



Mardi Gras Meals

In New Orleans, there's always a reason to celebrate! As soon as you've begun to shed those extra holiday pounds, Mardi Gras has arrived. Festivities will include parade parties, eating on the run, alcohol, and late night noshing. So how do you join in the fun without undoing those New Year's resolutions? Cutting back in small ways and making better choices can make a big difference.

PARADE PARTIES

Whether throwing the bash or attending one, prepare dishes with a purple, green, and gold theme. These colorful foods contain an array of nutrients and are low in fat and calories.

- Fix a festive green salad, tossed with spices, olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Top with purple beets and a sprinkle of goat cheese.
- Roast asparagus in the oven with a sprinkle of olive oil, salt, and pepper. Wrap with a slice of prosciutto.
- Spear kabobs of lean beef, pork, or chicken, along with green and yellow peppers.
- Mix a fruit salad, include green and purple grapes, and pineapple.

EATING ON THE RUN

Planning ahead is difficult when you're grabbing the kids and heading out to the parades in a hurry. Fast food does not have to be a diet saboteur. If you fancy fried chicken, pull off the skin to equal about the same amount of fat and calories as grilled chicken. If you are craving a burger and fries, opt for a small version or a kids meal - a grilled chicken sandwich is the best choice. If time permits, pack a healthy snack to take along. Try whole wheat wraps with lean meat or peanut butter, a protein bar with less than 10 grams of sugar and at least 10 grams of protein, string cheese, 100 calorie packs of nuts, Soyocrisps.

ALCOHOL CALORIES ADD UP QUICKLY

Light beer, 1 ½ ounces of hard liquor, and five ounces of red or white wine all contain about 100-120 calories. One of these is your best bet. Avoid high calorie mixers like soda and juice, which tend to go down quickly and leave you thirsty for more. Daiquiris may be tempting as you pass by those street vendors; run past as fast as you can! Even the fruity choices contain approximately 600 calories for 12 ounces. The creamy versions can climb to 1,000 calories. Don't forget to hydrate all day with plain water, and limit alcoholic beverages to one per hour. This allows the liver to properly process the alcohol so your head will thank you.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Beware of enticing late night munchies. After a long day of parades and partying, those cheese fries may be calling your name. Consider other available choices such as a grilled chicken sandwich, ham or turkey sandwich, even a hamburger. These alternatives will satisfy the hunger and won't leave you feeling so guilty in the morning. An order of cheese fries can pack about 700 calories, while a cheeseburger is approximately 400-500 calories. Better still, a grilled chicken sandwich is about 250-350 calories.

*Have a ball this Mardi Gras,
and don't take "Fat Tuesday"
so literally.*

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