

Iowa's Best Burger Contest Official Rules - 2026

The Iowa Beef Industry Council (IBIC) and the Iowa Cattlemen's Association (ICA) are proud to announce the 17th Annual Iowa's Best Burger Contest. **Nominations will be taken from Monday, February 9 to Monday, March 9, 2026.**

Anyone may nominate a hamburger from an Iowa restaurant. To be eligible for the contest the hamburger must meet the following guidelines:



1. To qualify as a hamburger, the burger must be **100% beef** although other ingredients may be added to the patty (such as spices, vegetables, etc.)
2. All burgers must be composed of a formed ground beef patty/patties served on a bun or other bread product (such as biscuits, focaccia or tortillas). Burgers may include any combination of condiments (such as ketchup, mayonnaise and mustard), sauces (such as barbecue or hot sauce), cheeses and toppings (such as bacon, onions, tomatoes and lettuce). Every component of the burger must be placed between the bun or bread pieces, or served open-faced on a bread product.

Official Rules

1. Entries will be accepted online between February 9, 2026 and March 9, 2026. **Voting will end at 5 p.m. on Monday, March 9, 2026.**
 - a. **To enter online:** Visit www.iabeef.org. Click on "Best Burger Contest". Follow the on-screen directions to submit your nomination.
2. Burgers must be available on the nominated restaurant's regular menu.
3. Restaurant must be open for business by the beginning of the nomination period – February 9, 2026 and must be open year-round.
4. A restaurant may only win Iowa's Best Burger Contest one time.
5. The Sponsors (IBIC and ICA) retain the discretion to make all decisions regarding the interpretation of these Official Rules. All decisions of the Sponsors are final and discretionary.

To follow Iowa's Best Burger Contest, LIKE the [Iowa Beef Council](#) on Facebook or follow us on Instagram at @iowabeefcouncil. You are encouraged to post a photo of your favorite burger on social media using #IABestBurger.

Selection of Finalists

Ten (10) burgers will be selected as finalists from throughout the state based on the number of nominations each restaurant receives. The Sponsors (IBIC and ICA) retain the discretion to make all decisions regarding the selection of these ten finalists. All decisions of the Sponsors are final and discretionary.

- *All burgers nominated from a single restaurant will be included in that restaurant's final nomination total.*
- *Restaurants who receive nominations for multiple locations will be counted per individual location not as a total.*

Judging Criteria

Selection of the 2026 Iowa's Best Burger will be conducted by an **anonymous** judging panel. **Judges will not announce their presence at your restaurant or request a free meal.** Decision of the judges is final.

The following guidelines will be used in judging:

- Taste (of burger patty) – 50%
- Appearance and Presentation – 30%
- Proper cooking temperature / degree of doneness – 10%
 - Medium doneness, internal temperature reaches 160° F.
- Overall – 10%