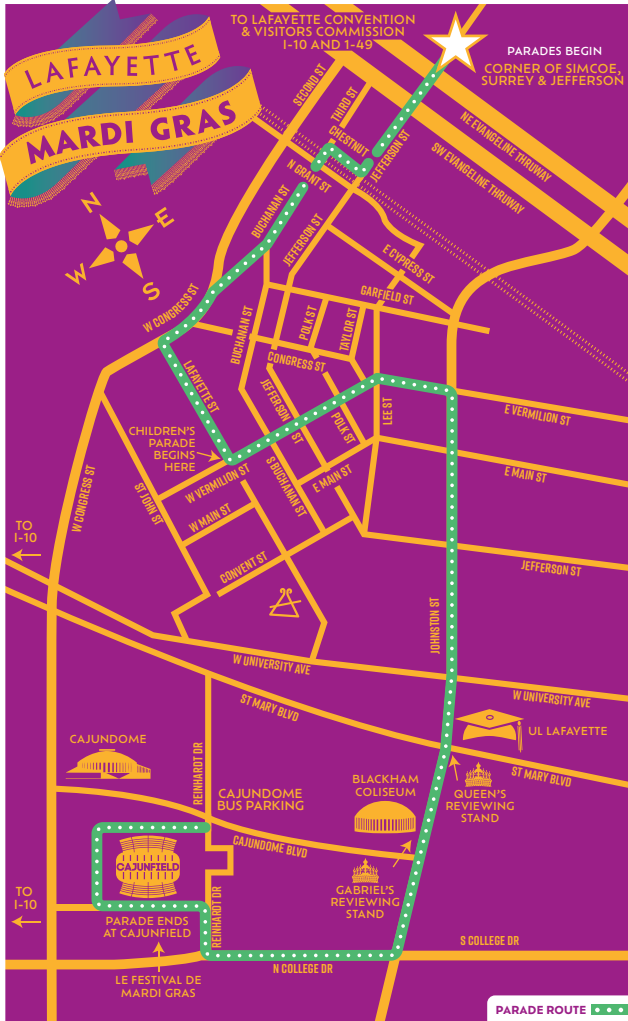


## PARKING

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 Le Festival de Mardi Gras, you may park for a fee at Cajun Field and free admission to the festival.



## SAFETY & OTHER TIPS

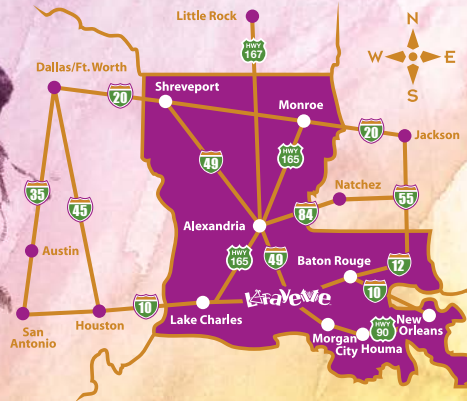
- ❖ Stay behind the barricades while the parade is in progress.
- ❖ Have fun, but realize that lewd behavior or drunkenness can get you arrested.
- ❖ Don't throw things at the float riders.
- ❖ Keep an eye on children.
- ❖ It's always a good idea to bring along an umbrella.
- ❖ Dress for cold and warm temperatures using clothing layers.
- ❖ Blankets are good for children to sit on and to stay warm.
- ❖ Items prohibited along the parade route include weapons, fireworks, glass containers and pets.

## Visit our Information Center

1400 N.W. Evangeline Thruway  
Intersection of I-10 & I-49  
I-10 Exit 103-A I-49 South of I-10

## Hours of Operations

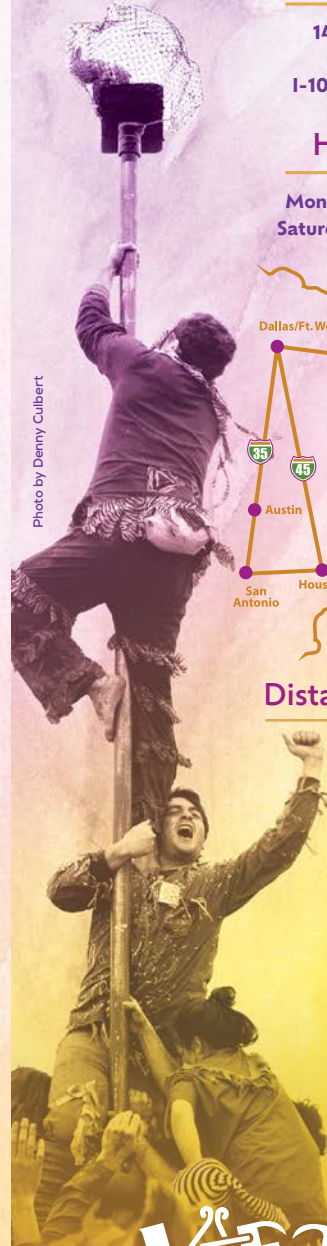
Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.  
Saturday-Sunday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.



## Distances to Surrounding Cities

Alexandria	89 mi.
Atlanta	580 mi.
Baton Rouge	59 mi.
Dallas	391 mi.
Houma	102 mi.
Lake Charles	75 mi.
Memphis	438 mi.
Monroe	184 mi.
Morgan City	68 mi.
Natchez	134 mi.
New Orleans (via I-10)	135 mi.
New Orleans (via Hwy.90)	153 mi.
Shreveport	212 mi.
Houston, TX	217 mi.

Photo by Denny Culbert



**Lafayette**  
LOUISIANA

LafayetteTravel.com

For stories, images and Mardi Gras event listings visit

LafayetteTravel.com/MardiGras 800 346 1958

# Lafayette Louisiana MARDI GRAS



Cover Photos by Lance LeBlanc and Jason Cohen.

LafayetteTravel.com/MardiGras

# TEN PARADES OVER TWO WEEKENDS, LIVE MUSIC, RIDES, GAMES & MORE

South Louisiana is home to the greatest free party on earth, a colorful celebration called Mardi Gras. In Lafayette, 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 kings and queens. For a complete list of events, visit [LafayetteTravel.com/MardiGras](http://LafayetteTravel.com/MardiGras).

## WHEN IS MARDI GRAS?

Ash Wednesday is always 46 days before Easter (40 days of Lent plus six Sundays) and Fat Tuesday is always the day before Ash Wednesday. The season starts on January 6, the Twelfth Night or feast of Epiphany and ends at midnight on Fat Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday.

2025	MARCH 4	2031	FEBRUARY 25
2026	FEBRUARY 17	2032	FEBRUARY 10
2027	FEBRUARY 9	2033	MARCH 1
2028	FEBRUARY 29	2034	FEBRUARY 21
2029	FEBRUARY 13	2035	FEBRUARY 6
2030	MARCH 5		

## THE COLORS OF MARDI GRAS

In 1872, King Rex, the king of New Orleans' carnival, selected the official colors of Mardi Gras: purple, green, and gold. Purple represents justice, green represents faith, and gold represents power.

## MARDI GRAS KREWES

A Mardi Gras Krewe is the membership organization for a parade. Krewes also get together throughout the year for balls and other events.

## KING CAKE

The history of the King Cake began in 12th century France, where the cake would be baked on the eve of January 6 to celebrate the visit to the Christ Child by the three Kings. A small token was hidden in the cake as a surprise for the finder. Today, the cake is circular and richly decorated in bright colors, representing a bejeweled crown to remind us of the Kings. The baby hidden in the cake symbolizes the Christ Child. King cakes are available at bakeries all over South Louisiana from January 6 through Mardi Gras Day, with some offering them year-round.



## LAFAYETTE'S MARDI GRAS TIMELINE

Lafayette's first Mardi Gras dates back to 1897. In 1934, representatives from civic and service organizations formed the Southwest Mardi Gras Association to ensure that Lafayette would always have a Mardi Gras celebration. King Gabriel and Queen Evangeline, who symbolize the Acadian sweethearts in Longfellow's "Evangeline," are reunited each year at Mardi Gras to rule over the Mardi Gras festivities.

- 1869** First recorded Mardi Gras observance in Lafayette 
- 1896** First city-wide celebration
- 1897** King Attakapas arrives in Lafayette on a Southern Pacific locomotive (tradition remains through 1961) 
- 1897** The first parade and ball are held
- 1926** Krewe of Oberon is formed, and city-wide celebrations resume.
- 1927** First Lafayette High School Carnival and first American Legion parade 
- 1934** Civic leaders form the Greater Southwest Louisiana Mardi Gras Association to coordinate and promote annual Mardi Gras celebrations.
- 1934** King Gabriel and Queen Evangeline become the official names for Lafayette's Mardi Gras Royalty 
- 1942** Mardi Gras celebrations suspended during the duration of WWII
- 1948** Annual Mardi Gras celebrations return to Lafayette 
- 1949** Krewe of Gabriel is formed to assist Greater Southwest in promoting Lafayette's Mardi Gras celebration. 
- 1965** First Tuesday night parade honoring the Queen Evangeline 
- 1970** Tuesday night Queen's parade moved to Monday night. 
- 1970** Saturday night parade added with the Krewe of Bonaparte. 


1987

The first parade physically ran through the Cajun Dome. 


1990

Saturday afternoon parade added with the "Children's Parade" 


1993

Parade route extended to run through Cajun Field 


1993

Le Festival de Mardi Gras a Lafayette launched with a family-friendly atmosphere, games, carnival rides, food, and live music at Cajun Field 

1998

Friday night "Kick-Off Parade" added 

2005

Parades expanded again with the Krewe of Carnivale en Rio parade 

2018


The Krewe de Canailles Walking Parade launched as the official kick-off to Lafayette Mardi Gras parades 

Full history available at [GoMardiGras.com/History](http://GoMardiGras.com/History)

## THROWS, DOUBLOONS, BEADS, CUPS & MORE

Throwing trinkets to the crowds was started in the early 1870s by the Twelfth Night Revelers and is a time-honored expectation for young and old alike. Unique throws with the Krewe's emblem become collector's items. "Throw me something, mister or sister" is a shout that can be heard as the parade floats roll past. Throws are inexpensive trinkets (doubloons, beads, cups, etc.) tossed from floats by costumed and masked krewe members.

## FAMILY-FRIENDLY MARDI GRAS

Lafayette's Mardi Gras offers a family-friendly atmosphere. Families stake out their spots along the parade route and float riders love to throw beads and trinkets to children. If you're from out of town, make a sign for the parade. Float riders look for these and welcome non-locals with a shower of beads. 

## COURIR DE MARDI GRAS

The *courir de Mardi Gras* dates back to the earliest days of settlement and is still considered a rite of passage. With its roots firmly planted in the medieval tradition of ceremonial begging, bands of masked and costumed horseback riders roam the countryside begging for ingredients for their communal gumbo. Eunice, Mamou, Iota, and Church Point are a few of the towns that continue celebrating Mardi Gras with this rural tradition. 