

Ride the Rodeo!

By Mira Temkin



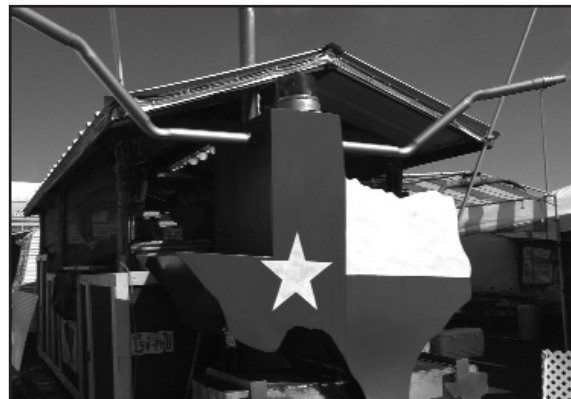
It's a combination Mardi Gras, Super Bowl and the running of the bulls in Spain, but Houston's annual Livestock Show and Rodeo is one wild and crazy event. Yes,

Houston is the 4th largest city in the country behind Chicago, but this is one festival that's pure Texas. Next year, the 75th Livestock Show and Rodeo runs from February 27 – March 18, 2007, which gives us Northerners plenty of time to visit. From the kick-off parade to carnival rides to rodeo events to country music's greatest stars and the best of Texas barbecue, the Rodeo is three weeks of non-stop fun!



A Taste of Texas's Best

My family and I boarded Houston's new light rail, a combination bus/train, and headed towards Reliant Park for the "World's Largest Barbecue Contest." As we approached the grounds, the delicious



aroma of barbecue sauce led the way. There before me were more than 300 tents, all grillin' up the best ribs, chicken and brisket the Lone Star State has to offer. The contest is another Rodeo fund raiser that brings in over a million dollars for college scholarships, but competition is still tough. Yep, it's invitation-only to get inside and sample each team's fare. But for \$6, you can wander among the booths, take in the scene and enjoy food and entertainment in the big public area.

My future son-in-law had scored three different invites. We feasted on tender barbecue brisket and chicken, corn on the cob, beans, potato salad and of course, the best apple pie in the world. Some tents were decorated like an old-fashioned saloon, while another looked like the Alamo. Teams get creative with the cookers, too, making them out of oilfield pipeline caps, even a pistol, complete with smoke coming out of the barrel. Add in the sounds of that great country music, along with the colorful lights of the carnival rides and the evening was stellar!

Live Livestock Show!

Here's your chance to get face to face with horses, steer, dairy cows, sheep, goats, and chickens. Children love the opportunity to see these animals up close and there are designated petting areas. For more thrills, there's everything you'd expect to see at the rodeo, calf roping, steer wrestling, barrel racing and bull riding -- heart-pounding excitement!

Shop, Play and Ride

Did I mention the shopping? Everything from hand-crafted jewelry to western duds -- as well as anything and everything in the shape of Texas! Don't miss La Grande Wheel -- the Western Hemisphere's largest portable Ferris wheel! The Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo is more than a once in a lifetime experience. I can't wait to go back!

For more information about the rodeo, visit www.hlsr.com. For more information about Houston, go to www.visithoustontexas.com.



Mira Temkin is a North Shore freelance writer specializing in advertising, promotional marketing and public relations. As a travel journalist, her skills have taken her across Europe and the Caribbean. In addition, she is Editorial Consultant for Suburban Woman Publications. She can be reached at 847.433.2109.