

Mardi Gras and Graduation

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Hi everyone! Welcome back to another English Extravaganza! For the third year students, this will be your last English Extravaganza before you graduate so I want to take a moment to congratulate you on your graduation. It is sad to end this chapter of your life but you are starting a new chapter, full of new things, adventure, and excitement. All of you have worked very hard as Nishiko students and I know you have the ability to overcome any challenges you face. Congratulations, graduates of 2017!



Today, I also want to tell you about Mardi Gras, a holiday that will be celebrated on next Tuesday. Mardi Gras is actually French. “Mardi” means “Tuesday” and “Gras” means “fat,” so Mardi Gras means “Fat Tuesday”. The day after Fat Tuesday is Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent. Lent is the 40 days of fasting(断食) prior to(~に先立って) Easter Sunday. These are all Christian holidays. Many people throw a big party since Lent is a long time of religious obligations(義務).



The largest Mardi Gras celebration is probably in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. In Brazil, Mardi Gras is called Carnival and it is without a doubt the biggest celebration in Brazil, bigger than Christmas or New Years. Offices, schools and shops close for up to(~まで) ten days. There is a massive parade with amazing floats(山車) and many, many dancers and performers. Loud music, dazzling costumes, dancing and marching bands form the heart of Carnival.

Mardi Gras is also celebrated in the United States, especially in New Orleans, Louisiana. In New Orleans, spectacular(壮観な) parades are held with marching bands, dancers, and floats. The riders on the floats throw coins and necklaces to the onlookers(見物人). Everyone dresses in Mardi Gras colors, which are purple, green, and yellow. Some people wear masquerade masks, as well. Overall, it's a very festive day. So, do you want to go to New Orleans for Mardi Gras? That's all for this week. See you next time! And again, congratulations, graduates!

