

The king cake is a type of cake associated with the festival of Epiphany in the Christmas season and in Louisiana precludes Lenten celebration of Mardi Gras.

The cake has a small trinket (often a small plastic baby, said to represent Baby Jesus) inside, and the person who gets the piece of cake with the trinket has various privileges and obligations which usually includes providing the next king cake.

Louisiana-style King Cake is a cinnamon-roll like cake inside with sugary icing and traditional Mardi Gras colored sprinkles on the outside. Trademark decorations--sugars in the royal colors of purple (justice), green (faith), and gold (power)--honor the three kings who visited the Christ child on Epiphany, the 12th day after Christmas.



Traditional King Cake

This traditional Mardi Gras dessert makes two king cakes each topped with a creamy glaze and festive gold, purple, and yellow sugar sprinkles.

Yield: Makes 2 cakes (about 18 servings each)

Cook time:10 Minutes

Prep time:30 Minutes

Stand:5 Minutes

Rise:1 Hour, 30 Minutes

Bake:16 Minutes

Ingredients:

1 (16-ounce) container sour cream	2 large eggs, lightly beaten
1/3 cup sugar	6 to 6 1/2 cups bread flour*
1/4 cup butter	1/3 cup butter, softened
1 teaspoon salt	1/2 cup sugar
2 (1/4-ounce) envelopes active dry yeast	1 1/2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
1/2 cup warm water (100° to 110°)	
1 tablespoon sugar	

Creamy Glaze (see below)

Purple-, green-, and gold-tinted sparkling sugar sprinkles

Preparation

Cook first 4 ingredients in a medium saucepan over low heat, stirring often, until butter melts. Set aside, and cool mixture to 100° to 110°.

Stir together yeast, 1/2 cup warm water, and 1 tablespoon sugar in a 1-cup glass measuring cup; let stand 5 minutes.

Beat sour cream mixture, yeast mixture, eggs, and 2 cups flour at medium speed with a heavy-duty electric stand mixer until smooth. Reduce speed to low, and gradually add enough remaining flour (4 to 4 1/2 cups) until a soft dough forms.

Turn dough out onto a lightly floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic (about 10 minutes). Place in a well-greased bowl, turning to grease top.

Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 1 hour or until dough is doubled in bulk.

Punch down dough, and divide in half. Roll each portion into a 22- x 12-inch rectangle. Spread 1/3 cup softened butter evenly on each rectangle, leaving a 1-inch border. Stir together 1/2 cup sugar and cinnamon, and sprinkle evenly over butter on each rectangle.

Roll up each dough rectangle, jelly-roll fashion, starting at 1 long side. Place one dough roll, seam side down, on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bring ends of roll together to form an oval ring, moistening and pinching edges together to seal. Repeat with second dough roll.

Cover and let rise in a warm place (85°), free from drafts, 20 to 30 minutes or until doubled in bulk.

Bake at 375° for 14 to 16 minutes or until golden. Slightly cool cakes on pans on wire racks (about 10 minutes). Drizzle Creamy Glaze evenly over warm cakes; sprinkle with colored sugars, alternating colors and forming bands. Let cool completely.

Note:

This recipe uses bread flour, which makes for a light, airy cake. You still get tasty results with all-purpose flour--the cake will just be more dense.

Creamy Glaze

Ingredients:

3 cups powdered sugar
3 tablespoons butter, melted
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 to 4 tablespoons milk

Preparation:

Stir together first 4 ingredients. Stir in 2 tablespoons milk, adding additional milk, 1 teaspoon at a time, until spreading consistency.