



Houston specializes in great steakhouses

Alison Cook at 7:30 pm on March 30, 2011

It's Texas, and we're beef fiends, so there's a high-end steakhouse at every turn in Houston. All of the usual national suspects are at hand, from the Capital Grille to Smith & Wollensky, Morton's to Del Frisco's. Here are some of the best options to get a local feel, a great vibe or outstanding specialties.

Ill Forks:

This Dallas transplant in a spare, contemporary downtown room has a kinder-than-usual range of price points: you can pay a lot for a USDA Prime wet-aged monster, or a lot less for a flatiron steak, a rib-eye sandwich or a tenderloin salad. Excellent house salad and outrageous six-cheese potatoes, too. 1201 Fannin, Suite 109, 713-658-9457.

Killen's Steakhouse:

Worth the 20-mile jaunt to Pearland for a chef-driven steakhouse that's tops for local color and flavor. Astounding 32-ounce long-bone rib-eye, meticulous sides, justly famous crème brûlée bread pudding. Great Gulf seafood, too. 2804 S. Main, Pearland, 281-485-0844.

Vic & Anthony's Steakhouse:

In a prime downtown location, this local fave is strong across the board for steak, lobster and smart sides. Try the quail appetizer, the roasted beet salad or the pappardelle with king crab, too, and don't miss the celebrated crabcake. Dessert? Tres leches. Or try the bar for a spectacular burger. 1510 Texas, 713-228-1111.
PAPPAS BROS. STEAKHOUSE: One of the best shrimp remoulade cocktails in the city at a consistent performer with a swank vintage railcar feel. Go for the dry-aged steaks and the high-rollers' dream of a wine list. 5839 Westheimer, 713-780-7352.

The Palm:

The local edition of the national chain oozes raffish charm. The old-fashioned wet-aged, USDA prime steaks, iceberg wedge salad with blue cheese dressing and New York cheesecake are reliable pleasures. So's the dignified service. 6100 Westheimer, 713-977-2544.

Brenner's:

A classic fieldstone ranch-house room with a long history, a wonderfully eccentric garden view and a genuine Texas feel. The lures are the little touches like marvelous, crusty German-fried potatoes; the legendary reddish roquefort dressing; and the tart, flaky apple strudel that has ruled for decades on the dessert menu. 10911 Katy Freeway, 713-465-2901.

Angus Grill:

One of the best of the many rodizio-style South American beef palaces Houston adores. Savor the differences in taste and texture among cuts of top and bottom sirloin, flank, filet or rib, all judiciously seasoned and sliced off the skewers that never stop coming. You can eat yourself even sillier on the cheese puff rolls, crisp squares of polenta, grilled pineapple and salad buffet. 6106 Westheimer, 713-334-5206.

Churrascos:

Houston's love affair with South-American-style churrasco steaks — butterflied tenderloin grilled and served with garlicky chimichurri sauce — started here 30 years ago. The churrascos are still terrific, and so is much of the zippy Latin menu that goes with them.