

# RESTAURANT AND CHEF AWARDS

## [SUBMIT A RECOMMENDATION HERE](#)

Established in 1991, the James Beard Foundation's Restaurant and Chef Awards honor members of the American food, beverage, and hospitality industries who demonstrate excellence in their respective fields. Winners show exceptional talent and creativity in their craft and commendable leadership among their colleagues and peers. The James Beard Foundation is dedicated to promoting a strong, safe, inclusive, ethical food community, and these Awards reflect those values.

**ENTRY  
DEADLINE:  
11.30.2021  
11:59:00 PM  
Eastern Time**

## **Open Call for Recommendations**

Anyone can submit a chef or restaurant for consideration during the online open call for recommendations from October 12 through November 30, 2021.

Equity, Transparency, Respect and Integrity drive our work at the James Beard Foundation. We have made a lot of changes in the past year, and we are requiring all Awards entrants to provide a short write-up or audio/visual recording to demonstrate that their work aligns with one or more of our **values** and Awards **mission** pillars. We encourage entrants to write and speak in their own words in highlighting their commitment to the mission. The statement will be reviewed for content and alignment, and not for language fluency, video quality, or production value. *More information is available on the entry form.*

If you are entering on behalf of someone else, please write and/or speak in your own words, how that entrant is aligned with one or more of the values and Awards mission pillars.

There is no entry fee.

## **Judges and Judging**

The Restaurant and Chef Awards voting body consists of members who have the ability to evaluate chefs and restaurants independently and are divided evenly among the **Award regions**. Members include food and beverage writers, critics, editors, book authors, media producers, food studies scholars, and culinary instructors. Others who could also qualify include food studies scholars, former chefs, restaurateurs, and diners from other professional backgrounds with knowledge of the restaurant scene in their region.

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In addition to the **subcommittee**, the Restaurant and Chef voting body consists of two categories of judges: **Scouts**, who are responsible for surfacing chefs and restaurants far and wide for consideration, and **Tasting Panelists**, responsible for tasting and scoring all Nominees based on a number of criteria, ultimately determining the winners. As of 2022, previous winners of the Restaurant and Chef Awards do not automatically vote. Winners from the previous three (3) years can be selected by the subcommittee to serve as judges.

The subcommittee produces a ballot with approximately 20 semifinalists in each category. These semifinalists are announced in late winter. This ballot is distributed online to the voting body—committee members and judges (including Scouts and Tasting Panelists). All votes count equally and are tabulated by an independent accounting firm. The five semifinalists with the highest number of votes become the nominees.

The nominees in each category are announced in spring.

A judging form with nominees is distributed to all Restaurant and Chef Subcommittee members and Tasting Panelists who visit restaurants in their regions and score their experiences on a number of criteria. Winners are announced at the Awards ceremony in June.

[Click here](#) for more information on the voting process for Restaurant and Chef Awards.

## Rules of Eligibility

1. No Award winner may be placed on the ballot in the same category for five years after winning. The ineligibility period begins the year after the award was presented. Award winners remain eligible in categories they have not won.
2. Candidates, nominees, and winners do not have to have previously cooked at or provided a service to the James Beard Foundation or James Beard Foundation's events.
3. Candidates, nominees, and winners do not have to have raised money for the James Beard Foundation.
4. Candidates for restaurant awards must be restaurants that are open to the public and that offer seating.
5. A chef cannot be a nominee in more than one chef award category.
6. A restaurant and its chef may be nominated for Best New Restaurant and Emerging Chef in the same year.
7. A restaurant, its chef, and its owner may not be nominated for Outstanding Chef, Outstanding Restaurant, and Outstanding Restaurateur in the same year.
8. A restaurant's chef and its pastry chef can both be candidates and nominees in the same year. Their restaurant may also be a candidate and nominee in another category.
9. A Best New Restaurant and its regional chef may both be a nominee in the same year.

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10. A Regional Chef and the restaurant for which they work may both be candidates and nominees, except that a restaurant may not be nominated for Outstanding Restaurant in the same year that its chef is nominated for Best Regional Chef. A restaurant may be nominated for Outstanding Service or Outstanding Wine Service the same year its chef is nominated for Best Regional Chef.
11. A restaurant can only be a nominee in one of these three national restaurant awards categories in the same year: Outstanding Restaurant, Outstanding Wine Service, and Outstanding Service.
12. A chef may not be a candidate or nominee in two different regions in the same year.
13. Allegations of criminal, unethical behavior, or behavior determined to be detrimental or contrary to the integrity and fair perception of the Awards may be cause for disqualification and removal from the nominating ballot or final ballot.

## CATEGORIES

Winning entries will align with the Awards mission statement and the values of the James Beard Foundation, though excellence in food remains key in these awards. The Restaurant and Chef voting body acknowledges and recognizes disruptions that have occurred over the last 18+ months due to the pandemic. Please note, only candidates who are active and whose business(es) are open will be considered.

1. **Outstanding Restaurateur Award:** A restaurateur who uses their establishment(s) as a vehicle for building community, demonstrates creativity in entrepreneurship, integrity in restaurant operations, and is making efforts to create a sustainable work culture. Eligible candidates must have been in the restaurant business for at least five years and they must not have been nominated for a James Beard Foundation chef award in the past three years. The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning restaurateur or, in the case of a pair or team of restaurateurs who are generally understood to be equal partners in the endeavor, restaurateurs.
2. **Outstanding Chef Award:** A chef who sets high culinary standards and has served as a positive example for other food professionals. Eligible candidates must have been working as a chef for three or more consecutive years. The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef or, in the case of a pair or team of chefs who are understood to be equal partners in the endeavor, chefs.
3. **Outstanding Restaurant Award:** A restaurant that demonstrates consistent excellence in food, atmosphere, hospitality, and operations while contributing positively to its broader community. Eligible candidates must have been in business for five or more consecutive years, not including any time closed due to the pandemic. A certificate is given to the winning restaurant and the medallion, and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal owner, or General Manager, or Chef, at the discretion of the restaurant.

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4. **Emerging Chef:** A chef who displays exceptional talent, character, and leadership ability, and who is likely to make a significant impact in years to come. No age limit is required. The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef.
5. **Best New Restaurant:** A restaurant opened in 2020 or 2021 that already demonstrates excellence in cuisine and hospitality and seems likely to make a significant impact in years to come. A certificate is given to the winning restaurant, and the medallion and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal owner, or General Manager, or Chef(s), at the discretion of the restaurant.
6. **Outstanding Pastry Chef:** A pastry chef or a chef who makes desserts, pastries, or breads served as part of a meal. Candidate demonstrates exceptional skills and can be affiliated with any food business and does not need a brick-and-mortar presence. Eligible candidates must have been working as a pastry chef or chef who makes desserts for the past three years. The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef or, in the case of a pair or team of chefs who are generally understood to be equal partners in the endeavor, chefs.
7. **Outstanding Baker:** A baker of breads, pastries, or desserts who displays exceptional skill. Eligible candidates must consistently sell goods directly to the public, but do not need a brick-and-mortar presence. Eligible candidates must have been working as a pastry chef or baker for the past three years. A certificate is given to the winning restaurant and the medallion and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal owner or General Manager, or Service Director, at the discretion of the restaurant.
8. **Outstanding Hospitality:** A restaurant that demonstrates consistent and excellent hospitality and service to its dining community, while also making efforts to provide a sustainable work culture. Eligible candidates have been in operation for five or more years.
9. **Outstanding Wine Program:** A restaurant or bar that demonstrates excellence in wine service through a carefully considered wine list and a well-informed approach to helping customers choose and drink wine. The candidate makes efforts to create and foster a diverse portfolio of wines and wine team members. A certificate is given to the winning restaurant and the medallion and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal Wine Director or Lead Sommelier, at the discretion of the restaurant.
10. **Outstanding Bar Program:** A restaurant or bar that demonstrates exceptional care and skill in the selection, preparation, and serving of cocktails, spirits, and/or beer. Candidate makes efforts to foster a diverse portfolio of brands and team members. A certificate is given to the winning restaurant and the medallion and a certificate are given to the restaurant's principal Beverage Director or Lead Mixologist, at the discretion of the restaurant.

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11. **Best Chefs (by region):** Chefs who set high standards in their culinary skills and leadership abilities, and who are making efforts to help create a sustainable work culture in their respective regions. A candidate may be from any kind of dining establishment but must have been working as a chef in the region for at least three years. The medallion and a certificate are given to the winning chef or, in the case of a pair or team of chefs who are generally understood to be equal partners in the endeavor, chefs.

## REGIONS

1. California
2. Great Lakes (IL, IN, MI, OH)
3. Mid-Atlantic (DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA)
4. Midwest (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD, WI)
5. Mountain (CO, ID, MT, UT, WY)
6. New York State
7. Northeast (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT)
8. Northwest & Pacific (AK, HI, OR, WA)
9. Southeast (GA, KY, NC, SC, TN, WV)
10. South (AL, AR, FL, LA, MS, PR)
11. Southwest (AZ, NM, NV, OK)
12. Texas

*The definition of the regions may be modified from time to time as appropriate by the Subcommittee, with the prior approval of the Awards Committee and the James Beard Foundation.*

13. **America's Classics** (six to be awarded annually): A locally and independently owned restaurant with timeless appeal, beloved in its region for food that reflects the character and cultural traditions of its community. The establishment must have been in existence for at least 10 years. Each year six winners are chosen by the Restaurant and Chef Awards Committee. Awarded regions alternate every year.