

Fry away your 2011 resolutions

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Alligator beignets at Max's Wine Bar

Justin Da

By Justin Davis January 20, 2011

Though barely three whole weeks of 2011 have passed, hearty congratulations to those of you who've managed to hang on to your New Year's resolutions. You've given more to charity (though better tipping doesn't count), gone green (using one-ply instead of two-ply doesn't count, either), and started to eat more healthfully. Hang on to your willpower, though, because *The A.V. Club* has found several eateries with fried foods worth busting that last resolution. Don't worry; we've included some suggestions for getting back on track, too.

Casa Colombia (1614 E. 7th St., 512-495-9425)

Visit Casa Colombia to order the aborrajado, sweet fried plantains stuffed with mozzarella cheese. The honey-sweet flavor of the plantains combines with the subtle, milky taste of mozzarella in a crust reminiscent of that fatty favorite, the Monte Cristo. While this dish might work better as a dessert than an appetizer, it's worth a bite if you enjoy plantains of any type.

Suggestions for recovery: A light salad, and someone else to eat the other half you couldn't

South Austin Bar And Grill (1003 Barton Springs Road, 512-482-8484)

The aptly (and unimaginatively) named South Austin Bar And Grill offers a fried-appetizer platter—collecting pickle spears, jalapeño strips, and parmesan fries under the punny banner “Fry Me A River”—as well as a fried mozzarella burger. The Fry Me A River is a dimly lit constellation of batter and oil—the parmesan fries feature the lightest cheese dusting and lack the most basic

seasoning of salt and pepper; the jalapeños have no heat whatsoever—with the pickles standing out as the one shining star. (Though even that can't make up for the accidental inclusion of fried carrots, curiously tasty though they may be.) Meanwhile, the fried mozzarella patty on the burger shimmers with grease and bizarrely resembles a Filet-O-Fish. In lieu of marinara sauce, a side of garlic aioli accompanies the burger—though the condiment can be more accurately described as garlic with a drop of aioli, and it totally overpowers the rest of the burger. Ask for a large stack of napkins to soak up grease that manages to seep its way to even the outside of the buns.

Suggestions for recovery: A crate of moist towelettes and some strong breath mints

Max's Wine Dive (207 San Jacinto Blvd., 512-904-0111)

A glossy painting of John Wayne over the kitchen window sums up Max's Wine Dive's "Texas, but shinier" vibe, and that same attitude plays out in the eatery's Gator Beignets and fried egg sandwich. The beignets have a dark, golden crust that tastes like a mix between high-quality tempura and beer batter, with accents of scallions laced throughout. Crack one open to find its sweet and fluffy interior—a contrast to the expectedly chewy texture of the alligator meat.

It's impossible to eat Max's giant fried egg sandwich without getting messy. It crams three pan-fried eggs, applewood smoked bacon, gruyère, hydroponic bibb lettuce, tomato, and garlic black truffle aioli between two pieces of artisan levain bread. Though the truffle oil on the eggs gives the sandwich a pungent, woodsy smell (and you can see little bits of black truffle suspended in the aioli), the actual taste of truffle is quite delicate and subdued. Make a difficult attempt at cutting the sandwich in half, and the over-medium eggs burst in a cascade of delicious sunshine over the bread.

Suggestions for recovery: A Rip Van Winkle-style nap—followed by a return trip

Torchy's Tacos (2801 Guadalupe St., 512-494-8226)

Atop Torchy's personal list of "Foods most damaging to First Lady Michelle Obama's **Let's Move** campaign" is the taco joint's Little Nookies. These chocolate chip cookies topped with powdered sugar and cherries are flash-fried in a coating of corn flakes, which allows the dough inside to remain gooey. If you love eating raw cookie dough—or if you're Cookie Monster, and you're still reeling from the contact high you got after **duetting with Jeff Bridges**—this fried dessert will appeal to your every pleasure center.

Suggestions for recovery: Slow down, Jabba.

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