

Travel & Driving Guide

Germany



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Touring Germany By Car

Germany is an incredibly beautiful and diverse country, located in northern Europe that is on the must-see agenda for travelers from around the world. There is something for everyone in Germany, with medieval towns and villages, spectacular scenery, ancient monuments, fascinating history, fairytale castles, all within easy reach of vibrant cities and towns. Take in all the sights and sounds in the bustling cities of Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt, full of great eateries, shopping, night clubs and bars. Explore the spectacular amazing Rhine and Moselle regions for world class wine and food. Enjoy the unsurpassed beauty of the Bavarian Alps. Tour the River Elbe or River Main, passing wooded forests where you'll see a scattering of ancient castles and palaces. Stroll through quaint villages with cobble stoned streets and half wooded houses.

With so much to see and do in Germany, the best way you can see all the best is by car. Germany has a fantastic road and highway network, especially the Autobahn that will connect you between all the major cities quickly and efficiently, and will allow you to enjoy all the famous sites, plus give you the freedom to uncover some undiscovered treasures as well.

This self drive guide is aimed at the traveler that enjoys the independence and comfort of their own vehicle. We've included the information you'll need for a self drive holiday in Germany, from hiring a car, rules of the road, FAQ's, to some great ideas for touring the different regions of this wonderful country.



Tips on Driving In Germany

- Drive on the **RIGHT** hand side of the road. The driver sits on the left hand side of the car.
- Be especially careful with overtaking on autobahns as cars from behind can approach very quickly.
- In the case of an accident, make sure you exchange details with the other driver, or wait until police arrive. If you hit a parked car, this still needs to be done. Unlike some other parts of the world, leaving your details behind in a note is generally not acceptable, and you may be charged with leaving the scene of an accident.
- In Germany there are a few things that must be kept in cars at all times. These include a first aid kit, and visibility vests in case of break down or accident. In general, rental companies will provide this with their cars however this may not be the case if your trip begins in another country.
- Avoid driving in major cities such as Berlin and Munich. The public transport in these major German cities

Driving Laws In Germany

- Cars drive on the right hand side of the road in Germany, and overtake in the left lane. Drivers sit on the left hand side of the car.
- Talking on the phone while driving in Germany is illegal, and seatbelts must be worn at all times.
- Police in Germany will often collect a fine on the spot, and there have been cases of cars being impounded until the fine is paid in the case of police suspecting the driver may leave the country without paying.
- Be sure to drive sensibly, and carry some cash just in case.
- Children under 12 years of age, or under 5 ft in height must be seated in an appropriate child seat.
- Driving while under the influence of alcohol is illegal in Germany, and a driver is regarded as over the legal limit if they have a blood alcohol concentration over 0.05.
- Speed Limits
 - City roads: 30 mph
 - Highways: 60 mph
 - Autobahn: no speed limit unless otherwise stated.
 - Recommended max speed is 80 mph



Insurance

German law states that all vehicles must have compulsory third party injury insurance, however your rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately, and an excess will be due. To reduce the amount of excess you may be liable for, check with your rental supplier or travel agent to arrange extra cover.

Car Rental companies in Germany will normally include:

- **Third Party insurance:** Compulsory insurance and will be included in your car rental rate. This covers you for other people's injury and damage to their vehicle.
- **Collision Damage Waiver (CDW):** This limits your financial liability for damage to the rented vehicle, and is normally included in prepaid car rental rates. Rentals are normally subject to liability excess, which can be reduced at the time you collect your rental car.
- **Theft Loss Cover:** This limits your financial liability for the loss or theft of the rented vehicle and is generally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Fire and Liability:** This limits your financial liability for bodily injury or death, and is normally included in prepaid car rental rates.
- **Personal Accident Insurance:** This covers the driver for personal injuries and is generally not included in your car rental rates. It is considered an optional extra that you can take upon collection of the car.

License Requirements

In order to rent a car in Germany, the driver will need to have had a full license for at least one to three years, depending on the vehicle type and the supplier. Depot staff will check this at time of collection.

Min & Max Age Requirements

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



Autobahn, near Munich

Important Road Signs



Stop



No Parking



Yield



No Vehicles Allowed



No Passing



Parking



One Way

Parking In Germany

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

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

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

German Car Rental FAQs

What kind of car should I rent for my holiday in Germany?

This depends on where you're traveling, how many people are traveling and the style of driving you intend to do. Cars range from small (economy, compact) to larger size cars (intermediate, full size), to convertibles and luxury vehicles. For short trips with fewer passengers opt for the smaller cars; for longer trips with the family then a larger car, van or SUV would suit. There are plenty of car rental options to choose from; it all depends on your personal needs.

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

How do I figure what car is right for me?

You can use the ACRISS system to find the car that suits your needs. This is an internationally recognized code that will ensure that you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

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



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

Examples:

ECMN:

E = Economy
C = 2 or 4 door
M = Manual
N = No Air

FDAR:

F = Full Size
D = 4 Door
A = Automatic
R = Air

Can I rent an automatic car in Germany?

Yes you can, however automatics are generally more expensive and harder to get than manual cars.

Will I be able to collect my rental car direct from the airport once I arrive, or will I have to take a shuttle bus to the depot?

The majority of car rental companies have desks at both international and domestic airport terminals, and many will have a shuttle bus that will take you direct to your rental vehicle. Check with Auto Europe when you book to find out the details to collect the car.

Are there additional fees to collect my rental car from German airports?

Auto Europe's car rental rates usually include the airport or 'premium location' fees for car rental collections in Germany. Check on your prepaid voucher to ensure that this included.

What about collecting my rental car from downtown depots in Germany?

Downtown, airport and railway locations are all considered premium locations, and as above these fees are included in Auto Europe's 'inclusive' car rental rates.

Do I need a credit card to collect my car rental?

Yes. Car rental suppliers will usually freeze the excess of the vehicle (from €850) which will be refunded to your credit card when the rental car is returned at the end of the rental. Some suppliers refund the deposit via a check that is mailed to the renters's residential address.

More German Car Rental FAQs

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

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

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

International one ways are definitely possible however, as with any international one way, this will incur a one way fee. Prices vary depending on the supplier, the length of the rental and the drop off destination. You can expect to pay from €260 + tax.

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

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

Should I take out additional insurance on my car rental?

Rental rates will include basic insurance: Collision Damage Waiver (CDW), Third Party Liability and Theft Protection. In the event that your rental vehicle is accidentally damaged, regardless of who is at fault, or stolen, the Insurance excess is the maximum amount you are liable for. In Germany, the base amount of excess begins at €510.

Should I rent a GPS for driving in Germany?

Definitely! You can rent a portable GPS from Auto Europe from as low as \$8 per day plus shipping for the latest Garmin models including a free dashmount and mapping for all Western countries and most Eastern countries. We can have the unit delivered to your home before you go.

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

Once the car rental has commenced you can call Auto Europe toll free at 00-800-223-5555-5 who will arrange the car to be extended and you will be charged the additional days based upon the current rate with Auto Europe.

German Regions at a Glance

Berlin

Central Germany: Hesse, Thuringia

Southern Germany: Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg

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

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

Eastern Germany: Brandenburg, Saxony Anhalt, Saxony



Berlin

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

What's On

February:

- Berlin International Film Festival, film makers and cinema lovers flock to Berlin for the annual festival, with free film screenings for the public.
- Late Night at the Museum, over 90 museums stay open late at night with concerts and lectures.

March-April:

- Festtage Music Festival, State Opera festival

June:

- Operas, early to mid June at the Staatsoper
- Carnival of Cultures, wonderful street fair and parade

July:

- Love Parade, lively and energetic parade with carnival floats

August:

- Beer Festival, held at Strasberger Platz offering over 1,500 different types of beer.
- Tanz in August, international dance festival
- Heimatklang, world music festival in Kreuzberg

September:

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

October:

- German Unity Day, 03 Oct German public holiday.

November:

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

December:

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

Best Things to See & Do

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

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

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

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

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

Climb the Victory Column – with fantastic views of the surrounding Tiergarten and the Western city center.

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

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

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



Quadriga on the Brandenburg Gate

Self Drive Tours around Berlin

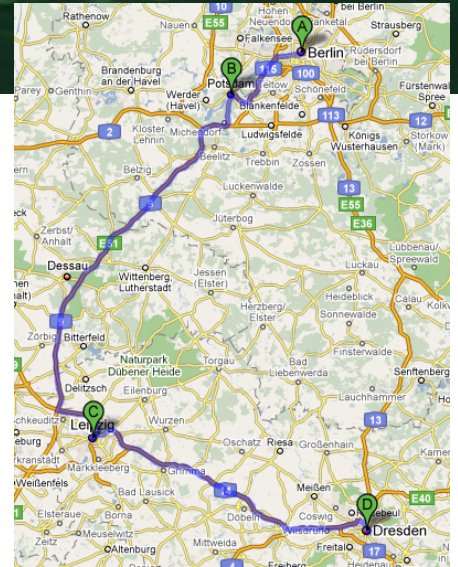
Berlin to Bautzen

Begin this tour from the bustling city of Berlin. Take the E51 toward the south-west to the town of Potsdam, which is the capital of the federal state of Brandenburg and is home to the World Heritage listed park of Sanssouci with its magnificent palaces.



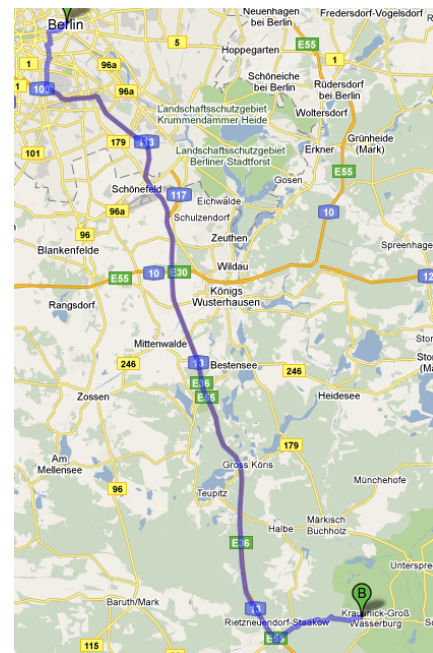
Sanssouci Castle and Park

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



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

beautiful historical town of Bautzen with a magnificent vista of medieval towers.



See the Spreewald

This tour will take you just over an hour south east of Berlin via the E36 to the magnificent region of the Spreewald. The Spree Forest is a protected Unesco biosphere reserve that covers over 100,000 acres of forested land that is



The Spree Forest

Central Germany

Regions: Hesse, Thuringia.

Cities: Darmstadt, Erfurt, Frankfurt, Weimar, Wiesbaden.

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

Best Things to See & Do

Hesse:

Explore Frankfurt:

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

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

Enjoy the Museum of Contemporary Art – With the art treasures on the outside as well as the inside.

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

Relax in the Palm Garden – With playground for kids, rose and formal gardens

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

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

Thuringia:

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

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

Hike the Rennsteig Trail – One of the most beautiful walks in Europe, the Rennsteig is almost 100 miles long and takes hikers from Eisenach through the Thuringia forest.

Be enlightened at Weimar – Soak up the town's art,

What's On

February:

- *Fasching* – Annual party celebrated across all of Germany

March:

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

May:

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

June:

- *Forest Folk Festival, Frankfurt* – Held in the Niederrad forest with markets, fairgrounds and games

July:

- *Museum Quay Festival, Frankfurt* – Annual festival including art exhibitions, live music and concerts
- *Sound of Frankfurt, Frankfurt* – Music festival held on the Zeil

August:

- *Rheingau Wine Festival, Wiesbaden* – Taste the local wines and sparkling wines
- *Luther Festival, Eisenach, Thuringen* – Huge historical spectacle held over 3 days when the people of Eisenach dress in costume and re-enact medieval life

September:

- *Autumn Dippe Fair, Frankfurt* – Similar to Spring Dippe Fair
- *Frankfurt Book Fair* – Enormous book fair famous the world over

October:

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

November:

- *Christmas markets* – All across Germany, traditional markets operating in the cities' medieval center with stalls offering gifts, food and wine



Muehlburg Castle, Erfurt

Self Drive Tours around Central Germany

Frankfurt to Würzburg

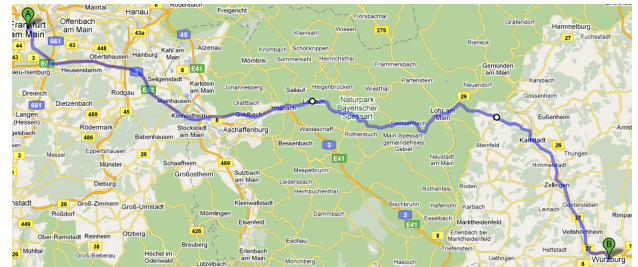
This lovely drive will take you through the beautiful Spessart National Park, from Frankfurt to Würzburg. Once you've had your fill of Frankfurt, take the E42 and E41 and drive east, until you reach the city of Aschaffenburg at the gateway to the Spessart that straddles the River Main. This beautiful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

Continue on the A26 & A27 through the towns of Lorh am Main, Karlstadt and Zellingen to the city of Würzburg. Here you can visit the Würzburg Residence and gardens, which is famous for its spectacular staircase showcasing one of the world's finest pieces of Baroque art.

There are also plenty of great cafés and restaurants showcasing the local produce, particularly its Franconian wine.



Johannisburg Castle

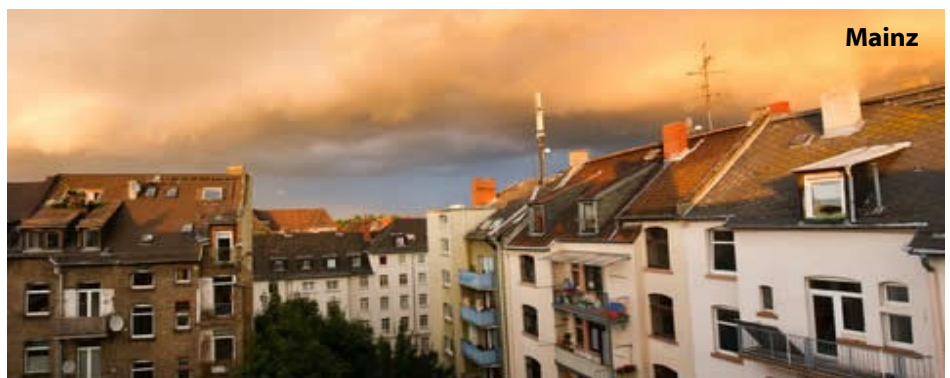
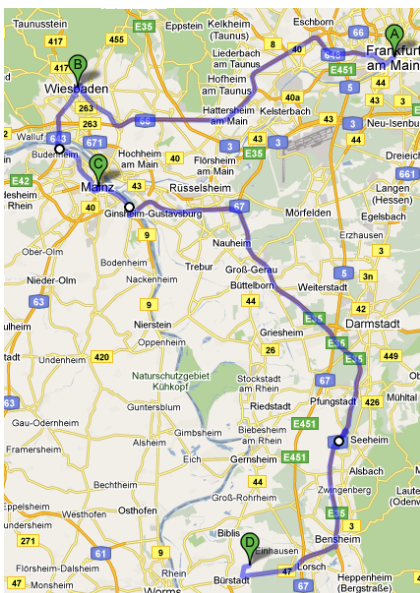


The Best of Hesse

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

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

From Mainz, head southeast along E42, then south on E35 to Darmstadt. From here head west to the wine growing region of Bergstrasse, and with designated driver at the wheel follow the Wine Trail that runs for 17 miles between Bockenheim to Schweigen-Rechtenbach. This region produces some of the best German wines in some spectacular country.



Southern Germany

Regions: Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria

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

What's On

February:

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

March:

- *Heidelberg Fruehling – Massive classical and contemporary music festival*

April:

- *Munich Spring Festival – Funfair with side stalls, markets and side stalls*

May:

- *Biennale Opera, Munich – Major opera festival*

June:

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

July:

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

August:

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

September:

- *Heidelberg Fall Festival – Plenty of beer and sausages on hand for popular street festival*
- *Night of the Proms, Munich – Large national music festival*

October:

- *Oktoberfest, Theresienwiese, Munich – World famous beer festival*

November:

- *Christmas markets – Held across Germany from end of November til Christmas Eve, full of magic atmosphere, unique gifts, arts and crafts and local foods for sale*



Neuschwanstein Castle, Bavaria

Best Things to See & Do

Munich:

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

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

Explore the arts – Munich is chocker-block full of art galleries and museums with 7 museums in the Munich Art Quarter alone.

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

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

famous German car, the BMW.

Heidelberg:

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

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

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

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

Stuttgart:

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

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

Würzburg:

See the Würzburger Residence – This is one of the finest Palaces in Europe and is famous for its magnificent staircase.

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

Self Drive Tours around Southern Germany



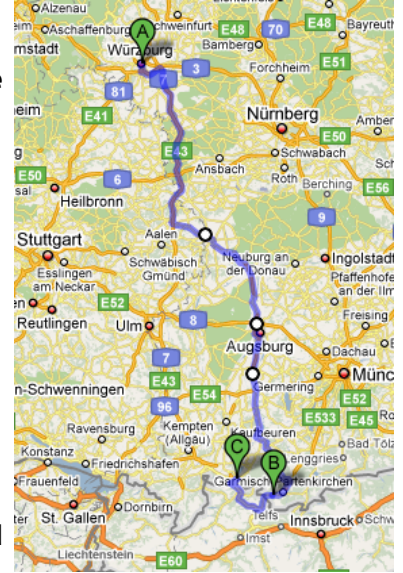
Würzburg Residence

The Romantic Road

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

From Rothenburg, take in the scenery as you drive through Norblingen, cross the Danube then come to Augsburg. While you're there take time to see The Fuggerei which is the worlds oldest welfare housing from 1516, see the Town Hall Square and the Cathedral of St Mary's Visitation. The town of Pfaffenwinkel is the next stop, and is home to the World Heritage listed Wieskirche Pilgrimage

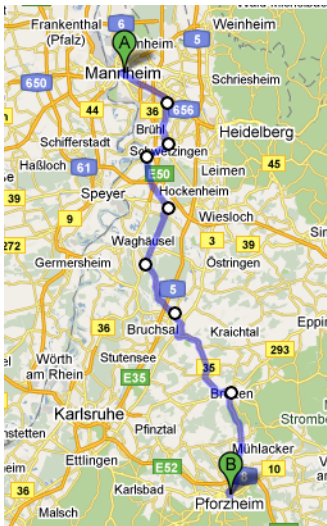
Church. From here, drive west to the region of Königswinkel and the towns of Fossen and Pfronten. Here you will see the fairytale castles of Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau that are surrounded by the majestic Bavarian Alps.



Bertha Benz Memorial Drive

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

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



Western Germany

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

Cities: Aachen, Bonn, Cologne, Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Essen, Koblenz, Mainz, Saarbrücken

Visitors to Western Germany will have the chance to see some of the best parts of this country. Here you'll find magnificent cathedrals, fairytale castles, Roman ruins, unrivalled scenery, and the mighty Rhine all featuring alongside bustling, energetic and charismatic cities full of art, great shopping and culture. In western Germany small villages dot the landscape, festivals abound and historical monuments are easily found. You can wander in quaint towns, climb spectacular cathedral spires, and tour the beautiful vineyards in the Rhine and Moselle regions that produce world famous wines. You'll never be short of great things to see and do in Western Germany!

Best Things to See & Do

Rhine Valley

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

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

Take a cruise along the Rhine – The best vantage point to see the best of the Rhine Valley.

Mainz

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

Heaven for bookworms – Visit the Gutenberg Museum which chronicles the history of bookmaking from the very beginning.

Cologne (Köln):

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

Explore the Ludwig Museum – Home to great collection of post modern art.

Stroll through the City Quarters – Wonder through the traditional neighbourhood, full of bookshops, cafes, art galleries and bars.

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

Dusseldorf:

Climb the Rheinturm – Get the 360° view of the entire town from the 164m high tower.

Wonder through the Altstadt (old town) – Stroll along the cobble stoned streets lined with restaurants, bars and nightclubs that open up onto the Rhine.

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

Bonn:

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

Visit Kreuzbergkirche – This beautiful Baroque style church has a superb stone Holy Staircase and fascinating artworks.

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

What's On

January:

- *Boot Dusseldorf* – International boat show that is one of the largest in the world

February:

- *Winter Festival, Köln* – Massive street carnival and party
- *Rosenmontag, Bonn* – Held on the Collop Monday with fancy costumes, dancing and parades

April:

- *Frühjahrs Dippemess, Frankfurt* – Traditional spring fair, running through to May

May:

- *Dusseldorf Jazz Rally* – Local and international musicians converge on the city for great music festival
- *Weinwoche, Cologne* – Week long wine festival
- *Rhine in Flames, Bonn* – Enormous fireworks display held first Saturday in May
- *Wäldchestag, Frankfurt* – Folk festival in Stadtwald

June:

- *Opernplatzfest, Frankfurt* – Massive food festival
- *6 Tage Oper, Dusseldorf* – 6 day festival of musical theatre and chamber opera

July:

- *Kirmes, Dusseldorf* – Fair and revelry on the banks of the Rhine opposite the Altstadt attracting a huge crowd.
- *German F1 Grand Prix, Nürburgring, Bonn* – Alternating every year with Hockenheimring
- *Bonner Bierbörse, Bonn* – Taste over 600 ales from Germany and across the globe at this massive beer festival

August:

- *Rheingau Wine Market, Frankfurt* – Wine festival with tastings and other culinary delights
- *International Beethovenfest, Bonn* – Festival paying tribute to the famous Ludwig van Beethoven
- *Ringfest, Cologne* – Weekend festival of music and food

September:

- *Pützchens Markt, Bonn* – Traditional folk festival and market

November:

- *Weihnachtsmarkt* – Christmas markets, held all across Germany with arts and crafts, gingerbread, mulled red wine and great festive gifts

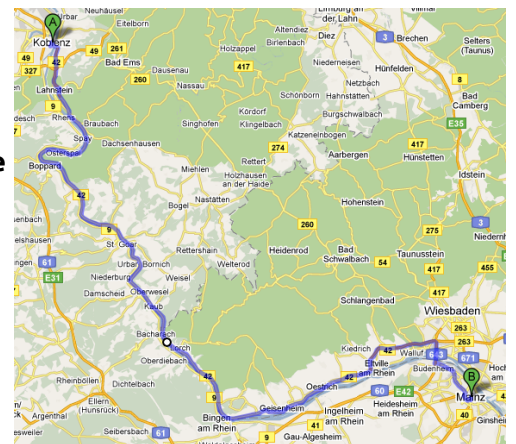
Self Drive Tours around Western Germany

Follow the Rhine

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



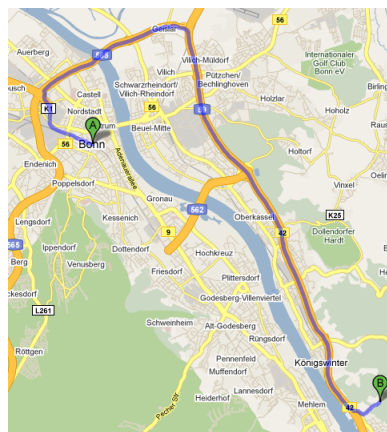
Follow the A42 along the Rhine, and you will discover plenty of small towns and villages along the way. Bingen am Rhein is a charming town in the Rheine, where you can see the Klopp Castle and the Mouse Tower that sits on its own island in the middle of the River. Drive east along the A42 to the city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



Explore the Siebengeburge National Park

This short tour will take you along the Rhine to the Siebengeburge National Park. Begin this tour in Bonn, where you can visit the magnificent Kreuzbergkirche cathedral and the lovely Botanical Gardens. From the center of Bonn, take the K1 to the route 565 where you'll cross the Rhine. On the east bank, drive south along the A59, continuing onto the B42, following the signs to Drachenfels. There are some

great castle ruins, and beautiful vineyards gracing the roadside. This is also the gateway to the Siebengeburge National Park, which aside from the wonderful natural environment, is home to the Schloss Drachenburg, the magnificent castle that dominates the landscape.



Northern Germany

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

Cities: Bremen, Hamburg, Hanover, Kiel, Lübeck, Lüneburg, Oldenburg, Rostock

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

What's On

March:

- *Hamburger DOM, Hamburg – The Dom Market is a month long festival with food, parades and fireworks.*
- *CeBIT, Hanover – Premier technology fair.*

April:

- *Hanover Messe – Industrial technological trade fair*

May:

- *Hamburg Port Festival – Celebrations on water and land, celebrating the 300 year old harbor.*
- *International Jazz Festival, Hanover – Annual music festival*

June:

- *Dragon Boat Festival, Hamburg – The largest of its kind outside of Asia*
- *Weltmusikfestival, Hanover – Music festival with artist performing from across the globe*
- *Kieler Woche, Kiel – Huge maritime festival, as well as international food and craft fair*

July:

- *Fleetinsel Festival, Hamburg – Cultural festival with arts and great food*
- *Niedersachsen Festival, Hanover – Traditional cultural festival*

August:

- *Alster Fair, Hamburg – Shows, concerts and street parties held on the banks of the Alster Lake.*
- *Maschseefest, Hanover – Beer festival on banks of Lake Masch*

October:

- *Freimarkt, Bremen – One of the oldest festivals in Germany*
- *Oktoberfest, Hanover – International Beer festival*

November:

- *Christmas Markets – Held all across Germany, with festive markets and stalls offering food, mulled wine as well as Christmas gifts*
- *Ketterpullen, Bremen – International rowing contest of the Weser River*



Best Things to See & Do

Hamburg

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

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

Stroll through the Altstadt – The old city in Hamburg and visit the City Hall (Rathaus).

Bremen

Stroll around the city center – Visit the Schnoor-Viertel with its beautiful medieval buildings and stature of Knight

Roland, protector of trade.

See the Rathaus (Town Hall) – This lovely building was built in 1410 and is now listed with the Unesco World Heritage.

Explore the Böttcherstrasse – This art nouveau street is home to beautiful facades and courtyards, with shops, museums and a huge Glockenspiel, that runs from the main square to the river.

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

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

Hanover

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

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

Relax in the gardens – Smell the roses at Grosser Garten and Herrenhausen, beautifully manicured gardens that originated back in the 17th century, with mazes, fountains and often host summer concerts.

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

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

Lower Saxony

Take a VW for a spin – The Autostadt in Wolfsburg opposite the VW factory.

Explore Lüneburg – Beautiful town that dates back to 956AD, known as the City of Salt, and home to magnificent City Hall, a bustling university population, lovely pedestrian areas and salt thermal baths.

Visit Hamelin – Explore the city of the legendary Pied Piper

Self Drive Tours in North Germany

The Fairytale Road

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

From Fulda, take the B254 into the Voglesberg Mountains through the medieval villages of Grossendlüder and Lauterbach, and onto the 254 to Alsfeld where the old town is well worth a visit. Drive along the Schwalm River, where the Brothers were inspired to write the story of Little Red Riding Hood. Visit the town of Neustadt with a tall circular tower where it's believed Rapunzel could have let down her hair. Continue on through Homberg through the Reinhards Forest and into Kassel in the Waldeck Region, which has been the inspiration behind legends of witches, magic spells, mystical princesses and wicked step-mothers.



Castle Lowenburg, Kas-

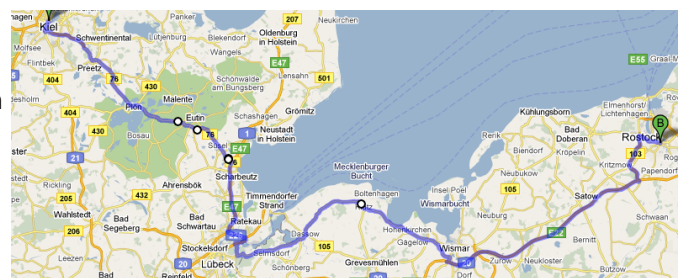
From Kassel, drive along the B3 to Munden and onto the town of Göttingen with its splendid market square and old town. From here, drive to the town of Sababurg, where there stands a turreted castle and park in nearby Dornröschenschloss Sababurg, which is said to be the location for the legend of Sleeping Beauty.

Continue along the Fairytale Road, which is well signposted along the way, through enchanted forests and fanciful villages, through the towns of Hoxter, Bodenwerder and onto Hameln, where the legendary Pied Piper led the rat population from the town. The final stop on this route is Bremen, with gorgeous medieval architecture and lovely old city center.



The Baltic Coast

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



Lubeck Harbor

Eastern Germany

Regions: Berlin, Brandenburg, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt

Cities: Berlin, Dresden, Halle, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Potsdam

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

What's On

January:

- *Leipzig Carnival – Held before Lent with parades and parties.*

April:

- *Dresden Film Festival – Local and overseas film showcase*
- *National Flower Festival, Leipzig – Massive floral festival with exhibitions, concerts and music, held April to October.*

May:

- *Dresden Music Festival – 2 week music festival celebrating famous classical music pieces*

June:

- *Elbhangfest, Dresden – Street festival with parades, market stalls and performers*
- *Bach Festival, Leipzig – Concerts honouring the music of Johann Sebastian Bach*
- *Leipzig City Festival – Annual party including music, dance and plenty of food and drinks*

July:

- *Leipzig Beer Exchange – Huge outdoor beer festival*
- *Saxonia Balloon Fiesta, Leipzig – Hot-air balloons fill the sky over Leipzig*

August:

- *Dresden City Festival – Carnival including the parade of the Sächsische Dampfschiffahrt*
- *Water Festival, Leipzig – Concerts, shows and entertainment held on the waterways around Leipzig*

September:

- *Saxonian Wine Festival, Dresden – Wine tasting and festival*
- *Leipzig Bathub Race – Held on the lake near the Monument of the Battle of the Nations*
- *Central German Marathon, Leipzig – Major athletic event, running along the Leipzig/Halle route*

October:

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

November:

- *Martinfest – Celebration across Germany, honouring Saint Martin and Martin Luther*
- *Striezelmarkt, Dresden – Founded in 1434, this is the oldest street market in Germany, held from November to mid December*

Best Things to See & Do

Berlin (see page 8)

Brandenburg

Explore Potsdam – Explore the forests with 3,000 lakes and 18,000 miles of watercourse, see the Sanssouci Palace, the old town and the Babelsberg Film Studios, which is the world's oldest film studios.

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

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

Dresden

Explore the Old City – Although much of the city was severely bombed in WWII, there is much to see here, including the reconstructed Frauenkirche Church, the Old Masters Picture Gallery, and shop or eat at the Altmarkt Square.

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

Leipzig

Explore the main square – See the magnificent Old Town Hall built in 1556

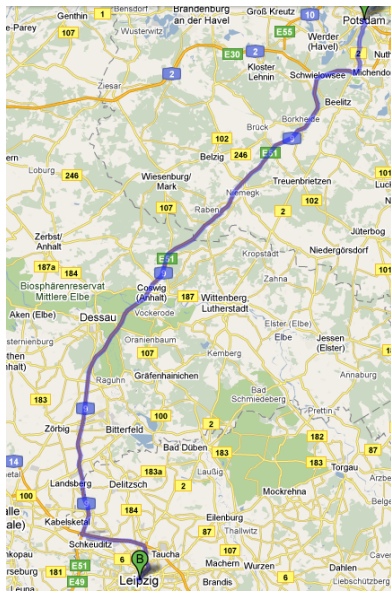
See St Thomas Church – This lovely church is the final resting place for Bach, one of Germany's best composers

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

Enjoy great classical music – Leipzig hosts wonderful concerts year round.



Self Drive Tours in East Germany



Potsdam to Leipzig

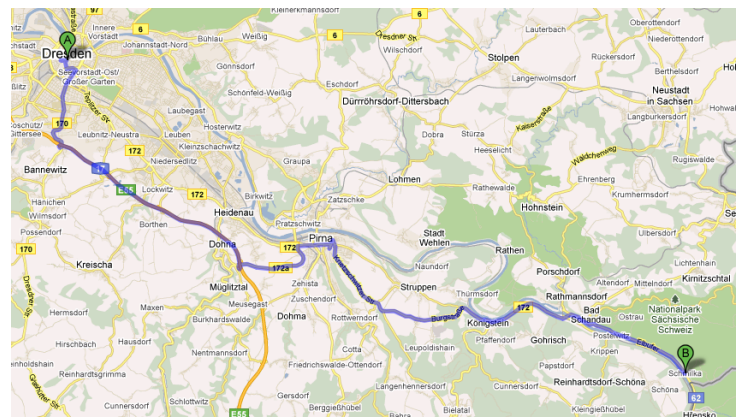
Explore the city of Potsdam, a true European city full of history and culture. Visit the Schloß Sanssouci Palace, the Dutch Quarter and the Weavers Quarters, the Babelsberg Filmpark and the Hohenzollern's magnificent palaces and gardens. From Potsdam, drive south toward the town of Michendorf, then west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

Dessau – Rosslau is a beautiful town that is renowned for its Bauhaus style of architecture, along with palaces such as the Georgium and the Luisium, and is surrounded by woods and lush meadows that are now declared as a Unesco Biosphere Reserve. Continue on through the wooded forests along the A9 until you reach Leipzig. This beautiful city is renowned for its universities and countless historical buildings and monuments. The first place to see is St Thomas Church, where, alongside seeing the wonderful building, you can hear magnificent classical concerts and also visit the final resting place of Bach. Visit the summer markets, the fascinating natural attractions at the zoo, visit the Bach museum, bar-hop in the Drallewatsch Pub District or chill out in the Auenwald Forest.



Follow the mighty Elbe River

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



Getting into Germany

By Land

Germany is bordered by a large number of countries, making access by land quite easy. Neighbours include Denmark, Poland, the Czech Republic, Austria, Switzerland, France, Luxembourg and Belgium.

By Sea:

Main Ports:

Kiel: www.port-of-kiel.de

Lubeck: www.lhg-online.de

Rostock: www.rostock-port.de

Sassnitz: www.faehrhafen-sassnitz.de



Sylvenstein Reservoir, Bavaria

Germany Airport Information

Frankfurt: Rhein-Main Airport (FRA)
11 miles southwest of city, approx 20 mins drive
www.airportcity-frankfurt.com
Ph: +49 0 1805 372 4636

Munich: Franz Josef Strauss Airport (MUC)
23 miles northwest from city, approx 30 mins drive
www.munich-airport.de
Ph: +49 89 975 - 00

Hamburg: Hamburg-Fuhlsbüttel Airport (HAM)
7 miles north of city, approx 25 mins drive
www.ham.airport.de
Ph: +49 40 50 75-0

Berlin: Tegel Airport (TXL)
7.5 miles northwest of city, approx 20 mins drive
www.berlin-airport.de
Ph: +49 1805 000186

Dusseldorf: Flughafen Dusseldorf (DUS)
6 miles north of city, 15 mins drive
www.duesseldorf-international.de/
Ph: +49 0211 421-0

Cologne: Flughafen Köln/Bonn (CGN)
10 miles southwest from city, approx 20 mins drive
www.koeln-bonn-airport.de
Ph: + 49 022 03 - 40-40 01



Accommodation Ideas

Motorhomes

All the convenience of accommodation and transport in one! Rent a fully equipped Motorhome from Auto Europe. For more information, go to www.autoeurope.com/motorhomes.cfm



Hotels:

Hotels in Germany range from inexpensive accommodation in small hotels to luxury suites. Most hotels have a wide range of facilities including swimming pool, sauna and gym along with spa treatment options. German hotels are classified by the star system, from one star for modest accommodation to five stars for highest level luxury accommodation.

Guest Houses and Inns:

Guest houses are great for families or couples as suites are available with shower and toilet and flexible bedding options, and cost less than hotels with more basic services. All with the rural charm and atmosphere of a bed & breakfast just more space.

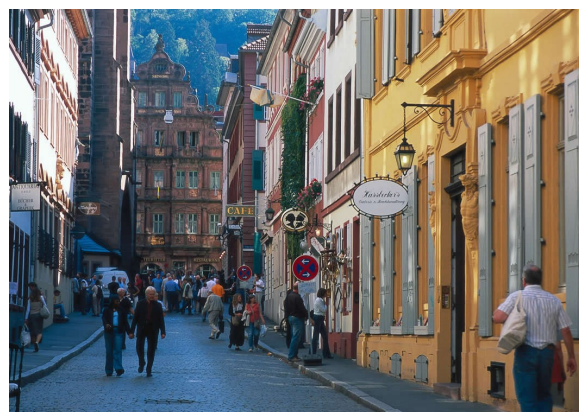


Bed & Breakfasts:

Located in small villages and towns, guests can stay in a warm and friendly atmosphere of B&Bs, and most often less expensive than guest houses and hotels. They are run by locals offering private guestrooms who will have lots of helpful holiday tips and regional information. True to its name, continental breakfast is offered.

Holiday Villages and Houses:

Holiday villages are located in picturesque parts of Germany, and are perfect for a short weekend break or family holiday. Normally self contained with their own bathroom and basic kitchenette.



Camping & Caravanning:

German campsites are generally open from April to October, but some that are located near winter sports areas are open year round. There are over 2,500 campsites to choose from, with services, facilities and amenities maintained at a high standard. Booking in advance is advisable.

Farm and Country Holidays:

For small groups or large families, farm holidays usually sleeping up to 6 people. At 'Urlaub auf dem Bauernhof' (farm holidays) guests are encouraged to help with the running of the farm, i.e. harvesting, milking cows, feeding animals. Farms that are classified as 'Landurlaub' (country holiday) are generally former farms and country houses that are no longer involved in active agriculture yet still have typical regional charm.



Youth & Backpacker Hostels:

There are over 600 youth hostels scattered through both east and west Germany that are open to members of all youth hostel associations. Stays are limited to 3 or 4 nights, in very simple accommodation at very cheap prices.

Climate & Weather

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



Public Holidays

2011	
Jan 01	New Years Day
06 Jan	Epiphany
22 Apr	Good Friday
25 Apr	Easter Monday
01 May	Labour Day
02 Jun	Ascension Day
13 Jun	Whit Monday
15 Aug	Assumption
03 Oct	Unity Day
01 Nov	All Saints Day
25 Dec	Christmas Day
26 Dec	St Stephens Day

Language & Useful Phrases

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

Zero:	null	Yes: Ja
One:	eins	No: Nein
Two:	zwei	Exit: Ausfahrt
Three:	drei	Entrance: Einfahrt
Four:	vier	Ring Road: Tangenziale
Five:	fünf	How do I get to ___?: Wie komme ich zum ___?
Six:	sechs	Petrol: Benzin
Seven:	sieben	Diesel: Diesel
Eight:	acht	One-Way: Einbahnstraße
Nine:	neun	No Parking: Parkverbot
Ten:	zehn	Highway: Autobahn
		Police: Polizei

to the left: Fahren sie links
to the right: Fahren sie rechts
north: norden
south: suden
east: osten
west: westen
Straight ahead: Geradeaus

Stay Safe

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

Important Phone Numbers

Call:
110 Police
112 Fire Brigade
112 Ambulance
11833 Phone Directory Assistance
(01802) 22 22 22 German Automobile Club road side assistance

Where to Get Help

US Embassy in Germany
Pariser Platz 2, 14191 Berlin
Ph: +49 (0)30 8305 0
www.germany.usembassy.gov

Local Tourist

German National Tourist Office
122 East 42nd St., Suite 2000
New York, NY 10168
Ph: 1-212-661-7200
Fax: 1-212-661-7174
www.cometogermany.com

Stay Healthy

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



St Marks Tower, Bavaria

Key Facts on Germany

Location: Central Europe
Area: 137,847 sq. miles
Capital: Berlin

Largest City: Berlin
Population: 82.3 million
Population Density: 143 sq. miles



Geography:

Germany is located in central Europe, and borders the Netherlands, Belgium, France, Switzerland, Austria, Czech Republic, Poland and Denmark. In the north, the typical terrain is flat, with plains, fields, rivers, and wetlands, and in southern Germany, the landscape features hills, mountains and valleys. Germany has coastlines in the north of the country, along the North Sea, and Baltic Sea, and the three major rivers which flow through the country are the Danube, Rhine, and Elbe.

Time Zone:

Germany is in the Central European Time Zone (CET), which is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT+1). In summer Germany observes daylight savings, when the time is shifted forward one hour (GMT+2).

Communications:

Mobile Phones

Make sure you get international roaming and see your provider for cost and conditions.

Telephone

The phone system in Germany is on par with the best in the world, with excellent coverage and a variety of providers. Sim cards for mobile phones can be bought in many places including shopping centers and supermarkets. The country code for calling Germany is 49.

Internet

The internet network in Germany is advanced and reliable, and you should have no problems finding access. Most hotels will be connected, and internet cafes are common. Areas with free wireless internet exist also, often around rail stations, airports and some cafes and shopping districts.

Post

The German post system is regarded as rather efficient and reliable, however can sometimes be a little expensive. As much of the postal system in Germany and the rest of Europe is privatized, it is a wise idea to insure any important packages being sent, as theft and fraud do occur from time to time.

Measurements

1 millimetre (mm) = 0.03937 inches	1 milligram (mg) = 0.0154 grain
1 centimetre (cm) = 0.3937 inches	1 gram (gm) = 0.0353 oz
1 metre (m) = 1.0936 yd	1 kilogram (kg) = 2.2046lb
1 kilometre (km) = 0.6214 mile	1 tonne (t) = 0.9842 ton

Germany uses the metric system of measurement:

Temperature is measured in degrees Celsius (°C)

Electricity

The standard for wall sockets and power in Germany is 230 volts AC, and 50 Hz. Electrical appliance plugs have two round prongs, not flat so a plug adaptor will be necessary to use items from outside Europe. These can be purchased at electrical appliance stores throughout the country.

Shopping hours

Opening hours for shops vary from state to state, however this is a general guide to shopping hours in Germany: Shopping centers and larger department stores: 10.00am to 8.00pm; Supermarkets: 8-9.00am to 8.00pm; Department stores in smaller towns: 9.00am to 6.30pm; Restaurants: 11.30am to midnight
Most shops in Germany are closed on Sundays.

Smoking

Generally, smoking is not permitted in any restaurants, airports, public buildings, hospitals, public transport, etc. Smoking is also prohibited in pubs and clubs, however this is being reviewed and smaller venues do not have the law imposed as yet. Smoking is permitted in special sealed off areas fitted with smoke extractors, in open spaces and in private homes

German Money Matters

Currency

The local currency in Germany is the Euro.

EURO (€)

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

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

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

Currency Exchange

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

Banking Hours:

Most banks in Germany are open from Monday to Friday for the following times:

0830-1300, and 1400-1600.

In larger cities, it's quite common for banks to have different hours on Thursday afternoons, with the hours after the lunch break being: 1430-1730.

ATMs

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

Credit Cards

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

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

American Express (069) 97 97 10 00

Diner's Club (05921) 86 12 34

EC and Bank Cards (069) 74 09 87

Euro/Mastercard (069) 79 33 19 10

VISA (0800) 89 49 1000

Traveler's Cheques

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

Tax

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

Tipping

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



Heidelberg

We would like to thank the German Tourist Board for the use of its images in the production of this guide. The touring information has been created to be used as a guide only. Auto Europe is not liable for any misinformation, typographical errors, etc. related to the information contained in this guide.

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