
PRESS KIT



UPDATED: 2016-2017

"A Kentucky Tradition"
MOONLITE[®]
 **Bar-B-Q**
INN
INC.

Ask the average person to tell you a city famous for its barbecue, and you might hear answers like Memphis, St. Louis, Kansas City or Austin. But a true barbecue aficionado knows that sometimes you need to go off the beaten path to find something special. A tradition so authentic that people will travel for miles and miles just to experience it.

That place is Owensboro, Kentucky. And that tradition is barbecued **mutton**.

What is Mutton, Anyway?

Although there is no hard-and-fast definition, mutton is simply the meat from older sheep, aged one to five years. Just as beef is mature veal, so mutton is mature lamb. According to the L.A. Times, “*mutton is older, wiser, tastier lamb.*” However, many people assume mutton is tougher and gamier than lamb, further reinforcing its bad rap.

A Little History

Sheep, which were introduced in North America in the 15th century, were considered one of the most nutritious and environmentally sustainable sources of meat: also producing milk, wool, and manure. Eaten in both cottages and palaces alike, mutton was found abundantly throughout the 18th and 19th century as the centerpiece in traditional meals like Shepherd's Pie, stews, and other complex dishes. Popularity declined in the 20th century due to changes in farming style and faster lifestyles. After all, mutton demands more aging time, careful handling, and longer cooking times than other meats.

Tra. di. tion (*tre dish' shen*): The handing down orally of stories, beliefs, customs, etc. from generation to generation. A long-established custom or practice that has the effect of an unwritten law.

The Owensboro Exception

The exception to this trend is here in Owensboro, KY, where mutton, specifically barbecued mutton, is king. In fact, there is more barbecued mutton per capita in Owensboro than any other place in the world, earning the title “*Barbecue Capital of the World.*” So why has mutton continued to grow in popularity here, while declining elsewhere? Many attribute Owensboro's early Welsh settlers who raised enormous herds of sheep. Agriculture records back up this idea documenting more than 11,000 sheep, compared to 6,570 beef cattle, radically different from today's records. So naturally, if a barbecue was in order, mutton would be the meat.

Moonlite Bar-B-Q

Over the past five decades, Moonlite Bar-B-Q has become a Kentucky legend. According to *Southern Living Magazine*, we've perfected Owensboro's old-fashioned Kentucky tradition, being one of the few restaurants in the country that serves barbecued mutton. As a fourth generation family-owned restaurant, we rely on a slow-cook method, over our handbuilt hickory burning pit. Each piece of meat must be dipped or basted several times with our vinegar based pit dip. After 12 hours, you get the pot-roast tender, hickory smoked flavor, no need for sauce, barbecued mutton we are famous for.



From L to R: 1. Early 70's, Pappy Bosley teaches grandson Mike Taylor about family traditions. 2. Pappy's enshrined cleaver and knife that cut ~250,000 mutton carcasses. 3. Owensboro's famous International Bar-B-Q Festival, where we cook up to 20,000 pounds of ewes (female sheep/mutton) over open fire pits each year. 4. The Signature Mutton sandwich served Owensboro style; on a hamburger bun with barbecue sauce, sliced onion and pickles, and accompanied by Pappy's famous mutton Dip. 5. Mutton and other meats being barbecued over hickory smoked logs inside our huge pit for over 12 hours, giving them that Hickory smoked flavor.

In February 1963, Catherine and Pappy Bosley bought Moonlite for \$50,000—a decision that would forever change the lives of generations to come. Working two jobs to make ends meet, Pappy, age 48, drove a cab for Veterans Cab Company and worked at Fleischman's Distillery, while his wife Catherine, 42, was a foreman at Glenmore Distillery. When Fleischman's informed Pappy he was being laid off, they decided to pour everything into their dream. The Bosleys, with their five children, moved in with Catherine's mother and sold their home, using the \$5,000 dollar profit to make the down payment on the Moonlite Restaurant. Apart from faith and hard work, they entered the restaurant business with no experience, and little formal education.

At the time, Moonlite was a 14- year-old barbecue joint with 30 seats including stools at the counter. Today, the restaurant seats 350 guests, serves of ~350,000 meals per year, and requires a staff of more than 120 dedicated members working various facets of the business, from catering to the online shop. Some staff have worked at Moonlite for over 19 years. They are considered not only part of the family, but also the heart of what makes Moonlite great.

Despite this success, the restaurant feels as if nothing has changed in the last 50+ years. You can sense the warm family atmosphere and smell the hickory barbeque pit as soon as you walk through the front doors. Just inside, the walls are lined with memorabilia of famous visitors, awards, and family heirlooms that gives the perception you're stepping into history. The enormous hand built pit, comparable in size to four mid-size cars stacked together, contains a constant fire burning nothing but hickory wood, which imparts Moonlite's famous flavor.

In an era of chain restaurants and frozen food, this experience of true hospitality and proudly crafted, award-winning barbeque is what spreads the tradition of Moonlite as a destination eatery across the nation.

There is sound of friendly banter as locals catch up on *"what's happening"* while picking up their order at the fast-paced carry-out counter. Most noticeable are the customers, sitting by the fire or inside a wood booth, that drive for hours to enjoy top rated food and hospitality. As a destination restaurant, it's not uncommon to see people from all over the world, from Russian Goodwill Ambassadors to bus loads from New Zealand. Even former President Bill Clinton has paid a visit.

The famous buffet is the main event and according to Gourmet Magazine, is *"spectacular"* and *"puts Owensboro barbeque in a class by itself."* Offering a never ending variety of delicious barbecued mutton, pork, ribs, chicken, ham and beef, numerous vegetables, a fantastic salad bar, and dessert bar of homemade pies, the buffet allows you to try something new or eat extra of your favorites. The buffet is like an extension of Grandma's family table where at any moment you might hear, *"Ya'll, there is plenty more."* For those who know exactly what they like, the menu features classic options like the barbecue sandwich served Owensboro style; on a hamburger bun with barbecue sauce, sliced onion and pickles, and accompanied by Pappy's famous mutton Dip.

Today, third generation Bosleys proudly walk through the doors, benefiting from Pappy and Catherine's decision in 1963. Moonlite has now grown into something far greater than just a successful restaurant, it's a Kentucky tradition.



From L to R: 1. The Bosley family has built a barbeque tradition lasting three generations. 2. Our unique, famous buffet is served daily, allowing our customers to try all our barbecued meats, including mutton. 3. Come on in...view from our back porch here at Moonlite. 4. A typical plate from the buffet including barbecue ribs, homemade sides, rolls, and our famous Burgoo stew. 5. Local guests and friends catching up over beer and barbeque inside one of our classic booths.

Founded: Originally founded in 1949 and purchased by Catherine and Pappy Bosley in 1963.

Location: 2840 W Parrish Ave., Owensboro, Kentucky 42301

Barbecue Captial of the World: There is more barbeque mutton per capita in Owensboro than any other place in the world, earning the title *"Barbecue Capital of the World."* Among other things, Owensboro is famous for the International Bar-B-Q Festival, which draws barbecue fans from all over the world. Every May, 20,000 pounds of ewes (female sheep, known as mutton) are cooked over open pits fired by Moonlite.

The Restaurant: When the Bosleys took over ownership, Moonlite was a fourteen year old barbecue joint with 30 seats including stools at the counter. Today, the restaurant seats 350 and serves over ~350,000 meals per year. As a destination experience, customers come from all over the world to enjoy our top rated food, one of a kind buffet and southern hospitality.

What are we famous for?: Barbeque mutton and our unique resturant buffet.

What is Mutton?: Although there is no legal definition, mutton is simply the meat from older sheep (1 year - 5 years) – just as beef is mature veal, so mutton is mature lamb. At Moonlite, we buy about 2-year-old female 'ewes' (sheep) that have just the right maturity to have a rich, meaty taste that's more satisfying than lamb.

That's a lot of Mutton: Moonlite is the largest mutton distributors in the country. Serving over 10,000 pounds of mutton a week, the restaurant is responsible for about 10% of the 'fat ewes' purchased in the United States.

The Kentucky Tradition: Being a fourth generation family owned restaurant, *"Moonlite BBQ has perfected the century-old Kentucky barbeque mutton tradition in Owensboro"*, according to [Southern Living Magazine](#).

Our Historic Legacy: Pappy Bosley's cleaver and butcher knife that he used from 1963 till 2013 are now enshrined in a permanent exhibit at the Southern Food and Beverage Museum in New Orleans. It is conservatively estimated to have butchered almost a ¼ million mutton carcasses, helping to cement a reputation for serving the best barbecued mutton in Kentucky, and indeed the nation.

Barbeque Secrets: As Ken Bosley once said, "there are no secrets, just hard work and patience." Meats are personally selected for quality, then cooked for around 12 hours inside our custom built, hickory fired pits. This gives them that distinctive hickory flavor Moonlite is famous for.

The Pit: The enormous pit, comparable in size to four mid-size cars stacked together, contains a constant fire, burning 24/7. Over the pit, which an uncle built by hand, there are huge double decker grills, with doors opening from both sides that are four feet wide. The pit is so deep, the pitmaster has to move the meat with pitchforks.

Our Cooking Process: Our famous slow cook method requires our pit cooks dip (baste) each piece several times with our vinegar based pit dip during the process. Only after the meat cooks do we put on Kentucky's special sauces made from Pappy Bosley's famous Black Barbecue Sauce Dip recipe. This produces that delicate, delicious taste which has helped make Moonlite the Kentucky Barbeque Tradition.

Moonlite Pitmasters: To become a pitmaster at Moonlite, it takes two years, or about 4,200 hours, of training.

Growing Enterprise: Moonlite has grown into a multifaceted business that includes the restaurant, carry-out, catering, online store & products, and the Wholesale Food Division.

DID YOU KNOW?

- **40 cents** was the cost of the first Moonlite mutton sandwich.
- Most places are afraid for their barbeque to be tasted unless it's swimming in sauce. Moonlite **puts the sauce on the table!**
- Pappy, who dressed in overalls and chewed a cigar, worked **18 hour days** and ran the restaurant every day as if it was going to go out of business.
- The enormous **Black Kettle** that sits in front of the resturant signifies the burgoo pots inside the kitchen.
- In 1963, mutton was **11 cents per pound**. Pappy thought it would put us out of business when it went up to 17 cents.
- Upon first opening, Catherine would **make pies at home** to sell & serve at Moonlite.
- Moonlite is the largest distributor of mutton in the country, serving over **10,000 pounds of mutton** per week (15,000 pounds of meat).
- Over **350,000 meals** are served each year with annual sales estimated at more than **\$5 million**.
- Halloween in 2003, Moonlite sold **19,000 Sandwiches** in one day.
- **Famous visitors**, including former President Bill Clinton, former Vice President Al Gore, former second lady Marilyn Quayle, U.S. Sen. Evan Bayh, Jim Nabors, Bill Monroe, Pam Tillis, William Shatner, Kevin Costner, Reba McIntyre and Emmylou Harris are a few whom we have served.
- The Bosley Family's **first menu** is now on permanent display at the Southern Food & Beverage Museum in New Orleans.
- "*Kentucky Burgoo*" is the **celebrated stew** served on Derby day.
- Catherine Bosley kept her job at Glenmore Distillery Company until retiring **just in case** they didn't make it in the restaurant business.
- **Back in the early 1940s**, Moonlite was a gas station in an old one-car garage metal building.



From Top L to R: 1. Typical buffet plate of barbecued mutton, burgoo and all the fixings! 2. Small treasures: picture of Pappy and Catherine Bosley. Their sweat and tears have left a fingerprint on the business to this day. 3. Moonlite's signature Barbecue sauce. 4. Moonlite BBQ Pitmaster cooks mutton in the custom pit that was originally built by an uncle in the family. 5. Gourmet catering hors d'oeuvres served by Moonlite's renowned catering department. 6. Pappy and Catherine Bosley meeting former president, Bill Clinton, during his visit to Moonlite. 7. Moonlite gear and products, available online and at the restaurant. 8. Moonlite's restaurant has continued to expand in order to handle all the facets of the business. 9. Black tie event catered by Moonlite and included an ice sculpture, hot and cold hors d'oeuvres, and fresh shrimp. 10. Owensboro is the burgoo capital of the world. 11. The famous buffet has made us unique. 12. Hugh Jr. "Benny" Bosley cooks burgoo with Iron Chef Bobby Flay in Louisville, KY.

PRESS & AWARDS



- Honored in 2016 by *Kentucky Living Magazine* as the “Best Non Franchised Barbeque” Hall of Fame
- In 2015, named “The King” of Kentucky BBQ by *Men’s Health Magazine*
- *Garden & Gun Magazine* named Moonlite in their 2015 Barbeque Bucket List
- In 2013, the *Southern Food & Beverage Museum* in New Orleans inducted the cleaver and butcher knife wielded by late Pappy Bosley since 1963 as a permanent exhibit as reported in prnewswire.com
- Featured on *Travel Channel’s* show *Bizarre Foods Travel Food Guide*
- **Andrew Zimmern**, states “From the bone-in ribs to the loins and shoulders, [Moonlite’s] barbecued mutton is fantastic” in his 2013 write-up of his visit to film the show *Bizarre Foods, Travel Channel*
- *Southern Living* names Moonlite BBQ in the Top 50 BBQ Joints of the South, quoting “The Moonlite is a Kentucky legend, and it turns out an incredible volume of smoked mutton, beef, pork, and chicken from two brimming buffets. For me, though, it’s the burgoo—tangy and soothing with a rich mutton bite and peppery finish—that’s the real star of the show”
- Southernfoodways.com features an [interview with Ken Bosley](#) that is published in the Kentucky Barbecue Book released by the University Press of Kentucky
- CNN’s eatocracy.com references Moonlite’s famous mutton, Owensboro’s International Bar-B-Q Festival, and the *Southern Foodways Alliance* in their article “Mutton, pork butts and burgoo - an intro to Kentucky barbecue”
- Featured barbecue restaurant for *Kentucky Tourism*
- Named among the Top 23 best BBQ restaurants in America by www.timeout.com
- Blog.foodnetwork.com features Moonlite’s Mutton Dip in their May 2012 “Liquid Gold: Regional BBQ Sauces”
- Moonlite voted *Best Bar-B-Q in Kentucky* by *Kentucky Living* and *Kentucky Magazine*

- Voted Best Restaurant Service in 2010 by *Messenger-Inquirer*
- Featured three page article in 2011’s *The Lane Report*, KY Business News Source noting Moonlite’s revenue to hit around 7 million that year
- One of the 12 Holy Grails of Barbecue by *Popular Plate Magazine*, 2010
- 2005 AAA Diamond Rated Restaurant Award
- Named among the South’s Best Restaurants in *Southern Living* Bar-B-Que, Our Ultimate Guide in 2003
- Featured in *Gourmet Magazine’s* 2003 “A Guide to America’s Roadfood” stating “Western Kentucky is a nexus of great barbeque and Moonlite is its shining star”
- Named “10 Most Popular Spots in Kentucky” in 2003 by *Travelocity* (selected from over 40,000 members)
- Feature article in *LA Times*, June 26th, 2002 by Charles Perry. “Mutton is just Older, Wiser, Tastier Lamb”
- Featured in *USA Today* in June 2001 among the best barbecue in America
- In April 2001, *USA Today* listed Moonlite as one of the 10 great places to fill your plate
- Featured in *Entertainment Guide’s* “Moonlite Bar-B-Q Tradition” by Clint Hadden of *Messenger-Inquirer* on July 6th 2001
- Kentucky.com names Moonlite in 2001 as “gold standard of Kentucky barbecue”
- According to *Gourmet Magazine*, Moonlite’s famous buffet is “spectacular” and “Puts Owensboro barbecue in a class by itself.” Published, July 2000
- The Associated Press coverage in 2000 of President Clinton’s visit “President Clinton speaks at Owensboro School and visits Moonlite barbeque restaurant”
- Featured article in *Money* issue 1999, “Fixed in Place” by Paul Lukas
- Kentuckytourism.com names Moonlite BBQ as main stop for Kentucky Heritage Culinary foods

Psst...the links are clickable!





Halloween sandwich sale tricks restaurant

By Keith Lawrence
Messenger-Inquirer

When Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn offered a Halloween trick-or-treat special on its barbecue sandwiches — 94 cents instead of the normal \$2.19 — “the trick was on us,” manager Pat Bosley said Friday.

The restaurant started offering the promotion — based on the number of a race car it sponsors — two years ago.

The first year, Moonlite sold 3,500 sandwiches. Last year, it sold 7,300.

“We geared up for 8,000 this year,” Bosley said. “But people just kept coming. We sold 11,488 sandwiches before it was over.”

Moonlite sells an average of 50 carryout sandwiches a day the rest of the year, he said.

The restaurant’s parking lot stayed full all day and into the

night. And there was a constant line at the carryout counter, Bosley said.

“Our average sale was 10 sandwiches,” he said. “The most I saw anyone buy was 147. But I left at 8 p.m. There may have been a bigger one later.”

Bosley said Moonlite does the special because “restaurant sales are typically dead on Halloween.”

There’s not a lot of profit in a 94-cent barbecue sandwich, he said.

“Yesterday, we said we’d never do it again,” Bosley said. “But today, we’re already talking about how to do it better next year.”

Moonlite didn’t run out of pork and mutton for the sandwiches, he said. “But it got pretty close. We had to pull some meat from our wholesale division.”

Keith Lawrence, 691-7301,
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*** Moonlite breaks own Halloween record ***

Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn sold a record 19,643 barbecue sandwiches on Friday, the fourth Halloween that the restaurant has sold its \$2.19 barbecue sandwiches for 94 cents.

Last year, the restaurant at 2840 W. Parrish Ave. sold 11,488 sandwiches, manager Pat Bosley said Saturday.

The sandwiches represent 4,910 pounds of mutton and pork, Bosley said. More detailed records weren’t kept, he said. Workers made an average of 26 sandwiches a minute for 12.5 hours, he said. The largest order was for 150 sandwiches.

The event, created four years ago to drum up business on a traditionally slow day, has become the restaurant’s busiest day in terms of customers served, Bosley said.

Barbecue From Coast to Coast



Moonlite to feed about 15,000 at Toyota picnic

By Keith Lawrence
Messenger-Inquirer

Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn is staging its biggest production this week.

About 45 employees from the Owensboro restaurant and a temporary crew of about 80 workers hired from the Louisville and Lexington areas will be feeding between 14,000 and 15,000 Toyota workers and their families Saturday at the company’s annual picnic in Georgetown.

“This is a major production,” says Jeanie Heath, Moonlite catering manager. “We literally set up camp in Georgetown.”

In the five years Moonlite has been catering the Toyota picnic, the serving line has grown from 2,000 to 14,000 people, said Ken Bosley, Moonlite vice president.

“I don’t think they knew what they

were getting into,” laughs Carol Fryman in Toyota’s employee relations office. And the serving lines are likely to continue growing as the company grows, she said.

This year’s picnic is on the grounds of a former convent and runs from 11:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., she said.

Actually, this is one of the restaurant’s easiest catering jobs, Heath said.

“I worry about Toyota the least,” she said. “Last year, it went off without a hitch.”

Barbecue is prepared on the Moonlite pit on West Parrish Avenue and reheated in Georgetown. Everything else is prepared in Georgetown, Heath said.

The menu includes 6,000 hot dogs,

See Moonlite/Page 3C

MESSANGER-INQUIRER, Tuesday, September 7, 1993

3C

Moonlite: Serves it up

From Page 1C

5,000 hamburgers, 5,000 boneless chicken breasts, 3,000 pounds of baked beans, 2,000 pounds of barbecued beef and a first this year, 200 pounds of chopped mutton.

“We’ve had requests from people who used to live in this area,” Heath said. “So this year, we’re having a Daviess County Mutton Lovers’ line.”

Fryman said some Toyota officials had eaten at Moonlite a few days before the first picnic was planned. And, she said, a former Owensboroan was working in the human resources department then.

“He said, ‘If you’re going to have barbecue, it’s got to be Moonlite,’” she said. “And they’ve had the job ever since.”

Twenty-five workers will leave Owensboro next Friday morning. Twenty more will follow in the afternoon. Both will be in convoys of vehicles carrying all the equipment for the event.

A few workers will be on site all that night. Others begin arriving at 4 a.m. Saturday. Everyone will be hard at work by 6:30 that morning, Heath said.

“We’ve got it down to a science,” she said.

Keep reading for more
article clippings...

June 26, 2002

Mutton Is Just Older, Wiser, Tastier Lamb

By CHARLES PERRY
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Roast a big piece of meat until half-done. Take it out of the oven, gash it to the bone in several places and rub the cuts with salt and cayenne; save the juices. Then throw this multiply-butterflied chunk of protein, like a folio of steaks bound together, on the grill until good and brown. Add the saved juices to a relish of pickled mushrooms.

"The reader will scarcely need to be told," wrote Eliza Acton in "Modern Cooking for Private Families," "that this is an excellent dish."

The year was 1845. The dish was the Cavalier's Broil. And even though its instructions run counter to much of what we now take for granted in cooking meat, it's so utterly efficient and its flavors so modern, it could have been invented yesterday.

In fact, there may not be a better way to cook leg of lamb. The Cavalier's Broil has a dark, tasty crust, a juicy medium-rare interior and an elegant, uncluttered seasoning. Best of all, it needs only 20 minutes on the grill.

It's a traditional recipe for a meat that is scarcely part of our tradition anymore: mutton. You can use lamb instead, just as you can in other mutton recipes of 19th century American cookbooks, but they'd be even better with the real thing. Mutton is richer and meatier than lamb, just as beef is richer and meatier than veal.

These days a lot of people are convinced, without ever having tasted it, that mutton must be coarse, tallowy and rank. But down to the beginning of the 20th century, it was always more popular than lamb. Pennsylvania, Virginia and North Carolina being particularly known for their fine mutton. (Where was Scarlett O'Hara going in the first scene of "Gone With the Wind"? To a barbecue of hickory-roasted pork and mutton.)

The typical 19th century American cookbook would include a diagram of the cuts of mutton, but never one for lamb. One reason is that the cuts of lamb didn't matter much. The various parts of mutton might figure in stews and meat pies and other complex dishes, but a lamb went straight to the oven or the roasting spit. "The best way of

ton like hams. Hotel breakfast menus offered broiled mutton chops; roast saddle of mutton was a special-occasion dish. Even the French knew of Reform cutlets, served at the famous Reform Club in London: butter-sauteed mutton chops in a breading that was half minced ham.

But mutton fell out of favor during the 20th century, even in the British Commonwealth, the traditional home of mutton connoisseurship. "Over the past 40 years, mutton has virtually disappeared from our shops and menus," laments the Web site of Graig Farm, Dolau, Wales. In New Zealand, Horizon Lamb & Mutton reports that it now slaughters four times as many lambs as sheep and sells its mutton mostly to Asia. (In Indian markets you sometimes find New Zealand corned mutton, a canned product invented to satisfy the dietary constraints of Hindus and Muslims.)

Graig Farm blames the decline on changes in farming style and a faster lifestyle. Mutton requires more investment from the farmer, longer aging and more careful handling by the meat industry and longer cooking by the consumer.

All these objections go double in our country, where many people already think lamb is too gamy and fear that mutton will be even worse. (Actually, gaminess can be more noticeable in lamb because it has a milder meat flavor.)

Real Kentucky Barbecue

The exception to the trend is Owensboro, Ky., located near where Illinois, Indiana and Kentucky meet. To the outside world, Owensboro is probably best known as the hometown of no fewer than 6 NASCAR drivers, including Michael and Darryl Waltrip, or maybe as the headquarters of the International Bluegrass Music Assn. To itself, it's the barbecue capital of the world—and when they say "barbecue" in Owensboro, they mean barbecued mutton.

The area was settled in the early 1800s by people from Wales, who had sheepherding in their blood. (Even today, there are nearly four sheep per person in Wales—15% of the sheep in the European Union.) On top of that, the tariff of 1816 had encouraged an American wool industry. Between one thing and

ley. But if you take the Parrish Avenue exit from US 60 (Wendell Ford Expressway) on the west side of town and head east four blocks, you'll see the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn, the biggest mutton dispensary in the country. It moves 10,000 pounds of sheep meat a week.

You can't miss it. Out front there's a black iron pot big enough to boil a hippo, in symbolizing Owensboro's annual World Barbecue Festival, held the second weekend in May. A sign welcomes you to "Owensboro, the World Capital of Barbecue." The huge parking lot is dominated by another that reads, "If It's Not Owensboro Barbecue, It's Not Real Barbecue."

When Hugh and Catherine Bosley bought the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn in 1963, it seated 35; now it seats 350 and has 120 employees, and though chicken, beef and pork have been moving up, mutton still accounts for most of its business.

"About half our customers are from Daviess County," says marketing director Pat Bosley. "But 8% come from out of state. There are pilots who fly in from nearby Air Force bases and have barbecue." The number of out-of-staters is bound to go up—this seems to be the year the outside world has discovered Owensboro, with sizable mentions in the recent "Celebrating Barbecue" by Doty Griffith (Simon & Schuster) and "The Barbecue America Cookbook" by Rick Browne and Jack Bettridge (Lyons Press).

To the left of the restaurant's busy gift shop (barbecue sauces, Moonlite bill caps, country hams) is the entrance to the butchering operation. Bosley shows a cold room where mutton carcasses hang. "I figure I buy 10% of the fat ewes for sale in the country," he says. "The average lamb might run 70 pounds. I look for a 2-year-old sheep weighing about 150 pounds."

"Mostly they're from what I call the Midwest—Texas, Colorado, Minnesota, Iowa and the Dakotas. There are only five major plants in the country that slaughter sheep of any age. Two or three are in Texas. They ship most of their mutton to Mexico."

Mutton by Mail

The reason for having a butchering operation, complete with a resident USDA inspector, on the

cooking lamb is to roast it," declared Eliza Leslie in her influential "Directions for Cooking" (1837): "when dressed otherwise, it is insipid, and not so good as mutton."

When Mutton Was King

Back then, by the way, people would have been amazed by the modern cult of rare lamb. "Lamb, like veal and pork, is not eatable unless thoroughly done," wrote Leslie; "no one preferring it rare, as is frequently the case with beef and mutton." Nearly 60 years later, Jamie Farmer would agree.

Of course, much depends on what you mean by "lamb" and "mutton." In the past, a lot of lamb was spring lamb, 6 to 8 weeks old, though the meat of animals up to one year still counted as lamb. The USDA now considers 12 months the dividing line between lamb and mutton. The French raise the bar to 14 months, and on Welsh sheep farms, mutton commonly begins at 18 months. At least everybody agrees that a 5-year-old sheep is probably too old and tough to cook.

There was a whole repertoire of regional mutton dishes, such as Irish stew, Scotch broth and Lancashire hotpot (a casserole of meat layered with potatoes). People of Welsh descent salted legs of mut-

another, there were more than 11,000 sheep in Daviess County by the 1860s.

From time to time, the herds-men had to cull older sheep from their flocks, and somehow—locals are vague about how this happened—barbecuing came to be the main way of cooking the meat, though mutton does show up in the local version of Kentucky bur-goo, a stew of mixed meats.

Along the way, mutton barbecues became important church fund-raisers. Owensboro's first recorded mutton barbecue, on July 4, 1834, was held at a Baptist church, but local Catholics have been particularly active barbecuers. Mount St. Joseph's convent school alone sells about two tons of barbecued mutton at its annual barbecue. Today there's at least one fund-raising picnic in the Owensboro area nearly every week in May and June.

So the taste for mutton flourished in Owensboro even while it was going into eclipse everywhere else. In fact, it even survived the disappearance of the local sheep industry. Owensboro's half-dozen barbecue restaurants now get their mutton from out of state.

Mutton aside, Owensboro doesn't seem exotic. It's an old, leafy city, fairly large for this part of the country (population 55,000), in the rolling country of the Ohio Val-

restaurants premises is that the Moonlite also sells meat wholesale to restaurants, grocery stores, schools and Wal-Marts from Louisville to Paducah. It doesn't ship raw mutton out of the area, alas.

But it does ship barbecued mutton, cooked for about 12 hours in huge double-deck hickory pits 24 feet long and so deep the cooks have to move the meat around with pitchforks. You can order sliced mutton or chopped mutton, the latter being trimmings, which some people prefer because they include extra-browned bits.

The Owensboro way of serving mutton is on a hamburger bun with barbecue sauce, sliced onions and pickles, accompanied by a thin sauce called "dip"—mostly vinegar, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce and spices. This is about all that's left of America's centuries-old mutton tradition. But sheep meat seems to have struck deep roots in northwestern Kentucky, so Owensboro barbecue should be around a long time.

Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn, 2840 W. Parrish Ave., Owensboro, Ky. (270) 684-8143; (800) 322-8989 (7 a.m. to 2 p.m.). Or order online at www.moonlite.com. Sliced barbecued mutton is \$8.55 pound; chopped mutton trimmings are \$4.89 a pound.

The Cavalier's Broil

Active Work Time: 25 minutes • Total Preparation Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

To give an idea what mutton cookery was like, here's a recipe adapted from Eliza Acton's "Modern Cookery for Private Families" (1845); the dish had been known for at least 100 years before that. In the absence of mutton, we used lamb.

LAMB

- 1 (5-pound) shoulder or half leg of lamb or mutton
- 3/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon salt

- Heat the oven to 400 degrees.
- Place the lamb in a roasting dish and cook 50 minutes.
- Remove the lamb from the oven to a large dish. Make 3 (5-inch) cuts down to the bone on each side, if using the shoulder, or 4 cuts to the bone through the meatiest part of the leg, and rub the cayenne and salt into the cuts. Let the meat sit in the dish 5 minutes and save the juices that drain.
- Meanwhile, heat the grill to medium high.
- Grill the lamb and cook, turning once, until the meat at the bone is



LAWRENCE K. HO/LOS Angeles Times

Salt and cayenne bring out flavor.

cooked medium rare, 25 to 30 minutes, or until a meat thermometer registers 140 degrees. Remove from the grill and let sit 10 minutes.

PICKLED MUSHROOMS

- 3/4 pound mushrooms
- Salt
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper

- 1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon mace or nutmeg
- Cut the mushrooms in quarters and place them in a skillet. Sprinkle generously with salt and cook, covered, over low heat, 10 minutes. They will release a thin juice. Drain, let the mushrooms cool and squeeze them out in a cloth.
- Meanwhile, place the vinegar in a small skillet or saucepan with the cayenne, ginger and mace or nutmeg. Bring to a boil, reduce the heat and simmer 5 minutes.
- Combine the mushrooms and the vinegar. (They can be used immediately or kept tightly covered for several months.) Mince half of the mushrooms. Place the mushrooms and the lamb juices from the plate into a skillet and cook over medium high heat until sizzling hot. Serve with the lamb.
- 6 to 8 servings. Each of 8 servings: 393 calories; 380 mg sodium; 122 mg cholesterol; 28 grams fat; 12 grams saturated fat; 2 grams carbohydrates; 32 grams protein; 0.59 gram fiber.

Gourmet

THE MAGAZINE OF GOOD LIVING

5 Easy Menus

A Weekend to Sunday Brunch

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TWO FOR THE ROAD

Road Notes: Kentucky Q

"You all goin' buffet?" the waitress asks as she sets down suites of silverware (each wrapped in a paper napkin) and a pair of sauce pitchers on the table of our booth.

In the tradition of an old-time southern pig-pickin', the buffet at the Moonlite Bar-B-Q in Owensboro, Kentucky, is spectacular. It occupies its own dedicated room, with meats and vegetables on one side, salads and desserts on the other. Never have we dipped a plate when there wasn't an employee replenishing ribs or dabbing drips of ham-cabbage hash off the counter.

What's special about a western Kentucky barbecue buffet is the variety of meats. Most of America's serious barbecue scenes specialize in just one kind: beef sausages in East Texas, pork shoulder in South Carolina, ribs in Chicago. In Owensboro, they've got it all, and at Moonlite, it is all good. There are chicken and ribs and pulled pork, even a pan of nonbarbecued sliced country ham that is firm and salty and fits so well into Moonlite's buttery dinner rolls, with maybe a dab of sorghum. (Beyond meats, we'll just mention the impressive deployment of "vegetables," including cheesy broccoli casserole, macaroni and cheese, creamed corn niblets, ham and beans, and butter-drizzled mashed potatoes, plus the western Kentucky soup/stew known as burgoo.)

The beef brisket is sensational. It is sliced a half inch thick and has a chewy crust blackened by hours in the pit. But the interior is butter-soft, with some quivery veins that appear to be meat but that are so infused with long-cooked fat that they literally melt on the tongue in a torrent of pure, noncorporeal meat-smoke flavor.

Mutton puts Owensboro barbecue in a class by itself. Cooked until pot-roast tender, it is set out on the Moonlite buffet two ways: chopped or pulled. Neither has sauce on it; you apply your own at the table from the pitchers the waitress brings. One is a dark-orange emulsion with gentle vinegar-tomato zest; the other is called "mutton dip," an unctuous gravy that is used to baste the mutton as it cooks. For those who need heat, Moonlite also supplies bottles of "Very Hot Sauce," which is brilliantly peppered and will set your lips and tongue aglow. But we recommend sampling this meat sauceless. The chopped mutton is pulverized to nothing but flavor: tangy lamb and wood smoke in a bold hash duet. The pulled version is a textural amusement park—rugged and chunky with a lot of hard outside crust among soft, juicy chunks of interior meat that fall into shreds so supple they make us want to abandon all utensils and eat like happy cave dwellers. —J. & M.S.

MOONLITE BAR-B-Q
2840 West Parrish Avenue
Owensboro, Kentucky
Tel. (270) 684-8143



The recipe that makes Bon Ton's chicken such a killer combination of spicy, salty, and crunchy dates back more than 50 years.

BON TON-STYLE FRIED CHICKEN

Serves 4

Active time: 45 min Start to finish: 25 hr

Bilko's spice mix is a closely guarded secret, but Donna King shared with us its fundamental ingredients as well as the basic technique—a long marination, at least 24 hours. This results in some of the juiciest chicken we've ever eaten. The chicken must also rest five or ten minutes after being dredged in the seasoned flour to, as King told us, "get doughy."

The Bon Ton recipe calls for Accent (monosodium glutamate) in both the marinade and the dredging mixture. We tested it with and without, and the chicken mainly tasted saltier with the Accent, which some people preferred.

For marinade

- 1 qt water
- 2 tablespoons salt
- 2 teaspoons cayenne
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 1½ teaspoons white pepper
- 1 tablespoon soy sauce
- 2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce

- 4 chicken breast halves, 4 thighs, and 4 drumsticks (all with skin and bones; 4 to 4½ lb total)

For frying

About 12 cups vegetable oil

For dredging

- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon cayenne
- 1 teaspoon white pepper

Marinate chicken:

- ▶ Whisk together all marinade ingredients in a large bowl.
- ▶ Add chicken, making sure it is covered with marinade. Chill, covered, stirring twice, about 24 hours.

Dredge and fry chicken:

- ▶ Heat 2 inches oil in a wide 8- to 9½-quart pot over moderately high heat until a deep-fat thermometer registers 365° to 375°F. (Our pot was 12 inches wide and 5 inches deep; if you don't have that wide a pot, you can fry the chicken in two batches.)
- ▶ Meanwhile, whisk together all dredging ingredients in a large bowl. Drain chicken, discarding marinade. Dredge each piece of chicken in seasoned flour and put on a large baking sheet. Let stand about 10 minutes.
- ▶ Fry chicken, turning a few times, 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden brown, then drain on a rack. ☞

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PERSONAL INTEREST SPENDING

Lost in America by Paul Lukas

Fixed in Place

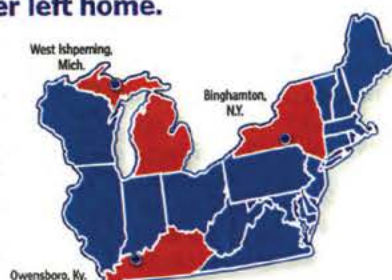
Unlike, say, Buffalo wings, these great regional dishes never left home.

ONE AUTUMN day a few years ago, I found myself in central Wisconsin with one afternoon left on my vacation and two places I desperately wanted to visit. If I went north, I could go to Hayward, home of the highly touted Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame; if I went east, I could check out some eateries in Sheboygan, the self-proclaimed Bratwurst Capital of the World. With no time to do both, it seemed like an impossible choice until my travel partner brought a bit of perspective to the situation. "I'm sure the Hall of Fame would be fun," she said, "but compare that to the chance of having a meal we might remember for the rest of our lives."

End of discussion. As this anecdote handily demonstrates, an army isn't the only thing that travels on its stomach. Good food—especially regional specialties not available back home—should always be a priority when traveling. And since America features so many distinct culinary cultures, there's no shortage of

regional delicacies to sample. Many have become fairly well known over the years—by now everyone's aware that Chicago is the place for deep-dish pizza and that New Orleans is where it's at for gumbo. Some, like Buffalo chicken wings and Philly cheese steaks, have even spread throughout the country, securing a spot on our national menu.

But if you really want to find America's true flavor, check out some of the regional specialties that have never caught on outside their own geographic bases or garnered widespread notoriety. These small, localized food subcultures—like Sheboygan's bratwurst outlets—may not be as famous as, say, the crab feasts of Baltimore, but they're every bit as interesting and tasty. In fact, because these less conspicuous food scenes have largely been ignored by the tourist crowd, their trademark dishes have not been corrupted, compromised or watered down like so many of their more celebrated counterparts.



My favorite overlooked food scene centers around Binghamton, N.Y., the only place in the U.S. where you'll find spiedies, an excellent dish available at bars and restaurants all over town. Spiedies ("spee-deez") are meat cubes—usually pork, but lamb, beef and chicken are sometimes used—that have soaked in a mixture of oil, vinegar, herbs and spices known as spiedie sauce. After marinating at least overnight—and often considerably longer—the meat is skewered, grilled over charcoal and served with a piece of squishy Italian bread, which you then use as a mitt to remove the hot cubes from the skewer. The result is a simple and remarkably tasty sandwich.

Spiedies are generally acknowledged to have originated with Binghamton's once sizable Italian immigrant population, although historical specifics are sketchy. In any case, ground zero for spiedies today is Sharkey's (56 Glenwood Ave.; 607-729-9201), a well-worn venue with a lively bar up front, some homey booths in the back and, in an odd decorating touch, a horseshoe crab mounted on the wall. The menu features everything from pizza (awful) to pierogies (pretty good), but serious chowhounds go to Sharkey's for the spiedies, which are Binghamton's best. Figure two or three skewers per person to start—but the marinade is so potent that spiedie addiction soon kicks in, at which



MOONLITE

Bar-B-Q



Western Kentucky's barbecued mutton fits perfectly into the southern smoke-house tradition.

10 great places to fill up your plate

Gluttony, the ancients warned, is a sin, but those abstemious ancients never supped at America's plentiful buffet restaurants. Michael and Jane Stern, authors of *Roadfood*, who have supped many times, say all-you-can-eat is still one of America's best deals — and the food's pretty darn good, too.

Buffet-style means you get up and load your plate from groaning tables. Family-style means you sit at huge tables and the eats come to you.

Michael Stern shares with USA TODAY'S Maria Puente the couple's picks for buffets and family-style eateries around the country. Note: Hours differ; check first.

Revolving Tables Restaurant

Mendenhall, Miss.

Set in an old railroad hotel, you sit at one of three giant, two-tier Lazy Susan tables piled with heaping platters of food. Guests help themselves as the top tier of the table spins. "I love" the stitched sampler on the wall: "Eat Til It Ouches." **Type:** family-style. **Price:** \$10. **Try:** chicken and dumplings, cornbread, rice casserole. 601-847-3113.

Blue Willow Inn

Social Circle, Ga.

"This is a spectacular, grand Southern mansion where you can eat to your heart's content. No matter how big an appetite you have, you cannot taste some of everything unless it's really teeny-weensy." **Type:** buffet. **Price:** \$9.95-\$16.95. **Try:** fried chicken, fried green tomatoes, collard greens. 770-464-2131 or www.bluewillowinn.com.

Hopkins House

Pensacola, Fla.

Another Southern boarding-house, "When you walk in, you're pointed to a table for 10 to 18 people, and before you hit your seat, you are surrounded by platters of fried chicken, hot biscuits, sweet potato soufflé and a dozen other Dixie specialties." **Type:** family-style. **Price:** \$7.95. **Try:** fried chicken, yellow squash, pancakes. 850-438-3979.

The Nordic Lodge

Charlestown, R.I.

"The place to go if you're a lobster lover." Gorge on succulent crustaceans and all manner of seafood, plus heaping portions of filet mignon, prime rib and pork ribs. **Type:** buffet. **Price:** \$47; less for kids. **Try:** lobster. 401-783-4515 or www.nordic-lodge.com.

Louis' Basque Corner

Reno

"All you can eat in the style of the Basques of northern Spain. "It was long-standing tradition for Basque shepherds to come down from their pastures in the winter and stay in hotels throughout northern Nevada, and some of those towns still have restaurants that serve these vast feasts." **Type:** family-style. **Price:** \$16.95, including wine; \$8.95 for kids. **Try:** lamb, a Basque favorite. 775-323-7203.

The White Way Restaurant/Cafe

Durant, Iowa

A salad lover's dream. There are 20 items, free with a regular menu meal. "The main menu item is the pork chops, but the real thrill is a shot at the salads. People pile their plates ridiculously high." **Type:** salad buffet. **Price:** free with meal; \$4.95 à la carte. **Try:** salad bar. 319-785-6202.

Catfish 'N'

Dardanelle, Ark.

The deep-fried balls of cornmeal known as hush puppies got their name because "you could toss one to the dog while cooking and it would shut up!" **Type:** buffet. **Price:** \$10.95; less for kids. **Try:** catfish and hush puppies. 501-229-3321.

Phil Smidt's

Hammond, Ind.

Who knew you could get frog legs anywhere but a French restaurant, let alone all you can eat? "They're also known for their fried lake perch with the secret recipe." **Type:** all-you-can-eat on certain items. **Price:** \$36.95. **Try:** frog legs, lake perch. 800-376-4534 or www.froglegs.com.

J&T Sweatman's

Rosinville, S.C., near Holly Hill

"It's classic Southern pig-picking barbecue; they serve virtually every part of the pig. Barbecue gold." **Type:** buffet. **Price:** \$6.05. **Try:** barbecue pig. 843-563-7574.

Looking for more travel ideas? Review "10 Great" lists on the Internet. Visit us on the Web at <http://10greats.usatoday.com>

MOONLITE BAR-B-Q TRADITION

By Clint Hadden

Messenger-Inquirer Special Publications

Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn
2840 W. Parrish Ave.
(270) 684-8143

tra•di•tion (tre dish en) 1. The handing down orally of stories, beliefs, customs, etc. from generation to generation 2. long established custom or practice that has the effect of an unwritten law

— Webster's Dictionary

In 1963, Hugh and Catherine Bosley purchased the Moonlite, then a popular, small bar-b-q establishment that first opened in the 1940s. Since then, Moonlite has grown into a remarkable family business. Hugh and Catherine, along with four of their children and several grandchildren, have created a bar-b-q institution.

Moonlite now requires more than 120 dedicated staff members to operate the multifaceted business. This includes a 350-seat restaurant, a busy carry-out department, a USDA-inspected processing plant, a catering department practiced at serving 15 to 15,000 with unparalleled quality and professionalism, as well as a wholesale division that produces, distributes, and ships bar-b-q and related products throughout a 4-state area. All this from that 30-seat roadside restaurant the Bosleys bought in 1963.

The restaurant, featured in national magazines like "Gourmet" and "Southern Living," has made the pages of newspapers around the country, and has even hosted a president.

The real center of attention, of course, is the food, especially the buffet, so big it has its own room.

You can heap your plate with barbecued mutton, pork, chicken, beef, and ribs, plus delectable side dishes, including expertly-seasoned vegetables, fresh salads, homemade desserts and blue ribbon pies.

The atmosphere is neighborly. Most of the staff have been with the restaurant for years and treat their customers like old friends. The prices are reasonable, with the buffet price increasing as the weekend approaches and the selection increases.

Hugh "Pappy" Sr. & Catherine Bosley, owners



The Moonlite continues to earn awards and recognition. For the second consecutive year, the Moonlite topped *Kentucky Monthly's* "Kentucky Best" survey in the "best bar-b-q" category.

Buffets are served daily, although hours change through the week.

Lunch buffet: 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., Mon. - Sat.
Dinner buffet: 4 - 9 p.m., Mon. - Thurs.
3:30 - 9:30 p.m., Fri. - Sat.
Sun. buffet: 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.



Clinton speaks at Owensboro school, visits Moonlite barbecue restaurant

by JAMES PRICHARD
Associated Press Writer

OWENSBORO — While her students at Audubon Elementary School dressed more casually for a 45-minute speech there by President Clinton, Chase Jourdan's appearance made a two-word fashion statement: Secret Service.

The fourth-grader was tired Wednesday like a miniature version of the agents who shadow the president's every public move. Chase sported a black, double-breasted suit, black loafers, a white shirt, a silver-and-black tie and a pair of dark shades that mostly stayed in his pocket.

Picture Haley Joel Osment arriving in "Men in Black."

When Chase told his family that he wanted to dress up like a Secret Service agent when the president spoke at his school, they went out Monday and bought the entire outfit.

"The day that I thought of it, I went right out to get it," said Chase, who will turn 11 on Monday.

Best of all, a real agent spotted Chase and gave him a Secret Service pin that the boy added to his lapel.

It's pretty cool," Chase said. He was among about 100 students — and about 550 people gathered — who listened to Clinton speak in the Audubon gymnasium about education reform and the need for turning around low-performing schools. Among those in attendance were Education Secretary Richard Riley, Gov. Paul Patton, Gov. Steve Henry, former John Y. Brown and former Sen. Wendell Ford.

Owensboro was the first stop

on a two-day, four-city tour that would take the president to Davenport, Iowa, later in the day and to St. Paul, Minn., and Columbus, Ohio, today.

Clinton praised Kentucky for its education reforms of the past decade and singled out Audubon, once a poorly performing school, as a model to which underachieving schools in other less-than-affluent areas should aspire.

"This school is now the 18th-best performing school in the state despite the fact that two-thirds of your students qualify for free school lunches," he said. "That is truly amazing."

He called on Congress to support his \$250 million education-accountability program, saying it would provide states and school districts with resources to help reverse the direction of failing schools.

Afterward, Audubon principal Diane Embry said she believes the president feels strongly about improving the nation's public schools.

"I gathered that he really has a passion that all kids should achieve at high levels," she said. "That's a passion for education that you have to have."

U.S. Rep. Ron Lewis, R-Ky., issued a statement saying local schools need more local control — not more federal bureaucracy.

"We all must be concerned with education, but I am also concerned with President Clinton's Washington-knows-best approach," Lewis said. "While education is primarily a state and local responsibility, federal funds account for about 7 percent of all education spending. These dollars must be spent in our classrooms, not bureaucracy, and allow for more local



The Associated Press

President Clinton greets students and teachers from Audubon Elementary School in Owensboro.

control."

After visiting the school, Clinton and his entourage stopped by the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn and left with a giant carryout sampler of barbecued mutton, ribs, chicken and pork, complete with all the trimmings.

The president was too pressed for time to eat, so he instead shook hands and posed for pictures with many of the restaurant's 325 lunchtime customers.

"He just visited with every single person in here," said Ken Bosley, who co-owns the Moonlite with several family members. "It was just unbelievable."

The president spent about an hour at the restaurant before leaving Owensboro. When it became known last week that

Clinton would be coming to town, it was widely assumed that he would drop in for lunch at the Moonlite, which is nationally known for its barbecued mutton.

But it wasn't until 11 a.m. CDT Wednesday — 15 minutes after Clinton arrived in Owensboro — that the Secret Service notified the restaurant that Operation Barbecue was a "go."

Bosley is chairman of the Daviess County Democratic Party and his wife, Moretta, is a member of the Democratic National Committee. But Bosley insisted that the president's visit to the eatery was strictly gastronomic in nature.

"It's a proud day for Owensboro and a proud day for Daviess County and a proud day for the Moonlite," Bosley said.

Owensboro shows off its hospitality

President Clinton got a taste of Moonlite Bar-B-Q

By Kristina Goetz
The Cincinnati Enquirer

OWENSBORO, Ky. — It's the kind of hometown welcome most big city folks know little about.

But when the first president to come to Owensboro since Harry Truman was on his way, there was plenty to do to make sure

Owensboro doled out the appropriate helping of Southern hospitality.

Schoolchildren made signs and some donned homemade Uncle Sam hats to welcome President Clinton.

The library displayed books about U.S. presidents on its tables. And a group of students from Daviess County and Apollo high schools laid out their best jazz performance for the president, including a rendition of "New York, New York."

But the biggest unofficial event

of the day was a presidential visit to the Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn, which includes a restaurant world-famous for its mutton and ribs.

All week, the town had been hearing rumors that the president might make a stop there. The Secret Service had visited earlier in the week. It is owned by the Bosley family, a well-known Owensboro clan that includes Ken Bosley, the county's Democratic chairman.

Mr. Bosley said the restaurant had saved a special seat for Mr. Clinton, in a back room with no

windows, but the president got take-out.

"The president came over and instead of going to eat he started working the crowd," Mr. Bosley said. "He was shaking hands, signing autographs and posing for pictures. Our customers really enjoyed it."

So how did the most powerful man in America make time for lunch?

"He got a go plate," Mr. Bosley said. "Ribs, chicken, green beans, corn and corn bread."

Even the wave goodbye was

impressive. Although the Secret Service wouldn't let residents without an invitation too close to the school, dozens lined a picket fence across the street. If they couldn't see the man himself they at least wanted to see the helicopter he was flying in.

Robert Bowlds, one of those in the crowd watching the president's helicopter depart, said of Mr. Clinton's visit:

"It kind of puts us on the map, I think."

From the Front Page

Lexington 5-4-00

Clinton greets crowd at Owensboro eatery

By James Mayse
OWENSBORO MESSENGER-INQUIRER

For days, rumors circulated through the city that Bill Clinton would cap his visit to Owensboro with a lunchtime side trip to Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn.

Many people didn't believe it. The rumor was too well publicized, they said.

All the attention would draw a crowd — something security-minded Secret Service agents like to avoid.

No, people said, the president won't come to Moonlite. But, to everyone's surprise, he did.

Moretta Bosley, a member of the family that owns the restau-

rant, said the family did not know of the president's visit until yesterday morning.

"They kept telling us if the crowd was too big he wouldn't come," Bosley said. "But this morning, when (the Secret Service) brought the dogs in, we figured he was coming."

By 11:30 a.m., clumps of people were forming along West Parrish Avenue, where the restaurant sits.

Police and Secret Service agents had already closed Moonlite to new customers, and were trying, with limited degrees of success, to set up a perimeter around the restaurant.

As time passed, the scattered clumps of spectators formed into

continuous lines on both sides of Parrish Avenue west of the restaurant. Marian Howard and Michelle West skipped their lunch hour to wait for the president.

"We wanted to go to Moonlite," Howard said. "My mom called and said, 'Try to get over there and eat lunch so you can at least touch him.'"

Clinton went in, the place was packed, and he began working the room, shaking hands, posing for pictures, moving slowly from the

entrance into the main dining room and past the buffet lines and into the rear dining room.

Meanwhile, people in the back dining rooms waited, some standing on chairs to see better, for the president to come their way.

Clinton spent about 40 minutes in the restaurant, but never got a chance to sample the food.

"What surprised me was he took the time to shake the hand of everyone in the restaurant," Bosley said.



New Location



CONTACT:

Name:

Moonlite Bar-B-Que Inn

Phone #:

Email:

***MOONLITE BAR-B-QUE INN HAS BEEN NAMED BY LOCALS AS
ONE OF THE 10 MOST POPULAR SPOTS IN KENTUCKY***

*Selected From Over 40,000 Travelocity Member Entries, Moonlite Bar-B-Que Inn
Made The Travel Service's Official List Of "Local Secrets, Big Finds"*

Owensboro, Kentucky (May 23, 2003) – Straight from the locals' mouths, Moonlite Bar-B-Que Inn has been recognized as a top hot spot in the state by residents of **Kentucky**. **Moonlite Bar-B-Que Inn** was chosen among more than 40,000 member entries as one of only 10 places in Kentucky to be named one of Travelocity's "Local Secrets, Big Finds."

Ranging from beaches and lakes to restaurants and bars, Travelocity's comprehensive collection of local hot spots was compiled after querying customers from Travelocity's 40-million member database. Culled from thousands of responses, the Local Secrets, Big Finds list reveals those hidden gems across the country where the locals like to go, many of them spots that ordinary tourists likely do not know about or could easily overlook.

More Details on Travelocity's Local Secrets, Big Finds List

From more than 40,000 customer responses regarding what the best spots are in the area, the travel service narrowed the list to create Travelocity's Local Secrets, Big Finds and is sharing them with vacationers across the country. A total of 510 spots, that is 10 picks for every state, plus Washington, D.C., were compiled from around the United States to create the final list.

"This must be where Jesus had the last supper, because literally the only thing better than the meal I just had is inheriting the kingdom of Heaven." - Louie B

"What an AWESOME place. Love that mutton. I have never gotten a bad meal there—always fresh and on POINT. I HIGHLY recommend Moonlite. You can't make a trip to Western Kentucky and not eat Moonlite Mutton." - Scott P.

"Here from out of town and by far best food ever!! I will definitely be back. Even if it is a 6 hour drive." - Travis C.

"No matter where I have called home.. I always travel the distance to eat the world's best barbecue at Moonlite. And the staff and owners are so friendly.." - Randy F.

"The food is only surpassed by the people who serve you there...we drove up from Alabama to try their barbecue mutton and burgoo...Roll Tide...all three are winners." - Marvin O.

"Moonlite is absolutely unparalleled in its food or service. If you are anywhere close, do yourself a favor and stop by. You will not be disappointed." - Mike R.

"A place like this is a treasure. Mountains of good country cooking piled high on the buffet table. A legacy stretching back generations, with roots deep in the community." - John W.

"The only bad thing about this place is there's only one." - Dana F.

"Yesterday on my way home to Elizabethtown from Evansville, I decided to stop in. It was after 4 pm on a Sunday and they should have been closed but Ken Bosley met me at the door with a "Closed" sign in his hand and told me to come in anyway. He served me personally and put together a "to go" platter for me based on what I liked. Great hospitality, super kind and the food was delicious!" - Walter C.

"Best Bar-B-Q there is. I drive 80 miles just to eat there." - Kevin S.

"Moonlite is our favorite 'ride to eat' destination! We live about 2 1/2 hours away, but go there several times a year, especially in the Summer when we can ride with the top down. Beautiful drive with delicious food waiting!" - Greg & Mary J.

"For all you pilots that don't know, fly into OWB and have the FBO call them. They will be there in just a few short minutes. Great \$100 BBQ flight." - Kevin K.

"Every single item on the buffet is absolutely awesome." - Roger S.

"You'd fight a man over it; without a doubt this is the best bbq joint in the bluegrass! The mutton is outstanding, and the cherry cobbler you wouldn't share for love or money." - Chris G.

"Most delicious, out of this world BBQ and sides. If you visit the beautiful state of Kentucky you must visit . Ask for Jeanie and request a behind the scenes tour. She's gracious, charming....5 plus stars." - Joy L

"Awesome! My second visit, drove 4 hours just for lunch! Introduced a friend to the buffet. Brought back items from the store, will definitely be back." -Janice S.

We prepared for the blizzard today in Pennsylvania by pulling Moonlite BBQ out of our freezer as a treat for lunch! Thanks for a great lunch and for your easy on-line order form! - Peter H.

Pappy came from an era when most Americans dreamt of owning their own businesses and being their own bosses. Through hard work, Pappy was able to fulfill this dream and also lay a foundation for multiple generations to come. Our expanded enterprise now boasts carry-out, extensive catering, an online store, a USDA-inspected processing plant, and a wholesale division. As an authority in barbecue, we're always looking to expand all facets of the business.

Three generations of Bosley ownership:

- Ken Bosley, 2nd Generation Owner
- Patrick Bosley, 3rd Generation Owner
- Chris Bosley, 3rd Generation Owner
- Jeanie "Bosley" Heath, 3rd Generation Owner

Management staff:

- Mike Clark, Catering Manager
- Scott Howard, House Manager
- Tracy Phillips, Purchasing Manager

Carry-Out

Need a quick lunch or dinner for the family? Our fast-paced carry-out department serves the local Owensboro area with a complete take-out menu, offering everything from sandwiches to by-the-pound meats. Just inside the restaurant, you'll also find a large selection of canned and bottled products, T-shirts, hats, cookbooks, and specialty items.

Catering

Our catering has expanded well beyond the barbecued mutton that has made us famous to include a complete, customizable menu. We've catered such elaborate events as the wedding reception for the son of Senator Wendell Ford, to large corporate functions including the Toyota Motor Manufacturing Company picnic. Our catering truck frequently visits the Louisville-Lexington area and as far away as New York, where you can find us serving mutton and barbecue at the Big Apple Block Party in New York.

Owensboro Living
Article, 2015



Online Store & Products

Since our loyal customers come from all over the world, we offer our most requested products by mail order service or online purchasing through our website www.moonlite.com. Order your favorites anytime and have them shipped throughout the United States right to your doorstep.

Wholesale Foods Division

Our wholesale division delivers USDA-inspected meats to restaurants, grocery stores, schools, and food businesses within our local region—Bowling Green, Paducah, Evansville, and Louisville—and even as far away as Texas. Because Moonlite is U.S.D.A. inspected, sanitation and health considerations are taken seriously and tours of the plant are not easily available.



From L to R: 1. Third generation Bosley and Catering Manager, Jeanie Bosley Heath 2. Anyone can go to the online store and order their favorites right to their doorstep. 3. Moonlite fan products, including shirts, clocks, hats and more, are for sale online & at the restaurant store. 4. Our catering goes beyond the barbecue, specializing in weddings, holidays, and corporate events. 5. Customers come by to pick up their orders at our carry-out for dinner.

With a philosophy of *helping people to help themselves*, Moonlite management has been active with and/or served on the Board of Directors/Advisory Board for the following organizations:

- American Cancer Society
- Brescia University
- Cliff Hagan Boys' Club, Inc.
- Girls, Inc.
- Goodwill
- International Barbeque Festival
- International Music Museum
- Junior Achievement
- Kentucky Restaurant Association
- Kentucky Wesleyan College
- Owensboro Community College
- Owensboro-Daviess County Family YMCA
- Owensboro-Daviess County Tourist Commission
- Owensboro Municipal Utilities
- Owensboro Museum of Fine Arts
- Owensboro Museum of Science and History
- The International Bluegrass Museum
- The International Bluegrass Music Association
- The Owensboro Chamber of Commerce
- The Owensboro-Daviess County Hospital
- Western KY Botanical Garden
- Western Kentucky University

The Bosley family also sponsors the Children's Garden at Western Ky Botanical Garden, in memory of Hugh (Pappy) & Catherine Bosley. Providing a wonderful place for children of all ages to have fun and learn about nature, some thematic gardens have included a Butterfly garden, a Zoo garden, a Pizza garden and a gourd teepee.



Customers from near and far come to visit our family table and as grandma would say, “*there is always room for more!*” We welcome the local media the same way by responding quickly to inquiries and sharing information for crafting interesting and informative stories.

Marketing & Public Relations

Patrick Bosley, *Marketing & Public Relations*

1 (270) 684-8143

1-800-322-8989 (toll free)

Patrick@moonlite.com

Restaurant Location & Hours of Operation

Moonlite Bar-B-Q Inn

2840 W Parrish Ave.

Owensboro, KY 42301

[Get Directions](#)

- Lunch Buffet served 11:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Dinner Buffet served Monday - Thursday from 4:00 pm until 9:00 pm and Friday & Saturday 3:30 pm until 9:30 pm
- Sunday features our famous brunch buffet served from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm

Our Family Fanbase

Online @ www.moonlite.com

 Like us @ facebook.com/MoonliteBarBQ

 Follow us @ twitter.com/MoonliteBarBQ

