

Home-Cooked Comfort: Mustard Slaw and Pulled Pork

By Kat Eftink

Living in Memphis, the sweet smell of barbecue never escapes your nose— it's carried in the wind. It makes up the wind. It should for real be a part of our weather forecast. But seriously, I'm thankful for that smell. That smell is home.

And that household's head must be Payne's Bar-B-Cue. I mean, can you really call yourself a Memphian if you've never eaten at Payne's?

Nestled off the side of Lamar Ave, Payne's just celebrated their 50-year anniversary of Serving the Community in 2022.

50 years of pulled pork.

50 years of mustard slaw.

50 years of them putting together sandwiches behind the same counter you order and pay at.

It's a place you can rely on. It's home for many. Fentriss Moore, pictured on the fourth slide, has been eating at Payne's Bar-B-Cue for over 40 years.

"It's a staple here in Memphis," Moore says.

Moore's from South Memphis and graduated from Hamilton High school. He'd stop by the "Old Payne's" on Bellevue after the bell dismissed him from class.

Even though the Bellevue location closed in the early nineties, and he's moved from the south to the east, he frequently makes the drive over to Orange Mound to get the smoked sausage.

"It's a deep-fried sausage, with the sauce and slaw," he says. "The combination of it all makes it perfect."

The coleslaw, crafted from a family recipe, draws in regulars like Moore because of its distinctive flavor. The mustard in the slaw is the foundation for the taste and the reason for its memorable color—neon green.

The tangy slaw and tender yet crispy pulled pork sandwich didn't last long on my plate. It evoked a sense of home-cooked goodness, making me feel like an honorary member of the Payne family. With each bite, I found comfort.