



Stir-Ups Cooking Contest - 2026 Guidelines



When: Saturday, February 28th, 2026

Timeframe: 1:35pm – 7:00pm

Where: Herrick Hall Food Lab #120 (MSU Campus)

Contest Purpose: To prepare an appealing, nutritious meal using food safe techniques.

Participants: Members can compete as individuals or in a team of two. Teams must be the same age category for competition. Divisions are: Juniors (ages 8-10), Intermediates (ages 11-13), or Seniors (ages 14+). Age is based on age as of October 1, 2025. The County Stir-Ups contest is a qualifying event for Senior teams and Senior individuals wishing to compete at the Montana Congress 4-H Stir-Ups Contest held in Bozeman July 7-10, 2026.

Theme: **ASIAN CUISINE**

The 2026 Stir-Ups Cooking Contest will highlight **ASIAN CUISINE!** Recipes can range from the simplest to more complicated combinations of ingredients which showcase healthy nutritious meals with the advantage of ease of preparation. Creativity is key to unique Asian Cuisine – there is no reason to stick to traditional ingredients or recipes.



Time Frame:

Meal preparation and cleanup: *up to 60 minutes*

Presentation/Taste-Testing/Interview: *up to 15 minutes*

Ingredients: Contestants will be responsible for all food and supplies needed in their dish. This includes main ingredients (ex. protein, vegetables, rice), dressings and any other additional ingredients or toppings.

Contestants must bring ALL materials needed to make their dish in order to compete (ingredients, bowls, cutting board, pots, mixers, utensils for cutting, etc.) Dress appropriate for cooking – apron and hair back, if applicable.

Contestants will prepare a dish that is visually appealing, nutritious and shows creativity. Contestants should use effective work habits and sanitary food preparation practices. All work is to be done by the contestants the day of the contest in front of the judges. ***No pre-preparation of the meal is acceptable** (i.e. cutting meat, chopping and washing vegetables, etc.). You are making one dish that will be done and prepared at the Stir-Ups Cooking contest and presented on a plate for the judges to taste. You do not need to make side dishes, dessert, etc.

Presentation/Judging: Following the preparation of the meal the contestant(s) will present an oral presentation to judges. Oral presentation should address proper table setting; selection of dish; preparation process; nutritional value of dish; and overall learning. **Bring a plate to present your dish on to each of the judges.** Judges will taste the dish and ask more questions about your dish during/after the presentation. ***Please bring a copy of your recipe for each of the three judges.**

Questions? Please read all of the information first, then contact the Extension Office:

(406) 582-3280 or email gallatin4h@montana.edu