

# SHOP TALK

A Twice-Monthly Newsletter for our Team. February 15, 2022

## Happy Mardi Gras, Y'all!

Yes, it's that time of the year again, when we pass a good time until Ash Wednesday. In observance, we're offering a great King Cake formula with procedures that will give you professional results.

Along with this are some dishes for Lent, which begins March 2 and continues until Easter Sunday.

By the way, although N'Awlins is thought of by the world as the birthplace of Mardi Gras, we have to give a nod to the small (back then) settlement of Fort Louis de la Mobile, aka Mobile, Alabama. The first Mardi Gras celebration was there in 1703.

*Laissez Les Bon temps Rouler*

### ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

- King Cake formula, guide to shaping & finishing
- 

**“There is no other place on Earth even remotely like New Orleans. Don't even try to compare it to anywhere else.”**

**—Anthony Bourdain**

**“There are a lot of places I like, but I like New Orleans better.”**

**—Bob Dylan**

**“An American has not seen the United States until he has seen Mardi Gras in New Orleans.”**

**—Mark Twain**

Everywhere else, it's just Tuesday

# Mardi Gras's Origin Story

Mardi Gras can be traced to **medieval Europe**, through Rome and Venice in the 17th century to the French House of the Bourbons. From here, the traditional revelry of "Boeuf Gras," or fatted calf, followed France to her colonies.

On March 2, 1699, explorer Jean Baptiste Le Moyne Sieur de Bienville arrived at a plot of ground 60 miles south of New Orleans and named it "**Pointe du Mardi Gras**" on the eve of the festive holiday.

Bienville also established "Fort Louis de la Louisiane" (Mobile) in 1702, and in 1703, Fort Louis de la Mobile observed America's very first Mardi Gras.

Bienville established New Orleans in 1718. By the 1730s, Mardi Gras was celebrated openly in New Orleans but not with the parades we know today. In the early 40s, Louisiana's governor created elegant society balls, which are the model for Mardi Gras balls of today.

The earliest mention of "Carnival" was a 1781 report to Spain's colonial governor, and by late 1830, New Orleans held processions of maskers with carriages and horseback riders to celebrate. Dazzling gaslight torches lit the way for the krewe's members and lent each event an exciting air of festivity.

In 1856, six young Mobile natives formed the Mistick Krewe of Comus. Comus brought magic and mystery to New Orleans with dazzling floats (known as tableaux cars) and masked balls. This tradition continues today.



We begin with the most popular Mardi Gras treat: King Cake. The dough much like a cinnamon roll dough; It is finished off with icing and fancy colored sprinkles.

## The Dough (makes 1 King Cake)

2	Tbsp	yeast
2	cups	milk, warmed to about 105 to 110 F
4	each	eggs, (cold – straight from reach-in)
1	cup	granulated sugar
2	tsp	salt
9	cups	flour
1/3	cup	ground cinnamon
2	cups	brown sugar, packed (light or dark)
3/4	cup	oleo, softened and creamed in mixer

- In mixer, put milk, granulated sugar, and yeast. Mix to just wet the yeast. Stop, and let proof until it foams.
- Add eggs, flour, and salt. Mix on low until dough forms.
- Increase mixer speed and knead the dough to develop. When it begins to clean the bowl, remove it.
- Put in a large bowl, cover with PVC film, and let rise until double, at least 1 hour.
- Remove, punch down, round up and let it rest 10 minutes.
- Mix cinnamon and brown sugar together.
- Sheet out dough about 18 x 40 inches.
- Spread oleo over the surface leaving an area 2 inches from the edge away from you ([image A](#)).

- Sprinkle sugar mixture evenly over the buttered area of the dough ONLY (image A).
- Roll up the dough into a log, as evenly as you can and as tightly as possible without tearing the dough (image B).
- Moisten the unbuttered end of the log with water to help bind the dough (Image C).
- Pinch to hold it together; roll it seam side down (image D).
- Transfer the log to a pan with parchment paper.
- Arrange the dough in an oval or a rectangle (image F).
  - Optionally, you can use scissors or a knife (scissors are easier) to slash the outer edge of the dough as shown in image G. Don't go too far into the dough.
- Let proof about 40 minutes, until nearly doubled in size.
- Bake at 375 F for 30 to 35 minutes.
- Remove and allow to cool before applying icing and sugar.
- Pour the icing down the center of each cake and let it flow over the sides.
- Immediately sprinkle the colored sugar on the cakes. If you wait, the sprinkles won't stick to the icing.

## The King Cake Icing

2	cups	powdered sugar
1	tsp	vanilla flavoring
3	Tbsp	water

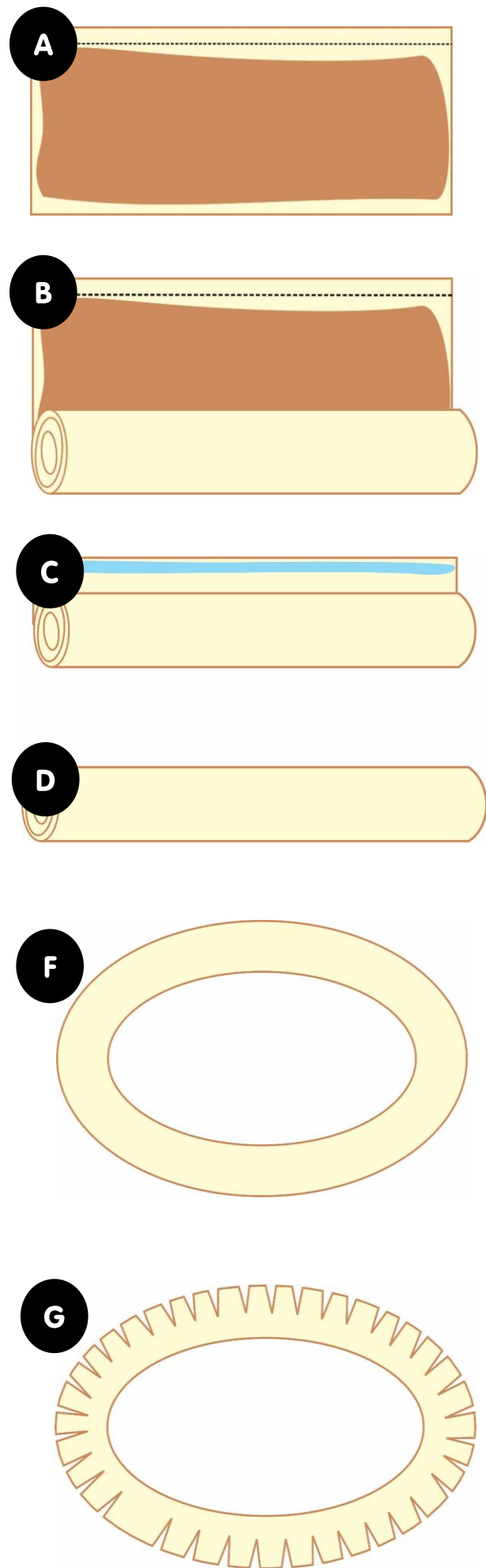
- Mix ingredients together, adding water slowly until you achieve a thick, but pourable icing.

## Cream Cheese Filling (Optional)

1	lb	cream cheese, softened
1	cup	granulated sugar
1/3	cup	flour
2	each	eggs, beaten
1 1/2	Tbsp	vanilla flavoring

- Cream all the ingredients together

**Final Thought:** if you don't order colored sprinkles, you can make them: Put sugar in a plastic bag, add a few drops of color and shake well. Spread onto a parchment sheet and let dry by baking for a few minutes. Break up any lumps and let cool.



## KEEP IT CLEAN...

More tips on keeping that kitchen clean and sanitary.

**Clean the can opener.** It's amazing how much bacteria builds up on that blade or wheel. It's in contact with the food in every can we open, so it makes sense to keep it sanitary.

Just put it in the sink, scrub it, rinse, and when dry, spray with Sani-Tyze. Do this at the end of every shift.

**Don't allow dirt to begin with.** Keep the counters clean; if you're using a cooking spoon or tongs, use a tool rest. You can make one from foil or use a plastic drink tumbler.

**Declutter those counters too!** Only keep what you MUST on the counter. Everything else should have a place. It will help you to be more organized, and there will be fewer targets for germs and stray dishwater.

Oh, and it will give you more working area, a special help in small spaces.

**Clean the sink several times a day.** If you think about it, NOT doing so just passes germs on to the next batch of dishes. Clean – and sanitize - the sink before each washing cycle.

And remember: CLEAN AS YOU GO!



## Catfish, Tiger Style with Corn Sauté'

The easiest catfish you ever served might also be the easiest. Perfect for our guests observing Lent! For 10 filets:

1	cup	Tiger Sauce
2	Tbsp	Lemon Juice
1	cup	Melted Margarine
1/2	tsp	Liquid Crab Boil

- Put it all together, heat it up and mix, set aside.
- Place filets face down on a sheet pan with parchment
- Brush Tiger Butter on each filet.
- Broil or bake at the highest temp your oven will go.
- After 10 minutes, flip the fish and brush with more Tiger Butter. Put back in the oven until it is done (flaky).
- Remove, transfer to line pan; brush with more butter.

### Corn Sauté

2	lbs	frozen corn (thawed)
1 1/2	Tbsp	Tony's or similar
2	Tbsp	garlic, minced
1	can	Ro-tel, drained
1/3	cup	cilantro, coarsely chopped
1	Tbsp	lemon juice
1/4	cup	oil or margarine (not olive oil)

- Sauté garlic in oil or oleo until fragrant; add Tony's
- Add the corn and tomatoes; sauté' another 10 minutes
- Remove from heat and stir in cilantro and lemon juice.
- Ladle some on top of each filet; serve the rest on the side.



## TIGER SLIDERS with CREAMY TIGER SAUCE

Spicy comfort food you can hold in your hand. Makes 24

- 1 cup mayo
- 1 tsp onion powder
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1/4 cup onions, very finely minced
- 1/4 cup Tiger Sauce
- 1/4 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup sweet relish (or minced sweet pickles)

- Mix together and set aside.

### For the Burgers:

- 5 lbs ground beef
- 1/2 cup Tiger sauce
- 2 each eggs
- 2 cups breadcrumbs (plain)
- 1/2 tsp black pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp salt
- 24 each small rolls (King's are good or make your own)
- As needed Sweet pickle slices (don't use dill)

- Add breadcrumbs to ground beef and mix gently. Don't overmix; it will make the patties tough.
- Combine remaining items, then blend into the beef.
- Portion into 24 balls and flatten each into a thin patty.
- Cook the patties about 3 minutes per side until crispy.
- Remove, place on buns and top each patty with a generous portion of sauce, then a pickle chip or more.

Note: Cheese doesn't really improve the product, so you probably don't want to use it. But a thin sliced marinated onion or just plain onion is great.

And you can also use thin sliced pineapple (fresh) sparingly.

## Salmon Croquettes

Great for Lent, but you might find it's good year-round. Makes about 12

- 1 pound salmon, grilled or canned
- 1/4 cup onion, minced
- 3 each eggs, beaten
- 1 1/2 cups breadcrumbs or crackers
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp cayenne
- 1/2 tsp garlic powder

- Flake the fish with a fork
- Combine all ingredients. Don't overwork
- Form 12 patties and place on sheet pan with parchment liner
- Place in cooler about an hour before cooking
- Fry at 350F until golden brown
- Drain, place in line pan to serve
- Garnish with chopped parsley and a twist of lemon.
- Serve with cocktail or dipping sauce



### Variation: Seafood Boulettes

Add a pound of peeled shrimp, 1/2 cup each of onion and bell pepper and increase breadcrumbs to 2 cups. Make into balls instead of patties, then freeze for about an hour. Deep fry and serve.

# Knife Safety and You...

Cutlery is essential to the operation of any commercial kitchen, so it is important to know how to use it correctly. Proper knife training can help minimize the risk of injury. If you are just beginning or need to brush up on your approach, keep reading...

## 1. Use a Sharp Knife



When you use a dull knife to cut, you need to apply more force; the knife is more likely to slip, increasing the risk of injury. Keeping knives sharp is one of the easiest ways to keep them safe.

## 2. Choose the Right Knife for the Task

Correctly selecting is a basic safety tip that food professionals should know.

- **Blade size:** Choose a knife that is proportional to what you're cutting. For example, a paring knife isn't good for butchering a large cut of meat; use a cleaver or chef knife instead.
- **Flexibility:** Some tasks require a flexible blade, while others need a firm one. Think about the knife



you'd choose to remove scales from a fish compared to the knife you'd need to cut potatoes.

- **Blade edge:** The edge of the blade can make your job easier or harder: serrated knives are excellent for cutting through foods with tender centers, while Granton blades are suited for wet foods like cheese and salmon.

## 3. Keep Your Knives Clean

To prevent contamination, it is important to clean a knife as soon as you're finished using it. Leaving a knife on the cutting board clutters a kitchen and creates opportunities for contamination and injury.

A clean knife is also easier to handle. Food residue can make your knife slippery, so be sure to keep it clean for the most secure grip.

**And never, ever,** place a knife in a sink and leave it. This is a sure recipe for injury. The next person to come along – your teammate – is at great risk for a serious hand injury. When you are finished with a knife, wash, rinse and sanitize, then store it properly and safely. Can you see the knife in the picture below? (yeah, neither could we).



#### 4. Store Knives Correctly

Proper knife storage keeps a kitchen organized and also encourages a safe knife routine. When not in use, knives should be stored out of the way. Storing knives in a drawer is not safe. Knife blocks or holders prevent mishaps.



#### 5. Hand off a knife Safely

So the safest way to hand a knife off to someone is to flip the handle so the other person can grab the handle, right?

Nope. The **ONLY** safe way to hand over a knife is to simply place it on a counter, and let your co-worker pick it up.

#### 6. Last but **NOT** least?

Last and definitely not least; wear a cutting glove. Before you put a knife in your hand, put a cutting glove on it. We cannot stress this enough. Gloves prevent injury, so please use one at all times when cutting or working with any sharp – not just a knife.



## A Falling Knife Has No Handle...

If you drop a knife, **let it drop!**

If what you see in this picture doesn't look like a good idea to you, then please accept our sincere congratulations!

It seems obvious, but you'd be very surprised at how many times our instincts kick in, and we try to catch a knife that slipped out of our hands.

If you drop a knife, just let it fall. Your most important priority is **YOUR SAFETY**. Step back and let it hit the floor. Then pick it up, inspect it for damage and wash, rinse and sanitize.



Entered what I ate today into my new fitness app, and it just sent an ambulance to my house.

I eat my tacos over a Tortilla. That way when stuff falls out, BOOM, another taco.

Pavlov walks into a bar. The phone rings, and he says, "Damn, I forgot to feed the dog."

Never ask a woman who is eating ice cream straight from the carton how she's doing.

Diet Day #1 - I removed all the fattening food from my house. It was delicious.

Just asked my wife what she's "burning up for dinner". It turned out to be all of my personal belongings.

I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you know.

My girlfriend's such a bad cook, she uses the smoke alarm as a timer.

I'm not a doctor but I know adding cheese to anything makes it an antidepressant.

Saying "super-size it" at the drive-thru doesn't work when it's a pharmacy.

So far eating hasn't filled the emptiness I feel inside, but I'm no quitter.

Dear Sonny;

I supervise a team of 6, and two of them don't like each other.

It's affecting the morale of the entire team, who are tired of the conflict. The two employees come to me one at a time "telling" on the other one. Frankly, I have had it.

What can I do?

It's time to take control. While conflict in any environment is inevitable, when it goes affects the workplace environment, it is time to deal with it. Having said that, it's always easier to resolve disputes before they become problems. In the future, "head trouble off at the pass" by dealing with it immediately. For your current situation, I recommend the following steps.

1. Bring the two employees together so you can:

- Explain how their behavior is affecting their team and:
- Advise them that a calm and pleasant workplace is necessary and anything that interferes with that must be addressed.
- Assure them that they are both valuable employees and that you are confident that they can resolve their differences.
- Be sure that they understand the seriousness of this problem and that you expect them to learn to work together.
- Get their commitment to work out their differences so they can work together.

2. Review the options with the employees:

- You can work this out on your own.
- I will meet with you to address the issues.
- We can ask HR to step in and help mediate.
- If you refuse to work in these issues, I will request that you both be reassigned.

