



Preparations for the 54th Pfennigbasar in the Schwarzwaldhalle (more info below)

Photo: C. Saile, one of 600 volunteers

Dear Expats,

It's a leap year, which means February has 29 days – enjoy that extra day!

For many in Karlsruhe, February is all about Fastnacht or Fasching, which is what the locals call carnival. For others, February is about music and art — the [Händel Festspiele](#) and [art Karlsruhe](#). More information can be found below.

Pfennigbasar

The [Pfennigbasar](#) is a Karlsruhe institution – a giant flea market of gently used objects including clothing, household goods, books, games, art and kitsch. A Pfennig was the smallest coin in the German currency before the euro, and the idea of the market was that for a small amount of money, you could buy good things for a good cause. The items are donated by locals and collected over three days — in this year it was January 25 - 27. Then volunteers (up to 600!) sort and organize the goods according to categories and set them out on tables. The International Women's Club of Karlsruhe are the organizers of this event, and assistance is provided by friends and family, as well as students and members of other local charities. The proceeds go to a scholarship fund for exchange students (Germany/USA), as well as local charities (e.g. food banks, volunteer fire departments, teaching reading to children and adults, etc.) Twice a year, charities can hand in a proposals and then the International Women's Club decides how to distribute the money. Between 1968 and 2016, almost 4 million euros have been distributed to local charities! Bargains galore! If you don't want to buy anything, stop by anyway for a cup of coffee and homemade cakes to support the cause.

February 1 – 3: Th & F 10 am – 1 pm; 2:30 – 6 pm; Sa 10 am – 2 pm.

Fastnacht

Some call carnival the fifth season - the celebrations started in November (on 11.11. at 11:11 to be precise) and end on Shrove Tuesday (Feb 13) or Ash Wednesday (Feb 14). Karlsruhe is on the border of the Rheinische Carneval and the Allemanische Fastnacht which have very different traditions. Background information about the celebrations can be found on our website [here](#).

If you are new to Karlsruhe, the parades (Umzug) in the region allow you to get a feel for Fasching without the need to fully participate. You don't even need to dress up, although that's part of the fun. Cheaply made costumes can be found in many stores in the region. As with any event where large groups of people (often drinking alcohol) come together, be aware of pickpockets and rowdiness – and use public transportation!

Special Fasching Dates in February

February 11 — Parade in Durlach starting at 14:11. Crowds (up to 100,000!) come to watch the 70+ floats and bands march by. Trams are re-routed. The motto of the parade is: “Ein Freizeitbad wie wär des schee und oben drauf könnte d’Festhall steh!” Roughly translated, this means that it would be great to have a public swimming pool and on top of that you could put the music hall. In Durlach, both the swimming pool (Turmbergbad) and Festhalle are in danger of closing – or possibly being combined in some way.

February 13 — Parade in Karlsruhe starting at 14:11 until about 16:30 with 80+ floats and marching bands. The motto this year is: “Karlsruhs Umzug zieht famos — scho’ 90 mol durch d’Kaisterstroß’!” Roughly translated, this means that Karlsruhe’s parade is a great success – 90 times along the Kaiserstrasse.

February 13 — Downtown Karlsruhe is closed in the afternoon because of the aforementioned parade. Many stores close early or don't open at all - especially in the center of town. Come early to get a good spot to watch the parade.

February 19 - 21 — Basler Fasnacht starts at 4 a.m. on February 19th and runs for 72 hours. The entire inner city of Basel (Switzerland) is dark, the only light coming from those marching in the parade. The Basel Carnival is on the UNESCO List of the Intangible Heritage of Humanity since 2017.

Many groups and organizations plan smaller events, especially for kids – keep a look out.

Strike and other news

- **Thursday, February 1** — the security personnel are striking at almost all airports in Germany, which means almost all flights are canceled. Check before you leave home.
- **Friday, February 2** — from 3:30 am to 3:15 am on Saturday, February 3, the union ver.di has called for a strike of the public transportation systems in all of Germany. For Karlsruhe, this means that the Trams 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 17 and 18 and S2, NL1, NL2 are **not running**. Most, but not all busses, are **not running**. The trains S1, S11, S12, S4, S5, S51, S52, S6, S7, S71, S8 und S81 are **running as usual**. To see if your scheduled train/tram is running , you can check [here](#).
- **Train Strikes** — The GDL has announced no new strikes of the Deutsche Bahn until at least March 3. Let's hope negotiations are successful.
- The ticket office of the kvv (local public transportation) at Marktplatz is permanently closed as of January 31, 2024. In Karlsruhe, to purchase tickets, obtain information etc., please use the offices just outside the main train station as well as the one on Durlacher Allee in the Oststadt.
- Meat (goat, sheep, poultry and pork) which is not packaged (e.g. fresh meat counter) must have labels with the country of origin (where bred and where slaughtered) starting on February 1. Beef must already have this label since 2000.

Registering your child for first grade

All children who have reached the age of 6 by June 30, 2024 are required to attend school and must be registered at the nearest elementary school on **Wednesday, February 21** for the 2024/25 school year. This must be done in person and the child should also attend. Please bring your child's birth certificate as well as proof of a measles vaccination. If you don't know which is the nearest school, click [here](#) and under Grundschulsuche put in your street address.

What to do in Karlsruhe in February Regular English Language Events

Karlsruhe's **English-Speaking Meetup Group** (sponsored by Relocation Service move-in) is a means for anyone to organize events and activities. The most popular regular event is the monthly Stammtisch where you can meet nice people who speak English in a relaxed atmosphere. Start is 6:30 pm until around 9:30 pm. The **February Stammtisch** is on **Tuesday, February 20th** at Wolfsbräu in Karlsruhe (see below). Other popular events are hiking and jazz concerts. Anyone can participate or organize, but it helps the organizers if you sign up first – and remove your name if you can no longer attend!

The **American Library** has regular events in English for kids and adults.

For adults: LitNight (Feb 6 & 20), New(s) Views (Feb 13), Poetry?Please! (Feb 27).

For kids and teens: Storytime in English for Kids 3 to 5 (Feb 14 @2pm and Feb 28 @4 pm), Stories for Kids 6 & up (Feb 2 & 23), TeenTime (Feb 2 & 23).

The **Karlsruhe Toastmasters** meet every 1st, 3rd and 5th Monday of the month from 7:15 to 9:15 pm to practice public speaking in English with friendly, relaxed support from speakers from around the world.

Calendar of Events

If you have an event you would like advertised, please let us know a few days before the end of the month (info@expat-ka.com). Keep in mind that it should be something of general interest or specifically of interest to an English-speaking community.

February 1 – 3 — 54th Pfennigbasar in the Schwarzwaldhalle in Karlsruhe. Th & F 10 am – 1 pm; 2:30 – 6 pm; Sa 10 am – 2 pm.

February 3 — Collegium Musicum concert at KIT Campus Süd in the Gerthsen-Hörsaal starting at 8 p.m. Orchestra music — this time Bruckner, Lutoslawski and Brahms. Free, but donations are requested upon leaving.

February 4 — Open House im Hallenbau KA. 11 am to 6 pm. The annual open house at ZKM and Städtische Galerie has been moved to a new date (in previous years it was January 6) and now includes all 4 institutions: ZKM, Städtische Galerie, Kunsthalle@ZKM and Hochschule für Gestaltung.

February 7 – 10 — Silent Film Festival in Karlsruhe at Studio 3 in the Kinemathek or the Stephanssaal in the Ständehaus. The motto is melodrama!

February 10 – 17 – School holidays (Fasching) for the Karlsruhe school system.

February 13 — Parade in downtown Karlsruhe starting at 14:11 until about 16:30.

February 14 — Valentine's Day. If you have a favorite restaurant, be sure to make reservations.

February 16 – March 4 — The 46th International Händel Festival at the Badische Staatstheater. Baroque music at its best. Concerts and operas.

February 20 — English Stammtisch at Wolfsbräu in Karlsruhe from 6:30 to 9:45 pm.

February 22 — Reading Party at the **American Library** from 7:30 to 9 pm. Do you need an excuse to read? Can't concentrate at home? Want to read (silently) with others? Join us for the first American Library Reading Party. Background music and beverages (for a donation) will be provided. Cell phones on mute, please! Free.

February 22 – 25 — art Karlsruhe. A very popular art market — classic to modern to contemporary at the Karlsruhe trade center. Most of the art works are for sale. Wear comfortable shoes and take breaks to avoid visual overload. Admission fee charged.

Want to improve your German?

Sprecht miteinander! Speak with each other!

Practice your spoken German in a relaxed atmosphere. People of similar language ability form groups moderated by a volunteer. Free and no registration required. Wednesdays and Fridays from 6:30 to 8:00 pm.

Bürgerzentrum Mühlburg (BZM) Weinbrennerstr. 79a 76185 Karlsruhe
Just stop by!

The [IBZ](#) also offers practice in speaking German via Skype on Mondays and in person on Thursdays from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. More info [here](#).

Relocation Service move-in

With more than 20 years of experience in the region, [Relocation Service move-in](#) can help with your move to Karlsruhe, your move from Karlsruhe and with all those day-to-day problems expats experience.

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