

About American BBQ, Kansas City BBQ Society (KCBS), BBQ Contests and KCBS Japan

KCBS Japan Rep J. Cross in Tokyo

Outline

- Purpose
- About American Barbecue (BBQ)
- Kansas City's BBQ History
- Competitive BBQ contests in U.S.
- About Kansas City BBQ Society (KCBS) and Sanctioned Contests
- KCBS in Japan Prospects



About this slide deck

Purpose: Overview of American BBQ, BBQ contests, KCBS, and prospects in Japan.

Audience: BBQ organizers, judges, teams, partners, and those interested in American BBQ.

Content: American BBQ History, info, BBQ contests, KCBS, competition structure.

Positioning: Educational and informational; not a sales presentation.



Barbeque or Barbecue (BBQ) versus Grilling

Barbecue (BBQ)

- Cooked **low and slow** with **indirect heat and smoke**
- Uses larger cuts like beef brisket, ribs, or pork shoulder
- Focus on tenderness and smoky flavor
- Uses a bbq grill with a lid for temperature control



BBQ Grill with Lid

Grilling (with or without lid)

- Cooked **hot and fast** over **direct flame or coals**
- Foods: fish, seafood, steaks, burgers, or veggies
- Focus on cooking, searing surface and juicy texture

In short:

- **BBQ = low and slow with smoke for tenderness**
- **Grilling = quick high heat & sear for eating**



Grill with without Lid



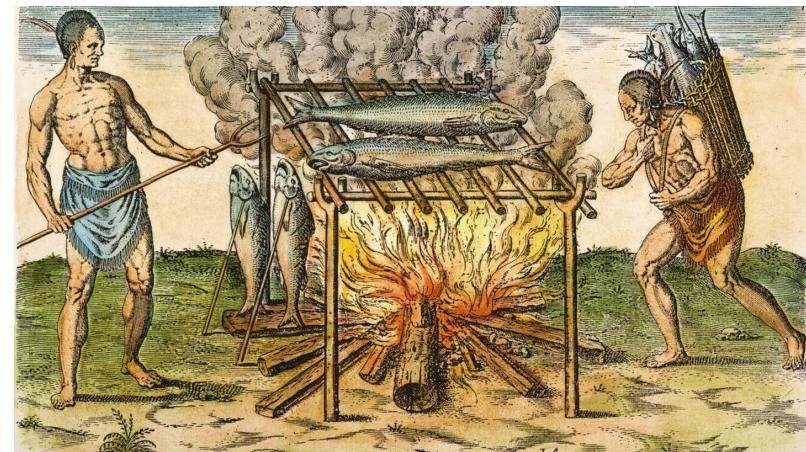
What is American Barbeque Culture Historically?

- Originated from **Caribbean cooking traditions**, using slow cooking over wood fires
- Influenced by **Native American techniques**, including pit cooking and smoke preservation
- Adapted and expanded in the **American South**, shaped by African, European, and local practices
- Developed as **outdoor, fire-based cooking** using wood, charcoal, and earth pits
- Evolved into a **regional and community-centered food culture** across the Southern United States

American BBQ is the result of layered cultural exchange and centuries of outdoor cooking traditions.



Southern BBQ (1887)



Painting of Fish Grilling (1590)



What is Modern American Barbeque ?

- Combines **historic traditions** with modern techniques and equipment
- Centered on **outdoor cooking** using fire, smoke, and fuel
- Often a **social role**—the cook hosts, plans timing, and manages the fire
- Strongly linked to **family gatherings, community events, and festivals**
- Influenced by **competition BBQ**, media, and shared standards (e.g., KCBS)
- Emphasizes **craftsmanship, patience, and pride** rather than speed

Modern American BBQ blends tradition, technology, and community around outdoor fire cooking.



Friendly BBQ



Family Style BBQ

BBQ News, Magazines, Websites...

- BBQ Magazine <https://www.thebbqmag.com/issues/>
- The Smoke Sheet <https://bbqnewsletter.substack.com/>
- *KCBS Bullsheet https://www.kcbs.us/the_bullsheet.php
- Barbeque News <https://www.barbecuenews.com/>
- Website Amazing Ribs <https://amazingribs.com/>
- BBQ in USA https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbecue_in_the_United_States
- BBQ Blogs: BarbequeBible, HowtoBBQright, GirlsCanGrill
- Instagram/Facebook many sites e.g. @overthefirecooking, @chefcuso

*Note: KCBS membership required for magazine access

BBQ TV programs

Barbecue Showdown, *Netflix*, Competitive BBQ series featuring pitmasters.

Chef's Table: BBQ, *Netflix*, Documentary profiling elite BBQ chefs and live-fire.

BBQ Pitmasters, *Amazon Prime Video Japan*, Classic U.S. competition series following teams on the BBQ circuit.

BBQ USA *Food Network / Discovery+* Travel-style series regional American BBQ

Man Fire Food *Amazon Prime Video*, Fire-focused cooking show BBQ techniques.

極める!! バーベキュー道 (Kiwameru! BBQ-dō) *Japanese TV (Tokyo MX / local broadcast)* Japanese BBQ technique and outdoor cooking culture

American BBQ Styles

Locations

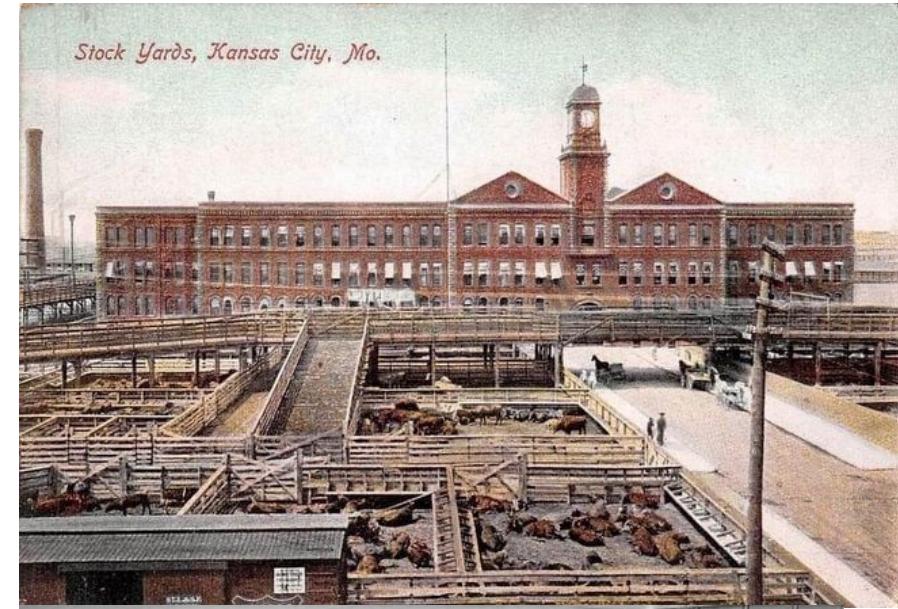
- **Kansas City** – Missouri, Kansas
- **Texas** – Texas
- **Memphis** – Tennessee
- **Carolinas** – North Carolina, South Carolina
- **Alabama** – Alabama
- **Regional styles shaped by history, meats, and traditions....**



Kansas City's (KC) Location



Stockyards and Auction

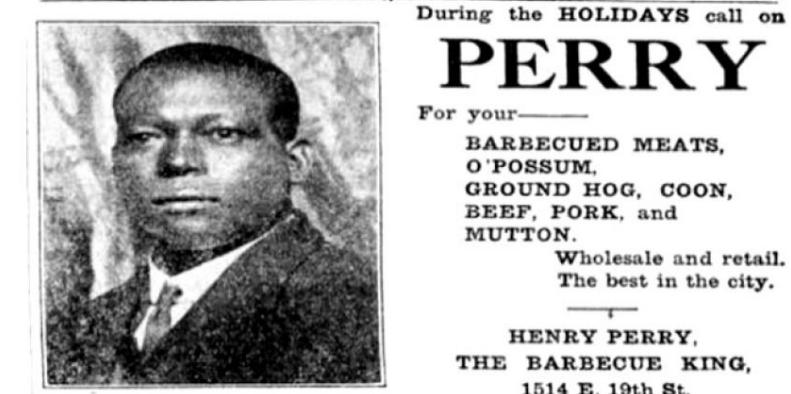


- Established in **1871**, the **Kansas City Stockyards** sold livestock via auction and closed in 1991.
- The stockyards attracted meat packers, butchers, and restaurants — the basis of **Kansas City's steak and barbecue culture**.



Kansas City: Home of Championship BBQ

- **Historic Roots:** Birthplace of American BBQ culture, beginning with pitmaster Henry Perry (early 1900s).
- **Legacy:** Shaped the rules, flavor, and spirit of modern competition BBQ — known as the *World Capital of Barbecue*.
- **Signature Style:** Slow-smoked meats, sweet tomato-based sauce, and iconic burnt ends (a KC original).
- **Global Influence:** Home of the Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS), sanctioning 500+ contests worldwide.
- **Major Events:** Host of the American Royal World Series of Barbecue and KCBS World BBQ Invitational.



World's 1st BBQ Museum in KC



Interactive exhibits covering the **six elements** of barbecue: Meat, Rub/Spice, Wood, Fire, Smoke, Sauce. [Crown Center+2](#)[Kansas City Star+2](#)

Dedicated gallery exploring the four major U.S. BBQ regions: Kansas City, Memphis, Texas, and the Carolinas. [Kansas City Magazine+1](#)

Scratch-and-sniff spice wall and “touch the wood” installation to engage multiple senses. [Smithsonian Magazine+1](#)

A giant “bean pit” featuring thousands of plastic beans as an immersive, playful installation. [Axios+1](#)



Competitive Barbecue in U.S.

Origins and Development

- **1950s–1960s:** Informal barbecue cook-offs at local fairs and festivals across the American South and Midwest.
- **1985:** The *Kansas City Barbeque Society* (KCBS) was founded, establishing standardized rules, judging criteria, and official categories (chicken, ribs, pork, brisket).
- **1980s–1990s:** Competitive barbecue grew nationwide as teams and judges joined organized circuits.
- **Today:** BBQ organizations hold more than **500 contests annually** in the United States and globally.



What is the Kansas City BBQ Society (KCBS) ?

- NonProfit Organization (NPO) founded in Kansas City, Missouri in 1985
- sanctions and oversees BBQ contests worldwide
- brings contest rules, BBQ judging criteria, and a scoring system
- manages BBQ competitions
- ensures BBQ contest fairness and consistency in Judging
- organizes food judging at the World Food Championship





Why People Join BBQ Contests

🎯 Skill & Mastery

- Perfecting cooking techniques develops discipline, precision, and creativity.

🤝 Teamwork & Leadership

- Working with a BBQ team develops communication, organization, and problem-solving skills.

🧠 Personal Growth

- Managing time pressure and setbacks builds patience, confidence, and emotional resilience.

👥 Community & Belonging

- Strong camaraderie among teams creates lifelong friendships and mentorship opportunities.

🏆 Purpose & Recognition

- Competitions provide pride in representing regional traditions and achieving measurable improvement.

Jan 2026

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BBQ World Championships (partial list)

- **Memphis in May (USA)** Prestigious BBQ competition, whole-hog cooking
- **Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) World Invitational Championship**
- **Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational (USA)**
Invitation-only event “Super Bowl of BBQ,” featuring elite teams from around the world.
- **American Royal World Series of Barbecue (USA)** One of the largest BBQ competitions globally, hosting both open and invitational championships.
- **World Food Championships – BBQ Division:** Multi-category culinary championship that includes BBQ contest
- **Others:** Rib Cookoff association, Steak, etc.





American Royal World Series of Barbeque in KC



Jack Daniels World Championship Invitational BBQ

Location: Lynchburg, Tennessee, USA **Established:** 1989

Overview

- Widely regarded as the “**Super Bowl of BBQ**”
- Invitation-only — teams must qualify by winning a **sanctioned competition**
- **KCBS certified BBQ judges**

Competition Format: four meats and ancillary categories

Global Reach

- Teams from **20+ countries** compete annually in October
- Highest international level of competitive barbecue

Cultural Significance

- Combines BBQ tradition, craftsmanship, and hospitality



KCBS World Invitational Championship

- Organized by the **Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS)**
- Invitation-based competition for top-ranked teams
- Teams qualify through **KCBS-sanctioned contests worldwide**
- Judged meats: **Chicken, Ribs, Pork, Brisket and single meats**
- Represents the **highest level of KCBS competitive BBQ**
- Serves as a pathway to elite global events (e.g., Jack Daniel's Invitational)
- KCBS certified BBQ judges



Memphis in May – World Championship Barbecue Cooking Contest

- Held annually in **Memphis, Tennessee** in May
- One of the **oldest and most prestigious BBQ competitions** in the world (est. 1978)
- Known for its focus on **whole hog**, ribs, and shoulder categories
- Attracts **200+ teams** from the U.S. and abroad
- Judged on **taste, tenderness, and presentation**
- Major cultural celebration of Southern BBQ heritage



World Food Championship (BBQ)

- Since 2012 in USA - global food contest
- Features **10+ competition categories**: BBQ, Steak, Burger, Bacon, Dessert, and others
- **BBQ category judging is organized by KCBS**
- Teams qualify through regional and international events including Japan



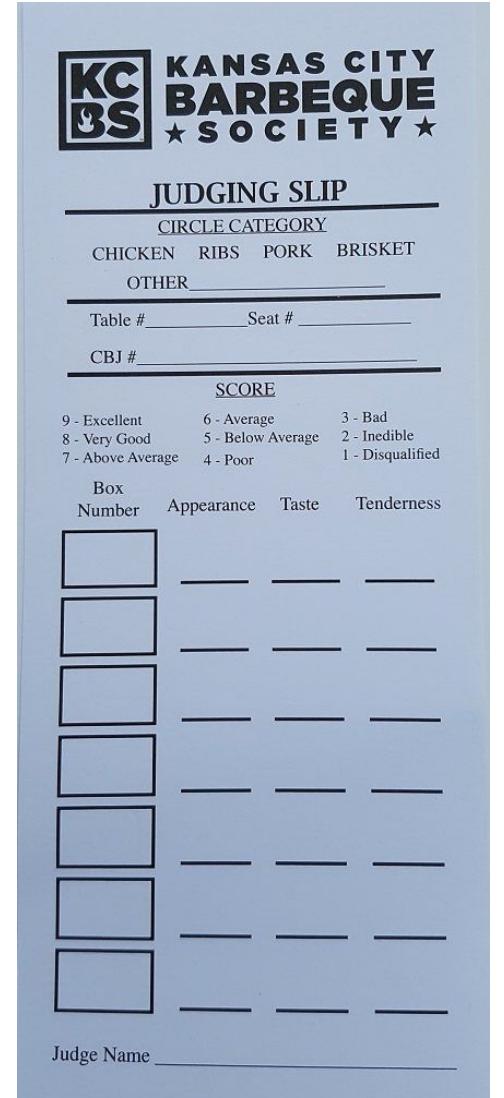
Major BBQ Associations in the USA

- **KCBS (Kansas City Barbeque Society)** – World's largest Non-profit BBQ association and BBQ contest sanctioning body
- **MBN (Memphis Barbecue Network)** – Traditional whole-hog BBQ competitions
- **SCA (Steak Cookoff Association)** – Steak-focused competitive grilling
- **FBA (Florida Bar-B-Que Association)** – Regional KCBS-style contests
- **IBCA (International Barbecue Cookers Association)** – Texas-style, simplified rules
- **CBBQA (California Barbecue Association)** – California-based BBQ promotion etc.
- **NBBQA (National Barbecue & Grilling Association)** – Industry and media organization

BBQ Judging Example

How KCBS BBQ Contests Are Judged

- **Categories:** Chicken · Pork Ribs/Roast · Beef Brisket
- **Other Divisions:** One-Meat · Backyard (Two) · Ancillary
- **Judging:** Typically certified judges, blind tasting
- **Criteria:** Appearance · Taste · Tenderness
- **Scoring:** 2–9 scale (Taste weighted highest)
- **Awards:** Category winners + Grand Champion
- **Advancement:** Winners may qualify for world championships



The image shows a "JUDGING SLIP" from the Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS). The slip is blue with white text. At the top left is the KCBS logo, and to its right is the text "KANSAS CITY BARBEQUE SOCIETY". Below this is a section for "CIRCLE CATEGORY" with options for CHICKEN, RIBS, PORK, BRISKET, and OTHER. There are fields for "Table #", "Seat #", and "CBJ #". A "SCORE" section at the top right lists ratings from 9 to 1. Below this is a table with columns for "Box Number", "Appearance", "Taste", and "Tenderness", each with a row of seven dashed lines for scoring. At the bottom is a field for "Judge Name".



<https://www.kcbs.us/>

The Bullsheet & News ▾

About ▾

Events ▾

Teams ▾

Judges, Reps & Organizers ▾

KCBS Foundation ▾

KCBS Merch

Partnerships ▾

KCBS Website

- Central platform for **sanctioned BBQ contests worldwide**
- Hosts official **contest calendar** and event info
- Manages **contest applications** from organizers
- Enables **judge registration** and assignment
- Provides rules, scoring standards, and contest guidelines
- Connects contest organizers, judges, reps, and teams through one system

Upcoming Events

Event Results



[Vienna BBQ Days](#)



Vienna, AUSTRIA
Oct 18 2025



[Red White & Que - CAMPGROUND
BBQ SERIES \(Day 1\)](#)



Jackson, NJ, UNITED STATES
Oct 24 2025



[Red White & Que - CAMPGROUND
BBQ SERIES \(One Meat Chicken\)](#)



Jackson, NJ, UNITED STATES
Oct 24 2025



[VPD Back the Blue BBQ Competition](#)



Vidalia, LA, UNITED STATES
Oct 24 2025

Recent News

[KCBS Board Meeting Agenda October 14, 2024](#)



October 13, 2025

[Nominations for 2026 KCBS Board of Directors are Open](#)

September 08, 2025

[KCBS Board Meeting Agenda for 9 September 2025](#)

KCBS sanctioned BBQ contest roles

Organizer

- Selects date, venue, and contest format
- Submits application to KCBS
- Local permits, insurance if needed
- Handles budget, sponsors, & vendors
- Team recruitment & promotion
- Prepares facilities & logistics
- Prepares prizes
- Handles awards
- Waste preparation and disposal
- Judge selection and communication

KCBS Representative

- Represents KCBS on site
- Enforces KCBS rules and procedures
- Meat inspection before cooking
- Holds meetings (cooks & judges)
- Manages box distribution to teams
- Manages box turn-in
- Manages judges and table captains
- Oversees scoring and fairness
- Handle disputes and violations
- Reports results to KCBS HQ, Teams, and Organizer
- Team high score recognition (pins)
- Provides contest feedback

Jointly

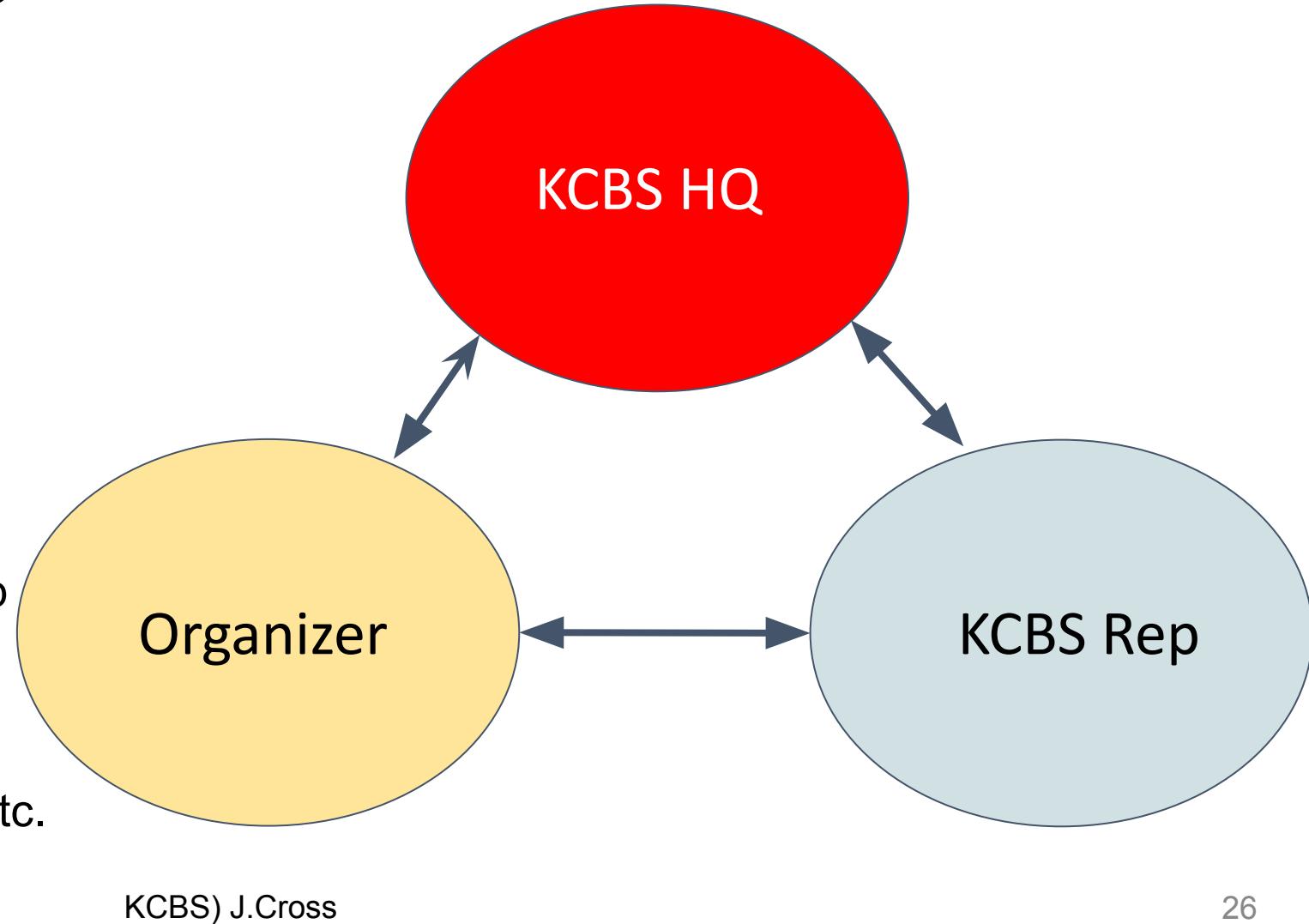
- Align contest schedule
- Coordinate judge logistics
- Confirm KCBS compliance
- Manage contest flow

BBQ Contest Organizer and KCBS Rep. are different people

KCBS Sanctioned BBQ Contest Flow

Contest process flow

1. Organizer and KCBS representative (rep) exchange contest information
2. Organizer submits application to KCBS HQ
3. KCBS contacts Organizer and schedules contest date
4. KCBS HQ appoints contest KCBS Rep
5. KCBS Rep contacts Organizer
6. Contest preparations and judge selection
7. Contest Held by Organizer with Rep organizing judging
8. Rep reports judging results to Organizer and KCBS HQ
9. Organizer pays Rep for expenses etc. and Rep contest provides feedback



KCBS International

- **Founded in 2010** to expand KCBS- sanctioned BBQ contests internationally
- KCBS member BBQ contest teams earn points toward the **KCBS International Team of the Year (TOY)** standings.
- **Winners of KCBS-sanctioned contests** may qualify to compete in major U.S. BBQ championships:
- 🥇 Jack Daniel's World Championship Invitational
- 🏆 The American Royal Invitational
- 🌎 KCBS World Invitational
- Countries: Australia, Canada, Europe, Japan



KCBS International Mission

To promote American barbecue worldwide through competition, education, judge certification, and support of KCBS-sanctioned events:

- Increasing the knowledge and skills of International competition cook teams to successfully compete in KCBS competitions.
- Instructing, training and certifying judges according to KCBS rules so they judge KCBS sanctioned contests anywhere in the world.
- Supporting and encouraging International KCBS competition organizers.



10 years of KCBS in Austria



KCBS Australia



BBQ Contest Photo Section Overview

(Slides 30–56)

- These slides provide **visual examples of KCBS-style BBQ contests and activities**, including contest sites, cooking setups, judging areas, awards, and event flow.
- The photos illustrate the scale, structure, and typical flow of KCBS competitions.
- Photos are courtesy of KCBS international.

The BBQ Contest Site

Site Preparation



Team Placement



Contest Site-Overview: Team Check-in



Contest Site Example

Parking lot



Contest Sites

Park Setting



City Setting



Contest Raw Meat Inspection



Reps Handing Out KCBS Sample Boxes



BBQ Cook Team Meeting



Teams at work



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Two day Master contest overnight cooking



Team Contest Meat Cooking



Judging Area Set Up-Judging Tables



Meat Box Turn-In Area





Contest Rep Working Area



Contest Day Judge Sign In



Judges are randomly assigned tables...



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Judge's Meeting and Oath



Judge's Oath



Box Turn-In in Process



Box Number Change to Create “Blind” Scoring



Sample Contest Meat Boxes

Chicken



Pork Ribs



Sample Contest Meat Boxes

Pork Roast



Beef Brisket



Judging in Process...



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Judges evaluate samples anonymously to ensure fair scoring. They are volunteers and can take-home leftovers

Judging in Process...

Small Contest

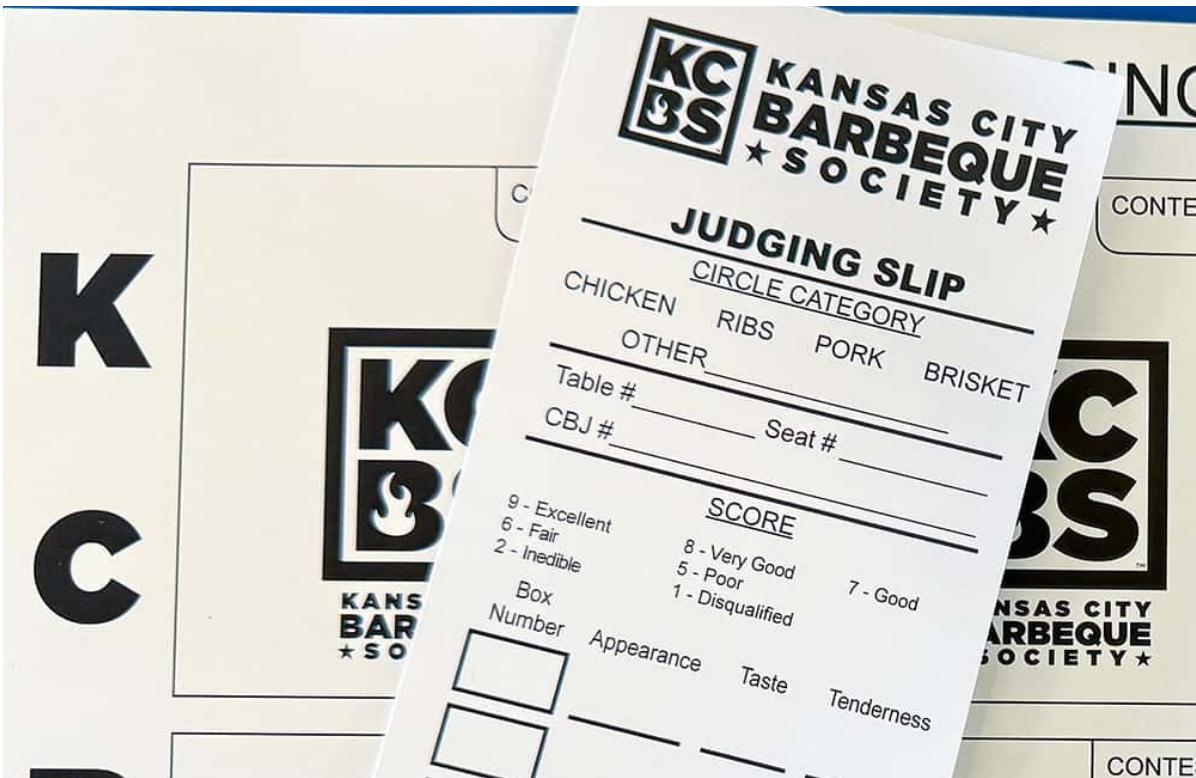


Large Festival



Judging slip and comment card (Appearance, Taste, Tender ness)

Judging Score card



Comment Card

Box / Entry # _____	Do Not Remove
KC BS COMMENT CARD	
For Rep Use Only	
Chicken, Ribs, Pork, Brisket	
Other: _____	
CBJ: YES / NO	
Please enter your score for all three criteria	
Appearance Score	_____
Comments: _____ _____	
Taste Score	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> too salty <input type="checkbox"/> too peppery <input type="checkbox"/> too sour <input type="checkbox"/> too sweet <input type="checkbox"/> bitter <input type="checkbox"/> too smoky <input type="checkbox"/> too spicy (hot) <input type="checkbox"/> bland/no flavor <input type="checkbox"/> burnt <input type="checkbox"/> dislike unknown flavor <input type="checkbox"/> pleasant <input type="checkbox"/> satisfying <input type="checkbox"/> enjoyable <input type="checkbox"/> savory	
Tender ness Score	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> meets the KCBS tender ness test <input type="checkbox"/> too tough <input type="checkbox"/> chewy <input type="checkbox"/> dry <input type="checkbox"/> mushy <input type="checkbox"/> fatty <input type="checkbox"/> rubbery <input type="checkbox"/> grainy/gristle <input type="checkbox"/> pleasant <input type="checkbox"/> satisfying <input type="checkbox"/> enjoyable	
Other Comments: _____	

KCBS Reps Tabulating BBQ Scores



Date: 04-06-2019 14:14:27

Page: 1 of 1

Rank	Num.	Team Name	CK	RI	PK	BR	Total
1	2	Rooters-N-Tooters	170.8112	174.2744	165.1084	175.4056	685.5996
2	3	The Algood Bar-B-Q Pit Crew	177.7028	176.5828	158.8228	169.7028	682.8112
3	16	Fire Dancer BBQ	163.9772	169.6684	173.7028	173.7028	681.0512
4	12	Killer Hogs	173.1084	159.3944	170.2628	175.4516	678.2172
5	14	Blue Collar BBQ	170.8112	174.8572	165.6684	162.8456	674.1824
6	18	Que-N-Brew	161.1200	158.2400	173.7256	177.7028	670.7884
7	11	Anchor Up BBQ	167.3944	161.0856	173.1200	168.5484	670.1484
8	6	Smokin Through The Night	159.3712	163.4172	172.5600	171.4056	666.7540
9	20	Uncle Feo's Tennessee Style BBQ	172.5484	153.1316	173.7028	165.6568	665.0396
10	21	Swine Life	165.6684	154.8228	170.8112	172.5600	663.8624
11	5	Dad's Grillin Crew	165.6684	166.8228	167.9888	160.0000	660.4800
12	8	Hawgmania	163.3944	162.8344	161.1084	169.6800	657.0172
13	19	Swine Crue	173.1084	158.2056	177.1428	147.9656	656.4224
14	1	K&K Kookers	171.9656	161.1088	171.9656	149.0972	654.1372
15	9	Pork Avenue	154.8228	168.5256	162.8112	163.9772	650.1368
16	13	Ridge Outlaws	150.1940	166.8456	173.1428	155.9200	646.1024
17	4	Hogg Legg Smokers	170.8112	142.2400	170.8344	161.0856	644.9712
18	24	Smokin Miss Piggy	154.8112	154.7888	169.6800	165.0856	644.3656
19	23	Porkosaurus	166.2856	166.2628	159.9312	143.9316	636.4112
20	25	Buzzards BBQ	155.3484	162.8000	157.6456	158.8000	634.5940
21	17	M & M BBQ	156.5600	157.6572	161.6800	156.5716	632.4688
22	10	Uncle Pookie and the Riblets	163.9428	152.5372	165.0856	149.6800	631.2456
23	22	Outlaw BBQ	154.7884	165.0856	146.2056	158.7884	624.8680
24	15	Smoke Divided	152.4684	158.2056	165.6800	145.6344	621.9884
25	7	Pigs Gone Hog Wild	147.3944	151.9540	147.9200	154.2744	601.5428

Main Contest Overall
Expertise: Both

Contest Name: 9th Annual Bull
Moose Cookoff
Location: Millington, Tn

Contest Award Ceremony



Trophy and Cash-Prize Awarded to top scoring teams

Contest Awards



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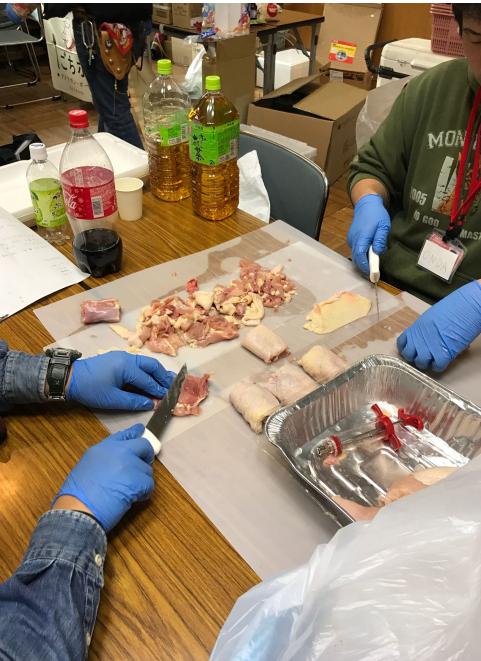
KCBS International Motto

*....So that truth,
Justice,
Excellence in Barbeque,
And the International KCBS
Family,
May be strengthened and
preserved forever.*



KCBS International Activities in Japan

- 2016 Held a KCBS Certified Judging Classes in Kawasaki with Japan BBQ Association (JBBQA)



American BBQ Contests in Japan

- **American BBQ Cook-Off (Tokyo):** Organized by Azora, Ltd. with sponsorship by Weber Japan and U.S. Meat Export Council in 2026, 3rd annual event
- **World Food Championships (BBQ Category):** annual qualifying event
- **Japan Barbecue Association (JBBQA):** Organizes domestic BBQ events in Japanese (domestic)
- **Regional Food & Cultural Festivals**
Hosted by local governments or tourism organizations featuring American BBQ



日本バーべキュー協会

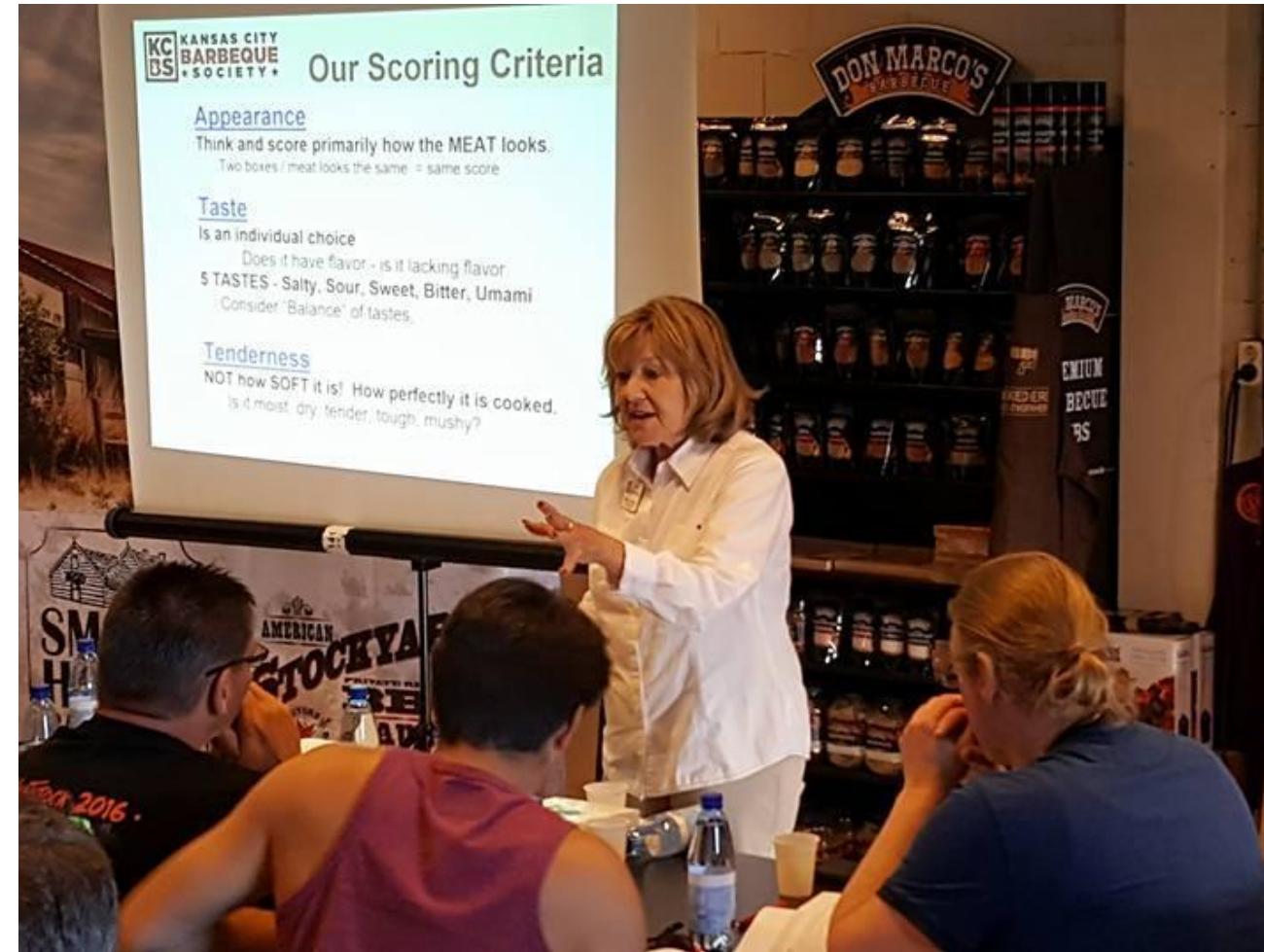
About KCBS Japan

- Established in 2025 by J. Cross
- Promotes American-style barbecue culture in Japan
- Supports education and awareness of competitive BBQ
- Offers KCBS BBQ judging classes
- Operates as a volunteer-based community initiative



KCBS Certified Judging Class Offered in 2026

- KCBS Japan will offer KCBS Certified BBQ Judging (CBJ) Classes in 2026.
- Classes last 4 hours in English and longer with translation.
- Class begins by summarizing cooking of the 4 contest meats and judging criteria. Tasting the cooked meats is included and they can be taken home.
- This class can be stand-alone or held before a scheduled KCBS contest.



KCBS Japan needs Japan based support

to grow BBQ competitions in Japan, KCBS Japan is seeking:

- **BBQ Contest Organizers** – to host official KCBS-sanctioned events
- **BBQ Judges** – to evaluate contest entries
- **Volunteers** – to help setup, contest operations, clean-up,
- **BBQ Teams** – to compete (10-15) in contests
- **Contest Locations** – in Japan



How Can KCBS Promote American BBQ in Japan?

- **Education:** Introduce American BBQ history, culture, and KCBS standards through talks, cooking workshops, and media
- **Events:** Support and promote BBQ cook-offs, festivals, and demonstrations in Japan with partners
- **Judging & Standards:** Teach KCBS-style judging and fair competition practices
- **Community Building:** Connect BBQ teams, judges, organizers, and enthusiasts in Japan
- **International Pathways:** Support Japan BBQ teams in joining international BBQ competitions
- **Cultural Exchange:** Share American BBQ as a social, outdoor cooking, fire-based food culture and cultural activity

KCBS Japan serves as a bridge between American BBQ traditions and the growing BBQ community in Japan.



Troy's American BBQ class in Nagoya

For more information: Contact: Jay (Tokyo)
Follow KCBSJapan on social media

Website <https://jscross18.wixsite.com/bbq-in-tokyo>



JAY CROSS

KCBS Japan Chair
KCBS BBQ contest Rep.
KCBS BBQ Judge

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KC
BS
KANSAS CITY
BARBECUE
SOCIETY

American
BBQ

A man with a beard and a blue baseball cap stands next to an open barbecue grill. The grill has a piece of meat cooking on the grates. The background shows a brick building and a window.

Acknowledgements & Notes

1. Original KCBS International slides and photos provided by KCBS International Debby Gage
2. Other images were taken from internet website for educational purposes
3. The Evolution of American Barbecue, *Smithsonian Magazine*, 2023.
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-evolution-of-american-barbecue-13770775/>
4. From Pit to Plate: How We Became a Barbecue Nation, Atlanta History Center, 2024,
<https://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/blog/from-pit-to-plate-a-brief-history-of-american-barbecue/>
5. Troy's American BBQ in Nagoya,
https://www.jalan.net/kankou/spt_guide00000213589/activity/l00003B24A/