

GERMANY (Central Europe)

Touring Tips



Read alongside our [general advice for motoring in Europe](#).

Driving licence

You must be at least 18 years old to drive a temporarily imported car or motorcycle.

Motor insurance

You must have a minimum of third-party cover.

Fuel

- Unleaded petrol (95 and 98 octane) and diesel are available.
- LPG is also available from more than 5000 stations.
- Leaded petrol is not available but you can buy lead substitute additive.
- You may carry up to 10 litres of petrol in a can in Germany but this is not permitted on board ferries.
- Credit cards are accepted at most filling stations but you should check with your card issuer for usage in Germany before travel.
- E10 (petrol containing 10% Ethanol) is widely available in Germany – pumps are clearly marked - but is not suitable for all vehicles. Check with your car manufacturer before use or refer to this [list published by the European Car Manufacturers' Association](#).

Speed limits

(Standard legal limits, which may be varied by signs, for private vehicles without trailers)

- Built-up areas 31 mph (50 km/h)
- Outside built-up areas 62 mph (100 km/h)
- Dual carriageways 80 mph (130 km/h) (recommended maximum)
- Motorways 80 mph (130 km/h) (recommended maximum)

You may only drive on German motorways if your vehicle has a design speed of more than 37mph (60 km/h).

In bad weather (visibility below 50m) the maximum speed limit is 31 mph (50km/h).

If you've got snow chains fitted the maximum speed limit is 31mph (50 km/h).

Seat belts

Front and rear seat occupants must wear seat belts if fitted.

GERMANY (Central Europe)



Touring Tips

Passengers/children

- Any children aged under 12 and less than 1.5m tall must be seated in a suitable child seat/restraint.
- You may not carry a child in a rear-facing child seat in the front unless any passenger airbag has been deactivated.
- Any child restraints/seats you use must conform to ECE 44/03 or ECE 44/04.
- The driver is responsible for making sure that all children are safely restrained.

Lights

- It's recommended that dipped headlights or daytime running lights are used during the day.
- It's compulsory to use dipped headlights during the day if fog, snow or rain restricts visibility.
- You must not drive with sidelights (parking lights) alone.
- You must use dipped headlights in tunnels.

Motorcycles

- It's compulsory to use your dipped headlight at all times.
- Riders of motorcycles and mopeds must wear a crash helmet.
- You must wear a crash helmet when riding a trike or quadbike capable of more than 20 km/h unless seat belts are fitted and worn.

Drinking and driving

- The legal limit is 49 milligrams of alcohol per 100 millilitres of blood.
- Penalties include fines and being banned from driving in Germany.
- If you're under 21 or have held your licence for less than 2 years there is a zero limit and you could be fined €250 if even a small amount of alcohol is detected.

Fines

- Fines can be on-the-spot or in the form of a deposit, if you refuse to pay your vehicle can be confiscated.
- You could be fined for many offences including speeding, using abusive language and making derogatory signs.
- Wheel clamps are not used in Germany but vehicles causing obstruction can be towed away.

GERMANY (Central Europe)



Touring Tips

The following items are compulsory in Germany

- **Winter tyres/equipment***

***Tyres**

You must not use summer tyres in Germany during winter weather conditions – standard tyres fitted in the UK are generally summer tyres.

Germany's winter tyre regulation applies to all motorised vehicles using roads in Germany including those registered abroad.

Winter weather conditions include black ice, snow, ice, slush and frost which may be present even if the temperature is above 0C.

Winter, or all season tyres designed for use in wintry conditions will normally be marked with 'M+S', a snow flake or snowy mountains symbol.

Some 'M+S' tyres sold in the UK are summer tyres and would not meet the German requirements so we recommend checking with your tyre supplier or manufacturer if you are unsure.

If your car is only fitted with summer tyres you cannot drive in winter weather conditions and could be fined €60 just for doing so and €80 if you actually obstruct traffic. You could also be prevented from continuing your journey unless you get the tyres changed or the weather conditions improve.

You must not use spiked tyres.

Other rules/requirements in Germany

It's not actually compulsory for visiting motorists to carry a warning triangle but it's recommended that you do, as all drivers must signal their vehicle in case of breakdown, and it is a compulsory requirement for German residents. It isn't compulsory to carry a first aid kit or a reflective jacket but it's recommended as they are compulsory in German-registered vehicles.

It's recommended that you carry a spare bulb kit.

If you are driving a slow-moving vehicle you must stop at suitable places and let others pass.

You must not overtake or pass a school bus that is approaching a stopping point (indicated by flashing hazard lights) and could be fined for doing so.

GERMANY (Central Europe)

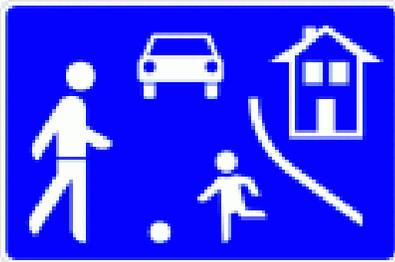


Touring Tips

If you have a GPS or Satnav system that can show the location of speed cameras then this function must be disabled or the system must not be carried.

It's forbidden to use radar detectors.

This sign means that you must not drive faster than walking pace – The walking pace speed has not been legally established but it's no more than 7kph.



Legally, vehicles must be equipped in accordance with weather conditions so you must adapt your vehicle to winter weather conditions, if required. This includes but is not limited to the use of a suitable additive in windscreen washer fluid and winter tyres. In extreme weather snow chains may be required too.

Emission Zones

Some German cities operate environmental zones in which access to some vehicles is restricted. If you intend driving in one of these restricted areas, you will have to display a 'Plakette' (sticker) in your windscreen and will be fined €80 for not doing so.

Restricted areas are indicated by signs "Umweltzone" showing coloured vignettes ("Plakette") - green, yellow and red.

You can get a 'Plakette' from technical inspection centres or approved garages in Germany and the colour of the 'Plakette' issued will depend on the type of engine and the Euro classification of the vehicle. You will have to present the vehicle registration certificate and pay a fee of 5 to 10 Euros.

The fee is a one-off charge and the 'Plakette' remains valid in any German City as long as it remains fixed in the vehicle. You cannot transfer it to another vehicle.

You can [obtain a vignette before you travel](#) We recommend that allow plenty of time.

[Maps and detailed information of the environmental zone areas.](#)

GERMANY (Central Europe)



Touring Tips

If you haven't got enough time to get the 'Plakette' before you travel, there are lots of testing stations throughout Germany where you can get one. [Visit the Dekra website](#) and enter a postcode or street name to find the nearest testing station operated by Dekra (this section of the DEKRA website is only available in German.)

June 2016

Related advice and information

European breakdown cover »

Travel insurance »

Travel money »

Atlases and guides »

General advice - driving abroad »

European low emission zones »

European tolls »

Touring tips country by country »