



Murphy's Backyard BBQ Rules and Requirements
(Non-sanctioned Competition - People's Choice)

April 25, 2026 | 12 PM - 3 PM
Murphy Central Park

1. INTERPRETATION OF RULES

The interpretation of rules and regulations are those of the Cook-Off Committee and their decision is final.

2. GENERAL RULES

1. Eligibility: The competition is open to all aged 18 and over (Murphy Residents will be granted priority). Participants must register by March 27, 2026. Spaces are limited on a first-come, first-served basis.
2. Team Composition: Team members (up to 4) must be declared at the time of registration with a designated head cook and cannot be changed once the competition begins. The head cook must be present for the entire duration of the event.
3. Teams must register online at <https://secure.rec1.com/TX/murphy-tx/catalog> and pay a registration fee of \$50 in order to participate in the competition.
4. All team members must obtain the following:
 - i. temporary health permit
 - a. must obtain [permit](#) through the City of Murphy.
 - ii. food handlers' certificate
 - a. every member is required to submit their individual certificate.
 - b. must be obtained through the [Texas Department of State Health Services](#)

3. COOKED ON SITE

All entries will be cooked on-site. The preparation and completion of any and all meats and other dishes in competition **MUST** be done within the confines of the cook-off site and during the time limits designated by the Backyard BBQ Competition. All competition meat will be inspected by the Cook-Off Committee.

1. Ingredients: All ingredients including marinades and seasonings must be provided by the competitors.

2. Competition meat may NOT be removed from the store packaging prior to the event. All meat and ancillary products (with the exception of marinades and seasonings) must remain sealed until approval from the Cook-Off Committee. No marinade, seasoning, brining, etc. can be done off-site.
3. Equipment: Each team must supply all the equipment necessary for the preparation and cooking of their entry including a cooker/grill, wood or wood pellets, charcoal, and utensils.
4. Cooking Time: Teams will have eighteen hours to prepare and cook their dishes. Cooking will commence on Friday at 5:00 PM and end on Saturday at 11:00 AM. Late submissions will not be judged.

4. BBQ PITS

BBQ pits can be any commercial or homemade, trailered or un-trailered, pit or smoker normally used for competitive barbecue:

- Pit should be of a permanent design.
- BYC (Backyard Cooker) – any cooking device by design or nature that is inherently portable and by design is intended for recreational cooking.

ENTRIES PER PIT: Pits may NOT be shared. Only one team will cook on a given pit.

5. Safety and Conduct

1. Safety: All teams must adhere to fire safety guidelines. Fire extinguishers MUST be present at each grilling station. Teams are responsible for providing their own extinguishers.
2. Gas generators and fuel are prohibited. Power will be provided by the Cook-Off Committee.
3. Conduct: Competitors and their guests are expected to maintain a respectful and friendly atmosphere. Unsportsmanlike behavior and the use of illegal drugs is strictly prohibited.
4. The consumption of alcohol during the event may result in disqualification. *(Event will take place Saturday, April 25, 2026, from 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM).*

PD will monitor event grounds overnight to ensure safety and conduct of all team members.

6. CATEGORIES

Competition

- **Brisket** – teams must present four (4) full slices. Blocking brisket ends is allowed. The fat cap may be trimmed or cut away before the slices are placed into the tray.

People's Choice

Cooking teams wishing to participate must be prepared to serve the following in order to provide samples within the designated time frame:

- **Meat of Choice:** any meat of choice as long as it is prepared on site.
- **Cook's choice:** ancillary products (side/dessert) of team's choosing. Must be prepared on-site.
- Cooking teams must be able to distribute a minimum of **200 samples** of each dish for the People's Choice competition.

- May provide leftover competition meat or create a separate “meat of choice” for People’s Choice.

Member(s) of each team is responsible for serving their dish to the public.

7. ARRIVAL

Teams may arrive to setup starting at 2:00 PM on Friday, April 24, 2026, unless otherwise directed by the BBQ Cook-Off Committee members. Staggered arrival times may be used to help larger RVs fit into their spaces before the rest of the area is filled. If you have a large RV or Trailer, please let the Cook-Off Committee know so accommodations can be made.

All teams are required to attend a ‘Cooks Meeting’. This meeting will take place Friday at 4:00 PM or at the conclusion of set up.

Teams may begin cooking once the Cooks meeting has concluded and the meat has been inspected and approved by a member of the Bureau Veritas Group.

Any participant who does not make the scheduled cooks meeting **MUST** contact the Cook-Off Committee before the scheduled start time of the meeting.

8. PARKING

Parking is available on-site. The parking lot will be blocked off beginning Friday night. Any vehicles **INSIDE** the barriers after they go up will **NOT** be able to leave. Vehicles inside the barriers **MUST** be parked in the designated cooking area for each team. Vehicles parked in the vendor area or any area inside the barriers but outside of the cooking team spot may be towed.

Murphy Central Park hours of operation are from 5:00 AM to 11:00 PM. Access outside of these hours is restricted to Cook-Off team members only.

9. MEAT INSPECTION

- All meats must be inspected by a member of the Bureau Veritas Group (health inspector) before cooking.
- Meat must be USDA or state DA inspected and passed.
- All meat must be maintained at a maximum of 40 degrees F prior to inspection.
- All meat that is resting in preparation for cooking must be covered at all times.
- All meats must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 135 degrees F.
- After cooking, all meat must be maintained at a minimum temperature of 140 degrees F in a covered container until turned in for judging.
- All competition meat, once inspected, may not leave the team’s site until turned in for judging.
- Inspection will begin at 3:00 PM on Friday, April 24, 2026.
- Meat and other ancillary products will undergo inspection before final plating on event day to ensure product has been prepared properly.

10. SANITATION & CLEANUP

Cooks are required to prepare and cook in the most sanitary manner possible. Running water will be available on park grounds for rinsing and cleaning. Bathrooms and portable sinks are available for hand washing.

Cooking conditions are subject to inspection by the Cook-Off Committee. The use of sanitary gloves is required at all times while handling food. Infractions identified by the Cook-Off Committee shall be immediately corrected or the cook will be subject to disqualification. All federal, state, and local food safety rules and regulations must be adhered to at all times.

Teams are responsible for cleanup of their site once the competition has ended. Trash bags will be provided. All RVs, trailers, grills, waste, and other equipment must be removed from the site by 10:00 PM on Saturday, April 25, 2026.

11. JUDGING & SCORING

Competition

Meats may be cooked with sauces and/or other liquids, but once the cooking is complete, sauces and/or liquids may NOT be added once meat is put into tray. NO PUDDLING IN BOTTOM OF TRAY. A turn-in window of ten (10) minutes before and after the set turn-in time will be recognized. Judging trays received after that time will not be accepted for judging. Ten minutes and one second is considered after the set turn-in time.

- 11:00 AM Brisket

Each entry will be scored by taste judges from the community under the direction of a head judge. Judges will score based on appearance, taste, and tenderness. Scoring ranges from a low of 2 to a high of 10 in increments of 1 point for each category.

People's Choice

The winner will be determined by the public. The public will be able to purchase wristbands for \$20. Each wristband comes with 3 voting tokens. The public will vote for their favorite food by depositing coins in the cooking team's box (provided by the Cook-Off Committee).

The People's Choice tasting event will take place from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM.

The coin count will begin at 2:00 PM. The team with the most coins will be declared the winner. The winner will be announced at the Awards ceremony.

12. AWARDS

Competition

First place will be awarded \$1,500 and "Brisket Master" Championship Belt.

People's Choice

Team with the most coins at the end of the count will be awarded \$1,000 and be granted 'people's choice' trophy.

The grand trophy will be showcased at the Murphy Community Center, granting the winning team bragging rights for the entire year.

13. TERMS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

A team can be disqualified for these reasons:

- Seal is broken on meats and other ingredients prior to approval from the Cook-Off Committee.
- There is evidence that the competition meat has been pre-seasoned, brined, etc.
- Gloves are not used while handling food products.
- Food was not prepared by Cook-Off team (store purchased, or pre-cooked foods).
- There is evidence that the competition meat is under cooked or unsafe to eat.

For any questions or additional information please contact, events@murphytx.org.

