



Blazing a trail through Texas BBQ country



Texas: a state so big, and so big into barbecue, that it needs its own separate BBQ trail designation. "Texas-style barbecue" is divided into four regions: Central Texas, East Texas, South Texas, and West Texas, though Central and East Texas barbecue are the most well-known. There is little love for North Texas among aficionados, but we have included it here because we can't just pretend Dallas doesn't exist, even if the rest of Texas wants to.

Barbecue by nature is a celebration of carnivorous eating, but nowhere is the meat more important than in Texas, where sauces are served as a side dip and white bread counts as a vegetable. Smoky moist brisket and spicy beef sausage are the highlights here, and sauce – if you MUST – is tomato-based laced with Worcestershire and vinegar.

North Texas

North Texas might not have its own distinct style of barbecue, but it does have Dallas, and Dallas is a big city with a lot of restaurants, many of which smoke meat.

SMOKE, Dallas

Where there's SMOKE, there's meat. SMOKE is a full restaurant and bar serving breakfast, brunch, lunch, midday, and dinner menus – because all of those are separate and distinct meals. They've got pulled whole hog done North Carolina style; chopped coffee-cured beef brisket; pork andouille, rabbit, and beef smoked sausages; dry rub pork spare ribs; plus a selection of charcuterie, raw oysters, game bird, and seafood, as well as one of the best brunches in town (smoked brisket cornbread hash, anyone?). It's a little bit of Southern comfort, a little bit of Tex-Mex, and a little bit of catch-all American barbecue. You'll want to order all of it.

Pecan Lodge, 2702 Main St., Dallas

Recently relocated to Deep Ellum, Pecan Lodge is easily one of the most talked-about barbecue joints in the great state of Texas, having gained a cultish following with its stand at the Dallas Farmers Market, which led to an appearance on the Food Network, which led to even more cultish fans. The consensus seems to be that pretty much everything here is exceptional right down to the sides and desserts, but the barky brisket is a thing of absolute perfection. Don't miss the Hot Mess, a sweet potato stuffed with shredded brisket and chipotle cream.

Lockhart Smokehouse, 400 West Davis, Dallas

Lockhart Smokehouse might be physically located in Dallas, but its heart is in Lockhart. It is the only place in the Dallas-Fort Worth area where you can get Kreuz Market Sausage. They serve all the Central Texas favorites – brisket, ribs, sausage, etc. – cooked low and slow over oak, with daily specials that might include beef ribs, burnt ends, and prime rib. It's all served on butcher paper with bread or saltine crackers, just like in Lockhart, and while they do have forks and sauce available, they'd prefer if you didn't use them.

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