



Katy's Best Barbecue

Local Eateries Serve up a Texas Tradition

Written by Wendy Clark and Select Photography by Marisa Hugonnett

Without a doubt, Texans are proud of their barbecue. Want to start a friendly argument among friends? Try suggesting that mesquite-smoked pork tastes better than a brisket slow-cooked for hours over pecan wood. Short of grilling in your own backyard, these Katy joints are the next best thing. Grab a napkin and dig in to these local favorites.

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Barbecue lovers can chow down on everything from delicious ribs to baked beans in Katy

Big Daddy's BBQ

2002 N. Fry Rd. • 281-398-1800

Big Daddy's BBQ has been serving its delicious dishes in Katy since 2003, with two other locations in the Houston area. Mark Ripple is the proud owner and has been in business for 15 years. Big Daddy's smokes its barbecue over mesquite wood, giving it a special kick. "It's a Texas wood and gives the meat a light, smoky flavor," Ripple says. The restaurant focuses on value, with a menu that reflects prices that are easy on the wallet. "Where else can you get a rib dinner for \$6.99?" he asks. Try the spicy sausage or slices of their lean brisket for a unique taste in barbecue. A variety of meat and side dishes abound, and with eight meats and 15 side dishes to choose from, it may take a few visits to pick your favorite! Popular side dishes include dirty rice and pinto beans. Ripple challenges Katy families to look for bargains wherever they choose to dine, especially when it comes to barbecue. "We do well with people who understand value," he says.

Big Mike's BBQ

21822 Franz Rd. • 281-647-8101

With a new location, Big Mike's BBQ continues to dish up Katy favorites after the team of Mike and Carol Dlouhy first opened the restaurant about seven years ago, according to their website. Even though their location is temporary, they serve a variety of dishes, including four meat selections – brisket, sausage, chicken, and ribs. Added to that are mouthwatering sandwiches with chopped and sliced beef and sausage, and a selection of sides from potato salad and beans to macaroni and cheese and coleslaw. One of Big Mike's specialties is definitely its barbecue sauce, which it sells bottled in case any Katyites get the urge to grill at home. With reasonable prices and catering services offered, Big Mike's has become a fixture in Katy's barbecue world.

Midway BBQ

5901 Highway Blvd. • 281-391-3101

Midway BBQ is another long-time Katy favorite, having been open now over 15 years. Midway is more than just barbecue, though. It is also attached to a meat processing plant and grocery store, and is available to cater authentic barbecue meals. Jeffrey Nicholson has been the manager for almost 10 years. "Our barbecue is good, because we don't cook it over an open flame," he says. "We smoke the barbecue over pecan wood." The ground beef is about the freshest you can find it, ground in the meat market that adjoins the restaurant. Midway's brisket and homemade sausage, half beef and half pork, are favorites served up with sides of barbecue baked potatoes, macaroni salad, baked beans, potato salad, and coleslaw.

According to Nicholson, over the years, Midway has been frequented by Katy mayors, local law enforcement officers, and even a few Texas Rangers. What keeps them coming back? Nicholson says the answer is simple. "If you eat here, then eat at all the other [barbecue] restaurants, I guarantee you will be back here!"

Nonmacher's Bar-B-Que and Catering Service

606 S. Mason Rd. • 281-392-7666

Open for over 30 years, Nonmacher's Bar-B-Que is serving its oak-smoked meats to the fourth generation of customers. "We're the best kept secret on Mason Road," says owner John Nonmacher. Lifelong fan Joe Gorman and his brothers, two of whom live out of state, often talk about the food and atmosphere of Nonmacher's. "The chopped beef is great," Gorman says. "It's the best barbecue you're gonna' get." Signature dishes include butterbeans with ham, available on Thursdays, and pork loin stuffed with jalapenos, onions, and garlic, available on Saturdays. Other choices include ribs, sausage, sliced beef, 1-pound baked potatoes, and three sides, including pinto beans, coleslaw, and potato salad. "My philosophy is K.I.S.S. – keep it simple stupid," says Nonmacher. "If there's less to choose from, it's easier to decide what you want to eat." If you decide to give it a try, bring cash or check, since debit and credit cards aren't accepted. "After 30 years, I still enjoy eating it every day," Nonmacher says of his barbecue. "I can't retire. Where would I go to eat barbecue?"

Spring Creek Barbeque

21000 Katy Fwy. • 281-829-0359

Spring Creek is the new kid on the block when it comes to barbecue in Katy. "The first Spring Creek opened in 1980," says Chris Carroll, owner of the chain that is rapidly spreading across Texas. The Katy-West Houston location opened just over a year ago, and the parking lot is always full. What draws the crowds? Says Carroll, "We are really proud of our pork ribs!" The ribs are flavored with a special blend of seasonings, then hickory smoked until they are fall-apart tender. As a finishing touch, they are finished on a fire-grill to caramelize the sugar and emphasize the fresh-off-the-grill taste. Side items include homemade bread and fried okra. Spring Creek is also nationally known for its special homemade sauce, which is available by mail-order on their website. The establishment prides itself on its commitment to education; 85 percent of its employees are high school or college students who receive bonuses and/or tuition depending on their academic performance. Carroll is excited about being a presence in Katy and welcomes first-time customers to stop on by. "We look forward to seeing you!" KM

WENDY CLARK a native Louisianan, frequently tells her Texan husband that crawfish is as good as barbecue. Their two girls always decline comment.



Katy's barbecue restaurants dish up a Texas favorite close to home

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