

# NORTH ZULCH VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT

## CHILI COOK-OFF - February 7, 2026

### Rules and Guidelines

The event setup begins at 7:00 am. All teams **MUST** check in at the Information Table before unloading.

**Entry Fees:** Chili = \$60.00 Gumbo = \$60 Beans = \$30 All Categories = \$140 Extra Space = \$60  
(Must have an entry for Chili OR Gumbo to enter Beans) Gumbo is optional. A signed registration form acknowledging rules, refund policy, and liability disclaimer is required. (hardcopy or electronic)

**COOK-OFF SPOTS:** Teams will be assigned a space no smaller than 12'x12'. One spot may have up to two teams, with a maximum of two entries for each category. If you elect this option, Team Names must be the same, followed by "A" or "B." Example: Creative Cookers A, Creative Cookers B. Entry fee rules above apply to each team.

**RESERVATIONS:** **IF THIS IS YOUR 1<sup>ST</sup> YEAR TO PARTICIPATE, YOU MUST PAY WHEN YOU RESERVE A SPOT.**  
**RETURNING TEAMS, PLEASE PAY BY DECEMBER 1<sup>ST</sup>.** (See the layout of spaces attached to mark your choices.)  
**ALL TEAMS MUST BE REGISTERED IN ADVANCE.** TO EXPEDITE EVENT DAY CHECK IN, we will not accept unregistered teams on event day!

Follow @NZVFD Auxiliary's Facebook Page under the EVENTS tab to see the most recent spots available.

**We accept cash, money order, check, SQUARE, or PayPal to @nzvfdauxiliary.**

- To pay in person: contact any member of the NZVFD or Auxiliary, or place the registration form & payment in the lockbox on the east side of the fire station by the walk-in door. See our Facebook pages for member names. To pay by mail: NZVFD Auxiliary - PO Box 65 - North Zulch, TX 77872

**Showmanship Award-** An anonymous member of the public will score. Criteria include best: Decorated Booth, Costume, Friendliest, and Overall Impression.

### Teams

Teams are responsible for supplying all of their utensils & products. After the Award Ceremony, each Team is responsible for cleaning up their area. **NEW:** We will provide you with a large trash bag. Please bag all of your trash and LEAVE IT by your spot when you tear down. Firemen will gather all trash bags after all teams have cleared the area. Trash cans and a trash trailer will be onsite. Electricity will not be provided. Water will be available at the fire station by the overhead bay door. **NEW:** Small portable generators that make minimal noise ARE ALLOWED.

### Check-in-

All Cook Teams **MUST BE** checked in at the information table by 8:00 a.m. on February 7, 2026. We will NOT accept any other teams after 8:00 a.m. **No vehicles** are allowed at the event's location during the day except for loading and unloading. When parking, park along any street, but **PLEASE DO NOT block any driveways.** If your car is towed, it will be at your own expense. If you are unsure where to park, ask a VFD or Auxiliary member.

### Cooks meeting-

Cooks meeting will begin at approximately 9:00 am, in the bay of the old station. After the cook's meeting, teams will be allowed to start cooking. On-site cooking ONLY. All Entries must be cooked from scratch (\*\*some exceptions below) on-site during the cook-off. Teams must cook out in the open (no motor homes, closed tents, etc.)

### From Scratch-

NO ingredient may be pre-cooked in any way before the event. MEAT MAY NOT BE PRE-COOKED. \*\*EXCEPTIONS are commercially canned/bottled products such as tomatoes, peppers, broth, etc. Gumbo may have roux pre-cooked. Gumbo/Beans may have salt pork, bacon, ham hock or sausage (smoked/raw), but must be in its purchased form.

### CHILI- MAIN EVENT

- ❖ A Fireman/Auxiliary Member may check ALL ingredients.
- ❖ All ingredients must be onsite at check-in and in purchased (raw) form but may be chopped and cut ahead of time.

❖ BEANS, macaroni, rice, hominy, corn, or other similar ingredients known as fillers are NOT PERMITTED and will DISQUALIFY your entry.

#### **GUMBO:**

- ▶ Fireman/Auxiliary members may check ALL ingredients.
- ▶ All ingredients must be onsite at check-in and in their purchased (raw) form but may be chopped and cut ahead of time; excluding roux, it may be pre-cooked.
- ▶ Gumbo may have smoked sausage but it must be in its purchased form.
- ▶ Gumbo may be seafood, non-seafood, or any combination of ingredients.
- ▶ NO fillers (rice) allowed in judging cup.
- ▶ You are permitted to cook & serve rice with your gumbo for public tasting

#### **BEANS:**

- ▶ Teams must have a Chili OR Gumbo entry to participate in the Bean Category.
- ▶ Fireman/Auxiliary members may check ALL ingredients.
- ▶ All ingredients must be onsite at check-in and in their purchased (raw) form but may be chopped/cut in advance.
- ▶ Beans CAN be soaked, but not cooked, before arrival.
- ▶ ONLY DRY **PINTO BEANS** PERMITTED
- ▶ Salt pork, bacon, OR ham hock (smoked/raw) may be used for flavoring but must be in its purchased form.
- ▶ NO pressure cookers or other automatic cooking devices may be used.

**Taster's Choice Award:** This award is for the Team with the most tokens. It may be for your Chili, Gumbo, or Beans. Each team will be provided a container for gathering tokens. Each token counts as one vote. ANY individual may purchase as many tokens as they wish. The Team with the most tokens will WIN. Taster's Choice Cups will begin selling around noon to the public. Token containers will be picked up around 3 pm.

#### **Head Cook Responsibilities:**

•Responsible for safeguarding the judging cup and matching number ticket. A matching ticket number must be presented to claim winnings. •Shall be responsible for the conduct of their team members and guests. •Shall be responsible for his/her team's compliance with the rules and regulations. •Offensive conduct, such as nudity, lewdness, excessive alcohol consumption, and vulgarity, **WILL NOT** be allowed and will be grounds for Team disqualification and potentially being banned from future events. This is considered a family event; teams are expected to act accordingly. •Shall be responsible for ensuring that the space area is cleaned after the event is completed. •FAILURE TO FOLLOW THESE RULES WILL BE GROUNDS FOR DISQUALIFICATION.

**2026 Turn-in Times:    1:00 PM - Gumbo    2:00 PM - Chili    3:00 PM - Beans**

***\*\*Teams will be provided with a five-minute notice before the official turn-in time\*\****

**Judging Criteria** – Each of the following four areas will be scored 1-10, with a maximum of 40 points.

**AROMA:** It should smell appetizing

**TEXTURE:** It should be a smooth combination of meat/seafood or roux

**COLOR:** It should look appetizing

**TASTE/AFTER TASTE:** Should taste good while eating, be pleasing to the palate & leave a pleasant taste after swallowing

We will announce the top five (5) teams in each category, and the top three will win prize money and a trophy. Scores of TOP 10 will be posted on the fire department wall/door. Only the ticket number will be posted. Tickets will only be revealed for the top 10 spots.

**No Prohibited Activities:** Per IRS, "No part of the activities of the Corporation shall be to influence or attempt to influence legislation. The Corporation shall not participate in, or intervene in (including the publishing or distribution of statements) any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office. The Corporation shall not participate in any other activities that are not permitted by a tax-exempt Corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or by a Corporation whose contributions are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code."

On behalf of the NZVFD, we would like to thank you for participating in this fundraiser, and we hope you enjoy this family-friendly competition! We encourage teams to interact with other groups. Have fun and make memories!

