



Germany

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Best Places to Eat

- » Cafe Jacques (p186)
- » Wolfshöhle (p253)
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- » Wurstküche (p235)

Best Places to Stay

- » Michelberger Hotel (p184)
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- » Hotel Sankt Nepomuk (p229)
- » Hotel Elch (p233)

Why Go?

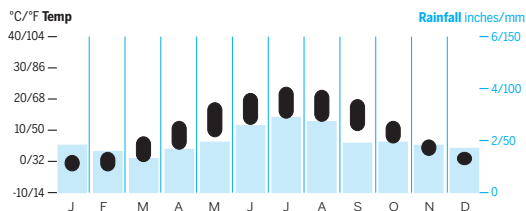
Beer or wine? That sums up the German conundrum. One is at the heart of a pilsner-swilling culture, is the very reason for one of the world's great parties (Oktoberfest) and is consumed with pleasure across the land. The other is responsible for gorgeous vine-covered valleys, comes in myriad forms and is enjoyed everywhere, often from cute little green-stemmed glasses.

And the questions about Germany continue. Berlin or Munich? Castle or club? Ski or hike? East or west? BMW or Mercedes? In fact, the answers are simple: both. Why decide? The beauty of Germany is that rather than choosing, you can revel in the contrasts.

Berlin, edgy and vibrant, is a grand capital in a constant state of reinvention. Munich rules Bavaria, the centre of national traditions. Half-timbered villages bring smiles as you wander their cobblestoned and castle-shadowed lanes. Exploring this country and all its facets keeps visitors happy for weeks.

When to Go

Berlin



Jun–Aug Warm summers cause Germans to shed their clothes; night never seems to come.

Sep The real month of Oktoberfest; autumn celebrations are found throughout Bavaria.

Dec It's icy, it's cold and you can drink hot wine at Christmas markets country-wide.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** euro (€)
- » **Language** German
- » **Money** ATMs common, cash preferred for small purchases
- » **Visas** Schengen rules apply

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 356,866 sq km
- » **Population** 85 million
- » **Capital** Berlin
- » **Telephone** country code 49; international access code 00
- » **Emergency** 112

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.74
Canada	C\$1	€0.74
Japan	¥100	€0.87
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.56
UK	UK£1	€1.16
USA	US\$1	€0.67

Set Your Budget

- » **Midrange hotel double room** €80–150
- » **Two-course dinner** €12
- » **1L of beer** €9
- » **Bottle of Rhine wine** €6
- » **U-Bahn ticket** €2

Resources

- » **Deutschland Portal** (www.deutschland.de)
- » **Facts about Germany** (www.tatsachen-ueber-deutschland.de)
- » **German National Tourist Board** (www.germany-tourism.de)

Connections

At the heart of Europe, Germany has a superb railway that's well linked to surrounding countries. Freiburg and Stuttgart have services south to Switzerland and Italy, Munich is close to the Czech Republic and Austria (including Salzburg and Innsbruck), Berlin is close to Poland, Hamburg has frequent services to Denmark, Cologne is good for fast trains to the Netherlands and Belgium (including Brussels for Eurostar to London), and Frankfurt is the base for high-speed trains to Paris, Strasbourg and other parts of France.

ITINERARIES

One week

Starting in Berlin, spend three days in and around the city, then head south through the wonderful little Thuringian town of Weimar and the tiny Bavarian town of Bamberg before ending up in Munich.

Two weeks

Start in Munich for some Bavarian joy, then head up to the goofy castles in Füssen. Take in some of the Bavarian Alps and the fun of Freiburg. Explore the Black Forest, soak up Baden-Baden and settle in for a boat voyage down the Rhine in Mainz. Pop up to Hamburg then south to the old East and Dresden. Finish it all in Berlin.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Sausage** (*Wurst*) More than 1500 types are made countrywide. From sweet, smoky and tiny Nurnbergers to imposing Thüringers to that fast-food remedy for the munchies, the sliced and drowned currywurst.
- » **Mustard** (*Senf*) The perfect accompaniment to sausages, schnitzels and more. German mustards can be hot, laced with horseradish or rich with seeds. Or all three.
- » **Bread** (*Brot*) Get Germans talking about bread and often their eyes will water as they describe their favourite type – usually hearty and whole-grained in infinite variations.
- » **Cakes** (*Kuchen*) From the confectionery fantasy of the whipped-cream-laden Black Forest cake to all manner of apple-laden, crumb-covered delights, sweet teeth never feel ignored.
- » **Beer** (*Bier*) Mostly crisp and clear, the many lagers of the land are easily quaffed, preferably from huge steins. But exceptions exist, such as Kölsch in Cologne and Rauchbier in Bamberg.
- » **Wine** (*Wein*) It's not all sweet and it's not all white; the best is superb and comes from 13 distinct regions.