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Holidays**

Your road to freedom

Germany

Self-Drive Guide

Call 1300 723 972 or visit www.driveaway.com.au

Worldwide Car Hire, European Car Leasing & Motorhome Rentals - Over 8,000 locations in 130 countries!

**DriveAway
Holidays**
Your road to freedom

Take a Self-Drive Holiday in Germany

With over 25 years experience and award-winning service, let DriveAway Holidays plan your next self-drive adventure. We offer an extensive range of vehicles to suit everyone's need and budget at over 8000 locations in 130 countries worldwide. Enjoy the freedom of having your own rental car and discover the world at your own pace.

Germany is an incredibly beautiful and diverse country. There is something for everyone including medieval towns and villages, spectacular scenery, ancient monuments and fascinating historical sites. Visit bustling cities such as Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt, which are full of great eateries, shopping, night clubs and bars. Explore the Rhine and Moselle regions for world class wine and food. Enjoy the unsurpassed beauty of the Bavarian Alps and tour the River Elbe or River Main and visit quaint villages along the way.

With so much to see and do in Germany, the best way to see it all is by car. Germany has a fantastic road and highway network. The Autobahn will connect you between all the major cities quickly and efficiently, and will allow you to enjoy all the famous sites on your self-drive holiday.

Contents	Page
Take a Self-Drive Holiday in Germany	2
Renting a car in Germany	3
Rental vehicle insurance	3
Driving in Germany	5
Berlin	8
Self-Drive Tours: Berlin to Bautzen / See the Spreewald	9
Central Germany	10
Self-Drive Tours: Frankfurt to Wurzberg / The Best of Hesse	11
Southern Germany	12
Self-Drive Tours: The Romantic Road / Bertha Benz Memorial Drive	13
Western Germany	14
Self-Drive Tours: Follow the Rhine / Explore the Siebengeburge National Park	15
Northern Germany	16
Self-Drive Tours: The Fairytale Road / The Baltic Coast	17
Eastern Germany	18
Self-Drive Tours: Potsdam to Leipzig / Follow the mighty Elbe River	19
Climate & Weather / Language and Useful Phrases	20
Stay Safe / Stay Healthy / German Money Matters	21



- Convenient locations throughout Europe
- Competitive rates

- World's largest car rental network
- Latest model vehicles
- Low carbon emissions

Book with Driveaway Holidays.



Renting a Car in Germany

When selecting a rental vehicle, take into consideration where you will be travelling, how many people will be travelling in the vehicle, luggage size and the kind of driving you intend to do. DriveAway Holidays offers a vast range of vehicles from small economy sizes to larger full-sized cars, 4WDs, convertibles and luxury vehicles. The ACRIS system on page 4 will help you find a car that suits your needs. This is internationally recognised code which will ensure you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

As a general rule of thumb in most European countries, the smaller the car the better, as some roads were made before the general use of cars so lanes can be very narrow and winding. Diesel can save you money on fuel costs and can be requested for hire and guaranteed for an additional cost.

Automatic and Manual Transmissions

Both automatic and manual vehicles are available Germany. Automatic vehicles are generally more expensive than manual cars and may be scarcer at smaller depots.

Do I need a Credit card?

Yes. A credit card will be needed when collecting, which will be used for a security bond. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car which depends on the category of vehicle you have booked and the rate type.

Collecting at an Airport in Germany

At most German airports you will find your rental company has a desk in the arrivals hall, with the rental cars being located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. A courtesy transfer will be provided from the airport to the depot in this instance. DriveAway Holidays offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location / airport fees and charges that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental will include all airport fees.

What are 'premium location' fees?

Premium location fees apply when a vehicle is collected from an airport, railway or selected downtown locations. DriveAway's car rental prices usually do include the airport or 'premium location' fees for car rental collections in Germany. Check on your prepaid voucher to ensure that this included.

Rental Vehicle Insurance

German law requires all vehicles to have compulsory third party (CTP) injury insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their cars. In the case of an accident it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately and an excess will be due.

Car Rental Companies in Germany will normally include:

- Third Party Insurance: Compulsory insurance and will be included in your car hire price. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- Collision Damage Waiver (CDW): This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle and is normally included in prepaid car hire prices. Rentals are normally subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car or by taking out **DriveAway Hire Car Excess Insurance**.

Rental Vehicle Insurance

- **Theft and Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in the prepaid car rental price.
- **Fire and Liability:** Limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in the prepaid car hire price.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rate. It is considered an optional extra that you can take out upon collection of the car.

DriveAway Hire Car Excess Insurance

When renting a vehicle, the rental rates include basic insurance, however, in the event that the vehicle is stolen or accidentally damaged, there is usually an Insurance excess amount which the driver is liable to pay to the rental company. To avoid any unexpected costs opt for DriveAway Hire Car Excess Insurance which will offer a reimbursement for the supplier's damage and theft excess to a maximum for AU\$5,000. Simply add this onto your car rental booking prior to departure and you could save thousands of dollars in the long run! To find out more, simply call DriveAway Holidays on 1300 723 972 or visit the DriveAway website.



ACRIS System

Class	Fuel Capacity	Type	Transmission	Fuel/Air Cond.
M = Mini	0.8 - 1.0	B = 2 Door	M = Manual	R = Yes
E = Economy	1.0 - 1.4	D = 4 Door	A = Automatic	N = No
C = Compact	1.2 - 1.6	C = 2/4 door	N = Manual 4WD	D = Diesel Air
F = Full size	2.0 - 3.2	L = Limousine	C = Manual AWD	Q = Diesel No Air
P = Premium	2.0 - 4.2	S = Sports Car	B = Auto 4WD	H = Hybrid Air
L = Luxury	2.0 - 4.2	T = Convertible	D = Auto AWD	I = Hybrid No Air
X = Special	1.2 - 3.0	J = All Terrain		E = Electric Air
		R = Recreational		C = Electric No Air



F = 4 Wheel Drive
X = Special
K = Commercial Van/Truck
P = Ute
X = Special
E = Executive

Examples:

ECMN: E = Economy
C = 2 or 4 door
M = Manual
N = No Aircon
FDAR: F = Full Size
D = 4 Door
A = Automatic
R = Aircon

The DriveAway Hire Car Excess Insurance is managed by Accident & Health International Underwriting Pty Limited, ABN 26 053 335 952, AFSL 238261 and underwritten by CGU Insurance Limited, ABN 27 004 478 371, AFSL 238291.

Driving In Germany

- Drive on the RIGHT hand side of the road. The driver sits on the left hand side of the car.
- Be especially careful with overtaking on autobahns as cars from behind can approach very quickly. Autobahns have no general speed limit but 130km/p/h is the advisory limit.
- In the case of an accident, make sure you exchange details with the other driver, or wait until police arrive. If you hit a parked car, this still needs to be done. Unlike some other parts of the world, leaving your details behind in a note is generally not acceptable, and you may be charged with leaving the scene of an accident.
- In Germany there are a few things that must be kept in cars at all times. These include a first aid kit, and visibility vests in case of break down or accident. In general, rental companies will provide this with their cars however this may not be the case if your trip begins in another country.
- Avoid driving in major cities such as Berlin and Munich. The public transport in these major German cities

Driving Laws In Germany

- Cars travel on the right hand side of the road in Germany, and overtake in the left lane. Drivers sit on the left hand side of the car.
- Talking on the phone while driving in Germany is illegal, and seatbelts must be worn at all times.
- Police in Germany will often collect a fine on the spot, and there have been cases of cars being impounded until the fine is paid in the case of police suspecting the driver may leave the country without paying.

Be sure to drive sensibly, and carry some cash just in case. Traffic fines range from approximately €5 - €425.

- Children under 12 years of age, or under 1.5m in height must be seated in an appropriate child seat.
- Driving while under the influence of alcohol is illegal in Germany, and a driver is regarded as over the legal limit if they have a blood alcohol concentration over 0.03.
- Speed Limits:
 - City roads: 50km/h
 - Highways: 100km/h
 - Autobahn: no speed limit unless otherwise stated.
 - Recommended max speed is 130km/h.

Village Ramsau, German Alps

Parking

Unlike some other countries in Europe, parking is quite regulated in Germany, and you will find appropriate signage in most areas. Generally, in areas where on-street parking is restricted, a blue square with a white "P" indicates a parking area. Areas where parking is not allowed will be marked by a red circular sign, featuring a blue centre, and either a diagonal line, or "X" marked across the centre in red. Parking meters are not common in Germany, and where parking is paid for the price can vary, but generally, expect to pay 1-2 Euro per hour.

Some areas of Germany have a time limit parking system, where a Parking Disc must be used. These are available from most newsagents and petrol stations, though they sometimes are supplied by the supplier. The way the system works, is by the driver adjusting the disc to show the time when they parked, which then begins the time they have left.

Unless parking under the light of a lamp post, German law requires parked cars to have their parking lights on at night time. This helps prevent accidents involving parked cars.

Licence Requirements

A full driving licence is required to drive in Germany. All drivers must have held a full valid driving licence for a minimum of one year. Australian residents are not required by law to have an international drivers licence, although it is recommended since an international licence holds more credibility with the local traffic police. Contact your local motoring association for further information.

Min & Max Age Requirements

The minimum age for drivers renting a car in Germany does vary, with some suppliers having a minimum of 18, and others not renting to drivers under 23. It's important to check this when booking a rental car, and also be sure to enquire about a young driver's surcharge which may apply to those under the age of 24. Generally, there is no maximum age, as long as the renter is fit and okay to drive.

Cross Border Fees and One Way Rentals

Can I collect my rental car in one German city and drop it off in another city in Germany?

Yes, this is certainly possible. Generally there are no fees for one way rentals within Germany but in some cases there may be a one-way fee payable and a minimum rental duration when you collect your rental. Check with DriveAway Holidays when you book to find out any additional costs.

Can I collect my rental car in Germany and drop it off in another European city?

International one ways are definitely possible however, as with any international one ways, this will incur a one way fee. Prices vary depending on the supplier, the length of the rental and the drop off destination.

Can I collect my car in Germany, visit another European city, then return it to Germany?

Most car rental companies based in Germany will permit travel to other European cities without an additional charge as long as the vehicle is returned to Germany. There may, however, be fees and additional insurances to travel to some European countries, depending on the vehicle type and supplier. Some suppliers may have certain restrictions when travelling to Eastern Europe. Check with DriveAway Holidays when you book.

Rothenburg

More German Car Rental FAQs

What are low emission zones?

Low emission zones are found within 32 cities around Germany, requiring vehicles to display an "Emissions Badge" (Umwelt Plakette). Vehicles entering this zone without a badge will be fined EUR40. Badges cost between EUR5-EUR10. Most rental cars already include this badge.

Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?

Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged, regardless of who is at fault, or stolen, the Insurance excess is the maximum amount you are liable for.

What do I do if I want to extend my car rental whilst I'm in Germany?

Once the car rental has commenced you will have to call the depot where you initially collected the vehicle, and if the car is available to be extended, you will be offered additional days at the local rate.

Important Road Signs

Stop: Red, octagonal and says 'stop' in the centre.

Give Way: A triangle with red border and white centre.

Parking areas: A blue square with a white "P" in the centre.

No Parking: A red circle with diagonal line through the centre, and blue background.

No Vehicles Allowed: White and round with a red circle around the border.

One Way: A blue sign with white arrow showing the flow of traffic.

No Passing: A red circle with a red car and black car in the centre, on a white background.

German Regions

Berlin

Central Germany: Hesse, Thuringia

Southern Germany: Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg

Western Germany: North-Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland

Northern Germany: Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg—Western Pomerania

Eastern Germany: Brandenburg, Saxony Anhalt, Saxony



Muehlburg Castle, Erfurt

Berlin

Berlin is the capital of Germany and is one of Europe's greatest and most vibrant cities. This amazing city had been deeply divided for over 40 years, with The Berlin Wall separating the East and West. This city was finally reunited in 1989 when The Wall was torn down. Since then, the city has become an enticing mix of old and new, with modern buildings standing beside war torn relics, grand architecture and recent constructions. Berlin holds a rich history that is worth seeing for yourself, with incredible sights, galleries and museums hosted by some of the most laid back people in Europe.

Events

February

Berlin International Film Festival - Film makers and cinema lovers flock to Berlin for the annual festival.

Late Night at the Museum - Over 90 museums stay open late at night with concerts and lectures.

March

Festtage Music Festival - Annual opera and classical music festival.

June

Operas - Held at the Staatsoper.

July

Love Parade - Lively and energetic parade with carnival floats.

August

Beer Festival - Held at Strasberger Platz, offering over 1,500 different types of beer.

Tanz in August, international dance festival.

Heimatklinge - world music festival in Kreuzberg.

September

Berlin Marathon - A race that runs from the Brandenburg Gate past some of Berlin's best sights, attracting over 35,000 runners.

October

German Unity Day - The National Day of Germany.

November

Jazzfest - famous jazz artists perform across the city
Jewish cultural days, at venues around Berlin

December

Christmas markets, Dresden, the Stiezelmarkt is one of the oldest and most popular in Germany.

Attractions

See the Brandenburg Gate - This is Berlin's most famous landmark that for years stood in no-man's land between East & West Germany and since the fall of The Wall in 1989, has become a symbol of reunification.

Visit the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church - The 'hollow tooth' is the shell of the remaining west tower of the church that was bombed in 1943 and is now a memorial hall dedicated to peace.

The Reichstag and the Government Quarter - Visit the seat of the German parliament that was renovated in 1999 from the original building originally constructed in 1894, and offers a great 360° view of Berlin from its glass dome.

Berlin Zoo - see over 14,000 animals that call Germany's oldest zoo home.

Wander through the Hackesche Höfe - Explore the restored courtyards that were originally built in the late 18th century and now house a complex of buildings with shops, galleries, restaurants and bars.

Climb the Victory Column - with fantastic views of the surrounding Tiergarten and the Western city centre.

Discover the Museumsinsel - this area is home to magnificent museums and some of Europe's most brilliant artworks.

The Berliner Dom - Berlin's main cathedral that was built in 1451.

The Berlin Wall Museum - Learn how the irrepressible human spirit coped with the Wall that separated East and West Berlin, and for those that tried to escape to the West. Also see Bernauer Strasse, where you'll see existing sections of the Wall and the Berlin Wall Memorial.

Self-Drive Tours around Berlin

Berlin to Bautzen

Begin this tour from the bustling city of Berlin. Take the E51 southwest to the town of Potsdam, which is the capital of the federal state of Brandenburg and is home to the World Heritage listed park of Sanssouci.

Continue along the E51 to the town of Dessau, situated at the junction of the Mulde and Elbe Rivers, and home to the influential design school of Bauhaus. Here you will see examples of its architecture throughout the town.

From Dessau, continue on the E51 to Leipzig where you'll see historic buildings including the Old City Hall, which was built in 1556 and the Auerbach's Keller, which is one of Germany's oldest operating pubs, opened in 1525. Make time to see the Leipzig Zoo, one of the largest and best known in Germany, as well as the magnificent Botanical Gardens. Head south east on the E40 to the town of Dresden, where you should see the Frauenkirche Church of Our Lady, the Zwinger Palace and the Semperoper Opera House. Finally, continue east on the E40 to the beautiful historical town of Bautzen which is home to a magnificent vista of medieval towers.

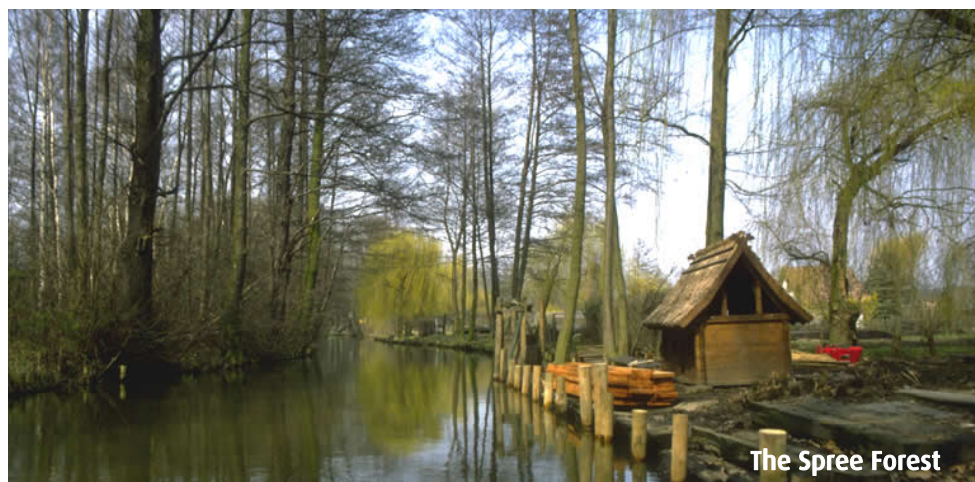
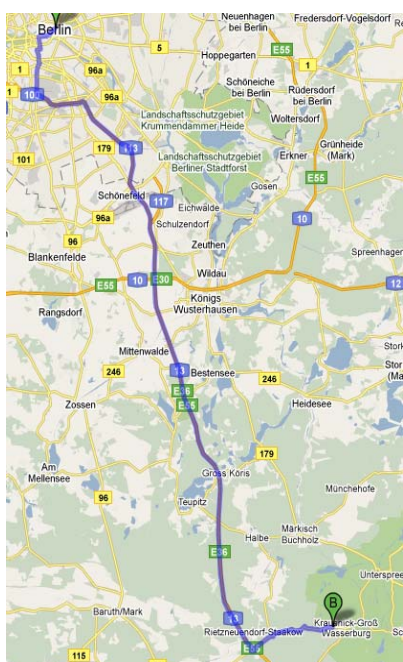


Sanssouci Castle and Park



See the Spreewald

This tour will take you just over an hour south east of Berlin via the E36 to the magnificent region of the Spreewald. The Spree Forest is a protected Unesco biosphere reserve that covers 48,000 hectares of forested land that is beautifully intersected by over a thousand kilometres of waterways that originated from the Spree River. You can explore the labyrinth of rivers and creeks on boat tours, enjoy a bicycle tour through the woods or go hiking in a wonderful natural landscape.



The Spree Forest

Central Germany

Central Germany is an eclectic mix of high finance, bustling cities and incredible wealth, nestled comfortably amongst rolling hills and forest of the green heart of Germany. This fascinating region has an immense store of recent and medieval history, as well as a culture steeped in literature, politics and the arts. Explore the small villages and towns that dot the landscape, indulge in the atmosphere in its hot spas and resort towns, visit open air markets or hike through the magnificent Rhine region.

Regions: Hesse, Thuringia.

Events

February

Fasching – Annual party celebrated across all of Germany.

March

Spring Dippe Fair, Frankfurt – Traditional market with crafts, food & wine tasting and firework displays.

May

Kunststhandwerk Heute, Frankfurt – Arts and crafts fair held in the Paulsplatz.

June

Forest Folk Festival, Frankfurt – Held in the Niederrad forest.

July

Museum Quay Festival, Frankfurt – Annual festival including art exhibitions, live music and concerts

Sound of Frankfurt, Frankfurt – Music festival held on the Zeil.

August

Rheingau Wine Festival, Wiesbaden

Luther Festival, Eisenach, Thuringen – Huge historical spectacle held over 3 days when the people of Eisenach dress in costume and re-enact medieval life.

September

Autumn Dippe Fair, Frankfurt

Frankfurt Book Fair

October

Euro Marathon, Frankfurt – 26 mile run with over 10,000 competitors.

November

Christmas markets – All across Germany, Traditional markets operating in the cities' medieval centres.

Attractions

Hesse

Römerberg – Dating back to 1270, this is Frankfurt's oldest square, and is also home to the city's town hall, known as the Römer.

See the Cathedral of Bartholomew – This church was originally founded in the 16th century but rebuilt after WWII, and today offers great views of the city from its tower.

Enjoy the Museum of Contemporary Art

Escape the bustling city – Visit the Frankfurt Zoo, which is one of the best in Europe.

Relax in the Palm Garden.

See the action of the stock exchange – Go to the Börse in the old city and you can see a semi-active trading floor.

Wiesbaden – Explore the health resorts, hot spas, lush parks, gardens and the elegant casino.

Thuringia

Explore the Thuringian Forest – In Eisenach, see Wartburg Castle, the birthplace of Bach and walk through the fissure caves in Meiningen.

Discover Erfurt – Journey back into the Middle ages and explore the capital city of Thuringia.

Hike the Rennsteig Trail – One of the most beautiful walks in Europe, the Rennsteig is almost 170kms long and takes hikers from Eisenach through the Thuringia forest.

Be enlightened at Weimar – Soak up the town's art, architecture and literary.

Self-Drive Tours around Central Germany

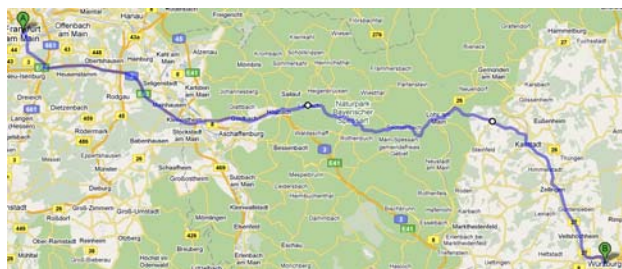
Frankfurt to Würzburg

This lovely drive will take you through the beautiful Spessart National Park, from Frankfurt to Würzburg. Take the E42 and E41 and drive east, until you reach the city of Aschaffenburg at the gateway to the Spessart that straddles the River Main. This beautiful city is home to magnificent buildings such as Johannisburg Castle, the Basilica and Schinbusch Park. Continue along the A26 in an easterly direction, enjoying the beauty of the Spessart National Park along the way.

Continue on the A26 & A27 through the towns of Lohr am Main, Karlstadt and Zelligen to the city of Würzburg. Here you can visit the Würzburg Residence and gardens, which is famous for its spectacular staircase showcasing one of the world's finest pieces of Baroque art. There are also plenty of great cafés and restaurants showcasing the local produce, particularly its Franconian wine.



Johannisburg Castle

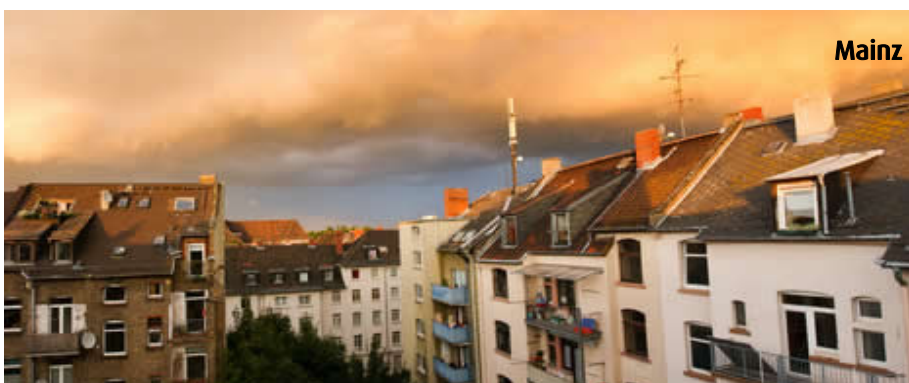
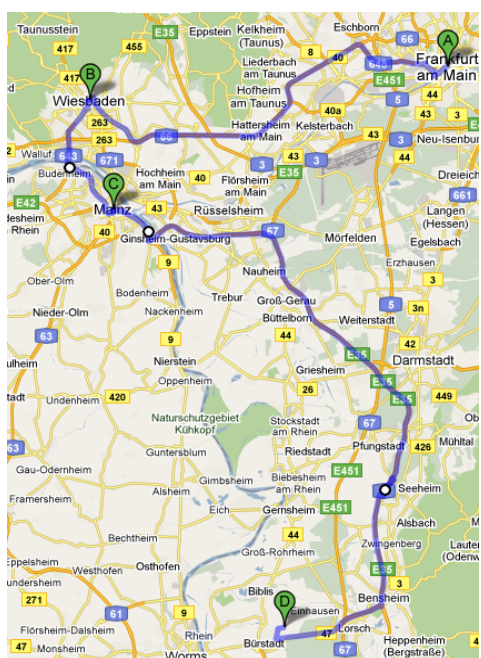


The Best of Hesse

This route takes you from the hustle and bustle of Frankfurt on a tour through the delightful regions in Hesse. Begin in Frankfurt and drive west on the A66 until exit 6 where you can follow the signs to the town of Wiesbaden. This lovely town is famous for its spas, where you can enjoy the Roman frescoes, saunas and pools in Kaiser-Friedrich Therme in the city centre.

From Wiesbaden follow the 643 south, crossing the Rhine River and then south east to the city of Mainz. This city has heritage dating back two thousand years, with its cathedral dating back as far as 975AD. Visit the Dom, the City Hall and the lovely Schillerplatz square or explore the

restaurants, shops and bars along the Rhine. From Mainz head south east along the E42 then south on the E35 to Darmstadt. From here head west to the wine growing region of Bergstrasse and follow the Wine Trail that runs for 28kms between Bockenheim to Schweigen-Rechtenbach.



Mainz

Southern Germany

The southern regions of Germany is one of the most visited areas in the country, famous for The Black Forest, The Alps, Bavarian culture and magnificent beer festivals. This area is studded with fairytale castles, thickly wooded forests, winding rivers and crystal clear waterways, beautiful towns and villages, plus wonderfully vibrant cities full of art and history. With so much to see and do, it's no wonder this is a favourite holiday destination for travellers from around the world.

Regions: Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria.

Events

February

Fasching, Heidelberg – Mardi Gras party that takes over the city.

March

Heidelberg Fruehling – Massive classical and contemporary music festival.

April

Munich Spring Festival – Funfair with side stalls, markets and side stalls.

May

Biennale Opera, Munich – Major opera festival.

June

Schlossbeleuchtung, Heidelberg – Held early in the months of June, July & August with fireworks and 'castle lighting'.

July

The ISPO Summer Games – Extreme sports competition held at the Much Trade Fair Centre
Magdalenenfest, Munich – Historic event dating back 300 years where local traders gather at the Hirschgarten.

August

Summer Festival, Munich – Two week long festival in the Olympic Park.

October

Oktoberfest, Theresienwiese, Munich – World famous beer festival.

Attractions

Munich

The Gothic Church of Our Lady – Built in the 15th century, this is Munich's most famous landmark.

Take a beverage – Have a beer in the world's most famous tavern at the Hofbrauhaus beer hall.

Stroll through the Botanical Gardens – These gardens were founded in 1809 and is today one of the world's most visited and important botanical gardens.

Visit the BMW Museum – Learn manufacturing history and traditions, right up to the current day of the famous German car, the BMW.

Heidelberg

Visit the Heidelberg Castle – You can't miss this cities most famous landmark and gardens.

Germany's oldest University – Built in 1712, the 'Old University' is now educating over 32 thousand students.

Explore the Old Town and the Old Bridge – Bustling with life and romantic charm, the old quarter is a must to see on foot.

Wander through the Heidelberg Botanical Gardens – Originally created in 1593 as a medicinal herb garden, and are today the oldest in Germany.

Stuttgart

Explore the famous opera house – The Opera house was completed in 1912 and houses the Stuttgart State Theatre.

Visit the Medieval Old Palace – This is now also home to the Wurttemberg State Museum.

Würzburg

Begin the Romantic Road – Wurzburg is the starting point for this famous driving route that winds down to Rothenburg and the Bavarian Alps.

Self-Drive Tours around Southern Germany

The Romantic Road



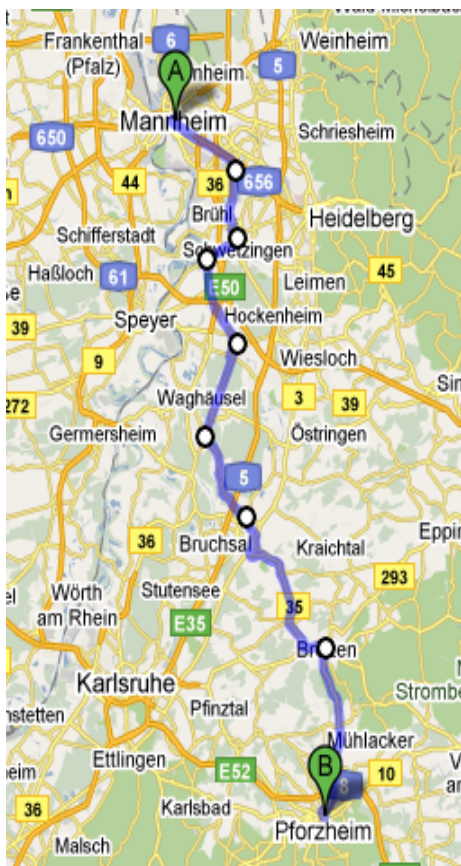
Würzburg Residence

This is one of the most famous drives in Germany. The route begins in the medieval town of Würzburg where you can visit the Residence, the cathedral, explore the courtyard restaurants and taste the local wines. Drive south along the Tauber River toward the town of Weikersheim, where you can see the Renaissance Palace and baroque gardens and then onto the town of Rothenburg. This is the best preserved medieval town in Germany, where you can walk along the wall that circles Rothenburg for a great view of the town.

From Rothenburg, drive through Norblingen. Travel across the Danube then come to Augsburg. Whilst you're here, visit The Fuggerei, which is the worlds oldest welfare housing, built in 1516. The town of Pfaffenwinkel is the next stop, home to the Wieskirche Pilgrimage Church. Drive west to the region



of Konigswinkel and to the towns of Fossen and Pfronten. Here you will see the magnificent Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau castles, which are surrounded by the Bavarian Alps.



Bertha Benz Memorial Drive

This tour follows the world's first long distance car journey which was completed in 1888 by Mrs Bertha Benz, the wife of the inventor of the Automobile - Dr Carl Benz. Begin in the town of Mannheim, the birthplace of the worlds first automobile, and where you'll also see Mannheim Castle and Luisenpark. Drive south east to the city of Heidelberg located on the Neckar River and the Rhine Valley. Here you can explore the historical city centre and main street, see the magnificent castle and the old university.

From Heidelberg, drive southwest to the lovely town of Schwetzingen, where you can see the fabulous Strahlenburg Castle and gardens. Drive south, taking in the wonderful views of the lush Rhine Valley, through the towns of Hambrucken, Forst, Bruchsal and on to Bretten, home to the World Heritage listed Maulbronn monastery. From Bretten, head further south to the gateway to the Black Forest and the town of Pforzheim. Explore the town itself or use this as a base to discover the delights of the Forest, take in some hiking, skiing, water sports and mountain biking, just to name a few.

Western Germany

Visitors to Western Germany will have the chance to see some of the best parts of this country. Here you'll find magnificent cathedrals, fairytale castles, Roman ruins, unrivalled scenery, and the mighty Rhine alongside bustling, energetic and charismatic cities full of art, great shopping and culture. Explore quaint towns, climb spectacular cathedral spires and tour the beautiful vineyards in the Rhine and Moselle regions that produce world famous wines.

Regions: North Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland.

Events

February

Winter Festival, Köln – Massive street carnival

Rosenmontag, Bonn – Held on the Collop Monday with fancy costumes, dancing and parades.

April

Frühjahrs Dippemess, Frankfurt – Traditional spring fair.

May

Dusseldorf Jazz Rally – Local and International musicians converge on the city for great music festival.

Rhine in Flames, Bonn – Enormous fireworks display held first Saturday in May

July

German F1 Grand Prix, Nürburgring, Bonn – Alternating every year with Hockenheimring

August

Rheingau Wine Market, Frankfurt – Wine festival with tastings.

International Beethovenfest, Bonn – Festival paying tribute to the famous Ludwig van Beethoven.

November

Weihnachtsmarkt – Christmas markets, with arts and crafts, gingerbread, mulled red wine and great festive gifts.

Attractions

Rhine Valley

See Schloss Stolzenfels – The neo-Gothic castle perched majestically above the Rhine and a must to see.

Visit the Ehrenbreitstein – Seated at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers, this massive fortress was built between 1817-1832.

Mainz

Visit the Dom & Diözesanmuseum – Explore the magnificent cathedral that was established in the 12th century, and the museum is home to incredible 16th century tapestries and beautiful artworks.

Visit the Gutenberg Museum – This museum chronicles the history of bookmaking from the very beginning.

Cologne (Köln):

Ogle at the Kölner Dom – Köln's most famous site. Climb the 504 steps of one of the massive twin spires, see the Shrine of the Three Magi behind the main altar, and marvel at the beautiful Gothic architecture.

Indulge at the Imhoff-Stollwerck Museum – a museum dedicated to the history of the production of chocolate!

Dusseldorf:

Climb the Rheinturm – Get the 360° view of the entire town.

Visit the Benrath Castle and Gardens – Explore the 18th century palace and sculpted gardens.

Bonn:

Soak up some classical history – Explore the Beethoven museum that was once the famous composer's home.

Visit Kreuzbergkirche – A beautiful Baroque style church

See Poppelsdorfer Castle – Built in 1715, the castle is located in the midst of the Botanical Gardens.

Self-Drive Tours around Western Germany

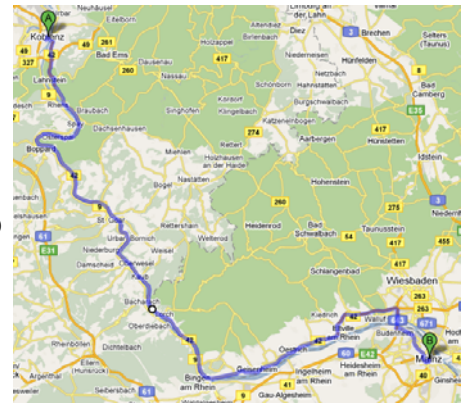
Follow the Rhine

This drive follows the winding Rhine River as it makes its way from Koblenz, through vineyards and small villages to the city of Mainz. This route can take just under two hours but savour the scenery and take your time. Begin in Koblenz, located at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers. Take the A42 and head south, following the Rhine enjoying the views of castles, castle ruins and lovely towns along the way. One castle in particular is in the town of Braubach, where you'll find the Marksburg castle with great views of the surrounding countryside from its terrace.



Rhine River

Follow the A42 along the Rhine, where you will discover plenty of small towns and villages along the way. Bingen am Rhein is a charming town in the Rheine, where you can see the Klopp Castle and the Mouse Tower that sits on its own island in the middle of the River. Drive east along the A42 to the city of Mainz, where you can visit the magnificent Dom and Museum and the City Hall, or rest in the Schillerplatz square. Stroll along the riverbank and enjoy the restaurants and bars.



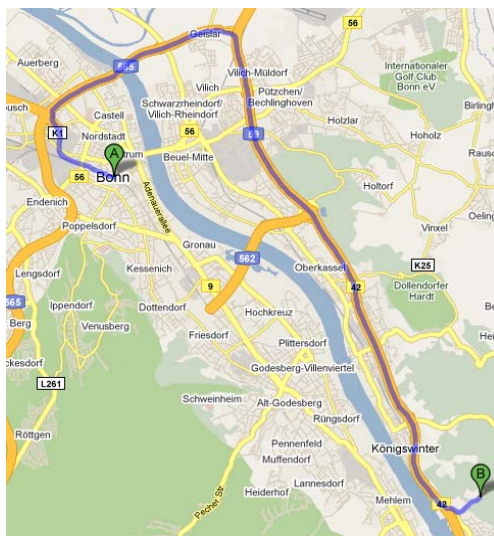
Explore the Siebengeburge National Park

This short tour will take you along the Rhine to the Siebengeburge National Park. Begin this tour in Bonn,



Drachenburg Castle

where you can visit the magnificent Kreuzbergkirche cathedral and the lovely Botanical Gardens. From the centre of Bonn take the K1 to the route 565 crossing the Rhine. On the east bank drive south along the A59, continuing onto the B42, following the signs to Drachenfels. There are some great castle ruins and beautiful vineyards gracing the



roadside. This is also the gateway to the Siebengeburge National Park, which is home to the Schloss Drachenburg, the magnificent castle that dominates the landscape.

Northern Germany

Northern Germany is a land of incredible diversity, from its windswept coastline on the Baltic Sea, white sandy beaches, busy port cities, rolling pasture lands, thick gnarly forests, winding rivers, fairytale castles and medieval villages. This is also the region with one of the world's greatest drives, The Fairytale Road.

Regions: Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Hamburg, Bremen

Events

March

Hamburger DOM, Hamburg – The Dom Market is a month long festival with food, parades and fireworks.

CeBIT, Hanover – Premier technology fair.

April

Hanover Messe – Industrial technological trade fair.

May

Hamburg Port Festival – Celebrations on water and land, celebrating the 300 year old harbour.

International Jazz Festival, Hanover – Annual music festival.

June

Dragon Boat Festival, Hamburg – The largest of its kind outside of Asia.

Weltmusikfestival, Hanover – Music festival with artist performing from across the globe.

Kieler Wocher, Kiel – Huge maritime festival

July

Fleetinsel Festival, Hamburg – Cultural festival with arts and great food.

Niedersachsen Festival, Hanover – Traditional cultural Festival.

August

Alster Fair, Hamburg – Shows, concerts and street parties held on the banks of the Alster Lake.

Maschseefest, Hanover – Beer festival on banks of Lake Masch.

October

Freimarkt, Bremen – One of the oldest festivals in Germany.

Oktoberfest, Hanover – International Beer festival.

Attractions

Hamburg

Enjoy the Alster – Take a boat tour to explore the harbour or stroll along the Alster Arcade & Pavillion.

Walk through the infamous red light district – The Reeperbahn has long been a hive of night life and bars.

Bremen

Stroll around the city centre – Visit the Schnoor-Viertel with its beautiful medieval buildings.

See the Rathaus (Town Hall) – This lovely building was built in 1410.

Tour the Beck's Brewery – See the production and taste the famous Becks Beer.

Visit the Bremen Market – This is one of the most beautiful squares in Northern Germany, home to the Dom St Petri and the Old Town Hall.

Hanover

See Hanover City Hall – Tour the building and enjoy the view from the dome at the top.

Shop at the Kröpcke – Explore Hanover's major shopping area, which also includes eating spots, the Hanover Opera House and the main TGV station.

Relax in the gardens – Smell the roses at Grosser Garten and Herrenhaussen.

Visit Hanover Zoo – Some say this is the best zoo in Europe, great for the whole family.

The Peace Bell – A gift from Hanover's sister city, Hiroshima, the bell is rung each year in August as a memorial to the victims of war.

Lower Saxony

Explore Lüneburg – Beautiful town that dates back to 956AD, known as the City of Salt.

Visit Hamelin – Explore the city of the Pied Piper.

Self-Drive Tours around North Germany

The Fairytale Road

Drive the road that connects the towns that inspired the Brothers Grimm to create such famous tales as Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood and Hansel and Gretel. Begin this tour in the region of Hanau on the River Main in the town of Steinau, the birthplace of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Head north on the B43 through the town of Gelnhausen and onto Steinau an der Strasse, where the Brothers grew up. Along the B40 you'll come across Fulda which is famous for its baroque architecture and the tomb of St Boniface.

From Fulda, take the B254 into the Voglesberg Mountains through the medieval villages of Grossendlüder and Lauterbach, onto the 254 to Alsfeld. Drive along the Schwalm River where the Brothers were inspired to write the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Visit the town of Neustadt with a tall circular tower where it's believed Rapunzel could have let down her hair! Continue on through Homberg through the Reinhards Forest and into Kassel in the Waldeck Region, the inspiration



Castle Lowenburg, Kassel

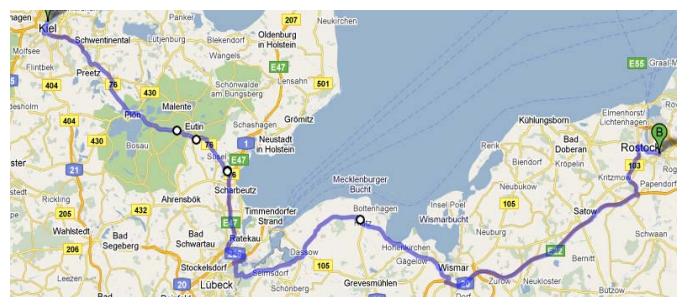
behind legends of witches, magic spells, mystical princesses and wicked step-mothers.

From Kassel, drive along the B3 to Münden and onto the town of Göttingen. From here, drive to the town of Sababurg, where there stands a turreted castle and park in nearby Dornröschenschloss Sababurg, said to be the location for the legend of Sleeping Beauty. Continue along the Fairytale Road, which is well signposted along the way. Through forests and villages, through the towns of Hoxter, Bodenwerder and onto Hameln, where the legendary Pied Piper led the rat population from the town. The final stop on this route is Bremen with medieval architecture and old city centre.



The Baltic Coast

This drive takes in some of the best parts of far northern Germany. Begin in Kiel, whose magnificent harbour is the busiest port in Germany. Take a boat tour of the harbour or visit the old quarter in the town centre. Take the A76 through Pteets to the town of Plön that lies right on the lake of Großer Plöner See, home to the Schloss Plön castle. Drive south on the A76 through Scharbeutz, Ratekau onto Lübeck on the Trave River, another major port city in Germany. From here head east, following the A105 through the towns of Klutz and Wismar, then on to the E22 up to Rostock. Visit the New Market Square and Town Hall that date back to the 13th century, stroll through pedestrian area of Kröpeliner Straße or wander through seaside port region of Warnemünde.



Eastern Germany

The region of East Germany is a land of stunning landscapes, vibrant cities, incredible diversity and remarkable history. Eastern Germany was bombed heavily during WWII, and until 1989, it was politically and physically separated from the rest of Germany by the Berlin Wall and held under Communist rule. Today, this amazing region has shown the people's strength of character and its ability to rebuild, with cosmopolitan cities full of art and culture standing amidst world heritage sites, beautiful castles and magnificent landscapes.

Regions: Berlin, Brandenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt

Events

January

Leipzig Carnival – Held before Lent with parades and parties.

April

National Flower Festival, Leipzig – Massive floral festival with exhibitions, concerts and music, held April to October.

June

Elbhangfest, Dresden – Street festival with parades, market stalls and performers.

Bach Festival, Leipzig – Concerts honouring the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

July

Leipzig Beer Exchange – Huge outdoor beer festival

Saxonia Balloon Fiesta, Leipzig – Hot-air balloons fill the sky over Leipzig.

August

Dresden City Festival – Carnival including the parade of the Sächsisch Dampfschiffahrt

Water Festival, Leipzig – Concerts, shows and entertainment held on the waterways around Leipzig

September

Leipzig Bathtub Race – Held on the lake near the Monument of the Battle of the Nations.

October

Dresden Festival of Contemporary Music – Showcasing local and international contemporary musicians.

November

Martinfest – Celebration across Germany, honouring Saint Martin and Martin Luther.

Striezelmarkt, Dresden – The oldest street market in Germany.

Attractions

Berlin (See page 8)

Brandenburg

Explore Potsdam – Explore the forests with 3,000 lakes and 30,000km of watercourse, see the Sanssouci Palace, the old town and the Babelsberg Film Studios.

Visit the Spreewald – Beautiful and unique natural landscape which includes a Unesco biosphere reserve.

Visit the medieval castles – Drive around the Fläming region, where there's plenty of palaces, castles and medieval towns.

Dresden

Explore the Old City – Although much of the city was severely bombed in WWII, there is much to see here, including the reconstructed

Frauenkirche Church, the Old Masters Picture Gallery, and shop or eat at the Altmarkt Square.

See the view from the Elbe's north bank – See the spires of the Royal Palace, the Kreuzkirche Church, City Hall and the Dreikönigskirche Church.

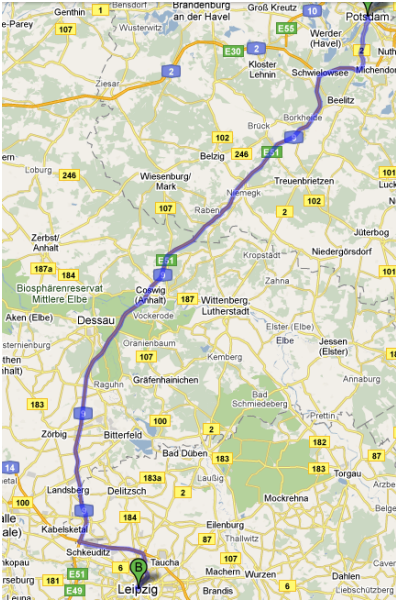
Leipzig

See St Thomas Church – This lovely church is the final resting place for Bach, one of Germany's best composers.

See where composers lived – Visit the houses of Schiller, Mendelssohn and Schumann who all lived and created works in Leipzig.

Self-Drive Tours around East Germany

Potsdam to Leipzig



Explore the city of Potsdam, a true European city full of history and culture. Visit the Schloß Sanssouci Palace, the Dutch Quarter and the Weavers Quarters, the Babelsberg Filmpark and the Hohenzollern's magnificent palaces and gardens. From Potsdam, drive south toward the town of Michendorf, then west following the A10, then the A9 till you reach Dessau.

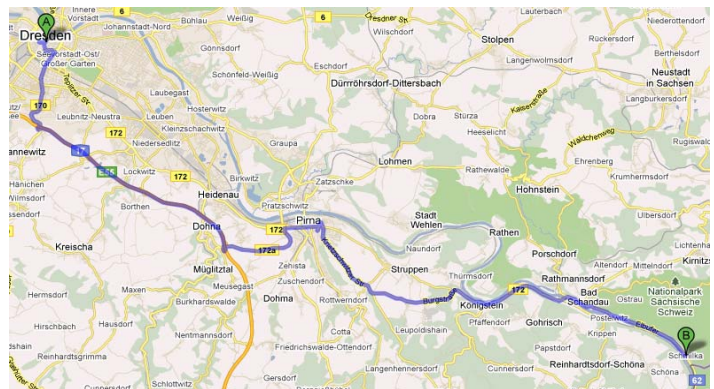
Dessau – Rosslau is a beautiful town that is renowned for its Bauhaus style of architecture, along with palaces such as the Georgium and the Luisium, and is surrounded by woods and lush meadows that are now declared a Unesco Biosphere Reserve. Continue on through the wooded forests along the A9 until you reach Leipzig. This beautiful city is renowned for its universities and countless historical buildings and monuments. The first place to see is St Thomas Church, where, alongside seeing the wonderful building, you can hear magnificent

classical concerts and also visit the final resting place of Bach. Visit the summer markets, the fascinating natural attractions at the zoo, visit the Bach Museum, bar-hop in the Drallewatsch Pub District or relax in the Auenwald Forest.



Follow the mighty Elbe River

This route follows the Elbe River from Dresden to Schmilka or Bad Schandau. It could take just over an hour but its best if you take your time to appreciate the beauty along the way. From Dresden, cross the Elbe so that you can drive along the S167 on the northern bank. At Copitz cross the river again into Pirna and follow the A172 until you reach the spa town of Bad Schandau near the border of the Czech Republic. Take a ride up the Bad Schandau Elevator for great views of the area or ride on the Kirnitzschtal tram that runs up to the Lichtenhain Waterfall. Take a tour on a paddle steamer along the Elbe to see it from a different perspective or maybe just kick back and enjoy the peaceful riverside atmosphere!



Climate & Weather

In general Germany has great weather patterns, with a climate featuring distinct seasons. Across the country you can expect warm, often hot, summers, and winters which are mild in most areas, however can get quite cold in some. Snowfall is common, particularly in the higher mountains, and the northern parts of the country see the most rain.

Oberstauffen in wintertime



Language & Useful Phrases

German is the official language of Germany, and English is widely spoken also. Some areas have a high number of people who speak French also. You will find that if you try to speak some German, even if it's poorly, the locals will appreciate your efforts and respond in kind. Here are some common phrases that may help:

Zero:	null	Yes: Ja	to the left: Fahren sie links
One:	eins	No: Nein	to the right: <i>Fahren sie rechts</i>
Two:	zwei	Exit: Ausfahrt	north: norden
Three:	drei	Entrance: Einfahrt	south: suden
Four:	vier	Ring Road: Tangenziale	east: osten
Five:	fünf	How do I get to ____?: Wie komme ich zum ____?	west: westen
Six:	sechs		Straight ahead: Geradeaus
Seven:	sieben	Petrol: Benzin	
Eight:	acht	Diesel: Diesel	
Nine:	neun	One-Way: Einbahnstraße	
Ten:	zehn	No Parking: Parkverbot	
		Highway: Autobahn	
		Police: Polizei	

Stay Safe

Germany is regarded as a very safe country to visit, however as with visiting any foreign land, precautions should be taken to avoid dangerous areas or high risk situations. Never carrying more cash on you than needed and keeping to well-lit areas at night will help minimise chances of anything happening. There are few dangerous animals, and to check for weather warnings when travelling in any remote areas.

Stay Healthy

Compared to many other destinations, Germany poses few risks to travellers. Tap water is fine to drink, and most waterways are fine to swim in. The medical system and hospitals are excellent, however Australia does not have a reciprocal health care agreement with Germany. Your comprehensive travel insurance should cover any medical costs including medical evacuation, so make sure that your insurance covers you for the whole time you'll be away and be clear on what is not included, otherwise you could face enormous hospital bills.

German Money Matters

Currency

The local currency in Germany is the Euro.

EURO (€) = 100 cents.

Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5.

Coins are in denominations of €2 and €1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

The "€" symbol is either in front or after the price. As with other European countries, a comma is used to indicate a decimal. For example, €1,50 is one euro and 50 cents.

Currency Exchange

Currency can be exchanged at several places, including banks, post offices, airports, large train stations, major hotels, and of course the Bureaux de Change.

Banking Hours:

Most banks in Germany are open from Monday to Friday for the following times: 0830-1300, and 1400-1600. In larger cities, it's quite common for banks to have different hours on Thursday afternoons, with the hours after the lunch break being: 1430-1730.

ATMs

ATMs can be found throughout Germany, and will accept most foreign credit cards. Fees for currency conversion do exist, so this is something to keep in mind when withdrawing money.

Credit Cards

Payment with a credit card is accepted in most parts of Germany, with major card types being fine for paying at most larger hotels, restaurants, stores, etc. Some parts of the country are still hesitant though, so be prepared by carrying cash just in case.

In case of a lost or stolen card, you may need to contact one of these numbers:

American Express (069) 97 97 10 00

Diner's Club (05921) 86 12 34

EC and Bank Cards (069) 74 09 87

Euro/Mastercard (069) 79 33 19 10

VISA (0800) 89 49 1000

Travellers Cheques

These are generally not accepted in stores as a form of payment, however Traveller's Cheques can be converted into cash at Bureaux de Change branches, and some banks.

Tax

As with most nations part of the EU, goods and services in Germany are subject to VAT, or Value Added Tax. This is generally at a rate of 19% and does apply to car rental extras such as baby seats or snow chains.

Tipping

A service charge of 15% is generally included in the prices listed on menus in restaurants and bars etc, however it is still common for tips of 3-5% to be given. When tipping in Germany, the common procedure is to state the amount you wish to pay, including the tip. For example if your bill comes to €13 and you would like to tip an extra €2, you advise at payment "15" and the waiter will take the tip.

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Updated: May 2013