

## Fassenacht in Mainz

### Fastnacht first timer: Behind the scenes of Mainz famous carnival

#### Fastnacht first-timer

I'll be honest – as an American expat and Fastnacht first timer, I went into the holiday rather unprepared. I had heard and read about Fastnacht clubs and exclusive parties, televised events, an influx of visitors from out of town, political satire-infused parades and an enigmatic obsession with the number 11.

But the week before, I realized I hadn't made plans or settled on a costume idea. (Luckily, budget costume retailers abound this time of year).

Until our chance encounter with the Ranzengarde, Fastnacht had seemed like an excuse for young people to party in uninspired costumes (see: animal onesies) and for older locals to indulge in a haze of colourful nostalgia. There were festive elements I appreciated, though.

The first day was the women's carnival, and groups of girlfriends wearing matching witch costumes danced to live Schlager music alongside men with chopped neckties. I chuckled noticing the central statue of Johannes Gutenberg adorned with a fool's hat; the attention to detail was fittingly on-the-nose.



*A marching band playing in the streets of Mainz on Monday.*