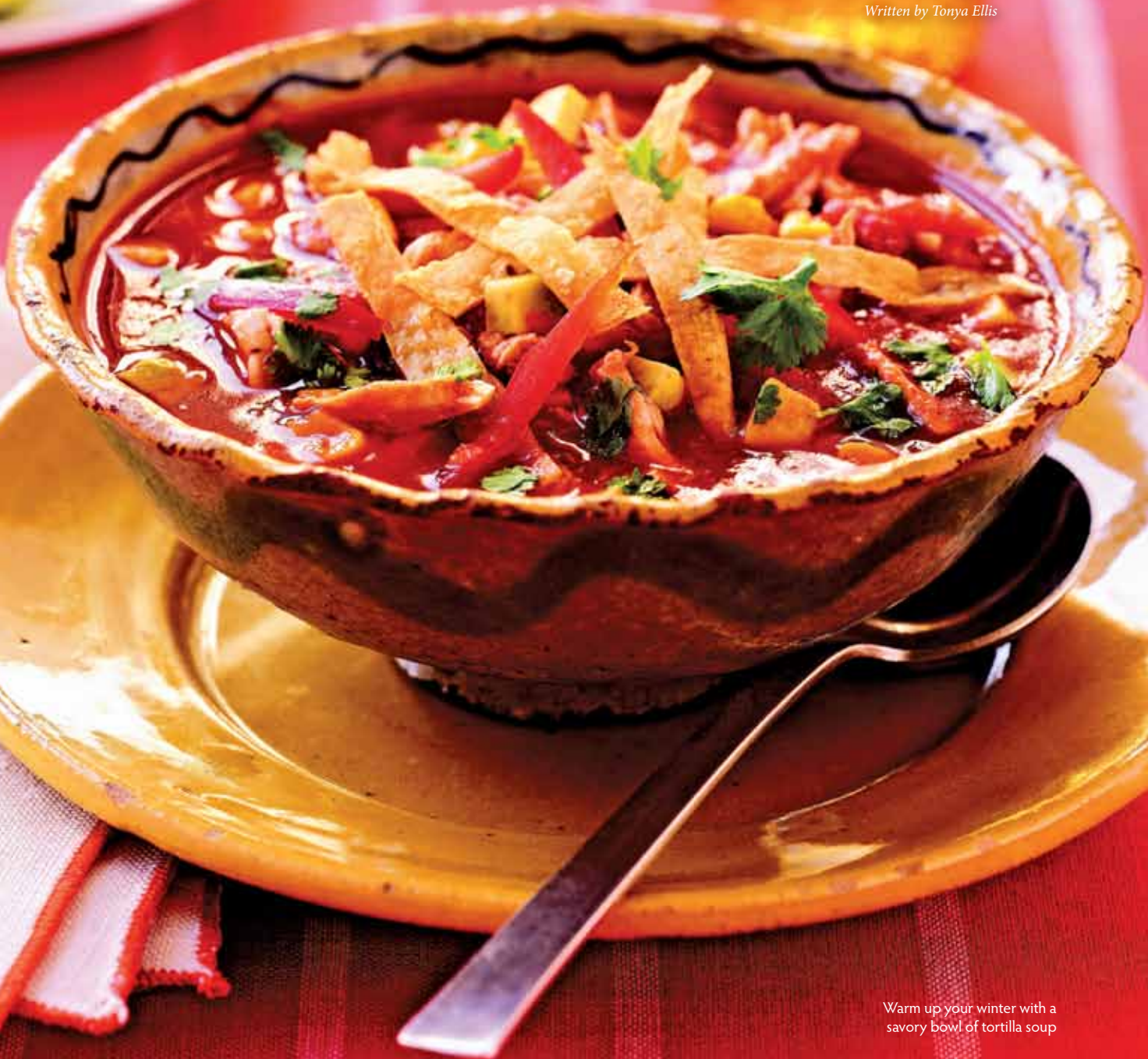


Foods That *Warm* You

Fort Bend's go-to foods when the temperature drops

Written by Tonya Ellis



Warm up your winter with a savory bowl of tortilla soup



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



Warm up with a hot and spicy bowl of piranha pale ale chili from BJ's Restaurant

**Bold
Flavors**

When you're chilled to the bone on a cold winter's day, nothing hits the spot like a hot, savory meal. Fort Bend restaurant managers and patrons recently shared some of the warm foods they love to eat when the winter chills arrive in Sugar Land.

Becks Prime

1822 Hwy. 6
281-242-6300

During cooler weather, hot and steamy baked potatoes are popular with patrons at Becks Prime. "We sell a lot of chicken-stuffed baked potatoes," says assistant manager Minerva Zuniga. "Every hour we put them in the oven. Every hour we have them fresh, and the chicken is grilled. We use real butter and real cheese - no imitations."

BJ's Restaurant

2231 Hwy. 6
281-242-0400

A hot and spicy bowl of piranha pale ale chili from BJ's Restaurant is just the thing to warm you when it's nippy outside. This hearty dish combines tender bits of pork, beef, and pinto beans with the restaurant's own hand-crafted piranha pale ale beer. "It's actually so popular it stays on the menu all year long," says Victoria Amie, a manager at the restaurant. "It's good, home-style chili."

Black Walnut Café

16535 SW Fwy.
281-565-7800

Black Walnut Café's pot roast dinner is like old-time home cooking, says operations manager Nabil Mouvayed. "It's really good, healthy, and very warm," he adds. The meal includes certified Angus beef and is covered in brown gravy and served with potatoes, roasted vegetables, garlic bread, and a house salad. Sit in one of Black Walnut Café's overstuffed chairs and enjoy a cozy mealtime.

Cheddar's Casual Café

803 Bonaventure Way
281-242-1035

Filled with hot, wholesome vegetables and a creamy sauce and topped with a flaky crust, Cheddar's chicken pot pie is like a slice of home. "It's a classic, just like everybody's mom used to make," says restaurant manager Robert Walker. The chicken pot pie is handmade fresh every morning and comes with a side or a salad that's sure to warm your tummy. "It's a hearty meal," adds Walker.



Sink your teeth into a juicy steak from Becks Prime paired with a steamy baked potato

**Tasty
Choices**



Several Fort Bend eateries offer warm and creamy soups to add to your meal



Try chicken gnocchi soup from Olive Garden - the perfect pick-me-up when paired with salad and breadsticks



The hot and toasty baked potatoes from Becks Prime are sure to please

Tempting Toppings

Cracker Barrel Restaurant and Old Country Store

23801 SW Fwy.

Rosenberg

281-239-8858

Chicken and dumplings is one of the most popular dishes at Cracker Barrel, says associate manager Jeanette Clackum. "It's comfort food," she says. "I think the best part of chicken and dumplings is the gravy that forms between the rolled out dough and the creamy broth that comes with it." If you're watching the calories, order green beans and corn as sides.

Fish City Grill

15980 City Walk

281-494-3474

What sets Fish City Grill's gumbo apart from the others is the "Holy Trinity." "That's the onions, green bell peppers, and celery," explains manager Jose Esparza. "If you're having gumbo without those three, you're not having traditional Louisiana gumbo." Don't forget the shrimp, chicken, Andouille sausage, and okra - which are also included in the savory and dark roux.

Olive Garden

5005 Sweetwater Blvd.

281-491-0478

Olive Garden's chicken and gnocchi soup combines roasted chicken, Italian dumplings, and spinach in a creamy broth that tastes oh so good. "It's a nice, hearty soup that really fills you up," says manager Alex Waterhouse. The chicken and gnocchi soup is part of the Olive Garden's all-you-can-eat lunch

promotion, which allows patrons to eat their fill of soup, salad, and breadsticks at a set price until 4 p.m. "It makes you feel good during cold weather," adds Waterhouse.

Pho Saigon Vietnamese Noodle House

4645 Hwy. 6

281-491-2988

Missouri City mom Carolyn Jones loves the chicken noodle soup at Pho Saigon. "This soup is so steamy it makes you feel like you're getting a facial," she shares. "I like to get it when it's cold outside." Waiter Bao Ngygen says that their beef version of the American favorite is also a popular option in the steamy broth. Lemon, fresh bean sprouts, spicy green peppers, cilantro, and basil leaves add a memorable zing to the savory soups. **SLM**



TONYA ELLIS is a freelance writer and author who lives in Missouri City.

Additional Fort Bend Eateries

Still craving something warm and delicious? Include these local restaurants on your list:

Escalante's Mexican Grill

15933 City Walk
Sugar Land

LupeTortilla

15801 SW Fwy.
Sugar Land

International House of Pancakes

16530 SW Fwy.
Sugar Land

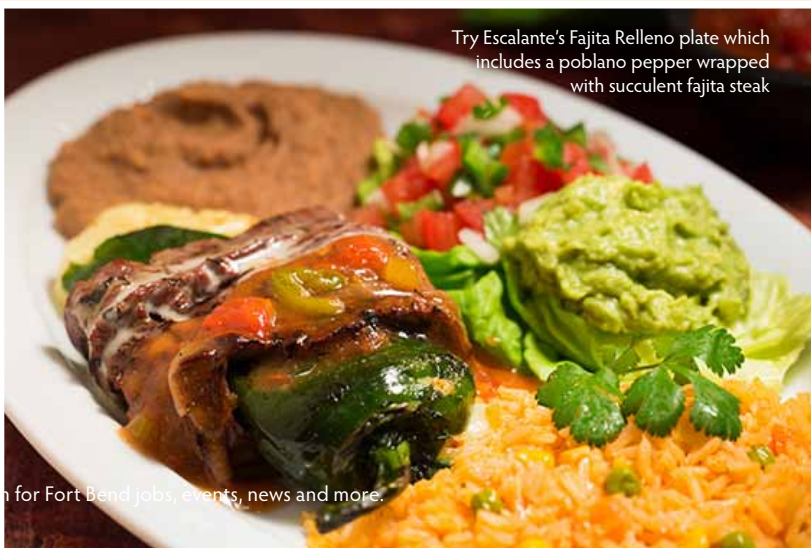
Texas Land and Cattle

12710 SW Fwy.
Stafford

Hearty Breakfast



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



Try Escalante's Fajita Relleno plate which includes a poblano pepper wrapped with succulent fajita steak