

Fassenacht in Mainz

Fastnacht first timer: Behind the scenes of Mainz famous carnival
Lyka Sethi, an American writer in Mainz, gives her first surprising impressions of Mainz' carnival, one of the oldest (and rowdiest) in Germany.



Untraditional cyclists in Mainz' Rosenmontag parade.

On the third evening of Fastnacht in Mainz, I mustered up the energy to leave my apartment and head into town. I had spent most of the day recovering from a brutal hangover after a night of debauchery.

Just two nights of celebration in, my voice was already hoarse and I wasn't sure I could croak out the jovial greeting *Helau!* ever again.

Still, I dragged myself (and my husband) out in the name of cultural exploration. Passing Schillerplatz, home of the famous Carnival Fountain and the epicenter of the week's festivities, we saw groups of rowdy young revellers dressed in animal jumpsuits.

The festival's ubiquitous party culture was frankly getting a little overwhelming, but recalling the centuries of history behind Fastnacht and its label as the region's "fifth season", I was determined to experience some real tradition.