

THE WHY OF 'CUE

Smoked, pulled, rubbed, sauced, and chopped: Pitmasters transform everyday meat into barbecue, a food subculture all its own. These spots are a few of Oklahoma's best.

BY **MEGAN ROSSMAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LORI DUCKWORTH**

Located along Route 66, the Butcher BBQ Stand in Wellston is one of Oklahoma's newer barbecue destinations.

Food

WORTH THE DRIVE

Good food is essential to good travel, and in Oklahoma, some of the best reasons to get in the car are culinary. For the fourth year running, we've rounded up some of the state's best destinations for turning a full tank of gas into a full belly.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **LORI DUCKWORTH**



The Rock House in Talihina was created with date night in mind, and the nearly 100-year-old stone building has romantic views of the nearby Kiamichi Mountains (page 74).

Of TRUNK AND Trumph

PHOTOGRAPHY BY LORI DUCKWORTH

The country's second-largest herd of Asian elephants roams the rolling countryside of southeastern Oklahoma, giving animal lovers a chance to get an up-close view of these magnificent creatures.

BY KARLIE TIPTON

IT'S A TYPICAL April day in lush southeastern Oklahoma, and it's already muggy and creeping up to hot at ten in the morning. Fifty people of all ages have driven hours from Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Texas, and even Missouri to Hugo, a town of about 5,000 people—and eleven elephants. Giddy anticipation bubbles through the crowd of visitors as they climb onto what look like

extended golf carts that ferry them beyond a set of tall metal gates.

It took Kasa Holtfrerich and her husband Matthew almost a full tank of gas to get here from Norman. Spurred by a Facebook post and a recommendation from a friend, Kasa knew she wanted to spend her birthday here visiting the Endangered Ark Foundation, but she didn't quite know what to expect.

While some of the elephants at the Endangered Ark Foundation in Hugo were born in Thailand and brought to North America as calves, many—including two-year-old Dori Marie, here—were born in Oklahoma.