

Transportation in Germany



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1. Necessary information about the public transport system in Germany

Below is the list of keywords or concepts you may find it useful when reading about public transport in Germany.

Means of public transport in Germany

Bus, tram, S-Bahn, U-Bahn, regional trains (RE/RB/IRE), ICE/ICs are the main public transportation in Germany. Except for ICE/ICs which is a German high-speed train for long-distance travel, the rest is used for regional transport.

Deutsche Bahn (DB)

DB is the German national railway company that operates all of the railway systems across Germany. The abbreviation for it is DB, and whenever you see the DB sign in red, it infers the central train station (German: Hauptbahnhof or Hbf).

Local transportation in Germany

Local transport association (German: Verkehrsverbund): these are local companies that operate local transport such as bus, tram, or U-Bahn. Each region will have a different association, and the fare is, therefore, subject to change between regions.

Zone in Germany

Big cities in Germany will have different zones whose fares are slightly different from one another. Usually, there are 3 zones in a city and most tourist attractions located in the first two zones whereas the airport is sometimes in the outermost zone. Pay attention to the zone when buying the ticket so that you can save the money and do not get fined when you go into an invalid zone.

Tips to check ticket price in Germany

You can check the ticket price for local transport in a region at the association's website or app. In addition, you may google the keyword "Name of city/region" + "Verkehrsverbund" and see its site with the English language. You can download the map of all the lines or get it free at the DB Info counter at the central train station.

2. Where to buy public transportation tickets in Germany?

There are many options for you to buy a ticket in Germany:

- At the station: the main station and some other big stations will have the ticket machine for you to buy. The DB ticket machine can allow you to purchase both local transportation ticket and long distance ticket, but some other ticket machines operated by the local transport associations only sell bus or tram tickets.
- At the DB Info counter at the station: you will receive assistance to buy the tickets and of course you have to pay for the service.
- Bus or tram: you can buy directly from the driver or at the ticket machine on the bus or tram.
- DB website or app: you can buy tickets operated by DB (regional trains, S-Bahn, ICE/ICs).

- The website or app of local transport association: you can buy local tickets (tram/bus/U-Bahn) here.

3. Ticket for local transport in Germany

There are many types of tickets depending on the region, but in general, you should know only three common types of them:

1. a) Single Ticket (EinzelTicket)

This ticket allows you to travel anywhere you like and by any means in the city usually within 1.5 hours, regardless of how many stops you make, by any means of the chosen zone in the city.

Price: 2 – 2.8 euros per person

1. b) Day Ticket (TagesTicket)

You can travel by any means and to anywhere in the zone you choose for one day.

One day here does not necessarily mean 24 hours from the time you buy the ticket, so you have to pay attention to the validity of the ticket.

In some cities, it means 24-hour ticket whereas some cities allow you to travel only to 3 A.M on the following day.

Price: 6 – 8 euros per person

1. c) Group Ticket (GruppenTicket/GruppenTagesTicket)

Group ticket is in major cases the day ticket for a group of a maximum of five people with some restriction in age.

Note that in some regions the price for group ticket is fixed no matter how many people there are in your group as long as it does not exceed five people.

In some other regions, the price is fixed for the first ticket and for each additional person you will have to pay extra.

Price: 12 – 20 euros per group of a maximum of 5 people

4. Ticket for long-distance transport in Germany

You can travel long-distance in Germany via ICE/ICs with connecting S-Bahn or Regional Trains in between.

My best advice for you is to buy tickets in advance as early as you can because the price system works precisely like flight booking, which means the later you book, the higher price you get.

There are two types of the ticket price you need to be aware: Flexpreis and Saving fares.

The only difference between them is that for Flexpreis you pay a lot higher than saving fares, but you are more flexible in the time and place.

It means you can travel any time or any route you like between your specified point of departure and destination within 1-2 days from the day your ticket is valid.

Frankfurt Central Station

Tips for long-distance transport in Germany

Buying tickets with Saving fares can save you a lot because the price can be as little as 19 euros compared to the usual 30-50 euros.

However, please keep in mind that you cannot change or return this ticket but if there are delays in your current route you can request for a new one at the Deutsche Bahn counter.

Seat reservation is allowed on the ICE, and it is around 2 euros for one seat.

5. Promotion tickets

Promotion tickets are usually group tickets for long distance travel in Germany. There are many types of them, but I will name here only the most common ones.

Regional day ticket (Länder-Ticket)

A group ticket for 4-5 people to travel across one of 16 federal states in Germany for one day. The average price is around 25 euros for the first person and 4 euros for each additional person.

The Best Cheap Eats In Copenhagen, Denmark

Some states like Baden-Wuerttemberg will have a different type of regional day ticket for young people (mostly younger than 23) with a more reasonable price.

Note that the validity of this ticket is from 9 A.M to 3 A.M the next day and you can use all of the public transport except for ICE/ICs.

Weekend ticket (Schönes-Wochenende-Ticket)

A group ticket for traveling anywhere in Germany on either Saturday or Sunday. The price is 44 euros for the first person and 6 euros for each additional person (maximum four fellows).

The ticket is valid from 0 A.M to 3 A.M the next day, and you can use all of the German public transport except for ICE/ICs.

Day ticket (Quer-Durchs-Land-Ticket)

This one is a perfect combination of the two previous tickets such that you can travel across Germany on any day you like. The price is 44 euros for the first person and 8 euros for each additional person (maximum 4). The only difference here is that you can only travel by regional trains and S-Bahn operated by DB and other railway cooperating undertakings. The valid usage time is from 9 A.M to 3 A.M the next day during the weekdays and entire day at the weekend.

Promotion tickets

Apart from all of these, you can have promotion tickets at a different time of the year. DB has many promotion programs throughout the year, especially in the summer and you can cheap tickets to travel individually.

Source:

www.iamexpat.de
www.expatolife.com