



A Seasonal Taste of Louisiana Can Be Yours

King Cakes Can Be Shipped from the Louisiana Coast All Across the U.S.

In most parts of the United States, January marks the beginning of a new year but also the end of the holiday season. In the Gulf Coast region, however, January brings with it another exciting season ... Mardi Gras. A favorite part of the days between the religious holidays of January 6, the Epiphany, and Mardi Gras, the day before Ash Wednesday, is the presence of “king cake” at social gatherings. Though the cake has religious ties – it’s named for the biblical three kings – over the years it has developed a following of its own. These days, though it’s easy to find king cakes all over coastal Louisiana throughout Carnival season, some bakeries create these colorful concoctions year-round. And many of them are happy to ship the delicacies to the rest of the country so everyone can enjoy a sweet taste of Louisiana.

It’s thought that the tradition of serving king cakes came to Louisiana from France in the latter half of the 19th century. A traditional Louisiana king cake is something like a giant cinnamon roll or coffee cake: braided dough filled with a cinnamon mixture, baked into an oval shape, then topped with a super-sweet white icing. The cake is typically sprinkled with sugar dyed the Mardi Gras colors of purple, green and gold (representing justice, faith and power). Over the years, though, clever bakers who wanted to carve a niche or fulfill the cravings of their customers began adding everything from cream cheese to fruit fillings to chocolate to their cakes. These days, it’s entirely possible to find pink or red icing and sugar on cakes sold around Valentine’s Day, for example, or cakes topped with the colors of the New Orleans Saints and other favorite sports teams.

King cakes often have Mardi Gras beads strewn on top of them, and a small plastic figurine – usually a baby, to represent the Christ child – is traditionally tucked inside the cake. In other parts of the world, including Belgium, France, Portugal, Spain and Switzerland, the king cake is more commonly served during the Christmas season and the trinket found inside is a bean. In either case, tradition generally dictates that the person served the piece of cake with the trinket has to provide the next cake.

King cakes can be found in countless locations throughout the parishes that comprise coastal Louisiana. Below is a list of some of the many bakeries, donut shops and grocery stores that not only bake memorable king cakes, but that also have the ability to ship them anywhere in the United States.

Bertinot's Best Bakery

Houma (Terrebonne Parish)

985-872-6208

www.bestbakerykingcakes.com

Bertinot's signature adjustment is to use its famous "Chix de Femme" dough, usually used to make sweet buns, instead of the more traditional cinnamon dough. Special flavors include pina colada and pecan praline.

Cannata's

Locations in Terrebonne and St. Mary parishes (East Houma, West Houma and Morgan City)

800-226-6282, ext. 118

www.cannataskingcakes.com

This locally owned grocery store has created unique king cake packages that can be shipped throughout the continental United States. Specialties include the "Bayou Alligator" (pistachio coconut Bavarian fusion), "Voodoo Queen" (raspberry filling and chocolate silk icing) and a Kid's Pack that lets the youngest bakers decorate a cake at home.

Delicious Donuts

Lake Charles (Calcasieu Parish)

337-479-2986

www.deliciouskingcakes.com

This donut shop creates king cakes in more than 25 flavors, with house specialties of pecan praline, pralines and cream, and pecan fudge. Other interesting flavors include "Zulu," a blend of coconut cream filling with chocolate and coconut icing, and "Scrap," which is whatever the employees choose.

Haydel's Bakery

Jefferson (Jefferson Parish)

800-442-1342

www.haydelbakery.com

Haydel's ships its delicacies all over the world, all year long. This is one of the bakeries that creates various shaped cakes – hearts for Valentine's Day, candy canes at Christmastime, even the traditional *fleur de lis*. Flavors include chocolate chip brownie and strawberry cream cheese.

Manny Randazzo King Cakes

Metairie (Jefferson Parish)

504-456-1476 or 866-456-1476

www.randazzokingcake.com

Manny is the second generation of his family to master the art of baking king cakes. The family got its start in Chalmette (St. Bernard Parish), but today Manny practices his craft in nearby Metairie. In 2012 he earned the title of "King King Cake." In addition to the traditional cinnamon cake, Manny will incorporate pecan praline, apple, cream cheese, lemon, strawberry ... or "royal," which is all the flavors but pecan praline, quartered off on the cake.

Meche's Donuts

New Iberia (Iberia Parish)

337-453-0810

www.mechesdonuts.com

The twist here is the use of donut dough for the cake, which can come with Bavarian cream, chocolate, cream cheese, lemon or raspberry filling ... and the additional decadence of a "bon pecan" topping.

Nonna Randazzo's

Locations in St. Bernard and St. Tammany parishes

985-893-1488

www.nonnaskingcakes.com

The Randazzo family has been making king cakes for decades (see reference to Manny Randazzo above), in both traditional and filled styles. Nonna's fillings include apple, cream cheese, cream cheese/pecan praline, pecan praline and strawberry cream.

Rouses

Locations throughout Louisiana's coastal parishes

www.rouses.com

This supermarket chain with dozens of locations along the Gulf Coast gives its customers more than 20 choices of fillings, including pecan praline, heavenly hash, and cookies and cream.