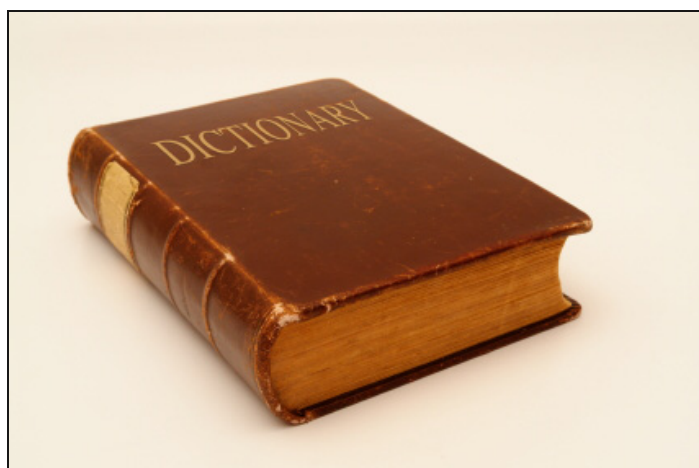


mental_floss Blog » 14 More Wonderful Words With No English Equivalent

Earlier this year, Bill DeMain introduced us to [15 Wonderful Words With No English Equivalent](#). Now that you've integrated those into your vocabulary, here are 14 more.



1. Shemomedjamo (Georgian)

You know when you're really full, but your meal is just so delicious, you can't stop eating it? The Georgians feel your pain. This word means, "I accidentally ate the whole thing."

2. Pelinti (Buli, Ghana)

Your friend bites into a piece of piping hot pizza, then opens his mouth and sort of tilts his head around while making an "aaaarrrrahh" noise. The Ghanaians have a word for that. More specifically, it means "to move hot food around in your mouth."

3. Layogenic (Tagalog)

Remember in *Clueless* when Cher describes someone as "a full-on Monet...from far away, it's OK, but up close it's a big old mess"?

That's exactly what this word means.

4. Rhwe (Tsonga, South Africa)

College kids, relax. There's actually a word for "to sleep on the floor without a mat, while drunk and naked."

5. Zeg (Georgian)

It means "the day after tomorrow." Seriously, why don't we have a word for that in English?

6. Pållegg (Norwegian)

Sandwich Artists unite! The Norwegians have a non-specific descriptor for anything – ham, cheese, jam, Nutella, mustard, herring, pickles, Doritos, you name it – you might consider putting into a sandwich.

7. Lagom (Swedish)

Maybe Goldilocks was Swedish? This slippery little word is hard to define, but means something like, "Not too much, and not too little, but juuuuust right."

8. Tartle (Scots)

The nearly onomatopoeic word for that panicky hesitation just before you have to introduce someone whose name you can't quite remember.

9. Koi No Yokan (Japanese)

The sense upon first meeting a person that the two of you are going to fall into love.

10. Mamihlapinatapai (Yaghan language of Tierra del Fuego)

This word captures that special look shared between two people, when both are wishing that the other would do something that they both want, but neither want to do.

11. Fremdschämen (German); Myötähäpeä (Finnish)

The kindler, gentler cousins of Schadenfreude, both these words mean something akin to "vicarious embarrassment." Or, in other words, that-feeling-you-get-when-you-watch-*Meet the Parents*.

12. Cafune (Brazilian Portuguese)

Leave it to the Brazilians to come up with a word for “tenderly running your fingers through your lover’s hair.”

13. Greng-jai (Thai)

That feeling you get when you don’t want someone to do something for you because it would be a pain for them.

14. Kaelling (Danish)

You know that woman who stands on her doorstep (or in line at the supermarket, or at the park, or in a restaurant) cursing at her children? The Danes know her, too.

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It can be a more vigorous head scratch too, but always well-intended.

It also applies to your dog, or your child, etc.

We also don’t have a word for “the day after tomorrow”, but we do have a word for “the

day before yesterday". "Anteontem" literally means "pre-yesterday".

posted by **@tiagor2** on [10-4-2011 at 4:40 pm](#)

I wish I could remember the word, it has slipped my mind at the moment, but the Italians have a word that literally means "impromptu midnight spaghetti dinner"

posted by **JLBOB** on [10-4-2011 at 4:42 pm](#)

The Japanese have a word for "death from overwork" it's called Karoshi.

posted by **John** on [10-4-2011 at 4:58 pm](#)

In Spanish you can use the word "tirada" to mean "sort of all tossed about" It is a bit stronger than just "messy."

posted by **@parriola** on [10-4-2011 at 4:58 pm](#)

In Spanish a word for an afternoon get together or party in the afternoon is "Tardeada."

posted by **@parriola** on [10-4-2011 at 5:00 pm](#)

Isn't the Japanese one 3 words?

posted by **BWNYC** on [10-4-2011 at 5:09 pm](#)

In Russian "syshnyak" is being thirsty because you've been drinking alcohol.

posted by **Joshua** on [10-4-2011 at 5:11 pm](#)

Italian has an awesome word that means pretty much to get things off your chest or have a rant about something that's been bothering you: sfogarsi

posted by **Ratsba** on [10-4-2011 at 5:23 pm](#)

My fave: schadenfreude (pleasure derived from the misfortune/pain of others)

posted by **profexorgeek** on [10-4-2011 at 5:27 pm](#)

We need a word to describe the experience of using too much shampoo when you first wash your hair after getting a haircut.

posted by **Scott** on [10-4-2011 at 5:38 pm](#)

Layogenic is a combination of Tagalog for far (layo) and the suffix -genic. Talikogenic is the Filipino word for someone who looks like he could be cute from the back (likod) but actually isn't.

posted by **anjp** on [10-4-2011 at 5:52 pm](#)

It is lagom, not logom. I'm a partner in a graphic design firm, and we liked that word so much we named our business after it!

posted by **jimmywags** on [10-4-2011 at 6:09 pm](#)

Number 10 gave me an instant mental image of Woody Allen

posted by **Ethel** on [10-4-2011 at 6:33 pm](#)

Übermorgen is German and means: the day after tomorrow

posted by **mackfly** on [10-4-2011 at 6:46 pm](#)

5. Zeg in Spanish is "pasado mañana"

posted by **Carito** on [10-4-2011 at 6:46 pm](#)

there's a word for day after tomorrow in Finnish too: ylihuominen

posted by **a random finn** on [10-4-2011 at 6:48 pm](#)

Fremdschämen is worse than Schadenfreude, for the one who feels it.
Although not nice, Schadenfreude makes you smile.

Fremdschämen hurts, like, when you see people in a talk show or any whatever-idol show who aren't ashamed of anything although they are just embarrassing, a failure, but don't see that. YOU feel the shame THEY should feel, like it's you on the stage.

"ashamed by proxy" :D Some people enjoy this feeling (and that's why they watch stuff like that), other hit the remote control because they just can't stand it ^^

posted by **Ligeia** on [10-4-2011 at 6:57 pm](#)

@ Scott. I know what you mean.

@ Ethel. I now have a mental image that is making me sick to my stomach.

posted by **Ken C** on [10-4-2011 at 6:59 pm](#)

no. 3 is a made up word. check you resources please.

posted by **f878** on [10-4-2011 at 7:00 pm](#)

The Japanese also have a word for the day after tomorrow: Asatte.

posted by **noirakita** on [10-4-2011 at 7:06 pm](#)

I would argue that we do have an English equivalent to Pållegg – it's "filling". As in "what sandwich filling would you like?"

posted by **Silverdragon** on [10-4-2011 at 7:18 pm](#)

Re #5: The Hebrew word for the day after tomorrow is "machortayim", or literally, "double tomorrow" ("machar" is "tomorrow" in Hebrew). However, there is a standalone word in Hebrew for the day before yesterday: "Shilshom"!

posted by **MetFanMac** on [10-4-2011 at 7:29 pm](#)

Spanish also has a word for the day after yesterday which is "anteayer" and the evening of the day before yesterday is "antenoché". We also have a word for the spouse of your spouse's sibling: conculñado (man) and conculñada (female) it means something like co-brother in law since you are both related only politically.

posted by **Paula** on [10-4-2011 at 7:33 pm](#)

Not only have the Germans words for the day after tomorrow (übermorgen) and the day before yesterday (vorgestern), they can also make up words for "the day before the day before the day before (...) tomorrow": vorvorvorvorvor(...)gestern, or the equivalent überüberüberüber(...)morgen. Repeat ad ultimo.

posted by **Maja** on [10-4-2011 at 8:06 pm](#)

Thanks for taking my "mamihlapinatapai" suggestion (if that's indeed what happened)!

posted by **Stefan** on [10-4-2011 at 9:32 pm](#)

#11 is actually called "schizoxendria."

But maybe that's less English and more...Latin-ish.

posted by [Jenn Zuko](#) on [10-4-2011 at 9:42 pm](#)

spanish also has a word for "the day after tomorrow" : pasadomañana

posted by **malena** on [10-4-2011 at 10:36 pm](#)

Koi No Yokan reminds me of a Yiddish term called B'shert. A b'shert is a match made in heaven; something meant to be.

A lover can be your b'shert.

Even opening a book to the page you need could possibly be b'shert.

posted by **Danielle** on [10-4-2011 at 10:37 pm](#)

JLBOB – Impromptu Italian midnight meal = "una spaghezzata."

posted by **Kim** on [10-4-2011 at 10:44 pm](#)

My native language Malayalam has a word for day after tomorrow, matanalluh (my transliteration may be off).

posted by [VR](#) on [10-4-2011 at 11:11 pm](#)

Re: Fremdschämen, my husband and I describe this phenomenon as "painful to watch."
He has no issue watching such things. I, however, can't stand it!

posted by **Kerry** on [10-4-2011 at 11:16 pm](#)

I experience Fremdschämen every time I watch "The Office" – Michael Scott makes me cringe! But in a funny way.

posted by **Lynley** on [10-4-2011 at 11:19 pm](#)

Mongolian also has a word for 'the day after tomorrow' (Nogoodor). There is even a word for 'the day before yesterday' (Urjigdar).

posted by **Paul** on [10-4-2011 at 11:50 pm](#)

Love this! But a pronunciation guide would make it even better. Hard to incorporate them into our lives if we don't know how to say them.

posted by **Anne** on [10-4-2011 at 11:58 pm](#)

As anjp said, layogenic is not a real word, but an artificial portmanteau of “layo” (distant) and “photogenic”.

posted by **Dan** on [10-5-2011 at 12:33 am](#)

Korean has a full set of days, i.e.:

eotguje(some time before the day before yesterday) – guje(the day before yesterday) –
eoje(yesterday) – oneul(today) – naeil(tomorrow) – mo're(the day after tomorrow) –
naelmo're(some time after the day after tomorrow).

Time-keeping, eh?

Maybe the Brazillian word “saudade” deserves a mention. The feeling of longing of something intangible of the past.

And then there's a Korean word for “the sorrow and grief that was repressed on the inside for years and could never be put into words properly”: han.

Then there's “cheonseng'yeonboon” which means in Korean “the couple destined to be together by heaven.”

posted by **Nemo** on [10-5-2011 at 1:49 am](#)

yup, layogenic, talikogenic and a cornacupia of words are all made up and as a filipino, i am proud of that. i think it shows how creative we can be. i bet mentalflossers will lose their senses once they get wind of bekimon, gay lingo and using proper nouns as verbs (luz valdez means loser while OMGina pareno is long way of saying OMG). bottom line, if its colorful and there's no harm, why not have some fun? God forbid, but they haven't found their way into legal and “formal” lit (not yet anyways!)

posted by **sheila** on [10-5-2011 at 3:21 am](#)

#5 is called Friday in English.

posted by **Sir Fatboy** on [10-5-2011 at 5:09 am](#)

The etymology of “lagom” has nothing to do with drinks – it is simply derived from an older dative case of “lag” (law) and means “according to the law”. The rest of muffy's explanation, though, may be correct, as one of the theories is that it has to do with the fair sharing of resources. =)

posted by **Alex** on [10-5-2011 at 5:11 am](#)

My vote for “Wonderful English Word With No Swedish Equivalent” goes to “vicarious”.

posted by **Alex** on [10-5-2011 at 6:43 am](#)

Fremdschämen: To be embarrassed through the actions of others. i.e. “Many Americans experience “Fremdschämen” on the anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima/Nagasaki.

I'd like to see the German word “doch” be implemented to the English language.

Doch has no definite meaning. It is nothing but a positive retort to a negative statement.

Boy “no way Mom. I’m not going to the dentist”.

Mom “Doch” (instead of: “Oh, yes you are. Now put on your coat”)

5 minutes later they’re on their way.

posted by **Daniel Pixley** on [10-5-2011 at 8:31 am](#)

In Malay Language, there are words to describe;

The day before yesterday = kelmarin

(yesterday = semalam)

The day after tomorrow = lusa

The day after tomorrow’s tomorrow = tulat

and the day after as well = langkat

posted by **Aris** on [10-5-2011 at 9:10 am](#)

In Japanese, the “day after tomorrow” is あさって (asatte), and the “day before yesterday” is おととい (ototoi). Makes for a much shorter movie title for “The Day After Tomorrow”, eh? ;p

posted by **Melody** on [10-5-2011 at 9:11 am](#)

“Fremdschämen” is what I’ve always called secondhand embarrassment.

posted by **Emma** on [10-5-2011 at 9:16 am](#)

I think the day after tomorrow shall be...

“threemorrow”

posted by **Cody** on [10-5-2011 at 9:36 am](#)

Fremdschämen = cringeworthy?

Also, Layogenic (Tagalog) could be 50-10-2-5, a 10 at 50 feet, but a 5 at 2 feet.

posted by **Bob** on [10-5-2011 at 10:12 am](#)

It's really a reach to call "koi no yokan" one word. "Koi" is romantic love, "no" is a grammatical marker, "you" means "like" (as in similar to), and "kan" is "feeling". So I'd call that four words, or three words and a particle – no more concise than the English.

posted by **matthew** on [10-5-2011 at 10:29 am](#)

@Cody, I concur! And to add to the punnery...

A "tartletale" is someone who goes to tattle on another, but suddenly forgets his/her name.

posted by **Jon B.** on [10-5-2011 at 11:53 am](#)

re: Daniel Pixley

i think what you're looking for with 'doch' would be something like:

Garth: No way!

Wayne: Way!

posted by **adamp** on [10-5-2011 at 1:29 pm](#)

I would contend that the English word 'filling' could be considered synonymous with 'Pålegg'. In Dutch there is also a word with that meaning: 'beleg'. To make matters more interesting, the same word also means 'siege'.

In Polish there is a word for the day after tomorrow, 'pojutrze'. In fact it is also common to say 'popojutrze' meaning the day after the day after tomorrow. Similarly there is a word for the day before yesterday i.e. 'przedwczoraj'. Analogous to tomorrow you can say 'przedprzedwczoraj' meaning, the day before the day before yesterday. ;-)

Another interesting example is the Dutch word 'gezellig' which signifies the fun, homely, warm atmosphere at a gathering of friends or family.

posted by **Chelman** on [10-5-2011 at 3:03 pm](#)

"Filling" is not a good equivalent for "pålegg" because it means "that which has been laid on top," in reference to open-faced sandwiches. And "filling" has way too many other meanings, including the dental one. If Americans ate open-faced sandwiches, they would probably use what they use for pizza: "toppings," which would be pretty close to an exact equivalent.

posted by **Kim Thompson** on [10-5-2011 at 6:23 pm](#)

I'd say that's pretty much the opposite of schaudenfreude rather than a toned-down version of it.



posted by **jdhs223** on [10-5-2011 at 9:33 pm](#)

These lists are idiotic. First of all, at least the Finnish word is not "one word." It's a compound word, something that happens very often in Finnish (and possibly more often than in English, giving them countless "words" that English has no "equivalents" for).

Secondly, did you know that some languages, such as Danish, don't have equivalents for "today?" Shocking I know, but the poor Danes have to use two words for that – "i dag." I wonder how the Danish lists look. "Did you ever wish we had only one word for the day that is happening right now? Well, the lucky English do. We need that word!"

Please stop reducing languages and translation to "equivalents."

And please stop giving us language "information" from known scammers such as the Global Language Monitor. Here's Ben Zimmer on the GLM:

<http://languageblog.idc.upenn.edu/nll/?p=972>

posted by **Joe** on [10-6-2011 at 2:51 am](#)

There are many Thai slang words that describe every nuance of sexual activity that have no English equivalent. One such word is the same as the name of an Oregon town called Hebo. You'll have to ask a Thai person to get the meaning, but be careful to which Thai person you're asking.

posted by **Mike** on [10-6-2011 at 7:00 am](#)

In response to #1, in the south we have a word for it. It's founded.

posted by **H** on [10-6-2011 at 9:10 am](#)

Urban Dictionary defines Nextmorrow as the day after tomorrow.

posted by **Judy** on [10-6-2011 at 9:26 am](#)

Korea also has a word for the "day after tomorrow" (mo rae) and also for the "day before yesterday" (geu juh gae). I wish you had used one of these instead of using a Georgian word twice.

posted by **daeywi** on [10-6-2011 at 10:00 am](#)

My favorite norwegian words:

Fylleangst, which mean “drunken angst”, the feeling when you wake up very hungover and fear what you did the night before, because you don’t quite remember.

Pulehår: when your hair is kinda fuzzy and messy on the back of your head after sex (lying down)

posted by **Hilde** on [10-7-2011 at 6:32 pm](#)

Japanese also has a word that means “the day after tomorrow”: assatte.

posted by **Katie** on [10-7-2011 at 8:09 pm](#)

In German, we have “übermorgen” for “the day after tomorrow”, and “vorgestern” for the day before yesterday. I’ve always wondered why there is no equivalent in English.

posted by **Jules** on [10-8-2011 at 1:53 am](#)

Day after tomorrow in Malay is ‘lusa’.

posted by **sarah** on [10-8-2011 at 5:18 am](#)

A Norwegian word with truly no English equivalent is “Fy”. It’s used for yelling at someone, and is completely generic, it can be used to say “bad dog!” or “bad girl!” or “shame on you!” or “that was a bad thing to do!”, all according to the situation. It is also used before certain curse words, to emphasize the expletive. So, so short and useful!

posted by **N.Wood** on [10-8-2011 at 6:01 am](#)

@Nemo

You beat me to the “saudade” reference, but something just died inside of me when you called it brazilian word, instead of portuguese...

posted by **S** on [10-8-2011 at 6:38 am](#)

#5, in Urdu, day after tomorrow is parson where the ‘n’ is not pronounced fully but just has a nasal sound towards the end of the word.

posted by **Zainab** on [10-8-2011 at 6:51 am](#)

Thanks for diverting me before I really, really need get back to some important work (do you have any other nice blog entries?)

Some more German:

- 1) Kuddelmuddel: big mess, some very hairy situation, everything is entangled. Can be used for relationships.
- 2) I think the Yiddish b'shert has a common root with "Bescherung" which is a ceremony in which everybody gets something (e.g., at Christmas). But a situation can also be a 'schöne Bescherung' (nice Bescherung with a sarcastic undertone) which actually describes another type of mess. Envision: your cat played with your ball of wool, a child drew the blanket from the fully laid table, ...
- 3) "Gespannt sein" (it is considered one word): being curious about the outcome of something. Gespannt means 'being tense' (literally) but that would be the wrong translation because the term can also express very mild curiosity. It is a neutral, almost scientific/observer version of "looking forward to", "being anxious to know".
- 4) Kladderadatsch: all your stuff. "Take away all of your Kladderadatsch here and let me lay out the table".

Btw, do you know the book by Douglas Adams: "The Deeper Meaning of Liff: A Dictionary of Things There Aren't Any Words for Yet—But There Ought to Be".

Hilarious must-read.

posted by **Nina** on [10-8-2011 at 10:54 am](#)



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