

## The origin of the names of the days in the Germanic languages:

It is always very interesting to examine certain words and the origins of them to get more knowledge about a nation's culture or history. Now, in the case of the

names of the days, this examination leads us to ancient Germanic beliefs.

But before getting into it too deep, let us see a list about these names

English	German	Dutch	Swedish	Norwegian	Danish	Icelandic
Monday	Montag	maandag	måndag	mandag	mandag	mánudagur
Tuesday	Dienstag	dinsdag	tisdag	tirsdag	tirsdag	briðjudagur
Wednesday	Mittwoch	woensdag	onsdag	onsdag	onsdag	miðvikudagur
Thursday	Donnerstag	donderdag	torsdag	torsdag	torsdag	fimmtudagur
Friday	Freitag	vrijdag	fredag	fredag	fredag	föstudagur
Saturday	Samstag*	zaterdag	lördag	lørdag	lørdag	laugardagur
Sunday	Sonntag	zondag	söndag	søndag	søndag	sunnudagur

Also, one can examine many different progresses, which the cultures went through. For example, one can recognise the ancient stance of the Icelandic language, being the only Germanic tongue, which other language did not or just hardly influence but you can also see, how, on some level, Rome influenced the West Germans.

Most names origin from the names of ancient Germanic Gods. The suffixes -day, -tag, -dag, -dagur are all the present words that evolved from the ancient description of a day: dag or daeg.

The first day of the week: In all descriptions for the first day of the week, the forms of the word "moon" can be identified. Monan, as the old Saxons said. The old Germanic tribes respected the moon a lot, they even had a calendar based on the moon's cycles.

The second day of the week: Tiw (Tyr) was the ancient Germanic God of war. His name is preserved in the name of the second day's name.

The third day of the week: Woen, or Woden was a chief Norse God. He was the husband of Frigga (*see Friday*). In the Scandinavian area, the name "Odin" was used for the same God. With two exceptions, the third day of the week

preserves his name. The two exceptions are in German and Icelandic. In both of this latter languages, the third day's name indicates, that it is the middle of the week.

The fourth day of the week: In every case, Thor, the God of the thunder is represented. Thunder in German means "Donner".

The fifth day of the week: Even if one would think the forth day's name can somehow be derived from the idea of getting "free" of the stress of the weekdays, the name of the day origins from the name of the ancient Norse chief goddess, Frige (*also: Friya or Frigga*).

The sixth day of the week: As it can be seen, there are two different approaches. West Germanic languages are influenced by Rome and the Latin tongue. Saturn was the Roman God of time.

The other approach is, however, more interesting. Ancient Germans bathed only on this day of the week, so that was the day for bath, that is, "löga" (Swe). In some form, this expression appears in the North Germanic names.

The last day of the week: In every case, the Sun itself is included in this name. The idea comes from the Greek, who named this day also after the sun, calling it "Hemera heliou".

\* "Samstag" origins from the Yiddish "Sabbath". "Sonnabend" (roughly: "the day before Sunday") and Saturntag are also used. The first one in the Northern and Eastern dialects, whereas the latter one in the dialects along the Dutch-German border.