

DEUTSCHE SAGEN UND LEGENDEN

Frau Perchta



Related beings

Grimm thinks Holda is her equivalent while the Weisse frauen may derive directly from Berchta in her white form.

The word *Perchten* is plural for **Perchta**, and this has become the name of her entourage, as well as the name of animal masks worn in parades and festivals in the mountainous regions of Austria. In the 16th century, the Perchten took two forms: Some are beautiful and bright, known as the *Schönperchten* ("beautiful Perchten"). These come during the Twelve Nights and festivals to "bring luck and wealth to the people." The other form is the *Schiachperchten* ("ugly Perchten") who have fangs, tusks and horse tails which are used to drive out demons and ghosts. Men dressed as the ugly Perchten during the 16th century and went from house to house driving out bad spirits.^{[10][11]}

Sometimes, *der Teufel* is viewed as the most *schlach* ("ugly") *Percht* and *Frau Perchta* as the most *schön* ("beautiful") *Percht*.

Today in Austria, particularly Salzburg, the Perchten are still a traditional part of holidays and festivals (such as the Carnival Fastnacht). The wooden animal masks made for the festivals are today called *Perchten*.^[11]



A Perchten mask