



AMERICAN ROYAL WORLD SERIES OF BARBECUE®

SAUCE CONTEST

2025 CONTESTANT INFORMATION



AMERICAN ROYAL WORLD SERIES OF BARBECUE®

SAUCE CONTEST

APRIL 10, 2025

Welcome to the 2025 American Royal World Series of Barbecue® Sauce Contest!

Important Dates & Information:

Event Schedule*

April 1, 2025	Online Registration Closes
April 4, 2025	ARRIVAL DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS
April 10, 2025	38 th Annual American Royal World Series of Barbecue® Sauce Contest Judging
By 5 PM, April 15, 2025	Complete results are posted online

Please note – entries are to be shipped in for the judging. Companies are **NOT** to be present during judging.

*Specific Time or Date Subject to Change

Your entry **must** arrive to the American Royal offices by the deadline of **Friday, April 4, 2025**. Entries should be shipped to the following address:

**American Royal Association
Attn: BBQ Sauce Contest
1701 American Royal Court
Kansas City, MO 64102**

Sauce Categories

Competition will be held in the following categories:

- Mild Tomato
- Hot Tomato
- Mustard
- Vinegar
- Specialty

A Contestant may enter any number of barbecue sauces and categories, but **you may only enter each sauce in one category**. Each sauce must be submitted into the category that best fits its ingredients.

The **Overall Champion Sauce** will be awarded to the highest scoring sauce overall, regardless of category.



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COMPETITION RULES & REGULATIONS

All Entries must be commercially available (through wholesale, retail or direct marketing generally available to the public.) Working Universal Product Code must be provided (or the international or regional equivalent) If you have any questions over your product's qualifications, please contact the American Royal Barbecue team at bbq@americanroyal.com.

Registration Process

1. Submit sauce entries on the online form and pay for each entry
 - a. \$75 for one entry
 - b. \$65 each for two entries
 - c. \$60 each for three or more entries
2. Print your confirmation
3. Ship bottle(s) & copy of confirmation email to the American Royal

Once bottles arrive, the American Royal team will match these with entries to ensure we have each bottle. If we do not have a bottle and or bottles arrive damaged, we will contact your company via the contact information on the online registration.

Once you ship your bottles, we will handle it from there! The contest will take place with KCBS certified judges in a blind tasting. No judges may be affiliated with companies with submissions.

KCBS

The American Royal is sanctioned by KCBS (Kansas City Barbeque Society). The rules of the American Royal World Series of Barbecue Sauce Contest have been reviewed and approved by KCBS.



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Detailed Rules for Sauce Submissions

All competitors must read and thoroughly review the rules set forth by the American Royal and KCBS for the competition.

1. **ONLY SAUCES** will be judged. No bastes, rubs, relishes, pastes, jelly, chutney, or marinades. Product must be sealed, labeled and sold retail as a barbecue sauce product.
2. **ALL** sauces must be commercially produced and available (through wholesale, retail or direct marketing generally available to the public). Working Universal Product Code, or the international/regional equivalent, must be provided. Sauces without this will be disqualified.
3. Labels **MUST** conform to all applicable laws and regulations including FDA nutritional information.
4. You may enter as many sauces as you wish as long as each conforms to all rules.
5. Each sauce can only be entered into one category. You may **NOT** enter the same sauce into more than one category.
6. A minimum weight of 12 ounces is required for judging.
7. ALL items submitted for judging become the property of the American Royal and will not be returned. Disqualified or extra entries will not be mailed back to the registrant.
8. The American Royal is **NOT** responsible for any entries that may become damaged during shipping. If a package arrives damaged and is unable to be judged, you will be notified by the American Royal.
9. Sauces will be judged in the following categories: Tomato Hot, Tomato Mild, Vinegar, Mustard and Specialty. If a category receives fewer than 10 entries, those entries may be moved to the Specialty category.
10. Sauces must be submitted into the category most appropriate when considering listed ingredients. The American Royal reserves the right to re-categorize sauce if the committee feels the ingredients are better suited in a different category. Refunds and/or returns will not be given in the event a sauce is reclassified.
11. The Sauce Contest judging is not a public event. Individuals competing in the Sauce Contest are not allowed to be present while judging is taking place or judge the event.

Violation of these rules is grounds for disqualification and could result in disqualification in future contests. Interpretation of these rules is the responsibility of the Royal and is not appealable. The Royal reserves the right to prohibit the display of any article that, in its opinion, is not in keeping with the nature and character of the contest, or the American Royal Association.



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JUDGING PROCEDURE

1. There will be five categories; you **MUST** choose the one which best fits your entered sauce. **You may NOT enter the same sauce into more than one category.**
2. Sauces will be poured into blank bottles and assigned a number to assure anonymity and blind judging.
3. Sauces will be judged alone and on unseasoned, pulled pork.
4. Sauces will be judged on appearance, texture and taste. Ties will be broken by the taste score; if still tied, they will be broken by the computer score.

SAUCE AWARDS

Results will be posted online in the days following the contest by 5 PM, April 15, 2025. The category and overall winners will be invited to attend the Invitational Awards Ceremony at the American Royal World Series of Barbecue® in the fall and receive their trophy on stage.

The following awards will be presented in each of the five categories:

- **1st Place** – \$500 plus Ribbon
- **2nd Place** – \$250 plus Ribbon
- **3rd Place** – \$125 plus Ribbon

OVERALL CHAMPION SAUCE - \$1,000 plus special trophy and a package to the American Royal World Series of Barbecue®. This award will be presented to the sauce with the highest overall score. Ties will be broken by the taste score; if still tied, they will be broken by the computer score

To see award winners online, visit www.americanroyal.com/bbq.

Donations

Competitors may donate extra bottles of barbecue sauce to be used to benefit the American Royal educational programs. Donated bottles of sauce should be clearly marked. Donated products may be marketed by the American Royal or its vendors by wholesale, retail or direct marketing to the public.



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HISTORY

From its beginning in a metro KC backyard patio, the American Royal Barbecue Sauce Contest is by far the largest and most prestigious barbecue sauce contest of its kind in the world.

Contest features include:

- Commercially available barbecue sauces with a proven sales record.
- Sauces divided into flavor categories;
- Highest scoring sauce is grand champion winner, now awarded “Best Barbecue Sauce on the Planet”;
- Blind judging;
- Judges representing a microcosm of the barbecue consumer public;
- Judging on the basis of appearance, texture, taste alone & taste on unseasoned real barbecue meat (not fingers, plastic spoons, bread or crackers);
- Judges take an official oath, penned by Ardie A. Davis at the first contest and administered each year since.

The premier event, featuring more than one hundred sauces, was on Saturday, October 13, 1984, in the backyard patio of founder, Ardie A. Davis and his wife, Gretchen. Davis named it the Diddy-Wa-Diddy National Barbecue Sauce Contest. He was listening to Ry Cooder’s rendition of Arthur “Blind Blake” Phelps’s Diddie Wa Diddie song when he was inspired to launch the contest.

The 1985 contest was at the Prairie Center in Olathe, raising funds to save 300 acres of prairie, woodlands and wetlands for education, recreation and wildlife. KC Baron of Barbecue Chef Paul Kirk, KC Rib Doctor Guy Simpson, and Pat Dalton of the Dalton Gang Competition Barbecue Team, served as official pitmasters. They endured a cold, rainy, lonely prairie night, serenaded by howling coyotes. Pat sustained them with his famous Dalton Gang Chili.

The 1986 contest, benefiting the MS Society, was on a rainy fall day at Crown Center. One of the judges that year was the late Joe McGuff, editor of The Kansas City Star. Joe told Davis, “You should put these sauces in lidded containers.” At that time sauces were in numbered uncovered Styrofoam cups. From then on the sauces have been put in lidded plastic squeeze bottles, thanks to Joe.

The contest found a permanent home at the American Royal Barbecue in 1987. When the late Jack Kay, Chair of the American Royal Barbecue back then, changed the early November weekend of the meat contest to the same day as the Diddy-Wa-Diddy, Davis called him to resolve the scheduling conflict. Jack said, “Let’s talk.” They met over ribs and coffee at a local Chili’s. Two hours later they shook hands on a mutual decision to marry the two contests. The sauce contest name was changed in 1988 to reflect its permanent home at the American Royal. The Diddy-Wa-Diddy Barbecue Sauce Store, brainchild of Steve Katz, pays tribute to the original name.

Ardie A. Davis

Founder of the Diddy-Wa-Diddy National Barbecue Sauce Contest

2016 Barbecue Hall of Fame Inductee

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INSURANCE & LIABILITY

Liability

Companies are liable and responsible for the shipping and packaging of their entries.

Contestant use of American Royal name, logo, branding, etc.

All use of the American Royal name, logo, likeness, and branding of the American Royal World Series of Barbecue® Sauce Contest is the property of the American Royal Association. Any mention of the contest or the American Royal must be approved by the American Royal. For all inquiries please contact our Marketing Department at Marketing@AmericanRoyal.com

Insurance

Neither the American Royal, the city of Kansas City, MO, KCBS, nor the representatives, will be responsible for any injury, loss or damage that may occur to the entries, the judges or guests or property from any cause whatsoever. It is the Contestant's responsibility to protect shipment so that no injury will result to persons or property. The Contestant, upon reading this agreement which is a requirement prior to entering the contest, expressly releases, holds, keeps and saves harmless and indemnifies the forgoing names, organizations and committees and individuals from all claims for such loss, damage, or injury. Contestants are advised to carry insurance to cover any of the above.

Force Majeure

In case of cancellation of the contest or unavailability of the Contest Space for the specified due to war, governmental action or order, act of God, fire, strike, labor disputes, or any other cause beyond the Royal's control, this Agreement shall terminate, and the Contestant shall be entitled to the return of the Entry Fee for the Contest, less the prorated share allocated to the Contest of the expenses incurred by the Royal in connection with the contest. In case of cancellation by the Royal for any other reason, or a change in the place or date of the contest which is unsatisfactory to the Contestant, the Contestant shall be entitled to return of sums paid for the Contest. Refund of the Fees as provided in this section shall be the exclusive remedy of the Contestant against the Royal in case the contest is canceled or rescheduled through war, governmental action or order, acts of God, fire, strike, labor disputes, or any other cause beyond the Royal of and from all claims for damage and agrees that the Royal shall have no obligation except the above stated refund.

Successor Interest

This Agreement shall bind the respective parties and their successors in interest.



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CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS

The Royal reserves the right to make changes to these rules. Any matters not specifically covered herein are subject to decision by the Royal. The Royal reserves the right to make such changes, amendments and additions to these rules as considered advisable for the proper conduct of the contest with the provision that all Contestants will be advised of any such changes in writing.

Please check back for the most updated version of this document. Updates to the document will be noted for ease of use.

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A Kansas City tradition since 1899, the American Royal is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization whose mission is to be the nation's leader for food and agriculture education, events, and engagement. The American Royal provides opportunities for nearly half a million youth and adults from around the world to engage in high-quality events and experiences, including nationally competitive livestock shows, the world's largest barbecue competition, regional and national equine shows, youth and professional rodeos, and elementary and secondary education outreach. Support from partners, members, and volunteers help the American Royal achieve its vision of a world where food and agriculture are celebrated, and all generations are committed to its future.