

THE UNOFFICIAL GUIDE TO NOT REINVENTING THE WHEEL [or] WHAT IT TOOK US FOREVER TO FIGURE OUT

Things I Wish I Knew.pdf

Compiled by The Spouses of Special Operations Command, Europe



Things I Wish I Knew

Moving to Europe often involves getting used to different ways of doing things.

This list was compiled by our SOCEUR spouses, in the hope that you will never have to say, as so many of us have, “Gosh, I wish I’d known that!”

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DISCLAIMER

This guide is made up of notes and suggestions for making life overseas a little easier and more enjoyable. Some things we learned the hard way, and we hope what we’ve learned will be helpful to you. However, we are not experts, and all information is based on our own personal experiences.

All Things Automotive

DRIVING, PARKING & FUELING

1. When using the fuel ration card at off-post Esso Stations, remember that the card tracks the number of liters allotted to that vehicle only; the money on the card applies to all of the vehicles your family has. If you accidentally go over the dollar amount you have in the card's account, AAFES will still allow the transaction to go through; you will just have to pay back the amount over and put more funds in before you use the card again. However, if you exceed the number of liters you have left for the month on that vehicle, the transaction will not go through and you will have to pay for the entire amount of the transaction in Euros, and at the German rate, which right now is about \$9.00 per gallon.
2. The blue parking disc that you receive for showing how long you have been parked in a parking space is not only for use in town. You are required to use it for many on-base parking areas as well, to include the Post Office and Commissary on Patch. When in doubt, put it out!



Bottom line: always know the dollars and liters left on your card.



3. When parking in a pay German parking lot or garage, you must take your ticket to a "Kasse" (Pay Here) machine (usually somewhere in the lot or at the entrance to the garage) and pay for parking *before* you try to drive out of the lot. If a store or restaurant validates parking (and this may not be full validation, only partial), you must get your ticket stamped, and *still* bring it to the Kasse to be stamped before you go to your car. The gate will not accept your ticket and open unless you have already paid or had the validation stamp scanned in the machine.
4. On-street parking usually requires payment as well. Look for the "Parkscheinlosen", a nearby metal box mounted on a pole where you can purchase your ticket. You must buy a ticket (good only for a certain amount of time; stated on both the machine and ticket) and place it in the window of your vehicle *before* you go to dine, shop, etc. If you don't have one, or if it expires, you can be ticketed.
5. Stay out of the left lane on the Autobahn unless you are passing; in Germany, the left lane really is for passing only.
6. Occasional frustration is a part of the driving experience; however, do not express your anger by "flipping the bird", following too closely or flashing your high beams at someone – you can be ticketed for doing so, and the fines are very high.
7. Slow down if you see the cars ahead of you slowing; it usually means a traffic camera, an accident or a stau.



8. Since we mentioned it, “stau” is one of the first German words you should learn. It means traffic jam, and is unlike anything you are likely to see in the States outside of major metropolitan areas. Tune in to your radio for regular traffic reports (both AFN and local radio stations have them) and avoid stau if possible. Autobahn A8 directions Karlsruhe and Munich, A81 direction Singen, and the B14 to Stuttgart Zentrum are often heavily congested during morning and evening rush hours.



9. Your child will likely need a booster or car seat here until 12 years of age. If your child is under 12 and shorter than 150 centimeters (about 59 inches), he or she must be in a car seat or booster seat. If they are under 12 and 150 centimeters or taller, they must use a seat belt; no booster seats are allowed. If they are 12 or older, regardless of height, they must use a seat belt (no boosters).

10. Owning a GPS is invaluable in Europe. You can buy one in the States before you PCS (it may be less expensive) and purchase the European map disks, if they are not included. Depending on the brand you choose, you may also be able to download maps online.

11. If you purchase a used car here, especially from another military family who is PCS'ing, remember that many of these cars have German “specs” (specifications). a you are not sure, ask. Good indicators: speedometer in kilometers, gas gauge in liters. These cars cannot be taken back to the US without a conversion (usually expensive). If the car has US “specs”, you can take it back to the States.

12. Talking on your cell phone while driving will get you a 40 Euro fine. You can be fined even if the car is stopped, but the engine is running. If you need to take or make a call, pull off the road and turn off your engine.



13. You can be fined for running out of gas on the Autobahn.

14. Traffic cameras are very common in Germany, and not all of them are stationary. Some are mobile, and are moved place-to-place. You may or may not see the flash if you are photographed speeding, but you will get the ticket in the mail. Your fine must be paid in Euros, by wire transfer, which can be done at any bank, on or off-post.

15. Always carry both your stateside and your USAREUR licenses with you, and have your green international insurance card (provided by your insurance company) in your car at all times.

16. It is a very good idea to have ADAC, which is the German equivalent of AAA. ADAC annual membership covers the driver, not the car; if you are

married, it is best to have ADAC Plus (sort of like ADAC on steroids), which covers both you and your spouse. ADAC offers towing and breakdown/road service in almost any EU country. You must keep your local address, not your CMR, in your car. It must be printed on an official document. If you live on-post you can ask ADAC to mail you your membership cards to your on-post German address. If you live on the economy, you can use any piece of mail that has your German address on it. You will need your official German address if you ever need to obtain a rental car through ADAC. They have an office in Breuningerland in Sindelfingen, and can also be found on the web at www.adac.de.

17. Ship your car EARLY and rent a vehicle in the States so that your vehicle is already here when you arrive. Renting a car is expensive (and you'll get a tin can) in Germany, plus the military does not reimburse you for this added expense.



Transportation

TRAINS & PLANES

1. Do not try to use public transportation without a ticket. The ticket checkers are hard to spot, and it will cost you an immediate 40 Euros if you are caught. Remember that all tickets need to be punched before you ride, both going and returning; look for the orange boxes near the escalators or on the platform.
2. It is legal to bring your dog or cat on German trains, but make sure that your pet doesn't get nervous in crowds; the trains are generally very full during morning and evening rush hours.
3. When purchasing a ticket for the U-Bahn or S-Bahn from the automatic ticket machines, look for the little country flags on the screen before you start and press the button next to the British flag; the screens will display in English.
4. Long-term parking at the Stuttgart airport can be extremely pricey. If you can, arrange a ride with friends, or take a taxi. Either is going to be a less expensive option.
5. The website for the German train system (within and outside of Germany) is www.dbahn.de; the one for the Stuttgart regional train and bus is www.vvs.de. Both have English pages, and you can book tickets online or check schedules.



Health Care



If you have a family emergency and need to go to a local German hospital, *always* remember to call the MP Desk first. They will have a translator call the hospital for you, and can also sign an ambulance in to base if that is needed. If you are out and about and have to go to a German hospital, call them as soon as possible. They will notify the translator and also TRICARE and the Patient Liaison.

MP DESK #: 0711-680-5261/5262.

Shopping

1. If you go to a German grocery store or other store that uses shopping carts, you must put a 1 Euro coin in the handle to unlock the cart for use. You get the coin back when you return the cart and lock it in with the rest.
2. Always carry Euros! Germany is essentially a cash economy. Many German grocery stores, smaller stores, bars and restaurants do not take credit cards. You must pay in Euros or with a German EC (Electronic Cash) card, which you receive only if you open an account with a German bank.
3. You may want to bring extra pillows and linens for all your beds, especially if you have a preference as to brand, thread count, etc. The selection at most PX's is necessarily limited, and you may or may not be able to order what you want online.



4. For Navy, Marine and Air Force service members, you may want to visit your Uniform Shop stateside before coming to Germany. AAFES Clothing Sales has a very limited selection of items for services other than Army. The store also does not do special orders; you must do them yourself, by phone or online, and should factor in shipping time. You may also want to stock up if a Uniform Shop/Clothing Sales store for your branch of service is available somewhere you are TDY/TAD.
5. Keep a VAT form in your glove box, even if you are not intending to go shopping that day. It will save you the 19% tax, and you never know when you might find that great piece you've been looking for!



6. Online shopping can be a great way to get things that are hard to find and/or expensive in Europe; however, check shipping and handling costs before you order. Also, make sure the company ships to APO addresses before filling your "cart"; most do, but there are some that don't.
7. "Never a Dull Moment" is a great guide to shopping and sightseeing in Germany. It is published by AWAG, and includes information on both Germany and other EU countries. Most entries will have street addresses, phone numbers and hours of operation, but since things do change, it is wise to call ahead and check, especially if the place you want to go is some distance away. "Never a Dull Moment" can be purchased at the USO on Panzer Kaserne.
8. Many German stores, including some groceries, do not give out shopping bags. You can purchase great cloth bags that fold up and store in a tiny pouch that clips to your purse; check local retailers. These bags are also very useful at flea markets.
9. Hornbach's (closest is in Boblingen) is very similar to Home Depot in the States. They also take VAT forms.
10. Shipping to and from the States can be expensive and time consuming. Christmas packages nearly always need to be mailed a week or two before Thanksgiving. The Post Office publishes a "Mail By" guide every year with the dates by which packages must be mailed to get to the US for Christmas. Also, consider shipping time when ordering gifts that you want to have here before the holidays. For gifts to Stateside family and friends, consider ordering online and shipping directly to the recipient; it could save you time and money.



11. Most towns have at least a weekly open-air market from spring until fall; some are year-round. Fresh vegetables, flowers, meat, cheese, wine and other local specialties are only some of what is available.

12. You may use any German bank Geldautomat (ATM/“green machine”) that takes your ATM card to get Euros. Exchange rates are not created equal; German banks typically offer an exchange rate that is slightly better than what you get at an American bank. If you are making a big purchase or if you pay your monthly bills in Euros, using the green machines may save you some money.

 **Geldautomat**

13. Christmas wouldn't be Christmas in Germany without the Weihnachtsmarkt or Christkindlmarkt (Christmas Markets). The ultimate website is www.weihnachtsmarkt-deutschland.de.

14. Don't rely on the PX to have the sport shoes, socks, shin guards or other sports equipment your child needs. The REAL and Marktkauf stores have a selection of sports items, and Deichmann

has inexpensive soccer and other sports shoes. You also may want to consider ordering online if there is a specific brand or size you need. Whatever you decide to do, we suggest that you do not wait until the last minute to purchase your child's sports supplies.



15. Do not throw plastic or glass bottles away (sodas, juices, yogurts, beer bottles, etc) as you can turn many of them in to grocery stores (look for the automated machines) to get money back to spend in the store! Some people will even look through American dumpsters and collect returnable bottles (look for the word PFAND on the label). Pfand = cash for you! Most stores automated machines will kick out a voucher you can use when you make your purchases and take that amount off your purchases. Instant savings!

16. The PX has a limited supply and selection of Halloween costumes. Check on the Internet, and order as early as September. You can also pick up costumes in the local stores during Fasching season (German equivalent to Carnival or Mardi Gras).

17. If your child has his or her heart set on a particular themed birthday party, the supplies may not be available here. This is another thing you may want to order online, and early.

18. The REAL store has a frequent shopper's card that you can get at their information desk. You can collect points, and then redeem them on their website for free stuff. Check the desk when you visit; usually the person manning the desk does speak English.



19. Typical store hours in Germany are not like those in the States. For anyone used to the 24/7 American shopping ideal, this may come as a shock. Stores are usually open from 8:00 or 9:00 am, and close at 6:00 pm. Many smaller stores close for lunch, and on Saturday, many close between 2:00 and 4:00 pm. Stores are not open on Sunday.

20. There is a Flohmarkt, or flea market, every Saturday morning at the Karlsplatz in downtown Stuttgart. You can take the train to the Stuttgart Hauptbahnhof, then walk up through the pedestrian zone.



Around the House

1. Many of the crew members who will be working your household goods delivery do not speak English (or German). There should be at least one crew member who does speak English, but he or she cannot be everywhere at once. To help facilitate getting everything to the right room, make a list of all the rooms in your new house, and assign a corresponding number to each. Tape a piece of paper with the right numbers on the door or doorframe of each room. As your goods come off of the truck, use a thick marker to mark each box with the correct room number (this is also a great job for your kids, if they are old enough). All your stuff will almost certainly make it to the right room!
2. If you use transformers, turn them off when not in use, as they pull a lot of power.
3. Whether living on-base or in town, you can plug your 110v lamps into 220v outlets without using a transformer. You will need only a plug adapter and European light bulbs (do not try to use American bulbs – they will blow up).
4. Doors and windows in homes on the economy generally do not have screens.
5. Most German houses do not have air conditioning (nor does on-post housing). While most of the year here is fairly temperate, it does get hot for some weeks in the summer. Window A/C units and fans from the States will use a lot of electricity with a transformer (off-post) and window A/C units of any type are not allowed in on-post housing. German standing fans are your best bet, and fairly inexpensive to acquire. Check the SCSC Thrift Shop on Patch, or even near the housing dumpsters (many people just put them out for the taking when they PCS).



6. US digital alarm clocks that are plug-in and not battery-operated will not keep correct time here, as the cycles are different. Advice: Purchase your alarm clock on the local economy.
7. Most German windows do not use curtain rods such as are common in the US (this is true for most on-post housing as well). Also, the walls in most German houses, as well as in on-post housing, are a cement type rather than dry wall construction. If you want to put up curtain rods, you may need permission from your landlord, as you will likely have to drill holes and use screw anchors to put them up.
8. You will have to decide for yourself what works best for your family when it comes to your 110V appliances and items such as grills and Christmas lights. Renovated on-post housing units do have 110 outlets in the kitchens and bathrooms, but off-post housing does not. Also, certain 110 appliances, when used with a transformer, either use more power than you



9. Check the SCSC Thrift Shop on Patch Barracks before buying new German appliances or transformers; many people who are PCS'ing will consign or donate their German appliances before they leave, and you may find what you need at a very good price.
10. Just as with any military move, make sure you have an accurate list, photos or videos of your household goods, and receipts and appraisals for your valuables. Appraisals are important for full replacement value for damaged items, especially those you have had for some time; prices may have gone up significantly since you purchased them.
11. Stuttgart on-post housing has 110 voltage, so it is okay to bring your small American appliances and vacuum cleaners. Some, like the expensive stand mixers and other appliances that cycle (alarm clocks), may have trouble, but most work just fine.

- 11.** If you live out in town, you can purchase heating oil through the Customer Service Desk at the Panzer Main Exchange. AAFES has a contract with a local company; the price does change daily. If you choose to use the program, fill out a form at the Customer Service Desk, pay for your oil and schedule your delivery. A 5% AAFES surcharge applies. You can also simply check the price and use it as a basis for comparison off-post.
- 12.** Also for those of you who live on the economy: periodically get a signed “review” of your home from your landlord. When you PCS, a record of review will make it easier for you to get your deposit back, in the case of any dispute with your landlord as to the condition of your premises.
- 13.** Please note that in writing money amounts, Europeans use a comma where we use a period and a period where we use a comma. For example,
\$35.00 is €35,00.
\$35,000 is €35.000.
You do not want to make this mistake when paying your bills.
- 14.** If you live on the economy, you may want to consider joining the German Renter’s Club. For an annual fee, you are entitled to their lawyers’ assistance with landlord/tenant disputes, and they can answer questions regarding your rights and responsibilities. Contact Mieterverein Sindelfingen, Untere Vorstadt 17, 71063 Sindelfingen. Tel: 0703-187-9544 or 0703-187-9661. Hours are Tuesday through Friday from 8:00am to Noon, and Thursday from 2-6pm.
- 15.** Renter’s vocabulary: your rent is the **Miete**; you are the **Mieter**, and your landlord is the **Vermieter**.
- Kaltmiete** is your basic rent without additional charges.
- Warmmiete** is the rent plus additional charges.
- Nebenkosten**, or additional charges, could include a parking space, trash, insurance, etc. Be sure to check exactly what is included.

- 16.** If you live on the economy and request them, the Housing Office will provide you with an American fridge/freezer (larger than the German ones) and a washer and dryer. You will receive either a German or an American washer/dryer, depending on the water exchange and venting capabilities in your home. The German washer heats the water inside, rather than piping in hot water. The German dryer is a condenser machine that pulls the water out rather than heating your clothes dry.
- 17.** The water in this area is quite hard, and calcium deposits build up very quickly. You should use an additive in your dishwasher along with your dishwasher soap tabs. “Somat” is the popular brand, and can be found in the commissary as well as locally.
- 18.** Germany has fairly strict rules regarding what you can and can’t do in your house or apartment. For example, you may not wash cars in front of your house on Sundays or holidays (or at all, in some areas). You may not mow your lawn, weed-whack or engage in any other loud activities on Sundays or holidays, or during posted “quiet hours”. There also may be regulations as to whether and where you can install a satellite dish, and for storing items in and around your house such as bicycles, gas grills or mowers.
- 19.** Depending on the town where you live, there may be regulations for on-street parking for residents and guests. You may need to apply for a resident parking pass (Anwohnerausweis) at the Rathaus. You will need to show proof of residency, such as your rental agreement or a utility bill, and your auto registration. Be sure the proof of residency is in German and contains your name and residence address.



Communication

COMPUTERS, PHONES & MAIL

1. Calls to a cell phone from a landline can be extremely expensive. Also, if you have teens who like to call and text frequently, they may be better off with a cell phone that uses a limited Euro card. If you do choose to have a contract, for yourself only or for multiple family members, read the fine print carefully to make sure that the fees are what you consider reasonable.
2. Computers are available for anyone's use at the USO in Building 2915 on Panzer Kaserne and at the library on Patch Barracks. The USO will print the first five pages free; there is a cost of 10 cents per page thereafter. The library charges a small fee for printing as well. The USO also has a public use fax machine; the first five pages are again free, and there is a \$1.00 per page charge for additional pages.
3. When moving in to either on- or off-post housing, try to get the previous tenant's phone number to pass on to your phone company; your phone hook-up will go much faster.
4. Something to think about is getting a Vonage phone for use during your time here. It must be registered to a US address (think family member or friend). You are issued a US phone # which people in the States can dial as they would any stateside number. It costs approximately \$30.00 a month to call back and forth to the US, and for an additional \$6.00 a month you can call most of Europe. Please note that you do need high-speed Internet to use this service (it hooks up through your computer). Also note that if you have a lot of problems with your computer service where you live, Vonage may not work for you.



5. Unlike in the States, in Germany you are charged for each and every call you make, whether it is to your next-door neighbor, another state or another country. Your home phone is "Festnetz" in German.
6. If your computer is dual voltage, you can plug it into both 220v and 110v; the latter requires a plug adapter for 220v sockets. You will likely have to flip a switch (from 110v to 220v) on your computer before you turn it on. Do NOT forget to check this before powering up; otherwise, you can instantly fry your computer.
7. You can usually plug monitors directly into 220v outlets with only a plug adapter, but again, check for a switch first. Printers and speakers normally require a transformer. Check the output volts on your setup before buying a transformer, to make sure the one you choose can handle the amount of voltage you need.
8. On a snail mail note, if you have to mail a letter to a German address (a bill, or a ticket, for example), you do not have to go downtown to get a German stamp. As long as your return address is your CMR, with box number and APO, you can get a regular US first class stamp and mail it at an APO or in a US mailbox on any base.
9. Here is a brief rundown of how the German billing system works for those of you who have TKS, Telekom or another German telephone/internet provider: when you receive a bill, you have two weeks from the date on the bill to pay in full. Should you not pay within that time frame, they will issue a Past Due Notice; you will have six days to pay. If you have not paid after a total of 20 days from the date on the bill, the company will automatically cut off your service until the bill is paid; then they automatically turn it back on.



Travel & Entertainment

1. The “Stuttgart Happenings” magazine, is a great way to keep up with classes and activities for all local MWR programs. The magazine is normally available at the Community Mail Room, the USO and at all MWR locations. You can also access it on the web at www.mwrfirstchoice.com.
2. The USO is a great resource for travel information, maps and to purchase discounted tickets to local area attractions. They provide day and overnight escorted tours to local and distant destinations. All of their trips are listed in “the Kiosk” magazine that is available at the USO on Panzer Kaserne. You can also access it on the web at www.uso.org/stuttgart.
3. After 2:30 pm on weekdays, and anytime on weekends, the playground at Boblingen Elementary School on Panzer Kaserne is open for play. This is a great outdoor meeting place for Moms to take the kids.
4. Travel guides are a great way to plan a trip and learn about your destination in advance. The ones by Rick Steves are very good.
5. The community website is www.stuttgart.army.mil. It has monthly calendars, information on community events, and the online Community Post newsletter, which includes “Out and About in Baden-Wuerttemberg.” O & A has articles and information on local area events, to include fests, flea markets and volksmarches.
6. Another super website for military families has information on all bases in Europe, as well as info on facilities and programs at each, www.gettingaround.net.
7. The Corso Theatre in Vaihingen shows original language movies, primarily American and English films. Check the website, www.corso-kino.de for general information and schedules.
8. Indoor and outdoor pools, mineral baths and spas are extremely popular in Germany. Many indoor facilities have saunas, steam rooms, lap, lounge,

and kiddie pools, and whirlpools. Please note that many of these are co-ed and clothing optional; be aware, and choose a facility that matches your comfort level.

9. Fests of all sorts are extremely popular in Germany. Oktoberfest in Munich, Sommerfest and Fruhlingsfest in Stuttgart, and the annual Fasching/Karneval (Mardi Gras) everywhere are just the beginning. Be aware that at most fests, beer and wine flow freely, and make sure you do not drive if drinking is on your agenda. Both the German Polizei and the MPs increase their DUI checkpoints during fest times.
10. Although most European countries use 220V/60Hz electricity, other countries may have slightly different plug configurations; always pack a multi-plug converter when you travel.
11. The RitterSport chocolate factory is right down the road in nearby Waldenbuch. The small museum is free, and there is a discount shop for overstock and mislabeled chocolate.
12. Want to spend a night (or several) in a real German castle? Schloss Weitenburg is about 45 minutes south of Stuttgart, overlooks the Neckar River and is run by a descendant of the family who has owned it for hundreds of years. He usually stops by during dinner and tells you which of his ancestors occupied the room you are staying in. They have an indoor pool, a small sauna, and there is a golf course a mile away. The website is in English: www.schloss-weitenburg.de/schloss/index.htm.
13. One of the most enjoyable family events in the Allgau region (east of the Bodensee, or Lake Constance) is the Cows Coming Home. It takes place in most of the towns and villages from around the 12th to the 24th of September, and celebrates bringing the cows down from their summer pastures and into the towns for the winter. They decorate the cows with flowers and bells, and make a great event of it. A great site is www.oberstdorf.de/index.shtml. Look under “Veisheid”. Parts of the site are in English.
14. Whenever you are out and about, make sure you have small change (coins under 1 Euro) for the restrooms. Some have attendants that you pay before you

enter; most Autobahn facilities require you to put in 50 cent Euro to pass through a turnstile into the restroom. The turnstile does, however, spit out a ticket good for 50 cent Euro towards anything you purchase (food, drink, etc.) at any Rest Stop.

15. Most Germans carry Travel Cancellation Insurance (Reiseruecktrittsversicherung) and Americans should too. For example, for one year's coverage to a max 3,000 euro per incident if you have to cancel for reasons of illness, job loss, etc, it is only just over 60 euro PER YEAR! You already have ADAC (like AAA) insurance for you and your vehicle (or you should), and you can purchase this Travel Cancellation Insurance through ADAC. The USO has an English translation of this document so you know exactly what is covered, the different levels of insurance and how you file a claim. Sign up at any ADAC store.

16. Best website for travel deals is www.opodo.de. At the bottom of the page there is an icon, click on the British flag for English. You can use your American credit cards on this site. Another site is [\[lastminute.de\]\(http://lastminute.de\) \(or \[.com\]\(http://.com\)\). Many people also visit the last minute travel agencies at the airport or use local German travel agencies, including the travel agency connected to the main ticket office at the main train station in Stuttgart. Go there to pick up yellow rail/hotel flyer combos and book with HUGE savings to major European cities!](http://www.</p>
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17. The USO on Panzer Kaserne maintains a large supply of brochures and flyers for cities and venues around mostly Germany and elsewhere. Files are also maintained in the back where customers have brought back brochures and travel information from various locations. Check those out before you travel or book one of the USO tours and let someone else do all the work.

18. Be sure to pay and get your Blue Tourist Passport, as the process can take up to three or four months if you apply after you arrive. Many countries advise that you MUST have a Blue Tourist Passport and not just your official SOFA-stamped passport to cross their borders, particularly France. No, you can not travel on your military ID

card as you did in the past either. area of 20 hectares, and will eat right out of your hand. Kids love it!

www.aquatoll.de water park in Neckarsulm

www.badkap.de water park in Albstadt

www.atlantis-freizeitpark.de water park in Ulm

www.tuwass.de water park in Tuttlingen

www.freizeitpark-traumland 45 minutes from Boblingen and one of the least expensive parks in the area

www.spieland.de sponsored by Ravensburger, a famous German toymaker

www.europa-park.de near Freiburg; has theme attractions and food from various European countries; this one is not cheap!

www.holidaypark.de in Hassloch

www.berghof-gechingen.de ponyhof (riding stables) (in German)

www.maislabyrinth-wolfenhausen.de corn maze; site in German only, hours for each year are posted late spring/early summer

www.stgt.com/stuttgart/leuzee.htm mineral baths with indoor and outdoor pools, tanning booths, saunas, waterfall and play areas

www.german-castles.biz lots of hotel castles in Germany (in English)

www.meersburg.de beautiful town on the shores of the Bodensee

www.freizeitparkrutesheim.de high rope climbing and mini-golf

19. The USO in Rome will find you a hotel room, pick you up at the airport and take you to your hotel AND offers discount tickets to a variety of venues in the area including the Vatican. Take advantage of them and check out what they have to offer. They do have a website.

20. Germany is renowned for parks of all types. There are Maerchen or Erlebnisparks (children's parks), Freizeitbad (water parks), Freizeitparks (amusement or theme parks) and Wildparadies or Tierparks (petting zoos).

Here are a few of the websites you may want to check out:

www.freizeitbad.de European Waterpark Association

www.infoparks.com Guide to European parks (over 600 in 16 countries)

www.freizeitpark.de 175+ German parks

www.maerchenpark.de in Rupholding near Chiemsee; great for small kids

www.tripsdrill.de NWof Ludwigsburg

www.legoland.de in Gunzberg near Ulm

www.affenberg-salem.de over 200 Barbary Macaques live freely within a forest

Your Pets

1. Dogs are generally welcomed everywhere in Germany, to include most hotels, stores, restaurants and bars (you cannot, however, take a dog into a German grocery store). It is always best to call in advance if you are not sure of the policy.
2. Pet passports are not difficult to obtain, and are a must if you intend to take your pet to European Union countries other than Germany. You can get the passports through any German veterinary office. The passport is not valid, however, for taking your pet back to the United States; guidelines for stateside travel can be obtained from the Vet Clinic on Panzer Kaserne.
3. If you live on the economy, be aware that the Germans have strict rules about the care of your animals. You cannot leave a pet tied outside, or alone inside for an extended period of time and it is frowned upon, if you do not walk your dog a few times a day. You cannot allow your dog to bark continually and disturb others. If you do any of these things and if your neighbors report you, your pet can be taken away from you by the German authorities.
4. The Panzer Vet Clinic does not offer emergency care. If you do have a pet emergency, the Dachswald-Klinik offers 24-hour service. They are located at Industriestrasse 3, 70565 Stuttgart-Vaihingen. The phone number is 0711-679-670 and the website is www.dachswald-klinik.de. The receptionist does not speak much English, but the veterinarians do.



Sprechen Sie Deutsch?

1. It is a good idea to learn basic German as soon as you can. The Head Start program and the Stuttgart Newcomer's Orientation that are part of your in-processing are good ways to begin.
2. For more intensive language classes, you may register at the Volkshochschule (VHS) in Boblingen. There is a cost associated with the classes. The website is www.vhsbb.de. Click on "Sprache", then "Deutsch" (German). "Deutsch als Fremdsprache" is "German as a Foreign Language".
3. Translation websites can be helpful; several we have used are:
 - <http://dict.leo.org>
 - www.freetranslation.com
 - www.babelfish.com
3. Great websites to get more information about our area:
 - www.stuttgart.army.mil
 - www.toytowngermany.com
 - <http://stuttgartmilitaryfamilies.ning.com/>
 - www.thelocal.de
Germany's News in English
 - http://files.sitepages.com/stuttgart/PTA/PTA_Handbook_9th_Edition.pdf
Our local international school's handbook but with GREAT info for all American Stuttgart residents
 - www.stgt.com/stuttgart/homee.htm
Stuttgart Info Guide in English
 - <http://forums.armywives.com/forums/index.php?board=54.0>
Overseas Wives, Fiances and Girlfriends

In General

1. Take it one day at a time. Your first month will be a learning curve, but every day gets easier!
2. Establish a network of friends. It helps with the transition, as well as once you've gotten settled. Your sponsor and your Family Readiness Coordinator are great places to start.
3. The SOCEUR spouses have monthly socials. We meet at a restaurant, or at someone's home. This is a great way to meet other spouses in the command. Details are put out via our weekly SpouseNet News.
4. Have fun! Stuttgart is a great place to live, with wonderful opportunities to travel and experience other cultures.



Stuttgart Coat of Arms

If you have suggestions or tips for living in Germany that you would like to share, we would be happy to include them in our next edition.

Please contact:

Lorie Warchol

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Special Operations Command Europe

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Cell/Handy: (0)162-296-7020 Lorie.Warchol@eucom.mil

Willkommen in Deutschland!

Women's Blouses, Shirts and Sweaters

American	34	36	38	40	42	44
British	36	38	40	42	44	46
European	42	44	46	48	50	52

Men's Shirts

American	14	14½	15	15½	16	16½	17
British	14	14½	15	15½	16	16½	17
European	36	37	38	39	41	42	43

Children's Clothes

American	4	6	8	10	12	14
British (Ht ins)	43	48	55	58	60	62
European (Ht cms)	109	122	140	147	152	157

Women's Suits and Dresses

American	8	10	12	14	16	18
British	10	12	14	16	18	20
European	38	40	42	44	46	48

Men's Suits and Coats

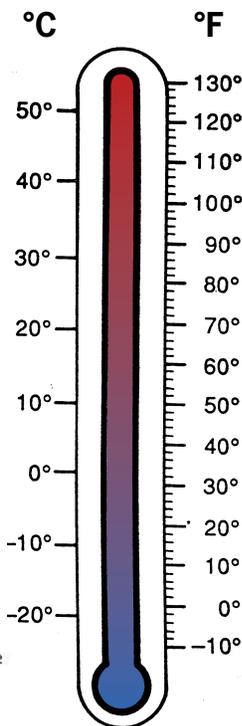
American	36	38	40	42	44	46
British	36	38	40	42	44	46
European	46	48	51	54	56	59

Women's Shoes

American	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9
British	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½
European	37	38	39	39	40	40	41

Men's Shoes

American	7½	8	8½	9½	10	10½	11
British	7	7½	8	9	9½	10	10½
European	40	41	42	43	44	45	46



Base Operator: 0711-680-113

Military Police Desk: 0711-680-5261/5262

GPS ADDRESSES

Panzer Kaserne: Panzer Str, 71032 Boeblingen

Patch Barracks: Katzenbach Str, 70569 Vaihingen

Kelley Barracks: Plieninger Str, 70567 Stuttgart-Moehringen

Robinson Barracks: Heidloch Str, 70376 Stuttgart-Burgholzof