

GRÜNDONNERSTAG / GREEN THURSDAY

What does Gründonnerstag mean in Austria?

Contrary to popular belief it is not another word for April's Fools Day in Austria, but the German term for Maundy Thursday.

Maundy Thursday is a religious day which commemorates Jesus Christ's last supper with his disciples.

It is celebrated on the Thursday before Good Friday each year – meaning that this year's date of April 1st is purely a coincidence.

While in many cultures it is little known, in Austria the day retains a special significance.

It is traditional to eat spinach and other green foods such as kale, herbs or salads on this day, hence the name.



Eating green things on Maundy Thursday

Although this custom has died out in recent decades, tradition dictates that on *Gründonnerstag* (Maundy Thursday) Germans should eat green food, be it vegetables, herbs or Frankfurt 'Green Sauce' (pictured above).

The '*Grün*' in Gründonnerstag doesn't actually refer to the colour green, as the word comes from the verb '*greinen*' which means to cry. Understandably, however, the Germans opted for a slightly more lighthearted custom than systematic crying on the day of Jesus' last supper.