

ROAD TRIP ESSENTIALS

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Germany, Austria & Switzerland Driving Guide

With stunning landscapes, superb highways and spectacular, vertigo-inducing mountain passes and hairpin bends, this region is made for road tripping.

DRIVING LICENCE & DOCUMENTS

Drivers must carry the following at all times:

- ➔ passport or EU national-ID card
- ➔ valid EU driving licence or International Driving Permit
- ➔ car-ownership papers
- ➔ Green Card insured by your insurers as proof of third-party insurance

INSURANCE

Third-party liability insurance is compulsory for all vehicles, including cars brought from abroad. Normally, private cars registered and insured in another European country do not require additional insurance, but check with your insurer before leaving home. You could face huge costs by driving when uninsured or underinsured. Germans are fussy about their cars and even nudging someone's bumper may result in you having to pay for a new one.

Keep a record of who to contact at your insurance company in case of a breakdown or accident.

HIRING A CAR

To hire a car in Austria, you'll need to be at least 19. In Germany and Switzerland it's usually 25. Region-wide, you need a credit card and a driving licence issued at least one year ago.

If you plan to take your car across a country border, tell the rental company

beforehand and double-check for add-on fees and age requirements.

All car-hire companies provide mandatory third-party liability insurance, but prices and conditions for collision-damage waiver insurance (CDW) vary greatly – CDW is optional, but driving without it is not recommended. Purchasing CDW reduces the deductible/excess you'll be liable for if your car is damaged or stolen. Your credit card may cover CDW if you use it to pay for the rental; verify conditions and details with your card issuer.

International car-hire companies have branches at airports, major train stations and larger towns. Rates vary considerably. Child or infant safety seats may be hired for about €5 per day; reserve when booking.

Reserve cars in advance online: prebooked and prepaid packages are cheaper than on-the-spot rentals. If you're flying into Geneva Airport in Switzerland, it's cheaper to rent on the French side.

Driving Fast Facts

- ➔ **Right or left?** Drive on the right
- ➔ **Manual or automatic?** Manual
- ➔ **Legal driving age** 18
- ➔ **Top speed limit** On motorways no limit in Germany, 130km/h in Austria, 120km/h in Switzerland
- ➔ **Signature cars** BMW Coupé, Trabant, Volkswagen Beetle