



KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- ❑ Driving is on the right.
- ❑ Drivers are required to carry a valid license (good for up to six months), vehicle registration and proof of insurance. Some rental car agencies may also require an International Driving Permit (IDP). An IDP must be obtained prior to travel.
- ❑ Passports must be valid for at least three months beyond dates of travel, and must be carried at all times.
- ❑ New camera systems are currently being installed on roadways to detect drivers using smartphones.
- ❑ An estimated 15% of all road deaths are pedestrians.
- ❑ Riders of two- and three-wheeled motorized vehicles account for about 19% of all road traffic fatalities.
- ❑ Legal blood alcohol limit is below 0.05 g/dl for general population, and zero for young or novice drivers. Despite legal limits, an estimated 7% of all traffic deaths involve the use of alcohol.
- ❑ There are 2.9 road deaths per 100,000 people in Germany, compared to 2.2 in Sweden and 2.3 in the UK.



Source: CIA Factbook

ROAD CULTURE

- **Distracted driving** and use of mobile devices behind the wheel is common.
- **Many drivers** are aggressive.
- **Drivers may** be verbally abusive to other motorists.
- **Tailgating** and speeding are common.
- **There is** high driver compliance to traffic laws including signaling and stopping.
- **Drivers generally** observe lane demarcations and exhibit low tolerance for motorists who weave in traffic, or who fail to use turn signals to indicate passing.
- **Pedestrians** typically adhere to pedestrian lights and crossings, even when traffic is not present.

ROAD CONDITIONS

- **There are** 625,000 km (388,356 miles) of paved roads, including 12,996 km (8,075 miles) of expressways.
- **Most roads** are well maintained and in good condition.
- **In winter**, roads are regularly cleared of snow and ice. Storms or heavy snow may mean that ice and snow are still present on some surfaces.
- **Highway signs** carrying the prefix "A" before a route number are part of the autobahn road network. Signs are blue.
- **In general**, "A" roads with even route numbers run east to west; "A" roads with odd numbers run from north to south.
- **Bundestrassen roads** are roughly equivalent to the US highway system. Signs are yellow. Route numbers follow the letter "B."
- **Regional roads** include "Landesstrasse" and "Kreisstrasse" routes connecting small towns and villages. Speed limit is always 50 kph (31 mph) on these roads.
- **Demonstrations** occur frequently. Large demonstrations take place on politically significant holidays including German Labor Day on May 1, and during international summits. Roads and transportation systems may be impacted.
- **Even peaceful** demonstrations may become confrontational or violent. Avoid public gatherings; follow instructions given by authorities.
- **Pedestrian infrastructure** is well developed.
- **Bicycle paths** are widespread. Bike paths run adjacent to streets and sidewalks.
- **On bike paths**, bicyclists have priority over pedestrians.
- **Bicycles have** priority over cars when turning onto side streets, even if motorists have a green light.
- **The following roads** may present particular challenges to motorists:
 - » **The German Alpine Road/Alpenstrasse/Queralpenstrasse** is a popular scenic drive in the Bavarian Alps. The paved road is 450 km (280 miles) long, and runs east-west from Lindau to Schönau on



Road Conditions, continued

the border with Austria. Winding curves and hills make the road challenging during peak tourist seasons; heavy traffic is common. The road runs through an area with many lakes, scenic stops and 25 castles. Motorists may be distracted, stop suddenly for photographs, or fail to observe standard traffic rules.

- » **Riedberg Pass/OA9** is a high-elevation road that connects the German town of Fischen to Hittisau in Austria. It has an asphalt surface and is 1,407 meters (4,616 feet) above sea level. Sections have a steep grade of up to 19 percent. The pass is open year-round, though heavy snow may impede traffic and create treacherous conditions during winter months. The road is closed to heavy vehicles including transport trucks.
- » **Feldberg Pass/Federal Highway B317/L126** is a steep, paved road in the Black Forest within the state of Baden-Württemberg in southwestern Germany. The route leads to a popular summit for recreational pursuits. The road has an elevation of 1,235 meters (4,015 feet). Winter weather conditions including snow, ice and wind can create dangerous driving conditions.

REGIONAL AND SEASONAL CONDITIONS

- **Germany is subject to** extreme weather conditions including floods, long periods of drought and harsh winters with deep snow, even in urban areas.
- **Heavy rains** can occur in spring and summer, with resulting floods and landslides. Damaged infrastructure, including bridges, is possible. Roads may become impassable.
- **Forest fires** often occur, particularly during summer months.
- **There is** a risk of avalanches in mountainous regions, especially following heavy snowfalls.
- **Snow, rain** and adverse weather conditions significantly increase the dangers of high-speed driving on the Autobahn. Always adjust driving speeds to road and weather conditions.
- **Large numbers** of migrating frogs at certain times of the year can create slick and dangerous surface conditions.
- **Be familiar with emergency procedures.** The Red Cross provides a website and free, downloadable emergency app: <http://www.redcross.org/get-help/prepare-for-emergencies/types-of-emergencies>

TRANSPORTATION






- **Transportation options** include cars, bicycles, taxis, electric rickshaws (sometimes called Velotaxis), rideshare services, buses, trams, U-Bahn (underground metro), S-Bahn (suburban trains), long-distance trains and boats.
- **Most rental** vehicles are standard transmission. If an automatic transmission is required, notify rental agency and reserve vehicle in advance.
- **Road navigation** systems in rental vehicles generally default to German. Be sure to switch languages to one you understand prior to travel.
- **Cycling** is a popular form of transport. Most cities have bicycle lanes. In some areas, cyclists may have to share busy roads with motorized vehicles.
- **Public transportation** is extensive and is generally regarded as safe and efficient.
- **Official taxis** are metered. Drivers may not accept credit cards.
- **Some taxi drivers**, particularly in small towns and villages, may not speak English. Carry a copy of your destination written in German.

Maximum Speed Limits

Type of road	Maximum speed
Urban areas	50 kph (31 mph)
Rural roads	100 kph (62 mph)
Highways	130 kph (80 mph)
Autobahn	No speed limit unless posted

Always adjust speed according to signage, hazards and weather conditions.

Signs are generally pictorial and may not follow European Union conventions.

								
Pedestrian underpass	These emission stickers are allowed entry	Residential zone: Be alert for children	Use caution: Migrating frogs crossing road	Use of hard shoulder as extra lane is permitted	Oncoming traffic has right-of-way	School bus stop	Exit to these locations	Mandatory directions of travel



Transportation, continued

- **Electric rickshaws** are popular in Frankfurt, Berlin, Cologne and in some towns with historic centers that have narrow streets. Rickshaws are licensed.
- **Rideshare services** are available in many areas. Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- **Bus networks** are extensive and serve cities and small villages. Night buses operate in cities. Long-distance bus service is available to many European destinations.
- **Tram systems** are available in multiple cities.
- **U-Bahn trains** generally operate underground. Stations are identified by an illuminated letter "U."
- **Local S-Bahn** (Stadtbahn) trains are run by national rail system Deutsch Bahn, and include networks of city and commuter trains.
- **S-Bahn stations** can be identified by a green and white "S" symbol near entrances.
- **Long-distance** trains are operated by German Rail (Deutsch Bahn). Routes include destinations throughout Germany and Europe.
- **Passenger** and car ferries serve German islands and nearby countries including Sweden.
- **Ferries** are operated by multiple companies; some companies are based in countries other than Germany.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS

- **Road safety** standards are high.
- **Speed limits** are strictly enforced.
- **Only select sections** of the autobahn have no maximum speed limit. In general, drivers exceeding 130 kph (80 mph) involved in a crash will be held liable, even on sections with no posted speed limit.
- **A minimum** speed limit of 60 kph (37 mph) applies to autobahn roads.
- **Drivers** on the autobahn must stay in the right-hand lane unless passing, and return to the right-hand lane when passing is complete and adequate distance is available in front of existing traffic.
- **Slower vehicles** must keep to the right on all multi-lane roads; this rule is highly enforced.
- **Right turns** on red are prohibited.
- **Drivers** must be at least 18 years of age.
- **Most rental car** agencies require drivers to be at least 21 years old.
- **Vehicles** approaching from the right have right-of-way, except on priority roads.
- **Motorists entering** a highway must yield to traffic already present.
- **Drivers** entering a roundabout must yield to traffic already in the circle.
- **It is** generally illegal to pass vehicles on the right.
- **Pedestrians have** right-of-way only at marked crossings.
- **Drivers may** not yield to pedestrians.
- **It is illegal** to enter pedestrian crossings when the red pedestrian light is on.
- **Parking on** bicycle paths and sidewalks is prohibited.
- **Seat belt use** is mandatory for driver and all vehicle occupants.
- **Children** up to 12 years of age or 150 cm (59 inches) in height must be seated in a child restraint.
- **Children are** allowed to sit in front seats provided they are in an appropriate restraint. For safety, children should be seated in rear seats in a child restraint.
- **Helmet use** is compulsory for motorcycle drivers and passengers. Compliance is high. For safety, helmets should be fastened.
- **Children are not** restricted from being passengers on motorcycles. For safety, children should not be motorcycle passengers.
- **Vehicles must** be equipped with a first aid kit, a reflective vest and reflective triangle.
- **During winter** weather, vehicles must be fitted with snow or all-season tires marked with the letters M+S.
- **In some** mountainous areas, snow chains may be required.
- **When driving** a vehicle (other than a rental car) that does not belong to you, carry written permission from the registered owner.
- **Some cities** have environmental zones (Umweltzone) that require documentation that a vehicle meets certain exhaust emission standards.
- **Police may** carry out random breath tests for alcohol.
- **On-the-spot** fines for some traffic infractions are legal.

Berlin (Capital)

- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, rickshaw taxis, buses, U-Bahn, S-Bahn, trams, rideshare services, bicycles and trains.
- » The A113 connects to Berlin.



Berlin, continued

- » Driving is not recommended. Traffic is dense and street systems can be confusing.
- » Many streets carry the same name but are located in different areas of the city.
- » Pedestrians do not have right-of-way except at crossings. City programs are currently underway to enhance pedestrian safety.
- » Most pedestrian crossings have only red and green lights, with no amber light indicating an upcoming change.
- » Cycling is popular. There are several city-wide bike sharing programs. Bike paths are generally well-maintained. Helmets are not provided with rentals; if planning to rent a bike, bring your own helmet.
- » In some areas, bike lanes are painted green and are separated by barriers from motorized traffic.
- » Licensed bicycle and electric rickshaws are available in some city areas.
- » Official, licensed taxis are cream colored and have “taxi” signs on roofs of cars.
- » Flat rates are generally available for many shorter routes of under 2 km (1.2 miles).
- » Not all taxi drivers speak English. Carry a copy of your destination written in English.
- » Rideshare services are available. Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver’s name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » The public transportation network is comprehensive. Buses, U-Bahn, S-Bahn and trams are operated by BVG. Tickets are interchangeable throughout the network, but must be validated.
- » Transport tickets may be purchased at machines located in S-Bahn and U-Bahn stations, BVG offices, at shops displaying BVG signs, or via the BVG app. Tickets purchased via the BVG app must be acquired and downloaded prior to boarding transport.
- » A variety of city transport cards are available for purchase at station machines, including day- and week-long cards.
- » U-Bahn, S-Bahn and tram transport stations are barrier-free, meaning that an honor system is used. Uniformed and plainclothes conductors frequently require passengers to show a properly validated ticket. Failure to do so carries steep fines.
- » Buses routes include city, night and long-distance destinations. There are more than 350 routes.
- » Bus stops are marked by circular signs containing a green “H.”
- » Bus tickets may be purchased from ticket machines or from bus drivers.
- » MetroBus line begin with the prefix “M;” ExpressBus rapid service routes include the letter “X,” and night buses running every 30 minutes are designated by the letter “N.”
- » Night bus service begins after other bus lines, U-Bahn and S-Bahn shut down.
- » The U-Bahn underground metro system has more than 170 stations and ten lines. Stations are identified by large “U” signs, which are usually illuminated.
- » U-Bahn trains operate approximately every five to ten minutes within city center from 4:30 am to 12:30 am on weekdays. Train frequency is every ten to 15 minutes after 8 pm.
- » On weekends and public holidays, U-Bahn trains are available 24 hours a day with reduced service.
- » Local S-Bahn (Stadtbahn) trains are run by national rail system Deutsch Bahn. There are 15 lines with approximately 170 stations. Entrances to stations are marked by a green and white “S” symbol on signs.
- » S-Bahn trains generally run above ground and connect the city to outlying areas including Potsdam and Wannsee.
- » S-Bahn trains operate from 4:30 am to 1:30 am; on weekends and holidays, trains run 24 hours a day. There are trains every 10 minutes during peak hours, and every ten to 20 minutes outside of peak hours. Night frequency is usually every 30 minutes.
- » MetroNetz trams are marked with the letter “M” and offer high-frequency service throughout the day, and approximately every 30 minutes at night.
- » There are more than 20 tram line with close to 400 stops. Most tram lines are located in the former East Berlin.
- » Ferries provide service on Berlin’s lakes. Stations are marked with the letter “F.” Some ferry routes are part of the public transport network, and allow the use of public transport cards for payment. Other ferries require tickets that can be purchased in advance at stations located at piers.



Berlin, continued

- » Berlin Brandenburg International Airport is 27 km (16.8 miles) from city center.
- » Transportation from the airport to city center includes taxis, buses, trains, rental cars and car sharing programs.
- » Multiple rail lines connect the airport's train station to city center and nearby locations. The station is located in Terminal 1 on Level U2.
- » Airport trains include the FEX Airport Express, and several regional and commuter trains connecting the airport to Berlin Central Station.
- » Long-distance IC trains connect to destinations including Dresden and Rostock.
- » Express buses offer frequent service between the airport and Potsdam Central Station and U-Bahn Rudow Station.
- » Taxi queues are located outside of the arrivals area at Terminal 1 on Level E0. Arrivals at Terminal 2 should use the signposted footpath connecting the terminals.
- » Use only officially marked taxis at regulated queues and avoid other drivers soliciting for fares; these people may pretend to be taxi drivers.
- » Most major car rental agencies and car sharing companies are represented at the airport.

Frankfurt

- » Transportation options include cars, taxis, rickshaw taxis, buses, U-Bahn, S-Bahn, trams, rideshare services, bicycles and trains.
- » Public transport is regarded as safe and efficient.
- » Tickets for public transport cannot be purchased on board, and must be obtained prior to travel.
- » The Frankfurt Card provides free and unlimited access to the city's public transport system.
- » The Rhine-Main Transport Association (RMV) offers an app for payment of public transport plus route planning.
- » Multilingual ticket machines for buses, trams, trains and metro can be found at all stops and stations.
- » U-Bahn, S-Bahn and tram transport stations are barrier-free and operate on an honor system. Uniformed and plainclothes conductors frequently require passengers to show a properly validated ticket. Failure to do so carries steep fines.
- » There are nine combined U-Bahn/tram lines with nearly 90 stations.
- » U-Bahn trains operate mainly below ground. Trains run every two to five minutes within city center; service is every 10 to 20 minutes after 8 pm.
- » Night buses replace U-Bahn trains from 1 am to 4 am.
- » S-Bahn trains run mainly above ground and serve stations within the city and to suburbs. Some lines include routes to nearby cities including Mainz, Wiesbaden and Hanau.
- » There are nine S-Bahn lines and 112 stations.
- » S-Bahn trains run every three minutes during peak hours and every 15 to 30 minutes at night. Some lines begin at 4 am. All lines have full service from 6 am to 8 pm.
- » Two S-Bahn lines operate 24 hours a day: S8 and S9.
- » S-Bahn stations are identified by green signs with a white "S" near entrances. Tickets should be validated at station machines prior to boarding.
- » Licensed taxis are cream-colored and have "taxi" signs on roofs of vehicles.
- » Taxis can be ordered by phone or online, or found at stands near stations and hotels.
- » Licensed bicycle and electric rickshaw taxis are available in some city areas.
- » The bus network is comprehensive. Stations are marked with circular signs with a green "H."
- » Bus tickets may be purchased directly from bus drivers, or from machines at S- and U-Bahn stations.
- » Night buses ("nachtbus") operate from 1 am to 4 am.
- » Long-distance train routes operated by Deutsche Bahn serve destinations throughout Germany and to nearby countries.

Frankfurt, continued

- » Pedestrian infrastructure is well developed. Motorists and pedestrians generally adhere to crossings and signals. Pedestrians should remain alert to distracted drivers.
- » Many people travel by bicycle. There are multiple city bike-sharing programs.
- » Rideshare services are available. Use only rideshare services that have a dispatch app providing vehicle description, license plate number and driver's name. Verify all information before entering vehicle.
- » Frankfurt Airport is 14 min (17.1 km) via A3 from city center.
- » The airport's regional train station is operated by RMV (Rhein-Main-Verkehrsverbund) with direct connections to Frankfurt, Hanau, Aschaffenburg, Mainz and Wiesbaden.
- » The long-distance train station is operated by German Rail (Deutsche Bahn) with routes throughout Germany and greater Europe.
- » Shuttle buses link the airport terminals.
- » There are multiple bus connections between the city and the airport. City bus stops are located opposite Terminal 1 at arrival level, and at level 2 in Terminal 2.
- » Various bus companies serve the long-distance bus station at Frankfurt Airport's P36 bus parking lot. Follow signs from either terminal.
- » Signs to buses, taxis and train stations are clearly marked throughout the airport.
- » Taxis queues are located at both terminals and at the long-distance train station.
- » Most major car rental agencies are located at the airport.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND INCLUSIONS FOR MOBILITY CHALLENGED

- **Laws regarding** discrimination against persons with physical challenges are strictly enforced.
- **Beyond major cities**, accessibility may be limited in older forms of public transportation, and in general infrastructure including buildings.
- **Most urban** infrastructure has been adapted to accommodate persons with mobility or other physical challenges.
- **Entrances** to U-Bahn and S-Bahn trains in Berlin are barrier-free. Many, but not all, stations are equipped with escalators and elevators. Posted maps specify accessibility.
- **Newer trains** in Berlin provide level-entry boarding. Gaps between platforms and trains are no more than two inches. If requested, ramps will be provided and manually set in place by a train conductor. Doors marked with wheelchair or stroller symbols indicate the best cars for wheeled travelers.
- **On buses**, the second door is generally accessible for wheeled travelers.
- **Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG)** offers detailed information in English for riders with mobility challenges via their website at <https://www.bvg.de/en>
- **A similar guide** for travelers to Frankfurt can be downloaded at <https://www.frankfurt-tourismus.de/en/Frankfurt-for/Travellers-with-handicaps/Brochure-Barrier-free-Frankfurt>

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

- **Responders to emergency numbers** in remote areas may not speak fluent English. If necessary, request an English speaking operator.
- **Pre-program** emergency numbers into your phone before departure.
 - » Police, ambulance and fire: 112
- **Responses** to emergency situations are generally good. Ambulance service is available throughout the country.
- **Most** medical care is regarded as being of high quality.
- **Non-residents** may be required to pay in cash (in local currency) at the time of treatment. At some health care facilities, credit cards may not be accepted.
- **Health care providers** including hospitals and clinics may not accept health insurance.
- **Reliable medical** care is widely available throughout the country. Beyond major urban areas and in mountain regions, it may take first responders and medical professionals longer to reach the injured and to provide assistance.

Emergency Information, continued

- **Emergency telephones** are located at regular intervals along the autobahn.
- **If involved in a crash:**
 - » Call police. Do not leave the scene until police indicate you may do so.
 - » Contact rental car agency.
 - » Collect contact information and vehicle details (including license plate number) from other driver(s) and any witnesses. If possible, take photos of crash scene.
 - » Obtain copy of crash report from police. A copy must be provided to the rental car agency.



ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION FOR SAFE INTERNATIONAL ROAD TRAVEL (ASIRT)

ASIRT is a non-profit humanitarian organization established in memory of Aron Sobel, age 25, who was killed along with 22 other passengers in a Pamukkale Bus Company crash on the roads of Turkey.

Disclaimer: ASIRT provides this information as a service to travelers. This Road Safety Review is intended to provide general guidelines for travelers to countries around the world. Any electronic links provided in this Report are for illustrative purposes and ASIRT is not responsible for the content provided within these electronic links and/or videos.

Copyright: Purchasers of this Road Safety Review are entitled to use it for purposes of research, education, information on health, safety and general road and traffic conditions or other non-commercial uses. Neither the whole nor any part of this ASIRT Road Safety Review may be copied in any form or provided to any other party without the prior written consent of the copyright owner. Flag images are © Central Intelligence Agency World Factbook.

To order more copies or to order Road Safety Reviews for other countries please contact:

Association for Safe International Road Travel, 11769 Gainsborough Road, Potomac, MD 20854 USA,

Phone: 1-240-249-0100; Email: asirt@asirt.org; Website: www.asirt.org; Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ASIRT.org/>