

# *Little Italy Festival's Second Annual Spaghetti Sauce Cook-Off's Rules & Guidelines*

LIFT, Inc.—Little Italy Festival Town, Inc.  
P. O. Box 6, Clinton, Indiana 47842



The Spaghetti Sauce Cook-Off will be held on Saturday, September 5, 2009, at the Four Seasons Fountain on Water Street, Clinton. Event Schedule: Registration & Set-up (10-10:30 a.m.); Mandatory Cooks' Meeting (10:30 a.m.); Preparation Time (11:00-11:30 a.m.); "Light Your Fire" (11:30 a.m.); Judging & Sampling (1:30-2:30 p.m.); Awards (3:00 p.m.). Nonrefundable Event Fees: Individual \$25; Team or Classroom \$50. Registration & Fee Deadline: August 28, 2009. Cash awards will be presented for the following categories: Judges' Choice, People's Choice, & Booth/Table Award (creativity and theme). A complimentary apron will be provided for each application. Additional aprons may be purchased from LIFT, if desired. Only meat that will be pre-ordered and pre-purchased at market price through LIFT may be used, which is in addition to the event fee. A confirmation letter will be sent upon receipt of the application and fee. Contestants are responsible for supplying all of their own cooking utensils, cooking products, and cooking support items. Only liquid fuel stoves or propane stoves may be used, as electricity will not be available. You may bring your own shelter, if you do not want to be in the tent (must meet fire code restrictions).

We welcome and appreciate your participation. It is the responsibility of each applicant to obtain a copy of and follow the official rules & guidelines. These may be found at [www.littleitalyfestival.org](http://www.littleitalyfestival.org) or will be provided upon receipt of the application and fee. Please make your check payable to LIFT. Event questions may be directed to Stephanie Waters (812-208-3576), Jessica Purcell (812-239-1953), or e-mail [liftspaghetticookoff@gmail.com](mailto:liftspaghetticookoff@gmail.com).

## **I. SPAGHETTI SAUCE COOKING RULES**

**SAUCE COOKED ON SITE** - All spaghetti sauce must be cooked from scratch on site the day of the cook-off. All sauce must be prepared in the open (no cooking in motor homes, etc.). Shelter, table, and chairs will be provided for the registered cook and assistant(s). **Contestants must bring their own heat source (Coleman camp stove, etc.) and cooking materials.** No electricity will be available.

**SAUCE COOKED FROM SCRATCH** - "Scratch" is defined as starting with raw meat.\*\* **Meat must be pre-ordered and pre-purchased through LIFT at market price.** Commercial seasoning is permissible, but complete commercial spaghetti sauce mixes ("just add meat" mixes that contain pre-measured spices) are NOT permitted. At least **one gallon** of sauce must be prepared on site for judging and crowd tasting.

**SANITATION** - Cooks are to prepare and cook sauce in as sanitary a manner as possible.

**INSPECTION OF COOKING CONDITIONS** - Cooking conditions are subject to inspection by the head judge or his/her designee and LIFT referee. (Failure to comply is subject to disqualification.)

**COOKS MAY HAVE TO TASTE THEIR SAUCE** - At the discretion of the head judge or LIFT referee, sauce cooks may be required to remove the lids from their sauce cups and taste their sauce before turning in for judging. (If a contestant refuses, his or her sauce will be disqualified.)

**ONE SPAGHETTI SAUCE PER COOK** - Each head cook is responsible for preparing one pot of sauce that he or she intends to be judged and turning in one judging cup from that pot. No more than one judging sample can be taken from any one pot.

**COOKS MUST SIGN NUMBER SLIPS** - Sauce cooks must sign their secret number slips in ink with their first and last names at the time cups are issued. Winners will not be eligible if their secret numbers are unsigned when presented. NOTE: Cooks must present their signed secret numbers to win.

**PROTECT THE JUDGING CUP** - Once judging cups have been issued, each head cook is responsible for his or her judging cup. Cooks must not remove or tamper with the numbers on the outside of the cups. Any marked or altered cup must be replaced prior to turn-in, or it will be disqualified.

**FILLING CUPS** - Cups will be filled to the level designated at the cooks' meeting.

**SAUCE TURN-IN** - Sauce will be turned in at the place and time designated at the cooks' meeting.

**PYROTECHNICS** - No contestant may discharge firearms or use any pyrotechnics or explosives at the Spaghetti Sauce Cook-Off.

**PENALTIES** - Failure to comply with LIFT rules will result in disqualification of an individual cook for the cook-off. Decisions of the official(s) are final. In case of disqualification, the LIFT official monitoring the cook-off will immediately notify the head cook and give a reason for disqualification. In the event disqualification of a cup of sauce occurs after judging has started, it is not necessary that the cook be located or given an explanation for the disqualification.

## **II. SPAGHETTI SAUCE JUDGING RULES**

**JUDGING CUPS** - All cups must be identical in color, size, and shape.

**PREPARATION** - A duplicate set of numbers provided by LIFT should be used and attached to the cup per guidelines. Commercial two-part tickets may be used, but must stay attached to the cup until the cook removes and signs the ticket.

**PROTECTION** - Care will be taken by all cup handlers and cooks to avoid damaging cups and/or numbers.

**SIGN FOR JUDGING CUP** - Each sauce cook must sign the secret number slip in ink with first and last name at the time the judging cup is issued and initial the official entrants' list that verifies the cup was received.

**TAMPERING** - Any cup that appears to have been marked or altered will be referred to the head judge for a ruling concerning disqualification.

**DAMAGED CUP** - If a cup is damaged, a replacement cup can be obtained from the head judge only after the head cook turns in the damaged cup and both numbers. (The head cook must sign the replacement cup number slip.)

**LOST CUP** - If a contestant loses a cup or number, a new cup and number can be issued. In this case, the head judge must sign the new secret number. NOTE: If the number of cups turned in exceeds the number of head cooks registered, the original numbers held by contestants with lost cups become invalid.

**SAUCE JUDGES** - Judging will be done using preliminary and final judges, and when applicable, intermediate level judges. (Five or six judges per table are suggested for all levels below final. The final table may have ten or more judges, but must have a minimum of five; the number should be at the discretion of the head judge.) Judges must be adults (18 years or older).

**PRELIMINARY JUDGES** - Head cooks or knowledgeable cooking team members may serve as preliminary judges. (With proper instructions on judging criteria, any person who likes spaghetti sauce will be able to judge satisfactorily.)

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL JUDGES** - Intermediate level judges must not have been preliminary judges.

**FINAL JUDGES** - Final judges must abstain from tasting sauce prior to judging. Final judges must not be associated with any cook at that cook-off (e.g., one spouse cooking and the other spouse judging; member of cooking team judging if another member of same team is cooking).

**LEVELS OF JUDGING** - At each level of judging prior to the final table, judging cups must be divided equally among the tables. At least 50% (one half) of the sauce in each level of judging must pass to the next level of judging. A number larger than 50% may be used, but never less than 50%.

**PRELIMINARY** - After judging, a minimum of 50% (one half) of the sauce must progress from each preliminary table to the next level of judging. At cook-offs with fifteen (15) to twenty (20) cooks, preliminary judging may be omitted and all sauces may proceed to final judging.

**INTERMEDIATE LEVEL(S)** - At cook-offs where more than twenty sauces would be on the final table, additional judging levels will be used.

**FINAL** - Sauce will progress from the prior table(s) so that the final table will begin with at least 50% (one half) of the sauce.

**TIES** - Tie scores in the predetermined number of sauces that come off the preliminary or intermediate level judging tables will not be broken. Ties are to be passed on for further judging. Only ties on the final table will be broken.

**JUDGING CRITERIA AND SCORING** - A single score takes into consideration the five criteria for scoring spaghetti sauce:

**Aroma**

**Consistency**

**Red Color**

**Taste**

## **Aftertaste**

**SCORING** - Each cup of sauce will be scored on its own merits with a whole number from 0 to 10, 10 being the highest.

## **III. JUDGING THE SAUCE**

**JUDGING SHEETS** - The LIFT official Judging Sheet included in the official LIFT packet must be used for judging. (Ample copies of Judging Sheets for preliminary, intermediate levels, if needed, and final judging, as well as tallying, must be available.)

**TURN-IN TIME** - All judging begins at the same time. No sauce will be accepted after judging commences. Contestants must be notified at the cooks' meeting of the turn-in time.

**CHECKING IN JUDGING CUPS** - As cups are turned in, judging official(s) will place cups in boxes or insulated containers. These boxes or insulated containers must have sufficient height to be above the tops of the sauce cups or be covered at all times while in use, except when sauces are being taken in or out.

**RANDOMLY SELECT CUPS FOR JUDGING** - The head judge will designate an official or officials (e.g., table monitors) to remove and randomly mix the cups of sauce taken in prior to presentation to the tables for judging.

**NUMBER THE CUPS** - After the number of sauces per judging table has been determined, an official will mark a judging designation (letter and number) on the side of each judging cup. This process will continue until all cups turned in are properly marked and taken to the appropriate judging tables. (Example: With three judging tables A, B, and C, cups are marked A1, A2, ..., B1, B2, ..., C1, C2, ..., etc. NOTE: The secret number taped to the side of the cup will remain unknown to the judges and official(s) writing the judging numbers on the cup sides.)

**RENUMBER THE CUPS AFTER EACH LEVEL OF JUDGING** - The judging designations (letter and number) on the cup sides must be changed at each level of judging. After each table has been tallied and the higher scoring sauces identified and removed for the next level of judging, each table monitor will immediately mark a large, highly visible "X" on the side and on the lid of each judging cup not forwarded to the next level of judging. Sauces to progress to the next level will be marked by an official in the above-prescribed manner.

**TABLE MONITORS** - Each judging table will have a knowledgeable table monitor to instruct judges, control table talk, answer questions, and enforce LIFT judging rules. Discussion of the sauce will not be permitted at judging tables.

**DISQUALIFICATION OF SPAGHETTI SAUCE** - Any questions regarding disqualification of a sauce will be directed to the head judge (and then to the LIFT referee if unresolved by the head judge) by the table monitor for a final decision.

**INSPECTION OF CUPS** - It is the responsibility of table monitors – especially on the preliminary tables – to remove each lid, look at the sauce, and check each cup for interior marks before placing the sauce on the table for judging.

**CHECK COMPLETENESS OF JUDGING AND SCORE SHEETS** - Table monitors will insure that each judge at the table has judged and scored each sauce before releasing the judges. Table monitors also will insure that each judge signs his/her judging sheet before releasing the judges.

**RETASTING A SPAGHETTI SAUCE** - A judge may not re-taste a sauce after it has been passed to the next judge.

**NO SMOKING** - Smoking is not allowed in cook-off tent.

**NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES** – Consumption of alcohol is not allowed on LIFT grounds.

## **IV. TABULATING RESULTS**

**TABULATE IN OBSERVABLE AREA** - Tabulation must be done in an area designated for tabulating that provides accessibility to observers and protection for judging sheets. The head judge and/or LIFT Cook-Off referee will observe tabulation, which must be done by two (2) or more persons. The sauce receiving the highest score will be the winner.

**MANUAL TABULATION** - Use two or more persons to do line addition for each sauce (i.e., all scores for sauce 1, all scores for sauce 2, etc.).

**TIE BREAKING (FINAL TABLE)** - All final judges' sheets will be used for tabulating results. If ties result, one judging sheet will be chosen at random to break the ties. If ties are still present, a second sheet will be chosen at random for tie breaking of remaining tied scores. A third or fourth sheet will be used to further break ties. A tie breaking panel of three judges, who meet the criteria for final judges and who have not judged that day, may also be used.

**MARKING WINNING CUPS** - When the winning cups have been determined, the place/order of finish must be marked in a manner not to be confused with a prior judging number (e.g., "1st", "2nd", etc.) on both the cups and the lids.

**ANNOUNCING WINNERS** – It is preferred that sauce winners be announced within 30 minutes of the completion of final judging.

**METHOD OF ANNOUNCING** - Winning sauce numbers will not be revealed until announcement of winners. At that time, the secret number that is affixed to the outside of each cup will be removed and passed to the announcer. (Persons announcing, monitoring judging, or refereeing may cook if they so choose; however, if cooking that day, they must appoint persons who did not cook to fulfill their duties during the announcement of the winners.)

**CLAIMING AWARDS** - Upon the announcement of the winning numbers, cooks must present the signed, matching numbers to claim awards. In addition to the Judges' Choice, there will be a People's Choice and a Booth/Table Award.

## **V. BOOTH/TABLE DECORATING RULES**

Booths/tables should be Italian-themed and will be judged on creativity, authenticity, and originality.