

50
YEARS



Chef OF THE
YEAR

COMPETITION CATERGORIES



For more information, email:
competitions@sachefs.co.za

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COMPETITION

OVERVIEW

The Chef of the Year competition is a prestigious culinary event that celebrates excellence in South African cuisine and showcases the talent and creativity of professional chefs from across the country.

This year, the competition introduces exciting changes and enhancements to elevate the culinary experience and promote innovation and skill in the culinary arts.

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CATEGORIES

HOT KITCHEN & PASTRY

CATEGORIES

Hot Competition: (Individual)

- Participants will create three course set menu within a three-hour timeframe, presenting four plates of each course to be judged – Consisting of a Starter, Main Course and Dessert
- Competitors are to bring their own plates for presenting their dishes.
- The Mystery Basket challenge adds an element of surprise and creativity, challenging chefs to incorporate mystery ingredients into their dishes.

Pastry Competition: (Individual)

- Participants will craft a contemporary dessert within 60 minutes, with four plated servings to be judged.
- Desserts must incorporate Fairafric chocolate into innovative and visually stunning creations.
- Competitors are to bring their own plates for presenting their dishes.
- A limited pantry will be available consisting of basics.

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COMPETITION

FORMAT

Regional Competitions:

The competition will kick off with regional competitions held in Gauteng, Kwazulu Natal, and Western Cape.

Each region will host a 2 day competition, with 5 chefs selected to compete each day for each Category . Winners will be crowned the Regional Chef of the Year .

Finals:

The national finals will be held at a secret location, to be announced at the last regional semi final competition.

The top chefs from each region will converge for the ultimate culinary showdown to determine the South Africa's Chef of the Year.

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COMPETITION

ONLINE ENTRY AND SHORTLISTING

Online Entry Registration for Chef of the Year Competition Regionals:

In addition to the general eligibility requirements for participation in the Chef of the Year Competition Regionals, participants must submit a recipe and a photo of their dish that aligns with contemporary cuisine reflecting South Africa. The submitted dish should showcase innovation, creativity, and a unique interpretation of South African culinary traditions.

1. Recipe Submission:

- Participants are required to submit a detailed recipe for their dish, including all ingredients, measurements, and step-by-step preparation instructions.
- The recipe should highlight the use of locally sourced ingredients and innovative cooking techniques.
- Emphasis should be placed on creativity, flavor balance, and the overall culinary experience offered by the dish.

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ENTRY PROCESS

2. Dish Photo:

- Participants must provide a high-quality photographs of their completed dishes as per the Category Criteria they are entering .
- The photo should be well-composed, visually appealing, and showcase the dish from an optimal angle to highlight its presentation and artistic elements. – Top View and Side View
- Lighting should be natural or appropriately staged to enhance the colors and textures of the dish.

3. Contemporary Cuisine Reflecting South Africa:

- The submitted dish should embody the spirit of contemporary cuisine while drawing inspiration from the diverse culinary landscape of South Africa.
- Participants are encouraged to explore innovative flavour combinations, modern plating techniques, and creative interpretations of traditional South African ingredients and dishes.
- The dish should reflect a deep understanding of South African culinary heritage while pushing the boundaries of culinary innovation and creativity.

Click on the icon below to submit your online entry:

SUBMIT NOW



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COMPETITION

SHORTLISTING CRITERIA

Originality and Creativity:

- Uniqueness and inventiveness in the concept, flavour profile, and presentation of the dish.

Reflection of South African Culinary Identity:

- Demonstrating an authentic connection to South African culinary traditions and ingredients while incorporating contemporary twists.

Culinary Technique and Execution:

- Mastery of cooking techniques, precision in preparation, and attention to detail in the execution of the dish.

Visual Appeal:

- Aesthetically pleasing presentation, attention to plating, and artistic composition of the dish.

Conformity:

- Membership with SA Chefs up to date, all documents submitted and Age eligibility.

Note: Shortlisted participants who meet the criteria for contemporary cuisine reflecting South Africa will advance to the Chef of the Year Competition Regionals and will be notified by email, where they will have the opportunity to compete for the prestigious title and showcase their culinary talents on a regional stage.



HOT KITCHEN

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

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RULES AND CRITERIA

HOT KITCHEN (INDIVIDUAL)

Hot Competition: Participants will receive a Mystery Basket containing ingredients that must be used to create their dishes. Additionally, we will supply a workstation with kitchen basics, pots and pans, oven and stove tops for competitors. A pantry with oil, spices, and additional ingredients will be provided to enhance the mystery basket.

Hot Competition:

- **Menu Requirements:** Three-course set menu in three hours, presenting Four plates of each course.
- **Theme:** South Africa Culinary Heritage
- **Mystery Basket Challenge:** Chefs must use Mystery basket ingredients in their dishes.

Course Breakdown:

- **Starter:** Innovative, restaurant-quality starter using proper technique.
- **Main Course:** Showcases South African cuisine and creativity, using modern culinary techniques.
- **Dessert:** Creative dessert with utilising FairAfric Chocolate.

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RULES AND CRITERIA

HOT KITCHEN (INDIVIDUAL)

Schedule

- On the competition morning – participants will be permitted into the kitchen 1 hour prior to starting time with Judges Briefing and inspection 20 min before competition beginning.
- All competitors will be given 3 hours to prepare their 3 course presentation.
- Each Course will be presented every hour for judges to score.
- Competitors will be given a 15 minute pre-warning when their items are due up per course.
- A total of 4 plates are to be prepared per course for tasting and display.

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SCORING SYSTEM

HOT KITCHEN (INDIVIDUAL)

Judging Criteria	Description	Points Available
Mise-en-place	Clear arrangement of materials. Clean working place, proper working position, clean work clothes, proper working technique. Planned arrangement for trouble-free work and service; correct use of work time for punctual completion.	0 - 10
Correct Professional Preparation	Correct basic preparation of food, matching modern culinary standards. Practical and acceptable methods excluding unnecessary ingredients. Punctual delivery at the appointed time is required. Appropriate cooking techniques for all ingredients, including starches and vegetables. Must maintain kitchen organization and food hygiene.	0 - 25
Service	In this time-limited competition, participants must demonstrate cooking skills. Entries must not be completed more than 10 minutes before time expires.	0 - 5
Arrangement & Presentation / Innovation	Clean arrangement without artificial garnishes and no time-consuming arrangements. Exemplary plating required to ensure an appetizing appearance.	0 - 10
Taste	The dish must preserve the typical taste of the food, have appropriate seasoning, and conform to modern standards of nutritional value, flavor, and color.	0 - 50

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CATEGORY PRIZES

HOT COMPETITION: (INDIVIDUAL)

Prizes:

Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals will be awarded to the top three winners in each division.

Winners of each division will be evaluated by the National Culinary Committee and scouts to potentially be selected and move into a incubation program for development for the national Culinary Team to compete at the IKA Olympics in 2028.

(Refer to concise overview in Competition Guidelines)

The winner of the Senior Division Finals will be awarded the prestigious President's Cup.



PASTRY

INDIVIDUAL COMPETITION

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RULES AND CRITERIA

PASTRY COMPETITION

Pastry Competition – Semi-Finals:

The Pastry Competition in the Chef of the Year is a mystery basket competition tailored for skilled professionals working in hotel or restaurant kitchens, banqueting, college students, or within corporate or event catering environments. To enter, chefs must submit a plated dessert designed for four covers, showcasing their culinary expertise and creativity. Additionally, we will supply a workstation with kitchen basics, pots and pans, oven and stove tops for competitors. A pantry with oil, spices, and additional ingredients will be provided to enhance the mystery basket including Fairafric Chocolate.

Competition Format:

Initial Submission:

- Participants are required to submit a plated dessert for four covers, accompanied by a detailed sketch or drawing.
- Submissions must include recipes, costing, rationale for concept, and considerations for flavour/colour combinations, textures, sustainability, seasonality, and historical influence.

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RULES AND CRITERIA

PASTRY COMPETITION

Judging Criteria:

Concept and Creativity:

- Evaluation of the originality and creativity of the dessert concept.
- Judges will assess the thoughtfulness of the design, flavour combinations, and overall concept rationale.

Execution and Presentation:

- Assessment of the technical skill and precision in executing the dessert.
- Judges will evaluate the presentation, including plating technique, arrangement of components, and attention to detail.

Taste and Flavour:

- Evaluation of the flavor profile, balance, and harmony of the dessert.
- Judges will consider the taste, texture, and overall sensory experience of the dish.

Adherence to Guidelines:

- Compliance with competition rules and requirements, including the incorporation of indigenous and heritage ingredients to highlight South African culinary diversity.

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RULES AND CRITERIA

PASTRY COMPETITION

Schedule

- On the competition morning – participants will be permitted into the Kitchen 1 hour prior to the starting time.
- All competitors will need to be ready to present their Desserts 5min before end time for Judging with clean station.

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SCORING SYSTEM

PASTRY COMPETITION

Judging Criteria	Description	Points Available
Mise-en-place	Clear arrangement of materials. Clean working place, proper working position, clean work clothes, proper working technique. Planned arrangement for trouble-free work and service; correct use of work time for punctual completion.	0 - 10
Correct Professional Preparation	Correct basic preparation of food, matching modern culinary standards. Practical and acceptable methods excluding unnecessary ingredients. Punctual delivery at the appointed time is required. Appropriate cooking techniques for all ingredients, including starches and vegetables. Must maintain kitchen organization and food hygiene.	0 - 25
Service	In this time-limited competition, participants must demonstrate cooking skills. Entries must not be completed more than 10 minutes before time expires.	0 - 5
Arrangement & Presentation / Innovation	Clean arrangement without artificial garnishes and no time-consuming arrangements. Exemplary plating required to ensure an appetizing appearance.	0 - 10
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(Refer to concise overview in Competition Guidelines)