



MARDI GRAS

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LE CARNAVAL



Le Carnaval is celebrated in parts of the world that have mostly Roman Catholic populations or in countries that have strong cajun/creole culture. Carnaval is the time celebrated between Epiphany (known as La Fête des Rois in France) and Ash Wednesday (Mercredi Cendres). Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday) is the last day of Carnaval. Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent— or the 40 days before Easter.

Cajun/Creole refers to people who are a mix of native people and European colonial settlers. In the United States, the people of Louisiana are considered “French Creole,” a person who is descended from a native to Louisiana before its integration into the United States, and a French colonial who inhabited the region at the time. Other French creole countries around the United States include Haiti, and other Caribbean



nations such as French Guinea, Saint Martin, Martinique, and the French Antilles.



The colors of Mardi Gras are Gold, Purple and Green.
Gold represents power.
Green Represents faith
Purple represents justice.

Traditionally, in the 7 days leading up to lent, people gorge themselves on food because lent is a time of fasting. Mardi Gras is the last day of the celebration, so people make a feast of fatty foods, like cheese, meat, dairy, and breads. Beignets are a type of fried dough that is traditionally eaten around Mardi Gras. People also will often make waffles.

UN MASQUE DE MARDI GRAS



Masks and costumes are a tradition at mardi gras celebrations. Originally, masks were a way for people to escape their social status and have the chance to be whomever they wanted to be. There are also many masquerade balls during Mardi Gras. You often see people dressed up in the street as well! You can make your own mask! Use the template on the next page or create your own!

SUGGESTED MATERIALS

1. Glue and scissors
2. Colorful feathers
3. Brightly colored stickers
4. Glitter
5. Markers, crayons, or paint
6. Mask template on the next page
7. Colorful paper or card stock
8. Hole puncher
9. Stick or string to hold your mask on your face

DIRECTIONS

1. Cut out the mask on the next page and trace it onto card stock or colorful construction paper. Cut your mask out.
2. Decorate the mask any way you like using the stickers, feathers, glitter, paint, etc.
3. Punch a hole in each end of the mask and attach a string, or attach a stick to the side of the mask.
4. Wear your mask on Mardi Gras!



BEIGNETS



Beignets (pronounced “ben yay”) are a type of fried dough, similar to a fritter, made from choux pastry or yeast dough. Beignets are popular in French creole cuisine and while they are not specific to the French creole culture, are often a specialty in those countries. This recipe is translated from French and the amounts are listed in grams. You can convert grams to our measurements easily on google, or if you have a scale that measures grams, give the metric measurements a try!

INGREDIENTS

500 grams flour



100 grams softened butter



2 eggs



2 1/2 tsp yeast



2 tbsp powdered sugar



pinch of salt



1 tsp vanilla



200 grams milk



vegetable oil for frying



DIRECTIONS

Note- the dough for the beignets can be made in your bread machine. If you choose to use your bread machine, place the ingredients in the order recommended for your machine, and set it to the dough cycle. Then follow the directions for frying. If using your bread machine, beat the eggs before adding them.

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| 1. Sift together the powdered sugar, flour, yeast, and salt in a medium bowl and set aside. | 2. In a large bowl, Beat the eggs as if you were preparing an omelet. Add the milk and vanilla and whisk together with the eggs. Add the butter and continue to mix together. slowly add the dry ingredients to the eggs and milk. |
| 3. Once the dough begins to come together, remove it from the bowl and knead it until it becomes soft and supple. Place it back into an oiled bowl and cover with a clean kitchen towel and let rise for 1 hour and 30 minutes. | 4. Lightly flour your work surface and roll out the dough to about 1/2 inch thick. Use a round cookie cutter or an inverted glass to cut out rounds of dough. Once all the dough has been cut into circles, let it rest for 30 minutes. |
| 5. Heat the oil in a deep fryer or a large, heavy bottomed pot. (The oil must be at least 350 degrees). Fry the dough in batches (do not overcrowd the pot) until they are golden and puffed. Place the fried beignets onto a paper towel to drain the excess oil after frying each batch. | 6. You can now enjoy your beignets as they are or you can coat them in sugar! YUM! |