

2026 California's Kitchen Taster's Row



Sampling booths from 2022-2024 shown above. 2025 booth layout will vary

The goal of this program is to **educate** over a half-million annual fair guests about the delicious bounty of our state and all of the farms, kitchens, factories, hearts and hands that bring food to our tables. Taster's Row is designed exclusively for growers, producers and processors of California agriculture and food products. Cottage Food Industry producers are welcome! All booths include an educational aspect and free food sampling for fair guests. Make a direct connection with your consumers in the California's Kitchen Exhibit.

APPLICATION: Booths are booked by the day, on a first-come-first-served basis.

DATES: July 17 - August 2, 2026

HOURS: Mon-Thu: 4 pm - 8 pm, and Fri-Sun: 10 am - 8 pm

LOCATION: California's Kitchen, Building B, Cal Expo, 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815

CONTENT REQUIREMENTS:

The provision of free samples to fair guests, and an educational dialogue and/or educational materials or signage are a requirement of this program. All products sampled or offered for sale on-location must be grown, processed or produced in California. All participating entities must be California-based.

DESCRIPTION: Booths are pre-decorated, and include (2) large stainless steel counters and (2) chairs. Bring freestanding or tabletop items for brand display. Cold storage and dry storage space are available for additional product and carrying containers. A backstage food prep area is available for your use.

BOOTH FEES: Receipt of payment confirms your reservation. Fees are per day.

\$50 Daily Reservation Fee (*non-refundable*)

\$50 Daily Product Sales Fee, all Monday - Thursdays (*optional*)

\$150 Daily Product Sales Fee, all Fridays - Sundays (*optional*)

COORDINATOR: Michelle Johnson at 916.263.3189 or email at mejohanson@calexpo.com

Please see the attached Demonstrator Rules & Regulations for full logistics information.

Demonstrator Rules and Regulations

If you are hosting an educational Taster's Row booth, appearing on a kitchen stage or teaching a tasting class in the California's Kitchen Program at the California State Fair, you are considered a "Demonstrator," which is different from a "Commercial Vendor," and agree to adhere to these regulations. These regulations will be enforced by the Program Coordinator and State Fair Management.

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Contact Information

Program Coordinator, Michelle Johnson

mejohanson@calexpo.com

(916) 263-3189 office

(916) 263-3163 fax

CA Kitchen Exhibit Office

(916) 263-2940 fair time only

Cal Expo Front Desk

(916) 263-3000

Cal Expo Street & Mailing Address

1600 Exposition Blvd
Sacramento, CA 95815

Admission & Parking Credentials

Individuals will be issued one admission credential each, per booth day. Only those directly involved with staffing the booth, or assisting with move in/out will be issued credentials, and only after the receipt of any applicable fees and all the following documents: Megan's Law Form, Letter of Understanding, Insurance Certificate and Credentials Request.

Admission Credentials: allow one bearer one entry through any entry gate at the California State Fair. Each individual will need one for each day. (Re-entry requires handstamp)

Parking Credentials: allow one vehicle one entry into the Cal Expo Parking Lot designated on the ticket. (No re-entry)

Delivery Permit: allows vehicle access to demonstration buildings each morning until 30 min before the fair opens to the public.

IMPORTANT: Any attempt to sell, exchange, barter or give away to fairgoers any credentials issued by the State Fair is strictly prohibited.

Advertising

In order to maintain consistency and "fairness at the Fair," Demonstrators are not allowed to advertise or promote their demonstration anywhere at the Fair other than in their designated booth. The Cal Expo and California State Fair logo(s) and other trademark artwork used by the Fair cannot be used on any marketing materials (ads, promotions, etc.) without written consent from the California State Fair. Contact the Program Coordinator for approval.

Americans with Disabilities Act - ADA

Make sure that your booth area remains wheelchair accessible and that you provide any assistance necessary to those who need it. You must comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") of 1990, (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability, as well as all applicable regulations and guidelines issued pursuant to the ADA. For more information, please visit the Americans with Disabilities Act website at www.ada.gov.

Assistance from Cal Expo Staff

A member of our Culinary Intern team will greet you at move-in time, guide you through check-in, assist with last-minute details, and make rounds throughout the day to help ensure health code compliance, see if you need anything, or have any questions. Their job is to take good care of you while you are here.

Booking & Reservations

Booths are booked first-come-first-served, beginning on February 1 each year. Requested dates are held no longer than 1 week without payment of fees in full. An invoice will be sent by email. After 1 week without payment, reserved dates are released to any waiting lists, then to any new bookings.

Damages

You agree to promptly reimburse and pay the California State Fair for any damages to Fair property or equipment that you, your employees or your agents cause during the term of your Agreement.

Design, Content & Presentation

Demonstration areas reflect your organization and the California State Fair. Please present a polished presentation. Under no circumstances may you paint, alter, improve, affix materials, remodel or renovate the area without the approval of CA State Fair. Do not obscure, alter or damage existing displays or materials.

Content Requirements:

1. Provision of free samples to fair guests
2. Educational dialogue, materials or signage
3. All products sampled or offered for sale on-location must be grown, processed or produced in California. All participating entities must be California-based. Out-of-state products are not allowed, even if they are from the same producer/organization.

Fair Guest Interaction

You are highly encouraged to be interactive & educate fair guests. Avoid cell phone/computer use while in your booth. Be family-friendly, polite & courteous always.

Dress/Apparel

You are encouraged to wear professional apparel which promotes your organization. Health code requires those working in these booths to wear closed-toes shoes, and to tie back long hair or wear a hat.

Signage

Tabletop and freestanding floor signage are allowed. Please use only new/clean banners on fronts of tables. Pins may be used to affix materials to wood booth walls. Do not use double-sided tape, Velcro or duct tape; it damages paint and furniture.

Sound Devices

No amplified sound is allowed in any booth.

Mascots

Mascots are allowed with prior approval and may roam the CA Kitchen Exhibit only. Mascots may rest backstage.

Other Decorations

- Balloons/Helium: must be securely attached to a weight, and must not be given out to fairgoers.
- Convention backdrops: not permitted
- Floor display items: must be contained within the booth space, do not block displays or violate ADA aisle regulations. Cal Expo staff will approve final set up.
- Banners: may be attached to counter fronts or walls using pins or gaffer's tape (no duct tape)
- Tablecloths: permitted as long as food and food service items only rest on washable surfaces such as a tray.

Supplies

Extra supplies (boxes, cleaning supplies, etc.) must be under counters and out of sight. Additional cold and dry storage is available.

Electrical Power

A standard, grounded power outlet (110 volts AC), will be available. The State Fair does not provide power strips or extension cords. Bring these items with you. 2-prong plug extension cords and multiplug adapters are not permitted, by order of the Fire Marshall.

Fees

Receipt of payment confirms your reservation. Sales Fees are optional and additional. Fees are per day.
\$50 Daily Reservation Fee (non-refundable)
\$50 Daily Sales Fee, Mon - Thurs (optional)
\$150 Daily Sales Fee, Fri - Sun (optional)

Fire Marshal Regulations

Open flames (torches, Sterno cans, candles, etc.) are not permitted in any Cal Expo Building. The State Fire Marshal has jurisdiction at Cal Expo. For a complete listing of applicable regulations visit www.fire.ca.gov.

- Do not block fire lanes or firefighting equipment such as fire extinguisher stations, fire alarm pull stations, fire hose cabinets and fire hydrants at any time, including during delivery.
- Do not block access to exits or exit signs.
- A 10-foot clearance must be maintained at all times in building aisles.

Food/Beverage (personal)

- No food may be consumed by Demonstrators in the booth area. Personal food may be kept "backstage," in sealed containers, and eaten outside of the booth area.
- Gate attendants are required to confiscate all glass bottles, aluminum cans, & alcohol. Please have your demonstration paperwork handy if you need to bring these kinds of items into the fairgrounds for the purposes of your booth. Use Gate 12 or Z Lot Gate.
- Water bottles are allowed everywhere.
- **No alcohol may be consumed at any time in the demonstration booths or backstage areas.** Intoxicated individuals are not allowed to work or volunteer in any booth.

Food Safety

The CA Kitchen exhibit is classified as a Temporary Food Facility (TFF), and is regularly inspected by the Health Department throughout the Fair.

Demonstrators are responsible for knowing and abiding by food safety standards.

The fairgrounds is a unique environment with a mix of live ruminant animals, poultry, and a large number of people, creating a high-risk environment for the transmission of enteric pathogens such as e-coli, bacteria such as salmonella, and all manner of communicable diseases spread by humans such as norovirus. People with compromised immune systems and children can fall very ill and do die from such things.

Minimum Requirements for Sampling:

- Samples must be monitored at all times.
- Fair guests may not grab any food or utensils from a collective container.
- Food on toothpicks may be placed spread out on platters. If a guest touches any food that they do not eat, it must be disposed of immediately.
- Fair guests may dip items into sauces/oil themselves, as long as there is no double dipping. If such contamination occurs, the dish

must be immediately washed and fresh product replaced.

- A hand washing station must be available and utilized by the person staffing the booth which includes a water dispensing container containing warm water, a basin to catch dirty water, hand soap, and paper towels. Gloves are encouraged but not required if hands are properly washed.
- Closed-toe shoes are required.
- Long hair must be tied back or under a hat.
- Hand samples only to adults. Adults can hand samples to their kids. (Allergies!)

The main idea is that no one touches anything that will go into anyone's mouth other than their own.

Cal Expo employees are under obligation to make sure that these standards are met by all of our guest Demonstrators, or we face being shut down for the day, or for good.

Gratuities (tips/donations)

You are not allowed to solicit gratuities, tips, or donations from fairgoers. If any California State Fair employees or officers explicitly request any free gifts or services such as money, food, or merchandise, report it to the Program Coordinator immediately.

Hours of Operation

California's Kitchen, Building B

Monday - Thursday: 4 PM - 10 PM

Friday - Sunday: 10 AM - 10 PM

If you are alone in your booth and need to take a break, please flag down a CA Kitchen Team Member to stand in your absence. Booth minder may not conduct sales. Your booth must remain occupied for your entire, pre-arranged schedule.

Taster's Row Booths are only required to stay open until 8pm. You may stay open after 8pm as long as you can be out before 10pm.

Insurance

Liability Insurance is required for the term of your demonstration.

If you do not have a liability insurance policy please contact the demonstration coordinator. We may be able to help.

Prior to your use of the premises, you must furnish the California State Fair with an original insurance certificate that shows general liability insurance with minimum coverage of \$1,000,000, combined single limit for the full term of the Agreement. The

insurance certificate must also provide the following special endorsements exactly as specified. No variation or alteration of the endorsements will be acceptable.

“The State of California, California Exposition & State Fair, its agents, officers, directors, and employees, are included as additional insured insofar as the operations under this contract are concerned.”

Event Address: Cal Expo Fairgrounds, 1600 Exposition Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95815

The California Exposition & State Fair is not responsible for loss or damage to your property. The parties agree that the Agreement does not convey, demise or let any interest of the California State Fair in any real property, and occupancy of premises by Exhibitor/Concessionaire, the acceptance of rent or commission by the California Exposition & State Fair during the term of, or under any holdover under, this Agreement shall not confer on Exhibitor/Concessionaire any title, interest, or right in real property against the California Exposition & State Fair as to “premises.”

Load In & Load Out

To ensure everything runs smoothly, please adhere to the following guidelines:

- Make on-grounds deliveries through Gate 12 at Ethan Way & Hurley Way only. A delivery pass is required.
- Admission Credentials are required to enter the fairgrounds.
- Get a handstamp when exiting to park vehicles.
- All vehicles must be OFF the fairgrounds by the end of the On-Grounds Delivery Times listed below.
- Any golf cart assistance needed must be arranged in advance.
- Satisfy all requirements in advance. You will not be issued any credentials, be able to set-up or open to the public until all requirements (fees, insurance, and other paperwork set forth in the Agreement) are on file with the State Fair office. An agreement may be terminated if any one of these requirements is not properly fulfilled prior to load-in and set-up.

On Grounds Delivery Times

Monday - Thursday 2:30 pm - 3:30 pm

Friday - Sunday 8:30 am - 9:30 am

Vehicles remaining on the fairgrounds after these hours will be towed. For special requests, contact the program coordinator.

Megan’s Law Forms

This form is required of all people who interact with the public at the Fair. Include all people who will be in the booth.

Raffles/Drawings

You may hold a raffle in your demonstration area, but you must meet the requirements of the State of California for Non-Profit Raffles:

(<https://oag.ca.gov/charities/raffles>)

Sales

IMPORTANT: All CA Kitchen programming is based primarily on education & enrichment, promoting CA Ag, food, and FUN (always). Sales are not the primary focus. However, some sales may be approved if they enhance the demonstration by providing the means for fair guests to take home tools/supplies/products to practice what they’ve learned.

Requirements to sell:

1. Sellers License (if applicable, must be posted in the Booth)
2. The ability to issue receipts (handwritten, emailed or printed)
3. You are required to fill out a Record of Sales at the end of each day. No commission is charged. Failure to submit this document will result in suspension of booth privileges until it is received.
4. Provide your own cash box or point of sales system such as a [Square Reader](#). Wi-Fi is available for this purpose, upon request.
5. For taxable goods, you must charge the City of Sacramento sales tax for all taxable sales (8.75% as of 2/4/26)

Allowable Food Sales: Demonstrators cannot sell alcohol, or full-serving-sized, hot/prepared, ready-to-eat food or beverages. Food products which are packaged, unprepared, and intended to be eaten at home may be allowed. Inquire about specific products. For example:

Allowed: jar of jam, bag of coffee beans

Not allowed: jam on a biscuit, brewed coffee

Sampling

Sampling is required in Taster's Row Booths. Samples are free, small, individual tastes (free samples should not compete with concession sales). Demonstrator must supply all paper sampling and/or prep supplies needed. You will be asked to fill out a sample tracking sheet to help with future sample number estimates.

Security & Overnight Security

It is highly recommended that you do not leave your products or possessions unattended in the booth at any time.

Overnight Security

At 10 pm the building will be locked and roving security is present. However, Demonstrators are only required to staff their booth until 8 pm. Between the hours of 8 pm and 10 pm Demonstrators may choose to:

- A. Staff their booth until the 10 pm closing time (foot traffic is very light in Bldg B from 8 pm - 10 pm due to concert schedule)
- B. Remove items from booth to storage areas for overnight storage.

Demonstrators may "drape" their booth at 9:50pm.

The building must look "open" until then.

Demonstrators may use dry and cold storage to store product overnight.

Losses & Damage

Please note that the California State Fair is not responsible for lost, damaged or stolen property. You may wish to obtain a temporary insurance policy to cover your displays for the period of the fair. Losses should be reported to the State Fair Police immediately upon detection.

**Cal Expo Police & Medical
(916) 263-3050.**

Stickers

Cal Expo has a strict "No Stickers" policy. You may not give away any stickers from your booth. The stickers end up all over the fairgrounds and are costly to remove.

Storage

The California's Kitchen building has limited storage. All excess boxes, cartons, and/or belongings must be out of public view. Demonstration storage areas may only be used during your scheduled demonstration days and overnight in between your scheduled days. Cold storage is available as long as the food is sealed and clearly labeled. Ask a CA Kitchen staff member for assistance.

Temperatures

It is HOT outside during the California State Fair (at times exceeding 100 degrees F). Bring water bottles and keep hydrated. Although hot outside, the California's Kitchen Building is air-conditioned and quite chilly, so please dress accordingly in layers. Building temperatures are kept at one setting for the entire Fair.

Violations

Violations of any of the above items will be addressed in a manner appropriate to the infraction.

Wireless Internet

Wi-Fi is available in the building for the following approved uses:

- Sales transactions
- Hardware devices for fair guest interactives

Ask for the login and password upon your arrival on the day of your demonstration. No hardware or software is available to loan. Wi-Fi is not intended for personal use.

Save Mart California's Kitchen Demonstrator Map



ON-GROUNDS DELIVERY WINDOWS

Monday–Thursday: 2:30am–3:30am

Friday–Sunday 8:30am–9:30am

A Delivery Permit is required for vehicles to enter the fairgrounds.

CONTACT

Michelle Johnson

Culinary Programs Coordinator

916.263.3189

916.263.2940 (kitchen backstage)

