



Where in the World Is Germany?

Hallo (HAH-loh) from Germany! That's how we say "hello." I'm Johann, and I will be your tour guide. My name is German for "John." Germany is located in

central Europe, or the "heart of Europe," as I like to say. My country is made up of 16 different and fascinating states. Let me show you around.

Fast Facts:

- Germany is 137,847 square miles (357,022 square kilometers) in area.
- It has the highest population of any country in Europe, at more than 82 million.
- The name Germany comes from the Latin word *Germania*.
- Germany is the seventh-most visited country by tourists in the world.
- The southern part of Germany is covered by a mountain range called the Alps.
- Germany's main rivers are the Rhine, Elbe, Danube, Mosel, Main, Weser, and Oder.
- The climate in Germany is generally **temperate**, with four seasons. It is cold and often overcast in winter and warm in summer.





Some apartments look out on a courtyard that is full of green.

Home Sweet Home

I am from Berlin, Germany. I live with my parents and older brother in an apartment. Our building has a beautiful **courtyard**. One set of my grandparents lives across the street. The other grandparents live 10 minutes away. Many German families live close to relatives, and family members often gather for big meals.

My last name is Becker, which means that my **ancestors** were bakers. You can tell a lot about someone's ancestors based on their last names. Why? A person's last name often told their occupation, or job. The chart above has some common German last names. Is yours on the list?

Last Name	Occupation
Müller	miller (grinds wheat into flour)
Schmidt	smith (works with metal, such as a blacksmith)
Schneider	tailor (makes and fixes clothes)
Fischer	fisher
Weber	weaver (makes cloth or fabrics)
Koch	cook
Meyer	farmer



Many homes are bright, with a lot of windows.



If you visit my home, you might be surprised that we open all our windows a lot—even in winter. We like to air out our homes at least twice a week. That lets in fresh air and keeps **mold** from growing. Other things you'll notice are our small kitchens, the lack of closets, and our special room for the toilet. It's separate from where we wash and bathe.

My family does some of its shopping at outdoor markets

scattered around the city. I love to visit the local bakery for a freshly baked treat. There are also large stores where you can buy almost everything—groceries, clothes, toys and games, furniture, TVs, and more. It makes life easy!

Life is also pretty fun. Like most Germans, we like to take lots of family vacations. Recently we've gone to other parts of Germany as well as to Spain.



Let's Eat!



Pumpernickel



Spätzle



Gingerbread

In Germany, our meals are all about meat and potatoes. We eat meat pies, meat dumplings, and all sorts of meat by itself. We are famous for our sausages, called *Wurst*, and have more than 1,200 different kinds! Try as many as you can when you visit.

Common potato side dishes range from potato pancakes to potato salad. Cabbage, carrots, and asparagus make good side dishes, too. We also enjoy a slice of dark bread called *Pumpernickel* with our meals. It's delicious and nutritious!

Various regions across Germany

have their own specialties. Bavaria, for example, cooks *Spätzle*, or spaetzle. This is a small dumpling served with meat and covered in gravy, or served with cinnamon and butter as a dessert. If you visit one of our port cities, you can order eel soup. *Doner kebab* is a dish that came to Germany from Turkey. It is lamb or chicken stuffed into pita bread. It is very popular, too!

We love desserts. One of my favorites are gingerbread and *Springerle*, a hard cookie that tastes like licorice. We eat a lot of tarts, too—apple, cherry, and strawberry.

Some foods are named after places in my country. Hamburgers are named after Hamburg!



Many people in Germany eat five small meals a day: early breakfast, late breakfast, lunch, midafternoon snack, and dinner. You won't go hungry here! Lunch is traditionally our largest meal. Then for the evening meal, everyone in my family gathers for cheese, bread, and cold sliced meat. I especially love my mom's *Brezel*, which is a yummy pretzel bread.

German Manners

Here are some things to remember when eating in Germany.

- 1 If you're meeting someone at home or at a restaurant, be on time. Try not to be more than a few minutes early, and you should never be late.
- 2 We don't really like to eat with our fingers, so use a fork and knife. That includes when you eat fries and even pizza!
- 3 Never put your elbows on the table while eating. How rude!
- 4 Always thank the cook with a simple "*Das schmeckt wunderbar.*" This means, "The food tastes wonderful."
- 5 When you lay your knife and fork beside your plate, it means "I'm done." Someone will see it and take your plate away!