

Restaurant & Food Truck FAQs

What is the application deadline for the current festival year?

The deadline for restaurants and food trucks to submit an application to be considered for participation is **February 2, 2024**.

How does the selection process work and when will I know if I have been accepted?

Each year, the Taste receives a considerable number of applications from restaurants and food trucks. There is a multi-step evaluation process that ensures that the festival provides a variety of menu offerings which are considered to be the best of WNY.

- Because we want to showcase only local businesses, we automatically eliminate restaurants and food trucks that are based or established outside of the WNY area.
- Restaurant Committee volunteers will schedule a meeting/interview with the restaurant/food truck contact person sometime in early-mid February. During this meeting, the restaurant committee volunteers will sample your food and help you assess your readiness and eligibility for participating in a large, multi-day event. The restaurant owner or representative will also have an opportunity to ask any questions pertaining to the event.
- After all of the prospective restaurant meetings have been held, the Restaurant Committee will meet to discuss their findings from each individual meeting. Restaurants and their menu offerings will be evaluated and ranked on quality of food, uniqueness of the menu items, how long the operation has been in business and perceived ability to meet the rigors (adequate staffing, prepping/cooking in a tent, etc.) of the 2-day event. Highest ranked restaurants that meet our objectives will be invited to participate in this year's event. (The number of new restaurants that will be admitted will be dependent upon the number of returning veteran restaurants.)
- Notifications of acceptance into the event will be sent no later than **March 15, 2024**.

What are the hours of event? Do we need to be there the entire time?

The hours of operation are 11:00am – 9:00pm on Saturday, and 11:00am – 7:00pm on Sunday. Your tent or food truck must be manned the entire duration of the festival and staff ready to serve prior to official opening of event.

- Vehicles and staff will be allowed to enter the festival footprint to begin set-ups at 5:30am on Saturday and all vehicles must be removed by 10am. Vehicles will not be allowed back on the footprint until the festival is ended on Sunday at 7:00pm and security has given the "OK" to do so.
- Food trucks must arrive 2 hours prior to the start of the taste and cannot leave the footprint until the event ends on Sunday evening.

How much does it cost to participate, and what do I get for this amount?

The entrance fee is \$700. This fee will cover the cost of a professionally assembled 15' x 15' frame tent (restaurants only), name/menu signage, and necessary permits (except propane). In addition, 18% of net sales (after NYS sales tax is remitted) will be retained by the Taste to help offset general festival operating expenses.

How big will my space be?

Each restaurant will have a 15'x15' tent from which they will prepare and distribute their foods. An additional 10' along one side the tent will be available for food preparation, cooking, storage, etc. Trailered cooking equipment must be pre-approved by the Restaurant Committee.

- If you need a second 15'x15' tent and space permits, it will be an additional \$700 fee.
- Food trucks will be allocated an additional 10' next to their truck. With approval from the Restaurant Committee, a food truck may place a pop up 10'x10' tent behind their truck, and a 6' table in front of their truck.

How much money should I expect to make?

The majority of experienced restaurants make money and promote their business. It's critical that you get portion size and pricing correct to ensure good sales margins. Your assigned Restaurant Committee representative, and other veteran restaurants can assist you with these items. Many restaurants not only recover their entrance fee cost but make significantly more in profit!

How many people should we expect to serve? How many portions of each menu item should I plan on preparing?

Each year, the festival sees an estimated 400,000 guests each year. It's approximately 200,000 – 250,000 per day. You could easily see a few thousand visitors at your tent or food truck per day!

- We have several experienced restaurants that have perfected the art of determining what items to serve, how many servings to prepare, what portion sizes should be offered and how they should be priced. Many of these veterans are happy to help, and we encourage them to share their experiences with you during your planning and preparation processes. We also have several experienced restaurant committee members that can also provide direction and advice.
- Veteran restaurants will be present at the mandatory annual meeting scheduled in mid-May and happy to answer any questions.

Who runs the Taste?

The Taste is run by an all-volunteer board of directors, and event management agency and supported by approximately 1,000 dedicated volunteers. This group works year-round to ensure its success because they are passionate about the WNY food scene and love to showcase the best of Buffalo and WNY!

Is the Taste a not-for-profit?

You can feel good about taking part in the Taste! Taste of Buffalo is a not-for-profit 501c6 corporation registered with the State of New York. Each year, scholarships are awarded to high school seniors pursuing a major in culinary arts or the hospitality field and donations are given to local charitable organizations that volunteer in the festival's ticket and beverage tents. If monies remain after expenses are paid, additional donations are made to local charitable organizations.