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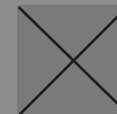
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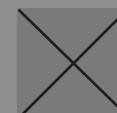
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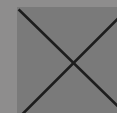
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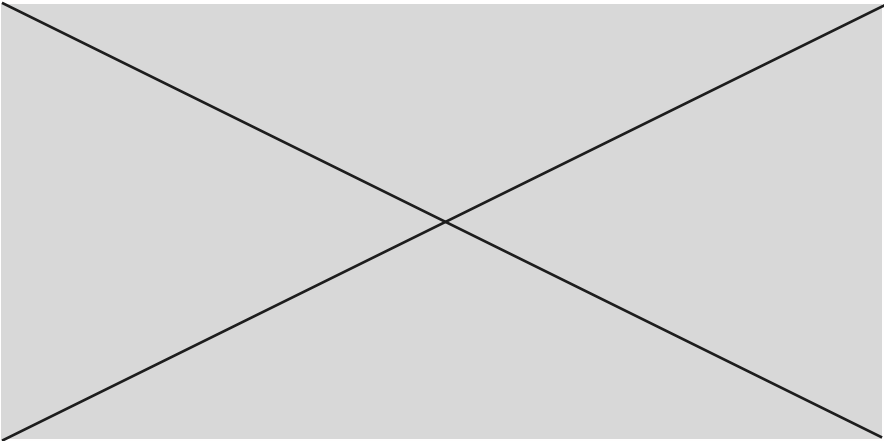
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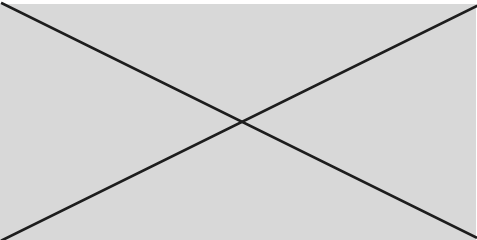




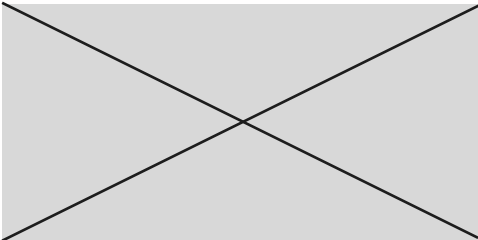
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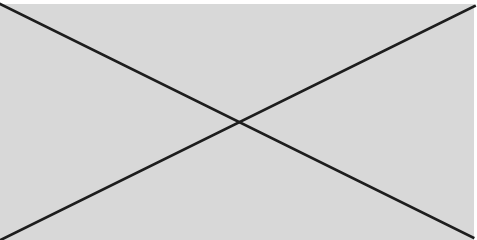
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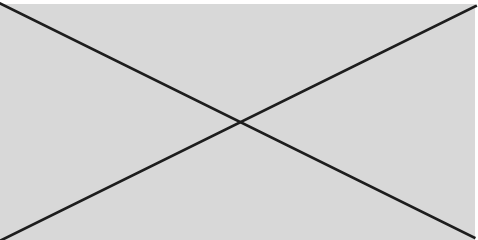
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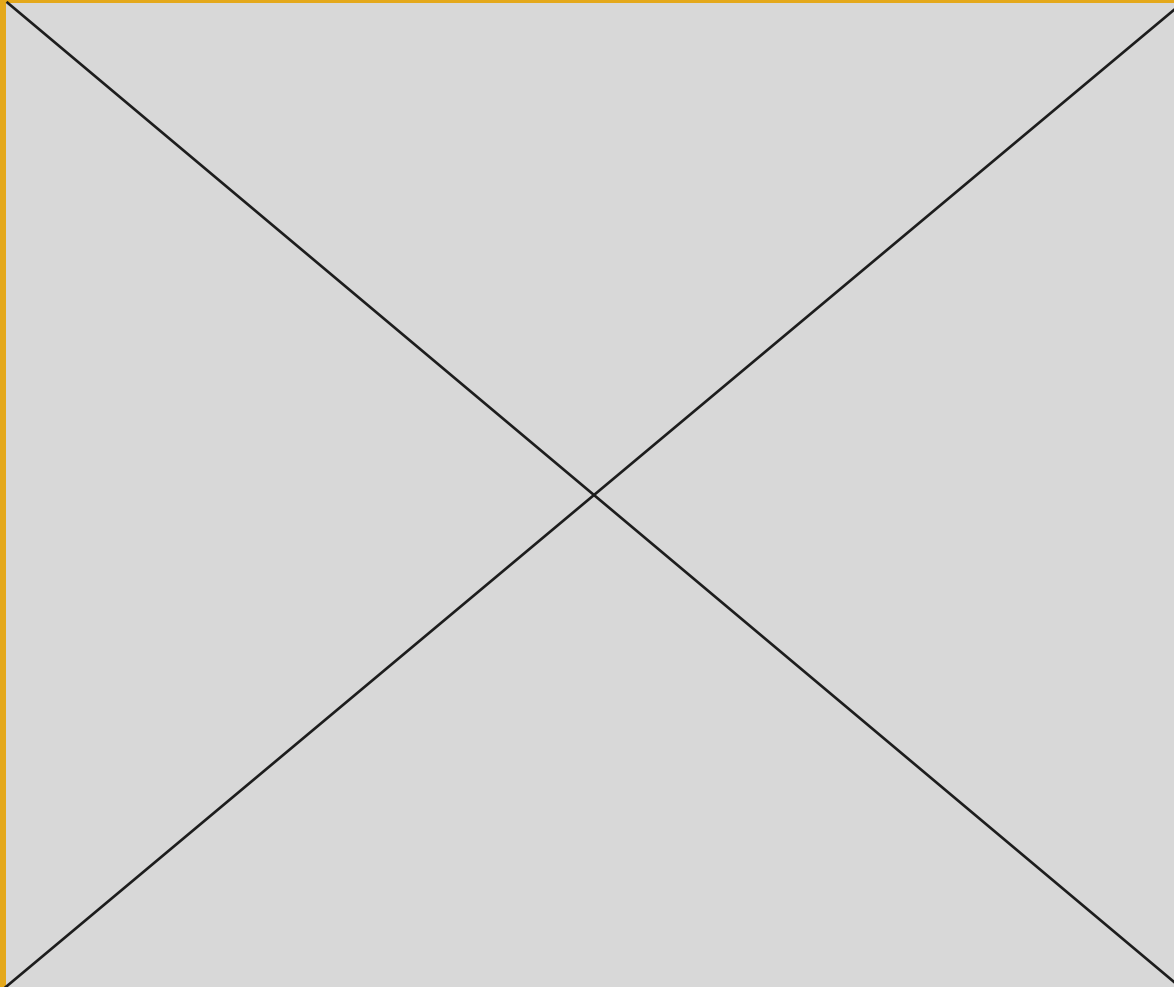


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Is there such a thing as too much good barbecue?

Written by Daniel Vaughn

Photos by Brittany Conerly

If you're trying to put together Texas Monthly's list of the fifty best barbecue joints in the state, the answer is yes.

Every four years or so, this magazine's barbecue team fans out across Texas to sample the wares at hundreds of establishments, seeking to distinguish among the great, the good, the bad, and the wretched. In past years, those efforts yielded a reasonable number of joints worthy of inclusion on our list. More than fifty, for sure, but not that many more than fifty. In 2013, 2017, and 2021, there were as many as a couple of dozen that we had to think hard about before relegating to the runners-up roster. Tough choices, yes, but it takes tough judges to evaluate tender brisket.

This past January, though, when I opened my Top 50 spreadsheet, I found myself staring at 120 solid contenders. One hundred and twenty! This was, as they say, shocking but not surprising. Ever since Franklin Barbecue opened, in 2009, Texas barbecue has undergone a radical transformation. First-rate brisket, once a rarity that required a lengthy search, has become commonplace. Sausage, which even some of the best joints once outsourced, is now made—and made well—at most places of note. Texas barbecue has gotten so much better since our 2013 list (the first I had a hand in) that only 7 of the joints from that Top 50 made it onto this one.

How We Did It

To compile the list, our taste testers drove thousands of miles across the state in late 2024. The most promising candidates were revisited by barbecue editor Daniel Vaughn to determine final placements. Visits were not announced in advance, and Texas Monthly paid for all the food -- including brisket at those crazy prices.

319
BBQ Joints
Visited



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