

Texas Men's State Chili Cook-Off in Johnson City, Texas

Good Chili-it's a Texas tradition! The competition of cooking the "best" chili is another Texas tradition. Here in Johnson City, at the Blanco County Fairgrounds along the banks of the Pedernales River, men from Texas and beyond will compete in one of the largest cook offs in the world, to become the chili cooking champion. Mark your calendars for Saturday, March 31, 2012 and plan to attend the 9th Texas Men's State Chili and Barbecue Championship. Many folks come out the day before and spend the night or weekend with us. There's plenty to do at the fairgrounds on Friday evening while the cooks begin their preparations to compete. Through the night, the fires and meat are tended to while the cooks sit around the campfire competing for Tallest Tale of the evening.

During your visit you will delight in the many activities available in addition to the Chili Cook-Off. There is the LBJ National Historical Park for starters, along with a trail of numerous local vineyards, art galleries, great shops, dining, Exotic Animal Zoo Resort and state and local parks as well. If you're looking for lodging you will find several fabulous options from Hotels to Bed & Breakfasts to cabins. You can check out our website at www.johnsoncitytexaschamber.com for details. Due to the large number of folks that converge into our town during this event you would be best served to make your reservations early. Should you have an RV, you're in luck as we have 2 wonderful parks right here in Johnson City along with a couple of State Parks nearby that are equipped with RV spaces.

On Saturday morning the chili cooks begin their preparations and shortly after the aroma of World Class Chili begins to fill the air. The competition chili is a blend of spices and meat with no beans allowed! The recipes, of course are Top Secret! While the gentlemen are cooking, music, craft vendors, artisans, beer booth and food vendors add to the party atmosphere throughout the day. The excitement mounts as judging samples are turned in for chicken, ribs, chili, and brisket. When judging and awards are over, old fashioned domino games of 42 pop up-another Texas tradition that you are invited to join. As we await the results, there will be plenty more stories, chili and barbecue tasting, and entertainment provided to us by both the musicians and the cooks. If you've never been to a chili cookoff you will definitely enjoy traveling the RV path of contestants, who are quite creative when it comes to entertainment and hospitality. Not only will you experience the excitement of a world class chili cook-off, but you'll surely make new friends along the way. Attendance to visit the Texas Men's State Chili Cook-Off is free to the public. All men interested are encouraged to enter into the cook-off competition. Newbies, known as chili virgins, have slipped into the winners circle several times in the past-so if you have a to-die-for secret chili recipe, now's your chance to strut your chili! Some of the best are winners, some are not. And for those that don't win, remember..."it's only chili"---unless you are Texan, of course!

The championship gives cooks the opportunity to qualify for international competition through sanctioning by the Chili Appreciation Society International (CASI) and the Lone Star Barbecue Society. Competition is open to all those who wish to enter. CASI is a 45 Year Old international association dedicated to chili, charity and fun. Throughout the year, over 600 CASI-sanctioned cook offs are held in the United States and surrounding territories contributing over \$1 million to local charities. Winning entries in CASI cook offs accumulate points to qualify in the Terlingua

International Chili Championship (TICC), held the first Saturday in November each year in Terlingua, Texas. Texas Men's State is especially important because it is one of three sanctioned cook offs held in Texas that grants automatic qualification to compete in TICC (the other two are the Texas Open and Texas Ladies' State). For details or to enter cook off go to www.texasmenschili.org or www.johnsoncitytexaschamber.com