
Travel Guide Bremen

02 Quick view	05 Getting around Bremen	10 Calendar of events
02 Germany	06 Top 10 sights	12 Hotels
04 Travel etiquette	08 Shopping in Bremen	
04 Health	08 Restaurants	
05 Phone calls & Internet	09 Nightlife	

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Quick view

Bremen – a brief overview

It may be 45km (28 miles) upriver from the North Sea, but that didn't stop Bremen becoming Germany's oldest seaport, and also the oldest coastal town in the country. It can trace its history way back over 1,200 years, and this rich heritage is reflected in its many fascinating old quarters and picturesque

town squares. But the second biggest town in Northern Germany isn't rooted in the past. There's also a thriving high-tech and space industry here, giving the city a true metropolitan feel, and making it a place where old beauty and modern sophistication blend seamlessly.



Germany

General Information

Country overview

Once mockingly referred to as the "land of schnitzels and leather pants," Germany has acquired a much more modern image in recent decades. International visitors are attracted to the big cities, especially the capital, Berlin. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, in particular, the city with its many cultural and entertainment attractions has become a major tourist destination. But other German cities also know how to celebrate and enjoy life.

Hamburg's annual Hafengeburtstag port anniversary festival attracts around two million visitors every year, the Rhineland is famous for its carnivals, and Munich's Oktoberfest is famous the world over.

Germany also has a variety of natural landscapes: for example, from the Wadden Sea and lowland plains of the northwest, the lakelands in the northeast of the country, numerous low mountain ranges and heathlands, to the central highlands and Alpine regions.

Geography

Germany borders Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland. The northwest has a coastline on the North Sea, while the Baltic coastline in the northeast stretches from the Danish to the Polish border.

The country is divided into 16 states (*Bundesländer*) and has an exceedingly varied landscape. In what was once known as West Germany, the Rhine, Bavaria and the Black Forest stand as the three most famous features, while in the east, the country is lake-studded with undulating lowlands.

River basins extend over a large percentage of the region, and some of Europe's most prominent rivers flow through the country. These include the Elbe, the Danube and the Rhine.

The highest point in the country is the 2962m (9718ft) peak of Zugspitze Mountain in the Bavarian Alps. Cable cars run to the summit, which can also be climbed.

General Information

Key facts

Population: 82,79 million (2017)
Capital: Berlin.

Language

German is the official language. Regional dialects often differ markedly from standard German.

Currency

Euro (EUR; symbol €) = 100 cents. Notes are in denominations of €500, 200, 100, 50, 20, 10 and 5. Coins are in denominations of €2 and 1, and 50, 20, 10, 5, 2 and 1 cents.

Electricity

230 volts AC, 50Hz. European-style round two-pin plugs are in use.

Public holidays

Listed below are the public holidays for the period January 2020 to December 2021.

Note:

- * In catholic regions only
- ** Sachsen only
- *** Not in all Laender (Bundesländer)
- **** Berlin only, 2020 only

2020

New Year's Day: 1 January 2020
Epiphany: 6 January 2020*
Good Friday: 10 April 2020
Easter Sunday: 12 April 2020
Easter Monday: 13 April 2020
Labour Day: 1 May 2020
Liberation Day: 8 May 2020****
Ascension Day: 21 May 2020
Whit Sunday: 31 May 2020
Whit Monday: 1 June 2020
Corpus Christi: 21 June 2020*
Assumption: 15 August 2020*
Day of German Unity: 3 October 2020
Day of Reformation: 31 October 2020***
All Saints' Day: 1 November 2020*
Repentance Day: 21 November 2020**
Christmas: 25 and 26 December 2020

2021

New Year's Day: 1 January 2021
Epiphany: 6 January 2021*
Good Friday: 2 April 2021
Easter Sunday: 4 April 2021
Easter Monday: 5 April 2021
Labour Day: 1 May 2021
Ascension Day: 13 May 2021
Whit Sunday: 23 June 2021
Whit Monday: 24 May 2021
Corpus Christi: 3 June 2021*
Assumption: 15 August 2021*

Day of German Unity: 3 October 2021
Day of Reformation: 31 October 2021***
All Saints' Day: 1 November 2021*
Repentance Day: 21 November 2021**
Christmas: 25 and 26 December 2021

All information subject to change.



Travel etiquette

How to fit in

Handshaking is customary in Germany, and it is considered rude to address people by their first name unless invited to do so. Normal courtesies should be observed. Before eating, it is normal to say "*guten Appetit*" to the other people at the table to which the correct reply is "*danke, gleichfalls*" ("Thank you, the same to you"). If you've been invited to eat at a German house, it is customary to present the hostess with unwrapped flowers (according to tradition, you should always give an uneven number, and it is worth noting that red roses are exclusively a lover's gift).

In shops and other businesses, courtesy dictates that visitors should utter a greeting, such as "*guten Tag*" (or "*grüß Gott*" in Bavaria) before saying what it is that they want; to leave without saying "*auf Wiedersehen*" or "*tschüss*" can also cause offence.

Similarly, when making a telephone call, asking for the person you want to speak to without stating first who you are is impolite. Casual wear is widely acceptable, but more formal dress is required for some restaurants, the opera, theater, casinos and important social functions. Smoking is prohibited where notified, on public transportation and in most public buildings.



Health

Health

Main emergency number: 112

Food & Drink

There's nothing to mark out German products as particularly risky to general health (although it has a partly founded reputation for being high in fat). Tap water is safe to drink.

Other Risks

Tick-borne encephalitis is present in forested areas of southern Germany; vaccination is advisable. Rabies is present; look out for 'Tollwut' signs. For those at high risk, vaccination before arrival should be considered.

During the summer months, sunburn can be a problem. The southwest generally has the highest temperatures. The usual precautions apply: Use a generous amount of sunscreen and be sensible about how long you spend in direct sunlight. Be aware that a breezy day can sometimes mask high temperatures.

If walking over a long distance in warm weather, it's advisable to drink – and carry – plenty of water and wear appropriate clothing, including a sun hat. Blisters can be another problem for hikers. These can often occur if new walking shoes are being worn over a long distance. Ideally, footwear should be worn in before the trip.

As a counterpoint to the balminess of the summer, German winters can be fairly severe. This is generally truer the further east you travel. If you're arriving during the coldest months of the year, make sure you have adequate clothing. At any time of year, in fact, temperatures can be unpredictable – even in July and August it makes sense to have a sweater (and maybe an umbrella, too) to hand.

Other health problems that inexperienced travelers might reasonably encounter are the various knock-on effects of consuming too much alcohol. The risk, unsurprisingly, is particularly prevalent among those attending Munich's Oktoberfest. Be aware that some beers have ABV levels of as much as 6 or 7% and should therefore be treated with respect.

Contractual physician of Lufthansa

Dr. Tonin, Annette
Leibnizplatz 5
D-28199 Bremen
Germany
Tel. +49-421-55-50-50

Please note that Lufthansa accepts no responsibility for the treatment nor will it bear the cost of any treatment.



Phone calls & Internet

Telephone

Country code:+49

Mobile telephony and Internet

Since June 2017, EU citizens traveling within the EU, and also in Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein have been able to use their cell phones and surf the Net without incurring any extra charges: In other words, customers pay the same price for phone calls, text messages and data volume as they do at home. Restrictions do apply to the constant use of SIM cards abroad, however, and caps may be set on data packages. For full details, contact your mobile telephony provider in your country. Travelers using a SIM card from a non-EU state do not benefit from the new arrangement.

Free Internet access via Wi-Fi is possible in many busy tourist spots. When using public Wi-Fi networks, it is a wise precaution to ensure encryption of all passwords, credit card details and banking credentials entered. Use of a VPN app or security software to check the safety of a hotspot is recommended.



Getting around Bremen

Public Transport

Bremen's tangle of medieval streets makes walking the best option, but there is also an efficient public transport network in the form of buses and trams. Night buses run on some routes at weekends. Services are operated by Bremer Strassenbahn (BSAG; tel: (0421) 55960, www.bsag.de). Buy tickets from bus drivers or from machines at stops.

Taxis

Taxis are inexpensive, but cannot be hailed in the street. Head for a taxi rank, or call an authorised company, such as Taxi-Roland (tel: (0421) 14433) or Taxi-Ruf

(tel: (0421) 14014). It isn't necessary to tip.



Top 10 sights Top 10 sights in Bremen

Schnoor

Bremen's Schnoor district is a charming jumble of narrow alleyways lined with houses dating back to the 15th century. Once home to trades people, you're now more likely to find an artist at work in a fashionable studio.

Schnoor-Viertel
Bremen
Germany

Marktplatz

The heart of the city's Altstadt is its impressive market square. Surrounded by the cathedral, the City Hall and guild houses, it's also home to the bronze statue of the Town Musicians of Bremen – four animals stacked on top of one another.

Marktplatz
Bremen
Germany

Dom St Petri

Majestic St Peter's Cathedral boasts a history going back more than 1,200 years. Most of today's early Gothic-style building dates from the 13th century. Climb the tower for a fabulous view.

Sandstrasse 10-12
28195 Bremen
Germany
Tel: (0421) 365 040

Opening times:
Mon-Fri 1000-1700
Sat 1000-1400
Sun 1400-1700

www.stpetridom.de

Rathaus

Although its flamboyant Renaissance facade was added in the 17th century, the Gothic Town Hall was built around 1410. The interior includes a superb oak staircase. The tiny cannons on the model ships in the Upper Hall can be fired for special occasions.

Am Markt 21
28195 Bremen
Germany

Opening times:
Guided tours only;
book through tourist office

www.rathaus-bremen.de

Böttcherstrasse

Contrasting with the ancient streets nearby, the buildings on this narrow alley were rebuilt in Jugendstil designs in the 1920s.

Böttcherstrasse
28195 Bremen
Germany

www.boettcherstrasse.de

Böttcherstrasse Museums

Böttcherstrasse is lined with galleries. The two most important are the Ludwig Roselius Museum, a 16th-century patrician house, and the Paula Modersohn-Becker Museum, the first gallery ever dedicated to a female artist.

Böttcherstrasse 6-10
28195 Bremen
Germany
Tel: (0421) 338 8222

Opening times:
Tue-Sun 1100-1800

www.museen-boettcherstrasse.de

Schlachte Promenade on the River Weser

This promenade along the east bank of the Weser River is a picturesque place for a stroll, or somewhere to hang out and enjoy the view on the terrace of one of its many bars.

Schlachte
28195 Bremen
Germany

Universum

Bremen's modernistic science centre resembles a giant silver mussel. Inside there are 300 interactive exhibits on the themes of mankind, Planet Earth and the cosmos.

Wiener Strasse 1a
28359 Bremen
Germany
Tel: (0421) 33460

Opening times:
Mon-Fri 0900-1800
Sat-Sun 1000-1800

universum-bremen.de

Übersee-Museum

The 'Overseas Museum' is a fascinating mixture of natural history and ethnographical museum, bringing the human and natural worlds from every continent together.

Bahnhofsplatz 13
28195 Bremen
Germany
Tel: (0421) 1603 8101

Opening times:
Tue-Fri 0900-1800
Sat-Sun 1000-1800

www.uebersee-museum.de

Botanika

This botanical science centre includes the city's beautiful Rhododendron Park. There's a discovery centre with interactive experiments, and a series of hothouses taking you on a global tour of the plant kingdom.

Deliusweg 40
28359 Bremen
Germany
Tel: (0421) 4270 6610

Opening times:
Mon-Fri 0900-1800
Sat-Sun 1000-1800

botanika-bremen.de



Shopping in Bremen

Shopping in Bremen

Key Areas

The streets to the north and west of the central Marktplatz Square – Obernstrasse, Knochenhauerstrasse and Sögestrasse in particular – are lined with shops where you will find everything you need from chic designer label boutiques to simple high-street chains. The atmospheric old Schnoor district has become a magnet for artists, and numerous small galleries have opened up in the area. Böttcherstrasse is the place to find arts and crafts stores.

Markets

There's a colourful daily flower market on the main square. An antiques and flea market sets up on the Schlachte promenade each Saturday morning, and reconvenes on Bürgerweide on Sundays.

Shopping Centres

Waterfront Bremen is a large shopping mall and leisure complex in a rejuvenated docklands area just west of the city centre. Bremen's biggest shopping mall is Weserpark, in an eastern suburb, home to over 100 shops as well as numerous restaurants and cafés.



Restaurants

Restaurants in Bremen

Bremen's Old Town streets are lined with cafés serving traditional German fare – eel is the delicacy here. There are restaurants lining riverside Schlachte, and plenty of fish places around Böttcherstrasse.

Grashoff's Bistro

City institution serving Mediterranean-Asian fusion dishes in a Parisian bistro setting.

Contrescarpe 80
28195 Bremen
Germany

Price: Expensive

Das Kleine Lokal

Refined German cuisine served in a modern romantic setting, located in an eastern suburb.

Besselstrasse 40
28203 Bremen
Germany

Price: Expensive

Urbano

Chic wine bar serving eclectic modern international dishes in the medieval Schnoor.

Am Landherrnamt 5
28195 Bremen
Germany

Price: Moderate

Gallo Nero

Central restaurant serving some of the best traditional Italian food in town.

Heimlichenstr. 1
28195 Bremen
Germany

Price: Moderate

Ratskeller

Germany's oldest town hall cellar restaurant has been serving hearty local food for 600 years.

Am Markt 11
28195 Bremen
Germany

Price: Cheap



Nightlife Nightlife in Bremen

While most of Bremen's nightlife revolves around its traditional bars and cafés, the locals are not averse to visiting the occasional cocktail lounge or techno club.

Schüttinger Gasthausbrauerei

Bremen's most central brewpub is a 'modern-rustic' affair serving good beer and food.

Hinter dem Schütting 12-13
28195 Bremen
Germany

Henry's Bar

Hip and exclusive art gallery/cocktail bar inside a theatre.

Richtweg 7-13
28195 Bremen
Germany

Soho Club

Famous for its party atmosphere, this is the trendiest nightclub in the city.

Konsul-Smidt-Strasse 8d

28217 Bremen
Germany

Lemon Lounge

Gets most locals' vote for serving the best cocktails in town.

Am Wall 164
28195 Bremen
Germany

Vivien Wu

Cocktails are also the name of the game in this chic central bar.

Kolpingstrasse 14
28195 Bremen
Germany



Calendar of events Calendar of events

Sixdays Bremen

More than 120,000 cycling fans pack the ÖVB Arena over six days to see professional cyclists battle it out in an intense programme of elite races. There's plenty to thrill audiences elsewhere in the arena too, with live music, international food and a dance party.

January 9 - 14, 2020

Venue: ÖVB Arena

Bremen Carnival

Europe's largest samba carnival is no ordinary German carnival. Partygoers are transported to the beaches of Brazil, with pounding samba rhythms, flamboyant costumes and energetic masked dances. A kids' carnival, masquerade ball and global village festival are all part of the fun.

February 14 - 15, 2020

Venue: City centre

VegeSack Harbour Festival (VegeSacker Hafenfest)

Boats of all shapes and sizes moor up for a three-day maritime extravaganza in Germany's oldest man-made harbour, built in the early 17th century. Live music (including traditional sea shanties), craft stalls and copious amounts of good food and drink create a lively party atmosphere.

June 5 - 7, 2020

Venue: VegeSack Harbour

Poetry on the Road

Bremen's literary festival plays host to renowned German and international writers, with readings, author interviews, exhibitions, poetry films, radio broadcasts and workshops all on the menu. Bag tickets to poetry sessions to hear performances by multiple poets from across the globe.

June 4 - 8, 2020

Venue: Various venues

La Strada

Bremen's streets are transformed into an open-air big top as acrobats, jugglers, clowns, magicians and a multitude of other acts take over the city centre. Crowds throng to fire displays, puppet shows, dance performances and theatrical spectacles. Gala shows draw together the highlights each evening.

June 18 - 21, 2020

Venue: Marketplace and city centre streets

Bremiale

For five days in summer, cavernous tents are pitched along the banks of the River Weser, crammed with crowds listening to live music or watching dance and comedy performances. There are food stalls galore, kids activities and a bike festival.

July 15 - 19, 2020

Venue: Weser riverbank

Maritime Festival

Over 30 bands and choirs from across Europe take to the stage (150 stages in fact) on the Vegesack waterfront for this maritime musical fiesta, performing everything from rock to folk to sea shanties. Street theatre, arts and crafts, exhibitions and a dazzling fireworks display add to the entertainment.

July 31 - August 2, 2020

Venue: Vegesack waterfront

Bremen Music Festival (Musikfest Bremen)

A terrific classical music programme mixes favourite (and lesser-known) orchestral, choral and operatic performances with contemporary pieces, plus a few surprise musical genres thrown in.

August 29 - September 19, 2020

Venue: Various Venues

Freimarkt

Over 4 million people hit Bremen's annual funfair, on the go for nearly 1,000 years. Fair-goers whizz and whirl on adrenaline-inducing rides and gorge on smoked eel, candyfloss and Schmalzkuchen (doughnut holes sprinkled with icing sugar). Little Freimarkt in the Marketplace has carousel rides and stalls serving toasted almonds and liquorices.

October 16 - November 1, 2020

Venue: Bürgerweide and Marketplace

Bremen Christmas Market and Schlachte Magic

Bremen's UNESCO-listed town hall provides a magical backdrop to the city's sparkling winter market. Nearly 200 illuminated stalls are laden with handcrafted jewellery, wooden toys and freshly baked treats. A maritime-themed Medieval market lines the Schlachte promenade, with craftsmen, street artists, warm gingerbread and glühwein.

November 23 - December 23, 2020

Venue: Marketplace and Schlachte Embankment



Hotels Hotels in Bremen

Bremen has a full range of accommodation options from hostels to 5-star retreats. As with other German cities, prices are reasonable – even an 'expensive' splurge may not break the bank.

Dorint Park Hotel

Opulently palatial hotel in an 80-hectare (198-acre) park, only a few minutes from the Old Town.

Im Bürgerpark
28209 Bremen
Germany

Category: Expensive

Swissotel

Business-oriented modern luxury hotel close to the heart of the action.

Hillmannplatz 20
28195 Bremen
Germany

Category: Expensive

Classico Boutique Hotel

Design hotel with individually styled rooms right beside the main square.

Hinter dem Schütting 1A
28195 Bremen
Germany

Category: Moderate

Alte Neustadt Garni

Family-run friendly bed and breakfast hotel across the river from the Old Town.

Grosse Johannisstrasse 228-230
28199 Bremen
Germany

Category: Moderate

B + L Hostel

Cheap and cheerful guesthouse offering budget rooms in centre of the new town.

Erlestrasse 34-36
28199 Bremen
Germany

Category: Cheap