



EVERYTHING
YOU WANTED TO
KNOW ABOUT
COOKING CHILI
[BUT WERE AFRAID TO ASK]

Thinking that you might want to cook chili in this year's chili cook-off, but you don't know where to start? How much chili do we cook, how long does it take, how much does it cost? Well, you've come to the right place.

This is your comprehensive,
know-it-all guide to cooking chili.

Cooking chili is easy. Cooking 25 gallons of chili and then serving it to a lot of people, in a small space, in tiny little cups, while smiling and having a GOOD TIME...
a bit more challenging.

First, the WHY

It's us, it's you and most importantly, it's the community. All the proceeds from the event go back to the community. That's right, we don't keep anything. Because of you, the Rotary Club of West Chester is able to support local non-profits. These are some of the organizations that benefited from previous Cook-Offs:

- Act in Faith
- ARC of Chester County
- Chester County Children's Inc.
- Chester County Family Academy
- Chester County Women's Services
- Community Volunteers in Medicine
- Community Warehouse Project
- Crime Victims Center of Chester County
- Domestic Violence Center of Chester County
- Family Service of Chester County
- Friends Association
- Home of the Sparrow
- Hope Springs Equestrian Therapy
- Kennett Youth Garage
- Maternal & Child Health Consortium
- Northstar of Chester County
- Read2Dream
- Safe Harbor
- Salvation Army
- The Hickman
- Volunteer English Program
- West Chester Area Senior Center
- West Chester Communities That Care
- West Chester Public Library
- West Chester Senior Center
- YMWIC Foundation, Inc.



THE COOKING

How, when, where?

You can cook your chili before **or** during the event...yup, you can do it the day before or a couple of days before...here's the catch: to pre-cook your chili, you must do it at a restaurant or a non-profit organization's facility AND provide the Chester County Health Department License to Operate a Public Eating or Drinking Place. We can help set you up with some of those non-profits who don't mind sharing their kitchen. You might even, in the spirit of the event, partner with one of those organizations.

If you do cook before the event, the health department has some "day-of" rules:

1. The chili must leave the cooking facility at 41° F or less.
2. Must be transported in a commercial grade cold hold equipment to maintain the 41° F or lower temperature.
3. Be maintained at 41° F or less until RAPIDLY reheated on site to a temp or 165° F and then maintained at 135° F or more until served.





So you feel like being a bit adventurous and cook chili on the street... totally cool! In that case, you'll need more than a hot plate. Bring cutting boards, sanitary gloves, knives, spoons, ladles, big bowls for the chili itself, insulated coolers for the cold stuff, plastic bags to hold stuff you're preparing (the health department doesn't want to see food just laying on trays or cutting boards or whatever, they like to see everything protected against dust and such, so once that onion is chopped, if not going into the pot right away, put it into a plastic bag), some sort of serving tray or trays (half sheet trays like the restaurants have are fantastic for this). Did you notice that most of those things we recommend you bring are plural? That's because it's best to bring more than one of each. Lastly...BRING THE HEAT (literally AND figuratively)!

The best heat to get your chili up to temp comes from propane. We have access to electricity (at an added fee), but it's limited, and honestly, gas or propane is soooooo much better to cook with. You can rent these things anywhere, if you don't have something already. If you need help, we can refer you to our preferred vendor.

The chili MUST be hot...and we're gonna check it out! We have a few folks who walk around with thermometers and make sure you're up to temp. What is that temp? Glad you asked...165° F.

THE PREP

So, you're diggin this idea. You're friends are into it, maybe your company wants to do it and they put you in charge....but you haven't done this and you're not sure what to expect or where to start. We got your back.

TIME: Prepare, prepare, prepare (and get some people to help). The teams having the best time tell us they meet a few times prior to the event, create shopping lists, assign tasks and generally know how things are gonna go before they get to the event. We've seen teams with as few as 3 people and as many as 10. We like whoever you're gonna bring.

If you precook your chili, estimate 2-4 hours from start to finish. That's just the cooking. Shopping's gonna take another hour and don't forget to figure out where you're gonna store the dang stuff.

If you cook on the street, you've got about 3 ½ to 4 hours to get it done. You can get here as early as 7:30 and as late as 9:30 (Don't get here at 9:30). You'll need to unload, set up your booth (yup you need at least a 10x10 tent) and start cooking. Serving to the public starts at noon; but before that -- 11:30 -- you submit your official chili sample to the judges room for tasting. So our advice is be prepared, be organized and be ready to have a great time.





THE COST

We ask our teams to cook 20 – 25 gallons of chili. It's a lot of chili, we get a lot of people, we want everyone to taste your chili (let's be honest here, we have no doubt you have the best chili of all time.) On average, a basic, ground beef chili and all the ingredients and the tools/trays/propane and entry fee (that WE GIVE BACK TO YOU!) will run a few hundred bucks...a small cost to make a big difference in your community! Remember that First Prize is \$1,000!!!!!!

THE FUN

The Chili Cook-Off is a great opportunity for team building and having FUN! Think of a theme and run wild with it! We've seen everything from teams in lederhosen to guys in coconut bras. There is a Best Decorated Booth prize...check out our Facebook page for pics of years past!



What are you waiting for?

SIGN UP YOUR TEAM TODAY!
westchesterchilicookoff.com

