

## Mardi Gras Frequently Asked Questions

South Louisiana is home to the greatest free party on earth, a colorful celebration known as [Mardi Gras](#). In [Lafayette, LA](#) residents celebrate in many ways including the traditional [Courir de Mardi Gras](#); [parades](#) with marching bands, beads and doubloons; Mardi Gras Indians with elaborate dancing and costumes; various styles of [king cakes](#); as well as extravagant [Mardi Gras balls](#) complete with a king and queen. See below for some tips on how to navigate Mardi Gras in the [Happiest City in America](#) and be sure to check out all the [Mardi Gras events](#) in Lafayette, LA and surrounding areas.

### When is Mardi Gras?

Ash Wednesday is always 46 days before Easter, and Fat Tuesday is always the day before Ash Wednesday. Easter can fall on any Sunday from March 23 to April 25, with the exact date to coincide with the first Sunday after the full moon following a spring equinox.

February 28, 2017  
February 13, 2018  
March 5, 2019  
February 25, 2020  
February 16, 2021  
March 1, 2022  
February 21, 2023  
February 13, 2024

### What are the official Mardi Gras colors and what do they mean?

The official colors of Mardi Gras are purple, green and gold. Purple represents justice, green represents faith and gold represents power.

### What is a King Cake?

A King Cake is an oblong pastry that contains a tiny plastic baby who represents the Christ child. Whoever gets the baby hidden within the king cake must buy the next one. And so the tradition continues on to Mardi Gras Day. There are different styles of King Cake from traditional to modern, all of them delicious.

### Why are beads and doubloons thrown during a parade?

The tradition of throwing doubloons, beads and trinkets started in New Orleans in the early 1870s when the city's Twelfth Night Revelers flung trinkets to the crowds while they made their way through New Orleans streets. The idea was so popular with their audience that the tradition continues to this day, although modern throws involve mostly beads and cups.

### **What is Courir de Mardi Gras?**

In the rural areas of Lafayette, LA residents celebrate Mardi Gras with the unique “Courir de Mardi Gras” or Mardi Gras runs where masked men on horseback would travel the countryside knocking on doors, singing songs, dancing and begging for ingredients to make a gumbo. Many times homeowners would throw a chicken to the begging krewe and maskers would attempt to catch the bird for gumbo meat. Musicians sometimes followed the krewes, providing more merriment. When the courirs returned to town, they produced a communal gumbo for all to enjoy.

### **Are the Lafayette parades family friendly?**

Lafayette, LA's Mardi Gras celebration is absolutely geared towards families. From staking out a spot along the barricaded parade route to the Le Festival de Mardi Gras a Lafayette at Cajun Field with carnival rides and live music you can be sure your family will be safe and have a great time.

### **Where should I park?**

You may park along a side street free of charge, avoiding driveways and private property. Don't be surprised to see "entrepreneurs" along the way to park in a private parking lot near the parade route. If you want to watch the parades from the the Le Festival de Mardi Gras, you may park for a fee at Cajun Field. Admission to the festival is free.

### **What other safety tips should I keep in mind?**

While the parades are in progress you should stay behind the barricades. Definitely have fun and let loose, but realize that lewd behavior and/or drunkenness can get you arrested. Don't throw things at the float riders. It's not only disrespectful, but you could seriously hurt someone. If you have children make sure to keep them close and come up with a meeting area in case you get separated from each other. There are several items are prohibited along the parade route including weapons, fireworks, bicycles, glass containers, and pets.