



Separating rubbish in Germany

You will probably have noticed the different coloured rubbish bins in Germany—at railway stations, in front of houses, and even on paths in the woods. Germans think it's important that rubbish isn't simply thrown away in the countryside, in public places, in the street or in front gardens.

That's why people put a lot of effort into disposing of waste properly or recycling some of it. Recycled waste—paper, plastic, glass, etc.—is used to produce new products such as newsprint, flower pots or bottles. Recycling reduces the number of waste dumps, saves raw materials and means that less waste is burned. Put simply, separating different kinds of waste and recycling are good for the environment.



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Different waste bins

In Germany waste is collected in different kinds of bins. Every house has its own bins. The paper bins mostly have a blue lid and packaging is put into a yellow bag or a bin with a yellow lid. Bio-degradable rubbish like kitchen waste or flowers are disposed of in the bio bin, which mostly has a brown or green lid.

You have to pay a deposit on most glass or plastic bottles you buy in Germany. You get back the deposit when you take the bottle back to a shop, the idea being to stop people from simply throwing them away. In supermarkets there's often a machine for returning these bottles. Germans collect other kinds of glass at home before taking the empties to glass recycling containers. Throwing glass into these containers makes a lot of noise so you should only do that during the daytime or in the early evening.

Other kinds of waste for which there is no special bin end up in the bin with the black lid. But since the lid colours sometimes vary from region to region, even native Germans sometimes have to ask in cases of doubt.



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Separating rubbish saves money

Initially, it takes a bit of effort to remember which kind of rubbish goes into which bin. But if you separate your rubbish and protect the environment in this way, you will definitely gain the respect of native Germans! For this reason, the Deutschland-Begleiter.de team would recommend that you find out more about how to separate waste correctly in the place where you live. You can either contact your local waste disposal organisation (which might be a bit complicated) or simply ask one of your neighbours. Alternatively, you could ask the person who told you about Deutschland-Begleiter.de. Separating the different kinds of waste may well save you money as well. In some parts of Germany residual rubbish in the black bin is weighed, and the heavier the rubbish, the higher the rubbish collection fee. Waste paper and packaging are normally collected free of charge.

Responsibility for our planet

By the way, Germany's waste separation habits are linked to the country's Christian roots. Christians are commissioned to "preserve creation" because it is a gift from God. This divine command has certainly left its mark on our society.

Even though many people in Germany try to protect the environment without referring to God and the Bible, the roots of these actions can be seen in our responsibility towards God.

After all, as the Bible says (in Genesis 2:15 and Psalm 115:16), the Earth belongs to God. We human beings should value, look after and preserve it. We should pass on to coming generations the good things we have received from God.



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Incidentally, there are some useful websites that explain in many languages what kind of waste goes into which bin:

www.abfallwirtschaft-heidenheim.de/internet/inhalt/inhalt.php?seite=184

www.mettmann.de/abfallberatung/infosshop.php