



CITY OF IMPERIAL
14TH ANNUAL TRI-TIP COOK-OFF
 MARCH 21, 2026 | DOWNTOWN IMPERIAL | 4:00 PM-9:00PM



TRI-TIP COOK-OFF PARTICIPATION APPLICATION

PARTICIPATION INFORMATION

Team Name: _____ Name of Team Leader/Chief Cook: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Primary Contact Number: _____ Email: _____

Number of Team Members: _____ Team Sponsor: _____

Entry Type (Check All That Apply): Tri-Tip BBQ Inspired Side Dish BBQ Inspired Dessert All Three Entries

List all foods to be provided to the public including, condiments, ice, and pre-packaged foods: _____

Where are foods, including condiments, ice, and pre-packaged foods going to be purchased? (Food must be purchased from an approved source) *Please retain all receipts of purchases readily available throughout the event*: _____

FEES

A maximum of 15 entrants, in all entry types, will be accepted on a first come, first served basis by Friday, February 27, 2026

Please note that registration will close upon the 15th entry, which may be before Friday, February 27, 2026

Team Entry Fee: Includes one-day Imperial County Public Health Department Temporary Food Facility Permit, one-day City of Imperial Business License, and (2) 12x12 Booth Spaces.

Tri-Tip Entry: \$200

All Three Entries: \$275

Additional Entries: \$50

BBQ Inspired Side Dish Entry: \$50

BBQ Inspired Dessert Entry: \$50

Forms of Payment Accepted: Cash, Card, Check (checks payable to the City of Imperial)

WAIVER OF LIABILITY

I, _____ (FULL NAME), fully understand that my participation in the City of Imperial Tri-Tip Cookoff (hereinafter "Event") exposes me to the risk of personal injury, death, communicable diseases, illnesses, viruses, or property damage. I hereby acknowledge that I am voluntarily participating in this Event and agree to assume any such risks.

I hereby release, discharge and agree not to sue City of Imperial, its officers, officials, employees, volunteers, and agents (hereinafter "City"), for any injury, death or damage to or loss of personal property arising out of, or in connection with, my participation in the Event from whatever cause, including the active or passive negligence of City or any other participants in the Event. The parties to this agreement understand that this document is not intended to release any party from any act or omission of "gross negligence," as that term is used in applicable case law and/or statutory provision.

In consideration for being permitted to participate in the Event, I hereby agree, for myself, my heirs, administrators, executors and assigns, that I shall indemnify and hold harmless City from any and all claims, demands, actions, or suits arising out of or in connection with my participation in the Event.

I hereby grant full permission to the Event organizers and/or agents authorized by them, to use any photographs, videotapes, recording, or any other record of the Event for any legitimate purpose. I agree to abide by the rules and regulations of the Event as interpreted by the judges/organizers.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS RELEASE, HOLD HARMLESS AND AGREEMENT NOT TO SUE AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. I AM AWARE THAT IT IS A FULL RELEASE OF ALL LIABILITY AND SIGN IT ON MY OWN FREE WILL.

All members of the team must familiarize themselves with the City of Imperial Tri-Tip Cook-Off Rules and Regulations, which can be found on the back side of this Participation Application.

Team Leader/ Chief Cook Printed Name: _____

Team Leader/ Chief Cook Signature: _____

Date: _____

City of Imperial | Department of Parks & Recreation | 101 E. 4th Street, Imperial, CA 92251 | Phone: (760) 355-3316 | Email: parks@imperial.ca.gov

OVER \$7,500 IN CASH PRIZES

TRI-TIP PEOPLE'S CHOICE CHAMPION: \$2,500
TRI-TIP JUDGE'S CHOICE CHAMPION: \$2,000 | RESERVE CHAMPION: \$1,000 | 3RD PLACE CHAMPION: \$500
BEST BBQ INSPIRED SIDE DISH: \$500 | RESERVE BBQ INSPIRED SIDE DISH: \$300 | 3RD PLACE BBQ INSPIRED SIDE DISH : \$200
BEST BBQ INSPIRED DESSERT: \$500 | RESERVE BBQ INSPIRED DESSERT: \$300 | 3RD PLACE BBQ INSPIRED DESSERT: \$200

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. The decisions and interpretations of the Tri-Tip Cook-Off Rules and Regulations are at the discretion of the Tri-Tip Cook-Off Representatives. Their decisions and interpretations are final.
2. Team sponsors must be identified at the time of registration.
3. **A maximum of 15 entrants will be accepted on a first received, first serve basis for all Cook-Off categories.** Cook-Off space will be assigned at the time of registration. All grills and other equipment used by the team must remain within the assigned cooking space.
4. Contestants must follow all local, fire, electrical, health, and other appropriate local codes. All contestants must review the Imperial County Public Health Department Temporary Food Facility guidelines. Information may be found online at: <https://www.icphd.org/assets/EHD-NewAddressForms-2025/Food/Temporary-Food-Facilities/Temporary-Food-Facility-Application-9-12-25.pdf>
5. **One day permit will be obtained from Imperial County Public Health Department, Division of Environmental Health, by the City of Imperial.** All food items must be identified on the Tri-Tip Cook-Off Application for required Health Department permit. Food items not listed on the Tri-Tip Cook-Off Application will not be allowed.
6. All participating Tri-Tip Cook-Off teams are required to obtain a City of Imperial Business License for all business and sales transacted within the City of Imperial.
7. **THERE WILL BE A MANDATORY PARTICIPANT MEETING ON TUESDAY, MARCH 17TH AT 6:00 PM FOR ALL CHIEF COOKS/TEAM LEADERS.**
8. Teams shall provide their own meat, cooking ingredients, individual cooking devices, equipment, preparation tables, hot coal catching pan, shade, etc. as needed or required for the Cook-Off.
9. One person is to be designated as the Team Leader or Chief Cook. The Team Leader or Chief Cook will attend the Cook's Meeting and will be responsible for all actions of the team. Only team members may assist with and be in the designated cooking space and/ or designated meat cutting areas.
10. Check-in time starts at 8:00 AM on Saturday, March 21, 2026. Vehicles will be allowed in the event area for set-up until 12:00 PM.
11. **There will be a MANDATORY Cook's Meeting at 10:00 AM at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.**
12. The Tri-Tip Cook-Off will be held from 4:00 PM-9:00 PM. People's Choice ballots will be accepted from 4:00 PM-7:30 PM. (In order to keep event on schedule, People's Choice ballots cannot be accepted after 7:30 PM.)
13. **Judging will begin at 2:00 PM. Results will be announced at 7:45 PM.**
14. All competition meat shall start out raw and stored at a temperature of 40 degrees or less (packed with ice in an ice chest or in a refrigerator).
15. Competition meat may be pre-seasoned at an approved kitchen facility. Teams must list the approved kitchen on Temporary Food Facility Permit Application.
16. Tri-Tip samples, sides, plate dishes, and beverages may be sold for Tri-Tip Cook-Off tickets only and may not be given away or sold for cash.
17. Tri-Tip Cook-Off tickets will be sold by the City of Imperial to the public for \$2 each with 70% of the sales going back to the participating teams.
 - o Each team will be provided with an enclosed box that contains the team number to hold collected tickets. Teams will turn in collected tickets to the City of Imperial Tri-Tip Cook-Off booth by 9:00 PM to be tabulated for reimbursement. People's Choice tickets collected in your booth's box will not count towards reimbursement. Reimbursement will be provided by the City of Imperial within three weeks of the Tri-Tip Cook-Off.
18. All teams are required to provide the City of Imperial a completed W-9 form. Reimbursement checks will not be disbursed without the required form.
19. **Judging:** Contestants must submit at least (6) six cuts of Tri-Tip meat, enough for all six judges, to the judging area at the Veteran's Memorial Hall.
 - o Turn in times will be drawn and assigned at the Cook's Meeting. The allowable turn-in time will be (5) five minutes before to (5) five minutes after the posted time. A late turn-in will not be accepted by Tri-Tip Cook-Off Representatives and will receive a (0) zero in all judging criteria.
 - o Judging will be based upon appearance, tenderness, and taste.
 - o Meat shall not be sculpted, branded, or presented in any way to make it identifiable. Rosettes of meat slices are not allowed. Violations of this rule will be scored a (1) one in all criteria from all (6) six judges.
 - o Garnish is optional. If used, it is limited to chopped, sliced, shredded, or whole leaves of fresh green lettuce, curly parsley or kale, flat leaf parsley. Any other garnish shall receive a penalty score of (1) one in the category of appearance.
 - o Entries will be submitted in a numbered container supplied by the City of Imperial. The number must be on the top of the container during the time of turn-in. The container shall not be marked in any way so as to make the container unique or identifiable. Aluminum foil, toothpicks, skewers, foreign material, and/ or stuffing are prohibited in the container. Marked entries or containers with the above listed material will receive (1) one in all criteria from all (6) six judges and will be **disqualified**.
 - o Each contestant must submit at least (6) portions of meat in an approved container. Judges may not cut, slice, or shake apart to separate pieces. If there is not enough meat for each judge to sample, the shorted judge(s) will score a (1) one on all criteria, and the judges that receive samples will change the appearance score to (1) one as a penalty.
20. **People's Choice Award:** Teams must provide tri-tip for at least 1,000 people. Tri-tip samples should be approximately (2) two ounces per sample, a minimum of 125 pounds of meat is required to participate in the Cook-Off. During the time of check-in at 8:00 AM, the Team Leader or Chief Cook will be required to provide the receipt for proof of the purchase of 125 pounds of meat that will be used for the Tri-Tip Cook-Off. The team will provide (1) one, 2-ounce sample, in exchange for (1) ticket. Attendees will receive (1) one People's Choice voting ballot per purchase of (5) five Tri-Tip Cook-Off tickets. Attendees may cast their vote for their favorite team at the People's Choice voting booth from 4:00 PM to 7:30 PM. The team with the most votes will win the People's Choice Award.
21. **Best BBQ Inspired Side Dish Award:** Contestants will submit (1) one side dish as (6) six individual portions, enough for all six judges, to the judging area at the Veteran's Memorial Hall. Entries must be submitted in a numbered container supplied by the City of Imperial. Judging will be based on appearance, taste, originality, and food (Tri-Tip) pairing. Teams are encouraged to write the name of the side dish on the container or where visible.
22. **Best BBQ Inspired Dessert Award:** Contestants will submit (1) one dessert as (6) six individual portions, enough for all six judges, to the judging area at the Veteran's Memorial Hall. Entries must be submitted in a numbered container supplied by the City of Imperial. Judging will be based on appearance, taste, originality, and food (Tri-Tip) pairing. Teams are encouraged to write the name of the dessert on the container or where visible.
23. 13th Annual Tri-Tip Cook-Off Award Categories:

Tri-Tip People's Choice..... \$2,500

Tri-Tip Judge's Choice.....	\$2,000	Best BBQ Inspired Side Dish.....	\$500	Best BBQ Inspired Dessert.....	\$500
Reserve Tri-Tip Judge's Choice.....	\$1,000	Reserve BBQ Inspired Side Dish.....	\$300	Reserve BBQ Inspired Dessert.....	\$300
3rd Place Tri-Tip Judge's Choice.....	\$500	3rd Place BBQ Inspired Side Dish.....	\$200	3rd Place BBQ Inspired Dessert.....	\$200