

# Barbecue, Football and Regional Pride

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— Elizabeth Engelhardt,  
associate professor of  
American studies and author  
of *Republic of Barbecue*

For many carnivorous Texas Longhorn fans, celebrating a big win just wouldn't be complete without a mouthwatering cascade of brisket, sausage and ribs. Recognizing just how important barbecue is to football culture, the presidents of The University of Texas at Austin and The University of Alabama have wagered it on the outcome of the national title football game on Thursday, Jan. 7.

University of Texas at Austin President William Powers Jr. will ship barbecue from Iron Works Barbecue in Austin to Alabama President Robert E. Witt should the Longhorns lose. Witt will send barbecue from Tuscaloosa, Ala.'s Dreamland to Powers should the Crimson Tide lose.

Much like football, barbecue in Texas has become a source of regional pride. In "[Republic of Barbecue: Stories Beyond the Brisket](#)" (University of Texas Press, 2009), Elizabeth Engelhardt, associate professor of American studies, and 11 of her graduate students took a culinary tour across central Texas to explore how barbecue evolved into not just a hot meal, but a way of life.

On a quest to hear the stories of Texas' uniquely smoky heritage, the team of authors set out to collect, document and preserve oral histories from the people who make barbecue happen in

popular chain restaurants, legendary mainstays like Lockhart's Kreuz Market and Driftwood's Salt Lick, small mom-and-pops, and many other venues.

Exploring the people and places of Texas' barbecue nation, the authors documented a vast array of themes, including manliness and meat, new technology, civil rights, small-town Texas identity and intrinsically Texan drinks such as Big Red, Dr Pepper, Shiner Bock and Lone Star beer.

Visit the [Life & Letters Web site](#) to read more about the book.

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