



Seriously, Let It Snow



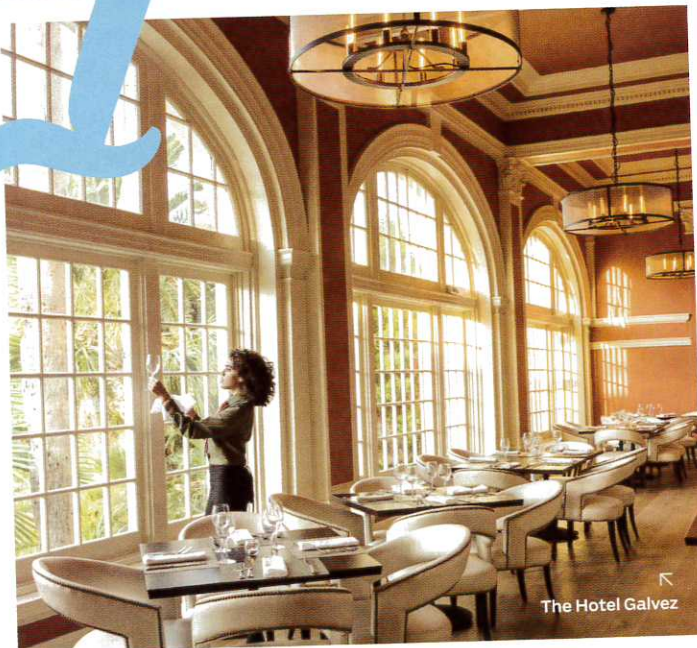
Of course, a game of tackle football in his backyard was just a pretense to roll around in what passes for snow here—not the powdery stuff of Colorado and upstate New York, but something more akin to slush. Nevertheless, to us it was still magical, made more special by its rarity. Glen and I wound up soaked and ready for hot chocolate a mere 10 minutes into our game, but nearly 35 years later I still remember that coat-soaking, bone-chilling, euphoric day.

Few and far between as they are, I remember every snow day Houston has had during my lifetime. Among my memories: me, not even four years old, begging to go outside during the February cold snap of 1973. Decades later, Christmas Eve 2004: the heart-stopping sight of the first flurries floating past our windows, transforming the entire region into a scene out of a Bing Crosby song. And those back-to-back Decembers—2008 and 2009—when I raced around with my camera to capture the ephemeral white glory before it melted, work be damned.

On the precious few snow days Houston gets, we gawk, transfixed, at the spectacle of it all before dashing outside into city streets and suburban backyards. We pretend

It was Saturday, February 2, 1980. Ten-year-old me awoke to the sight of something my wondering eyes had rarely seen: snow, on the ground, in Houston. In the early-morning hours, a light dusting—just over an inch—had fallen, and I couldn't wait to get outside. I bundled up in layer after layer, topping it off with a heavy coat, and headed outside in the freezing temperatures to find my friend Glen.

it's more than a fleeting moment, a glancing winter blow. We ponder, for a moment, the cursed life of Northerners who shovel driveways and invest in snow tires and hold cleared parking spots for neighbors. And finally, we rejoice in the knowledge that tomorrow it will be gone, without the help of snowplows or rock salt, though our memories of it will remain with us forever, frozen in time. —Jeff Balke



The Hotel Galvez

GOBBLE UP GALVESTON

Galveston Restaurant Week gives you another great excuse to visit—even in winter.

Celebrating a new year may mean starting things off on the right foot with a new diet and exercise routine. Here to derail your best-laid plans is Galveston's fifth annual Restaurant Week, at which it's almost impossible to resist tasting and tipping until you tip over.

Okay, "week" is misleading; the event is actually a two-week foodie fest featuring special prix fixe menus at dozens of the island's best restaurants, including newcomers like Number13 and stalwarts like Shearn's and the Hotel Galvez, all offering multicourse meals ranging from \$10 to \$40 per menu. And hey, look at it this way: if you resolved to spend less money on dining out in 2016, then this event is ideal.

Galveston Restaurant Week, Jan. 9–23,
galvestonrestaurantweek.com