

Fasching und Karneval: Grüße und Narrenrufe (greetings and fool shouts)

der Brauch, die Bräuche: custom
 das Gruß, die Grüße: greeting
 der Ausdruck, die Ausdrücke: expression, saying
 der Narrenruf, die Narrenrufe: shouts, screams, calls from a fool

“Kölle Alaaf!”

(typical call or shout by the people of Cologne during the Carnival season, which means
 “Here’s to Cologne!”, a declaration of love for the city)



Kölle Alaaf! is the typical Cologne Carnival greeting, which can be translated as “Cologne above all!” This cry can be heard throughout the week-long street festival, which begins in earnest on Thursday and ends on Ash Wednesday. Some one million visitors flock to the city on the Rhine to join the celebrations, which tend to take place all day and night - turning the city into a party zone.

Alaaf! – A Karneval greeting in the Cologne dialect. Like all Karneval greetings, it originates from trying to say something else while inhibited with drink. In this case, it is an alcoholic derivative of “alles ab” or “everything gone,” but can be used to mean “Cologne above all else” in *Kölle alaaf!* Context provides meaning.

Alaaf! – Carnival greeting in the Köln dialect.

The Cologne cheer is “*Kölle Alaaf!*”, which dates back to “*All av!*” (Bottoms up!), a traditional toast from the Middle Ages that was used not only at Carnival but throughout the whole year. In its present usage, it means “Cologne alone” or “Cologne’s the greatest”—possibly the shortest declaration of love for the cathedral city.