

## THE JUDGES



Benjamin Fisher: Parachute rigger, 82nd Airborne Division and Indianapolis Colts fan



Donnell Woolford: Former Chicago Bear's comeback



Michelle Johnson: Head chef, Straight Outta New Orleans Restaurant



Charles Franklin Young III: Youth minister and wing enthusiast



Joe McGee: Father, entrepreneur and Indianapolis Colts fan

# FEELING SAUCY

Five judges, six restaurants and lots of napkins later, we found the best wings.

By Chick Jacobs  
Staff writer

The big game may be on television Sunday, but the real battle will be fought in restaurant kitchens all over town.

Favorites and underdogs, all-stars and unknowns, all will be vying for the championship: Who makes the best wings in town?

We could just sit here and pontificate like a pompous NFL announcer, but that wouldn't really be fair. Besides, wings are a lot like NFL teams. You may grow up liking one and hating the other for no other reason than "that's the way it's always been."

So we turned to the community for help, selecting five people whose knowledge of football and wings was beyond question:

- A home-grown football hero;
- A chef who knows the business end of a fryer;
- A soldier to speak for the folks who serve;
- and fans of this weekend's respective Super Bowl teams.

We fed them wings from six Fayetteville wing joints. All were sauced with medium heat, ordered fresh and served in a blind test. Napkins and water were plentiful, and everyone tasted at least two wings from each place.

In fairness, we didn't get every wing place in town (we quit counting after we hit 15). And some places serve a variety of wings, which we simply couldn't sample. Instead, we chose the places that had earned a name in our community for Buffalo wings.

See WINGS, next page

## INSIDE

■ Meet our panel of expert wing judges.

■ Whip up your own batch of wings, just in time for the big game on Sunday.

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## THE RESULTS

### ITZ

Average score: 9.25

Score spread: 8-10

What the judges said:

- "Wings have good, meaty texture. Spiciness is just right with a nice kick." — Benjamin Fisher
- "Appearance wasn't the best, but the spices, you could really smell them. For a medium sauce it was really good. I liked these, baby!" — Michelle Johnson
- "You can smell the kick here. Very meaty wings with a nice texture." — Joe McGee



### WINGS OVER FAYETTEVILLE

Average score: 8.1

Score spread: 6-9

What the judges said:

- "Nice appearance and good texture. A little too hot." — Donnell Woolford
- "Really good flavor. The spices would have me coming back. Can I get a few extra?" — Johnson
- "Kind of spicy, but a flavor I like. It's got some kick going." — McGee



### BUFFALO WILD WINGS

Average score: 6.5

Score spread: 4-8

What the judges said:

- "Pretty appearance and pleasing aroma, very good sauce." — Johnson



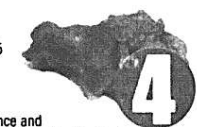
### WINGSTOP

Average score: 6.375

Score spread: 5-8

What the judges said:

- "Good appearance and aroma, not too hot or bland." — Woolford
- "Good aroma, great flavor, fresh and juicy. I'd come back for more." — Charles Franklin Young III



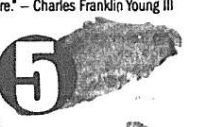
### WING ZONE

Average score: 6.0

Score spread: 5-7

What the judges said:

- "Good, but kind of crispy. The sauce was good." — Johnson



### HOOTERS

Average score: 5.25

Score spread: 3-8

What the judges said:

- "Looks good, taste was OK, but kind of chewy." — Johnson



## WHERE WE GOT THEM

Want to hold your own taste test? Here are the phone numbers and locations of the wing spots. All of them open at 11 a.m.

- Buffalo Wild Wings: 2097 Skibo Road in the Fayetteville Pavilion Plaza shopping center. 868-1561.
- Hooters: 501 N. McPherson Church Road, just south of Sycamore Dairy Road. 868-0700.
- It's Sports Bar & Grill: 4118 Legend Ave., between Sycamore Dairy Road and Skibo Road. 826-2300.
- Wings Over Fayetteville: 155 Bonanza Drive, near the intersection of Morganton Road. 860-4444.
- Wingstop: Westwood Shopping Center, near the Carmike 12 movie theater. 867-7600.
- Wing Zone: 2429 Robeson St., near the intersection of Raeford Road. 223-9464.

Staff photos by Stephanie Bruce