



RULES AND REGULATIONS CHEF BALFEGÓ 2026

CHEF BALFEGÓ', IX BALFEGÓ BLUEFIN TUNA INTERNATIONAL GASTRONOMY COMPETITION

Balfegó announces the **IX edition of CHEF BALFEGÓ**, its international bluefin tuna gastronomy competition, which is open to professional chefs from across Europe.

The final of the competition will be held on **30 November 2026** at **LE CORDON BLEU in Madrid**. The deadline for entries is **30 April 2026**.

If you have any questions or encounter any issues with your application, please contact Balfegó by email at concurso@grupbalfego.com.

We look forward to receiving entries from chefs across Europe who wish to take part in what has become one of the leading gastronomic competitions dedicated to bluefin tuna.

REQUIREMENTS

Contestants must be active professional chefs. In this edition of CHEF BALFEGÓ 2026, chefs from **any European country** are eligible to submit their proposals. The restaurant where the candidate works must be located in Europe. If two chefs from the same restaurant submit recipes and proposals, only one will be eligible to participate.

Minimum age of participants: 22 years old.

Participants are not eligible to take part in the competition:

- Chefs who are part of the kitchen teams of jury members.
- Chefs who have been finalists in either of the two previous editions of CHEF BALFEGÓ.
- Chefs from the team...

EUROPEAN SEMIFINAL

Candidates from all European cities, with the exception of Spain, who submit their applications will be considered for selection to compete in a European

semifinal, which will take place in a European city to be determined between September and October 2026.

During this semifinal, participants will present only one dish to the jury, prepared using the part of the tuna of their choice. However, as part of their application, they must submit two recipes: one featuring tuna loin and another featuring a different part of the tuna of their choice. This is because, if selected for the Grand Final in Madrid, they will be required to prepare both dishes.

At the European semifinal, the jury will select eight winners who will compete in the CHEF BALFEGÓ final in Spain alongside four Spanish chefs. In the final, participants will present two dishes to the Spanish jury: the first prepared with tuna loin and the second using the part of the tuna of their choice.

The names of the jury members for both competitions will be announced shortly on Balfegó's website and social media channels, and will also be communicated directly to the selected chefs.

DISHES TO BE DEVELOPED

The dishes to be developed in the two phases of the competition must have a single compulsory ingredient, Balfegó Bluefin Tuna.

- The first dish to be prepared must be made with tuna loin, the rest of the ingredients will be of free choice of the participants.
- The second dish can be made with any part of the tuna. Only chefs who present proof in their registration form that the dish for the competition has been made with Balfegó bluefin tuna will be able to enter this competition.
- In addition to attaching the receipt or proof of purchase to participate, those selected must prove that they have continued to purchase Balfegó Bluefin Tuna in their restaurant in the following months until the final (we recommend that you keep the receipts in a safe place).

The dishes to be made must be presented previously detailed in writing on the official competition form that can be found on the Balfegó website in the section dedicated to CHEF BALFEGÓ.

The form must indicate all the equipment that the chef needs to prepare the dish on the day of the competition, as well as the parts of the Balfegó tuna and the quantity needed for its preparation.

In the form there is a section in which you must send a photo of the dish in jpg format with the highest possible quality and the QR code that is given when you buy any piece of Balfegó Bluefin Tuna to prove that the dish has been made with Balfegó Tuna.

**Entries that include dark, out-of-focus or poor-quality photos will be discarded and will not be eligible to participate.*

European Semifinal – Paris, October 26, 2026

- The dish may be prepared using any part of the tuna. Only chefs who submit proof with their application that the competition dish has been prepared using Balfegó Bluefin Tuna will be eligible to enter the competition.

Spanish Final – Le Cordon Bleu Madrid, November 30, 2026

- The first dish must be prepared using tuna loin. All other ingredients are at the participants' discretion.
- The second dish may be prepared using any part of the tuna. Only chefs who submit proof with their application that their competition dishes have been prepared using Balfegó Bluefin Tuna will be eligible to enter the competition.

In addition to submitting proof of purchase as part of their application, selected chefs must demonstrate that they have continued purchasing Balfegó Bluefin Tuna for their restaurant in the following months leading up to the final. We recommend keeping the relevant product purchase invoices and the QR-code labels supplied with each piece of tuna ordered.

The dishes must be described in detail in writing in the official competition application form, available on Balfegó's website in the section dedicated to CHEF BALFEGÓ.

The form must specify all the equipment required by the chef to prepare the dishes on the day of the competition, as well as the Balfegó tuna cuts and quantities needed for their preparation.

The form also includes a section where participants must upload photographs of their dishes in JPG format, at the highest possible quality, together with the QR code provided when purchasing any piece of Balfegó Bluefin Tuna, as proof that the dishes have been prepared using Balfegó tuna.

Applications containing dark, out-of-focus or low-quality photographs will be rejected, and the candidates will not be eligible to participate.

RULES AND STRUCTURE OF THE COMPETITION

Presentation (Recipe and Photograph)

European Semifinal – Paris, October 26, 2026

Contestants will undergo an initial selection round based on the two recipes and photographs submitted through the registration form before April 30, 2026. Dishes that are considered too simple or inadequately presented will not receive the jury's approval and will not proceed to the next stage.

The two dishes submitted in the registration form will be the ones prepared in the final if the contestant is selected. The names of the participants advancing

to the next stage will be published on Balfegó's website, announced on its social media channels and communicated by email to all registered contestants.

Spanish Final – Le Cordon Bleu Madrid, November 30, 2026

Contestants will undergo an initial selection round based on the two recipes and photographs submitted through the registration form before April 30, 2026. Dishes that are considered too simple or inadequately presented will not receive the jury's approval and will not proceed to the next stage.

The two dishes submitted in the registration form will be the ones prepared in the final if the contestant is selected. The names of the participants advancing to the next stage will be published on Balfegó's website, announced on its social media channels and communicated by email to all registered contestants.

Competition

European Semifinal – Paris, October 26, 2026

Contestants will have one hour to prepare each dish. Participants must prepare their proposed dish for the six members of the jury, as well as one additional dish to be photographed by the attending press. In other words, they must prepare a total of seven dishes.

The dishes will be presented to the jury in stages, with a few minutes between each presentation.

The eight finalists will not be announced until 8:00 p.m. on the same day, during the awards ceremony.

Spanish Final – Le Cordon Bleu Madrid, November 30, 2026

Contestants will have one hour to prepare each dish. Participants must prepare their proposed first and second courses for the six members of the jury, as well as one additional dish to be photographed by the attending press. In other words, they must prepare a total of seven dishes.

The dishes will be presented to the jury in stages, with a few minutes between each presentation.

The three winners will not be announced until 8:00 p.m. on the same day, during the awards ceremony.

PRODUCTS AND PREPARATION

European Semifinal – Le Cordon Bleu Paris, October 26, 2026

The ingredients used to prepare the dishes may be inspected by the judges before cooking begins. Chefs who fail to comply with the rules may be disqualified, or any products or preparations that do not meet the following requirements may be removed:

- The proposed recipe must be prepared using Balfegó Bluefin Tuna. Each chef may choose whichever part or parts of the tuna they prefer.
- All ingredients, including vegetables and other produce, may be brought clean but must not be pre-cut or shaped.

- Fish may be brought scaled and meat deboned, with the pieces cleaned and ready for cooking. Balfegó Bluefin Tuna will be available to all chefs, provided they request it in advance.
- If basic doughs, stocks or broths are used, they may be brought ready-made or almost finished.
- Side dishes requiring long cooking times may also be brought partially or fully cooked in advance.
- Ingredients may be weighed and portioned in advance.

Spanish Final – Le Cordon Bleu Madrid, November 30, 2026

The ingredients used to prepare the dishes may be inspected by the judges before cooking begins. Chefs who fail to comply with the rules may be disqualified, or any products or preparations that do not meet the following requirements may be removed:

- The first proposed recipe must be prepared using Balfegó Bluefin Tuna loin. The second recipe must also be prepared using Balfegó Bluefin Tuna, but each chef may choose the part or parts of the tuna they wish to use.
- All ingredients, including vegetables and other produce, may be brought clean but must not be pre-cut or shaped.
- Fish may be brought scaled and meat deboned, with the pieces cleaned and ready for cooking. Balfegó Bluefin Tuna will be available to all chefs, provided they request it in advance.
- If basic doughs, stocks or broths are used, they may be brought ready-made or almost finished.
- Side dishes requiring long cooking times may also be brought partially or fully cooked in advance.
- Ingredients may be weighed and portioned in advance.

THE JURY

The jury, chaired by Martín Berasategui, will consist of six highly respected professionals, including chefs and one of Spain's leading food critics. The names of the jury members will be announced shortly.

JUDGING CRITERIA

The following criteria will be taken into account when evaluating the dishes and awarding points:

1. Appealing, aesthetic and original visual presentation.
2. Balance in appearance, colour and flavour.
3. Respect for the product, its flavour and its colour.
4. Correct handling of all ingredients used in the dish, including temperature, cooking, cutting and presentation.
5. Dish names must accurately reflect what the dishes actually are.
6. Non-edible elements must not be presented on the plates.
7. Cleanliness throughout the preparation and completion of the challenge, including plates, utensils, machinery and workstations.

SCORING AND EVALUATION

Total score: 100 points

- Flavour, aroma and texture: 40 points
- Presentation: 30 points
- Balance of ingredients: 15 points
- Preparation and proper handling of the product: 15 points

GROUNDINGS FOR DISQUALIFICATION

1. Presenting another chef's dish or an obvious copy of another chef's creation.
2. Arriving late for the competition.
3. Publishing, presenting or disclosing by any means, including social media, the competition dish, its photograph, the wording of its recipe or its name.
4. Contestants must use the tableware provided by the competition organisers and may not use any alternative tableware.
5. Inappropriate behaviour or disrespect towards other contestants, members of the organising team or the jury.

KITCHEN ASSISTANTS

Participants may be assisted by a kitchen assistant from the same restaurant where the contestant works. Having an assistant is neither compulsory nor necessary. Assistants may only perform the following duties:

- Preparing equipment, machinery and ingredients.
- Cleaning the workstation, utensils and machinery before and after the challenge.
- Basic handling of the ingredients used in the recipe, including washing and cleaning. Cutting the ingredients is the contestant's responsibility.
- Switching equipment on and off, keeping track of timings, controlling temperatures and placing items in any equipment used to prepare the different components of the dish.
- Assisting with the preparation of sauces or stocks, including straining and blending. Under no circumstances may the assistant combine the ingredients to make them.
- Assisting the contestant with plating by following the contestant's instructions. Under no circumstances may the assistant decide how the dish should be plated, question the contestant's decisions or offer advice on plating.
- Any member of the jury or organising team may reprimand assistants who fail to comply with the rules and remove them from the kitchens if they believe the rules are being deliberately breached. Ignorance of the rules is not an excuse for non-compliance.
- The jury and organising team will address any questions contestants or assistants may have regarding these rules.

Attire

All contestants must attend the final competition wearing the official competition chef jacket, which will be provided on the day of the event together with an apron.

Assistants must bring their own chef jackets in impeccable, clean condition. They will also be given an apron, which they must wear at all times.

A neat appearance and appropriate personal hygiene are required when taking part in the competition.

IMAGE RIGHTS

All contestants must sign a document confirming that they voluntarily grant image rights for all video footage and photographs taken throughout the competition, from registration until its conclusion and the announcement of the three winners.

Balfegó Grup may freely use these images to promote and publicise the Balfegó Bluefin Tuna Gastronomy Competition through any of its own or external communication channels.

The competition will also be filmed as a television programme and broadcast on Balfegó's YouTube channel, as well as on other television channels, audiovisual media or digital platforms that Balfegó Grup considers appropriate, without any restrictions.

Balfegó undertakes to respect the contestants and use their images in good faith.

By signing this agreement, participants accept the filming conditions for the television programme, which will require:

1. Several hours of filming at the contestant's restaurant and at outdoor locations in their city or town of residence.
2. A trip to Balfegó's facilities in Tarragona to film scenes at the tuna pools, swim with the tuna if participants wish, and observe the processes involved in preparing tuna for commercialisation. Depending on the chef's city of origin, filming and travel to Tarragona and back may require one or two days.
3. The time required to travel to Madrid and take part in the competition, which will last a maximum of eight hours.
4. Attendance at the awards ceremony, which will take place in Madrid on the afternoon or evening of the same day as the competition.
5. Granting permission for the recipes of both competition dishes to be used.
6. Photography and video recording of the competing dishes.

PRIZES

The winners will receive the following prizes:

First Prize

- A trip to Japan for two people to discover the country's rich gastronomic and cultural heritage, with a flexible itinerary. The prize includes flights and six nights' accommodation for the winner and a fellow chef from the same restaurant.
- €6,000 in cash to enjoy meals at Japan's finest restaurants. This is optional and the winner may use the money as they wish.
- Balfegó Experience: A trip for two people, including transport and accommodation, to Barcelona to dine at our Tunateca restaurant and to L'Ametlla de Mar (Tarragona) to enjoy the Tuna Tour experience.
- Publication of the winning recipe on Balfegó's website, including a photograph of the dish, the chef, the recipe and a description of the chef, alongside the finest tuna dishes created by the country's leading chefs, in the collection being continually developed on Balfegó's website.
- Publication of a feature about the winner on Balfegó's website, highlighting their professional career and the creation of the winning dishes.
- The "CHEF BALFEGÓ" Balfegó Bluefin Tuna Gastronomy Competition trophy.
- Travel and accommodation in Madrid to compete in the final.
- **Additional prizes courtesy of the competition sponsors.**

Second Prize

- €3,000 in cash.
- Balfegó Experience: A trip for two people, including transport and accommodation, to Barcelona to dine at our Tunateca restaurant and to L'Ametlla de Mar (Tarragona) to enjoy the Tuna Tour experience.
- Publication of the winning recipe on Balfegó's website, including a photograph of the dish, the chef, the recipe and a description of the chef, alongside the finest tuna dishes created by the country's leading chefs in the collection being continually developed on Balfegó's website.
- Publication of a feature about the winner on Balfegó's website, highlighting their professional career and the creation of the winning dishes.
- The "CHEF BALFEGÓ" Balfegó Bluefin Tuna Gastronomy Competition trophy.
- **Additional prizes courtesy of the competition sponsors.**

Third Prize

- €1,000 in cash.

- Balfegó Experience: A trip for two people, including transport and accommodation, to Barcelona to dine at our Tunateca restaurant and to L'Ametlla de Mar (Tarragona) to enjoy the Tuna Tour experience.
- Publication of the winning recipe on Balfegó's website, including a photograph of the dish, the chef, the recipe and a description of the chef, alongside the finest tuna dishes created by the country's leading chefs in the collection being continually developed on Balfegó's website.
- Publication of a feature about the winner on Balfegó's website, highlighting their professional career and the creation of the winning dishes.
- The "CHEF BALFEGÓ" Balfegó Bluefin Tuna Gastronomy Competition trophy.
- Additional prizes courtesy of the competition sponsors.

Balfegó Experience – Scheduling Conditions

The three winners must mutually agree on a date to enjoy their respective Balfegó Experience, coordinating their availability with Balfegó. The experience date will be arranged by mutual agreement to ensure the best possible experience for all winners.

Winners of the Semifinals

- Publication of a feature about the winner on Balfegó's website, highlighting their professional career and the creation of the winning dishes.
- Audiovisual feature.
- The opportunity to compete for the other prizes available in the international final.
- Travel and accommodation in Madrid.

AWARDS CEREMONY

A grand awards ceremony will take place at 8:00 p.m. on the same day as the competition, during which the winners will be announced and presented with their prizes.

Leading figures from the culinary world, prominent food journalists and key personalities from the hospitality and gastronomy sectors will be invited to the gala.

The event will feature a spectacular gastronomic showcase starring Balfegó Bluefin Tuna, which all guests will be able to taste paired with a selection of outstanding wines.

Previous editions of the awards ceremony have established themselves as some of the most significant events on the gastronomic calendar.