

### State Fair



Last weekend I ticked another item off my nonexistent bucket list: I went to a state fair. Ever since Holyoke High performed the musical “State Fair,” a little part of me has wondered what it would be like to attend an actual state fair.

Nonetheless, for some reason I never made it to one in Colorado, and my first year as a Texas resident came and went without me going to the fair. Finally 2012 brought the realization of that dream.

Texas’ state fair lived up to all the fried-food stereotypes, for sure. We saw signs boasting concoctions ranging from the more typical chicken and funnel cakes to the more outlandish, such as fried watermelon, butter, sugar cubes and lemonade.

Who comes up with these things? Despite my curiosity, I settled on a somewhat safer option, fried cheesecake. It was indeed interesting, but I’d be OK with never eating that again.

Of course, if eating fried food all day got to be too much to handle, the state fair also offers food simply to look at. As a newbie, I spent a good while marveling at the butter sculpture, depicting a scene of Girl Scouts.

Aside from the officially displayed food, I also delighted in simply watching other fair-goers pass by with their mountains of food. A 12-inch-high tower of Texas Twister Fries seems to defy physics as the eager eater weaves through the throng of hungry people.

Whole families sat together, each munching on a gigantic turkey leg. Baked potatoes got lost under a mountain of toppings, and a hefty plate of Texas nachos features chips in the shape of the proud state.

## Drumroll Please

Written by Jes-c Brandt

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Don't get me wrong, there was more to the state fair than food alone. There is something special about being part of the traditions at the fair, and I embraced those traditions with a soundtrack of Rogers and Hammerstein running through my mind all the while.

Big Tex, a 52-foot Texan in the middle of Fair Park, has been a part of that fair for 60 years, and it was fun to see his imposing frame and hear his booming voice make announcements throughout the day.

Another traditional attraction of the Texas State Fair is the Ferris wheel, the Texas Star. Waiting in line for the most popular ride at the fair, we learned some interesting information about that ride.

It's been around since the '80s and is 212 feet tall, making it the tallest in the Western Hemisphere. Operating the Ferris wheel requires 18 employees, and the foundation is made up of 35 tons of reinforcing steel. The ride can seat 264 people at once, which was a huge relief, given the length of the line to ride it.

At first the statistics wowed me, but then I began the ascent to the top and that view spoke far more than any of those numbers. Riding at night, the view of the colorful fair itself was amazing. With the hustle and bustle far below, the midway was a stream of people and bright lights.

Looking beyond the park, the view of downtown Dallas was even more breathtaking. The native Texans I shared the gondola with pointed out various buildings in the skyline, adding a little something extra to the already phenomenal experience.

I left the fair feeling like I was a part of something bigger, even if that something was a collective feeling of regret over fried foods.

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