



MRE Challenge

PURPOSE

MREs, or Meals Ready to Eat, are the main operational food ration for the United States Armed Forces. It originated from the c-rations and k-rations from World War II and are still the US Army's primary ration. This contest will challenge a team of 2 students to use their culinary experience and creativity to work together and prepare a meal.

ELIGIBILITY

Open to all active SkillsUSA members enrolled in a high school or post-secondary program with Culinary Arts or Commercial Baking/Pastry Arts as an occupational objective.

Students will compete in teams of 2. Both students must be paid, registered members of SkillsUSA in the same division (high school or post-secondary) in order to compete as a team. Penalties for incomplete teams will be assessed in accordance with the SkillsUSA Championships General Regulations at 50% of the final score. A maximum of 3 teams per region, per division are permitted to attend the state event. Regional coordinators will make final determination of participating teams.

CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS

Class G: Culinary/Commercial Baking Attire

- White or black work pants or black-and-white checkered chef's pants
- White chef's jacket
- White or black work shoes (non-slip, no sneakers) with black or white socks
- Undershirt, plain white t-shirt (optional)
- White apron
- Hat – chef's toque and hairnet or similar. No baseball caps permitted.

UNIFORM STANDARDS:

1. Uniforms must be clean.
2. No names or logos may be displayed on uniforms, except for the SkillsUSA logo. Any identifying information must be covered with masking tape or other material.
3. Hair must be restrained, and hats worn properly.
4. Students must be properly groomed and practice good hygiene. Male students must be clean-shaven, or beards and/or mustaches neatly trimmed and covered with a beard guard. Fingernails should be short and clean, and nail polish is not permitted.
5. No jewelry is permitted (rings, bracelets, earrings, necklaces). Only 1 Plain wedding band (no stones) and 1 watch are allowed.

SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS

To be supplied by the Technical Committee/Host Site:

- One 6-foot table per team for preparation
- One community table for plate presentation
- Food grade sanitizing solution
- Heavy-duty plastic table covers (for team tables)
- Heavy-duty plastic table covers (for presentation tables)
- Plastic silverware for tasting
- Hot and cold cups for beverage presentation
- Judge's packets and scoresheets
- 6 MREs per team, plus 2-3 additional for demonstration
- 4 bottles of water per team
- Flameless Ration Heater (FRH)
- Menu planning sheets (4 per team)

To be supplied by each team:

- Hard copy of each team member's resume
- 6 presentation plates (glass or china, no plastic)
- Two #2 pencils
- 1 cutting board
- Chef's knife
- Sanitizer bucket and towel
- Food service gloves (latex or similar)

ADDITIONAL APPROVED ITEMS:

Teams may also bring the following items, if desired. No electrical or heating elements are permitted, except for the Flameless Ration Heater provided at the contest site. The Hospitality Committee must approve the use of any hand tools or equipment not on this list in advance, and any approvals will be shared with all contestants. To request an exception, email Jpressinger@acfchefs.net. No other items be allowed in the competition area. Cell phones may not be used at any time during the contest.

- Paring knife
- 1 set stainless steel bowls
- 1 set measuring spoons
- 2 rubber spatulas
- 2 whisks
- Honing steel
- Ounce scale
- 2 slotted spoons
- 2 solid spoons
- 2 ladles – 1 oz/2oz
- 2 half sheet pans
- 1 pastry brush
- 1 pastry bag
- Assorted pastry tips
- 1 offset spatula
- 1 instant read thermometer
- 1 cheese grater
- 4 side towels per team
- Small china cap
- Meat mallet
- Canape cutters
- Plastic squeeze bottles

CONTEST GUIDELINES

1. Please review the contest carefully, study the contest packet in advance. Have a plan and bring any notes you may need to execute your menu.
2. During Orientation for the Contest, a member of the Technical Committee will review the contest packet with you.
3. Contact a judge to look at your garbage before removing anything from your station
4. You will present one plate to your assigned section for the public to see and 1 plate for judges to taste.
5. Raise your hand and ask for assistance if there is anything that you do not understand. There will be a period just before the start of the contest when all questions will be answered for all contestants to hear. Once the competition starts, any questions about technique or definitions, etc. will not be answered.
6. Remember two things – This is about LEARNING and it should be FUN. If at any time you feel overwhelmed and feel that you cannot continue, speak to a judge or member of the Technical committee. We are here for you!
7. Clean as you go. Sanitation is an evaluative criterion used throughout the competition. Keep your work area and all tools, utensils, and equipment clean and sanitary. Each contestant is also expected to assist with the overall clean up and breakdown of the competition area at its conclusion. Failure to do so will result in a deduction from your sanitation score.

SCOPE OF CONTEST

Contestants will demonstrate their culinary knowledge and sanitation, as well as their ability to utilize and be creative with military issue MREs. Contestants will produce 2 servings of each item below. One plate will be displayed, and one plate will be submitted for judging.

- Appetizer
- Entrée
- Dessert
- 12oz beverage (hot or cold)

Competitors will be judging on the following criteria:

- Proper use of commercial tools, utensils, and equipment
- Mise en place skills
- Menu planning and preparation
- Proper portioning, plating and garnishing of finished products
- Teamwork
- Safety and Sanitation
- Quality of food items, including taste, texture, flavor, and creative use of ingredients

During the contest orientation, each team member will submit a hard copy of their resume. Failure to submit a resume will result in a penalty of -50 points from the team total.

Each team will receive at least 6 randomly selected MRE packs. Start times may be staggered, depending on the number of teams entered. A schedule will be posted and discussed during the MRE Flameless Ration Heater (FRH) demonstration and contest orientation meeting.

Teams will be given 30 minutes for menu planning, 90 minutes for menu preparation, and 5 minutes to present to judges with question and answer period. Teams will receive their MREs at the beginning of their planning time. Once the MREs have been received by the team, the 30 minutes for planning will officially begin. Contestants will use the paper provided to plan their menu. Planning sheets should be submitted to the judges during the presentation phase, as well as a 1-page, handwritten menu.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS *(tentative)*

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	SkillsUSA technical committee and judges arrive, set up stations
8:30 AM – 9:00 AM	SkillsUSA Contestants arrive, stations assigned
9:00 AM – 9:30 AM	Welcome and orientation, instructions, and MRE Heater/Cooker demonstration
9:30 AM	Phase 1 begins
10:00 AM	Phase 2 begins
11:30 AM	Phase 3 begins
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Lunch for competitors
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	Phase 4 begins
1:00 PM – 1:15 PM	Debrief with Coast Guard Master Chief Justin Reed and other judges
1:15 PM – 2:00 PM	Team pack up and departure

PHASE 1 – MENU PLANNING (30 min)

- Each team will receive 6 randomly selected MREs and create a menu and execution plan. A one-page, handwritten menu should be prepared to present to the judges during Phase 3.

PHASE 2 – PREPARE MRE MENU (90 min)

- Each team must prepare 2 plates of the following items:
 - Appetizer
 - Entrée
 - Dessert
 - 12oz hot or cold beverage
- Accompanying items may be served with or on the menu plates

PHASE 3 – PRESENTATION (5 min)

- Teams will present menu to judges in the designated area and allow for question and answer period.

PHASE 4 – JUDGING

- Judges will taste and judge all items and prepare final scores. Teams will clean and sanitize their stations during the judging phase.

SCORING CRITERIA

Proper use of tools and equipment	50
Creative use of ingredients	50
Mise en Place	100
Menu planning/preparation	50
Teamwork	50
Safety and Sanitation	100
Appetizer Presentation	50
Appetizer Taste	100
Entrée Presentation	50
Entrée Taste	100
Dessert Presentation	50
Dessert Taste	100
Beverage Presentation	50
Beverage Taste	100
Total possible points	1000
PENALTIES	
Resume Penalty	-50
Time penalty (per 1 minute)	-10