

# Cologne Events With Europe's Biggest Street Parties

## — Top Areas Of Interest

- [History](#)
- [Webcams](#)
  
- [Gunzenhausen](#)
- [Sigmaringen](#)

Cologne has a rich and vibrant cultural life. This is certainly most apparent during the biggest parties of the year — the world-famous Cologne events!

## Cologne Carnival

The Cologne Carnival officially begins at 11:11 a.m. on the eleventh day of the eleventh month (i.e., November 11). But the real party begins just before the Lent season. The Thursday before Ash Wednesday is known as Women's Carnival Day and is the start of the "crazy days" of the season with citizens dressed up in masks and bars that never close.

The highlight of this event is Rose Monday, which features a half-mile long procession led by the Triumvirate (a prince, peasant and maiden). These chosen few have paid big bucks to be in that position and so are in charge of many of the festivities. As a true sign of the playfulness of this grand event, the "maiden" is always a man dressed in drag.

This tradition has lasted close to 200 years. One million people typically take part in this fun-filled event, cheering in the streets with the words "Kölle Alaaf!" or "Long live Cologne!"

## Christopher Street Day

With the world's second largest gay population (behind San Francisco), Cologne is host to an annual gay pride parade — the Christopher Street Day.

While the mood is festive and celebratory, this Cologne event is actually held to honor the turbulent

Stonewall riots that took place in New York's Greenwich Village on Christopher Street. A candlelight vigil is held for the victims (and current sufferers) of HIV and AIDS, but the final day is a huge parade that has seen a crowd of close to a million spectators.

## **Comedy Festival and Film Festival**

This annual event has become popular as more traveling Germans returned home with stories of stand-up comics from abroad. A celebration of imported and home-grown comics, awards are also presented for the best and the funniest.