

Eat Calf Fries at Risky's Steakhouse, in Fort Worth



The swinging anatomy that separates the bulls from the steers also separates gastronomically bold Texans from their weak-stomached compadres. Sampling a plate of calf fries—a.k.a. Rocky Mountain oysters or calf testicles—is a seminal challenge for any

Texan, a way to honor the “waste not, want not, fry everything” machismo of our cowboy heritage. Today the chewy morsels are standard menu items at meat meccas across the state, including Risky’s Steakhouse, a down-home joint in the historic Fort Worth Stockyards. It’s not far from where Theo Yordanoff, an enterprising Yugoslav cafe owner, started selling his 15-cent calf-fry sandwiches in the twenties. At Risky’s, you can get seven ever-so-slightly-sweet nuggets, served with the requisite homemade cream gravy, for just shy of six bucks. Proving that you have the guts to eat nuts is, of course, priceless. 120 E. Exchange Ave., 817-624-4800. JORDAN BREAL

WITNESS THE ANNUAL CORAL SPAWNING IN THE GULF OF MEXICO

It will be the last August of my life, just after the full moon.

I’ll head for the coast, gorge on fried shrimp, and board a dive boat for the Flower Garden Banks National Marine Sanctuary, almost a hundred miles out into the open Gulf. In the stillness of the night, while flying fish are gliding above the waves and whale sharks are stirring up eddies of phosphorescent light, I’ll put on my gear and sink down sixty feet to the reef. And there I’ll finally see it, the event that takes place once a year at this precise moment like some secret alien rite: the annual coral spawning. I’ll find a good observation spot, a little sand channel, perhaps, and watch millions of tiny coral polyps releasing their gametes, their snowflake bundles of eggs and sperm. As my last year comes to a close, as the days of glory in the flower, splendor in the grass, and all-you-can-eat fried shrimp dwindle, it will be a fine and fitting thing to witness this frenetic upward rain of new life. 409-621-5151. STEPHEN HARRIGAN