

# Gumbo Cookoff

46<sup>th</sup> Annual Natchitoches-NSU Folk Festival

Saturday, July 18, 2026  
Northwestern State University, Prather Coliseum  
Natchitoches, Louisiana

<b>Entry</b>	<b>No entry fee!</b> 2 gallons (minimum) gumbo for competition and tasting All cooking must be done with fuel (propane gas) or by contained cooking fire.
<b>Schedule</b>	8:00 a.m. registration and cooks' meeting, N-Club Room, Prather Coliseum 8:45 a.m. cooking officially begins 12:30 p.m. judging begins by contest judges 1:00 p.m. sales to public ("Buck-a-Cup") open 3:15 p.m. announcement of winners, Main Stage
<b>Categories</b>	Seafood Poultry Plus (chicken, duck, sausage, turkey, wild game, etc.) People's Choice
<b>Awards</b>	Seafood – 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Poultry Plus – 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , and 3 <sup>rd</sup> People's Choice – 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , and 3 <sup>rd</sup>

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## Rules for the Gumbo Cookoff

**No alcoholic beverages on the premises.**

**All spaces for each entry are a 10' x 20' space.**

**All Head Cooks are responsible for ALL of their own supplies and setup.**

**Running water is available on the premises.**

**Gumbo must be cooked on-site.**

- Gumbo must be cooked on the day of the cookoff, beginning after the Cooks' meeting.
- Roux must be made "from scratch" on-site – no commercial roux mixes allowed.
- No roux is to be made until after the Cooks' meeting.
- Poultry, meat, and seafood ingredients for gumbo may be prepared in advance.
- Broth or stock may be prepared in advance, or canned broth may be used.
- Rice may be prepared in advance or on-site.

**Sanitation is required.**

- Gumbo must be prepared in as sanitary a manner as possible.
- All food for consumption must be heated to a boil on-site.
- Cooking conditions are subject to inspection by cookoff officials.
- Gumbo cooks may be required to provide a taste of their gumbo at the request of cookoff officials. When taste testing, please use a spoon or bowl and dispose after use. The festival will provide tasting utensils and disposable containers for the judges.
- Participants must bring their own trash receptacles and trash bags.
- Chefs participating in "A Buck A Cup" must provide their own bowls, spoons, and napkins.

**Cooking facilities are limited.**

- All entries must be cooked using propane gas or contained cooking fire.
- All entries must be cooked outside of Prather Coliseum, as directed by cookoff officials on the day of the cookoff.
- All entries will be given a specific, assigned space outside for use during the cookoff.

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### **Each Head Cook may submit one gumbo entry per category.**

- Each Head Cook is responsible for preparing a minimum of 2 GALLONS of gumbo to be judged in a specific category and for preparing 16 ounces for judging from that same 2 GALLONS.
- Each entry requires a separate registration form.
- The two categories are seafood or poultry plus (meat that is not seafood).

### **Attending the Cooks' meeting is mandatory.**

- All people participating as Head Cooks or other cooks must attend the cooks' meeting to receive materials for the organization and judging of the competition, including a signed, number identification slip.
- All Head Cooks must sign their confidential identification slips in ink, with the first and last name, at the same time as the materials for the organization and judging of the competition are given, including a signed, number identification slip.
- All Head Cooks must present a signed, number identification slip to be eligible as a winner. (Note: please keep the signed, numbered identification slip in a safe place until the winners are announced.)

### **Gumbo judging will have several criteria.**

- At 1 p.m., contest officials will begin collecting the 16-ounce sample for judging.
  - All judges will have numerically labeled containers that will match up to the numerically labeled cooking booth/Head Cook entry.
  - Proportion of rice to other ingredients in the cup is at the discretion of the Head Cook.
  - Filé or other last-minute ingredients and seasonings are at the discretion of the Head Cook. Judges will not be allowed to add anything to any entry.
- At 2 p.m., all judging will end and all judges will meet to deliberate the winners. If a second round of judging is needed, judges will request another sample of the entries needed.
- All entries will be judged on the following criteria on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the highest score for each criterion:
  - appearance: looks like a good gumbo – colors of roux and other food items in gumbo
  - aroma: smells appetizing
  - consistency: stirs like a good gumbo
  - texture: a balance of quantity of ingredients
  - flavor: tastes like a good gumbo

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## Registration Form

Head Cook \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Gumbo Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Seafood      \_\_\_\_\_ Poultry Plus

Submit Form:

By email to

[folklife@nsula.edu](mailto:folklife@nsula.edu)

Or drop off at

Northwestern State University  
Louisiana Folklife Center  
213 Kyser Hall  
Natchitoches, LA 71497

For more information, contact Shane Rasmussen at:

[rasmussens@nsula.edu](mailto:rasmussens@nsula.edu)

or

(318) 357-4332