

Where can I enter the Berry Delicious competition?

Local fairs all over Virginia are holding preliminary contests. The top three winners from each contest are eligible to compete at the finals, to be held at the State Fair of Virginia on Saturday, September 29. If you can't compete at your local fair, contact a nearby fair to see if they have residency requirements (many don't). If you place 1st, 2nd, or 3rd at any fair, you may not compete in another.

What kind of recipe is the Virginia Egg Council looking for?

We're really interested in something that's delicious, that uses eggs in some way and berries as an integral ingredient (a berry *garnish* is not enough). A *minimum* of four eggs should be used. Custard pies, meringue desserts, cakes, tortes, kuchen and kugels, flans, bread puddings, breakfast casseroles, egg-rich berry scones, berry French toast, etc., are possibilities.

Why eggs and berries?

During the summer season, berries are at their peak. It's also the time when fairs are held, so it's the perfect marriage – berries held together in a recipe with eggs. Everyone knows how nutritious eggs are, with thirteen important nutrients, and berries are tiny but potent when it comes to nutrients. Plus the berries are so beautiful, whatever you dream up is bound to look appealing.

Is it just a recipe contest, or must I bring a finished product, for tasting?

It's both. As we said, it must taste delicious, plus you'll want it to look great for judging, as well. Get presentation ideas from magazine food photos, with ideas for garnishes, etc. Some fairs may require disposable containers. We suggest you hit the dollar store for a serving piece you won't mind leaving.

Will the written recipe be judged?

That is definitely part of the judging criteria at the state finals. Listing ingredients in order of use; using correct abbreviations; including cooking times; temperatures; servings; and clear preparation instructions are all important, so the recipe can be easily recreated. Typewritten recipes are easier to read, but not essential at the local level.

Must it be an original recipe?

We are not interested in recipes straight out of a cookbook, but understand there are few *original* recipes. We suggest folks take a terrific recipe and make it their own by changing 3 ingredients (adding the berries might do it); maybe changing the presentation (rather than a sheet pan, try a Bundt or springform pan); or bump up the flavor with a cocktail of flavorings.

What if the finished product I bring for judging is best served hot? Or cold?

Many fairs will have access to a microwave - check with your local fair ahead of time. Or bring it hot if you know exactly what time it'll be judged. Deliver cold entries in a cooler and allow judges to remove it from the cooler for judging.

Prizes?

Local winners are sent prizes from the Virginia Egg Council. At the State Finals, all contestants go home with gifts. We also have non-finalist prizes along with the 1st place (\$350 plus an Egglord's Best* egg each day, for a year!); 2nd place (\$250 plus an EB egg a day for six months) and 3rd place (\$150 plus an EB egg a day for six months). *From Braswell Family Farms, Nashville, NC.

What does the Virginia Egg Council do with the recipes?

We love using the recipes in our promotional efforts. Several booklets have been printed, using some of the top winning recipes (available on virginiaeggcouncil.org/recipes) and placed in Virginia Welcome Centers for the public. We also use them in TV and radio segments we appear in and send them to newspapers around Virginia. We pre-test all recipes, to make sure they work.

Where can I get further information?

Check out www.virginiaeggcouncil.org/events. You'll find everything from a sample judges' form to all the information the local fairs are privy to. Once you win at your local fair, we'll send you tips on how to win at the state level.

