



GERMANY

FLAG



FACTS AND STATISTICS

Location: Central Europe, bordering Austria 784 km, Belgium 167 km, Czech Republic 646 km, Denmark 68 km, France 451 km, Luxembourg 138 km, Netherlands 577 km, Poland 456 km, Switzerland 334 km

Capital: Berlin

Climate: temperate and marine; cool, cloudy, wet winters and summers; occasional warm mountain (foehn) wind

Population: 82 million (2019 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: German 91.5%, Turkish 2.4%, other 6.1% (made up largely of Greek, Italian, Polish, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish)

Religions: Protestant 34%, Roman Catholic 34%, Muslim 3.7%, unaffiliated or other 28.3%

Government: federal republic

Business Culture: Ranked 11th in the Business Culture Complexity Index™

LANGUAGES IN GERMANY

- The official language of Germany is German, with over 95% of the population speaking German as their first language.
- Minority languages include Sorbian, spoken by 0.09% in the east of Germany; North and West Frisian, spoken around the Rhine estuary by around 10,000 people, or 0.01%, who also speak German.
- Danish is spoken by 0.06%, mainly in the area along the Danish border. Romani, an indigenous language is spoken by around 0.08%.
- Immigrant languages include Turkish, which is spoken by around 1.8%, and Kurdish, by 0.3%.

GERMAN SOCIETY & CULTURE

A Planning Culture

- In many respects, Germans can be considered the masters of planning.
- This is a culture that prizes forward thinking and knowing what they will be doing at a specific time on a specific day.
- Careful planning, in one's business and personal life, provides a sense of security.
- Rules and regulations allow people to know what is expected and plan their life accordingly.
- Once the proper way to perform a task is discovered, there is no need to think of doing it any other way.

-
- Germans believe that maintaining clear lines of demarcation between people, places, and things is the surest way to lead a structured and ordered life.
 - Work and personal lives are rigidly divided.
 - There is a proper time for every activity. When the business day ends, you are expected to leave the office.
 - If you must remain after normal closing, it indicates that you did not plan your day properly.

The German Home

- Germans take great pride in their homes.
- They are kept neat and tidy at all times, with everything in its appointed place.
- In a culture where most communication is rather formal, the home is the place where one can relax and allow your individualism to shine.
- Only close friends and relatives are invited into the sanctity of the house, so it is the one place where more informal communication may occur.
- There are many unwritten rules surrounding the outward maintenance of one's home.
- It is imperative that common areas such as sidewalks, pavements, corridors (in apartments), and steps be kept clean at all times.

GERMAN ETIQUETTE & MANNERS

Meeting Etiquette

- Greetings are formal.
- A quick, firm handshake is the traditional greeting.
- Titles are very important and denote respect.
- Use a person's title and surname until invited to use their first name.
- You should say Herr or Frau and the person's title and their surname.
- In general, wait for your host or hostess to introduce you to a group.
- When entering a room, shake hands with everyone individually, including children.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- If you are invited to a German's house, bring a gift such as chocolates or flowers.
- Yellow roses or tea roses are always well received.
- Do not give red roses as they symbolize romantic intentions.
- Do not give carnations as they symbolize mourning.
- Do not give lilies or chrysanthemums as they are used at funerals.
- If you bring wine, it should be imported, French or Italian.

-
- Giving German wines is viewed as meaning you do not think the host will serve a good quality wine.
 - Gifts are usually opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

If you are invited to a German's house:

- Arrive on time as punctuality indicates proper planning. Never arrive early.
- Never arrive more than 15 minutes later than invited without telephoning to explain you have been detained.
- Send a handwritten thank you note the following day to thank your hostess for her hospitality.

Table manners

- Remain standing until invited to sit down. You may be shown to a particular seat.
- Table manners are Continental -- the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- Do not begin eating until the hostess starts or someone says 'guten appetit' (good appetite).
- At a large dinner party, wait for the hostess to place her napkin in her lap before doing so yourself.
- Do not rest your elbows on the table.
- Do not cut lettuce in a salad. Fold it using your knife and fork.
- Cut as much of your food with your fork as possible, since this compliments the cook by indicating the food is tender.
- Finish everything on your plate.
- Rolls should be broken apart by hand.
- Indicate you have finished eating by laying your knife and fork parallel across the right side of your plate, with the fork over the knife.
- The host gives the first toast.
- An honored guest should return the toast later in the meal.
- The most common toast with wine is 'Zum Wohl!' ('good health').
- The most common toast with beer is 'Prost!' ('good health').