



Germany Travel Planning Podcast

Ep 14 - 11 Germany Travel Mistakes You Can Totally Avoid

Transcript is autogenerated

You're just starting to plan your Germany adventure. Maybe you've got a few cities in mind or a growing list of things to see. But before you get too deep into the big stuff like mapping out your driving routes or making hotel reservations, let's talk about the mistakes that can quietly derail your trip. I'm talking about the details most first time travelers to Germany don't even think about until it's too late.

This is the Germany Travel Planning Podcast, the show that helps you plan a super fun trip to Germany. My name is Cate and I'm your Germany Destination Specialist.

I'm here to help you plan the trip of a lifetime.

Today we're tackling mistakes travelers often make. Because if it's your first time visiting Germany, you don't know what you don't know. So that's why I'm gonna share 11 common mistakes and how to avoid them. So your trip will feel smoother and easier and way more enjoyable.

Mistake number one is not bringing a European outlet adapter.

German electrical outlets are different from the ones used in the US, the UK, and other countries. So if you're planning to charge your phone or your camera battery or an iPad, laptop, electric toothbrush, et cetera, et cetera, you'll need to bring an outlet adapter. We've tested a bunch of them over the years and there's one that we really love and we use it on every single trip to Germany. I'll link to it in the show notes so you can check it out and see if it'll work for you too.



This adapter that we love so much is compact, so it's really easy to pack, it's not very heavy, and it also has USB ports, which makes it super convenient to charge all of our tech at one time in the evening.

I also want to mention here that while many things that need to be charged are dual voltage these days, you should always double check. Anything that's not dual voltage will need a voltage converter instead of just a plug adapter.

We have a whole guide on this topic on our website, so I'll link to that in the show notes and then you can look at it and see if you do just need a plug adapter or if there's anything where you're going to need a converter as well.

Mistake number two, not bringing a portable battery for your phone.

Your phone will be your lifeline in Germany. You will use it for maps, train tickets, translations, navigation, photos, and so much more.

Aaron and I use our phones all day every day when we're in Germany and we run out of battery by about 2 p.m.

So we bring a portable charger that we each use to keep our phone batteries topped up all day. I can't recommend this enough. It gives us such peace of mind to know that we are not going to suddenly find ourselves without being able to use our phone.

The portable charger that we have can charge both of our phones and it's pretty small and lightweight. So it's really no problem to carry with us when we're out and about. I'll link to it in the show notes so you can check it out.

Mistake number three, not using a phone tether.



Trust me, it's a lifesaver. You likely don't use a phone tether at home, but just imagine you're out and about in Germany, you're taking photos on the go, you're walking on cobblestones, you're leaning over a ledge, or maybe you're on a boat and you're leaning over the ledge over water, or you're on a bridge, or you're on an overlook.

You are using your phone for directions in crowded spaces. You're sitting down in restaurants. I mean, I am always worried that I'm going to drop my phone or I'm going to set it down in a restaurant or somewhere else and I will just forget it. And I worry if I'm in a crowded place like on a bridge or a boat or an overlook that somebody might bump me and I might drop my phone. And I'm also a little worried that somebody could snatch it out of my hand when I'm not paying attention.

But when I use my wrist strap, I don't have to worry about any of these things. My rule for myself is if my phone is out of my travel purse, it is tethered to my wrist. That way I don't even have to take the chance that I'll drop it or I'll lose it or that it'll be snatched out of my hand. I know some people prefer tethers that you can wear like a necklace or cross body, but personally I prefer the wrist strap.

I just find it easier, especially if I want to take pictures or if I want to hold on to it, if I'm looking at navigation or something, and I just find it much more comfortable.

So having a wrist strap is cheap and it will give you so much peace of mind. Aaron also uses a wrist strap, but he uses a different one than I do. And he only uses his when we're traveling. But I actually liked using mine so much, I use it when I'm at home too. I'll link up the wrist straps that we each use in the show notes so you can check them out.

Mistake number four, not using the Deutschland ticket.

So many travelers pay more than they need to for train travel. I see it all the time. And I know, I know, I know, I know. There are so many options, so many tickets, and it can



be a lot to sort through all of them to figure out which ticket, which pass will work the best for your trip. Sometimes it's not just one ticket. Sometimes it's a combination of tickets, so I know it's a lot to go through.

And side note, that's exactly why we figure out the best train tickets or passes or combination of those things, the best routes, departure times, et cetera, for our clients who book a custom itinerary with us. This is actually a huge perk that comes with the custom itineraries because we do the heavy lifting so that you don't have to spend hours and hours or days sorting through all of that.

And we are so happy that we are able to save you so much time and hassle so you can enjoy train travel in Germany.

If you're traveling within Germany for more than a few days, but within one calendar month, and you plan to use city public transit and regional trains, the Deutschland Ticket monthly pass is such a good deal.

At the time of this recording, it costs under 60 euros per person and you get unlimited travel on city and regional public transportation all across Germany. That includes buses, trams, S-Bahn, U-Bahn, some ferries, and regional trains that run from city to city.

Aaron and I have used this ticket many times for several months in the past few years, and I honestly cannot recommend it enough. Now, it's not right for everyone or for every trip, but it could save you a lot of money and make transportation easier.

If you're wondering whether the Deutschland ticket will work for you, check the show notes because I will link up our guide to this ticket that's on our website. And we have a lot more information, more details about the ticket. So if you're interested in it, definitely go check that out.



Mistake number five, not downloading the DB Navigator app.

If you plan to take the train in Germany, this app is a must. Whether you're going to take high-speed trains or the city to city regional trains, you definitely need to download this app.

It's the official app for the Deutsche Bahn, which is the German train system, and not only is it where you can keep train tickets you've purchased, it's super helpful for checking schedules and platforms, delays, and even buying tickets if needed. The app is in English, so definitely download it before you leave for Germany.

And if taking the train in Germany and figuring out which tickets or passes to get is starting to feel daunting, don't worry. Our DIY Germany Travel Planner includes a whole section on train travel in Germany and takes you step by step through all the basics you need to know so that you can buy the right tickets and get seat reservations, navigate train stations, and feel confident taking public transit and trains all over Germany on your trip.

I'll link to the DIY Germany travel planner in the show notes. So if you don't yet have access to it, you can go there and you can check it out. You will find it so helpful as you plan your trip.

Mistake number six, planning exactly where to eat every single meal.

Now first, I do wanna say that we have a list of recommended restaurants on our website that highlight some of our travel community's favorite places to eat around Germany. And I will link to that in the show notes, so definitely go check that out if you're looking for some good restaurants and beer gardens and cafes and things like that.



And if you do already have our DIY Germany travel planner, you'll find recommendations for restaurants, cafes, bakeries, ice cream, beer gardens, and other places that Aaron and I have enjoyed. You'll find those on our interactive map. Okay,

Now here's the thing, while it can be useful to have a short list of some places that you think you might want to eat, we don't recommend making reservations for every single meal while in Germany.

Personally, I don't like to be tied down and have to cut something short just so I can rush across town to eat at a specific place and at a specific time. I mean, I might not even be hungry at that time, right? So Aaron and I rarely make restaurant reservations. Instead, when we're hungry, we'll check Google Maps and we'll see what's available near us.

We'll look at some reviews and then we'll narrow things down to a couple of places. And then since they're all real nearby, we'll just go over and look at the restaurants and the menus that are posted outside. then we just choose one that looks good in that moment. And that's always worked for us. We have never had a bad meal in Germany. So I encourage you to be spontaneous when it comes to meals rather than locking yourself into eating at specific times or at specific restaurants every single night. That doesn't mean that you can't or shouldn't choose some restaurants ahead of time or make reservations. definitely make reservations if you do have a larger group.

Or if you need to eat at a specific time each day and you just don't want to have to think about it, those are good reasons to make reservations in advance.

And also, if eating at a couple of specific restaurants is just as important as visiting specific sites, then definitely work that into your itinerary. Just don't do it every night.



Leave some room for spontaneity. Some of our favorite food memories are from places that we just randomly discovered when we were out and about.

Mistake number seven, not carrying coins when in Germany. This one often catches people off guard.

You'll need change for public toilets because yes, they often cost between 50 cents and a euro, maybe a little bit more at some train stations. You'll also need coins for lockers at train stations, museums, and other sites, as well as for shopping carts at grocery stores. So when you arrive in Germany, make a point of stashing away some coins so you'll always have them when you need them.

I always keep some coins in a special little pocket in my purse. That way I won't accidentally use them and they will always be there when I need them.

Mistake number eight, not bringing your own washcloth or top sheet if you need them.

If you've never been to Germany, you might not know that top sheets and washcloths aren't commonly provided in hotels, guest houses, and apartments. You will get towels, you'll get a cover for your duvet, and you'll get a bottom sheet.

But you'll almost never get a top sheet or a washcloth. This is totally normal in Germany, but it surprises a lot of travelers. So if you can't sleep without a top sheet or you can't live without your washcloth, I recommend bringing them with you.

Mistake number nine, not watching out for bike lanes.

Germany is a bike friendly country and has marked bike paths everywhere. In many places, these bike paths run parallel to pedestrian sidewalks. And because of that, it's super easy to accidentally step into the bike lane and sometimes right in front of which as you can imagine can be unpleasant or even downright dangerous.



You'll find bike lanes both in the street and on the sidewalk, though not at the same time. You'll find them either on the street or on the sidewalk. And they're usually marked with either white lines, a bike symbol, or bricks that are a different color compared to the part of the sidewalk that's for pedestrians. It's not always super obvious where the bike lane is and where the pedestrian area is, so just keep your eye out.

If you hear a bell ringing rapidly behind you, yeah, you're probably in the bike lane. So just step to the side and continue walking.

And don't worry, we've all done it.

Mistake number ten, not bringing a reusable shopping bag.

We always bring two fold-up reusable bags to Germany because they come in so handy. Bring your own reusable shopping bags for groceries, shopping and souvenirs, laundry, taking snacks on the train, or impromptu picnics. I'll link up the ones that we love in the show notes.

And finally, mistake number eleven, not paying attention to escalator etiquette.

When you're on an escalator in Germany, make sure that you stand on the right and walk on the left. This is a small thing, but people in Germany follow this rule. So whatever you do, when you get on the escalator, don't stand on the left.

If you do that, you will likely hold up everyone behind you. So remember, stand on the right, walk on the left.

And there you have it, 11 Germany travel mistakes you can now avoid. Be sure to check the show notes for all of the links to the guides, the outlet adapter, and all the other things that I mentioned in this episode. Two quick things before you go.



First, if you found any of our podcast episodes helpful, please, please, please, please, please leave a five star rating and review if you haven't already done that yet. the more ratings and reviews we have, the more our podcasts will be shown to other travelers. So your rating and review really helps us out.

Second, if you're in the early stages of planning your trip and you want to feel confident, organized, and avoid lots of rookie mistakes that can derail your dream trip and cost you a lot of extra money, you need our DIY Germany Travel Planner.

Think of it as your travel savvy best friend who's handing you time saving shortcuts, step by step directions, and insider insights.

So you can go from asking yourself, where do I even begin with planning this trip? To confidently saying, This is going to be the best trip ever. It's basically a masterclass in how to plan your perfect trip to Germany.

Or if you want a trip that's fully tailored to you, but without spending weeks or months figuring it all out yourself, let us create a fully custom itinerary just for you, designed around your interests, priorities, and budget.

We'll do all the heavy lifting, including recommending specific hotels, driving routes, train tickets, and activities for each day of your trip. So you can skip the overwhelm, confidently book each piece of your trip, and get right to the fun part, preparing for departure. You'll find links to our DIY Germany Travel Planner and Custom Itinerary Service in the show notes and on our website, mygermanyvacation.com.

Thanks so much for listening to the Germany travel planning podcast and until next week, happy travel planning.