

Fast food restaurants provide food for students

By Staff Writer

The college life is such a fast paced life...who can keep up? If you're not running to class, you're running to a meeting. If you're not running to a meeting, you're running to the library. If you're not running to the library, you're usually out of energy.

When is there ever enough time to eat? If you're like us, you'll find yourself relying on the fast food establishments in the Bryan-College Station area to keep you running.

We've taken a look at some of the fast food establishments around town. Just for the record, we've defined a fast food restaurant as: having a drive through window (usually), serving self-service food (you order, pay and pick-up at a counter), having somewhat of a standardized menu with a few house specialties included, and having a recognizable logo (with the exception of the local fast food restaurants that aren't part of a big chain).

Arby's...Known for roast beef sandwiches, it also has turkey, ham, submaring and club sandwiches. Prices range from \$1.59 to \$1.99 for sandwiches and extras such as potato cakes or french fries cost between 59 and 75 cents. The menu has been expanded to include a Bacon Cheddar Deluxe and a chicken sandwich. The hoarse sauce really adds flavor to a roast beef sandwich. Located on Southwest Parkway, it's convenient for those who live in that part of College Station or for those with transportation of some sort.

Church's Chicken... This is really like any other chicken establishment. It has the usual entrees for chicken dishes. Two locations: 507 N. Texas Avenue and 3207 Texas Avenue.

Cow Hop...For a full meal at a great price, the Cow Hop is the answer. You can eat a meal for \$2 and the management takes checks.

This restaurant is down to earth and personable, from the homey decor to the friendly method of calling for ready orders. And you listen to rock 'n roll while you eat.

The hamburger (a.k.a cow pies) are a specialty; decorate them with cheese, sour cream, jalapeno peppers, mushrooms, bacon or alfalfa sprouts. And the extras don't stop there. Build a salad on your burger with unlimited amounts of lettuce, onions, tomatoes and toppings. Burgers made with chicken fried steak and barbeque, nachos, chicken breast, chef salad and 8 oz. t-bone are other choices.

The Northgate location makes it popular and convenient for University employees and dorm residents. Be prepared to rub shoulders with your colleagues as you order quickly and move through the line as if in a cattle chute.

Dairy Queen...This old family restaurant just isn't what it used to be. It now costs a fortune just to enjoy the food here. The burgers are still served in refreshingly good taste, but these days you're definitely charged for what you get. A

double beef burger, order of fries and large drink is around \$5.

Danver's...This establishment offers a little bit of everything for everybody, and it all tastes good. Danver's specialty is its soup and salad bar with two kinds of soup and a variety of salad fixins'. So how can you miss? Order a baked potato and fix it up at the salad bar; sour cream, butter, bacon bits, mushrooms...The bacon cheeseburger is also a treat, and the hot ham and cheese sandwich shouldn't be missed. Danver's is located at 201 Dominick.

Der Wienerschnitzel...Located almost in downtown Bryan (501 Texas Avenue), this fast-food restaurant — specializing in all sorts of hot dogs — is somewhat out of the average college student's usual daily travels.

Farmer's Market...With a menu and decor more like a delicatessen than a fast-food restaurant, Farmer's Market offers a welcome change from hamburgers. Sandwiches range from Poor Boys (\$1.65) to Reubens and Salami and can be ordered in submarine sizes (for a little more money). Lasagna is the most expensive item on the menu at \$2.99.

Bakery items are this restaurant's special attraction. Kolaches, cookies, brownies. Farmer's Market Sandwich Shop is at Northgate, Farmer's Market Bar-B-Que is at 810 S. Main and Farmer's Market Bakery and Delicatessen is at 8700 Texas Avenue.

The Gourmet Court...The food section at Post Oak Mall provides a taste of just about everything from pizza to chinese food to chicken fried steak.

Giovanni's specializes in pizza sold by the slice, although whole pizzas are sold. A slice of cheese pizza costs \$1.09, while slices of pepperoni or other types cost \$1.24. Whole pizzas range from \$4.60 to \$11.10.

Potatoes Etc. serves stuffed baked potatoes. You can get a potato filled with sirloin tips or seafood newberg for \$2.99 or a more traditional spud with butter and sesame seeds for a mere \$1.99.

The Wagon Wheel serves Texas style barbeque sandwiches or Sausage-on-a-stick for \$2.25 and barbeque plates for \$4.95.

Corn Dog 7 has a limited menu with corn dogs ranging in cost from 89 cents for a regular to \$1.19 for a jumbo and french fries for 79 cents.

Chick-Fil-A isn't "just another place to get chicken," it's one of the best places to get chicken. The Chick-fil-A sandwich (\$1.69) is yummy and the chicken nuggets (one dozen for \$1.89) are just as good. The french fries are hot and crispy. Chick-fil-A's slogan, "Taste it.

You'll like it for good," seems to be most appropriate. We "liked it good."

At **Emilio's Sandwich City** the menu not only includes sandwiches, but spaghetti (\$1.89), lasagna (\$2.99) and stuffed grape leaves. Desert includes baklava and cheese cake. Emilio's also has a limited selection of imported beers.

Sesame Hut provides a taste of the Orient by serving egg rolls for 80 cents and dinners such as seafood combo and chicken teriyaki for \$3.25.

The Great Hot Dog Experience is just that. The menu lists almost every hot dog imaginable. The price range is from 55 cents for a hot dog jr. to \$1.45 for polish sausage complete with sauerkraut. The menu also has chili cheese dogs.

Pepe's Mexican Food has the usual selection of burritos, tacos and mexican food. About \$3 can fill you up. Pepe's are located throughout the Bryan-College Station area and are known as the place to be after the bars close.

Ken Martin's Chicken Fried Steak adds a touch of class by serving side orders of fried mushrooms to compliment the chicken fried steak dinner (\$3.29). Chimichangas also are sold for \$3.29.

Orange Julius, famous for its orange drink, has expanded to strawberry, pina colada and a flavor-of-the-month. Food items include old fashioned hamburgers for 99 cents.

Swenson's for ice cream or shakes. One dip cones are 85 cents and shakes are \$2.25 or half shakes are \$1.65.

Grandy's...Located near Post Oak Mall, this restaurant lives up to its slogan "Fast food that doesn't taste fast." The rib, chicken or chicken fried steak dinners are great and the fresh butter-yeast rolls are fantastic. The two-piece chicken dinner includes mashed potatoes or french fries, cole slaw or baked beans and a roll and costs \$2.79. The dinner is well worth the money. The aroma of freshly baked cinnamon rolls is enough to drive you crazy.

The Grapevine...This restaurant really isn't fast food. You do order and pay at the counter but your food is delivered to your table. Located at 201 Live Oak, behind La Quinta Motel, this restaurant also has a drive-thru and service that is quick.

But all similaries to a fast food restaurant end there. Specialties include delicatessen-style sandwiches on a variety of breads, cheese plates, huge salads, domestic and imported wines and the best Sangria you'll find in town. In the evening you can order steaks.

The grapevine is a great, relaxing place to eat for moderate prices.

Jack-in-the-Box...When they blew up the clown, you knew "the box" was never going to be the same. That Friday-night-high-school-hangout place were you munched on greasy french fries and kangaroo meat hamburgers has been transformed. Jack-in-the-Box is not quite a restaurant, but it's no longer just a fast food joint.

Yes, the food still comes fast, but the surroundings and the food are dressed up.

The days of talking through the mouth of a plastic clown when ordering at the drive through window are over, and the hard, orange plastic seats have been replaced by something a bit more subdued and softer.

The **Dinner-in-the-Box**, costing about \$4 for chicken strips and a drink, comes with artificial home fries, garlic bread and a dinner salad. Of course the dressing comes in a plastic pouch — like ketchup — and the garlic bread does not possess the crispness of fine french loaf, but it all is surprisingly good.

Although the clown is gone, the old standbys remain unchanged. The tacos still possess their magic charm. Their tantalizing, just spicy enough sauce and combination bean-meat filling never fails to warm the heart. Their crisp, yet soft-spots, shell is unequalled in the fast food world.

Kentucky Fried Chicken...Home of Col. Sander's original recipe, this is an average fried chicken restaurant with moderate prices. You can choose between original recipe and extra-crispy. The cole slaw, potato salad and corn entrees are really quite good. Two locations: 3320 S. Texas Avenue and 110 Dominick Drive.

Long John Silver's...Fast fish as chicken of the sea. Predicatably fishy from the wharf-like entryway to the harpoon and fish net decor with little variance from one Long John Silver's to another. Fish dishes include breaded oysters, fish filet and shrimp. Another favorite is breaded chicken.

Long John Silver's now garnishes their meals, a practice usually seen only in traditional restaurants. Entrees include cole slaw, corn on the cob and french fries. Prices range for, \$1.99 to \$9.29 for family deals. Special features include 25 cent refills on drinks. Two location: 1808 S. Texas Avenue and 3224 Texas Avenue.

McDonald's...For convenience and speed, McDonald's usually wins the race. With three locations — across the street from Zachary (on University Drive), Southwest Parkway and at Manor East Mall — this locally owned fast-food franchise reaches a large market.

For some of the best french fries around, go to McDonald's. The hamburgers are average and limited as to what trimmings are on them but the Chicken McNuggets are great. For a change of the usual fare offered along Northgate and University Drive, the Filet o' Fish is a good choice — if you like fish, tartar sauce and cheese.

Depending on how hungry you are, it's possible to eat for \$3. More if you're a pig.

Schlottzky's...This establishment serves its own special sandwich made of sourdough bread, cold cuts, two cheses, olives and a few other surprises. The sandwiches are served hot or cold with your choice of chips. The best thing about Schlottzky's is all the artwork (?) by customers that adorn the walls. It is amazing how many ideas people have come up with to tell you exactly what a Schlottzky's sandwich is. Probably one of the best buys you can make for the money; a Schlottzky's sandwich will really fill you up. One location at Culpepper Plaza and another on Texas Avenue.

Sonic Drive-In Restaurant...This drive-in brings back memories of Fonzie and the "happy days" of the '50s. Drive on in with your date and a '57 chevy or your pick-up, or you Trans-Am, or ...

A choice of 25 parking booths under the red, yellow and blue neon lights that make Sonic readily identifiable from your average hamburger joint, makes service lightning-fast. Before you order, take time to drool over the yummy illustrated menu, then place your order...be faithful to mom and try not to let your eyes become bigger than your stomach (like ours did).

Prices range from an 85 cent "mini burger" to a \$1.40 "regular burger" to a \$1.95 steak sandwich. The most expensive thing on the menu, and well worth the dinero, is the \$2.25 double meat "super burger." Fish and chicken sandwiches as well as the famous Sonic Coney Island hotdogs (plain or with chili, cheese or onions offer an appeal other than the burger route. A \$1.60 burrito thoughtfully has been added to the menu for all you die-hard Mexican food addicts.

Sonic backs the Idaho spud by pushing their potato specialties...onion rings and tater tots smothered with cheese. Try them, and you'll be hooked.

Taco BellOne of Taco Bell's best deals is its Wednesday night all-you-can-eat burritos. You pay \$2.29 for

one taco and all the bean burrito your stomach can handle. This also a favorite late night stop on the way home from the clubs. It's open until 2:30 a.m. on weeknights and 3:30 a.m. on weekends. One of the better fast food Mexican places.

A new feature is the taco light. Variations of burritos, enchiritos, tacos range from 74 cents to \$1.19 for individual items. You watch them build your meal as fast as the can. Two locations: Harvey Road and 3901 S. Texas Avenue.

Taco Villa...Located on La Maria Road across from Manor East Mall, this restaurant serves a type Mexican fast food meal: burritos, tacos and the other usual assortment of pseudo-Hispanic fast-food fare.

Tinsley's Chicken and Rice...Tinsley's is consistently one of the best fast food places in town, especially because the food is good, the servers are quite a bit friendlier than usual. Tinsley's decor is more understated and modern than the other establishments with large wood tables and several large plants. Their chicken is hot and cut in large pieces, and it's served with wonderful baked rolls. It is always a pleasure to eat at Tinsley's. Several locations, with the closest to campus on South Texas Avenue.

Wendy's...Home of the Frosty desert in a cup that's more than shake, but costs about the same, more of a chocolate ice cream dessert and well worth the trip. Forget about using a straw. Wendy's probably is the only square hamburger patty around. Service is quick, the burgers are good and the salad bar is available for a fast food place.

Wendy's has a new item on the menu — baked potatoes. Ranging in price from \$1.29 to \$1.99, the potatoes are available with a variety of toppings. Taco salads and hamburger/cheese burgers are other choices.

Four people pigging out can stuff themselves for \$11. If you don't have transportation, Wendy's isn't practical, but for change of pace when you're on wheels, Wendy's is great.

Whataburger...This establishment features large burgers that are well waiting for (no precooking here). The prices at Whataburger have remained moderate. A decent meal for a hungry guy can be purchased for less than \$3.50. Good fries and shakes can be had when the machine is working.

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