



**NC STATE
CULINARY ARTS CONTEST
HIGH SCHOOL
2026**

High School Culinary Arts Competition

Modified Market Basket Format

- Competitors will receive a market basket with various ingredients. The contents of the basket are listed below.
- Competitors must use a noticeable amount of each item in their market basket.
- Competitors can supplement the market basket ingredients with items from the community pantry.
- The competitors will present four (4) copies of a menu that include an appetizer OR a soup, one entrée, and a dessert following the competition guidelines. The menus must be turned in at the beginning of the competition and must include which market basket items will appear in each course. Competitor number must be listed on each menu, no names.

Market Basket

Ingredients subject to change based on availability. Ingredients will be substituted with similar products if necessary.

- Chicken
- 4 oz Parsnips
- 6 oz Green Beans
- ½ head of Cauliflower
- 4 oz Shiitake Mushrooms
- 1 Lemon
- 2 Zucchini
- 4 oz Clarified Butter
- 2 oz Blueberries

Menu

Appetizer OR Clear Soup

Sauteed Chicken with Sauce, Grains, Vegetables

Custard

Competition Guidelines

Equipment check-in will occur at check-in. All equipment must be checked in at this time. Any equipment not on the approved list must be removed. Equipment will be stored safely until your competition time. Please remove all school or personal information from your toolbox. Mark your toolbox with your contestant number.

The competitors will present four (4) copies of a menu that include an appetizer OR a soup, one entrée, and a dessert following competition guidelines. Menus must include where the market basket items will appear on the plates. This will be scored as part of the creativity score by the tasting judges. The menus must be turned in at the beginning of your competition day. Include your competitor number on the menu, no names.

Please use only as much of each ingredient as is necessary. Return unused portions to the supply tables.

Contact a judge to look at your waste before removing anything from your station.

You may work on any component of your menu at any time. For example, you can begin working on your stock and/or soup during your knife cut time.

For each menu category, you will present one (1) plate to the tasting judges for evaluation and one (1) plate for display.

Raise your hand and ask for assistance if there is anything that you do not understand. There will be a period just before the start of the first session when all questions will be answered for all contestants to hear. Once the competition starts, any questions about technique or definitions etc. will not be answered. Questions about where to find ingredients or equipment will be answered.

Remember two things – this is about LEARNING, and it should be FUN. If at any time you feel overwhelmed and feel that you cannot continue, speak to a judge or member of the technical committee. We are here for you!

High School Judging Categories – 980 points

CATEGORY & POINTS	POSSIBLE POINTS	POINTS
SANITATION (KITCHEN JUDGE)	190 POINTS	
Hygiene and safety (64)	64	
Food handling (63)	63	
Cleanliness (63)	63	
TECHNICAL SKILLS (KITCHEN JUDGE)	190 POINTS	
Mise en Place (60)	60	
Time management & planning (65)	65	
Cooking methods & techniques (65)	65	
KNIFE SKILLS (KITCHEN JUDGE)	50 POINTS	
Minced onions (17)	17	
Julienne carrots (17)	17	
Medium diced potatoes (16)	16	
BUTCHERY (KITCHEN JUDGE)	50 POINTS	
Breast boneless and skin on (16)	16	
First bone of wing attached (17)	17	
Tender intact and attached to breast (17)	17	
FINISHED PRODUCT	450 POINTS	
APPETIZER OR SOUP (TOTAL 150)		
Presentation (50)	50	
Creativity (50)	50	
Taste/Techniques (50)	50	
ENTREE (TOTAL 150)		
Presentation (50)	50	
Creativity (50)	50	
Taste/Techniques (50)	50	
DESSERT (TOTAL 150)		
Presentation (50)	50	
Creativity (50)	50	
Taste/Techniques (50)	50	
WRITTEN MENU (TOTAL 50)	50 POINTS	
Complete and professional menu matches dishes served	50	
DEDUCTIONS		
Poor/no cleanup and reset of station area	-20	
Uniform infraction	-10	
No resume	-10	
No approved safety card	-10	
Late Service		
Up to 10 minutes late	-10	
10-20 minutes late	-20	
20 -30 minutes late	-30	

Culinary Arts Addendum

Clothing Requirements

- Black work pants or black-and-white checkered chef's pants
- White chef's jacket (if it has a school logo or sponsor logo, the logo must be covered completely)
- Black non-slip, non-porous, closed toe, closed heel shoes
- White apron
- Hair restraint as needed
- White chef's hat (toque) or skull cap
- White neckerchief (optional)
- Side towels

Clothing items do not need to have the SkillsUSA logo but must otherwise match the descriptions above.

No facial jewelry is allowed. Earrings are not permitted even if covered by a bandage. A single wedding ring is the only jewelry that will be allowed during competition. All hair must be restrained and off the collar – this may require a hairnet along with your hat. Beards must be covered by a snood during all periods of food handling.

Equipment & Materials

Supplied by the Technical Committee

*See attached list

Supplied by the Contestant

- Resume
- Food Safety Certification
- Menus (4) with competitor number
- *See attached equipment list

Contestants will not be allowed to share tools or equipment.

No knife cut measuring devices can be used.

Cell phones or electronic devices are NOT allowed in the competition area.

No additional equipment beyond what is listed in the national technical standards is allowed to be used in the contest.

SkillsUSA Culinary Arts Equipment List

Mandatory Student-Provided Equipment	Mandatory Site-Provided Equipment
Resume	Sautee pans
Knife Kit	Sauce pots
• Chef's knife	Stock pots
• Paring knife	Sheet pans
• Boning knife	Hotel pans
• Slicing knife	Cutting boards
• Knife steel	Tongs
• Vegetable peeler	Spatulas
Thermometer	Large spoons
Pen/Marker for labeling	Strainers/Chinois
Side towels	Plastic wrap
Measuring cups/spoons	Tin Foil
	Cheesecloth
	Twine
	Disposable gloves
	Tape (for labeling)
	Cleaning towels and buckets
	Mixing bowls
OPTIONAL Student provided: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any approved equipment from the national technical standards tool list that you need to prepare for your menu Oven mitt or pan handlers Maximum of 2 pots or 2 pans additional 	

Scope of the Contest

Food Safety Certification:

All competitors must submit a copy of a current ANSI approved food safety manager or food handler certification at orientation. Failure to do so will result in a 10-point penalty. This is required of ALL contestants in High School and Post Secondary levels.

*High School exemption for NC Competition – NC will allow for advisor/instructor verification that student-contestant is qualified for food safety IF food handling test has not been taken by the state competition date.

Resume:

All competitors must submit a resume at check in.

Create a Menu:

All competitors must create a menu of what they will produce and submit four (4) copies at the beginning of their competition day. Menus must have your competitor number and no names.

Time Limit:

High School Contest – Students will have 3.5 hours to make 3 knife cuts, fabricate a chicken, prepare an appetizer OR soup, an entrée, and dessert.

Knife Cuts:

Perform these 3 knife cuts that must be utilized in the finished product

- Minced onions, julienne carrots, medium diced potatoes

Fabricate a Chicken:

High School Contest – Two breasts: The breasts should be skin on and boneless, except for the first bone of the wing which should be attached. The tender should be intact and attached to the breast. The wing bone and tender can be removed after evaluation for use in the menu as desired.

Common Kitchen Items for High School and Postsecondary

DRY GOODS	PRODUCE	DAIRY	OTHER
AP Flour	Apples	Butter	1 each 3 lb. chicken
Sugar	Lemons	Cream	2 slices bacon
Corn meal	Garlic	Milk	½ lb. Haricot beans
Couscous	Onions	Eggs	½ lb. White mushrooms
Corn starch	Scallions	Cheddar cheese	½ lb. Parsnips
Brown rice	Shallots	Parmesan cheese	1 lb. Red potatoes
Orzo pasta	Leeks	Blue cheese	3 oz Couscous
Lentils	Carrots		3 oz Plum tomatoes
Quinoa	Celery		3 oz Lentils
Bread	Red peppers		
Honey	Mushrooms		
Vegetable oil	Green leaf lettuce		
Extra virgin olive oil	Spinach		
Soy sauce	Assorted fresh herbs		
Tabasco	Parsley		
Anchovy filets	Potatoes		
Dijon mustard	Tomatoes		
Whole grain mustard			
Almonds			
Walnuts			
Tomato puree			
White wine vinegar			
Red wine vinegar			
Assorted dry spices			
Chicken base			
Beef base			
Red cooking wine			
White cooking wine			

APPETIZER/FIRST COURSE

Skill components: Hot/Cold Appetizer, Salad, Flatbread

Prepare two (2) identical plates of appetizer of choice. This could be a plated appetizer OR a salad. Required components:

- Must contain a protein component
- Must contain a scratch-made crisp flour-based cracker component produced from a non-yeasted dough
- Minimum of two (2) distinct knife cuts

OR

CLEAR SOUP

Skill component: Stock/Clear Soup

Prepare two (2) identical bowls of consommé using a minimum of two (2) distinct knife cuts as garnish.

ENTRÉE

Skill components: Sauté, Sauce, Grains, Vegetable

Prepare two (2) identical plates following guidelines below.

- **Protein:** Sauteed Chicken
- **Vegetable:** At least two (2) vegetables displaying distinct knife cuts. One of the vegetables must be prepared using the sauté method.
- **Starch:** Simmered grain, pilaf, or risotto
- **Sauce:** Pan sauce or a derivative of a Mother Sauce

DESSERT

Skill components: Baking, Custard, Fruit

Prepare two (2) identical plates of basic custard following guidelines below. May be served hot or cold. Serve in soup cups and garnish with fruit.

See recipe attached

BASIC CUSTARD

- 2 cups milk
- 2 eggs
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ tsp vanilla

Method:

1	Heat milk until just bubbling at the edge of the pan.
2	Whisk together eggs, sugar, and vanilla.
3	Pour a small amount of hot milk into egg mixture to temper.
4	Whisk continuously while slowly adding remaining milk.
5	Pour mixture into cups.
6	Cook in a water bath at 325F (163C) for 45 minute or until set.

Alternate Method:

1	Start a double boiler on the stove top by bringing water to a boil and then reducing to a simmer.
2	Pour the milk into a bowl and place bowl of milk on top of a double boiler over simmering water.
3	Stir occasionally until milk is heated through,
4	Beat eggs in a large bowl until light.
5	Add sugar to eggs and mix well.
6	Temper the egg mixture with a small portion of hot milk into egg mixture, whisking constantly, until warmed and thinned.
7	Pour mixture slowly back into hot milk, whisking constantly.
8	Cook and stir until custard is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. An instant read thermometer inserted into custard should read 180F (82C).
9	Remove from heat and stir in vanilla.
10	Transfer custard to cups and serve warm or chilled with appropriate garnish.