



The Competition - Hand Book

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

The Challenge

Create and present an appetizer, main course, and dessert, to demonstrate your knowledge, skill, and creativity in presenting Emirati cuisine; whether traditional or modern way.

At its heart, the competition is a celebration of Emirati culinary identity, honouring the diversity, depth, and evolution of local UAE cuisine, and recognizing the talent shaping its future.

Organized by Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET), International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA Dubai), in partnership with Dubai Culture & Arts Authority and Sikka Art & Design Festival 2026 and powered by the Foodverse, this competition provides professional chefs with a platform to showcase their mastery of Emirati flavours, indigenous ingredients, and cultural narratives.

The Competition Registration Process -

- **Sign up on the ICCA-Foodverse App:**
Individual participants from Dubai can register for free, on the Foodverse App to participate in the competition.
Click here - https://www.foodverse.io/Dashboard/DET/det_home
- **Create a Foodverse Profile:**
The competitor's profile on the Foodverse will be a gateway to this competition and will enable them to connect and interact with the organizers and with the world of chefs at large.
- **Apply for the Competition:**

Step 1: Submit Your Entry

- Clear, high-quality images of the inspiration menu (comprising an appetizer, main course, and dessert), that can be cooked and presented within three hours,
- A recipe card with a complete list of ingredients and step-by-step method for each dish,
- A short story (maximum 100 words) sharing the inspiration behind your chosen menu and what it means to you.
- Brief on your culinary story and what inspires your craft.



Step 2: Make Your Entry Stand Out

Your submitted images, recipe, and the story are key to the selection process. Ensure, your presentation reflects creativity, authenticity, and attention to detail.

Selection & Participation

- Individual participants will be accepted.
- The Top 8 competition submissions will be shortlisted to compete live in the final round at the International Centre for Culinary Arts, ICCA Dubai.

For further information or help, please reach out on competition@iccadubai.ae



The Competition - Process & Timelines

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

Preliminary Online Selection

Participants must submit their entry in the required format, including high-quality images of the inspiration menu, recipe cards, and short stories as detailed above. Submissions will be reviewed by a panel of experienced chefs, with selections made based on originality, authenticity, and inspired menu presentation.

Deadline for Registration & Submission

Thursday, December 4, 2025

Announcement of Selected Finalists

Saturday, December 6, 2025 The selected finalists will be formally notified via email.

Briefing for competitors at ICCA Dubai - facility familiarisation and Foodverse orientation

Wednesday, December 10, 2025
02.30 PM to 03.30 PM.

Competition Finals

Finalists will compete live at the International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA Dubai) on Saturday, December 13, 2025, 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM

The **Top 8 selected finalists** will present a complete traditional or modern menu (appetizer, main course, and dessert dish) before an esteemed jury featuring renowned award winning chefs and experts.

The Competition Venue – ICCA Dubai The Hub

Facility Video - [Video Link](#)

Location Map - <https://maps.app.goo.gl/STFRHYT5HAszkrYA8>

The Winning Prizes

1st Place **AED 40,000**, 2nd Place **AED 20,000**. The two winners will also earn a spot to showcase their culinary creations at Sikka Art & Design Festival 2026.



The Competition - Guidelines

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

To ensure a fair experience for all participants, please carefully read and adhere to the following rules and guidelines:

Meal Structure: Participants must create a three-course Emirati-inspired menu consisting of an appetizer, main course, and a sweet dish. The dishes should balance tradition and innovation, showcasing creativity in flavor, texture, and presentation.

Portion and Portion Size: The competitors will be required to prepare and present two sets of the menu (good enough for two judges to taste); one for the judging panel and the other for food photography.

Theme Adherence: The dishes should showcase Emirati cuisine, incorporating elements such as slow-cooked meats, fragrant rice, aromatic spices, dried limes, saffron, or date-based ingredients. Creativity is encouraged while preserving Emirati flavors and techniques.

Taste: The dishes should have a well-balanced flavor profile, incorporating key Emirati elements such as sweetness, sourness, saltiness, bitterness, and umami. All entries must be original creations and homemade, with no store-bought components.

Texture: The dishes should showcase Emirati cooking methods, such as slow cooking, steaming, or roasting and textural contrast, including crispy, soft, creamy, crunchy, is encouraged.

Presentation: The competitors must ensure that the menu presentation reflects Emirati elements with props if necessary.

Timing: Participants will have 180 minutes to complete and present their dishes for judging.

Every participant will start cooking five minutes after the person before them.

Pantry Table: The common pantry table will have the commonly used ingredients, such as:

Dry Essentials

- Salt
- Sugar
- Honey
- Date syrup
- Dates
- Raisins
- Oil (Sunflower and Olive)

Spices & Seasonings

- Black pepper
- White pepper
- Chilli powder
- Saffron
- Turmeric
- Cardamom
- Cinnamon
- Cloves
- Black lime (Loomi)

- Cumin
- Coriander seeds
- Bay leaves

Aromatics & Flavor Boosters

- Rose water
- Harissa paste
- Tomato paste
- Tamarind

Seeds & Nuts

- Sesame seeds (black and white)
- Cashews

Fruits & Vegetables

- Tomatoes
- Onions
- Potatoes
- Garlic
- Ginger

Grains & Rice

- Basmati rice

Flours & Baking Essentials

- Wheat flour
- All-purpose flour

Proteins (Other than Chicken, Meat and Fish)

- Eggs
- Red Lentils

Herbs

- Fresh coriander (Cilantro)

Dairy & Fats

- Ghee (Clarified Butter)
- Butter

Proteins - Chicken, Meat & Seafood

- Bring your own protein – Chicken, Meat or Seafood (Menu can also be 100% Vegetarian)

- Star anise
- Fenugreek
- Ginger powder

- Stock cubes (Meat, Chicken, Vegetable)
- Qahwa (Bring your own)

- Almonds
- Walnuts
- Pistachios

- Eggplant
- Zucchini
- Okra
- Carrots
- Pumpkin

- Short-grain rice

- Semolina
- Dried yeast

- Chickpeas
- Fava beans

- Mint
- Dill

- Yogurt
- Cream

- Sumac

- Bezaar (Bring your own)

- Pine nuts

- Bell peppers
- Lemon
- Green chillies
- Pomegranate

- Vermicelli

- Parsley
- Curry leaves

- Milk (Fresh and Powdered)

The Competition - Judging Criteria

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

1. Taste, Texture, and Flavor Balance (50 Marks)

- Are the flavors of all components well-balanced and complementary?
- Are the ingredients prepared to their ideal texture?
- Do all elements contribute to a harmonious eating experience without overpowering each other?
- Is there a depth of flavor that showcases skilful seasoning and technique?

2. Presentation and Plating (20 Marks)

- Are the dishes visually appealing and appetizing?
- Are the colors of the ingredients vibrant and well-balanced?
- Does the presentation reflect skill, attention to detail and cultural authenticity?

3. Originality and Creativity (20 Marks)

- Do the dishes introduce unique Emirati-inspired elements?
- Are traditional ingredients used innovatively without losing cultural essence?
- Is there a creative element in cooking or presentation that makes the dishes stand out?
- Do the dishes surprise or delight while staying true to Emirati cuisine?

4. Adherence to Time, Hygiene, and Wastage (10 Marks)

- Were the dishes completed within the 180-minutes time frame?
- Were proper hygiene and food safety standards maintained?
- Were ingredients used efficiently with minimal wastage?

The Competition - Important Dates

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

1. **Last date of Registration and Submission:** Thursday, December 4, 2025
2. **Announcement of Finalists:** Saturday, December 6, 2025
3. **Competition Briefing and Foodverse orientation:**

Wednesday, December 10, 2025
02.30 PM to 03.30 PM

At:

International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA Dubai),
Block 9, Dubai Knowledge Park, Dubai.

Location:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/nGK2tSeT3PnbJ8og7>

4. **The Finals:**

Saturday, December 13, 2025,
09.00 AM to 02.00 PM

At:

International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA Dubai),
Block 9, Dubai Knowledge Park, Dubai.

Location:

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/nGK2tSeT3PnbJ8og7>

The Competition - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

1. Who can apply to this competition?

We encourage anyone who has a passion for cooking to apply. This competition is open to Dubai-based amateur chefs and home cooks who enjoy experimenting in the kitchen. It is not intended for professional or experienced chefs working full-time in restaurants or hotels.

2. Do I need to be Emirati?

No, this is open for all nationalities, as long as you are based in Dubai.

3. Is this competition only for Emirati cuisine?

Yes, the idea of this competition is to cook Emirati dishes and use Emirati ingredients. However, we highly encourage innovation and creativity, so the dishes can be presented in a Modern or fusion Emirati style.

4. Are there any fees or costs for participation?

No, submission and participation is completely free of charge.

5. What are the steps of the competition?

- Receiving all online applications until the 10th of November
- Selection and notification of top 8 finalists to compete at the final competition day
- Selection of top 2 winners on the competition day

6. How will the 8 finalists be selected out of the online applications?

Participants must submit their entry in the required format, including high-quality images of the inspiration menu, recipe cards, and a short brief about the menu and about themselves. Submissions will be reviewed by a panel from Dubai Economy and Tourism and ICCA, with selections made based on originality, creativity, inspired menu presentation, and attention to detail.

7. When will you announce the 8 finalists?

The 8 finalists will be formally notified via email on the 14th of November 2025. This date is subject to change depending on the number of applications we receive.

8. What is the format of the final competition day?

The 8 finalists will need to cook and create their submitted menu to a judging panel of award winning chefs and culinary experts. They will have 180 minutes to create and present their menu.

9. What is the judging criteria for the top 2 winners to be selected?

Read section Competition – Judging Criteria.

10. What will the top 2 winners get?

There will be 2 final winners who will receive cash prizes and the opportunity to participate in Sikka Art & Design Festival

11. Do I need to prepare anything for the competition?

All the base ingredients as listed for the Common Pantry Table will be provided for you on the day of the competition.

Protiens - Chicken, Meat & Seafood

Bring your own protein – Chicken, Meat or Seafood
(Menu can also be 100% Vegetarian)

All cooking equipment will also be provided by ICCA.

12. Who will be on the judging panel on the competition day?

This is still subject to final confirmation.

13. I have more questions. Who can I contact?

Please reach out to us on competition@iccadubai.ae with any further questions.

About

From Heritage to Plate: The Emirati Cuisine Competition 2025

Showcase your Skills in the Emirati Cuisine with Prizes for the Top Participants

Organized by Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) collaboration with the International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA Dubai), in partnership with Dubai Culture & Arts Authority and Sikka Art & Design Festival 2026 and powered by the Foodverse, this competition provides professional chefs with a platform to showcase their mastery of Emirati flavours, indigenous ingredients, and cultural narratives.

Dubai Department of Economy & Tourism

www.dubaidet.gov.ae/en

With the ultimate vision of making Dubai the world's leading commercial centre, investment hub and tourism destination, the Dubai Department of Economy and Tourism (DET) is mandated to support the Government in positioning the Emirate as a major hub for the global economy and tourism, and in boosting the city's economic and tourism competitiveness indicators. Under this remit, DET is driving efforts to further enhance Dubai's diversified, innovative service-based economy to attract top global talent, deliver a world-class business environment and accelerate productivity growth.

Additionally, DET is supporting Dubai's vision to become the world's best city to live and work in by promoting its diverse destination proposition, unique lifestyle and outstanding quality of life, overall.

DET is the principal authority for the planning, supervision, development, and marketing of Dubai's business and tourism sectors. It is also responsible for the licensing and classification of all types of businesses, including hotels, tour operators, and travel agents.

The International Centre for Culinary Arts, ICCA Dubai

www.iccadubai.ae

Recognized as a leading Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) school in Culinary Arts, the International Centre for Culinary Arts (ICCA), in Dubai, and Abu Dhabi deliver award-winning learning to aspiring chefs, artisans, and entrepreneurs of food, from the world over.

Established in 2005, ICCA, home-grown in the UAE, has been featured amongst the "Top 10 Culinary Institutes in the World" and awarded the "Recognition of Quality Culinary Education" by the World Association of Chefs Societies (Worldchefs), a global authority on food standards.



Foodverse The Face of Food

Foodverse is the world's first holistic digital ecosystem dedicated to harnessing the potential of people and the industry in food.

A super app that connects, enables, and empowers chefs, enthusiasts, and industry professionals to seamlessly connect, collaborate, share knowledge, foster learning and find opportunities.

[ICCA Foodverse Continuous Development Program](#)

Dubai Culture & Arts Authority

www.dubaiculture.gov.ae

Dubai Culture & Arts Authority was launched on 8 March 2008 by His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai. The Authority enables and develops the cultural and creative sectors in the emirate as the custodian entity, based on its cultural responsibility towards Dubai and to help define it in both a local and global context.

Under the leadership of Her Highness Sheikha Latifa bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Chairperson of Dubai Culture, the Authority is committed to enriching the cultural scene of the emirate, firmly rooted in the heritage of the United Arab Emirates. It is working on building bridges of constructive dialogue between various civilizations and cultures to enhance Dubai's position as a global centre for art and culture, an incubator for creativity, and a thriving hub for talent.

Sikka Art and Design Festival

The Sikka Art and Design Festival is a flagship event of Dubai Art Season, a comprehensive annual artistic celebration held annually in Al Fahidi Historical Neighborhood to celebrate the emirate's growing creative and cultural landscape.