

It's Mardi Gras Time! Bring On The Beads And King Cakes!

by Kristyn Clarke - 022015

(PCM) Happy Mardi Gras or Fat Tuesday! Mardi Gras is the cultural celebration in preparation prior to the fasting season of Lent! The holiday, heavily celebrated in New Orleans, consists of many parades, dancing, wearing costumes, overturning social conventions and general fun and debauchery.

According to Wikipedia, Mardi Gras arrived in North America as a French Catholic tradition with the Le Moyne brothers, Pierre Le Moyne d'Iberville and Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville, in the late 17th century, when King Louis XIV sent the pair to defend France's claim on the territory of Louisiane, which included what are now the U.S. states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

In 1723, the capital of Louisiana was moved to New Orleans, founded in 1718. The first Mardi Gras parade held in New Orleans is recorded to have taken place in 1837. The tradition in New Orleans expanded to the point that it became synonymous with the city in popular perception, and embraced by residents of New Orleans beyond those of French or Catholic heritage. Mardi Gras celebrations are part of the basis of the slogan, *Laissez les bons temps rouler*, (Let the good times roll).

The parades in New Orleans are organized by Carnival krewes. Krewe float riders toss throws to the crowds; the most common throws are strings of colorful plastic beads, doubloons (aluminum or wooden dollar-sized coins usually impressed with a krewe logo), decorated plastic throw cups, Moonpies, and small inexpensive toys. Major krewes follow the same parade schedule and route each year.

Another Mardi Gras tradition is the King Cake. For those that don't know a King Cake is traditionally a braided bread like cake often baked with cinnamon swirls and light frosted with confectioners sugar icing and decorated with the traditional Mardi Gras colors of purple, gold and green.

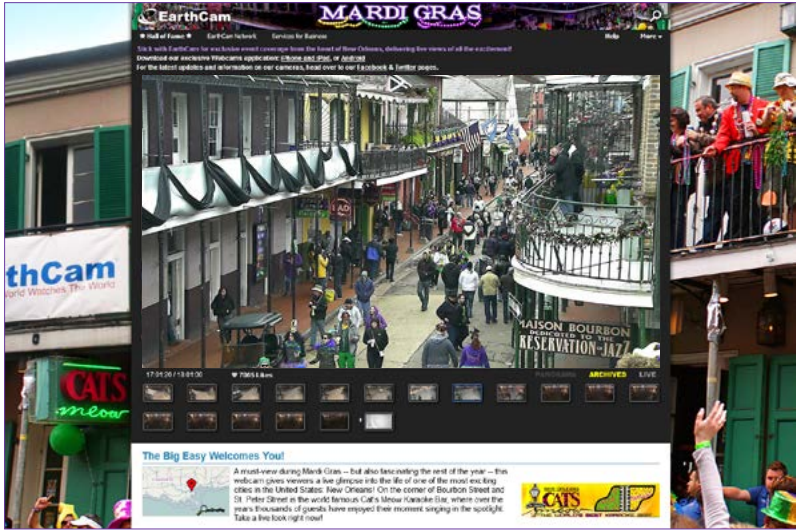
Traditionally a small plastic baby is baked into the King Cake as well and the person who gets the baby in his or her slice of cake is said to be blessed with luck and prosperity throughout the year and they must provide the King Cake for next year's celebration.

Below find a fabulous King Cake recipe that was featured in Southern Living:

- Ingredients**
- 1 (16-ounce) container sour cream
 - 1/3 cup sugar
 - 1/4 cup butter
 - 1 teaspoon salt
 - 2 (1/4-ounce) envelopes active dry yeast
 - 1/2 cup warm water (100° to 110°)
 - 1 tablespoon sugar
 - 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
 - 6 to 6 1/2 cups bread flour*
 - 1/3 cup butter, softened
 - 1/2 cup sugar
 - 1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
 - Purple, green, and gold-tinted sparkling sugar sprinkles

- Creamy Glaze ingredients:**
- 3 cups powdered sugar
 - 3 tablespoons butter, melted
 - 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 - 1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
 - 2 to 4 tablespoons milk

Preparation:
Stir together first 4 ingredients. Stir in 2 tablespoons milk, adding additional milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, until spreading consistency.



Cake Preparation:

Cook first 4 ingredients in a medium saucepan over low heat, stirring often, until butter melts. Set aside, and cool mixture to 100° to 110°.

Stir together yeast, 1/2 cup warm water, and 1 tablespoon sugar in a 1-cup glass measuring cup; let stand 5 minutes.

Beat sour cream mixture, yeast mixture, eggs, and 2 cups flour at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer until smooth. Reduce speed to low, and gradually add enough remaining flour (4 to 4 1/2 cups) until a soft dough forms.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). Place in a well-greased bowl, turning to grease top.

Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 1 hour or until dough is doubled in bulk.

Punch down dough, and divide in half. Roll each portion into a 22- x 12-inch rectangle. Spread 1/3 cup softened butter evenly on each rectangle, leaving a 1-inch border. Stir together 1/2 cup sugar and cinnamon, and sprinkle evenly over butter on each rectangle.

Roll up each dough rectangle, jelly-roll fashion, starting at 1 long side. Place one dough roll, seam side down, on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bring ends of roll together to form an oval ring, moistening and pinching edges together to seal. Repeat with second dough roll.

Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 20 to 30 minutes or until doubled in bulk.

Bake at 375° for 14 to 16 minutes or until golden. Slightly cool cakes on pans on wire racks (about 10 minutes). Drizzle Creamy Glaze evenly over warm cakes; sprinkle with colored sugars, alternating colors and forming bands. Let cool completely.

Also, if you can't be in New Orleans to celebrate Mardi Gras, don't fret! You can join the party from the comfort of your own home with Earthcam! Take part in the festivities with [EarthCam's live streaming webcams](#), regardless of your location.

The post It's Mardi Gras Time! Bring On The Beads And King Cakes! also appeared on PCM Lifestyle.

Read more at <http://pcmworldnews.com/news/2015/02/its-mardi-gras-time-bring-on-the-beads-and-king-cakes/#UqruBhX7yXghDcJd.99>