

# Carnival in Germany

## What Is Carnival?

Carnival is one of the most popular celebrations in Germany. Depending on where you live, there are different words for Carnival. People in the south of Germany, Austria and Switzerland usually call the festival 'Fasching' or 'Fastnacht'. In the north of Germany, the word 'Karneval' is used.



Carnival officially starts on 11th November at 11:11 a.m. However, the main festivities take place in February in the week before Lent.

## How Is Carnival Celebrated in Germany?

There are many customs that happen during the Carnival season. Children and adults dress up in colourful costumes and attend Carnival parties or parades.

Traditional majorette dancers usually perform as part of the parades. These dancers are called *Garde* (guard), '*Tanzmariechen*' (Dancing Marys) or '*Funkenmariechen*' ('Glistening Marys'). Their costumes are inspired by old-fashioned uniforms and consist of a tricorne (a three-sided hat), a wig with two braids, boots, a coat and a short dress with a petticoat.

The biggest Carnival parades take place in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Mainz. During this time, many people cheer the Carnival parades or watch them on television. During the parades, Carnival floats also travel along the main streets. These floats often have political messages.

## What Do People Eat during Carnival?

The most common Carnival food is 'Berliner' or 'Krapfen'. They are pastries, similar to doughnuts, which are filled with jam or custard and usually have sugar, powdered sugar or icing on top.

# Questions

1. Fill in the missing word in the sentence below.

Carnival is one of the most popular celebrations in \_\_\_\_\_.

2. What do you call Carnival in the north of Germany? Tick one.

- Karneval
- Fasching
- Fastnacht

3. When do the main festivities take place? Tick one.

- February
- April
- July

4. What is a name for a traditional German majorette dancer? Tick one.

- Berliner
- Funkenmariechen
- Fastnacht

5. Where do the biggest Carnival parades happen?

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6. What is a 'Berliner' or 'Krapfen'? Tick one.

- a doughnut
- a biscuit
- a pie

7. Why do you think Carnival is so popular?

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# Answers

1. Fill in the missing word in the sentence below.

Carnival is one of the most popular celebrations in **Germany**.

2. What do you call Carnival in the north of Germany? Tick one.

- Karneval**
- Fasching
- Fastnacht

3. When do the main festivities take place? Tick one.

- February**
- April
- November

4. What is a name for a traditional German majorette dancer? Tick one.

- Berliner
- Funkenmariechen**
- Fastnacht

5. Where do the biggest Carnival parades happen?

**The biggest Carnival parades happen in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Mainz.**

6. What is a 'Berliner' or 'Krapfen'? Tick one.

- a doughnut**
- a biscuit
- a pie

7. Why do you think Carnival is so popular?

**Children's own responses, such as: I think Carnival is so popular because it is a fun time of the year where people can celebrate.**

# Carnival in Germany

## What Is Carnival?

Carnival is one of the most popular celebrations in Germany. Depending on where you live, there are different words for Carnival. People in the south of Germany, Austria and Switzerland usually call the festival 'Fasching' or 'Fastnacht'. In the north of Germany, the word 'Karneval' is used. Sometimes people even refer to the Carnival period as the 'Fifth Season'.



Carnival officially starts on 11th November at 11:11 a.m. However, the main festivities take place in February, in the week before Lent.

During Carnival, people mock the government, make fun of politicians or recent political events and try to take themselves less seriously.

## How Is Carnival Celebrated in Germany?

In Germany, there are many customs surrounding Carnival, which differ from region to region. Children and adults wear colourful costumes and it is not uncommon to see people dressing up to go to work or school. It is also very popular to attend Carnival parties and parades. Traditional majorette dancers usually perform as the parade travels down the main street. These dancers are called 'Garde' (guards), 'Tanzmariechen' (dancing Marys) or 'Funkenmariechen' (glistening Marys). Their costumes are a tricorne (three-sided hat), a wig with two braids, boots, a coat and a short dress with a petticoat. In the 1700s, parts of Germany were occupied by the Prussians and the French. Dressing up in mock-uniforms was the people's way of making the military forces look ridiculous.

The biggest Carnival parades take place in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Mainz. In Cologne, more than 10,000 people take part in the parade every year. The parade in Cologne takes place on 'Rosenmontag' (Rose

Monday), the day before Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day). Around one million visitors from around the world come to see the floats, dance and have fun. Every year, the people standing on the floats throw up to 300 tons of sweets into the crowd for the spectators to catch. In south-west Germany, Switzerland and Austria, it is still common for people to wear scary masks. They do this to drive away the dark spirits of winter and to welcome spring.

### **Which Food Is Popular during Carnival?**

The most common Carnival food is 'Berliner' or 'Krapfen'. They are pastries, similar to doughnuts, which are filled with jam or custard and usually have sugar, powdered sugar or icing on top.



# Questions

1. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below.

People in the south of \_\_\_\_\_ , \_\_\_\_\_  
and \_\_\_\_\_ usually call the festival 'Fasching' or 'Fastnacht'.

2. Draw a line to complete the sentences:

In the north of Germany, ●

10, 000 people ●

Children and adults ●

● take part in the parade in  
Cologne.

● wear colourful costumes.

● the word 'Karneval' is  
used.

3. What is a 'Tanzmariechen'? Tick one.

- a three-sided hat  
 a dancer  
 a doughnut

4. Why do the dancers' costumes look like military uniforms?

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5. What do you call the day before Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) in German? Tick one.

- Blaumontag  
 Rotmontag  
 Rosenmontag

6. How many visitors from around the world come see the floats, dance and have fun

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7. What are 'Krapfen' filled with? Tick one.

- chocolate spread or toffee
- jam or custard
- ham or bacon

8. Would you like to attend a German Carnival? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

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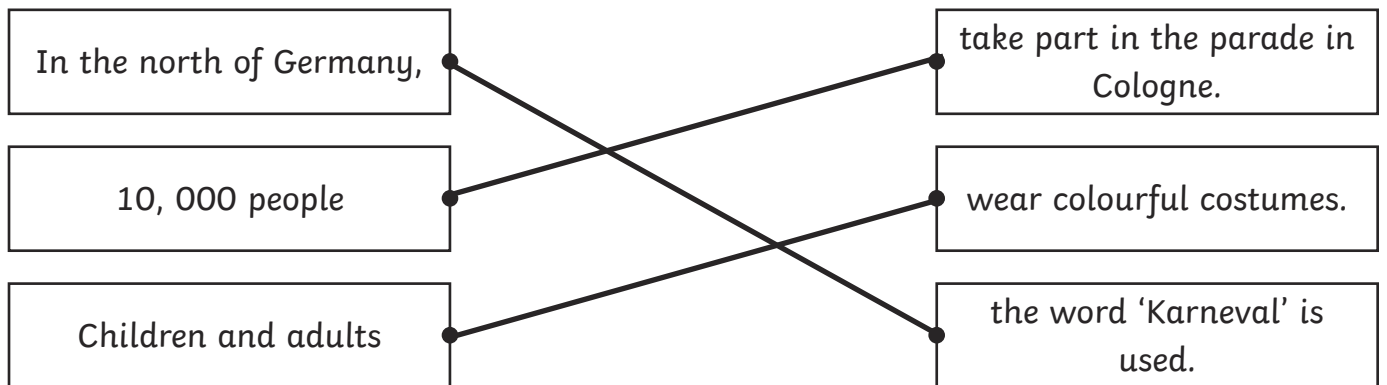
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# Answers

1. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below.

People in the south of **Germany, Austria and Switzerland** usually call the festival 'Fasching' or 'Fastnacht'.

2. Draw a line to complete the sentences:



3. What is a 'Tanzmariechen'? Tick one.

- a three-sided hat  
 **a dancer**  
 a doughnut

4. Why do the dancers' costumes look like military uniforms?

**People wear military uniforms because, in the 1700s, parts of Germany were occupied by the Prussians and the French. Dressing up in mock-uniforms was the people's way of making the military forces look ridiculous.**

5. What do you call the day before Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day) in German? Tick one.

- Blaumontag  
 Rotmontag  
 **Rosenmontag**

6. How many visitors from around the world come see the floats, dance and have fun?

**Around one million visitors from around the world come to Cologne see the floats, dance and have fun.**



7. What are 'Krapfen' filled with? Tick one.

- chocolate spread or toffee
- jam or custard**
- ham or bacon

8. Would you like to attend a German Carnival? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

**Children's own responses, such as: I would like to attend a German Carnival because I would like to see the floats and parades.**

# Carnival in Germany

Carnival is one of the most popular celebrations in Germany. The first Carnival event to be recorded happened in 1296. Depending on where you live, there are different words for Carnival. People in the south of Germany, Austria and Switzerland usually call the festival 'Fasching' or 'Fastnacht'. In the north of Germany, the word 'Karneval' is used. Sometimes people even refer to the Carnival period as the 'Fifth Season'. Carnival officially starts on 11th November at 11:11 a.m. However, the main festivities take place in February, in the week before Lent.



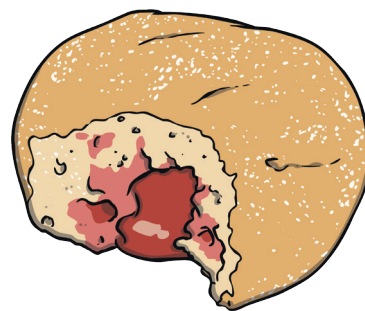
In Germany, there are many customs surrounding Carnival, which differ from region to region. Children and adults wear colourful costumes and it is not uncommon to see people dressing up to go to work or school. It is also very popular to attend Carnival parties and parades. Traditional majorette dancers usually perform on these occasions. These dancers are called 'Garde' (guard), 'Tanzmariechen' (dancing Marys) or 'Funkenmariechen' ('glistening Marys'). Their costumes are inspired by 18th century uniforms and consist of a tricorne, a wig with two braids, boots, a coat and a short dress with a petticoat. In the 18th century, the Rhineland area in western Germany was occupied by the Prussians and the French. Dressing up in mock-uniforms was a way for the people to make the French and the Prussians look ridiculous.

The biggest parades in Germany occur in Cologne, Düsseldorf and Mainz. The parade in Cologne takes place on 'Rosenmontag' (Rose Monday), the day before Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Day).

It has been around since 1823 and is usually more than 7km long. Around one million visitors from all around the world come to see the floats, dance and have fun. There are also more than 10,000 people who actively participate in the parade

In south-west Germany, Switzerland and Austria, people usually wear more traditional and menacing costumes and masks that are often made out of natural materials like wood or hay and carry whips and cow bells to make noise. This is to drive away the dark spirits of winter and welcome spring.

The most common Carnival food is 'Berliner' or 'Krapfen'. They are pastries, similar to doughnuts, which are filled with jam or custard and usually have sugar, powdered sugar or icing on top.



# Questions

1. When was Carnival first celebrated in Germany? Tick one.

- 1296
- 1396
- 1496

2. Why do you think Carnival is called the 'Fifth Season' in Germany?

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3. What do traditional 'Tanzmariechen' costumes look like?

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4. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below.

The parade in \_\_\_\_\_ takes place on 'Rosenmontag' (Rose Monday), the day \_\_\_\_\_ Shrove Tuesday (\_\_\_\_\_).

5. Draw a line to match the questions to the answers:

How many people take part in the parade in Cologne each year?

a million

When did the first Carnival occur in Cologne?

10,000

How many people from all around the world come to see the floats, dance and have fun?

1823

6. 'They are pastries, **similar** to doughnuts ...'

What does the word **similar** mean in this sentence?

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7. Why do people in the south-west of Germany, Austria and Switzerland wear menacing costumes and masks?

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8. Would you like to attend a German Carnival? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

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# Answers

1. When was Carnival first celebrated in Germany? Tick one.

- 1296  
 **1396**  
 1496

2. Why do you think Carnival is called the 'Fifth Season' in Germany?

**Children's own responses, such as: I think Carnival is Carnival called the 'Fifth Season' in Germany because it is an important time of the year.**

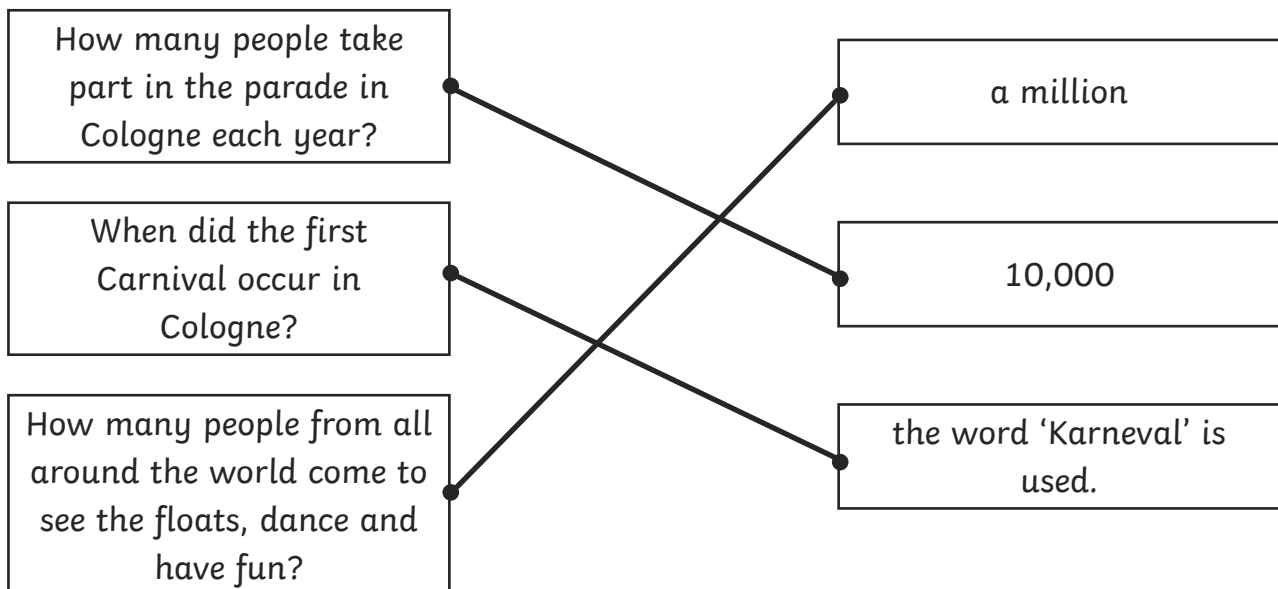
3. What do traditional 'Tanzmariechen' costumes look like?

**'Tanzmariechen' costumes look like 18th century uniforms.**

4. Fill in the missing words in the sentence below.

The parade in **Cologne** takes place on 'Rosenmontag' (Rose Monday), the day **before** Shrove Tuesday (**Pancake Day**).

5. Draw a line to match the questions to the answers:



6. 'They are pastries, similar to doughnuts ...'

What does the word similar mean in this sentence?

**Accept an answer that describes 'similar' as looking like a doughnut.**

7. Why do people in the south-west of Germany, Austria and Switzerland wear menacing costumes and masks?

**People in south-western Germany, Switzerland and Austria wear scary masks and costumes to drive away the dark spirits of winter and to welcome spring.**

8. Would you like to attend a German Carnival? Explain your answer using evidence from the text.

**Children's own responses, such as: I would like to attend a German Carnival because I would like to see the floats and parades**