

ÓBIDOS

FESTIVAL
INTERNACIONAL

Chocolate



RULES

**COMPETITION
CHOCOLATE
RISING STAR 2026**

INTERNACIONAL CHOCOLATE **20** FESTIVAL OF ÓBIDOS **26**

CHOCOLATE RISING STAR COMPETITION

Over the last few editions, the Óbidos International Chocolate Festival has established itself as one of the most creative themed events in Portugal, transforming chocolate into settings, characters, and sensory experiences through imaginative worlds ranging from the fantastic to the contemporary. This continuous evolution has always maintained a common thread: the ability to surprise through the fusion of gastronomy, imagination, and spectacle.

In 2026, **from March 6 to 22**, under the theme of **Art**, the festival returns to the essence of human creation, celebrating the diverse forms of artistic expression, from Architecture to Cinema, reinterpreted in chocolate. Sculptures inspired by great artists and movements, thematic installations, interactive workshops, performances, and sensory experiences invite the public to discover chocolate as a creative raw material, in an event that reinforces its role as a stage for cultural innovation, where tradition and modernity meet.

In Óbidos, art acquires flavour and chocolate becomes a universal language.

Competition for students from Vocational Schools and Higher Education institutions in the areas of Culinary Arts and Pastry, as well as recent professionals.

1. PREAMBLE

To learn more about the art of chocolate or to reward the best in the field, the Óbidos International Chocolate Festival offers a program of competitions that aims to attract more enthusiasts to this field, giving professionals, students, and amateurs the opportunity to showcase their skills.

Part of the Festival, which will take place from March 6 to 22, 2026, from Friday to Sunday. The Chocolate Rising Star contest is an annual contest that aims to promote and publicize the potential of students and recent professionals from cooking and pastry courses who want to show their skills in the art of chocolate.

This challenge is based on the creation of a dessert and a variety of bonbons of your choice, where the main ingredient in both recipes must be cocoa and/or pure chocolate in all its forms.

The competition will consist of three semi-finals, which will take place on March 6, 7, and 8, respectively, where the three finalists will be chosen to go straight to the final, which will take place on March 22 and will end with the selection of the Chocolate Rising Star 2026. All the competition events will take place in Óbidos, at the Óbidos International Chocolate Festival, on the Competition and Demonstration Stage, located in the Óbidos Castle Enclosure.

This competition is the responsibility of Óbidos Criativa, E.M., the company organizing the Óbidos International Chocolate Festival, hereinafter referred to as the Organization, and will be governed by the following clauses:

ART. 1 - OBJECT

The purpose of this regulation is to establish, in accordance with the following rules, the admission and selection of competitors, as well as the subsequent awarding of prizes within the scope of the “Chocolate Rising Star” competition at the International Chocolate Festival of Óbidos 2026.

ART. 2 - ELIGIBILITY

- 1 All students attending vocational or higher education schools in the culinary arts and/or pastry courses, and recent professionals who have completed their training in these fields in the year following 2021, are eligible to participate.
- 2 All applications in accordance with these requirements will be accepted, with nine (9) semifinalists being selected to participate in the three competition semifinals.

ART. 3 - RESPONSIBLE ENTITY FOR THE CONSULTATION

This consultation is the responsibility of Óbidos Criativa, E.M., the event organizer.

ART. 4 - REGISTRATION

- 1 The application for participation in the “Chocolate Rising Star 2025” competition must be formalized by completing the following online form <https://forms.gle/YSfistNsWAT3yHJu6>
- 2 The deadline for applications is **February 22, until 11:59 PM.**
- 3 The application must include the following:
 - a. Personal data for the registration form;
 - b. Description/technical sheet of the recipes to be presented;
 - c. One or more images of the finished products;
 - d. Copy of student card or certificate of course completion/training;
- 4 Registration is free but is limited to applicants who meet the eligibility requirements outlined in Article 2.
- 5 The organization will inform the selected semifinalists by **11:59 PM on February 27.**
- 6 The organization reserves the right to cancel the competition if the total number of registrations is less than nine (9). In such cases, registered participants will be immediately informed.



ART. 5 - ITEMS TO BE PRESENTED

- 1 The items to be presented are for both the semifinals and the final competition.
- 2 The following items must be prepared:
 - a. One dessert;
 - b. One chocolate bonbon containing a traditional Portuguese food product.
- 3 The main ingredient in both elements must unconditionally be cocoa and/or pure chocolate in all its forms.
- 4 Three identical desserts must be made and plated: one for public exhibition and tasting, and two for jury evaluation.
- 5 One variety of molded bonbons, in a quantity of 24 units, must be prepared: 12 units for public exhibition and tasting, and 12 units for jury evaluation.
- 6 The items must align with the theme of the 2026 edition of the International Chocolate Festival of Óbidos: “Art.”
- 7 Use of chocolate substitutes is not allowed.
- 8 Use of ice cream as part of the dessert is not allowed.

ART. 6 - COMPETITION CONDITIONS

- 1 The competition is divided into the following events with the respective schedule:
 - a. 1st Semifinal - March 6 (friday)
 - b. 2nd Semifinal - March 7 (saturday)
 - c. 3rd Semifinal - March 8 (sunday)
 - d. Final - March 22 (sunday)
- 2 The events will take place on the Competitions and Demonstrations stage, one of the areas of the International Chocolate Festival of Óbidos located in the Castle Courtyard of Óbidos.
- 3 Nine (9) pre-selected competitors, chosen from the applications, will participate in the semifinals.
- 4 The winner of each semifinal will have direct access to the final competition.
- 5 Finalist competitors must present themselves at **10:30 AM at the competition venue.**

Competitors will have 30 minutes at their workstations
6 for mise en place in the presence of jury members or the organization before the start of the competition.

The competition will begin at **11:30 AM** and last for a maximum of **3 hours**, finishing at **2:30 PM**, with no
7 extension beyond the allotted time.

8 All processes involved in preparing the competition elements must be executed during the competition; no fully or partially prepared items are allowed.

9 The ingredients used must be properly packaged, weighed, separated, and comply with HACCP regulations.

10 Evaluation will take place throughout the competition, and tasting will occur immediately after the time limit, with the jury's final decision announced.

11 In summary, the final competition will be conducted as follows:

- a. Mise en place preparation;
- b. Cooking and plating the items during the 3-hour competition;
- c. Tasting and evaluation by the jury;
- d. Final decision.

12 It will be the responsibility of the organization:

- a. To provide a kitchen counter equipped with a burn point, convection oven, water point, and marble stone for tempering chocolate;
- b. To provide general equipment for collective use of positive and negative cold storage and a temperature shocker;
- c. To provide a festival jacket for use in the final tests.

13 It will be the responsibility of the competitor:

- a. To ensure the necessary products for the preparation, decoration, and plating of the elements to be presented:
 - i. The use of fruits or vegetables that are pre-cut or shaped is not allowed; they must be washed and peeled only.
 - ii. Ingredients that need to be marinated should be brought pre-marinated, but it is necessary to prepare them in the competition, in a portion for one serving, to demonstrate the process and for the proper evaluation by the jury.
 - iii. Finalists may bring with them a pre-made decorative chocolate piece for displaying the bonbons.
- b. To bring all the necessary equipment and general utensils, such as pots, pans, spatulas, plates, knives, molds, and others, required for preparing their recipe.
 - i. Competitors may bring up to three (3) electrical appliances.

ART. 7 - JURY

The jury consists of professionals from academia and the industry. The selection and evaluation criteria will be based on the following conditions:

- 1 Jury members are invited personally and cannot delegate their invitation.
- 2 If a jury member is unable to attend, they will be replaced by another person invited by the organization.

3 The members and the jury president will be announced before the competition begins.

4 Before the competition, the jury members must participate in a coordination session to calibrate procedures for completing the evaluation sheets and classification criteria.

5 During the competition, the presence of the jury members and support staff is mandatory. Accredited journalists and the public are also allowed to attend.

6 The organization ensures that the appropriate conditions are maintained and chooses the order in which products are evaluated..

7 The results from each jury member will be processed anonymously by the organization, which guarantees the confidentiality of the results until the winners are announced. In case of doubt, dispute, or any situation not covered by these regulations, the organization will resolve the matter, with no recourse to its decisions. The jury president will have the casting vote.

8 Participants will be informed by the organization of the criteria for any disqualifications.

ART. 8 - EVALUATION

- 1 Technical Scoring (Maximum points: 30 points)
 - a. Mise-en-place: 0 - 5 points
 - b. Hygiene and work methods: 0 - 5 points
 - c. Handling of equipment: 0 - 5 points
 - d. Condition of ingredients and waste: 0 - 5 points
 - e. Composition and harmony of the dessert and bonbon: 0 - 10 points
- 2 Dessert Evaluation (Maximum points: 40 points)
 - a. Flavor and aroma: 0 - 10 points
 - b. Presentation and plating: 0 - 10 points
 - c. Textures: 0 - 10 points
 - d. Creativity and innovation: 0 - 5 points
 - e. Modern culinary techniques: 0 - 5 points
- 3 Bonbon Evaluation (Maximum points: 30 points))
 - a. Chocolate texture and shine: 0 - 5 points
 - b. Ganache texture and shine: 0 - 5 points
 - c. Flavor and aroma: 0 - 5 points
 - d. Presentation: 0 - 5 points
 - e. Creativity, innovation, and presentation: 0 - 5 points
 - f. Modern culinary techniques: 0 - 5 points

- 4 Extra Points (Points: 10 points)
 - a. Alignment of the presentation with the event theme for the **2026 edition – Art**

Maximum points in the competition (technical + dessert evaluation + bonbon evaluation + extra points): 110 points

ART. 9 - PRIZES

- 1 Prizes will be awarded to the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners.
- 2 The prizes to be awarded in this contest will be announced by the Organization through its official channels.
- 3 The prizes cannot be converted into cash, and the Organization reserves the right to award other prizes of equal value if unforeseen circumstances make it necessary.
- 4 The awards ceremony will take place on March 22nd at 7 PM.

ART. 10 - COMPETITION SCHEDULE

The competition will follow the schedule below:

- 1 Registration Period: Until 11:59 PM on February 22, 2026
- 2 Application Selection Period: From February 23 to March 27, 2026
- 3 Semifinals:
 - a. 1st semifinal: March 6, 2026, at 11:00 AM;
 - b. 2nd semifinal: March 7, 2026, at 11:00 AM;
 - c. 3rd semifinal: March 8, 2026, at 11:00 AM;
- 4 Final: March 22, 2026, at 11:00 AM;
- 5 Award Ceremony: March 22, 2026, at 7:00 PM.

ART. 11 - COPYRIGHT

- 1 The competitor guarantees they hold all copyright and related rights for the recipe or product listed in the technical sheet submitted. In doing so, the competitor grants the International Chocolate Festival of Óbidos and Óbidos Criativa, E.M. the right to use these rights freely, for any purpose deemed appropriate, without any compensation or liability.
- 2 The participant is responsible for any potential damages arising from the publication of their recipe.

ART. 12 - DATA PROTECTION

- 1 The competitor agrees that providing their data is necessary for processing the competition, determining the winner, and awarding prizes.
- 2 The competitors also consent to the use of their data for marketing and publicity purposes. Data will be collected and processed by Óbidos Criativa, E.M.
- 3 Óbidos Criativa, E.M. guarantees the security and confidentiality of the data, as well as the right to access, rectify, or cancel data upon explicit communication to the company.
- 4 Personal identification data may be disclosed for civil and criminal liability purposes, upon request from the competent judicial authorities.

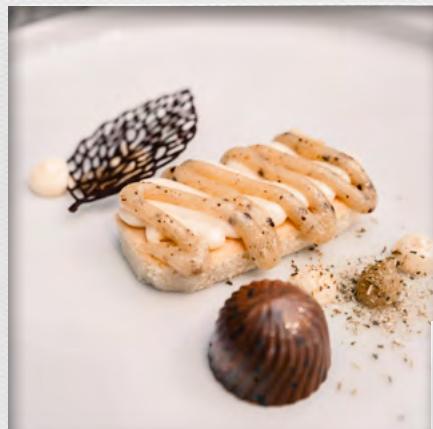
ART. 13 - FINAL PROVISIONS

- 1 Participation in this competition implies full acceptance of this regulation, including any future amendments, and acceptance of the results and decisions of the jury, without the possibility of appeal.

ART. 14 - CLARIFICATIONS

- 1 Interested parties can request clarification regarding the understanding and interpretation of the regulations.
Clarifications can be requested through the following contacts:
 - a. Phone: +351 262 955 561, Monday to Friday from 10 AM to 1 PM and 2 PM to 4 PM
 - b. Email: festivalchocolate@cm-obidos.pt

Previous edition:



FRANCISCO
SIOPA

CHEF FRANCISCO SIOPA
CURADOR IFIC



PEDRO RODRIGUES
PRESIDENTE DO CONSELHO DE
ADMINISTRAÇÃO ÓBIDOS CRIATIVA E.M.