



## Welcome

Welcome to Germany and to our website German Guides (Deutschland-Begleiter.de): We've put together some information just for you to help to get acclimated to Germany and to feel truly at home much faster.

Perhaps many things will be a lot different than you initially imagined. In Germany people with very different backgrounds and value systems all live together. It's quite a colourful country! For this reason there are some basic cultural principles that you need to know and respect Germany can become your new home. Along the way you will undoubtedly have to clear many official hurdles. Regardless, we would like to offer you some helpful tips and pointers to assist you in becoming a part of German society.

To help you succeed, we at German Guides (Deutschlandbegleiter) want to invite you on a discovery tour to find out more about Germany and about the German people—to learn some of their usual (or unusual) habits, and how you can relate to them on a daily basis.

### **Cultural traits that are common for Germans may be foreign to you**

Many things that we will explain to you seem obvious and natural to them. They learned them from childhood as a normal part of their upbringing at home or in school. If you were to ask about them, a German would say, "Of, course. That's just the way things are!" Nevertheless there can be big differences in lifestyle among regions, and there are often small differences just among families. We at German Guides (Deutschlandbegleiter) want to emphasize the cultural traits that are generally true for most people, and thus are important for you to know.

### **Rules as the basis for freedom**

One important fact to begin with: In Germany there are multitudes of rules and laws, and forms that go along with them. Sometimes we have the feeling that these regulations are too limiting, coldhearted or even somewhat inhuman. But the civil offices, and all that paperwork, are there to keep public daily life functioning at its best, and to promote harmony among the various people groups in the country. It might sound a bit unusual, but these measures are designed to simplify life on the whole.

Laws create individual freedom and personal space to develop our ability to work hard, to produce quality goods and services and to be innovative. Germany is known all over the world for these characteristics. If you initially have the feeling that you are constricted by all these forms and rules, then we would like to help you understand their purpose. Discovering the freedom they are intended to protect should help you lead a good life in Germany.



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## **Christian roots of German society**

And now a bit about the people at German Guides (Deutschland-Begleiter.de): We are a group of Christians from different countries and cultures, who have found ourselves at home in many different types of churches here in Germany. We have collected a lot of this information with reference to the Christian roots of German society. Everyone, Christian or not, can benefit from these helpful tips about Germany and about our basic moral values. Even this cultural characteristic belongs to our "open society".

## **Contact to Germans helps in becoming a part of society**

Once you arrived in Germany, your friends and often your family will most likely be far away. In the initial phase it is not always easy to build new relationships. We invite you to try to get to know new people who don't come from your home country or region of the world. Try to approach Germans with an open attitude.

Many helpers in organisations for immigrants, as well as the Christians who have put this material together, are volunteers.

That means that they chose to help without getting paid for their efforts, because they are interested in you as fellow human beings. The vast majority of Germans view you as an enrichment to the country and would be glad to get to know you personally.



Perhaps you might experience people who relate to you in a way that seems to you to be very strange or even abrasive. Rest assured: That's not usually intentional. It results from our own uncertainty about how to help you and relate to you.

Good relationships thrive on two parties growing together.

So we extend this invitation: Take a look around; build new relationships. Learn German and discover a lot about Germany. German Guides (Deutschlandbegleiter) wants to help you do this. Keep returning to our website [www.Deutschland-Begleiter.de](http://www.Deutschland-Begleiter.de). We'll regularly post new information in addition to adding new languages to our website.