



SPONSORED BY REAL CALIFORNIA MILK
AUG. 3-5, ANAHEIM, CA. WWW.USPIZZATEAM.COM/CPC25



EVENT RULES

Eligibility:

- Competitors of the California Pizza Challenge (CPC) must make and sell pizzas in a brick-and-mortar pizzeria, mobile unit or active pizza catering service. Eligibility will be evaluated by competition management.
- All main category competitors must be at least 17 years of age.
- Competitors **may only win one grand prize trip** to Italy. If a competitor wins both culinary and acrobatic grand prizes, **they will receive 2 free entries into the international competition**. One for each category.
- While this event is open to all eligible pizza makers, **if either Grand Prize Winner (culinary/acrobatics) is a member or part of any other competitive pizza group**, organization, or team, they are still eligible for the Grand Prize, pursuant on the following conditions:
 - Winners **may only wear attire featuring only** the REAL California Milk logo and/or their pizzeria, or attire acquired at the event to compete **while on the sponsored grand prize trip to international competition**.
 - Winners **will not be asked** to wear the USPT logo, but they **may not wear** the logo and/or colors of any other competitive pizza group, organization, or team while in Italy with the USPT. **All attire must be neutral. A trip jacket with your pizzeria's logo will be provided as part of the prize.**
 - Winners must provide testimonial video while in Italy thanking event sponsor REAL California Milk
 - Winners must stay with the competing group during the trip to include group dinners, excursions and shopping trips for preparation.
- Any non-adherence to written rules or rulings on the floor by competition management will result in instant DQ.
- Competitors must maintain a clean workspace and respect the area and property of other competitors in the prep and competition areas.
- Competitors are responsible for washing their own dishes and any competition dishes they use. Future allowance to compete in USPT events will be on the line so be clean and respectful of other people's property.
- Competitors must maintain a civil attitude towards their fellow pizzaioli, and all competition and show management.
- **ALL COMPETITORS MUST SIGN AND AGREE TO TERMS** to be eligible to compete.





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GENERAL INFORMATION

Event sponsor **REAL California Milk** will provide any assistance needed in locating or obtaining any cheese found on the [REAL California Milk official website](#).

Winners of the Non-Traditional category will win the grand prize of a trip to the World Pizza Championships in Parma, Italy in 2027

Each competitor must **bring an assistant** or recruit someone to help them clean their areas when they are presenting. Your assistant may be another competitor or anyone you grab off the floor, as long as they can clear your area for the next competitor while you present. If you need help with this, **let the competition management know and we will pair you with an accountability-buddy.**

DO NOT PAY FOR REGISTRATION INTO THE CALIFORNIA RESTAURANT SHOW

Registration for the REAL California Pizza Challenge gets each competitor **2 PASSES** into the California Restaurant Show and Pizza Tomorrow Summit Pavilion. A competitor and an assistant. You will be given a link to register you and your assistant. **Only 2 passes per competitor.** This will be strictly enforced.

It is recommended that competitors come prepared with **enough product for several pizzas** and enough doughs to make at least 3-4 of their submission recipes, for testing and safety's sake. The competition will have limited ingredients such as cheese and pepperoni available. Other ingredients may become available, but plan ahead.

Competitors will be allowed to prove the ovens as soon as they are available. **They may only make a plain cheese pizza** in the oven to test it.

The competition will provide limited supplies so bring your own. The competition will **provide limited** screens, pans, and utensils. The competition **will provide** all oven tools such as peels, oven grips, gloves, paper towels and cleaning supplies. The competition will also have dual induction burners available for any onsite stove top prep. **If you feel like asking if we have an item, assume the answer is no and bring it to be safe. BRING YOUR OWN PANS.**

Competitors must dress professionally for the kitchen. Your picture will be taken with your pizza so dress to impress. A logoed Chef coat or well-kept, logoed T-shirt is recommended, as well as kitchen pants and an apron.





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All competitors will stop for at least 2 pictures before presenting to the judges. One full one of you and your pie, and a close-up of your winning creation. Remember to dress well because this **picture will go in PMQ Pizza Magazine** when you win.

Competitors are encouraged to bring a generic plain serving tray to display your pizza to the judges while you present to them. There are no points given for presentation displays, this is solely for pizza transportation purposes. Feel free to create a serving display if you like.

We will have a strict schedule for all events so if you miss your assigned competing time, you will be put to the end of the rotation. **Be present and ready to go at all times.**

Competitors must **be prepared to go 30 minutes earlier or later** than you assigned time in case of any absent competitors or delays in the competition. The schedule may shift. Be prepared.

The most important time you will be told is your TURN-IN time. This is the time you can submit your pizza to the judges. If you finish **before your Turn-In time, you will have to wait** and your pizza will get cold, so time your build. You will not be allowed to present to the judges early. We will work with any conflicts that arise to ensure all competitors get the chance to turn in a pizza.

If you registered and cannot compete, contact Brian Hernandez at bhernandez@wtwhmedia.com immediately. **No refunds will be given after July 28th, 2026.**

-Schedule Ahead-





Schedule

Saturday, Aug. 22nd – Meet & Greet for The California Pizza Challenge Sponsored by REAL California Milk. **8:30 pm, location TBD.**

Sunday, Aug. 23rd – **Mandatory Meeting at 8:00am for Traditional competitors.** It will start at precisely 8am so be there. Do not ask questions that were answered in the meeting if you miss it.

- 8 am – Mandatory Meeting
- 8:30 – Competitors may prove the ovens
- 9:00 – First Gluten-Free AND 3-Cheese Challenge competitors begin
- TBD Largest Dough Stretch
- TBD Fastest Box Folder
- 4:15 - Culinary & Athletics Award Ceremonies

Monday, Aug. 24th – **Mandatory Meeting at 8:00am for Pan competitors.** It will start precisely at 8am so be there. Do not ask questions that were answered in the meeting if you miss it.

- 8 am – Mandatory Meeting
- 8:30 – Competitors may prove the ovens
- 9:00 – First Non-Traditional competitors begin
- TBD Fastest Pizza Maker
- TBD Freestyle Acrobatics
- 4:15 - Culinary & Athletic Award Ceremonies

Tuesday, Aug. 25th – **Mandatory Meeting at 8:00am for some competitors.** It will start precisely at 8am so be there. Do not ask questions that were answered in the meeting if you miss it.

- 8 am – Mandatory Meeting
- 8:30 – Competitors may prove the ovens
- 9:00 – First Pizza in the Pan competitors begin
- 3:15 - Culinary Award Ceremonies

-Category rules ahead-





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NON-TRADITIONAL PIZZA CHALLENGE RULES

- Competitors may make any style of non-traditional pizza featuring creative, gourmet, or innovative ingredients and flavor combinations.
- There are no restrictions on sauce style, cheese selection, toppings, finishing ingredients, or presentation style, provided the pizza remains a true pizza product.
- Competitors are encouraged to showcase creativity, balance, originality, and technical pizza-making skill.
- Excessively overloaded pizzas may be penalized or disqualified if the bake quality suffers.
- Competitors must turn in their recipe and oven type and temperature no later than the designated deadline.
- Both before-bake and after-bake finishing ingredients are permitted.
- Competitors may use fresh herbs, infused oils, drizzles, sauces, edible garnishes, spices, cheeses, and specialty ingredients after the bake.
- Competitors will receive 15 minutes from first touch to hands off.
- Competitors must make a 14”-16” pizza.
- Pizzas must yield at least 6 slices from a single pizza, one slice for each judge.
- Pizza must be round.
- Pizza must be baked directly on the oven deck or refractory baking surface.
- Pizza may not be cooked in any form of pan with raised edges.
- No parbakes will be allowed before your time begins.
- Competitors are encouraged to make more than one pizza during the allotted time and choose the best pizza for presentation.
- Competitors may pair beverages with their pizza. Beverage portions may not exceed 4 oz. No hard liquor permitted. Pairings must be submitted and approved prior to the event.
- Competitors will pose for no less than 2 pictures after finishing their pizza and before presenting to the judges.
- Before cutting the pizza, competitors will present their pizza to the judges. Judges may ask questions regarding ingredients, dough process, baking method, and overall pizza concept.
- Competitors may cut their pizza before presentation if needed for best presentation quality.
- Competitors will then cut and present the best portions to the judges.
- Judging will be based on bake quality, flavor balance, creativity, originality, appearance, and overall pizza craftsmanship.
- Competitors must maintain a clean and professional workspace at all times.
- Competitors must conduct themselves respectfully toward fellow competitors, judges, and event staff.
- Any violation of timing procedures, event conduct rules, or competition standards may result in disqualification.
- Competition management reserves the right to inspect ingredients, prep methods, and procedures at any time.





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PIZZA in the PAN CHALLENGE

- Competitors will get **30 minutes** from first touch to hands off.
- Pizzas must be made in a raised-edge pan.
- Pan pizza may be any style of pizza baked in a pan. Roman, Deep-Dish, Detroit, Sicilian, Grandma. Etc.
- Pizzas must **yield at least 6 portions** from a single pizza.
- Competitors may not arrive with a parbaked dough.
- Competitors may only parbake their dough in front of competition management.
- Competitors may start parbaking their dough as soon as the ovens are ready, as long as it is in the presence of competition management.
- All time used to parbake will be deducted from your total 30-minute bake time.
- Competitors **are encouraged** to make more than one pizza in the time allotted (if possible) and choose the best to present to the judges.
- Competitors may pair beverages with their pizza. No larger than 4 oz. portions. No hard liquor. **Pairings must be approved before the event** or they will not be allowed.
- Competitor will pose for no less than 2 quick pictures of the competitor and their pizza after they are finished before they present to the judges.
- **Before you cut your pizza**, competitors will present their pizzas to the judges. You may not present your pizza in the pan. The judges will be able to ask you questions, even observe you at the table making your pizza, so know your pie. If your best presentation requires you to cut your pizza first, you may do so.
- Competitors will then cut pizza and present the best portions to the judges.
- Competitors must maintain a clean and professional workspace at all times.
- Competitors must conduct themselves respectfully toward fellow competitors, judges, and event staff.
- Any violation of timing procedures, event conduct rules, or competition standards may result in disqualification.
- Competition management reserves the right to inspect ingredients, prep methods, and procedures at any time.
- Winners will be announced after the event.





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LOOK FOR THE SEAL.

GLUTEN-FREE PIZZA CHALLENGE RULES

- Competitors will receive **15 minutes** from first touch to hands off.
- Competitors may make any style of gluten-free pizza as long as it can be prepared onsite during the competition.
- ALL ingredients used in the competition must be verified gluten-free. This includes dough, flour, starches, sauces, cheeses, meats, seasonings, garnish items, and finishing ingredients.
- Competitors must be prepared to provide ingredient labels or documentation upon request from competition management.
- Competitors must turn in their **full recipe** and ingredient list **no later than Aug. 3.**
- No ingredients containing wheat, barley, rye, malt, brewer's yeast, or non-certified oats may be used.
- Competitors must follow strict gluten-free handling procedures throughout the event to avoid cross-contamination and prevent contact between gluten-free products and any gluten-containing ingredients or surfaces.
- Gluten-free pizzas must be baked on a clean screen, pan, parchment, or approved barrier surface.
- Competitors may not place pizzas directly onto contaminated oven decks or surfaces.
- Competitors may bring their own pans, screens, and any specialty gluten-free equipment needed for their pizza.
- Competitors may use any sauce, cheese, protein, vegetable, or finishing ingredient that complies with gluten-free standards.
- **Pizzas must yield at least 6 portions** from a single pizza, one portion for each judge.
- Competitors are encouraged to make more than one pizza during the allotted time and choose the best pizza for presentation.
- Competitors will pose for no less than 2 pictures after finishing their pizza and before presenting to the judges.
- Before cutting the pizza, competitors will present their pizza to the judges. Judges may ask questions regarding ingredients, gluten-free procedures, dough process, baking method, and overall pizza concept.
- Competitors may cut their pizza before presentation if needed for best presentation quality.
- Competitors will then cut and present the best portions to the judges.
- Competitors must maintain a clean and professional workspace at all times.
- Competitors must conduct themselves respectfully toward fellow competitors, judges, and event staff.
- Any violation of gluten-free safety procedures, cross-contamination rules, timing procedures, or event conduct rules may result in disqualification.
- Competition management reserves the right to inspect ingredients, prep methods, and gluten-free procedures at any time.





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REAL CALIFORNIA 3-CHEESE CHALLENGE

- Competitors may make any style they wish for the event, as long as it can be prepared onsite at the competition. BRING YOUR OWN PANS.
- **Competitors must have at EXACTLY 3 CHEESES produced from a California producer on this pizza.** Any cheese included in any part of your pizza counts as a single cheese and must be produced with Real California Milk.
- Event sponsor **REAL California Milk** will provide any assistance needed in locating or obtaining any cheese found on the [REAL California Milk official website](#).
- Competitors may use other ingredients on their pizza, but **no cheeses outside the 3 required.**
- Competitors may use any sauce they desire.
- Recipes will be judged on creativity, use of additional ingredients, and the best representation, uniqueness, and use of the 3 cheeses selected, as well as proficiency in other areas of pizza creation.
- Competitors must turn in their full recipe **no later than Aug. 3rd, 2026.**
- Competitors will get **20 minutes** from first touch to hands off.
- Pizzas must **yield at least 6 portions from a single pizza.** One portion for each judge.
- Competitors may start parbaking their dough as soon as the ovens are ready, as long as it is in the presence of competition management.
- All time used to parbake will be deducted from your total 20-minute bake time.
- Competitors **are encouraged** to make more than one pizza in the time allotted (if possible) and choose the best to present to the judges.
- Competitors may pair beverages with their pizza. No larger than 4 oz portions. No hard liquor. **Pairings must be turned in with recipe and approved before the event** or they will not be allowed.
- Competitors will pose for no less than 2 pictures after they are finished before they present to the judges.
- **Before you cut your pizza,** Competitors will present their pizzas to the judges. The judges will be able to ask you questions, even observe you at the table making your pizza, so know your pie. If your best presentation requires you to cut your pizza first, you may do so.
- Competitors will then cut and present the best portions to the judges.
- Judging will be based on bake quality, flavor balance, creativity, originality, appearance, and overall pizza craftsmanship.
- Competitors must maintain a clean and professional workspace at all times.
- Competitors must conduct themselves respectfully toward fellow competitors, judges, and event staff.
- Any violation of timing procedures, event conduct rules, or competition standards may result in disqualification.





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- Competition management reserves the right to inspect ingredients, prep methods, and procedures at any time.
- The awards ceremony will be held after the day's events.

MORE AHEAD





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WEST COAST ATHLETIC TRIALS

Largest Dough Stretch:

- Contestants hand stretch a dough ball as large as possible in 5 minutes.
- Contestants order will be drawn at the beginning of each event. A random letter will be selected, and each competitor will go alphabetically from that letter. This mimics the rules at the World Pizza Championships in Italy.
- Contestants have five minutes to hand stretch or toss one 18-ounce dough ball to the maximum size. without tearing the dough (no rolling pins allowed).
- The dough will be made with cold water and half the normal yeast to provide the best dough possible to work with.
- Only dusting flour can be used to help stretch the dough. Oil, water, corn meal or other materials may not be used. Contestants may request as much flour as they see fit.
- Organizers will place one dough ball for each contestant in the pile of flour on the contestant's table. referees and contestants are not to dust the top of the dough ball with flour or touch the dough balls until the allotted 5 minutes begins.
- If the contestant feels that the dough ball is damaged, they may request a new one. If the referees concur that the dough ball is damaged, they will replace it. A maximum of one dough ball may be replaced. Referees will count down "3 - 2 - 1 - GO." Referees will start stopwatch on "GO." In the event of a mis-start by competitor, they may be disqualified.
- In the event of a malfunction of the stopwatch, the referees will immediately stop the competition. Table will be reset with a fresh dough ball and the contestant will start over.
- Holes can be repaired as long as this is done within the five-minute time limit. Holes bigger than a dime will disqualify entry. If the hole is oddly shaped and cannot be readily determined if it is larger than a dime, the referees and the organizer will cast a majority vote and arrive at a final decision.
- If at any point the dough touches the ground, the competitor must immediately move to the ground to finish stretching the dough.
- Once on the floor the contestant is free to continue stretching the dough. However, the "lick and stick" method is not allowed (wetting the dough to make it stick to the floor). Kneeling





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on any part of the dough is also prohibited and may lead to disqualification.

- The dough must be in round or oval form. Square, rectangle, star, quadrangle, trapezoid, rhombus, or similar shapes are not allowed and will be disqualified.
- When 4:50 minutes is reached the timekeeper will start a 10-second count down. At 5 minutes, the referees will announce "stop!" signaling the contestant to immediately raise their hands into the air and back away from the dough. If the contestant fails to stop working the dough, he/she will be disqualified.
- The referees will take two measurements of the dough. They will use a measuring stick or tape measure to measure the widest diameter of the dough. That measuring device will be left in place and its midpoint will be used to take a perpendicular measurement. These two measurements will be averaged together for the final score.
- The contestant's own score will be shown to him/her, but all other scores will be kept confidential until the end of the event.
- Contestants must be ready to be compete at the scheduled time. Any disputes or concerns about the results, the way in which the contest was judged, or concerns over the condition of the dough will be taken before the organizer who may appeal to a panel of judges if he/she sees necessary.
- In the event a competitor behaves disrespectfully he or she will be disqualified and removed from the area.
- No "practice runs" will be allowed.

Fastest Pie Maker:

- Contestants race to stretch out five 10oz. dough balls onto five pizza screens.
- Contestants order will be drawn at the beginning of each event. A random letter will be selected, and each competitor will go alphabetically from that letter. This mimics the rules at the World Pizza Championships in Italy.
- Contestants will stretch/toss out five 10-ounce dough balls to cover five 10-inch pizza screens in the shortest amount of time possible (no rolling pins allowed).
- Tables and screens will be cleaned of excess flour between each competitor.





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- Only dusting flour can be used to help stretch the dough. Oil, water, corn meal or other materials may not be used. Contestants may request as much flour as they see fit.
- Organizers will place five dough balls for each contestant in the pile of flour on the contestant's table. Contestants may arrange the screens and flour however they wish on the table but may not dust the top of the dough ball with flour nor touch the dough balls until the timekeeper says "GO."
- If the contestant feels that the dough ball is damaged, they may request a new one. If the referees concur that the dough ball is damaged, they will replace it. A maximum of one dough ball may be replaced.
- Referees will count down "3 - 2 - 1 - GO." Judge will start stopwatch on "GO." In the event of a mis-start by competitor, they may be disqualified.
- In the event of a malfunction of the stopwatch, the judge will immediately stop the competition. Table will be reset with fresh dough balls and the contestant will start over.
- Only one stainless steel table will be provided for both working the dough and laying the doughs down on the screens.
- Each doughball must completely cover each screen with no metal showing. Even if the dough initially covers the entire screen, it may retract and need to be reworked to completely cover the metal again before the referees can stop their watches.
- The clock will continue to run until holes are repaired and all of the screens are covered with dough. There will be no "fix it time." Referees will point out repairs on the fly.
- Times will be measured to the hundredth of a second.
- Two referees will keep time on stopwatches. The average of their times will be used for the final score. The contestant's own time will be shown to him/her, but all other scores will be kept confidential until the end of the event.
- Contestants must be ready to compete at the scheduled time. Any disputes or concerns about the results, the way in which the contest was judged, or concerns over the condition of the dough will be taken before the organizer who may appeal to a panel of judges if he/she sees necessary.





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- In the event a competitor behaves disrespectfully, he or she will be disqualified and removed from the area.
- No "practice runs" will be allowed.

Freestyle Acrobatics:

- If for any reason the winner of the grand prize all-expense paid trip to the Galbani Professionale Pizza Cup in Orlando FL. Nov., 11-13 cannot fulfill his/her obligations, the prize will fall to the 2nd place competitor, then third.
- Each competitor may make their own dough or have it made by Competition Officials (Dough making equipment will be on-site)
- Contestants' order will be drawn at the beginning of the day's events. A random letter will be selected, and each competitor will go alphabetically from that letter. This mimics the rules at the World Pizza Championships in Italy.
- Contestants will perform a 3-minute acrobatic dough tossing routine set to music of their choosing. Music must be within Safe for Work standards. No excessive profanity.
- If the event provides dough for the competitor, the competitor will be given 10 8-ounce dough balls. Two dough balls will be put together to make one dough ball, giving each contestant five 16-ounce dough balls. Dough will be kept in refrigeration until the contestant starts or otherwise directed by the competitor.
- If competitor makes their own dough, they are permitted to make as many dough balls at whatever weights desired.





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LOOK FOR THE SEAL.

COMPETITOR AGREEMENT FOR THE CALIFORNIA PIZZA CHALLENGE

Sponsored by REAL California Milk

This Competitor Agreement ("Agreement") is entered into by and between the participant ("Competitor") and REAL California Milk, the US Pizza Team, Restaurant Events, LLC, PMQ Pizza Magazine, WTVH Media, and all associated sponsors and organizers ("Sponsors"). By participating in the California Pizza Challenge ("Competition"), the Competitor agrees to the following terms and conditions:

1. Agreement to Abide by Competition Rules

The Competitor hereby acknowledges that they have read, understood, and agree to abide by all rules and regulations of the California Pizza Challenge ("Competition"). The rules and regulations are available for review and are incorporated herein by reference.

2. Participation Eligibility

This event is open to all pizza makers who meet the eligibility criteria in their respective categories as defined in the competition rules.

Teen competitors aged 14–17 competing in the "Slice of the Future: Young Pizza Maker Challenge" must have signed parental or guardian consent to participate.

3. Rights to Likeness and Submissions

The Competitor grants the Sponsors the following rights:

- a. **Likeness and Image:** Sponsors may use the Competitor's likeness, name, image, voice, and any photographs or video recordings taken during the event for editorial, promotional, and commercial purposes across all media platforms.
- b. **Recipe Submissions:** Sponsors may use any recipes submitted during the Competition for editorial, promotional, or commercial purposes, including publication in PMQ Pizza Magazine or its associated websites.
- c. **Editorial Use:** Sponsors may use any content captured on the show floor of the California Restaurant Show or Pizza Tomorrow Summit in which the Competition is held.

4. Liability Waiver and Indemnification

By signing this Agreement **physically or by completing online registration**, the Competitor (and parent/guardian if under 18) hereby voluntarily **waives, releases, and holds harmless** the following parties from **any and all liability, claims, demands, losses, or damages** arising out of or related to:

- Participation in the Competition and any related activities
- Travel to and from the event location(s), whether local, domestic, or international





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- Any post-competition travel associated with a prize, including but not limited to travel to international pizza competitions (e.g., in Italy)

This waiver covers, but is not limited to:

- Personal injury, illness, property damage, or theft
- Foodborne illness or allergic reaction
- Missed or delayed travel connections
- Issues related to international travel such as passports, visas, or customs
- Accidents or injuries during recreational or professional activities before, during, or after the event

The following parties are included in this waiver:

- The US Pizza Team
- PMQ Pizza Magazine
- WTWH Media
- Restaurant Events, LLC
- REAL California Milk
- The Pizza Tomorrow Summit
- The California Restaurant Show
- Competition judges, volunteers, and affiliated sponsors

Competitors understand they are voluntarily participating and **assume full responsibility and all associated risks.**

5. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California without regard to its conflict of law principles.

6. Entire Agreement

This Agreement represents the full understanding between the parties and supersedes all prior discussions, communications, or agreements, whether written or oral.

