

Rotary **YOUNG CHEF** COMPETITION



INFORMATION PACK

2026-27



[ROTARYGBI.ORG](https://rotarygbi.org)

Rotary
Great Britain & Ireland 

Information Pack for 2026-27

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Introduction

The Rotary Young Chef Competition is organised and promoted by Rotary International in Great Britain and Ireland (Rotary GB&I).

There are four stages to the competition, each designed to support and encourage the development of young people's culinary skills and confidence. Some stages may have more than one round to select entrants progressing to the next stage.

Aims and Objectives

This competition aims to encourage young people to:

- learn how to cook a healthy and nutritious main course and dessert
- develop food presentation and plating skills
- understand and apply food hygiene principles
- develop organisational and planning skills
- gain confidence in managing time and pressure in a demanding situation

Who can take part?

The competition is open to all young people between the ages of 11 and 17 on 31st August 2026 who live within a Rotary Great Britain and Ireland district, including Gibraltar, the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man. They may be an individual choosing to enter directly themselves or an entrant through a group or community organisation including schools and colleges, home educated, other young peoples' community organisations, for example, community RotaKids or Interact, Scout Groups, Girl Guides, etc. It should be noted that a competitor who is 17 on 31st August 2026 but turns 18 on 1st September is allowed to enter whilst a young person who is 10 on 31st August is not.

This competition is for amateur chefs. An amateur is considered to be someone who is not in full time, or regular part time, employment in the catering industry. Eligible entrants who have been temporarily employed by restaurants during the school holidays may take part. The competition is not open to students who are enrolled on a full-time catering course leading to a qualification above "A" level or equivalent standard. Students undertaking part-time (day release) education for catering are also not eligible to participate.

The qualifying criteria of all entrants will be checked rigorously; any entrant who does not meet the above conditions will not be allowed to take part.

How to enter

To enter a local heat, contact your local Rotary club. You can find one using the club finder at the top left-hand corner of the homepage of the Rotary GB&I website www.rotarygbi.org. If you're unable to reach a local club or if you have any questions, please email the Rotary GB&I Competitions Team at competitions@rotarygbi.org.

Entrants should submit their completed entry form, available from their local Rotary club, to the Local Heat organiser by the date they have specified.

Important: Entrants may participate in a competition organised by a Rotary club outside their geographical area but may enter only one local heat.



The Four Stages of the Competition

Please note: some stages may involve more than one round to select those progressing to the next stage.

Local Heats

These are organised by local Rotary clubs, each of which sets its own deadline for entries which are generally between September and December. There may be more than one round to select those progressing to the District Finals.

District Finals

The winners from the Local Heats are entered into the Rotary District Final which is generally completed by mid-February. If there is a high number of entrants, additional preliminary rounds prior to the District Final may be required. Any such rounds must follow the same guidelines.

Districts are responsible for reimbursing the entrant's ingredient costs up to a maximum £18.

Sponsoring clubs are responsible for assisting with food and/or travel costs to the District Final venue.

Cluster Finals

The winner of the District Final progresses to the Cluster Final, organised by several Rotary districts together, and generally completed by early March.

Clusters are responsible for reimbursing the entrant's ingredients up to a maximum £18.

Sponsoring clubs are responsible for assisting with food and/or travel costs to the Cluster Final venue.

National Final

The winner from each of the Cluster Finals goes on to the National Final, organised by Rotary GB&I. The National Final will be held on Saturday, 24th April 2027 at a venue to be announced. This is an all day event and competitors are expected to attend the full day.

The moral support of friends, family and the sponsoring club and district are important at the National Finals.

Sponsoring clubs are responsible in the first instance for the expenses of entrants reaching the National Final. No expenses are funded by Rotary GB&I.

Competition Guidelines

Task

To prepare and serve, in two hours, a two-course healthy and nutritious meal comprising a main course and dessert for two people and costing up to £18.00 sterling.

The task for Local Heats and District and Cluster finals may have local variations so entrants should check the detailed requirements for each stage with the organiser.

Judges

The judges will be people with appropriate skills appointed by the organisers for the Local Heats, District Finals and Cluster Finals accordingly.

At the National level the judges will be appointed by Rotary GB&I and will not be Rotarians.



Judging Criteria

Judges will consider each of the following elements with the maximum of 5 points for each of them:

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Costing | 5 points |
| Planning | 5 points |
| Healthy choice of dishes | 5 points |
| Correct use of knives and equipment | 5 points |
| Meal served on time and at correct temperature | 5 points |
| Neatness and organisation of work area and hygiene | 5 points |
| Range of skills used | 5 points |
| Presentation of display table | 5 points |
| Presentation of main course | 5 points |
| Taste of main course | 5 points |
| Presentation of dessert | 5 points |
| Taste of dessert | 5 points |
| Possible Total | 60 points |

When deciding on the Points awarded the following scoring guideline will be considered by the Judges:

| | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 5 points: | Outstanding |
| 4 points: | Distinction |
| 3 points: | Commendable |
| 2 points: | Reasonable |
| 1 point: | Passable (OK) |

Judges will deduct up to 5 Points for each of the following:

- Any food preparation such as chopping, cooking, marinading or mixing done before the competition begins
- Any ready or prepared food or ingredients, including any marinated food.

A sample Judges marking guide sheet can be seen below.

At the end of the competition, the organiser will collect the judges score sheets. These will be retained by the competition organiser for a maximum of 3 months after the date of the competition stage, after which they, and all other data collected, will be destroyed to comply with the [General Data Protection Regulations](#) and the Rotary Youth Competitions and Awards Privacy Policy.

A Rotarian with no interest in the participating entrants will review the scores to ensure accuracy before the results are announced.

After the judges have determined the result of the competition one or more judges will comment on their observations before announcing the result.

The judges will not enter any discussion or correspondence regarding their decision; the decision of the judges will be final and not subject to any appeal.

Recognition

At all stages of the competition, competitors will receive a Certificate of Participation.

Prize Sponsor for National Final – Filippo Berio

Filippo Berio of Lucca, Tuscany, is delighted to continue supporting and inspiring the next generation of cooks as the proud sponsor of the prize for the winner of the 2026/27 Rotary Young Chef National Final. The winner will receive a two-day trip to Tuscany, including cookery classes to discover the secrets of regional Italian cooking.



Competition Procedure

Arrival

Before each competition, the organiser will conduct a ballot to assign each entrant a cooking station.

On arrival entrants will be directed to where they can deposit their equipment and ingredients.

Introduction

Competitors and supporters will be welcomed. Competitors will be briefed by the judges, who will indicate where the judging and table display areas are and explain what they are looking for including the proper use of knives and cooking equipment.

Supporters will be informed of a designated area or activity for them during the competition.

Equipment, ingredients and rules

Ovens, hobs and refrigeration will be provided at the venue. Competitors should bring all other equipment they may require, including any specialised equipment and utensils. Any electrical equipment they bring must have a current Portable Appliance Tested (PAT) certificate. Any questions about equipment availability should be directed to the competition stage organiser in advance.

Organisers will provide a table for each competitor to present their finished dishes for supporters to see after the competition. Competitors should also display a menu and costings on their tables which will be judged.

Ingredients and Preparation

- Ingredients may be pre-weighed, but no food preparation is allowed beforehand
- Any evidence of pre-preparation including pre-made marinades, chopping, mixing or cooking may lead to point deductions

Competitors must

- not begin any food preparation before the official start
- not use any ready-made or pre-prepared food or ingredients including marinated items
- submit their completed Time Plan (see below) and Menu and Ingredients form (see below) to the judges.

Supporters

- may help unpack and organise equipment prior to the start
- must not assist in any food preparation
- must leave the cooking area before the official start.

The **Menu and Ingredients form** (attached below) should

- list all ingredients and show the purchase cost for quantities being used
- include a fair retail value of any home grown or donated ingredients being used
- exclude small amounts of herbs, spices and seasoning
- include receipts, with relevant ingredients clearly marked.

VERY IMPORTANT NOTE

If a dish **contains any types of nut**, competitors must:

- clearly state this on the Menu and Ingredients form
- inform the competition organiser on arrival so separation measures can be arranged
- ensure all equipment, utensils and surfaces are thoroughly cleaned to avoid residue cross-contamination.



Preparation Time

Competitors will have two hours to prepare, cook and serve their meal.

During the final 45 minutes of the two-hour duration, competitors should stagger serving their courses in the correct order and at the appropriate temperature.

One serving of each course should be placed in the judging area, and the other one on the display table for the supporters to see.

Clearing up may take place after the two-hour period if necessary.

Results

Once judging is complete, one or more of the judges will provide feedback and the competition results will be announced. Opportunity will also be given for supporters to view the display tables.

Rotary Youth Competitions and other opportunities for young people

Take a look at <https://www.rotarygbi.org/projects/young-people/> to explore

- other Rotary Youth Competitions: Artist, Environmentalist, Musician, Photographer, Writer, Youth Speaks and Youth Speaks A Debate
- and
- Rotary Young Citizen Awards, Rotary Young Citizen Environmentalist Award, Rotary Young Citizen Peacemaker Award and Rotary Young Citizen Sporting Hero Award

You may wish to enter more than one competition or Award.

You'll also find information about

- Rotary Technology Tournaments which are organised in many areas
- Rotary programmes including RotaKids, Interact, and Developing Future Leaders
- Rotary Youth Exchange and more

There may be additional opportunities available locally - connect with Rotarians in your area to find out what's happening near you.

Working with Children

Rotary GB&I has adopted this statement of policy in working with children, vulnerable adults and those with disability:

The needs and rights of the child, the elderly, the vulnerable and those with disability take priority. It is the duty of every Rotarian to safeguard to the best of their ability, the welfare of and prevent the physical, sexual or emotional abuse and neglect of all children, the elderly, persons with disability or otherwise vulnerable persons with whom they come into contact during their Rotarian duties.

Click here to see the [Rotary GB&I Safeguarding Policy](#)



***Menu and Ingredients Form (maximum cost must not exceed £18 sterling)**

Competitors should bring a completed copy of this form to the competition. Only cost the quantity of ingredients used, not the quantity purchased.

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Competitor's Name | |
| | |
| Total Cost of Main Course + Dessert | £ |

| Main Course Ingredients and Cost | Dessert Ingredients and Cost |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|
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| | |

** An electronic version of this form is available as a separate document from your competition organiser*




**Rotary Young Chef – Judges Marking Guide

| <p style="text-align: center;">Marking Guide 5 Points: Outstanding 4 Points: Distinction 3 Points: Commendable 2 Points: Reasonable 1 Point: Passable (OK)</p> | | Costing | Planning | Healthy choice of dishes | Correct use of knives and equipment | Meals served on time and correct temperature | Neatness and organisation of work areas and hygiene | Range of skills used | Presentation of display table | Presentation (Main) | Taste (Main) | Presentation (Dessert) | Taste (Dessert) | Sub Total | LESS any deductions for: - | any food preparation done before competition begins | any ready or prepared food or ingredients, inc. marinated food | Final Total | |
|--|--|----------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|--|-------------|--|
| Maximum Score | | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 60 | | -5 | -5 | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Name: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |



**Alternative Marking Guide for Judges:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------------------|---|--|-------------|--|
|  <p>Marking Guide 5 Points: Outstanding 4 Points: Distinction 3 Points: Commendable 2 Points: Reasonable 1 Point: Passable (OK)</p> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Costing | Planning | Healthy choice of dishes | Correct use of knives and equipment | Meals served on time and correct temperature | Neatness and organisation of work areas and hygiene | Range of skills used | Presentation of display table | Presentation (Main) | Taste (Main) | Presentation (Dessert) | Taste (Dessert) | Sub Total | LESS any deductions for: - | any food preparation done before competition begins | any ready or prepared food or ingredients, inc. marinated food | Final Total | |
| Maximum Score | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 60 | | -5 | -5 | | | |
| Name Of Competitor: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dish main: (Comments) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Dish Dessert: (Comments) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Points total | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 60 | | -5 | -5 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Both versions of the Marking Guide are available as standalone documents in the Rotary GB&I Members' Area