1 cup milk

1/4 cup butter

2 (.25 ounce) packages active dry yeast

2/3 cup warm water (110 degrees F/45 degrees C)

1/2 cup white sugar

2 eggs

1 1/2 teaspoons salt

1/2 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

FILLING:

1 cup packed brown sugar

1 tablespoon ground cinnamon

2/3 cup chopped pecans

1/2 cup all-purpose flour

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup melted butter

FROSTING:

1 cup confectioners' sugar

1 tablespoon water

In the southern United States, the tradition was brought to the area by colonists from France and Spain and is associated with Carnival (also known as Mardi Gras). Celebrated across the Gulf Coast region from the Florida Panhandle to East Texas, it originated in French Louisiana and King cake parties in New Orleans are documented back to the eighteenth century.

The king cake of the Louisiana tradition comes in a number of styles. The most simple, said to be the most traditional, is a ring of twisted cinnamon roll-style bread topped with icing or sugar, usually colored purple, green, and gold (the traditional Mardi Gras colors) with food coloring. In 1972, a small bakery in Picayune, Mississippi, Paul's Pastry, started adding fillings to king cakes - the most common being cream cheese, praline, cinnamon, or strawberry. A so-called "Zulu King Cake" has chocolate icing with a coconut filling, because the Krewe of Zulu parade's most celebrated throw is a coconut. Also, some bakers have now taken the liberty to offer king cakes for other holidays that immediately surround Mardi Gras season, such as green and red-icing king cakes for Christmas, red and pink-icing cakes for Valentine's Day, and green and white-icing cakes for St. Patrick's Day. Others have gone a step further and produce specialty king cakes from the beginning of football season for Louisiana State University and New Orleans Saints tailgate parties, then for Halloween, then Thanksgiving - and do not cease until after Mardi Gras season with an Easter holiday king cake. It has become customary in the Southern culture that whoever finds the trinket must provide the next king cake or host the next Mardi Gras party.

CALORIES 418 Kcal 21%

Cholestrol 51mg 17%

Fiber 2.3g 9%

Sodium 300mg 12%

Carbohydrates 68.7g 22%

Fat 13.4 21%

Protein 7.2g 14%