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Some Like It Hot

Chase away the autumn chill with a bowl of one of these locally famous chilies.

BY KARA WILLIAMS | PHOTOGRAPH BY KANA OKADA

BOULDER, COLORADO

THE SPOT: After a day of hiking or mountain-biking, Boulder athletes undo all that good with duck nachos and strong margaritas at **Zolo Grill** (2525 Arapahoe Ave., 303-449-0444). Join them at the bar for a tequila shot—there are more than 150 kinds to choose from—or unwind on the patio, where you'll be treated to a view of the famous Flatirons.

THE SPECS: The white bean, chicken and poblano chili (\$8) is so addictive, you'll be tempted to lick the bowl. No need: It's served with a grilled flour tortilla for sopping.

GRAPEVINE, TEXAS

THE SPOT: Frank X. Tolbert is considered the "godfather of chili." He wrote the chili bible *A Bowl of Red* (\$20, Texas A&M University Press) and owned Tolbert's Texas Chili Parlor from 1976 until his death in 1984. His daughter, Kathleen, carries on the family tradition at **Tolbert's Restaurant** (423 South Main St., 817-421-4888). Pay your respects at Frank's oil-painted portrait.

THE SPECS: The beefy, no-bean bowl of red (\$7) is a lesson in classic Texas chili. Kathleen gives it a 6 on a spice scale of 1 to 10; slice up the serrano pepper if you want extra heat.

CINCINNATI

THE SPOT: In a city of more than 140 chili joints, **Camp Washington Chili** (3005 Colerain Ave., 513-541-0061) stands out for its longevity (it's been serving chili on noodles since 1940) and accessibility (open 24 hours a day, six days a week). The place is hopping throughout the night, when college students and factory workers line the counter.

THE SPECS: No one will look at you funny when you ask for a three-way (\$5), spaghetti topped with cinnamon-spiced beef chili and a mound of shredded Wisconsin cheddar. Bean lovers: Order up a four-way.

SALT LAKE CITY

THE SPOT: **Fiddler's Elbow** (1063 E. 2100 S., 801-463-9393) is an alpha-male sports bar (pool tables, dartboard, 18 televisions, 32 beers on tap—they're all here). But it's also got a tender side, serving up a vegan chili. The dish was added to the menu 10 years ago as the token vegetarian meal; now even the meat-eaters can't get enough.

THE SPECS: Named "Best Tailgate Chili" at the Great Salt Lake Chili Affair, this bowl (\$6) is made with four kinds of peppers, sweet potato, black beans and a splash of red wine.