformity of cell walls, good elasticity.

15%.....Lightness

- Product should have lightness appropriate for the product.

15%.....General Appearance

- Shape, proper dome, smoothness, crust color.

15%.....Crust

- Thickness, quality, crispness, tenderness and uniformity.



PIES & CHEESECAKES COMPETITION

Pies

40%.....Crust

- Texture: flaky, tender.
- Flavor: agreeable; no strong taste of fat or salt

40%.....Filling

- Flavor: natural or well-blended.
- Consistency: fruit is moist, not syrupy; well-cooked; filling should hold shape but be smooth and soft.

20%.....Appearance

- Color and shape.

Cheesecakes

40%.....Texture

- Smooth and consistent.

40%.....Flavor

- Delicate and pleasing.
- Natural flavor of ingredients.
- No off-flavor.

20%.....Appearance

- Outside: uniform, not too thick.
- Size: uniform
- Crust: color, texture, depth.

Youth Pies & Cheesecakes

40%.....Crust

- Texture: flaky, tender.
- Flavor: agreeable; no strong taste of fat or salt

40%.....Filling

- Flavor: natural or well-blended.
- Consistency: fruit is moist, not syrupy; well-cooked; filling should hold shape but be smooth and soft.
- Cheesecake: smooth and consistent.
- Meringue: light; tender; evenly browned; no shrinking from sides; no weeping; at least ½ inch

20%.....Appearance

- Color and shape.