



Germany Travel Planning Podcast

Ep 31 - Souvenirs That Bring Germany Home With You

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Have you started thinking about what you might want to bring home from Germany? The topic of souvenirs comes up in our Facebook group every once in a while. So I thought I'd do an episode sharing some ideas of things that you might want to bring home with you, either for gifts or for yourself. So that way you'll know exactly what you want to shop for before you arrive in Germany.

Welcome to 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, including choosing the perfect souvenirs to remember your travels.

Before we get into specific items, let's talk about what makes a great souvenir. In my opinion, great souvenirs are things that have local identity. So maybe they're made from local materials or there's local craftsmanship involved, or maybe it has some sort of local story.

Consumables are also really great souvenirs and they make great gifts. So, you know, food and drinks, candy, chocolate, all that delicious stuff. Also things that are usable, everyday items that you might wear or just use in your everyday life. Those are some of my favorite souvenirs. And then also something that's displayable that will go with your home decor that you enjoy seeing every day and that you see it and it reminds you of your trip.



And maybe also it's a good conversation starter. When somebody comes over to your house and they see it, and that's like a nice little door that opens up to sharing a little bit about your trip and your experience in Germany.

Good souvenirs are also things that you can easily and affordably bring home, and also just anything that reminds you of a moment, a place, or something specific about your trip. There have been times where we just like spontaneously have some memorable moment. And then we see something that we hadn't really even considered could be a souvenir, but it just connects to that very memorable special moment we had, and it becomes a favorite souvenir. So with all that in mind, let's talk about some specific souvenir ideas.

The first one is a classic. It's iconic, and pretty much everyone who goes to the Black Forest wants to get one. You can probably guess it's a cuckoo clock.

Black Forest Cuckoo clocks are amazing. They're beautiful. There's a wide variety. There's different styles. You can get big ones, little ones, ornate, simple. There are lots of classic designs and there's even some more modern designs that are interesting. But these can be really, really beautiful souvenirs. They also range in price and you do need to think about how you're going to get at home, whether you're going to mail at home. Some people like to send half of it home and then take half of it in their suitcase. That just kind of reduces the price of shipping a little bit.

And if you do want a cuckoo clock, I highly recommend doing some research ahead of time. Just look online, you'll be able to find some information about them and also photos. And the reason for doing research ahead of time is because there's a lot of different choices. And as soon as you step into a Black Forest cuckoo clock shop, you're gonna be overwhelmed by the options. There are people there who will help you and they can give you information about the different designs and your different options. But I found it so helpful to spend a little time beforehand becoming familiar with them so that when I went into a shop, it was much easier to narrow down, okay,



this is what I'm interested in, this is the price range, and this is how I want to take it home. And then it just makes it so much easier. So these clocks really are works of art. And if you're interested in getting one, you will absolutely enjoy seeing it every day in your home.

Another classic German souvenir, another classic when it comes to souvenirs are Christmas decorations and Christmas ornaments. Germany is the best country for Christmas. And they have an amazing variety of ornaments for your tree and for your home. And so if you love Christmas, these can make really, really wonderful souvenirs. Over the years, we've brought home so many different types of Christmas tree ornaments. You can get everything from very lightweight and simple straw ornaments at Christmas markets to wooden ornaments and also things like those wooden smokers and the really big wooden pyramids and all sorts of things, nutcrackers and, oh my gosh, this is an amazing variety of Christmas decorations that you can get. So if you're into Christmas and you love decorations, then that would definitely be something that would be really, really wonderful to bring home and add to your Christmas decor.

If you're a beer drinker, something that could be fun to bring home is a beer stein or a beer krug. The steins are those, you know, kind of like traditional steins that you'll still see around Germany, I mean, mostly for decoration, but the kind that have the lid that you can take on and off. So you'll see those, those can be really fun, you know, decorations for your home and, maybe you would use one. But if you want something that you'll use on a more regular basis, then look for a beer krug. These are mugs that are made out of ceramic or stoneware. Sometimes they're kind of plain, sometimes they're decorated, and sometimes they'll have a lid, but a lot of times they don't.

And you'll see these if you go to restaurants or beer gardens. So those can be really fun. They can be heavy and they can, depending on what you get, they could break. So you have to think about how you're gonna transport it home. You can also find



those big glass mugs for beer that are a liter. And you find these at beer gardens and also at Oktoberfest. And I have brought a few of those home over the years. You do definitely have to think about how you're gonna transport them but I found that it didn't break, they're pretty sturdy.

Something that I've always enjoyed bringing home are things like fountain pens, pens, notebooks, journals, and planners. Germany has amazing paper and notebooks and pens, and they're really good quality too. So if you like writing or sketching or journaling, or if you still like to use the hard copy planners, Germany is a great place to pick up some really amazing things.

Over the years, I have brought home countless fountain pens, tons and tons of pens. They're also not that expensive, so it's just kind of a fun thing to pick up and use while I'm in Germany, write postcards and stuff, and then I bring it home and use it when I'm at home. And I also, even now, I still really like to bring home notebooks, and I use these here at home when I'm working. I always have a couple of different German pens and a couple of spiral notebooks, and I just love using them every day.

Like I said, they're good quality, so it's a joy to write with them and to write on the paper. But also, it just makes me happy. You know, when I see the pen that I remember buying in that little shop in Berlin, and the notebook that I bought when I was in, you know, whatever random town and just stopped by a little store and found a notebook. Those types of things make me really happy and make me feel connected to Germany even when I'm back at home in the U.S. And I love that they're also just very practical everyday items. I use them every single day.

Another category of souvenirs that are really fun are related to food and drinks. So these are consumables and I also really like these as souvenirs and also as gifts. I mean, who doesn't love eating a really good bar of chocolate, right? So speaking of chocolate, you can get, of course, brands like Ritter Sport and Milka. Those are really popular. And even though you can buy those brands in other countries, I know I've



seen them a lot in the US in the last several years, you can actually get different flavors in Germany. You go into any grocery store and you'll see a wide variety of chocolate and especially Milka and Ritter Sport. And especially if you go during Christmas time, you'll see special Christmas flavors. So I always go in and pick out a selection of chocolate and bring it home. I've never had any problem bringing home chocolate. And actually when Aaron and I got married, I was in Germany for about five weeks, like right before we got married.

So I went to the grocery store right before we came home and I bought chocolate for every single guest. I filled up like an entire bag full of chocolate and I brought it home. I was a little nervous going through customs. I wasn't sure if they would question me at all, but they didn't, it was totally fine. So you can bring home as much chocolate as you would like.

Another good souvenir is marzi pan. You can get the regular marzipan that is just plain or chocolate covered. That's a good option if you just like marzipan. But you can also get these little marzipan figurines. So it's just marzipan that's been molded and then painted to look like pigs or different types of fruit. Or sometimes they'll be like seasonal shapes. And they're super cute. I mean, they're almost too cute to eat. But that can be another fun thing to bring home or a fun gift, especially if you know somebody who likes marzipan.

Mustard is another great option and you can go into any grocery store and you can find lots of different types of mustard. That's something we bring home too. And you can actually bring home different kinds and then you get, that would make a great gift, but you could also bring home a few different kinds of mustard and then use them throughout the year. You can also find other condiments like curry ketchup or spice mixes. If you're there during the Christmas season, you can find really great Christmas spice blend. And also you can go to like the baking aisle and you could get different things that would be fun to bake with. I also like to just go to the aisle



where they have different packets, you know, and I'll like, I'll just get like different packets for things that I might want to make at home.

Actually, just going to the grocery store is a fun experience in Germany. And you can just go up and down the aisles. I do this every single time, even though I know exactly what's there. I just like to walk up and down the aisles. And I'll just bring home different things that look good, just things I want to try or things that I like in Germany that I'd like to have at home.

Also, definitely go to the chocolate aisle, as I mentioned. Go to the candy aisle because you'll find things like different types of Haribo, gummy bears, and lots of different gummy candies and licorice. Especially up in Northern Germany, you can get different types of licorice that I think kind of come from Denmark maybe, but you can get salted licorice and regular black licorice. And you can just find some really interesting things to give as gifts or to take home and enjoy once you're at home.

Also go to the chip and cracker aisle because there's some really good things there that are a little bit different from what you might have in your home country. I know there's some things that are different from what we have in the US and I always enjoy picking up a few things even if I just eat them as snacks on my flight home.

And also related to food, there's alcohol. Germany is home to an incredible range of beers, obviously, and also they have a lot of local wines and you can also get different spirits like the Kirsch that goes into Black Forest Cake.

If you're able to bring liquids home, because they do have to go in your checked luggage, you could bring home a couple different kinds of beer or some wine or maybe something like Kirsch or maybe Jägermeister. You can go take a look at the store and see what they have that looks interesting to you. You do want to think about how you're going to transport it, because like I said, it does have to go in your



checked luggage. I have brought beer home with no problem, but you do want to make sure that it's not going to get broken.

There are things you can purchase ahead of time so that you can transport bottles of wine or beer in your checked luggage so that it will make it home without breaking.

I also like to bring home things like tea towels or maybe a tablecloth or cloth napkins. I used to bring home a lot of duvet covers because I couldn't get them in the United States.

I also like to bring home mugs for my coffee or maybe sometimes I brought home like glasses for beer or just things that I see in Germany that I like and that I want to use in my own home. A lot of times I'll just go into a boutique or a home store or I'll go to the Galerie Kaufhof and go to the homeware section. And I just like looking around and you know, it's just, I just, love these things because, when I go grab my kitchen towel that I bought in Cologne, or I pull out a tablecloth that I bought many years ago in Berlin, whatever, I just, it makes me feel really happy. It reminds me of the place I bought it, the trip that I was on, and I just absolutely love these everyday items.

Okay, so you can also buy clothes in Germany. That can be a really fun souvenir. Of course, you can go into any store and you can find things that you can wear when you're at home, just everyday normal clothes. I do that a lot because when I'm at home, I love pulling out a shirt from the closet and remembering where I bought it, kind of like I was saying when I, know, bought a tablecloth or a towel or something.

And it's also kind of fun if somebody says, hey, I like your shirt. And then you can say, yeah, I bought that when I was in Munich or Berlin. And so that's kind of fun too. But you can also buy things like traditional clothing.

The best place to buy traditional clothing is definitely Bavaria. So if you're gonna go to Munich, that would be a good place because there's a lot of different stores in



Munich that do have a variety of traditional clothing at different price points. And even if you don't wanna buy the whole entire outfit, you could buy a hat or an apron or a shirt or just something like that just so that you have a little bit of something traditional.

If you're into soccer or football, you can also bring home some souvenirs related to the local team. You can get things like jerseys and scarves, hats and all different kinds of memorabilia. And that's pretty easy to find no matter where you are in Germany.

If you're into Birkenstocks, you can buy them in Germany. It's funny, actually, I was thinking that I've actually never bought Birkenstocks in Germany. I've always bought them in the States and I do not know why. You can get them all over Germany. I don't know that they're any less expensive, but sometimes I see different patterns or colors or styles in Germany that I don't see in the US. So if you like Birkenstocks, that could be a really fun souvenir. So keep your eye out. You'll see them all over Germany. They're very easy to find.

If you're looking for souvenirs for kids, there are a lot of wonderful toys. You can find really nice wooden toys. You can find those all over Germany. And there are actually boutiques that cater to really high quality, like wooden toys. So you can find those all over Germany and they're fun to go into and see what's similar and what's different.

But you can also just go into any department store or sometimes even like smaller drug stores and you'll see them all over Germany. But you can go into those stores and take a look at the toys and puzzles and other fun things that would be, you know, the kids would enjoy. Also children's books can be a really great thing. Even the ones that are in German.

When I was a kid, I was absolutely in love with languages and I didn't know any other language besides English. But I absolutely loved looking at books that were in other



languages, even though I couldn't really read them. But especially when I was a really little kid and I was still into picture books, I could look at the pictures and kind of figure out what the book was about. And also I would look at the language and I would look at the way that the words were, the letters in the words and the Umlauts and you know, I just thought that stuff was absolutely fascinating. So those can be really good gifts for kids.

And if you're going to Berlin, a really fun souvenir can be that classic iconic Ampelmännchen. This is the little traffic light man that's a relic from East Germany and it has become a cult favorite. When you're in the Eastern part of Berlin, you'll still see the Ampelmännchen on the traffic lights.

And then you'll also see him on t-shirts, mugs, keychains. You can get a cookie cutter of the Ampelmännchen. I mean, there's just lots and lots of souvenirs with the Ampelmännchen. And it's instantly recognizable. It makes everybody smile and they see it. And it really is an iconic thing from Berlin. And it commemorates Berlin's unique history. And so it can be really fun. I know I definitely have some keychains and some t-shirts and things with the Ampelmännchen and it does make me smile every time I see it.

And here's one last idea. In Germany, there are good luck symbols, and you'll find these good luck symbols like horseshoes, little red mushrooms with white spots, ladybugs, pigs, four-leaf clovers, and sometimes chimney sweeps too. And you'll find these good luck symbols on different things like little gift items or sometimes made out of marzipan or on magnets or little notebooks. And these little things are just really fun German things. And they make really fun little gifts and they make really good souvenirs. And they're really popular as little gifts around New Year's. So if you are in Germany around Christmas and New Year's, they're really easy to find. You can go into department stores or little gift shops or drugstores. You can find them throughout the year, but definitely around New Year's they're super easy to find.



Okay, so those are some really fun souvenir ideas. I hope you found this helpful. And no matter what you decide to bring home, I'm sure that it will be a wonderful memory of a fantastic trip to Germany.

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