



**Wisconsin
Culinary Arts Contest**

**High School &
Post Secondary**

**April 7-8, 2026
Madison, WI**

The High School Culinary Arts Competition is a Modified Market Basket format.

1. Competitors will receive a market basket with various ingredients. The contents of the basket are listed below.
2. Competitors must use a noticeable amount of each item in their market basket.
3. They can supplement those ingredients with items from the community pantry.
4. The competitors will present four copies of a menu that includes an appetizer, and one entrée 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.

2026 Market Basket

Ingredients subject to change based on availability. Ingredients will be substituted with similar products if necessary. Any substitutions will be announced at orientation on April 7th, 2026

3lb Chicken

4 oz Jones Dairy Bacon

1 Granny Smith Apple

1 cup coarse yellow polenta

1 Navel Orange

1 pc Fennel

SkillsUSA

High School Culinary Arts Contest

MENU

Appetizer/First Course

Sautéed Chicken with Sauce

Grains

Vegetables

Judging Categories

Written Exam: 50 pts

Competitors will take a 50-point test with each question worth 2 points each. Questions will be based on knowledge competencies of Sanitation and Safety, Nutrition, and Basic Food Preparation.

Sanitation: 150 pts

Hygiene and Safety (50)

Food Handling (50)

Cleanliness (50)

Technical Skills: 120 pts

Mise en Place (40)

Cooking Methods and Techniques (40)

Time Management and Planning (40)

Butchery: 40 pts

Chicken Butchery

Knife Skills: 60 pts

Vegetable Cuts

Stock Technique: 10 pts

Taste and appearance, proper use of mirepoix, and heat.

Appetizer/First Course: 100pts

Appearance/Presentation/Creativity, Crisp, Seasoning/Flavor Balance, Difficulty in Technique. Taste.

Entrée 1: 150 pts

Appearance/Presentation (hot), Taste and technique of Main Protein, Sauce, Starch, and Vegetable. Creativity.

Written Menu: 15 pts

Complete menu and matches dishes served

Total Points: 695

Tie Breaker: highest overall tasting score will be determined to be the winner.

Secondary tie breaker: highest score on the written test will be determined to be the winner.

Deductions:

Poor/no clean-up and reset of station and/or overall contest area	50-100 points
From SkillsUSA – Uniform infraction	10 points
No Resume'	10 points
Late/Missed Service Windows	25%-100% of that course

Competition Checklist

Before the Contest, carefully study the contest packet:

- Review the list of possible ingredients in contest packet.
- Menu: Write a menu of what you will produce
- Write a food list and a timeline including the presentation windows for each component.

Suggestions when building a menu:

There are two food lists:

- **The market basket**, you must use a good bit of each product provided at some point in your menu.
- **The pantry list**, is the items you can use if you wish to complete your menu.

Appetizer, hot or cold.

Required components:

1. Must contain a protein component.

2. Must contain a scratch-made crisp flour-based cracker component produced from a non-yeasted dough.
3. Three vegetable garnishes are required. One must be the concassé prepared in the knife cut segment.

Entree #1

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

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

- During orientation for the contest, a member of the Technical Committee will review the contest packet.
- Equipment check-in will occur at orientation. All equipment must be checked in at this time. Equipment will be stored safely until your competition time.
- Resumes must be turned in during orientation. Resumes will not be accepted after orientation is complete. Competitor number must be on resume.
- The competitors will present two copies of a one-page menu that includes a starter, and one entrée of their own choosing following the competition guidelines. The menus must be turned in at the beginning of the competition. Include your competitor's number on the menu.
- 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. i.e.: You can begin working on your stock during your knife cut time.
- You will present one (1) plate to the tasting judges for evaluation and one (1) display plate for the public to see. Turn in both plates to the pass area.

- 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 and other logistics 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!

Competition Schedule

April 7

3:00pm

Or when buses transport students to Madison College if delayed. Tour of space (start order announced), exam, equipment checks and turn in resumé.

April 8

8:00 am

Contestants will meet in the back hallway of the culinary program for open question and answer with Technical Committee – all questions will be answered in such a way that everyone will be able to hear the questions and the answers. If a contestant is late and misses this session, the questions will not be repeated or re-answered.

8:30am-11:45am

Group 1 enters the kitchen. The window to begin verbal critiques opens depending on the status of the last contestant. Finished plates will be on display in Diane's Delicious Diner. Critique will take place by display plates, please bring something to take notes.

12:30pm-3:45pm

Group 2 enters the kitchen. The window to begin verbal critiques opens depending on the status of the last contestant. Finished plates will be on display in Diane's Delicious Diner. Critique will take place by display plates, please bring something to take notes.

Group 1

Station	1	2	3	4	5	6
Set Up	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30	8:30
Start	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45	8:45
Butchery	9:15	9:15	9:15	9:15	9:15	9:15
Knife Cuts	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30	9:30
Appetizer	10:15	10:15	10:15	10:15	10:15	10:15
Entree #1	11:00	11:00	11:00	11:00	11:00	11:00
Station Clean	11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30	11:30
Dishes Clean	11:45	11:45	11:45	11:45	11:45	11:45

Group 2

Station	1	2	3	4	5	6
Set Up	12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00	12:00
Start	12:15	12:15	12:15	12:15	12:15	12:15
Butchery	12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45	12:45
Knife Cuts	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00	1:00
Appetizer	1:45	1:45	1:45	1:45	1:45	1:45
Entree #1	2:30	2:30	2:30	2:30	2:30	2:30
Station Clean	3:00	3:00	3:00	3:00	3:00	3:00
Dishes Clean	3:15	3:15	3:15	3:15	3:15	3:15

Contest Timeline

- Please be aware of the time frame for presentation of all items. The time will be based on when the plate is presented for evaluation at the judge's area.
- The window for presenting is 5 minutes. For example, contestants in Group 1 have 5 minutes before 10:15am (10:10am) and 5 minutes after 10:15am (10:20am) to present their Appetizer course without penalty. Appetizer plates can be presented between 10:10-10:20am.
- Any items presented between 5-10 minutes late will result in a 25%-point loss for that item. (10:20-10:25am)
- Any items presented between 10-15 minutes late will result in a 75%-point loss for that item. (10:25-10:30am)
- Any items presented 15 minutes late will not be scored. (Example: Group 1 Appetizer is late after 10:30am)
- You may not present plates before the window opens.
- Butchery and knife cuts will be judged at your station. *These may be presented when completed, even before window opens.*
- On all other courses, the contestant will bring plates to the pass with contestant number on it to be delivered to the judges and display table.

ALL FOOD PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION MUST BE COMPLETED BY 3:15 pm

12:00 Judges critique of Round 1 participants

3:30 Judges critique of Round 2 participants

Return to convention center for closing ceremony. See general requirements for dress code requirements. Winners announced!

SKILL COMPONENT:

CHICKEN BUTCHERY

Each contestant will have one chicken to butcher. They will execute the following:

1. Two breasts – The breast 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.
2. Two leg/thigh portions – the leg and thigh should be separated, skin on and bone-in
3. Carcass meat, trim and bones are to be used for stock and soup.

SKILL COMPONENT:

VEGETABLE CUTS

Prepare the following vegetable cuts and/or tasks and present for judging. These items will be used in other menu items:

1. Small Dice (1/4"x1/4"x1/4") – 1/2 Onion
2. Chopped Parsley – 1/4 Bunch
3. Tomato Concassé –1 tomato
4. Minced 4 large cloves garlic
5. Medium Dice (1/2" x 1/2" x 1/2" cube) - 1/2 cup. Use vegetables based on your menu.
6. Julienne (1/8"x1/8"x2") -2 oz. prepared weight required. Use vegetables based on your menu.

SKILL COMPONENT:

STOCK

Yield: 1 qt

- Chicken bones, trim from your chicken
- Water
- Mirepoix
- Sachet

Use as needed throughout the competition.

APPETIZER/FIRST COURSE

Skill Component: Hot/Cold Appetizer, or Salad

Yield: 2 servings

Prepare appetizer of choice. This could be a plated appetizer or a salad.

Required components:

1. Must contain a protein component.
2. Must contain a scratch-made crisp component produced from a non-yeasted dough/batter or cheese. Any cooking method variation of a crisp tuille will be accepted.
3. Three vegetable garnishes are required. One must be the tomato flesh prepared in the knife cut segment.

ENTRÉE 1

Skills Components: Sauté, Sauce, Grains, Vegetable

Yield: 2 Plates

Protein: Sautéed Chicken (mixed heat transfers are allowed)

Vegetable: At least two 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