

California STATE★FAIR

2025 Postal Service Cooking Challenge



We are looking for Mail Women or Men who can really deliver...in the kitchen! Compete in a live cooking challenge at the California State Fair. Individual amateur chefs will use a mystery ingredient to prepare a 3-course, home-style meal in front of a live fair audience and a panel of qualified Judges. Space is limited, apply today!

APPLICATION DUE: June 15, 2025, accepted on a first-come-first-served basis

EVENT DATE: **Sunday, July 13, 2025**

TIME: Qualifying Round 1: 11am-1pm
 Qualifying Round 2: 2pm-4pm
 Final Round: 6pm-8pm

LOCATION: Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815
 Cooking Theatre in Save Mart California's Kitchen, Building B

QUALIFICATIONS: Any team of 2 amateur cooks, one must be currently employed by USPS.

AWARDS: 1st, 2nd & 3rd Place (final round) State Fair Rosette
 1st, 2nd & 3rd Place (qualifying round) State Fair Ribbon

AVAILABLE EQUIPMENT:

- Induction range & oven, microwave, sink and electrical outlet.
- Tools and small appliances typically found in a home kitchen are available.
- Teams are encouraged to bring their own knives or any specialty equipment needed.

AVAILABLE INGREDIENTS:

- Mystery ingredient will be provided and MUST be featured in 1 or more dishes.
- The pantry is stocked with a variety of common ingredients for cooking and baking.
- Teams may not bring any outside food or spices into the competition.

CONTACT: Michelle Johnson, California's Kitchen Coordinator
916.263.3189, mejohnson@calexpo.com

JUDGING CRITERIA

- 30% **Taste:** Complimentary courses, seasoning, flavor, temperature/doneness
- 25% **Presentation:** portion size, harmonious garnish, color, slicing/placement
- 20% **Skill Level:** Difficulty, cooking & knife skills, use of ingredients, creativity
- 15% **Use of Mystery Ingredient:** Prominence in meal, good use of ingredient
- 10% **Work Habits & Showmanship:** Food safety and sanitation, organization of work area, professional and courteous, communication with MC and Judges during competition

Significant Points Deductions:

- Mystery ingredient not featured in any dish (-30 points)
- Food not safe to eat (undercooked) (-20 points per item)
- Less than 3 courses presented (-20 points per absent course)

CHALLENGE FORMAT:

1. Arrive **30 minutes prior** to your start time to be fitted for a microphone and to sort out any last-minute details.
2. **Start Time:** The MC will introduce the challenge, competitors and Judges. The mystery ingredient will be revealed, then the MC will start the competition.
3. **5 minutes:** to "shop" for food from the kitchen pantry. Chefs may access pantry behind throughout the competition.
4. **5 minutes:** to prep and set up kitchens: preheat ovens, boil water, organize equipment, etc. No cooking or food prep is allowed at this time.
5. **50 minutes:** to cook and plate your meal, which is immediately presented to Judges upon completion.
6. **Judges Evaluate** the dishes behind the scenes while teams clear down kitchens and fair staff distribute any remaining food as samples (Fair staff will also help clean).
7. **Judges Announce the Winners** and ribbons will be presented.

ADDITIONAL RULES & REGULATIONS:

- **Contestants may not be inebriated, and no alcoholic beverages may be consumed** onstage or backstage; however, it may be used as an ingredient. Failure to follow this rule may lead to disqualification and prizes will be forfeit.
- Kitchens will be assigned randomly before each round begins.
- No open flame is allowed, including torches and lighters (CA Fire Marshall Regulations).
- "3 Courses consists of an appetizer, main dish and a dessert.
- Plate one of each course for judges to share. Please prepare enough food for roughly 4 standard servings so that food will be available for fair guests to sample.
- Only participating team may be backstage (space limitations and food safety).
- Teams are encouraged to wear USPS apparel.
- Each participant will receive 1 Admission Credential and 1 parking pass to enter the Fair the day of the Challenge. 2 additional admission credentials will be given to each participant for guests.



2025 Postal Service Cooking Challenge

APPLICATION DUE DATE: June 15, 2025

SUBMIT TO: Michelle Johnson
1600 Exposition Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95815

email: mejohnson@calexpo.com
phone: 916.263.3189

Contact Name	
Phone Number	Cell phone Number (<i>for day of presentation</i>)
Mailing Address	
City	State, Zip Code
Email Address	
Teammate Name	
City or Post Office Branch Representing	

Preferred Preliminary Round on Sunday, July 13, 2025:

☐ 11am-1pm ☐ 2pm-4pm

I hereby certify that all of the information submitted with my application to compete in the Postal Service Cooking Challenge is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I have read the competition information and rules, and I will accept and comply with rules as written, and accept the decision of the Judges as final.

I hereby certify that if selected as the first place winner of my preliminary round that I will be available to compete in the final round on Sunday, July 13, 2025, from 6:00pm-8:00pm.

Challenge Accepted!

Signature _____ Date: _____

CALIFORNIA EXPOSITION AND STATE FAIR
California's Kitchen
2025 Letter of Understanding

This Letter of Understanding is between CALIFORNIA EXPOSITION AND STATE FAIR, hereafter referred to as "Cal Expo" and _____ hereinafter referred to as "Demonstrator".
(Demonstrator's full name)

Under this agreement, Demonstrator will participate as a competitor in the **Postal Service Cooking Challenge Preliminaries** in the Cooking Theatre, Building B, Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815 on the following Date(s) and Time(s):

- Sunday, July 13, 2025,
(Round Time)
- Demonstrator agrees to appear on Sunday, July 13, 2025 from 6:00pm-8:00pm, should they win their Qualifying Round.

Demonstrator will provide all of the following for the above stated demonstration:

1. Demonstrator agrees to arrive for check-in at the backstage area of the Cooking Theatre 30 minutes before the start of their competition round(s).
2. Demonstrator will adhere to all food safety standards, which are enforced by the Sacramento County Environmental Health Division.
3. Copies of any distributed materials to be handed out during the fair. Submit to the Program Coordinator.
4. A completed Megan's Law compliance form listing all individuals associated with the activities outlined in this agreement who will be backstage or interacting with fair guests.

Cal Expo will provide all of the following for the above stated demonstration:

- 1) Credentials for Fair entry, parking and any delivery appointments for above dates.
- 2) Mystery ingredient, basic pantry ingredients, tools, and demonstration kitchen.

Demonstrator and all participants agree to indemnify, defend and save harmless the State of California, California Exposition & State Fair, its officers, agents and employees from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any and all contractors, subcontractors, suppliers, laborers, and any other person, firm or corporation furnishing or supplying work services, materials, or supplies in connection with the performance of this Agreement, and from any and all claims and losses accruing or resulting to any person, firm or corporation who may be injured or damaged by the Demonstrator and/or the Demonstrator's paid or volunteer assistants in the performance of this Agreement.

Signature: _____
Demonstrator

Print Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Signature: _____
Contracts Manager
California Exposition & State Fair

Date: _____

Cal Expo Fairgrounds
1600 Exposition Blvd.
Sacramento, CA 95815


CONTACT: Michelle Johnson
mejohanson@calexpo.com
916-263-3189



CALIFORNIA EXPOSITION & STATE FAIR
MEGAN'S LAW
(MULTIPLE APPLICANT)

One of the fundamental responsibilities of the California Exposition & State Fair (Cal Expo) is to protect the public. In 1998, Cal Expo implemented a policy requiring that all persons conducting business with, employed by, or volunteering at Cal Expo shall provide the necessary personal information to enable their names to be searched through the Department of Justice's Megan's Law files. This file consists of records of individuals convicted of specific sex offenses who are required by Penal Code Section 290 to register as sex offenders.

Requesting Department Information		
NAME	PHONE NUMBER	EMAIL
Michelle Johnson	916-263-3189	mejohnson@calexpo.com
DEPARTMENT REQUESTING INFORMATION		DATE OF REQUEST
Culinary Programs – Dept. 420		

MULTIPLE APPLICANT INFORMATION					
THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED LEGIBLY, WITH ALL INFORMATION REQUESTED, OR IT WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. SUBMIT TO THE CAL EXPO PERSONNEL OFFICE PRIOR TO THE EVENT					
COMPANY/ORGANIZATION/APPLICANTS NAME SUBMITTING:				PRODUCT/SERVICE PROVIDED:	
				Cooking Demonstration	
REPRESENTATIVE FULL NAME				PHONE NUMBER	
TYPE OF BUSINESS/GROUP/POSITION (CHECK ONE):					
CONTRACTOR CONSULTANT CONCESSIONAIRE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXHIBITOR TENANT VOLUNTEER OTHER:					
PRINT CLEARLY. ALL ITEMS MUST BE COMPLETELY FILLED OUT AND LEGIBLE.					
BY SIGNING BELOW, I CERTIFY THAT THIS IS AN ACCURATE LISTING OF ALL PERSONS SCHEDULED TO WORK/VOLUNTEER FOR LISTED ORGANIZATION WITH CAL EXPO. FAILURE TO COMPLY WILL BE CAUSE FOR REJECTION OF THE ENTIRE APPLICATION.					
REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE:				DATE:	
				____/____/____	
APPLICANT FULL NAME:				DATE:	
				____/____/____	
DATE OF BIRTH:	ZIP CODE:	DIVER'S LICENSE/ID #:	ISSUING STATE:	PHONE NUMBER:	
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APPLICANT FULL NAME:				DATE:	
				____/____/____	
DATE OF BIRTH:	ZIP CODE:	DIVER'S LICENSE/ID #:	ISSUING STATE:	PHONE NUMBER:	
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APPLICANT FULL NAME:				DATE:	
				____/____/____	
DATE OF BIRTH:	ZIP CODE:	DIVER'S LICENSE/ID #:	ISSUING STATE:	PHONE NUMBER:	
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