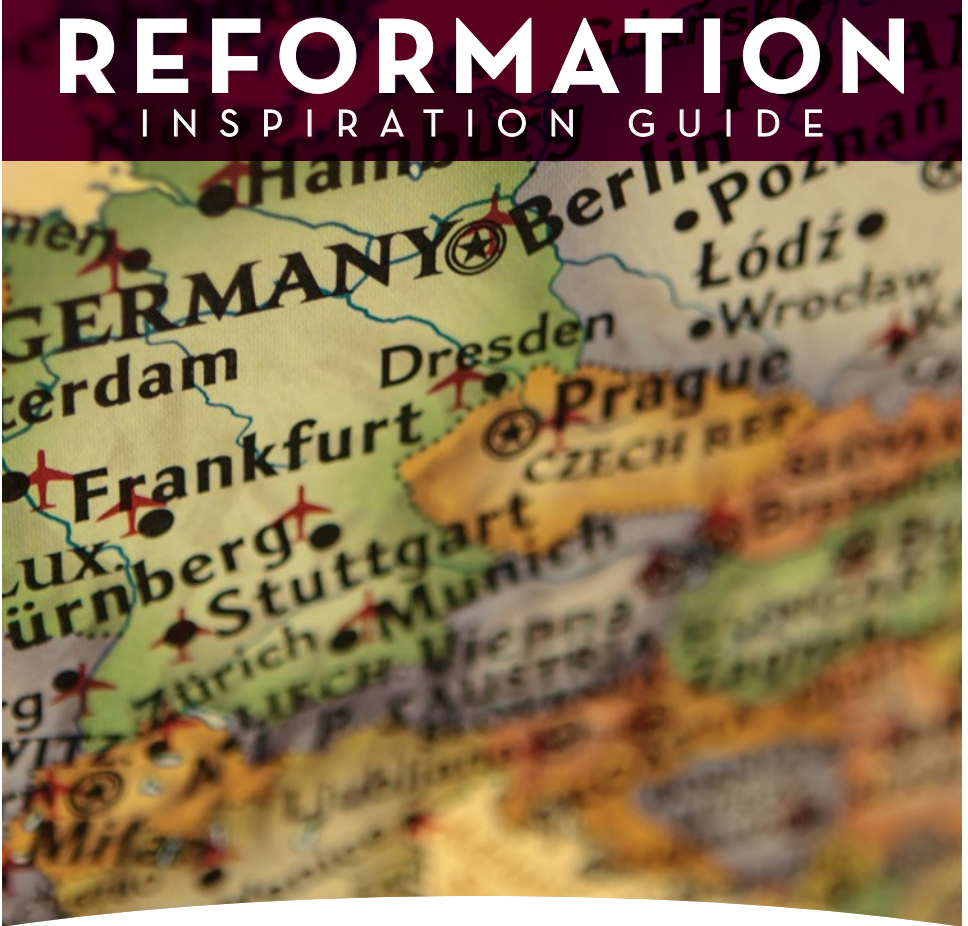




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# CZECH REPUBLIC



## OVERVIEW

The Czech Republic is a small landlocked country in Central Europe, situated south-east of Germany and bordering Austria to the south, Poland to the north and Slovakia (with which it used to form one country of Czechoslovakia) to the south-east.

## QUICK FACTS

Capital: Prague

Government: parliamentary democracy

Currency: Czech crown (CZK) - "koruna"

Area: 78,866 sq km

Population: 10,211,904 (July 2009 est.)

Language: Czech, Slovak

Religion: agnostic and atheist 59%, Roman Catholic 26.8%, Protestant 2.1%, other 3.3%, unspecified 8.8%

Electricity: 230V/50Hz (European plug)

Calling Code: 420

Time Zone: UTC + 1

Following the First World War, the closely related Czechs and Slovaks of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire merged to form Czechoslovakia. With the collapse of Soviet authority in 1989, Czechoslovakia regained its freedom through a peaceful "Velvet Revolution." On January 1, 1993, the country underwent a "velvet divorce" into its two national components, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The Czech Republic joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004.



## CULTURAL OVERVIEW (CZECH REPUBLIC)

Czechs don't appreciate when foreigners incorrectly assume that Czechoslovakia still exists, or that it was part of the Soviet Union or the Russian Empire—both definitely false—although it was part of the Soviet Bloc and, until 1918, an Austro-Hungarian territory. Commenting about how “everything is quite cheap here” comes across as condescending about the country's economic status, and in any case is no longer true.

### LANGUAGES

The main language spoken is Czech. The Slovak language can also be often heard, as there is a sizable Slovak minority and both languages sound similar. Czech people are very proud of their language, and thus, even in Prague you will not find many signs written in English (outside of the main tourist areas). Many older people, especially outside the large cities, are also unable to converse in English, so it's good to learn some Czech or Slovak before your arrival. However, most young people speak at least some English, as it has been taught in most schools since 1990.

The Czech and Slovak languages are difficult for English-speakers to grasp, as they, like their sisters, can be tongue-twisting languages to learn (especially Czech) and take time and practice to master, especially if you're not really familiar with the other Slavic languages, including Russian. However, if you can learn the alphabet (and the corresponding letters with accents), then pronunciation is easy as it is always the same - Czechs and Slovaks pronounce every letter of a word, with the stress falling on the first syllable.

### GEOGRAPHY

The Czech landscape is quite varied. Bohemia, to the west, consists of a basin drained by the Elbe (Czech: Labe) and the Vltava (or Moldau) rivers, surrounded by mostly low mountains, such as the Krkonoše range of the Sudetes. The highest point in the country, Sněžka at 1,602 m (5,260 ft), is located here. Moravia, the eastern part of the country, is also quite hilly. It is drained mainly by the Morava River, but it also contains the source of the Oder River (Czech: Odra). Water from the landlocked Czech Republic flows to three different seas: the North Sea, Baltic Sea and Black Sea. The Czech Republic also leases the Moldauhafen, a 30,000-square-meter (7.4-acre) lot in the middle of the Hamburg Docks, which was awarded to Czechoslovakia by Article 363 of the Treaty of Versailles, to allow the landlocked country a place where goods transported down river could be transferred to seagoing ships. The territory reverts to Germany in 2028.

All content and information collected from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech\\_Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic)

## WEATHER

The Czech Republic has a temperate continental climate, with relatively hot summers and cold, cloudy and snowy winters. Most rain falls during the summer. The temperature difference between summer and winter is relatively high, due to the landlocked geographical position. Within the Czech Republic, temperatures vary greatly, depending on the elevation. In general, at higher altitudes, the temperatures decrease and precipitation increases. Another important factor is the distribution of the mountains; therefore, the climate is quite varied.

At the highest peak of Sněžka (1,602 m/5,260 ft), the average temperature is only  $-0.4\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $31\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), whereas in the lowlands of the South Moravian Region, the average temperature is as high as  $10\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $50\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). The country's capital, Prague, has a similar average temperature, although this is influenced by urban factors.

The coldest month is usually January, followed by February and December. During these months, there is usually snow in the mountains and sometimes in the major cities and lowlands. Normal winter temperatures vary between  $-11\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $12\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and  $0\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $32\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). During March, April and May, the temperature usually increases rapidly, especially during April, when the temperature and weather tends to vary widely during the day. Spring can be late in starting, but when it arrives, parts of the countryside are carpeted with blossoms from the fruit trees. Spring is also characterized by high water levels in the rivers, due to melting snow.

The warmest month of the year is July, followed by August and June. On average, summer temperatures are about 20 degrees higher than during winter. Especially in the last decade, temperatures above  $30\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $86\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) are not unusual, although the normal summer temperature varies between  $23\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $73\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and  $29\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $84\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). Summer is also characterized by rain and storms.

Autumn generally begins in September, which is still relatively warm and dry. During October, temperatures usually fall below  $15\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  or  $10\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $59\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$  or  $50\text{ }^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) and deciduous trees begin to shed their leaves. By the end of November, temperatures usually range around the freezing point.

Content and information collected from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech\\_Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic)

## CUISINE

Tipping is a standard 10%, and is not normally added to the bill. Don't be confused by the percentage figures listed at the bottom of the bill - by Czech law, a receipt must show the VAT paid (19% in most cases) - the VAT is already included in the final amount, and you should add 10% to this. It is normal practice to give the waiter the tip before you leave the table. Tips are not obligatory - if you weren't satisfied with services offered, don't bother tipping.

In a vast majority of better restaurants located in major cities you can pay by credit card (MASTERCARD, VISA), but don't be surprised if a few will not accept them. Make sure to check the door for respective card logos when entering the restaurant or ask the waiter before ordering. Czechs sometimes use special tickets (stravenky) to pay in some restaurants - these are tax-preferred and subsidised by employers. You won't get these tickets unless you get a job in the Czech Republic, just don't be surprised when you see them.

### Traditional Foods & Drink

Traditional Czech food is hearty and suitable after a hard day in the fields. It is heavy and excellent in the winter. In recent times there has been a tendency towards light food

with more vegetables; now the traditional Czech food is usually not eaten everyday and some people avoid it entirely. Some traditional Czech cuisines are pork, duck, or goose with knedlíky (dumplings) and sauerkraut.

A traditional main meal each day (usually lunch) consists of two or three dishes. The first dish is hot soup (polévka). The second dish is the most important part, very often based on some meat and side-dish (both served on the same plate). The third, optional part is either something sweet (and coffee) or small vegetable salad or something similar.

Czechs like sweets but consumer patterns are different compared to France, USA or the UK. As everywhere some traditional treats have become a mass-market production for tourists, others are pretty difficult to be found.

Tap water is fine to drink in the Czech Republic, although the chlorine can be quite strong.

Content and information collected from <http://wikitravel.org/> and <http://en.wikipedia.org>

## RELIGION

Czechs are one of the most atheistic peoples in the world, and are very proud of it. This is true especially in large Bohemian cities. According to the 2001 census, 59% of the country is agnostic, atheist, a non-believer or a non-organized believer, 26.8% is Roman Catholic and 2.1% is Protestant. According to the most recent Eurobarometer Poll in 2005, 19% of Czech citizens responded that “they believe there is a god” (the second lowest rate among European Union countries after Estonia with 16%), whereas 50% answered that “they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force” and 30% said that “they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, god or life force”. Don’t assume that anyone you do not know believes in God or has a passion for Christianity.

Content and information collected from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech\\_Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Czech_Republic)

## HOLIDAYS

January 1 - Restoration Day of the Independent Czech State; New Year’s Day

March, April - Easter Monday; Easter is celebrated on Sunday and Monday in the Czech Republic

May 1 - Labor Day

May 8 - Liberation Day

July 5 - Saints Cyril and Methodius Day

July 6 - Jan Hus Day

September 28 - St. Wenceslas Day (Czech Statehood Day)

October 28 - Independent Czechoslovak State Day

November 17 - Struggle for Freedom and Democracy Day

December 24 - Christmas Eve

December 25 - Christmas Day

December 26 - St. Stephen’s Day (Czech: “The Second Christmas Day”)

Content and information collected from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public\\_holidays\\_in\\_the\\_Czech\\_Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_holidays_in_the_Czech_Republic)

# TRAVEL OVERVIEW (CZECH REPUBLIC)

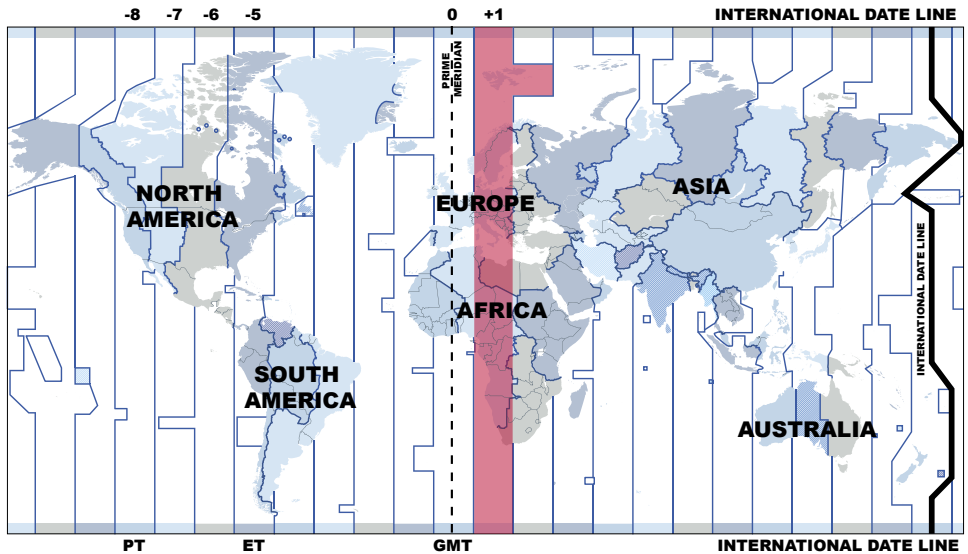
## ENTRY INTO CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic is a party to the Schengen Agreement. As such, U.S. citizens may enter the Czech Republic for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the periods of stay. For further details on travel into and within Schengen countries, please see the Schengen Fact Sheet ([http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4361.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4361.html)). All foreigners seeking entry in the Czech Republic must carry proof of a medical insurance policy contracted for payment of all costs for hospitalization and medical treatment in the Czech Republic. It is the personal responsibility of each passenger to fully comply with all Immigration and documentation requirements.

Content and information collected from [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1099.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1099.html)

## TIME DIFFERENCE

Czech is UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)



## MONEY

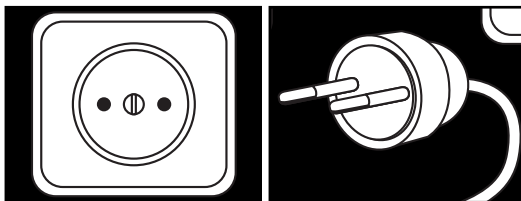
The currency of the Czech republic is the koruna (crown), plural koruny or korun. The currency code CZK is often used internationally, but the local symbol is Kč (for Koruna česká). 1 koruna is made up of 100 haléř, abbreviated to hal., but coins are only issued in whole koruna values as of October 2008. Some major stores will accept Euros, and it's also common for accommodation providers to quote the price in Euros. Major stores throughout the country accept VISA and MASTERCARD, as do all the tourist stores in Prague.

Never exchange money on the street. There is no "black market" with better rates, but there is a good chance you'll end up with a roll of worthless paper. Be very careful when you are exchanging money at a small exchange kiosk. They try to use tricks in order to give you a bad exchange rate. Ask for the total amount you will get and recompute it by yourself. Do not trust "0% commission" signs (usually there is "only on CZK buy" amendment in small letters).

Content and information collected from <http://wikitravel.org/en/Czechia>

## ELECTRICITY

AC in the Czech Republic is 230 volts and you will need to have/purchase an adapter for electronic items that run on 110/220v current. Your larger electronic items (hairdryer, laptop, etc) will require a power converter before plugging into wall sockets in the Czech Republic. See photos to the right for specific plug information.



## PHONE CALLS

### Important Telephone Numbers

Ambulance: 155

Fire department: 150

Emergency road service: 1230, 1240

Police: 158

Municipal police: 156

### International Dialing Codes

USA 001

Czech Republic 00420

All content collected from [www.visitprague.cz/en/general-info/what-to-know-before/what-to-know-before-go.html](http://www.visitprague.cz/en/general-info/what-to-know-before/what-to-know-before-go.html)

## SHOPPING

Always say 'hello' (Dobrý den) and 'goodbye' (Na shledanou) when you enter and leave a small shop as it is polite.

In small towns most shops are open Mon – Fri, from 8 or 9am until 6pm, and only in the morning on Saturdays. In big cities shops may stay open until 9pm. Only a few small shops have a lunch break, usually between 12 and 1pm. Shopping centers and department stores have longer opening hours, usually until 10pm even on weekends. Some large supermarkets are open 24 hours a day.

**Prague** has a good mix of local brands, well-known luxury western stores and antique shops. Buying glass in the Czech Republic goes without saying as the Bohemian crystal is famous in the world for its quality and creative designs. The Czech Republic is also known for its garnet mines. The Czech garnet stones, which have bright pinkish tone, are used for making all kinds of jewelry, being a big shopping draw for jewelry buffs. What most people don't know, however, is that Prague boasts with modern design stores specializing in contemporary Czech art as well as 20th century Czech Cubist, Functionalist and Art Deco styles.

If you're looking for a bargain and more eclectic shopping you should head down to backstreet shops located in hidden passages and arcades of the Little Quarter and the Old Town. Wander around these tiny shops and look for all sorts of rare finds such as antique books, handmade crafts, wooden toys, jewelry and crystal.



**If you're looking to purchase gifts in Prague, the following items are recommended:**

**Wooden toys and traditional marionettes:** These very nice (and reasonably priced) traditional Czech toys can be found everywhere. The Havelka market in Prague is a good place to start.

**Ceramics and pottery:** Many shops in Prague, especially tourist-oriented souvenir stores, sell these items. Maliř ceramics, produced near Slavonice, are very beautiful and quite different from others. There is a shop in the Lucerna Gallery that sells Maliř ceramics.

**Botanicus:** Natural beauty products, made in the Czech Republic. Tasteful design and packaging, a perfect gift for someone who enjoys relaxing with fine scents or handmade soaps.

**Bohemian crystal:** This inexpensive but very beautiful glassware can be found throughout Prague and Bohemia. Items made from Bohemian Crystal include all types of glasses, vases and jewelry. Very modern and colored glassware made from crystal are available at the famous Blue Praha in Prague.

[http://www.czechtourism.com/eng/uk/docs/\\_us/press-x-media/editorial-leads/shopping-in-the-czech-republic.html](http://www.czechtourism.com/eng/uk/docs/_us/press-x-media/editorial-leads/shopping-in-the-czech-republic.html)  
<http://www.a-tout-prague.com/en/guide/practical/guide-about-prague-and-the-czech-republic/gifts-from-the-czech-republic/>  
& <http://www.czechtourism.com/eng/uk/docs/practical-info/faq/info/10-business-hours/index.html>

# GERMANY



Calling Code: +49  
Time Zone: UTC +1

## OVERVIEW

The Federal Republic of Germany is the largest country in Central Europe. It is bordered to the north by Denmark, to the east by Poland and the Czech Republic, to the south by Austria and Switzerland, and to the west by France, Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands. Germany is a federation of 16 states, similar to the US, each with a distinct and unique culture and contrary to the general foreigner's conception, not a very homogenous nation.

As the largest Central European country both in population and size, Germany is the largest economy in Europe and is also the world's biggest exporter nation.

## QUICK FACTS

Capital: Berlin  
Government: Federal Republic  
Currency: Euro (EUR)  
Area: 357,021 sq km  
Population: 82,060,000 (Dec. 2008 est.)  
Language: German  
Religion: Christianity, 64%, Protestant 34%, Roman Catholic 34%, Muslim 3.7%, unaffiliated or other 28.3%  
Electricity: 220-240 volts at 50 Hz



## CULTURAL OVERVIEW (GERMANY)

Throughout the world, especially in the English-speaking countries, Germany and the Germans have earned themselves a reputation for being stiff, brusque and strict with rules but also hard working and efficient. As with all such clichés, there is some truth to it. The German language is not as smooth as English, so even a friendly word can sound harsh to the English-speaker (not to mention the French, for that matter). More important, the German sense of “politeness” differs significantly from the Anglo-American concept of courteous remarks, small talk and political correctness. Germans highly value honesty, straight talking, being able to cope with criticism and generally not wasting other people’s time. Consequently, business meetings (though not necessarily shorter than American ones) tend to lack the introductory chit-chat. As for the infamous efficiency: Germans are the world’s leading recreationists (at an average of 30 days of paid leave per year, not counting public holidays), while maintaining one of the highest productivity rates on earth. A late-running train is considered a sign of the degradation of society.

Germany is historically called *Das Land der Dichter und Denker* (the land of poets and thinkers). German culture began long before the rise of Germany as a nation-state and spanned the entire German-speaking world. From its roots, culture in Germany has been shaped by major intellectual and popular currents in Europe, both religious and secular. As a result, it is difficult to identify a specific German tradition separated from the larger framework of European high culture. Another consequence of these circumstances is the fact that some historical figures, such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Franz Kafka and Paul Celan, though not citizens of Germany in the modern sense, must be considered in the context of the German cultural sphere in order to understand their historical situation, work and social relations. Germany claims some of the world’s most renowned classical music composers, including Ludwig van Beethoven, Johann Sebastian Bach, Johannes Brahms and Richard Wagner.

Numerous German painters have enjoyed international prestige through their work in diverse artistic styles. Hans Holbein the Younger, Matthias Grünewald, and Albrecht Dürer were important artists of the Renaissance, Caspar David Friedrich of Romanticism, and Max Ernst of Surrealism. Architectural contributions from Germany include the Carolingian and Ottonian styles, which were important precursors of Romanesque. The region later became the site of significant works in styles such as Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque. Germany was particularly important in the early modern movement, especially through the Bauhaus movement founded by Walter Gropius. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, also from Germany, became one of world’s most renowned architects in the second half of the 20th century. The glass façade skyscraper was his idea.

Content and information collected from <http://www.hotelsbot.com/Europe/Germany.htm>

## LANGUAGES

German is a Germanic language which belongs to the large group of Indo-Germanic languages. It is related to Danish, Norwegian, Swedish, Dutch, Flemish and also English. Many different dialects are spoken in Germany. As in other languages, dialect and accent are a good indication of which part of Germany the speaker is from. The regional dialects and traditions are a legacy from the time when the area now known as Germany was populated by various tribes such as the Franks, Saxons, Swabians and Bavarians. German is also the native tongue in Austria, much of Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Luxembourg as well as parts of northern Italy, eastern Belgium and eastern France. Many Germans also speak English.

Content and information collected from [http://www.germany-tourism.de/ENG/infocenter/language\\_religion.htm](http://www.germany-tourism.de/ENG/infocenter/language_religion.htm)

## GEOGRAPHY

The territory of Germany covers 357,021 sq km (137,847 sq mi), consisting of 349,223 sq km (134,836 sq mi) of land and 7,798 sq km (3,011 sq mi) of water. It is the seventh largest country by area in Europe and the 63rd largest in the world. Elevation ranges from the mountains of the Alps (highest point: the Zugspitze at 2,962 meters (9,718 ft)) in the south to the shores of the North Sea (Nordsee) in the north-west and the Baltic Sea (Ostsee) in the north-east. Between lie the forested uplands of central Germany and the low-lying lands of northern Germany (lowest point: Wilstermarsch at 3.54 meters (11.6 ft) below sea level), traversed by some of Europe's major rivers such as the Rhine, Danube and Elbe.

Germany shares borders with more European countries than any other country on the continent. Its neighbors are Denmark in the north, Poland and the Czech Republic in the east, Austria and Switzerland in the south, France and Luxembourg in the south-west and Belgium and the Netherlands in the north-west. It is bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, between the Netherlands and Poland, south of Denmark.

Content and information collected from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany>

## WEATHER

Most of Germany has a temperate seasonal climate in which humid westerly winds predominate. The climate is moderated by the North Atlantic Drift, which is the northern extension of the Gulf Stream. This warmer water affects the areas bordering the North Sea including the peninsula of Jutland and the area along the Rhine, which flows into the North Sea. Consequently in the north-west and the north, the climate is oceanic; rainfall occurs year round with a maximum during summer.

Winters are mild and summers tend to be cool, though temperatures can exceed 30°C (86°F) for prolonged periods. In the east, the climate is more continental; winters can be very cold, summers can be very warm, and long dry periods are often recorded. Central and southern Germany are transition regions which vary from moderately oceanic to continental.

Content and information collected from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Germany>

## CUISINE

German food sticks pretty much to its roots and a typical dish will consist of meat with some form of potatoes and gravy, accompanied by vegetables or salad. The modern German cuisine has been influenced by other European countries such as Italy and France and is a bit lighter. Dishes show a great local diversity and it might be interesting to discover those. Since most bigger employers have a canteen for their employees, you will find fewer sandwich shops and takeaways than in the Anglo American world and therefore the eating out culture in Germany is dominated by the Gasthaus/Gasthof and restaurants to have proper food.

**Some of the more common eating options include:**

### **Snacks**

'Schnellimbiss' means quick snack, and is what you will see on the sign of German stalls and small shops that sell primarily sausage (Wurst) and fries (Pommes Frites). Sausages will include Bratwurst, which is fried and usually a boiled pork sausage. A very German variant is Currywurst: sausage chopped up and covered in spiced ketchup, dusted with curry powder. 'Döner Kebab' is Turkish lamb or chicken stuffed into bread, similar to Greek Gyros and Arab Shawarma. Even though considered Turkish, it's actually a speciality which originated in Germany. According to its legend, it was invented by Turkish immigrants in West-Berlin during the 1970s. In fact, the 'Döner' is Germany's most beloved fast food. The sales numbers of 'Döner' exceed those of McDonald's and Burger King products by far. Nevertheless, American fast food giants like McDonald's, Burger King and Pizza Hut are in most towns. Nordsee is a German seafood chain, they offer 'Rollmops' - soussed herrings - and many other fish and seafood snacks. However, many independent seafood snack-bars (most common along the German shores) offer slightly better and slightly cheaper seafood.

### **Bakeries and Butchers**

Germans have no tradition for sandwich shops, but you will find that bakeries / butchers sell quite nice take away food and are serious competition for the fast food chains. Even the smallest bakeries will sell many sorts of bread or rolls, most of them darker (for example, using wholemeal or more rye flour) than the white bread popular around the world and definitely worth a try. Even if they don't already have it prepared, almost all butchers will prepare a sandwich for you if you ask. Some butchers even prepare meals for you. This butcher 'imbiss' is mainly popular in southern Germany, and the quality and freshness of food is usually high.

In most restaurants in Germany you can choose your own table. You can make reservations (recommended for larger groups and haute cuisine on Saturday nights) and these are marked by reservation cards ("Reserviert"). The expensive and outstanding restaurants in larger cities will require reservations and you will not be allowed to choose your table.

### **Typical Dishes & Drinks**

**Rinderroulade mit Rotkraut und Knödeln:** this dish is quite unique to Germany. Very thin sliced beef rolled around a piece of bacon and pickled cucumber until it looks like a mini barrel (5cm diameter) flavored with tiny pieces of onion, German mustard, ground black pepper and salt. The meat is quick-fried and is then left to cook slowly for an hour, meanwhile red cabbage and potato dumplings are prepared and then the meat is removed from the frying pan and gravy is prepared in the frying pan. Knödel, Rotkraut and Rouladen are served together with the gravy in one dish.

**Schnitzel mit Pommes frites:** there are probably as many different variations of Schnitzel as there are restaurants in Germany. They have in common a thin slice of pork often covered in egg and bread crumbs that is fried for a short period of time and it is often served with fries (that's the Pommes frites part). In the south you can often get Spätzle (pasta that Swabia is famous for) instead of fries with it. Spätzle are egg noodles typical of south Germany – most restaurants make them fresh. It is very common to find Schnitzel on the menu of a German restaurant, it might even be the most common dish in German restaurants.

**Rehrücken mit Spätzle:** Germany has maintained huge forests such as the famous Black Forest, Bayerischer Wald and Odenwald. In and around these areas you can enjoy the best game in Germany. Rehrücken means venison tenderloin and it is often served with freshly made noodles such as Spätzle and a very nice gravy based on a dry red wine. Wurst

“sausage”: there is no country in the world with a greater variety of sausages than Germany and it would take a while to mention them all. “Bratwurst” is fried, other varieties such as the Bavarian “Weißwurst” are boiled. Here is the shortlist version: “Rote” beef sausage, “Frankfurter Wurst” boiled pork sausage made in the Frankfurt style, “Pfälzer Bratwurst” sausage made in Palatine style, “Nürnberger Bratwurst” Nuremberg sausage– the smallest of all of them, but a serious contender for the best tasting German sausage, “grobe Bratwurst”, Landjäger, Thüringer Bratwurst, Currywurst, Weißwurst. If you spot a sausage on a menu this is often a good (and sometimes the only) choice. Often served with mashed potatoes, fries or potato salad.

**Koenigsberger Klopse:** Literally “meatballs from Koenigsberg”, this is a typical dish in and around Berlin. The meatballs are made out of minced pork and are cooked and served in a white sauce with capers and rice or potatoes.

## Cider

Undisputed capital of “Apfelwein” cider in Germany is Frankfurt. Locals love their cider and it is very popular around here. There are even special bars (“Apfelweinkneipe”) that will serve only “Apfelwein” and some gastronomic specialties. Cider is often served in a special jug called “Bembel”. The taste is slightly different from Ciders in other countries and tends to be quite refreshing. In autumn when apples are turned into cider you might find “Frischer Most” or “Süßer” signposted at some places. That is the first product in the chain of “Apfelwein” production. You’ll want to limit yourself to one glass. “Apfelwein” is called “Viez”. It varies here from “Suesser Viez” (sweet), to “Viez Fein-Herb” (medium sweet) to “Alter Saerkower” (sour). The Viez capital of that region is Merzig. During winter it is also quite common to drink hot cider (along with some cloves and sugar). It is considered an efficient measure against an upcoming cold.

## Coffee

Germans drink lots of coffee. Currently, the port of Hamburg is the world’s busiest place for coffee trading. Coffee is always freshly made from ground coffee or beans - no instant. However, persons coming from countries with a great coffee tradition (like Italy, Portugal, Turkey, Greece or Austria) might find the coffee that is served in normal restaurants a bit boring. Over the past few years, American coffee house chain Starbucks has expanded into Germany, but mostly you will encounter “Cafés” which usually offer a large selection of cakes to go along with the coffee.

## Tea

Tea is also very popular, and a large choice is readily available. Especially the region of East Frisia has a long tea tradition, and is probably the only place in Germany where tea is more popular than coffee. According to the East Frisian tea ceremony, it is black tea served in a flat porcelain cup, with special rock sugar (Kluntje) put in the cup before pouring in the tea, and cream to be added afterwards, but not to be stirred.

As a country with many immigrants, Germany has adopted many international dishes into its cuisine and daily eating habits. Italian dishes like Pizza and Pasta, Turkish and Arab dishes like Döner Kebab and Falafel are well established, especially in bigger cities. International burger chains, as well as Chinese and Greek restaurants, are widespread. Indian, Thai, Japanese, and other Asian cuisines have gained popularity in recent decades. Among nine high-profile restaurants in Germany, the Michelin guide has awarded three stars, the highest designation, while 15 more received two stars. German restaurants have become the world’s second most decorated after eateries in France.

Content and information collected from <http://wikitravel.org/en/Germany>

# RELIGION

Protestant 34%, Roman Catholic 34%, Muslim 3.7%, unaffiliated or other 28.3%

## Christianity

A majority of the German people belong to a Christian community although many of them take no active part in church life with Sunday church attendance at less than 10 percent. 4.7% of the population are Orthodox Christians.

Independent and congregational churches exist in all larger towns and many smaller ones, but most such churches are small. One of these is the confessional Lutheran Church called Independent Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Germany.

Roman Catholicism was the sole established religion in the country in the 15th century, but the Reformation changed this drastically. In 1517 Martin Luther challenged the Catholic Church as he saw it as a corruption of Christian faith. Through this, he altered the course of European and world history and established Protestantism.

## Islam

As of 2006, according to the U.S. Department of State, approximately 3.2 million Muslims (mostly of Turkish descent) live in Germany. This figure includes the different denominations of Islam as well as religions thought to be forms of Islam by most Germans who are even aware of them, such as Alevites.

## Judaism

Today Germany, especially its capital Berlin, has the fastest growing Jewish community worldwide. Circa ninety thousand Jews from the former Eastern Bloc, mostly from ex Soviet Union countries, settled in Germany since the fall of the Berlin wall. This is mainly due to a German government policy which basically grants an immigration ticket to anyone from the CIS and the Baltic states with Jewish heritage, and the fact that today's Germans are seen as significantly more accepting of Jews than many people in the ex-Soviet realm. Some of the about 60,000 long-time resident German Jews have expressed some mixed feelings about this immigration that they perceive as making them a minority not only in their own country but also in their own community. Prior to Nazism, about 600,000 Jews lived in Germany, with familiar background going back to Roman times or even earlier. Many Jews from Russia and other former communist countries in Germany adhere to Reform Judaism.

Content and information collected from <http://wikitravel.org/en/Germany>

## **HOLIDAYS**

January 1 - New Year's Day  
January 6 - Epiphany  
April 2 - Good Friday  
April 5 - Easter Monday  
May 1 - Labor Day  
May 13 - Ascension Day  
May 24 - Whit Monday  
June 3 - Corpus Christi  
August 15 - Ascension of the Virgin Mary  
October 3 - Day of Unity  
October 31 - Day of Reformation  
November 1- All Saints Day  
November 17 - Repentance Day  
December 25 - Christmas Day  
December 26 - Boxing Day

[http://www.germany-tourism.de/ENG/infocenter/school\\_breaks\\_holidays.htm](http://www.germany-tourism.de/ENG/infocenter/school_breaks_holidays.htm)  
<http://www.cybergerman.addr.com/holidays2.htm>

## **TRAVEL OVERVIEW (GERMANY)**

### **ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

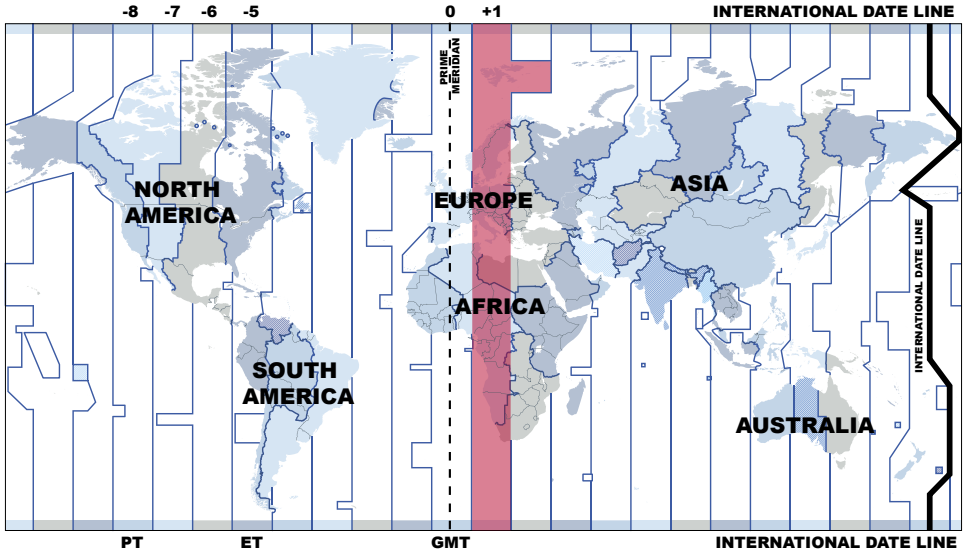
Germany is a party to the Schengen Agreement. As such, U.S. citizens may enter Germany for up to 90 days for tourist or business purposes without a visa. The passport should be valid for at least six months beyond the period of stay. For further details about travel into and within Schengen countries, please see the Schengen fact sheet ([http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4361.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4361.html)). It is the personal responsibility of each passenger to fully comply with all Immigration and documentation requirements.

Content and information collected from <http://www.hotelsbot.com/Europe/Germany.htm>



## TIME DIFFERENCE

Germany is UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)



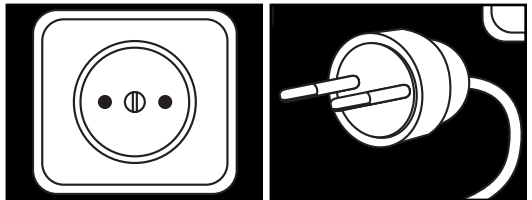
## MONEY

**Germany is a member of the Eurozone, 1 Euro = 100 cents**

The Deutsche Mark (DEM, DM) or German mark was the official currency of West Germany and, from 1990 until the adoption of the euro, all of unified Germany. It was first issued under Allied occupation in 1948 replacing the Reichsmark, and served as the Federal Republic of Germany's official currency from its founding the following year until 1999, when the Mark was replaced by the euro; its coins and banknotes remained in circulation, defined in terms of euros, until the introduction of euro notes and coins in early 2002. The Deutsche Mark ceased to be legal tender immediately upon the introduction of the euro—in contrast to the other eurozone nations, where the euro and legacy currency circulated side by side for up to two months. However, DM coins and banknotes continued to be accepted as valid forms of payment in Germany until February 28, 2002.

## ELECTRICITY

AC in Germany is 230 volts and you will need to have/purchase an adapter for electronic items that run on 110/220v current. Your larger electronic items (hairdryer, laptop, etc) will require a power converter before plugging into wall sockets in Germany. See photos to the right for specific plug information.



# PHONE CALLS

## Important Telephone Numbers

Ambulance: 112

Police: 110

Fire department: 112

## International Dialing Codes

USA 001

Germany +49

All content and information collected from [wikitravel.org/en/Germany](http://wikitravel.org/en/Germany)

# SHOPPING

In common with most other Western European languages (but unlike English), in German a comma is used to indicate a decimal. For example, 2,99€ is two euros and 99 cents. The “€” symbol is not always used and may be placed both in front or after the price. A dot is used to “group” numbers, so “1.000” would be one thousand.

Small shops are often closed from 1 to 3 p.m. If necessary in many big cities you will find a few (sometimes more expensive) supermarkets with longer opening hours (often near the main station). Bakeries usually offer service on Sunday mornings (business hours vary) as well. Also most petrol stations have a small shopping area.

In some parts of Germany (like Berlin, Cologne, Düsseldorf and the Ruhr area) there are corner shops called “Kiosk”, “Trinkhalle” (drinking hall) or “Büdchen” (little hut) that offer newspapers, drinks and at least basic food supplies. These shops are often run by Arabian immigrants and are, depending on the area, open till late night.

Basic supplies can usually be bought around the clock at gas stations. Gas station owners work around opening hour restrictions by running 7-Eleven style mini marts on their gas station property. Be aware that prices are usually quite high. Another exception to this law are supermarkets located in touristy areas. Towns designated as a Kurort (health resort) are allowed to have their stores open all week during tourist season. Just ask a local for those well-kept secret stores.

**Taxes:** Retail prices are reasonable and lower than in northern European countries but the value added tax, V.A.T., “Umsatzsteuer” (official, but even politicians use this rather sparsely) or “Mehrwertsteuer” (most Germans use this word) has been increased to 19% from 2007 onwards and therefore prices will slightly rise. Some German brands of high end goods such as kitchen utensils, stationery, and hiking gear are considerably cheaper than abroad. V.A.T. is always included by law in an item’s pricetag (only exception is for goods that are commercially exported but then duties might apply).

**Local Products:** You can find local food products (not necessarily organic) in most places at the farmer’s market (“Wochenmarkt” or simply “Markt”), usually once or twice a week. While your chances of finding English-speaking sellers there may be somewhat reduced, it’s nevertheless quite fun to shop there and mostly you will get fresh and good quality food for reasonable prices.

**Souvenirs:** German honey is a good souvenir, but only “Echter Deutscher Honig” is a guarantee for reasonable quality. Along the German coasts, smoked eel is quite a common delicacy and a typical souvenir.

Content and information collected from <http://www.hotelsbot.com/Europe/Germany.htm>

# SWITZERLAND



## QUICK FACTS

Capital: Berne

Government: Federal Republic

Currency: Swiss Franc (CHF)

Area: 41,285 Sq km

Population: 7,489,370 (July 2006 est.)

Language: Swiss-German, German, French, Italian, Romansh

Religion: Protestant and Roman Catholic in pretty equal shares, Judaism 0.2%

Electricity: 230V/50Hz

Calling Code: +41

Time Zone: UTC+1

## OVERVIEW

Switzerland is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It has borders with France to the west, Italy to the south, Austria and Liechtenstein to the east and Germany to the north.

Switzerland's independence and neutrality have long been honored by the major European powers and Switzerland was not involved in either of the two World Wars. The political and economic integration of Europe over the past half century, as well as Switzerland's role in many UN and international organizations has strengthened Switzerland's ties with its neighbors. However, the country did not officially become a UN member until 2002. Switzerland remains active in many UN and international organizations, but retains a strong commitment to neutrality.



## CULTURAL OVERVIEW (SWITZERLAND)

The culture of Switzerland is influenced by its neighbors but over the years a distinctive culture with some regional differences and an independent streak has developed. In particular, French-speaking regions have tended to orient themselves slightly more on French culture and tend to be more pro European Union. In general, the Swiss are known for their long standing humanitarian tradition as Switzerland is the birth place of the Red Cross Movement and hosts the United Nations Human Rights Council. Swiss German-speaking areas may perhaps be seen more oriented on German culture, although German-speaking Swiss people identify strictly as Swiss because of the difference between High German, and the Swiss German dialects. Italian-speaking areas can have more of an Italian culture. A region may be in some ways strongly culturally connected to the neighboring country that shares its language. The linguistically isolated Romansh culture in the eastern mountains of Switzerland is also robust and strives to maintain its rare linguistic tradition. Many mountain areas have a strong highly energetic ski resort culture in winter, and a hiking (wandering) culture in summer. Some areas throughout the year have a recreational culture that caters to tourism, yet the quieter seasons are spring and autumn when there are fewer visitors and a higher ratio of Swiss. A traditional farmer and herder culture also predominates in many areas and small farms are omnipresent outside the cities.

In traditional European fashion, friends kiss each other on the cheek three times (left - right - left). This is the usual thing to do when being introduced to someone in the French speaking part. In the German speaking part it is normal to just shake hands when being introduced. Be punctual. Not surprisingly for a country that is known for making clocks, the Swiss have a near-obsession with being on time. Lastly, do not litter; it's definitely seen as bad behavior (offensive) in Switzerland. Also make sure that you put it in the correct bin (e.g. recyclable).

Content and information collected from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland>

## LANGUAGES

There is no single Swiss language, although there are four recognized official languages. Depending on where you are in the country the locals might speak Swiss-German, French, Italian, or, in the hidden valleys of Graubunden, Romansch, an ancient language related to Latin. Some cities such as Fribourg are bilingual, and any part of Switzerland has residents who speak something besides the local vernacular at home. Around two-thirds of the population of Switzerland is German-speaking, located particularly in the center, north, and east of the country. French is spoken in the west, around Lausanne and Geneva, while Italian and Romansch are spoken in the far south.

The Swiss themselves learn one of the other Swiss languages in school. In French-speaking Switzerland, this is typically German, so English is less commonly understood there. In any of the large German-speaking cities you will have no trouble finding people who speak English. In the countryside, it is less common but hardly rare, and in the cities many prefer to use English when speaking with foreigners.

Swiss-French is essentially standard French with only a few oddities. It is spoken more slowly, with more of a drawl. The numbers are not the same. Swiss-Italian is no more divergent from standard Italian than any other regional dialect that you would encounter within Italy.

Content and information collected from <http://www.hotelsbot.com/Europe/Switzerland.htm>

## GEOGRAPHY

With an area of 41,285 square kilometres (15,940 sq mi), Switzerland is a small country with a population of around 7.6 million. Switzerland comprises three basic topographical areas: the Swiss Alps, the Swiss plateau or “middleland”, and the Jura mountains along the northwestern border with France. The Alps are a high mountain range running across the central-south of the country, comprising about 60% of the country’s total area. Among the high peaks of the Swiss Alps, the highest of which is the Dufourspitze at 4,634 metres (15,203 ft), countless valleys are found, many with waterfalls and glaciers. From these the headwaters of several major European rivers such as the Rhine, Rhône, Inn, Aare, and Ticino flow finally into the largest Swiss lakes such as Lake Geneva (Lac Léman), Lake Zürich, Lake Neuchâtel, and Lake Constance.

The most famous mountain is the Matterhorn (14,692 ft) in Valais and Pennine Alps bordering Italy. The highest mountain, the Dufourspitze (15,203 ft) in the Monte Rosa Massif (close to the Matterhorn) is followed by the Dom and Weisshorn. The section of the Bernese Alps above the deep glacial Lauterbrunnen valley containing 72 waterfalls is also well known for the Jungfrau (13,642 ft), Mönch, Eiger group of peaks, and the many picturesque valleys in the region. In the southeast the long Engadin Valley, encompassing the St Moritz area in canton Graubünden, is also well known; the highest peak in the neighboring Bernina Alps is Piz Bernina (13,284 ft).

The more populous northern part of the country, comprising about 30% of the country’s total area, is called the Middle Land. It has greater open and hilly landscapes, partly forested, partly open pastures, usually with grazing herds, or vegetables and fruit fields, but it is still hilly. There are large lakes found here and the biggest Swiss cities are in this area of the country. The largest lake is Lake Geneva (also called Lac Léman in French), in the West of Switzerland. The Rhône River is the main tributary to Lake Geneva.

Content and information collected from <http://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Wikijunior:Europe/Switzerland>

## WEATHER

The Swiss climate is generally temperate, but can vary greatly between the localities, from glacial conditions on the mountaintops to the often pleasant Mediterranean climate at Switzerland’s southern tip. Summers tend to be warm and humid at times with periodic rainfall so they are ideal for pastures and grazing. The winters in the mountains alternate with sun and snow, while the lower lands tend to be more cloudy and foggy in winter. The driest conditions persist in the southern valleys of the Wallis/Valais above which valuable saffron is harvested and many wine grapes are grown. Graubünden also tends to be drier in climate and slightly colder, yet with plentiful snow in winter. The wettest conditions persist in the high Alps and in the Ticino canton which has much sun yet heavy bursts of rain from time to time. The temperature ranges from 18 to 28 °C (65° - 82° F) during the day in the summer months of July to August. The Autumn and Spring day temperature is between 8 to 15 °C (46° - 59° F) and the winter is colder with temperatures from -2 to 7 °C (28° - 45° F) during January and February.

Content and information collected from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Switzerland>

## CUISINE

Foods often associated with Switzerland include cheese and chocolate. Swiss cheeses, in particular Emmental cheese, Gruyère, Vacherin, and Appenzeller, are famous Swiss products. The most popular cheese dishes are fondue and Raclette. Both these dishes were originally regional dishes, but were popularized by the Swiss Cheese Union to boost sales of cheese.

## Traditional Foods & Drinks

Rösti is a popular potato dish that is eaten all over Switzerland. It was originally a breakfast food, but this has been replaced by the muesli, which is commonly eaten for breakfast and in Switzerland goes by the name of “Birchermüesli” (“Birchermiesli” in some regions). For breakfast and dinner many Swiss enjoy sliced bread with butter and jam. There is a wide variety of bread rolls available in Switzerland. Bread and cheese is a popular dish for dinner. Tarts and quiches are also traditional Swiss dishes. Tarts in particular are made with all sorts of toppings, from sweet apple to onion.

There are a great number of regional dishes in Switzerland. One example is Züri gschnätzelttes—thin strips of veal with mushrooms in a cream sauce served with rösti. Italian cuisine is popular in contemporary Switzerland, particularly pasta and pizza.

Many Swiss supermarkets have an entire aisle dedicated solely to Swiss chocolate. Rivella, a carbonated Swiss drink, is one of the most popular drinks in Switzerland. Apple juice (and cider) is popular in many areas of Switzerland.

The chocolate drink Ovomaltine (known in the USA as “Ovaltine”) originates in Switzerland and enjoys ongoing popularity, particularly with young people. Aside from being a beverage it is also used on top of a slice of buttered bread.

Content and information collected from [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss\\_cuisine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swiss_cuisine)

## RELIGION

Switzerland has no official state religion, though most of the cantons (except Geneva and Neuchâtel) recognize official churches, in all cases including the Catholic Church and the Swiss Reformed Church. The 2005 Eurobarometer poll found 48% to be theist, 39% expressing belief in “a spirit or life force”, 9% atheist and 4% agnostic.

Christianity is the predominant religion of Switzerland, divided between the Catholic Church (41.8% of the population) and various Protestant denominations (35.3%). Immigration has brought Islam (4.3%, predominantly Kosovars) and Eastern Orthodoxy (1.8%) as sizeable minority religions. The country is historically about evenly balanced between Catholic and Protestant, with a complex patchwork of majorities over most of the country. The larger cities (Bern, Zürich and Basel) are predominantly Protestant, while Central Switzerland is traditionally more Catholic. The Swiss Constitution of 1848, under the recent impression of the clashes of Catholic vs. Protestant cantons that culminated in the Sonderbundskrieg, consciously defines a consociational state, allowing the peaceful co-existence of Catholics and Protestants. A 1980 initiative calling for the complete separation of church and state was resoundingly rejected, with only 21.1% voting in support.

Content and information collected from [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion.in.switzerland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/religion.in.switzerland)

## HOLIDAYS

January 1- New Year's Day

April 5 - Easter Monday

May 1 - May Day

May 8 - Liberation Day

July 5 - Day of the Apostles St Cyril and St Methodius

July 6 - Anniversary of the Martyrdom of Jan Hus

September 28 - Czech Statehood Day

October 28 - Independence Day

November 17- Freedom and Democracy Day

December 24 through 26 - Christmas

# TRAVEL OVERVIEW (SWITZERLAND)

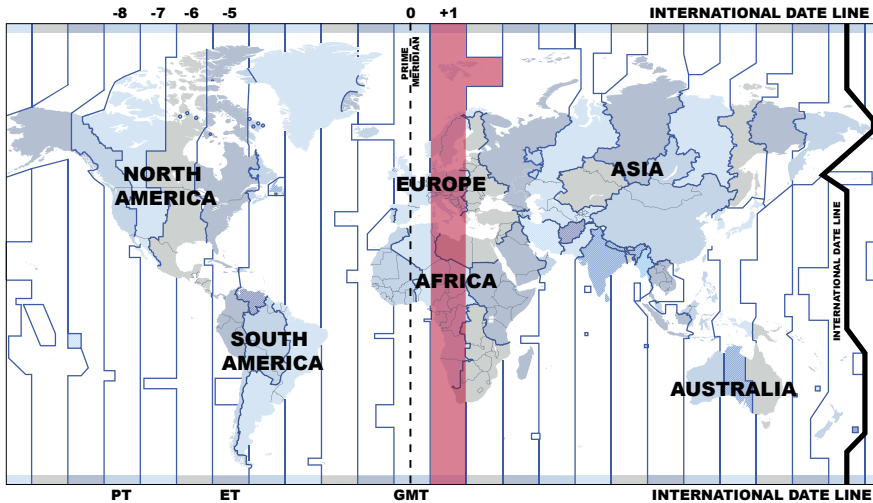
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[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4361.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4361.html)

## TIME DIFFERENCE

Switzerland is UTC+1 (6 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)



## MONEY

**Swiss franc (or Franken or franco, depending in which language area you are)**

Please note that Switzerland remains with the Swiss franc, usually indicated as CHF. While Switzerland is not part of the European Union and thus is not obliged to convert to the Euro, many prices are nonetheless indicated in euros so that visitors may compare prices. Merchants may accept euros but are not obliged to do so. Change given back to the client will most likely be in Swiss francs.

Content and information collected from [wikitravel.org/en/Switzerland](http://wikitravel.org/en/Switzerland)

## ELECTRICITY

Switzerland has its own standard which is described in SEV 1011. (ASE1011/1959 SW10A-R) This plug is similar to the type C Europlug (CEE 7/16), except that it has an offset earth pin and the pin shanks are not insulated, so plugs partially inserted into non-recessed sockets present a shock hazard. Sockets used in kitchens, bathrooms and other wet areas are recessed, while those used elsewhere are not. Some plugs and adaptors have a tapered form and can be used in either environment, while others will fit only the non-recessed sockets. Swiss sockets accept Swiss plugs or Europlugs (CEE 7/16). There is also a non-earthed two-pin variant with the same pin shape, size, and spacing as the SEV 1011's live and neutral pins, but with a more flattened hexagonal form. It fits into round and hexagonal Swiss sockets and CEE 7/16 sockets, and is rated for up to 10 A.



A less-common variant has 3 square pins and is rated for 16 amps. Above 16 amps, equipment must either be hardwired to the electrical supply system with appropriate branch circuit protection, or connected to the mains with an appropriate high power industrial connector.

<http://www.czechtourism.com/eng/uk/docs/practical-info/faq/info/03-electrical-network/index.html>

## PHONE CALLS

### International Dialing Codes

USA 001

Switzerland +41

Public phones in Switzerland are surprisingly cheap, and have no surcharge for credit cards. If you stay for some time, it may be advisable to buy a pre-paid cell phone card that you can use in any phone that supports the GSM standard on the 900/1800 Mhz bands - they usually cost around 10-40 CHF and are obtainable in the shops of the mobile service providers Swisscom, Orange or Sunrise in most cities. Mobile network coverage is close to 100% by area, even in the mountainous, non-populated areas.

Content and information collected from [wikitravel.org/en/Switzerland](http://wikitravel.org/en/Switzerland)

## SHOPPING

Switzerland is not part of the European Union and the currency is the Swiss franc. However, many places (such as supermarkets and the railways) still accept Euro (notes only) and will give you change in Swiss Francs. Changing some money to Swiss Francs (CHF) is essential. Money can be exchanged at all train stations and most banks throughout the country. Switzerland is more cash-oriented than most other European countries. But all ATMs accept foreign cards, getting cash should not be a problem.

Switzerland is famous for a few key goods: watches, chocolate, cheese, and Swiss Army Knives.

**Watches:** Switzerland is the watch-making capital of the world, and "Swiss Made" on a watch face has long been a mark of quality. While the French-speaking regions of Switzerland are usually associated with Swiss watchmakers (like Rolex, Omega, and Patek



Philippe), some fine watches are made in the Swiss-German-speaking region, such as IWC in Schaffhausen. Every large town will have quite a few horologists and jewelers with a vast selection of fancy watches displayed in their windows, with huge price tags to go with them. For fun, try to spot the most expensive of these mechanical creations and the ones with the most “bedazzle!!”.

**Chocolate:** Switzerland may always have a rivalry with Belgium for the world’s best chocolate, but there’s no doubting that the Swiss variety is amazingly good. Switzerland is also home to the huge Nestlé food company. If you have a fine palate - you can find two of the finest Swiss chocolatiers in Zurich: Teuscher and Sprüngli. For the rest of us, even the generic grocery store brand chocolates in Switzerland still surpass the chocolate bars found elsewhere. For a good value, try the “Frey” brand chocolates sold at Migros. If you want to try some real good and exclusive swiss chocolate, go for the Pamaco chocolates, derived from the noble Criollo beans and accomplished through the original, complex process of refinement (quite expensive though, a bar of 125g costs about CHF 8.-).

**Cheese:** many different regions of Switzerland have their own regional cheese speciality. Of these, the most well-known are Gruyère and Emmentaler (what Americans know as “Swiss cheese”). Be sure to sample the wide variety of cheeses sold in markets, and of course try the cheese fondue! Fondue is basically melted cheese and is used as a dip with other food such as bread. The original mixture consists of half Vacherin cheese and half Gruyère but many different combinations have been developed since.

**Swiss Army Knives:** Switzerland is the official home of the Swiss Army Knife. There are two brands Victorinox and Wenger. Both brands are manufactured by Victorinox. The most popular Victorinox knife is the Swiss Champ which has 33 functions. Most shops throughout Switzerland stock Victorinox Knives. They are excellent gifts and souvenirs. N.B. Swiss Army Knives must be packed in checked luggage.

Ski and tourist areas will sell the other kinds of touristy items - cowbells, clothing embroidered with white Edelweiss flowers, and Heidi-related stuff. Swiss people love cows in all shapes and sizes, and you can find cow-related goods everywhere, from stuffed toy cows to fake cow-hide jackets. If you have a generous souvenir budget, look for fine traditional handcrafted items such as hand-carved wooden figures in Brienz, and lace and fine linens in St. Gallen. If you have really deep pockets, or just wish you did, be sure to shop on Zurich’s famed Bahnhofstrasse, one of the most exclusive shopping streets in the world. If you’re looking for hip shops and thrift stores, head for the Niederdorf or the Stauffacher area.

Content and information collected from [wikitravel.org/en/Switzerland](http://wikitravel.org/en/Switzerland)

# TRAVEL INFO & TIPS

## TRIP ATTIRE

As you plan for your Reformation Tour, plan to bring comfortable clothes. Dress in cool, cotton layers. Pack comfortable walking or tennis shoes. Additionally, many of the holy sites in Europe prohibit entrance to people with bare shoulders or exposed knees, and you will need to plan accordingly for most of the days of the tour. Women can bring a lightweight shirt or sweater, a skirt (covering the knees) or pants, and either a scarf or hat for a head covering. Men will need a shirt with sleeves and long pants. It's much easier to simply wear the appropriate attire than to try and re-dress in modest attire on the bus. Hats, sunglasses and sunscreen are always good travel essentials—An extra pair of prescription glasses may prove a blessing. A lightweight jacket or sweater will be wanted for cooler evenings, as well.

## TRIP PREPARATION

You'll need your paper ticket, e-ticket confirmation, airlines itinerary OR boarding pass to get through the security checkpoint at the airport.

- Bring proper photo identification – A Passport is required for travel to Europe.
- Pack any sharp objects, such as scissors and knives, in your checked baggage.

Visit [www.TSA.org](http://www.TSA.org) for a detailed list of items prohibited in aircraft cabins. Items allowed in carry-on baggage include nail clippers, nail files, tweezers, safety razors (including disposable razors), eyelash curlers, knitting needles, walking canes and umbrellas.

## VACCINATIONS

Before travel, be sure you and your children are up to date on all routine immunizations according to schedules approved by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practice (ACIP). See a complete schedule of immunizations for adults (<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/adult-schedule.htm>) and the schedule for infants and children (<http://www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.htm>). Some schedules can be accelerated for travel. See your doctor at least 4–6 weeks before your trip to allow time for shots to take effect. If it is less than 4 weeks before you leave, you should still see your doctor. It might not be too late to get your shots or medications as well as other information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

## HELPFUL MEDICATIONS & ITEMS

- Personal prescription medications (in original containers or carry copy of prescription)
- Anti-Diarrhea & upset stomach medications
- Anti-malarial medications, if applicable
- Antibiotic for self-treatment of moderate to severe diarrhea
- Motion sickness medication
- Antihistamine • Decongestant, alone or in combination with antihistamine
- Acetaminophen, aspirin, ibuprofen, or other medication for pain or fever
- Mild laxative • Cough suppressant/expectorant • Throat lozenges • Antacid
- Antifungal and antibacterial ointments or creams • 1% hydrocortisone cream
- Epinephrine auto-injector (only if prescribed by physician—controlled substances and injectable medications require an accompanying letter from prescribing physician)
- Antibacterial hand wipes or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Insect repellent containing DEET (up to 50%)
- Sunscreen (SPF 15+) and/or aloe gel (for sunburns)
- Basic first-aid items
- Oral re-hydration solution packets
- Moleskin for blisters
- Lubricating eye drops (e.g., Natural Tears)

## JET LAG

Flying across multiple time zones disrupts your natural body rhythms, leading to sleep problems and other symptoms. Learn how to put jet lag to rest. Like cures for the common cold, jet lag remedies abound. How effective they are is a matter of debate, but most experts agree on a few basic rules:

- Get plenty of rest before your trip. Starting out sleep-deprived makes the effects of jet lag even worse.
- Traveling east, try going to bed one hour earlier each night for a few days before you depart.
- Go to bed one hour later for several nights if you're flying west.
- If possible, eat meals closer to the time you'll be eating them at your destination.
- Drink plenty of water before, during and after your flight to counteract the dehydrating effects of in-flight cabin air.
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine, both of which dehydrate you further.
- Try to sleep on the plane if it is nighttime at your destination. Earplugs, headphones and eye masks can help block out noise and light. If it is day where you're going, resist the urge to sleep.
- Adjust your watch to the new time before you leave. Once you reach your destination, try not to sleep until nighttime, no matter how tired you are.
- Use light to set your internal clock; it's the best natural tool for regulating the sleep-wake cycle.
- Consider melatonin or other holistic herbal or diet remedies. Check the Internet for information.
- Investigate other remedies. Talk to your friends and see what has helped or worked for them.

Swollen ankles are a very common problem on long flights, because of the lack of 'musclepumping' that helps drain away tissue fluid normally. This is **not** due to a more serious condition called DVT (deep vein thrombosis.)

How to minimize the effects of sitting for long periods of time

- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice.
- Avoid drinking alcohol, it will dehydrate you more.
- Get up and move around as often as you can.
- When seated, try moving your ankles and going up and down on your tiptoes.
- Try the airline recommended exercise program found in the in-flight magazine.
- Wear elastic compression stockings to improve circulation.
- Avoid sitting with legs crossed and do not wear restrictive clothing.
- Some doctors may recommend you take an aspirin before you fly—that is a decision to be made in consultation with your medical provider.

## TOTE BAG AND PURSES

It's helpful to keep a large tote bag with you on the bus, packed with the following items; camera, film, a change of shoes, sunglasses, sunscreen, modesty kit, Bible, medications, and over-the-counter comfort aids. You will also want a lightweight purse or backpack to take with you as you tour sites. The bus will remain locked at all times and at all locations, so your tote bag will be secure.

## PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

Please remember that any pictures, videos, and recordings, you take of the trip are for your personal use only. Performances by speakers and musical artist are usually copyrighted and thus are protected by international copyright laws that apply worldwide. If you should distribute your photographs or videos beyond your own personal use or for profit, you might be breaking some copyright laws.

## **RESTROOMS**

Public restrooms are available at most tourist sites, and it is recommend that you carry tissue in your bag along with disposable wipes (some bathrooms just are not clean). Some locations will have an attendant who asks for a small user's fee.

## **TAXIS**

If you need to use a taxi to get back to the hotel, insist that the meter be turned on and reset at the start of the trip. The driver might want to make a deal with you, but it might be cheaper to let the meter run. Ask the driver what approximate price will be charged before beginning the trip (Taxi service availability may vary from location to location).

## **TIPPING**

As in many countries, a 15-20 percent tip is expected in restaurants where you have received good service. This tip is included as part of your tour package with all group meals. However, when dining on your own, you'll want to remember to tip.

## **AIRPORT SECURITY**

For your safety, it is possible that you will be interviewed by professional security officers before departing for your home country. Answer their questions completely and truthfully, but do not elaborate. Have your tour documents ready. Do not be concerned by this process, and do not feel threatened or insulted. Remain calm, but do not joke with them. The process may be tedious, but remember, it increases your own safety.

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# VOCABULARY GUIDE

ENGLISH	CZECH	GERMAN	FRENCH
Hello	Dobrý den	Guten Tag	Bonjour
Hi	Ahoj!/Čau	Tag	Salut!
Good Morning	Dobré ráno	Guten Morgen	Bonjour
Good Night	Dobrou noc	Gute Nach	Bonne nuit.
Good Bye	Na shledanou	Auf Wiedersehen	Au revoir
Bye	Ahoj!/Čau	Tschüs	Au revoir
See you later	Na shledanou později	Tschüs	A bientôt
Please	Prosim	Bitte	S'il vous plait
Excuse Me	S dovolením	Entschuldigung	Excusez-moi
I'm sorry	Promiňte	Es tut mir leid	Je suis désolé
Thank You	Děkuji	Danke schön	Merci
Thanks	Dík(y)	Danke	Merci
You are welcome	Prosim/Není zač	Bitte schön	De rien
Yes	Ano	Ja	Oui
No	Ne	Nein	Non
Do you speak English?	Mluvíte anglicky?	Spricht hier jemand Englisch	Parlez-vous l'anglais?
I don't understand	Nerozumím	Ich verstehe nicht	Je ne comprends pas.
I need a doctor	Potřebuji doktora	Ich brauche einen Arzt!	j'ai besoin d'un médecin
I need a phone	Potřebuji si zavolat	Ich benötige ein telefon	j'ai besoin d'un telephone
Call the police	Zavolejte policii	rufen Sie die Polizei	appelez la police!
I'm looking for a Hospital	Hledám nemocnici	ich suche nach einem Krankenhaus	cherchez un hopital
Where is	Kde je	Wo ist	Où se trouve... / Où est...
Is it far?	Je to daleko	Ist es weit	c'est loin?
Information center	Informační centrum	Informationszentrale	information touristique
How much does it cost?	Kolik to stojí?	Wieviel kostet das?	Combien ca coute
Entrance	Vchod	Eingang	entrée
Exit	Východ	Ausgang	pas de fumar
Open	Otevřeno	Offen	ouvert
Closed	Zavřeno	Geschlossen	fermé
Restroom	Toalety	Toilette	la salle de bain
No smoking	Zákaz kouření/Kouření zakázáno	Rauchen verboten	pas de fumar
bridge	most	brucke	le pont
castle	hrad	schloss	Chateau
church	kostel	kirche	Valise
garden	zahrada	garten	Jardin
river	řeka	fluss	église
shop	obchod, prodejna	geschäft	boutique
square	náměstí	rathausplatz	grand-place
station	nádraží	bahnhof	station

<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>CZECH</b>	<b>GERMAN</b>	<b>FRENCH</b>
stop	stanice, zastávka	halt	arreter
street	ulice	strasse	boulevard/avenue
theatre	divadlo	theater	theatre
town	město	stadt	ville
men	muži	mannen	nomme
women	ženy	frauen	madame, femmes



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