



How to Throw a Fat Tuesday Party

Tips from Chef Mike Valentine of NOLA themed restaurant Ford's Oyster House



Ford's Oyster House

Throw an amazing Mardi Gras party with these simple tips!

As the winter chill begins to wane, one of the first signs of spring's arrival comes in a gaudy bang. Mardi Gras, a holiday of fun fare and brightly colored beads, is a celebration full of joy and culture. Inextricably linked with the day affectionately known as "Fat Tuesday" are good old NOLA dishes – ones that are enjoyed and prepared around the country. Chef Mike Valentine of [Ford's Oyster House](#), a New Orleans themed restaurant in Greenville, SC, knows a thing or two about bringing New Orleans authenticity wherever you are.

"There are so many different feelings in the midst of Mardi Gras," says Valentine. "You look around and you see revelry, romance, madness and music. Of course, there are endless parades and parties, and plenty of comic costuming in the streets."

More on Mardi Gras

- [How to Bring Mardi Gras Home](#)
- [Mardi Gras Around the World](#)
- [Celebrate Mardi Gras at Home](#)
- [Mardi Gras: The Feast Before the Fast](#)
- [Mardi Gras Mambo Cocktail Recipe](#)

To help you bring that NOLA

flare to your own celebration, Chef Valentine has given us a few ideas on how to host a killer Mardi Gras party. Check out his tips here:

Make your guest list.

The number of attendees will determine a lot about your menu. If you're having a big group, serve food buffet style. If your guest list is small, consider doing a more formal, seated multicourse menu.

Plan your menu.

If you're trying to keep the menu simple, think about doing a crawfish spread, Muffaletta sandwiches, Andouille & Red Bean Dip in the crock pot, Cajun Grilled Chicken on biscuits, or a big pot of Jambalaya. If you're going for a fancier menu, you could do Shrimp and Grits, Fried Okra Gumbo, or Panko Crab Cakes with Jalapeno Remoulade sauce.

Decide on a drink menu.

Have fun with a few classic New Orleans cocktails – Sazerac, Hurricane Punch, Arnie Palmer Shots, or a make-your-own Bloody Mary bar.

Buy your decorations.

Don't wait until the day of the party to do this. You should be focusing on the food at that point, and the decorations can be bought and put together a few days before the event. Doubloons and beads in vases with jester wands make a nice centerpiece. When in doubt, go with purple, gold, and green.

Don't forget the music.

Mardi Gras and music go hand-in-hand. Whether you hire a brass band or play Mardi Gras music from iTunes, make sure you set the mood with your music

Have fun!

Relax, have a drink, and enjoy your guests.