THINGS TO EAT, SEE AND DO IN
HOUSTON

The host city of Super Bowl 51 has a bustling arts scene and a slew of international restaurants. We found plenty of reasons to visit right now—or anytime.
9 RESTAURANTS
IN A ROW
Grab a bite along lower Westheimer Road. The options on so-called Restaurant Row are as ethnically diverse as the city's residents.

1. Hugo's
Go to this Mexican restaurant on Sunday morning for the brunch buffet—$3 gets you unlimited servings of favorites such as tomatillo chilaquiles and churros. hugosrestaurant.net

2. Da Marco
This jacket-preferred trattoria has an extensive Italian wine list and attentive waitstaff. They're well trained at shaving truffle and serving breadsticks. damarcohouston.com

3. Nidda Thai Cuisine
Skip your usual pad thai and try something new, like avocado Massaman curry, or chuu chee eggplant covered in red curry. niddathaicuisine.com

4. Mala Sichuan Bistro
The wok chi (small plates) section of this menu brings Sichuan-style street food inside. Try the chilled mung bean noodles and chili oil dumplings. 832-767-0911

5. Aladdin Mediterranean Cuisine
At this cafeteria-style spot, your main course comes with three sides. Locals love the chicken kebab with tabouli—and the good value. aladdinhouston.com

6. Uchi
This Japanese favorite is famous for its happy hour: $3 sake, and rolls and small plates made with fish flown daily from Japan. uchirestaurants.com

7. Theo's Restaurant
All the delicious Greek classics are on the menu here, including koftedes (meatballs) and loukanika (pork sausage). theoshouston.com

8. Indika
The menu at this bold Indian restaurant is not for the timid. Dishes include goat brain masala, seared foie gras and saffron-pistachio ice cream. indikahouston.com

9. L'Olivier
This French bistro turns out beloved dishes like chateaubriand (a center-cut filet of beef) and île flottante (an island of meringue floating in custard). lolivierhouston.com

5 INTERNATIONAL MASH-UPS
These international dishes with a Texas twist showcase Houston's cultural diversity. Almost a quarter of the city's 6.3 million residents were born abroad.

- SLOPPY BEEF BANH MI
  Banh mi sandwiches are ubiquitous in Houston, and when you mix one with an all-American classic at B10 Vietnamese Café, this is what you get. b10vietnamesecafe.com

- BOUDIN KOLACHE
  Early Czech immigrants brought kolache (sweet filled pastries) to Houston. The folks at Shipleys Do-Nuts now stuff them with boudin, a Cajun sausage. shpleydonuts.com

- TURKEY VINDALOO
  Vindisco gets a soul food spin at Kitchen 713: Potatoes are mashed and served alongside collard greens, then topped with smoked turkey in spicy curry sauce. kitchen713.com

- MAC 'N' CHEESE EGG ROLLS
  The pan-Asian food truck Mulish Makimitos specializes in egg rolls stuffed with bacon and mac and cheese. mulishmakimitos.com

- BRISKET PAD THAI
  At Wokker TX Ranger, mesquite-smoked brisket is the only (and unexpected) protein option for pad thai. wokkerbranger.com
6 ICONIC TEX-MEX DISHES

Tex-Mex isn’t a creation of the fast food industry. Tejanos, Texans from Mexico and Spain, invented the cuisine in the 1800s by riffing on their native recipes. As the Lone Star State became more Americanized, Tex-Mex dishes did, too, with processed cheese, chili powder and corn chips. Don’t leave Houston without trying six Tex-Mex classics from these favorite eateries:

- **Breakfast Tacos** (pictured)
  BROTHERS TACO HOUSE
  brothersstacothouse.com

- **Queso**
  EIGHT ROW FLINT
  eigthrowflint.com

- **Taco Pie**
  STOKED TACOS & TEQUILA
  stokedmidtown.com

- **Cheese Enchiladas**
  STATE OF GRACE
  statoedofgracex.com

- **Fajitas**
  SYLVIA’S ENCHILADA KITCHEN
  sylviassenchiladas.com

- **Nachos**
  CAFE ANNIE
  cafeanniehouston.com

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7 SPOTS PICKED BY SANDRA LEE

This is the 10th consecutive year that Sandra Lee will be at the Super Bowl, and this time she’s team captain of the 10,000-person Host Committee. Here are her favorite Houston spots.

- **Reserve 101**
  Sandra loves this whiskey bar for its huge selection (the largest in Texas) and the intimate lounge upstairs.
  reserve.101.com

- **Bayou & Bottle**
  Sandra is a fan of The Four Seasons, home of this sleek new bar that specializes in top-shelf bourbon.
  foursesons.com

- **BCN Taste & Tradition**
  You can admire original artwork by Picasso and Miró while you enjoy the Spanish tapas here.
  bcnhouston.com

- **Steak 48**
  This popular surf-and-turf joint is where Sandra heads for a bowl of peka.
  steak-48.com

- **Christie’s Seafood & Steaks**
  At this family-run Houston fixture, Sandra’s favorite dish is the gumbo. It’s made from a century-old recipe.
  christies-restaurant.com

- **Etoile Cuisine et Bar**
  Sandra loves chef Philippe Verpiand’s seasonal French fare—and the elegant setting.
  etoilecuisine.com

- **Caracol**
  At chef Hugo Ortega’s new restaurant, the signature mole is an undisputed favorite.
  caracol.net
4 NEW BREWS TO TRY

Twenty-three years ago, there was only one craft brewery in Houston. Now there are more than 15—and counting. Try one of these new pours.

4 COOL BARBECUE JOINTS

ROEGELS BARBECUE CO.
Russell and Misty Roegels
Every weekday, Russell features a different oak-smoked meat (pasta/sami on Thursday). Don't miss his wife Misty's bourbon banana pudding.
roegelsbarbecue.com

PAPPA CHARLIE'S BARBECUE
Wesley Jurena
Wesley grew up trying all the city's barbecue spots with his dad. His own spot is famous for not-so-traditional bites like masala-rubbed tri-tip.
pappacharliesbbq.com

MIDTOWN BARBECUE
Brett Jackson and Eric Aldis
Brett churns out brisket and pulled pork, while his lifelong BFF Eric whips up sides like corn casserole and spicy slaw.
midtownbbqhouston.com

RAY'S REAL PIT BBQ SHACK
Rayford S. Busch
This retired sheriff's deputy and barbecue pit veteran is well known for his baby back ribs and fried corn on the cob.
rayssbbqshack.com

1 PLACE YOU SHOULD BE ON SUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Although this is Houston's third Super Bowl, it's the first one taking place at NRG Stadium. Concessionaires will be cranking out Texas favorites like brisket sandwich on jalapeño bread at Killen's Barbecue, and a baked potato loaded with chili and cheese in sections 108 and 123.
1 OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD LUNCH

The visitors center at NASA's Johnson Space Center is a must-see, especially on Fridays, when you can have lunch with an astronaut and hear stories about living and working in space. The roster of astronauts and the menu rotate ( alas, no Tang or freeze-dried ice cream). Reservations recommended; spac center.org

4 GREAT HOTELS

HOTEL ZAZA
The vibe here is more Sin City than Space City. There’s a dimly lit lobby, baroque furniture, a busy rooftop bar and plenty of rooms with dramatic views. From #329; hotelzaza.com

MARRIOTT MARQUIS HOUSTON
At this new downtown spot, you’ll find a Tex-Mex restaurant, a sports bar curated by Astros Hall of Famer Craig Biggio and a Texas-shaped lazy river on the roof. From #249; marriott.com

THE HOUSTONIAN
This lodge-like property, set in a secluded 18-acre forest in the middle of the city, has a spa, three pools and nine tennis courts. From #209; houstonian.com

THE WHITEHALL
At this newly renovated hotel, all rooms come with a welcome treat (lemon sugar cookies), and guests have access to a new coffee shop, cocktail bar and art gallery. From #129; thewhitehallhouston.com

10 THINGS TO DO WHEN YOU'RE NOT EATING

See the beer can house.
Beer-lover John Milkovich decorated his iconic house with more than 50,000 aluminum cans. beer canhouse.org

Post a Houston selfie.
Snap a pic at one of the city’s famous street murals, as we did with Sandra Lee (page 145). “Greetings from Houston” is on the wall at the pizza place Gelazzi. 3601 White Oak Dr.

Explore the tunnel system.
When Houston heats up, locales stay cool. The city’s six-mile subterranean concourse is home to almost 100 eateries, and you can take a historic tour: discoverhouston.com

Burp the bayou.
To improve the circulation of the slow-moving Buffalo Bayou (the city’s river), city officials and local artist Dean Ruck installed a red button under the Preston Street Bridge. Passersby can press it so the river “burps” and spouts bubbles.

Catch an outdoor movie.
Even in the winter, Houston’s temperatures are comfortable at night. On many evenings, you can catch an outdoor movie at the 12.2-acre Discovery Green: discovergreen.com

See a light show.
Reserve a sunset spot under artist James Turrell’s Twilight Epiphany skyspace at Rice University. As the sun sets, colored lights illuminate the ceiling. skyspace rice.edu

Do some big-time shopping.
The Galleria is bigger than NRG Stadium, home of the Super Bowl, and has more than 300 stores and an ice rink. simon.com

Meet a dinosaur.
Wyrex, the 65-million-year-old Tyrannosaurus rex at the Houston Museum of Natural Science, has the most complete hands and feet of any T. rex ever unearthed. hmsg.org

See some fake food.
Catch Best If Used By at the Houston Center for Contemporary Craft before it leaves on January 15. The “craft food” exhibit includes bananas with Louis Vuitton logos. craft houston.org

Make a wish.
The nondenominational Rothko Chapel was designed to be a meditative space. Stop by for a quiet moment. rothkop Chapel.org