

Mardi Gras Mambo

For many Americans, New Orleans and Mardi Gras are near synonymous—and last year's Carnival marked a 25-year high in partygoers visiting the Big Easy. Before we break out our feather boas and doubloons, here's a look at the festivities, by the numbers. *BY MARGARET RHODES*

1.2 MILLION

people attended Mardi Gras festivities last year—**3.5** times the population of New Orleans.

The City of New Orleans spends **\$3.33 MILLION** on Mardi Gras each year. It sees a return of **\$4.48** for every public dollar spent.

Hotels take in **\$56 million** over the **12** days. Prices for a double room on Bourbon Street increase **151%** over any other time during the year.

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There are **3,000** bars in New Orleans. THE HURRICANE is considered the cocktail of Mardi Gras:

4 OZ. LIGHT AND DARK RUM, 2 OZ. PASSION-FRUIT JUICE, 1 OZ. ORANGE JUICE, 1/2 OZ. LIME JUICE, AND 1/2 OZ. GRENADINE.

Haydel's Bakery sells

57,000

yellow, green, and purple king cakes—baked with a plastic doll inside—during Mardi Gras. That's enough to give **2 million** people, **2** or all of Slovenia, a slice.

In 2010, Haydel's baked the world's **LARGEST** king cake: It wrapped around the Louisiana Superdome **twice** and fed **6,000** folks.

That's roughly **92,390** bonus bottles of Southern Comfort.

\$2.6 MILLION Alcohol sales spike during the festivities.

Mardi Gras always kicks off **59** days before Easter. The **12**-day party includes **87** parades put on by **54** different krewe.

75 floats and **60** marching bands.

2,300

members toss **1.5 million** plastic cups, **2.5 million** doubloons, and **200,000** beads to parade bystanders.

In **154** years, Mardi Gras celebrations have been canceled **13** times—for, among other reasons, a **YELLOW-FEVER** epidemic and riots during the Reconstruction—but not after Hurricane Katrina.

7 out of **10** Americans polled in 2009 said they support making Mardi Gras

A NATIONAL HOLIDAY.

700,000 people partied at the post-Katrina Mardi Gras, the only year corporate sponsorship was allowed.

Glad donated **2,100** boxes of trash bags.

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