अतुल्य भारत
Incredible India

PHDCCI

INDIAN FEDERATION OF CULINARY ASSOCIATIONS

PHDCCI
NATIONAL YOUNG CHEF COMPETITION

Celebrating Indian Culinary Heritage
Blending Tradition with Innovation

GRAND FINALE

RULE BOOK

SKILL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER

THSC
TOURISM & HOSPITALITY SKILL COUNCIL

PHDCCI
NATIONAL YOUNG CHEF COMPETITION
Celebrating Indian Culinary Heritage
Blending Tradition with Innovation

GRAND FINALE (ROUND 3)

Date: 19th January 2026

Venue: Institute of Hotel Management (IHM), Pusa, New Delhi

Mandatory Briefing Session for Qualified Institutes

A mandatory briefing session will be conducted for all institutes qualified to participate in the Grand Finale (Round 3) of the National Young Chef Competition (NYCC). The briefing session is intended for **Principals**, **Faculty Members** and **Student Participants** from all qualified institutes.

Briefing Schedule (Virtual Mode)

Date: Wednesday, 7th January 2026

- 3:00 PM onwards: Principals & Faculty Members
- 3:30 PM onwards: Student Participants

The meeting link will be shared in advance on the registered email IDs.

Scope of the Briefing Session

The briefing session will cover important aspects of the Grand Finale, including but not limited to:

- Competition format, workflow and timelines
- Rules, regulations and evaluation criteria
- Kitchen setup, equipment availability and ingredient guidelines
- Code of conduct, hygiene and safety norms
- Important updates, clarifications and instructions related to the Grand Finale

Important Notes:

- Attendance is mandatory for all concerned representatives
- All instructions and clarifications shared during the briefing will be final and binding
- Institutes are requested to ensure timely participation to avoid any last-minute confusion during the competition

COMPETITION REQUIREMENTS

Category: Bhojan (भोजन)

All participating teams must submit their detailed recipes (mandatory) and photographs (if available) of each dish on or before 12th January 2026.

1. Each team must prepare and present a **traditional Indian meal** consisting of the following:
   - **1 Bhaja Preparation** (Refer to Annexure A at the end for details)
   - **1 Main Dish** (Vegetarian or Non-Vegetarian)
   - **1 Vegetable Preparation** (Accompaniment)
   - **1 Beans / Pulses / Lentil Preparation** (Accompaniment)
   - **1 Curd Preparation**
   - **1 Rice or Bread Preparation** (No tandoor facility will be provided)
   - **1 Sweet Dish**

2. Each team is required to prepare **two portions** of each dish.
3. Total cooking time allotted will be **2 hours and 30 minutes**.
4. Teams will commence cooking at **staggered intervals of 10 minutes**.
5. **30 minutes** will be provided prior to cooking for setup and assembly.
6. Each team will be provided with **one cooking table** equipped with a **4-burner range**.
7. For presentation, each team will be given **a display table** with table cloth.
8. Accompaniments and condiments may be used at the team's discretion.
9. A **printed recipe card** must be displayed next to each prepared dish.
10. The following equipment will be shared among all teams: Combi Oven, Refrigerator, Deep Freezer, Grinder
11. Basic utensils such as pots, pans, spatulas and ladles will be provided by the organizers.
12. Standard plain white plates will be provided by the organizers: half plates for Starters and Desserts and full plates for Main Course dishes.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Mise En Place, Hygiene and Waste Management Preparation, organization, hygiene standards, food safety and waste control	**10 Points**
Composition & Innovation Aesthetic appeal, creativity and styling that enhances the dish's attractiveness	**15 Points**
Correct Professional Preparation Appropriate culinary techniques, balance of ingredients, technical accuracy. Dishes conceived as hot may be presented moderate for judging.	**10 Points**
Presentation & Service Visual appeal, plating, portion control, consistency, service timing, temperature, professionalism	**15 Points**
Taste Balance of flavours, seasoning, texture, mouthfeel, overall palatability	**50 Points**
Total	**100 Points**

JUDGING PARAMETERS

1. A **strict time limit of 2 hours 30 minutes** will be enforced; no additional time will be permitted
2. **Innovation**, **presentation** and **creativity** must be reflected consistently across all dishes
3. Presentation Guidelines
   a) Food must appear freshly cooked and appetizing
   b) Dishes must be visually appealing, neatly plated and well presented
4. Innovation Guidelines
   a) Innovation must be rooted in Indian culinary heritage and traditions
   b) Western cuisine will not be regarded as innovative for the purpose of this competition
5. Creativity Guidelines
   a) Dishes should engage all five senses: Appearance, Aroma, Taste, Texture, Sound (where applicable)

PRIZES & RECOGNITION

- **Grand Champion**: Entry to International Chef Competition+ Trophy + Certificate + Job Opportunity
- **1st Runner-Up**: Cash Prize + Trophy + Certificate
- **2nd Runner-Up**: Cash Prize + Certificate

RULES AND REGULATIONS

1. Institute names or logos must not be visible on chef coats, display materials or presentation ware during the competition.
2. The organizers are not responsible for damage, loss or theft of any participant's exhibits or equipment.
3. All participants must wear a full, clean chef uniform during the competition.
4. **Registration opens at 08:00 AM on the day of the competition. Participants must report to their assigned area by 08:00 AM.**
5. Uncollected exhibits may be disposed of at the discretion of the organizers.
6. Organizers reserve the right to change, modify or withdraw rules as necessary. All interpretations by the organizing committee are final.
7. The number of participating entries may be limited or altered based on organizational needs.
8. Results will be declared after all teams have been judged.
9. No intervention or interference by any member or chef is allowed during judging. Judges' decisions are final and cannot be appealed.
10. Any violation of these rules may lead to disqualification.
11. Participants must cooperate with organizers and officials at all times.
12. Judging of prepared dishes will be done with an assessment of the recipe. Make sure to place it by the side of the display.
13. Recipe descriptions must be clear and concise.
14. No points will be awarded for the writing or display of menus, descriptions or recipes alone.
15. A clearly written method of preparation must accompany each dish. Failure to provide this may result in disqualification.
16. All intellectual property (recipes, photos, videos, recordings, etc.) used in the competition remains with PHDCCI. Reproduction is allowed only with written consent.
17. Only participants and official photographers appointed by PHDCCI are allowed to take photographs during the competition.
18. All **raw and unprocessed ingredients** must be brought by the teams and will be inspected prior to the competition, to ensure no preparatory work has been done.
19. Teams must provide their own base and display materials. Teams must also ensure their creation can be moved to the judging area, when their time limit is up.
20. For any confusion or clarification, participants are encouraged to contact the organizing committee directly.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q1. What ingredients will be provided by the organizers?
Ans. Basic ingredients will be provided by the organizers. A detailed list of the ingredients to be supplied will be shared with all participating institutes prior to the competition.

Q2. What type of plates will be provided by the organizers for plating?
Ans. Standard plain white plates suitable for professional food presentation will be provided by the organizers.

Q3. Are participants allowed to bring their own plates for plating?
Ans. Yes, participants may bring their own plates if required for their presentation.

Q4. What utensils and equipment will be provided to the participants?
Ans. A standard set of kitchen utensils and basic equipment will be provided. The detailed list of utensils and equipment will be communicated in advance.

Q5. Are participants allowed to bring pre-prepared ingredients (such as peeled garlic, peeled potatoes, or pre-kneaded dough)?
Ans. No. Participants are not permitted to bring any pre-prepared, semi-cooked or processed ingredients. All ingredients must be prepared fresh at the competition venue during the allotted time.

Q6. Will accommodation be provided for the participants?
Ans. Yes. Accommodation at the IHM Pusa Hostel will be provided only for participating students.

Q7. Will travel expenses be reimbursed by the organizers?
Ans. No. Participants are required to make their own travel arrangements to reach the competition venue at IHM Pusa, New Delhi.

Q8. What is the theme of the competition?
Ans. The theme of the competition is innovation rooted in Indian heritage and traditions. Only Indian regional cuisine is permitted for all dishes.

Q9. Is it acceptable to submit brief or non-detailed recipes?
Ans. No. All recipes must be detailed and comprehensive, as they will be published in the event souvenir. Dish names must be appropriate and aligned with Indian culinary traditions. Western dish names are not permitted.

CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Participants must read, understand and comply with all competition rules.
2. Teams are expected to take responsibility for their behavior and performance at all stages of the competition.
3. Judges' decisions are final and binding. Participants must respect and accept them gracefully.
4. Disrespectful behavior, refusal to accept results or awards, or walking out will lead to disqualification and blacklisting from future PHDCCI events.
5. Judges appointed by PHDCCI are certified professionals and will maintain impartiality.
6. All participants must treat fellow contestants, judges and committee members with courtesy and respect.
7. Teams must participate in all official activities including photo shoots, attendance, introductions and award ceremonies.
8. Participants must conduct themselves with professionalism and dignity, positively representing their institutions.
9. All communication must be respectful. Offensive or hurtful remarks are strictly prohibited.
10. Teams must uphold the spirit of fair play and follow all competition protocols.
11. Cheating, shortcuts, or rule violations will lead to disqualification.
12. Bullying or sabotage of other teams or participants is strictly forbidden.
13. Any attempt to damage or tamper with others' equipment or ingredients will result in disqualification.
14. Participants must not post abusive or derogatory comments on social media regarding the competition or its stakeholders.
15. Participants may file formal grievances via email to sanchit.prabhakar@phdcci.in. The Steering Committee will review and address genuine concerns appropriately.

ANNEXURE A

Bhaja in the Indian meal component refers to a dry, shallow-fried or pan-roasted preparation, where ingredients are cooked with minimal moisture until lightly crisp on the outside and well-seasoned within.

EAST & NORTH EAST INDIA

Bengal
- *Aloo Bhaja – Thin-sliced potatoes fried till crisp edges*
- *Begun Bhaja – Eggplant slices, lightly spiced and shallow-fried*
- *Kumro Bhaja – Pumpkin fried till soft inside, crisp outside*
- *Machh Bhaja – Fish steaks rubbed with salt & turmeric, shallow-fried*
- *Potoler Khosa Bhaja – Pointed gourd peels fried crisp (frugal household classic)*

Assam
- *Aloo Bhaja – Mildly fried potatoes, often with mustard oil*
- *Kola Posola Bhaja – Banana stem fry*
- *Lai Xaak Bhaja – Mustard greens lightly sautéed*
- *Bor Bhaja – Fried lentil dumplings served as a side*

Nagaland / Manipur
- *Yongchak Fry (Dry) – Tree beans pan-fried*
- *Kanghou-style Dry Sauté – Vegetables sautéed without liquid*
- *Smoked Pork Fat Fry with Greens – Crisp, dry, fat-driven side*

Odisha
- *Alu Bhaja – Plain potato fry*
- *Baigana Bhaja – Eggplant fry, often with mustard oil*
- *Kakharu Phula Bhaja – Pumpkin flowers fried crisp*

NORTHERN & CENTRAL INDIA

Uttar Pradesh / Bihar
- *Aloo Chhilka Fry – Potato skin-on fry*
- *Karela Fry – Bitter gourd fried till crisp*
- *Parwal Fry – Pointed gourd shallow-fried*

Rajasthan
- *Kachri Fry – Wild cucumber slices fried*
- *Sangri Fry – Desert beans dry-fried with minimal spice*

WESTERN INDIA

Gujarat
- *Ringna Ravaiya (Dry) – Stuffed eggplant shallow-fried*
- *Bhinda Fry – Okra stir-fried till crisp*

(Though sweet-spiced, texture aligns with bhaja)

Maharashtra
- *Batata Kachrya – Thin potato slices fried crisp*
- *Karlyachi Bhaji (Dry) – Bitter gourd fry*

SOUTHERN INDIA

Tamil Nadu
- *Vazhakkai Varuval – Raw banana fry*
- *Vendakkai Varuval – Okra fry till crisp*
- *Kathirikai Varuval – Brinjal pan-fry*

Kerala
- *Upperi – Coconut-oil fried vegetables (raw banana, yam)*
- *Meen Varuthathu – Fish shallow-fried (bhaja in spirit)*

Karnataka
- *Sukke (Dry Version) – Lightly sautéed vegetables*
- *Menasina Kai Fry – Chili-based vegetable fry*

WESTERN & CENTRAL HIMALAYA

Himachal Pradesh *(Kangra, Mandi, Shimla belt)*
(Bhaja logic: mustard oil / ghee, minimal spice, pan-dry)
- *Kachalu Bhaja-style Fry – Colocasia (arbi) slices pan-fried till crisp*
- *Gaderi Fry – Taro root dry-fried with turmeric and salt*
- *Lingdi Fry – Fiddlehead ferns sautéed till dry*
- *Palda Greens Fry (Dry) – Collard / local saag lightly pan-roasted*
- *Suka Machhli Fry – Sun-dried river fish shallow-fried (winter staple)*

In Himachal meals, these dry fries sit beside dal, madra or khatta – exactly the role of bhaja.

Kashmir Valley
(Often no onion/garlic; slow frying in mustard oil or ghee)
- *Nadru Bhaja-type Fry – Lotus stem slices pan-fried till lightly crisp*
- *Monji Fry – Kohlrabi root dry-fried with turmeric*
- *Haaq Saag Fry (Dry) – Collard greens sautéed with minimal moisture*
- *Wangan Tchokh (Dry version) – Brinjal pan-fried without gravy*

These are home-meal bhaja equivalents, distinct from Wazwan gravies.

Ladakh *(Lower Ladakh, Changthang influence)*
- *Dried Turnip Fry – Sun-dried turnip slices pan-fried in butter*
- *Skam Bhaja-style Fry – Dried apricot kernel sauté*
- *Khambir Crumb Fry – Old bread crumbs pan-roasted in fat (texture dish)*

Dry frying here is fuel-efficient and storage-driven, aligning perfectly with bhaja logic.

Uttarakhand *(Garhwal–Kumaon)*
- *Bhangjeera Aloo Fry – Potatoes pan-fried with hemp seed powder*
- *Mooli Patta Fry – Radish greens dry sauté*
- *Jhangora Bhaja-style Crisp – Barnyard millet pan-roasted*
- *Sisuna Saag Fry – Nettle leaves sautéed till dry*