

Making friends in Germany

In Germany, friends are almost more important than family. Just like everywhere else, friends are the people you trust the most and are there for in times of need.

Friendship is very important in Germany. But people distinguish between good friends and people that they know. This is the difference between “friends” and “acquaintances”. Friends are those you invite to your home. Acquaintances, not so much. For many Germans, friends have even more importance than family.

Time together is more important than gifts

Friendships develop when people share the same interests and like each other. For Germans, it is important that they can trust their friends. This trust must develop slowly and this is why many Germans do not share everything about themselves when they first meet someone. After they get to know someone, many Germans will open up and share personal things.

It isn't common in Germany for people to give each other gifts all the time. Many Germans may even get uncomfortable when they are showered with gifts. They don't expect it and don't give many gifts themselves. It is more important that they can have a good time with their friends.

Paying separately

It isn't common that friends pay for each other in Germany. People in other countries sometimes make jokes that Germans pay separately in restaurants. Even spouses sometimes pay separately. This is because people think they shouldn't pay for more than what they have taken.

If someone buys a round in a café or bar, then it is expected that someone else will pay for the next round, so that at the end everyone has around the same costs. You shouldn't be surprised if someone doesn't offer to pay for you. And if you really want to pay for someone and they don't accept, then you should just pay for yourself.

Honest and punctual

For many Germans, friendship doesn't mean that you take every wish into consideration. If you don't have any time to help someone or to meet, then you just tell them so. People accept it if others don't have time to do things together.

Open Your Heart

Germany for beginners

People are also expected to tell each other their honest opinion. It can sometimes seem unfriendly, but is meant as a sign of respect. Even among good friends, people respect others private space.

Germans place a lot of worth on punctuality – also in friendships. If you are invited for dinner at 7 p.m., then you should arrive then and not later. When going over to someone's home, you can bring something to drink. It's best to ask if you should bring something and your host will let you know.

Good friendships take time

If you are new in a city or country, there are a lot of opportunities to meet people who may be in the same situation. Athletic clubs or education centers are good places to meet people. Don't be disappointed if you don't hit it off right away with someone or aren't invited to their homes. Many Germans just need a little bit of time to open up.

Suggested links:

[Look for athletic clubs in Germany \(German\)](#)

[Find classes at a public training center \(German\)](#)

[Information on culture in Germany](#)