



Germany Travel Planning Podcast

Ep 6 - 4 Mistakes to Avoid When Planning Your Own Germany Trip

Transcript

Welcome to episode 6 of the Germany Travel Planning Podcast. In this episode, I share four common Germany travel planning mistakes and the simple strategies you can use to avoid them.

If you're dreaming of traveling to Germany, you're in the right place. Hey, I'm Cate co-founder with my husband Aaron of MyGermanyVacation.com and host of this podcast. Our goal is to help you plan and enjoy a meaningful and unforgettable trip to Germany and surrounding countries. So let's dive in.

There are so many things that can throw a wrench into your carefully planned trip to Germany and beyond. Since you're likely investing a significant amount of money into your travels, Aaron and I want to help you avoid these wrenches as much as possible so you can enjoy your Germany adventure and create unforgettable memories without unnecessary stress or complications. The good news is that with the right preparation, you can avoid making these mistakes.

In today's episode, I'm going to talk about the top mistakes we see travelers make and how you can avoid them.

Before we get into that, I want to stress, if you realize as you listen to this episode that you're making any of the mistakes I'm going to talk about, please don't feel bad. You're not doing anything wrong. Travel has changed so much in the last few years, and in some ways it can be even more challenging to plan a trip these days than it was five, 10, 15, 20 years ago. So if you're making any of these mistakes, you're not alone.



We have made them ourselves at one time or another. Becoming aware of a mistake is half the battle, and once you're aware of it, you can change course.

And we are here to help you every step of the way. Now, you're probably wondering, okay, just what are these mistakes I might be making?

So let's jump in. Mistake number one is waiting too long to book important elements of your trip.

It's so easy to fall down a rabbit hole of endless research and spending hours lost in Facebook groups, watching YouTube videos, TikToks, reading travel blogs, scouring reviews, using price trackers, researching the latest travel hacks. I mean, you get the idea. The problem is that at a certain point, this type of research stops being helpful and it just creates analysis paralysis. And instead of leading to an itinerary that you're excited about, you feel more like you're going around in circles and not making any progress as you see your departure date zooming towards you.

If you enjoy doing travel research, consuming a lot of travel info is really fun, at least initially. If you don't enjoy doing travel research, it can feel overwhelming very quickly. and in any case, it can lead to weeks or months of putting off booking important elements of your trip.

in missing out on finding the best hotel deals or rooms that are harder to find like family rooms or staying in a castle hotel because when you finally decide which castle you want to stay at and the dates you go to book it and it's all booked up, private guides because they also book up quickly.

Or you find train tickets cost more because they increase in price as it gets closer to your departure date. And not to mention, it's just really, really stressful. And it can put a huge damper on your trip before you've even boarded the plane. Not only do I hear



this exact thing from clients, but we've experienced this ourselves when we've planned trips to countries we've never been to. And in fact, last summer, we decided fairly last minute to stop in Northern Ireland on our way back to the US from Germany.

And it was really stressful trying to put that trip together for all the reasons I just mentioned. And I almost just canceled our stopover because it was just taking time away from other things that were really important. And it just wasn't an enjoyable experience. I decided not to cancel the trip. I did actually get it put together, but I was still working on it when we were traveling. It worked out okay, but it was more stressful than it needed to be.

And because of that stress, it did decrease the enjoyment we had of our trip. And I do not want that for you. I want you to enjoy every bit of your trip when you're in Germany and as much of the planning process as possible.

So if you find yourself in this situation, please don't beat yourself up. There's so much information out there and while you can gather a lot of free information, the problem is that it's all in little incomplete pieces and it's hard to put those pieces together into a complete and coherent trip.

It's like gathering a bunch of tiny puzzle pieces and then trying to put that puzzle together. It's possible, but it's very difficult and it can take a very long time.

This is actually why we put all of our guides and our interactive map into our DIY Germany travel planner. We decided against selling all of the guides and pieces separately because we didn't want to just give you little puzzle pieces. We want to make the planning process easy for you. So that's why we give you access to all of the pieces of the Germany travel planning puzzle at one time.



And it's why we're adding three new guides to the planner instead of just selling everything separately.

If you find yourself putting off booking important elements of your trip because you're going around in circles, here are three suggestions.

If you like to join Facebook groups, limit yourself to one or maybe two Facebook groups and really get to know these groups, get to know the group members, get to know the leaders of the group. And that way you'll be able to better evaluate the responses you get and the information that is put out in the group. You'll know whose input and advice will work for you. And that will decrease the overwhelm that you feel and you will feel less like you're going off in all different directions.

If you're looking for a good Facebook group to join, check the show notes because We have a really wonderful Facebook group full of kind and friendly and helpful people.

So if you are looking for a great Germany travel Facebook group, come over and join us. The second tip is to keep track of all of your travel notes and research in one place. this will help you stay organized and staying organized will help you feel less scattered and less overwhelmed. You can use a Google Doc or a Word document or notes app on your phone or if you have our DIY Germany travel planner, there's a notes tab in the itinerary planning spreadsheet that you can use. And that way you have access to all of your notes as you are working on your itinerary.

The third tip is to get help, whether it's from us at MyGermanyVacation or someone else. If it is from us, you can use our DIY Germany Travel Planner, or if you'd like personalized help, you can book a Zoom travel planning consult, a custom itinerary, or an itinerary review.



We would love to work with you and create the most unforgettable amazing trip ever. That is really fun and low stress for you.

One more thing before we move on to mistake number two. Sometimes you do have to plan trips last minute and you just don't have the time for research and planning.

if that's the case for you, book a consult or a custom itinerary with us and let us do the heavy lifting. That way you can get your trip sorted out very quickly and easily. And then you can focus on things like getting up to speed on navigating trains or driving in Germany, packing, and most importantly deciding which German beers you want to sample.

Let's move on to mistake number two, which is not learning the basics about train travel in Germany. Germany's train system is one of the most efficient and extensive in Europe, and it connects a lot of the destinations you'll likely want to visit. Yes, there are delays and even cancellations here and there, as lots of much needed improvements are being made to the train system, but generally, taking the train is comfortable and it's a great way to travel around Germany, especially if you're visiting larger towns and cities. And if you get the right tickets at the right times, it can also be a super affordable way to travel. Unfortunately, we see travelers make costly train travel mistakes simply because they don't invest a little time into understanding some train travel basics.

One huge tip, and I cannot stress this enough, don't leave learning about train tickets and train travel and all of that to just before you leave or worse, after you arrive in Germany. Do not do that. It will be very stressful and you will regret it.

Learning the basics of things like ticket and rail pass options, knowing when to use regional day passes versus standard tickets versus a rail pass, which tickets to book in advance and which you can buy in Germany, how to book seat reservations, when you need to book seat reservations, and learning how to navigate train stations, tight



connections, what to do and what not to do, what you're on the train. Learning just some of those basics can save you hundreds of euros, tons of time, and it can prevent stressful situations during your trip.

For those of you who have our DIY Germany travel planner, great news because you already have our Germany train travel made easy guide in the planner. So check out the cheat sheets that we have for you. And then also there's a video that I created that takes you step by step through everything you need to know about travel in Germany. So you really can learn what you need to know about train travel and tickets and all of that in just about an hour and then you will feel so much more confident and ready to have a great time traveling by train in Germany.

Moving on now to mistake number three, which is not planning ahead for Sundays and holidays. Many things are closed on Sundays and holidays in Germany, including grocery stores, boutiques, clothing shops, drug stores, department stores, offices, pharmacies, things like that.

What's open are restaurants, bakeries, cafes, bars, some museums and tourist sites, and stores and train stations and airports. When you're planning your trip,

Consider where you'll be on Sundays and holidays so you can plan ahead.

As much as possible when I'm planning my own trips, I like to make Sundays a travel day. But when that's not possible, just check to make sure that the sites you want to see or the tours or activities you want to do are available.

And be sure to stock up on essentials like food, groceries, drinks, snacks, shampoo, and things like that on Saturday or another day, just not on Sundays.

And make sure to buy souvenirs when stores are open. It's really heartbreaking when you plan to purchase something and you think, I'll go buy it on our last day. And then



you realize that your last day someplace is on a Sunday and the store is closed. So if you have the opportunity to buy a souvenir, just purchase it when you can.

And every once in a while, there will be a local holiday that you just didn't know about, and you'll find that stores are closed and you just didn't know that they would be closed. So if there's something you wanna buy, buy it when you have the opportunity, don't put it off.

And now for the final mistake that we're gonna talk about today. Mistake number four, which is trying to fit too much into your trip. Everyone makes this mistake. And I totally get it, Germany is packed with incredible destinations, so it's tempting to cram in as much as possible into your itinerary.

Part of the problem is that Germany is bigger than most people think. So it's super easy to plan a trip that looks fine at first glance, but is actually setting yourself up for a less than amazing experience or an even downright miserable experience.

Part of the problem is that when you're planning your own trip, it's really hard to know what is actually realistic or to know the tricks for maximizing your time in Germany. Like I said, this is a mistake that everyone makes it's something that I help clients with all the time.

If you think that you're trying to fit too much into your trip, here's a few tips.

First, if you want to see and do a lot, but you don't want to spend a lot of time in transit, focus on one or two regions that are easy to combine. And if you're traveling by train, check the Deutsche Bahn website, or if you're traveling by car, check Google Maps to see how long it will take to get from one location to the other. Sometimes it looks like it's going to take a really long time to get from one place to the other, and you find that there's actually an express train or you find that it's actually very quick to travel there. And it can be the opposite. Sometimes you think like, that's really



close. These two places are really close to each other. It won't take that long to get there. And you find that it actually does take a long time to drive or take the train or that there is no train. have to take a bus.

So checking on those things will help you get a realistic picture of how much you really can fit in.

Second, be realistic about how early you'll start your day and how late you'll end each day, especially if you're traveling with other people. It's way too easy to think, we'll start our day at eight o'clock and it's okay if we don't return home until 10 o'clock at night.

But you have to think, okay, if you're gonna start your day at eight, you have to get up, you have to get ready, you need to eat breakfast, you need to get your bearings for the day, and that can often take longer than you expect. And if you don't return home until 10 p.m. at night, are you really gonna fall asleep right away? Are you going to get enough sleep? And yeah, when you're traveling, you can go on adrenaline and you can push yourself and maybe you don't need quite as much sleep.

But it is good to think about these things because you don't want to find that you are so tired that you can't enjoy your trip. Or if you're traveling with other people, you might be okay getting up early, but your travel companions might not.

Third, really give some thought to what you want to experience in Germany and how you want to experience Germany.

Some clients we work with want to do as much as humanly possible and they say we are totally okay with long days. We want to do a fast trip. We want to see as much as we can. And so we figure out how to make that happen in a way that maximizes their time in the best way possible because it is doable.



Other clients realize that what they really want is a relaxed approach because they want to balance enjoying time with their travel companions, relaxing in a beer garden and just really, you know, taking in the vibe and experiencing German culture. And they really want to balance that with seeing a lot of top sites. So it's very important to just really sit down and think about this for yourself or maybe discuss this with your travel companions so everyone can get on the same page.

What is your ideal trip really look like? What does it feel like? It's a good idea to really think about how you want to experience Germany and what you want your trip to feel like, how you want to feel when you're in Germany. It will then be easier for you to look at your itinerary and say, yeah, this will work or maybe we need to make some adjustments. And it's way better to do before you get to Germany.

And the fourth tip is to sit down and really think through each part of your itinerary. That's exactly what I do when I plan trips for Aaron and me and that's exactly what I do for our clients too. I sit down and look at every part of the trip and I really think each piece through to make sure there's enough time for everything, but not too much time. And just think through, this the pace that I want or that our clients want? it's really worth giving some time to that because then you'll see what doesn't quite work.

Now if you've created your itinerary but you're unsure whether it's really doable, book an itinerary review. I'm happy to look it over and what I'll do is I will create a video, I will talk through your entire itinerary and I will tell you, I think this part will work, I think this part won't work as well, here are some alternatives, you can ask some travel questions, I'm happy to answer them. A lot of people ask about trains and things like that.

I'll put a link in the show notes so that you can check it out and you can see whether that would be helpful for you.



And there you have it. Now you know how to avoid these four very common Germany travel planning mistakes so you can enjoy an unforgettable trip to Germany.

Until next time, happy travel planning!

Thanks so much for listening to the Germany Travel Planning Podcast. If you enjoyed today's episode, please leave us a review. Leaving a review is a fantastic way to support the podcast because it helps others discover our Germany travel content and trip planning tools. We also encourage you to share this podcast with your fellow travelers. Be sure to check out the show notes for the links and resources I mentioned in today's episode. And visit our website, mygermanyvacation.com for expert travel resources.

that make planning your Germany trip easier and stress-free, including free travel guides, our step-by-step DIY Germany travel planner, and personalized services like custom itineraries, one-on-one trip planning consults, and itinerary reviews to ensure that you make the most of your time and enjoy the best of Germany. Until next week, happy travel planning!