

## DEUTSCHER LEBENSTIL UND DEUTSCHE KULTUR (German Lifestyle and Culture)

### Pros and Cons of Living in Germany

Though salaries may pale in comparison with Germany's ultra-rich neighbors like Luxembourg and Switzerland, they're decent in comparison to the cost of living. In 2021, the average employee in Germany earned a highly respectable €49,200 per year – around €5,000 higher than in the UK. For workers in less well-paid jobs, the minimum wage is set to go up to €12 per hour in September. This is one of the highest minimum wages in Europe.

#### 2. You can get lots of paid time off

Employees in Germany get a minimum of four weeks off per year, which amounts to 20 days of paid holiday for a five-day working week. That said, many companies choose to offer more than this, so it's not uncommon to get five or even six weeks off per year.

Depending on what state you live in, you can also look forward to around 10 days of public holidays – or even as many as 14 if you live in Bavaria. The culture of taking *Brückentage* – or bridging days – around these public holidays means that often you can look forward to a week or more off work while barely using any of your holiday allowance.

Parental leave is also hugely generous, with up to 14 months of state support available for new mums and dads who want to take time off work, as well as 14 weeks of paid leave for mothers before and after the birth of their child.

#### 3. It's increasingly international

In pretty much all of the major cities, Germany is becoming ever more '*Multi-kulti*' and international. These days, it's far from unusual to find people gathering at English language comedy nights or going to the cinema to see films in English or with English subtitles.

Understanding that German isn't a first language for everyone, companies are increasingly internationalizing their services by offering English-language versions of their websites and apps. And you'll find a bustling startup scene in places like Munich and Berlin, where English is also the working language in the office.

#### 4. You can feel safe

Germany is a very safe place to live, with similar crime rates to countries like Norway and Luxembourg. Though people need to watch out for things like pickpocketing and bike theft, serious crimes like shootings are very rare.

#### 5. Public services and facilities are good

Not everything works perfectly in Germany, but it's fair to say that tax money is well spent. In most parts of the country, you can find buses and trains to get you around and a decent network of cycle paths as well. Most towns and cities also have well-stocked public libraries, lots of parks and leisure centers, decent schools and heavily subsidized adult education at the *Volkshochschulen*.