



Sugar-sprinkled lingonberry kolaches and horses greet guests at The Inn at Dos Brisas.

# Road Food Revisited

In Central Texas, a quest for sweet and savory Eastern European pastries (kolaches) leads to good eats and plenty of holiday cheer

DAY  
1

**La Grange to Brenham** (73 miles)

The German- and Czech-settled towns of Central Texas are home to pastries known as kolaches (see right) and klobasnikys, dough stuffed with savory meats. Could there be a tastier inspiration for a road trip?

As any local knows, the best versions are sold at gas stations and convenience stores, and there are a lot of those (and a *whole* lot of kolaches and klobasnikys) in this part of Texas. A good place to begin your kolache trek is in La Grange at **Weikel's Bakery** (2247 West State Highway 71; [weikels.com](http://weikels.com) or 979/968-9413).

This family-owned business began in 1929 when brothers Alvin and "Pop" Weikel opened Bon Ton Cafe, and to this day the Weikel family prides themselves on using authentic family recipes. Try an apricot kolache (\$1.10). Continue east on State 71 and you'll find **Hruška's** (109 West State Highway 71; [hruskas-bakery.com](http://hruskas-bakery.com) or 979/378-2333) in Ellinger. Frank J. Hruška originally opened this as a mercantile in 1912, and 40 years later Frank's son started selling pastries prepared by a neighbor. Join local purists and order a sausage klobasniky (think pig in a blanket) stuffed with a blend of smoked pork, beef, and garlic (\$1.25).

Follow State 159 to Industry (population 304), and then pick up State 36 East to pretty Bellville. After stretching your legs walking around its festive town square, continue on to Brenham and the **Blue Bell Creameries** (1101 South Blue Bell Road; [bluebell.com](http://bluebell.com) or 800/327-8135). Indulge your candy cane dreams—the

## So what exactly is a kolache?

Originating in Eastern Europe in the 1700s, kolaches are squares of tender dough that cradle usually sweet but sometimes savory fillings. Klobasniky is the more traditional name for savory-filled pastries. They arrived in Texas via Czech settlers and are beloved fare for breakfast, lunch, and road trips.





Czech, please! Proud bakers show off cream cheese and fruit kolaches at Hruška's; Blue Bell's vintage delivery truck; boudin-stuffed kolaches from Shipley Do-Nuts in Houston.

pink peppermint flavor circles into rotation in November—and take the factory tour (\$5/adults, \$3/ages 6 to 14; call ahead to confirm times), which includes a generous scoop of ice cream. Before the sun sinks, check in to the new **Hampton Inn and Suites** (2605 Schulte Blvd.; [brenhamsuites.hamptoninn.com](http://brenhamsuites.hamptoninn.com) or 979/337-9898; rates begin at \$109/night). If you feel like splurging on dinner (hey, lunch was cheap!), head to Washington (about 20 miles) and **The Inn at Dos Brisas** (10000 Champion Drive; [dosbrisas.com](http://dosbrisas.com) or 979/277-7750), a spectacular 300-acre luxury ranch resort. The inn's menu offers sumptuous offerings such as Organic Capon (rooster) baked in alfalfa hay with chestnuts (\$135/person for an eight-course tasting menu).

## DAY 2 Brenham to Houston (102 miles)

From Brenham, pick up U.S. 290 to Chappell Hill, and compare the hearty sausage-and-cheese klobasniki (\$1.69) at the **Chappell Hill Exxon Gas Station** (8990 U.S. 290 East; 979/836-2560) with the same variety (\$1.79) next door at the **Chappell Hill Bakery & Deli** (8900 U.S. 290 East; 979/836-0913). Head on to Hempstead, and take the Brookshire exit to Farm Road 359, a quiet, pretty stretch of road that will spill you

onto I-10 and into Houston. Don't miss the holy grail of urban fusion meat kolaches (as they're called in the city): a spicy, Cajun-inspired boudin-stuffed version (95 cents, sold only on weekends) at Shipley

Spend the night at **The Houstonian Hotel, Club & Spa** (111 North Post Oak Lane; [houstonian.com](http://houstonian.com) or 713/680-2626). Outside the hotel, a grand oak tree aglow with 75,000 lights—more than the Christmas tree at Rockefeller Center—greet guests, accompanied by life-size camels decorated with jeweled leather saddles (rooms begin at \$179/night).

End your rich holiday weekend with a performance of *A Christmas Carol* at the **Alley Theatre** (615 Texas Avenue; [alleytheatre.org](http://alleytheatre.org) or 713/220-5700). Tickets start at \$25. The new **Tony Mandola's** (1212 Waugh Drive; [tonymandolas.com](http://tonymandolas.com) or 713/528-3474) is a convivial spot for a pre-theater meal. Sip a flawless Negroni (\$10), served in an iced martini glass, and order Mama's Shrimp and Crabmeat Spaghetti (\$13). Man does not live by kolaches alone. **SL**

