School pride runs deep in College Station. The home of Texas A&M, it’s affectionately referred to as Aggieland, a fitting nickname for a town where alumni (Aggies, if you want to sound local) have made a habit of staking around and opening businesses. The same can be said for the neighboring town of Bryan. The oldest public school in Texas, plans for A&M pre-date its statehood. History runs deep—it has bragging rights as the place where country music legends Lyle Lovett and Robert Earl Keen first crossed paths as students. With one of the biggest undergraduate populations in the country at 64,882, there’s no question that the school has a larger-than-life presence in town. And that means there’s plenty to take in on any visit, including pastoral corners of campus, the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library, and this time of year, that unmistakable, palpable energy that accompanies college football season in the South.

### START YOUR MORNING WITH A TEXAS BREAKFAST

There’s plenty to take in, from pastoral corners of campus to the unmistakable, palpable energy of college football season in the South.

**EAT + DRINK**

Start your morning with a Texas specialty at Kodee Roll’s. We’re talking about pastries of yeasty dough filled with fruit and/or cheese that were introduced to Bryan’s community by Leonard Kodee—aka Aggie. The menu is minimalistic: go the drive-thru route for fried chicken, Texas toast, and your choice of sauces for dipping.

Have you ever eaten lunch in a laundromat? Just steps from the Texas A&M campus, Harvey Washbangers is the laundrobar brainchild of Culinary Institute of America-trained chef Michael Lair. Yes, it’s really a destination for co-ed toting laundry baskets, but it’s also a hangout for residents craving Texas craft beer and scratch-made food. The menu is just zany enough to keep things interesting (see: “porable” cheese fries). Over in Bryan, Jose’s Taqueria & Bakery is a temple to tacos, filling tortillas with all the meats (barbacoa, picadillo, pork adobo, and, then some). Plus, four words: all-day breakfast tacos.

Dinner deserves a reservation at Bryan’s Ronin, a new restaurant from Bryan and Amanda Lights. Having first fed the community through nine-course tasting dinners on their nearby farm, the couple channels those vibes at the downtown concept, serving their harves around two hand-built communal tables in the main dining room. Back in College Station, you could also head to Poppy, inside the George hotel. Lest you miss the wood-burning hearth positioned at its center, the restaurant prides itself on live-fire cooking. Get a taste with some grilled foie gras, served with roasted mushrooms and pickled veggies, then the oak-grilled short rib draped in chimichurri and charred corn butter. After dinner, wander over to 1791 Whiskey Bar off the lobby for a nightcap. With six distinctive iterations on the menu, you could say it specializes in old-fashioned cocktails. And yes, they’re on that fine-feet for all 12 Ma—a motto that has stuck since 1922 when student E. King Gill suited up and joined the 12 Ma in a tough match. Nearly a century later, students still take the legacy so seriously they’ll run their feet for all home games, symbolically ready to answer the call. If one isn’t on your agenda, you can still see the stadium during a behind-the-scenes tour, offered Wednesday through Friday. Also in order: a stroll around the Texas A&M campus to take in its sweeping oak-lined lawns and neoclassical architecture—specifically ten ornate buildings that were built at the height of the Great Depression (with the help of $3 million in West Texas oil money). Chant your inner cowboy with a trip to Catalina Hatters in Bryan, a family-run operation that’s been crafting custom headgear for three generations. Then, get a taste of Texas wine at Messina Hof. Established in 1977, it’s the third-oldest vineyard in the state and has played an instrumental role in the growing industry.

### EAT + DRINK

*Ronin*

*Poppy*

*1791 Whiskey Bar*

*Messina Hof*

*Kodee Roll’s*

**Bryan-College Station by the Numbers**

- 64,882 Students enrolled at Texas A&M university, as of spring 2019.
- 113,564 Population of College Station.
- 84,021 Population of Bryan.
- 95 Miles from College Station to Houston. (It’s 106 to Austin and 180 to Dallas.)
- 1876 Year A&M opened its doors (though plans for the university were underway in the Republic of Texas back in 1839). College Station was subsequently founded and built around the school.
- 102,733 Seating capacity of Kyle Field, the highest in the SEC and fourth-highest in the country for college stadiums.
- 128 Estimated age of the so-called Century Tree on the A&M campus. It’s thought to have been planted in 1891, making it nearly as old as the university itself.