

## Mardi Gras

Written by Editor

Tuesday, 21 February 2017 15:43 - Last Updated Wednesday, 22 February 2017 07:13

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Mardi Gras is often called Fat Tuesday! It's the last night of eating rich and fatty foods before the ritual fasting of the Lenten season, which begins the next day on Ash Wednesday. This week's recipes are perfect for a Mardi Gras themed dinner party. You'll just need to add a green salad, a really special wine and a mask or two. A Mardi Gras mask is an essential item.

Hiding your face in a mask allows you to play a totally different role and gives you the liberty to assume another personality. Bourbon Street Chicken is a simple and delicious crockpot entree that's served over rice. I chose herbed long grain and wild rice but white rice is more traditional. King Cake is a southern Mardi Gras custom. Inside the cake you'll find a trinket — usually a dried bean or a small plastic baby representing the baby Jesus. The person who gets the piece of cake with the trinket is declared king or queen of the day and must provide the next King Cake or host the next Mardi Gras party. The most traditional King Cake is a ring of twisted cinnamon roll-style bread topped with icing and purple (justice), green (faith) and gold (power) colored sugars — the official Mardi Gras colors.

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**Bourbon Street Chicken** (above)

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3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs

½ teaspoon grated fresh ginger

4 cloves garlic, minced

½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes

1/3 cup apple juice

1½ tablespoons honey

¼ cup brown sugar, packed

¼ cup ketchup

3 tablespoons cider vinegar

¼ cup bourbon

¼ cup soy sauce

3 tablespoons cornstarch

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3 tablespoons water

Salt and pepper, to taste

½ cup sliced green onions

Place chicken in a crockpot. Mix ginger, garlic, red pepper flakes, apple juice, honey, brown sugar, ketchup, cider vinegar, bourbon and soy sauce in a small bowl. Pour over chicken. Cover and cook on high for 3 hours. Remove chicken from crockpot and cut into bite-sized pieces. Cover to keep warm. Turn crock pot back up to high. Whisk cornstarch with water to make a slurry. Whisk cornstarch slurry into the sauce. Cover and allow to thicken, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Add chicken back into the sauce. Season with salt and pepper, if desired. Serve chicken and sauce over hot cooked rice. Garnish with sliced green onions. Serves 6 to 8.

## Mardi Gras King Cake



1/3 cup packed light brown sugar□ □

2 teaspoons ground cinnamon

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1 (18.25-ounce) package yellow cake mix□ □

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1 cup powdered sugar

2 tablespoons milk

½ teaspoon vanilla extract

Purple sugar sprinkles

Green sugar sprinkles

Yellow sugar sprinkles

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Lightly grease a Bundt cake pan with canola oil spray, then dust with flour. Shake out the excess flour. For the filling, place the brown sugar and cinnamon in a small bowl and stir until well combined. Set bowl aside. Prepare cake mix according to package directions. Pour one-third of the batter into the prepared pan. Scatter half of the brown-sugar cinnamon filling evenly over the batter. Pour another third of the batter evenly over the filling. Scatter remaining of brown sugar-cinnamon mixture over the batter. Pour the remaining batter evenly over the top, smoothing it out with a rubber spatula. Place the pan in the oven. Bake for 40 minutes or until cake is golden brown. Remove the pan from the oven and cool on a wire rack for 15 minutes. Invert onto wire rack and allow to cool completely. Prepare the glaze by mixing powdered sugar, milk and vanilla extract in a small bowl; stir until smooth. Place cooled cake on a serving platter and spoon the glaze over the top so that it drizzles down the sides and into the center of the cake. Before the glaze hardens, sprinkle the cake with purple, green and yellow sugars. Allow to set for 30 minutes before serving. Serves 12.



*The writer owns Catering by Debbi Covington and is the author of two cookbooks, Gold Medal Winner of the Benjamin Franklin Award, Celebrate Everything! and Dining Under the Carolina Moon.*

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