

Tailgate Culture Shock

Experiencing another college campus is something that all OSU students should take part in. Bedlam being in Norman this year will, without a doubt, lead to a mass exodus headed south on I-35. In recent years, many students traveled to Austin to tailgate and go to 6th street when the Cowboys played the Longhorns.

Aside from visiting for an away game, one should consider visiting a friend at a campus not in the Big 12. Seeing the traditions of other schools and conferences with a carload of your sisters is fun way to spend a weekend. Many students are fortunate to not have any class on Friday, which allows the road trip to begin that morning. There are plenty of campuses within eight hours from Stillwater that have a huge tailgating culture to take part in.

If you were to visit a Big 10 school, be aware that it is the farthest thing from similar to a game day here in Stillwater. Up north, tailgates are mostly comprised of frat tanks and basketball shorts. They may be a little more comfortable but I prefer to see the collared shirts and sweater vests.

It is extremely different, but fun to experience. You will not find a Homeland Security barricade surrounding the tailgate area, nor will there be undercover officers dressed as fraternity men. The tailgate is more important than the game, seeing as half of the stadium is usually empty and the people, who are there, sit for most of it.

SEC tailgating is a religion. It starts at the early hours of the morning and involves every sorority, every fraternity, family, neighbors --everyone but the enemy. There are campuses that have a specific spot on campus strictly used for

tailgating purposes. One may look at, "The Grove," at Ole Miss where people have had a specific spot roped off for generations. Ole Miss students make a living off of waking up early to reserve spots for people. Women are dressed in semi-formal dresses, pearls and sometimes heels. The party goes until about a half an hour before cook off as The Grove clears out and the stadium fills up.

If you have friends at other campuses, I strongly encourage you to visit. If you don't have friends at schools outside of the Big 12, visit anyway. A road trip in and of itself is a great way to spend a weekend, but if there were a college football game added in there somewhere, it would make the trip even better. Research the campus and the traditions before you leave, so you are sure to take the appropriate style of clothing in the school's colors. Nothing would be more uncomfortable than walking around the tailgates at 'Bama or Ole Miss wearing a t-shirt.

If friends visit you from the north and attend a game, they will ask you about the horse running around on everyone's shirts and why they don't see girls wearing their letters and carrying a cup at the same time. Style and morals above and below the Mason Dixon Line greatly differ and experiencing the opposite is always a great time.

Tailgates at every campus have a friendly atmosphere, as long as you are wearing the right colors. When I visit my friends at another school I usually wear a touch of orange or OSU with the school colors to not get too caught up in the atmosphere and remember that I go to school with the happiest people and friendliest campus. Whether or not you are cheering on one of the teams, it is a great

way to experience a tradition besides the ones you will celebrate for four years in Stillwater.