

Understanding cultural differences

What are typical German traditions and customs? To avoid cultural misunderstandings, it is helpful to learn more about the culture in Germany.

Every country has its own history, culture, customs and traditions. Things that are understood as normal in one country, like kissing in public, are not accepted or are sometimes forbidden in others. It's no wonder that there are surprises and sometimes misunderstandings when someone is new in a country where there are other rules and customs.

Punctuality and order are important

What are typical customs and behaviors in Germany? Many people say that Germans are very exact and very punctual and that they work a lot and have many rules for everything. First of all, there are many Germans who are disorderly, lazy and not on time – but there is something true to the clichés. Punctuality, order and work play a large role in Germany.

There is also a serious attitude that you may notice – both in work and with relationships and friendships. Sometimes this may seem cold and humorless and, for example, it may take a while before people consider someone to be their friend. And even between friends it is considered impolite if someone arrives 15 minutes late.

Getting to know people takes time

In Germany when people meet it is not common to start talking right away about personal things like family or salary. That would be considered impolite. It is usually better to stick to small talk like about the weather or food. Political or ideological discussions and talking about personal feelings should wait until later when someone knows you better.

You shouldn't be disappointed when Germans are not friendly to you right away. That has nothing to do with you, it is just how some people are in Germany. People want to really get to know others before they start a closer friendship. Sometimes this takes a lot of time.

Germans are interested in other countries

To begin that first conversation, it's good to know that most Germans are curious and interested in other countries. They like to travel and learn about different cultures. Many people like international cuisine and are interested in the traditions of other countries.

So keep in mind that your culture and home country are good topics when you want to start a conversation in Germany. A good question to ask people is: "Where I am from we do things like this. How is it done in Germany?"

Open Your Heart

Germany for beginners

Suggested links:

[Information about life in Germany in English](#)

[Information about life in Germany in Arabic](#)

[Overview of important facts about Germany in English, Spanish and French](#)

[Important information for migrants and refugees](#)