

## Land und Leute



### Feiertage

Germans enjoy a minimum of nine legal, paid holidays per year. These holidays are days off in addition to vacation time. In some states, such as Bavaria, the people have twelve holidays. With the exception of some transportation facilities, some restaurants and recreational facilities, businesses in Germany must be closed on legal holidays.

Germany celebrates both secular and religious holidays. Among the secular holidays are New Year's Eve (**Silvester**), New Year's Day (**Neujahr**), and **Tag der Arbeit** on May 1, which is celebrated in honor of workers. Germany's national holiday is **Tag der deutschen Einheit** (Day of German Unity), which is celebrated on October 3 to commemorate the unification of East and West Germany in 1990.

The following Christian holidays are observed throughout the country: Good Friday (**Karfreitag**); Easter (**Ostern**—both **Ostersonntag** and **Ostermontag**); Ascension Day (**Christi Himmelfahrt**), the sixth Thursday after Easter; Pentecost (**Pfingsten**), the seventh Sunday and Monday after Easter; Christmas Eve (**Heiligabend**), and December 25 and 26 (**erster Weihnachtstag** and **zweiter Weihnachtstag**). Four other Christian holidays are observed in some states, but not all.



Neujahrs-Feuerwerk am Brandenburger Tor.





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### Der deutsche Film

People in the German-speaking countries have enjoyed movies since the nineteenth century. Some of the earliest film premieres were in Germany. In Berlin in 1885 Max Emil Skladanowsky produced a seven-minute film which is still in existence. The German movie industry flourished during the era of silent films and early “talkies” (1919–1932). Directors like Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau, and G. W. Pabst were considered among the finest in the world, and the German use of the “moving camera” influenced many directors.

During the Nazi era (1933–1945), many great German and Austrian filmmakers emigrated to the United States and other countries. Some of them never returned; this loss led to a period of mediocrity in German filmmaking that lasted until the mid-sixties. At that point a generation of young filmmakers began to introduce the New German Cinema (**Neuer deutscher Film**). Those directors, many of them now famous, include Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, Wolfgang Petersen, and the late Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Despite the fact that the majority of films shown in German movie theaters today are American, with dubbed voices, other German directors such as Margarethe von Trotta, Volker Schlöndorff, Doris Dörrie, Percy Adlon, Tom Tykwer, and Caroline Link have not only renewed the German film audience but won international recognition.

With Tom Tykwer’s (b. 1965) 1998 film *Lola rennt* (Run Lola Run) a generation of directors born in the 1960s and 1970s began winning fans at German and international box offices. Caroline Link (b. 1964) directed *Nirgendwo in Afrika* (Nowhere in Africa), which won the American Academy Award for best foreign language film in 2003. The Turkish-German director Fatih Akin won international acclaim with his film *Gegen die Wand* (Head-on) in 2004. In short succession, two more German-language films won Academy Awards, in 2007, Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck’s *Das Leben der Anderen* (The Lives of Others) and in 2008 the Austrian film *Die Fälscher* (The Counterfeiters) directed by Stefan Ruzowitzky. All of these Oscar-winning films deal with problematic aspects of the German past, ranging from the Hitler Era to the East German Republic.



Berlinale: Leute warten auf die Filmstars.



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### München



Das Neue Rathaus mit Glockenspiel in München.

In an annual review of 215 cities worldwide, Munich consistently ranks in the top ten best places to live (Mercer Human Resource Consulting).

Munich (**München**), the capital of Bavaria (**Bayern**), is called **die Weltstadt mit Herz** (*the world city with a heart*), and no doubt many of the six million people who visit the **Oktoberfest** each year in September can attest to the appropriateness of this nickname. Indeed, not only do foreign tourists visit Munich, but it is also the most popular domestic vacation spot for Germans. An important destination for many is the **Marienplatz**, the location of several world-famous sights, including the **Hofbräuhaus** and the **Glockenspiel** on the **Neues Rathaus** (*New City Hall*).

However, Munich is more than a tourist attraction; it is also a dynamic center of business, commerce, science, and culture with 1.4 million residents, of whom 23% are foreigners. Founded in 1158, Munich got its name from the phrase "**bei den Mönchen**" (*home of the monks*). It quickly became the residence of the Wittelsbach family, who ruled Bavaria until 1918. Munich has been a center of education and science since the sixteenth century, and today it has three universities and five **Hochschulen**, among them the Munich **Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen**. In recent years, the city has become a center for media industries (movies, television, advertising, and music). Since

1983, the Munich Film Festival has attracted some 60,000 visitors each year to its screenings of international films and student productions. In addition, Munich is a center for the financial industry, high-tech industries, and biotechnology.

The city offers a wide variety of museums and parks, including the well-known **Englischer Garten**. Among the most famous museums are the **Alte Pinakothek**, which houses one of the most important collections of European paintings from the fourteenth through the eighteenth centuries, and the **Neue Pinakothek**, devoted to nineteenth-century art. The **Deutsches Museum** has exhibitions on science and history, and for car fans, there is the BMW museum. The Olympia Park, site of the 1972 Olympic Games, is another popular attraction in Munich.

Munich has excellent public transportation. However, one can also tour the city by bicycle or on in-line skates, the latter with the aid of a city map specifically for in-line skaters.