



From palmettos to long-leaf pines

Uptown Charlotte, NC at Victoria Yards

April 17 & 18 2026

The Kickoff + Festival

Our Kickoff event takes place on Friday with a BBQ party + tasting event featuring all things Charlotte, NC BBQ + more. On Saturday get a taste of diverse barbecue traditions from across the Southeast. 25 pitmasters will showcase their signature styles, smoking up whole hog, chicken, ribs, brisket, seafood + more. Each BBQ tasting pairs with chef-curated accouterments. Beyond the amazing eats, The Festival features partner activations, kids zone, local vendors + more. All in partnership with Charlotte SHOUT, an aspirational multi-week festival designed to celebrate creativity and innovation through art, music, food, and ideas.



Presented by
Atrium Health  Bank of America 



**OPERATION
BBQ RELIEF**

Our Mission

Preserve and promote the rich barbecue culture of the Carolinas by showcasing acclaimed pitmasters, embracing varied cooking styles, supporting local + national charities, and bringing people together in an annual event. Festival Style.

Our Vision

To establish the Carolina BBQ Festival as the premier annual gathering for barbecue enthusiasts to experience the authentic flavors, techniques and camaraderie that define Carolina's whole hog barbecue legacy.



Divided by Sauce, United by Coal.

CAROLINABBQFEST.ORG

CAROLINA BARBECUE FESTIVAL

2025 Highlights + 2026 Overview

Our Reach

543.4K

SOCIAL REACH

47.6K

WEBSITE VISITS

22.2K

EVENTBRITE VIEWS

The Festival \$52k

Donations to both local & national charities.

5K

ATTENDEES
2026

25

PIT MASTERS
2026

6

LOCAL BBQ
2026

5K

Expected attendees for 2026 - 3K 2025

Based on year-over-year growth + SHOUT! Partnership

17

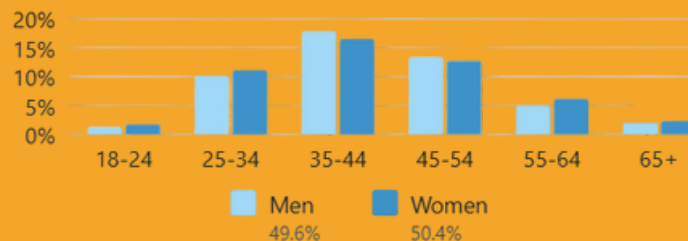
PIT MASTERS
2025

5

CHEFS
2025

Our Audience

NC, SC, VA, GA - as far as FL, NY, CA, WA
27 states represented



Media + Partners



.....CAROLINA BARBECUE FESTIVAL.....

Our Charities

In the last four years, our festival has raised over \$52,000 for charitable causes. These funds have been donated to organizations (including Operation BBQ Relief, Hungry Heroes, and World Central Kitchen) dedicated to feeding and supporting communities in need. Through these contributions, we're proud to extend the spirit of BBQ beyond our festival, making a positive impact on food security and community support.



The Kickoff + Festival Experience

The Carolina BBQ Festival Two-Day Event is a premier celebration of barbecue culture. Attendees enjoy tastings from some of the Southeast's most renowned Pitmasters, featuring an array of offerings, including whole hog (cooked on site), brisket, ribs, chicken, seafood, hash and rice, and more. The barbecue tastings are complemented by unique accompaniments that showcase the chef-driven dishes. Live music + DJ sets the soundtrack throughout the day, while vendor and brand activations provide opportunities to sample + shop. Families can enjoy the kid zone and so much more. Craft beer, cocktails, and wine options are available for purchase to accompany the tastings. For those seeking an elevated experience, a VIP package offers early entry, a dedicated VIP area, a live DJ, complimentary oysters, specialty merch + more. The Festival kicks off Friday with Live Music and a Pitmaster Meet + Greet. Enjoy some of Charlotte's Local Favorites serving up their take on BBQ! This event celebrates the rich barbecue traditions of the South. We hope you will join us.



CAROLINA BARBECUE FESTIVAL

bbq beyond the festival



The Brunch

2026 will be our third year hosting this pre-game event. This event is specifically designed for our partners, sponsors, bbq community, and media. We invite our Chef friends to get creative with their food offerings - think candied smoked bacon and Krispy Kreme doughnut brisket sandwiches. YUM.



The Pig Pickin'

The tradition of whole hog bbq is a pillar of our festival and we love to celebrate it often. This annual event which takes place in the fall, has grown year over year and become an expectation from our followers. Smoked oysters on the half-shell and football viewing brings the whole crew out!



The After Party

New for
2026

We are gearing up for our fifth anniversary in 2026 and want to show our appreciation. So for our pitmasters and families, volunteers and staff, partners and sponsors, we will be celebrating with a huge BBQ bash! More food + drinks, live music and present our charity partner Stan Hays of Operation BBQ Relief with a check. (Saturday Evening)

THE PARTY CONTINUES

.....CAROLINA BARBECUE FESTIVAL.....

partnership tiers

high on the hog - presenting sponsor

\$50K

- Presenting rights to The Festival
- Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, CBF event merchandise, and partner signage
- Partner promotion on social channels
- Mention in Press Release(s) pertaining to the event
- Name included in all contracted promotions
- Activation space in The Festival area
- 20x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 20x VIP Passes to The Festival (SAT)

Plus: Naming rights to all additional pop-up events throughout the year

These curated events draw attention to the Carolina BBQ Festival brand + partners

Additions Include: The Pig Pickin' (Fall 2025) & BBQ Brunch (Early Spring 2026)

the kickoff

\$35K

- Presenting rights to The Kickoff
- Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, and partner signage
- Partner promotions on social channels
- Activation space Friday + Saturday
- 16x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 16x VIP Passes to The Festival (SAT)

the after party

\$25K

- Presenting rights to The After Party
- Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, and partner signage
- Partner promotions on social channels
- Activation space in The Festival Area
- 14x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 14x VIP Passes to The Festival (SAT)

vip

\$15K

- Branding rights to VIP Area (SAT)
- Co-Branded VIP attendee gift
- Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, and partner signage
- Partner promotions on social channels
- Activation space in VIP Area
- 12x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 12x VIP Passes to The Festival (SAT)

welcome wagon

\$12.5K

- Opportunity to design the entrance area with co-branding and pre-approval
- Branding rights to the entrance areas of The Festival
- Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, and partner signage
- Partner promotions on social channels
- Activation space in The Festival area
- 8x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 8x VIP Passes to The Festival (SAT)

.....CAROLINA BARBECUE FESTIVAL.....

partnership tiers

serving up the goods

items available to co-brand at cost to produce

Add-on
or Stand-
alone

Cutlery \$7500
Wayfinder Signage \$2500

Staff Shirts \$1500
Festival Wristbands \$2250

Souvenir Cocktail Cups (Bars) \$3500
Volunteer Shirts \$1500

pitmaster sponsor

\$6.5K (5 AVAILABLE)

*Sponsor our hardworking, dedicated pitmasters;
Supports the full experience for our pitmasters and their families to join us.*

Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, and pitmaster partner signage

Mentioned and/or logo included wherever your Pitmaster is mentioned

Opportunity to add gift for all Pitmaster Participation Thank You Bags

Partner promotions on social channels

We fill their cooler - compliments of you

Activation space in The Festival Area next to your Pitmaster or Private tent + table for your crew

8x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)

8x VIP Passes to The Festival (SAT)



All partnership tiers are customized to meet the needs for branding + marketing opportunities

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.....CAROLINA BARBECUE FESTIVAL.....

partnership tiers

smokehouse suite - 5k

Sip, Savor, Relax

- Presenting rights & signage for your suite
- Full service staff for all tastings + drinks
- Company logo placement on the website and partner signage
- Partner promotion on social channels
- 10x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 10x VIP Tickets to The Festival (SAT)

piglet pen - 4k

- Presenting rights & signage for the family-friendly area
- Activation space in the Piglet Pen (family zone area)
- Company logo placement on the website and partner signage
- Partner promotion on social channels
- 6x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 6x Tickets to The Festival (SAT)

smokin swag - 2.5k

Sample, Taste, Sell

- Right to include up to two branded items for attendees (samples)
- Company logo placement on the website, step & repeat, and partner signage
- Partner promotions on social channels
- Activation space in The Festival area
- 4x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 4x Tickets to The Festival (SAT)

it takes a team - 2k each (10 available)

- Right to include 1 swag item
- Right to include #BBQForACause Raffle Donation for a service or item
(both must be approved by team)
- Company logo placement on the website and partner signage
- Donation item or service is accompanied by clear branding when mentioned
- Partner Promotions on social channels
- 2x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 2x Tickets to The Festival (SAT)

hydration stations - \$1.5K each (10 available)

- Presenting rights + signage
- Includes complimentary water and misting stations
- Company logo placement on the website and partner signage
- Partner promotion on social channels
- 4x Tickets to The Kickoff (FRI)
- 4x Tickets to The Festival (SAT)

All partnership tiers are customized to meet the needs for branding + marketing opportunities



WHO WE ARE



Lewis Donald

Founder,
Owner &
Smoketender -
Sweet Lew's BBQ

Founder, Owner and Smoketender - Sweet Lew's BBQ
Lewis Donald can't cut into a radish without thinking of his grandfather. Growing up in a suburb of Cleveland, Ohio, Donald wasn't the best student in the classroom, but he could spend all day studying the rows of vegetables in the garden his granddad Ray planted every year. Donald has lived in six different states since then, mastering numerous cuisines as a cook and chef at restaurants, country clubs, resorts, and a specialty food store. In Sweet Lew's, he fulfills his dream of running a classic barbecue shack. He takes the lessons from all of those travels and distills them into everything he does.



Erin Hunter

Founder,
Marketing & Event
Management
Let's Meet CLT

Founder, Marketing & Event Management - Let's Meet CLT
Responsible for business operations and team building for Let's Meet CLT. Born and raised in Charlotte, she has an absolute love for the city! After graduating from Appalachian State University, she has worked in the startup, corporate, and franchise space for marketing and events. Wanting to follow her passion of supporting the small business community and events that help connect the city she grew up in, Let's Meet CLT was started. A true connector of the small business community.

A note from Lewis

As the founder of the Carolina BBQ Festival, I am delighted to extend an invitation for your business to join us in 2026 as we come together to #bbqforacause. The Carolina BBQ Festival has become a cherished tradition, highlighting the Southeast's rich culinary heritage and culture. Our festival brings together renowned Pitmasters from across the region, each showcasing their distinctive cooking styles and the absolute best of barbecue.

From whole hog and chicken to ribs, seafood, brisket, and chopped pork, our event promises an elevated barbecue experience. By supporting our festival, your business will have the opportunity to align itself with an authentic, innovative, and community-driven event.

By becoming involved, you can expect *Exposure and Visibility*. The Carolina BBQ Festival draws a diverse audience of barbecue enthusiasts, foodies, and families. Through our partnership, your business will gain valuable exposure to many potential customers. Our comprehensive marketing efforts span various media channels, ensuring that your brand receives prominent visibility not only during the festival but also before and after the event. Additionally, supporting the Carolina BBQ Festival sends a positive message to the public and can generate favorable media coverage.

Our team invites you to be a part of this extraordinary event in partnership with Charlotte SHOUT! and contribute to our vision and mission of giving back to the community. Together, we can create an unforgettable experience for attendees, celebrate our culinary heritage, and contribute to the growth and support of our local community.

Sincerely, Lewis Donald | Founder, Carolina BBQ Festival