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FEAST

HOUSTON **39** CHEF INSIDER **42** EDIBLE SOUVENIRS **44**



Clockwise
Revival Market,
The Pastry War, Killen's
Barbecue and State
of Grace—just four of the
culinary gems that await
in America's fourth-
largest city.



HOUSTON DINING GUIDE

Affordable, multicultural, innovative and delicious—when it comes to the dining scene in this Texas hub, exciting options abound.



PHOTOS: REVIVAL MARKET BY JOSHUA BLACK WILKINS, THE PASTRY WAR BY JULIE SOEPPER, KILLEN'S BARBECUE BY ROBERT JACOB LERMA, STATE OF GRACE BY JULIE SOEPPER

EATING WELL

ENDLESS CHOICE, EXCITING FLAVOURS

➔ For many travellers, Texas cuisine is synonymous with steak houses and barbecue, but Houston, in particular, offers so much more. One of the most ethnically diverse cities in the United States, Houston has an exciting culinary scene that boasts an array of cultural choice, from Iraqi kabobs and Indonesian fried rice to Vietnamese pho and Mexican fajitas. All over this Southern metropolis, talented, worldly chefs have discovered just how open-minded the city's diners can be, launching ambitious restaurants to national acclaim.



MUST-TASTE DISH

BEEF FAJITAS BY NINFA

When in Houston, make sure to sample the smoky, char-grilled beef fajitas wrapped in handmade flour tortillas from The Original Ninfa's on Navigation. A widowed mother of five, Ninfa Lorenzo single-handedly popularized fajitas in this city when she started a taco stand in 1973, which led to the restaurant that still stands on Navigation Blvd. (ninfas.com)



THE PASTRY WAR

The Pastry War, on Main Street, has the best mezcal and tequila list in town, along with Mexican beer and wicked frozen margaritas. Pay in pesos and ask for a side of chapulines—a.k.a. dried grasshoppers. (thepastrywar.com)

WHERE TO SIP



TWO TO TRY



ANVIL BAR & REFUGE

Anvil Bar & Refuge on Westheimer Road was the first classic cocktail bar in Houston when it opened in 2009, and it's still a great place to go. The menu offers 100-plus time-honoured favourites, plus seasonal specials. (anvilhouston.com)



RESTAURANT HIT LIST

1

REVIVAL MARKET

Start the day with Vietnamese iced coffee and a buttermilk biscuit egg sandwich at this casual favourite in the Heights neighbourhood. It doubles as an artisanal grocery store selling house-cured charcuterie, condiments and preserves. (revivalmarket.com)

2

UNDERBELLY

Loyalty to local farmers drives this vibrant, Montrose-area restaurant's hyper-seasonal menu, which embraces the city's culinary diversity with modern mash-ups like Korean braised goat and dumplings and heirloom grits with smoked pork. (underbellyhouston.com)

3

STATE OF GRACE

Start in the Oyster Room at this bustling spot in the River Oaks neighbourhood before sinking into leather banquettes to enjoy what the kitchen here describes as "Gulf Coast meets Texas Hill Country" cuisine, featuring dishes like cheesy Tex-Mex enchiladas and gulf crab hushpuppies. (stateofgracetx.com)

PHOTOS: COLTIVARE; THE PASTRY WAR AND ANVIL BAR & REFUGE BY JULIE SOEFER; NINFAS BY COOPER + RICCA; REVIVAL MARKET BY CARLA GOMEZ

SIGNATURE EXPERIENCE

OXHEART'S TASTING MENU

Chef Justin Yu won a James Beard Award this year for his veggie-forward tasting menus at the remarkably relaxed Oxheart restaurant. Slow-roasted carrots as sweet and smoky as the best barbecue meat in town, hearty allium-stuffed mung bean crepes accented with pickled turnip slices and tilefish in basil-kombu broth are some of the many highlights to savour. (oxhearthouston.com)



BEST BARBECUE

LOCAL FAVOURITES

Grab a heaping plate of pork ribs at Pizzitola's Bar-B-Cue on Shepherd Drive. The open-brick pits here have been hickory smoking spare ribs, beef brisket and chicken on the bone since the 1930s. The pitmasters use only salt and pepper for seasoning, so all the other flavours smoldering in your mouth are from the pit smoke. Another great option is Killen's Barbecue, opened in 2014 in Greater Houston's Pearland area. This hot spot serves house-ground sausage, beef ribs, pulled pork and bone-in pork belly by the pound or plate with baked beans and creamed corn piled high. On weekends, long lines snake through the parking lot. (pizzitolas.com; killensbarbecue.com)



SWEET SPOTS

CACAO & CARDAMOM CHOCOLATIER

Candy-lovers should head to Cacao & Cardamom Chocolatier, where tropical fruits and South Asian spices flavour the shop's gorgeous jewel-like chocolate bonbons and confections. (cacaoandcardamom.com)

CLOUD 10 CREAMERY

Equally enticing are the ice cream flavours at Cloud 10 Creamery on Morningside Drive. Try one of the savoury options or opt for the dark chocolate—it's exceptional. (cloud10creamery.com)

—Amber Gibson

FATBURGER

Sure, it's not your typical name... but we're not your typical BURGER.



Our burgers are made with fresh, never frozen lean Alberta Angus beef. Then we add fresh, hand cut lettuce, tomato, onions and your choice of free toppings. Every meal is cooked to order, just the way you want it—using only the freshest ingredients and traditional cooking methods. So rest easy, friends. You don't need to deprive your taste buds any longer.

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