



## EasyCookoff.app – People's Choice or Ribfest Cookoff Organizer's Guide

### 1. Introduction

This guide is a great reference for organizing a **People's Choice** or **Ribfest** event, suitable for any community, festival, or non-profit. Use these suggestions to make the event your own!

What is the difference between a **People's Choice** event and a **Ribfest** event? That is a great question.

**People's Choice** events ask participants to decide on a winning team. This is done in two diverse ways. Paying teams for redeemed rib tickets is highly recommended.

1. Rib cards have a set number of slots for the taste tester to walk around and to sample, usually five or six, and they turn in a ticket to a team/tent to for a rib. Writing down tent numbers to remember where they sampled ribs and circling the winning team/rib. Participants turn the rib card back into the organizer by a set time. The selections are then tallied, and awards are given accordingly. Organizers may reward places lower than first place as well. A five-rib card could sell for \$15, with a portion of those proceeds given back to teams for their hard work, such as \$1-\$1.50 a rib. Redeemed rib tickets are counted and turned into the organizer for a payment. Paying teams back for their hard work helps them offset costs and is a fantastic way to ensure they come back year after year.
2. Teams are given a special box to redeem tickets. A set number of rib tickets are sold to a taste tester, usually five or six, and they redeem a ticket in the box to receive a rib. The taste tester is also given ONE different colored ticket, such as a golden ticket. The golden ticket is dropped into a team's box if they deem their rib to be the best. The boxes are then collected, winning tickets are tallied, and awards are given accordingly. Organizers may reward for places under first place as well. Redeemed rib tickets are also counted from the box, to pay back teams for their hard work. \$1-\$1.50 would go back to the teams, so they can offset their costs, and it is a terrific way to ensure they come back year after year.

**Ribfest** events are all about selling rib tickets. Teams are asked to cook as many rib racks as possible. The public can purchase as many tickets as they would like, so they can walk around and sample ribs. Foam to-go boxes are usually provided so they can load up and take ribs home as well. This is a fantastic way for an event to make money for their cause. The organizer may have a way to poll the public to crown a favorite team or business the best rib of the day.

**People's Choice** and **Ribfest** events usually have a main judging component to it. Turn-in boxes are judged, scores are compiled, and awards are issued. The **People's Choice** and **Ribfest** should start 15-20 minutes after the main judging turn in. This gives the teams time to prepare for the 1-2 hours of passing out ribs. Having an event like this after the main turn in gives the organizer time to enter main judging scores into the **EasyCookoff.app**, and to organize the award ceremony.

**Benefits:** Community engagement, fun for participants, and fundraising opportunities.

**Event Economics:** To make money for your cause, it is important to understand what kind of revenue can be generated. Here is an example of how you can make money at your event.

As an example, you were able to secure twenty teams, and on average they can cook fifteen rib racks for the people's choice event.

For the main turn in box, each team turns in six individual rib bones for main judging. The team will sample some ribs as they cook them because tasting is essential to winning!

Each rib has approximately twelve rib bones, however 10-11 bones are usually counted as some ribs are small and cannot be handed out.

15 rib racks x 10 individual rib bones= 150 rib bones.  $150 - 6 = 144$ .

$144 \times 20$  teams=2880 individual rib bones, possibly a few more. If you sell rib cards with five ribs per card, that is 576 rib cards. 576 rib cards at \$15 per card, is \$8640. If you pay back one-third of the fees collected to the teams for producing the ribs, you end up with \$5789.

As a side note, it is important to have a way to keep track of what teams have ribs available as the event happens. It is disappointing to sell rib cards or rib tickets if teams are out or almost out of ribs. Using a "yellow card" or "orange card" system is a wonderful way to keep track. Hang cards on the corners of the tents and ask teams to remove them once they run out of ribs. Have a volunteer keep a watchful eye on the tents, and once cards begin to be removed, frequently ask teams how many ribs they have left. You can then decide how many more rib cards you can sell. There is no perfect way to do this, but each year it only gets easier!

Organizers normally charge an entry fee for each team to compete to pay for awards, so add \$100 or more per team which is \$2000+. Your total revenue is \$7789+. Keep in mind you have expenses to take care of, such as the purchase of ribs, awards, and event amenities such as a band.

Some events do not charge an entry fee, with sufficient sponsorship dollars. This can be a fantastic way to attract teams, and you can easily fill up your team roster if they know you do not charge an entry fee. Offering high payouts and attractive trophies would attract as many teams as you need. Make it clear that team sign-ups depend upon their ability to cook a certain number of rib racks. If you are hoping for a large People's Choice or Ribfest event, this is a wonderful way to have long lines purchasing rib tickets!

It is important to secure sponsors that can monetarily support the event, or donate items such as porta-potties, purchase the awards, or donate the ribs. Sponsorship is the most critical component to the event that an organizer can spend time on to make the event profitable. Create a spreadsheet to track your expenses and projected income to prepare for the event. Track your sponsorship! Do not be afraid to ask for sponsors, you will be amazed by the generosity of your community. Use the spreadsheet of all required items and costs when soliciting sponsors. You can advertise at your event what each sponsor was generous enough to provide.

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## 2. Planning Timeline

Lead Time	Tasks
6-12 months	Define event scope, secure venue, permits, insurance
4-6 months	Secure sponsors, plan marketing
2-3 months	Order awards, finalize layout, open an account on the <b>EasyCookoff.app</b> and start uploading site maps, rules, pictures of awards, and more materials.
1 month	Open team registration on <b>EasyCookoff.app</b> , Finalize coordination, volunteers, and judging system (number of judges and judging tables), continue to update the <b>EasyCookoff.app</b> as needed.
1 week	Confirm all participants, volunteers, and deliveries. Close team registration on the <b>EasyCookoff.app</b> and place your order for ribs needed from your supplier or sponsor.

Lead Time	Tasks
Event day	Execute the event: setup, tasting, voting, awards, and HAVE FUN! Post team rankings on the <b>EasyCookoff.app</b> after the awards ceremony.
Post-event	Cleanup, feedback using the <b>EasyCookoff.app</b> feedback form, reporting, thank-you notes

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### 3. Site Planning

- Competition Area: Have maps for teams and list them on **EasyCookoff.app**.
  - People's Choice/Team Registration Tent: ticketing, voting stations.
  - Public Amenities: Seating, shade, restrooms, first aid
  - Vendor/Entertainment Area: Optional music, drinks, local vendors, food trucks.
  - Coordination: Power, water, trash, recycling, safety
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### 4. Competition Structure

- **Categories:** Typically ribs.
  - **Team Rules:** Bring own equipment, cook on-site, follow local health and fire regulations. Post a rules .pdf on the **EasyCookoff.app** for teams to reference.
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### 5. Voting & Judging

#### People's Choice Voting:

- Attendees purchase tickets (e.g., five sample tickets per rib card)
  - Rib cards are turned in with the favorite team back into the organizer **OR**
  - Use the “golden ticket” and box system to count tickets.
  - Tally votes to determine People's Choice winner.
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## 6. Budget & Sponsorship

- **Income:** Entry fees, tasting tickets, vendor fees, sponsorships
  - **Expenses:** Venue, permits, insurance, awards, marketing, staffing
  - **Sponsorship Ideas:** Booth sponsor, award sponsor, tasting ticket sponsor.
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## 7. Awards & Recognition

- **People's Choice Champion:** Highest attendee votes, WWE style belt, monetary awards.
  - **Main judging awards:** Trophies, monetary awards.
  - **Gift bags for the teams:** a great touch with sponsor coupons, gift cards, T-shirts, branded drink tumblers, supplies, stickers and more. Include their advertisements as well. It is a special touch of appreciation for your competitors. Gift bags can be given out anytime during the event, during the cook's meeting, or at the awards ceremony as a thank you for attending.
  - **Post trophy pictures:** on the **EasyCookoff.app** to entice team signups.
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## 8. Marketing & Promotion

- Social media campaigns (#hashtag posts)
  - Local newspapers, radio, community boards
  - Posters, flyers, and email newsletters
  - Highlight voting, tasting, and entertainment options.
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## 9. Volunteers & Staffing

### Roles:

- Ticketing and voting stations.
- Setup and teardown crew
- Food safety monitors
- Event coordination

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## 10. Cleanup & post-event

- Trash, recycling, composting.
- Grease disposal compliance and hot coal disposal.
- Feedback collection from teams, volunteers, and attendees
- Public thank-you posts and sponsor recognition at the awards ceremony.

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## 11. Resources

### 1. Cook Team Application Forms

#### EasyCookoff.app – Cook Team Application

Promote steam sign-ups on the **EasyCookoff.app**. The app has incredible features to organize the event.

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### 2. EasyCookoff.app – People’s Choice Ballot

#### People’s Choice Ballot / Voting Instructions

See People’s Choice Rib cards.

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### 3. EasyCookoff.app – Event Site Map

#### Suggested Site Map Layout

[Entrance] → Ticket Booth → People’s Choice Tent → Competition Area → Vendor Booths → Stage → Restrooms → First Aid

#### Legend:

- **Competition Area:** Pitmaster setups
- **People’s Choice Tent:** Tasting and voting.
- **Vendor Booths:** Food and drinks, food trucks, sponsor booths
- **Stage:** Announcements and entertainment if applicable
- **Amenities:** Restrooms, First Aid
- **EasyCookoff.app:** post an event map for teams to reference.

#### 4. EasyCookoff.app – Volunteer Duties

##### Volunteer Checklist

Task	Assigned To	Completed (✓)
Set up tents and tables	_____	_____
Ticketing & voting stations	_____	_____
Monitor tasting stations	_____	_____
Food safety checks	_____	_____
Teardown & cleanup	_____	_____
First aid / safety monitoring	_____	_____

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#### 5. EasyCookoff.app – Sponsorship Opportunities

**Create a spreadsheet for organization.**

**Print banners with sponsor logos for recognition.**

##### Sponsorship Levels:

Level	Benefits	Price
Title Sponsor	Logo on all marketing, stage mention, booth space	\$_____
Booth Sponsor	Booth space, social media mention	\$_____
Platinum, Gold	Logo on all marketing, stage mention, booth space	\$_____
Silver, Bronze	Logo on all marketing, stage mention, booth space	\$_____
Tasting Ticket Sponsor	Logo on tasting tickets	\$_____