



MFL Sunderland Primary French Podcasts

intercultural
understanding

Chandeleur,
Carnaval and
Mardi Gras

Welcome to the MFL Sunderland Primary French podcast. Intercultural Understanding – Chandeleur, Carnaval and Mardi Gras

In this podcast you'll find out how Chandeleur, Carnaval and Mardi Gras are celebrated in France.

Chandeleur

Chandeleur is celebrated 40 days after Christmas, on 2nd February. Its name comes from "la Fête des Chandelles", or "Festival of Candles". In Roman times it was a pagan celebration in honour of Pan, but it was Christianised in 472 AD to become the celebration of the presentation of Jesus at the temple. Each participant in the festival used to go to the church to collect a lit candle and take it home, all the time keeping it lit. It was said to be good luck for the forthcoming year if you could arrive home with the candle still lit. The main tradition of Chandeleur is the making of crêpes, or pancakes. It is said to have come from an old myth which said that if you didn't make crêpes on Chandeleur then that year's harvest would be ruined. The round, golden crêpes are said to look like the sun, and remind us of the return of Spring after the Winter.

Carnaval

Carnaval begins on the day of Epiphany and lasts until Mardi Gras, or Shrove Tuesday, though most of the events occur in the two weeks leading up to Mardi Gras.

One of the most famous Carnivals is the Carnaval de Nice, which started in 1830. It attracts more than 1 million visitors each year. In the "Corso Carnavalesque", floats carry huge, brightly coloured papier maché figures, which are usually animated by a system of ropes and pulleys which are attached to the floats' wheels. The Carnaval de Nice is especially well-known for its "Bataille de Fleurs" or Battle of the Flowers, which was started in 1876. The flowered floats are decorated by hand with thousands of locally grown flowers the night and morning before each Battle. People on the floats throw flowers to the crowds. The Bataille de Fleurs celebrates the work of local flower growers. There is also a giant model of the Roi du Carnaval, or the Carnival King, which stays on the Place Masséna in the city throughout the festivities. On the last day it is burned and there are fireworks over the Baie des Anges.

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is the French for the day that we call Shrove Tuesday. It's the day that precedes Lent, which is traditionally a period of fasting. The tradition is to eat all the fatty food in the house before Lent begins. Traditional foods for Mardi Gras are crêpes, beignets (like doughnuts) and bugnes (doughnut-like pastries sprinkled with icing sugar that date back to the Middle Ages). Another tradition is for children to dress up and go to ask their neighbours for eggs, sugar and flour to make crêpes or cakes.

Here is some of the vocabulary that you can use to talk about this time of year in French:

Mardi Gras	<i>Shrove Tuesday</i>
le Carême	<i>Lent</i>
Pâques	<i>Easter</i>
des beignets de Carnaval	<i>doughnuts</i>
se déguiser	<i>to dress up</i>
des crêpes	<i>pancakes</i>
des gateaux	<i>cakes</i>
le Carnaval de Nice	<i>Nice Carnival</i>
février	<i>February</i>
la fête	<i>celebration</i>
le printemps	<i>Spring</i>
la nouvelle année	<i>New Year</i>
le Corso Carnavalesque	<i>float</i>
la Bataille de Fleurs	<i>Battle of the Flowers</i>
le Roi du Carnaval	<i>Carnival King</i>
la place Masséna	<i>Masséna Square</i>
la Baie des Anges	<i>the Bay of Angels</i>

That's the end of this podcast. If you think you need a bit more practice, go back to the beginning and listen again.

Au revoir !