

Friday the 13th

The superstition surrounding this day may have arisen in the Middle Ages, "originating from the story of Jesus' last supper and crucifixion" in which there were 13 individuals present in the Upper Room on the 13th of Nisan Maundy Thursday, the night before his death on Good Friday. While there is evidence of both Friday and the number 13 being considered unlucky, there is no record of the two items being referred to as especially unlucky in conjunction before the 19th century.

An early documented reference in English occurs in Henry Sutherland Edwards' 1869 biography of Gioachino Rossini, who died on a Friday 13th: *He [Rossini] was surrounded to the last by admiring friends; and if it be true that, like so many Italians, he regarded Fridays as an unlucky day and thirteen as an unlucky number, it is remarkable that on Friday 13th of November he passed away.*

It is possible that the publication in 1907 of Thomas W. Lawson's popular novel *Friday, the Thirteenth*, contributed to disseminating the superstition. In the novel, an unscrupulous broker takes advantage of the superstition to create a Wall Street panic on a Friday the 13th.

Another suggested origin of the superstition—Friday, 13 October 1307, the date Philip IV of France arrested hundreds of the Knights Templar—may not have been formulated until the 20th century. It is mentioned in the 1955 Maurice Druon historical novel *The Iron King*, John J. Robinson's 1989 work *Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry*, Dan Brown's 2003 novel *The Da Vinci Code* and Steve Berry's *The Templar Legacy* (2006).



In Spanish-speaking countries, instead of Friday, Tuesday the 13th is considered a day of bad luck. The Greeks also consider Tuesday (and especially the 13th) an unlucky day. Tuesday is considered dominated by the influence of Ares, the god of war (Mars in Roman mythology). The fall of Constantinople to the Fourth Crusade occurred on Tuesday, April 13, 1204, and the Fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans happened on Tuesday, 29 May 1453, events that strengthen the superstition about Tuesday. In addition, in Greek the name of the day is Triti (Τρίτη) meaning the third (day of the week), adding weight to the superstition, since bad luck is said to "come in threes".

According to the Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute in Asheville, NC, an estimated 17 to 21 million people in the United States are affected by a fear of this day, making it the most feared day and date in history. Some people are so paralyzed by fear that they avoid their normal routines in doing business, taking flights or even getting out of bed. "It's been estimated that \$800 or \$900 million is lost in business on this day". Despite this, representatives for both Delta Air Lines and now-defunct Continental Airlines have stated that their airlines do not suffer from any noticeable drop in travel on those Fridays. In Finland, a consortium of governmental and nongovernmental organizations led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health promotes the National Accident Day, which always falls on a Friday the 13th.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friday_the_13th]