

Carnival around the world

New Orleans

One of the **most famous** carnivals in the world is in New Orleans, USA. It is called **Mardi Gras**, which is French for 'Fat Tuesday', the day when people would traditionally eat up all the fat before starting the Lent fast. The celebration in New Orleans lasts around two weeks, with a parade every day. Groups of people, called 'krewes', dress up in special costumes and ride on decorated floats. They throw small gifts to the people watching, especially strings of beads. Mardi Gras is very popular with tourists, and it is estimated that well over a million people visit every year to join the celebrations.

Rio de Janeiro

The carnival in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is considered **the biggest** in the world, with around two million people celebrating on the streets each day. Rio Carnival is famous for its samba music and for its amazing costumes and floats. In 1984, the government decided to give the carnival a special stadium, called **the Sambadrome**, where people could buy tickets to go and see the parades. However, there are still plenty of street parties and parades happening all over the city. The parades are a kind of competition and the samba 'schools', or groups, are judged on their costumes, dancing, floats and music. Some samba schools spend millions of dollars on their preparations, but it is estimated that carnival makes over \$40 million from ticket sales and advertising.

Venice

Carnival in Venice is a **much quieter** celebration, but it is still very famous, mainly for the beautiful masks that people wear. Traditionally, the masks are made and decorated by hand, with gold, jewels and feathers. There is a competition for **the most beautiful** mask, and there are many masked balls and other celebrations. Watching all the people dressed in masks and costumes wandering through the city makes you feel as if you have stepped back in time to the 18th century.

Binche

The carnival in Binche, Belgium, is not as famous as some of the others, but it may have **the longest** history. It dates back to the 14th century. Up to 1,000 men and boys, called 'Gilles', dress up in masks, costumes and wooden shoes. They also wear very tall feather hats, up to 90cm tall. The Gilles dance through the streets and throw oranges at the crowd. This can sometimes cause accidents and break windows, but it is supposed to be good luck if you are hit by an orange.



Activity 1

Choose the correct place where these images take place.



Activity 2 Decide if these sentences are true or false.

- 1-Around two million tourists visit New Orleans for carnival each year.
- 2-All the parades in Rio de Janeiro take place in the Sambadrome.
- 3-It is difficult to have big parades on the streets of Venice.
- 4-People are often happy if they get hit by an orange during carnival in Binche.

Activity 3 Choose the best option to answer these questions.

- 1-Which carnival brings in around \$40 million?
- 2-Which carnival has people wearing very expensive masks?
- 3-Which carnival has a special name?
- 4-Which carnival has the largest crowds?
- 5-Which carnival is the oldest?

