

Directory

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ACCOMMODATION

Germany has all types of places to unpack your suitcase, from hostels, camping grounds and family hotels to chains, business hotels and luxury resorts. Reservations are a good idea, especially if you're travelling in the busy summer season (June to September). Rooms can also be scarce and prices high around major holidays (p746), local festivals and events (mentioned throughout this book and also on p744) and, in business-oriented cities, during trade shows.

This book lists accommodation as budget, midrange and top end. Listings are in ascending order starting with the cheapest property.

Unless noted, rates include VAT and breakfast, which is usually a generous all-you-can-eat buffet.

There are some regional variations, but generally budget recommendations won't put you more than €80 (per double, less in rural areas) out of pocket and will have you checking in at hostels, *pensions* or family hotels where facilities may be shared.

Midrange properties generally offer the best value for money. Expect to pay between €80 and €150 for a clean, comfortable, decent-sized double with at least a modicum of style, a private bathroom, cable TV and direct-dial telephone. A surprising number of midrange properties also have saunas and some basic fitness equipment.

Accommodation at the top end (from €150) offers an international standard of amenities and perhaps a scenic location, special décor or historical ambience. Some may also have pools, saunas, business centres or other up-market facilities. Unless you're going to use these, though, it's rarely worth the extra cost over most midrange hotels.

Properties with designated nonsmoking rooms are on the rise and identified with the nonsmoking icon (🚭) in this book. Air-conditioning is not a standard amenity and is most commonly found in high-end chain hotels. Properties with air-con in at least some of their rooms are denoted with the 🌬 icon.

Hotels with on-site parking are listed with the parking icon (🅇). Note that on-site parking is rather rare for city hotels, forcing you either to search for street parking or to steer towards an expensive public garage.

Prices listed in this book do not – and in fact cannot – take into account promotional discounts. City hotels geared to the suit brigade often try to lure leisure travellers with weekend specials. Also check hotel websites (listed throughout this book) for discount rates or packages.

Reservations

An excellent source for last-minute bargains is **Hotel Reservation Service** (HRS; ☎ 0221-207 7600; www.hrs.com), a searchable database of available hotel rooms throughout Germany. Bookings

PRACTICALITIES

- Electrical supply is at 220V AC, 50 Hz.
- Widely read daily newspapers include the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Die Welt* and *Der Tagesspiegel* (all quite centrist), as well as the more conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. *Die Zeit* is a high-brow weekly with in-depth reporting.
- *Der Spiegel* and *Focus* magazines are popular German news weeklies, and *The Economist*, *Time* and *Newsweek* are sold in train stations and major newsstands.
- Radio stations are regional with most featuring a mixed format of news, talk and music.
- Germany uses the metric system (see conversion chart on inside front cover).
- The GSM 900/1800 system is used for mobile phones (compatible with Europe and Australia, but not the US or Japan).
- The PAL system (not compatible with NTSC or SECAM) is used for videos.
- For women's clothing sizes, a German size 36 equals size 6 in the US and size 10 in the UK, then increases in increments of two, making size 38 a US 8 and UK 12.

are free and can be made online or via the telephone. Other online booking services are www.venero.com and www.hotel.de.

If you have no advance booking, contact the local tourist office where staff can help you find lodging, sometimes for a small fee. Outside office hours, vacancies may be posted in the window or a display case. Sometimes branches have electronic reservation boards or touch terminals that connect you directly to local establishments.

When making a room reservation directly with a property, always tell your host what time they can expect you and stick to your plan or ring again. Many well-meaning visitors have lost rooms by showing up late.

Kurtaxe

One of the most annoying practices in most German resort and spa towns is the levying of a *Kurtaxe* (resort tax). This is a fee ranging from €0.50 to €3.50 per person per night, which is added to your hotel bill. The money is used to subsidise visitor-oriented events

(concerts, lectures, workshops, etc), but you have to pay the tax no matter whether you intend to take advantage of these offerings or not.

Camping

Camping in Germany can be a lot more than just a cheap way to spend the night. The nicest sites have you waking up next to shimmering lakes, below steep mountains or beneath a canopy of trees. Some camping grounds remain open year-round, but generally the season runs from April to October.

Sites are ubiquitous (about 2500 at last count) and well maintained, although they do get jammed in summer. Make reservations as early as possible or show up by midday to snap up any spots that may have been vacated that morning. Having your own wheels is definitely an asset, as many sites are in remote locales that are not, or only poorly, served by public transport.

Facilities vary widely, but even simple sites have toilets and communal washing facilities, including showers, and a shop. The nicest are fully fledged resorts with swimming pools, playgrounds, supermarkets, restaurants and other creature comforts. Some rent out cabins, caravans or rooms.

Camping on public land is not permitted. Pitching a tent on private property requires the consent of the landowner.

Prices depend on facilities and location. There's usually an entire menu of fees with separate charges per person (between €3 and

BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at www.lonelyplanet.com. You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

€6), tent (€2.50 to €8, depending on size) and car (€2 to €4). Additional fees may be levied for hot showers, resort tax, electricity and sewage disposal. Most campsites accept the Camping Card International (see p743), which may shave up to 25% off the final tally.

The ADAC motoring association (see p765) publishes a comprehensive camping guide, *ADAC Camping & Caravaning Führer*, available in bookshops. Other handy sources include **Alan Rogers Camping Guides** (www.alanrogers.com) and **ACSI Eurocampings** (www.eurocampings.de). The latter publish free searchable databases with contact information and short descriptions about a large number of sites throughout Germany. Printed versions are also available through the websites.

Farm Holidays

A holiday on a working farm (*Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof*) is inexpensive and a great opportunity for city slickers to get close to nature in relative comfort. This type of vacation is especially popular with families. Kids get to meet their favourite barnyard animals up close and may even get to help with everyday chores. Accommodation ranges from bare-bones rooms with shared facilities to fully furnished holiday flats. Minimum stays are common. A variety of farm types are on offer, including organic, dairy and equestrian farms as well as wine estates. Places advertising *Landurlaub* (country holiday) no longer actively work their farms. The best establishments are quality controlled by the Deutsche Landwirtschafts-Gesellschaft (DLG; German Agricultural Association). To learn more farm holidays, check www.landtourismus.de. German-speakers can get even more detailed information from www.bauernhofurlaub.com.

Holiday Flats

Renting a furnished flat for a week or longer is a popular form of holiday accommodation in Germany, especially with budget-minded self-caterers, families and small groups. Tourist offices have lists of holiday flats (*Ferienwohnungen* or *Ferien-Appartements*). Some *pensions*, inns, hotels and even farmhouses also rent out apartments. Most owners impose a minimum rental period of three days to a week. Shorter stays may be possible by paying a surcharge.

Hostels

DJH HOSTELS

Here's a piece of trivia that might come in handy at your next cocktail party: the first youth hostel opened in Germany in 1912 on Burg Altena in the Sauerland. Since then the concept has, of course, taken the world by storm.

No matter how remote the region, you'll usually stumble across a DJH hostel. At last count, Germany had 542 hostels that are affiliated with Hostelling International (HI), and run by the Deutsches Jugendherbergswerk (denoted as 'DJH' throughout this book).

DJH hostels are government-subsidised and welcome some 10 million overnight guests every year, more than 90% of whom are Germans. Although they cater primarily for school groups and families, hostels do of course accept single travellers as well. Once places of 'monastic' charm, most properties have recently been modernised and upgraded. Smaller dorms and private rooms for families and couples, often with en suite bathroom, are increasingly common.

Amenities vary widely but the better ones offer internet access, bistros, party rooms and even indoor pools. Almost all can accommodate mobility-impaired travellers. Curfews and daytime lockouts are becoming less common, especially in the cities. Hostels are generally open year-round. Dorms and washrooms are gender-segregated.

Staying at a DJH hostel requires membership with your home country's HI association. Nonmembers can still get a bed by buying an HI card for €15.50 (valid for one year) or individual 'Welcome Stamps' costing €3.10 per night for a maximum of five nights. Both are available at any DJH hostel.

A night in a dorm costs from €12 to €25 and always includes linen and breakfast; optional lunch and supper cost around €5 extra each. In some areas, people over 26 (so-called 'seniors') are charged €3 extra. If hostels are busy, priority is given to people under 26 and to those over 26 travelling with at least one underage child.

About 400 German DJH hostels can now be booked online on the DJH website (www.jugendherberge.de in German). Only 40 can also be booked on the HI website (www.ihf.org). Alternatively, just contact the hostel directly by phone, fax or email.

INDEPENDENT HOSTELS

Germany was slow in embracing the backpacker hostel concept but in recent years indies have been popping up all over the country. Although they sometimes accept school groups to pad the bottom line, they generally cater for individual travellers, welcome people of all ages and attract a more convivial, international crowd than DJH hostels. They're an excellent budget choice even if you're not a backpacker, as most now offer private rooms with en suite facilities, and even small apartments alongside traditional dorm accommodations.

No two hostels are alike, but typical facilities include communal kitchens, bars, cafés, TV lounges, lockers, internet terminals and laundry. There are no curfews, and staff tend to be savvy, energetic, eager to help and multilingual. Dorms are mixed, although most hostel owners will set up women-only dorms on request. Rates sometimes include bed linen but not breakfast, which can be purchased for €3 to €5.

Most hostels have fewer than 100 beds; the smallest ones can accommodate only 20 or so people. At the other end of the spectrum are megahostels, such as those in the A&O and Meininger minichains, and with several hundred beds.

Approximately 40 German hostels have joined together in an alliance known as the **Backpacker Network** (www.backpackernetzwerk.de, partly in English), whose website contains full contact information and a link to each of its member. Some hostels can also be booked via this site.

Online booking systems that are not Germany specific include www.gomio.com, www.hostelworld.com, www.hostels.com and www.hostels.net.

Hotels

German hotels range from luxurious international chains to comfortable midrange hotels and small family-run properties. Some are located in elegant estates or ancient castles. Those serving breakfast only are called Hotel Garni. An official classification system exists, based on a scale of one to five stars, but it's voluntary and most hotels choose not to participate. Even so, this being Germany, standards are controlled even in the lower price categories and even the cheapest places are invariably clean, comfortable and well

run. Rooms usually have TV, often with cable or satellite reception, and direct-dial phones are common in all but budget places. Rooms in newer or recently renovated hotels often feature minibars, hairdryers and alarm clocks. Even midrange hotels may have so-called 'wellness' areas with a sauna, spa and fitness equipment.

In most older, privately run hotels, rooms vary dramatically in terms of size, décor and amenities. In the cheapest ones you must share facilities, while others may come with a shower cubicle installed but no private toilet; only the pricier ones have en suite bathrooms. If possible, ask to see several rooms before committing.

Long-Term Rentals

If you're going to stay in any particular German city for a month or longer, you might consider renting a room or a flat through a *Mitwohonzentrale* (flat-sharing agency). These agencies match up visitors with fully furnished vacant flats, houses or rooms in shared houses. Rates vary by agency, city and type of accommodation but, generally speaking, a room in a flat goes for about €200 to €350 per month and a one-bedroom flat ranges from €400 to €900, excluding commission and VAT (19%). The final tally is likely to be less than what you'd pay for a similar standard in a hotel. Even if you're not staying for an entire month, it may still work out cheaper to pay the monthly rent and leave early. Many *Mitwohonzentralen* now also arrange short-term stays, although prices are higher then.

Home Company (www.home-company.de) is a nationwide network of agencies; its website has all the details, also in English. **Apartments Apart** (www.apartmentsapart.com) arranges Europe-wide holiday rentals.

Pensions, Inns & Private Rooms

Essentially B&Bs, these types of lodging are smaller, less formal and inexpensive. You can expect clean rooms but only minimal amenities: maybe a radio, sometimes a TV, but almost never a phone. Facilities are often, but not always, shared. What rooms lack in amenities, they sometimes make up for in charm and authenticity, often augmented by friendly and helpful hosts who take a personal interest in ensuring that you enjoy your stay. Rates always include breakfast.

Throughout the country, *pensions* (*Pensionen*) are common, while inns (*Gasthof*, *Gaststätte* or *Gasthaus*) are more prevalent in rural areas. The latter two usually operate their own restaurant serving regional and German food to a local clientele.

Private rooms are most prevalent in resort towns, where empty-nesters and other locals like to pad their income by offering their guest rooms to travellers. People in need of lots of privacy may find these places a bit too intimate. On the other hand, such a stay does allow you a rare glimpse into how local people live.

Tourist offices keep lists of available rooms or you can simply look for signs saying *Zimmer Frei* (rooms available) in houses or shop windows. Rooms start as low as €13 per person and rarely exceed €35. If a landlord is reluctant to rent for a single night, offer to pay a little extra. It's a good idea to say right up front how long you intend to stay. A central source for advance reservations is www.bed-and-breakfast.de.

ACTIVITIES

For outdoor enthusiasts Germany offers the mother lode of possibilities. No matter what kind of activity gets you off that couch, you'll be able to pursue it in this land of lakes and rivers, mountains and forests. Everywhere you go, you'll find outfitters and local operators eager to gear you up.

Cycling

Strap on your helmet! Germany is superb cycling territory, no matter whether you're off on a leisurely spin along the beach, an adrenaline-fuelled mountain exploration or a multiday bike-touring adventure. There are more than 200 long-distance routes alone, which total some 40,000km. Routes are clearly signposted and are typically a combination of lightly travelled back roads, forest roads and paved highways with dedicated bike lanes. Many traverse nature preserves, meander along rivers or venture into steep mountain terrain.

For inspiration and route planning, there's no better free source than www.germany-tourism.de/biking, which details, in English, dozens of routes and provides useful links to local organisations. The website of the **Euro-pean Cyclists' Federation** (www.ecf.com) has more generalised information.

For day tours, staff at local tourist offices often serve as founts of information. They also sell route maps and can refer you to local bicycle-hire outfits, many of which are listed throughout this book.

The best maps are those published by the national cycling organization **Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad Club** (ADFC; www.adfc.de, in German) and available for about €7 in tourist offices, bookstores and from its website.

ADFC also publishes a useful online directory called **Bett & Bike** (www.bettundbike.de, in German) that lists hundreds of bicycle-friendly hotels, inns and hostels. Bookstores carry the printed version (€11.90).

For an overview of transporting your bike within Germany, see p762.

Hiking & Nordic Walking

Got wanderlust? With lovely scenery throughout, Germany is perfect for exploring on foot, no matter whether you've got your heart set on rambling through romantic river valleys, going peak-bagging in the Alps or simply going for a walk by the lake. Nordic walking, where you strut with poles just like a cross-country skier, has taken Germany by storm in recent years.

The Black Forest, the Harz Mountains, the Bavarian Forest, Saxon Switzerland, the Thuringian Forest and the Sauerland are among the most popular regions to explore on foot. Many of the nicest trails traverse national and nature parks or biosphere reserves.

Trails are usually marked with signs or symbols, sometimes quaintly painted on tree trunks. To find a route matching your fitness level and time frame, talk to the staff at local tourist offices, who will also supply you with maps and tips. Many also offer multiday 'hiking without luggage' packages that include accommodation and luggage transfer between hotels.

The **Deutscher Wanderverband** (German Hiking Federation; ☎ 0561-938 7313; www.dt-wanderverband.de) has an excellent website filled with route descriptions, tips and maps at www.wanderbares-deutschland.de, but, alas, it's in German only.

Mountaineering

'Climb every mountain...' the Mother Superior belted out in the *Sound of Music*, and the Bavarian Alps, the centre of mountaineering in Germany, will give you plenty of opportunity to do just that. You can venture out

TOP FIVE LONG-DISTANCE CYCLING ROUTES

- **Altmühltal Radweg** (190km) This easy to moderate route goes from Rothenburg ob der Tauber to Beilngries, following the Altmühl River through the Altmühltal Nature Park.
- **Bodensee-Königssee Radweg** (414km) Lindau to Berchtesgaden; a moderate route running along the foot of the Alps with magnificent views of the mountains, lakes and forests.
- **Elberadweg** (860km) Follows the Elbe River from Saxon Switzerland to Hamburg through wine country, heath and marshland and past such cities as Dresden, Dessau and Wittenberg. Also see the boxed text, p216.
- **Donauradweg** (434km) Travelling from Neu-Ulm to Passau, this is a delightful, easy to moderate riverside trip along one of Europe's great streams.
- **Romantische Strasse** (359km) Würzburg to Füssen; this easy to moderate route is one of the nicest ways to explore Germany's most famous holiday route, though it can get busy during the summer peak season.

on day treks or plan multiday clammers from hut to hut, as long as you keep in mind that hiking in the Alps is no walk in the park. You need to be in reasonable condition and come equipped with the right shoes, gear and topographic maps. Trails can be narrow, steep and have icy patches, even in summer.

Before heading out, seek local advice on trails, equipment and weather and take all precautions concerning clothing and provisions. And always let someone know where you're going. If you're inexperienced, ask at the tourist offices about local outfitters offering instruction, equipment rental and guided tours. These are usually run by energetic and English-speaking folk with an infectious love for and deep knowledge of the mountains. For potential problems and how to deal with hypothermia, see p772.

The **Deutscher Alpenverein** (DAV; German Alpine Club; ☎ 089-140 030; www.alpenverein.de, in German) is a good resource for information on hiking and mountaineering with local chapters throughout Germany. It also maintains numerous Alpine mountain huts, many of them open to the public, where you can spend the night and get a meal. Local DAV chapters also organise various courses (climbing, mountaineering etc) as well as guided treks, with which you can link up. Staff at local tourist offices should be able to hook you up.

Rock Climbing

Clambering around steep rock faces chiselled and carved by time and the elements is a popular pursuit in various parts of the country. Rock hounds, from beginner to expert,

gravitate towards the Jurassic limestone formations in the Naturpark Altmühltal (p372) in Bavaria and around Saxon Switzerland (Sächsische Schweiz; p180) in Saxony. Wherever you go, there are local outfitters that can set you up with equipment and advice.

Saunas & Spas

Germans love to sweat it out in the sauna, and many public baths (*Stadtbäder*) have sauna facilities, sometimes with fixed hours for men and women, although most sessions are mixed. Prices average €10 per session. Note that not a stitch of clothing is worn, so leave your modesty in the locker. Bring, or hire, a towel.

Experiencing a regimen of sauna, bath, massage and exercise in a spa resort (*Kurort*) is also a popular pastime. The local spa centres (*Kurzentrums*) or spa administrations (*Kurverwaltung*) can provide price lists for their services. Expect to pay upwards of €30 for a full massage. Sauna and massage combinations are very popular, as are a wide range of beauty and health treatments. Bookings for these can usually be made at short notice.

In spa towns and resort areas you'll also find a growing number of sparkling water parks with several indoor and outdoor pools (often filled with thermal water from local mineral springs), Jacuzzis, surge channels, massage jets and waterfalls, multiple saunas plus a menu of pampering options, including massages. A few hours in such a wellness oasis is especially great on rainy afternoons.

Skiing & Snowboarding

Modern lifts, trails from 'Sesame Street' to 'Death Tunnel', breathtaking scenery, cosy mountain huts, steaming mulled wine, hearty dinners by a crackling fire – all these are the hallmarks of a German skiing vacation.

The Bavarian Alps, only an hour's drive south of Munich, offer the best slopes and most reliable snow conditions. The Olympic Games town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen (p346) has world-class facilities and is popular with the international set. Other major resorts are Oberstdorf (p350) in the Allgäu Alps and Berchtesgaden (p353).

There's also plenty of skiing and snowboarding to be done elsewhere in the country, where the mountains may not soar as high but the crowds are smaller, the prices lower, the ambience less frenetic and yet the snow conditions still reliable. Many less-experienced ski hounds and families prefer these more low-key places.

Among Germany's low mountain ranges, the Bavarian Forest (p389) has the most reliable snow levels with plenty of good downhill action on the Grosser Arber mountain. Cross-country skiing is especially wonderful in the Bavarian Forest National Park. In snowy winters, the Black Forest (p430), the Harz (p230), the Thuringian Forest (p270) and the Sauerland (p589) also attract scores of snow fans.

At higher elevations, the season generally runs from late November/early December to March. In many places snowmaking equipment guarantees winter fun in years when nature doesn't play along. All resorts have equipment-hire facilities. Rates for downhill gear start at about €10 per day, with discounts for longer hiring periods. Cross-country equipment costs slightly less. Daily ski-lift passes start around €20.

Water Sports

Germany's coasts, lakes, rivers and canals are all popular playgrounds for water-based pursuits. Canoeing and kayaking are popular in such places as the Spreewald (p156) in Brandenburg, the Naturpark Altmühltal (p372) in Bavaria and the Müritzer National Park (p711) in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Sailors should head for the North Sea and Baltic Sea or lakes such as the one in Starnberg (p322) or the Chiemsee (p323) in Bavaria.

BUSINESS HOURS

Official trading hours in Germany allow shops to open until 8pm Monday to Saturday. Actual hours, though, vary widely. In rural areas and city suburbs, shop owners usually close doors at 6pm or 6.30pm Monday to Friday and at 2pm or 4pm on Saturday. Some establishments also observe a two- or three-hour lunch break. Train stations and petrol stations are good for stocking up on basic supplies after hours, although prices will be inflated. Many bakeries open for three hours on Sunday morning and for two hours on Sunday afternoon.

Banking hours are from 8.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday, with suburban and rural branches usually closing for lunch. Most branches stay open until 5.30pm or 6.30pm on Thursday. Post office hours vary widely, but core hours are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and to 1pm on Saturday (also see p749).

Travel agencies and other service-oriented businesses are usually open from 9am to 6pm weekdays and till 1pm or 2pm on Saturday. Government offices, on the other hand, close for the weekend as early as 1pm on Friday. Many museums are closed on Monday but stay open late one evening a week.

Restaurant hours vary greatly, but many still close in the afternoon, stop serving food at about 9.30pm and observe a closing day (*Ruhetag*). This rule generally does not apply in big cities where you'll have no problem packing your tummy all day long and until late in the evening.

Pubs and bars pour libations from around 6pm, unless they serve food, in which case they're also open during the day. Happy hours are practically mandatory, and are usually between 5pm and 10pm. In cities without closing hours, such as Hamburg and Berlin, bars stay open until the wee hours if business is good; otherwise, 1am or 2am are typical closing times. Clubs don't really get going before 11pm or midnight and often keep buzzing until sunrise or later. In places like Berlin there is now a growing number of daytime clubs, so it's quite possible not to go home at all on weekends!

All shops, banks, government departments and post offices are closed on public holidays.

Variations on the above are noted in individual reviews.

CHILDREN

Germany is a great destination for travelling with kids, especially if you keep a light schedule and involve the little ones in the day-to-day trip planning. Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children* offers a wealth of tips and tricks on how to make it child's play. The websites www.travelwithyourkids.com and www.flyingwithkids.com are also good general resources.

Practicalities

Children enjoy lots of discounts for everything from museum admissions to bus fares and hotel stays, although the cut-off age can be anything from six to 18.

At hotels, ask for family rooms with three or four beds. Those that don't have them can provide rollaway beds or cots, usually for a small charge. Some properties (usually chains) allow children below a certain age to stay for free in their parents' room, although this may apply only if no extra bedding is required.

Car-rental firms (p765) rent children's safety seats (which are compulsory) for about €5 per day, but be sure to book them in advance. Airlines usually allow infants (up to two years old) to fly for free, while older children requiring a seat of their own may qualify for reduced fares.

Baby food, infant formulas, soy and cow's milk, disposable nappies (diapers) and the like are widely available in supermarkets and chemists (drugstores). Breastfeeding in public is practised, especially in the cities, although most women are discreet about it. Most tourist offices can lead you to local resources for children's programmes, childcare facilities and English-speaking paediatricians.

Kids are welcome in casual restaurants, where highchairs are standard, but taking them to upmarket ones might raise eyebrows, especially at dinnertime. Also see p84.

Sights & Activities

It's easy to keep the kids entertained no matter where you travel in Germany. The great outdoors, of course, yields endless possibilities. A day spent swimming, bicycling, windsurfing, walking or otherwise engaging in physical activity is sure to send the little ones quickly off to dreamland. Farm holidays (p736) are an excellent way for city kids to get a full immersion in nature. Germany's legend-shrouded

WEATHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT

Germans have a few indigenous expressions for their weather patterns. A brief cool period that occurs regularly in May is called *die drei Eisheligen* (the three ice saints). *Schafskälte* (loosely a 'sheep's cold spell') corresponds with shearing time in June. *Altweibersommer* (old maid's summer) is an Indian summer, while mild weather between Christmas and New Year's is called *Weihnachtstauwetter* (Christmas thaw weather).

castles, including the medieval fortresses along the Romantic Rhine (p483), the stately Wartburg (p270) in Thuringia or dreamy Schloss Neuschwanstein (p342) in Bavaria, are sure to fuel the imagination of many a Harry Potter fan.

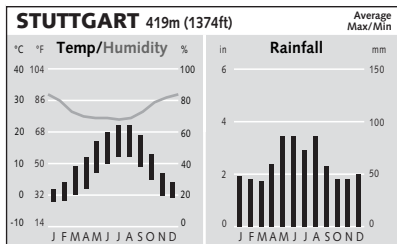
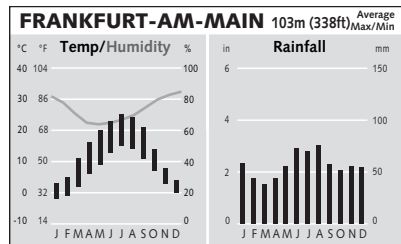
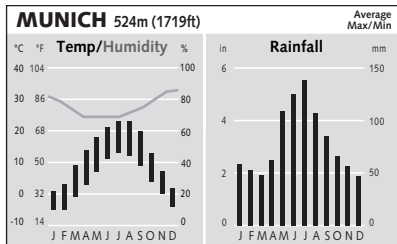
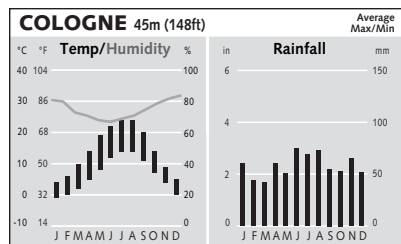
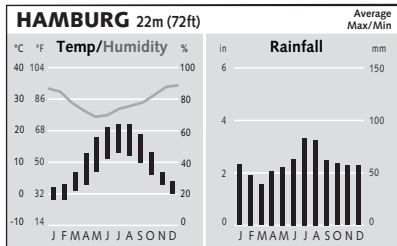
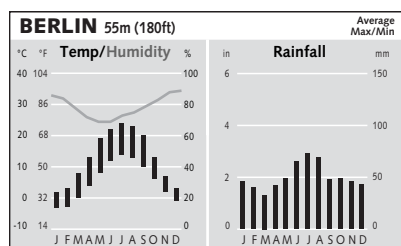
Theme parks are also perennially popular playgrounds, including PhantasiaLand (p561) in Brühl, Europa Park (p445) in the Black Forest, and the CentrO Adventure Park (p579) in the Ruhrgebiet. Older kids get a kick out of Hollywood magic made in Germany at Bavaria Filmstadt (p305) in Munich, Filmpark Babelsberg (p151) in Potsdam near Berlin and Movie Park Germany (p580) in the Ruhrgebiet.

Even in the cities, possibilities for keeping kids entertained abound. Take them to parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, zoos or such kid-friendly museums as the Schokoladen Museum (Chocolate Museum, p554) in Cologne, the Spielzeugmuseum (Toy Museum, p358) in Nuremberg or the technology museums in Munich (Deutsches Museum, p304), Speyer (Technik Museum; p475) and Berlin (Deutsches Technikmuseum; p114). Berlin (p116), Münster (p583), Leipzig (p188) and Gelsenkirchen (p580) are among those cities with wonderful zoos.

CLIMATE CHARTS

The German weather is highly capricious: on any given day it can be cold or warm, sunny or rainy, windy or calm – or any combination thereof. Meteorologists blame this lack of stability on colliding maritime and continental air masses, but for you this simply means packing a wardrobe that's as flexible as possible.

The weather tends to be most pleasant in summer, which is rarely suffocatingly hot



(usually around 28°C), the occasional heat wave notwithstanding. Humidity levels tend to be quite high, making afternoon thunderstorms fairly common. Spring is beautiful but it can be slow to arrive, even if jackets are sometimes stripped off as early as April. Autumn arrives in September and brings the added bonus of bright foliage. Though temperatures can still be quite high, which can keep beer gardens and outdoor cafés open until October. Predictably, December to February is the coldest period, when the mercury can plunge well below 0°C. At the higher elevations, snowfall is possible from November.

For general advice on the best times to travel around the country, see p15.

COURSES

Plenty of courses are offered throughout Germany, including hands-on sessions that don't

require fluency in German. Options are literally endless. How about learning rock climbing in Saxon Switzerland, taking a workshop in porcelain painting in Meissen, joining a wine seminar in a Mosel village, getting a tutorial in woodcarving in the Black Forest or taking cooking lessons in Berlin? Tourist offices are usually the best sources for what's on offer locally, although the classifieds in listings magazines and local newspapers may also yield some leads.

If learning German is your aim, you could hire a private tutor or join a language school. Among the most respected are those run by the **Goethe Institut** (www.goethe.de), a government-subsidised nonprofit organisation promoting German language and culture abroad. Programmes cater for all levels of proficiency, usually last a few weeks and are offered in 16 German cities, including Berlin, Dresden and Munich.

Many universities offer summer courses, which are sometimes held in English. The website of the **Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst** (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service; www.daad.de) has a searchable database of available programmes. For the complete lowdown on study and research at German universities, see www.campus-germany.de.

CUSTOMS

Most articles that you take to Germany for your personal use may be imported free of duty and tax. The following allowances apply to duty-free goods purchased in a non-European Union (EU) country. In addition, you can bring in other products up to a value of €175.

Alcohol 1L of strong liquor or 2L of less than 22% alcohol by volume and 2L of wine (if over age 17)

Coffee & tea 500g of coffee or 200g of coffee extracts and 100g of tea or 40g tea extracts (if over age 15)

Perfume 50g of perfume or scent and 0.25L of eau de toilette

Tobacco 200 cigarettes, 100 cigarillos, 50 cigars or 250g of loose tobacco (if over age 17)

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Germany is a very safe country in which to live and travel, with crime rates that are quite low by international standards. Theft and other crimes against travellers occur rarely. Of course, to be on the safe side, you should still take all the usual sensible precautions, such as locking hotel rooms and cars, not leaving valuables unattended, keeping an eye out for pickpockets in crowded places and not taking midnight strolls in city parks. Train stations tend to be magnets for the destitute and drug-dependent who might harass you or make you feel otherwise uncomfortable, especially if you are in the area at night.

Definitely avoid groups of intoxicated football (soccer) hooligans, especially those whose team was on the losing side. These people are erratic, unpredictable and often violent. Many belong to neo-Nazi and skin-head organisations who tend to target especially those they perceive as 'foreign-looking'. Assaults are also possible in a nonfootball setting, of course. Statistics sadly show the eastern states to have higher rates of racially motivated crimes. While we won't go so far as to recommend avoiding these areas altogether if your skin colour is not white, you

should exercise extra caution in these states, especially in rural areas. Cities are generally safer, although they too may have so-called 'no-go zones'. Ask at your hotel or phone the local police for advice. If you do find yourself in a threatening situation, try not to provoke these aggressors, get away from the scene as fast as possible and notify the police. Also see the boxed text, p50.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Besides the cards mentioned below, general discounts are widely available for seniors, children, families and the disabled, with no special cards needed. In some cases you may be asked to show ID to prove your age.

Camping Card International

This card is available from your local camping or motoring associations and may net you discounts of up to 25% at German camping grounds. It also includes third-party liability insurance for any accidental damage you may cause. See www.campingcardinternational.com for details.

Student & Youth Cards

If you're a full-time student, the **International Student Identity Card** (ISIC; www.isicard.com) is your ticket to savings on airline tickets, travel insurance and admission to local attractions. For nonstudents under 26, the **International Youth Travel Card** (IYTC; www.istc.org) or the **Euro<26 Youth Card** (www.euro26.org) grant similar benefits. Both cards are issued by student unions, hostelling organisations and youth-oriented travel agencies such as STA Travel.

Welcome Cards

Many cities offer Welcome Cards, entitling visitors to discounts on museums, sights and tours, plus unlimited trips on local public transport. Cards are usually available for individuals, families or groups. They can be good value if you plan on taking advantage of most of the benefits and don't qualify for any of the standard discounts.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

For German missions around the world, as well as foreign missions in Germany not listed here, check the website of the German **Federal Foreign Office** (www.auswaertiges-amt.de); link to 'English', then 'Addresses'.

German Embassies & Consulates

Germany has diplomatic representation in almost every country in the world. The embassy is generally located in the capital city but consulates, which handle visas and other travel-related services, are usually found in other major cities as well. Contact the German embassy in your country for a referral to the consulate nearest you.

Australia (☎ 02-6270 1911; www.germanembassy.org.au; 119 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)

Canada (☎ 613-232 1101; www.ottawadiplo.de; 1 Waverley St, Ottawa, Ont K2P 0T8)

France (☎ 01 53 83 45 00; www.amb-allemaigne.fr; 13-15 Ave Franklin Roosevelt, 75008 Paris)

Ireland (☎ 01-269 3011; www.germany.ie; 31 Trimleston Ave, Booterstown, Dublin)

Japan (☎ 03-5791 7700; www.tokyo.diplo.de; 4-5-10, Minami-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0047)

New Zealand (☎ 04-473 6063; www.wellington.diplo.de; 90-92 Hobson St, Thorndon, Wellington)

Russia (☎ 495-937 9500; www.moskau.diplo.de; Ulitsa Mosfilmovskaya 56, 119285 Moscow)

South Africa (☎ 012-427 8900; www.pretoria.diplo.de; 180 Blackwood St, Arcadia, Pretoria 0083)

Switzerland (☎ 031-359 4111; www.bern.diplo.de; Willadingweg 83, 3006 Bern)

UK (☎ 020-7824 1300; www.london.diplo.de; 23 Belgrave Sq, London SW1X 8PZ)

USA (☎ 202-298 8140; www.germany-info.org; 4645 Reservoir Rd NW, Washington, DC 20007-1998)

Embassies & Consulates in Germany

All countries have their embassies in Berlin but maintain consulates in German cities such as Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg and Düsseldorf. Call the embassy number listed here to find out which consulate is closest to your location. Most can be reached by phone from 8am or 9am until 5pm or 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

Australia (Map p98; ☎ 030-880 0880; www.australian-embassy.de; Wallstrasse 76-79)

Canada (Map pp100-1; ☎ 030-203 120; www.kanada-info.de; Leipziger Platz 17)

Czech Republic (Map p98; ☎ 030-226 380; www.mzv.cz/berlin; Wilhelmstrasse 44)

France (Map p98; ☎ 030-590 039 000; www.botschaft-frankreich.de; Pariser Platz 5)

Ireland (Map p98; ☎ 030-220 720; www.botschaft-ireland.de; Friedrichstrasse 200)

Italy (Map p98; ☎ 030-254 400; www.botschaft-italien.de; Hiroshimastrasse 1)

Japan (Map p98; ☎ 030-210 940; www.botschaft-japan.de; Hiroshimastrasse 6)

Netherlands (Map p98; ☎ 030-209 560; www.dutchembassy.de; Klosterstrasse 50)

New Zealand (Map p98; ☎ 030-206 210; www.nzembassy.com; Friedrichstrasse 60)

Poland (☎ 030-223 130; www.botschaft-polen.de; Lassenstrasse 19-21)

Russia (Map p98; ☎ 030-229 1110; www.russische-botschaft.de; Unter den Linden 63-65)

South Africa (Map p98; ☎ 030-220 730; www.suedafrika.org; Tiergartenstrasse 18)

Spain (Map pp96-7; ☎ 030-254 0070; www.spanischebotschaft.de; Lichtensteinallee 1)

Switzerland (Map p98; ☎ 030-390 4000; www.botschaft-schweiz.de; Otto-von-Bismarck-Allee 4a)

UK (Map p98; ☎ 030-204 570; www.britischebotschaft.de; Wilhelmstrasse 70)

USA (Map p98; ☎ 030-238 5174; www.us-botschaft.de; Neustädtische Kirchstrasse 4-5) The embassy is expected to move to new building on Pariser Platz in 2008.

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Germany has a packed schedule of festivals and special events. Mentioned here are those celebrated either throughout the nation or in specific regions. For more merriment, see the Festivals & Events sections in the destination chapters.

January & February

Karneval/Fasching (Carnival) The pre-Lent season is celebrated with costumed street partying, parades, satirical shows and general revelry, mostly in cities that are located along the Rhine such as Düsseldorf, Cologne and Mainz, but also in the Black Forest and Munich. See the boxed text, p55.

April

Walpurgisnacht Celebrated on 30 April throughout the Harz, this festival of pagan origin has villages roaring to life; young and old dress up as witches and warlocks and parade through the streets singing and dancing. For more, see the boxed text on p249.

May

Maifest (May Festival) Villagers celebrate the end of winter by chopping down a tree (*Maibaum*), painting, carving and decorating it, and staging a merry revelry with traditional costumes, singing and dancing, usually on the eve of 1 May (*Tanz in den Mai*).

Muttertag (Mother's Day) Mothers are honoured on the second Sunday of May, much to the delight of florists, sweet shops and greeting-card companies.

Nördlinger Pfingstmesse Exhibition of regional traders, with a huge market featuring beer tents, food stalls and entertainment; Nördlingen (p338).

Karneval der Kulturen (www.karneval-berlin.de) Multicultural street and music festival and colourful parade; Berlin (p124).

Internationales Dixieland Festival (www.dixieland.de) Major festival with bands from around the world; Dresden (p174).

Hafengeburtstag (Harbour Birthday; www.hafengeburtstag.de) Five-day festival in the harbour area; Hamburg (p664).

Rhein in Flammen (Rhine in Flames) Huge fireworks festival in five Rhine villages; May to September (p484).

June

Vatertag (Father's Day) Now also known as Männertag (Men's Day), this Ascension Day celebration is an excuse for men to get liquored up with the blessing of the missus.

Erlanger Bergkirchweih (www.der-berg-rufft.de in German) Popular folk and beer festival; Erlangen (p364).

Kieler Woche (Kiel Week; www.kieler-woche.de) Giant festival with yachting regattas and nonstop partying; Kiel (p681)

Wave-Gotik-Treffen (www.wave-gotik-treffen.de) The world's largest Goth gathering; Leipzig (p190).

Christopher Street Day (www.csd-germany.de) Major gay celebration with wild street parades and raucous partying, especially in Berlin, Cologne and Hamburg but also in Dresden, Munich, Stuttgart and Frankfurt.

Mainzer Johannisnacht (www.mainz.de/johann-nisnacht) Huge street festival whose highlight is the ceremonial initiation of printers' apprentices; Mainz (p470).

Africa-Festival (www.africafestival.org) Europe's largest festival of Black music; Würzburg (p330).

July & August

Schützenfest (Marksmen's Festivals) Over a million Germans (almost all men, naturally) belong to shooting clubs and show off their skills at these festivals where one of them will be crowned *Schützenkönig* (king of the marksmen); the biggest one takes place in July in Hanover, but Düsseldorf has one of the oldest.

Weinfeste As soon the grapes have been harvested, the wine festival season starts with wine tastings, folkloric parades, fireworks and the election of local and regional wine queens. The Dürkheimer Wurstmart (p479) is one of the biggest and most famous.

Kinderzeche (Children's Festival; www.kinderzeche.de) Ten-day festival with children performing in historical re-enactments, a pageant and the usual merriment; Dinkelsbühl (p336).

Samba Festival (www.samba-festival.de in German) An orgy of song and dance that draws around 90 bands and up to 200,000 visitors; Coburg (p371).

Love Parade (www.loveparade.net) No longer techno only but all types of electronic music at the world's largest rave in mid-July; Berlin (p124).

Richard Wagner Festival (www.bayreuther-festspiele.de in German) Prestigious opera and music festival held throughout August; Bayreuth (p369).

September, October & November

Ertedankfest (Harvest Festival) This harvest festival is celebrated in late September/early October with decorated church altars, processions (*Ertedankzug*) and villagers dressed in folkloric garments.

Oktoberfest (www.oktoberfest.de) Legendary beer-swilling party, enough said. Actually starts in mid-September; Munich (p308).

Frankfurt Book Fair (Frankfurter Buchmesse; www.buchmesse.de) October sees the world's largest book fair, with 1800 exhibitors from 100 countries; Frankfurt (p518).

St Martinstag Celebrated on 10 and 11 November, this festival honours a 4th-century saint known for his humility and generosity with a lantern procession and a re-enactment of the scene where St Martin famously cuts his coat in half to share with a beggar. This is followed by a big feast of stuffed, roasted goose.

December

Nikolaustag On the eve of 5 December, German children put their boots outside the door hoping that St Nick will fill them with sweets and small toys overnight. Ill-behaved children, though, may find only a prickly rod left behind by St Nick's helper, Knecht Ruprecht.

Christmas Markets Mulled wine, spicy gingerbread cookies, shimmering ornaments – these and lots more are typical features of German Christmas markets held from late November until December 24. The Christkindlmarkt (p361) in Nuremberg is especially famous.

Silvester The German New Year's Eve is called Silvester in honour of the 4th-century pope under whom the Romans adopted Christianity as their official religion; there's partying all night long, and the new year is greeted with fireworks launched by thousands of amateur pyromaniacs.

FOOD

Though traditionally a meat-and-potatoes country, the cuisine available in Germany is becoming lighter, healthier and more international. For the full rundown, see p74.

Eating recommendations in this guide match all tastes and travel budgets. Budget eateries include takeaways, cafés, *Imbisse* (snack bars), markets and basic restaurants where you can get a meal (defined as a main course and one drink) for less than €10. At midrange establishments, you usually get tablecloths, full menus, beer and wine lists and a bill that shouldn't exceed €25 per person. Top-end places tend to be full gourmet affairs with expert service, creative and

freshly prepared food and matching wine lists. Main courses alone here will cost €20 or more; set three- or four-course menus are usually a better deal.

If our reviews do not mention opening hours, standard hours (11am to 11pm) apply. Note that food service may stop earlier, depending on how busy the place is that night.

Nearly all restaurants in Germany allow smoking, although some have a nonsmoking section. Only some restaurants are air-conditioned.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

Germany is a magnet for gay travellers with the rainbow flag flying especially proudly in Berlin. Some 500,000 gays and lesbians currently make their home in the city, which is helmed by Germany's first openly gay mayor, Klaus Wowereit (affectionately dubbed 'Wowi'). For an overview of the Berlin scene, see the boxed text on p136; for Cologne, flick to p560, for Hamburg to p674. All of these hubs have humming nightlife scenes, magazines, associations and support groups, and major Gay Pride celebrations. Frankfurt (p523), Munich (p318) and other cities have smaller but still vibrant scenes.

Overall, Germans are tolerant of gays (*Schwule*) and lesbians (*Lesben*) although, as elsewhere in the world, cities are more liberal than rural areas, and younger people tend to be more open-minded than older generations. Discrimination is more likely in eastern Germany and in the conservative south where gays and lesbians tend to keep a lower profile.

Germany's gay movement took a huge step forward in 2001 with the passing of the *Lebenspartnerschaftsgesetz* (Life Partnership Act, colloquially known as 'Homo-Ehe' or gay marriage). It gives homosexual couples the right to register their partnership at the registry office and to enjoy many of the same rights, duties and protections as married heterosexual couples. Another victory, and not only for gays, was the passage, in July 2006, of the *Gleichbehandlungsgesetz* (Equal Treatment Law), a far-reaching antidiscrimination initiative. It makes it punishable to discriminate against anyone at work or in private life based on age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnic background, religion or world view.

Local gay and lesbian magazines and centres are listed throughout this book. Online sites about all things gay in Germany abound, but most are in German only. Try www.gayscape.com, a search tool with hundreds of links, or go directly to www.justbegay.de or www.gay-web.de. Sites specifically for women are www.lesbians-unlimited.org and www.lesarion.de. Sites specialising in gay travel include www.tomontour.de and www.outtraveler.com (in English). National publications include **Lespress** (www.lespress.de), *L.Mag* for lesbians and **Du & Ich** (www.du-und-ich.net) for young gay men.

HOLIDAYS

Public Holidays

Germany observes eight religious and three secular holidays nationwide. Shops, banks, government offices and post offices are closed on these days. States with predominantly Catholic populations, such as Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg, also celebrate Epiphany (6 January), Corpus Christi (10 days after Pentecost), Assumption Day (15 August) and All Saints' Day (1 November). Reformation Day (31 October) is only observed in eastern Germany.

The following are *gesetzliche Feiertage* (public holidays):

Neujahrstag (New Year's Day) 1 January

Ostern (Easter) March/April – Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Easter Monday

Christi Himmelfahrt (Ascension Day) 40 days after Easter

Maifeiertag/Tag der Arbeit (Labour Day) 1 May

Pfingsten (Whit/Pentecost Sunday & Monday) May/June; 50 days after Easter

Tag der Deutschen Einheit (Day of German Unity) 3 October

Weihnachtstag (Christmas Day) 25 December

2. Weihnachtstag (Boxing Day) 26 December

School Holidays

Each state sets its own school holidays but in general kids get six weeks off in summer and two weeks each around Christmas and Easter and in October. In some states, schools are also closed for a few days in February and around Whitsun/Pentecost.

Traffic is worst at the beginning of school holidays in population-rich states like North Rhine-Westphalia and can become a nightmare if several states let out their schools at the same time.

Germans are big fans of miniholidays built around public holidays, especially those in spring like Ascension Day, Labour Day, Corpus Christi and Whit/Pentecost. Expect heavy crowds on the roads, in the towns, on boats, in beer gardens and everywhere else. Lodging is at a premium at these times as well.

INSURANCE

No matter how long or short your trip, make sure you have adequate travel insurance. If you are a citizen of the EU, the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) entitles you to reduced-cost or free medical treatment due to illness or accident, although not for emergency repatriation home. Check with your local health authorities on how to obtain an EHIC. In most countries, applications may be filed online. Non-EU citizens should check if a similar reciprocal agreement exists between their country and Germany, or if their policy at home provides worldwide healthcare coverage.

If you need to buy travel health insurance, be sure to get a policy that also covers emergency flights back home. Many healthcare providers expect immediate payment from nonlocals but most do not accept credit cards. Except in emergencies, call around for a doctor willing to accept your insurance. Check your policy for what supporting documentation you need to file a claim and be sure to keep all receipts.

Some policies exclude coverage for 'dangerous activities' like scuba diving, motorcycling, mountaineering, hang-gliding etc. If these activities are on your agenda, be sure to get a policy that includes them. For additional details, see p771.

You should also consider coverage for luggage theft or loss. If you already have a homeowners or renters policy, check what it will cover and only get supplemental insurance to protect against the rest. If you have prepaid a large portion of your vacation, trip cancellation insurance is a worthwhile expense.

For information about what kind of insurance coverage you need while driving in Germany, see p766.

Agencies offering comprehensive travel insurance online include the following:

1 Cover (☎ in Australia 1300-368-344; www.1cover.com.au) Australia-based agency.

Insure.com (☎ in US 800-556-9393; www.insure.com) Compares quotes from 200 US-based insurance companies.

THE LEGAL AGE FOR...

- Drinking alcohol: 14
- Being served alcohol in a pub: 16
- Driving a car: 18
- Sexual consent: 14 (with restrictions)
- Voting in an election: 18

Quoteline Direct (☎ in UK 0870-444 0870; www.quotelinedirect.co.uk) Compares quotes from 30 UK-based insurance companies.

Travelax (☎ in US 800-228-9792; www.travelax-insurance.com)

Travel Guard (☎ in US 800-826-4919; www.travelguard.com)

INTERNET ACCESS

Surfing the Web and checking email is rarely a problem while travelling around Germany. Most public libraries offer access, but downsides may include time limits, reservation requirements and queues. In smaller towns, though, this may be your only choice. Hostels and hotels offering guest PCs with internet access are identified in this book with an internet icon (☎).

Otherwise, internet cafés are plentiful and listed in the Information sections throughout this book; online costs range from €1 to €5 per hour. Unfortunately, these cafés tend to have the longevity of a fruit fly, so please forgive us if our listings are outdated and ask staff at your hotel for a recommendation. Internet access is also often available at telephone call shops near train stations. They're not the nicest places but a good fallback if all else fails.

Laptop users may need adapters for German electrical outlets and telephone sockets, which are widely available in such electronics stores as Saturn and Media Markt. Wireless internet access (wi-fi, or W-LAN in Germany) is becoming fairly prevalent in some midrange and many high-end places. Access is sometimes free; where it's not, charges tend to be steep (eg €25 per day), so read the fine print.

Unless you have an ISDN-compatible modem, access may be difficult, if not impossible, in hotels using this now outdated data service, which is especially prevalent in the eastern states and in rural areas. Another, though increasingly rare, obstacle is hard-wired (ie wired to the wall) telephones.

Some cafés and pubs also offer wi-fi access, sometimes at no charge with a purchase. To locate hot spots, check the directories at www.jiwire.com or www.hotspot-locations.com.

For a full run-down on connectivity issues see www.kropla.com.

LEGAL MATTERS

German police are well trained, fairly 'enlightened' and usually treat tourists with respect. Most can speak some English, though communication problems are likely to be more prevalent in the eastern states, especially in rural areas.

By German law you must carry some form of photographic identification, such as your passport, national identity card or driving licence. Reporting theft to the police is usually a simple, if occasionally time-consuming, matter. Remember that the first thing to do is show some form of identification.

If driving in Germany, you should carry your driving licence and obey road rules carefully (see p766). Penalties for drinking and driving are stiff. The permissible blood-alcohol limit is 0.05%; drivers caught exceeding this amount are subject to stiff fines, a confiscated licence and even jail time.

The sensible thing is to avoid illegal drugs entirely, as penalties can be harsh. Although treated as a minor offence, the possession of even small quantities of cannabis for personal use remains illegal, and getting caught may result in a court appearance. In practice, the courts often waive prosecution if it's a first offence involving only a small amount of cannabis. The definition of 'small', however, is up to the judge, so there are no guarantees. Most other drugs are treated more seriously.

If you are arrested, you have the right to make a phone call and are presumed innocent until proven guilty. If you don't know a lawyer, contact your embassy.

MAPS

Most tourist offices distribute free (but often very basic) maps, but for driving around Germany you'll need a detailed road map or atlas such as those published by Falkplan, Hallwag, RV Verlag or ADAC. Look for them at bookshops, tourist offices, newsagents and petrol stations. **Map 24** (www.map24.de) and **Stadtplandienst** (www.stadtplandienst.de) have downloadable driving directions.

MONEY

The euro has been Germany's official currency since 2002. Euros come in seven notes (five, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 euros) and eight coins (one- and two-euro coins and one-, two-, five-, 10-, 20- and 50-cent coins). At the time of writing, the euro was a strong and stable currency, although some minor fluctuations are common. The exchange-rate table on the inside front cover can only offer guidelines. For current rates, check with your bank or online at www.xe.com/ucc or www.oanda.com.

You can exchange money at many banks and post offices as well as foreign-exchange offices. Rates are quite good and service swift and unbureaucratic at Reisebank offices at large train stations; look for branches listed throughout this book. American Express and Thomas Cook/Travellex offices are also reliable stand-bys.

For an overview of the costs you can expect in Germany, see p15.

ATMs

ATMs are ubiquitous and usually the easiest and quickest way to obtain cash from your home bank account. Most are linked to international networks such as Cirrus, Plus, Star and Maestro.

Many ATMs also spit out cash if you use a credit card. This method tends to be more costly because, in addition to a service fee, you'll be charged interest immediately (ie there's no grace period as with purchases).

For exact fees, check with your bank or credit-card company. Always keep the number handy for reporting lost or stolen cards.

Cash

Cash is still king in Germany, so you can't really avoid having at least some notes and coins, say €100 or so, on you at all times. Plan to pay in cash almost everywhere (see the next section for likely exceptions). Banks only exchange foreign paper money and not coins.

Credit Cards

Major credit cards are becoming more widely accepted, but it's best not to assume that you'll be able to use one – enquire first. Some shops may require a minimum purchase, while others may refuse to accept a card even if the credit card company's logo is displayed in their window.

Even so, a piece of plastic is vital in emergencies and also useful for phone or internet bookings. Report lost or stolen cards to the following:

American Express (☎ 01805-840 840)

MasterCard (☎ 0800-819 1040)

Visa (☎ 0800-811 8440)

Tipping

Restaurant bills always include a service charge (*Bedienung*) but most people add 5% or 10% unless the service was truly abhorrent. At hotels, bellhops get about €1 per bag and it's also nice to leave a few euros for the room cleaners. Tip bartenders about 5% and taxi drivers around 10%.

Travellers Cheques

Once a popular alternative to large wads of cash, travellers cheques are becoming increasingly obsolete in the age of network-linked ATMs. It doesn't help that German businesses generally don't accept them, even if denominated in euros, and that even banks often refuse to cash them or charge exorbitant fees for the service. Currency exchange offices are usually the best places to go. American Express offices cash their own cheques free of charge. Always keep a record of the cheque numbers separate from the cheques themselves.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Germany is a photographer's dream, with its gorgeous countryside, fabulous architecture, quaint villages, exciting cities, lordly

cathedrals, lively cafés and picture-perfect castles, palaces and old towns. A good general reference guide is Lonely Planet's *Travel Photography* by Richard T Anson.

If photography means only digital to you, you need only go to www.malektips.com for advice on how to keep your pixels poppin' in nearly every situation you can imagine. If you still have a 'traditional' camera with actual film, keep in mind that for general shooting – either prints or slides – 100 ASA film is the most useful and versatile as it gives you good colour and enough speed to capture most situations. If you plan to shoot in dark areas or in brightly lit night scenes without a tripod, switch to 400 ASA. For slides, Fuji Velvia and Kodak E100VS are easy to process and provide good quality. For print film, you can't beat Kodak Gold or Fuji.

Film of any type is inexpensive in Germany, so there's no need to stock up at home. For a roll of 36-exposure standard print film, expect to pay around €1.50 to €3, while quality slide film should cost from €5 to €7. The cost goes down if you buy in multipacks. Big chain electronics stores like Saturn or Media Markt tend to have the best prices for film.

Film can be damaged by excessive heat, so avoid leaving your camera and film in the car (this goes for digital cameras too). Carry spare batteries to avoid disappointment when your camera dies in the middle of nowhere or on a Sunday afternoon. With any new camera, practise before leaving for your trip.

Germans tend to be deferential around photographers and will make a point of not walking in front of your camera, even if you want them to. No-one seems to mind being photographed in the context of an overall scene, but if you want a close-up shot, you should ask first.

POST

Main post offices, which are often near train stations, are usually open from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday and till 1pm on Saturday. Suburban and rural branches often close at lunchtime and at 5pm or 5.30pm weekdays and noon on Saturday. Our destination chapters list only opening hours deviating from this standard.

Stamps are officially sold at post offices only, though hotel staff and souvenir and postcard shops in tourist resorts may also carry some.

TAXES & REFUNDS

Prices for goods and services include a value-added tax (VAT), called *Mehrwertsteuer*, which is 19% for regular goods and 7% for food and books. If your permanent residence is outside the European Union, you can have a large portion of the VAT refunded, provided you shop at a store displaying the 'Tax-Free for Tourists' sign and obtain a tax-free form for your purchase from the sales clerk. At the airport, show this form, your unused goods and your receipt to a custom official before checking your luggage. The customs official will stamp the form, which you can then take straight to the cash refund office at the airport.

Within Germany and the EU, standard-sized postcards cost €0.45, a 20g letter is €0.55 and a 50g letter is €1. Postcards to North America and Australasia cost €1, a 20g airmail letter is €1.55 and a 50g airmail letter is €2. A surcharge applies to oversized mail. The post office's website (www.deutsche-post.de) has full details.

Letters sent within Germany take one to two days for delivery; those addressed to destinations within Europe or to North America take three to five days and those to Australasia five to seven days.

Sending a parcel up to 2kg within Germany costs €4.10. Surface-mail parcels up to 2kg within Europe are €8.20 and to destinations elsewhere €12.30. Airmail parcels up to 1kg are €10.30/21 within Europe/elsewhere; parcels over 1kg cost €14.30/29.70.

SHOPPING

Germany is a fun place to shop, with an enormous selection of everyday and wonderfully unique items. Much of the shopping is done in pedestrianised shopping zones in the city centres rather than in big shopping malls, which are often relegated to the suburbs. There's really nothing you can't buy in Germany, but even in the age of globalism, there are still some treasures you'll unearth here better than anywhere else.

Regional products include traditional Bavarian outfits, including dirndl dresses, lederhosen and Loden jackets. Beer mugs are the classic souvenir, no matter whether made of glass or stoneware, plain or decorated, with or without pewter lids – the choice is endless.

Germans make excellent clocks, and not only of the cuckoo variety. Precision instruments such as microscopes and binoculars with lenses by Carl Zeiss are also a speciality. Cutlery is first-rate, with WMF, Wüsthof and JA Henckels being leading brands.

Top-quality woodcarvings are widely available in the Alpine regions, the Harz and Saxony. Fans of the fragile can pick up exquisite china made by Meissen, Villeroy & Boch, Rosenthal, KPM or Nymphenburger Porzellanmanufaktur. The glass artisans in the Bavarian Forest make beautiful vases, bowls and ornaments.

Famous toy brands include stuffed animals by Steiff (the inventor of the teddy bear) and collectible Käthe Kruse dolls. At Christmas markets you'll discover wonderful ornaments, classic nutcrackers and other decorations. Sea-

sonal treats include Lebkuchen, a spicy gingerbread, and Stollen, a loaf-shaped fruit cake.

German wine is another excellent purchase, especially since some of the best bottles are not available outside the country. If you're into street fashion, head to Berlin, which makes the most *Zeitgeist*-capturing outfits. See the boxed text on p141 for specifics.

Bargaining

Bargaining almost never occurs in Bavaria, except at flea markets. At hotels, you can sometimes get lower rates if business is slow.

SOLO TRAVELLERS

There are no particular problems or difficulties associated with travelling alone in Germany. Germans are generally friendly but rather reserved and not likely to initiate a conversation with strangers. This shouldn't stop you from approaching them, though, since most will quite happily respond and even be extra helpful once they find out you're a traveller. And don't let your lack of German deter you. Young people especially speak at least some English and many are keen to practise it.

Women don't need to be afraid of initiating a conversation, not even with men. Unless you're overtly coquettish, this most likely won't be interpreted as a sexual advance. Issues of safety, though, are slightly different for women than they are for men; see p752 for more specific advice.

For more on the subject, check out the website of the nonprofit **Connecting: Solo Travel Network** (www.cstn.org). It's membership-based but much information is accessible without joining.

TELEPHONE & FAX Fax

Faxes can be sent from and received at most hotels, photocopy shops and internet cafés.

Mobile Phones

Mobile (cell) phones are called 'handys' and work on the GSM 900/1800 standard, which is compatible with the rest of Europe, Australia and parts of Asia, but not the North American GSM1900 or the totally different system in Japan. Multiband phones that work worldwide are becoming increasingly common.

If you have an unlocked GSM900/1800 or multiband phone, buying a local prepaid, rechargeable SIM card is likely to work out

cheaper than using your own network. Cards are available at any telecommunications store (eg T-Online, Vodafone, E-Plus or O2) and give you a local number without signing any contract. All include voice mail, text messaging and free incoming calls. Recharge with scratch cards from news kiosks and general stores.

If your phone doesn't work in Germany, you can buy a GSM prepaid phone, including some airtime, starting at €30 at any telecommunications store.

Note: calls made to a mobile phone are more expensive than those to a stationary number, but incoming calls are free.

Phone Codes

German phone numbers consist of an area code, which always starts with 0, and the local number. Area codes can be up to six digits, local numbers up to nine digits long. If dialling from a landline within the same city, you don't need to dial the area code. If using a mobile, you must dial it.

If calling Germany from abroad, first dial your country's international access code, then 49 (Germany's country code), then the area code (dropping the initial 0) and the local number. Germany's international access code is ☎00. If you need to put through a reverse-charge call or *R²-Gespräch*, contact the operator on ☎0180-200 1033.

Deutsche Telekom offers fast and reliable live directory assistance, but it's ridiculously expensive. Numbers within Germany (☎118 37 for an English-speaking operator) are charged at €1.29 per minute, while numbers outside Germany (☎118 34) command a base rate of €0.99 plus €1.19 per minute. If you have online access, you can get the same information for free at www.telefonbuch.de. A much cheaper provider is the fully automated Telix (☎118 86), which charges only €0.29 per minute.

Numbers starting with 0800 are toll free, 01801 numbers are charged at 4.6 cents per minute, 01803 at €0.09 and 01805 at €0.12. Calls to numbers starting with 01802 cost a flat €0.06, while those to 01804 numbers cost a flat €0.24. Avoid numbers starting with 0190 or 900, which are charged at exorbitant rates. Direct-dialled calls made from hotel rooms are also usually charged at a premium.

If you have access to a private phone, you can benefit from cheaper rates by using a call-by-call access code (eg 01016 or 010090).

Daily newspapers often list providers that offer the currently cheapest rates, although the most comprehensive source is online at www.billigertelefonieren.de (in German).

Telephone call shops, which tend to cluster around train stations, may also offer competitive calling rates, although they often charge rather steep connection fees. Always make sure you understand the charges involved.

Phonecards

Most public pay phones only work with Deutsche Telekom (DT) phonecards, available in denominations of €5, €10 and €20 from DT stores as well as post offices, newsagents and tourist offices. Occasionally you'll see non-DT pay phones, but these may not necessarily offer better rates.

For long-distance or international calls, prepaid calling cards issued by other companies tend to offer better rates than DT's phonecards. Look for them at newsagents and telephone call shops. Most of these cards also work with payphones but usually at a surcharge – read the fine print on the card itself. Those sold at Reisebank (p748) outlets have some of the most competitive rates.

TIME

Clocks in Germany are set to central European time (GMT/UTC plus one hour). Daylight-saving time comes into effect at 2am on the last Sunday in March and ends on the last Sunday in October. Without taking daylight-saving times into account, when it's noon in Berlin, it's 11am in London, 6am in New York, 3am in San Francisco, 8pm in Tokyo, 9pm in Sydney and 11pm in Auckland. The use of the 24-hour clock (eg 6.30pm is 18.30) is common. Refer to the map on pp814–15 for additional times.

TOURIST INFORMATION Local Tourist Offices

Just about every community in Germany has a walk-in tourist office where you can pick up information, maps, pamphlets and often book a room, sometimes for a small fee. Contact details are listed throughout this book in the Information section of each town.

Tourist offices in big cities and resort areas usually have English-language brochures. With few exceptions, there's at least one staff member more or less fluent in English and willing to make the effort to help you.

Tourist Offices Abroad

The best pre-trip planning source is the **German National Tourist Office** (GNTO; www.germany-tourism.com), whose comprehensive website is available in a dozen or so languages. For specific enquiries, contact the GNTO office in your country. Here's a selection:

Austria (☎ 01-513 2792; www.deutschland-tourismus.de)

Belgium (☎ 02-245 9700; www.duitsland-vakantieland.be, www.vacances-en-allemanne.be)

Canada (☎ 416-968 1685; www.cometogermany.com)

France (☎ 01 40 20 01 88; www.allemanne-tourisme.com)

Italy (☎ 02-8474 4444; www.vacanzeingermania.com)

Japan (☎ 13-3586 0735; www.visit-germany.jp)

Netherlands (☎ 020-697 8066; www.duitsverkeersbureau.nl)

Spain (☎ 91-429 3551; www.alemania-turismo.com)

Switzerland (☎ 01-213 2200; www.deutschland-tourismus.de)

UK (☎ 020-7317 0908; www.germany-tourism.de)

USA (☎ 212-661-7200; www.cometogermany.com)

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Overall, Germany caters well for the needs of the disabled (*Behinderte*), especially the wheelchair-bound. You'll find access ramps and/or lifts in many public buildings, including train stations, museums, theatres and cinemas, especially in the cities. In historic places, though, cobblestone streets make getting around quite cumbersome.

Newer hotels have special rooms for mobility-impaired guests with extra-wide doors and spacious bathrooms. Nearly all trains are accessible, and local buses and U-Bahns are becoming increasingly so as well. For details, call the local transport organisations listed throughout this book. Seeing-eye dogs are allowed on all forms of public transport.

Some car-rental agencies offer hand-controlled vehicles and vans with wheelchair lifts at no charge, but you must reserve them well in advance. In parking lots and garages, look for designated disabled spots marked with a painted wheelchair.

Many local and regional tourist offices have special brochures for people with disabilities, although usually in German.

At the **Deutsche Bahn Mobility Service Centre** (☎ 01805-512 512; www.bahn.de); ☎ 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) operators provide train access information and help with route planning. The website has useful information in English (link to 'International Guests').

Other resources:

Access Travel (☎ in UK 01942-888 844; www.access-travel.co.uk) Tour operator specialising in holidays for travellers with disabilities.

Access-Able Travel Source (☎ in US 303-232 2979; www.access-able.com) Operates an excellent website with many links.

All Go Here (www.everybody.co.uk) Directory that provides information on disabled services offered by most major airlines.

E-Bility (☎ in Australia 02-9810 2216; www.e-bility.com) Australia-based destination website with disability-related information, services and products.

Mobility International (☎ in UK 020-7403-5688, in US 541-343-1284; www.miusa.org) Advises disabled travellers on mobility issues and runs an educational exchange programme.

Natko (☎ in Germany 06131-250 410; www.natko.de in German) Central clearing house for inquiries about travelling in Germany as a disabled person.

Society for Accessible Travel & Hospitality (SATH; ☎ in US 212-447-7284; www.sath.org) Lots of useful links and information for disabled travellers.

VISAS

Most EU nationals only need their national identity card or passport to enter, stay and work in Germany. Citizens of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Poland, Switzerland and the US are among those countries that need only a valid passport but no visa if entering Germany as tourists for up to three months within a six-month period. Passports should be valid for at least another four months from the planned date of departure from Germany.

Nationals from most other countries need a so-called Schengen Visa, named for the 1995 Schengen Agreement that abolished passport controls between Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Greece, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden. You must apply for the Schengen Visa with the embassy or consulate of the country that is your primary destination. It is valid for stays up to 90 days. Legal residency in any Schengen country makes a visa unnecessary, regardless of your nationality.

Visa applications are usually processed within two to 10 days, but it's always best to start the process as early as possible. For full details, see www.auswaertiges-amt.de and check with a German consulate in your country.

WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Germany is generally a safe place for women to travel, even alone and even in the cities. Of course, this doesn't mean you can let your guard down and trust your life to every stranger. Simply use the same common sense as you would at home.

Getting hassled in the streets happens infrequently and is usually limited to wolf-whistles and unwanted stares. In crowded situations, ie on public transport or at events, groping is rare.

German women are quite outspoken and emancipated. It's normal to split dinner bills, even on dates, or for a woman to pick up a man. Going alone to cafés and restaurants is perfectly acceptable, even at night, although how comfortable you feel doing so depends entirely on you. In bars and nightclubs, solo women are likely to attract some attention, but if you don't want company, most men will respect a firm 'no thank you'. If you feel threatened, protesting loudly will often make the offender slink away with embarrassment – or at least spur other people to come to your defence.

Some recommended online resources for women travellers include **Journeywoman** (www.journeywoman.com) and **Her Own Way** (www.voyage.gc.ca/main/pubs/PDF/her_own_way-en.pdf). While the latter is published by the Canadian government, it still contains lots of good general advice.

Physical attack is very unlikely but, of course, it does happen. If you're assaulted, call the police immediately (☎ 110) or, if you're too traumatised, contact a women's crisis centre. For a complete list, see www.frauennotrufe.de (also in English) or call ☎ 030-3229 9500. Hotlines are not staffed around the clock.

Berlin (☎ 030-216 8888)

Cologne (☎ 0221-562 035)

Frankfurt-am-Main (☎ 069-709 494)

Hamburg (☎ 040-255 566)

Hanover (☎ 0511-332 112)

Leipzig (☎ 0341-391 1199)

Mainz (☎ 06131-221 213)

Munich (☎ 089-763 737)

Nuremberg (☎ 0911-284 400)

Stuttgart (☎ 0711-285 9001)

WORK

Non-EU citizens cannot work legally in Germany without a residence permit (*Aufenthaltserlaubnis*) and a work permit

(*Arbeitslaubnis*). EU citizens don't need a work permit but they must have a residence permit, although obtaining one is a mere formality. Since regulations change from time to time, it's best to contact the German embassy in your country for the latest information.

Because of fairly high unemployment, finding skilled work in Germany can be a full-time job in itself, except in high-demand fields such as information technology. A good place to start is at the local employment offices (*Arbeitsamt*), which maintain job banks of vacancies. The classified sections of the daily papers are another source, as are private placement and temp agencies. The three largest temp agencies are **Randstadt** (☎ 06196-4080; www.randstadt.de), **Adecco** (☎ 01802-900 900; www.adecco.de) and **Persona** (☎ 02351-9500). All have comprehensive websites (in German) that allow you to search for job openings. Computer specialists might want to visit www.computerjobs24.de, a data bank that allows you to search for jobs or list your services at no cost. Obviously, the better your German, the greater your chances.

If you're not in the market for a full-time job but simply need some casual work to pad your travel budget, options include babysitting, cleaning, English tutoring, tour guiding, bar tending, yoga teaching, donating sperm or perhaps nude modelling for art classes. You won't get rich, but neither will you need a high skill level, much training, or fluent German. Start by placing a classified ad in a local newspaper or listings guide. Other places to advertise include noticeboards at universities, photocopy shops and supermarkets.

Au pair work is relatively easy to find and can be done legally even by non-EU citizens. Fluent German is not expected, although you should have some basic language skills. For the full story, get the latest edition of *The Au Pair and Nanny's Guide to Working Abroad* by Susan Griffith and Sharon Legg. The website www.au-pair-agenturen.de has links to numerous agencies in Germany.

Citizens of Australia, New Zealand and Canada between the ages of 18 and 30 may apply for a Working Holiday Visa, entitling them to work for up to 90 days in a 12-month period. Contact your German embassy for details (p743).

Transport

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GETTING THERE & AWAY

ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Entering Germany is usually a very straightforward procedure. If you're arriving in Germany from any of the 15 Schengen countries, such as the Netherlands or Austria, you no longer have to show your passport or go through customs in Germany, no matter which nationality you are. For a list of Schengen countries as well as an overview of visa requirements, see p752.

Passport

Passports must be valid for at least six months after the end of your trip. Citizens of most Western countries can enter Germany without a visa; other nationals may need a Schengen Visa; see p752 for details.

AIR Airports

Frankfurt International Airport (FRA; ☎ 01805-372 4636; www.frankfurt-airport.de) is the main gateway for transcontinental flights, although **Düsseldorf** (DUS; ☎ 0211-4210; www.duesseldorf-international.de) and **Munich** (MUC; ☎ 089-975 00; www.munich

THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or a travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and ticket you may buy) works and be aware of the security requirements for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and are not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

-airport.de) also receive their share of overseas air traffic. Berlin has two international airports, **Tegel** (TXL; ☎ 0180-500 0186; www.berlin-airport.de) and **Schönefeld** (SXF; ☎ 0180-500 0186; www.berlin-airport.de). There are also sizeable airports in **Hamburg** (HAM; ☎ 040-507 50; www.ham.airport.de), **Cologne/Bonn** (CGN; ☎ 02203-404 001; www.airport-cgn.de) and **Stuttgart** (STR; ☎ 01805-948 444; www.stuttgart-airport.com), and smaller ones in such cities as Bremen, Dresden, Erfurt, Hanover, Leipzig, Münster-Osnabrück and Nuremberg.

Some of the budget airlines – Ryanair in particular – keep their fares low by flying to remote airports, which may be little more than recycled military airstrips. The biggest of these is **Frankfurt-Hahn** (HHN; ☎ 06543-509 200; www.hahn-airport.de), which is actually near the Moselle River, about 110km northwest of Frankfurt proper.

For details about individual German airports, including getting to and from information, see the destination chapters.

Airlines

The main airline serving Germany is the national flagship carrier and Star Alliance member **Lufthansa** (LH; ☎ 01805-838 426; www.lufthansa.de), which operates a vast network of domestic and international flights and has one of the world's best safety records. Of the many other national and discount carriers also serving Germany, the main ones are listed here along with their telephone numbers in Germany for reservations, flight changes and information. For contact information in your home country, see the airlines' websites.

Low-budget airlines rule the skies these days with some fares as low as a taxi ride. UK-based Ryanair and easyJet as well as German airlines Air Berlin, Germanwings and HLX offer the most flights to Germany.

NATIONAL CARRIERS

Aeroflot (SU; ☎ 0180-375 5555; www.aeroflot.com)
Air Canada (AC; ☎ 01805-0247 226; www.aircanada.ca)
Air France (AF; ☎ 01805-830 830; www.airfrance.com)
Air Lingus (EI; ☎ 01805-975 900; www.airlingus.com)
Air New Zealand (NZ; ☎ 0800-5494 5494; www.airnz.co.nz)
Alitalia (AZ; ☎ 01805-074 747; www.alitalia.com)
American Airlines (AA; ☎ 0180-324 2324; www.aa.com)
British Airways (BA; ☎ 01805-266 522; www.britishairways.com)
Cathay Pacific Airways (CX; ☎ 069-710 080; www.cathaypacific.com)
Continental Air Lines (CO; ☎ 0180-321 2610; www.continental.com)
Delta Air Lines (DL; ☎ 01803-337 880; www.delta.com)
Iberia (IB; ☎ 01803-000 613; www.iberia.com)
KLM (KL; ☎ 01805-214 201; www.klm.com)
LOT (LO; ☎ 01803-000 336; www.lot.com)
LTU (LT; ☎ 0211-941 8888; www.ltu.de)

Malev Hungarian Airlines (MA; ☎ 069-238 5800; www.malev.hu)
Olympic Airlines (OA; ☎ 069-970 670; www.olympic-airways.com)
Qantas Airways (QF; ☎ 01805-250 620; www.qantas.com.au)
Scandinavian Airlines/SAS (SK; ☎ 01805-117 002; www.scandinavian.net)
Singapore Airlines (SQ; ☎ 069-719 5200; www.singaporeair.com)
South African Airways (SA; ☎ 069-2998 0320; www.flysaa.com)
Swiss (LX; ☎ 01803-000 337; www.swiss.com)
Turkish Airlines (TK; ☎ 089-9759 2710; www.turkishairlines.com)
United Airlines (UA; ☎ 069-5007 0387; www.united.com)
US Airways (US; ☎ 01803-000 609; www.usairways.com)

DISCOUNT CARRIERS

Air Berlin (AB; ☎ 01805-737 800; www.air-berlin.com)
Centralwings (CO; ☎ 0180-454 545; www.centralwings.com) A subsidiary of LOT Polish Airlines.
Cirrus (CQ; ☎ 0180-444 4888; www.cirrus-world.de)
easyJet (EZY; ☎ in Germany 0900-1100 161; www.easyjet.com)
Germania Express (ST; ☎ 01805-737 100; www.gexx.com)

CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorized travel generates CO₂ (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org and other websites use 'carbon calculators' that allow travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: www.lonelyplanet.com.

Germanwings (4U; ☎ 0900-191 9100; www.germanwings.com)

Hapagfly (HF; ☎ 01805-787 510; www.hapagfly.com)

HLX (X3; ☎ 01805-093 509; www.hlx.com)

Jet2 (LS; ☎ in UK 0871 226 1737; www.jet2.com)

Norwegian Air Shuttle (DY; ☎ in Norway

08152-1815; www.norwegian.no)

OLT (OL; ☎ 01805-658 659; www.olt.de)

Ryanair (FR; ☎ 0900-116 0500; www.ryanair.com)

Snowflake (03; ☎ in Sweden 08-797 4000; www.flysnowflake.com) A subsidiary of SAS.

Virgin Express (TV; ☎ 01805-133 212;

www.virgin-express.com)

Tickets

Everybody loves a bargain and timing is key when it comes to snapping up cheap airfares. You can generally save a bundle by booking early, travelling midweek (Tuesday to Thursday) or in the off-season (October to March/April in the case of Germany). Early-morning or late-night flights may also be cheaper than those catering for the suit brigades. Some airlines offer lower fares if you stay over a Saturday.

Your best friend in ferreting out deals is the internet. Start by checking fares at online travel agencies such as **Expedia** (www.expedia.com), **Opodo** (www.opodo.com) or **Zuji** (www.zuji.com), then run the same flight request through meta-search engines such as **SideStep** (www.sidestep.com), **Kayak** (www.kayak.com), **Mobissimo** (www.mobissimo.com), **Qixio** (www.qixio.com) or **Farechase** (www.farechase.com). These so-called aggregators find the lowest fares by combing the websites of major airlines, online consolidators, online travel agencies and low-cost carriers.

To get the skinny on which budget airlines currently serve German airports, consult www.whichbudget.com or www.skyscanner.net. For bookings on discount carriers go to the airline websites directly or try an online agency such as www.openjet.com. Phone reservations usually incur a ticket surcharge.

If you're North America-based and flexible with regard to the airline and departure times or dates, you might be able to save a bundle through **Priceline** (www.priceline.com) and **Hotwire** (www.hotwire.com). You name the fare you're willing to pay, then wait and see if any airline bites.

Many airlines now guarantee that you'll find the lowest fare on their own websites, so check these out as well. A good way to learn about late-breaking bargain fares is by

signing on to airlines' free weekly email newsletters. Even the old-fashioned newspaper can yield deals, especially in times of fare wars. And don't forget about travel agents, who can be especially helpful when planning complex itineraries. STA Travel and Flight Centre, both with worldwide branches, are recommended.

Intercontinental RTW Tickets

Coming from Australia or New Zealand, round-the-world (RTW) tickets may work out cheaper than regular return fares, especially if you're planning on visiting other countries besides Germany. They're of most value for trips that combine Germany with Asia or North America.

Official airline RTW tickets are usually put together by a combination of airlines or an entire alliance and permit you to fly to a specified number of stops and/or a maximum mileage, so long as you don't backtrack. Tickets are usually valid for one year. Some airlines 'black out' a few heavily travelled routes.

For more details and tickets, check out these websites:

Air Brokers (www.airbrokers.com)

Air Treks (www.airtreks.com)

Circle the Planet (www.circletheplanet.com)

Just Fares (www.justfares.com)

Australia & New Zealand

Many airlines compete for business between Australia and New Zealand and Europe, with fares starting at about A\$2100/1300 in high/low season. The dominant carriers are Qantas, British Airways and Singapore Airlines. Depending on the airline, you'll fly via Asia or the Middle East, with possible stopovers in such cities as Singapore or Bahrain, or across Canada or the US, with possible stopovers in Honolulu, Los Angeles or Vancouver. Definitely look into a round-the-world (RTW) ticket, which may work out cheaper than regular return fares. Some recommended agents:

AUSTRALIA

Flight Centre (☎ in Australia 133 133, in New Zealand 0800 243 544; www.flightcentre.com.au, www.flightcentre.co.nz)

STA Travel (☎ in Australia 1300 733 035, in New Zealand 0508 782 872; www.statravel.com.au, www.statravel.co.nz)

Travel.com (www.travel.com.au, www.travel.co.nz)

Zuji (www.zuji.com)

Canada

Lufthansa and Air Canada fly to Frankfurt and Munich from all major Canadian airports, with prices starting at C\$1250/850 in high/low season. Some flights may involve a stopover. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 800-667-2887; www.travelcuts.com) is Canada's national student travel agency. For online bookings try www.expedia.ca and www.travelocity.ca.

Continental Europe

Air Berlin, easyJet, Germanwings, HLX and Ryanair are the dominant discount carriers with flights to all major and minor German airports from throughout Europe. Smaller airlines servicing less busy routes from Scandinavia include Snowflake and Norwegian Air Shuttle. From Eastern Europe, Centralwings and Sky Europe are among carriers with flights to Germany. One-way fares to Berlin can be as low as €99 from Madrid or Barcelona, €39 from Milan or €59 from Rome. Check www.whichbudget.com for which airlines fly where.

National carriers such as Air France, Alitalia, Iberia, SAS and, of course, Lufthansa offer numerous flights to all major German airports.

Recommended travel agencies:

Anyway (www.anyway.fr) France

Barceló Viajes (www.barceloviajes.com) Spain

CTS (www.cts.it) Italy

Last Minute (www.fr.lastminute.com) France

Nouvelles Frontières (www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr) France

Opodo (www.opodo.fr) France

Opodo (www.opodo.it) Italy

OTU (www.otu.fr) France

UK & Ireland

About a dozen airlines fly to some 22 destinations in Germany from practically every airport in the UK and Ireland. Lufthansa and British Airways are the main national carriers, but naturally prices are a lot lower on the dominant discount carriers Ryanair, easyJet, Air Berlin and Germanwings. Their extensive route network has made travelling even to smaller, regional destinations such as Dortmund, Nuremberg and Münster very inexpensive. Rock-bottom fares start as low as £20 one way, including airport taxes.

Recommended travel agencies:

Ebookers (☎ 0870 010 7000; www.ebookers.com)

Flight Centre (☎ 0870 890 8099; www.flightcentre.co.uk)

Opodo (www.opodo.co.uk)

Quest Travel (☎ 0870 442 3542; www.questtravel.com)

STA Travel (☎ 0870 160 0599; www.statravel.co.uk)

Traiffinders (www.traiffinders.co.uk)

Travel Bag (☎ 0870 890 1456; www.travelbag.co.uk)

USA

The US-Germany route is busier than ever and competition means that good deals are often available. All major US carriers as well as Lufthansa operate flights from nearly every big US city to Germany. In addition, German carriers LTU and Condor operate seasonal (ie summer) service from select US cities. (Condor flies from Anchorage and Fairbanks, for instance.) Good fares are often available from Asia-based airlines, such as Air India and Singapore Airlines, that stop in the US en route to their final destination.

Most flights land in Frankfurt, but Düsseldorf and Munich are also seeing more incoming traffic and even Hamburg, Cologne and Berlin are now served directly from New York. There's even a direct flight from Atlanta to Stuttgart. But even if you land in Frankfurt – and it's not your final destination – it's a snap to catch a connecting domestic flight or to continue your travels on Germany's ever-efficient train system.

Airfares rise and fall in a cyclical pattern. The lowest fares are available from early November to mid-December and then again from mid-January to Easter, gradually rising in the following months. Peak months are July and August, after which prices start to drop again. Fares start at around US\$600/450 return in high/low season from New York, US\$850/550 from Chicago and US\$1000/700 from Los Angeles.

If you're flexible with your travel dates, flying stand-by may save you a bundle. Fares offered through **Air Hitch** (☎ 877-247-4482, 212-736-0505; www.air-hitch.org) can be as low as US\$155 one way from east coast cities and US\$240 from the west coast in peak season.

STA Travel (☎ 800-781-4040; www.statravel.com) and **FlightCentre** (☎ 866-967-5351; www.flightcentre.us) are both reliable budget travel agencies offering online bookings and bricks-and-mortar branches throughout the country. To scour the web for cheap fares, try the following:

Cheap Air (www.cheapair.com)

Cheap Tickets (www.cheaptickets.com)

Expedia (www.expedia.com)

Lowest Fare (www.lowestfare.com)

Orbitz (www.orbitz.com)

Travelocity (www.travelocity.com)

LAND Border Crossings

Germany is bordered anticlockwise by Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland. The Schengen Agreement (p752) abolished passport and customs formalities between Germany and all bordering countries except Poland, the Czech Republic and Switzerland.

Bus

Riding the bus to Germany is slower and less comfortable yet generally cheaper than taking the train. However, fares often can't beat cheap flights offered by the budget airlines. Still, buses have their use if you missed out on those super-low air fares, you're travelling at short notice, or you live in an area poorly served by air or train.

Eurolines (www.eurolines.com) is the umbrella organisation of 32 European coach operators whose route network serves 500 destinations in 30 countries, including most major German cities. Its website has links to each company's site with detailed fare and route information, contact numbers and, in most cases, an online booking system. Children between the ages of four and 12 pay half price and there's a 10% discount for teens, students and seniors. In Germany, Eurolines is represented by **Deutsche Touring** (☎ 069-790 350; www.deutsche-touring.com).

Route	Price	Duration (hr)
Warsaw–Berlin	€45/74	11
Budapest–Frankfurt	€99/156	13-18
Lille–Dresden	€60/107	14-15 hrs
Parma–Munich	€60/107	13
Aarhus–Hanover	€63/115	13

If Germany is part of your European-wide itinerary, a **Eurolines Pass** (www.eurolines-pass.com) may be a ticket to savings. It offers unlimited travel between 40 cities within a 15- or 30-day day period. From mid-June to mid-September, the cost is €329/439 (15/30 days) for those over 26 and €279/359 for travellers over 26. Lower prices apply during the rest of the year; the website has full details. The pass is available online and from travel agents.

Berlin-based **BerlinLinienBus** (☎ 030-861 9331; www.berlinlinienbus.de) is a similar organisation with some 55 national and Europe-wide companies serving 350 destination all over the con-

tinents. There is some overlap between services provided by BerlinLinienBus and Eurolines.

A smaller company is **Gulliver's** (☎ 030-311 0211; www.gullivers.de), also based in Berlin. All companies offer discounts for students, and people under 26 and over 60.

BUSABOUT

Backpacker-geared **Busabout** (☎ in UK 020-7950 1661; www.busabout.com) is a hop-on, hop-off service that runs coaches along three interlocking European loops between May and October. Germany is part of the northern loop, which includes stops in Berlin, Dresden, Munich and Stuttgart. Loops can be combined. In Munich, for instance, the northern loop intersects with the southern loop to Italy. Trips on one loop cost £275, on two loops £450 and on three £575.

If you don't like travelling along predetermined routes, you can buy the Flexitrip Pass, which allows you to travel between cities across different loops. It costs £225 for the minimum six stops and £25 for each additional stop.

For other options or to buy a pass, check the website. Passes are also available from such travel agencies as STA Travel and Flight Centre.

In many cities, buses drop off and pick up at centrally located hostels.

Car & Motorcycle

When bringing your car to Germany, all you need is a valid driving licence, your car registration certificate and proof of insurance. Foreign cars must display a nationality sticker unless they have official Euro-plates (number plates that include their country's Euro symbol). You also need to carry a warning (hazard) triangle and first-aid kit.

There are no special requirements for crossing the border into Germany. Under the Schengen Agreement there are no longer any passport controls for cars coming from the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Denmark and Austria. Controls do exist, if arriving from Poland, the Czech Republic and Switzerland, but these are a mere formality.

For road rules and other driving-related information see p763.

EUROTUNNEL

Coming from the UK, the fastest way to the continent is aboard the high-speed **Eurotunnel** (☎ in UK 08705-353 535, in Germany 01805-000 248;

www.eurotunnel.com). These shuttle trains whisk cars, motorbikes, bicycles and coaches from Folkestone in England through the Channel Tunnel to Coquelles (near Calais, in France) in about 35 minutes. From there, you can be in Germany in about three hours.

Shuttles run daily around the clock with up to three departures hourly during peak periods. Fares are calculated per vehicle, including passengers, and depend on such factors as time of day, season and length of stay. Expect to pay between £70 and £145 for a standard one-way ticket. The website and travel agents have full details.

For details about bringing your car across the Channel by ferry, see p761.

Hitching & Ride Services

Lonely Planet does not recommend hitching, but travellers intending to hitch shouldn't have too many problems getting to and from Germany via the main autobahns and highways. See p767 for a discussion of the potential risks.

Aside from hitching, the cheapest way to get to, away from or around Germany is as a paying passenger in a private car. In Germany, such rides are arranged by *Mitfahrzentralen* (ride-share agencies) found in many cities (see destination chapters). Most belong to umbrella networks like **ADM** (☎ 194 40; www.mitfahrzentralen.de) or **Citynetz** (☎ 01805-194 444; www.citynetz-mitfahrzentrale.de).

Fares comprise a fee to the agency and a per-kilometre charge to the driver. Expect to pay about €16 (one way) going from Hamburg to Berlin, €33 from Berlin to Amsterdam and €15 from Prague to Berlin.

Another way to find rides is by consulting online bulletin boards such as www.hitchhikers.de, www.mitfahrgelegenheit.de and www.mitfahrzentrale.de (all in German). Prices may be even lower, but you will have to get in touch with the driver yourself.

Train

Long-distance trains connecting major German cities with those in other countries are called EuroCity (EC) trains. Seat reservations are highly recommended, especially during the peak summer season and around major holidays (p746).

For overnight travel on a *Nachtzug* (night train, NZ), you can choose between *Schlafwagen* (sleepers), which are comfortable com-

partments for up to three people; *Liegewagen* (couchettes), which sleep four to six people; and *Sitzwagen* (seat carriage), which have roomy reclining seats. If you have a rail pass, you only pay a supplement for either. Women can ask for a berth in a single-sex couchette when booking, but book early. For full details, contact Deutsche Bahn's (DB) **night train specialists** (☎ in Germany 01805-141 514; www.nachtzugreise.de).

EURAIL PASS

Eurailpasses (www.eurail.com) are convenient and good value if you're covering lots of territory in a limited time. They're valid for unlimited travel on national railways (and some private lines) in 18 European countries and also cover many ferries, eg from Finland to Germany, as well as KD Line's river cruises on the Rhine and Moselle. Available only to nonresidents of Europe, they should be bought before leaving your home country, although a limited number of outlets, listed on their website, also sell them in Europe.

The standard Eurailpass provides unlimited 1st-class travel and costs US\$605/785 for 15/21 days and US\$975/1378/1703 for one/two/three months of travel. If you're under 26, you qualify for the Eurailpass Youth and prices drop to US\$394/510/634/896/1108.

A variety of other options, such as group passes and flexi passes, are available as well. Children under age four travel free; those between ages four and 11 pay half price.

In the US, Canada and the UK, an excellent resource for all sorts of rail passes and regular train tickets is **Rail Europe** (www.railurope.com), a major agency specialising in train travel around Europe. In Australia, passes are sold by Flight Centre (www.flightcentre.com.au); in New Zealand try www.railplus.com.au.

EUROSTAR

Linking the UK with continental Europe, the **Eurostar** (www.eurostar.com) needs only two hours and 20 minutes to travel from London to Brussels, where you can change to regular or other high-speed trains, such as the French Thalys or the ICE (InterCity Express) train, to destinations in Germany.

Eurostar fares depend on such factors as class, time of day and season. Children, rail-pass holders and those aged between 12 and 25 and over 60 qualify for discounts. For the

latest fare information, including promotions and special packages, check the website or contact Rail Europe (p759).

INTERRAIL & EURODOMINO PASSES

If you've been a permanent resident of a European country, Russia, Morocco or Turkey for at least six months, you qualify for the InterRail Pass. It divides Europe into eight zones (Germany shares one with Denmark, Austria and Switzerland) and is available for 16 days of travel in one zone (under/over 26 years €195/286), for 22 days of travel in two zones (€275/396) and for one month of travel in all zones (€385/546).

The EuroDomino Pass is good for three to eight days of travel within one of 27 European countries. For anyone aged over 26, the three-day pass costs €269 in 1st class and €189 in 2nd, with extra days costing €30/20. If you're under 26, the fare drops to €139 for three days and €15 for additional days, but only in 2nd class. People over 60 pay €229/159 in 1st/2nd class and €15/25 per each add-on day.

Both passes are sold at travel agents and train stations throughout Europe and online at www.bahn.de.

LAKE

The Romanshorn-Friedrichshafen car ferry provides the quickest way across Lake Constance between Switzerland and Germany. It's operated year-round by **Schweizerische Bodensee-Schiffahrtsgesellschaft** (☎ in Switzerland 071-466 7888; www.sbsag.ch), takes 40 minutes and costs €6.60 per person. Bicycles are €4.20, cars start at €25.50.

SEA

Germany's main ferry ports are Kiel, Lübeck and Travemünde in Schleswig-Holstein, and Rostock and Sassnitz (on Rügen Island) in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. All have services to Scandinavia and the Baltic states. Return tickets are often cheaper than two one-way tickets. Prices fluctuate dramatically according to the season, the day and time of departure and, for overnight ferries, cabin amenities. All prices quoted are for one-way fares. Car prices are for a standard passenger vehicle up to 6m in length and include all passengers. Also see the individual port towns' Getting There & Away sections in the destination chapters.

Denmark

GEDSER-ROSTOCK

Scandlines (☎ 01805-116 688; www.scandlines.de) runs year-round ferries every two hours to/from Gedser, about 100km south of Copenhagen. The 1¼-hour trip costs €100 per car in high season. Walk-on passengers pay €10/5 per adult/child. It's €13 for a bike and you.

RØDBY-PUTTGARDEN

Scandlines (☎ 01805-116 688; www.scandlines.de) operates a 45-minute ferry every half-hour for €56 for a regular car. Foot passengers pay €7/4 per adult/child in peak season one way or same-day return. It's €11 if you bring a bicycle.

RØNNE-SASSNITZ

From March to October, **Scandlines** (☎ 01805-116 688; www.scandlines.de) operates daily ferries to/from this town on Bornholm Island. The trip takes 3¼ hours and costs from €81 per car, €21 per person (kids €10) and €27 with bike, all in peak season.

Finland

HELSINKI-TRAVEMÜNDE

Finnlines (☎ in Germany 0451-15070, in Finland 09-251 0200; www.finnlines.de) goes to Travemünde (near Lübeck) daily, year-round. On their new, faster boats the trip has been cut by 12 hours to 26 hours. Berths start at €134 and include food and some drinks. Bikes are €20, cars start at €100.

Latvia

RIGA-LÜBECK

DFDS Lisco (☎ 0431-2097 6420; www.dfdslico.com) operates this epic 34-hour journey twice weekly with berths starting at €91 and cars costing from €89; bikes are a flat €6.

VENTSPILS-ROSTOCK

Scandlines (☎ 01805-116 688; www.scandlines.de) offers this fairly new service, which costs from €80 per car and €85 per cabin berth in peak season. Bikes are €10. Kids pay half price. Ferries run daily and make the journey in 27 hours.

Lithuania

KLAIPEDA-KIEL

DFDS Lisco (☎ 0431-2097 6420; www.dfdslico.com) makes daily 22-hour runs on this route. Passengers pay from €87 for a berth in a four-person cabin in peak season. Bikes are a flat €6, cars from €91.

KLAIPEDA-SASSNITZ

DFDS Lisco (☎ 0431-2097 6420; www.dfdslico.com) also operates ferries on this route twice weekly in either direction. Costs start at €81 per berth in peak season, plus €61 for a regular car and €6 per bike.

Norway

OSLO-KIEL

Color Line (☎ 0431-730 0300; www.colorline.de) makes this 20-hour journey almost daily. The fare, including a berth in the most basic two-bed cabin, is around €200, including car. Children, seniors and students pay half-price on select departures.

Sweden

GOTHENBURG-KIEL

The daily overnight ferry that's run by **Stena Line** (☎ 0431-9099; www.stenaline.com) takes 13½ hours and costs €50 for foot passengers (only €25 for children, students and seniors). Taking your car will cost €165 in peak season, and single berths in four-bed cabins start from €21.

MALMÖ-TRAVEMÜNDE

Skandlines (☎ in Germany 04502-805 20, in Sweden 040-176 800; www.nordoe-link.com) makes the trip in nine hours. Passenger fees are €25 for adults and €12.50 for children who are aged six to 12. Cars start at €100, while bicycles cost a mere €5.

TRELLEBORG-ROSTOCK

This **Scandlines** (☎ 01805-116 688; www.scandlines.de) service runs up to thrice daily, takes between 5¼ and 6½ hours and in peak season costs €140 per car and all passengers. Foot passengers pay €24 (kids €12) or €25 if you bring a bike.

TT-Line (☎ 040-360 1442; www.ttline.de) makes the same crossing in about 5½ hours. A car with passengers starts at €112. Adult walk-ons pay €30; children, seniors and students cost €15.

TRELLEBORG-SASSNITZ

Scandlines (☎ 01805-116 688; www.scandlines.de) operates a quick ferry to Sweden, popular with day-trippers. There are five departures daily and the trip takes 3¼ hours. Peak season fares are €115 for regular cars, €15/7.50 for adult/child foot passengers and €21 for you and a bike.

TRELLEBORG-TRAVEMÜNDE

TT-Line (☎ 040-360 1442; www.ttline.de) operates up to five ferries daily on this route, which takes seven hours and costs €30 for adult foot passengers and €15 for students, seniors and children. Cars, including all passengers, start at €112. Bicycles are €5.

Russia

ST PETERSBURG-LÜBECK

Finnlines (☎ 0451-150 7443; www.tre.de) operates the 60-hour TransRussiaExpress, via Sassnitz. It is essentially a cargo vessel offering passenger services, not a regular ferry. Fares start at €292 per adult, €146 per child; cars cost from €150.

UK

There are no longer any direct ferry services between Germany and the UK, but you can just as easily go via the Netherlands, Belgium or France and drive or train it from there. Check the ferries' websites for fare details.

TO FRANCE

P&O Ferries (☎ 0870-598 0333; www.poferries.com) Dover–Calais; 75 minutes.
SeaFrance (☎ 0870-443 1653; www.seafrance.com) Dover–Calais; 75 minutes.
Norfolk Lines (☎ 0870-870 1020; www.norfolklines-ferries.com) Dover–Dunkerque; two hours.

TO BELGIUM

P&O Ferries (☎ 0870-598 0333; www.poferries.com) Hull–Zeebrugge; 13½ hours.
Superfast Ferries (☎ 0870-234 2222; www.superfast.com) Rosyth (Edinburgh)–Zeebrugge; 17½ hours.

TO THE NETHERLANDS

P&O Ferries (☎ 0870-598 0333; www.poferries.com) Hull–Rotterdam; 14 hours.
Stena Line (☎ 0870-570 7070; www.stenaline.co.uk) Harwich–Hoek van Holland; 3¼ hours.
DFDS Seaways (☎ 0870-252 0524; www.dfds.co.uk) Newcastle–Amsterdam; 15 hours.

GETTING AROUND

Germans are whizzes at moving people around, and the public transport network is among the best in Europe. The two best ways of getting around the country are by car and by train. Regional bus services fill the gaps in areas not well served by the rail network.

AIR

Most large and many smaller German cities have their own airports (also see p754) and numerous carriers operate domestic flights within Germany. Lufthansa, of course, has the most dense route network. Other airlines offering domestic flights include Air Berlin, Cirrus Air and Germanwings.

Unless you're flying from one end of the country to the other, say Berlin to Munich or Hamburg to Munich, planes are only marginally quicker than trains if you factor in the time it takes to get to and from the airports. Even the big carriers often have some very attractive fares, finally making domestic air travel a viable option.

BICYCLE

Bicycling is allowed on all roads and highways but not on the autobahns. Cyclists must follow the same rules of the road as vehicles. Helmets are not compulsory, not even for children.

Hire & Purchase

Most towns and cities have some sort of bicycle-hire station, which is often at or near the train station. Hire costs range from €9 to €25 per day and €35 to €85 per week, depending on the model of bicycle you hire. A minimum deposit of €30 (more for fancier bikes) and/or ID are required. Many agencies are listed in the Getting Around sections of the destination chapters in this book. Some outfits also offer repair service or bicycle storage facilities.

Hotels, especially in resort areas, sometimes keep a stable of bicycles for their guests, often at no charge.

If you plan to spend several weeks or longer in the saddle, buying a second-hand bike may work out cheaper than renting one and easier than bringing your own. You may get a cheap, basic two-wheeler for around €60, although for good reconditioned models you'll probably have to shell out at least €200. The hire stations sometimes sell used bicycles or may be able to steer you to a good place locally. Flea markets are another source as are the classified sections of daily newspapers and listings magazines. Notice boards at universities, hostels or supermarkets may also yield some leads. A useful website for secondhand purchases is www.zweithand.de, although it's in German only.

Transportation

Bicycles may be taken on most trains but require purchasing a separate ticket (*Fahrradkarte*). These cost €8 on long-distance trains (IC and EC, reservations required) and €3.50 on regional trains (IRE, RB, RE and S-Bahn; see p768 for train types). Bicycles are not allowed on high-speed ICE trains. If bought in combination with one of the saver tickets, such as Länderticket or the Schönes-Wochenende-Ticket (see p770) the €3.50 fee is good for all trips you take while the ticket is valid. There is no charge at all on some trains. For full details, enquire at a local station or call the **DB Radfahrer-Hotline** (bicycle hotline; ☎ 01805-151 415). Free lines are also listed in DB's complimentary *Bahn & Bike* brochure (in German), as are the almost 50 stations where you can rent bikes. It's also available for downloading from www.bahn.de.

Many regional companies use buses with special bike racks. Bicycles are also allowed on practically all boat and ferry services on Germany's lakes and rivers. See p758 for taking bikes on the Europabus.

For additional information on cycling in Germany, see p738.

BOAT

With two seas and a lake- and river-filled interior, don't be surprised to find yourself in a boat at some point or other. For basic transport, boats are primarily used when travelling to or between the East Frisian Islands in Lower Saxony; the North Frisian Islands in Schleswig-Holstein; Helgoland, which also belongs to Schleswig-Holstein; and the islands of Poel, Rügen and Hiddensee in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania. Scheduled boat services operate along sections of the Rhine, the Elbe and the Danube. There are also ferry services in areas with no or only a few bridges as well as on major lakes such as the Chiemsee and Lake Starnberg in Bavaria and Lake Constance in Baden-Württemberg.

From around April to October, local operators run scenic river or lake cruises lasting from one hour to a full day. For details, see the individual entries in the destination chapters.

BUS

Basically, wherever there is a train, take it. Buses are generally much slower and less dependable, but in some rural areas they may be

your only option for getting around without your own vehicle. This is especially true of the Harz Mountains, sections of the Bavarian Forest and the Alpine foothills. Separate bus companies operate in the different regions, each with their own tariffs and schedules. In this book we only list bus services if they're a viable and sensible option.

The frequency of service varies from 'rarely' to 'constantly'. Commuter-gear routes offer limited or no service in the evenings and at weekends. If you depend on buses to get around, always keep this in mind or risk finding yourself stuck in a remote place on a Saturday night.

In cities, buses generally converge at the central bus station (*Busbahnhof* or *Zentraler Omnibus Bahnhof/ZOB*), which is often close or adjacent to the Hauptbahnhof (central train station). Tickets are sold by the bus companies, which often have offices or kiosks at the bus station, or by the driver on board. Special fare deals, such as day passes, weekly passes or special tourist tickets, are quite common, so make it a habit to ask about them.

Berlin Linien Bus

An umbrella for several German bus operators, **Berlin Linien Bus** (☎ 030-861 9331; www.berlinlinienbus.de) has 30 national bus routes connecting Berlin with all corners of Germany. Destinations include major cities, such as Munich, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt, and holiday regions such as the Harz and the Bavarian Forest. One of the most popular routes is the express bus to Hamburg, which makes the journey from Berlin in 3¼ hours up to eight times daily (€24/39 one-way/return).

Tickets are available online and from travel agencies. Children under four travel for free and discounts are available for older children, students, those over 60 and groups of six or more. Full one-way/return fares include €33/52 for Berlin to Göttingen, €37/55 for Hamburg to Hamelin and €30/50 for Coburg to Leipzig.

Deutsche Touring

A subsidiary of Deutsche Bahn, **Deutsche Touring** (☎ 069-790 350; www.deutsche-touring.com), runs Europabus coach services geared towards individual travellers on three routes within Germany:

Romantische Strasse (Romantic Road) The most popular route operates between Würzburg and Füssen from April to October. There are links to Würzburg from Frankfurt and

to Füssen from Munich. Sample fares: Frankfurt–Munich €99/138 one-way/return; Würzburg–Füssen €59/82; Rothenburg ob der Tauber–Füssen €46/64.

Burgenstrasse (Castle Road) Dozens of castles and palaces line this route from Mannheim to Nuremberg via Heidelberg, Rothenburg ob der Tauber and Ansbach; buses run from May to September. Sample fares: Mannheim–Nuremberg €48/66 one-way/return; Rothenburg–Heidelberg €32/45.

Strassbourg-Reutlingen Year-round service from Strassbourg, France to Reutlingen via the Black Forest and such towns as Freudenstadt and Tübingen. Sample fares: Reutlingen–Strassbourg €25.50 each way, Freudenstadt–Strassbourg €13.

There's one coach in either direction daily. You can break the journey as often as you'd like, but plan your stops carefully as you'll have to wait a full day for the next bus to come around (reserve a seat before disembarking). The Romantic Road and the Castle Road both stop in Rothenburg, where you can switch from one line to the other.

Tickets can be purchased by phone or online and are available either for the entire distance or for segments between any of the stops. Eurail and German Rail pass holders get a 60% discount; people under 26 or over 60 qualify for 10% off, while children ages four to 12 pay half-price.

Bicycles may be transported with three days' advance notice. The fee ranges from €3 to €15, depending on the distance travelled.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

German roads are excellent and motoring around the country can be a lot of fun. The country's pride and joy is its 11,000km of autobahn (motorway, freeway), which is supplemented by an extensive network of *Bundesstrassen* (secondary 'B' roads, highways) and smaller *Landstrassen* (country roads). No tolls are charged on any public roads.

Along each autobahn, you'll find there are elaborate service areas with petrol stations, toilet facilities and restaurants every 40km to 60km; many are open 24 hours. In between are rest stops (*Rastplatz*), which usually have picnic tables and toilet facilities. Emergency call boxes are spaced about 2km apart. Simply lift the metal flap and follow the (pictorial) instructions.

Seat belts are mandatory for all passengers and there's a €30 fine if you get caught not wearing one. If you're in an accident, not wearing a seatbelt may invalidate your

GERMAN AUTOBAHNS



insurance. Children need a child seat if under four years old and a seat cushion if under 12; they may not ride in the front until age 13. Motorcyclists must wear a helmet. The use of hand-held mobile phones while driving is very much *verboten* (forbidden).

Parking in city centres is usually limited to lots and garages charging between €0.50

and €2 per hour. Many cities have electronic parking guidance systems directing you to the nearest garage and indicating the number of available spaces. Street parking usually works on the pay-and-display system and tends to be short-term (one or two hours) only. For long-term and overnight parking, consider leaving your car outside the centre

TRAFFIC JAMS

The severity of German traffic jams (*Staus*) seems to be something of a national obsession. Traffic jams are a subject of intense interest to motorists in Germany and are the focus of typical German thoroughness; you can actually get an annual 'Staukalender' (traffic jam calendar) from motoring organisation ADAC (below).

Some breakfast shows on TV present the worst-afflicted sections every day, and German radio stations broadcast a special tone that interrupts cassette and CD players during traffic reports. Ask the rental agent to disable it unless you want your music peppered with poetic phrases like, 'Die Autobahn von Frankfurt nach Stuttgart ist...'

Normal *Staus*, however, are nothing when compared with the astounding *Stau aus dem Nichts* (literally, the traffic jam from nowhere). You can be sailing along at 180km/h and suddenly find yourself screeching to a halt and taking the next 8km, 10km or even 30km at a crawl. Most frustrating is that in the vast majority of cases, you'll end up speeding back up again and never see what it was that caused the back-up in the first place. These types of *Staus* are so prevalent that the government actually funded a study of the phenomenon!

in a Park & Ride (P+R) lot, which are free or low-cost.

Automobile Associations

Germany's main motoring organisation, the **Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club** (ADAC; ☎ for roadside assistance 0180-222 2222; www.adac.de) has offices in all major cities and many smaller ones. Its excellent roadside assistance programme is also available to members of its affiliates, including British AA, American AAA and Canadian CAA.

Driving Licence

Drivers need a valid driving licence. International Driving Permits (IDP) are not compulsory but having one may help Germans make sense of your home licence (always carry that one too) and may simplify the car or motorcycle rental process. IDPs are inexpensive, valid for one year and issued by your local automobile association – bring a passport photo and your home licence.

Fuel & Spare Parts

Petrol stations, nearly all of which are self-service, are generally ubiquitous except in sparsely populated rural areas. Petrol is sold in litres. In September 2006, the average cost for mid-grade fuel was around €1.20 per litre.

Finding spare parts should not be a problem, especially in the cities, although availability, of course, depends on the age and model of your car. Be sure to have some sort of roadside emergency assistance plan (above) in case your car breaks down.

Hire

In order to hire your own wheels you'll need to be at least 25 years old, possess a valid driving licence and a major credit card. Some agencies rent to drivers between the ages of 21 and 24 for an additional charge. Those younger or not in possession of a credit card are often out of luck, although some local car-rental outfits may accept cash or a travellers cheque as a deposit. Taking your rental car into an Eastern European country, such as the Czech Republic or Poland, is often a no-no, so check in advance if that's where you're headed.

All major international car-rental companies maintain branches at airports and major train stations, and in towns. Contact the following central reservation numbers for the one nearest you:

Avis (☎ 01805-217 702; www.avis.com)

Budget (☎ 01805-244 388; www.budget.com)

Europcar (☎ 01805-8000; www.europcar.com)

Hertz (☎ 01805-938 814; www.hertz.com)

You could make a booking when calling the reservation agent, although it may be worth checking directly with the local branch for special promotions the agent may not know about. Smaller local agencies sometimes offer better prices, so it's worth checking into that as well.

As always, rates for car rentals vary considerably by model, pick-up date and location, but you should be able to get an economy-size vehicle from about €35 per day, plus insurance and taxes. Expect surcharges for rentals originating at airports and train stations,

additional drivers and one-way rentals. Child or infant safety seats may be rented for about €5 per day and should be reserved at the time of booking.

Prebooked and prepaid packages, arranged in your home country, usually work out much cheaper than on-the-spot-rentals. The same is true of fly/drive packages. Check for deals with the online travel agencies, travel agents or car-rental brokers such as the US company **Auto Europe** (☎ in US 888-223-5555, see website for numbers in other countries; www.autoeurope.com) or UK-based **Holiday Autos** (www.holidayautos.co.uk).

Insurance

German law requires that all registered vehicles carry third-party liability insurance. You could get seriously screwed by driving uninsured or underinsured. Germans are very fussy about their cars, and even nudging someone's bumper when jostling out of a tight parking space may well result in you having to pay for an entirely new one.

If you're hiring a vehicle, make sure your contract includes adequate liability insurance at the very minimum. Rental agencies almost

never include insurance that covers damage to the vehicle itself, called Collision Damage Waiver (CDW) or Loss Damage Waiver (LDW). It's optional but driving without one is not recommended. Some credit-card companies cover CDW/LDW for a certain period if you charge the entire rental to your card. Always confirm with your card issuer what coverage it provides in Germany.

Road Rules

Driving is on the right-hand side of the road and standard international signs are in use. If you're unfamiliar with these, pick up a pamphlet at your local motoring organisation. Obey the road rules and speed limits carefully. Speed and red-light cameras are common and notices are sent to the car's registration address wherever that may be. If you're renting a car, the police will obtain your home address from the rental agency. There's a long list of finable actions, including using abusive language or gestures and running out of petrol on the autobahn.

The usual speed limits are 50km/h on city streets and 100km/h on highways, unless they

are otherwise marked. And yes, it's true, there really is no speed limit on autobahns. However, there are many stretches where slower speeds must be observed (eg near towns, road construction), so be sure to keep an eye out for those signs or risk getting ticketed.

The highest permissible blood-alcohol level for drivers is 0.05%, which for most people equates to one glass of wine or two small beers.

Pedestrians at crossings have absolute right of way over all motor vehicles. Always watch out for bicyclists when turning right; they have the right of way. Right turns at a red light are only legal if there's a green arrow pointing to the right.

Drivers unaccustomed to the high speeds on autobahns should be extra careful when passing another vehicle. It takes only seconds for a car in the rear-view mirror to close in at 200km/h. Pass as quickly as possible, then quickly return to the right lane. Try to ignore those annoying drivers who will flash their headlights or tailgate you to make you drive faster and get out of the way. It's an illegal practice anyway, as is passing on the right.

Note that some garages and parking lots close at night and charge an overnight fee.

HITCHING

Hitching (*Trampen*) is never entirely safe in any country and we don't recommend it. That said, in some rural areas in Germany poorly served by public transport – such as sections of the Alpine foothills and the Bavarian Forest – it is not uncommon to see people thumbing for a ride. If you do decide to hitch, understand that you are taking a small but potentially serious risk. Remember that it's safer to travel in pairs and be sure to let someone know where you are planning to go.

It's illegal to hitchhike on autobahns or their entry/exit ramps. You can save yourself a lot of trouble by arranging a lift through a *Mitfahrzentrale* (see p759).

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Most towns have efficient, frequent and punctual public transportation systems. Bigger cities, such as Berlin and Munich, have comprehensive transportation networks that integrate buses, trams, and U-Bahn (underground) and S-Bahn (suburban) trains.

Fares may be determined by zones or time travelled, or sometimes both. Multiticket

strips (*Streifenkarte*) or day passes (*Tageskarte*) generally offer better value than single-ride tickets. Sometimes tickets must be stamped upon boarding in order to be valid. Fines are levied if you're caught without a valid ticket. For details, see the Getting Around sections in the destination chapters.

Bicycle

From nuns to Lance Armstrong wannabes, Germans love to cycle, be it for errands, commuting, fitness or pleasure. Many cities have dedicated bicycle lanes, which must be used unless obstructed. There's no helmet law, not even for children, although using one is recommended, for obvious reasons. Bicycles must be equipped with a white light in the front, a red one in the back and yellow reflectors on the wheels and pedals. See p762 and p738 for more cycling information.

Bus & Tram

Buses are the most ubiquitous form of public transportation and practically all towns have their own comprehensive network. Buses run at regular intervals, with restricted service in the evenings and at weekends. Some cities operate night buses along the most popular routes to get night owls safely back home.

Occasionally, buses are supplemented by trams, which are usually faster because they travel on their own tracks, largely independent of other traffic. In city centres, they sometimes go underground. Bus and tram drivers normally sell single tickets and day passes only.

S-Bahn

Metropolitan areas such as Berlin and Munich have a system of suburban trains called the S-Bahn. They are faster and cover a wider area than buses or trams but tend to be less frequent. S-Bahn lines are often linked to the national rail network and sometimes interconnect urban centres. Rail passes are generally valid on these services. Specific S-Bahn lines are abbreviated with 'S' followed by the number (eg S1, S7) in the destination chapters.

Taxi

Taxis are expensive and, given the excellent public transport systems, not recommended unless you're in a real hurry. (They can actually be slower than trains or trams if you're

ROAD DISTANCES (KM)

Berlin	395																			
Bonn	353	596																		
Bremen	471	376	335																	
Cologne	377	558	28	307																
Dresden	275	187	549	460	565															
Erfurt	147	277	335	332	351	216														
Essen	416	514	105	246	69	547	336													
Frankfurt-am-Main	196	507	177	407	347	451	238	396												
Freiburg	388	778	393	673	419	662	509	488	269											
Hamburg	502	282	476	115	413	453	354	356	482	750										
Hanover	354	273	314	115	288	357	213	243	327	593	150									
Koblenz	300	564	61	392	88	508	295	153	106	332	492	344								
Leipzig	240	160	591	354	472	109	123	438	359	627	354	250	415							
Mainz	226	542	142	437	166	487	273	228	39	261	512	357	80	394						
Munich	225	576	561	696	569	457	371	646	392	332	777	629	473	422	394					
Nuremberg	60	425	412	531	397	304	206	446	216	355	561	417	320	270	246	157				
Rostock	580	226	614	290	587	408	430	532	613	882	175	300	641	357	645	762	609			
Saarbrücken	359	688	215	552	243	633	419	312	182	267	657	503	165	540	146	423	349	792		
Stuttgart	222	613	318	591	345	492	350	410	183	167	650	495	258	457	180	228	182	780	212	
Würzburg	82	475	271	463	294	358	208	339	114	305	504	350	217	320	143	257	102	656	276	141

Bamberg	Berlin	Bonn	Bremen	Cologne	Dresden	Erfurt	Essen	Frankfurt-am-Main	Freiburg	Hamburg	Hanover	Koblenz	Leipzig	Mainz	Munich	Nuremberg	Rostock	Saarbrücken	Stuttgart
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A PRIMER ON TRAIN TYPES

Here's a quick lowdown on the alphabet soup of trains operated by Deutsche Bahn (DB).

InterCity Express (ICE) Long-distance, space-age bullet trains that stop at major cities only; special tariffs apply and they're the most comfortable of the trains.

InterCity (IC) & EuroCity (EC) Long-distance trains that are slower than the ICE but still pretty fast; they stop at major cities only. EC trains go to major cities in neighbouring countries.

InterRegio (IRE) Slower medium-distance trains serving cities and linking local with long-distance trains.

Nachtzug (NZ) Night trains with sleeper cars and couchettes.

RegionalBahn (RB) Local trains, mostly in rural areas, with frequent stops, the slowest in the system.

Regional Express (RE) Local trains with limited stops that link rural areas with metropolitan centres and the S-Bahn.

StadtExpress (SE) Local trains primarily connecting cities and geared towards commuters.

S-Bahn Local trains operating within a city and its suburban area.

stuck in rush-hour traffic.) In most cities, it's not common to hail a taxi. Instead you either order one by phone or walk over to a taxi rank. The phone numbers of local taxi companies are often listed in the Getting Around sections of the destination chapters.


Taxis are metered and charged at a base rate plus a per-kilometre fee. These are fixed but vary from city to city. Some cabbies charge extra for bulky luggage or night-time rides.

U-Bahn

The fastest and most efficient travel in large German cities is by underground/subway train, known as the U-Bahn. Route maps are posted in all stations and at many stations you'll be able to pick up a printed copy from the stationmaster or ticket office. The frequency of trains usually fluctuates with demand, meaning there are more trains during commuter rush hours than, say, in the middle of the day. Buy tickets from vending machines and validate them before the start of your journey. Specific U-Bahn lines are abbreviated with 'U' followed by the number (eg U1, U7) in the destination chapters.

TRAIN

The German rail system is justifiably known as the most efficient in Europe. With 41,000km of tracks, the network is Europe's most extensive, serving over 7000 cities and towns. A wide range of services and ticket options is available.

Nearly all trains are operated by **Deutsche Bahn** (DB);  reservations & information 118 61, free automated timetable information 0800-150 7090, www.bahn.de, although there are also some private lines

such as the LausitzBahn in Saxony and the Bayerische Oberlandbahn in Bavaria.

The DB website has an entire section in English (click on 'International Guests'), where you'll find detailed information about buying tickets, train types and services, timetables, route maps and lots of other useful prep-trip planning nuggets.

Many train stations have a *Reisezentrum* (travel centre) where staff sell tickets and can help you plan an itinerary (ask for an English-speaking clerk). Smaller stations may only have a few ticket windows and the smallest ones aren't staffed at all. In this case, you must buy tickets from vending machines. These are also plentiful at staffed stations and convenient if you don't want to queue at a ticket counter. English instructions are normally provided. Both *Reisezentrum* agents and machines usually accept major credit cards.

Tickets sold on board (cash only) incur a service fee of €2 to €7 unless the station where you boarded was unstaffed or had a broken vending machine.

For trips over 50km, you can also buy tickets online up to 10 minutes before departure at no surcharge. You'll need a major credit card and a print-out of your ticket to present to the conductor.

Most train stations have coin-operated left-luggage lockers ranging in cost from €0.50 to €3 for each 24-hour period. Larger stations have staffed left-luggage offices (*Gepäckaufbewahrung*), but these are more expensive than lockers. If you leave your suitcase overnight, you're charged for two full days.

See p762 for details on taking your bicycle on the train.

GERMAN RAILWAYS



Classes

German trains have 1st- and 2nd-class compartments, both of them modern and comfortable. Paying extra for 1st class is usually not worth it, except perhaps on busy travel days (eg Friday, Sunday afternoon and holidays) when 2nd-class cars can get very crowded.

In both 1st and 2nd classes, the seating is either in compartments of up to six people or in open-plan carriages that have panoramic windows. First class generally buys wider seats, a bit more leg-room and – on ICE, IC (InterCity) and EC (EuroCity) trains – drinks and snack service that's brought to you in your seat.

On ICE trains you'll enjoy such extras as reclining seats, tables, free newspapers and audio-systems in your armrest. Newer generation ICE trains also have individual video screens in 1st class and electrical outlets at each seat.

All trains have both smoking and nonsmoking cars. ICE and IC/EC trains are fully air-conditioned and have a restaurant or self-service bistro.

For details about sleeper cars, see p759.

Costs

Standard, nondiscounted train tickets tend to be quite expensive, but promotions, discount tickets and special offers become available all the time. Check the website or ask at the train station. A one-way ICE train ticket from Munich to Hamburg, for instance, costs €115 in 2nd class and €175 in 1st class, which can be the same as or more than a cheap flight.

Depending on how much travelling you plan to do, you can cut costs by buying a rail pass or by taking advantage of discount tickets and special offers. Always check www.bahn.de for the latest rail promotions.

SCHÖNES-WOCHENENDE-TICKET

The 'Nice-Weekend-Ticket' is Europe's finest rail deal. It allows you and up to four accompanying passengers (or one or both parents or grandparents plus all their children or grandchildren up to 14 years) to travel anywhere in Germany on *one day* from midnight Saturday or Sunday until 3am the next day for just €30. The catch is that you can only use IRE, RE, RB and S-Bahn trains in 2nd class.

LÄNDERTICKETS

These are essentially a variation of the Schönes-Wochenende-Ticket, except that they are valid any day of the week and are limited to travel within one of the German states (or, in some cases, also in bordering states). Prices vary slightly from state to state but are in the €22 to €27 range. Some states also offer cheaper tickets for solo travellers costing between €17 and €21. Night passes, valid from 7pm until 6am the following day, are available in Berlin-Brandenburg and in Munich. See the destinations for details about specific passes.

Reservations

Seat reservations for long-distance travel are highly recommended, especially if you're travelling on a Friday or Sunday afternoon, during holiday periods or in summer. Choose from window or aisle seats, row seats or facing seats or seats with a fixed table. The fee is €3 or €6 for groups of up to five people. If you reserve seats at the time of ticket purchase, the price drops to €1.50 and €3, respectively. Reservations can be made online and at ticket counters as late as 10 minutes before departure.

Train Passes

BAHNCARD

A **Bahncard** (www.bahn.de) may be worth considering if you plan a longer stay or return trips to Germany within the one year of its validity. BahnCard 25 entitles you to 25% off regular fares and costs €51.50/103 in 2nd/1st class. Additional cards for partners and your own children under 18 are just €5. BahnCard 50 gives you – you guessed it – a 50% discount and costs €206/412. The cost drops by half if you're the partner of a card holder, a student under 27 or a senior over 60. Cards are available at all major train stations and online.

GERMAN RAIL PASSES

If your permanent residence is outside Europe, you qualify for the German Rail Pass. It entitles you to unlimited 1st- or 2nd-class travel for four to 10 days within a one-month period. The pass is valid on all trains within Germany and some KD Line river services on the Rhine and Moselle. The four-day pass costs US\$263 in 1st and US\$200 in 2nd class with extra days being charged at US\$38/25.

If you are between the ages of 12 and 25, you qualify for the German Rail Youth Pass, which costs US\$163 for four days and is only good for 2nd class travel. Additional days are US\$13. Two adults travelling together should check out the four-day German Rail Twin Pass for US\$300 in 2nd class and US\$400 in 1st class. More days cost US\$38/50 each (2nd/1st class). Children between six and 11 pay half-fare. Children under six travel free.

In the US and Canada, the main agency specialising in selling the German Rail and other passes, as well as regular DB train tickets, is **Rail Europe** (www.raileurope.com). If you live in another country, contact your travel agent.

Health

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BEFORE YOU GO

While Germany has excellent health care, prevention is the key to staying healthy while abroad. A little planning before departure, particularly for pre-existing illnesses, will save trouble later. Bring medications in their original, clearly labelled containers. A signed and dated letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and medications, including generic names, is also a good idea. If carrying syringes or needles, be sure to have a physician's letter documenting their medical necessity. Carry a spare pair of contact lenses and glasses, and take your optical prescription with you.

INSURANCE

If you're an EU citizen, an E111 form, available from health centres or, in the UK, post offices, covers you for most medical care. E111 will not cover you for nonemergencies, or emergency repatriation home. Citizens from other countries should find out if there is a reciprocal arrangement for free medical care between their country and Germany. If you do need health insurance, make sure you get a policy that covers you for the worst possible case, such as an accident requiring an emergency flight home. Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments

directly to providers or reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures.

RECOMMENDED VACCINATIONS

No jabs are required to travel to Germany. The World Health Organization (WHO), however, recommends that all travellers should be covered for diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, rubella and polio, regardless of their destination.

IN TRANSIT

DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Blood clots may form in the legs during plane flights, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom of DVT is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle or calf, usually but not always on just one side. When a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty breathing. Travellers with any of these symptoms should immediately seek medical attention.

To prevent the development of DVT on long flights you should walk about the cabin, contract the leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

To avoid jet lag (common when crossing more than five time zones) try drinking plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eating light meals. Upon arrival, get exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are usually the first choice for treating motion sickness. A herbal alternative is ginger.

IN GERMANY

AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Excellent health care is readily available and for minor self-limiting illnesses pharmacists are able to give you valuable advice and sell

over-the-counter medication. They can also advise when more specialised help is required and point you in the right direction.

TRAVELLERS' DIARRHOEA

If you develop diarrhoea, drink plenty of fluids, preferably in the form of an oral rehydration solution such as Dioralyte. If diarrhoea is bloody, persists for more than 72 hours or is accompanied by fever, shaking, chills or severe abdominal pain, seek medical attention.

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Heat Illness

Heat exhaustion occurs following excessive fluid loss with inadequate replacement of fluids and salt. Symptoms include headache, dizziness and tiredness. Dehydration is already happening by the time you feel thirsty – aim to drink sufficient water to produce pale, diluted urine. To treat heat exhaustion drink water and/or fruit juice, and cool the body with cold water and fans.

Cold Illness

Hypothermia occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it. As ever,

proper preparation will reduce the risks of getting it. Even on a hot day in the mountains, the weather can change rapidly, so always carry waterproof garments, warm layers and a hat and inform others of your route.

Hypothermia starts with shivering, loss of judgment and clumsiness. Unless re-warming occurs, the sufferer deteriorates into apathy, confusion and coma. Prevent further heat loss by seeking shelter, warm dry clothing, hot sweet drinks and shared bodily warmth.

SEXUAL HEALTH

Emergency contraception is available with a doctor's prescription in Germany. It is most effective if taken within 24 hours after unprotected sex. Condoms are readily available throughout Germany.

TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

Make sure the children are up to date with routine vaccinations, and discuss possible travel vaccines well before departure as some vaccines are not suitable for children under aged under one year.

If your child has vomiting or diarrhoea, lost fluid and salts must be replaced. It may be helpful to take rehydration powders with boiled water.

WOMEN'S HEALTH

Emotional stress, exhaustion and travelling through different time zones can all contribute to an upset in a woman's menstrual pattern.

If using oral contraceptives, remember some antibiotics, diarrhoea and vomiting can stop the pill from working. Time zones, gastrointestinal upsets and antibiotics do not affect injectable contraception.

Travelling during pregnancy is usually possible but always consult your doctor before planning your trip. The most risky times for travel are during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and after 30 weeks.

MEDICAL CHECKLIST

All of the following are readily available in Germany. If you are hiking out of town, these items may come in handy.

- antibiotics
- antidiarrhoeal drugs (eg loperamide)
- acetaminophen (Tylenol) or aspirin
- anti-inflammatory drugs (eg ibuprofen)
- antihistamines (for hay fever and allergic reactions)
- antibacterial ointment (eg Bactroban; for cuts and abrasions)
- steroid cream or cortisone (for poison ivy and other allergic rashes)
- bandages, gauze, gauze rolls
- adhesive or paper tape
- scissors, safety pins, tweezers
- thermometer
- pocketknife
- DEET-containing insect repellent for the skin
- pyrethrin-containing insect spray for clothing, tents and bed nets
- sun block
- oral rehydration salts
- acetazolamide (Diamox; for altitude sickness)

Language

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German belongs to the Indo-European language group and is spoken by over 100 million people in countries throughout the world, including Austria and part of Switzerland. There are also ethnic-German communities in neighbouring Eastern European countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic, although expulsions after 1945 reduced their number dramatically.

High German used today comes from a regional Saxon dialect. It developed into an official bureaucratic language and was used by Luther in his translation of the Bible, gradually spreading throughout Germany. The impetus Luther gave to the written language through his translations was followed by the establishment of language societies in the 17th century, and later by the 19th-century work of Jakob Grimm, the founder of modern German philology. With his brother, Wilhelm Grimm, he also began work on the first German dictionary.

Regional dialects still thrive throughout Germany, especially in Cologne, rural Bavaria, Swabia and parts of Saxony. The Sorb minority in eastern Germany has its own language. In northern Germany it is common to hear Plattdeutsch and Frisian spoken. Both are distant relatives of English, and the

fact that many German words survive in the English vocabulary today makes things a lot easier for native English speakers.

That's the good news. The bad news is that, unlike English, German has retained clear polite distinctions in gender and case. Though not as difficult as Russian, for instance, which has more cases, German does have its tricky moments. Germans are used to hearing foreigners – and a few notable indigenous sports personalities – make a hash of their grammar, and any attempt to speak the language is always well received.

All German school children learn a second language – usually English – which means most can speak it to a certain degree, and some, very well. You might have problems finding English speakers in eastern Germany, however, where Russian was the main foreign language taught in schools before the *Wende* (change).

The words and phrases included in this language guide should help you through the most common travel situations (see also p86 for food vocabulary). Those with the desire to delve further into the language should get a copy of Lonely Planet's *German Phrasebook*.

GRAMMAR

German grammar can be a nightmare for speakers of other languages. Nouns come in three genders: masculine, feminine and neutral. The corresponding forms of the definite article ('the' in English) are *der*, *die* and *das*, with the universal plural form, *die*. Nouns and articles will alter according to complex grammatical rules relating to the noun's function within a phrase – known as 'case'. In German there are four cases: nominative, accusative, dative and genitive. We haven't allowed for all possible permutations of case in this language guide – it really is language-course material and simply too complex to cover here. However, bad German is a whole lot better than no German at all, so even if you muddle your cases, you'll find that you'll still be understood – and your efforts will be warmly appreciated regardless.

If you've noticed that written German seems to be full of capital letters, the reason is that German nouns always begin with a capital letter.

PRONUNCIATION

It's not difficult to pronounce German because almost all sounds can be found in English. Follow the pronunciation guide and you'll have no trouble getting your message across.

Vowels

German Example	Pronunciation Guide
<i>hat</i>	a (eg the 'u' in 'run')
<i>habe</i>	aa (eg 'father')
<i>mein</i>	ai (eg 'aisle')
<i>Bär</i>	air (eg 'hair', with no 'r' sound)
<i>Boot</i>	aw (eg 'saw')
<i>leben</i>	ay (eg 'say')
<i>Bett/Männer/kaufen</i>	e (eg 'bed')
<i>fliegen</i>	ee (eg 'thief')
<i>schön</i>	eu (eg 'her', with no 'r' sound)
<i>mit</i>	i (eg 'bit')
<i>Koffer</i>	o (eg 'pot')
<i>Leute/Häuser</i>	oy (eg 'toy')
<i>Schuhe</i>	oo (eg 'moon')
<i>Haus</i>	ow (eg 'how')
<i>zurück</i>	ew ('ee' said with rounded lips)
<i>unter</i>	u (eg 'put')

Consonants

The only two tricky consonant sounds in German are **ch** and **r**. All other consonants are pronounced much the same as their English counterparts (except **sch**, which is always as the 'sh' in 'shoe').

The **ch** sound is generally like the 'ch' in *Bach* or Scottish *loch* – like a hiss from the back of the throat. When **ch** occurs after the vowels **e** and **i** it's more like a 'sh' sound, produced with the tongue more forward in the mouth. In this book we've simplified things by using the one symbol **kh** for both sounds.

The **r** sound is different from English, and it isn't rolled like in Italian or Spanish. It's pronounced at the back of the throat, almost like saying a 'g' sound, but with some friction – it's a bit like gargling.

Word Stress

As a general rule, word stress in German mostly falls on the first syllable. To remove any doubt, the stressed syllable is shown in

italics in the pronunciation guides for the following words and phrases.

ACCOMMODATION

Where's a ...?

<i>Wo ist ...?</i>	vaw ist ...
bed and breakfast	
<i>eine Pension</i>	ai-ne paang-zyawn
camping ground	
<i>ein Campingplatz</i>	ain kem-ping-plats
guesthouse	
<i>eine Pension</i>	ai-ne paang-zyawn
hotel	
<i>ein Hotel</i>	ain ho-tel
inn	
<i>ein Gasthof</i>	ain gast-hawf
room in a private home	
<i>ein Privatzimmer</i>	ain pri-vaat-tsi-mer
youth hostel	
<i>eine Jugendherberge</i>	ai-ne yoo-gent-her-ber-ge

What's the address?

<i>Wie ist die Adresse?</i>	vee ist dee a-dre-se
I'd like to book a room, please.	
<i>Ich möchte bitte ein Zimmer reservieren.</i>	ikh möekh-te bi-te ain tsi-mer re-zer-vee-ren

For (three) nights/weeks.

<i>Für (drei) Nächte/Wochen.</i>	fewr (drai) nekht-te/vo-khen
----------------------------------	------------------------------

Do you have a ... room?

<i>Haben Sie ein ...?</i>	haa-ben zee ain ...
single	
<i>Einzelzimmer</i>	ain-tsel-tsi-mer
double	
<i>Doppelzimmer mit einem Doppelbett</i>	do-pel-tsi-mer mit ai-nem do-pel-bet
twin	
<i>Doppelzimmer mit zwei Einzelbetten</i>	do-pel-tsi-mer mit tsvai ain-tsel-be-ten

How much is it per ...?

<i>Wie viel kostet es pro ...?</i>	vee feel kos-tet es praw ...
night	
<i>Nacht</i>	nakht
person	
<i>Person</i>	per-zawn

May I see it?

<i>Kann ich es sehen?</i>	kan ikh es zay-en
---------------------------	-------------------

Can I get another room?

<i>Kann ich ein anderes Zimmer bekommen?</i>	kan ikh ain an-de-res tsi-mer be-ko-men
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MAKING A RESERVATION

(for phone and written requests)

To ...	<i>An ...</i>
From ...	<i>Von ...</i>
Date	<i>Datum</i>
I'd like to book ...	<i>Ich möchte ... reservieren.</i> (see the list under 'Accommodation' for bed and room options)
in the name of ...	<i>auf den Namen ...</i>
from ... (date) to ...	<i>Vom ... bis zum ...</i>
credit card	<i>Kreditkarte</i>
number	<i>Nummer</i>
expiry date	<i>gültig bis ... (valid until)</i>

Please confirm availability and price. *Bitte bestätigen Sie Verfügbarkeit und Preis.*

It's fine. I'll take it.
Es ist gut, ich nehme es. es ist goot ikh nay-me es

I'm leaving now.
Ich reise jetzt ab. ikh rai-ze yetst ap

CONVERSATION & ESSENTIALS

You should be aware that German uses polite and informal forms for 'you' (*Sie* and *du* respectively). When addressing people you don't know well you should always use the polite form (though younger people will be less inclined to expect it). In this language guide we use the polite form unless indicated by 'inf' (for 'informal') in brackets.

If you need to ask for assistance from a stranger, remember to always introduce your request with a simple *Entschuldigung* (Excuse me, ...).

Hello. (in the south)	<i>Guten Tag.</i>	<i>goo-ten taak</i>
Hi.	<i>Grüss Gott.</i>	<i>grews got</i>
	<i>Hallo.</i>	<i>ha-lo/ha-law</i>
Good ...	<i>Guten ...</i>	<i>goo-ten ...</i>
day	<i>Tag</i>	<i>taak</i>
morning	<i>Morgen</i>	<i>mor-gen</i>
afternoon	<i>Tag</i>	<i>taak</i>
evening	<i>Abend</i>	<i>aa-bent</i>

Goodbye.
Auf Wiedersehen. owf vee-der-zay-en

See you later.
Bis später. bis shpay-ter

Bye.
Tschüss./Tschau. chews/chow

How are you?
Wie geht es Ihnen? (pol) vee gayt es ee-nen
Wie geht es dir? (inf) vee gayt es deer

Fine. And you?
Danke, gut. dang-ke goot

... and you?
Und Ihnen? (pol) unt ee-nen
Und dir? (inf) unt deer

What's your name?
Wie ist Ihr Name? (pol) vee ist eer naa-me
Wie heisst du? (inf) vee haist doo

My name is ...
Mein Name ist .../ Ich heisse ... main naa-me ist .../ ikh hai-se ...

Yes.
Ja. yaa

No.
Nein. nain

Please.
Bitte. bi-te

Thank you (very much).
Danke./Vielen Dank. dang-ke/fee-len dangk

You're welcome.
Bitte (sehr). bi-te (zair)

Excuse me, ... (before asking for help or directions)
Entschuldigung ... ent-shul-di-gung ...

Sorry.
Entschuldigung. ent-shul-di-gung

DIRECTIONS
Could you help me, please?
Können Sie mir bitte helfen?
keu-nen zee meer bi-te hel-fen

Where's (a bank)?
Wo ist (eine Bank)?
vaw ist (ai-ne bangk)

I'm looking for (the cathedral).
Ich suche (den Dom).
ikh zoo-khe (dayn dawm)

Which way's (a public toilet)?
In welcher Richtung ist eine öffentliche toilette?
in vel-kher rikh-tung ist (ai-ne eu-fent-li-khe to-a-je-te)

How can I get there?
Wie kann ich da hinkommen?
vee kan ikh daa hin-ko-men

How far is it?
Wie weit ist es?
vee vait ist es

Can you show me (on the map)?
Können Sie es mir (auf der Karte) zeigen?
keu-nen zee es meer (owf dair kar-te) tsi-gen

EMERGENCIES

Help!
Hilfe! hil-fe

It's an emergency!
Es ist ein Notfall! es ist ain nawt-fal

Call the police!
Rufen Sie die Polizei! roo-fen zee dee po-li-tsay

Call a doctor!
Rufen Sie einen Arzt! roo-fen zee ai-nen artst

Call an ambulance!
Rufen Sie einen Krankenwagen! roo-fen zee ai-nen krank-ken-vaa-gen

Leave me alone!
Lassen Sie mich in Ruhe! la-sen zee mikh in roo-e

Go away!
Gehen Sie weg! gay-en zee vek

I'm lost.
Ich habe mich verirrt. ikh haa-be mikh fer-irt

Where are the toilets?
Wo ist die Toilette? vaw ist dee to-a-le-te

left	<i>links</i>	<i>lings</i>
right	<i>rechts</i>	<i>rekhts</i>
near	<i>nahe</i>	<i>naa-e</i>
far away	<i>weit weg</i>	<i>vait vek</i>
here	<i>hier</i>	<i>heer</i>
there	<i>dort</i>	<i>dort</i>
on the corner	<i>an der Ecke</i>	<i>an dair e-ke</i>
straight ahead	<i>geradeaus</i>	<i>ge-raa-de-ows</i>
opposite ...	<i>gegenüber ...</i>	<i>gay-gen-ew-ber ...</i>
next to ...	<i>neben ...</i>	<i>nay-ben ...</i>
behind ...	<i>hinter ...</i>	<i>hin-ter ...</i>
in front of ...	<i>vor ...</i>	<i>fawr ...</i>
north	<i>nord</i>	<i>nord</i>
south	<i>süd</i>	<i>zeward</i>
east	<i>ost</i>	<i>ost</i>
west	<i>west</i>	<i>vest</i>

SIGNS

Polizei	<i>Police</i>
Polizeiwache	<i>Police Station</i>
Eingang	<i>Entrance</i>
Ausgang	<i>Exit</i>
Offen	<i>Open</i>
Geschlossen	<i>Closed</i>
Kein Zutritt	<i>No Entry</i>
Rauchen Verboten	<i>No Smoking</i>
Verboten	<i>Prohibited</i>
Toiletten (WC)	<i>Toilets</i>
Herren	<i>Men</i>
Damen	<i>Women</i>

Turn ...
Biegen Sie ... ab. bee-gen zee ... ap

left/right
links/rechts lingks/rekhts

at the next corner
an der nächsten Ecke an dair naykhs-ten e-ke

at the traffic lights
bei der Ampel bai dair am-pel

HEALTH
Where's the nearest ...?
Wo ist der/die/das nächste ...? (m/f/n) vaw ist dair/die/das naykhs-te ...

chemist
Apotheke (f) a-po-tay-ke

dentist
Zahnarzt (m) tsaan-artst

doctor
Arzt (m) artst

hospital
Krankenhaus (n) krank-ken-hows

I need a doctor (who speaks English).
Ich brauche einen Arzt (der Englisch spricht).
ikh brow-khe ai-nen artst (dair eng-lish shprikt)

Is there a (night) chemist nearby?
Gibt es in der Nähe eine (Nacht)Apotheke?
gipt es in dair nay-e ai-ne (nakht-)ja-po-tay-ke

I'm sick.
Ich bin krank.
ikh bin krankg

It hurts here.
Es tut hier weh.
es toot heer vay

I have diarrhoea/fever/headache.
Ich habe Durchfall/Fieber/Kopfschmerzen.
ikh haa-be durkh-fal/fee-ber/kopf-shmer-tsen

(I think) I'm pregnant.
(Ich glaube) Ich bin schwanger.
(ikh glow-be) ikh bin shwang-er

I'm allergic to ...
Ich bin allergisch gegen ... ikh bin a-lair-gish gay-gen ...

antibiotics
Antibiotika an-ti-bi-aw-ti-ka

aspirin
Aspirin as-pi-reen

penicillin
Penizillin pe-ni-tsi-leen

LANGUAGE DIFFICULTIES
Do you speak English?
Sprechen Sie Englisch?
shpre-khen zee eng-lish

tram

Strassenbahn shtraa-sen-baan

tram stop

Strassenbahnhalte- shtraa-sen-baan-hal-te-
stelle shte-le

urban railway

S-Bahn es-baan

What time does the ... leave?

Wann fährt ... ab? van fairt ... ap

boat das Boot das bawt
bus der Bus dair bus
train der Zug dair tsook

What time's the ... bus?

Wann fährt der ... Bus? van fairt dair ... bus

first erste ers-te
last letzte lets-te
next nächste naykhs-te

Where's the nearest metro station?

Wo ist der nächste U-Bahnhof?
vaw ist dair naykhs-te oo-baan-hawf

Which (bus) goes to ...?

Welcher Bus fährt nach ...?
vel-kher bus fairt nakh ...

A ... ticket to (Berlin).

Einen ... nach (Berlin). ai-nen ... naakh (ber-leen)

one-way
einfache Fahrkarte ain-fa-khe faar-kar-te
return
Rückfahrkarte rewk-faar-kar-te

1st-class
Fahrkarte erster Klasse faar-kar-te ers-ter kla-se
2nd-class
Fahrkarte zweiter Klasse faar-kar-te tsvai-ter kla-se

The ... is cancelled.

... ist gestrichen. ... ist ge-shtri-khen

The ... is delayed.

... hat Verspätung. ... hat fer-shpay-tung

Is this seat free?

Ist dieser Platz frei? ist dee-zer plats frai

Do I need to change trains?

Muss ich umsteigen? mus ikh um-shtai-gen

Are you free? (taxi)

Sind Sie frei? zint zee frai

How much is it to ...?

Was kostet es bis ...? vas kos-tet es bis ...

Please take me to (this address).

Bitte bringen Sie mich bi-te bring-en zee mikh
zu (dieser Adresse). tsoo (dee-zer a-dre-se)

ROAD SIGNS

Gefahr	Danger
Einfahrt Verboten	No Entry
Einbahnstrasse	One-Way
Einfahrt	Entrance
Ausfahrt	Exit
Ausfahrt Freihalten	Keep Clear
Parkverbot	No Parking
Halteverbot	No Stopping
Mautstelle	Toll
Radweg	Cycle Path
Umleitung	Detour
Überholverbot	No Overtaking

Private Transport**Where can I hire a...?**

Wo kann ich ... mieten? vaw kan ikh ... mee-ten

I'd like to hire a/an ...

Ich möchte ... mieten. ikh meukh-te ... mee-ten

automatic

ein Fahrzeug mit ain faar-tsoyk mit
Automatik ow-to-maa-tik

bicycle

ein Fahrrad ain faar-raat

car

ein Auto ain ow-to

4WD

ein Allradfahrzeug ain al-raat-faar-tsoyk

manual

ein Fahrzeug mit ain faar-tsoyk mit
Schaltung shal-tung

motorbike

ein Motorrad ain maw-tor-raat

How much is it per ...?

Wie viel kostet es pro ...? vee feel kos-tet es praw ...

day

Tag taak

week

Woche vo-khe

diesel

Diesel dee-zel

LPG

Autogas ow-to-gaas

petrol (gas)

Benzin ben-tseen

Where's a petrol station?

Wo ist eine Tankstelle?
vaw ist ai-ne tangk-shte-le

Does this road go to ...?

Führt diese Strasse nach ...?
fewrt dee-ze shtraa-se naakh ...

(How long) Can I park here?

(Wie lange) Kann ich hier parken?
(vee lang-e) kan ikh heer par-ken

Where do I pay?

Wo muss ich bezahlen?
vaw mus ikh be-tsa-a-len

I need a mechanic.

Ich brauche einen Mechaniker.
ikh brow-khe ai-nen me-khaa-ni-ker

The car has broken down (at ...)

Ich habe (in ...) eine Panne mit meinem Auto.
ikh haa-be (in ...) ai-ne pa-ne mit mai-nem ow-to

I had an accident.

Ich hatte einen Unfall.
ikh ha-te ai-nen un-fal

The car/motorbike won't start.

Das Auto/Motorrad springt nicht an.
das ow-to/maw-tor-raat shpringkt nikht an

I have a flat tyre.

Ich habe eine Reifenpanne.
ikh haa-be ai-ne rai-fen-pa-ne

I've run out of petrol.

Ich habe kein Benzin mehr.
ikh haa-be kain ben-tseen mair

TRAVEL WITH CHILDREN**I need a ...**

Ich brauche ... ikh brow-khe ...

Is there a/an ...?

Gibt es ...? gipt es ...

baby change room

einen Wickelraum ai-nen vi-kel-rowm

baby seat

einen Babysitz ai-nen bay-bi-zits

booster seat

einen Kindersitz ai-nen kin-der-zits

child-minding service

einen Babysitter-Service ai-nen bay-bi-si-ter-ser-vis

children's menu

eine Kinderkarte ai-ne kin-der-kar-te

(English-speaking) babysitter

einen (englisch- ai-nen (eng-lish-
sprachigen) Babysitter shpra-khi-gen) bay-bi-si-ter

infant formula (milk)

Trockenmilch für Säuglinge tro-ken-milkh fewr soyg-ling-e

highchair

einen Kinderstuhl ai-nen kin-der-shtool

potty

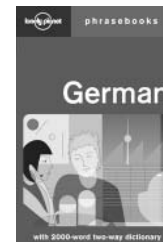
ein Kindertöpfchen ain kin-der-teupf-khen

Do you mind if I breastfeed here?

Kann ich meinem Kind hier die Brust geben?
kan ikh mai-nem kind heer dee Brust gay-ben

Are children allowed?

Sind Kinder erlaubt?
zint kin-der er-lowpt



Also available from Lonely Planet:
German Phrasebook

Glossary

(pl) indicates plural

Abfahrt – departure (trains)
Abtei – abbey
ADAC – Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil Club (German Automobile Association)
Allee – avenue
Altstadt – old town
Ankunft – arrival (trains)
Antiquariat – antiquarian bookshop
Apotheke – pharmacy
Arbeitsamt – employment office
Arbeitserlaubnis – work permit
Ärzte – doctor
Ärztelhaus – medical clinic
Ärztlicher Notdienst – emergency medical service
Aufenthaltsurlaubnis – residency permit
Auflauf, Aufläufe (pl) – casserole
Ausgang, Ausfahrt – exit
Aussiedler – German settlers who have returned from abroad (it usually refers to post-WWII expulsions), sometimes called *Spätaussiedler*
autobahn – motorway
Autofähre – car ferry
Autonome (pl) – left-wing anarchists
AvD – Automobilclub von Deutschland (Automobile Club of Germany)

Bad – spa, bath
Bahnhof – train station
Bahnsteig – train station platform
Bau – building
Bedienung – service; service charge
Behinderte – disabled
Berg – mountain
Bergbaumuseum – mining museum
Besenwirtschaft – seasonal wine restaurant indicated by a broom above the doorway
Bezirk – district
Bibliothek – library
Bierkeller – cellar pub
Bierstube – traditional beer pub
Bildungsroman – literally ‘novel of education’; literary work in which the personal development of a single individual is central
BRD – Bundesrepublik Deutschland or FRG (Federal Republic of Germany); the name for Germany today; before reunification it applied to West Germany; see also *DDR, FRG, GDR*
Brücke – bridge

Brunnen – fountain or well
Bundesland – federal state
Bundesliga – Germany’s premier football (soccer) league
Bundesrat – upper house of the German parliament
Bundestag – lower house of the German parliament
Bundesverfassungsgericht – Federal Constitutional Court
Burg – castle
Busbahnhof – bus station

CDU – Christian Democratic Union
Christkindmarkt – Christmas market; see also *Weihnachtsmarkt*
CSU – Christian Social Union; Bavarian offshoot of CDU

DB – Deutsche Bahn (German national railway)
DDR – Deutsche Demokratische Republik or, in English, GDR (German Democratic Republic); the name for former East Germany; see also *BRD, FRG, GDR*
Denkmal – memorial
Deutsche Reich – German Empire; refers to the period 1871–1918
Dirndl – traditional women’s dress (Bavaria only)
DJH – Deutsches Jugendherbergswerk (German youth hostels association)
Dom – cathedral
Dorf – village
DZT – Deutsche Zentrale für Tourismus (German National Tourist Office)

Eingang – entrance
Eintritt – admission
Einwanderungsland – country of immigrants
Eiscafé – ice-cream parlour

Fahrplan – timetable
Fahrrad – bicycle
Fasching – pre-Lenten carnival (term used in southern Germany)
FDP – Free Democratic Party
Ferienwohnung, Ferienwohnungen (pl) – holiday flat or apartment
Fest – festival
FKK – nude bathing area
Flammkeuche – Franco-German dish consisting of a thin layer of pastry topped with cream, onion, bacon and sometimes cheese or mushrooms, and cooked in a wood-fired oven. Especially prevalent on menus in the Palatinate and the Black Forest.
Fleets – canals in Hamburg

Flohmarkt – flea market
Flughafen – airport
Föhn – an intense autumn wind in the Agerman Alps and Alpine foothills
Forstweg – forestry track
Franken – ‘Franks’, Germanic people influential in Europe between the 3rd and 8th centuries
Freikorps – WWI volunteers
Fremdenverkehrsamt/Fremdenverkehrsverein – tourist office
Fremdenzimmer – tourist room
FRG – Federal Republic of Germany; see also *BRD*
Fussball – football, soccer

Garten – garden
Gasse – lane or alley
Gastarbeiter – literally ‘guest worker’; labourer from primarily Mediterranean countries who came to Germany in the 1950s and 1960s to fill a labour shortage
Gästehaus – guesthouse
Gaststätte, Gasthaus – informal restaurant, inn
GDR – the German Democratic Republic (the former East Germany); see also *BRD, DDR, FRG*
Gedenkstätte – memorial site
Gemütlichkeit – a particularly convivial, cosy atmosphere and setting, for instance in a pub, restaurant or living room
Gepäckaufbewahrung – left-luggage office
Gesamtkunstwerk – literally ‘total artwork’; integrates painting, sculpture and architecture
Gestapo – Nazi secret police
Glockenspiel – literally ‘bell play’; carillon, often on a cathedral or town hall, sounded by mechanised figures depicting religious or historical characters
Gründerzeit – literally ‘foundation time’; the period of industrial expansion in Germany following the founding of the German Empire in 1871

Hafen – harbour, port
Halbtrocken – semi-dry (wine)
Hauptbahnhof – central train station
Heide – heath
Heiliges Römisches Reich – Holy Roman Empire, which lasted from the 8th century to 1806; the German lands comprised the bulk of the Empire’s territory
Herzog – duke
Heu Hotels – literally ‘hay hotels’; cheap forms of accommodation that are usually set in farmhouses and similar to bunk barns in the UK
Hitlerjugend – Hitler Youth organisation
Hochdeutsch – literally ‘High German’; standard spoken and written German, developed from a regional Saxon dialect
Hochkultur – literally ‘high culture’; meaning ‘advanced civilisation’
Hof, Höfe (pl) – courtyard

Höhle – cave
Hotel Garni – hotel without a restaurant where you are only served breakfast

Imbiss – stand-up food stall; see also *Schnellimbiss*
Insel – island

Jugendgästehaus – youth guesthouse of a higher standard than a youth hostel
Jugendherberge – youth hostel
Jugendstil – Art Nouveau
Junker – originally a young, noble landowner of the Middle Ages; later used to refer to reactionary Prussian landowners

Kabarett – cabaret
Kaffee und Kuchen – literally ‘coffee and cake’; traditional afternoon coffee break in Germany
Kaiser – emperor; derived from ‘Caesar’
Kanal – canal
Kantine – cafeteria, canteen
Kapelle – chapel
Karneval – pre-Lenten festivities (along the Rhine)
Karte – ticket
Kartenvorverkauf – ticket-booking office
Kino – cinema
Kirche – church
Kloster – monastery, convent
Kneipe – pub
Kommunales Kino – art-house cinema
Konditorei – cake shop
König – king
Konsulat – consulate
Konzentrationslager (KZ) – a concentration camp
KPD – German Communist Party
Krankenhaus – hospital
Kreuzgang – cloister
Kristallnacht – literally ‘night of broken glass’; attack on Jewish synagogues, cemeteries and businesses by Nazis and their supporters on the night of 9 November 1938, marking the beginning of full-scale persecution of Jews in Germany (also known as *Reichspogromnacht*)
Kunst – art
Kunstlieder – early German ‘artistic songs’
Kurfürst – prince-elect
Kurhaus – literally ‘spa house’, but usually a spa town’s central building, used for social gatherings and events and often housing the town’s casino
Kurort – spa resort
Kurtaxe – resort tax
Kurverwaltung – spa resort administration
Kurzentrum – spa centre
Land, Länder (pl) – state
Landtag – state parliament

Lederhosen – traditional leather trousers with attached braces (Bavaria only)

Lesbe, Lesben (pl) – lesbian (n)

lesbisch – lesbian (adj)

lieblich – sweet (wine)

Lied – song

Maare – crater lakes in the Eifel Upland area west of the Rhine

Markgraf – margrave; German nobleman ranking above a count

Markt – market; often used instead of *Marktplatz*

Marktplatz – marketplace or square; often abbreviated to *Markt*

Mass – 1L tankard or stein of beer

Meer – sea

Mehrwertsteuer (MwST) – value-added tax

Meistersinger – literally ‘master singer’; highest level in medieval troubadour guilds

Mensa – university cafeteria

Milchcafé – milk coffee, *café au lait*

Mitfahrzentrale – ride-sharing agency

Mitwohzentrale – an accommodation-finding service that is usually for long-term stays; see also *Zimmervermittlung*

Münster – minster or large church, cathedral

Münzwäscherei – coin-operated laundrette

Nord – north

Notdienst – emergency service

NSDAP – National Socialist German Workers’ Party

Ossi – nickname for an East German

Ost – east

Ostalgie – a romanticised yearning for the GDR era, derived from ‘nostalgia’

Ostler – old term for an *Ossi*

Ostpolitik – former West German chancellor Willy Brandt’s foreign policy of ‘peaceful coexistence’ with the *GDR*

Palast – palace, residential quarters of a castle

Pannenhilfe – roadside breakdown assistance for motorists

Paradies – literally ‘paradise’; architectural term for a church vestibule or anteroom

Parkhaus – car park

Parkschein – parking voucher

Parkscheinautomat – vending machine selling parking vouchers

Passage – shopping arcade

Pension, Pensionen (pl) – relatively cheap boarding house

Pfand – deposit for bottles and sometimes glasses (in beer gardens)

Pfarrkirche – parish church

Plattdeutsch – literally ‘Low German’; German dialect of northwestern Germany (especially Lower Saxony)

Platz – square

Postamt – post office

Postlagernd – poste restante

Priele – tideways on the Wadden Sea (*Wattenmeer*) on the North Sea coast

Putsch – revolt

Radwandern – bicycle touring

Radweg – bicycle path

Rathaus – town hall

Ratskeller – town hall restaurant

Reich – empire

Reichspogromnacht – see *Kristallnacht*

Reisezentrum – travel centre located in train or bus stations

Reiterhof – riding stable or centre

Rezept – medical prescription

R-Gespräch – reverse-charge call

Ruhetag – literally ‘rest day’; closing day at a shop or restaurant

Rundgang – tour, route

Saal, Säle (pl) – hall, room

Sammlung – collection

Säule – column, pillar

S-Bahn – suburban-metropolitan trains; Schnellbahn

Schatzkammer – treasury

Schiff – ship

Schiffahrt – shipping, navigation

Schloss – palace, castle

Schnaps – schnapps

Schnellimbiss – stand-up food stall; see also *Imbiss*

schwul – gay (adj)

Schwuler, Schwule (pl) – gay (n)

SED – Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (Socialist Unity Party)

See – lake

Sekt – sparkling wine

Selbstbedienung (SB) – self-service (restaurants, laundrettes etc)

Sesselbahn – chairlift

Soziale Marktwirtschaft – literally ‘social market economy’; the German form of a market-driven economy with built-in social protection for employees

Spätaussiedler – see *Aussiedler*

SPD – Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (Social Democratic Party)

Speisekarte – menu

Sportverein – sports association

SS – Schutzstaffel; organisation within the Nazi party that supplied Hitler’s bodyguards, as well as concentration-camp guards and the Waffen-SS troops in WWII

Stadt – city or town

Stadtbad, Stadtbäder (pl) – public pool

Stadtwald – city or town forest

Stasi – *GDR* secret police (from Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, or Ministry of State Security)

Stau – traffic jam

Staudamm, Staumauer – dam

Stausee – reservoir

Stehcafé – stand-up café

Strand – beach

Strasse – street; often abbreviated to *Str*

Strausswirtschaft – seasonal wine pub indicated by wreath above the doorway

Süid – south

Szene – scene (ie where the action is)

Tageskarte – daily menu or day ticket on public transport

Tal – valley

Teich – pond

Thirty Years’ War – pivotal war in Central Europe (1618–48) that began as a German conflict between Catholics and Protestants

Tor – gate

trampen – hitchhiking

Treuhandanstalt – trust established to sell off *GDR* assets after the *Wende*

Trocken – dry (wine)

Trödel – junk

Turm – tower

U-Bahn – underground train system

Übergang – transit or transfer point

Ufer – bank

Verboten – forbidden

Verkehr – traffic

Verkehrsamt/Verkehrsverein – tourist office

Viertel – quarter, district

Volkslieder – folk song

Waffen-SS – the combat wing of the SS

Wald – forest

Waldfrüchte – wild berries

Wäscherei – laundry

Wattenmeer – tidal flats on the North Sea coast

Wechselstube – currency exchange office

Weg – way, path

Weihnachtsmarkt – Christmas market; see also *Christkindlmarkt*

Weingut – wine-growing estate

Weinkeller – wine cellar

Weinprobe – wine tasting

Weinstube – traditional wine bar or tavern

Wende – ‘change’ of 1989, ie the fall of communism that led to the collapse of the *GDR* and German reunification

Weser Renaissance – ornamental architectural style found around the Weser River

Wessi – nickname for a West German

West – west

Westler – old term for a *Wessi*

Wiese – meadow

Wirtschaftswunder – Germany’s post-WWII ‘economic miracle’

Zahnradbahn – cog-wheel railway

Zeitung – newspaper

Zimmer frei – room available (for accommodation purposes)

Zimmervermittlung – a room-finding service, primarily for short-term stays; see also *Mitwohzentrale*

ZOB – Zentraler Omnibusbahnhof (central bus station)

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