

Carnival at Lake Constance!

The fifth season

When winter is drawing to a close in the four-country region around Lake Constance, the carnival is a very special highlight. Witches and jesters move through the alleys, creating a unique carnival atmosphere everywhere, be it in the streets or in restaurants and festival halls. “Ho Narro”, “Narri Narro”, “Juhu”, “Huhuhu” – as unmistakable as the call is the activity of the fools in the city streets, heralded in on “Schmotzigen Dunschtig” in numerous processions with impressive masks and costumes. In the individual towns and villages, sometimes very old traditions are maintained designed to chase away the winter.

CONSTANCE



ABC for Fools



“FASTNACHT or FASNACHT?”

“Fasnacht” is the regional variation of the high-German spelling “Fastnacht” (with a “t”).

“GUGGENMUSIK” — MARCHING CARNIVAL BANDS

Lively walking marching bands that play carnival music, mainly on brass instruments and drums.

“HEMDGLONKERUMZUG” — WHITE SHIRTS & RATTLES PARADE

One the night of “Fat Thursday” (Constance) or Shrove Monday (Überlingen), everyone dresses in white nightshirts and white hats and parades through the streets with noisemakers. School children make fun of their teachers with homemade banners.

JACOBIN TRIBUNAL (Constance)

A well-known personality stands accused before the court at the Obermarkt. This is a foolish folksy party in the Alemannic German dialect — translation: a lot of silly babble and gibberish.

Carnival marching bands, masquerade parties, balls, parades and much more. Foolish traditions like these turn normalcy on its head during the Swabian-Alemannic Carnival in Constance. January 6 marks the kick-off to all the foolery with the traditional Carnival Proclamation in the historic old city. Until February 14, you'll hear the cries of "Ho Narro!" here, there and everywhere: in the streets, in quaint wine bars, at the dance balls and during the mischievous Fat Thursday morning 'Wake Up Call.' Highlights include the *Butzenlauf*, one of the oldest Carnival traditions in southern Germany. Then there's the popular *Hemdglonker* where everyone parades through the streets in white nightshirts and hats on "Fat Thursday," followed by the spectacular "Witches' Burning" *Hexenverbrennung* the night before Ash Wednesday. The mix of medieval Carnival traditions have evolved over the centuries and these "fifth season" customs are kept alive by the different Carnival Guilds whose handmade masks and costumes are much celebrated. Not just local fools, but guilds from the region and beyond meet up in Constance to celebrate together. The Constance Carnival atmosphere is unique with its cozy alleys, mystical morning mists and breathtaking lake and alpine panorama.

DID YOU KNOW...?

In 1879, the first ever "White Shirt Misfits Parade" *Hemdglonkerumzug* took place in Constance. Its origins come from an earlier public shaming custom where Constance high school students would reproach teachers for their mistakes and weaknesses. An original Constance tradition, the "White Shirt Misfits Parade" in Constance is traditionally held on the night of Fat Thursday, and others like it take place in different cities. Participants must wear the obligatory white nightshirt!

FOOLS' CALL: "HO NARRO"

ABC for Fools



"MÄSCHGERLE" — FOOLS' COSTUME

Individual costumes that disguise the Fool. Constance has a large variety of costume styles.

MASK

Carved mostly from wood, each mask has its own individual facial expression. The mask is the main feature of the costume and the signature part of every Carnival character.

"NARRENBAUM" — FOOLS' TREE

The tall conifer tree is a symbol of power in the community and the crown is often decorated with colorful ribbons.

"SCHMOTZIGER DUNSCHTIG" — FAT THURSDAY

Thursday before Ash Wednesday is the high point of Carnival time. In Constance, the highlight is the street carnival where young and old dress up and make their way cheerfully and noisily through the streets.

"SCHNURREN" — FOOLS' INTERROGATION

This custom of Fools reprimanding locals for their misdeeds happens primarily on Fat Thursday.

ÜBERLINGEN



The climax of the Swabian-Alemannic Carnival peaks between “Fat Thursday” (the Thursday before Ash Wednesday) and the following *Fasnets-Dienschtag* or “Shrove Tuesday.” The undeniable highlight of the Überlingen Carnival is the *Hänselejuck*, a special Saturday night parade. At 7:00 pm sharp, the troop of Hänsele Fools, demonically lit by red Bengali flames are accompanied by an army of Carnival musicians as they hop and dance through the medieval Franziskanertor up to the Hofstatt. Hundreds of the traditionally costumed ‘fellows of the guild’ snap their whips and heckle the crowds as they make their way toward the shore of Lake Constance.

ORIGINS OF ÜBERLINGEN CARNIVAL

Reaching far back into the Middle Ages, fasting and atonement were strictly enforced, resulting in serious diet restrictions. Meat consumption was totally forbidden and animal products like lard, fat, milk, cheese, butter and eggs were not allowed at the table. On the eve of the fasting period, all forbidden foods were served up, lest they spoil. Where food was served and drunk, music was played. People danced and partied and this was accompanied by unimaginable human debauchery. This wild celebration among Überlingen community quickly earned many followers, and soon the celebration was not just limited to one night. The more elaborate the festivities, the greater the preparation. Tradition has it that in earlier times, Monday, Tuesday and

ABC for Fools



SWABIAN-ALEMANNIC

“FASNET”

A regional name for Carnival “Fasnet” comes from southwest Germany and parts of German-speaking Switzerland where one talks of Fasnet, Fasnacht or Fasent.

“VERBRENNUNG” — BURNING (Constance)

On the night before Ash Wednesday, Carnival festivities officially conclude. Burning the giant straw figure on Stephansplatz is the grand finale event.

“WECKEN” — WAKE UP CALL

Thanks to the traditional early morning Fools’ Rousing, the night of Fat Thursday quickly comes to an end. The fools prance through the streets in the early morn with fanfare and drumming, rousing everyone from bed.

“WURSTSCHNAPPEN” — THE SAUSAGE GRAB (Konstanz)

Not to be missed! The *Blätzlebuebe* Sausage Grab is on Shrove Monday after the children’s parade at the Marktstätte.

“ZUNFTMEISTER” — GUILD MASTER

As chairman of the Fools’ Guild, the “Guild Master” represents his club at all official events.

Saturday were slaughter days. Following the strict Lent rule, three days wasn't enough time to consume all the meat by Ash Wednesday so it wouldn't spoil during the required abstinence. The Friday before was taboo as a reminder of the day when Jesus' died and thus a weekly fast day. That's how the Thursday before Ash Wednesday came to be known as (Schmotziger Dunschtig = schmotz = schmalz = fat). Thursday was the last slaughter day before Lent and soon marked the actual beginning of the boisterous celebration we know as Carnival, a secular off-shoot that lives on to this day.



THE HÄNSELE CHARACTER

The main character at the Überlingen Carnival is the "Hänsele" figure. He is first named in historical documents dating back to 1766, but even earlier accounts from the Lent rules of 1496, describe this character as a Teufelhäs, meaning devilish costume. The men made these devilish costumes from cloth scraps and wore them, according to the historic documents. The name Hans, Hansel, or Hänslin was a synonym for Devil in the late Middle Ages, so scholars attribute this connection between the two names. Such demonic characters had their place in religious processions and church performances.



The "Hänsele" belongs to a genre of Fools called Plätzle-Narren, a regional breed from Lake Constance and the Hegau. The current Überlingen "Hänsele" style hasn't changed since WWII. An extremely unique look, this character wears a black linen cover-all adorned with colorful blue, red, green and yellow felt strips and silver sequins. The head mask is most unusual and the snapping whip is an essential part of the Hänsele ensemble.



FOOLS' CALL: NAARI-NARRO!



TRADITIONAL FOOL'S MARCH

1. "Fools' March Überlingen"

Hans rattles his bells and flicks his switch

Kiss my ass, leave me alone, today we're getting all
dressed up for Carnival

The Fools' Tree stands tall, it's silly here on the Bodensee

Even the hairy cat dances like crazy

Father Fool, look in your bag, throw us a pretzel, don't
be lazy,

Your sweetheart Mother Fool already has a pipe in her
mouth.

2. Tä, tä, tärätä,

Now Carnival is coming, it's time to get merry and more

Mother Fool blows her nose, waves to Father Fool

Adolf help me with my costume, be a little bit cavalier

And Adolf takes a pinch of snuff tobacco, and blows his
nose before he sneezes,

Put your top hat on and get up into the carriage, Father
Fool.

3., 4., 5., ...

1. Hänsele dont schelle und karbatscheschnelle,
blos mer in Hobel, heit gemers nobel.

Narrebom schoht i dr Höh', luschtig isch's am
Bodensee,

daß au d'Katz horig isch, danzet wie en
Flederewisch.

Narrevatter lang in Kratte, wirf uns Brezele, sei it
ful,

denn din Schatz, die Narremotter,
hot scho lang ihr Pfief im Mul.

2. Tä, tä, tärätä,

etz kunnt d'Fasnet, etz wird's heiter und so weiter.

D' Narremotter butzt de Zinke, tuet im Narrevatter
winke.

Adolf hilf mer au i's G'schirr; sei eweng en Kavalier,
und de Adolf nimmt e Briese, butzet d'Nase vor em
Niese,

setzet de Zylinder uff, Narrevatter etz nu druff.

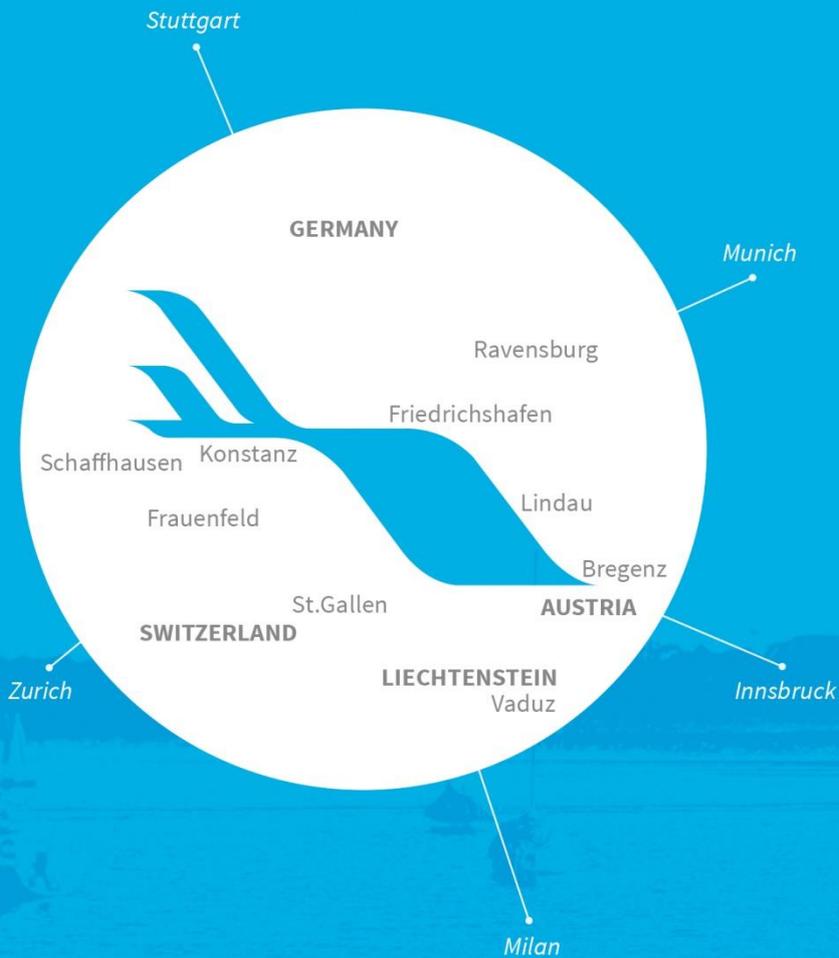
3., 4., 5. ...

TRADITIONAL RECIPE: CARNIVAL CAKES

Ingredients: 500 g Flour, 15 g Yeast, 50 g Sugar, 1/4 Liter Milk, 1 tsp Salt, 1 - 2 Eggs, 50 - 80 g Butter,
250 g Lard

Preparation:

Add the flour to a bowl and keep warm. Mix yeast with a bit of sugar and lukewarm milk and stir. Make a depression in the middle of the flour, then mix a small amount of flour with the yeast and milk into a thick liquid pre-dough "sponge." Then lightly dust with flour, cover the bowl and keep warm. After 30 minutes, make the actual dough by adding sugar, salt and lukewarm milk to the pre-dough "sponge" and mix. Next add warm eggs, melted butter and milk and mix into a soft dough, kneading until bubbles appear and the mass easily separates from spoon and bowl. Then put the dough-ball in a warm place and cover with a towel. After another 30 minutes, roll out dough about finger thick on the pastry board, and cut out squares with a baking wheel. Cook the squares in hot lard until they are light brown. Remove from hot lard and let them drain and dry off. After they cool, sprinkle the cakes with powdered sugar or cinnamon and sugar.



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Publisher & Copyright:

Internationale Bodensee Tourismus GmbH | Subject to changes
 Design: hggraphikdesign Heidi Lehmann, Radolfzell
 Fotos: Internationale Bodensee Tourismus GmbH & their partners,
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