

Onboarding Germany

How to settle down in Germany for Myanmar people:
easily, relaxed and with fun

A practical guide
for your arrival.



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For all who believe in a brighter future. And thanks to all who are kindly supporting this eBook project with their ideas, insights and critics.

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If you want to support our ambitious project with a donation, please feel free to → [contact us](#) for further details.



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Preface

When I came to Myanmar for work the very first time in 2010, I would have been glad to find an onboarding guide like this, for my very first migration steps into the Myanmar society. Even as a born half Burmese, instead it was quite hard and took me more than five years to explore and learn all the habits, rules and environment on my own, to sustain my daily life. Although the people around me were friendly, inviting and sometimes also supportive, it took a long while and uncountable efforts to raise each other's trust. It has been a long journey to really connect to the locals around me, everywhere in this wonderful country of my ancestors.

Knowing how challenging it is to be a stranger far away from home, I once decided building a structure to improve intercultural understanding. This eBook shall be the very first step, and is intended to be a valuable guide and friend during your onboarding process to Germany or if so, you're already in Germany. It is specifically written for young people from Myanmar who want to make a new start in Germany and refers to all the knowledge, expertise, experiences and personal insights we collected while working with Myanmar citizens who are willing to migrate to Germany or who are already living in Germany.

We have a special focus on Myanmar-German exchange, and we strongly believe that your arrival in Europe can be an enriching experience for you and all the people around you.

This e-book is an ambitious long-term project. We will continually expand and update our contents. Please note that it is only a collection of information and not legal advice in the sense of the law. All advice is given without guarantee. If you have individual needs, you should seek legal advice from the appropriate sources. We also assume no liability for the accuracy or completeness of the content linked in this e-book – these hyperlinks are merely intended to make it easier for you to quickly find in-depth information and sources online.

We are pretty aware that the onboarding of Myanmar professionals in Germany is much larger and more challenging than we could overview alone. Therefore, our stated goal is to build an offline and online community that, free from social, ideological and political constraints, covers as many aspects of daily life as possible and remains open to constructive criticism, suggestions, and new ideas.

In this spirit, we welcome any commitment that promotes practical understanding between Myanmar and Germany and supports young people from Myanmar in settling in Germany. When the time is right, we will also support the flux other way round. This explicitly includes all actors who probably see themselves as competitors to our services. We invite you to join us in shaping a future in which every actor can have a constructive place.

In my work, I can confidently rely on a broad network in Myanmar, Germany, and more recently also in Thailand. A network that has grown over decades and is constantly expanding. That's why I often refer to "we" rather than just myself in this e-book.

Since life and learning works best in person, we see online activities as a useful complement. On the long run, we will increasingly strive to offer regular offline classes and events in a variety of locations both at home and abroad. We hope this will contribute more to trusting exchange and networking among all Myanmar people in Germany (and those who want to become one of them). You will soon find more information about this in due course on our website <https://www.onboarding-germany.com>.

Furthermore we are also happy to assist you with our customized language, consulting, and coaching services. You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49.163.1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

And one more request: we are offering this e-book free of charge, so that everyone can benefit from it. You are welcome to distribute this eBook and share it as a whole complete PDF file (uncut and exactly how provided to you) with your family, friends, and even with people you don't know on social media for free. **Please note:** This does not mean that you are free to copy extracts or individual content, graphics, or photos from this eBook and/or to distribute it uncensored in other printed or social media. Should this happen, we will asap take all legal action against you. Copyright law in Germany is one of the strongest in the world, and violating this copyright law can quickly become very expensive for copyright infringers. So please be fair and respect our work. Thank you.

While writing this onboarding guide, I kept asking myself what I can do for you, to give you a better start than I previously had - please enjoy the benefits and take your chance to do it faster, more comfortable and with loads of fun! I would be delighted if you could successfully follow your path and if we would personally get in touch sooner or later.

Kay Min Tut Strasser
The Publisher

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*On the move doesn't
mean that there is
no stability.*



Wilhelm-Leuschner-Platz, Leipzig, October 2025 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Why Germany? Instead of Japan, UK, USA, Canada, Singapore or Australia?

Watching the international news carefully, you'll realize that many countries are more and more restricting their immigration opportunities to a minimum. Sometimes even cutting existing programs from one day to another like the current U.S. Government does, even without considering the hardships caused by that. This development targets first citizens of those countries which are not the western ones. Unfortunately this is also very relevant for Myanmar passport holders.

Compared to these other countries, Germany does differently and has a good work-life balance and an exemplary work culture with strong employee rights. On the long run this makes the daily life less exhausting than e.g. in Japan, where pressure and competition are usually very high. To keep them onboard, most German employers do a lot of efforts to make their staff feeling comfortable in their job. Additionally nearly all continuing education and study programs are for free or supported by the employers. Probably the German salaries are sometimes not comparable to the ones in Canada or Singapore. However, the social system here is also considerably better and especially as a German citizen (which you may become soon) there is virtually no situation in which you are left alone with your worries. The political system and the individual guarantees that come with it are considerably more stable than elsewhere in the world and with a German passport you have free access to the entire EU - and having it's far more easier to sustain in other western countries too. In general the German passport is one of the best worldwide because it gives you visa-free entry to more than 170 countries. Unlike citizens of the USA or UK, Germans enjoy great respect all over the world, are less at risk from violence, kidnapping and terrorism and are in most cases treated with the utmost respect. And if you only have a German passport, you have the best possible diplomatic support in dangerous situations while traveling. Even in your country of origin.

And best of all: if you're well integrated and you can sustain your life by having a good salary, a place to live and good German language skills, you have the legal right to → [apply for German citizenship](#) right after five years only!

! Good to know: use all available channels!

If you need more first hand information about migration to Germany, you can easily join social media groups to get in touch with other Myanmar who're already planning to settle there or who are already living there. One of the best groups on Facebook is → [Germany for Study](#) with currently nearly 70.000 users and also the → [Myanmar in Germany Facebook page](#) provides some useful video clips in Burmese language. A more general approach not only for Myanmar citizens follows the → [Handbook Germany](#), which calls itself "from the community, for the community".

Please be aware that all their user's perception might be very individual and experiences in general vary much depending on migration generation, professional status, personal focus and the place where they live. Like everywhere, people's motivation can be community, socially or also pure benefit driven. And there are only a very few experts who are really familiar with Myanmar and German habits, regulations and daily challenges both at the same level. That's why we recommend to double check all their references and reputations carefully, to avoid disappointments or great loss of budget.

Of course we're also cautiously monitoring the challenges and all the needs of Myanmar people in Germany. As a result, this e-book takes the challenge to collect all the useful information clearly in one place, for free. For further paid services we offer you personal online consultancy and job onboarding coachings, individual research, native speaking German language classes and also elaborate accompaniment for your first steps in Germany, if you need so. This is your chance to avoid expensive detours, annoying misunderstandings and discouraging fails.

We try our best to keep all our services as transparent as possible, cause we believe that according to the German customs and traditions good references are the best way to gain real trust and success. One of our references is this onboarding guide e-book.

In case you need personal support, please feel free to connect to our research and coaching services. For more information, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#), → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

Your status as a Myanmar citizen in the European Union (EU)

As Myanmar citizen you won't have the same legal rights as European Union (EU) citizens if you want to join it the very first time. From their EU perspective they call your citizenship → [“third country” \(“Drittstaat”\)](#), and with this status you have far more legal restrictions than EU citizens have. There are some exceptions and special rights regulations for some few third country origins, but you as a Myanmar won't benefit.

For EU passholders it doesn't matter if they are native ones or those who got one of the EU citizenships later on in their career. If you own the EU citizenship you can live, study and work freely in the whole European Union, so that i.e. a German has the same legal rights like an Italian or Dutch. No matter if he's living in France, Poland or in the Baltic Countries. For some regulated professions (e.g. doctors, architects, nurses) there is even automatic recognition provided the qualification was acquired → [according to EU standards](#) in order to facilitate professional mobility.

That's why the EU citizenship is one of the most attractive worldwide, with also less restrictions in many other countries. So if you really want to migrate to Germany, we recommend to → [apply for the German citizenship](#) as soon as possible!



University of Heidelberg, October 2024 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Realistic options to settle in Germany

In addition to the tourist visa, which is really only suitable for short trips to Germany and offers no prospect of a longer stay in the country, there are → [various options](#) for Myanmar citizens to settle in Germany - depending on your age, your personal goals and capacities. Some of them require big investments in advance, and some are nearly for free indeed. All of them have in common that your chances increase with your individual German language skills.

1. Studying in Germany

In principle, under certain circumstances, it is possible to → [study at a public or private university in Germany](#). For programs taught in English, this is even possible with relatively limited German language skills. However, certain → [requirements](#) must be met. You need a university place – and a security deposit of currently nearly 12,000 euros per year must be deposited in a blocked account. Since this amount is rarely sufficient to cover your living expenses in Germany (especially if you are studying at a private university with high tuition fees), you will either have to → [work](#) additionally or bring more money with you.

2. Studying in an ASEAN country with EMPM as a useful stopover for your further studies in Germany

For those of you guys who are not yet readily prepared in German language skills, it may be an option to have an inbetween stopover in one of the ASEAN countries before applying to come to Germany. Probably this gives you time and space to prepare yourself the best way for your next career steps in Europe. Therefore the European Union created the → [European Union Mobility Programme for Myanmar \(EMPM\)](#), which awards scholarships to students from Myanmar who have not been able to continue their higher education since March 2020. The program shall provide increased online and offline access to virtual mobility and online studies at EU and ASEAN institutions for students and young professionals. The EMPM acts as a facilitator between the beneficiary and the host institution abroad before, during and for the completion of the beneficiary's stay.

More information about staying in Thailand you'll find in our chapter → ["All you should know if you're planning a longer stopover in Bangkok"](#).

3. Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters and DAAD scholarship applications for students

The reputable → [Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters \(EMJM\) programme](#) is also open for → [Myanmar Scholars](#). Once a year you can apply to this programme that attracts youth from all over the world to do their Master's in different universities in the EU.

Alone in 2025, six outstanding youth for Myanmar have been awarded the EMJM scholarships, having been selected among hundreds of candidates from around the globe. Since 2007, 91 students from Myanmar have received Erasmus scholarships.

More details you'll find on the → [European Union in Myanmar facebook page](#) and their → [animated video to the topic \(in Burmese language\)](#).

Also the → [Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst e.V. \(DAAD\)](#) awards own scholarships to Myanmar nationals, they publish a → [List of Applications Deadlines](#) every year. On their website they give an → [overview about the DAAD Scholarships](#) with information e.g. about requirements, living in Germany, work & career aspects and many other topics.

! Good to know: Double your chances!

From our experience, especially if you intend to study at a public German university free of charge, you'll need a perfect research in advance. Better not applying to one placement only, but also to alternative opportunities. If you address two or more universities at the same time, you may double or triple your chances to be accepted for studying in Germany. Very often there are similar study programs which are easier accessible than your preferred ones, and most online and offline communication at German universities will be definitely in German language. Even for German citizens it's very often a real challenge to do their own proper research about all good opportunities.

In case you need personal support, please feel free to connect to our research and coaching services.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us → [Facebook](#), → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

4. As an au pair in Germany

A relatively inexpensive way to work and live in Germany is to work as an → [Au Pair](#) with a German host family. You must be at least 18 years old and not older than 26. Even though German law strictly limits the stay to a minimum of six and a maximum of twelve months, with good integration and good German language skills, there is the possibility in individual cases of immediately transferring to a → [Voluntary Social Year \("Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr" or "FSJ"\)](#) or directly into a → [Dual Vocational Training \("Duale Berufs-Ausbildung"\)](#). According to our information, whether this is actually possible in practice depends very much on the respective federal state, your placement location, and the commitment of your host family and potential employers.

We therefore recommend that you inform yourself as much as possible about such transfer options at your placement location before your au pair stay. We currently only have information on the → [au pair visa](#) from the German Embassy in Bangkok, unfortunately not from Yangon. Please contact your responsible → [German Embassy in Yangon](#) about the necessary steps for applying for a visa.

5. Voluntary Social Year (“Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr” or “FSJ”)

The Voluntary Social Year (“Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr” or “FSJ”) is a social volunteer service originally introduced for conscientious objectors. It allows German citizens to contribute to society through projects for children and young people, political education, or animal and nature conservation. Since there are increasingly fewer participants from EU countries in the healthcare sector, the FSJ has also been → [opened up to citizens of third countries](#). This could be your opportunity!

As with au pairs, there is an age limit of 26. And when applying for a visa, you must be able to credibly demonstrate that you will return to Myanmar after 12 months at the latest. If the German Embassy isn't truly convinced of this, they won't grant you a visa for an FSJ.

So far the → [Diakonie Baden](#) is the most experienced organisation inviting third country applicants to FSJ. However, some employers are now using the FSJ as a smarter entry point into dual training for occupations with a shortage of skilled workers. So, if you complete an FSJ (voluntary social year) in a hospital, nursing home, or facility for people with disabilities, some employers offer the option of transferring directly into a dual training program at the same location after successful integration and motivated participation. In this case, the employer will support you in obtaining the appropriate visa from the local authorities. Even though this route isn't officially intended, employers are now actively using it to recruit urgently needed skilled workers. Please note that you should never discuss this openly when applying for a visa for the FSJ!

Of course this also means that on this track you're directly linked to your certain employer, with nearly no chance to switch to another profession. The employer who's supporting you for the FSJ program wants to keep you onboard with their company, also for the vocational training (Ausbildung). That's their genuine interest and the mutual agreement to support your ambitions.

! Good to know: You need individual support?

If you decide for a FSJ, we are open to online support you with our services during your whole application process: individual research and consultancy, communication training, preparation for employer or visa interviews. We will provide you with all the current detailed informations and insider tips to increase your personal chances succeeding with your application.

For more information, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#), → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

6. Vocational Training for professions in demand (“Duale Berufs-Ausbildung”)

Arguably the easiest and most cost-effective way to come to Germany at the moment is through the → [Dual Vocational Training \(“Duale Berufs-Ausbildung”\)](#) for → [professions in demand \(„Mangelberufe / Engpassberufe“\)](#). Or to directly apply for a job in demand, if you're already qualified in a certain profession. Since demographic trends in most Western countries are leading to a growing shortage of skilled workers in less attractive professions, a few years ago Germany also began recruiting well-trained workers from countries outside the European Union and additionally those from third countries, who were willing to undergo this kind of professional education or further training. Under pressure from employers, entry requirements for skilled workers were simplified, and a structure for onboarding and integration and simplified → [visa regulations](#) were established.

Participants of vocational training programs are sharing their time partly working for an employer and partly joining the regular vocational school with e.g. maths, German language, politics and economy in their timetables. That's why it's called a dual education system.

However, since Germany is largely federally organized and the individual federal states are responsible for implementation, this option for immigration to Germany has so far been rather confusing. Furthermore, learning the German language to B1 level is always required first, which represents a further hurdle for many applicants from abroad, leading them to prefer to work in English-speaking countries. This, in turn, means that some regulations in Germany are now more open than, for example, in the UK. Not to mention the current situation in the USA. This gap could be your perfect chance to make your own future!

! Good to know: how to better understand all your opportunities in the German job market

The market for vocational trainings in Germany can be very confusing and competitive (not only between the placement agencies and their students), cause it's federally organised and very much linked to the private economy. In the end it's the Germany based employer and not the agency who is selecting their preferred candidates to invite them to Germany. They will take the legal responsibility for all actions linked to the process in inner Germany. On the other hand the German government is ruling the framework for all the work migration programs and is responsible for the very last decision, i.e. for giving a visa.

Professions of high demand, where German companies seek desperately for employees and where your chances might be the highest at all, may change from time to time and also the legal pathways and restrictions are more and more volatile. A good preparation for the communication with employers is mandatory, if you don't want to rely on the ordinary services of the placement agencies only.

Cause speaking German is mandatory in nearly all cases, most of the further online information about chances and job opportunities is in German language only. That's the way how the German government and companies ensure that only the most motivated applicants will find their way.

So even if you're already in the preparation process for a job or a vocational training, we also offer you coaching services to individually approve and replenish the pathway your placement agency offers to you. To stand the agency's inner competition, we prepare you, the most focused on your personality, to all your further interviews and challenges. We can provide you with current insights and research about your future career and income chances from a native German perspective, depending on your preferred profession. And we'll bring you on a German communication and motivation level which German employers expect. Language-wise and also in your communication and intercultural skills we'll train you to be able to help yourself in sovereignty and dignity.

All in all it can be very helpful to use these kinds of coaching as an inspiration and momentum for diving in an efficient process with ease, fun and personal safety.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

7. Studying after having completed a three-year vocational training program

Vocational training in Germany can also be a → [good opportunity to subsequent university studies](#) . An additional bachelor's degree will improve your job prospects and deepen your expertise in various fields. Take advantage of this opportunity to make yourself particularly attractive to employers. If you have completed a three-year vocational training program, you are generally entitled to study at a German university without any restrictions. **It is important that your final grade is no worse than 2.5. If you complete a three-year vocational training program with a final grade of 2.6 or lower, you usually have to take an entrance exam. Both of course requires excellent German skills, which you should acquire as quickly as possible.**

Furthermore, your three-year vocational training program must be regulated by one of the following laws: the → Crafts and Trades Act ("Handwerksordnung") , the → Vocational Training Act ("Berufsbildungsgesetz") or → State or Federal Laws ("Landes- oder Bundesgesetze") . If your training meets all these requirements, you can study any subject you want. It doesn't matter whether the subject is related to your vocational training or not. The only exception is → [medicine](#).

Besides the usual three-year vocational training program, there are other vocational training programs that you can complete in just two years. To use these as a basis for university admission, you must also demonstrate relevant work experience. This means you must have worked full-time for at least two years. In this case, you will need to take a university entrance exam to prove that you are qualified enough to study.

In addition, some universities require entrance exams for certain degree programs. This is especially true when the number of study places is very limited and the program is also very popular.

Medical studies in Germany are generally a special case. Although it is possible here too to obtain a professional qualification without a high school diploma and thus be admitted to university studies. But the chances of securing a place are often very slim because university places are allocated centrally by the Foundation for University Admissions ("Stiftung für Hochschulzulassung"). A completed three-year vocational training is required to have a chance of studying medicine. This includes, among other things, also nursing professions and might be attractive for all those attending a vocational training in "Pflegeausbildung"! In the application process, this training is then considered equivalent to a high school diploma with a grade of 4.0. The Numerus Clausus (NC) for medicine is usually much higher – predominantly 1.0. Besides the final grade, there are other ways to obtain a place. Waiting semesters unfortunately do not count. An individual entrance exam significantly improves the chances. Here, one must demonstrate basic medical knowledge. Nevertheless, it is not impossible to study medicine with vocational qualifications.

8. Dual Course of Studies („Duales Studium“)

A dual course of studies program combines university studies with integrated vocational training or intensive practical phases in a company, giving it a strong practical focus. In the English speaking expat bubble this special German education track is also known as "Dual Study", "Integrated Degree Programme" or "Co-operative Education".

There are two main forms: the training-integrated study program ("Ausbildungsintegrierende Studium"), which leads to two qualifications (a university degree and a vocational qualification), and the practice-integrated study program ("Praxisintegrierende Studium"), which offers both a university degree and extensive professional experience. Dual students receive a salary (depending on the company usually between 800 and 2000 Euro) and often have better career prospects; however, it is also a demanding program and requires early commitment. Often there is a multi-year commitment to work for the company, with possible penalties for non-compliance.

An → [overview about Dual Course of Studies \(in German only\)](#) shows you all the opportunities with English-language degree programs in → [law, economics and administration](#) ("Rechts- und Wirtschaftswissenschaften und Verwaltung"), → [engineering, mathematics and computer science](#) ("Ingenieurwissenschaften, Mathematik und Informatik"), → [Natural sciences](#) ("Naturwissenschaften"), → [Social and Societal Sciences](#) ("Gesellschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften"), → [Media and Communication](#) ("Medien und Kommunikation"), → [Medicine, healthcare and sports](#) ("Medizin, Gesundheitswesen und Sport"), → [Music, art and design](#) ("Musik, Kunst und Gestaltung"), → [Linguistics and Cultural Studies](#) ("Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaften") and → [Agricultural and Forestry Sciences](#) ("Agrar- und Forstwissenschaften"). Of course there are countless more opportunities with German-language degrees.

9. Recognition of your qualification from a third country, for a direct job application in Germany

Under → [certain conditions](#), with the help of the → [Job search opportunity card](#) there might be possibilities in coming to Germany to look for a suitable job.

If you successfully graduated from university of a third country or holding another qualification already, you might need a → [recognition](#) in Germany to apply for a job in most of the cases. How to recognise your degrees depends a lot from the kind of your profession. In some cases it's even possible to do the recognition procedure while you're already working, e.g. for nurses.

If you intend to work in Germany, doesn't matter as vocational trainee, employee or right after your studies, it could be very helpful to have a look at the → [professions in demand \(„Mangelberufe" / "Engpassberufe"\)](#) or the ones where migrants from abroad were very successful during the past decades. Some additional information in English language you can find on the website → [Make it in Germany](#). And the Federal Statistical Office regularly publishes → [reports and graphics](#) to the current needs and situation on the labour market. Thinking out of the box and also applying for other professions than all your competitors do, can double or even triple your chances and be your decisive advantage.

In case you still have no idea which profession could fit to your interest, the → ["Deutsche Welle – Profis gesucht"](#) could

be somewhat helpful for you. On B1 language level they offer some information in animated videos, including interactive exercises, vocabulary and grammar. Additional information you'll also find in the → [Handbook Germany work chapters](#).

There are several commercial online platforms where you can find job offers in Germany, like → [Indeed](#), → [Stepstone](#), → [Glassdoor](#), → [Monster](#), → [LinkedIn](#) and → [Xing](#). Cause they are not much regulated by governmental laws you should be beware of scams and better have general knowledge about the German job market. A more safe way is to rely on the → [German Federal Employment Agency](#) ("Bundesagentur für Arbeit" or "Arbeitsagentur" or "Jobcenter"), which is the state run platform. In both, commercial and public platforms your chances to find your match are of course far higher if you have proper German language skills.

10. EU Blue Card and other job visa opportunities easily explained

The → [EU Blue Card](#) is a residence title for foreign academics and people with comparable qualifications for a qualified employment ("qualifizierte Beschäftigung") in Germany. You require a German academic qualification or a foreign academic qualification which is comparable to the German one. If you don't have a traditional academic degree, it must correspond to at least level 6 of the → [International Standard Classification of Education \(ISCED 2011\)](#) or level 6 of the → [European Qualifications Framework](#) ("Europäischer Qualifikationsrahmen"). Examples of such training qualifications are "Master craftsman training / Master craftswoman training" as well as non-academic vocational qualifications in educator professions. Anyways your qualification has to pass a → [Recognition \(„Anerkennung“\)](#) process and as a third country passport holder you need to apply for a visa.

Furthermore you also need a specific job offer from a company in Germany for your EU Bluecard application, with a contract with at least six months employment. This job needs to match your qualification, and if a licence to practise („Berufsausübungserlaubnis") for → [regulated professions \(„reglementierte Berufe“\)](#) is required, this must be in place or in prospect at the time of the visa application. Additionally your job in Germany must enable you to earn a gross annual salary of at least 50.700 EUR. If you are employed in a → [shortage occupation \(„Mangelberufe“\)](#), you can also obtain an EU Blue Card with a lower gross annual salary of at least 45.934,20 EUR, if the Federal Employment Agency ("Bundesagentur für Arbeit" / "BA") has approved your employment. These shortage occupations are in managing positions of manufacturing, mining, construction, distribution, information and communications technology service, and professional services such as childcare services, health services and education. As well as STEM („MINT") professionals, academic professionals in architecture, spacial and transport planning, medical doctors, veterinarians, dentists, pharmacists, academic and comparable nursing and midwifery professionals and school and out-of-school teachers and educators.

If you are IT professional or manager without a formal qualification, under certain conditions, you may be also able to obtain an EU Blue Card under → [Section 18g of the Residence Act \(„Aufenthaltsgesetz" / "AufenthG"\)](#). You need to have a specific job offer as an IT professional in Germany with an employment with at least six months. Your job in Germany must enable you to earn a gross annual salary of at least 45.934,20 EUR and you must have worked in IT for at least three of the past seven years. Your professional experience must have been at university level and a prerequisite for employment in Germany.

If you are an experienced professional and would like to work in a non-regulated profession without formal recognition of your qualification, the → [Visa for professionally experienced workers \(„Visum zum Arbeiten für Berufserfahrene"\)](#) under → [Section 19c \(2\) of the Residence Act \(„AufenthG"\)](#) in conjunction with → [Section 6 of the Ordinance on the Employment of Foreigners \(„BeschV"\)](#) could be an opportunity for you.

! Good to know: no German language skills necessarily required, but:

we don't recommend to arrive in Germany without any German skills, because it will be very hard to face your daily life routines. Even if your work environment is completely in English, all other topics e.g. like housing, contracting or socializing will be more than challenging.

In case you need personal support, please feel free to connect to our research and startup coaching services.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us → [Facebook](#), → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49.163.1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

11. Setting up a business in Germany

The most challenging and complicated way to apply for a work residency in Germany is with setting up an own business. In order to set up a business in Germany, you will need a residence permit for the purpose of → [self employment](#). (["Aufenthaltserlaubnis zur Ausübung einer selbständigen Tätigkeit"](#)). If you are already in Germany and hold a residence permit for another purpose or a visa which was granted explicitly for the purpose of self-employment, and if you have already planned your business and laid down your business plan in writing, you can apply for a → [residence permit for the purpose of self-employment](#) at the → [Foreigners Authority \("Ausländeramt" or "Ausländerbehörde"\)](#) .

If you're still residing in your home country, you will need to apply for a visa for the purpose of self-employed occupation at your local competent German mission ("Auslandsvertretung" or "Deutsche Botschaft"). The points of contact in your home country can be found on this → [Local contacts map](#) . Before you apply, you should ask the competent German mission about the documents you will require. You can also find support at the → [German Chambers of Commerce \(IHK\)](#) and at German Business Associations abroad. Similarly, institutions in the place where you intend to take up residence may be able to help – for example the Chambers of Industry and Commerce or the "Welcome Centers" which have been set up → [in some German states](#) . The German mission abroad will send your visa application to the foreigners authority at your future place of residence in Germany. The immigration authority will involve other agencies and professional associations, if necessary. Processing your application will normally take two to four months. Depending on the outcome, the German mission abroad will decide whether it can grant an entry visa for the occupation you would like to pursue. The entry visa is generally valid for a period of three months, and once you are in Germany, it will need to be converted into a term residence permit by the immigration authority. You will not require an entry visa if you are a citizen of Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, the Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland or the United States of America. Citizens of these states can enter Germany without a visa and will then have to apply for a residence permit within three months.

A residence permit for the purpose of self-employment will allow you to set up a → [self-employed or freelance business](#) in Germany. More details you'll find in the guidebook → [Starting a Business in Germany \(„Einfach gründen in Deutschland“\)](#) .

! Good to know: Be mindful with your resources!

Setting up a business in Germany requires far more preliminary work for third country citizens than all other opportunities to settle in Germany. Nearly all of the network, research and preconditions have to be done in German language, and the to do list is challenging even for native Germans. They have to be done both, nationwide and locally, mostly in a certain sequence and timeline. Without having lived in Germany before we urgently advise you to have a representative at the spot who is pretty familiar with creating startups and businesses within the country. Otherwise you will waste your resources, money and time.

In case you need personal support, please feel free to connect to our research and startup coaching services. You can request more information without obligation by contacting us → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49.163.1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.



Inner city refugee container village, Berlin, Spring 2024 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

12. The special case of political asylum seekers

Political asylum is a social achievement that Germany derived from the endless suffering of World War II. During the Nazi era, many Germans were forced to leave their homeland to avoid being persecuted or even killed because of their political views, religion, origin, skin color, or sexual orientation. However, it was often difficult or even impossible for these people to flee anywhere. Political asylum draws the lesson from this history that persecuted people should find a place of safety, at least until they can safely return to their countries of origin.

That's why, in 1949, the authors of the German Constitution (→ [„Grundgesetz“](#)) provided a guarantee for all those in need of this protection. Similar regulations exist in other European and Western countries.

However, with the increasing flow of refugees to Europe not only of protection reasons, a debate has erupted about the extent to which European countries are even capable of accepting all these people and integrating them, at least temporarily. It is also being questioned whether refugees from climate-change-affected regions or poor countries can even be entitled to political asylum. This is because the grounds for asylum are examined individually for each individual, and the criteria for acceptance or rejection often appear highly arbitrary.

According to published figures, from 2021 to 2024 there were approximately 610 people from Myanmar applying for asylum in whole Germany. Up to this point, around 480 decisions have been made, nearly 38% of which were rejections, in the first administrative act. The recognition rate could increase further through appeals to the administrative courts, but there is absolutely no guarantee of this.

In recent years, there have been several initiatives to allow asylum seekers to switch to a different legal status that would allow them to enter the German labor market (→ [„Spurwechsel“ – only available in German](#)) – but this is not the norm and is by no means guaranteed.

As nationalist parties are currently gaining strength in all Western societies, it can be expected that the situation for asylum seekers will become increasingly difficult also with the quite moderate governments. From 2015 until today Germany has friendly welcomed so many people from Syria, Afghanistan, Ukraine and many other countries, that the whole social infrastructure from schools to accommodation starts to be overstretched. This leads to the fact that some German citizens are feeling annoyed by these challenges increasingly and vote for right wing parties. For the future a lot will depend on how well all the migrants can integrate into German society. If asylum seeker or not, you can do a lot to help with that, for example by learning German as quickly and good as possible!

Furthermore, the asylum bureaucracy is very lengthy and sometimes exposes applicants to considerable uncertainty for years. For example, they are not allowed to work as long as their status is not confirmed. In addition, they are often housed in uncomfortable collective accommodation or container villages, which can be a difficult start to a new life. This makes the asylum system the least reliable way to remain in Germany, leaving many people in limbo. You should only consider trying to seek political asylum, if you urgently need protection.

Striving to better, oft we mar what's well.

William Shakespeare



Leipzig, October 2025 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Having all your documents together?

We recommend to prepare yourself well long time in advance for the moment when you address the → [German Embassy in Yangon](#) or the → [German Embassy in Bangkok](#) for your visa request, depending on your current residence. It can be a real pain, if you then realise that you're then struggling to bring all the documents needed. Especially if you have to get them from Myanmar directly. Therefore we give you an example what to bring, if you apply for a → [Vocational Training for professionals in demand](#) . The detailed requirements for these or other purposes and types of visa may change or vary.

Of course you need your valid passport, doesn't matter if PV, PE or PJ. Together with 2 biometric passport photos with white background and the → [VIDEX Schengen Visa Application Form](#) , this will be for identification purposes. Additionally you need to provide your CV and a motivation letter, your signed work contract, your B1 or B2 German Language Certificate, both your University Degree Certificate and University Transcript in originals and same originals and notary of your Grade 10th Pass Certificate, your Grade 10th Pass Transcript and your NRC. You'll also have to bring original and notary of your Household List and the double side printed VAZ, issued in → [Yangon](#) or → [Bangkok](#) . Especially in Yangon the 99 USD visa fee banknotes should be in very good condition.

We recommend to also have all your documents copied in black and white at least in one edition, and please avoid binding with stapler. Also important is to keep your visa receipt carefully.

Having an agency for your migration to Germany?

If you want to work with an agency for your migration to Germany you should be aware that they are part of a rising high profitable business, driven by the increasing demand for professionals in Germany. As many German employers recently told me that agencies worldwide are spreading like mushrooms and flood them with requests, they now start to be very selective whom to work with. This means on the long run that also the agencies outside of Germany will have to work more transparently if they want to keep their networks safe. And the quality of their services can always only be as good as their real networks with German partners and employers are.

So far most of the agencies unfortunately don't feel responsible any more for their Myanmar people when they once arrived in Europe. This causes special hardships for migrant workers on several levels. And the European employers have too less experience yet in onboarding workers and vocational trainees from South East Asia, and especially from Myanmar. This doesn't urgently mean that they do it by purpose, but of course there's a lot potential to improve and especially in raising awareness for Myanmar working migrants in Europe.

Additionally there are also some things you can do by yourself, while requesting an agency. Which could be also a good training and preparation for your understanding how negotiations in a European context work:

If you get in touch with agencies, try to sort out which services are just promised and what's really guaranteed. During your migration process to Germany there are many steps to cover, and learning German language is undoubtedly the most important one, but also only the very first one of it.

Generally said it's never the agency choosing the candidates for vocational trainings or job opportunities in Germany, but the German employer himself who is doing the invitations. And these employers are normally not the same ones like their contact persons within Germany. Sometimes German agencies are also involved (public or commercial ones), which forward the candidate suggestions to the employers for further job interviews. In your Myanmar agency's applicants pool you might be in a competition with all the students around you. We recommend to check beforehand how many workers the German employers intend to invite with this agency and how many students they accept in their classes, in the same timeframe. And how they succeeded in the past. That says a lot about your chances and to what extent a job in Germany is realistic or more like a lottery. Before paying for services you can also ask for verifiable references, e.g. how many students they currently have and how many of them they really brought to Germany yet. And you may share information and keeping yourself up to date to each agency with like-minded people on relevant Facebook groups like → [Germany for Study](#) .

A good agency will transparently provide you with all the detailed information you need for investing your time, capacity and budget wisely, with nothing to hide.

Though the agency market in Myanmar is not that regulated so far, there are some laws and regulations in Germany you definitely should know. E.g. in the case of vocational training placements, unlike employment placements, placement service fees can only be charged to the employer and not the apprentice. According to Section 299 of the Social Code („Sozialgesetzbuch“ / „SGB“), German agencies are → [obliged to provide certain information](#) in the case of cross-border placements. One of them is that Recruitment agencies must inform applicants in a language they understand before concluding an employment contract. Do not sign any contracts or documents that you do not fully understand. You should also check which specific services are included in the contract. Always ask and read the → [small print. Terms and Conditions \(Allgemeine Geschäftsbedingungen – AGBs\)](#) !

There may be other costs agencies charge you, for example, if you take a language course through the agency, or if you receive assistance with entry and visa procedures. And please be aware that signing a simple contract for language classes is not automatically a guarantee for a job contract in Germany!

Of course you're also free to maximize your chances by doing all migration processing on your own. I know many guys out there who very successfully managed their German classes and all their applications and visa steps purely by themselves, with the help of collective intelligence of Facebook groups or relying on their own personal networks.

Still struggling ... even after your successful arrival in Germany?

Most of the students and workers being already in Germany are currently struggling to sustain their lives in Europe because they are not really well prepared.

While the preparation for your new future at home in Myanmar often takes a few months only, once you arrive in Germany, you will have to prove yourself all day long, in all aspects of life in a foreign country, for at least three years. Unfortunately, the placement agencies then offer very little further assistance – and universities or employers are often overwhelmed by the countless tasks involved in the comprehensive onboarding of students, vocational trainees and skilled workers from abroad. Language and communication difficulties, intercultural misunderstandings, everyday challenges and homesickness are just a few factors on a long list that newcomers can report experiencing after only a few weeks in Germany.

After their arrival in Germany, of course all of them are lucky having managed this step. But very often they aren't aware that on the German labour market private university degrees are not the same well accepted as public university degrees. And that they will be in a harsh competition with their European fellow students who are native speakers and very confident with all the habits already. Third country students of private universities very often miss the fact that studying at public German universities in general would be free of charge - provided your German language skills are good enough to attend them and you succeed in their application process. So most Myanmar students pay a lot for their private education every month, mostly held in English language and therefore easier to access at first glance. But while calculating their realistic costs for rents, food and daily efforts, this urges them to work in very low level and low paid part-time jobs in fast food restaurants or food delivery services, on top of their already demanding fulltime studies.

And also for the participants of → [vocational training programs](#) their B1 level is barely enough to follow the German held classes and exams at the vocational school from the scratch, though they also have alternating work assignments to do. Of course all exclusively in the German language, so that including filling the gaps makes it more than a fulltime job. That's why some employers already require at least B2 level now for inviting foreigners to their vocational training programs.

Furthermore many of these international students and vocational trainees from non EU countries first start traveling around Europe (because of the comfortable → [Schengen Visa](#)) instead of learning German language properly. After two or three years they then realise that without speaking German properly they have nearly no chance to get a well paid job which is mandatory to apply for a work visa. In the end they're hired for a poor income by low level companies who themselves struggle to get highly qualified staff. And can't really enjoy the benefits of the common German work-life balance.

The simple solution for this avoidable struggle is obvious: to improve your German language skills as soon and as best as possible, if you intend to take your chance best in Germany. To avoid the vicious circle from beginning on, or if you're already in there, to escape as soon as possible. And probably to also connect to the local society by having German

friends, participate in German communities in sports, science or family affairs. You'll enjoy these integration benefits then free of charge. And without any struggle.

To get a quick impression and to also test your current German language skills, you can watch the Video → [„Die ersten 100 Tage in Deutschland“](#), published by the government initiative „Make it in Germany“. Let's check if you get all the details!

! Good to know: planning the next steps right after your arrival ...

The real challenge isn't how to come to Germany, but to sustain in a safe, smart and successful manner. If you need support to find a proper strategy or to make the right decisions, one of our coaching programs could be your solution

Please feel free to contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

Being Myanmar forever? Or becoming a „real“ German?

Me as author of this eBook, I think that integration doesn't mean that you as a foreigner should just become like a proper real German, even though if you intend to stay in Germany for the rest of your life. Your Myanmar roots are as precious as the German roots are, and you should never forget your heritage. Rathermore migration to Europe can be an useful add on to your asian socialization: if you're open to watch, learn and adapt your own personality to the new environment.

Over the last decades Germany has more and more changed to a multicultural and immigration friendly country. And most German people are happy about all the cultural influences which make their livings more rich and colourful. They love other countrie's dishes, travel to worldwide destinations and welcome people from abroad to live and work with them. And they value that foreigners bring views and skills which we all need to sustain a peaceful, sustainable, prosperous and stable future.

Germany is one of the few western countries which relatively succeeded in integrating all the waves of foreign workers without creating big diaspora bubbles in certain urban districts and areas. This means that compared to France i.e., where most of the arabic and african rooted population is situated in desperate suburbs out of Paris or other cities.

Of course there are also big challenges and problems we face with immigration in Germany, but we finally managed to have all the people from Turkey, Lebanon, Vietnam, Turkey or Syria more or less well integrated at least in their 2nd or 3rd generations.

Since decades already there's a vital discussion in German public if inviting professionals from abroad is weakening their mother countries. From my author's perspective and experience every migrant could be a potential ambassador between both countries, Myanmar and Germany. Doesn't matter if you intend to stay in Germany forever or if you probably plan to return to your mother country sooner or later, to also share your benefits with Myanmar. If you're open enough to learn about all the intercultural differences, gaps and misunderstandings, you'll be the perfect expert for our common future. And of course, you urgently need to learn proper German for gaining all the same chances local Germans already have. So far, there are very little experts focussing on Myanmar-German relations. So take your chance and become one of them!

Importance of German language skills in everyday life

Germany is a fairly immigration-friendly country, especially since there is a huge demand for skilled workers in certain essential professions. Even if the German mentality doesn't always seem immediately inviting at first glance, and building a circle of native German-speaking friends doesn't always seem that easy for people from all over the world, German society has become very open and multicultural thanks to the diverse immigration flows of recent decades. Many immigrants are still not fully integrated, but unlike, for example, Great Britain or France, no ghettos have emerged

in German cities, and politicians generally make a sincere effort to solve the undeniable problems and challenges as best they can.

You should be aware, however, that your personal and especially **your professional success in Germany depends significantly on your command of the German language. This applies not only to vocabulary and grammar, but above all to your pronunciation. Germans are very sensitive to different dialects and accents in their language – and in many situations, your individual chances depend largely on how well and confidently you can articulate yourself. These include job hunting, contract negotiations, and, above all, apartment hunting.**

In the past decades, there were repeated reservations in Germany about immigrant groups from Turkey, Italy, Russia, Lebanon, or currently from Syria or Ukraine. However, many of these people have now found a place in German society, starting families and businesses, and thus making a significant contribution to making Germany more colorful and interesting, not just in terms of food or culture with music, film, and dance. Notable numbers of immigrants from Asia have only been seen in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, with large groups from Vietnam who came to Germany as contract workers for the former East German government (→ [“Vertragsarbeiter”](#)) or as refugees (→ [“Boatpeople”](#)... [“Bootsflüchtlinge”](#)). After the collapse of the socialist East German system, there was also some friction between them and the German majority society. However, this no longer plays a role today, and Vietnamese have still the biggest asian diaspora group in Germany.

The Myanmar community has existed in Germany since the early 1960s – but until the turn of the millennium, it was so small that practically everyone knew everyone. The ones who learnt German language properly succeeded a lot, the others struggled a lot, sometimes until now in their advanced ages. Over the past fifteen years, more and more people from Myanmar have come to Germany as students, professionals, refugees and, more recently, as skilled workers in training, making it difficult to keep track of this.

! Good to know: what you can do for the Myanmar community

Due to the current situation in both countries, the needs and challenges for people from Myanmar in Germany are often completely different from those from other countries of origin. It is important to us to learn more about this beyond the information contained in this e-book in order to be able to create better and more effective services for everyone in the future. So stay tuned – and if you have topics to add, please tell and share with us!

Therefore, we invite you to contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

Learning German

Whether you attend German classes at the Goethe Institute, private language schools, or with private teachers outside Germany (in which case, we refer to them as → [German as a Foreign Language \(“Deutsch als Fremdsprache” or “DaF”\)](#)), **it makes a huge difference whether your teachers are native speakers or not.** Especially at the beginning, when the main focus is on learning the correct pronunciation of letters and sounds, many pronunciation errors can creep in, which can later only be corrected with the greatest effort and then again only with native speakers. **Once learnt wrong is quite harder to correct than leaning properly from the scratch!** And even later on, it plays a major role whether your teachers teach confidently, based on everyday practice, and are familiar with current developments in the language.

Because we are aware that there are far too few native-speaking teachers to meet the high demand, we also offer language classes and workshops as train-the-teacher programs for non-native teachers, so that they can optimize their teaching, especially in pronunciation. So please, if you're already working with non native speaking teachers, let them know about these opportunities.

! Good to know: How to improve your portfolio as a German teacher?

One idea that comes up again and again in our German classes is to support non-native speaking German teachers in optimizing their pronunciation and teaching methods, to scale up high profile skilled teaching.

Therefore we offer an individual training and coaching program, specifically aimed at Myanmar German teachers in Myanmar, Thailand, or even Germany, who would like to expand their teaching and make it more innovative.

For German teachers without a native speaker background, we offer support to optimize your own language course offerings. With workshops, events, and innovative learning materials and methods, we'll prepare you best for the future.

For further information or requests, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp](#) under +49 163 1435582 or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

It can sometimes be very difficult for language students to determine a teacher's educational background, especially as a beginner, when you have no idea what the pronunciation level of the class is. Therefore, when researching, we recommend that you carefully consider where and with whom your teachers learned German, as well as their current connection to everyday life in Germany. Unfortunately, even a longer stay or even naturalization in Germany does not always guarantee that pronunciation and language skills will be at a native speaker level. There are people from Myanmar who speak German perfectly and without any accent – and there are also those who, even after decades in Germany, are still far from that level.

Inside Germany, there are many different opportunities to learn German or improve your language skills. These classes are usually called → [German as a Second Language \("Deutsch als Zweitsprache - DaZ"\)](#) and are offered by → Adult Education Centers ("Volkshochschulen") at moderate fees (database → ["vhs-Kusfinder"](#) , only available in German language), by commercial language schools at the comparable higher local standard rates, and in bigger cities sometimes even free of charge by a few municipal organizations and NGOs (e.g. offered by the → [Federal Office for Migration and Refugees "BAMF"](#)), as well as some employers.

→ [Integration courses \("Integrationskurse"\)](#) are also a good opportunity for newly arrived immigrants with little or no knowledge of German: in addition to learning German, participants also get to know more about the German culture and society, covering everyday topics such as the workplace and careers, shopping, media or child education.

Because all these language classes involve people from all over the world in one class at the same time, honestly said, they are often not very effective. The challenges of learning German, especially when it comes to pronunciation, vary greatly depending on the country of origin, and teachers then have to find a compromise that ultimately isn't optimal for everyone. Cause those sounds which are probably most challenging for Myanmar people, aren't for Ukraine people. And other way round. This usually requires special training to avoid lifelong pronunciation errors. Unequal learning conditions due to the diverse educational systems in the students' countries of origin further complicate finding a pleasant and smooth introduction to the German language.

! Good to know: What's different with our German classes?

According to our experience, Myanmar natives face special pronunciation challenges which differ a lot from the ones dedicated to other origins. Especially the quality of your bunch of your very first lessons will fundamentally decide about your further language comfort, efficiency, understanding and success. So it makes a lot of sense to attend classes specially designed for Myanmar people, held by native German speakers only.

Inspired by → [MyME project in Yangon](#) we developed, together with the → [Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School](#) and their Tourism Assistance Project (TAP) in Mandalay, from 2012 to 2019 a special teaching program for Myanmar nationals focussing on their very personal needs. Involving user centered elements from → [Design Thinking project management method](#) and based on the → [Non Formal Education \(NFE\)](#) standards we especially

focus on daily needs, intercultural life skills and above all best pronunciation practises to guarantee a smooth adaption to your new environment. It's much more than learning – it's about finding solutions together for your very individual pathway. And to constantly learn with and from each other as if in a circulatory system.

Renowned organisations like → [UNESCO](#) , → [UNICEF](#) and → [Save the Children](#) are already successfully working with NFE for decades. The same as we realised, that learner and experience centered approaches with a participatory and interactive character are flexible and adaptable enough to serve the student's needs immersively and effectively.

That's why we incorporate the latest media and technology into our lessons and provide you with enough material, so that you can also further work independently on improving your language skills, if you wish.

For further information or requests, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp](#) under +49 163 1435582 or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

1. Online opportunities to improve your language skills

There are many online resources that you can use to practise and improve your German skills. We recommend the following:

→ [VHS learning portal](#): Here you will find free online German courses at levels A1 to B2. An online tutor corrects your work and supports you to learn.

→ [Deutsche Welle](#): On the Deutsche Welle news channel's "Learn German" page, you can find slowly spoken news reports in German, interactive learning activities and a Deutschtrainer to improve your pronunciation, for example. There is also a placement test to help you determine your current language level.

→ [Goethe-Institut](#): The Goethe Institute platform offers a range of free media, including a vocabulary trainer, learning games and online exercises. The Goethe-Institut's → [Welcome Coaches](#) ("Willkommenscoach") also organise free in-person and online events in Germany. In addition to paid offers for learning German, you can get advice on many important questions when arriving in Germany.

You can also use a wide range of apps to learn German. Some apps are even free, like the beginner levels of → [Duolingo](#) . Other apps like → [Rosetta Stone](#) have same or even better reputation, but require monthly subscription payments.

On Youtube there are also many channels like → [Deutsche Welle](#) , → [Goethe Institut](#) , → [Like Germans](#) , → [Deutsch lernen durch Hören](#) , → [Deutsch mit Spass](#) → [Hallo Deutschschule](#) or → [Sprachschule – Learn german fast](#) offering free online content.

News outlets can be also very useful to get more familiar with german sound, pronunciation and paraphrasing. The Youtube channel → [Logo! Nachrichten](#) is originally dedicated to children, but because of its simple language also easier for foreigners to understand. Logo is part of the german public television networks and therefore free of charge. Same for the news websites of the public television channels → [ARD](#) and → [ZDF](#) .

Other german main news outlets and Newspapers like → [Der Spiegel](#) → [Der Tagesspiegel](#) → [Die Zeit](#) → [Süddeutsche Zeitung](#) → [Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung](#) offer only limited free content, also with iPhone or Android apps, if you prefer.

However, reading newspapers is one of the elevatest and most efficient methods to practise your language skills.

Another way to learn german communication, almost incidentally and immersive, is to watch german language movies frequently and as much as possible. And if you mainly focus on german productions, you can even start understanding german culture, habits and environment automatically. Please be aware that free available movies are quite harder to access than other sources, if you're not already in Germany. Then you could give it a try using VPN to avoid geoblocking and watch german movies and documentaries with → [ard Mediathek](#) , → [ZDF Mediathek](#) → [Arte Mediathek](#) → [3Sat Mediathek](#) or → [Netzkino](#) or → [Arte TV Kultur on Youtube](#) . And if you can reach out for german movies or with german subtitles, probably on Netflix or other streaming services, this will be a gamechanger in the beginning for sure.

2. Offline opportunities to improve your language skills

As you probably know, daily practise and communication is the most effective way to learn and train a new language. If you're already in Germany, language tandems and clubs are an additional way to improve – and to meet new people at the same time. You can find out about these opportunities through local universities or on social media sites.

If you are in a → [vocational training program](#) , many of your colleagues are native Germans. So take your chance and make friends with at least one of them! Spending leisure time together is the most relaxed way to learn more about each other's habits, food and culture. It's not only about learning and having fun, but also about feeling at home as soon as possible.

3. Why is B1 level not the same as B1 level?

You will generally take your language exam at a Goethe-Institut in Yangon, Bangkok, or Singapore or a telc certified institute. This is unless you already have a recognized qualification from YUFL or MUFL. Since most Goethe-Instituts rarely have native-speaking teachers, especially in the entry-level classes, the language level is often lower than for comparable B1 and B2 exams in Germany, especially in terms of pronunciation and comprehension.

Furthermore, while B1 or B2 is a prerequisite for many au pair and voluntary social year positions, as well as dual training programs and some degree programs, most employers have found that this language level is not actually sufficient to truly thrive in these professions. Especially not if you start your training right away, take German-taught classes, and have to take exams in German language very soon. This means that this transition is really tough and demanding for most people. And it's almost impossible to live in Germany with a secure long-term status with just a B1 or B2 level. There are exceptions in particularly skilled professions, such as IT, but these are rare. You also need to be able to read, understand, and sign employment, rental, insurance, and cell phone contracts in German if you don't want to constantly rely on the help of others.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you seek language lessons with native-speaking teachers (or at least have teachers who are regularly trained by native speakers), maintain daily communicative contact with native speakers, and, if this isn't possible, regularly use German-language media such as → [podcasts, films, music, and audiobooks](#) . This will help you better familiarize yourself with the sound of the German language and, with the most up-to-date materials, learn to understand today's everyday German quickly and comfortably.

! Good to know: how to learn German quickly, practically, and with lots of fun

We're happy to support you on this journey with our advanced learner classes, workshops, events, individual coachings and innovative learning materials and methods. We are specialized in German classes especially for vocational trainees, students and specialists from Myanmar - with a focus on correct pronunciation with native speaking teachers, interculturality and using the latest methods of NonFormalEducation (NFE).

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

4. YUFL, MUFL, Goethe Institute or TELC?

You can be lucky if you're already holding a → [Yangon University of foreign Languages \(YUFL\)](#) or → [Mandalay University of foreign Languages \(MUFL\)](#) German degree, in this case you don't need another proof of your German language skills for most of the working visa requests. If you don't, you have to succeed in one of the officially accepted German language tests from → [Goethe Institute](#) or licensed private → [TELC certified academies](#) . Both of them are officially accepted by public institutions, universities, vocational schools, employers and embassies for visa requests.

There had been some → [illegal bribe incidences with a few private telc institutes](#) (→ [video report on Youtube](#)) in the past, so that some German public started doubting on the private run TELC system. In the eyes of employers the Goethe Institute certificats are still the most trustworthy ones, even if TELC is same accepted.

! Good to know: Why is community networking important?

As already mentioned in our preface: we are aware that the onboarding of Myanmar professionals in Germany is much larger and more challenging than we could overview alone. Therefore, our declared goal is to build an offline/online community that, free from ideological and political constraints, covers as many aspects of daily life as possible and always remains open to constructive criticism, suggestions, and new ideas.

In this spirit, we welcome any commitment that promotes practical understanding between Myanmar and Germany and supports young people from Myanmar in settling in Germany. When the time is right, we will of course also advocate for the opposite approach. All of this explicitly includes all actors who see themselves as competition to our services. We invite you to join us in shaping a future in which every actor can have their constructive place.

Since living and learning work best in offline spaces, and we see online activities as a useful complement to these, we will increasingly strive to offer regular offline classes and events at various locations both in Germany and abroad. We hope this will contribute more to the trusting exchange and networking of all Myanmar in Germany (and those who aspire to become Myanmar). You will soon find more information about this in due course on our website → <https://onboarding-germany.com>.

For more information, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

The biggest hidden risk

Loosing precious time is one of the biggest hidden risks during your onboarding in Germany. Not only because for native Germans the "time is money" principle is one of the most important tasks in their daily life and labour cost is more expensive than most of the material goods. It's more than understandable that you prefer to hang around with your Myanmar expat bubble and travel whole Europe during your weekends and holidays. But your timeframe as a migrant, with the urgent goal of having a safe future, is more limited than it probably seems so, right after your arrival.

If you don't want to stuck on the lowest income level for a lifetime or even being sent back to your mother country with lack of success, it's mandatory to integrate into the German society as soon as possible. Therefore you should take all chances to learn and meet local people regularly from the very beginning on - not only to be well accepted by the locals but also to get in touch with all the habits, necessities and regulations, which are bringing you on the same eye level, with same chances and same opportunities. Without these skills and perspectives, it will be a permanent struggle to survive, not only in Germany, but in the whole western hemisphere!

As a foreigner in Europe from a third country it's a good move to better work double, to run double and to understand double - as long as you are young and vital enough to do so. This process takes time, at least three years probably, maybe more. And meanwhile it needs all your efforts and energy, not to wake up one day, with no chances any more.

! Good to know: Feeling overwhelmed?

If you feel overwhelmed with all the impressions, tasks and challenges, sometimes it can be very efficient to sort your thoughts. In our coachings we can support you in get your things well planned and properly done.

For further information or requests, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

*Lost time is never
found again.*
Benjamin Franklin



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Cost of living

The cost of living - all the costs you have to cover, for example, food, accommodation, transportation, insurance, and energy costs like heating and electricity - is much higher compared to Myanmar. Of course, wages are also much higher in Germany, and the social and education systems are much better than in Myanmar. However, you should be aware that, especially with lower incomes, you might not have much left at the end of the month. For example, you might not have much left over for savings. Additional information to everyday life you'll also find in the → [Handbook Germany life chapters](#).

Accommodation & apartment search

As in all western immigration countries, accommodation rents in Germany are comparatively expensive, especially in large cities and metropolitan areas. A room in a shared apartment can easily cost 500 to 1.000 euros per month, depending on your tenacity, cleverness and good luck while searching. So finding your own rental apartment can sometimes take several months of intensive searching. When applying for your own rental agreement, landlords usually expect convincing proof of income and a so-called → [Schufa statement](#), which proves your debt-free status. → [Schufa](#) is a private German registry of residents in which all payment defaults are personally assigned. Regular Schufa services are paid in a monthly rate, but according to the German law you have the right to apply for a free of charge information about your own personal data. To avoid unnecessary billing we urgently recommend to follow exclusively this → [link to „Datenkopie nach Art. 15 DS-GVO“](#), which is not that easy to find on their website!

Non-German applicants from abroad often find it more difficult to provide all of this documentation, putting them at a significant disadvantage when looking for an apartment. This generally makes it more difficult for them to find suitable housing, even if discrimination and racism are no longer considered a factor under German law.

In some cities and regions in Germany, there are statutory rent caps for standard rental apartments, but these can easily be circumvented, for example, by renting out furnished apartments. Therefore, please be aware that the search for an affordable apartment can be very time-consuming and stressful. And you should therefore make as many enquiries as possible to increase your chances of getting a viewing. Due to the generally fierce competition among prospective tenants, it is always an advantage to be able to present yourself confidently and have a fluent command of German.

! Good to know: how to prepare for an apartment application

It can be very frustrating and expensive to find a suitable accommodation in Germany. We offer personalized advice, support, and coaching for your apartment search to avoid fail and disappointments. We research suitable contacts and housing companies for your location, assist you in compiling and optimizing your application documents. To prepare you best for viewing appointments, we train and simulate sample housing interviews in German language with you.

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Rental apartments on the free market are available as long-term accommodation with three month' notice ("Mietwohnung", not usually furnished, not always equipped with a kitchen) and short lets ("Wohnung zur Zwischenmiete") as temporary accommodation for a fixed period (Usually furnished). You can find them on → [housing online portals](#) such as → [Immowelt](#), → [Immonet](#), → [ImmoScout24](#), → [Kleinanzeigen](#), → [wohnungsboerse.net](#), → [meinestadt.de](#), and → [ohnemakler.net](#), as well as on the websites of → [Wohnungsunternehmen](#) (these are public and half public housing or also private companies, also called "Wohnungsgesellschaften" or "Wohnbaugesellschaften"). These Housing companies in Germany specialize in the construction, management, administration, and marketing of their own residential properties and can be organized as non-profit or cooperative companies, or purely private companies. For example, in Berlin but

also in many other cities and towns, there are many → [semi-public municipal housing companies \(Kommunale Wohnungsunternehmen\)](#) that often offer housing at more moderate prices than private landlords. These sometimes also have waiting lists that you can sign up for.

But it's also worth keeping an eye out offline: in many neighborhoods, apartments are occasionally advertised via notices on lampposts or bulletin boards in supermarkets ("New tenant wanted," "Roommate wanted" - "Wohnung zur vermieten", "Wohnung zur Untermiete", "WG-Zimmer zu vermieten") – and if you're feeling really brave, you can simply walk into any doorway in your favorite neighborhood. There's usually information about the property management company right next to the front door, usually with contact details. It might be worth it to simply call and ask.

Flatsharing ("Wohngemeinschaft" / "WG") in Germany is very popular with students and artist, because they are often a cheaper option than having a place of your own, especially in major cities. You can find rooms in shared apartments as flatshare on portals like → [wg-gesucht.de](#) or → [wg-suche.de](#), but also offline via notices, especially in places where many students hang out, such as on noticeboards at universities, cafeterias, bars, and libraries. Please note that in shared apartments, you will at best receive a sublease agreement and, very often, only a verbal contract. While this gives you a lot of flexibility, it also gives you virtually no legal tenant protection. This means you can lose your room very quickly and at short notice. And in some cases, you cannot officially register with the → [Meldebehörden \(local registration authorities\)](#) using this address.

In housing ads, you will often see phrases such as "2-room flat" ("2-Zimmer-Wohnung" in western parts of Germany, "2-Raum-Wohnung" in eastern parts). This usually means that the flat has two rooms (e.g. A bedroom and a living room) as well as a kitchen area and a bathroom with a toilet, shower or bathtub. If not and the kitchen is integrated within the rooms, they probably call it "Studio" or "Mini-Apartment".

If you can rely on a bigger budget or if it may take longer than expected to find suitable accommodation, a holiday apartment or furnished short let may be a good option for your first few months in Germany. This will also give you time to prepare the documents you will need to find accommodation, such as payslips or proof of having opened a bank account.

More information on the subject of housing you can also find on the → [Make it in Germany portal](#) or with the brochure → ["Finding a place to live in Germany – A guide for migrants"](#). Some good information you'll also find in the → [Handbook Germany housing chapters](#).

And of course, if your budget is enough you could also purchase a property. Flat and house prices vary much depending on the city, district and neighbourhood. Condos in Munich, Frankfurt, Hamburg or Berlin, for example, are more expensive than in other German cities. If you are buying a flat or a house, you should be aware that there are additional costs to consider, such as Land Registry fees, estate agent fees, notary fees and taxes.

Authorities: Residents' Registration Office ("Meldebehörde")

Once you have found accommodation, you must register with your local Residents' Registration Office ("Meldebehörde") within two weeks of moving in. You need to make an appointment online, in some cities and towns you can also go there in person during office hours. Please check their regulations in advance. Each municipality has its own Residents' Registration Office (other German names for the "Meldebehörde" are "Bürgeramt", "Bürgerservice" or "Einwohnermeldeamt"). There you will receive an official registration certificate free of charge as proof of your registration. Please keep this document in a safe place. You will need to show your registration certificate to other authorities, such as the Foreigners Authority ("Ausländerbehörde"), as proof of accommodation.

You are required by law to register at the Residents' Registration Office. You will also need it to apply for other things in Germany, such as a bank account ("Bankkonto") and a German mobile phone number or SIM card ("SIM-Karte").

For your appointment, you will need valid identification documents (e.g. passport or ID card - „Reisepass“ or „Personalausweis“) for all the people you want to register in the property, a tenancy confirmation letter ("Wohnungsgeberbestätigung") from your landlord or landlady, birth certificates („Geburtsurkunde“) for your children, and a marriage certificate („Heiratsurkunde“) if you are married.

You may also need other documents to register your place of residence. Check the website of the Residents' Registration Office in your city or region before you go to your appointment. Please note that in

the case of family reunification („Familiennachzug“), you must register all other family members at the Residents' Registration Office. For persons under 16 years of age, the obligation to register must be fulfilled by the person into whose home the minor is moving. Newborns born in Germany only have to be registered if they are moving to a home other than that of their parents or mother.

Authorities: Foreigners Authority („Ausländerbehörde“ or „Ausländeramt“)

The Foreigners Authority („Ausländerbehörde“ or „Ausländeramt“) is the competent authority for foreign nationals. Its responsibilities include providing advice, issuing and renewing → [residence permits](#) („Aufenthaltserlaubnis“), issuing documents in lieu of passports, participating in the issue of visas („Visum“), and much more besides.

If you have entered Germany on an entry visa („Einreisevisum“), you must apply for a residence permit for the purpose of your stay at your local Foreigners Authority in good time after your entry, depending on the duration of your visa. This may also apply to accompanying family members.

For applying your residence permit at the Foreigners Authority you will usually need a valid passport, your registration certificate from the Residents' Registration Office („Meldebestätigung“), tenancy agreement („Mietvertrag“), Certificate from your health insurance provider („Bescheinigung von der Krankenkasse“), Employment or apprenticeship contract („Arbeitsvertrag“ or „Ausbildungsvertrag“) and biometric passport photos („Biometrische Passfotos“).

It is best to check with your local Foreigners Authority to find out exactly what documents are required.

The residence permit („Aufenthaltserlaubnis“), in the form of an electronic ID card, is issued on the basis of the purpose of your stay.

Authorities: Competent Recognition Authority („zuständige Anerkennungsbehörde“)

If you gained your professional qualifications abroad and if they have not yet been fully recognised in Germany, you can continue or start the process once you are in the country. If you work in a regulated profession, such as a doctor, the recognition procedure is compulsory. If you work in a non-regulated profession, you can improve your career prospects with a fully recognised professional qualification. Recognition can also be an advantage for residence purposes.

You apply for recognition of your foreign qualifications with the recognition authority responsible for your place of work and profession. The recognition authority will also tell you what documents you need to submit with your application. You can find the competent body on the → [Federal Government's information portal](#). More details also on the → [Make it in Germany portal](#).

! Good to know: Do you need personal support?

As Germany is a proper constitutional state, all authorities have to strictly follow the laws and may also have to answer to the law. Nevertheless some clerks also have bad days or are sometimes even unwilling. Since bribery is an absolute no-go in Germany and inevitably leads to criminal prosecution, good communication is essential in such cases. If you want so, we are happy to personally support you with our professional expertise during your visits to the authorities, if you find them unpleasant or even encounter problems.

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*Placing too much value on the opinions of others
is a widespread delusion.*

Arthur Schopenhauer, german philosopher



Art Festival in Lindenau, Leipzig, September 2026 - © 2025 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

First steps: how do I open a bank account?

For things like receiving your salary, transferring your rent or signing insurance contracts you need a bank account in Germany. The associated debit card (e.e. "Girocard" or formerly "EC-Karte") will also allow you to make everyday payments at the supermarket, ticket counters or other casual situations. You can also use your debit card in other countries.

If you are travelling a lot or plan to do a lot of online shopping, In-App payments or travel bookings (e.g. Flights, hotels, rental cars, etc.), you may consider a credit card additionally to your debit card. When you open your bank account, you can also apply for a regular or prepaid credit card, which is usually subject to an extra yearly fee.

Best practise is to reach out for as many offers as possible, at least from the main players like → Postbank, which is directly linked to → [Deutsche Bank](#), → [Sparkasse](#) → [Volksbank](#) → [Commerzbank](#) → [ING](#) → [Santander Consumer Bank](#). The Sparkasse has still the most branches, even at the countryside. But be aware that their organisation is divided in many districts in Germany, so that you can't get every service far away from your living place. The Postbank is linked to the post offices, so that you will find a branch everywhere, with very generous opening hours.

If the reduced service of pure online banking is also an option for you, there are → [N26](#) or → [Comdirect](#) to consider.

And if you prefer sustainable, ethical and ecological banks more than pure beneficial driven ones, you can have a look at → [GLS Bank](#), → [Tomorrow](#), → [Triodos Bank](#) or → [EthikBank](#).

! Good to know: choosing your right bank is not that simple!

Bank fees in general can differ a lot, regarding to their monthly costs. Depending on your professional situation e.g. As a student, being in vocational training or already working in a job, there are many discounts on the market. Banking is a high competitive business in Germany, very often linked to other services like insurances or lending money.

Many discounts in banking, deposits, insurance and lending, but also with all other contracts, seem to be a good deal only at first glance: very often they catch you in one year or even three years contracts with low monthly fees in the beginning, but disproportionately increasing later on. If you've already signed, it's nearly impossible to escape after. Only with online contracts and deals which are not signed in their shops, offices or business premises, you have the legal right to retreat within 14 days.

Business like this is legal in Germany, as long as the terms and conditions are transparently noted in the → ["Allgemeine Geschäftsbedingungen" \(AGB\)](#) and they are not immoral. Unfortunately this legal framework leaves many gaps to risk large amounts of money. Of course this will be never mentioned in sales talks and advertising campaigns.

Especially if you are not really confident with the German language and regulations yet, it can be very confusing and a right challenge to make the best deal.

If you need support, e.g. to get a current overview about the most reliable offers or the best deal and service at your place, please feel free to get in touch with us. We will not only coach you how to benefit best, but also train you to make it on your own, in the future.

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To open a current bank account, you will usually need your valid passport, your residence permit or visa, your registration certificate and your payslip or salary statement. So before you can open a bank account, you must register at your local → ["Bürgeramt / Bürgerbüro / Bürgerdienst / Bürgerservice"](#) with your German address.

! Good to know: beware of high exchange fees abroad, with your debit or credit card!

Some EU countries are members of the political European Union and the Schengen visa commitment, but not of the currency union. Instead of Euro they still use their established currency, like Bulgaria with their LEV (BGN), Denmark with their Danish Krone (DKK), Poland with their Złoty (PLN), Romania with their Leu (RON), Sweden with their Swedish Krona (SEK), Czech Republic with their Czech Koruna (CZK) and Hungary with their Forint (HUF). In many of these countries banks and shops offer a EURO settlement while using their ATMs and payment terminals, which can be a real money trap. Better always select payment in the local currency to avoid these unnecessary service costs. Your German bank will automatically exchange the amount with a better rate, for sure.

Online Payment

The most popular Online Payment system in Germany is → [Paypal](#). Nearly everyone uses it to quickly transfer also very small amounts of money, or to do safe shopping in online stores. Recently, you can even use it to pay in some stores. The Paypal account is directly linked to your German bank account, and private transactions are even for free. Of course there are also other competitors like → [Apple Pay](#) or → [Google Pay](#), but they are way less popular and spread. Cause the European data protectors are scared of the U.S. data collecting performance, European banks recently started to develop → [Wero](#) as an EU alternative.

Currency exchange & International Money Transfer in Germany

If you need US Dollars to be changed in Euro currency for your daily needs, the best rates are usually provided by → [ReiseBank AG](#), → [Western Union](#), → [RIA Money Transfer](#), → [Rekoda](#) or also local exchange offices in bigger cities. Please watch the current exchange rates carefully.

Even if Germany is their second largest market in whole Europe, → [Wise money transfer](#) is not yet that popular among Germans in their daily life like in Thailand or elsewhere.

Phone, simcards, mobile internet and Wifi in Germany

Landline connections in Germany are primarily used to provide broadband internet access. This can be done via fiber optic/DSL or cable connections. Landline telephones, on the other hand, are becoming increasingly less important, as mobile telephony is now just as affordable and more flexible in installation and contracting. Because they are no more linked to a certain accommodation household. Smartphones and mobile phones are usually called "Handy" in Germany. To get a SIM card for your phone, you have the choice between:

- a mobile phone contract with a minimum term of 12 months or
- a prepaid SIM card with no fixed contract term.

Although mobile phone contracts with the big three operators → [Deutsche Telekom](#), → [Vodafone](#), → [O2](#) and their sub licensed operators like → [Freenet](#), → [Klarmobil](#) or → [Simyo](#) are usually somewhat cheaper, we recommend a prepaid card, especially for beginners. This also gives you flexibility if you want to adjust your data usage from time to time or if you don't need the German phone number for a while.

At the first glance it might seem you that a 2 years phone contract is the cheaper choice, but please consider: all mobile services are becoming rapidly cheaper from time to time. It can be a trap being caught in such a contract for a very long period, with no chance to change the operator. Same with their quality of reach and service, depending on your location or travel preferences. And please keep in mind: 30, 40 or even 50 Euro monthly paid are a lot of money, especially for those just starting their careers.

Additionally many contracts are only under the condition of → [direct debit authorization \(„Abbuchungserlaubnis“\)](#). If you

give them you have to watch your bank account carefully that all the bookings are correctly done. Sometimes there's a lot of fraud in it. So please avoid to give too many of these authorizations, cause you might lose the overview about your expenses soon.

In case you're not able to pay only a single month because of other unexpected expenses, the phone companies will bring you in big trouble for sure. Not only that you have to pay a "fine" of 15 Euro, which is often called "Rückbuchungsgebühr" and another bank transaction fee additionally. They might also give you a → [record in the Schufa data base](#) in case of payment fail. Same is with landline phone and internet contracts. In worst cases this can prevent you to sign an accommodation contract, even if you found your perfect apartment to rent. Do you really risk this because of a simple phone contract?

Not only regarding these risks we urge you to always carefully study the → [Terms and Conditions \("Allgemeine Geschäftsbedingungen"\)](#) **before signing a contract!** According to the law they are always exclusively in German language unfortunately.

All large discount food retailers like → [Aldi](#) and → [Lidl](#), as well as supermarkets like → [Rewe](#) and → [Kaufland](#), now offer affordable flat-rate phone plans with generous data packages. Compared to other countries real unlimited mobile data flatrates are still disproportionately expensive, not really valid in EU wide roaming and therefore not worthwhile yet.

Unless unlimited prepaid data flats are not common yet, but both, **Aldi and Lidl offer "Unlimited on Demand"-prepaid schemes for 28 days now, allowing you to top up for free and as many times as you need, when your data limit runs out. From our perspective, this would be our first choice!**

You can easily purchase these retailer starter set with a SIM card at the supermarket checkout, and then simply activate it online by video identification, using your passport or ID card.

Personal registration with passport or video ident process is mandatory by law. You can top up your credit both at the checkout and conveniently online; with Lidl-Connect, you can even use PayPal. Lidl, Rewe, and Kaufland use the technically more reliable Vodafone or Deutsche Telekom network - Aldi cooperates with O2. → [Freenet](#) offers a slightly different, flexible billing model, and if you prefer to work directly with a network provider, the Deutsche Telekom subsidiary → [Congstar](#) might be right for you.

There's good news for anyone who travels a lot in Europe: by → [law](#), all mobile phone connections throughout the European Union (EU), as well as Liechtenstein, Norway, and Iceland, → [must always be reachable at home rates](#). This means you can use your phone plan and your data allowance throughout the EU as usual. Please note that you must be in Germany for this to work, and this rule does not apply in non-EU countries such as Switzerland, the UK, Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, or the Vatican City. Unlimited data plans are also generally exempt from this, and calls to foreign phone numbers are always charged separately – no matter where you are.

So in whole Europe, calls from German numbers to German numbers are in the same pricing, doesn't matter where you are. But be aware: if you call a number with another country code, e.g. a polish number with a polish country code "+48", you'll have to pay very high extra fees, even if you're staying in Poland in this moment.

Same with your data package, it's valid to the same conditions in whole EU. But caution: this is not true for unlimited data packages! They have special → [fair use regulations](#) .

If you don't have a landline internet connection at your accommodation, we recommend purchasing a second SIM card and a mobile WiFi router. Devices like the → [tp-Link M7010](#) or the → [D-Link DWR932](#) are often available for less than €40 (on the second hand market, for example in → [Kleinanzeigen](#), sometimes even for 20 euros or less) and reliably provide Wi-Fi for computers and tablets.

The telephone country code for Germany is "0049" or "+49". People inside Germany who do not travel that much, mostly use a simple "0" instead, for domestic calls. That's why German telephone numbers always start with a "0", doesn't matter if mobile or landline.

If your number would be "0170 1234567" , for using the international code, please remove the "0" like in the following: "+49 170 1234567" . If you make a call from abroad to a German number, the telephone country code is mandatory.

Free Wifi is now available in many locations like libraries, trains, hospitals, hotels, restaurants, bars and public places. The connection quality varies a lot and **you should be aware that it's up to you to protect yourself and your data against hacking, fraud and your own copyright infringements!**

*Where the fear is,
that's the way to go.*

Günter Ammon, founder of dynamic psychotherapy



Konstanz, April 2022 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Your application for a job

How easy it is to → [find a suitable](#) job in Germany, of course, depends largely on how you came to the country. With the → [Quick Check from "Make it in Germany"](#) you can get a first glance about which requirements are to consider.

If you already have a visa for a → [dual vocational training program](#), e.g. in a profession in the healthcare or tourism sector, your career path is initially predetermined, and you can rely on getting a job at your training company immediately upon successful completion of your → [vocational qualification \(Berufsabschluss\)](#). Of course, you are free to further qualify yourself later and advance into other professional fields with your gained experience and language skills. Since you will then already be working in a German-speaking company and attending → [vocational school \(Berufsschule\)](#) in German language, your start will still be very challenging, even with a B2 language certificate (→ also see our chapter: Why is B1 level not always B1 level?). Through daily contact with native speakers and supportive language acquisition measures, you will generally have achieved an acceptable level of knowledge and language skills after three years, at least to be able to cope reasonably well in this profession.

If you apply for a job in Germany with a degree from university or any other qualification from a third country, you might need a → [recognition](#) in Germany to apply for a job in most of the cases. So best is to verify beforehand which requirements are fundamental and must be respected. Probably you may apply with support of the → [Checklist for qualified professionals from non-EU countries](#) for the → [Job Search Opportunity Card](#) visa.

As is true everywhere, the more committed you are to your future, the greater and more diverse your job and career opportunities will be.

Direct weblinks to online job searching platforms you'll find in the → ["Recognition of your qualification from a third country for a direct job application in Germany"](#) chapter!

! Good to know: how to increase your career opportunities even during your dual training (Berufs-Ausbildung)

Feel free to contact us if you'd like to quickly broaden your horizons beyond the prescribed range and learn more about further opportunities.

For further information or requests, please contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#), → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

If you came to Germany for study, your chances depend largely on the extent to which you were able to use your time at university to learn German. If you completed your studies primarily in German, you will likely have it very easy to find a suitable job in your field due to the current favorable labor market situation in Germany. Through internships and practical seminars, you will already have access to networks in German communities and German companies, and you will also be very familiar with German customs.

If you complete your studies in an English-taught program, the situation is unfortunately quite different in our experience. While you will have acquired the most important professional standards with your successful → [University Degree \(Hochschulabschluss\)](#), since you probably spent most of your studies in the international bubble, you will in most cases lack the necessary language skills as well as the intercultural experience and skills you urgently need to start your career in Germany. This often leads to you initially only being able to take on underqualified and underpaid jobs, and even the search for such jobs becomes a major hurdle. Having a fulltime job and additionally learning proper German the same time is a challenge only few people succeed in. Therefore, we strongly recommend that you address this question and find solutions during your studies or qualification period, ideally right from your start in Germany.

The simplest and most cost-effective, but also most challenging approach would be to expand your circle of friends and social circle to include native German speakers as quickly as possible, thus expanding your intercultural skills and integrative knowledge on a daily basis. You could do this, for example, by specifically targeting a German sports club

where you can participate in both athletic activities and volunteer work. We expressly do not mean commercial fitness clubs, which usually only attract international customers. German → [clubs \(Vereine\)](#) have been an important non-profit institution for social gatherings, leisure activities, and continuing education for centuries. You can find them in cities as well as rural areas, covering all imaginable topics, such as animal husbandry, model making, dance, or anything else you enjoy.

Another option is to volunteer for a few hours with aid organizations and NGOs such as the → [German Red Cross \(Deutsches Rotes Kreuz\)](#), the → [fire department \(Feuerwehr - which can be found in every city and municipality\)](#), the → [Malteser](#) (a German charity), the → [Federal Agency for Technical Relief \(Technisches Hilfswerk - THW\)](#), the → [Caritas](#) and the → [Diakonie](#) (both christian German charities for the elderly) or the → [Homeless Support \(Obdachlosenhilfe\)](#). Here, too, you can quickly connect with native speakers and also develop your social skills. There's even an → [English-language database for volunteer projects](#) in Germany. Be brave and just look it up!

! Good to know: how to quickly overcome your weaker self & the language barrier

In this case, we now have extensive experience in providing students with linguistic, intercultural, and institutional training in the shortest possible time. If you wish, we can support or even personally accompany and introduce you while joining communities, clubs and institutions and resolve any problems that arise quickly and easily with you.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

In general, we recommend that you always look around in the social circles of your professional peer group. This means attending trade fairs, conferences, networking events, and even bars or restaurants where your professional peer group usually hangs out. Here, you can have informal conversations with potential colleagues and gain insider information that isn't written down anywhere. You'll also be practicing your German language skills at the same time.

! Good to know: how to prepare for your job search

We offer personalized advice, support, and coaching for your job search. We will work with you to find suitable contacts and employers based on your qualifications and location, assist you in compiling and optimizing your application documents, and train and simulate sample job interviews in German.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

*The only constant in life
is change.*

Heraklit, greek philosopher



Market at Augustusplatz, Leipzig, October 2025 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Working in Germany: Gross and net salary

German employment contracts usually state your gross salary ("Bruttogehalt" or "Bruttolohn"). However, gross is not the same as net ("Netto"). This means that you will ultimately be paid less than what is stated in your employment contract, because taxes ("Steuern") and social security contributions ("Sozialabgaben") will be deducted from this amount. The amount you end up on your payslip and with your bank account is your net salary ("Nettogehalt" or "Nettolohn").

Aside the VAT which comes to every purchase and service ("Mehrwertsteuer" or "Umsatzsteuer", usually 19% and 7% for selected items and services) and some other special taxes, the income tax ("Einkommenssteuer") is the most relevant one for you as employee, freelancer or contractor. Every month, your employer will automatically pay income tax on your behalf to the Tax Office ("Finanzamt") in the form of a payroll tax ("Lohnsteuer").

If your income tax or payroll tax exceeds a certain amount, you must also pay the solidarity surcharge ("Solidarit t zuschlag"), which was originally created for the reconstruction of East Germany after the communist breakdown.

If you are a member of a tax-collecting Christian religious community, you will also be liable for church tax ("Kirchensteuer"), which your employer also will pay on your behalf. It is therefore important that you declare your religious affiliation correctly to your employer.

As well as tax, social security contributions will also be deducted from your salary.

Each month you will receive a salary statement or payslip ("Gehaltsabrechnung" or "Entgeltbescheinigung") from your employer, showing your exact gross and net pay and the contributions you have paid. In addition, at the end of the year you will receive a "printout of the electronic wage tax statement" ("Ausdruck der elektronischen Lohnsteuerbescheinigung") for the whole calendar year. Please keep all tax-related documents in a safe place. You will also need them if you decide to file your tax return declaration.

To get an idea of how much tax you can expect to pay before receiving your first salary, simply use the tax calculator provided by the → [Federal Ministry of Finance \("Bundesfinanzministerium" .. BMF\)](#) .

How much tax you will pay depends on a number of personal factors that may affect the amount of your income in any given year (for example, whether you are married or have children or certain special expenses). In general, the higher your income, the more percentage of tax you pay. Income tax rates range from 14% to 45% of wages. If your income tax or payroll tax exceeds a certain limit, you will also pay the solidarity surcharge ("Solidarit t beitrag") of up to 5,5% on this tax. If you are liable for church tax, the rate is 8% or 9% of the income tax or payroll tax, depending on the federal state you're working in.

In addition, employees are placed in different tax brackets ("Lohnsteuerklassen", I to VI), depending on their personal circumstances. A number of factors determine your tax bracket:

Are you married, single, divorced or in a registered same-sex partnership? Be aware that if you're married and your marriage took place abroad, it's not automatically valid in Germany. Please contact your local register office ("Standesamt") in Germany to find out how to register your foreign marriage certificate in Germany.

If so, does your partner have a salary? Or do you have children? Are you raising them alone or in a partnership or marriage? Or do you have another job or probably property income where you get additionally paid?

When you move to Germany and register with the → Residents' Registration Office ("Meldebeh rde") , you will automatically receive a letter sent to your address from the → [Federal Central Tax Office \("Bundeszentralamt f r Steuern"\)](#) containing a number called a Tax Identification Number ("Steueridentifikationsnummer" / "ID"). All tax IDs have 11 digits. You must give this number to your employer so that they can deduct payroll tax from your salary. Your tax ID is valid for life. This means that if you have previously worked in Germany and received a tax ID already, you must use the same number. If you no longer have your tax ID, you should contact your local Tax Office ("Finanzamt").

In case that you're unable to provide your employer with your tax ID in time, he can deduct payroll tax without your tax ID for a minimum of three months. If you do not provide your tax ID and date of birth within three months, your employer will be obliged to calculate the income tax according to payroll tax bracket VI, which is usually the least favourable one. It is therefore important that your employer receives your tax ID and date of birth as soon as possible.

! Good to know: Apply for your yearly tax refunds!

It may be worth filling a tax return / income tax return ("Steuererklärung" or "Einkommenssteuererklärung") each year. If you have paid too much tax, for example, you may get a refund. The → [Federal Central Tax Office](#) ("[Bundeszentralamt für Steuern](#)") [website](#) provides helpful information on tax returns.

Refunds of more than 1000 Euro a year are possible, so it can be really worth it. Some Germans appoint a tax advisor, some are using apps or tax calculation programs to do their tax return declaration. Cause the online tax office access according to its security queries in administrative German is not that easy to apply, this is only for advanced users.

If you need further assistance, please feel free to get in touch with us and ask for our services on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

Living in Germany: Social security and insurances you urgently need

Germany has a well-developed social security system that provides people with financial security, for example in times of illness or unemployment. E.g. If you have an accident, your health insurance company ("Krankenversicherung" or "Krankenkasse") will cover all basic costs you need for your hospital treatment. If you then probably need rehabilitation, this will be paid for by your pension insurance ("Rentenversicherung" or "Rentenkasse"). If you're subsequently unable to return to work immediately, you will receive sick pay ("Krankengeld").

This is how the system works: In principle, all employees and apprentices are covered by the social security system. If you earn more than a certain amount, you are subject to → [social security contributions](#) ("[Sozialabgaben](#)"). This means that you automatically → [become a member of the social security system](#). As a member, a certain amount is deducted from your salary each month and paid to the insurance companies. You do not have to do anything – your employer will make sure that the money is paid on time and to the right recipient. For students doing jobs for income there are → [special regulations](#) .

In the social security system, there are fixed percentages for each type of insurance, with the exception of health insurance. Health insurance contributions may vary. This means that the more you earn, the more you pay in social security contributions. In total, you will have to pay around 20% of your gross income in social security contributions. Your employer will also contribute to your social security, paying about the same amount as you do.

You do not have to register for social security yourself – your employer will register you with German Pension Insurance ("Deutsche Rentenversicherung"), which will then send you a letter containing your Insurance Number Certificate ("Versicherungsnummernnachweis"). This certificate will show your insurance number and your first and last name. You will need this insurance number throughout your working life, for example if you change jobs or claim benefits. If you do not have a social security number when you start work, your employer will apply for one for you when they register your employment. You can also apply for one yourself from German Pension Insurance ("Deutsche Rentenversicherung") or your health insurance provider.

In whole Europe, you can insure yourself against pretty much any imaginable risk. So, you can spend a lot of money financially protecting yourself against every conceivable type of accident, disaster, or damage. However, many of these policies are far too expensive or only suitable for niche interests. Furthermore, there is fierce competition among insurance providers, and some providers have a better reputation than others for service and claims processing. Some insurers are even known for avoiding all claims processing as much as possible, thus putting their customers in hopeless situations. While Germany is a constitutional country with truly excellent jurisdiction, when a large company with good lawyers plays for time, it can be very nerve-wracking for some customers. Therefore, keep your eyes peeled when choosing insurance!

1. Health Insurance (“Krankenversicherung”)

In Germany, membership in a health insurance fund is mandatory for everyone staying in the country – even visitors. And it is part of the national social security system. For residents of Germany – both German and foreign citizens – there are two options for insuring themselves against health risks and covering almost all major medical treatment costs in clinics and hospitals:

Statutory health insurance (“Gesetzliche Krankenversicherung”)

Private health insurance (“Private Krankenversicherung”)

In some cases, you have the freedom to choose whether to take out statutory or private health insurance upon arrival in Germany.

The majority of employees and apprentices are covered by the statutory health insurance. Comprehensive private health insurance is only available to certain groups of people and is mainly relevant for the self-employed, civil servants and employees with a certain, higher income. The amount of the premium depends on the scope of the insured benefits and the individual insured risk, e.g. your age, occupation and state of health. Compared to statutory health insurance, family members cannot be included free of charge on your policy. If you have private health insurance, you must pay the invoices yourself and then submit them to your insurance company for reimbursement, once the insurance company approves them.

Generally speaking, private health insurance is generally cheaper for young people and becomes increasingly more expensive for older insured persons. What may seem like an advantage at first can quickly become a cost trap, especially if you intend to stay in Germany for more than a few years. Because most private health insurance companies expect you to submit expensive doctor and hospital bills upfront, even for expensive operations, this can quickly run into the tens of thousands of euros. Which you first have to provide out of your own pocket.

Many doctors and insurance companies claim that you can get a doctor's appointment faster and sometimes even better services with private health insurance. However, these services are often based on scientifically unproven measures, and at least in urban areas, the density of doctors and hospitals in Germany is so high that you will always get an appointment quickly. And once you have private health insurance, you can only return to statutory health insurance in exceptional cases.

It's also possible to be covered by statutory health insurance and to take out individual supplementary private insurance, e.g. Supplementary dental insurance or insurance that provides special benefits or comfort in the event of hospitalisation.

Statutory health insurance, for which there are hundreds of different providers offering slightly different benefits, is, in our opinion, the better choice in the long run – simply because it's part of the German social security system and therefore offers better legal protection. Private health insurance, on the other hand, is exclusively profit-driven and can, in the worst case, even go bankrupt. But of course, you're free to make your own choice!

For your first few days or weeks in Germany, or before you are covered by German health insurance, it can be advisable to take out global health insurance in your home country. You may be asked to provide proof of health insurance when you apply for a visa.

If you're a member of a statutory health insurance scheme, you will receive an electronic health card (“Elektronische Gesundheitskarte” or “Krankenversicherungskarte” or “Krankenversichertenkarte”), which is like a health insurance membership card. Bring this card with you when you go to the doctor. In most cases, you will not have to pay anything at the doctor's surgery because they will send the invoice directly to your health insurance provider and settle it with them. The card is also valid in all EU countries, as well as in Great Britain, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

The statutory health insurance covers all outpatient medical care, such as doctors' surgeries (including dental surgeries), medication, remedies and medical aids, inpatient stays and treatments (e.g. In hospitals and clinics), medically necessary rehabilitation and pregnancy and childbirth care.

There are differences when it comes to other medical services. For example, some health insurance providers pay for professional teeth cleaning or cover part of the cost of artificial insemination, while others do not. If you want to compare which company covers which certain service, we recommend you to contact many health insurance providers directly.

! Good to know: How to understand the German health insurance system

Of course, what applies to all topics also applies here: the better your German skills, the easier it will be for you to cope with illnesses and health emergencies! We are happy to support you in our coaching sessions and German classes to help you choose the right health care plan for you.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

2. Statutory Social Care Insurance (“Gesetzliche Pflegeversicherung”)

This insurance provides basic cover in the event that you need longterm care due to illness or disability. The elderly are most often affected. You are entitled to social care insurance if you have been insured for a certain qualifying period, which is two years within the last ten years before you apply. Whether and what benefits people in need of nursing care receive from the insurance depends on the duration of the need for care, the care level (“Pflegegrad”) and the type of care.

3. Statutory Pension Insurance (“Gesetzliche Rentenversicherung”)

When employees retire at the end of their working lives, the pension scheme pays them a monthly pension for the rest of their lives. The amount of the pension depends mainly on your income and the number of years you worked in Germany.

4. Statutory Accident Insurance (“Gesetzliche Unfallversicherung”)

If you have an occupational accident or disease, your accident insurance will pay for your medical treatment and help you get back to work.

5. Statutory Unemployment Insurance (“Gesetzliche Arbeitslosenversicherung”)

When employees lose their jobs, unemployment insurance pays a monthly amount for a certain period to replace lost wages, if certain conditions are met: among other things, they must usually have been insured for at least one year over the last 30 months and must be looking for work again. If you're an employee, your unemployment benefit will be around 60% of your average salary. Under tax legislation, the amount of unemployment benefit is 67% if you have children.

6. Liability Insurance (“Haftpflichtversicherung”)

The absolute must-have insurance policy is Liability Insurance. With some really good providers, it costs less than €40 for a one-year contract and protects you against all damage you cause to the health or property of others. For example, if you carelessly cross the street as a pedestrian and cause an accident. Such damage and its consequences can amount to millions of dollars and leave you in debt for life. Therefore, you shouldn't spend a day in Germany without Liability Insurance!

Be careful: some banks offer such liability insurance as a bundle when you open a bank account. What initially sounds like a good service can be quite expensive, because these contracts often have a minimum term of three(!) years. And you should also be aware that the insurance industry works almost exclusively on commission: this means that the more insurance policies the insurance agent (“Versicherungsvertreter”) sells you, the more money they earn. Insurance brokers (“Versicherungsmakler”), who have several providers in their portfolio and can offer you better deals, are a bit better in this regard – if you found a trustful one.

3. All other insurances

As well as being covered by social security, which is compulsory in Germany, most people in this country take out other

types of insurance that are voluntary. These can be useful depending on your circumstances and exposure to risk. But please be aware that it can be very expensive to protect all cases, so that your choice should be carefully done. E.g. home contents insurance („Hausratversicherung“) covers all items in your house or flat in the event of theft or damage to your furniture and clothing by fire, storm or water. → [Handbook Germany](#) provides you with a very good overview about the most usual additional insurances in Germany.

! Good to know: how to find your best insurance

Even for native Germans it can be sometimes a real hassle to choose the right company for each single insurance. Of course you can also book all contracts at the same provider – then in most of the cases you should accept to lose a lot of money. On your request we're happy to support you finding the right insurance policies or good insurance brokers for your carefree life in Germany. We'll also help you understand the often complicated insurance terms and conditions, which are written exclusively in German. This is also part of our German classes.

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The importance of Terms and Conditions („Allgemeine Vertragsbedingungen“) in German contracts

Doesn't matter if you sign a contract for a purchase, for an insurance or to buy a house - **from the moment on you set your signature on a contract, you will be liable for all the obligations arising from this**. Which commitments they are is very often written in the Terms and Conditions („Allgemeine Vertragsbedingungen“ or „AGB“), on which most of the contracts refer to. If available, every company is obliged to make its terms and conditions easily accessible and to openly refer or even attach them to the contracts it signs.

Germany sees itself as a constitutional state (→ [„Rechtsstaat“](#)) and therefore attaches great importance to ensuring that every individual can rely on the judiciary to the best of their ability. Conversely, this also means that all signed contracts are unconditionally legally valid, provided they do not violate common decency.

According to German law, all agreements between contracting parties must be documented transparently and comprehensibly. For business transactions in Germany, only German-language terms and conditions are legally valid. This often makes it very difficult for foreigners without sufficient German language skills to understand what kind of transaction they are entering into. Even for native German speakers, the formal language can be very confusing. And many contracting parties often don't read the terms and conditions carefully enough because they're too impatient for long texts. Since contracts can sometimes be valid for life, this poses a certain risk.

! Good to know: how to make you fit for your own legal transactions

Especially if you intend to compare different offers, contracts and terms, booking insurances, signing job or accommodation contracts can be very confusing and risky. To avoid fail and scam, please feel free to get in touch with us and ask for our dedicated coaching services which, in best case, enable you to manage all these challenges on your own, in the future. By the way, this is also essential part of our German classes.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

Copyright infringement, intellectual property and criminal liability

One of the biggest cash traps you risk after arriving in Germany is copyright infringement. Many foreigners in Germany have already had to pay hefty fines for downloading movies or music from illegal platforms. Or for the unauthorized use of copyrighted images. Especially in the online and social media sector, from a technological point of view, it is no longer a problem to detect such copyright infringements thanks to AI. Ignorance of the law is no excuse – and there are dozens of law firms that specialize in pursuing these cases for their own benefit. They often charge between 1.000 EUR and 5.000 EUR just for a cease-and-desist letter, which is legal under German law. If the matter goes to court, it can quickly become much more expensive.

Unlike in Myanmar, in Germany and throughout the EU, texts, paintings, graphics, images, and videos are protected by copyright and may only be reproduced with the permission of the intellectual property owner. Violation of this law is both a criminal offense and a private law violation – and both can be prosecuted independently. In the worst-case scenario, a conviction for such a crime can result in a criminal record that could even prevent you from becoming a naturalized citizen of Germany.

Since Germany is a constitutional state, all the rights and obligations of its citizens are clearly regulated. Freedom of expression and property rights have a particularly important significance in this context. This means that according to the German law and common court rulings anyone who owns property or openly expresses their opinion is also legally responsible for how it is created. And that also means that it must always be clear to everyone who the rightful contact person is, in case of a problem. Therefore, this eBook also includes → [the warning that all advice is given without guarantee](#) and that you should seek legal advice if in doubt.

For example, all publications published in whole Germany are subject to the → [legal notice requirement \("Impressum" = Imprint\)](#), which allows those responsible to be transparently identified at any time. However, this also entails exploitation rights, which are based on the understanding of intellectual property. This means that only the responsible rights holder decides what happens to their property and who may make money from it or benefit from it in any other way.

Therefore, you may not copy lines from other sources into your own writing without citing the source. And even then, as a quote within a very limited framework. And of course, you may also not use photos and videos on your social media accounts for which you do not have a license.

*When you're scared
you put your heart in your mouth and smile.*

German movie title



Mobile clinic of "Deutsches Rotes Kreuz", Berlin, May 2022 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Healthcare provision

Germany has one of the worldwide best network of hospitals, surgeries and pharmacies. Mandatory health insurance makes necessary treatment affordable for all. If you need to see a doctor, you will find that you can get help quickly and cheaply. Some good additional information you'll also find in the → [Handbook Germany health chapters](#) .

1. Seeing a doctor

In Germany, you have a “free choice of doctor” (“freie Arztwahl”), which means you can choose which doctor you want to see. Normally, you should see your general practitioner (GP - “Hausarzt”) first. If necessary, they will refer you to a specialist or a hospital.

If you need help finding a suitable doctor, please visit the → [National Health Portal](#) .

If you need medical help, but your doctor's surgery is closed, you can call the national emergency numbers 116 or 117 for the non-emergency medical on-call service or 112 for emergency services. You can also use 116 117 to make an appointment to see a doctor if you have an acute problem. 116 117 is also available as a → [website and an app](#) .

2. Medicines

Medicines can only be dispensed by pharmacies. Pharmacies can be identified by a sign with a large red letter A. You can also find online and mail-order pharmacies on the internet, which can deliver medicines to your home by post.

Many medicines, including some that you can buy over the counter from pharmacies in your home country or in other countries, are prescription-only medicines in Germany. Your doctor must prescribe the medicine for you, i.e. issue a prescription. You can either take the prescription to your local pharmacy or order your medicine online from a mail-order pharmacy. There is a maximum copayment of €10; the rest of the cost is covered by your health insurance provider.

Non-prescription medicines are available over the counter, without a prescription, from your pharmacy. However, you will usually have to pay for them yourself. Classic examples are low-dose painkillers and medicines for colds. Your pharmacist will also be able to give you expert advice if you describe your problem. You will always be able to find an emergency pharmacy in your area, even at → [weekends, on public holidays and at night](#) .

In addition to prescription medicines, pharmacies also sell health and beauty products. Medicines such as painkillers are not available from the various drugstore chains in Germany. However, you can buy cheaper toiletries and personal care items there, as well as health teas, cough sweets, vitamin tablets, and herbal products and ointments.

3. Going to hospital

Germany has public hospitals, private clinics and charitable hospitals run by faith-based relief organisations. As a rule, your GP will arrange to have you admitted to hospital.

You should only go straight to hospital in an emergency if you cannot get appropriate care from a doctor's surgery or a medical oncall service. Most hospitals have an accident and emergency (A&E) department („Notaufnahme“) that is open 24 hours a day. In the event of a life-threatening illness or injury, call the free emergency number 112.

Your health insurance will usually cover the cost of your hospital stay. However, since hospitalisation can be very expensive, it is a good idea to check beforehand whether all your treatment costs will be covered. If you have statutory health insurance, you will usually have to pay the hospital €10 for each calendar day of hospital treatment (up to a maximum of 28 days per calendar year).

Public Transport in Germany

Public transport is, depending where you live, mostly well equipped in Germany. Many cities or metropolitan areas have underground or light rail systems, very often combined with local buses. Compared to other European countries rides with trains, coaches, and buses are relatively expensive, if you're applying for the regular fares. That's why it's always a good idea to check out all the discounts i.e. from → [Deutsche Bahn](#), the local → [transport associations](#) ("[Verkehrsverbünde](#)") or the biggest coach company → [FlixBus](#) (who also runs some few long range → [trains](#)).

For long distance travels Germany is well integrated in the European high speed train systems and it can be more time efficient to prefer the train before considering a flight. Though late evening trains are sometimes on a discount, flights are very often still cheaper, if you watch their discounts carefully. The main operators there are → [Ryanair](#) , → [EasyJet](#) , → [Eurowings](#) , → [Wizz Air](#) and → [TUIfly](#) .

One of the cheapest ways to travel locally is the → [Deutschlandticket](#), which allows you to take all the regional and local trains and buses in whole Germany for a monthly rate of 58 Euro (63 Euro from 2026 on). This is quite cheaper than most of the usual regional monthly tickets, but only available in a monthly cancellable subscription at any local public transport provider.

With the → [DB navigator app](#) you may easily check if your planned trip is available in a reasonable timeframe. So if you're booking the Deutschlandticket for your residential area anyway, you might not have additional costs for your additional mid range trips. Many national or regional transport associations offer free apps so you can check timetables and buy tickets at the touch of a button.

Regional trains are signed with RE ("Regionalexpress") or RB ("Regionalbahn"), long-distance trains with ICE ("InterCityExpress" - the high speed rail system in Germany) or IC ("InterCity").



Underground railway, Berlin, April 2023 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Driving License

If you hold a driving license issued in your home country, different rules apply in Germany depending on the country where you originally obtained your driving license. Driving licenses issued in the EU, Liechtenstein, Norway and Iceland are valid without restrictions. You do not need to have anything amended or exchanged.

Is your driving license issued in another country, you can use your driving license to drive in Germany for six months (from the time you register your place of residence in Germany). After that, you will need a German driving license.

To have your driver's license converted, you generally have to pass the theoretical and practical driving tests (without further training) in Germany. However, there are exceptions – depending on the country where you obtained your license. A driving test is not required if the issuing country ensures that the EU-wide minimum standards for the examination are met. These requirements are fulfilled if a mutual recognition agreement exists between Germany and the foreign country. You can find out whether such an agreement exists with your country and whether you therefore do not need to take either or both tests by consulting this → [list of countries](#).

Drivers' license holders from non-EU countries that are not listed in the specified list of countries must take a theoretical and practical driving test. However, they are not required to complete driver's education. There are no minimum or mandatory driving lessons. The applicant decides independently whether and when they feel ready to take the tests. The practical test itself is conducted in the presence of a driving instructor. According to this with a Myanmar driving license you will need to take another driving test in Germany to obtain a German driving license.

The application for a German driver's license must be submitted to the road traffic office ("Fahreulabnisbehörde") in your place of residence. There is no deadline for submitting the application. The responsible driver's licensing office will later note in the German driver's license that it was issued on the basis of a driver's license from a non-EU country. The licensing office will either return the foreign driver's license to the issuing authority or keep it in safekeeping. If the authority requires a classification of the foreign driver's license before issuing a German one, you can obtain this e.g. from your → [local ADAC regional club](#).

For detailed information on the validity of driving licences issued abroad, please also visit → [Handbook Germany](#).

If you want to obtain a driving license in Germany without conversion, you have to take a course of theory and practical lessons at a driving school. The costs are around 3.000 to 4.000 Euro, if you start from new.

Do you want to have your own car?

In some more remote regions and areas of Germany public transport is not really good and reliable enough. That's why probably need a car sooner or later. Please be aware that not buying a car is the most expensive in Germany, but sustaining the running costs.

1. Purchase a car in Germany

If you want to buy a car, you can get it from professional car dealers as well as from private sellers. Private purchase is normally cheaper, but you should be aware that warranty regulations for these deals are limited on the lowest. If you're not really familiar with technical knowledge and the requirements for the General Inspections, this can be very risky to lose your money.

Same is with some sorts of "professional" car dealers, who are normally selling exclusively to commercial customers (BtoB business). This is a kind of grey market, they very often avoid to give any warranty.

All other commercial car dealers have to provide a one year warranty at least, if they are selling to private persons. Even for second hand cars. For new cars the warranty is two years by law.

Very popular and recommendable online platforms for second hand cars from private and car dealers are → [mobile.de](#), → [AutoScout24](#) and → [kleinanzeigen](#). The German motor club → [ADAC](#) gives some more information about how to buy cars online (in German language only).

2. Registration of a car in Germany

You must register your car at a Motor Vehicle Registration Office („Kraftfahrzeug-Zulassungsbehörde“ or „Kfz-Zulassungsstelle“). You will need your vehicle registration document („Fahrzeugschein“) and your car insurance policy (which you applied before online or at an insurance office). If you are bringing your car from abroad, check with the Registration Office to see if you need any additional documents.

3. General Inspection (Periodical Technical Inspection)

In addition to registration, every car in Germany must pass a general inspection („Hauptuntersuchung“, „HU“ or „TÜV“) every two years. A sticker („Plakette“) on your registration plate (number plate - „Nummernschild“) shows when your next general inspection is due. The inspector from the officially recognised inspection organisation (e.g. „DEKRA“, „KÜS“) or technical inspection organisation (e.g. „TÜV“) checks the vehicle's roadworthiness and exhaust and emissions performance. You must arrange and pay for this inspection yourself. If your vehicle has defects, a new sticker will not be issued until the defects have been rectified.

4. Car Insurance

There are different types of insurance for your car. All cars in Germany must have motor vehicle liability insurance. This insurance pays for damages if you cause an accident with your car or injure someone. It does not cover the cost of repairing your own car. If you want to additionally cover damage to your own car, you can take out fully comprehensive insurance („Vollkaskoversicherung“).

The costs depend on the type of vehicle, the age of the driver, the location of the vehicle registration, and several other factors. It's worth checking the offers from individual providers annually and choosing the most affordable option.

You can also book a Motor vehicle protection letter („Schutzbrief“) with your insurance or alternatively join a motor club like → [ADAC](#) , → [AvD](#) or → [ACE](#), if you want to be covered in case of accident or breakdown cover. Your insurer will then pay for things like towing or a hire car, but not for the repair itself. A comparison of their services and some other providers you can find on → [Finanztip](#) (only available in German language).

5. Motor Vehicle Tax

If you own a car in Germany, you must pay motor vehicle tax. Registration for payment of Motor Vehicle Tax („Kraftfahrzeugsteuer“ or „KfZ-Steuer“) takes place at the relevant Registration Office as part of the vehicle registration process. The costs depend on the car's environmental performance. Electric vehicles are exempt from vehicle tax.

6. What else should I be aware of when driving in Germany?

Right-hand driving is compulsory in Germany, as are seat belts, winter tyres and child seats. The legal limit for drinking and driving in Germany is 0.5 mg/ml. However, even 0.3 mg/ml can result in a penalty if other road users are at risk. You must also carry your driving licence, vehicle registration document and identity card with you at all times when driving. If you are involved in a car accident, call the emergency number 110 (police emergency number).

Riding a bicycle in Germany

Riding bicycles and e-bikes or pedelecs up to 25 km/h speed limit are free of driving license regulations in Germany and whole EU. That's why they are increasingly popular in towns and cities also to promote a better carbon footprint. All children learn to ride a bicycle at school. So for Germans cycling is also a very important part of their everyday mobility. If you don't know how to ride a bike yet, you should → [learn](#) as soon as possible. There are → [cycling schools for adults](#) everywhere.

Cheap second hand bikes are more than enough offered at → [kleinanzeigen](#) , sometimes even for free. Please ensure that your bicycle is → [roadworthy according to German laws](#) before you enter public roads!

Applying for the German citizenship

As already mentioned, under certain circumstances you'll have a realistic chance to apply for the German citizenship after been living habitually and legally in Germany for at least 5 years. If your children are born after these 5 years, they will automatically get the German passport with their birth.

So if you don't waste time with learning German language properly and integrating yourself in the labour market and the German society as soon as possible and you're able to sustain yourself on the long run, you can just go for it. In 2024 there have been nearly 300.000 naturalizations („Einbürgerung“ or „Verleihung der deutschen Staatsangehörigkeit“) all over Germany, and of course, all these new citizens are also allowed to work and live in the whole EU and have additionally easier access to other western countries. Among them e.g. are 80,000 Syrians who have only arrived in the country since 2015.

The further requirements to access the → [naturalisation by legal entitlement \(„Anspruchseinbürgerung“\)](#) are that you can prove your identity and current citizenship and that you have at least B1 level of German and sufficient knowledge of the legal system, society and way of life in Germany. You'll have to declare your commitment to the free and democratic basic order and some other points and to be without criminal records. How the process works you'll find in → [The path to a German passport \(„Der Weg zum deutschen Pass“\)](#).

With the new citizenship law, dual citizenship is now possible in Germany. We recommend that you obtain all the documents you might need for naturalization as early as possible. If you still live in Myanmar, best try to get all your documents together there beforehand.

! Good to know: are you ready for the german citizenship?

If you think you're ready to apply for the german citizenship, we can provide you with individually designed services and coachings to handle the process smoothly and effectively. Also in making decision about dual citizenship or not.

You can request more information without obligation by contacting us on → [Facebook](#), → [Telegram](#), on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

Family reunification (“Familiennachzug”)

Separation from one's family is a great burden for many foreigners. If you live in Germany and wish to bring your spouse, children, or other family members to join you, there are clear legal regulations in place. → [Family reunification \(„Familiennachzug“\)](#) makes it possible, under certain conditions, to obtain a visa or residence permit for your relatives.

Not all family members can come to Germany. The → [law](#) distinguishes between close relatives (“enge Verwandte”), who have a right to family reunification, and other relatives for whom special conditions apply. Family reunification is possible for the following persons: spouses (“Ehepartner”) and registered civil partners (“eingetragene Lebenspartnerinnen und Lebenspartner”), minor children (“minderjährige Kinder”) and parents of minor children living in Germany.

In certain cases, it is also possible to bring other relatives to Germany. These include, for example, parents (“Eltern”), parents-in-law (“Schwiegereltern”) or siblings (“Geschwister”). However, a special reason must exist and is often only possible in exceptional hardship cases. Whether such a case exists is assessed individually. In that respect, it should then be also examined whether the granting of other residence permits is possible.

Whether family reunification is possible depends primarily on your residence permit. Only if you have a specific type of permit are your spouse, children, or other family members allowed to join you. These are namely the Settlement Permit (“Niederlassungserlaubnis”), the EU long-term residence permit (“Erlaubnis zum Daueraufenthalt – EU”), the Residence Permit (“Aufenthaltserlaubnis”), the EU Blue Card (“Blaue Karte EU”) and both the ICT Card (“ICT-Karte”) or the Mobile ICT Card (“Mobile ICT-Karte”). It is also important that this permit is valid, especially if it is a temporary one. Therefore, make sure your residence permit is not about to expire and, if necessary, apply for an extension or a new permit – ideally one without a time limit, such as a permanent residence permit.

Even persons who are temporarily staying in Germany for research purposes (“vorübergehend zu Forschungszwecken”) and have a residence permit according to § 18e of the Residence Act (“§ 18e des Aufenthaltsgesetzes”) are allowed to bring their family to Germany. For persons recognised as entitled to asylum there are → [special regulations](#) .

In order for your family members to join you, you must prove that they are financially secure in Germany. This includes that your apartment must be large enough to accommodate all family members (“Wohnraumnachweis”), that you can finance your family's livelihood (“Einkommensnachweis”) and that you can provide all your family members with an health insurance (“Krankenversicherungsnachweis”). If you are a skilled worker (“Fachkraft”) residing in Germany, you may be exempt from providing proof of your accommodation. Check with your local immigration office to see if your residence permit allows for easier family reunification.

In many cases, family members joining their relatives must prove German language skills at level A1 before entering the country. This is intended to enable them to communicate in everyday life and integrate more effectively. However, there are exceptions: e.g. if you have an EU Blue Card or an ICT Card. Same if your family members have a university degree and can work in Germany. Or if they do not plan to stay permanently in Germany. If language acquisition is not possible due to illness or disability, there are also exceptions. Please also find out about other regulations that may facilitate family reunification.

If your family members come from a third country, they need a special visa for family reunification (“Visum zur Familienzusammenführung”). They must apply for this at the German embassy or consulate in their home country. It is important that all required documents are submitted in full. The exact documents required depend on the individual case. Processing often takes two to three months, sometimes longer. Plan enough time and find out about the requirements early on.

Your family members will need to present various documents at their appointment at the embassy. These include the Embassy appointment confirmation (“Terminbestätigung der Botschaft”), Visa application form (“Visumsantrag”), Birth certificate (“Geburtsurkunde”), Marriage certificate (“Heiratsurkunde”, if applicable), Extract from the family register (“Auszug aus dem Familienregister”, if available), Passport (“Reisepass”), biometric passport photos (“biometrische Passfotos”) and a Copy of your residence permit (“Kopie Ihres Aufenthaltstitels”).

Once the application has been submitted to the German diplomatic mission abroad, the official review process follows in several steps: The German embassy is reviewing the submitted documents first, then the relevant immigration authority in Germany will be involved in the process. As a family member living in Germany, you will be invited by the immigration authorities (“Ausländerbehörde”) for a personal interview. Then the authority reviews the application and issues a statement. If all requirements are met, it approves the application. The German diplomatic mission abroad makes the final decision and informs your relatives.

If the embassy rejects your application for family reunification, you have two options: file an appeal with the German embassy or file a lawsuit with the administrative court. Before filing an appeal or lawsuit, you should understand exactly why your application was rejected. In this case, seek legal advice. An immigration lawyer can help you identify errors and, if necessary, obtain a correction – without having to submit a new application. All of this is part of the → [German rule of law](#) (“Rechtsstaat”) .

! Good to know: family reunification with German nationals is far easier!

When family members wish to join a German citizen, simplified conditions often apply. This is a significant advantage and makes the process easier. Therefore, it can be very beneficial to work towards → [obtaining a German passport](#) by yourself as quickly and efficiently as possible, to open up all these possibilities also for your relatives. The specific facilitations depend on the individual case. However, certain documents, such as proof of language proficiency or financial security, are often waived.

So for the sake of your whole family, it can be a good investment to put all your available resources in your proper onboarding in Germany instead of only spending it for a comfy daily life.

If you need more information without obligation how to succeed in that, please contact us on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49.163.1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

*The man is richest
whose pleasures are cheapest.*

Henry David Thoreau, US-american philosopher



City Hall seen from the Höfe am Brühl shopping Mall, Leipzig, October 2025 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Seasons in Germany

As you probably already heard, winter season in Germany can be very hard. Temperatures vary between minus ten degrees and plus 10 degrees Celsius in general – since global warming with less and less snow, but uncomfortably cold and sometimes with rainy weather over weeks and some few sunny days only. The biggest difference between rain in Myanmar and Germany is the temperature difference, so that the people avoid to expose themselves to the showers. Most of the tree leafs are gone and the nature is sleeping.

Sunrise in winter time comes very late around 7:30 am and sunset already at 4:30pm. That's why most of the Germans prefer to stay in their cosy flats and houses most of the time, from mid October to March. This makes it quite harder to get in touch with them in a relaxed manner. This can easily give the impression that Germans aren't sociable. But that's deceptive, because they meet up with their friends and families at home, in cafes and restaurants, or go to the movies together. Another reason for you, as a immigrant, to quickly seek contact with locals so you don't feel so alone in the winter!

Then the spring season from April to May brings nature same as people in a kind of rebirth status, both mentally and physically, and temperatures increase between ten and 20 degrees Celsius. During summer season from June to mid September all the world is staying outside, same as you know it from Myanmar, going to holidays or meeting in parks. The temperatures range from 20 to sometimes 35 degrees with very few rain.

Autumn season is the roll back and already preparation for the winter, but because of the colourful nature always a very nice period of time. Temperatures are between 0 and 15 degrees Celsius.

Because weather conditions can change quickly in Europe, the Germans love to use weather apps like → wetteronline.de or → wetter.de . Their forecasts ("Wetterbericht" or "Wettervorhersage") are somewhat precise and a good tool to come around.



Winter season, Potsdam, November 2023 - © 2025 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

What clothes and items should I bring to Germany?

Regarding to the fact that luggage might be kind of limited on your flight to Europe, we recommend not to bring winter clothing from Myanmar to Germany. Even if you arrive during winter season, one or two pullovers, solid shoes and a light jacket are enough. Depending on the region where you intend to live it's you will have to adapt your wardrobe to your real needs, which are not predictable in advance. If you have some budget planned for your first shopping tour and you're not that much focused on high brands, you will find affordable clothing in every City and town with shops like → [H&M](#) , → [Primark](#) or → [New Yorker](#) . In addition fashion styles are even very different between German regions, so if you want so, you can better adapt to the local taste.

Better bring items from Myanmar, probably your favourite decoration or blanket which makes you feel home in the far. If you want to bring traditional food or → [cultural assets](#) , please comply with the → [EU food import](#) and → [German food import](#) regulations of → [restricted goods](#) .



Berlin, January 2023 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

Rules of Daily Life

Compared to everyday life in Myanmar, Germans generally keep an arm's length distance from each other. Closer physical contact is only common between family members or close friends and is otherwise tolerated only reluctantly, if at all, on a crowded subway.

Openness, politeness, and helpfulness towards strangers, whether native German or foreign origin, vary gradually from region to region. So, if some everyday situations don't seem very pleasant or friendly, it's not necessarily your fault.

As everywhere in the world, racism exists in Germany too, and in my experience, the best way to deal with it is through communication and composure. This again highlights the importance of German language skills: they determine every single day how well you are integrated into German society.

For example, if you make an effort to speak German while shopping, you not only improve your language skills but also demonstrate your respect for the German language and culture. This is important to some Germans, less so to others.

Smoking in public spaces such as restaurants, clubs, and train stations is largely prohibited in Germany, unless designated smoking areas are provided. While this isn't enforced and punished as strictly as in Singapore, you won't make any friends if you disrespect the rules.

Chewed gum also doesn't belong on the street, in nature, on indoor floors, or under seats at university or on trains. It can be deadly to unsuspecting animals, or at least a nuisance to people who don't want to come into contact with it. The same applies to other types of litter.

Speaking of litter: in Germany, it's collected separately in color-coded bins (blue = paper and cardboard, yellow = packaging, brown = organic waste, black = residual waste). Since recycling is only effective if this separation is strictly followed, most Germans not only make sure they do it themselves, but also check whether their neighbors are doing the same. This is because the general waste disposal fees, which everyone has to pay monthly through their rent or as a homeowner, often depend on this.

Unlike in other parts of the world, Europeans are very sensitive with their personal data (→ "[Datenschutz](#)"), including in the digital realm. Of course, they use social media and digital tools like everyone else – but legislation protecting your identity is much stricter in the EU than, for example, in the United States. Therefore, it's considered good practice in everyday life to ask permission before sharing private addresses or phone numbers with friends or colleagues.

How do personal social relationships work in Germany? And how to make friends?

Germany is embedded in a social and cultural framework of multiple European countries, which differ a lot from each other. Not only in languages, but also in social structures and behaviours. While the nordic people like the Swedish, Norwegian or Danes usually are more reserved in their personalities, the southern European people like the Spanish, French and Italians are more open, impulsive, talkative and loud in their expressions. In former times these gaps and also the historic heritage between the peoples caused many intercultural misunderstandings and troubles, especially when inner European migration started after World War II. But with creation of the European Union and the open borders between the EU nations with all its economic and labour market impacts the gaps between the people became less relevant.

In a smaller scale there are similar differences between the regions inside Germany. Also depending on cultural and economic heritage and success, southern and northern Germans are very proud of their origin, according to its people having different dialects and specifics in language, communication, food and traditions. The typical bavarian atmosphere with Oktoberfest, specially brewed beer and the traditional dresses e.g. is only a small excerpt from German reality and far from being like the people in Berlin, Hamburg or Saarbrücken.

For Germans moving from one region to another can sometimes also be very challenging. Cause the social networks and structures in villages and small towns are additionally quite different from those in big cities and metropolitan areas. So also the way how to express kindness and tolerance speak different levels, depending on the location you are.

The capital Berlin is very well known for its open but quick rough tone, while southern and western Germans prefer slow

and more inviting communication forms. You should be aware that in most of the cases it's not you as a foreigner who causes a challenging conversation, but the loads of misunderstandings which result out of these conditions. Compared to most of Myanmar people many Germans seem to behave less welcoming, less friendly and less supportive. It's because Germans are very focused on their own private and professional networks with friendships, partnerships and many different grades of connections. Depending on these grades this is also very openly shown in their communication. While they are probably very open and talkative to one person, they can be very reserved to another one at the same table. This is not an affront to any particular person, but is a perfectly normal part of the process. For them there are only a few reasons to give you and others credit in form of inclusion, if you don't belong to family or friends of friends.

On the other hand it's comparably easy to gain this inclusion. All depends on how open you are to start an substantial communication with the people around you. If they experience you as a friendly, open and communicative person, you can become friends right on the spot. And there are many people out there who would like to know more about your origin, about your impressions and living realities. The Germans love to openly share and enjoy this kind of informations – and you shouldn't feel embarrassed if they ask you about it. And please feel free to ask questions by yourself, to keep the conversation fluently running. As more relaxed and funny both of your communications styles are, as sooner you'll become future chat partners and maybe also friends.

In the very beginning you'll more rely on your English language skills, and most of the younger German generation doesn't hesitate to join. The more you speak, you'll automatically switch to your German skills, growing more trust and routine in your own abilities. Good luck and have fun!

Is German tap water safe to drink?

German tap water ("Leitungswasser") is one of the → [strongest controlled drinking waters worldwide](#) . The taste varies from region to region, and if you like it, there's no reason to spend money for drinking water at the supermarket. Nevertheless many Germans prefer sparkling bottled waters ("Mineralwasser") or the taste of the source of their choice. And of course, some water brands are also fashionable and some Germans really enjoy to → [discuss this topic with passion](#) .

Storage of potable tap water is limited to some days only, depending on storage temperature. Please make sure to keep your water bottle always clean and best refill it after cleaning every day.

To ensure you always have completely fresh water, it's best to let a little water run through the cold water tap before drawing your drinking water. This is because the water pipes in some houses may be quite old and cause contamination through stagnant water in lead plumbing systems, in very rare cases.

Religion

The main Religion in Germany is the Christian belief. But nowadays there are more → [atheists \("Atheisten" or "Konfessionslose"\)](#) under the population than people who are still linked to one of the main churches, the → [Catholics \("Katholiken" or "Katholische Kirche"\)](#) and the → [Protestants \("Protestanten" or "Evangelische Kirche"\)](#) . Nevertheless all culture and traditions are based on the Christian history, e.g. in daily habits, jurisdiction, public holidays, music - and the people are pretty aware of this. With the migration from the Middle East, also → [Islam](#) is increasingly practised in mosques all over the country.

The → [Jewish belief](#) plays an extraordinary role because of the horrible crimes during the Second World War. That's why many Germans and also the German government feel a special responsibility to protect jewish interests.

Buddhism and Hinduism are less common, but also popular even under certain German rooted communities. In bigger cities you'll find Buddhist pagodas and monasteries, mostly run by vietnamese communities. You will easily find them on Google maps.

The → [freedom of religion \("Religionsfreiheit"\)](#) is anchored in the → [German constitution \("Grundgesetz"\)](#), so that you're free to practise whatever you like. By law it's not allowed to discriminate any belief. But one exception that also might

affect you is the extraordinary → [labor law for churches \(Arbeitsrecht der Kirchen\)](#) , e.g. if you work as a caregiver for church-affiliated employers such as → [Caritas](#) or → [Diakonie](#). In Germany, the labor law regulations for employees of churches and church-related organizations differ significantly from the regulations applicable to other employees.

Food

The German food habits differ a lot, depending on the social bubble the people live in. Cause restaurants are comparatively expensive, many of them prefer snack restaurants ("Imbiss") like Döner or french fries shops for regularly eating out. Bagel shops, streetfood and vietnamese fastfood bowl shops are recently also very popular with the modern healthy lifestyle fraction.

Of course you'll also find loads of pizzerias and Asia shops. Out of this, in the bigger cities and towns there's a big range of worldwide culinary delights like syrian, sudanese, latin american or eastern european kitchen. Please feel encouraged to try this unlimited variety of tastes!

While cooking at home, Germans prefer German and mediterranean dishes. The more wealthy ones swear on weekly markets and organic supermarkets like → Bio Company or → Denns BioMarkt for their groceries. All others prefer supermarkets like → [Edeka](#) , → [Rewe](#) and → [Kaufland](#) - or even discounters (cheaper, but with a limited product range) like → [Aldi](#) , → [Lidl](#) , → [Penny](#) , → [Netto Marken-Discount](#) , → [Netto](#) or → [Norma](#) .

In bigger cities and towns you'll also find asian supermarkets, even offering fresh vegetables and fruits. Just have a look at Google maps!

Swimming skills

Because there are many rivers and lakes in whole Europe, going out in the nature for swimming is one of the most favourite leisure pleasures for Germans, during summer season. All Germans are learning basic swimming skills at school, during their childhood already.

In most of the German cities and towns you'll find public indoor and outdoor swimming pools, sometimes even with wellness and sauna area.

It's not a shame if you come from abroad without swimming skills. But we recommend you to join a swimming class sooner or later, not to be excluded if you're out with your German friends and colleagues. If you join the public → [DLRG](#) you can even get classes on a low cost level. Furthermore, it's a good and easy opportunity to make social connections to locals.

Emergencies

The emergency number for the police in Germany is 110. Dial 112 for the fire brigade and ambulance services.

Germans are sometimes very reserved and often only act when an emergency is very obvious. So in case of emergency, doesn't matter if health or other issues, please don't hesitate to directly adress the people around you for help.

A lay follower is accomplished in generosity by dwelling at home with a mind devoid of stinginess, and by being freely generous, open-handed, delighting in renunciation, devoted to charity, delighting in giving and sharing.

Samyutta Nikaya V.395



Linh Thuu Vietnamese Pagoda, Berlin, January 2025 - © 2026 by Kay Min Tut Strasser

All you should know if you're planning a longer stopover in Bangkok

If you're not yet ready prepared to migrate to Germany immediately, you might consider to do a many months long stopover in Bangkok (or anywhere else in Thailand) to give your efforts a boost. In this case you should carefully pay attention to your legal status:

If you are coming with a 14 days visa free regulation, you can extend it twice by one month each time. The fee at the official immigration office is 1900 THB / 60 USD / 51 EUR per month and 3500 THB / 110 USD / 94,50 EUR with an agent. For the first visa extension we recommend you to do it with an agent. The process is complex and it will take you the whole day. During these two months, you could prepare yourself to enroll for a Language School or University, or to get a work permit. For the language visa, you can get a one year visa, but you still need to go to the immigration authority every 3 months. For these steps it doesn't matter if you hold an PV, PE or PJ passport.

After 6 months staying in Thailand with a "Residential stay" and corresponding visa entries in your passport, you can try to address the German Embassy directly in Bangkok. When you finally hold your Germany Visa, you need to do a visa cancelation from your school within one year.

If you want to visit other countries during your residential stay in Thailand, it is very important that you need to receive a re-entry stamp.

For your accommodation in Bangkok you can get an apartment which is comfortable enough for two people, starting from 3000 THB / 94 USD / 81 EUR a month. Some landlords give rental contracts, and some may not. To avoid loss of documents sent by e-mail we recommend you to do screenshots and save them as phone and usb stick backups. Same is with your passport and driving license, if you have the latter. You should also check the rates for electricity and water. The government rate is always half the price than normal rate. Air conditioning will charge you around 1000 THB / 31 USD / 27 EUR per month, using a fan is around 500 THB / 15 USD / 13,50 EUR. Moreover, you should ask to the owner if you can get a TM30 document. It's crucial for your visa extension. If the landlord doesn't provide TM30, you have to buy this document from an agent with 300 THB / 9,50 USD / 8 EUR extra costs.

To save money, the cheapest option is cooking by yourself. So you may spend 100 THB / 3 USD / 2,50 EUR a day and around 5000-7000 THB / 157-220 USD / 135-189 EUR per month. Most of Myanmar food and groceries are also available in Thailand.

We don't recommend to buy SIM cards or exchange money directly at the airport. You can easily purchase SIM cards and internet plans in every shopping center (e.g. for 1 month or 6 months) with a wide range of competition and discounts.

For USD to THB money exchange the Superrich Counter is the best option. There is no possibility to exchange MMK cash officially, but Kpay application is also widely used with the expat Myanmar people living in Thailand.

Because the Thai police sometimes checks your documents for your legal stay, most important is to have your Passport always with you.

Current flight opportunities from Yangon to Bangkok are with → [Thai AirAsia](#) 08:45 RGN → 10:30 DMK and return 17:40 RGN → 19:25 DMK, → [Myanmar Airways International \(MAI\)](#) 07:25 RGN → 09:15 BKK and return 10:25 RGN → 12:15 DMK, → [Thai Airways International](#) 11:25 RGN → 13:20–13:25 BKK (depending on schedule) and → [Myanmar National Airlines](#) 07:45 RGN → 09:40 BKK (on days of operation). You should inquire your travel agency which airport you want to go, as there are Suvarnabhumi and Don Mueang Airport. Flights go to both Bangkok airports — BKK and DMK — depending on the airline and flight.

Regularly flights from Mandalay to Bangkok are Myanmar Airways International (MAI) 8:00 MDL → 10:20 BKK Suvarnabhumi Airport and Myanmar Airways International (MAI) 14:40 MDL -17:00 DMK Don Mueang Airport.

The typical flight time is about 1 hour and 20–30 minutes. You need to arrive at the airport 3 hours ahead of your flight. Security checks and documentation may take an hour. We recommend to go to Thailand with 14 days tourist visa or Education visa.

For the immigration authorities you always need to show your valid passport and also your previous passport, because they sometimes check your travel history. Additionally you need to carry an amount of at least 20000 THB or 700 USD, hotel booking, return ticket and the Official Thailand Digital Arrival Card (TDAC) form. You need to show this both at Myanmar and Thailand side. If you speak English properly this will help a lot. Even if you can show all required

documents, you might be suspended at the immigration office for many hours, if you are Myanmar citizen. So if affordable, you might buy VIP passes at both sides for a smooth immigration. Before you reach Thailand, you'll need to fill the Thailand Immigration form 3 days in advance, and we recommend you to also print it out. That document is called TM6 and will be crucial for your visa extension later on.

For your taxi rides you can download BOLT application, it's the cheapest and safe option. The Grab app is very similar. If time doesn't matter, public bus is the cheapest option. To escape the insane Bangkok traffic, the medium expensive way of transportation is MRT or sky train.

For your first steps in Thailand we recommend to prepare your budget for at least 7 months. And for your daily communication you should consider to learn basics of Thai language, cause most of Thai people can't speak English. Using Google Map is crucial and to practice more familiar.

For further information there are some useful Facebook groups such as → [Bangkapi Bangkok](#) , → [Bangkok Myanmar Community](#) , → [Bangkapi Myanmar Community](#) , → [Bangkapi Bangkok Myanmar People](#) and → [Bangkapi Myanmar People](#) , for Myanmar nationals living in Bangkok.

! Good to know: whom to address for your Bangkok stopover

To avoid delays, unnecessary expenses and bitter fails you should be well prepared for your next steps. If you need support to find a proper strategy or to make the right decisions, one of our resettlement coaching programs could be your solution.

Please feel free to contact us without obligation on → [Facebook](#) , → [Telegram](#) , on → [Whatsapp under +49 163 1435582](#) or emailing → contact@onboarding-germany.com.

About the authors



Author and publisher **Kay Min Tut Strasser**, born 1970 in Germany's capital Berlin, has been working for many years on the design and simultaneous implementation of vocationally oriented, integrative German language courses for career preparation – at universities and special needs schools, as well as for international NGOs in Germany and Myanmar. He focuses in particular on onboarding, language skills development, and targeted coaching of foreign professionals in the German labor market, as well as general career guidance, intercultural issues, and interdisciplinary networking in all these areas.

Due to his family background with a Myanmar father and a German mother, he lived half-time in Myanmar before the COVID-19 pandemic. There, he developed an intuitively designed German language class for aspiring professionals at Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School & University in Mandalay, to promote and recruit young talents, among other things, which he subsequently intended to bring to Germany. Covid and the current situation in the country have prevented this for the time being – although he is still mentoring some of his former students who have since come to Germany as trainees, volunteers, students, or refugees, or who may still be waiting in Myanmar or Thailand for entry.

Kay Min Tut Strasser actually comes from the creative sector and worked for many years as a freelance photographer for the Berlinale Film Festival and Berlin Fashion Week. In addition, he has always conducted workshops and orientation coaching for startups and young professionals, including as a lecturer at the Free University of Berlin and the Humboldt-Viadrina School of Governance. He also collaborates with think tanks, startups, and companies in Berlin, Barcelona, Yangon, and Mandalay. In these, as well as elsewhere, he often incorporates selected elements of design thinking project management and focuses on user-centered social design in practical application.

In Myanmar, he also taught English and intercultural aspects of tourism in the framework of the German-Myanmar NGO driven Tourism Assistance Project (TAP). From 2018 to 2019, he also led a research project commissioned by UNICEF and US Aid, which investigated the potential for scaling professional social worker training to a virtual reality and AI format, in the framework of Case Management System for Myanmar girls and young women in danger.

As part of the Berlin vaccination and refugee projects, he was involved in the establishment of the Ukraine Arrival Center for Refugees in Berlin-Tegel (Germany), in addition to providing vaccination support, between 2021 and 2023.

In many of these roles, he has been and continues to be entrusted with development, planning, strategy, and project management tasks, often in an interdisciplinary capacity, but always places great importance on being part of the implementation and execution process at lower levels. This allows him to flexibly draw on diverse experience at any time and dynamically adapt implementation processes, even during the introductory phase.

As a Freelancer, Kay Min Tut Strasser also already worked for big players like Guggenheim Museum, Freie Universität Berlin, Université de Bordeaux (France), Humboldt-Viadrina School Governance, ELISAVA Barcelona (Spain), Berlinale

International Film Festival, Berlin Fashion Week, IKEA, O2 Telefonica, BMW, UNICEF, USAID, Impact Hub Yangon, Phandeeyar Yangon, Phaung Daw Oo Monastic High School & University Mandalay, LaSource Yangon, only to name some of them.

With this eBook *Onboarding Germany / How to settle down in Germany for Myanmar people*, he now offers together with his co-authors practical tips and valuable instructions for everyone who wants to make a relaxed and efficient new start in Germany.



Co-author **Ohmar Myint**, born 1981 in Thazi (Myanmar), is our Bangkok responsible for Onboarding Germany's research and operational tasks. As a lecturer for Tourism at the → [KRIRK University](#) and program manager at the Diploma Tourism Management department at Phaung Daw Oo Highschool and University in Mandalay she is very familiar with project management, vocational training and tour operations. Her academic background in tourism and business, combined with practical and teaching experience, already let her ran a travel company in Mandalay and managing a German-funded tourism education program, including curriculum design, student recruitment and industry cooperation.

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