What is Fasching or Carnival?

Fasching, the Roman Catholic Shrovetide carnival as celebrated in German-speaking countries. There are many regional differences concerning the name, duration, and activities of the carnival. It is known as Fasching in Bavaria and Austria, Fosnat in Franconia, Fasnet in Swabia, Fastnacht in Mainz and its environs, and Karneval in Cologne and the Rhineland. The beginning of the pre-Lenten season generally is considered to be Epiphany (January 6), but in Cologne, where the festivities are the most elaborate, the official beginning is marked on the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of the year. Merrymaking may get underway on the Thursday before Lent, but the truly rambunctious revelry associated with Fasching usually reaches its high point during the three days preceding Ash Wednesday, culminating on Shrove Tuesday.

Although the exact historical origins of Fasching are unclear, the observance of its rites is mentioned in Wolfram von Eschenbach's Parzival (early 13th century). It was a festival that originated in the cities—most notably Mainz and Speyer—and was already established in Cologne by 1234. Traditionally, it was not only a feast before Lent but also a time during which the rules and order of daily life were subverted. This gave rise to such customs as handing over the keys of the city to a council of fools or ceremoniously letting women rule. It also inspired noisy costumed parades and masked balls; satirical and plays, speeches, and newspaper columns all of which are still common elements of contemporary Fasching celebrations.

Weiberfastnacht - Thursday, 16. February 2023 women get the key to the city council and rule for the day.
Fastnachtssamstag - Saturday, 18. February 2023 masked balls and satirical plays.
Fastnachtssonntag - Sunday, 19. February 2023 masked balls and satirical plays.
Rosenmontag   - Monday, 20. February 2023 parades, masked balls, and satirical plays.
Fastnacht   - Tuesday, 21. February 2023 parades, masked balls, and satirical plays.
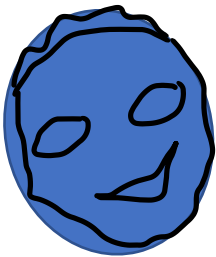Aschermittwoch - Wednesday, 22. February 2023 all is over and lent begins.

Your SGC Team

Make your own Fasching's Mask

What do you need?

- one round balloon
- a waterproof pen
- some old newspaper pages
- wallpaper paste
- large bowl

- old whisk
- some string or thin ribbon (maybe elastic)
- pair of scissors
- coloring paint for the finish

1. Creating the form

Blow up the balloon so it is a little larger than your head. Draw the shape of your mask on to the balloon. Be careful to leave the openings for your nose, eyes, and mouth large enough for you to see through later.

2. Make your paper mâché

Mix the wallpaper paste with water according to the directions. Rip the newspaper in small pieces.

3. Glue time

Take one paper piece at a time and pull it through the glue. Place each piece on the balloon face until you have about four to five layers of paper. Make sure to stay inside of your drawing.
Sometimes it is helpful to pre-cut shapes to fit your design.
To stabilize your balloon during that step, you can place it on a bowl or box.

4. Paint time

Carefully remove the mask from the balloon after it is completely dry. This will take some hours. Cut two holes for your string on both sides of the mask. Make sure to place the holes well, so your mask will fit nicely later. Use some striking color to finish your design. You can also use some feathers, or fake hair to decorate.