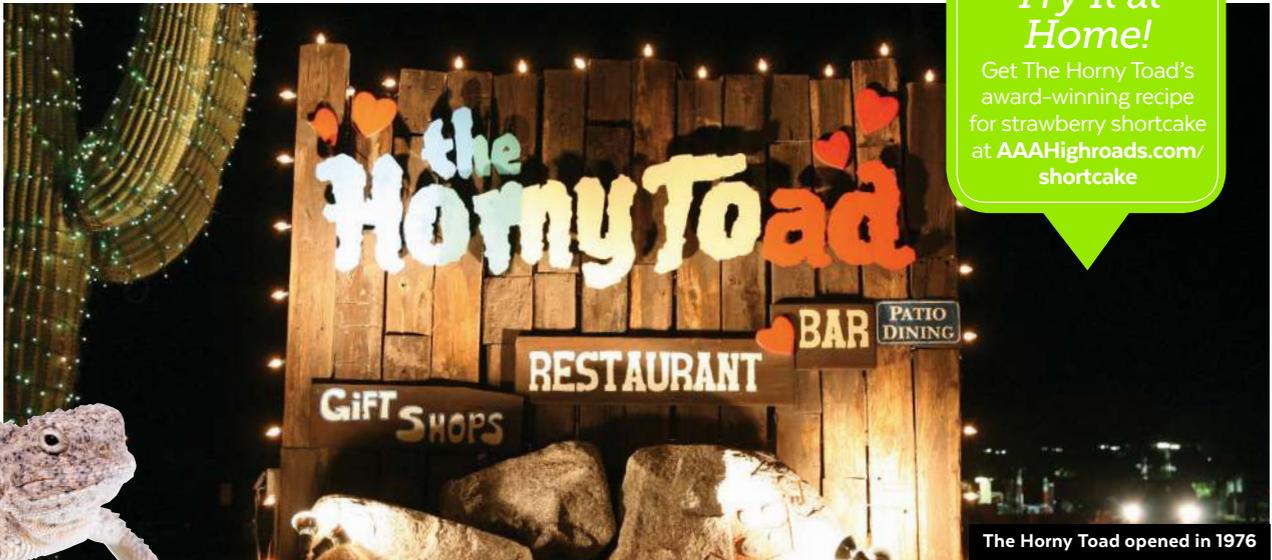


Try It at Home!

Get The Horny Toad's award-winning recipe for strawberry shortcake at AAAHighroads.com/shortcake



The Horny Toad opened in 1976

© Michael Kelly

A Taste of the Old West

The Horny Toad in Cave Creek offers comfort food with a cowboy twist

Driving into Cave Creek, Arizona, conjures feelings of the Old West. Although Cave Creek has 1,000 shops brimming with antiques, art, and jewelry, it still retains a small-town feel where local restaurants and watering holes have regulars who order “the usual.”

The Horny Toad is one such restaurant. It's been serving down home cookin' since its opening in June 1976, and celebrates its 40th anniversary next year. In nearly four decades, The Horny Toad has dished out 2.75 million pounds of its award-winning fried chicken.

As the oldest original restaurant in Cave Creek, The Horny Toad is a come one, come all type place, with an emphasis on being family friendly. Customers range in age from 1 to 101 and from motorcycle riders to horseback riders. There are even hitching posts for those who ride their horses to lunch or dinner.

There are multiple dining rooms, including one with games and a small stage for live music, and a spacious outdoor patio that offers views of the desert. The décor is reminiscent of the Old West, with rustic elements of wood and stone, and pops of color from stained glass windows.

“We're still trying to save that Old Western appeal,” says Managing Partner Jeff Price, who grew up in the restaurant business and bought The Horny Toad six months after it opened. “We're a place that keeps the reputation of the original Cave Creek alive.”

THE EATS

On the menu you'll find items like baby back ribs, chicken fried steak, and burgers stuffed with green chiles. Plus

there's always a daily blackboard special. On Fridays, restaurant-goers can partake in the all-you-can-eat fish fry of deep-fried Icelandic cod, fries, and coleslaw. Flown in fresh, the cod is cut and breaded in-house.

The Horny Toad's kitchen even cranks out its own breading for fried food, barbecue and hot sauces, and dressings, and all are available to purchase.

NAME GAME

The restaurant was named after — you guessed it — the horny toad, which can sometimes be seen in Cave Creek. Every now and then a customer brings Price a live horny toad (which he releases). He also receives stuffed and ceramic horny toads as tokens of customers' affection for the eatery's food and commitment to Cave Creek's roots.

But perhaps the biggest token of appreciation is that The Horny Toad has stood the test of time. “I love it when people walk in and say, ‘My parents used to bring me here when I was a kid,’” Price says. “And now they're bringing their children. To me, that says a lot. That's my pat on the back.”

If You Go

The Horny Toad
6738 E. Cave Creek Road
480-488-9542
thehornytoad.com

SHOP AROUND: Adjacent to the restaurant are The Horny Toad Shops, a conglomeration of gift and antique stores plus a bicycle rental.

