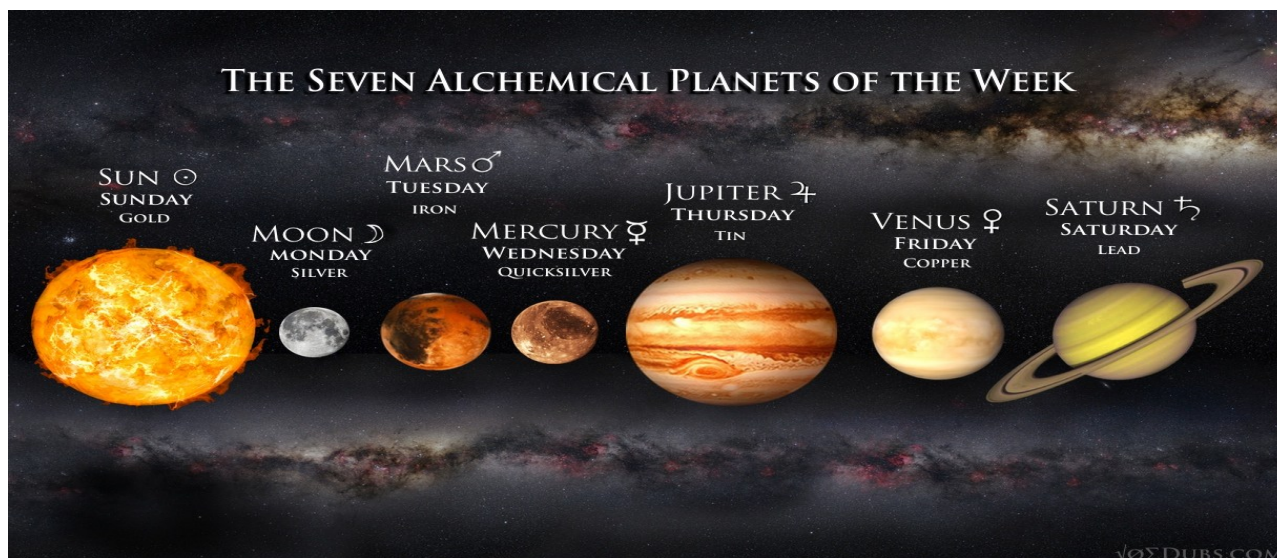


## Origins of the Days of the Week



In inglese, i nomi dei giorni della settimana derivano dalla mitologia romana, germanica e nordica. Grazie alla lunga storia della lingua Inglese, parole dei giorni della settimana provengono da culture e lingue diverse. Secondo Genesi, il primo capitolo del Vecchio Testamento della Bibbia, Sabbath (una parola ebraica che significa giorno di riposo) è stato l'ultimo giorno della settimana in cui il Dio ha avuto il tempo per rilassarsi dopo i sei lunghi giorni faticosi della creazione. Questo giorno è uguale a Sabato in inglese ed è per questo che la settimana inizia con la Domenica in paesi di lingua inglese.

In English, names of the days of the week are derived from Roman, Germanic and Norse mythology. Thanks to the long history of the English language, words of the days of the week came from different cultures and languages. According to Genesis, the first chapter of the Bible's Old Testament, Sabbath (a Hebrew word meaning Day Of Rest) was the week's last day on which the God had a relax time after the six-day long creation toil. This day equals to Saturday in English and that is why the week starts with Sunday in English-speaking countries.

### Sunday

The name of this day is associated with the **Sun (Sole/Apollo)**. You can object that the Sun is not a planet, that it is a star. For ancient cultures, the Sun and its daily cycle were crucial because their lives depended on its light and heat making it possible to grow plants and get rid of the fear of the nightly shadows. Every morning, they were afraid the great gold sphere would not rise up in the heavens again. So the Sun was mostly understood as an incarnation of their most important deity and they were begging it with their prayers to come back the other day. In many Romance languages, Sunday is called the Lord's Day (Domingo in Spanish, dimanche in French, domenica in Italian: based on the Latin expression Dies Dominica) since this was the day when the God started his one week creation feast.

## **Monday**

It is easy to remember - Monday is the **Moon (Luna/Artemide)** Day. The word moon is associated with the Norse god Måni (Máni). He was pulling the moon across the sky, trying to escape and save it from a mythological wolf. At the end of the world, the wolf will catch them and tear the moon into pieces. This apocalyptic period of the world is called Ragnarok in Norse mythology. In Romance languages, Monday is also the Moon Day (lunes in Spanish, lundi in French, lunedì in Italian: coming from Latin Dies Lunae).

## **Tuesday**

Tyr (referred to as **Tiw (Marte)**, Tiu or Tew in Old English) was the god of combat. He had just one hand. The prophecy of Sybil that three siblings would bring troubles to gods alarmed the pantheon and Odin (see also the section for Wednesday) decided to get rid of them. One of them was Fenrir, a huge mythological wolf. They tried to bound him, but he was too strong and tore any chain they used. Finally they asked dwarves to make a special, untearable binding called Gleipnir. It consisted of six wondrous ingredients which do not exist any longer because the gods took them from the world for good. Fenrir did not believe them that they would set him free again after having tried the binding on him. Tyr had to put his arm in his mouth as the guarantee. That is why one of his arms is missing. And again, when Ragnarok begins, the wolf will free himself from Gleipnir and avenge this deception by devouring Odin. In Romance languages, this day belongs to Mars, the Roman god of war (martes in Spanish, mardi in French).

## **Wednesday**

The fourth day of the week is named after **Woden (Mercurio)** (Odin or Wodan). In Anglo-Saxon world, Woden is not necessarily the mirror of the Norse Odin. Up to the seventh century, he was worshipped as the main deity. He was the psychopomp which is a word for someone who helps deliver human souls to the afterlife. In Romance languages, the name of the day comes from Latin Dies Mercurii (miércoles in Spanish, mercoledì in Italian, mercredi in French), associated with Mercury, the Roman god of trade, profit and commerce. In German, the word for Wednesday is simply Mittwoch, meaning the middle of the week.

## **Thursday:**

Thursday is named after **Thor (Giove)**, the Norse god of thunder. He travels through the heavens in a chariot, wearing a special belt and iron gloves which give him extra strength to lift his giant hammer. Romance languages based their fifth day's name upon the Latin Dies Iovis, meaning the Day of Jupiter (jueves in Spanish, jeudi in French, giovedì in Italian). Jupiter was a chief Roman god, the god of laws and social order. His attribute was a thunderbolt.

## Friday

The Norse goddess **Frigg (Venere)** represented beauty, love, the household, fertility and motherhood. She was Odin's wife. She wonderfully balances out the dreadfulness of all the masculine gods sitting around our week table. Derived from Latin Dies Veneris, Friday is viernes in Spanish, vendredi in French and venerdi in Italian. The day belongs to Venus, the Roman goddess of beauty, love and fertility.

## Saturday

The word Saturday is derived from **Saturn (Saturno)**, the god of harvest and agriculture. In Latin, the word for Saturday is Sambata Dies, meaning the Day of Sabbath (sábado in Spanish, sabato in Italian, samedi in French). Sabbath is a Hebrew word for the Day of Rest. It was the last day of the all-in-one-week creation run. A day when the God finally had some relax, lying in the Garden of Eden and curiously waiting for what happens next.

<http://www.renegadetribune.com/day-saturn-vs-old-germanic-days-week/>

<http://www.jamesrobertwatson.com/months.html>

## Origins of the names of the months

Name	Comes from	Who or what?	Why?
January	<a href="#">Janus</a>	God of Doors	This month opens the year.
February	februo	purify	This was a Roman month of sacrifices and purification.
March	<a href="#">Mars</a>	God of War	Start of year for soldiers (no fighting during winter)
April	aperire	open	This is the month when trees open their leaves.
May	<a href="#">Maia</a>	Goddess of Growth	This is the month when plants really start to grow.
June	<a href="#">Juno</a>	Queen of the Gods	
July	Julius Caesar	Ruler of Rome	He reorganised the calendar.
August	Augustus	Ruler of Rome	He thought he was at least as important as Julius Caesar!
September	septem	seven	Seventh month (counting from March)
October	octo	eight	Eighth month (counting from March)
November	novem	nine	Ninth month (counting from March)
December	decem	ten	Tenth month (counting from March)