

Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship at Ley Memorial Pavilion, Harris Park – Dodgeville, WI

Welcome to the Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship! This is a growing regional event that is designed to put your Grilled Cheese recipes and cooking skills to the test. This competition features several different heats that all have different ingredients and rules, so please read these instructions carefully. At the Grilled Cheese Championship, we are proud of our Wisconsin cheese-making history, so ALL cheeses used must be from Wisconsin.

As you can imagine, during the event, things will get a little hectic. There will be 3,000+ people at the competition watching you cook, and a few VIP's will be sampling sandwiches. The judges are typically local celebrities and/or people with experience in the culinary arts. Participants are encouraged to wear costumes and have team names. We try to make the event one where the cooks and the audience have a lot of fun. Rules, recipes, and the spirit of competition are important, but having fun is the best part.

If you find yourself having fun, please come back and compete again. The team of volunteers helping out and running the event try to make improvements each and every year and we know there is always opportunities for improvements. If you have ideas, please share them with one of our friendly volunteers anytime during or after the event. If you have questions or suggestions, you can always email us at WIGrilledCheeseChamp@gmail.com.

If you have participated before, you will notice that the rules have been updated. Please make special note that the cooking time has been reduced to 13 minutes to make the competition more challenging.

The Competition

There will be a maximum of 20 competitors in each heat. Once capacity has been reached, a waiting list for competitors will be created and additional heats may open up. Each competitor will be allowed to enter only one sandwich per category in a maximum of four categories for the entire competition day.

1. The entry fee is non-refundable, and you must pre register using GrowthZone (<http://grilledcheesewi.eventbrite.com>): \$20 for your first category and \$10 each additional category thereafter. Competitors may enter in up to four categories.
2. Competitors aged 12-17 may only enter as a competitor in the Young Chef category but may serve as an assistant with an adult competitor in other Amateur categories. The entry fee includes admission for one competitor and one assistant. Except for the special Young Chefs heat, competitors must be at least 18 years of age to compete. Assistants must be 12 years of age or older and must be accompanied by an adult competitor during the competition.
3. *Day of the event:* Competitors will enter the Pavilion at Harris Park with all necessary supplies. At 10:00 AM please gather on the bleachers around the cooking area. At 10:15 AM, there will be a mandatory meeting for all competitors. This will be a great opportunity for you to ask questions about the competition, hear sanitation guidelines, learn to operate the stoves, and have your ingredients inspected. The Competition will start with the first category at 11:00 AM. When your heat is called, you will be asked to enter the cooking area and will be given 5 minutes to organize your things, prep your sandwich bread by adding butter or start heating up your pan. You will also need to put on your apron, gloves, and cooking hat. There is a table in the middle of the cooking area that has aprons, gloves, and hats on it for your use. You may NOT start cooking yet.

Before your heat starts, the Emcee will say "*Spatulas Up*" and then start the event. You will have 13 minutes to cook two sandwiches. When cooking is completed, competitors must prepare their sandwiches for judging. Be

sure to cut the 1st sandwich into four pieces for tasting and the 2nd sandwich will simply be placed on a plate for presentation to the judges.

When you are ready, please raise your flag and a volunteer will collect your sandwiches and take them to the judges for their evaluation. You are free to pack up your food and take your cooking pan over to the VIP area. Volunteers will be wiping up and disinfecting the cooking area before the next heat.

At the VIP area, you'll need to cook two additional sandwiches for the VIP ticket owners to sample. Then you can clean up your VIP cooking area and wait for your next competition or for the awards ceremony.

Awards: After all the heats are done cooking, the awards will be presented to the winning chefs. Please refer to the schedule to plan your day. If it is determined through the scoring process that there is a tie, competitors will be offered the chance to do a cook-off. This is why it is very important to bring extra ingredients! If you don't have ingredients, or refuse the cook-off, the other tying competitor will be offered the higher place trophy or prize. Sometimes, just having the ingredients can win a tie.

Competitor Rules

All competitors must attend a mandatory meeting at 10:15 am on Saturday, April 26th to sign-in, obtain their entry kit and grilling station number, review rules and sanitary guidelines, complete required paperwork, learn how to work the stoves, and have their ingredients inspected and approved.

At each competitor cooking station, there will be certain items for your use:

- Sterno Action Station butane portable stove
- 12" American Kitchen by Regal Ware Stainless Steel fry pan with Eco-Satin non-stick coating (mandatory equipment, no substitutions)
- Disposable Grilling Hats
- Disposable Grilling Apron
- Official Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Competition Cheese Flag
- Hand Sanitizer
- Disposable Gloves
- Official Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship Plates
- Paper Towels
- Rules Sheet

Onsite, competitors will be assigned a numbered grilling station for the relevant grilling heat. Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship will provide table-top, butane burners for the event and tables upon which to cook and hold supplies. The pavilion kitchen is available to competitors to wash their cooking equipment before, during, or after they compete.

Competitors must bring the following items to the competition.

- o Spatula or Turner
 - o Cutting Board
 - o Knife
 - o Ingredients needed to make six sandwiches for each sandwich category entered.
 - o Appropriate coolers and supply storage containers to hold ingredients in a sanitary manner and chilled ingredients must remain 45 degrees or below.
4. Each competitor will bring any and all supplies and ingredients necessary to make six sandwiches (two for judging, two more for our VIP attendees to sample, extra ingredients for two more sandwiches in the event of error or "cook-off") for each category.
 5. You may prepare certain items prior to the event (e.g., sauté onions and mushrooms, make a compote, make

- a compound butter, etc.).
6. The competitor will grill two sandwiches at the same time during the competition. One sandwich will be cut up into quarters and presented to the judges to sample. The other sandwich will be kept whole and given to the judges to determine presentation points. Afterwards, the whole sandwich will be cut in half by event staff and displayed to the spectators along with a description of the sandwich's contents.
 7. For our VIP promotion, a competitor will be required to repeat the grilling of the sandwich again so additional ingredients should be brought. This includes bread, butter, and Wisconsin cheese at the very minimum (see Sandwich Categories and Definitions below for more details on what is allowed for each category). The VIP sandwiches do not need to be completed during the competition time as additional cook stations will be provided to complete them following your heat.
 8. Competitors MAY NOT cook additional sandwiches for family or friends any time while the competition is going on. Additional sandwiches are exclusively for VIP ticket holders.
 9. All perishable items must be stored in a cooler with ice and stored at safe temperatures below 45 degrees F.
 10. All foodstuff must be stored off the ground at least 6 inches or remain in coolers.
 11. Coolers and supply storage units should be labeled with competitors' names.
 12. No outside cooking equipment or cookware is allowed. The table-top, butane burners have been tested to work well with the 12" skillet provided.
 - o All other cooking devices and tools such as George Foreman Grills, deep fryers, toaster ovens, Panini grills, waffle irons, foil-wrapped bricks, PAN LIDS/COVERS, etc. will not be allowed.
 13. All competitors must wear grilling hats, aprons, and sanitary gloves either provided by the Grilled Cheese Championship event or each competitor may bring their own hats, aprons, and sanitary gloves.
 - o When handling foodstuffs, all competitors will wear sanitary, disposable gloves.
 - o While costumes are permitted and encouraged, they must include a hat, an apron, and sanitary, disposable gloves.
 14. Each Amateur or Professional competitor must be 18 years or older and assistants must be 12 years or older. Each Young Chef competitor must be between 12-17 years of age. Each competitor should have an assistant to help with cooking. Assistants must be at least 12 years of age. Assistants under the age of 18 must be paired with an adult competitor over the age of 18. The assistants will also need to wear sanitary, disposable gloves and maintain a safe food environment. The assistant will be responsible for raising the designated cheese flag and event staff will pick up the sandwich.
 15. Each competitor must prepare two regular-sized grilled cheese sandwiches for judging purposes. The sandwiches must be grilled using the equipment provided. The competitor will decide which sandwich is cut up for the judges to sample and which sandwich will remain whole and judged for presentation. One of the sandwiches will then be cut by the competitor into four quarters, thereby creating four judging samples. The other sandwich must remain whole.
 16. Each competitor, regardless of whether they are competing in multiple categories, will be required to break down their station, pack their ingredients up and clear out of the cooking area.

Category Descriptions and Definitions:

All grilling will be done in separate 13-minute heats. Each competitor will have only 13 minutes per category to complete their grilling. The Emcee of the event will occasionally announce time remaining as the heat advances. The competition will begin with the command "*Spatulas Up!*"

Classic -- any type of bread, real Wisconsin butter, and only one kind of real Wisconsin cheese. No additional ingredients. (Compound butters can be used on the outside and do not count as an ingredient on any sandwich. Use them on the inside and it does count as an ingredient.) A garnish is permitted, but it may not be used to enhance the flavor of the sandwich and is only for display purposes.

Classic Plus One -- a savory (as opposed to sweet) sandwich with any type of bread, "butter," and only one kind of real Wisconsin cheese plus one additional ingredient (note: compound ingredients such as jams, spreads, etc. can be counted as one). The interior ingredients must be at least 60% cheese. A garnish is permitted, but it may not be used to enhance the flavor of the sandwich and is only for display purposes.

Classic Plus Extras -- a savory (as opposed to sweet) sandwich with any type of bread, "butter," and real Wisconsin cheese (multiple cheeses accepted) plus unlimited additional ingredients. However, the interior ingredients must still be at least 60% cheese.

Classic Dessert -- any kind of bread, "butter," and real Wisconsin cheese (multiple cheeses accepted) plus additional ingredients to create an overall sweet (as opposed to savory) flavor that would be best served as a "dessert" grilled cheese sandwich. However, the interior ingredients must still be at least 60% cheese.

"Open" -- during the special heat for competitors aged 12-17, Amateur-Young Chef competitors may prepare the Classic, Classic Plus One, Classic Plus Extras, or Classic Dessert sandwich as defined above. A Young Chefs must be accompanied by an adult during the competition.

"Winners Circle" -- is a special heat where participation is limited to contestants who have received first place honors for a category in past competitions. This special contest is intended to have limited participation and will occur sporadically.

Special "Main Event" Cooking -- The Grilled Cheese Championship occasionally introduces special competitions. These may include introducing a unique ingredient in order to challenge chefs or it may be one or more community groups challenging each other. Rules for this category are determined annually as "special" competitions are introduced.

When the time limit is reached, time will be called with the command "*Spatulas Down!*" When announced, you must have your sandwich on the plate and off the grill, as you are no longer cooking. You will need to cut your sandwich and raise your flag.

Sample Schedule

- Mandatory Competitors Meeting: 10:15-10:45 am
- Amateur-Classic: 11:00 am
- Professional-Classic: 11:30 am
- Amateur-Classic Plus One: 12:00 pm
- Professional-Classic Plus One: 12:30 pm
- Awards Presentation????
- Young Chefs (open sandwich category): 1:00 pm
- Amateur-Classic Plus Extras: 1:30 pm
- Professional-Classic Plus Extras: 2:00 pm
- Amateur-Classic Dessert: 2:30 pm
- Professional-Classic Dessert: 3:00 pm
- Tie Breaker: 3:30 pm
- Awards: 4:00 pm

Heat times may vary based on the number of heat participants. The schedule will be announced during the competitors meeting on the day of the event. Categories with more than 10 participants will be split into multiple heats.

Competitors are required to check-in from 9:30am and 10:10 AM and attend the mandatory competitors' meeting at 10:15 am. At that time, competitors will be assigned a cooking time and a numbered cooking station at which to grill. Competitors will be responsible for storing their own supplies, coolers, and containers in a safe, sanitary manner while on site. When a competitor's designated heat is called, they will have 5 minutes to gather their supplies and report to their designated cooking station and get ready to compete. When the cooking heat begins, competitors will be given the go ahead by the command "*Spatulas Up!*" After 13 minutes, the heat will end with the command "*Spatulas Down!*"

Judging Rules

There are a total of four judges for each heat in the Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship. Two sandwiches must be grilled for each category entered: one will be quartered and presented to the judges to sample while the other sandwich must remain whole and given to the judges to award presentation points. Each sandwich entry will be able to score a maximum of 40 points per judge for a total of 160 points possible. The sandwich with the highest points awarded by the judges will be declared the winner of that category. In case of a tie, a cook-off will be held.

Sandwiches determined by the lead judge or the floor judge to be non-compliant (e.g., fails to use required ingredients or in required proportions, failure to follow sanitary requirements, etc.) will be disqualified. The Pit Boss or an Inspections Team member may also issue one point penalties at their discretion should a contestant be caught breaking rules or being uncooperative. Points will be awarded by the judges based upon the following criteria:

Presentation (How does the sandwich look?): Up to 10 points possible

- Appearance and Neatness: Does the sandwich have a clean and appealing appearance? Are the cuts even and tidy? Points should be deducted for a messy or sloppy presentation.
- Creativity: How creative is the visual presentation? Are there artistic elements in the plating or sandwich design that enhance its overall aesthetic appeal?
- Color and Texture: Does the sandwich display a pleasing mix of colors and textures? Are there visible contrasts between ingredients, and do they look appetizing?
- Garnishes: Are the garnishes used appropriately and do they contribute to the visual appeal without overshadowing the sandwich? A garnish should not be used to enhance the flavor but to complement the presentation.

Taste (How does the sandwich taste?): Up to 20 points possible

- Flavor Balance: Is there a harmonious balance of flavors in the sandwich? Does any ingredient overpower the others, or is it a well-rounded experience?
- Use of Cheese: Since cheese is a critical component, does it taste fresh and of high quality? Does it meld well with the other ingredients?
- Seasoning and Seasonality: Are the ingredients seasoned appropriately, and do they reflect the intended flavor profile? Are any ingredients over or under-seasoned?
- Aftertaste and Enjoyment: Does the sandwich leave a pleasant aftertaste? Was it an enjoyable experience to eat?
- Temperature and Texture: Is the sandwich at an ideal temperature for tasting? Does it have the correct texture, with a crisp exterior and a gooey, melted cheese interior?

Style (Is this sandwich special?): Up to 10 points possible

- Originality and Innovation: Does the sandwich offer a unique twist or an innovative approach to grilled cheese? Is it different from conventional grilled cheese sandwiches?
- Thematic Consistency: Does the sandwich align with the category in which it is entered (e.g., Classic, Classic Plus One, Classic Plus Extras, Classic Dessert)? Does it maintain a consistent theme throughout?
- Overall Concept: Does the sandwich tell a story or reflect a particular concept? How well does the concept translate into the final product?
- Impact and Memorability: Does the sandwich leave a lasting impression on the judges? Is it the kind of sandwich they would remember and want to try again?

Definitions:

“Bread”: any leavened or unleavened, flour-based and baked item that is considered to be “bread” (e.g., pita, whole-wheat, sandwich thins, etc.). Gluten-free products ARE ALLOWED this year! CAN PARTICIPANTS MAKE THEIR OWN BREAD, WITH VARIOUS INGREDIENTS SUCH AS CRANBERRIES BAKED INTO THE BREAD?

“Butter”: a sandwich grilling aid that includes butter, margarine, plain or flavored oils, etc. used on the grilling side of the bread are permitted in Classic Plus One, Classic Plus Extras, Young Chef, and Dessert. However, only real butter with no additives (such as garlic, dill, mayonnaise, etc.), may be used in the “classic” category.

“Cheese”: MUST BE MADE IN WISCONSIN from an animal source (Note: processed cheese, including cream cheese, is prohibited and will result in disqualification).

- An “amateur” competitor is a person who engages in cooking as a past-time rather than as a profession. Should a competitor win the top prize in any amateur category for three or more years in a row, they may participate in the “professional” category.
- A “Young Chef” competitor is a person aged 12-17 who engages in cooking as a past-time rather than as a profession (note: Young Chef competitors must be accompanied by an adult during the competition). Young Chef competitors aged 12-17 may only enter in the Young Chef category but may serve as assistants with an adult competitor in other categories.
- A “professional” competitor is:
 - 1) a person who engages in cooking as part of their profession; or
 - 2) an expert with specialized knowledge in culinary arts and in which one is practicing professionally; or
 - 3) a person who has won three or more separate contests at past competitions

Prize Section

The Wisconsin Grilled Cheese Championship offers a variety of prizes to reward the outstanding efforts of our competitors. The top three scores for each category will be declared first, second and third place winners for Professional, Amateur, and Young Chef classifications. Here is what you can expect for each category:

Professional and Amateur Categories:

- First Place: The top sandwich in each category will receive a trophy and a cash prize of \$50. This top prize honors the skill and creativity demonstrated in the competition.
- Second Place: The runner-up in each category will receive a trophy and a cash prize of \$25.
- Third Place: The third-place winner in each category will receive a prize from local businesses. Prizes may

include an assortment of locally made cheeses, locally processed meats, locally bottled barbecue sauce, and other specialty items from the region.

Young Chef Category:

- First Place: The winner of the Young Chef Open category will receive a trophy, a \$25 gift certificate to Culvers, and a Wisconsin Grilled Cheese hot pad.
- Second Place: The second-place winner will receive a \$10 gift certificate to Culvers, a ribbon, and a Wisconsin Grilled Cheese hot pad.
- Third Place: The third-place winner will receive a \$10 gift certificate to Culvers, a ribbon, and a Wisconsin Grilled Cheese hot pad.
- Participation: All Young Chefs participating in the competition will receive a ribbon and a Wisconsin Grilled Cheese hot pad as a token of appreciation for their involvement and effort.

Lorin Toepper "Best of Show" Award:

The Lorin Toepper "Best of Show" award is presented to the contestant with the highest-scoring sandwich among all Professional categories. This prestigious award comes with a special trophy and a cash prize of \$100.