

Beat: Miscellaneous

Why people fear Friday the 13th, and is it really unlucky?

Today the only Friday the 13th this year

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USPA NEWS - Friday the 13th is widely considered as a day of bad luck, and experts once recommended staying at home on the ominous day due to an increased risk of hospitalization. The fear of Friday the 13th even has a name - paraskevidekatriaphobia.

Experts at mobile trading card game www.cardstheuniverseandeverything.com have put together a crash course guide to the spookiest day of the year so that you can decide for yourself if Friday the 13th really is a day of doom.

What's the origin of Friday the 13th?

The origin of number 13's unlucky nature can be linked back to Norse mythology. According to one myth, 12 gods had a dinner party in Valhalla when the trickster god, Loki (the inspiration behind Tom Hiddleston's character in the Marvel cinematic universe) arrived as an uninvited 13th guest. Upon arrival, Loki arranged for Hoder, the blind god of darkness, to shoot Balder the Beautiful, the god of joy and gladness, with a mistletoe-tipped arrow.

After the death of Balder, folklore historian Donald Dossey notes that the entire Earth was shrouded in darkness due to mourning and 13 was permanently associated with bad luck. If the myth sounds vaguely familiar, the Last Supper might be on your mind. Judas, the apostle who betrayed Jesus, was the 13th guest to the Last Supper – the final meal that Jesus shared with his apostles in Jerusalem before his crucifixion.

When does Friday the 13th happen?

The 13th day of the month falls on a Friday at least once per year, but can also occur up to three times per year. In 2022, it only happens once: May 13th. If you want to mark your calendar, it'll next fall on January 13 and October 13 in 2023. Fear not, though, as Friday the 13th isn't slated to occur three times in a single year until 2026.

What's the impact of Friday the 13th?

A study by the British Medical Journal in 1993 found that Friday the 13th is truly unlucky for some. By examining the relation between health, behavior and superstition surrounding Friday the 13th in the United Kingdom, the study found that the risk of hospital admission as a result of a transport accident increased by as much as 52% compared with Friday the 6th. Experts even went as far as to recommend staying at home on Friday the 13th due to the increased risk of hospitalization.

What can people afraid of Friday the 13th do?

If you feel spooked, you might suffer from paraskevidekatriaphobia. Symptoms of paraskevidekatriaphobia can range from mild anxiety to full-blown panic attack and it can also be an extension of triskaidekaphobia – fear of the number 13. Richard Wiseman, professor at the University of Hertfordshire, opined that people who consider themselves unlucky are more likely to believe in related superstitions (like Friday the 13th) and that luck is a magical force which can ruin lives.

How can people overcome paraskevidekatriaphobia?

While paraskevidekatriaphobia is a niche phobia, almost all phobias can be successfully treated and cured. Cognitive behavioral therapy, exposure therapy and psychotherapy are among the leading treatments for most phobias and a mental health professional can advise you on the best course of action.

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