



# LUND MEDIA GROUP

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## Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Superstitions

Friday the 13th is widely known as the “day of misfortune” because the number 13 and the day Friday have together been considered “bad luck” for centuries. The fear of Friday the 13th is known as *Paraskevidekatriaphobia*; the fear of the number 13 is *Triskaidekaphobia*. On the opposite end of the spectrum, *Triskaidekomania* is a reverence for the number 13.

Believed to be a lucky or an unlucky day, every year has at least one Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, but never more than three. In 2017, there were two... January and October (there will also be two in 2018: April and July). We provide this guide so you and your listeners have everything you ever wanted to know about Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> – and more! Consider using portions of this text on your station website and as part of talent show prep.

### Origins & Fears about Friday The 13th

A national organization known as “The Society of 13 against superstition, prejudice, and fear” meets every Friday the 13th for lunch. They celebrate with mirror breaking and salt-spilling ceremonies. All black cats are welcome!

#### Friday

- Jesus died on Friday.
- Eve tempted Adam with the apple on Friday.
- The Great Flood began on Friday (Noah and the Ark).
- Adam was created on a Friday.
- Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden on a Friday.
- Adam and Eve died on a Friday.
- The confusion at the Tower of Babel took place on a Friday.
- The Norse have a myth that journeying on a Friday is bad luck.
- Friday was a common day for people to be hanged.
- Friday was considered an important day before the Bible was written. Primitive people set aside Fridays as a special time to worship their deities and ask them for good crops, health, & happiness. Those who worked on this day were told not to expect good luck from the gods.



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## Thirteen

- In numerology, the number twelve is considered the number of divine organizational arrangement or chronological completeness, as reflected in the twelve months of the year, twelve hours of the clock day, the twelve deities of Olympus, twelve tribes of Israel, twelve Apostles of Jesus, the 12 successors of Muhammad in Shia Islam, twelve signs of the Zodiac, the 12 years of the Chinese Buddhist cycle, etc., whereas the number thirteen was considered irregular, transgressing this completeness.
- Thirteen represents the number of men at the Last Supper.
- Greek Philosophers and mathematicians felt that it was an “imperfect” number.
- In Norse Mythology there were 12 gods present at a feast when the 13th god named Loki (spirit of evil and dissension) arrived and caused the death of Balder (the god of light, joy, and reconciliation).
- Thirteen pence halfpenny was at one time the wage paid to the hangman.
- The Babylonians were mathematicians, and the number 13 was unlucky to them because it was a prime number. 12 was sacred because it could be divided so many different ways.

## According To Superstition...

### Things to Avoid on Friday The 13<sup>th</sup>

- ♦ Don't take on any new enterprises, and don't start anything important.
- ♦ Be suspicious of food.
- ♦ Don't get married.
- ♦ Don't associate with gypsies.
- ♦ Don't have 13 people to dinner (or one will die by the end of the year).
- ♦ Don't tell any of your dreams or they won't come true.
- ♦ Don't close any business deals.
- ♦ Don't start a trip.
- ♦ Do not trim your nails.
- ♦ Beware of rooms numbered 12A or hotel/office rooms on the 14th floor; they were probably a 13 to begin with!
- ♦ Don't stir your companion's cup as this will stir up strife.
- ♦ Don't spill the milk or open an egg at the small end.
- ♦ Don't spill the salt, and don't burn the toast! (Burnt toast feeds the devil.)
- ♦ A bed changed on Friday will bring bad dreams (As will new shoes left under the bed).
- ♦ Any ship that sails on Friday will have bad luck.
- ♦ You should never start a trip on Friday or you will meet misfortune.
- ♦ Never start to make a garment on Friday unless you can finish it the same day. Otherwise it will never be finished.
- ♦ A broken shoelace means that thunder and lightning will strike before noon.
- ♦ Placing a shoe on the table means there will be a serious quarrel at home. (The shoe also must never be worn again, in either case, for such shoes can only be employed for the long walk into the underworld.)

### Things to Do on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>

- ▶ Wear clothing inside out so that death or the Boogie Man will not recognize you and single you out as its next victim.
- ▶ It's a bad omen if you trip starting out the day. It can be counteracted by turning around three times and saying, “I turn myself three times about, and thus I put bad luck to rout.”



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- ▶ Black cats must wear bells.
- ▶ A metal disc in the pocket brings good luck to golfers.
- ▶ Use one of the three vital good luck charms: (These should be carried or displayed on Friday the 13th without fail).
- ▶ Ocean Liners should be held in dock until after midnight.

## Symbols of Luck

- ⇒ A four-leaf clover was the last thing taken from the Garden of Eden when Adam & Eve were banished.
- ⇒ A horseshoe. Be sure to hang it prongs up so that the good luck doesn't run out. A horseshoe is also used to ward off the devil and witches.
- ⇒ A rabbit's foot. Early man was amazed at the rabbit's swiftness and cleverness and so its foot became a symbol of luck (not for the rabbit!).

### Salt:

- ▷ Salt is the saving grace, for it is the purest substance on earth and stronger than holy water which you are unlikely to have on tap anyway.
- ▷ Salt must be thrown from the right hand over the left shoulder, for this is where the devil resides to move in anytime you slip up (water or salt spilt, a fork or a piece of meat dropped) and the salt will blind him long enough for you to escape the moment of bad fortune.
- ▷ Keep a few pounds of pure salt around the house for emergencies.
- ▷ Buy enough to pass some to all the guests that leave your house. This will store up your good fortune for the future, like a savings account, with interest.

## Superstitions That Apply Only on Good Friday

- ☑ A child born on Good Friday and baptized on Easter Sunday has a gift of healing. If a boy, he should go into the ministry.
- ☑ Cut your hair on Good Friday to prevent headaches in the year to come.
- ☑ A person who dies on Good Friday will go right to heaven.
- ☑ Shed no blood on Good Friday, work no wood, and hammer no nail.

## Other Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Facts & Superstitions

- \* The actual, historically documented reason why Friday the 13th is considered to be an unlucky day has nothing to do with witches or the day Christ was crucified, or what have you. The real reason is that when Philip the Fair (the King of France) arrested the entire Order of the Templars, and seized all their property for the throne, it was a well-coordinated raid that took place on Friday the 13th. The action was so swift, brutal and efficient that the day has lived on in infamy ever since.
- \* One of the earliest documented examples of the "evil" number thirteen comes from the Song of Ishtar, an ancient Babylonian epic poem. The thirteenth line contains the name of the Goddess of the Dead (which is never a good thing).



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- \* The day Friday was named after Frigg (or Frigga), the Norse goddess of marriage. Later she was confused with the goddess of love, Freya, who in turn became identified with Friday. When the Norsemen and Germanic tribes became Christians, Freya was supposed to have been banished to the mountains as a witch. Friday came to be called "witches' Sabbath." For it was believed that on this day, each week, twelve witches and the Devil met; thirteen evil spirits up to no good! This is one of the reasons for today's Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> superstition.
- \* Friday the 13th is only bad luck for males. The calendars used to have 13 months for the 13 phases of the moon in a year. Men changed the calendar to 12 months. Women generally have 13 menstrual cycles in a year. Friday is also ruled by Venus who represents women.
- \* Friday the thirteenth is considered the unluckiest of days, unless you were born on Friday the thirteenth. If you were born on this day then Friday the thirteenth is your lucky day.
- \* It is considered especially unlucky to have 13 people at the table during a meal, such as in Agatha Christie's mystery novel, *Thirteen at Dinner*. During the 1880s, a men's group that felt superstition was an unhealthy influence on public life held Thirteen Club dinners.
- \* In the 18th century, the HMS Friday was launched on Friday the 13th. It was never heard from again. Since then, ships are not usually launched on that date.

## Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> Promotional Opportunities

No matter how worldly or blasé we may be, each of us has some superstition that we heed. Certainly, in public, we may ridicule belief in superstition, but not one of us is completely free from it. This is the perfect basis for a fun promotion in April. Ideas:

Test the Validity of Common Superstitions. Using two air talents, one is established as the believer in superstitions and the other as the disbeliever. Several days before the 13th, one DJ warns listeners that there is a Friday the Thirteenth coming up so they should be particularly careful. The second DJ ridicules this and states that he would not be afraid to test any superstition. Then the DJ who is the believer in superstitions challenges the other to take the test.

Listeners call in with their common superstitions. In a public place on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, a brave DJ will violate as many of these superstitions as possible in a test to determine if bad luck really will befall him. Encourage participation. Listeners assist the experiment by providing some of the various props needed in breaking the superstitions -- black cat, ladder, salt, etc.

Add more fun to the superstition test and have a doctor and nurse on hand. They check the talent's "condition" between each experiment. Have an ambulance standing by, too, just in case the DJ is stricken with bad luck. The talent should follow a systematic program of testing the superstitions with a play-by-play accounting of the experiment, done with a reasonable amount of seriousness. Since bad luck does not always befall one immediately, carry reports on the air for a week after the event on anything of a "bad luck" nature happening to the DJ who took the test.

Morning talent does show from a bed at a visible street location because he's afraid to get out of bed on Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>! This is a great stunt that gets talk. (Thanks to Kent Crider, K103, Cape Girardeau, MO)

Lucky Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. For stations that play a "12 in a row" music sweep, ask listeners to listen for the lucky number 13. Morning shows can prove that there is nothing unlucky about 13.



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Lucky Clients. Look for businesses or even listeners who live on 13th Street or Avenue, or Highway 13, and broadcast from these locations.

Haunted House. If there is a haunted house or structure or mystery attraction in the area, have the morning show broadcast on location, or do the show from the 13<sup>th</sup> floor of a local building.

You're #13! Award contest prizes to the 13<sup>th</sup> caller on this day. Get listeners to wear jerseys with "Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>" on them at the mall, and air comments from passersby. If there is a TV channel 13 in your area, stage a morning bit with one of their news/sports/weather anchors.

## Superstitious or Magic Songs

Designate "Superstition" songs as the "song of the day". Examples include Stevie Wonder's *Superstition*, CCR's *I Put A Spell On You*, Jeff Beck/Rod Stewart's *I Ain't Superstitious*. Also consider: *Black Magic Woman*, *Magical Mystery Tour*, *Do You Believe in Magic?*, etc. For a complete list of songs, check your music software or email The Lund Consultants.

## Friday the 13th Audience Interactives

Ask listeners during the week to contribute their fears and silly superstitions. Consider these questions:

- What are your biggest fears? What are you most afraid of happening today?
- Ask for "horror stories" of events that occurred on previous Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. The most deserving person wins "Friday the 13th Insurance" in the form of a dinner that night to celebrate a safe day.
- What's the best thing that ever happened on this day?
- What superstitions do you have? Will you walk under a ladder, or walk around it?
- What types of things do you avoid?
- Do you have something that you consider to be "lucky"? (i.e., a football jersey that has to be worn on game day to assure a win, and so on.)
- Events that must have happened on Friday the 13th. (The Macarena was recorded?)

## Who's a Believer?

You've got to admit, there's a whole lot of wood-knocking going on! A Gallup poll concerning superstitions produced the following statistics about people in America:

A little superstitious	28%
Somewhat or very superstitious	27%
Don't miss a chance to knock on wood	25%
Nervous about a black cat crossing their path	13%
Never risk walking under a ladder	12%
Fear the number 13	11%
Believe something bad will occur when a mirror breaks	19%
Think that lucky clothing can help	2%
Believe in picking up lucky pennies	1%

Consider doing your own poll (perhaps on the station website or social media) to see how your market compares superstitiously to the national average.



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## Sports Superstitions

Sportswriter Michael Morrison documents some common superstitions in baseball, basketball, and other sports. Players and fans alike have their ways of avoiding bad luck. Some sports superstitions are stranger than others. For example, Michael Jordan (a graduate of North Carolina) always wore his blue North Carolina shorts under his Bulls uniform for good luck.

Baseball players may be the most superstitious. Pitcher Turk Wendell brushed his teeth and chewed licorice between every inning. Wade Boggs would eat only chicken the day of a game, and used to draw a symbol that means "To Life" in the dirt before every at-bat. Former pitcher Mark "The Bird" Fidrych used to pitch with the dirt on the mound and talk to himself and the ball before he pitched.

Red Sox shortstop Nomar Garciaparra gets dressed the same way every day, makes sure to step on each dugout step with both feet, and tugs at his batting gloves and taps his toes during each at-bat.

Here are some common superstitions in the world of sports.

### Baseball

- ▶ Spitting into your hand before picking up the bat is said to bring good luck.
- ▶ A wad of gum stuck on a player's hat brings good luck.
- ▶ It is bad luck if a dog walks across the diamond before the first pitch.
- ▶ Some players believe it is good luck to step on one of the bases before running off the field at the end of an inning.
- ▶ It is bad luck to touch the baselines while running off and onto the field between innings.
- ▶ Lending a bat to a fellow player is a serious jinx.
- ▶ Some players actually sleep with their bat to break out of a hitting slump or stay in a groove.
- ▶ If a pitcher is throwing a perfect game or a no-hitter, never speak of it while it's going on.

### Basketball

- ▶ The last person to shoot a basket during the warm-up will have a good game.
- ▶ Wipe the soles of your sneakers for good luck.
- ▶ Bounce the ball before taking a foul shot for good luck.

### Bowling

- ▶ To continue a winning streak, wear the same clothes.
- ▶ The number 300, a perfect score, on your license plate will increase your score.
- ▶ Carry charms on your bowling bag, in your pockets, or around your neck for good luck.

### Fishing

- ▶ Fish may not bite if a barefoot woman passes you on the way to the dock.
- ▶ Spit on your bait before casting your rod to make fish bite.
- ▶ Throw back your first catch for good luck.
- ▶ It is bad luck to change rods while fishing.
- ▶ Don't tell anyone how many fish you've caught until you're done or you won't catch another.



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## Football

- ▶ Double numbers on a player's uniform brings good luck.
- ▶ It's bad luck for a professional football player to take a new number when he is traded to another team.
- ▶ A mascot is an important good luck symbol.

## Golf

- ▶ Start only with odd-numbered clubs.
- ▶ Balls with a number higher than 4 are bad luck.
- ▶ Carry coins in your pockets for good luck.

## Ice Hockey

- ▶ It is bad luck for hockey sticks to lie crossed.
- ▶ It is bad luck to say "shutout" in the locker room before a game.
- ▶ Players believe they'll win the game if they tap the goalie on his shin pads before a game.
- ▶ Many players must put their pads and skates on in exactly the same order every day.

## Rodeo

- ▶ Always put the right foot in the stirrup first.
- ▶ Avoid wearing the color yellow.
- ▶ Always shave before a competition (for men only!)

## Tennis

- ▶ It's bad luck to hold more than two balls at a time when serving.
- ▶ Avoid wearing the color yellow.
- ▶ Walk around the outside of the court when switching sides for good luck.
- ▶ Avoid stepping on the court lines.

## Sports and the Number 13

Sportswriter Michael Morrison found a handful of athletes who dared to wear the infamous number. Is the number 13 really unlucky, or is it just a myth? Check out info at this website: <http://aol1.infoplease.com/spot/friday13th.html>. Below are just a handful of the athletes who dared to wear the infamous number. Decide for yourself.

**Ralph Branca** (Baseball). Branca, a pitcher for the Brooklyn Dodgers, wore no. 13 and, as legend has it, playfully posed with black cats before the 1951 playoffs began. He would become famous in the 1951 playoffs for surrendering Bobby Thomson's "shot heard round the world" home run, one of the most famous home runs of all-time.

**Jeff Fassero** (Baseball). Fassero wore no. 13 in 1999 for Seattle and Texas and compiled a 5-14 mark with a 7.20 ERA, the worst major league single-season ERA (for pitchers with 150 innings) since 1937.

**Dan Marino** (Football). This former Miami Dolphins quarterback and Hall of Famer holds all-time NFL records in passing touchdowns and passing yards. It's kind of tough to consider him "unlucky." But he never did win that Super Bowl ring, did he?



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**Buck Martinez** (Baseball). Martinez wore no. 13 as a catcher for the Toronto Blue Jays. He lasted 17 years in the big leagues but had a career batting average of just (gulp) .225. In 1985, he was bowled over by a player attempting to score and severely dislocated his ankle, effectively ending his playing career. He wore 13 as manager of the Blue Jays and is now the play-by-play announcer for the team.

**Mats Sundin** (Hockey). This captain of the Toronto Maple Leafs, in November, 2001, received an errant pass from teammate Bryan McCabe that caught him squarely in the face. He suffered a cut between his eyes and forehead that required 15 stitches. Actually, for a hockey player, this may just be all in a day's work. Sundin's response to McCabe the next day? "Nice pass."

**John Valentin** (Baseball). Third baseman for the Boston Red Sox who tore knee ligaments ten games into the 2000 season and missed the rest of the season.

**Billy Wagner** (Baseball). Flame-throwing relief pitcher for the Houston Astros who missed time in 1998 after a line drive struck him on the left side of the head. He made a successful return in 1999 but missed most of the 2000 season after elbow ligament surgery.

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In closing, let us know if you found this information useful to your show prep, and tell us what you did for this Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>!