# Culture

## Germany at a glance

http://www.spotlightgermany.com/misc/glance.htm

## Etiquette

There are **many clichés about the Germans**, many stressing their punctuality, thoroughness, reserve and lack of humour. This is only true to a certain extent. However, here are some guidelines that might help soften the impending cultural clash.

* **Formal vs. the informal pronoun** ('du' and 'Sie'). Use the formal pronoun when talking to people older than you. At universities however, 'du' is used fairly frequently even with teaching staff. Watch German students to be sure
* **Title** and last name: A person's title is important, though more so in business communication rather than in private meetings
* **Shaking hands** is the established form of greeting. Take the other hand out of your pocket and look into the person's eyes
* **Punctuality**: This cliché is true, try to be punctual or apologise if you are not
* **Reserve vs. directness**: Germans can be both reserved and direct at the smae time. They will take their time to warm towards you, whilst speaking their mind almost immediately. Do not be offended! It is not meant to be a personal insult.
* **Dinner-invitations**: try to be punctual and bring a small gift (flowers or a bottle of wine)
* **Table manners**: Say 'Mahlzeit' or 'Guten Appetit' before eating. Keep your hands but not your elbows on the table.

Generally, **people will understand if you make a mistake**. Don't worry, they have been abroad and made such mistakes themselves. If you are in Germany for business purposes it might be sensible to do some extra research.

## Weather

Expect the weather to be partly cloudy, some rain with temperatures between 59F and 77F on average.

## Tipping and Service in Restaurants, Bars, Clubs, etc.

A service charge of 15% is included in the menu price in restaurants, bars, etc. all over Germany.  Still, it is typical to "round up" the amount to some more-or-less round figure.  However, if you are paying for more than one person, you might go even higher.  A rule of thumb is to add 3-5%, generally ending with a full Euro amount.

## Credit Cards

While Germany is a leader in many areas of technology, it is decidedly *not* so in credit card acceptance. When eating out, visiting any store or trying to pay for just about anything, don't be surprised if the response to your credit card is *"Nein."* Most Germans still settle in cash or rely on debit cards called "EC" or "electronic cash" cards which are not logo-bearing and do not work like credit cards. While some hotels, restaurants and other venues will take credit cards, by far the majority does not. When shopping or consuming anything, it's always wise to *ask in advance*, otherwise you'll be expected to pay in cash. Personal checks are unknown in Germany and Traveller's Checks often carry a substantial "service charge" for cashing them.

## Food Service Etiquette Do's and Don'ts

***Water, Ice Water:  Water is not free. If you order water you will be expected to pay for it as any other beverage ordered. It is not customary to serve or receive ice water upon arrival in any restaurant in Germany.*** If you order water, you will be asked whether you wish still or carbonated mineral water. In some you may request tap water, but the practice is uncommon and seen as cheap, if not downright rude.  [In other places in Europe, like France, good drinkable tap water is available free in restaurants with no such negative impressions (eg:  un carafe d'eau).]

***Beverage and portion sizes:*** Soft drinks generally are served in 0,2 and 0,3 L sizes. Beer is usually served in 0,3 (small) or 0,5 Liter sizes (large), although in some areas of Germany a 1-liter glass is "large" but not extraordinarily so. The vat-sized softdrink containers found in the U.S. are unknown here, as is the "free refill" or bottomless cup concept. You pay for every refill. Coffee will in some restaurants be served either by the cup or by *Kännchen* (small pot - usually about 2 cups) and is always accompanied by cream and sugar. The same holds true for hot tea (where lemon is also readily available and usually served alongside without asking). Cocoa is usually a third option readily available in this manner, and is also readily available for breakfast in most places, especially if you have children in your party.

***Table/cover fees:*** Bread, butter, rolls, table settings sometimes are added to the bill as a separate cover charge. This is not fraud, but customary in some areas, just as it is sometimes customary for guests staying for a longer stay and enjoying half-board or full board to reuse their cloth napkins for several meals.

***Condiments:*** In some American fast food restaurants, (i.e. McDonalds, Burger King, Wendy's) you must pay separately for ketchup and/or mayonnaise **.** Be aware that the menus at most fast food restaurants in Germany are not exactly the same as they are in the U.S. **.** You may also notice that a sandwich that you recognize from "back home" may taste a little different or may be smaller.

***Seating/Non-Smoking Sections:*** The concept of a "host" or "hostess" is unknown in all but the most exclusive restaurants in Europe, where the Maitre d' will personally seat you. In most restaurants, just walk right in and pick the table of your choice. Please note that in some areas there will not be separate Non-smoking sections, and that this is not seen as a marked negative as it is in the U.S.  The caveat applies: If you don't like the place, leave and go somewhere else. Making a "big stink" about smoking only brands you as a hapless tourist and does not endear you to anyone. Note also that in many restaurants it will be customary for you to allow perfect strangers to join you if you are seated at a table larger than your party; this holds particulary true in beer gardens and vineyard restaurants. Instead of objecting, look at the practice as an opportunity to get to know locals and/or make new friends - after all, isn't that what visiting a foreign country is all about?\

## Mail and phone

* Mail: You can recognize the “Deutsche Post” by it’s yellow color and it’s post horn. [Deutsche Post](http://www.deutschepost.de/dpag?tab=1&skin=hi&check=null&lang=de_EN&xmlFile=828)
* Postage: postcard is 1 Euro, letter is 1,70 Euro

* Phone: Use international phone cards to call the U.S.
* Pay phones are easily recognizable by their pink color or “Deutsche Telekom” sign. [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/b/bd/Deutsche_telekom.png/200px-Deutsche_telekom.png](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Deutsche_telekom.png)

## Currency Exchange and Money

* Sunday’s exchange rate: 1 Euro = 1.48 USD 1USD = 0.67EURO
* ATMs can be found in any city, however, not in bars and restaurants
* Be aware of your bank’s fee to withdraw money in Germany

## Prices

* Bread (.5 kg): .45 Euro
* Milk(1 Liter): .60 Euro
* Noodles(.5kg): .30 Euro
* Cigarettes (17 smokes): 3.80 Euro
* Mineral Water(1.5liter): .20 Euro
* Bier(.5 liter): .50 – 1 Euro
* Gas (93 Octane/ liter) 1.31 Euro

# Basic Words

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English (alphabetized)** | **German** | **Pronunciation** |
| Excuse me | Entschuldigung | ehntshooldeegoong |
| Good evening | Guten Abend | gootern aabent |
| Good morning | Guten Morgen | gooten moargan |
| Hello | Guten Tag | gooten tugg |
| How? | Wie? | vee |
| How are you? | Wie geht es Ihnen? | wee gahyt ehss eehnern |
| No | Nein | nine |
| Please | Bitte | bitter |
| See you later | Tschüs | tsheus |
| Thank you | Danke | duhnker |
| What? | Was? | vahs |
| When? | Wann? | vahn |
| Where? | Wo? | voa |
| Where are? | Wo sind? | voa zeent |
| Where is...? | Wo ist? | voa eest |
| Who? | Wer? | vear |
| Why? | Warum? | vahroom |
| Yes | Ja | yaa |
| You're welcome | Bitte | bitter |
|  |  |  |

# Hauptbahnhof Leipzig (main train station)

* central location
* 140 stores
* Open
  + Monday – Satur day 9 :30 – 22 :00 (10pm)
  + Sunday 13:00- 18:00 (1pm – 6pm)
* Car rentals available
* Public transportation tickets available

# Transportation

* Car rental
  + [www.avis.com](http://www.avis.com)
  + [www.europcar.com](http://www.europcar.com)
  + [www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)

Ask for student or other specials at the Leipzig Main Station (train station)

* Leipzig Public Transportation
  + [www.lvb.de](http://www.lvb.de) (click on the British flag)
  + Extensive coverage
  + available 24hrs
  + Ticket price examples
    - Hourly 1,90 Euro
    - Daily 5,00 Euro
    - Weekly 15,90 Euro
  + Tickets are available at any station at vending machines
* Taxi
  + Yellow vehicles with a taxi sign on top
  + Cab drivers usually speak English
  + Fees are based on time and distance (expensive)
  + Fees are higher at night

# Nightlife

## Clubs

* Clubs in Leipzig <http://www.leipziginfo.de/party-nightlife/clubs/>
* Student Clubs http://www.studentenwerk-leipzig.de/KUL/studclubs.html
* Usually starts at 22 :00 (10pm) and ends at 5 :00am.
* Cover charge: free – 5 Euro
* Drinks: beer 3 Euro, cocktails up to 9 Euros

## Bars

* <http://www.leipziginfo.de/essen-trinken/bars-kneipen/barfussgaesschen/>
* Highlight:

Auerbachs Keller

Grimmaische Straße 2-4

04109 Leipzig

Phone: 0341.216100

* Note: The drinking age in Germany is 16 for beer and wine, and 18 for hard liquor. Go and have fun, but not too much, there will be class the next day. For the best taste, avoid drinking the cheapest beer.

# Day Trips

* Dresden (100 miles east)
* Hartz (Mountain range with hiking possibilities)
* Belantis (adventure theme park, 10 miles outside of Leipzig)

http://www.belantis.de/www2006/73b0224bc6bcf2334b92e18bf15ef7e9\_de.php

# Leipzig University

Check out some historical information about the University.

http://www.uni-leipzig.de/cumpraxi/english/history.html