

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

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

Wann feiert man Fasching? (When is Fasching celebrated?)

Fasching

From January 7 till Shrove Tuesday, four to six weeks later, Munich's famous carneval season. Costume balls during the whole Fasching time. High points on Fasching Sunday and Shrove Tuesday with great carneval doings outside at the Viktualienmarkt and on the Pedestrian Mall.

All these traditions and all this history come together each November at 11 minutes after 11 p.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month. They go into high gear in January and reach a climax the day before Lent.

Every year, at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month, the "Season" is declared officially open with a certain amount of pomp. Nothing very exciting seems to happen for some weeks after this proclamation, as November in Germany is the traditional period of mourning for the dead. However, people are quietly "beavering away," writing witty song lyrics, working on floats for their particular neighborhoods or clubs, or devising and making fanciful costumes for the numerous parties in January and February.

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In southern Germany, the tradition of elaborate pre-Lenten parties called *Fasching* began in the 16th century. It is a time of merrymaking with fancy-dress balls and people wearing masks. The celebrations start officially in early January and last until the beginning of Lent.
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Fasching officially begins at 11 minutes after 11 pm on the 11th day of the 11th month, and swings into high gear from January to Ash Wednesday with each city selecting a prince and princess to reign over the revelry. The last weeks before Ash Wednesday, Fasching is at its gayest with parades and masquerade balls sponsored by a wide variety of groups from sausage stuffers to Schwabing artists.

The Carnival season in Germany is referred to as 'the fifth season', except for Munich, where this term is coined by the Oktoberfest. Here you could talk about 'the sixth season'. The Fasnacht officially starts with the coronation of the Fasching Prince and Princess at 11:11am on the 11th day of the 11th month, with the royal couple assisting the 'Council of Eleven' in preparing the coming year's festivities. While this is a popular street event with the coronation taking place in the Viktualienmarkt for all of Munich to see, the revelry of the Fasching season does not take off until Spring of the next year, with the season ending on Ash Wednesday.

At 11.11. am on the 11th day of the 11th month the Fasching Prince and Princess are crowned, in preparation for their reign over the "crazy season", which begins on the 7th January and continues **through Shrove Tuesday or "Faschingsdienstag"**. During this "crazy season" every society, corporation or guild throws its own Fasching ball.

During the last three crazy days (on Fasching Sunday, on Rose Monday and on Shrove Tuesday pedestrian area in the city center around Marienplatz is turned into a gigantic open air party zone with live music, fancy dresses and dancing. Climax is "München Narrisch" on March 2.

The season here is made up mostly of fancy Fasching balls, and it is not until the final weekend, from the Sunday before Lent to Shrove Tuesday, that things really heat up.

On these days, Neuhauserstrasse and Kaufingerstrasse — Munich's main pedestrian area — and the Viktualienmarkt are one big party zone.

Bands play on makeshift stages, everything from oom-pah-pah to rock 'n' roll. Stands sell drinks and food to masked denizens dancing in the streets. The fare ranges from the traditional Munich Weisswurst (white sausage) to gourmet salmon. And while this is Bavaria, beer is not the only thing flowing. Sparkling wine is very popular, and so are rum-spiked Caipirinhas,