

Why Friday 13th creates weird bargains - and how to take advantage

Millions of Britons will alter their usual buying behaviour this Friday, merely because it is the 13th.

For those who don't buy into superstition, this presents some unusual opportunities to pick up a bargain.

Last year was particularly "unlucky" because it had three Friday 13ths. Most years have just one or two.

Statistically there seems to be less likelihood of accidents or other unfortunate events on Friday 13ths, according to insurance data, because drivers and homeowners are extra cautious.

Adam Powell, head of operations at broker Policy Expert, said: "These figures suggest the UK remains superstitious as ever and that historically we take extra care around that unlucky date."

But for those who aren't hiding under the covers all day, there are some strange savings to be made.

Book a bargain flight

Flyers not prone to superstition should check prices on Friday 13th. Kayak, a flight booking website, found that travellers could save 41pc on a flight to Copenhagen if they choose to go on Friday 13 May. On average, flights are 14pc cheaper.

Last year, the cheapest day to fly was June 13 with flight prices 22pc less than usual. That month, the average price of a domestic return was £233 which fell to £181 on Friday 13th.

Loella Pehrsson, regional director at Kayak, said: "Flight prices are, of course, based on demand, so the data indicates that Brits really are superstitious enough that they would prefer not to fly on Friday 13th.

"Most airlines even facilitate any superstitious fliers by not having an aisle 13 on their aircrafts."

Buying or selling a home

The number of property transactions decline on Friday 13th. Research by FindaProperty.com found that between 2005 and 2012, there were 43pc less transactions on Friday 13th compared to other Fridays in the month.

The worst day was May 13 2011, when there were 51pc less transactions. Ironically, these transactions are likely to run more smoothly given that the staff handling them, in solicitors firms and banks, will have more time on their hands.

Property bargains are more likely to relate to houses or flats numbered 13. Number 13 houses are not that common – property website Zoopla found only 28pc of streets have one.

Number 13 houses are rare but cheaper than other numbers

In 2011, Zoopla found that houses numbered 13 on average cost £3,924 less than houses with luckier numbers - good news for brave buyers.

Weddings

Ok, it's a bit late to book this year but doing so in 2017 could clip significant amounts of the average £24,000 cost.

According to data compiled by TheKnot.com, a wedding concierge service, 1,345 fewer couples are getting married on Friday, 13 July 2017 compared to the following Friday.

For those not concerned about chandeliers crashing down or the chance of being jilted, wedding venue House For an Art Lover offers couples a 13pc discount if they get married on Friday 13th.

The venue has been offering the marked-down marriages since 2013. It is currently taking bookings for unlucky days in 2017 – January 13 and October 13.

Lynn Stevenson, of House for an Art Lover, said some couples like to make it a feature of the day.

She said: "If you make a feature of it rather than avoiding the elephant in the room I believe it makes it a much more appealing option for people, particularly when most

are budget led - it offers them a weekend date with a discount that wouldn't normally be available."

Investments

The stock market is rife with superstition and some investors still swear by the old saying "sell in May and go away" reflecting the age old assumption that stocks underperform between May and the end of October.

Adrian Ash, of gold and silver exchange BullionVault, said many traders still refuse to place new trades on Friday 13th. On the last four "unlucky" Fridays, there's been a 45pc drop in trade compared to a week either side, he said.

Jason Hollands, managing director of Tilney BestInvest, says there is no evidence that Friday 13th is bad for the market.

AT A GLANCE

Friday 13th Facts

- Some believe Friday 13 is unlucky because at the Last Supper Jesus and his 12 disciples made a party of 13, Judas being the 13th. Jesus was crucified on a Friday so the two go hand in hand
- A 1907 book called "Friday, the Thirteenth" by Thomas William Lawson about a business man who tried to crash the stock market on Friday 13 is thought to reinforce the message
- Fear of the number 13 is known as Triskaidekaphobia. Fear of Friday 13 is Paraskavedekatriaphobia
- Apparently, Winston Churchill refused to sit in row 13 on a plane or at the theatre