

“Bei uns ist immer was los!” Feste in Rheinland

„FASCHING IN MÜNCHEN“ / „CARNIVAL SEASON IN MUNICH“

Ursprung und Geschichte (origin and history)

1. **The first official recognition of Fasching came from city council in 1537, but the celebration goes back at least two centuries. It was first mentioned in German writings in 1359.**
2. **Early festivals featured sleigh rides, tournaments (Iublgestach) in which knights jousted wearing small wooden barrels on their heads instead of helmets and first “Fast Night” dances were held in a special hall built by the council.**
3. **Masquerade balls began to appear at the beginning of the 19th century. A bulletin from St. Peters Church mentions a ball in 1828, which attracted 5,000 costumed Bavarians (including King Ludwig I).**
4. **Fasching activities which have become traditions continued to be added:**
 - **Well-organized balls began to be held in 1894.**
 - **The first “Fasching Prince” was chosen and crowned.**
 - **The first big Fasching parade was started, with its floats wandering through the decorated streets of the city.**
 - **In 1908 the first Munich “Fasching Society” (Narrhalla) was founded, with the purpose in maintaining the artistic standards of the event.**

On the following day Fasching begins, the famous and muchpraised Munich Fasching. It is actually not known just how long the custom has been in existence. In the 16th. century the magistrate was accustomed to arranging on the Sunday after Twelfth Night a great sleigh ride, which ended with dancing and a supper of wild game. It is certain that the court as well took pleasure in Fasching. In the 17th. und 18th. centuries it was common to imitate life as it was lived in the country and to perform peasant-style “weddings”. The electoral couple masqueraded as innkeepers, the nobility as guests and servants. From the time of King Ludwig I the artists' balls with their definite subjects were the highlights of Fasching, half a century later those of the “Allotria”.

Although the exact historical origins of Fasching are unclear, the observance of its rites is mentioned in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival* (early 13th century). It was a festival that originated in the cities—most notably Mainz and Speyer—and was already established in Cologne by 1234. Traditionally, it was not only a ~~fest~~ before Lent but also a time during which the rules and order of daily life were subverted. This gave rise to such customs as handing over the keys of the city to a council of fools or ceremoniously letting women rule. It also inspired noisy costumed parades and masked balls; satirical and often impertinent plays, speeches, and newspaper columns; and generally excessive behaviour—all of which are still common elements of contemporary Fasching celebrations. After the Reformation, Protestant areas of Europe took exception to such Roman Catholic excesses, and carnival practices began to die out in them.

