



National Folk Festival

Jackson, Mississippi

nationalfolkfestival.com

83rd National Folk Festival Food Vendor Guidelines

The 83rd National Folk Festival is returning to Jackson, Mississippi, for the second year of its three-year residency November 13 – 15, 2026. The festival is now accepting vendor applications for the festival food courts. Downtown Jackson will come alive for three days of FREE outdoor music, non-stop dancing, family activities, storytelling, crafts demonstrations, parades, and so much more—don't miss out on being part of this transformative cultural experience. Vendor applications are available via the festival website.

The National Folk Festival seeks food vendors that can provide high quality, diverse, efficient, friendly service to thousands of festivalgoers. The festival features a wide variety of regional foods, as well as classic festival fare that will take diners on a culinary journey around Mississippi, the United States, and the world.

Important Dates

Applications Open	April 14, 2026
Early Bird Application Deadline	June 12, 2026
Early Bird Notification of Acceptance by Email	June 26, 2026
Final Application Deadline	July 10, 2016
Final Notification of Acceptance by Email	July 24, 2026
Contracts sent out by	August 7, 2026
Deadline for fully-executed Contract and Vendor Fees	September 4, 2026
Cancellation for Refund	September 18, 2026
Participation Details Emailed to Vendors	October 30, 2026
83 rd National Folk Festival	November 13–15, 2026

Application Process

Applying vendors are required to submit the following. Vendor spots are **open until July 10, 2026**.

1. A completed and successfully submitted food vendor application
2. At least one (1) current photograph of their food vending operation
3. At least three (3) current photographs of their food and/or specialty beverage
4. A non-refundable \$35 application fee must be submitted with your online application by credit card



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Applicants will receive email confirmation of their successful submission. If you DO NOT receive a confirmation, your application was not successfully submitted and therefore will not be considered. Festival organizers may request clarification. Failure to provide requested clarification is grounds for rejection.

Applications do not guarantee acceptance. Vendors must apply each year; acceptance in a previous year does not guarantee acceptance in future years.

Selection Process

The number of food vendors selected for the 83rd National Folk Festival will depend on the final site design layout. The Festival anticipates that with good weather, approximately 80,000 individuals will attend over the course of the weekend and that between 25 and 30 vendor spots will be needed to meet the demands of festival crowds.

Your application will be reviewed by a committee based on the following criteria:

- Product quality & uniqueness
- Previous experience serving festivals and/or large crowds
- Overall presentation
- Business location (local/regional vendor)
- Productivity (ability to serve large numbers of customers in a short period of time)

Food vendors will be chosen from the following food vendor categories:

- Food specialties from across Mississippi & the Deep South
- International flavors from the state & region
- Snacks / Desserts
- "Fair" foods
- Other main dishes
- Specialty beverages (limited to 3)

The Festival may limit specific types of food or beverage to ensure a wide selection of items for festival-goers.

NOTE: No alcohol sales may be sold through festival food vendors. Only non-alcoholic beverages may be sold by individual food vendors.

Applicants who apply by the posted deadlines will receive notification by email regarding acceptance or rejection no later than **July 24, 2026**. The National Folk Festival reserves the right to deny any application without explanation.



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Food Vending Hours of Operation

Friday: 5:00pm to 10:00pm
Saturday: 11:00am to 10:00pm
Sunday: 11:00am to 6:30pm

Note: Vending hours may vary slightly from overall Festival hours, depending on assigned food vending location. Final hours will be confirmed in contract.

- Booths must be staffed and serving to the public during all contracted hours of operation.
- The festival goes on rain or shine unless extraordinary weather presents a safety issue. All vendors are expected to be open during the hours listed above unless they are notified by Festival personnel.
- Food vendors may continue to sell up to a ½ hour after the last performance at your location.

Vendor Fee Pricing & Payment

Food Vendor Space Fees

Food vendor space is allocated by the frontage foot. Standard booth spaces are 10 frontage feet and 20 frontage feet. **All food vendor spaces are 20 feet deep.** Spaces lease for \$36 per frontage foot. See chart below for easy reference.

For food trucks, frontage foot allocation is based on the bumper to bumper length plus three feet.

For trailers, frontage foot allocation is the total length including tongue, plus three feet.

For food operations that have a unique footprint that can't fit in these dimensions it may be possible to negotiate a special space allocation and fee.

The below fees are for all three festival days, Friday – Sunday, November 13 - 15, 2026

Frontage Feet	Fee
10	\$360
20	\$720
21	\$756
22	\$792
23	\$828



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(cont.)

24	\$864
25	\$900
26	\$936
27	\$972
28	\$1,008
29	\$1,044
30	\$1,080
31	\$1,116
32	\$1,152

Additional fees that **may** apply:

- City of Jackson food truck permit, \$300
- Mississippi State Dept. of Health temporary permit, typically:
 - \$40 for non-hazardous food
 - \$198 for all other food preparations

Electricity

The first 20 amp/120V circuit of electricity is included in the basic vendor fee. Any additional electrical service carries an additional fee based on the type and amount. Additional needs or requests for electricity beyond this base amount must be included in the application. **Use of generators are not allowed.**

Vendors selected to participate in the 83rd National Folk Festival will be responsible for providing their own power cords and power distribution from the service connection to and within their vending space. The National Electrical Code requires that all circuits provided by the Festival be equipped with a ground fault interrupt. Vendors are responsible for insuring that their equipment and power cables are compatible with ground fault interrupt circuits.

See chart below for a list of standard electrical hookups and charges:

Frontage Feet	Fee
20 amp 120V (standard 120V plug)	\$25 per line
20 amp 120V (NEMA 6-20)	\$75 per line
20 amp 120/240 twist lock (NEMA L14-20)	\$125 per line
30 amp 240V twist lock (NEMA L14-30)	\$175 per line
50 amp 120/240 Cal. Std twist lock (CS63-65C)	\$200 per line
6 gauge 4 conductor 50 Amp cable (Bare ends)	\$215 per line
50 amp 240 range plug (NEMA 6-50 or NEMA 14-50)	\$215 per line



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Refunds

- No refunds for cancellations after September 18, 2026
- No refunds for inclement weather
- No refunds for failure to pass health inspection

Booth Operation Guidelines

Vendor Placement & Space Details

- The Festival will assign booth locations to each vendor. Please understand that food vendor placement and the location of Festival food courts are subject to change if there are changes to the Festival site.
- No space will be held without both a completed contract and full payment of the contract fee.
- Vendors may not trade, switch, or set up in another area, without approval from the Festival.
- Parking spaces will be provided for a maximum of two support vehicles.
 - These are to be used for refrigeration and/or dry goods storage. Support vehicle parking will be in the vicinity of the food court to which you are assigned but not necessarily adjacent.
- Vendors are responsible for providing staff. Parking for staff is the responsibility of the vendor.
- Vendors are responsible for providing push carts/hand trucks for moving supplies onsite, including any beverages and ice purchased from the Festival.

Booth Operation

- All vendors must undergo a health inspection by the Mississippi State Health Department onsite on Friday morning, November 13, 2026, before they will be allowed to start vending.
 - Food trucks who have a current valid health permit will not be required to pay for a temporary permit
 - All tent vendors and food trucks without a current permit will be required to pass an onsite inspection and pay for a temporary license.
 - Failure to pass inspection or pay your health permit fee will be grounds for expulsion from the Festival
- Vendors must restrict all activities to their booth space (paid-for frontage feet and a depth 20').
- Condiment push carts and beverage coolers are the only things allowed in front of food vendor booths, and must remain within the boundaries of the vendors' assigned space.



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- Vendors are not permitted to provide free sampling of food or beverage items.
- Vendors must maintain a separate service line for artists and staff performers and staff. Festival staff and performers should be given expedited service in taking and fulfilling their orders. The festival will provide signage for this line. Food vendors **MUST** communicate to the Festival Event Operations Manager how the vendor will provide a separate line for artists and staff.
- Vendors must accept festival scrip tickets (“festival bucks”) from artists and staff for which you will be reimbursed by the festival after the event.
- Use of generators is not permitted. Electrical connections will be provided by the festival.
- Playing music from your booth is prohibited.
- Vendor is responsible for a clean booth area, free of debris.
- Vendors are responsible for providing their own nighttime lighting.
- Vendors may not sell National Folk Festival branded merchandise.

Booth Coverings

All booth coverings must follow festival guidelines for both fire compliance and wind safety. Vendor-owned tents must be approved by the festival before use.

Fire and wind safety compliance:

- All tents must comply with the State of Mississippi and City of Jackson Fire regulations, using flame-retardant materials meeting Fire Department codes.
- Vendors bringing their own canopy/tent need to provide proof that the canopy/tent is compliant with state/county/city regulations for flammability. Tarps are not an acceptable canopy.
- If you are accepted as a festival vendor and are using your own tent, you must submit photographic proof to the Food Vendor Coordinator that your tent meets the fireproofing requirement prior to the signing of your contract. This is independent of providing proof to the Fire Marshal at the time of your onsite inspection.
- If a vendor is not able to provide a fire-safe tent, they may rent one from the festival at cost.
- All tents must meet specifications for wind safety. Pop-up / accordion style frame tents are not allowed. Tents must be weighted or staked (if permitted) properly.

Tent rentals:

- Vendors needing a rental tent **MUST** rent directly from the festival. Rental tents and tent vendors **NOT** approved by the festival will **NOT** be allowed access to the festival site.
- The festival will reserve your tent and arrange its setup.



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- Your cost will be a straight pass-through and you will be billed by the festival as a part of your final settling of accounts.
- Common tent sizes and fees are:
 - 10' x 10' = \$270
 - 10' x 20' = \$380
 - 10' x 30' = \$520
 - 20' x 20' = \$620

Menu & Signage

Only menu items approved by the Festival Food Vendor Coordinator and by the Department of Health may be sold at the Festival.

- Vendors must list on their application ALL items they wish to sell. Items not approved may not be sold and must be removed from the vendor's booth.
- If vendors wish to sell non-food items, approval will be given by the Festival Food Vendor Coordinator on a case-by-case basis.
- National Folk Festival branded merchandise is not allowed.
- In the interest of presenting as wide a selection of food and menu items as possible, the Festival may limit a specific type of food or beverage item.
- Vendors are not granted exclusive rights to sell any particular item.
- Changes/additions are only allowed with pre-approval by the Festival prior to September 4, 2026.
- In an effort to maintain a professional level appearance and feel among all vendors, all signage and menu boards must be of standard condition. Hand-written signage will be permitted on a case-by-case basis, and must look nice and be readable. Vendors must request permission to use hand-written signage and if granted permission, vendors must not alter their signs/menus to items that deviate from what was approved in their acceptance into the Festival.
- Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, and Vegan items should be listed on a second menu sheet to make it easy for people with dietary restrictions to locate these menu items.
- If the vendor serves raw or under-cooked animal foods then they need to have posted, *"Consuming raw or undercooked animal foods may increase your risk of contracting a foodborne illness, especially if you have certain medical conditions."*
- All menu signage must include pricing and must be easy to read.

Marketing

All Festival food vendors will receive the following marketing benefits:

- A listing on the Festival's website, with a link to the vendor's website or social media (if submitted).
- A listing in the Festival's official program guide



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Taxes & Insurance

Taxes

Vendors are responsible for all local, state, and federal taxes.

- Vendor acknowledges and understands that they are responsible for sales and use tax and shall in no way hold the City of Jackson, the State of Mississippi, or its representative responsible for any type of permits other than for the Festival itself. Vendor is responsible for the acts, and all costs associated with, any and all of its employees and volunteers. No Vendor shall hold itself out as an Agent of the City of Jackson.
- Vendor retains 100% of their sales but are **required** to submit Mississippi State Sales Taxes to the festival organizers, for remittance to the Mississippi State Department of Revenue, prior to leaving the event.
- Vendors who fail to submit taxes to the festival organizers prior to leaving the event will be barred from future vending opportunities with the National Folk Festival, Jackson.

Insurance

Vendors must provide a certificate of insurance in the amount of \$1,000,000 (one million dollars), no later than **September 18, 2026**. The certificate must include language naming indemnified parties as additional insured as respects to the National Folk Festival November 13-15, 2026.

- Indemnified parties as additional insured on the contract of insurance should be listed as follows: "City of Jackson, National Council for Traditional Arts, and all producing partners, sponsors and affiliates of the National Folk Festival."
- The festival disclaims any authority of control over the operation of vendors. Vendors assume all rights and responsibilities for the conduct of their operations including, but not limited to: obtaining liability and general coverage insurance for vendor-related activities adhering to all local and state ordinances and regulations.
- The festival does not have separate vendor coverage under any insurance it may maintain.

Thank you for reading through all of the food vendor guidelines!

If you have any questions about these guidelines or the application process, please email food@nationalfolkfestival.com