

CONTESTANT RULES

— 2026 IMPERIAL VALLEY TACO FESTIVAL
MAY 01, 2026 - MAIN ST. & PLAZA PARK, BRAWLEY



DO YOU HAVE THE BEST TACOS IN TOWN?

Will you be the next Taco Champion?

Professional, amateur, and/or fundraising/service organizations are invited to participate.

Local celebrity judges will decide who the next Imperial Valley Taco King/Queen will be!

CATEGORIES
CARNE ASADA TACO
OPEN CATEGORY TACO
BEST SALSA

COMPETITORS WILL
PROVIDE 1 TACO PER JUDGE
PER CATEGORY.

JUDGING BEGINS
AT 5:00 P.M.

GENERAL RULES

1. Entries for cookoff must be obtained through the Chamber's online website or in person
2. Each Vendor must provide their own tables, displays and tents.
3. Submissions for the cookoff will start March 3, 2026.
4. Contestants for the cookoff will be those who have completed the entry form, paid the entry fees, been approved, signed a vendor contract, and met the rules and guidelines for the event.
5. Each team must have a team Captain. The Captain is responsible for the team and for following all the guidelines, rules and any other specifics laid out by The Chamber of Commerce for Greater Brawley and/or volunteers, or in this document.
6. Set-up for contestants begins at 12 a.m. on Friday, May 1, 2025. (All other vendors at 11:00pm)
7. The name of your team should be in clear view for the general public.
8. Each team is responsible for the cleanliness of their booth. Trash must be placed in trash receptacles. Staff will be by periodically to inspect team area. **Any vendor/contestant with booth space left uncleaned at the end of the event will be charged a \$100 cleaning fee.**
9. Proper food preparation guidelines must be followed by every team member. Please be sure that you are washing your hands, wearing preparation gloves and hairnets, and keeping your venues clean and safe for all visitors, staff and volunteers.
10. Each booth must have at least one (1) **fire extinguisher** within reach of their cooking area at all times. Fire Department will inspect each venue throughout the event to ensure fire safety is being practiced, including maintaining easy access to their fire extinguisher.
11. Pets are NOT allowed in the cookoff area.
12. Please, no loud, offensive, or explicit music. If noise levels are too high or music has any type of explicit nature, entrants may be asked to leave and the team may be disqualified.
13. Vendors cooking with oil are required to place a tarp or mat under the cooking area.
14. Hot surfaces placed directly on the concrete or ground are not permitted. Any equipment or devices that may damage the surface area of the contest site in any way are prohibited.
15. A power source or generators will **NOT** be provided by the Chamber. If power is required for your booth, you are responsible for providing the means of electricity.
16. **Only whisper/quiet generators will be allowed.**

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CATEGORY DESCRIPTION

CARNE ASADA- Beef shall be prepared and grilled thoroughly. (Meat can be skirt steak, flank steak, Arrachera, etc. NO GROUND BEEF) Beef shall then be placed in one or two tortillas* and garnished as seen fit by the team to best showcase the preparation of the meat. The meat should comprise at least 70% of the weight of the prepared taco filling. All sauces and garnishes should be prepared on-site.

OPEN CATEGORY- This category is open to ANY TYPE of Tacos. For example: Chicken Tacos, Fish/Seafood Tacos, Pork Tacos (Carnitas), Vegetarian or Vegan Tacos, Shredded beef Tacos, Tacos de Guisado, Sweet tacos, etc. In order to be considered as Tacos, fillings shall then be placed in one or two tortillas* and garnished as seen fit by the team to best showcase the preparation of the fillings. The featured fillings should comprise at least 70% of the weight of the prepared taco. All sauces and garnishes should be prepared on-site.

**Tortillas can be Corn or Flour tortillas and may be substituted for a lettuce wrap, Jicama Tortilla, Rice Paper, Crepes or any substitute that resembles a tortilla.*

SALSA- Does your salsa have what it takes to be named the best? You must prepare a minimum of 1 pint (16 oz.) of your freshest and tastiest salsa for the contest. All salsa must be prepared on-site starting at 12:00 a.m. using fresh ingredients only. Please bring your own containers. **Pre-made or pre-mixed salsa will be disqualified from the competition.** A panel of judges will taste and judge salsa based on aroma (0-10pts.), consistency (0-10pts.), appropriate heat level (0-10pts.), color and taste (0-20pts.). Collection of salsa will begin at 4:00pm

TACO COOKOFF RULES

1. Health & Safety Compliance

- All ingredients must arrive on-site raw and in compliance with health department guidelines.

2. Cooking & Preparation

- Cooking may begin as early as 12:00 a.m. when the setup period begins.

3. Judging Process

- Judges will visit each booth (in no specific order) to taste the tacos.
- The first category to be judged will be Carne Asada Taco.
- A chamber volunteer will notify each contestant 10 minutes before the judges arrive at their booth to allow preparation time.

4. Presentation & Serving

- Contestants are encouraged to present their dish creatively to appeal to the judges.
- Garnishes may be presented on the side of the dish, or each judge can assemble their own taco.
- Contestants may set up a table for the judges, but this is not mandatory.
- If a table and extra chairs are placed outside the booth space, they must be removed immediately after judging.

5. Judging Criteria

- **APPEARANCE** - The dish should be attractive and inviting to eat. (0-10 points)
- **AROMA** - The dish should smell appetizing. (0-10 points)
- **TEXTURE** - The texture should have a pleasing mouth-feel. (0-10 points)
- **FLAVOR** - The flavor should be delicious, characteristic of the dish, and balanced. (0-20 points)

CONTESTANT AGREEMENT

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This Contestant Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into on _____ [Date], between The Brawley Chamber of Commerce, hereinafter referred to as "Organizer," and _____ [Vendor Name], hereinafter referred to as "Vendor."

1. Scope of Services:

Vendor agrees to provide food/beverages at the **7th Annual Imperial Valley Taco Festival** event, scheduled to take place on **May 1, 2026**. The food and beverages shall be prepared and served in compliance with the guidelines set forth by the Imperial County Health Department ("Health Department").

2. Compliance with Health Department Guidelines:

a. Vendor shall ensure that all food preparation, handling, and service activities comply with the regulations and guidelines established by the Imperial County Health Department. This includes but is not limited to:

- All food preparation must be conducted on-site during the specified event setup times.
- Food, beverages, and condiments provided to the public must be prepared within a food booth or an approved kitchen facility.
- Approved kitchen facilities must possess an annual permit issued by the Environmental Health Department and be designed and equipped for retail food preparation.

3. Pre-Event Food Preparation:

a. If Vendor intends to prepare foods before the event at an approved kitchen facility, Vendor must complete and submit the required documentation in conjunction with the APPLICATION FOR A TEMPORARY FOOD FACILITY PERMIT, no later than two (2) weeks before the event.

4. Responsibilities of Vendor:

- a. Vendor shall be responsible for obtaining all necessary permits and licenses required by the Imperial County Health Department for food preparation and service at the event.
- b. Vendor shall ensure that all food products used are fresh, safe for consumption, and stored at appropriate temperatures to prevent spoilage or contamination.
- c. Vendor shall maintain a clean and sanitary food preparation and service area throughout the duration of the event.

5. Indemnification:

Vendor agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Organizer, its officers, employees, and agents from and against any and all claims, damages, liabilities, costs, and expenses arising out of or related to Vendor's breach of any provision of this Agreement or any negligent or wrongful act or omission by Vendor or its employees or agents.

[Printed Name of Vendor]

[Signature of Vendor]

[Title of Vendor]

[Date]