

Germany

Destination Guide





A Self Drive Holiday in Germany


Germany is an stunning and diverse country, with medieval towns and villages, spectacular scenery, ancient monuments and fascinating historical sites. Visit bustling cities like Berlin, Munich and Frankfurt for shopping, nightlife and history. Explore the 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, while visiting quaint villages along the way. Germany has a fantastic road and highway network, which connects all of the country's major cities quickly and efficiently via the autobahn system, giving you more time to enjoy all of the sites and scenery on your self drive holiday.

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Renting a Car in Germany

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	Examples: ECMN: E = Economy C = 2 or 4 door M = Manual N = No Aircon FDAR: F = Full Size D = 4 Door A = Automatic R = Aircon	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		

How do I know which vehicle is right for me?

When selecting a rental vehicle, take into consideration where you will be travelling, how many people will be travelling in the vehicle, luggage size and the kind of driving you intend to do. Auto Europe offer a vast range of vehicles from small economy sizes to larger full-sized cars, 4WDs, convertibles and luxury vehicles. The ACRISS system above will help you find a car that suits your needs. This is an internationally recognised code which will ensure you get the same standard of vehicle wherever you rent.

As a general rule of thumb, smaller cars are better in most European countries, 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 hire and guaranteed for an additional cost.

Automatic and Manual Transmissions

Both automatic and manual vehicles are available Germany. Automatic vehicles are generally more expensive than manual cars and may be scarcer at smaller depots.

Do I need a credit card to collect my vehicle?

Yes. A credit card will be needed when collecting, which will be used for a security bond. The deposit is generally the insurance excess of the rental car which depends on the category of vehicle you have booked and the rate type.

Should I hire a GPS for driving in Germany?

GPS hire is available from Auto Europe South Africa and delivered directly to your home prior to departure. GPS units can be requested direct with some suppliers, This will be at their own rates. If time is short, or you would simply prefer to collect your GPS unit when you pick up your car hire, this may be the option for you.

Collecting at an airport in Germany

At most German airports, rental companies will have a desk in the arrivals hall and vehicles will be located within walking distance. However, at smaller airports you may be required to collect your vehicle from a downtown depot. Usually a courtesy transfer will be provided from the airport to the depot in this instance. Auto Europe South Africa offer all-inclusive prices which generally include any location/airport fees that may otherwise apply. Remember to check at time of booking to ensure your rental price will include all airport fees.

Rental Vehicle Insurance



Rental Vehicle Insurance

German law requires all vehicles to have Compulsory Third Party (CTP) insurance, although your car rental supplier should already have comprehensive insurance covering their vehicles. In the case of an accident, it must be reported to the insurance provider immediately and an excess will be due.

Car hire companies in Germany will normally include:

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



Driving Rules in Germany



- Drive on the **right** side of the road, the driver sits on the left side of the vehicle.
- Be especially careful with overtaking on autobahns, as cars can approach very quickly from behind and Autobahns have no general speed limit but 130km/p/h is the advisory limit.
- In case of an accident, make sure you exchange details with the other driver or wait until police arrive. If you hit a parked car, you must wait for the police. 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, including a first aid kit and visibility vests in case of break down or accident. In general, rental companies will provide these materials with their cars, however this may not be the case if your trip begins in another country.
- The public transport in major German cities is excellent and will allow you to explore more on foot and save time and money trying to park in congested city centres. It is wise to save your driving time for the country roads and autobahns.
- Talking on a mobile phone while driving in Germany is illegal.
- Seatbelts must be worn at all times, by all passengers.
- Police in Germany will often collect fines for minor traffic offences on the spot. If you don't have enough cash, you can typically pay by credit card. If you are unwilling or unable to pay, it is likely that your vehicle will be impounded until you can pay. Alternatively, you may be issued a court date and/or a higher fine.
- Children under 12 years of age or under 1.5m in height are prohibited from sitting in the front seat of the vehicle and must be in the appropriate child seats (for babies and small children).
- Driving under the influence of alcohol is illegal in Germany; the blood alcohol concentration limit is 0.03.
- Speed Limits:
 - City roads: 50km/hr
 - Highways: 100km/hr for cars and 80km/hr for campervans and cars with trailers
 - Autobahn: no speed limit unless otherwise stated; recommended max speed on Autobahns is 130km/hr for cars and 80km/hr for campervans and cars with trailers



Licence Requirements

A full driving licence is required to drive in Germany. All drivers must have held a full valid driving licence for a minimum of one year. South African residents are required by law to have an international drivers licence. Contact your local motoring association for further information.

Min & Max Age Requirements

The minimum age for drivers renting a car in Germany does vary, typically between 18-23. 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 okay to drive. Enquire with one of our reservations consultants for more information.

Cross Border Fees and One Way Rentals

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

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

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 ways, this will incur a one way fee. Prices may vary depending on the supplier, the length of the rental and the drop off destination.

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. However, there may be fees and additional insurances to travel to certain European countries, depending on the vehicle type and supplier. Some suppliers have restrictions for travel to Eastern Europe. Please confirm these details with Auto Europe as well as your supplier when you retrieve your vehicle in Germany.

How do I extend my rental after I've picked up the vehicle?

Once the car rental has commenced, you will have to call the depot where you initially collected the vehicle. If the vehicle is available to be extended, you will be offered additional days at the local rate.

Germany Car Hire Information



Important Road Signs

- Stop:** Red, octagonal and says “stop” in the centre.
- Give Way:** A triangle with red border and white centre.
- Parking areas:** A blue square with a white “P” in the centre.
- No Parking:** A red circle with diagonal line through the centre, and blue background.
- No Vehicles Allowed:** White and round with a red circle around the border.
- One Way:** A blue sign with white arrow showing the flow of traffic.
- No Passing:** A red circle with a red car and black car in the centre, on a white background.

German Regions

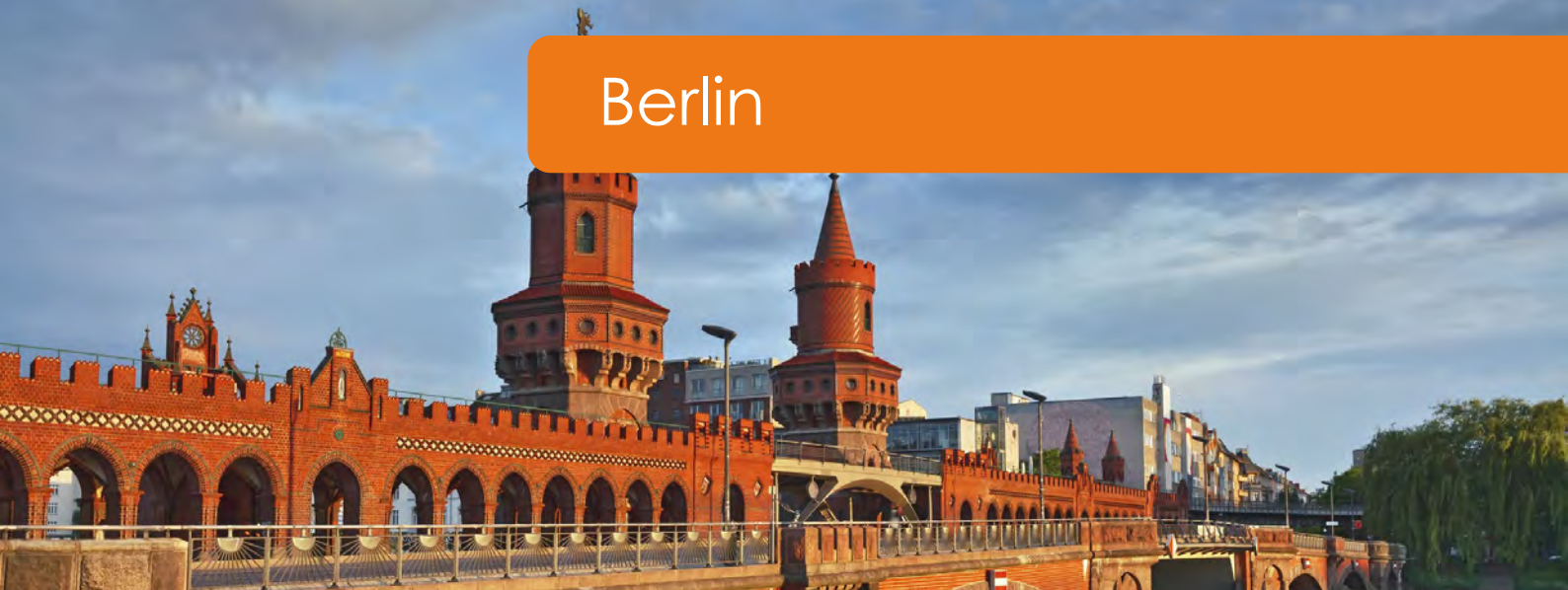
- Berlin**
- Central Germany:** Hessen, Thuringia
- Southern Germany:** Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg
- Western Germany:** North-Rhine-Westphalia, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland
- Northern Germany:** Bremen, Hamburg, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Mecklenburg—Western Pomerania
- Eastern Germany:** Brandenburg, Saxony Anhalt, Saxony

Low Emission Zones

Low Emission Zones, known as Umweltzonen, require vehicles to display an “Emissions Badge” (Umwelt Plakette) to prove that they are low emission. These zones are prevalent in cities throughout Germany and vehicles entering without a badge will be fined EUR40. Badges cost between EUR5-EUR10. Most rental suppliers in Germany will include this badge with your car hire.



Berlin



Berlin is the capital of Germany and one of Europe's greatest and most vibrant cities. This amazing city had been deeply divided for over 40 years, split in half by the Berlin Wall. The city was reunited in 1989 with the destruction of The Wall. Since then, the city has become an enticing mix of old and new, with modern buildings standing beside war torn relics. Berlin holds a rich history filled with incredible sights, galleries and museums, not to mention its overtly hospitable locals.

Attractions

See the Brandenburg Gate – This is Berlin's most famous landmark which has become a symbol of Germany's reunification

Visit the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church - This church was bombed in 1943 and is now a memorial hall dedicated to peace

The Reichstag and the Government Quarter – Visit the seat of the German parliament for 360° views of Berlin from its glass dome

Wander through the Hackesche Höfe – These restored courtyards were originally constructed in the late 18th century and now house a complex of buildings with shops, galleries and restaurants

Climb the Victory Column – Head up for fantastic views of the surrounding Tiergarten and city centre

Discover the Museumsinsel – This area is home to magnificent museums and some of Europe's most brilliant works of art

The Berliner Dom – Berlin's main cathedral, built in the year 1451 and still functioning today

Bernauer Strasse - Travel here to see existing sections of the Berlin Wall and the Berlin Wall Memorial

The Berlin Wall Museum – After visiting the wall, head here to learn about the history of the structure and the effects it had on the people of Berlin and the surrounding areas

Events

February

Berlin International Film Festival - Film makers and cinema lovers flock to Berlin for the annual festival

April

Festtage Music Festival - Annual opera and classical music festival

July

Love Parade - Lively and energetic electronic dance music festival celebrating the freedom of love

August

Beer Festival - A major annual festival offering over 2,000 different types of beer

September

Berlin Marathon - A race that runs from the Brandenburg Gate past some of Berlin's best sights

October

German Unity Day - Celebrated on October 3 to commemorate the reunification of Germany in 1990

November

Jazzfest Berlin - A major annual music festival in Berlin

December

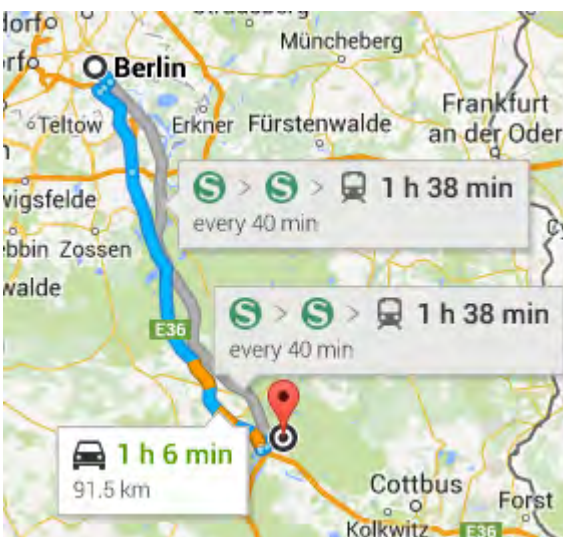
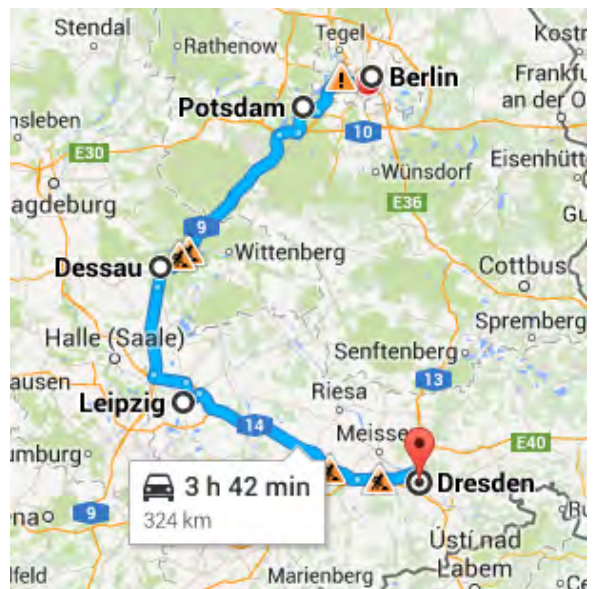
Christmas Markets - Hosted around the country, head to the Stiezelmarkt in Dresden, one of the oldest and most popular markets in Germany

Self Drive Tours: Berlin



Berlin to Bautzen

Begin this tour from the bustling city of Berlin. Take the E51 south west to Potsdam, the capital of the German state of Brandenburg and home to Sanssouci, a UNESCO listed palace and park. Continue along the E51 to the town of Dessau, situated at the junction of the Mulde and Elbe Rivers, where you can visit the influential design school of Bauhaus and explore the unique architecture of the town. From Dessau, continue on the E51 to Leipzig, where you'll find incredible, historic buildings including the Old City Hall and the Auerbachs Keller. Established in 1525, Auerbachs Keller is one of Germany's oldest operating pubs. Make time to see the Leipzig Zoo, one of the largest and most well known in Germany. Head south east on the E40 to the town of Dresden to 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, which is home to 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 48,000 hectares of forestland that is wonderfully intersected by over a thousand kilometres of waterways that originated from the Spree River. You can explore this labyrinth of rivers and creeks on boat tours, enjoy a bicycle tour through the woods or go hiking in a wonderful natural landscape.

Central Germany



Central Germany is an eclectic mix of high finance, bustling cities and incredible wealth, nestled comfortably amongst rolling hills and forest of the green heart of Germany. This fascinating region has an immense store of recent 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, soak in the atmosphere in the region's resort towns, visit open air markets or hike through the magnificent Rhine River Valley.

Attractions

Hesse

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

Cathedral of Bartholomew – This church was founded in the 16th century and rebuilt after WWII; visit the tower for fabulous views of Frankfurt

Visit the Frankfurt Zoo – Escape the bustling city for one of Europe's finest zoos

Relax in the Palm Garden - Don't miss Frankfurt's memorable botanical gardens

See the action of the stock exchange – Go to Frankfurter Börse in the old city for a presentation and view of the trading floor (must book in advance)

Wiesbaden – Explore the health spas, lush parks, gardens and elegant casino in this charming city

Thuringia

Explore the Thuringian Forest – In Eisenach, see Wartburg Castle, the birthplace of Bach and the caves near 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 170km long and takes hikers from Eisenach through the Thuringia forest

Be enlightened in Weimar – Soak up the town's art, architecture and literary

Events

February

Fasching – Annual Mardi Gras (aka Shrove Tuesday) celebrations across all of Germany

March

Spring Dippe Fair – Also known as Funfair Dippemess, this is a traditional market with crafts, food, wine tasting and firework displays in Frankfurt (there is also an Autumn Dippe Fair in September)

July

Museum Quay Festival – Annual festival including art exhibitions, live music in Frankfurt

August

Rheingau Wine Festival - Savour fantastic regional food and wine while relaxing in Wiesbaden

Luther Festival – Huge historical spectacle held over 3 days when the people of Eisenach dress in costume and re-enact medieval life

September

Frankfurt Book Fair - This is the world's largest trade fair for books, hosting an impressive number of publishing companies and visitors each year

October

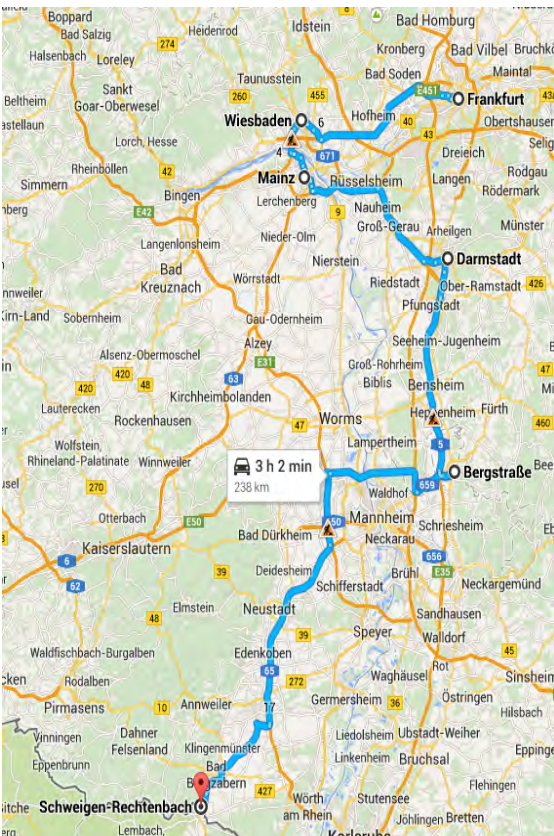
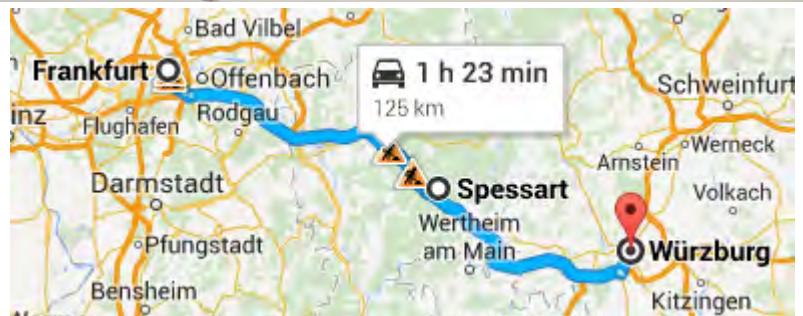
Kreativ Welt - Germany's second largest arts and crafts fair, hosted annually in Frankfurt

Self Drive Tours: Central Germany



Frankfurt to Würzburg

This lovely drive will take you through the Spessart National Park to Spessart and Würzburg. From Frankfurt, take the E42 or E41 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 such as Johannsburg Castle, the Basilica and Schinbusch Park. Continue east along the A26, enjoying the beauty of Spessart National Park along the way. Take the A26 and A27 through the towns of Lohr am Main, Karlstadt and Zelligen to the city of Würzburg. Here you can visit the Würzburg Residence and gardens, famous for its spectacular staircase which showcases one of the world's finest pieces of Baroque art. There are also plenty of restaurants offering locally sourced cuisine and Franconian wine.



The Best of Hesse

This route takes you from the hustle and bustle of Frankfurt on a tour through the delightful region of Hessen. Begin in Frankfurt and drive west on the A66 until exit 6 where you can follow the signs to the town of Wiesbaden. This lovely town is famous for its spas, complete with Roman frescoes, saunas and pools. The Kaiser-Friedrich-Therme in the city centre is among the most well known spas in Wiesbaden.

From Wiesbaden, follow the 643 south across the Rhine River, then south east to the city of Mainz. This city has a heritage dating back two thousand years. Don't miss the cathedral, which dates to 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 south east along the E42 then south on the E35 to Darmstadt. From here, head west to the wine growing region of Bergstrasse and follow the Wine Trail that runs for 28kms between Bockenheim to Schweigen-Rechtenbach.

Southern Germany



Southern Germany is one of the most visited areas in the country. This region is famous for its incredible landscape, including the Black Forest and the Alps, as well as the world-famous Bavarian culture. This area is studded with fairytale castles, winding rivers, beautiful towns and villages, plus wonderfully vibrant cities full of art and history. It's no wonder this is a favourite holiday destination for travellers from around the world.

Attractions

Heidelberg

Visit the Heidelberg Castle – The city's most famous landmark and gardens

Germany's oldest University – Built in 1712, the "Old University" is now educating over 32,000 students

Explore the Old Town and the Old Bridge – Heidelberg's old quarter is a must see

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

Munich

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

Visit the BMW Museum – Learn about the manufacturing, history and traditions of this famous German company

Stuttgart

Oper Stuttgart – The Stuttgart opera house is a celebrated establishment and icon of the city

Visit the Medieval Old Palace – Now home to the Wurttemberg State Museum

Würzburg

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

Events

March/April

Heidelberg Fruehling – Massive classical and contemporary music festival

April

Munich Spring Festival – Known as "Little Oktoberfest," this festival offers a healthy dose of German culture to any visitor

April/May

Munich Biennale – This major festival in Munich takes place on even numbered years and promotes theatre-related contemporary music with a specific focus on operas from young composers

June/July/September

Schlossbeleuchtung – Watch a spectacular fireworks show over the Heidelberg Castle, this event is held only one night each month

August

Summer Festival – Hosted in Munich's Olympic Park, this annual festival boasts music, rides, water sports, food and a fantastic market

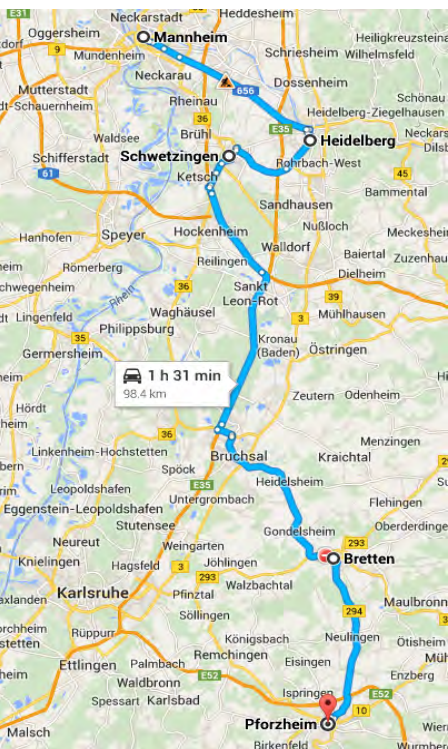
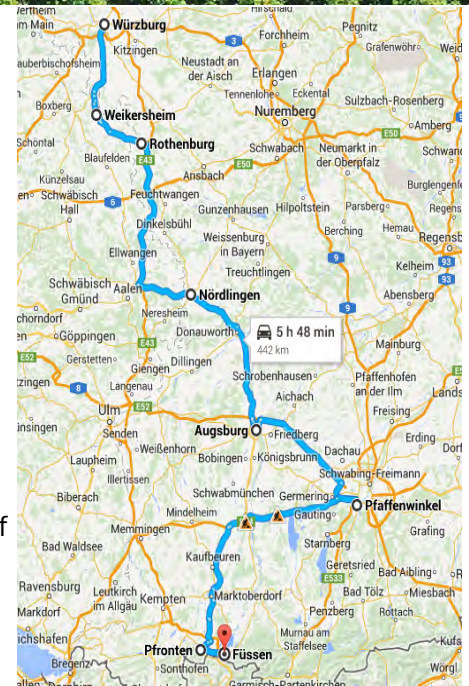
September/October

Oktoberfest – A world famous beer festival hosted annually in Munich from late September to early October



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 Würzburg Residence and the city's cathedral, explore the restaurants and taste local wines. Drive south along the Tauber River toward the town of Weikersheim to see the Weikersheim Palace and Gardens, then continue on to the town of Rothenburg, which is among the most well preserved medieval towns in Germany. Walk along the city walls of Rothenburg for a great view of the town. From Rothenburg, drive through Nordlingen and across the Danube until you reach Augsburg. Whilst you're here, visit The Fuggerei, the world's oldest welfare housing, built in 1516. The town of Pfaffenwinkel is the next stop, home to the Wieskirche Pilgrimage Church. Drive west to the region of Konigswinkel and to the towns of Fussen and Pfronten. Here you will see the magnificent Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau Castles, both of which are surrounded by the breathtaking Bavarian Alps.



Bertha Benz Memorial Drive

This tour follows the world's first long distance car journey which was completed in 1888 by Mrs. Bertha Benz, the wife of the Dr. Carl Benz, inventor of the automobile. Begin in the town of Mannheim, the birthplace of the automobile, where you'll also see Mannheim Castle and Luisenpark. Drive south east to the city of Heidelberg, located on the Neckar River near the Rhine Valley. Here you can explore the historical city centre and main street, see the Heidelberg castle and the old university. From Heidelberg, drive south west to the lovely town of Schwetzingen, where you can see the Schwetzingen 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, home to the UNESCO listed Maulbronn Monastery. From Bretten, head further south to the gateway of the Black Forest and the town of Pforzheim. Explore the town itself or use this as a base to discover the delights of the Black Forest, where you can go hiking, skiing and mountain biking, among a number of other activities.

Western Germany



Visitors to Western Germany will have the chance to see some of the best parts of this country. Here you'll find magnificent cathedrals, fairy tale castles, Roman ruins, unrivalled scenery and the mighty Rhine River alongside energetic cities full of entertainment and culture. Explore quaint towns, climb spectacular cathedral spires and tour the beautiful vineyards in the Rhine and Moselle regions, both of which produce world famous wines.

Attractions

Bonn

Beethoven Haus – Visit this museum which once served as the famous composer's home

Poppelsdorfer Schloss – Built in 1715, this Baroque palace is now part of the University of Bonn

Cologne (Köln)

Kölner Dom – Köln's most famous site; the massive spires and marvel at the beautiful Gothic architecture

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

Düsseldorf

Climb the Rheinturm – See 360° views of the city

Schloss Benrath – Explore the grounds of this 18th century palace and gardens

Frankfurt

Goethe Haus - Explore the home of this famous writer, replicated to reflect the style before it was bombed

Mainz

Visit the Gutenberg Museum - This museum chronicles the history of bookmaking

Rhine Valley

Schloss Stolzenfels – The Neo-Gothic castle perched above the Rhine is a must see

Visit Ehrenbreitstein Fortress – This 17th century structure sits at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers

Events

February

Rosenmontag – Rose Monday is the celebration just before Shrove Tuesday, otherwise known as Mardi Gras, which is the final day of carnival season; cities in Western Germany are especially known for their carnival celebrations

April

Frühjahrs Dippemess – Hosted in Frankfurt, this is the largest folk festival in the Rhine-Main region

May

Dusseldorf Jazz Rally – Local and International musicians converge on the city for great music festival

Rhine in Flames – Enormous fireworks display held along the river in Bonn

August

International Beethovenfest, Bonn – Festival paying tribute to the famous Ludwig van Beethoven

September

Rheingau Wine Market – A major wine festival with over 600 vinters from Rheingau showcasing their products in Frankfurt

November

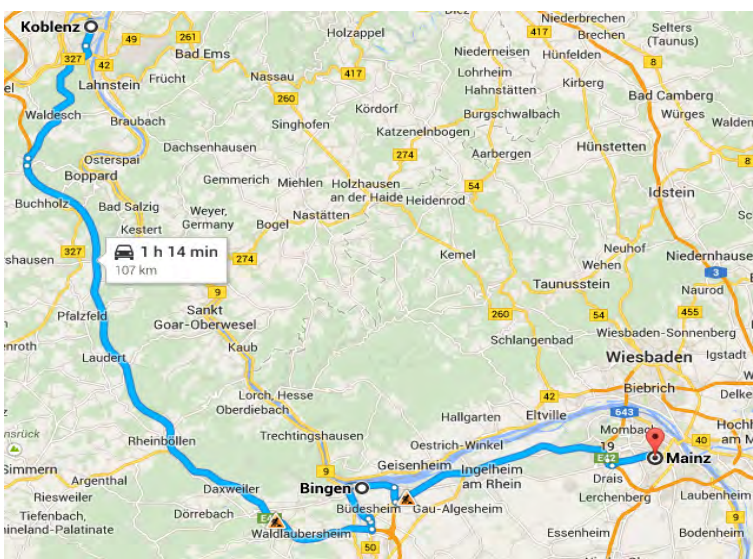
Weihnachtsmarkt – Christmas markets with arts and crafts, gingerbread, mulled wine and festive gifts are scattered throughout the country

Self Drive Tours: Western Germany



Follow the Rhine

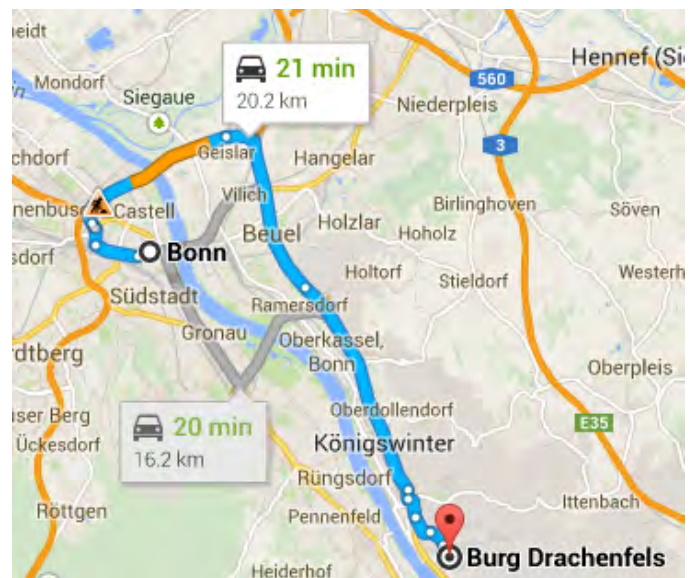
This drive follows the winding Rhine River as it makes its way from Koblenz through vineyards and small villages to the city of Mainz. Straight through, this route can take just under two hours, but there are lovely towns and nice places to stop along the way if you choose to take your time. Begin in Koblenz, located at the junction of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers. Take the A42 and head south, following the Rhine enjoying the views of castles, ruins and villages along the way. One castle of particular interest is the Marksburg Castle, located in the town of Braubach.



Follow the A42 along the river to Bingen am Rhein, a charming town in where you can see the Klopp Castle and the Mouse Tower, which sits on its own island in the middle of the Rhine River. Drive east along the A42 to the city of Mainz, where you can visit the magnificent Dommuseum and the Mainz City Hall, or rest in the Schillerplatz square. Stroll along the riverbank and enjoy the restaurants and bars of this great German city.

Siebengeburge Nature Park

This short tour will take you along the Rhine River to the Siebengeburge Nature Park. Begin this tour in Bonn, where you can visit the magnificent Kreuzbergkirche Cathedral and the city's Botanical Gardens. From the centre of Bonn, take the K1 to the route 565 crossing the Rhine. On the east bank, drive south along the A59 and continue on to the B42, following the signs to Drachenfels. There are fantastic castle ruins and beautiful vineyards throughout this area. Drachenfels is also the gateway to the Siebengeburge Nature Park, home to Schloss Drachenburg, an extravagant castle that dominates the landscape.





Northern Germany

Northern Germany is a land of incredible diversity, with white sand beaches, busy port cities, rolling pastures and medieval villages. This is also the region with one of the world's greatest drives, The Fairy Tale Road. Journey through Germany's north to experience a truly fascinating portion of this country.

Attractions

Bremen

Visit the Schnoor-Viertel – Check out the medieval centre of Bremen, which appears to be straight out of a storybook

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

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

Hamburg

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

Walk through the infamous red light district – The Reeperbahn has long been a nightlife hub

Hanover

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

Shop at the Kröpcke – Explore Hanover's major shopping area and see the Hanover Opera House

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

Explore Lüneburg – Known as the City of Salt, this beautiful town dates back to 956AD

Visit Hamelin – This enchanting town is recognised as the home of the folk tale character, Pied Piper

Events

April

Hanover Messe – A major industrial technological trade fair

May

Hamburg Port Festival – Celebrations on water and land, celebrating the 300 year old harbour

June

Dragon Boat Festival – Hamburg hosts one of the largest Dragon Boat Festivals in Europe

Kieler Woche – Head to Kiel for the largest sailing event in the world

July

Fleetinsel Festival – A cultural festival in Hamburg with arts and great food

August

Alster Fair – Shows, concerts and street parties held on the banks of the Alster Lake in Hamburg

Maschseefest – Beer festival on banks of Lake Masch in Hanover

September

Heideblütenfest – Travel to Lüneburg for this folk festival, complete with singing, theatre and a Heath Queen contest.

October

Freimarkt – Hosted in Bremen, this is one of the oldest festivals in Germany

Self Drive Tour: Northern Germany

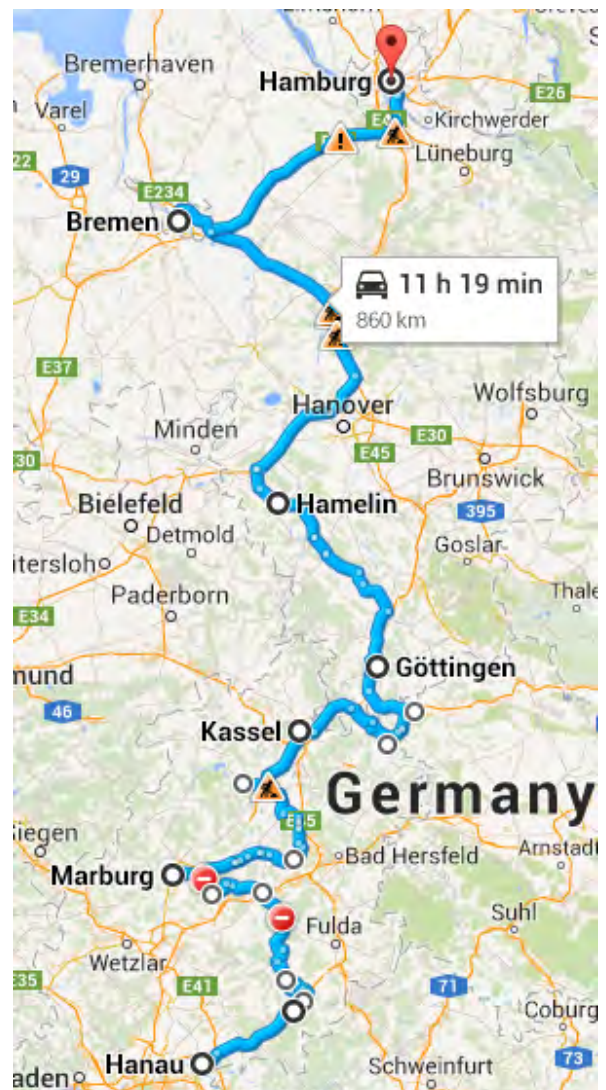


The Fairy Tale Road

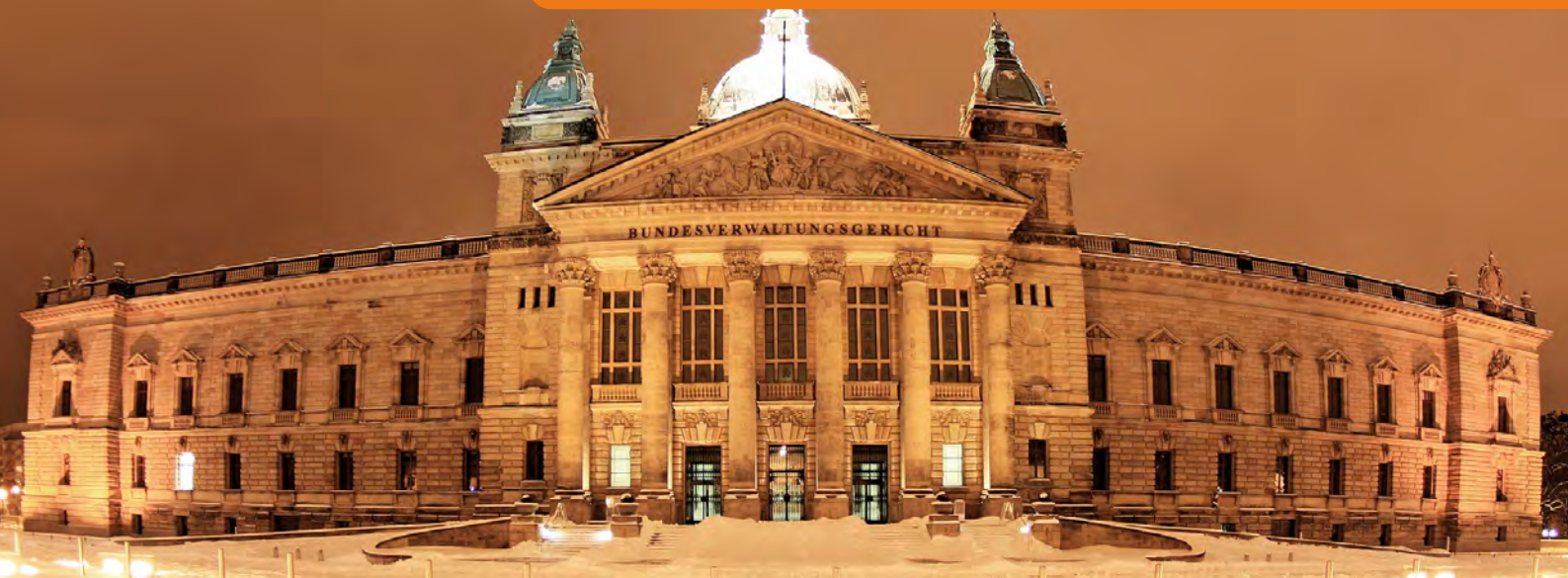
This road connects the towns that inspired the Brothers Grimm to create such famous tales as Snow White, Little Red Riding Hood and Hansel and Gretel. Begin this tour in Hanau, just outside of Frankfurt, where you can tour the Philippsruhe Castle and museum, featuring a Brothers Grimm section. Then travel to the town of Steinau an der Strasse, the birthplace of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. This windy route will take you through a variety of small towns which influenced these famed storytellers and served as the setting for their beloved tales.

Visit the enchanting town of Marburg where you can stop by Amönau, better known as Rapunzel's Tower. Drive along the Schwalm River and through Schwalmstadt, which inspired Little Red Riding Hood, then continue through Homberg, Reinhardswald Forest and into Kassel, where you'll feel as though you've ventured into a fairy tale of your own. From Kassel, drive along to Göttingen, where you can visit the Fairyland Society. Continue your journey to Hofgeismar-Sababurg Sleeping Beauty Castle before driving through forests and villages Höxter, Bodenwerder and onto Hameln. Hameln is home to the legendary Pied Piper, who led the rat population from the town.

The final stop on this route is Bremen, a phenomenal German city and home to a few UNESCO World Heritage Sites, as well as the Bremen Town Musicians statue from another well known Grimm Brothers' tale. If you'd like, head north east to Hamburg, Germany's second largest city. For more information on the Fairy Tale Road, visit their official [website](#).



Eastern Germany



Eastern Germany holds many winsome, endearing villages, vibrant cities and a remarkable history. Eastern Germany was bombed heavily during WWII and remained politically and physically divided from the rest of Germany until 1989. , this amazing region is home to cosmopolitan cities full of art and culture standing amidst UNESCO World Heritage Sites, magnificent castles and stunning landscape.

Attractions

Brandenburg

Explore Potsdam – See the Sanssouci Palace and the historical buildings that fill the Old Town

Visit The Spreewald – An impressive forest, designated a UNESCO biosphere reserve

Live like royalty – Tour the many gorgeous castles and palaces of the area

Dresden

Explore the Old City – Visit the reconstructed Frauenkirche Church, the Old Masters Picture Gallery and 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

See St. Thomas Church – This lovely church is the final resting place for Bach, one of Germany's finest and most famous composers

Get inside – Visit the former homes of such well known composers as Schiller, Mendelssohn and Schumann, all of whom lived and worked in Leipzig

Events

June

Elbhangfest – Street festival with parades, market stalls and performers in Dresden

Bach Festival– A music festival in Leipzig honouring the music of Johann Sebastian Bach

July

Leipzig Beer Exchange – A massive outdoor beer event

Saxonia Balloon Fiesta– Hot-air balloons fest in Leipzig

August

Canaletto- Dresden City Festival – This annual event is the largest festival in Germany, hosting over half a million guests for music, theatre, sports, food and more

September

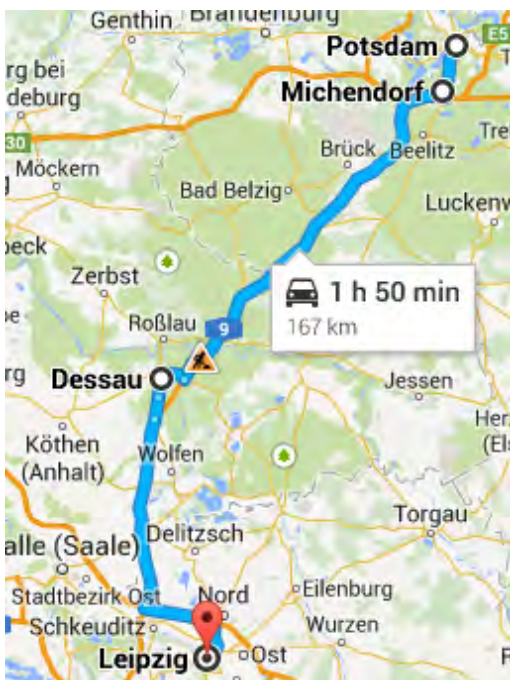
Leipzig Bathtub Race – A major boat race held on the lake near the Monument of the Battle of the Nations

October

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

November

St. Martin's Day– A feast day celebrated throughout Germany, including bonfires the night before

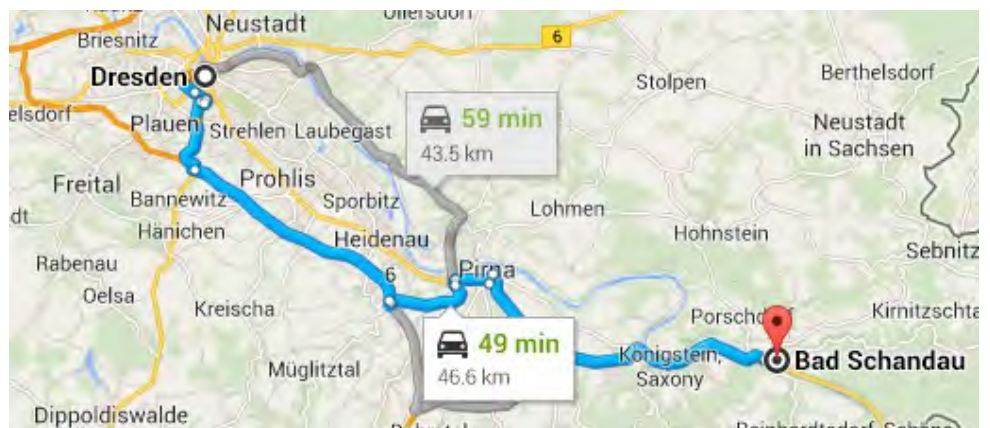


Potsdam to Leipzig

Explore the city of Potsdam, a true European city full of history and culture. Visit the city's famous palaces, the Dutch Quarter and the Weavers Quarters, as well as the Babelsberg Filmpark. From Potsdam, drive south toward the town of Michendorf, then west following the A10, then the A9 till you reach Dessau. Dessau is a beautiful town renowned for its architecture and parks, especially the Schloss and Park Georgium and the Schloss Luisium. Continue on through the wooded forests along the A9 until you reach Leipzig. This spectacular city is renowned for its many universities, historical buildings and monuments. The first stop is St. Thomas Church, where you can hear magnificent classical concerts and also visit the final resting place of Johann Sebastian Bach. Tour the city's summer markets, fantastic museums and impressive architecture, bar-hop in the Drallewatsch Pub District or relax in the Auenwald Forest.

Follow the Elbe River

This route follows the Elbe River from Dresden to Bad Schandau. Straight through, it takes just under an hour but there are many nice places to stop along the way if you choose to follow this route at a slower pace. From Dresden, cross the Elbe and 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 of the Czech Republic. Take a ride up the Bad Schandau Elevator for great views of the area or ride the Kirnitzschtal Tramway to the Lichtenhain Waterfall. Take a tour on a paddle steamer along the Elbe for a different view or kick back and enjoy!





Money Matters

Currency

Euro (EUR €) = 100 cents (¢) Notes are in denominations of €500, €200, €100, €50, €20, €10, €5. Coins are in denominations of €1 and €2, 50, 20, 10, 5 and 1 cent coins.

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 (called “Wechselstube” or “Geldwechsel” in German). Banks are typically open 08:30-16:00 on weekdays and closed on the weekends. Some banks close for lunch from 12:30-13:30 and stay open until 17:00 or 18:00 on Thursdays only.

ATMs

ATMs (automatic teller machines) are located in almost all towns and cities, and are accessible 24 hours a day. ATMs typically accept all major credit and debit cards, though conversion rates may apply.

Credit & Debit Cards

Major credit and debit cards should be accepted throughout Germany, though some businesses may require cash. Contact your bank/credit card company before departure to inform them that you'll be using your card in another country, and contact your them immediately if your credit card is lost or stolen.

Tax

As with most nations part of the EU, goods and services in Germany are subject to Value Added Tax (VAT). This is generally at a rate of 19% and applies to car rental extras such as baby seats or snow chains. Select consumer goods including food, public transport and accommodation, are set at a reduced VAT rate of 7%. Some services - generally government related like banks or healthcare - are VAT exempt.

Tipping

A service charge is generally included in the prices listed on menus in restaurants and bars etc., however it is still common for tips to be given. Tip approximately 10% or simply round up the bill (e.g. if your bill is €26, round up to €30). You will often not receive a bill in Germany. The common procedure is to state the amount you owe plus the amount you wish to tip. For example, if your bill comes to €13 and you would like to tip an extra €2, simply inform the waiter that you'd like to pay €15 and they will process the payment accordingly.



Stay Healthy & Stay Safe

Stay Healthy

The German medical system and hospitals are excellent, however South Africa does not have a reciprocal health care agreement with Germany. Your comprehensive travel insurance should cover any medical costs, including medical evacuation. Make sure you understand the full extent of what is included in your travel insurance, otherwise you could face enormous hospital bills. You will need to hold on to all documentation of treatment to provide to your insurer for reimbursement. Check with your travel insurance provider for the name of any preferred, English speaking doctors that may be recommended.

Stay Safe

Germany is regarded as a very safe country to visit. However, standard safety precautions should be taken to avoid dangerous areas or high risk situations. Never carrying more cash than necessary and keep to well-lit areas at night. It is always a good idea to check the South African Department of International Relations and Cooperation website for safety information specific to your destination before you go. In the unlikely event that your credit or debit cards are lost or stolen, notify your bank and credit card companies immediately.

In case of an emergency, dial 112 for medical and fire or 110 for police.

Where To Get Help

South African Embassy Berlin

Tiergartenstr. 18, 10785
Berlin Germany

Telephone: +49 (0)30 22 07 30

Fax: +49 (0)30 22 07 31 90

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We look forward to hearing from you!

Auto Europe South Africa hope that you find the information in this guide helpful for your self drive holiday in Germany.

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