

EXPLORE!



Highlights of Germany

8 days

Germany - Trip code GER

Highlights of Germany

On this fast-paced trip you'll get to experience the highlights of Eastern Germany from the capital Berlin right down to Munich in Bavaria. We'll see the main highlights such as Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, the stylish city of Leipzig, Colditz Castle and the famed cities of Dresden and Nuremberg. We travel by coach but also local train, explore the cities on foot and get off the beaten track and see Neuschwanstein Castle and Konigstein Fortress from an angle that most travellers don't on our included walks to these famed attractions. On our Christmas markets departure you'll get the opportunity to browse the traditional markets in each city we stay in and indulge yourself in spiced gingerbread, warm gluhwein and tasty roasted sausages. We also visit Annaberg-Buchholz in the Erzgebirge Mountains, which is known as the cradle of German Christmas traditions and has one of the most beautiful Christmas markets in Germany.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Colditz Castle** - Experience the infamous prisoner of war camp on our included guided tour
- ★ **Leipzig** - Visit this fashionable city by local train and see Europe's largest railway station
- ★ **Neuschwanstein Castle** - Visit the ultimate fairy tale castle and get a different view from our walk in the Pollat Gorge
- ★ **Berlin** - Explore Germany's capital with the chance to bike along the Berlin Wall
- ★ **Old cities** - See the historic Old City districts of Dresden, Nuremberg and Munich on foot

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

12 - 18

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join trip in Berlin

Our trip begins in Germany's capital city, Berlin. After checking in to our hotel and meeting the group, this evening is at leisure for you to enjoy your first taste of the city's restaurants and nightlife. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 Auguststrasse was able to establish itself as a trendy gallery district and here you'll find a variety of restaurants in historic buildings that you might like to dine in this evening. If you're booking your own flights then please ensure that you let us know whether you're arriving into Berlin Schonefeld or Tegel Airport so we can arrange your transfer accordingly



Accommodation: Hotel Titanic (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Berlin walking tour; free afternoon to perhaps cycle the Berlin Wall

This morning our Explore Leader will take us on a walking tour of some of this city's main attractions including the Rotes Rathaus City Hall and the Nikolai Quarter, which is the oldest residential area in the city. We'll also see the Berlin TV Tower and Berlin's largest city square, Alexanderplatz. Around this square are buildings constructed by the German Democratic Republic in East Berlin as part of their vision of a 'new socialist utopia'. We continue through the Lustgarten Pleasure Gardens and from here we can view the domes of Berlin Cathedral and Museum Island. We then walk down Berlin's grand avenue, Unter den Linden to see the Baroque buildings from the Prussian era and the famous Brandenburg Gate. Other sights include the moving Holocaust Memorial, the site of Hitler's Bunker and finally, we see Germany's most beautiful square, the Gendarmenmarkt and Checkpoint Charlie, which used to be the crossing point between East and West Berlin. This afternoon is free for you to further explore this large city and its many attractions. It's easy to get around using the metro and public buses. You may like to visit the East Side Gallery, which is

1.3 kilometre long section of the Berlin Wall that has been kept as a monument to peace, or perhaps the Berlin Wall Memorial. If you'd prefer to be a bit more active, then a great way to see the city is by bike and you can choose to join a bike tour from the Prenzlauer Berg District to see the most impressive Berlin Wall sights on Bernauer Strasse including the Memorial Centre. You'll also be able to visit some of Berlin's many famous Christmas markets such as Weihnachtszauber at the Gendarmenmarkt, which is popular for handmade trinkets and cheeses and you could try a cup of hot white chocolate milk or some fried apple. Another option would be the oldest of the markets, Berliner Weihnachtszeit at Roten Rathaus, where you can ride the Ferris wheel or try your hand at ice skating. One of the smaller and less commercial markets is Lucia in the courtyards at Kulturbrauerei, which has a Scandinavian feel to it.



Accommodation: Hotel Titanic (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Train to Dresden via Leipzig; walking tour of Dresden

Today we leave Berlin and take a local train to Leipzig in Saxony. On arrival our Explore Leader will take us on a walking orientation tour to see Europe's largest railway station -Leipzig Central, which was built in 1915 and the Old City Hall, which is now part of the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum. We'll also see the historic fair trading and exhibition buildings, Naschmarkt (market square), the Goethe Memorial statue and the lovely Saint Nicholas Church. After spending around three hours in Leipzig we'll hop back on the train to Dresden and take a taxi from the station to our hotel. After checking in our Explore Leader will take us on a walking tour to get our bearings and see the Rococo styled Zwinger Palace, Semper Opera House, Kreuzkirche Lutheran Church and Dresden Castle. We'll also visit Neumarkt, which is an area that was largely destroyed by Allied bombing during World War II and the firestorm which followed. The Frauenkirche (Church of Our Lady) survived this but sadly collapsed a few days later. During the proceeding Soviet era this area in the heart of the Old City remained empty apart from the ruins of the church which were left as a memorial site, but it has now thankfully been fully restored and is once again a beautiful area to explore. On our Christmas departure you'll be able to visit Striezelmarkt, Dresden's most famous Christmas market and one of the oldest in the country. It's known best for its stollen cake, which is definitely worth sampling. You can also buy a variety of other culinary treats including gingerbread cookies, roasted nuts, deep-fried dumplings and of course a glass or two of gluhwein (mulled wine). You'll also find a range of wooden crafts, Christmas gifts and decorations, incense smokers and handmade candles.



Accommodation: Hotel Dormero Konigshof (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Free day in Dresden; chance to take the train to Konigstein Fortress

Today is free for you to explore Dresden. Perhaps this morning you'd like take the train to near Konigstein Fortress and from the station you can enjoy a pleasant climb on a hiking trail to the castle, which is perched on a rock plateau above the Elbe River. You can easily spend a couple of hours here to explore the castle complex and if you want to learn more then there's the option to hire an audio guide. Following your visit you can walk back to the train station along the old fortress road. In total the walk will take around 2.5 hours, covers 6 kilometres and has a maximum ascent/descent of 300 metres. This afternoon you may like to take the train to Meissen, which is a 35 minute journey away. Meissen is also situated on the Elbe River and is most famous for its porcelain which has been manufactured here for centuries and for its pretty hilltop castle. Back in Dresden itself perhaps you'd like to join a cruise along the Elbe to Blasewitz (it takes approximately 90 minutes). Some of the ships used on this route are traditional steam boats, which give you a real sense of travelling in a bygone age.



Accommodation: Hotel Dormero Konigshof (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Visit Colditz and Christmassy Annaberg-Buchholz; arrive in Nuremberg

This morning we drive to Colditz Castle for a guided tour. This Renaissance castle gained notoriety in World War II when it was used as a prisoner of war camp. After our tour and a little free time here for you to have lunch we drive to Annaberg-Buchholz in the Erzgebirge Mountains, which is known as the cradle of German Christmas traditions and has one of the most beautiful Christmas markets in Germany. Here you can buy locally made wooden toys, Erzgebirge figurines and handmade lace from Plauen as well as trying delicious potato pancakes and chubby sausages. After time here to explore we drive on to Nuremberg where we stay for the next two nights. This evening is free to make your first discoveries of the city, known for its Medieval architecture including its almost completely intact old city walls.



Accommodation: Hotel Agneshof Nuremberg (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Nuremberg walking tour; chance to enjoy a beer tasting

This morning our Explore Leader will take us on a walking tour of the old city to see some of its most iconic buildings and the Hauptmarkt market square where we'll find 'the beautiful fountain'. This 14th century fountain looks like a mini Gothic cathedral and according to local folklore if you turn the golden ring attached to the railing three times and make a wish, it will come true. This afternoon is free for you to discover more. Perhaps you'd like to visit the Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds, Nuremberg Castle or walk the city walls (they're 5.5 kilometres long). Or perhaps you'd like to take group tour of the Hausbrauerei Altstadt underground rock-cut beer cellars and enjoy a beer tasting. Another culinary option would be to take the gastronomic walking tour 'the taste of Nuremberg', which lasts around 3 hours and you'll get the chance to enjoy some food samples along the way. Nuremberg is home to Christkindlesmarket held in Hauptmarkt Square. Here you'll find around 180 stalls full of Christmas handicrafts including 'Nuremberg Plum People' which are little figurines made from prunes and culinary delight such as spicy gingerbread, fruit loaf and roast sausages.



Accommodation: Hotel Agneshof Nuremberg (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Visit to Neuschwanstein Castle and Royal Castles walk; Munich orientation tour

This morning we drive to Neuschwanstein Castle where we have a 30 minute guided tour followed by time for you to explore on your own and grab some lunch. The castle is the epitome of a traditional fairy tale castle, which was built for show rather than any strategic or defensive purposes. We then take a circular walk up through the impressive Pollat Gorge to view the royal castles of Neuschwanstein and Hohenschwangau from the Marienbrücke Bridge. Our walk will take around 1 hour 45 minutes, covers a

length of 4.5 kilometres and has a maximum ascent/descent of 215 metres. Next we will continue the drive to Munich, the capital of Bavaria, which is probably best known for its beer festival, Oktoberfest, but there is far more to the city than that. Munich centre is easily walkable and retains a small town feel. This evening our Explore Leader will take us on an orientation tour of the Old City to see the Frauenkirche and Saint Peter's Churches, Marienplatz Square which is home to the very ornate New City Hall, Alter Hof (the old court building), the central square of Odeonsplatz and the Munich Residenz, which was formerly a Bavarian royal palace. After a busy day you may like to visit Hofbrauhaus, which has a traditional beer hall dating back to the 16th century. Here you can sample a wide variety of traditional German beers and hearty food such as white sausages, boiled beef and apple strudel.



Accommodation: Arthotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Trip ends in Munich

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Munich. Your transfer to the airport today will either be by local train or by taxi. The local train service is very efficient with trains running every 10-20 minutes and reaching the airport in just under 45 minutes. Depending on the time of your flight, you may want to enjoy some of Munich's numerous attractions. You could take a stroll through the English Garden, which is one of Europe's biggest city parks. At the Residenz Museum you can learn about Bavaria's rulers from 1508 right up to World War I or you could revisit the city's biggest landmark, Frauenkirche Church, which dates from 1488 and although it was damaged by bombing in World War II it's been reconstructed and remains the spiritual heart of Munich. If you're looking for something a bit more unusual then you can visit the only second-hand traditional clothing shop in the city, Holareidulijo where you might pick up a pair of Lederhosen. Or perhaps you'll choose to visit the Olympiapark which was built for the 1972 Summer Olympic Games.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

On our Christmas markets departure you'll get the opportunity to browse the traditional Christmas markets in each city we stay in and also visit Annaberg-Buchholz in the Erzgebirge Mountains, which is known as the cradle of German Christmas traditions and has one of the most beautiful Christmas markets in Germany.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 7



Transport

Bus
Taxi
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

7 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

Germany Holidays & Tours

Climate

Germany has a variable climate with frequent changes of weather from day to day. Expect a contrast of warm summer days with the possibility of showers at any time.

Time difference to GMT

+1

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Christian

Language

German

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Berlin: Berlin Wall by Bike tour (public English tour starts at 15.00 and lasts for 3.5 hours and covers 15 kilometres) €21.00 per person including bike rental (helmets are provided). Dresden: Konigstein Fortress audio guide €3.00; train to/from Meissen €10.00 per way; River Elbe boat cruise €16.00. Nuremberg: Documentation Centre Nazi Party Rally Grounds (open until 18.00 with admission until 17.00) €5.00; Nuremberg Castle (open until 18.00 or 16.00 in October only) €7.00; private tour for 75 minutes of Hausbrauerei Altstadt beer cellar €100.00 per group and beer tasting from €4.00 per person; the taste of Nuremberg guided walk €125.00 per group.

Clothing

In spring and summer, lightweight clothing is best during the day plus warmer clothing for colder nights. We also recommend taking a lightweight raincoat and an umbrella. During autumn and winter layers work best. In winter we recommend taking a hat,

gloves, scarf, fleece/jumper and a thick waterproof and windproof jacket.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes and sandals or trainers for relaxing. If you're travelling in winter then it may be slippery underfoot, so please ensure that your footwear is waterproof and that it has a good grip.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack for personal items. Remember that you'll have to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

We recommend taking insect repellent (if travelling in summer), sunscreen, sunglasses and a torch. Most importantly don't forget your camera.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Explore Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly you should allow approximately £20.00 for tips. In order to make things easier for you, the Explore Leader may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Country Information

Germany Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£18

Beer price

£3

Water price

£1.3

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Euro

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP and USD are readily exchanged.

Where To Exchange

We recommend that you change any currency into Euros prior to arrival. Bureau de Change are generally only found in major cities and large airports.

ATM Availability

ATMs are readily available throughout Germany.

Credit Card Acceptance

Most major credit cards are accepted, but ask first.

Travellers Cheques

Can be exchanged at banks and exchange shops.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Taxi, Train

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Germany: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our [Essential Information](#) and [Booking Conditions](#).

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. [Read more about them here.](#)

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Included activities

This holiday is designed to acquaint you with the highlights of Eastern Germany in just 8 days. On Day 3 we'll be using trains between the cities to experience travelling like the locals do and you'll need to be able to carry your luggage on/off the trains. Most of our explorations within the towns and cities visited are done on foot and there are also a couple of included walking excursions as well, so please bring sensible footwear and be prepared for the busy nature and amount of walking involved in this enthralling holiday. Where we have included walking tours to introduce you to the main sights of the cities/towns visited you'll get to see the wonderful exteriors of the buildings listed in our trip notes. Following the tour they'll usually be some free time for you to go back to any that you'd like to take a more in depth look at and to pay the entrance for the attraction to see the inside.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, polio and hepatitis A. Tickborne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Europe, at specific times of the year. Check latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.