

Fastnachtzeit oder Fastenzeit: Carnival Season

Fasching oder Karneval?

Why the different names for it? Carnival is a regional festival and is celebrated in different ways according to different local traditions. It's known as:

Karneval in the "Rheinland" (Rhineland) area;

Fastnacht around the city of Mainz ('fasting night', or eve of Lent, the period of fasting);

Fasnet in Swabia (south-west region of Germany) and in the southwest of the state of Bavaria;

Fosnat in the Franken region (northern Bavaria), and as

Fasching around the city of "München" (Munich) and in Austria.

Karneval - The Crazy Time

Carnival season in Germany starts on the eleventh day of the eleventh month at eleven minutes past eleven - "am 11. 11. 11 Uhr 11." It climaxes in the crazy days just before Ash Wednesday in February or early March.

Fasching, Fastnacht, Fasnet, Karneval - the names differ in the various regions of Germany but they all mean the same thing: The foolish late-winter days dedicated to merry-making and fun.

Names

In parts of East and South Germany, as well as in Austria, the carnival is called *Fasching*. In Franconia and the southwest-parts as well as some other parts of Germany, the carnival is called *Fastnacht* or *Fasnet*; in Switzerland, *Fasnacht*.

While Germany's carnival traditions are mostly celebrated in the predominantly Roman Catholic southern and western parts of the country, the Protestant North traditionally knows a festival under the Low Saxon names *Fastelavend* ['fastl̩. v:vm̩t], *Fastelabend* ['fastl̩. v:b̩m̩t] and *Fastlaam* (also spelled *Fastlom*) ['fastl̩p:m]. This name has been imported to Denmark as *Fastelavn* and is related to *Vastelaovend* in the Low-Saxon-speaking parts of the Netherlands. It is traditionally connected with farm servants or generally young men going from house to house in the villages and collecting sausages, eggs and bacon, which was consumed in a festivity on the same evening. While going from house to house they wore masks and made noise. The old tradition vanished in many places, in other places under influence of German carnival traditions it came to resemble carnival with its parades.