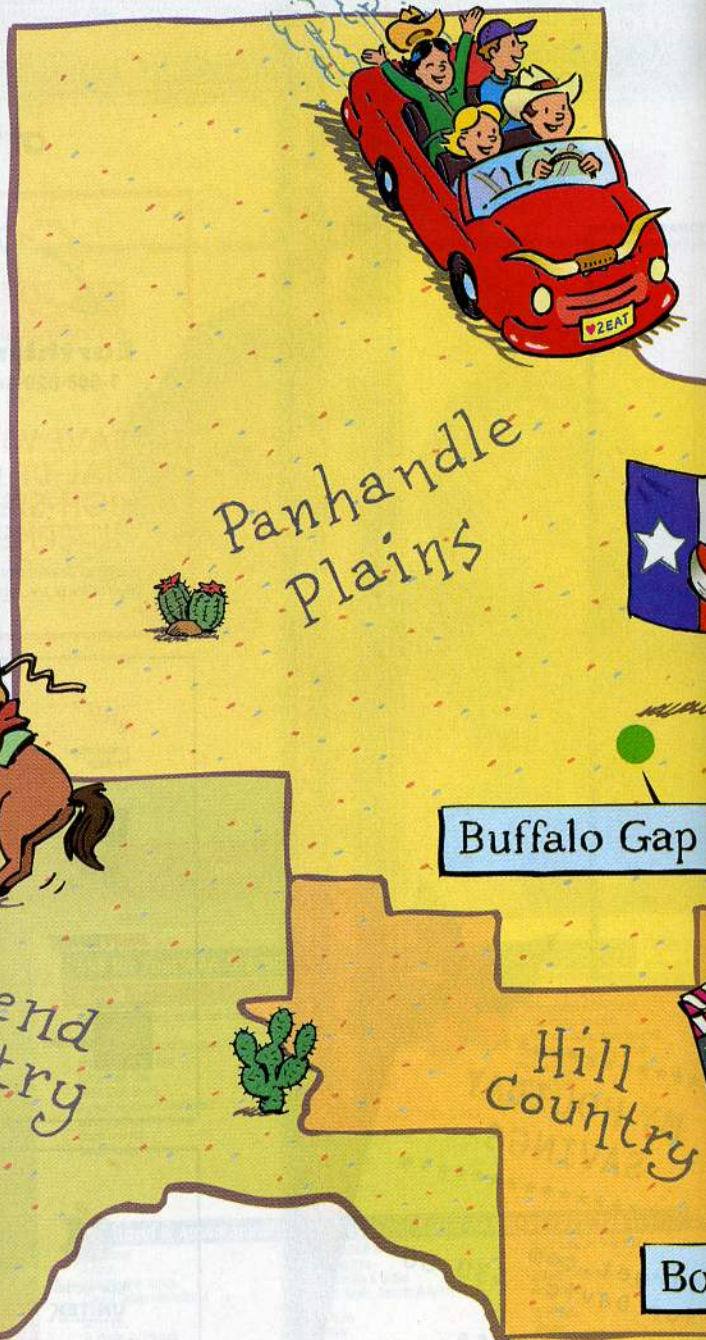


Hankering for some good eats? Here's a baker's dozen of Texas restaurants worth going out of your way to enjoy.

BY JOHN MORTHLAND
ILLUSTRATIONS BY PHIL SCHEUER



Some restaurants earn the right to be destinations in and of themselves. At some eateries, unique architecture or a design theme might be worth the trip. Others stand out because they offer entertainment, such as live music or children's activities. The meal should be excellent, of course, but it can be gourmet cuisine or simple comfort food, pricey or inexpensive. And the less readily available the menu offerings are where you live, the more worthy the restaurant is of being a destination. The establishment may be so typical of its location that to go there for a meal is to better understand how the locals live.

Fortunately, Texas offers incredible diversity. Culturally, East Texas feels Southeastern, San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley are influenced by Mexico, West Texas remains cowboy country, and urban centers have big-city sophistication. A rich ethnic mix of people is found statewide, representing African-American, Anglo, Asian, Cajun, Chicano, Czech, and German heritage, among others. These factors create a mix of cooking styles that, in turn, makes for an abundance of restaurants worth a detour.



