

# Foods That *Warm* You

Local restaurants combat cold weather with red hot meals

*Written by Cherri Northcutt*



Warm up your winter with a savory bowl of tortilla soup





Indulge in winter favorites such as chicken and dumplings at Cracker Barrel



D'Amico's Italian Market Café serves up delicious pasta dishes made fresh daily

**Bold  
Flavors**

*W*

Winter is upon us, bringing colder temperatures and biting winds. To combat the chill, Katyites will be seeking out comfort foods that are filling, warm, and hearty. There's nothing like a good, hot meal on a cold day. This winter, try some local favorites that will warm you to the bone.

### Cheddar's Casual Café

21150 Katy Fwy.

Katy

281-578-0593

This casual café never disappoints the pockets or appetites of its patrons because of the high quality and diverse nature of the meal selection. Entrées like shepherd's pie topped with creamy meat sauce and pork baby back ribs will be just enough to induce salivation. "Anyone will feel welcome here," says restaurant manager Thomas Wade. "Cheddar's creates perfect, home-style, made-from-scratch meals."

### Chuy's

21300 Katy Fwy.

Katy

832-772-1277

Mark Novak, manager at Chuy's, knows that nothing warms you like south-of-the-border spices. "I recommend a big steak burrito with our hatch green chile sauce," Novak says. This signature sauce is made with beef stock, caramelized onions, and fresh, fire-roasted green chiles. "Another favorite is our tortilla soup," Novak adds. "It's homemade broth with corn, cilantro, cheese, avocado, and tortilla strips."

### Cracker Barrel

18151 Katy Fwy.

Houston

281-492-1585

If you crave down-home Southern cooking, you can't go wrong with Cracker Barrel. "During the winter months, our big sellers are the meatloaf and our famous chicken and dumplings," shares manager Albert Brown. "The meatloaf with mashed potatoes and turnip greens is a hot commodity."

### D'Amico's Italian Market Café

2643 Commercial Center Blvd.

Katy

281-769-9682

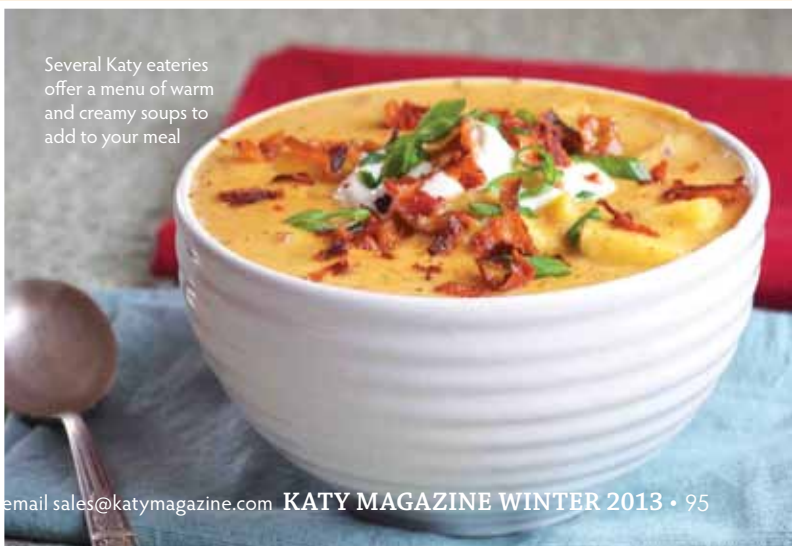
If it's a little Italian flare you're after, D'Amico's has you covered. From savory soups to made-fresh-daily pasta, you'll find a warm and hearty dish pleasing to your taste buds. A popular choice is the penne asparagus, which is mixed with grilled chicken, roma tomatoes, garlic, basil, and olive oil. Try the house favorite, rolled stuffed eggplant, which is filled with spinach, ricotta, and Romano cheeses, then baked in marinara sauce and served with linguini.

*See ad on page 41*

**Tasty  
Choices**



The Elvis Presley Memorial Combo at Chuy's is a spicy trio including beef Tex-Mex, cheese ranchero, and chicken tomatillo enchiladas



Several Katy eateries offer a menu of warm and creamy soups to add to your meal



Add a creole shrimp etouffee to any fish platter at Orleans Seafood Kitchen



Tempting Toppings

Order a side of warm fries or steaming soup with your gourmet burger from Red Robin



### Drix Restaurant

1850 S. Mason Rd.

Katy

281-371-2749

Cassandra Kourradi and her husband Sid Mounfik opened Drix Restaurant in 2010. Serving the finest in gourmet foods and wines, Kourradi is proud of their fresh, tender, grilled lamb chops. "We marinate it in wine and Mediterranean spices and it's served with pesto, herb-roasted potatoes, and asparagus," Kourradi says. "The taste is amazing."

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### La Madeleine

23322 Mercantile Pkwy.

Katy

281-395-2888

Well-known for its signature creamy tomato basil soup, La Madeleine French Country Café makes a habit of serving up multiple entrees to warm patrons' bellies. "The tomato basil soup is yummy and even more appetizing during the winter," says diner Kristin Scott. If it's a succulent sandwich you are craving, try the French dip piled with roast beef, caramelized onions, horseradish sauce, and Gruyere cheese and served with a steaming bowl of French onion soup for dipping. Don't miss the traditional crepes filled with items like chicken, spinach, or shrimp.

### Orleans Seafood Kitchen

20940 Katy Fwy.

Katy

281-646-0700

For Cajun seafood at its best, you can't beat the Orleans Seafood Kitchen. This family-friendly eatery opened in 2007. During the winter months, manager Chance Comstock likes a hot, spicy bowl of gumbo. "Our shrimp and crabmeat gumbo is fresh, satisfying, and delicious," he says. "It's the best this side of the muddy waters."

### Red River BBQ

1711 S. Mason Rd.

Katy

281-578-3800

At Red River BBQ, meat lovers can dig into some delicious Texas barbecue. For those who really want to spice things up, assistant manager Fritz Moreno recommends the jalapeno sausage, flavorful and with just the right kick. General manager Ric Kiersh is partial to the chicken fried steak. "It's hand-battered, fried, and served with cream gravy," Kiersh says. Add a side of mashed potatoes, and you've got the perfect combination for a cold day.

Hearty Breakfast

Cracker Barrel serves breakfast all day including the Mama's Pancake Breakfast served with eggs and your choice of meat



Red Oak Grill's Beef Shawarma Plate features roasted marinated beef slices served with hummus and tabouleh





### Red Oak Grill

2004 S. Mason Rd.

Katy

281-392-2612

There's something for everyone at Red Oak Grill, from traditional American fare to exotic Mediterranean dishes. On a cold winter's day, manager Eric Salman suggests the chicken shawarma. "It's roasted chicken with hummus and tabouleh, served with rice and Mediterranean salad," Salman says. "It combines delicious flavor with healthy, all natural ingredients."

### Red Robin

23318 Mercantile Pkwy.

Katy

281-392-1004

When the temperatures drop, nothing hits the spot like a hot, juicy burger, and Red Robin is famous for its delicious burger creations. Manager Terri Constantine recommends the gourmet cheeseburger with lettuce, tomato, cheese, and signature pickle relish. "During the winter months a lot of people add chili to their burger," Constantine adds.

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### Sam's Deli Diner

1251 Pin Oak Rd., #141

Katy

281-574-5041

Katy foodies know that Sam's is the place to go when you're really hungry. With a wide variety of sandwiches, hot dogs, and chicken strips, there's something for everyone. Katy local Steve Day says, "They have a great steak sandwich." Day's wife Kari adds, "The fish sandwich is very good, and the fries are wonderful, too."

### Snappy's Café and Grill

5803 Hwy. Blvd.

Katy

281-391-8163

Well-known in Katy for its award-winning breakfast, Snappy's also serves up some tasty lunches. Co-owned by Alex Tsounakas and Bobby Katsabas, Snappy's opened in 2002 in historic Katy. Katsabas recommends a bowl of the piping hot homemade chili as just the thing to warm you up on a chilly day. He says, "We make it from scratch with ground beef, spices, and no beans."

KM



CHERRI NORTHCUTT is a freelance writer. She and her family have enjoyed dining in Katy eateries for the last 13 years.

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