

Pforzheim University

Fact Sheet

Germany 101



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Welcome to Germany! To help you prepare for your time here, we've put together a list of practical facts and cultural tips so you know what to expect when you arrive.

Daily Life and Opening Hours

- Shops are closed on Sundays: Almost all stores, supermarkets, and malls are closed on Sundays. Only some restaurants, cafes, and bakeries may open for few hours.
- Early Closing Times: Most shops close around 8:00 PM, and smaller ones might close even earlier, around 6:00 PM.
- 24/7 Convenience Stores don't exist: Plan your grocery shopping in advance. Gas stations, train station kiosk or the so called "Späti" kiosk are your only late-night/last-minute options.



Public Transport



- Punctuality and Reliability: Germans are known for their punctuality - their trains and buses, however, not always. While public transport generally runs on time, delays do happen, so it's always a good idea to check the schedule using the DB Navigator or local apps like VPE (Verkehrsverbund Pforzheim).
- Tickets required: Always have a valid ticket before boarding. Fines for riding without a ticket are high (60 Euro or more).
- Monthly Semesterticket: Considering getting a student public transport ticket if it is not included in our semester fees. (D-Ticket JugendBW)

Money and Payments

- Cash is King: Many places like restaurants, bakeries and cafés don't take cards, especially EC cards from abroad. Always carry some cash (Bargeld).
- Banking: Opening a German bank account (e.g., online banks like N26 or traditional ones like Sparkasse) can be helpful for rent, phone bills, etc.



Living and Housing:



- Furniture: Student housing or shared apartments (WGs) might not be fully furnished.
- TV/Radio Tax (GEZ): Every household in Germany must pay a broadcasting license fee, even if you don't own a TV. This is not a scam - it's mandatory.
- Waste separation: Recycling is serious here. Learn to sort your trash into paper, plastic, biodegradable waste, glass, and general waste. Otherwise, you can be fined.

Administrative Culture:

- City Registration (Anmeldung): You must register your address with the local city office within 2 weeks of arrival.
- Most administrative procedures require an appointment. Some can be booked online, other may require a phone call/email.
- Health Insurance required: You'll need valid health insurance, German or equivalent, before enrollment.
- Residence Permit: Non-EU students need a visa unless they're from countries exempt from this requirement (Exemptions for entry into the Federal Republic of Germany) and for stay for longer than 90 days, they must apply for a residence permit shortly after arrival.



Cultural Norms



- Punctuality Matters: Germans are very punctual. Always be on time for classes, appointments, and meetings.
- Quiet Hours: "Ruhezeiten" (quiet hours) are taken seriously. Typically, after 10 PM and all-day Sunday. Avoid loud music.
- Direct Communication: Germans tend to be straightforward - don't mistake it for rudeness. It's just part of the culture.

Technology and Communication

- WhatsApp is the most common messaging app.
- SIM Cards: Prepaid SIMs are available in stores like Aldi, Lidl, or Telekom. You'll need ID and proof of residence for activation.
- Wi-Fi: Most student housing includes Wi-Fi, getting your own router is preferred. Public Wi-Fi is not as common as in some countries.
- Language: Many Germans speak English, especially younger people and students but basic German will help a lot in everyday situations.



Before You Pack



- Bring EU Power Adapters: Germany uses Type F plugs (230V). Check if you need an adapter for your devices.
- Weather can vary: Pack for all seasons. Winters can be cold and wet - bring a warm coat, gloves, and waterproof shoes

We're excited to welcome you to Hochschule Pforzheim!

Enjoy your time in Germany, make new friends, explore new cultures, and don't hesitate to reach out to us if you need any support.

Your adventure starts here. Willkommen!

German phrases for everyday situations

English

Hello!
 Good morning
 Good day / Hello
 Good evening
 Bye!
 Goodbye
 Have a nice day!
 How are you?
 I'm fine, thank you.
 Thank you (very much)
 Please / You're welcome
 Excuse me / Sorry
 My name is ...
 I'm from ...
 I don't speak German.
 Can you repeat that?
 It's nice to meet you.
 Do you speak English?
 Where is ...?
 How much is this?
 I'm hungry / thirsty.
 I don't understand.
 Can you help me?
 No problem!
 All right! / Got it!
 Have fun!
 Good luck!
 Bless you!

German

Hallo!
 Guten Morgen
 Guten Tag
 Guten Abend
 Tschüss!
 Auf Wiedersehen
 Einen schönen Tag noch!
 Wie geht's dir?
 Mir geht's gut, danke.
 Danke (schön/sehr)
 Bitte
 Entschuldigung
 Ich heiße ...
 Ich komme aus ...
 Ich spreche kein Deutsch.
 Können Sie das wiederholen?
 Es freut mich, dich kennenzulernen.
 Sprichst du Englisch? (informal)
 Sprechen Sie Englisch? (formal)
 Wo ist ...?
 Wie viel kostet das?
 Ich habe Hunger / Durst.
 Ich verstehe nicht.
 Kannst du mir helfen? (informal)
 Können Sie mir helfen? (formal)
 Kein Problem!
 Alles klar!
 Viel Spaß!
 Viel Glück!
 Gesundheit!