



TOURISM IN GERMANY

This brochure will provide you with information on hotels and camping in Germany. You will find practical advice and important legal information covering the different topics. We have tried to include all the relevant information concerning travel to Germany and your stay in Germany; however the information provided is not fully detailed on all points and should be viewed as a guide not as a verbatim statement of the law.

Hotels

Tourism tax

◆ German cities have the right to charge a visitors tax. If and how much they charge is to the decision of the cities.

Hotel booking

◆ German hotels are approved and checked by the association of hotels, and classified into five categories: 1 to 5 stars. All must display their rates (VAT included) in each room.

◆ You can ask Tourist Information Offices or a booking agent to book your room, if you do not wish to look for a hotel by yourself.

◆ It is advisable to make an advance booking for travel during the high tourist season i.e. beginning of July to the end of August.

Before leaving home

◆ When you have booked a room in a hotel and the hotel keeper confirms your booking, both parties are bound to the contract. The hotel keeper is not allowed to give your room away if not otherwise agreed.

◆ There is no common rule in Germany concerning deposits. A few hotels require a deposit. So it is better to ask before you book the room.

◆ Also, there is no general rule concerning arrival times. There are hotels with limited arrival times and others which give the possibility to arrive 24 hours a day. Please ask your hotel for further details.

- ◆ The hotel keeper can be held responsible if the room is given to another person or the hotel is overbooked. For example he has to compensate you for your journey home or the higher prices of another hotel room.
- ◆ If you have to cancel your stay you should try to find an agreement with the hotel keeper. Normally, when you have booked a room you are obliged to take it and pay for it. Otherwise, you have to pay a cancellation fee, called "Stornogebühr": the price for the hotel room minus the saved expenses of the hotel keeper (e.g. for not having used the bed sheets etc). It is quite possible that you will have to pay an amount of up to 80 % of the room price.
- ◆ If you have to cancel your stay you should inform the hotel keeper as early as possible for he should normally try to give away the room to another person. In that case you will not have to pay anything.
- ◆ As a general rule, check out should be done by the end of the morning, unless agreed otherwise with the hotel.

What if on arrival the hotel does not live up to your expectations?

- ◆ If you booked directly at the hotel and the hotel keeper supplied you with all the information (e.g. from a web site, brochures etc.) it is possible to ask for compensation (maybe for a reduction of the price to be paid, for example) on the basis of misleading advertising.
- ◆ In case you booked a package travel through a travel agency, the responsibility of the agent is defined by the German civil code (§§ 651a-651m BGB). This entitles you to compensation, or to stay in a new place which corresponds to the type that you have booked. In that case you have to complain to the travel agent and not to the hotel keeper. Please note: The responsibility of a travel agency only applies if the booking concerns includes at least two elements, such as transport and hotel or / and another tourist service.

I am a victim of a theft in the hotel or its surroundings, what can I do?

- ◆ Hotel keepers are responsible for thefts and damage to the possessions of their customers, whether inside or in the car parks of the establishment (unless they can prove it is the fault of the customer or "force majeure"). In order to receive compensation, the consumer should have evidence of the value of the stolen or damaged possessions.
- ◆ However, the compensation to be paid by the hotel keeper is limited to 100 times the costs of a night's stay for a theft committed inside the hotel or at least 600 Euro (if the prejudice is also at least 600 €, of course) but not exceeding the amount of 3500. This limitation does not apply when the prejudice is the result of a fault committed by the hotel keeper. (§ 702 II BGB) The consumer has to prove the fault of the hotel.
- ◆ "Exclusion notices" announcing that the hotel keeper is not responsible in case of theft or damage, have no validity and cannot be used to argue against your claim.
- ◆ Tip: In case of theft, make a report to the management of the hotel, and ask for a certificate confirming the theft. Then, go to the nearest police station and lodge a complaint. Do not wait until you get back to your home country to do this!

Camping

Campsites

- ◆ Germany has more than 3600 campsites, from rural farm sites to holiday villages, classified by 1 to 5 stars. There is not one official classification authority in Germany. The most important organisations on camping are the ADAC (German automobile club), DCC (German Camping Club) and the DTV (German tourism association). Those organisations as well as others issue different guides to campsites (with classifications) available in bookshops.
- ◆ The campsite prices are free. The average price for two adults, one child plus carpark, electricity and hot water for one night is 24 Euro. However, in highly frequented places the prices are higher.
- ◆ The internal rules of the campsite must be displayed at the entrance of the site and in the reception area.
- ◆ There are also special campmobile-sites for short term stays. Usually they are located closer to cities than normal campsites are. But these sites are only allowed for campmobiles and not for any other vehicles. They only offer the access to electricity and fresh water and the possibility to drain waste water. They are meant for short term stays (1-3 nights).

Residential leisure parks

- ◆ On these sites, the owners of mobile homes or caravans either rent or buy a plot of land for a home on a more permanent basis.

Farm camping "camping à la ferme" and open-air camping

- ◆ A farmer can accommodate up to 3 tents or caravans on his ground, by not making a declaration at the town hall.
- ◆ But there are also farms that offer more sites. These sites must be registered at the district office.

Camping in the wild

- ◆ Make sure that camping is not forbidden and that you have the agreement of the owner. Otherwise you can be fined! Please note that even with a permission, special rules might apply (e.g. no open fire).

Campsites and insurance

- ◆ Please make sure to lock up your goods (into a hermetically closed container) or to leave them under surveillance. At no time should the camper leave any valuables unprotected. Ask your insurance company if they offer special contracts.

If you, as a foreign consumer, are feeling mistreated by a German professional, the European Consumer Centres (ECCs) will be pleased to help you to find an amicable settlement of the dispute. You can find further information and a complete list of all ECCs under: http://europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/redress/ecc_network/index_en.htm

ECC Germany (German/English/French)
+49 7851/991480 or +49 431 9719350

