

International Chocolate Awards – Categories and Rules

Summary

- To enter the International Chocolate Awards, please visit:
www.internationalchocolateawards.com/enter/
- Entry fees for each competition are given on the website with payment details. Entry fees are non-refundable. Payment is made through our online system with our merchant partner, PayPal. Bank debit and credit cards are accepted.
- You may enter a maximum of 20 products in total in all categories, except plain bar categories, where entries are not limited.
- Entries are judged using our specially developed judging system, created after international trials and consultation with independent experts around the world. Full details of the judging scheme and forms are available on the Awards website.
www.internationalchocolateawards.com/judging-system-and-forms/
- All entries must be commercially available for at least one month during the year of the competition. See below for full details of the rules.
- Unless otherwise stated for a specific competition, quantities of product needed are: 400g (14 ounces) for bars, 40 x each filled chocolate and 1 x jar or 300g/10 ounces minimum for spreads.
- Please see our website for details of the receiving addresses for samples for each competition. Each entry must be packaged separately and clearly marked with the category and product numbers.
- For our full calendar of competitions this year, please see our website.
- By entering the International Chocolate Awards you agree to abide by the rules given below.

Updates - Cacao sourcing and traceability

For 2021-22 we have relaunched our filled chocolate competitions as “Craft Chocolatier Competitions”, to celebrate and champion the chocolate makers and companies using cacao with an identifiable and traceable source.

We will now only accept chocolate in any category that has a declared and traceable source for the cacao. Couverture and blends are still acceptable, provided that the source of each cacao used is also declared. The sourcing information can either be public or declared in confidence with the Awards.

This change brings our chocolatier entries inline with our bean-to-bar competitions, and we are proud to celebrate and support the work of the growers, chocolate makers and all the supporting industries working to produce the world’s best chocolate products.

Product Categories

The International Chocolate Awards includes the following categories. Please read the rules at the end of this document, which apply to all categories unless otherwise stated.

Bars

Origin or Blend bars

Unflavoured Origin or Blend bars are judged at our main Bean-to-bar competitions only.

Dark / Milk / White / Alternative Ingredients

- Large scale (> 80kg refiner)
- Micro-batch (<= 80kg refiner)

Flavoured bars

Chocolate maker flavoured bars are judged at our bean-to-bar competitions. Flavoured bars made from couverture are judged at our regional or national chocolatier competitions.

Dark / Milk / White / Combination

- Infusions or flavorings
- Inclusions or pieces
- Filled bars

Spreads

- Spreads with dark chocolate (no milk powder)
- Spreads with milk chocolate or milk powder
- Spreads with white chocolate

Ingredients

- Cocoa butter
- Cocoa powder

Drinking Chocolate

Special competitions only.

Drinks with dark chocolate or cocoa powder

- Prepared with water
- Prepared with milk

Drinks with milk chocolate or with milk powder

- Prepared with water

Filled / Bonbons / Pralines

Ganache/ truffle

Dark / Milk / White / Combination

- Origin or Blend
- Flavored

Nut based

Dark / Milk / White / Combination

- Nut-based pralines
- Marzipan
- Dragées, enrobed whole nuts

Caramels

Dark / Milk / White / Combination

Fruits

- Fruit pastes, jelly/gelées
- Enrobed whole fruit

Sugar/butter/cream

- Enrobed fondants
- Enrobed torrone/manon/butter/cream

Infusions or cacao tea

Alcoholic drinks/liquors

- made with chocolate or cacao

Special Prize Criteria

Special Prizes are given for the highest scoring products meeting specified criteria (eg for Recipe and Sourcing) and at Grand Jury discretion to recognise innovation and new developments in the fine chocolate world, as well as classic skills and use of ingredients and sourcing of cacao.

Sourcing

- Biome
- Certified
- Chocolate Maker
- Direct Traded
- Growing Country
- Local ingredients
- Organic

Style

- Classic
- Craft
- Eclectic
- Gastronomic
- Innovation
- Limited edition
- Modern
- 'Naked' (uncoated filling)
- Reinterpretation

Process

- Cacao flavoring/aging
- Caramelized
- Fermentation additions
- 'Ground-in' (added during chocolate refining)
- No-milk white chocolate
- Rough ground

Recipe

- High %
- 100%
- Dark-milk (50% or over cocoa solids)
- Non-cow milk
- Alternative fats/oils
- Alternative sugars
- Alternative theobromas
- Alternative vegan milk
- Recipe
- Self-made cocoa butter
- Unrefined cane sugar
- Vegan

Product

Special prize product types can be added to by at Grand Jury discretion during competitions when new, specific, product types are entered.

- Alcohol
- Boero
- Caramel
- Flavoured cremino
- Fondant
- Gianduiotto
- Jellies/gelée
- Manon/butter/cream
- Marzipan
- Unflavoured cremino

Rules

The rules of the Awards are based on the results of our Entrants' and Judges' Surveys at the Foundation of the Awards and have been compiled through consultation with our permanent Grand Jury.

Chocolate

1. All products entered must include chocolate as an ingredient. The chocolate used must meet the following technical definition of 'fine chocolate'
 - a. If vanilla is added, only real / natural vanilla as pods or extract is allowed
 - b. Lecithin is allowed, either soy or other source such as sunflower
 - c. Chocolate may contain only natural sugars such as refined or unrefined cane or beet sugar or 'alternative natural sugars' such as coconut sugar, maple sugar, stevia, lucuma or other natural sources.
 - d. Dark chocolate must contain a minimum of 60% cocoa solids when used in a bar or coating. When used in a filling mixed with other ingredients, 55% is permissible.
 - e. Milk chocolate must contain a minimum of 30% cocoa solids.
 - f. White chocolate must contain a minimum of 25% cocoa solids.
 - g. Unflavoured origin or blended bars are accepted only from chocolate makers, partial producers (eg making from liquor) or a 'Private label bean-sourcers' ⁶. Private label companies must declare the cacao source and who is making their chocolate, which will be listed publicly if they win an award. The production type should also be given.
2. The flavour quality of chocolate used in all products will be a consideration when judging.
3. It is required to state the source or brand of chocolate used for each entry. This will be kept confidential and is not shown to judges except at the Grand Jury round in the case of a technical or judging issue.

Definitions

4. **Chocolate maker bar:** a bar fully made from cacao beans into finished chocolate in the entering company's own factory. Does not include private label products or companies sourcing cacao for chocolate made in another company's factory.
 - a. **Micro-batch bar:** where the size of the refiner used is 80 kilos (176 pounds) or less.
5. **Partially produced:** a bar made by a company that partially produces or refines chocolate, eg from cocoa liquor.
6. **'Private label bean-sourcer' bar:** a bar from a company who source the cacao used for the chocolate through their own efforts and contract a chocolate maker to produce the finished chocolate, to a process or recipe the entering company controls.
7. **Directly traded cacao:** chocolate made from cacao that has been directly traded with the grower for a directly negotiated price, with as few steps as possible in the export chain and where the chocolate maker has direct contact with the grower. Ideally the grower is recognised on the bar packaging or publicity. The chocolate maker may also submit details confidentially to when entering if commercial confidence is an issue.
8. **Growing Country chocolate:** chocolate bars completely produced and packaged in recognised cacao growing countries
9. **Certified or labelled products:**
 - a. **Organic:** fully certified using a recognised scheme. The entering company must be certified and details of the certification must be provided.
 - b. **Vegan:** (Labelled as Vegan with all vegan ingredients, including vegan sugar).
 - c. **Other certification:** Full details of the scheme must be given.
10. **Ganache and truffles:** coated or uncoated chocolates/bonbons that mainly consist of an emulsion of chocolate with cream or any other liquid, including unprocessed oils or water. Butter is permitted.
11. **Combination:** products using a combination of dark, milk or white chocolate, for example, ganaches or truffles where the coating is of one type (e.g. dark chocolate) and the filling is predominantly of another (e.g. white chocolate).
12. The Grand Jury may ask for proof or authentication if any of the above definitions are applied to a product.

Ingredients

13. All products should contain only natural ingredients:
 - a. Solidified vegetable fat or non-dairy animal fats are not allowed in any product as substitutes for cocoa butter
 - b. Unprocessed oils, butter, cream etc. are permitted in filled chocolates and flavoured bars
 - c. No fat other than cocoa butter is allowed for unflavoured dark bar categories.
 - d. Real / natural vanilla as pods or extract are allowed
 - e. 'Natural vanilla flavour' is allowed if it is made with real vanilla
 - f. Flavourings labelled in English as 'natural flavour', vanillin, artificial vanilla or other artificial flavouring are not allowed.
 - g. Natural sugars such as cane or beet sugar, glucose or fructose and alternative natural sugars are permitted. Sugar substitutes eg maltitol, sorbitol or aspartame are not allowed.
 - h. Artificial food colouring is NOT allowed when used as part of the recipe for the inside of a product. It is permissible at Grand Jury discretion when used for decoration, eg in cocoa butter transfers or sprays.
14. In the case of products with a declared cacao origin, further information concerning the source of the cacao may be required prior to an award being confirmed.
15. We will now only accept chocolate in any category that has a declared and traceable source for the cacao. Couverture and blends are still acceptable, provided that the source of each cacao used is also declared. The sourcing information can either be public or declared in confidence with the Awards.

Entries and availability

16. The International Chocolate Awards is open to chocolate companies, chocolate makers, chocolatiers and chefs. Entries will be accepted from commercial companies or individuals.
17. Entries from retailers, importers and distributors are not eligible unless the name of the producer or chocolatier is included on the entry form. Prizes will only be given in the name of the producer.
18. All entries must be commercially available for at least one month during the year of the Awards.
19. Products may be moved to a different category during judging, at the discretion of the Grand Jury.
20. Each individual/company may enter only the national or regional competition closest to their headquarters and may enter only one national or regional competition per year,
21. Each entry must consist of only one single product, e.g. a single flavour of filled chocolate or a single bar origin. Collections of bonbons or entries deemed to contain more than one type of product cannot be judged and will be disqualified.

Fees

22. Payment of all fees must be completed before judging begins. Non-payment of fees may disqualify products from the competition. The International Chocolate Awards is not liable for any customs or import duties. Any fees paid by the Awards on acceptance of samples will be invoiced to the entrant.
23. Fees are non-refundable. This includes in the case of non-receipt of entry samples or disqualification due to a breach of the rules. Non-payment of customs charges may result in barring from future competitions.

Judging

24. All entries are judged blind to the extent that this is possible while still providing a consumer-type experience. All entries will be removed from their packaging for judging.
25. Entries will be judged using the Awards' electronic judging system, the criteria of which will be made public through our website.
26. Feedback from the judging will be available to entrants in electronic form through our website.
27. All judges will have no current or recent commercial interest in any of the entrants being judged at the competition at which they are present. Judges will be required to declare any conflict of interest and will be asked to agree to a confidentiality statement before judging.

Prizes

28. Prizes will be given in each category to the highest scoring entries that meet prize-winning quality standards, as determined by the Grand Jury.
 - a. A single main Gold will be given in each category except in the case of tied scores where additional Golds may be given. The numbers of Silver and Bronze prizes in each category will be determined by the Grand Jury.
 - b. If no products meet prize-winning quality standards, Gold, Silver or Bronze prizes may not be given in a category, as determined by the Grand Jury
 - c. Additional Special Prizes may be given within a category, at the discretion of the Grand Jury
 - d. Overall prizes will be given for best dark and best milk origin or blend bars
 - e. On all matters relating to the awards the Grand Jury's decision is final.

The Grand Jury follows strict procedures and rules, which are published separately on our website.

Samples

29. It is the responsibility of the entrant to ensure the prompt and safe delivery of all entries. Keep in mind that products will also be judged on appearance, so protective packaging is advised.
30. Products received after the start of judging will be judged at the organisers discretion only.
31. Whilst the Awards organiser will take great care to ensure safe keeping of all entries throughout judging, the organiser, its staff and associated partners or assistants cannot be held responsible for the condition of any product served during judging.
32. No entries can be returned to entrants. Samples will be disposed of with care and with sensitivity to food waste.
33. The organisers may conduct random retail purchase of the winners to ensure that products offered for sale are of the same quality as products submitted for the competition by entrants. The Awards reserves the right to rescind prizes if purchased products are of significantly lower quality or use significantly different ingredients from the submitted entries, as determined by the permanent Grand Jury.
34. Winners may be asked to provide further samples, photos and other material for use in publicity purposes.

Use of Awards prizes

35. The International Chocolate Awards logo is protected by copyright.
36. The awards Prize logos can only be used on or related to the awarded product and must refer to the year of the Award. Usage terms for prize and other logos and certificates will be sent to winners with artwork.
37. Misuse of the awarded prizes will result in penalties or barring from future competitions.