



Mardi Gras



Many cities around the world have well known Carnival celebrations. These cities include *Rio de Janeiro*, Brazil; *Barranquilla*, Colombia; *Port of Spain*, Trinidad and Tobago; *Quebec City*, Canada; and *Mazatlan*, Mexico.

One of the most famous Carnival celebrations takes place in **New Orleans**, Louisiana, in the United States. As in the other cities, the New Orleans Carnival season starts on January 6 and ends on **Mardi Gras** (Fat Tuesday in English) the day before **Ash Wednesday**. During the Carnival season there are numerous **parades** and **balls**. However, most celebrations take place over the two week period just before Mardi Gras.

Krewes and Throws



In New Orleans the parades and costume balls are organized by Carnival **krewes**. During parades krewe float riders toss **throws** to the crowds. The most common throws are strings of colourful plastic beads, doubloons (coins with the krewe logo), plastic cups, and small toys.

Mardi Gras Colours

The official colours for Mardi Gras are purple, green, and gold. These colors were chosen in 1872 by the King of Carnival, Rex. He chose these colours to stand for the following:

- **purple** represents **justice**
- **green** stands for **faith**
- **gold** stands for **power**



King Cakes

As part of the celebration of Mardi Gras, it is traditional to bake **an oval cinnamon cake**. This cake- the King Cake- is to honour the three kings who took gifts for the baby Jesus.



The shape of a King Cake symbolizes the unity of faiths. Each cake is decorated in the traditional Mardi Gras colours. A small plastic baby, **symbolizing the baby Jesus**, is baked into each cake. It is believed that the person who finds the baby in their slice will have good luck. In addition, that person is responsible for providing the King Cake the next year.





1. Answer the questions.

a) What is Mardi Gras and where does it take place?

b) When is Mardi Gras celebrated?

c) Who organizes the parades and costume balls?

d) What do krewe float riders toss?

e) What do official colours of Mardi Gras flag represent?

f) What is a King Cake?

g) Why do people put a small figurine inside the cake?

2. Translate the words.

- Lent - _____ - Ash Wednesday - _____

- Easter Sunday - _____ - Easter Monday - _____

- Mardi Gras (or Fat Tuesday / or Shrove Tuesday) - _____

- Good Friday - _____ - Maundy Thursday - _____

- a crib sheet - _____ - sprinkle - _____

- a performance - _____ - powdered sugar - _____

- pastry - _____ - secrecy - _____

