



OCTOBER 26 · A TEXAS TRADITION SINCE 2011

The Best Chicken Fried Steak in Texas Guide

The official standards for judging, ordering and celebrating the state's most famous plate.

100-POINT SCORECARD · REGIONAL STYLES · TEXAS RESTAURANT LIST

A standard worth defending.

Texas Chicken Fried Steak Day was proclaimed in 2011 to honor a plate that belongs to every corner of this state — farm town cafes, big city dining rooms, ranch kitchens and roadside counters. Great chicken fried steak is craft: the right cut, honest hand-breading, clean hot fat and cream gravy made in the same pan.

The seven standards

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| 1. The cut | Tenderized beef cutlet — round or cube steak — pounded thin and even, about a quarter inch. No pre-formed, frozen patty. Cut it with a fork, but still taste beef. |
| 2. The dredge | Hand-breaded to order: seasoned flour, egg-and-buttermilk wash, back to flour. A rest before frying sets the crust. |
| 3. The fry | Clean fat at 340–360°F, fried deep golden brown, never gray or greasy. The crust should crackle and stay married to the meat. |
| 4. The gravy | Peppery cream gravy built from pan drippings, served hot. Thick enough to coat a spoon, loose enough to pool. |
| 5. The ratio | Gravy covers most, not all, of the steak. A rim of bare crust proves the kitchen is proud of the fry. |
| 6. The sides | Real mashed potatoes, a green vegetable and bread — roll, biscuit or Texas toast. Iced tea within reach. |
| 7. The hospitality | Served hot and fast, refilled without asking. A great plate comes with a room glad you walked in. |

The 100-point scorecard.

Score each category, add it up and post the total with a photo. Ninety and above is a Texas landmark plate.

CATEGORY	WHAT EARNS THE POINTS	POINTS
Crust	Crisp, craggy, hand-breaded, fused to the meat	25
Steak	Tender, evenly pounded, seasoned through	20
Gravy	Pan-made, peppery, hot, correct body	20
Fry quality	Golden, not greasy, clean oil	15
Sides & bread	Real potatoes, honest vegetable, fresh bread	10
Plate & portion	Generous, well composed, steak to the rim	5
Hospitality	Warm welcome, hot delivery, refills	5
TOTAL		100

How to read your total

90–100 — A landmark plate. Tell everybody, and tag it #TxCFsday.

75–89 — A good Texas plate with one fixable flaw.

60–74 — Edible, but the kitchen is cutting corners — usually the breading.

Below 60 — Frozen patty territory. Keep driving.

The chicken fried steak map.

Thirteen Texas kitchens worth the drive, from the Panhandle to the Gulf. This is a living field list — nominate your own with #TxCFsday.

RESTAURANT	CITY	REGION
Perini Ranch Steakhouse	Buffalo Gap	West Texas
Jake and Dorothy's Cafe	Stephenville	North Central
Mary's Cafe	Strawn	North Central
Babe's Chicken Dinner House	Roanoke	Dallas-Fort Worth
Massey's Restaurant	Fort Worth	Dallas-Fort Worth
Hoover's Cooking	Austin	Central Texas
Broken Spoke	Austin	Central Texas
Frank's Restaurant	Schulenburg	Central Texas
Goodson's Cafe	Tomball	Gulf Coast
Ouisie's Table	Houston	Gulf Coast
Cast Iron Grill	Lubbock	Panhandle & Plains
Cattleman's Steakhouse	Fabens	Far West Texas
Lulu's Bakery & Cafe	San Antonio	South Texas

How a plate at Mary's Café became a Texas tradition.

Sitting in Strawn, Jeffrey Yarbrough wondered why mangoes could have a holiday but chicken fried steak could not. He wanted a celebration any Texas restaurant could join — whether it had a famous chef or served a town of 450 people.

After several agencies passed, restaurateur-turned-representative Ralph Sheffield told him, “Podner, I think I can do that for you.” A few weeks later, the House resolution was signed by Sheffield, Speaker Joe Straus and Chief Clerk Robert Haney.

May 30, 2011

The State of Texas officially recognized Texas Chicken Fried Steak Day, celebrated every October 26.

50+ restaurants

More than 50 restaurants officially participated in the first year, with hundreds more estimated statewide.

A lasting special

Gilley's reported a record non-concert day and kept the plate as a weekly tradition.

Blue Bonnet Café

The Marble Falls landmark, open since 1929, was serving 300–400 pounds of cubed sirloin weekly when the holiday began.

“Have chicken fried steak for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Upload your photos using #TxCFsday.”

Regional styles of Texas.

Hill Country	Thin, wide cafe plates, pillowy cream gravy, roll and honey butter.
West Texas	Ranch portions, thick cutlets, heavy black pepper, gravy by the ladle.
Panhandle & Plains	Cracker-crisp cast-iron crust, mashed potatoes and cream gravy.
Dallas–Fort Worth	Chef-driven takes beside old-guard counters and refined gravy.
Gulf Coast & East Texas	Cayenne in the dredge and a little Cajun heat in the gravy.
South Texas	Flour tortillas and ranchero heat appear as often as bread.

The first step

Pound the steak until it is tender. Everything good about the plate starts there: even cooking, a crust that stays attached and beef you can cut with a fork.

The soundtrack

“Peace, Love and Chicken Fried Steak” by Jimmy Baldwin — watch it at texascsday.com.

Top 20 Texas Chicken Fried Steaks · 2025

The complete list, preserved in its original order. It is a field list, not a ranking — twenty kitchens carrying the tradition across Texas.

1. Jake & Dorothy's Café
Stephenville, Texas

2. Mary's Café
Strawn, Texas

3. George's
Waco, Texas

4. Rockett Cafe & Club
Waxahachie, Texas

5. The Legendary Barn Door Steakhouse
Odessa, Texas

6. AllGood Café
Dallas, Texas

7. Fred's Texas Café
Fort Worth, Texas

8. Ranch 616
Austin, Texas

9. Matt's Rancho Martinez
Allen, Texas

10. Hoover's Cooking
Austin, Texas

11. Barbecue Inn Restaurant
Houston, Texas

12. Prego Pasta House Restaurant & Bar
Dallas, Texas

13. River Smith's Chicken & Catfish
Lubbock, Texas

14. Ouisie's Table Restaurant, Bar & Gardens
Houston, Texas

15. High Cotton Kitchen
Paris, Texas

16. Hunter Brothers H3 Ranch
Fort Worth, Texas

17. Mama's Café
San Antonio, Texas

18. Killen's
Houston, Texas

19. Cast Iron Grill
Lubbock, Texas

20. Michaels Cuisine
Fort Worth, Texas

Original poster and the full restaurant archive are available at texascfdsday.com.

OCTOBER 26

How to celebrate.

- 1 Order a chicken fried steak in Texas — or make one at home.
- 2 Score the plate with the card in this guide.
- 3 Photograph it before the gravy settles.
- 4 Post it with #TxCFsday and tag the restaurant that earned it.
- 5 Tell the cook. Nobody hears it enough.

Read more

- How Jeffrey Yarbrough grabbed his place in Texas chicken fried history — CraveDFW.
- Fun Facts About Chicken Fried Steak.
- Jeffrey's complete restaurant archive and 2025 Top 20 poster.
- The 2011 proclamation, 2019 celebration release and complete press archive.

Peace, love and chicken fried steak.

Texas Chicken Fried Steak Day is celebrated every October 26, by proclamation of the State of Texas since 2011. More at texascfsday.com.