



WORLD
ASSOCIATION
OF CHEFS
SOCIETIES

CULINARY
COMPETITION
COMMITTEE

Worldchefs Hot Kitchen Competition Standards Consolidated Policy

1. Purpose

This document consolidates the Individual Hot Kitchen Competition Rules (April 2025) and the Worldchefs Hot Kitchen Competition Policy into a single, unified standard. It establishes clear rules, timings, judging structures, hygiene requirements, and governance to ensure fairness, consistency, and professional integrity across all Worldchefs-aligned competitions.

All competitors must be 16 years of age or over, unless it is a stipulated school program where the competitor may need to be supervised.

2. Scope

Applicable to Country, Regional, National, Continental, Global Semi-Final, and International Individual Hot Kitchen competitions, conducted under Worldchefs alignment.

3. Competition Classes & Structure

3.1 Individual Class #1 – Contemporary Western Main Course

- Protein selected by organiser: beef, chicken, pork, lamb, seafood, fish, game, vegetarian or plant-based
- Protein to weigh between 110 – 150g
- One contemporary Western-style main course
- Main course must have balanced and appropriate garnish
- The weight of the total plate to be between 160-240g
- 3 or 4 portions depending on competition level (see Section 3.5)
- Time limit: A minimum time of 60 minutes

3.2 Individual Class #2 – Modern Local Cuisine

- Modern local cuisine with Western plating OR the traditional family style plating
- Must be authentic in flavour profile and not fusion cuisine

- The weight of the individual portion needs to be between 110-150g
- A family style plate for 3 pax needs to be 330 – 450g
- 3 or 4 portions depending on competition level
- Time limit: A minimum time of 60 minutes

3.3 Individual Class #3 – Pasta Freestyle (Main Course Only)

- Fresh pasta/noodle, which are made on site: 45 minutes
- Commercial pasta/noodle (dry pasta/noodle) 30–45 minutes (organiser to declare)
- Pasta/noodles must be cooked and finished onsite
- Other individual starches that also may feature in this class can be used as well. ie; Potato, polenta, rice etc
- The pasta/noodles, rice, potatoes are the highlight of the dish, not the protein or accompaniments.

3.4 Team Class #4 – Two Young Chefs (25 & under)

- Team of two chefs
- 3 portions each of:
 - Appetizer (seafood/fish/vegetarian)
 - Contemporary Western-style main course
- Time limit: 60 minutes minimum
- Appetizer: served at 50-minute mark
- Main course: served at 60-minute mark

3.5 Minimum Cooking Time & Plate Requirements

- Minimum Cooking Time
- Protein-based competitions: 60 minutes minimum
- Pasta exceptions apply as per Section 3.3
- Number of Plates (Single Course)
- Country / Regional / National: 3 plates
- Continental / International: 4 plates

3.6 Multi-Course Competitions

- **Two-Course Competitions (e.g. Two to Tango)**
 - 4 plates per course (appetizer + main)
 - Time limit to be clearly stated by organizer
- **Three-Course Competitions**

- Country / Regional / Continental - Total time: 90 minutes - Appetizer: 50–55 min - Main: 70–75 min - Dessert: 85–90 min
- Global Semi-Final / International Individual competitor- Total time: 2.5 hours - Appetizer: 70–80 min - Main: 100–110 min - Dessert: 140–150 min

4. Competitor Rules & Mise en Place

- Competitors to report 30 minutes before competition
- Ingredients must comply with HACCP and Worldchefs mise en place rules

5. Worldchefs Mise en Place Rules Individual competition or teams of two. International teams cooking for more than 4 pax, the rules are similar but more stringent. Please refer to Worldchefs web page.

Compete Ingredient Guideline (for mise en place)

- Need to declare if event is Halal (no pork products or alcohol)
- Basic mother sauces – are permitted but must have further fabrication.
- Salad, cleaned and washed
- Vegetables and fruits cleaned, can be cut/trimmed (any shape) **BUT** must be raw
- Fruit purées are permitted but must not be a finished item
 - No glaze or concentrated juices
 - Dried fruit / or vegetable powder permitted
 - Dehydrated fruit or sheets permitted
- Vegetable ash and home-made spice mixture are permitted
- The use of transglutaminase (Meat glue) is not permitted
- Fish – gutted, scaled can be fileted / portioned if required BUT must be raw
- Shellfish/ crustaceans – clean raw can be removed from their shell
- Meat/Poultry/Game, Deboned can be portioned, trimmed but must be raw.
- Proteins cannot be brought in minced. Mincing must be done in the kitchen.
- Liver and sweetbread can be brought soaked in milk, but not seasoned or flavoured.
- Smoked fish, prosciutto, chorizo, bacon, are allowed as long as they are further processed in the kitchen.
- Pasta and other doughs, allowed can be flavoured and rolled into sheets but not portioned and not cooked
- Pastry Sponge, biscuits, not cut or stenciled
- Macaroons or macarons need to be baked on premise, the mixture may be brought in
- Decor elements 100% made on site
 - No titanium dioxide – no metallic powder no artificial food colours

are permitted

- Do not use gold or silver leaves
- Eggs – can be separated, and pasteurized
- Dry ingredients can be pre-measured
- Flavoured oils and butter are allowed

Please note, only 2 molds are permitted to be used in the menu and 1 stencil.

Competitors who violate the above rules will be penalized up to 10%- point deduction from their final score.

6. Equipment & Hygiene Requirements

Standard equipment published three months in advance

Mandatory:

- Cooking burners ideally to be induction and 2-4 burners
- Oven can be conventional oven or combi oven
- Stainless steel workbench (min. 1200 x 700mm) per competitor
- 4 power point outlets
- Running water facilities (can be shared)
- Hand-wash sink and washing sink
- Under counter chiller or upright chiller
- Upright chiller can be a share chiller provided areas are labeled
- Waste separation bins

7. Judging & Governance

7.1 Judges per Plate

- Maximum 3 judges per tasting plate, this is due to international hygiene rules

7.2 Rookies

- Maximum 2 rookies per hot kitchen event
- Must be documented, approved and completed a seminar

7.3 Judges' Levels by Competition Tier

- a) The competition levels, with the appropriate categories, must apply to Worldchefs standards which appear on the Worldchefs web page for applications.
- b) Worldchefs Food Waste and Hygiene rules, need to be part of the criteria.
- c) Worldchefs Branding Standards must be followed with criteria badging and certificates.

- **Country / Domestic Competition** (new level): Chairman Continental or higher, Observer Regional, judges can be a mix of Continental, Regional or Local as per new criteria.
- **Regional Level Competition**: Chairman Continental, Lead judges Continental or Regional Observer Continental, Judges can be International, Continental or Regional.
- **National Level Competition**: Chairman International, Observer Continental level The Lead judges must be Continental level or higher, there must be at least 4 International Judges, other judges may be Continental with a mix or Regional.
- **Continental Level Competition**: Chairman and Observer International level, The Lead judges must be International level; other judges need to be Continental level, Minimum of 8 International Judges
- **International Level Competition**: Chairman and Observer International level, The Lead judges must be International level, Minimum of 12 International Judges Other judges can be mainly International with a mix of Continental.

7.4 Consistency of Judging Panels

- Same judging group must judge the same class throughout the event

7.5 Chairman of the Jury Responsibilities

- Review the lead judges of the group
- Assign the duties or classes to judge
- Ensure the Observer is known to all
- Review the competition criteria with the jury at a Judges' briefing
- Explain the judging system (manual or via digital system)
- Explain the importance of taking notes during the competition
- Check that the lead judges are doing a pre-competition briefing
- Check that there is time allocated and the jury teams are doing competition feedback
- Liaise with the organizers for judging sheets and the process
- Check all scorecards prior to printing awards
- Sign off on the Observers report
- Explain Worldchefs 'Best Practices' or have hand out

7.6 Lead Judge Responsibilities

- Assign mise en place checks
- Allocate kitchen numbers
- Designate feedback judges
- Work with the marshals on food delivery judging
- Check that judges are following Worldchefs guidelines and scoring techniques
- Tasks as per Competition Seminar standards
- Tasks for the Rookies

7.7 Marshals Responsibilities

- Kitchens are ready on time as per criteria

- Kitchens are clean
- Kitchens have minimum of 2 rubbish bins – Organic and non-organic
- Kitchens are numbered clearly
- Allow competitors in on time to set up
- Check timing on competitor when they finish
- Record if the plated meals are warm – use a sticker
- Ensure the kitchens are vacated and cleaned on time for the next round

7.8 Judging Criteria for All Hot Kitchen Events

Hot Culinary Challenge Judging Criteria

Material brought / mise en place 5 points

- Clear arrangement of materials
- Correct number of items brought in
- Proper working technique
- Correct utilization of working time

Hygiene & Food Waste 10 points (as per Worldchefs web page)

- Clean hygienic work techniques
- Workflow has been adhered to and followed
- Clear benches not cluttered
- Correct storage of food items
- Temperature control on food items – hot and cold
- Control on excess and food waste
- Limitation on plastic waste. Corrects Professional

Preparation 15 points

- Correct basic preparation of food, corresponding to today's modern culinary art.
- Preparation should be by practical, acceptable methods that exclude unnecessary ingredients.
- Appropriate cooking techniques must be applied for all ingredients, including starches and vegetables.
- Proper working technique and attention paid to hygiene during preparation of food
- Review of all food waste including excess items.
- Review of teamwork or the time to make items or serve them.

Innovation 5 points

- The introduction of a new technique or significantly improving and existing dish
- New style of dishing presentation that enhances the customer or

- judge's expectation.
- Allow chefs or teams to create a WOW factor.
- Scoring will start for zero (0) and go up to 5 marks
- Chairman of the jury will decide when dealing with ethnic or heritage food whether to allocate 5 points automatically.

Service 5 points

- Correct number of plates must be presented.
- The meals should be practical, transportable
- Meals must be presented on time OR points will be deducted

Presentation 10 points

- Ingredients and side dishes must be in harmony
- Points are granted for excellent combination, simplicity and originality in composition
- Clean arrangement, with no artificial garnishes and no time-consuming arrangements
- Exemplary plating to ensure an appetizing appearance is required

Taste & Texture 50 points

- The typical taste of the food should be preserved
- It must have appropriate taste and seasoning
- The dish quality, flavors and color should conform to today's standards of nutritional values

7.9 points Required for a Medal

100 Points Gold with Distinction (all judges must agree)

99 – 90 points Gold medal with certificate

89 – 80 points Silver medal with certificate

79 – 70 points Bronze medal with certificate

69 – 60 points Diploma with certificate

- Award ceremony area with Worldchefs and sponsors logos
- Seating area for public and jury

8. Scheduling & Workflow

- Avoid back-to-back heats of the same protein

- Recommended rotation: Chicken → Fish → Beef
- Ensure that if chicken on day #1 and day #2 that the jury are the same for consistency
- Avoid having more than 10 individuals cook off at the same time for the same protein to allow fair judgement
- Allow time for scoring, review, and feedback between the respective heats

9. Code of Conduct

- All judges must sign the Worldchefs Code of Conduct
- Recommended: one large onsite display copy for signing
- Judges are dressed correctly as per Organisers' direction
- Act in a professional manner with public and competitors
- Judges' responsibilities under the Code are to the Organizers and Worldchefs rules

10. Competitor Arena

- Competition arena has Worldchefs logos as well as sponsors
- Judges' rooms are clearly marked and equipped
 - Adequate landing table for competitors' dishes to be delivered.
 - Ideal to have a warming box to hold food
 - Cutlery and extra plates for jury
 - Clothes racks for jackets
 - Rules books and stationery
 - Water/coffee station provided
 - Rubbish bins
 - Judges' schedules
 - Judging sheets or QR code to scan
 - Transport arrangements and timing
 - The printed task for the Rookies
 - PowerPoints for judges to charge judging tablets or phones
- Competitors pre-competition preparation areas
- Judges' information display board (Who is here and their level)
- Results scoreboard
- Time clock for the competitors
- First aid area / box
- Pot wash area for all to share
- Paper towels and chemicals to clean the kitchens
- Organic and non-organic competitors waste area
- Dedicated plate display area for photography and public viewing
- Walkway is clear for public to view displays
- Separate feedback zone for competitors and debriefing

10.1 Chefs' Corner/Resting area

- Area for competitors, staff and judges to take breakfast or other meals
- Space for competitors to rest/wait between classes
- Promotion banners for sponsors

11. Reporting & Compliance

- Media update for Worldchefs to promote the event sent to office
- Observers' report to be completed within 7 days which must be signed by the Chairman of the Jury and the official Observer
- Reports sent to Worldchefs Office and CCC
- Full judges list (with emails) submitted for digital badging
- List of competitors with email can be sent for digital badging.

Appendix A: Summary

Area	Standards to comply
Minimum cooking time	60 min minimum (proteins)
Pasta timing	45 min fresh / 30–45 min commercial
Plates (single course)	3 (Country–National), 4 (Continental–Intl)
3-course timing	Defined service windows
Judges per plate	Max 3 judges
Rookies	Max 2, documented
Judging panels	Same panel per class
Heat scheduling	Protein rotation
Code of Conduct	Single large onsite signing
Mise en Place	What is permitted in Individual competitions
Judging	Criteria and medal points
Competition Area	Standard set ups
Reporting	Observer report + judges list mandatory