

## WALPURGISNACHT / WITCHES' NIGHT

im Harz Gebirge auf dem Gipfel des Brockens



Witches have supposedly been gathering in Germany's Harz since the mid-17th century to light fires and "hold revels with the devil." The event on April 30 still attracts thousands of visitors, and is spread across 20 locations around the Brocken Mountain. The focal point is Hexentanzplatz (Witches' Dance-floor) in the Harz Mountains.

## Walpurgis Night

The silhouette of a witch  
is seen before a traditional  
Walpurgis Night fire.



It all begins in the night from April 30 to May 1, also known as Walpurgis Night. People believed that witches met and held an enormous celebration on Mt. Brocken, the highest summit of the Harz Mountain Range. To protect house and home against witches and evil spirits, people would build what was called a witches' or May bonfire and dance around it.

Other means of protecting against witches' pranks included hiding brooms, cracking whips and banging on drums, setting out May bushes, and drawing white crucifixes on doorways. Although belief in witches and evil spirits has faded, the tradition of the witching hour persists in folklore and folk festivals. These celebrations on the Brocken, which is located in eastern Germany, have become a major tourist attraction since reunification.