



# Germany

Through the turmoil of the 20th century, Germany has emerged as a powerful, confident nation and, with the memory of the wall that divided Berlin into east and west still fresh in the national consciousness, continues to be the driving force towards greater European integration. The German people enjoy a reputation for accuracy, precision and efficiency – words often used to describe their excellent cars – although an equally enduring image is of lederhosen-clad Bavarians hoisting beer steins at Munich's famous Oktoberfest. Neither of these stereotypes reflects the diversity of Germany's towns and cities. From romantic Heidelberg, the medieval Nuremberg of Dürer and the Weimar of Goethe and the Bauhaus, to the lively port cities of Bremen and Hamburg, the financial center of Frankfurt and revitalized cities of the former east like Dresden. Overshadowing them all is the cosmopolitan decadence of Berlin, where bureaucrats of the new capital rub shoulders with artists and techno club-goers. The German landscape is similarly varied. In the south, the Alps attract ski-lovers in winter and hiking enthusiasts in summer, who come to explore the scenic lakes and atmospheric castles here and in the Black Forest. Watersports are another summer pastime, and in the north, the island of Rügen with its majestic white cliffs and coastal towns like Wilhelmshaven offer terrific facilities for adventures on the North Sea.

## General Information

**Area:** 357,021 sq km (137,847 sq miles)

**Population:** 82.6 million (UN estimate 2007)

**Capital:** Berlin

**Geography:** The Federal Republic of Germany shares frontiers with Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland. The NW of the country has a coastline on the North Sea with islands known for their health resorts while the Baltic coastline in the NE stretches to the Danish to the Polish border. The country is divided into 16 states.

**Language:** German. English is widely spoken.

**Time:** GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to Saturday before last Sunday in September).

**Electricity:** 230 volts AC, 50Hz. European-style round 2-pin plugs.

## Money

**Currency:** EURO

**Credit Cards:** Credit cards are widely accepted. It is also advisable to carry cash.

**Travelers Checks:** These are widely accepted. Generally, they provide the best exchange rate.

**Banking Hours:** Generally Mon-Fri 8:30AM-1:00PM and 2:00PM-4:00PM; Thurs 8:30AM-1:00PM and 2:30-5:30PM. Bureaux de change in airports and main railway stations are open 6:00AM-10PM.

## Public Holidays

**Apr 10** Good Friday

**Apr 13** Easter Monday

**May 1** Labor Day

**May 21** Ascension Day

**Jun 1** Whit Monday

**Jun 11** Corpus Christi\*

**Aug 15** Assumption\*

**Oct 3** Day of Unity

**Oct 31** Day of Reformation\*

**Nov 1** All Saints' Day\*

**Nov 18** Repentance Day

**Dec 25** Christmas Day

**Dec 26** Boxing Day

**Jan 1** New Year's Day

**Jan 6** Epiphany\*

\*Epiphany, Corpus Christi, Assumption of Virgin Mary, Day of Reformation, All Saints' Day and Day of Prayer and Repentance are not observed in all areas.

## International Travel

**Air:** The national airline is *Lufthansa* (LH) ([www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com)).

### Approximate flight times

**London** to Frankfurt is 1 hour 30 minutes

**New York** to Frankfurt/M is 8 hours 30 minutes

**Chicago** to Frankfurt is 8 hours 30 minutes

**Los Angeles** to Frankfurt/M is 11 hours 20 minutes

### International Airports

*Frankfurt/M* (FRA) (Rhein/Main)

([www.airportcity-frankfurt.com](http://www.airportcity-frankfurt.com)) is Germany's major air transport hub, 13 km/8 miles southwest of the city. Regular buses connect the airport with the city center (main railway station). By bus (travel time 25 minutes), by train (travel time 15 minutes), both available to Mainz & Wiesbaden. Taxi service is available.

*Berlin-Tegel* (TXL) ([www.berlin-airport.de](http://www.berlin-airport.de)) is 8 km/5 miles northwest of the city (travel time 20 minutes). Bus and taxi services available.

*Munich* (MUC) (Franz Joseph Strauss) ([www.munich-airport.de](http://www.munich-airport.de)) is 29 km/18 miles northeast of the city (travel time by train 38 minutes). Bus and taxi services are available.

*Cologne* (Köln/Bonn) ([www.airport-cgn.de/](http://www.airport-cgn.de/)) (CGN) is 14 km/9 miles southeast of Cologne and 21 km/13 miles northeast of Bonn (travel time 25 and 35 minutes respectively) with train, Express bus & taxi services to both cities.

*Duesseldorf* (DUS) ([www.duesseldorf-international.de](http://www.duesseldorf-international.de)) is 8 km/5 miles north of the city (travel time 20 minutes). Train connections, bus and taxi services are available.

*Hamburg* (HAM) ([www.ham.airport.de](http://www.ham.airport.de)) is 9 km/6 miles north of the city center (travel time 25 minutes). Bus and taxi services available.

## Social & Business Customs

**Food** The main meal of the day in Germany tends to be lunch with a light snack eaten at about seven in the evening. Breakfasts, served in hotels consist usually of a boiled egg, bread rolls with jam, honey, cold cuts



and cheese slices. Menu meals, served in a simple Gasthof or Cafe usually includes three courses. International specialty restaurants such as Chinese, Greek and Turkish can be found everywhere in the western part of the country. Local regional specialties cover an enormous range.

**Drink** The national drink is beer in its many forms. Regional flavors vary from light pilsner-type lagers to heavy stouts. German wines are among the finest in the world. Some of the most famous are grown in the Rhine and the Moselle Valley.

**Nightlife** In larger towns and cities in western and eastern Germany, visitors will have the choice between theater, opera, nightclubs, bars with live music and discos catering to every taste. Berlin, in particular is famous for its large selection of after-hours venues.

**Shopping** Special purchases include precision optical equipment such as binoculars and cameras, porcelain, handmade crystal, silver, steelware, Solingen knives, leatherwear, sports equipment, toys from Nuremberg and Bavarian Loden cloth. Special purchases in eastern Germany include musical instruments, wooden carved toys from the Erzgebirge Mountains and Meissen china.

**Shopping Hours** Stores are generally open from 6AM to 8PM on Monday to Friday, 6AM-4PM on Saturday and closed on Sunday.

**Tipping** It is customary to tip taxi drivers, hairdressers, cloakroom attendants and in bars, and a 10 per cent tip in restaurants.

**Business** Business people are expected to dress smartly. Many local business people speak English but it is an advantage to have a working knowledge of German. Appointment times should be strictly adhered to. Always use titles such as Herr Doktor or Frau Doktor when addressing business contacts. Office hours: Mon-Fri 8:00AM-4:00PM (most close earlier on Friday).

## Climate

Temperate throughout the country with warm summers and cold winters but prolonged periods of frost or snow are rare. Rain falls throughout the year.