

Carnival

This article is about the celebration of Carnival in many cultures. For the traveling entertainment, see [Traveling carnival](#). For other uses, see [Carnival \(disambiguation\)](#).

Carnival (see other spellings and names) is a fes-

German-speaking Europe and the Netherlands, the Carnival season traditionally opens on 11/11 (often at 11:11 a.m.). This dates back to celebrations before the Advent season or with harvest celebrations of St. Martin's Day.

Rio de Janeiro's carnival is considered the world's largest, hosting approximately two million participants per day. In 2004, Rio's carnival attracted a record 400,000 foreign visitors.^[6]



Masquerade at the Carnival of Venice.

tive season that occurs before the Christian season of Lent. The main events typically occur during February or early March. Carnival typically involves a public celebration and/or parade combining some elements of a circus, masks and public street party. People wear masks during many such celebrations, an overturning of life's normal things. The celebrations have long been associated with heavy alcohol consumption.^[1]

The term *Carnival* is traditionally used in areas with a large Catholic presence. However, the Philippines, a predominantly Roman Catholic country, does not celebrate Carnival anymore since the dissolution of the *Manila Carnival* after 1939, the last carnival in the country.^[2] In historically Lutheran countries, the celebration is known as *Fastelavn*,^{[3][4]} and in areas with a high concentration of Anglicans and Methodists, pre-Lenten celebrations, along with penitential observances, occur on Shrove Tuesday.^[5] In Eastern Orthodox nations, *Maslenitsa* is celebrated during the last week before Great Lent. In



Carnival celebrations in the Southern Netherlands, 1490



Carnival in Rome circa 1650



Games during the carnival at Rio de Janeiro, c. 1822

1 Etymology

The Latin-derived name of the holiday is sometimes also spelled *Carnaval*, typically in areas where Dutch, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese are spoken, or *Carnevale* in Italian-speaking contexts. Alternate names are used for regional and local celebrations.

The oldest word which points in the direction of the word Carnival, is listed on a certificate from the Italian Subiaco from 965 CE as a timestamp *Carnelevare*. Also known from the 13th century are the words *Carnisprivialis*, *Carnis Privium* and in an old Liège text the term *Quarnivalle*.^[7]

The origin can be traced to the Latin expression *Carne Levare*, or Italian *Carne lavare* or *Carnem levare* which with reasonable certainty can be translated into “farewell to the flesh” or “taking away the flesh”,^{[8][9]} which was a ritual to prelude lent.

Two other, less likely, explanations that the term would be a contraction of the Latin *Carne* (meat) and *Paler* (rule), literally “the time that meat reigns” and the Italian *Carnueale* or the French *Carne Avalis* (both mean so much as “devour flesh”) are given as well.^{[10][11]}

The origin may also be from the Italian word “carrus” (*car*). Which may suggests an origin within Christianity

as well as in earlier religions.

2 Origin and development

From an anthropological point of view, carnival is a reversal ritual, in which social roles are reversed and norms about desired behavior are suspended.^[10] Winter was thought of as the reign of the winter spirits that were to be driven out for the summer to return. Carnival can thus be regarded as a rite of passage from darkness to light, from winter to summer: a fertility celebration, the first spring festival of the new year.^[12]

Traditionally a carnival feast was the last opportunity to eat well before the time of food shortage at the end of the winter during which one was limited to the minimum necessary. On what nowadays is called *vastenavond* (the days before fasting) all the remaining winter stores of lard, butter and meat which were left would be eaten, for it would soon start to rot and decay. The selected livestock had in fact already been slaughtered in November and the meat would be no longer preservable. All the food that had survived the winter had to be eaten to assure that everyone was fed enough to survive until the coming spring would provide new food sources.^[7]

Several Germanic tribes celebrated the returning of the daylight. A predominant deity was during this jubilee driven around in a noisy procession on a ship on wheels.^[13] The winter would be driven out, to make sure that fertility could return in spring.^[10] A central figure was possibly the fertility goddess Nerthus. Also there are some indications that the effigy of Nerthus^[14] or Freyr was placed on a ship with wheels and accompanied by a procession of people in animal disguise and men in women’s clothes.^{[7][15]} Aboard the ship would the marriage of a man and woman be consummated as a fertility ritual.^{[16][17]}

Tacitus wrote in his *Germania*: *Germania* 9.6: *Ceterum nec cohibere parietibus deos neque in ullam humani oris speciem adsimulare ex magnitudine caelestium arbitrator* – “The Germans, however, do not consider it consistent with the grandeur of celestial beings to confine the gods within walls, or to liken them to the form of any human countenance.” *Germania* 40: *mox vehiculum et vestis et, si credere velis, numen ipsum secreto lacu abluitur* – “Afterwards the car, the vestments, and, if you like to believe it, the divinity herself, are purified in a secret lake.”^[18]

Traditionally the feast also applied to sexual desires, which were supposed to be suppressed during the following fasting.^{[7][11]} Before Lent began, all rich food and drink were consumed in what became a giant celebration that involved the whole community, and is thought to be the origin of Carnival. The Lenten period of the Liturgical calendar, the six weeks directly before Easter, was originally marked by fasting and other pious or penitential practices. During Lent, no parties or celebrations

were held, and people refrained from eating rich foods, such as meat, dairy, fat and sugar.^[19]

While christian festivals such as *corpus christi* were church-sanctioned celebrations, Carnival was also a manifestation of European folk culture.

In the Christian tradition the fasting is to commemorate the 40 days that Jesus fasted in the desert according to the *New Testament* and also to reflect on Christian values. As with many other Christian festivals such as Christmas which was originally a pagan midwinter festival,^{[20][21]} Easter which was a pagan spring festival,^{[22][23][24]} and *Sinterklaas*,^{[25][26][27][28][29]} the Christian church has found it easier to turn the pagan Carnival in a catholic tradition than to eliminate it. ^[7] Unlike today, carnival in the Middle Ages took not just a few days, but it covered almost the entire period between Christmas and the beginning of Lent. In those two months, several Catholic holidays were seized by the Catholic population as an outlet for their daily frustrations.^[30]

In many Christian sermons and texts, the example of a vessel used to explain Christian doctrine: “the nave of the church of baptism”, “the ship of *Mary*”, etc. The writings show that processions with ship-like carts were held and lavish feasts were celebrated on the eve of lent or the greeting of spring in the early Middle Ages. The catholic church condemned this “devilish debauchery” and “pagan rituals”. As early as the year 325 the council of Nicaea attempted to end these pagan festivals.^{[7][16]}

Many synods and councils attempted to set things “right”. The statements of *Caesarius of Arles* (470–542), which protested around 500 CE in his sermons against the Pagan practices, seemed to have formed the building blocks of the *Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum* (small index of superstitious and pagan practices), which was drafted by the Synod of Leptines in 742 in which the *Spurcalibus en februario* was condemned.^{[7][16]}

Pope *Gregory the Great* (590–604) decided that fasting would start on Ash Wednesday. The whole Carnival event was set before the fasting, to set a clear division between the pagan and the Christian custom. It was also the custom during Carnival that the ruling class would be mocked using masks and disguises.^{[7][16]}

In the year 743 the synod in Leptines (Leptines is located near *Binche* in Belgium) spoke out furiously against the excesses in the month of February.^[16] Also from the same period dates the phrase: “Whoever in February by a variety of less honorable acts tries to drive out winter is not a Christian, but a pagan.” Confession books from around 800 contain more information about how people would dress as an animal or old woman during the festivities in January and February. Noticing that on it was no small penance.^{[7][16][31]}

Gradually the ecclesiastical authority began to realize that the desired result could not be attained by ban-

ning the traditions, which eventually led to a degree of christianization. The festivities became part of the liturgy and the liturgical year.^[16]

While forming an integral part of the Christian calendar, particularly in Catholic regions, many Carnival traditions resemble those antedating Christianity.^[32] Italian Carnival is sometimes thought to be derived from the ancient Roman festivals of *Saturnalia* and *Bacchanalia*. The *Saturnalia*, in turn, may be based on the Greek *Dionysia* and *Oriental* festivals. While medieval pageants and festivals such as *Corpus Christi* were church-sanctioned, Carnival was also a manifestation of medieval folk culture. Many local Carnival customs are claimed to derive from local pre-Christian rituals, such as elaborate rites involving masked figures in the *Swabian–Alemannic Fastnacht*. However, evidence is insufficient to establish a direct origin from *Saturnalia* or other ancient festivals. No complete accounts of *Saturnalia* survive and the shared features of feasting, role reversals, temporary social equality, masks and permitted rule-breaking do not necessarily constitute a coherent festival or link these festivals.^[33] These similarities may represent a reservoir of cultural resources that can embody multiple meanings and functions. For example, Easter begins with the resurrection of Jesus, followed by a liminal period and ends with rebirth. Carnival reverses this as King Carnival comes to life, a liminal period follows before his death. Both feasts are calculated by the lunar calendar. Both Jesus and King Carnival may be seen as expiatory figures who make a gift to the people with their deaths. In the case of Jesus, the gift is eternal life in heaven and in the case of King Carnival, the acknowledgement that death is a necessary part of the cycle of life.^[34] The commonalities between church and Carnival rituals and imagery suggest a common root. Christ’s passion is itself grotesque: Jesus is the victim of summary judgement and is tortured and executed before a mob. Holy Week processions in Spain include crowds who vociferously insult the figure of Jesus. Irreverence, parody, degradation and laughter at a tragicomic God can be seen as intensifications of the sacred order.^[35]

Some of the best-known traditions, including carnal parades and masquerade balls, were first recorded in medieval Italy. The carnival of *Venice* was, for a long time, the most famous carnival (although Napoleon abolished it in 1797 and only in 1979 was the tradition restored). From Italy, Carnival traditions spread to Spain, Portugal and France and from France to *New France* in North America. From Spain and Portugal it spread with colonization to the *Caribbean* and *Latin America*. In the early 19th century in the German *Rhineland* and *Southern Netherlands*, the weakened medieval tradition also revive. In Rhineland in 1823, the first modern Carnival parade took place in *Cologne*, Germany.^[36] The upper Rhineland is mostly Protestant, as is most of Northern Germany and Northern Europe. *Carneval*, (*Fasching* or *Fastnacht* in Germany) mixed pagan traditions with Christian traditions. Pre-Lenten celebrations featured

parades, costumes and masks to endure Lent's withdrawal from worldly pleasures.



Riderless Racers at Rome by Théodore Géricault. From the mid-15th century until 1882, spring carnival in Rome closed with a horse race. Fifteen to 20 riderless horses, originally imported from the Barbary Coast of North Africa, ran the length of the Via del Corso, a long, straight city street, in about 2½ minutes.

Other areas developed their own traditions. In the United Kingdom, West Indian immigrants brought with them the traditions of Caribbean Carnival, however the Carnivals now celebrated at Notting Hill, London; Leeds, Yorkshire, and other places became divorced from their religious origin and became secular events that take place in the summer months.

3 Theories

Interpretations of Carnival present it as a social institution that offers an alternative to the seriousness of daily life beyond a simple respite,^[37] as a release for impulses that threaten the social order that ultimately reinforces social norms,^[38] as a social transformation^[39] or as a tool for different groups to focus attention on conflicts and incongruities by embodying them in “senseless” acts.^[40]

4 Geographic distribution

4.1 Africa

4.1.1 Cape Verde Islands

Carnival was introduced by Portuguese settlers. The celebration is celebrated on each of the archipelago's nine inhabited islands. In Mindelo, São Vicente groups challenge each other for a yearly prize. It has imported various Brazilian carnival traditions. The celebration in São Nicolau is more traditional, where established groups parade through the Ribeira Brava, gathering in the town square, although it has adopted drums, floats and costumes from Brazil. In São Nicolau three groups, Copa



Carnival on the day of Donetsk city in Ukraine, 2010

Cabana, Estrela Azul and Brilho Da Zona constructs a painted float using fire, newspaper for the mold, iron and steel to for structure. Carnival São Nicolau is celebrated over three days: dawn Saturday, Sunday afternoon, and Tuesday.

4.1.2 Seychelles

The Seychelles carnival began in 2011. It is held in the capital city of Victoria and takes place over 3 days. On day 1 the grand opening is held in the city center near the clock tower. The second day is parade day. On day 3 the closing ceremony is held and a lottery winner is announced.

4.1.3 Zimbabwe

The Harare Carnival is held late in May life. Events include fashion and music shows. The climax is a street party featuring costumes and music.^[41]

4.2 Asia

4.2.1 Indonesia

In Indonesia, the word “carnival” or *karnaval*, is not related to pre-Lent festivities, but more to festivals in general, especially those with processions and extravagant costumes. One of the largest carnivals in Indonesia is

Solo Batik Carnival, held in Solo, Central Java; and Jember Fashion Carnaval, held in Jember, East Java.

The Roman Catholic community of Kupang, East Nusa Tenggara held an Easter procession in form of an Easter Carnival called *Pawai Paskah Kupang*.^[42]

4.2.2 India



Goan Christians participating at the Goan Carnival, late 20th century



Revellers at the modern Goan Carnival

In India, Carnival is celebrated only in the state of Goa, where it is known as 'Intruz' (from **Entrudo**, an alternative Portuguese name for Carnival). The largest celebration takes place in the city of Panjim. It was introduced by the Portuguese who ruled Goa for over four centuries. The Carnival is celebrated for three days and nights, when the legendary King Momo takes over the state. All-night parades occur throughout the state with bands, dances and floats and grand balls are held in the evenings.^[43]

In Sambalpur, Sitalsasthi carnival is celebrated according to the Hindu calendar on the sixth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Jyestha; It is celebrated for two days and one night.

In Sirsi, Holi is celebrated with a unique Carnival. A folk dance called "Bedara Veshha" is performed during the nights beginning five days before festival day. The festival is celebrated for five days every alternate year.

4.2.3 Israel

Main article: Adloyada

4.2.4 Turkey

Main article: Baklahorani

For almost five centuries, local Greek communities throughout Istanbul celebrated Carnival with weeks of bawdy parades, lavish balls and street parties. This continued for weeks before Lent. Shrove Monday, the last day of the carnival season, took place in Baklahorani. The event was led by the Greek Orthodox community, but the celebrations were public and inter-communal. The final celebration was sited in the Kurtuluş district.^[44] In 2010 the festival was revived.^[45]

4.3 Europe

4.3.1 Belgium and the Netherlands



Giant Joker of Maaseik in 2013

Many parts of Belgium celebrate Carnival, typically with costume parades, partying and fireworks. These areas include Heist, Binche, Aalst, Eupen, Malmedy and Kelmis. The Carnival of Binche dates at least to the 14th century. Parades are held over the three days before Lent; the most important participants are the Gilles, who wear

traditional costumes on Shrove Tuesday and throw blood oranges to the crowd.^[46] In 2003, the Carnival of Binche was recognised as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.^[47] The Carnival of Aalst, celebrated during the three days preceding Ash Wednesday, received the same recognition in 2010.^[48]

Some Belgian cities hold Carnivals during Lent. One of the best-known is Stavelot, where the *Carnival de la Laetare* takes place on Laetare Sunday, the fourth Sunday of Lent. The participants include the *Blancs-Moussis*, who dress in white, carry long red noses and parade through town attacking bystanders with confetti and dried pig bladders. The town of Halle also celebrates on Laetare Sunday. Belgium's oldest parade is the Carnival Parade of Maaseik, also held on Laetare Sunday, which originated in 1865.

The carnival in the Netherlands, especially in the south west, is strongly related to the Belgium carnival.

4.3.2 Bosnia and Herzegovina

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the city of Ljubuški holds a traditional Carnival (Bosnian: *Karneval*). Ljubuški is a member of the Federation of European Carnival Cities (FECC).

4.3.3 Croatia

The most famous Croatian Carnival (Croatian: "karneval", also called "maškare") is the Rijeka Carnival, during which the mayor of Rijeka hands over the keys to the city to the Carnival master ("meštar od karnevala"). The festival includes several events, culminating on the final Sunday in a masked procession. (A similar procession for children takes place on the previous day.)



"Carnival of Medimurje", northern Croatia (2011)

Many towns in Croatia's Kvarner region (and in other parts of the country) observe the Carnival period, incorporating local traditions and celebrating local culture.

Just before the end of Carnival, every Kvarner town burns a man-like doll called a "Jure Piškanac", who is blamed for all the strife of the previous year. The *Zvončari*, or bell-ringers, wear bells and large head regalia representing their areas of origin (for example, those from Halubje wear regalia in the shape of animal heads). The traditional Carnival food is fritule, a pastry. This festival can also be called Poklade.

Masks are worn to many of the festivities, including concerts and parties. Children and teachers are commonly allowed to wear masks to school for a day, and also wear masks at school dances or while trick-or-treating. Carnivals also take place in summer. One of the most famous is the Senj Summer Carnival – first celebrated in 1968. The towns of Cres, Pag, Novi Vinodolski and Fužine also organise Summer Carnivals.

4.3.4 Cyprus

Carnival has been celebrated for centuries. The tradition was likely established under Venetian rule around the 16th century. It may have been influenced by Greek traditions, such as festivities for deities such as Dionysus. The celebration originally involved dressing in costumes and holding masked balls or visiting friends. In the twentieth century it became an organized event held during the 10 days preceding Lent (according to the Greek Orthodox calendar). The festival is celebrated almost exclusively in the city of Limassol.

Three main parades take place during Carnival. The first is held on the first day, during which the "Carnival King" (either a person in costume or an effigy) rides through the city on his carriage. The second is held on the first Sunday of the festival and the participants are mainly children. The third and largest takes place on the last day of Carnival and involves hundreds of people walking in costume along the town's longest avenue. The latter two parades are open to anyone who wishes to participate.

4.3.5 Czech Republic



Masopust masks in Czech Republic, 2013

In the Czech Republic, the Masopust Festival takes place from Epiphany (*Den tří králů*) through Ash Wednesday (*Popeleční středa*). The word *masopust* translates literally from old Czech to mean “meat fast” and the festival often includes a pork feast. The tradition is most common in Moravia but also occurs in Bohemia. While practices vary, masks and costumes are present everywhere.

4.3.6 Denmark and Norway

Main article: *Fastelavn*

Carnival in Denmark is called *Fastelavn*, and is held on the Sunday or Monday before Ash Wednesday. The holiday is sometimes described as a Nordic Halloween, with children dressing in costume and gathering treats for the *Fastelavn* feast. One popular custom is the *fastelavnsris*, a switch that children use to flog their parents to wake them up on *Fastelavns* Sunday.

In Norway, students having seen celebrations in Paris introduced Carnival processions, masked balls and Carnival balls to Christiania in the 1840s and 1850s. From 1863, the artist federation kunstnerforeningen held annual Carnival balls in the old Freemasons lodge, which inspired Johan Svendsens compositions “Norsk Kunstnerkarneval” and “Karneval in Paris”. The following year, Svendsens *Festpolonaise* was written for the opening procession. Edvard Grieg attended and wrote “aus dem Karneval” (*folkelivsbilleder* Op. 19). Since 1988, the student organization *Tårnseilerne* has produced annual masquerade balls in Oslo, with masks, costumes and processions after attending an opera performance. The Carnival season also includes *Fastelavens søndag* (with cream buns) and *fastelavensris* with decorated branches.

4.3.7 England

Main article: *Shrove Tuesday*

In England, the season immediately before Lent was called Shrovetide. A time for confessing sins (*shriving*), it had fewer festivities than the Continental Carnivals. Today, *Shrove Tuesday* is celebrated as *Pancake Day*, but little else of the Lent-related Shrovetide survived the 16th-century English Reformation. Possibly the only Shrovetide Carnival in the United Kingdom is celebrated in Cowes and East Cowes on the Isle of Wight.

4.3.8 France

Some major Carnivals of mainland France are the Nice Carnival, the Dunkirk Carnival and the Limoux Carnival. The Nice Carnival was held as far back as 1294, and annually attracts over a million visitors during the two weeks preceding Lent.

Since 1604 a characteristic masked Carnival is celebrated in Limoux.

The Dunkirk Carnival is among the greatest and most exuberant carnivals celebrated in Europe. Its traditions date back to the 17th century and are based on the 'vischerbende' as fishermen went from one café to another accompanied by their relatives and friends just before departing to Icelandic fishing grounds.

In French West Indies, it occurs between the Sunday of Epiphany and Ash Wednesday;^[49] this dates back to the arrival of French colonists in the islands.

4.3.9 Germany, Switzerland, and Austria

Main articles: *Karneval in Germany and Austria* and *Fastnacht or Fasnacht in Germany, Switzerland, Alsace and Austria*

Germany The Karneval, Fasching, or Fastnacht season in the German-speaking world officially begins on 11/11 of any given year at 11:11 AM and ends just before midnight on Ash Wednesday the following year after the Monday's *Rosenmontag Parade*.



Carnival float in the Rosenmontag parade of the Cologne Carnival, Germany.

The earliest written record of Carnival in Germany was in 1296 in Speyer.^[50] The first worldwide Carnival parade took place in Cologne in 1823.

The most active Carnival week begins on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday, with parades during the weekend, and finishes the night before Ash Wednesday, with the main festivities occurring around *Rosenmontag* (Rose Monday). This time is also called the “Fifth Season”. *Shrove Tuesday* is celebrated in some cities, but Germany has no special name for that day.

Parties feature self-made and more fanciful costumes and occasional masks. The parties become more exuberant as the weeks progress and peak after New Year, in January

and February. The final Tuesday features all-night parties, dancing, hugging and kissing. Some parties are for all, some for women only and some for children. *Kreppel*, or donuts, are the traditional Fasching food and are baked or fried.

In Germany, the *Rheinische Fasching* and the *Schwäbische Fastnacht* are distinct.

“Rheinische” Carnival (Fasching) The “Rheinische” Carnival is held in the west of Germany, mainly in the states of North Rhine-Westphalia or Nordrhein-Westfalen, Rhineland Palatinate or Rheinland-Pfalz, but also in Hessen [including Oberhessen], Bavaria and other states. Some cities are more famous for celebrations such as parades and costume balls. Köln or *Cologne Carnival*, as well as Mainz and Düsseldorf are the largest and most famous. Other cities have their own, often less well-known celebrations, parades and parties such as Worms am Rhein, Speyer, Kaiserslautern, Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Mannheim, Ludwigshafen, Stuttgart, Augsburg and München [Munich] Nürnberg. On Carnival Thursday (called “Old Women Day” or “The Women’s Day”) in commemoration of an 1824 revolt by washerwomen, women storm city halls, cut men’s ties, and are allowed to kiss any passing man.



Reitenderle, der Grundholde, Hudelmale, Schnarragages; popular Fasnet characters from Kisslegg im Allgäu, Swabia.

The Fasching parades and floats make fun of individual politicians and other public figures. Many speeches do the same.

“Swabian-Alemannic” Carnival (*Schwäbische Fastnacht*) The “Swabian-Alemannic” Carnival, known as *Schwäbische Fastnacht*, takes place in Baden and Schwaben (Swabia, Southwestern Germany), the Allgäu, Elsass (i.e. Alsace) and Vorarlberg (Western Austria). During the pagan era it represented the time of year when the reign of the grim winter spirits is over and these spirits are hunted and expelled. It then adapted to Catholicism. The first official record of “Karneval, Fasching or Fastnacht” in Germany dates to 1296.



From the Monstercorso on Gütisdienstag’s evening in Lucerne (2009)

Swiss Fasnacht In Switzerland *Fasnacht* takes place in the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, e.g. in Lucerne (*Lozärner Fasnacht*), but also in Protestant Basel. However the *Basler Fasnacht* begins on the Monday after Ash Wednesday. Both began in the Late Middle Ages. Smaller Fasnacht festivities take place across German Switzerland, e.g. in Bern, Olten, or in the eastern part (Zurich, St. Gallen, Appenzell).

4.3.10 Greece



The float of the King Carnival parading in Patras, Greece

In Greece Carnival is also known as the *Apokriés* (Greek: Αποκριές, “saying goodbye to meat”), or the season of the “Opening of the Triodion”, so named after the liturgical book used by the church from then until Holy Week. One of the season’s high points is *Tsiknopempti*, when celebrants enjoy roast beef dinners; the ritual is repeated the following Sunday. The following week, the last before Lent, is called *Tyrinē* (Greek: Τυρινή, “cheese [week]”) because meat is forbidden, although dairy products are not. Lent begins on “Clean Monday”, the day after “Cheese Sunday”. Throughout the Carnival season, people disguise themselves as *maskarádes* (“masqueraders”) and engage in pranks and revelry.

Patras holds the largest annual Carnival in Greece; the famous Patras Carnival is a three-day spectacle replete with

concerts, *balles masqués*, parading troupes, a treasure hunt and many events for children. The grand parade of masked troupes and floats is held at noon on *Tyrine* Sunday, and culminates in the ceremonial burning of the effigy of King Carnival at the Patras harbour.

Other regions host festivities of smaller extent, focused on the reenactment of traditional carnevalic customs, such as Tyrnavos (Thessaly), Kozani (West Macedonia), Rethymno (Crete) and in Xanthi (East Macedonia and Thrace). Tyrnavos holds an annual Phallus festival, a traditional “phallkloric” event^[51] in which giant, gaudily painted effigies of phalluses made of papier maché are paraded, and which women are asked to touch or kiss. Their reward for so doing is a shot of the famous local *tsipouro* alcohol spirit. Every year, from 1 to 8 January, mostly in regions of Western Macedonia, Carnival fiestas and festivals erupt. The best known is the Kastorian Carnival or “Ragoutsaria” (Gr. “Ραγκουτσάρια”)^[52] [tags: Kastoria, Kastorian Carnival, Ragoutsaria, Ραγκουτσάρια, Καστοριά]. It takes place from 6 to 8 January with mass participation serenaded by brass bands, pipises, Macedonian and grand casa drums. It is an ancient celebration of nature’s rebirth (fiestas for Dionysus (Dionysia) and Kronos (Saturnalia)), which ends the third day in a dance in the medieval square Ntoltsso where the bands play at the same time.



This Venetian tradition is most famous for its distinctive masks



The Battle of the Oranges at carnival of Ivrea

4.3.11 Hungary



The Busójárás in Hungary

In Mohács, Hungary, the Busójárás is a celebration held at the end of the Carnival season. It involves locals dressing in woolly costumes, with scary masks and noise-makers. They perform a burial ritual to symbolise the end of winter and spike doughnuts on weapons to symbolise the defeat of Ottomans.

4.3.12 Italy

Main article: Carnival in Italy

The most famous Carnivals of Italy are held in Venice,

Viareggio and Ivrea.

The Carnival in Venice was first recorded in 1268. Its subversive nature is reflected in Italy’s many laws over the centuries attempting to restrict celebrations and the wearing of masks. Carnival celebrations in Venice were halted after the city fell under Austrian control in 1798, but were revived in the late 20th century.

The month-long Carnival of Viareggio is characterized mainly by its parade of floats and masks caricaturing popular figures. In 2001, the town built a new “Carnival citadel” dedicated to Carnival preparations and entertainment.

The Carnival of Ivrea is famous for its *Battle of the Oranges* fought with fruit between the people on foot and the troops of the tyrant on carts, to remember the wars of the Middle Ages.

In the most part of the Archdiocese of Milan, the Carnival lasts four more days, ending on the Saturday after Ash Wednesday, because of the Ambrosian rite.

4.3.13 Lithuania

Main article: Užgavėnės

Užgavėnės is a Lithuanian festival that takes place on Ash Wednesday. Its name in English means “the time before

Lent". The celebration corresponds to Carnival holiday traditions.

Użgavènès begins on the night before Ash Wednesday, when an effigy of winter (usually named Morè) is burnt. A major element symbolizes the defeat of winter in the Northern Hemisphere. It is a staged battle between Lašininis ("porky") personifying winter and Kanapinis ("hempen man") personifying spring. Devils, witches, goats, the grim reaper and other joyful and frightening characters appear in costumes during the celebrations.

Eating pancakes is an important part of the celebration.

4.3.14 Luxembourg

In Luxembourg, the pre-Lenten holiday season is known as *Fuesend*. Throughout the Grand-Duchy, parades and parties are held.

Pétange is the home of the Grand-Duchy's largest pre-Lenten Karneval celebration. Annually hosting a calvacade with roughly 1200 participants and thousand of celebrants, the official name is Karneval Gemeng Péteng or Kagepe (the initials in Luxembourgish are pronounced Ka, Ge and Pe).

The town of Remich holds a three-day-long celebration, notable for two special events in addition to its parades. The first is the Stréimännchen, which is the burning of a male effigy from the Remich Bridge that crosses the Moselle River separating the Grand Duchy from Germany. The Stréimännchen symbolizes the burning away of winter. The other special event at the Remich Fuesend celebrations is the Buergbrennen or bonfire that closes the celebration.

Like Remich, the town of Esch-sur-Alzette holds a three-day celebration. Other major Fuesend parades in Luxembourg are held in the towns of Diekirch and Differdange.

4.3.15 Malta



Carnival procession in Valletta on Malta

Main article: [Maltese Carnival](#)

Carnival in Malta (Maltese: *il-Karnival ta' Malta*) was introduced to the islands by Grand Master Piero de

Ponte in 1535. It is held during the week leading up to Ash Wednesday, and typically includes masked balls, fancy dress and grotesque mask competitions, lavish late-night parties, a colourful, ticker-tape parade of allegorical floats presided over by King Carnival (Maltese: *ir-Re tal-Karnival*), marching bands and costumed revellers.

The largest celebration takes place in and around the capital city of Valletta and Floriana; several more "spontaneous" Carnivals take place in more remote areas. The Nadur Carnival is notable for its darker themes. In 2005, the Nadur Carnival hosted the largest-ever gathering of international Carnival organizers for the FECC's global summit.

Traditional dances include the *parata*, a lighthearted re-enactment of the 1565 victory of the Knights over the Turks, and an 18th-century court dance known as *il-Maltija*. Carnival food includes *perlini* (multi-coloured, sugar-coated almonds) and the *prinjolata*, which is a towering assembly of sponge cake, biscuits, almonds and citrus fruits, topped with cream and pine nuts.

4.3.16 Netherlands

Main article: [Carnival in the Netherlands](#)

Carnival in the Netherlands is called *Carnaval*, *Vaste-*



The Fight Between Carnival and Lent, Pieter Bruegel 1559, Den Bosch

navond or *Vastelaovend(j)*, and is most celebrated in traditionally Catholic regions, mainly the southern provinces North Brabant and Limburg. Dutch Carnival is officially celebrated on the Sunday through Tuesday preceding Ash Wednesday. Although traditions vary from town to town, some common characteristics of Dutch Carnival include a parade, a "prince" plus cortège ("Jester/adjutant and Council of 11"), a Peasant Wedding (*boerenbruiloft*), and eating herring (*haring happen*) on Ash Wednesday.

Two main variants can be distinguished: the *Rhineland Carnaval* (locally: *Vastelaovend*) found in the province of Limburg, and the *Bourgondische Carnaval* (locally: *Karneval*) found mainly in North Brabant. Maastricht, Limburg's capital, holds a street Carnaval that features

elaborate costumes resembling Venetian influences.

The first known documentation dates from the late 8th century (*Indiculus superstitionum et paganiarum*), but Carnival was already mentioned during the First Council of Nicaea in 325 and by Caesarius of Arles (470-542) around 500 CE. In the Netherlands itself the first documentation is found in 1383 in Den Bosch, the oldest-known images of Dutch Carnival festivities date from 1485, also in 's-Hertogenbosch.

Normal daily life comes to a stop for about a week in the southern part of the Netherlands during the carnival, with roads temporary blocked and many local businesses closed for the week as a result of employees who are en mass taking the days off during and the day after the carnival.^{[53][54]}

4.3.17 Poland

The Polish Carnival Season includes Fat Thursday (Polish: *Thusty Czwartek*), when *paczki* (doughnuts) are eaten, and *Śledzik* (Shrove Tuesday) or Herring Day. The Tuesday before the start of Lent is also often called *Ostatki* (literally “leftovers”), meaning the last day to party before the Lenten season.

The traditional way to celebrate Carnival is the *kulig*, a horse-drawn sleigh ride through the snow-covered countryside. In modern times, Carnival is increasingly seen as an excuse for intensive partying and has become more commercialized with stores offering Carnival-season sales.

4.3.18 Portugal



Sesimbra Carnival, Portugal

Carnival in Portugal is celebrated throughout the country, most famously in Ovar, Sesimbra, Madeira, Loulé, Nazaré, and Torres Vedras. The Carnivals in Podence and Lazarim incorporate pagan traditions such as the *careto*, while the Torres Vedras celebration is probably the most typical.

Although Portugal introduced Christianity and the customs related to Catholic practice to Brazil, the country has begun to adopt some aspects of Brazilian-style Carnival celebrations, in particular those of Rio de Janeiro with sumptuous parades, samba and other musical elements.

Lazarim In Lazarim, a municipality of Lamego, celebrations follow the pagan tradition of Roman Saturnalia. It celebrates by burning colorful effigies and dressing in home-made costumes. Locally-made wooden masks are worn. The masks are effigies of men and women, but both roles are performed by men. They are distinguished by their clothes, which caricature attributes of both men and women.

The Lazarim Carnival cycle encompasses two periods, the first starting on the fifth Sunday before Fat Sunday. Masked figures and people wearing large sculpted heads walk through the town. The locals feast on meats, above all pork. The second cycle, held on Sundays preceding Ash Wednesday, incorporates the tradition of the *Compadres* and *Comadres*, with men and women displaying light-hearted authority over the other.

Over the five weeks, men prepare large masked heads and women raise funds to pay for two mannequins that will be sacrificed in a public bonfire. This is a key event and is unique to Portugal. During the bonfire, a girl reads the *Compadre's* will and a boy reads the *Comadre's* will. The executors of the will are named, a donkey is symbolically distributed to both female and male “heirs”, and then the final reckoning in which the *Entrudo*, or Carnival doll, is burned.

Other regions In Estarreja, in the Central region of Portugal, the town's first references to Carnival were in the 14th century, with “Flower Battles”, richly decorated floats that paraded through the streets. At the beginning of the twentieth century, these festivities ended with the deaths of its main promoters only to reappear again in the 1960s to become one of many important Carnival festivals in Portugal.

In the Northern region of Podence, children appear from Sunday to Tuesday with tin masks and colorful multilayered costumes made from red, green and yellow wool. In the Central Portugal towns of Nelas and Canas de Senhorim, Carnival is an important tourist event. Nelas and Canas de Senhorim host four festive parades that offer colorful and creative costumes: *Bairro da Igreja* and *Cimo do Povo* in Nelas and *do Paço* and *do Rossio* in Canas de Senhorim.

Carnival in the town Ovar near Porto began in 1952, it is the region's largest festivity. It is known for its creative designs, displayed in the Carnival Parade. Its Carnival parade features troupes with themed costumes and music, ranging from the traditional to pop culture.



Ovar Carnival, Portugal

In Lisbon, Carnival offers parades, dances and festivities featuring stars from Portugal and Brazil. The Loures Carnival celebrates the country's folk traditions, including the "enterro do bacalhau" or burial of the cod, which marks the end of Carnival and the festivities.

North of Lisbon is the famous Torres Vedras Carnival, described as the "most Portuguese in Portugal." The celebration highlight is a parade of creatively decorated streetcars that satirize society and politics.

Other Central Portugal towns, such as Fatima and Leiria, offer colorful, family-friendly celebrations. In these towns everyone dresses up as if it were Halloween. Children and adults wear masks.

In the Algarve region, several resort towns offer Carnival parades. Besides the themed floats and cars, the festivities include "samba" groups, bands, dances and music.

Azores On the islands of the Azores local clubs and Carnival groups create colorful and creative costumes that jab at politics or culture.

On São Miguel Island, Carnival features street vendors selling fried dough, called a *Malassada*. The festival on the biggest island starts off with a black tie grand ball, followed by Latin music at Coliseu Micaelense. A children's parade fills the streets of Ponta Delgada with children from each school district in costume. A massive parade continues past midnight, ending in fireworks.

The event includes theatre performances and dances. In the "Danças de Entrudo" hundreds of people follow the dancers around the island. Throughout the show the dancers, act out scenes from daily life. The "Dances de Carnival" are allegorical and comedic tales acted out in the streets. The largest is in "Angra do Heroísmo", with more than 30 groups performing. More Portuguese-language theatrical performances occur there than anywhere else.

Festivities end on Ash Wednesday, when locals sit down for the "Batatada" or potato feast, in which the main dish is salted cod with potatoes, eggs, mint, bread and wine. Residents then return to the streets for the burning of the

"Carnival clown", ending the season.



A dancer in the Carnival of Madeira, on the island's capital Funchal

Madeira Main article: Carnival of Madeira

On the Island of Madeira, Funchal, the island's capital, wakes up on the Friday before Ash Wednesday to the sound of brass bands and Carnival parades throughout downtown. Festivities continue with concerts and shows in the Praça do Município for five consecutive days. The main Carnival street parade takes place on Saturday evening with thousands of samba dancers filling the streets. The traditional street event takes place on Tuesday, featuring daring caricatures.

Arguably, Brazil's Carnival could be traced to the period of the Portuguese Age of Discoveries when their caravels passed regularly through Madeira, a territory that emphatically celebrated Carnival.^{[55][56]}

4.3.19 Republic of Macedonia

The most popular Carnivals are in Vevčani and Strumica.

The Vevčani Carnival (Macedonian: Вевчански Карневал, translated *Vevchanski Karneval*) has been held for over 1,400 years, and takes place on 13 and 14 January (New Year's Eve and New Year's Day by the old calendar). The village becomes a live theatre where costumed actors improvise on the streets in roles such as the traditional "August the Stupid."^[57]

The Strumica Carnival (Macedonian: Струмички Карневал, translated *Strumichki Karneval*) has been held since at least 1670, when the Turkish author Evlija Chelebija wrote while staying there, "I came into a town located in the foothills of a high hillock and what I saw that night was masked people running house-to-house, with laughter, scream and song." The Carnival took an organized form in 1991; in 1994, Strumica became a member of FECC and in 1998 hosted the XVIII International Congress of Carnival Cities. The Strumica Car-

nival opens on a Saturday night at a masked ball where the Prince and Princess are chosen; the main Carnival night is on Tuesday, when masked participants (including groups from abroad) compete in various subjects. As of 2000, the Festival of Caricatures and Aphorisms has been held as part of Strumica's Carnival celebrations.

4.3.20 Russia

Main article: *Maslenitsa*

Maslenitsa (*Масленица*, also called *Pancake Week* or



Boris Kustodiev's painting of Maslenitsa

“Cheese Week”) is a Russian folk holiday that incorporates some pagan traditions. It is celebrated during the last week before Lent. The essential element is *bliny*, Russian pancakes, popularly taken to symbolize the sun. Round and golden, they are made from the rich foods allowed that week by the Orthodox traditions: butter, eggs, and milk (in the tradition of Orthodox lent, the consumption of meat ceases one week before that of milk and eggs).

Maslenitsa also includes masquerades, snowball fights, sledding, swinging on swings and sleigh rides. The mascot is a brightly dressed straw effigy of *Lady Maslenitsa*, formerly known as *Kostroma*. The celebration culminates on Sunday evening, when *Lady Maslenitsa* is stripped of her finery and put to the flames of a bonfire.

4.3.21 Slovakia

In Slovakia, the *Fašiangy* (*fašiang*, *fašangy*) takes place from Three Kings Day (*Traja králi*) until the midnight before Ash Wednesday (*Škaredá streda* or *Popolcová streda*). At the midnight marking the end of *fašiangy*, a symbolic burial ceremony for the contrabass is performed, because music ceases for Lent.

4.3.22 Slovenia

The Slovenian countryside displays a variety of disguised groups and individual characters among which the most popular and characteristic is the *Kurent* (plural: *Kurenti*), a monstrous and demon-like, but fluffy figure. The most significant festival is held in Ptuj (see: *Kurentovanje*). Its special feature are the *Kurents* themselves, magical creatures from another world, who visit major events throughout the country, trying to banish the winter and announce spring's arrival, fertility, and new life with noise and dancing. The origin of the *Kurent* is a mystery, and not much is known of the times, beliefs, or purposes connected with its first appearance. The origin of the name itself is obscure.

The *Cerknica* Carnival is heralded by a figure called “*Poganjič*” carrying a whip. In the procession, organised by the “*Pust society*”, a monstrous witch named *Uršula* is driven from Mt. *Slivnica*, to be burned at the stake on Ash Wednesday. Unique to this region is a group of dormice, driven by the Devil and a huge fire-breathing dragon. *Cerkno* and its surrounding area are known for the *Laufarji*, Carnival figures with artistically carved wooden masks.

The *Maškare* from *Dobrepolje* used to represent a triple character: the beautiful, the ugly (among which the most important represented by an old man, an old woman, a hunchback, and a *Kurent*) and the noble (imitating the urban elite).

The major part of the population, especially the young and children, dress up in ordinary non-ethnic costumes, going to school, work and organized events, where prizes are given for the best and most original costumes. Costumed children sometimes go from house to house asking for treats.

4.3.23 Spain

Arguably the most famous Carnivals in Spain are *Santa Cruz*, *Las Palmas*, *Sitges*, *Vilanova i la Geltrú*, *Tarragona*, *Águilas*, *Solsona*, *Cádiz*, *Badajoz*, *Bielsa* (an ancestral Carnival celebration), *Plan*, *San Juan de Plan*, *Laza*, *Verín*, *Viana* and *Xinzo de Limia*.

Andalusia Main article: *Carnival of Cádiz*

In *Cádiz* the costumes worn are often related to recent news, such as the bird flu epidemic in 2006, during which many people were disguised as chickens. The feeling of this Carnival is the sharp criticism, the funny play on words and the imagination in the costumes, more than the glamorous dressings. It is traditional to paint the face with lipstick as a humble substitute of a mask.

The most famous groups are the *chirigotas*, choirs and *comparsas*. The *chirigotas* are well known witty, satiric popular groups who sing about politics, new times and



The Burial of the Sardine, *Francisco Goya, c. 1812*



A choir singing in the Carnival of Cádiz

household topics, wearing the same costume, which they prepare for the whole year. The Choirs (*coros*) are wider groups that go on open carts through the streets singing with an orchestra of guitars and lutes. Their signature piece is the “Carnival Tango”, alternating comical and serious repertory. The *comparsas* are the serious counterpart of the *chirigota* in Cádiz, and the poetic lyrics and the criticism are their main ingredients. They have a more elaborated polyphony that is easily recognizable by the typical countertenor voice.

Canary Islands See also: Carnival of Las Palmas and Carnival of Santa Cruz de Tenerife

The Santa Cruz Carnival is, with the Carnival of Cadiz, the most important festival for Spanish tourism and



Carnival Queen of Santa Cruz de Tenerife 2009

Spain’s largest Carnival.^{[58][59][60][61]} In 1980 it was declared a Festival Tourist International Interest. Every February, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, the capital of the largest of the Canary Islands, hosts the event, attracting around a million people.^[62]

In 1980 it was declared a Festival Tourist International Interest.^[62] In 1987 Cuban singer Celia Cruz with orchestra Billo’s Caracas Boys performed at the “Carnival Chicharrero”, attended by 250,000 people. This was registered in the Guinness Book of World Records as the largest gathering of people in an outdoor plaza to attend a concert, a record she holds today.

The Carnival of Las Palmas (Gran Canaria) has a Drag Queen’s gala where a jury chooses a winner.

Catalonia In Catalonia people dress in masks and costume (often in themed groups) and organize a week-long series of parties, pranks, outlandish activities such as bed races, street dramas satirizing public figures and raucous processions to welcome the arrival of Sa Majestat el Rei Carnestoltes (His Majesty King Carnival), known by various titles, including *el Rei dels poca-soltes* (King of the Crackpots), *Príncep etern de Cornudella* (Eternal Prince of Cuckoldry), *Duc de ximpls i corruptuts* (Duke of Fools and the Corrupt), *Marquès de la bona mamella* (Marquis of the lovely breast), *Comte de tots els barruts* (Count of the Insolent), *Baró de les Calaverades* (Baron of Nocturnal Debaucheries), and *Senyor de l’alt Plàtan florit, dels barraquers i gamberrades i artista d’honor dalt del llit* (Lord of the Tall Banana in Bloom, of the Voyeurs and Punks and the Artist of Honor upon the Bed).^[63]

The King presides over a period of misrule in which conventional social rules may be broken and reckless behavior is encouraged. Festivities are held in the open air, beginning with a *cercavila*, a ritual procession throughout the town to call everyone to attend. *Rues* of masked revelers dance alongside. On Thursday *Dijous Gras* (Fat Thursday) is celebrated, also called ‘omelette day’ (*el dia de la truita*), *coques* (*de llardons, butifarra d’ou, butifarra*) and omelettes are eaten. The festivities end on



Vidalot is the last night of revelry before Ash Wednesday in Vilanova. Water color painting by Brad Erickson.

Ash Wednesday with elaborate funeral rituals marking the death of King Carnival, who is typically burned on a pyre in what is called the burial of the sardine (*enterrament de la sardina*), or, in Vilanova, as *l'enterro*.^[64]

The Carnival of Vilanova i la Geltrú has documented history from 1790^[65] and is one of the richest in the variety of its acts and rituals. It adopts an ancient style in which satire, the grotesque body^[66] (particularly cross-dressing and displays of exaggerated bellies, noses and phalli) and above all, active participation are valued over glamorous, media-friendly spectacles that Vilanovins mock as "*thighs and feathers*".^[67] It is best known for *Les Comparses* (held on Sunday), a tumultuous dance in which 12,000 or more dancers organized into rival groups throw 75 tons of hard candies at one other. The women protect their faces with *Mantons de Manila* (Manila shawls) but eye-patches and slings for broken arms are common the following week. Vilanovins organize an elaborate ritual for the arrival of King Carnival called *l'Arrivo* that changes every year. It includes a raucous procession of floats and dancers lampooning current events or public figures and a biting satiric sermon (*el sermo*) delivered by the King himself. On *Dijous Gras*, Vilanovin children are excused from school to participate in the *Merengada*, a day-long scene of eating and fighting with sticky, sweet meringue.

Adults have a meringue battle at midnight at the historic



Children become covered in meringue during Dijous Gras.

Plaça de les Cols. In the mysterious *sortida del Moixo Foguer* (the outing of Little-Bird-Bonfire) accompanied by the *Xerraire* (jabberer) who insults the crowd.^[68] In the King's procession he and his concubines scandalize the town with their sexual behavior. A *correfoc* (fire run) or Devil's dance (*Ball de diables*, features dancing youth amid the sparks and explosions of the ritual crew of devils. Other items includes bed races in the streets, the debauched *Nit dels Mascarots*, Karaoke sausage roasts, *xatonades*, the children's party, *Vidalet*, the last night of revelry, *Vidalot*, the talking-dance of the Mismatched Couples (*Ball de Malcasats*) and the children's King *Caramel* whose massive belly, long nose and sausage-like hair hint at his insatiable appetites.



The *Ball de Malcasats* (Dance of the Mismatched Couples) is a satiric talking-dance traditional to Carnival in Vilanova.

For the King's funeral, people dress in elaborate mourning costume, many of them cross-dressing men who carry bouquets of phallically vegetables. In the funeral house, the body of the King is surrounded by an honor guard and weeping concubines, crying over the loss of sexual pleasure brought about by his death. The King's body is carried to the *Plaça de la Vila* where a satiric eulogy is delivered while the townspeople eat salty grilled sardines with bread and wine, suggesting the symbolic cannibalism of the communion ritual. Finally, amid rockets and explosions, the King's body is burned in a massive pyre.^{[64][65]}



“Ploranyeres” weep for the death of His Majesty and the loss of pleasure.



Donkeys of Solsona, hung in the tower bell.

Carnaval de Solsona takes place in Solsona, Lleida. It is one of the longest; free events in the streets, and nightly concerts run for more than a week. The Carnival is known for a legend that explains how a donkey was hung at the tower bell – because the animal wanted to eat grass that grew on the top of the tower. To celebrate this legend, locals hang a stuffed donkey at the tower that “pisses” above the excited crowd using a water pump. This event is the most important and takes place on Saturday night. For this reason, the inhabitants are called “matarrucs” (“donkey killers”).^[69]

Another characteristic of the Carnival is its giants. *Crazy Giants* pursue and try to hit revellers with articulated arms and legs.^[70]

“Comparses” groups organize free activities. These groups of friends create and personalize a uniformed suit to wear during the festivities

In Sitges special feasts include *xatonades* (*xató* is a traditional local salad of the Penedès coast) served with omelettes. Two important moments are the *Rua de la Disbauxa* (Debauchery Parade) on Sunday night and the *Rua de l'Extermini* (Extermination Parade) on Tuesday night. Around 40 floats draw more than 2,500 participants.

Tarragona has one of the region’s most complete ritual sequences. The events start with the building of a huge barrel and ends with its burning with the effigies of the King and Queen. On Saturday, the main parade takes place with masked groups, zoomorphic figures, music and percussion bands, and groups with fireworks (the devils, the dragon, the ox, the female dragon). Carnival groups stand out for their clothes full of elegance, showing brilliant examples of fabric crafts, at the Saturday and Sunday parades. About 5,000 people are members of the parade groups.

4.4 North America

4.4.1 Caribbean

Main article: [Caribbean Carnival](#)

Most Caribbean islands celebrate Carnival. The largest and most well-known is in Trinidad and Tobago. The Dominican Republic, Guyana, Antigua, Aruba, Bonaire, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Curaçao, Barbados, Dominica, Haiti, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Jamaica, Saba, Sint Eustatius (Statia), Sint Maarten, Saint Lucia, Saint Kitts, Saint Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines hold lengthy carnival seasons and large celebrations.

Carnival is an important cultural event in the Dutch Antilles. Festivities include “jump-up” parades with beautifully colored costumes, floats, and live bands as well as beauty contests and other competitions. Celebrations include a middle-of-the-night j’ouvert (juvé) parade that

ends at sunrise with the burning of a straw King Momo, cleansing sins and bad luck. On Statia he is called Prince Stupid.

Carnival has been celebrated in Cuba since the 18th century. Participants don costumes from the island's cultural and ethnic variety. After Fidel Castro's Communist Revolution, Carnival's religious overtones were suppressed. The events remained, albeit frowned upon by the state. Carnival celebrations have been in decline throughout Cuba since then.

Aruba Carnival means weeks of events that bring colourfully decorated floats, contagiously throbbing music, luxuriously costumed groups of celebrants of all ages, King and Queen elections, electrifying jump-ups and torchlight parades, the Jouvert morning: the Children's Parades and finally the Grand Parade. Aruba's biggest celebration is a month-long affair consisting of festive "jump-ups" (street parades), spectacular parades and creative contests. Music and flamboyant costumes play a central role, from the Queen elections to the Grand Parade. Street parades continue in various districts throughout the month, with brass band, steel drum and roadmarch tunes. On the evening before Lent, Carnival ends with the symbolic burning of King Momo.

Antigua Main article: Antigua Carnival

The Antiguan Carnival is held from the end of July to the first Tuesday in August. The most important day is that of the j'ouvert (or juvé), in which brass and steel drum bands perform. Barbuda's Carnival, held in June, is known as Caribana. The Antiguan and Barbudan Carnivals replaced the Old Time Christmas Festival in 1957, with hopes of inspiring tourism.

Barbados Main article: Crop over

Carnival is known as Crop Over and is Barbados's biggest festival. Its early beginnings were on the sugar cane plantations during the colonial period. Crop over began in 1688, and featured singing, dancing and accompaniment by shak-shak, banjo, triangle, fiddle, guitar, bottles filled with water and bones. Other traditions included climbing a greased pole, feasting and drinking competitions. Originally signaling the end of the yearly cane harvest, it evolved into a national festival. In the late 20th century, Crop Over began to closely mirror the Trinidad Carnival. Beginning in June, Crop Over runs until the first Monday in August when it culminates in the finale, The Grand Kadooment.

Carnival time for many islanders is one big party. Craft markets, food tents/stalls, street parties and cavalcades fill every week.

A major feature is the calypso competition. Calypso music, originating in Trinidad, uses syncopated rhythm and topical lyrics. It offers a medium in which to satirise local politics, amidst the general bacchanal. Calypso tents, also originating in Trinidad, feature cadres of musicians who perform biting social commentaries, political exposés or rousing exhortations to "wuk dah waistline" and "roll dat bumper". The groups compete for the Calypso Monarch Award, while the air is redolent with the smells of Bajan cooking during the Bridgetown Market Street Fair. The Cohoblot Festival blends dance, drama and music with the crowning of the King and Queen of costume bands. Every evening the "Pic-o-de-Crop" Show is performed after the King of Calypso is finally crowned. The climax of the festival is Kadooment Day celebrated with a national holiday when costume bands fill the streets with pulsating Barbadian rhythms and fireworks.

Belize San Pedro is one of Belize's few cities to observe Carnival before Lent. Elsewhere Carnival (sometimes referred to as Carnival) often occurs in September. The Fiesta de Carnaval is often the most popular celebration, usually held over three days prior to Ash Wednesday, but the festivities often extend to the full week.^[71] This festival "always includes music, dancing, costumes and parades".^[72]

Comparsas are held throughout the week, consisting of large groups "of dancers dancing and traveling on the streets, followed by a Carrosa (carriage) where the musicians play. The Comparsa is a development of African processions where groups of devotees follow a given saint or deity during a particular religious celebration".^[73] One of the most popular comparsas of Fiesta de Carnaval is the male group comparsa, usually composed of notable men from the community who dress up in outlandish costumes or cross-dress and dance to compete for money and prizes.^[74] Other popular activities include body painting and flour fighting.^{[75][76]} "On the last day of Carnival painters flood the street to paint each other. This simply means that a mixture of water paint and water or raw eggs is used to paint people on the streets, the goal being to paint as many people as you can".^[74]

Street fights often occur during the festivities - some locals treat this festival as an opportunity to exact revenge on their enemies. Vandalism is common and "businesses constantly have to prepare in covering or repainting their advertisements during Carnival season because of the mischief performed.^[77] The tradition continues despite critics who advocate the termination of these festivities.^[76]

Dominica Main article: Chanté mas

Carnival in Dominica is held in the capital City of Roseau, and takes elements of Carnival that can be seen in the neighbouring French islands of Martinique and



A Dominican Carnival costume band

Guadeloupe, as well as Trinidad. Notable events leading up to Carnival include the Opening of Carnival celebrations, the Calypso Monarch music competition, the Queen of Carnival Beauty Pageant and bouyon music bands. Celebrations last for the Monday and Tuesday before Ash Wednesday.

Dominican Republic Main article: Dominican Carnival

Dominican Carnival is celebrated in most cities and towns in the main streets during February. Among its main characteristics are its flashy costumes and loud music. The one held in *La Vega*, which is one of the biggest in the country, and the National parade in *Santo Domingo* was where the first Carnival of the Americas was held.

Carnival masks are elaborate and colorful. The costumes used on the parades are satires of the Devil and are called “Diablos Cojuelos”. They dance, and run to the rhythm of Merengue mixed with techno, hip-hop, and reggaeton. Additional allegorical characters represent Dominican traditions such as “Roba la Gallina”, and “Califé”.

One of the most international parades is in *San Pedro de Macorís*. It exhibits the “Guloyas” parade of costumed groups dancing in the streets. Revelers flee from the “Diablos Cojuelos” who try to hit them with “Vejigas”.

The timing of the festivals has grown apart from its original religious synchronization with the period of Lent. Due to National Independence Day on 27th of February and the birthday of its founding father on the 26th of January, the Carnival celebrations fill February regardless of the Lenten calendar.

Haiti Main article: Haitian Carnival

Carnival in Haiti started in 1804 in the capital Port-au-Prince after the declaration of independence. The Port-au-Prince Carnival is one of the largest in North America. It is known as Kanaval in the Creole language. It starts in

January, known as “Pre-Kanaval”, while the main carnival activities begin in February. In July 2012, Haiti had another carnival called Kanaval de Fleur. Beautiful costumes, floats, Rara parades,^[78] masks, foods, and popular rasin music (like Boukman Eksperyans, Foula Vodoule, Tokay, Boukan Ginen, Eritaj, etc.) and kompa bands (such as T-Vice, Djakout No. 1, Sweet Micky, Kreyol La, D.P. Express, Mizik Mizik, Ram, T-Micky, Carimi, Djakout Mizik, and Scorpio Fever) play for dancers in the streets of the Champ du Mars plaza (Chanmas). An annual song competition takes place.

Other places in Haiti that celebrate carnival, including Jacmel and Aux Cayes. In 2013, Kanaval was celebrated in Okap (Cape Haïtien).

Carnival finishes on Ash Wednesday, followed by rara, another parading musical tradition known mainly in Haiti and in the Dominican Republic. This festival emphasises religion. Songs are composed each year and bands play bamboo tubes (vaksin) and homemade horns (konèt). Rara is also performed in Prospect and Central Parks in summertime New York.^[79]

Jamaica Bacchanal, Jamaica’s carnival, is typically held around Easter. It is a cultural import from Trinidad & Tobago. The celebration starts with the opening of mas camp launch. Preliminaries are followed up with a Beach Jouvert, Bacchanal Jouvert and end with a Road March. The costumes worn by the bands are vibrant and colorful, decorated with jewels and feathers. Both the masqueraders and spectators enjoy dancing parade to soca, reggae and dancehall music.

Puerto Rico Main article: Carnaval de Ponce

Puerto Rico's most popular festivals are the Carnaval de Loiza and Carnaval de Ponce. The Carnaval de Ponce (officially “Carnaval Ponceño”) is celebrated annually celebration in Ponce. The celebration lasts one week and ends on the day before Ash Wednesday. It is one of the oldest carnivals of the Western Hemisphere, dating to 1858.^[80] Some authorities trace the Ponce Carnival to the eighteenth century.^{[81][82]}

Trinidad and Tobago Main article: Trinidad and Tobago Carnival

In Trinidad & Tobago, Carnival lasts months and culminates in large celebrations in Port of Spain on the three days before Ash Wednesday with Dimanche Gras, J’ouvert, and Mas (masquerade). Tobago’s celebration culminates on Monday and Tuesday on a much smaller scale in Scarborough. Carnival combines costumes, dance, music, competitions, rum and partying (fete-ing). Music styles include Soca, Calypso and Rapso and more recently Chutney-soca.



Masqueraders chipping on Carnival Tuesday in Port of Spain during Trinidad and Tobago Carnival



The Carnival King costume for a particular band

The annual Carnival steel pan competition known as the National Panorama competition holds the finals on the Saturday before the main event. Pan players compete in categories such as “Conventional Steel Band” or “Single Pan Band” by performing renditions of the year’s calypsos.

“Dimanche Gras” takes place on the Sunday night before Ash Wednesday. Here the Calypso Monarch is chosen (after competition) and prize money and a vehicle awarded. The King and Queen of the bands are crowned, where each band parades costumes for two days and submits a king and queen, from which an overall winner is chosen. These usually involve huge, complex, beautiful well-crafted costumes, that includes ‘wire-bending’.

J’ouvert, or “Dirty Mas”, takes place before dawn on the Monday (known as Carnival Monday) before Ash Wednesday. It means “opening of the day”. Revelers dress in costumes embodying puns on current affairs, especially political and social events. “Clean Mud” (clay mud), oil paint and body paint are familiar during J’ouvert. A common character is “Jab-jabs” (devils, blue, black or red) complete with pitchfork, pointed horns and tails. A King and Queen of J’ouvert are chosen, based on their witty political/social messages.

Carnival Monday involves the parade of the mas bands. Revelers wear only parts of their costumes, more for fun than display or competition. Monday Night Mas is popular in most towns and especially the capital, where smaller bands compete. There is also the “Bomb Competition” which is a smaller-scaled judging of steel bands.

Carnival Tuesday hosts the main events. Full costume is worn, complete with make-up and body paint/adornment. Usually “Mas Boots” that complement the costumes are worn. Each band has their costume presentation based on a particular theme, and contains various sections (some consisting of thousands of revelers) that reflect these themes. The street parade and band costume competition take place. The mas bands eventually converge on the Queen’s Park Savannah to pass on “The Stage” for

judging. The singer of the most played song is crowned Road March King or Queen earning prize money and usually a vehicle.

This parading and revelry goes on until Tuesday midnight. Ash Wednesday itself, while not an official holiday, sends flocks to local beaches. The most popular are Maracas Beach and Manzanilla Beach, where huge beach parties take place on Ash Wednesday.

4.4.2 Guatemala

The most famous Carnival celebration in Guatemala is in Mazatenango. During February, Mazatenango is famous for its eight-day Carnival Feast. Days of food, music, parades and games fill the streets of the department of Suchitepéquez. As one Guatemalan website states, “To mention the Carnival of Mazatenango is to bring to mind moments of a happy and cordial party. In the eight days of this celebration’s duration the local residents have kept alive the traditions of the Department.”

4.4.3 Honduras

In La Ceiba in Honduras, Carnival is held on the fourth Saturday of every May to commemorate San Isidro. It is the largest Carnival celebration in Central America.

4.4.4 Nicaragua

On the Caribbean coast of Bluefields, Nicaragua, Carnival is better known as Palo de Mayo (or Mayo Ya!) and is celebrated every day of May.

In Managua, it is celebrated for 2 days. There it is named “Alegria por la vida” translated to “Joy for Life” and features a different theme each year. Another festival in Managua is called “Santo Domingo de Guzman” and lasts ten days.

4.4.5 Mexico

Main article: [Carnival in Mexico](#)

In Mexico, Carnival is celebrated in about 225 cities and towns. The largest is in [Mazatlán](#) and the city of [Veracruz](#) with others in [Baja California](#) and [Yucatán](#). The larger city Carnivals employ costumes, elected queens and parades with floats, but Carnival celebrations in smaller and rural areas very widely depending on the level of European influence during Mexico's colonial period. The largest of these is in [Huejotzingo, Puebla](#) where most townspeople take part in mock combat with rifles shooting blanks, roughly based on the [Battle of Puebla](#). Other important states with local traditions include [Morelos](#), [Oaxaca](#), [Tlaxcala](#) and [Chiapas](#).

4.4.6 Panama

Traditionally beginning on Friday and ending on the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, “los Carnavales”, as Panamanians refer to the days of Carnival, are celebrated across the country. Carnival Week is especially popular because of the opulent [Las Tablas Carnival](#) as well as the Carnival celebrations in [Panama City](#) and almost all of the [Azüero Peninsula](#). The Panamanian Carnival is also popular because of the concerts in the most visited areas.

4.4.7 Bahamas

In an effort to capitalize on Carnival's popularity, the [Bahamas](#) announced the first [Bahamas Junkanoo Carnival](#) to commence in May 2015.^[83]

4.4.8 Canada

[Caribana](#), held in [Toronto](#) on the first weekend of August, has its origins in Caribbean Carnival traditions. Due to the more comfortable weather, [Caribana](#) is held in the summer.^[84] Attendance at the parade typically exceeds one million.

The [Quebec Winter Carnival](#) is the biggest winter-themed Carnival in the world. It depends on snowfall and very cold weather, to keep snowy ski trails in good condition and ice sculptures frozen. Again, weather pushes this to the last days of January and first days of February.

In the [Ottawa-Gatineau](#) region, [Winterlude](#) takes place during the first 4 weeks of February.

4.4.9 United States

Main articles: [Mardi Gras in the United States](#) and [Mardi Gras](#)

Carnival celebrations, usually referred to as [Mardi Gras](#)



“Wheel of Torture” float, satirizing TV show “Wheel of Fortune” and US government use of torture. *New Orleans Mardi Gras, 2007.*

(Fat Tuesday in French), were first celebrated in the [Gulf Coast](#) area, but now occur in many states. Customs originated in the onetime [French colonial](#) capitals of [Mobile](#) (now in [Alabama](#)), [New Orleans](#) ([Louisiana](#)) and [Biloxi](#) ([Mississippi](#)), all of which have celebrated for many years with street parades and masked balls. Other major U.S. cities with celebrations include [Mobile, Alabama](#); [St. Louis, Missouri](#); [San Francisco](#); [San Diego](#); [Galveston, Texas](#); and [Miami, Pensacola, Tampa, and Orlando](#) in [Florida](#).

Carnival is celebrated in [New York City](#) in [Brooklyn](#). As in the [UK](#), the timing of Carnival split from the [Christian](#) calendar and is celebrated on [Labor Day Monday](#), in [September](#). It is called the [Labor Day Carnival](#), [West Indian Day Parade](#) or [West Indian Day Carnival](#), and was founded by immigrants from [Trinidad](#). That country has one of the largest Caribbean Carnivals. In the mid twentieth century, [West Indians](#) moved the event from the beginning of [Lent](#) to the [Labor Day](#) weekend. Carnival is one of the largest parades and street festivals in [New York](#), with over one million attending. The parade, which consists of [steel bands](#), floats, elaborate Carnival costumes and sound trucks, proceeds along [Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway](#) in the [Crown Heights](#) neighborhood.

Starting in 2013, the [Slovenian-American](#) community located in the [St. Clair-Superior](#) neighborhood of [Cleveland, Ohio](#) began hosting a local version of [Kurentovanje](#), the Carnival event held in the city of [Ptuj, Slovenia](#).^[85] The event is conducted on the Saturday prior to [Ash Wednesday](#).

Louisiana Main article: [New Orleans Mardi Gras](#)

The most widely-known, most elaborate and most popular US events are in [New Orleans](#), while other [South Louisiana](#) cities such as [Lake Charles](#), [Lafayette](#), [Mamou](#), [Houma](#), and [Thibodaux](#), all of which were under [French](#) control at one time or another, also hold Carnival celebrations.



Revelers on Frenchmen Street, 2006

Mardi Gras celebrations are spreading to other regions, such as the Mississippi Valley region of St. Louis, Missouri; Orlando, Florida in Universal Studios and in the Gaslamp Quarter of San Diego.

4.5 South America

4.5.1 Argentina

In Argentina, the most representative Carnival performed is the so-called *Murga*, although other famous Carnivals, more like Brazil's, are held in Argentine Mesopotamia and the North-East. *Guaqueguaychú* in the east of *Entre Ríos* province is the most important Carnival city and has one of the largest parades. It adopts a musical background similar to Brazilian or Uruguayan Carnival. *Corrientes* is another city with a Carnival tradition. *Chamame* is a popular musical style. In all major cities and many towns throughout the country, Carnival is celebrated.

As Carnival coincides with summer in the Southern Hemisphere, in many parts of Argentina children play with water. The 19th century tradition of filling empty egg shells with water has evolved into water games that include the throwing of water balloons.

4.5.2 Bolivia

Main article: *Carnaval de Oruro*

La Diablada Carnival takes place in Oruro in central Bolivia. It is celebrated in honor of the miners' patron saint, *Virgen de Socavon* (the Virgin of the Tunnels). Over 50 parade groups dance, sing and play music over a five kilometre-long course. Participants dress up as demons, devils, angels, Incas and Spanish conquistadors. Dances include *caporales* and *tinkus*. The parade runs from morning until late at night, 18 hours a day, 3 days before Ash Wednesday. It was declared the 2001 "Masterpieces of Oral Heritage and Intangible Heritage of Humanity" for UNESCO.^[86] Throughout the country celebrations are held involving traditional rhythms and water



The *Diablada*, dance primeval, typical and main of Carnival of Oruro a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity since 2001 in Bolivia (Image: *Fraternidad Artística y Cultural "La Diablada"*)

parties. In Santa Cruz de la Sierra, on the east side of the country, tropical weather allows a Brazilian-type Carnival, with *Comparsas* dancing traditional songs in matching uniforms.

4.5.3 Brazil

Main article: *Brazilian Carnival*

The Carnival in Brazil is a major part of Brazilian Cul-



Carnival parade in São Paulo, *Gaviões da Fiel Torcida Samba School*.

ture. It is sometimes referred to by Brazilians as the "Greatest Show on Earth". The first true Carnival expression of this Brazilian festivity, officially recognized by Brazilian historians, took place in Rio de Janeiro, with the "préstitos", very similar to a musical processions, in 1641, when John IV of Portugal was crowned King and parties were celebrated in public streets.

Rio de Janeiro Main article: *Rio Carnival*

The street carnival of Rio de Janeiro is designated by



Carnival circuit of the city of Salvador.

Guinness World Records as the largest carnival in the world with approximately two million people each day.^[6]

Samba Schools are large, social entities with thousands of members and a theme for their song and parade each year. In Rio Carnival, samba schools parade in the Sambadrome (“sambódromo” in Portuguese). Some of the most famous include GRES Estação Primeira de Mangueira, GRES Portela, GRES Imperatriz Leopoldinense, GRES Beija-Flor de Nilópolis, GRES Mocidade Independente de Padre Miguel, and recently, Unidos da Tijuca and GRES União da Ilha do Governador. Local tourists pay \$500–950, depending on the costume, to buy a Samba costume and dance in the parade. *Blocos* are small informal groups with a definite theme in their samba, usually satirizing the political situation. About 30 schools in Rio gather hundreds of thousands of participants. More than 440 *blocos* operate in Rio. *Bandas* are samba musical bands, also called “street carnival bands”, usually formed within a single neighborhood or musical back-ground. The Carnival industry chain amassed in 2012 almost US\$1 billion in revenues.^[87]

Salvador, Bahia Main article: Bahian Carnival

Salvador has large Carnival celebrations, including the Axé, a typical Bahia music. A truck with giant speakers and a platform, where musicians play songs of local genres such as Axé music, Samba-reggae and Arrocha, drives through town with a crowd following while dancing and singing. It was originally staged by two Salvador musicians, Dodo & Osmar, in the 1950s. After the Salvador Carnival, Porto Seguro continues the celebration.

Three circuits make up the festival. Campo Grande is the longest and most traditional. Barra-Ondina is the most famous on the seaside of Barra Beach and Ondina Beach and Pelourinho.^[88]

International singers like David Guetta, Will.I.Am, Psy and Bob Sinclair performed in Salvador.^[89] Ivete Sangalo, Claudia Leitte, Daniela Mercury, Margareth

Menezes, Chiclete com Banana and Banda Eva are some traditional attractions. The party takes officially 6 days, but can continue for more than.^[90]

4.5.4 Colombia



Carnival float in the Blacks and Whites' Carnival in Pasto, Colombia

Main article: Carnival in Colombia

Carnival was introduced by the Spaniards and incorporated elements from European cultures. It has managed to reinterpret traditions that belonged to Colombia's African and Amerindian cultures. Documentary evidence shows that Carnival existed in Colombia in the 18th century and had already been a cause for concern for colonial authorities, who censored the celebrations, especially in the main political centres such as Cartagena, Bogotá and Popayán.

The Carnival continued its evolution in small/unimportant towns out of view of the rulers. The result was the uninterrupted celebration of Carnival festivals in Barranquilla (see Barranquilla's Carnival) now recognized as one of the Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The Barranquilla Carnival includes several parades on Friday and Saturday nights beginning on 11 January and ending with a six-day non-stop festival, beginning the Wednesday prior to Ash Wednesday and ending Tuesday midnight. Other celebrations occur in villages along the lower Magdalena River in northern Colombia, and in Pasto, Nariño (see Blacks and Whites' Carnival) in the south of the country. In the early 20th century, attempts to introduce Carnival in Bogotá were rejected by the government. The Bogotá Carnival was renewed in the 21st century.

4.5.5 Ecuador

In Ecuador, the celebrations began before the arrival of Catholicism. The Huarangas Indians (from the Chimbos nation) used to celebrate the second moon of the year with a festival at which they threw flour, flowers and

perfumed water. This pagan tradition merged with the Catholic celebration of Carnival.

A common feature of Ecuadorian Carnival is the *diablitos* (little devils) who play with water. As with snowball fights, the practice of throwing or dumping water on unsuspecting victims is revered by children and teenagers although feared by some adults. Throwing water balloons, sometimes even eggs and flour both to friends and strangers is fun, but can also upset the uninformed.

Although the government as well as school authorities forbid such games, they are widely practiced. Historians tell of a Bishop in 1867 who threatened **excommunication** for the sin of playing Carnival games.

Festivals differ across the country. Locals wear disguises with colorful masks and dance. Usually, the celebrations begin with the election of *Taita Carnival* (Father Carnival) who heads the festivities and leads the parades in each city.

The most famed Carnival festivities are in **Guaranda** (Bolívar province) and **Ambato** (Tungurahua province). In Ambato, the festivities are called *Fiesta de las Flores y las Frutas* (Festival of the Flowers and Fruits). Other cities have revived Carnival traditions with colorful parades, such as in **Azogues** (Cañar Province). In Azogues and the Southern **Andes** in general, *Taita Carnival* is always an indigenous **Cañari**. Recently a celebration has gained prominence in the northern part of the Sierra in the **Chota Valley** in **Imbabura** which is a zone of a strong afro-Ecuadorian population and so the Carnival is celebrated with *bomba del chota* music.

Latacunga celebrates Carnival of three manners:^[91] Carnival with water where people play with water, Religious Carnival where people make religious festivity and Carnival Parade in the city in which people march on the Latacunga streets wearing mask while they dance with music band.

4.5.6 French Guiana

The Carnival of **French Guiana** has roots in **Creole** culture. Everyone participates – mainland French, Brazilians (Guiana has a frontier with Brazil) and Chinese as well as Creoles.

Its duration is variable, determined by movable religious festivals: Carnival begins at **Epiphany** and ends on Ash Wednesday, and so typically lasts through most of January and February. During this period, from Friday evening until Monday morning the entire country throbs to the rhythm of masked balls and street parades.

Friday afternoons are for eating *galette des rois* (the cake of kings) and drinking champagne. The cake may be flavoured with *frangipani*, *guava*, or *coconut*.

On Sunday afternoons major parades fill the streets of **Cayenne**, **Kourou** and **Saint-Laurent du Maroni**. Com-

peting groups prepare for months. Dressed to follow the year's agreed theme, they march with Carnival floats, drums and brass bands.

Brazilian groups are appreciated for their elaborate feathered and sequined costumes. However, they are not eligible for competition since the costumes do not change over time.

Mythical characters appear regularly in the parades:

- *Karolin* – a small person dressed in a magpie tail and top hat, riding on a shrew.
- *Les Nèg'marrons* – groups of men dressed in red loincloths, bearing ripe tomatoes in their mouths while their bodies are smeared with grease or molasses. They deliberately try to come in contact with spectators, soiling their clothes.
- *Les makoumés* – Cross-dressing men (out of the Carnival context, *makoumé* is a pejorative term for a homosexual).
- *Soussouris* (the bat) – a character dressed in a winged **leotard** from head to foot, usually black in colour. Traditionally malevolent, this character is liable to chase spectators and “sting” them.



Four touloulous

A uniquely Creole tradition is the touloulous. These women wear decorative gowns, gloves, masks and head-dresses that cover them completely, making them unrecognisable, even to the colour of their skin. On Friday and Saturday nights of Carnival, touloulou balls are held in so-called *universities*; in reality, large dance halls that open only at Carnival time. Touloulous get in free, and are even given condoms in the interest of the sexual health of the community. Men attend the balls, but they pay admittance and are not disguised. The touloulous pick their dance partners, who may not refuse. The setup is designed to make it easy for a woman to create a temporary liaison with a man in total anonymity. Undisguised women are not welcomed. By tradition, if such a woman gets up to dance, the orchestra stops playing. Alcohol is served at bars – the disguised women whisper to the men “touloulou thirsty”, at which a round of

drinks is expected, to be drunk through a straw protect their anonymity.

In more modern times, Guyanais men have attempted to turn the tables by staging *soirées tololo*, in which it's the men who, in disguise, seek partners from undisguised women bystanders.

The final four days of Carnival follow a rigid schedule, and no work is done:

- Sunday – The Grand Parade, in which the groups compete.
- Monday – Marriage burlesque, with men dressed as brides and women as grooms.
- Tuesday – Red Devil Day in which everyone wears red or black.
- (Ash) Wednesday – Dress is black and white only, for the grand ceremony of burning the effigy of Vaval, King Carnival.

4.5.7 Peru



Morenada dance, in the Carnival of the Juliaca city – Perú.

Cajamarca The town of Cajamarca is considered the capital of Carnival in Peru. Local residents of all ages dance around the *unsha*, or *yunsa*, a tree adorned with ribbons, balloons, toys, fruits, bottles of liquor and other prizes.

At a certain point the *Mayordomo* (governor of the feast) walks into the circle. The governor chooses a partner to go to the *unsha*, which they attempt to cut down by striking it three times with a *machete*. The machete is passed from couple to couple as each strikes the tree three times. When the *unsha* finally falls, the crowd rushes to grab the prizes.

The person who successfully brings down the *unsha* becomes the following year's governor.

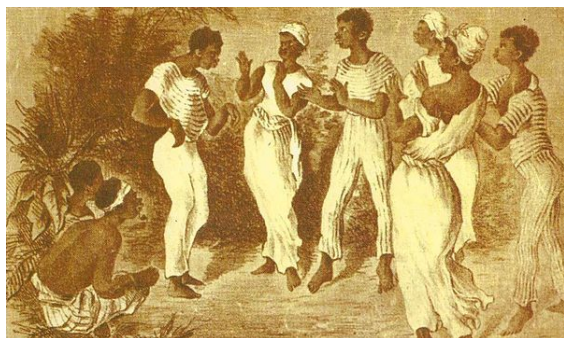
Violence The Peruvian Carnival consists mostly of violent games that last all February, extending to early March if Ash Wednesday falls in March, but rarely ending when it falls in February.^[92] Quoting the Lima police chief, “The Carnival is associated with criminal actions.”^[93] It has had major consequences.^[94]

Peruvian Carnival incorporates elements of violence and reflects the urban violence in Peruvian society following the *internal conflict in Peru*. Traditionally, Peruvian Andean festivities were held on this period every year because it is the rainy season. It was already violent during the 19th century,^[95] but the government limited the practice. During the early 20th century it consisted partying and parading, while in the second half of the 20th century it acquired violent characteristics that continued. It was banned, first from the streets in 1958 and altogether in 1959 by the Prado government.^[92] It consisted basically of water battles in a traditional way, while in later years it included playing with dirty water, mud, oil and colorants -and also including fighting and sometimes looting private property and *sexual assaults* on women. It has become an excuse for criminal gangs to rob people while pretending to celebrate. As of 2010, it had become so violent that the government imposed penalties of up to eight years in prison^[96] for violence during the games (the games themselves are not forbidden, but using violence during the games or coercing others to participate is).^{[97][98][99][100][101][102]}

At the end of the Carnival season, in the inner Peruvian towns (and lately in the major cities too), it is customary to cut a tree, called “*yunsa*” in the mountains and “*humisha*” in the jungle.

4.5.8 Uruguay

The Carnival in Uruguay covers more than 40 days, generally beginning towards the end of January and running through mid March. Celebrations in Montevideo are the largest. The festival is performed in the European parade style with elements from Bantu and Angolan Benguela cultures imported with slaves in colonial times. The main attractions of Uruguayan Carnival include two colorful parades called *Desfile de Carnaval* (Carnival Parade) and *Desfile de Llamadas* (Calls Parade, a *candombe*-summoning parade).^[103]



Afro-Uruguayans gathering for a Candombe celebration, ca. 1870

During the celebration, theaters called *tablados* are built in many places throughout the cities, especially in Montevideo. Traditionally formed by men and now starting to be open to women, the different Carnival groups (Murgas, Lubolos or Parodistas) perform a kind of popular opera at the *tablados*, singing and dancing songs that generally relate to the social and political situation. The 'Calls' groups, basically formed by drummers playing the tamboril, perform candombe rhythmic figures. Revelers wear their festival clothing. Each group has its own theme. Women wearing elegant, bright dresses are called *vedettes* and provide a sensual touch to parades.

European archetypes (Pierrot, Harlequin and Columбина) merge with African ancestral elements (the Old Mother or *Mama Vieja*, the Medicine Man or *Gramillero* and the Magician or *Escobero*) in the festival.

4.5.9 Venezuela

Carnival in Venezuela covers 2 days, 40 days before Easter. It is a time when youth in many rural towns have water fights (including the use of water balloons and water guns). Any pedestrian risks a soaking. Coastal towns and provinces celebrate Carnival more fervently than elsewhere in the country. Venezuelans regard Carnival about the same way they regard Christmas and Semana Santa (Holy Week; the week before Easter Sunday) when they take the opportunity to visit their families.^[104]

5 See also

- Culture of Popular Laughter
- Basler Fasnacht
- Carny
- Cologne Carnival
- Careto
- Fair

- Federation of European Carnival Cities
- Mardi Gras
- Mardi Gras in Mobile
- Sitalsasthi Carnival
- Feast of Fools
- Adloyada

6 Notes

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