

# 2026 Bastrop TX MARDI GRAS

**Lighted Mardi Gras Parade Packet**  
**January 31, 2026 | 6pm-8pm**  
**Historic Downtown Bastrop**

Get ready to let the good times roll at the 3rd Annual Lighted Mardi Gras Parade in downtown Bastrop! Following a full day of Mardi Gras Festival festivities, this exciting lighted evening parade kicks off at 6:00 PM, filling the streets with music, colorful floats, festive throws, glowing decorations, and plenty of beads.

The parade will follow the traditional downtown route, beginning at Bastrop High School, traveling west on Cedar Street, continuing south along Main Street, and ending at Emile Street. Local businesses, organizations, and community groups are invited to join the fun and help bring the spirit of Mardi Gras to life for spectators lining the route. Grab your beads, turn up the music, and come celebrate an unforgettable night of Carnival in Bastrop!



## What to Know about the Lighted Mardi Gras Parade

The Lighted Mardi Gras Parade is designed to be a smooth and well-organized experience for all participants. Those who participated in the 2025 Lighted Christmas Parade can expect a similar registration, lineup, and parade flow, while first-time participants will receive clear on-site guidance throughout the event.

- **Throwing of Items:** Approved items may be thrown during the parade. All entries throwing items must have a walker on each side of the float or vehicle. See rule #1 for more details.
- **Registration Process:** Registration will take place electronically on parade day at the registration and lineup area. Upon arrival, entries will be assigned a lineup spot and asked to complete a brief online registration form.
- **Registration Locations:** Parade entry registration and lineup will **begin at 4:00 PM** at the Bastrop High School parking lot entrance off Hawthorne Street. **Registration will end at 5:30pm and no entries will be allowed into the lineup after this time.** See the Registration & Lineup Map on page 7 for further details.
  - **Horse entries** will register separately on Cedar St. near West Fayette St.
  - **VIP/Grand Marshalls/City floats** will check in at the intersection of Hill St. and Cedar St. Plan to enter at the barricade at this location.
- Marching bands and dance teams will be staged in the areas designated on the Registration & Lineup Map on page 7.
- **Prep & Load Location:** The Bastrop Convention Center is designated as a prep & load location for the parade where participants can meet to decorate or load their float before heading over to the registration and lineup area. The designated route from the Convention Center is not recommended for large trailers as there are narrow roads and sharp turns. Floats can also be prepared and decorated at the registration and lineup area once you have checked in and been assigned your lineup spot.
- **Lineup and Arrival:** All entries will be lined up in order of arrival. Groups are recommended to arrive together to maintain placement. **Lineup spots will not be saved for late arrivals, so punctuality is important.**
- **Participant Drop-Offs and Shuttles:** Participants may be dropped off near the registration entry and shuttled to their float as City golf carts become available. All participants under 18 being shuttled must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
  - **NEW!** Parking for participants is available at designated locations. See Registration & Lineup Map for more details.

## Parade Rules & Regulations

To ensure a safe, enjoyable, and memorable experience for all participants and spectators, all entries must adhere to the following rules:

1. **Throwing of Items:** Participants may throw lightweight, soft items commonly associated with Mardi Gras celebrations, including but not limited to:
  - a. Plastic beads and bead necklaces
  - b. Soft plush items (small stuffed toys)
  - c. Foam items
  - d. Soft, lightweight trinkets or favors
  - e. Individually wrapped, soft candy

**Any float or vehicle throwing items is required to have a walker on each side of the float or vehicle.** All throws must be lightweight and safe for tossing from a moving float. Items that are hard, heavy, sharp, breakable, or otherwise pose a safety risk are strictly prohibited.
2. **Use of Electronic Devices:** Float drivers and anyone operating a vehicle of any kind—including cars, trucks, golf carts, UTVs, mini-bikes, tractors, or any motorized equipment—may not use electronic devices during the parade. This includes cell phones, tablets, headphones, or any device that may distract from safe operation. All operators must remain fully attentive to ensure the safety of participants and spectators.
3. **Registration and Check-In:** All parade entries must check in at the designated registration location as shown on the Registration & Lineup Map beginning at 4pm. Once an entry has been assigned its place in the lineup, participants are required to complete the online registration form before the parade begins. **Registration will end at 5:30pm and no entries will be allowed into the lineup after this time.**
4. **Parade Start Time:** The parade will begin promptly at dark, around 6:00 PM, rain or shine.
5. **Alcohol Prohibition:** Consumption of alcoholic beverages by drivers or any participants before or during the parade is strictly prohibited.
6. **Vehicle Operation:** A licensed driver must operate all vehicles, trucks, golf carts, ATVs/UTVs or other large motorized equipment. Small motorized vehicles, such as mini-bikes, small tractors, and go-carts, must be operated by persons age twelve or older.

7. **Parade Safety and Control:** All entries are expected to exercise caution during the parade. Drivers must maintain complete control of their float and participants at all times and avoid excessive acceleration.
8. **Float and Rider Conduct:** Riders must remain seated and may not hang over the sides of floats or vehicles. Participants may not get on or off floats during the parade and may only exit at the designated disassembly area—not on city streets.
9. **Maximum Entry Height:** The maximum height for any float, vehicle, or other parade entry is twelve feet.
10. **Vehicle Restrictions:** Due to parade pacing and sharp turns along the route, 18-wheelers and tractor-trailers are not permitted.
11. **Lighting Requirement:** All parade entries must be decorated with Mardi Gras-themed lights. The more lights, the better!
12. **Horse Participation:** All horses in the parade must have a current negative Coggins Test submitted to the parade committee along with the parade entry. Out-of-date forms will not be accepted. Horses must either be diapered or have walkers behind them to clean up after them.
13. **Walking Groups and Dance Troupes:** Dance troupes and walking groups may not stop to perform or solicit funds during the parade. It is crucial that all participants keep moving along the route.
14. **Disassembly Points:** At the conclusion of the parade at the intersection of Water Street and Emile Street, all floats must continue moving eastbound on Emile Street. Floats should proceed to a designated disassembly point. Floats **must not** disassemble near the end of the parade route, as doing so could bring the parade to a halt. **See the Parade Return Route & Disassembly Locations Map on page 6 for the route back to the lineup area and suggested disassembly locations.**
15. **Compliance:** Participants who fail to follow parade rules may be removed from the parade or lineup at any time. Additionally, entries that disregard these requirements may be prohibited from participating in future parades.

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- Parade Viewing Area
- Float Arrival Route
- Closed for Float Lineup



