

Essential Tips for First-Time Visitors to Germany

Are you planning your first trip to Germany? In this episode of the podcast,

Tracy: Are you planning your first trip to Germany? In this episode of the podcast, I chat with Germany travel planning expert Kate about everything you need to know before you go. From itinerary planning and transport tips to cultural etiquette and must try foods. We cover essential advice to help you explore Germany with confidence.

Tracy: Hi, and welcome to the Global Travel Planning Podcast. I'm your host, Tracy Collins, who with my expert guests will take you on a weekly journey to destinations around the globe, providing travel inspiration, itinerary ideas, practical tips, and more to help you plan your next travel adventure.

Tracy: Hi and welcome to episode, 45 of the Global Travel Planner Podcast. This week we're heading to Germany, a country known for its stunning landscapes, vibrant cities, and incredible food and drink. Whether you're exploring fairy tale castles, scenic countryside or bustling urban centers, planning your first visit can feel overwhelming. Overwhelming. To help, I'm joined by German travel planning expert Kate, who shares her top tips for first time visitors. You'll learn how to make the most of your itinerary, the best ways to get around common mistakes to avoid budget friendly travel tips, and key cultural etiquette to be aware of. Plus, Kate reveals the must try foods and drink every visitor should experience.

Cate is co founder with her husband of mygermanyvacation. com

I first started by asking Kate to introduce herself, where she comes from and explain her connection with Germany.

Cate: I am co founder with my husband aaron of mygermanyvacation.com and we help travelers plan unforgettable and unique trips to Germany and surrounding countries. We are digital nomads, so we spend some of time part, of the year in the United States and part of the year in Europe or elsewhere. my connection with Germany, that's decades long. I'd always wanted to live abroad when I was a kid, and I, did not come from a family of travelers or anything like that. I grew up on the west coast of the United States, and I had been looking for a way to go abroad since I was like 3 years old. And when I was 15, I met a boy from Germany and he spoke German to me and I really wanted to see him again. So I went into my high school guidance counselor's office when I was in 11th grade, and I said, I want to go to Germany. And, I can't. I have no money. So he found a scholarship for me. And this was like way back when, I didn't know anyone who went abroad. I, you know, I didn't know anyone who did any of that kind of stuff. And so anyway, he found a scholarship for me. I applied for it. I actually Got it. And then, a few months later I moved to Germany and I spent my senior year of high school in Germany. And so I learned German, lived with a family, I traveled all over. And and then from then on I just have always had this connection with Germany. So I studied German, my Bachelor's, Master's and PhD. I taught German for a while, was a German professor for a while. And then I started doing intercultural work and actually preparing other people to go live and work and be successful in Germany. And then a few years ago we.

Tracy: Started this travel business because, well, you are Germany experts. You are

kind of the equivalent of, myself and Doug as UK Travel planet experts. You are the Germany travel planet expert.

This podcast is about tips for first time visitors to Germany

So it's great who else to have on the podcast to talk about Germany, but it had to be uk so because this podcast episode is about, you know, tips for first time visitors to Germany because that's what kind of approaching it as, ah, somebody who has never been to Germany before. What sort of things should they know before they arrive?

Cate: Yeah, so there's a few things that that people should know. We work with a lot of first time visitors to Germany. so Germany is full of amazing things to see. There are tons and tons of castles and castle ruins and they're really the best. Germany, has the best Christmas markets in the world. Like really the best Christmas markets in the world. I've been to a lot. Germany has the best. you can get excellent local beer and wine all over the country. There is tons of fascinating history. Alpine coasters are really fun. So you can have some really great outdoor experiences. There's hiking, there's beaches. Germans, love the outdoors. So there's a lot of really great things you can do and just you can find so many wonderful experiences and you can have so, so much fun in Germany. It's really easy to get around the country whether you drive or take public transit. And the great thing about Germany is that it's not usually as crazy crowded or over touristed as, you know, as over touristed as other countries.

Tracy: Yeah, that's, that is true. Actually. it can, it seems a little bit quieter saying that I was in Berlin before Christmas when it was the Christmas markets and it, it was pretty busy to be honest.

Cate: But so Christmas markets and Oktoberfest, that's the exception.

Tracy: And I say, I think then it was pretty busy. But it's also, it's a big country as well. I mean when I say that, and I was talking to somebody about France recently as well. And I said the same thing. And obviously for you guys from the States, you kind

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Tracy: of go, oh, it's not that big. Or anybody listening from Australia, they go, it's not that big. But actually, in European standard, it is.

Cate: It is a pretty big country. And that's something people often underestimate the distances and they think they can, you know, see all the different regions in Germany in five days. And that's. That's not possible. But there is a lot to see, but it is pretty big.

Cate, how do people plan trips without feeling overwhelmed or overwhelmed

Tracy: Okay, well, that. That kind of segues really nicely into the next question, Kate, which is, you know, somebody visiting them for the first time, and they start thinking about planning their itinerary. You know, how can they do, you know, make the most of their time and plan that itinerary without A, feeling overwhelmed and B, as you say, what happens quite often, and we say in the UK is trying to just do too much. So how do you. What do you do and how do you recommend people kind of start with that planning process?

Cate: Yeah. So, you know, actually, when I work with. I work with clients on this a lot, and one of the first things that we do is we look at the distances between the places they want to go. Because I know when I'm planning trips to countries I have not been to, I find that the most difficult thing. You know, you just really don't know how long it's going to take to get from place to place. And if all the places you're thinking about, including in your itinerary, if that's really realistic. So if you're doing it yourself, I would definitely go to Google Maps and I would look at how long will it take you to get from A to B, C, D, E, all the places you want to go by car and by public transit. And that will give you more of an idea of what is actually doable. Another thing is consider flying into one airport and out of another. Actually, a lot of people don't realize you can do this, but we often will fly into, say, Munich and out of Frankfurt, or we'll fly into Frankfurt and out of Berlin. And that way you can maximize your time because you don't have to loop all the way back. You know, you'll lose, like, half a day or a whole day if you have to loop back to the airport that you flew into to fly out of it. And then, also look at other airports. A lot of people fly into Frankfurt or Munich or Berlin, but you can also fly into airports Like Hamburg, Stuttgart, Nuremberg. if you're coming from within Europe, you can fly into, Dresden or Cologne. there's a lot of other smaller airports you can fly into that might be closer to the places you actually want to go. And they're a little bit smaller and sometimes easier. And then you can also look outside. So I've flown into Zurich and Prague and Paris. So you actually have a lot of airports that you can look at to find really good prices. And then also it might just be a better starting point and ending point. And then the last thing is definitely book things in advance. Look in advance for hotels and flights because especially if you're going to be going to Germany during Christmas market season or Oktoberfest or during school holidays, or if you're going to places where a lot of Germans like to vacation or other Europeans, it gets booked up very quickly and prices just skyrocket. So the earlier you can start looking, the better.

Tracy: Are there particular things that you would say that, people should book?

Cate: Definitely hotels and I would book non refund or book refundable hotels so that you can change your mind. but definitely hotels, flights and rental cars.

In the uk, getting an automatic car is quite difficult

Tracy: I'm, going to ask this question as well, just when you mentioned rental cars actually, because in the uk, getting an automatic car is quite difficult. So we always recommend if somebody's come to the uk that they book ahead of time and that they specify that they've got to have an automatic because they are less common. What's the situation in Germany for hire cars? Is it pretty much an even split or are they far more automatics a bit like the States? In Australia it's actually been a lot.

Cate: Easier to get automatics recently and they don't cost quite as much like they used to cost a lot more than a manual, but we found we just have to pay a little bit more to get an automatic. one thing we have noticed with automatics is that the cars are typically larger and there aren't as many cars. So sometimes we get a manual because we actually want a very small car and we cannot get an automatic and a small car. But, but fortunately it does. It's not that expensive and it's pretty easy.

Book in advance private guides because they often fill up months in advance

the other thing I, I just thought of to book in advance are private guides because they often, especially the ones we work with, they are excellent and they fill up months in advance. So if you're thinking about working with private guides, definitely reach out to them early on.

Tracy: And I'm just going to actually mention it because you have a new Germany travel planner podcast coming out soon, haven't you? So are we going to be hearing some of your guides on your podcast?

Cate: Absolutely. I've got one interview scheduled next week with our preferred partner Mati in Berlin. And, yeah, we'll be bringing all the other ones on too.

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Tracy: Oh, that's really exciting.

What mistakes do you see people making when planning a Germany trip

So I'm going to. I actually do want to talk about getting around Germany, but I am going to go back. I'm just going to kind of rewind back a bit. Going back to kind of that first time planner doing the itinerary. What sort of mistakes do you see people making when they first arrive in Germany, when they're first putting that itinerary together? And how can they avoid those mistakes?

Cate: One that we see is, people renting cars when they're visiting big cities. So, like

going to Munich or, Berlin or other big. Hamburg, other big cities, you do not want a car in these cities. You don't need one. You don't want one. So if you're flying into Munich and you're going to spend a few days there, same goes for Berlin or other cities. don't pick up your car until you're ready to leave the city and only rent a car if you're going to be visiting smaller towns and villages. We will do trips to Germany. So we usually go to Germany for about three months at a time. And we have done trips for three months, all over Germany. And we only take the train because you just don't want a car in the cities. The car is great if you're doing, lots of villages or, you know, you're going to be like in the Black Forest or something, or if you're going to explore a lot of more rural Bavaria, then that's really good. You can also rent a car for half of your trip. I was actually just working with clients yesterday, and they didn't really want to rent a car for their entire trip. So we, we worked out their itinerary so that they rented a car for half of the trip when they were going to be doing a lot of more rural sightseeing. And then they returned the car. We found the right place for them to return the car and then they were doing the train for the other half of their trip where they're visiting larger towns. So it saves money, it's more convenient. So don't assume that you just have to have a car everywhere. The other thing is, people underestimate how long it takes to move from place to place, you know, so you really want to think about, okay, if I get up at 8am and I have to get ready, I have to pack, I have to eat breakfast, I have to check out of my hotel, I have to get to the train station, find the track that I'm going to be on and get on the train and then I have to take the train to the next city and then do everything in reverse. People underestimate how much time all of that takes. And so they try to cram way too much into their itinerary or do too many one night stays and what happens is they get really tired and they don't get to see the things that they want to see and then their trip is just not as enjoyable. So that's definitely one of them. Another one is, that a lot of people go to just to the places that they've heard about that they know of. Like everyone goes to Bavaria because especially for Americans, that is the region that we

picture in our minds when we think of Germany. And a lot of people don't really look at other locations that they would actually maybe love even more or offers what they're really looking for because they just don't know about it.

Tracy: So they can do lots of research. And I know you've got a website that's got lots of information for anybody planning to visit Germany. and obviously you mentioned some of those, and I hate the word, I'm going to say it, but those, those words, hidden gems. But people are looking more and more for those because they're trying to get off the beaten track. Oh, I'm sort of full of the cliches today, Kate. Off the beat track, hidden gems and something a little bit different. So I know obviously your website's got loads of information, some great ideas as well, on there to, to get some, to you know, change your kind of view from I just want to go to Berlin or I'm just going to go to Munich or I'm just going to go to Bavaria, those sort of places to give you a bit more of a, of an idea, even if it's for your second or third time, if you want to do the big hitters. And it's a bit same like in the uk, people kind of want to do the big hitters first and then the next time they go, right, I'll do something a little bit out of the ordinary.

Cate: Yeah, absolutely. And some people want, you know, want to do those big hitters you're talking about. But Then they also want to have maybe a quarter of their itinerary is something unexpected. And, it's something I help our clients with all the time. You know, they're. I talk to them and I figure out kind of what they're. What kind of experience they're after, and then I can recommend the place that they really want to go. And you don't. I understand that when I go to a new country, there are things I know I absolutely want to see, but then I also kind of want to explore something else that maybe I don't know about. And so. So, yeah, we have a lot of materials on our website. We also have a Germany travel planner that has a map, and it's a digital map. And, we show all the popular places, but then we also show the really, really great things that

are, near those places that you can easily work into your itinerary. So it makes it easy for people to find those things that they don't know about, but that they're going to absolutely love.

Tracy: That's great. And that's an invaluable tool if anybody's planning to visit Germany.

We've already touched on the public transport and trains and driving in Germany

so we've already kind of touched on it before about the public transport and trains and driving. Now, I've been to Germany a few times, but I have to put my hands up here

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and say I've only ever done it by train. I do not ever want to drive in Germany, basically because it's on the other side of the road for me. So that. That would make me nervous, though I would be. If I was. I'd be looking at the Chupiyama resources because they're very good for any country you're driving to if you're not used to. But. But I'm a train traveler, as you know. I. I jump on the train and I travel around by train. So, what about. So talk us through a little bit about if you travel on by train, what sort of things you need to know. You've mentioned a little bit about the. About. So we'll talk about trains then. I also want to ask you about, like, driving in terms of what's parking? Like, do you have to pay for, you know, is there hotels that have got plenty parking? Do you have to pay for, parking when you get to places? Just a bit of the kind of practicalities.

Cate: Yeah. So I actually take trains in Germany all the time. I don't really drive in

Germany. Aaron drives when we're in Europe, because he's much better at a manual transmission than I am. So yeah, I take trains all the time. We have traveled all over Germany by train and right now they're, they're doing. The train system is a little chaotic, more than it used to be because, they are upgrading tracks and systems. So some trains are late, some are, are canceled. You know, sometimes they change platforms. So it can be a little bit confusing if it's your first time. but that's why I highly recommend if you're going to take the train, spend some time learning about the system and being prepared because then you will feel so much more confident and it will feel more familiar right when you get there. Traveling by train is excellent. I say most of, the, most of the train trips we have taken in Germany in the last few years have been fine. we haven't had too many problems and you can get almost anywhere. The only exception is if you're going to really, really tiny, tiny little vil that the clients I was working with yesterday, we were looking at in Google Maps, we were looking at how long it would take to get to a couple of the villages they wanted to go to by train and by car. And by train it was two hours by train and bus and by car it was 20 minutes. So if you're going to really teeny tiny little places, car is probably better. But almost everywhere else in Germany you can easily take the train. There's high speed trains, there's local trains. yeah, if you want to know more I can tell you, but there's, yeah, it's a great way to travel.

Tracy: And then go back to the driving because I know some people do like to drive and that's what you know, they, they want to travel around that way maybe because they've got luggage or they've got small kids and they find it easier. Obviously like in the UK we always say if you've hired a car and you're going to go to a city like Bath or Cambridge, or Oxford for example, there's park and ride schemes. So you can park outside the city, park your car and then a bus that will take you into the city. So that's it, you pay for the bus that covers kind of your parking. So do they have anything similar to that in Germany? How do you go about it? If you do decide to hire a car and you want to go

into some of the cities, what would you say?

Cate: Yeah, so we've actually parked, we've just find like we find parking garages in all types of cities and towns or parking Lots. And, we found that really easy. We find them on Google Maps before we leave, and then we just navigate right to the parking lot or the parking garage. For popular sites, they will have parking lots that are a little bit further away. And then, there will be a shuttle that will take you to the site. And, so that's pretty easy. A lot of times, like in the US A lot of times you can actually drive right up to the site and park very close, or you can drop someone off, or you can just kind of drive by and see it. And you can't really do that as often in Germany. Like, most of the time you can't do that. But we haven't had too many problems with parking. some hotels will have parking on site. Usually you pay for it. I mean, you pay for parking almost everywhere. some hotels do not have parking. And then in that case you can just park at a public lot. And we've done that before, and you just pay for, you know, 24 hours of parking or something. So, yeah. The only thing that is also different between parking in the US And Germany, or driving in general, is that in the US Our cars tend to be bigger and the roads, the lanes and the parking spaces just tend to be bigger. And so that can be a little bit difficult in Germany, especially if you're driving a larger car, just trying to park in these really skinny spaces. There are so many times when I've had to get out of the car and help Aaron park, you know, like, direct him into the parking space. And there have been a few where we're like, there's no way our car is going to fit. And we have made it work. But that can be, that can be a little bit stressful. So if you're at all nervous about that, rent a smaller car.

Tracy: Yeah, that's a really good tip.

What about, um, any apps or tools that would help navigate in whether that's train or car

What about, any apps or tools that would help navigate in whether that's train or

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or car or just organizing your trip?

Cate: There are two apps that we use. I actually don't really use very many travel apps. I find I don't really need them. So the two that we use all the time, one is the DB Navigator, which is the app for the Deutsche Bahn, the German rail, and the other one is Google Maps. We use that every day when we're driving. We use it when we're getting around a city, and we're just trying to figure out the most, or the most convenient, the most direct way to get from one site to another, and we decide Whether we want to walk or take public transit, those are the two we use all the time.

Tracy: That's great.

Have you tips for traveling to Germany and making it more budget friendly

What about, let's turn our attention to. Let's talk about money matters now because we're all on the boat where, you know, we want our pound or a dollar to go that little bit further. So. And, and that same goes when we're traveling. We're always looking at, you

know, unless we're multi millionaires and we've got loads of cash to splash, we usually were looking at ways that we can, you know, make our budget go a little bit further. So have you tips for traveling to Germany and kind of, you know, making it a bit more budget friendly?

Cate: Yeah, I've got three tips I can share. these are tips we use ourselves. The first one is, when you're looking for hotels, look at hotels that are just outside the old town. those hotels, you're often very close to the old town. And you can, you know, five or 10 minutes, you can be right inside the old town. But oftentimes they cost a little bit less. Or they might have breakfast that's included. So that can also save you some money. The next one is if hotel breakfast is not included in your room price, just don't add it. That can save you a lot. Hotel Breakfast can be €25 a person. And you can very easily, stop at a grocery store and pick up some yogurt or a piece of fruit or something, or get tea and coffee somewhere else in a cafe or something. And you can just get that to go. So it'll save you time as well. And the third one is we save a lot of money by not eating in restaurants constantly. So we'll, we'll just pick up something small for breakfast. For lunch we often will pick up, we'll go to. We'll get Vietnamese because they have really great lunch specials and really good food too. Or we'll pick up a, ah, Donna or a pizza and get it to go. I like to get those things and then go sit in a park or something and just. Or sit in the town square and just, you know, people watch. And then we go to grocery stores a lot too. So we go, to Reve is one we like to go to. Edica is another one. And you can get snacks and drinks, you know, inexpensively, but you can also pick up salads and sandwiches and soup and pasta and all sorts of things. They have a lot of, to go items and that can just really help reduce your Budget or reduce the amount of money you spend so you have a larger budget for dinner.

Tracy: Yeah, that's a good one.

In places like London, there's lots of free things to do

What about, in places like London, there's lots of free things to do, like museums. so what about Germany? Do you have. Are the same sort of things like that, museums that are free for everybody or not?

Cate: There are some museums that are free. Berlin has a lot of free ones. there. Yeah, so there are some free things. I'm, trying to think of other specifics. The, concentration camp memorial sites are free. Documentation centers are free. and then there are some great museums that are free.

Tracy: Okay, that's always good to know because it. To add into your itinerary, especially, say, trying to make it a little bit more budget friendly.

People are often surprised you have to pay to use the toilet in Germany

What about, cultural norms and etiquette tips when you're in Germany, get asked that about the UK And I'm just saying, just drink tea and keep to the right on the tube and you're all right.

Cate: So in Germany, there are three that come to mind immediately. One is that people are often surprised you have to pay to use the toilet when you're out and about. You, can find free ones here and there, but it's always a good idea to have change on you because it can cost \$0.50, \$0.70 a euro at train stations. It can even be up to €2 to use

the toilet. So be prepared for that. The upside to that is that they're generally clean and well stocked, and usually you have somebody that's overseeing them. So if you're there at night or you're traveling alone, it feels a little bit safer to use the toilet. The other one is that while you can use your credit card at a lot more places now than even five years ago, there are still some stores and restaurants and, sometimes even parking meters where you have to pay cash, and they just don't take credit cards. And then the other thing, this one actually really surprises people. Not everyone will come across this, but we just had somebody ask about this in our Facebook group. So if you're booking an apartment or a hotel, sometimes they will ask you for your credit card just as, like a hold, but they don't charge your credit card, and they either want you to pay, via a bank transfer, which is very common in Germany, but we don't

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Cate: really do that in the US the, other one, a bank transfer, or they want you to pay cash when you arrive. And so a lot of times we get questions about this because people ask, like, is that okay? Is it a scam. Like is that, is that legit? And it is, a lot of times it'll be smaller, places maybe places that are more family run and they just don't want to pay for the fees that come along, that come along with paying, by credit card.

Tracy: Yeah, that's a good point.

Tell us about what should we eat and drink when we're in Germany

Okay, let's talk about one of my favorite topics. Food and drink. And especially in Germany, I have to say I was there in December and I could eat my body weight in

currywurst. I absolutely love it. So tell us about what should we eat and drink when we're in Germany.

Cate: Oh my gosh. How much time do you have for this? There are so many things, okay, so here's a few that I highly recommend. The first one, I already mentioned this before, but kebab, those are excellent. And you can find them all over Germany. So that for sure. Traditional German. I would have at least one meal of traditional German food. There's, a variety of things that you can eat. They're all really good. Actually. People ask me, do I have to eat traditional German for every meal? No, you do not have at least one. Like, I do not eat traditional German food all the time. Germany has a variety of, types of food, but definitely have it at least once or twice. Another thing is go to an ice cream shop, sit down and have one of their amazing ice cream creations. Like you'll get a menu and you'll see all of these amazing sundaes. One that I highly recommend is called spaghetti ice cream. Spaghetti ice. And what it is, it is vanilla ice cream that is pressed through a sieve and over, like a mound of, of, whipped cream. So it looks like a pile of spaghetti. And then they put strawberry sauce over the top and then white chocolate flakes. And it looks like spaghetti, but it is ice cream and it is so good. So definitely recommend trying that. And then also experience one of my favorite German traditions, which is kafengkuchen. Coffee and cake. Go into a cafe or even maybe a Kondita Reill, and you will find an amazing selection of cakes. You could spend your entire life trying all of German cakes and you would never try them all. There are so many different kinds and they're all really good. So sit down at least once in the afternoon and have coffee and tea with some cake. And then the last one is in Germany, you have to try local beer or local wine. You can find that all over Germany. And especially with the beer. I tend to like beer more than wine. So I know more about the beer. But, anywhere you go in Germany, you can ask for what's the local beer, what do you recommend? And then if you're traveling around Germany, get lots of different

kinds. You can go to the grocery store and you can get lots of different kinds of beer and, you know, try them. It's less expensive that way. Or you can just go to restaurants or bars and, ask for what's local, what they recommend. And then also pay attention to the type of glass that they serve it in because different beers require different types of glasses. So that's also fun to, to see.

Tracy: Oh, that's really cool. I didn't know that. I'm not a big beer or actually wine drinker, but, when I did a food show in, Berlin in December, and, we went to this place where people had a flight of beer. They had about 10 different beers. It was amazing, the different colours and the different flavors. They were saying, you mentioned about having a traditional German meal. so I actually want to ask you what you would. What would you find in a traditional German meal?

Cate: Oh, that's a great question. so a lot of people go for schnitzel. That's one of my favorite things. But you can also get, various types of chicken. Usually it's like meat and potatoes or meat and. Or noodles. but you can get chicken, you like, roasted chicken. you can get, It kind of depends on the region because a lot of it's regional. But you can also get, like pork knuckle. That's one that's really popular.

Tracy: That's what I was waiting for you to say.

Cate: Yeah, that's not my favorite. I like the schnitzel and, rouladen. Those are really good. you can eat sauerbraten, so like, you know, beef and pork that's marinated or rolled up with mustard and different fillings. Let's see, what are some other ones? Oh, I'm trying to think I should know all this. There's so many different things that you can get. Oh, one thing that's really good, especially this is great for vegetarians too, is cheese. It's these, these kind of noodle. They're not really noodles, but they look kind of

like noodles. they're. A lot of people make them from scratch and, I don't really quite know how to describe them,

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Cate: but people describe it as like German Mac and cheese because it's like these noodle type things that, are made with cheese. And then it's baked and. Oh, it's so, so good. It's not really Mac and cheese, but it's kind of similar to that. Did you have that in Germany?

Tracy: I didn't. I have to say. Well, I think of German food, and I kind of think of. I think of the meat, vegetables. I think of protein. I think of big, hearty me meals. I did think of port knuckle. I think of sauerkraut.

Cate: Oh, yeah, sauerkraut, yeah.

Tracy: and I do enjoy German, food. And, I do like the currywurst. I have to say, when I was in Berlin, I. I just really enjoy that.

You'll find lots of traditional German restaurants, especially in southern Germany

German sausages. There's a lot of good sausages.

Cate: Yeah, bratwurst is my favorite. You can get that all over. And then there's different local, variations. But, yeah, you can definitely get lots of sausage and, Oh, and then

side dishes. There's some really, really good ones. You can, of course, get sauerkraut, and, you know, vegetables and salad and things like that. But in the north, you'll find a lot of really good potatoes. Like, they're just boiled potatoes, which actually taste really good. The potatoes are different there than, say, in the United States, and they have a lot of different variations of potatoes. and then in the south, you'll find, or, also dumplings. You can get, like, bread dumplings or potato dumplings. And, those are really good red cabbage. You'll find that a lot, too. but, yeah, there's so many different kinds, and there's so many different things. It's all really good. But, you know, it's funny, like I mentioned before, people ask me, like, do I have to eat traditional German food all the time? I. When I lived in Germany, I didn't really eat that very often. It kind of depends on, you know, where you are in Germany. But, like, my very first year, the host family I lived with, we never ate that stuff. I don't think I had schnitzel the entire year. I. We had potato salad, we had potatoes, but we didn't eat very much meat. Like, we did not eat that traditional German food. So you will find it. You'll find lots of traditional German restaurants, especially in southern Germany. But I definitely recommend, trying other things. You know, try the German take on different types of cuisine, and that makes the experience really fun.

Tracy: I definitely recommend, as well, doing a food tour. I did a food tour in Berlin in, December, and it was brilliant. So, they're always worth doing to get A bit of a taste, then you figure out what you like and what you don't like. I think that's always a good idea as well.

Tracy: Yeah.

Cate: I did a food tour in Berlin recently and it was really fun because we got out of the city center and into a neighborhood and we got to try things that were very

representative of the neighborhood. So some of it was international, some of it was traditional German and we had like the most, most amazing desserts as well.

Tracy: Well, I have to have to go back to Berlin and try, try another food tour. I'm quite, I'm always happy to do a food tour.

If anybody's going to Germany and they're thinking about buying gifts

Anyway, let's turn away from food. I'm actually going to ask you one question, which I didn't actually prepare you for. But, if, if anybody's going to Germany and they're thinking about buying gifts to take home to, America or Australia or New Zealand or wherever in the world they live, what, what would you recommend people look at to, to purchase?

Cate: Oh, that's a great question. if you're going during Christmas market season, everyone loves mugs and you can get those everywhere and they're very unique depending on, you know, which market you're at. So that's a good one. lots of food. I bring home lots of food. Chocolate, mustard, you know, I just go, I love going to the grocery store and just buying the random things and then bringing it home. So that's always a good one. Cuckoo, clocks. Everyone loves those. Those are not inexpensive, but, but that's always good. You can get lots of really neat mugs and, you know, like a beer kug, so something you can drink your beer out of. Germany has lots of fountain pens. They're still really popular and I always get the best pens. Fountain pens, notebooks, anything paper related. Like, I love journals. And so that's a really. I buy a lot of them in Germany because they just have the best paper and pension. Oh, one last thing. a lot of people who like, football, soccer, they like to bring back items relating to

that. You know, sports jerseys and things like that. That can be a really fun gift too.

Tracy: Oh. So that's. Well, that's some great ideas and something for everybody there, actually. Kate as well.

Kate: Consider working with a destination specialist before buying your plane tickets

So, I'm going to wrap up the podcast now, and I always end with the same question, which is what is the number one tip you would give to anyone visiting Germany for the first time?

Cate: My biggest tip is to consider working with a destination specialist before buying your plane tickets. I absolutely recommend this. And, not just because I do this work, but, you know, because I do this work, I now realize how incredibly valuable it is. And when I plan trips to other countries, that is the first thing I look for. I no longer try to do everything myself. I want a specialist. I want an expert who can tell me, who can help me plan out the trip that I actually want so that I make the most of my money and my time. So that is my biggest tip. And I do recommend reaching

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Cate: out to somebody before you have your flights, because I know I've worked with clients both ways, and I can always make it work. But, sometimes when I work with clients and they have their flights set and once we talk everything through, they realize that they actually really wish that they had had chosen a different airport. And now they

have to spend some of their vacation time getting back to this less convenient airport. So, yeah, I definitely recommend considering it. The money is very well spent. You will get so much more out of your trip than if you do everything yourself. And you can still do a lot of planning yourself. I love working with people who are planners because, you know, and I work with people who don't want to do the planning, and then also people who do love the planning and even people who love the planning. It's like you're planning with somebody else who loves planning, and so it makes it even more fun for them. So, you know, destination specialists can help you articulate what it is you're really looking for in your trip. They can help draw that out, and then they can help, you put it together so it will work really, really well. And then you will save time, money, stress. You will enjoy your trip. So so much more.

Tracy: 100%. Well, you know, I 100% agree with you on that. We both do that. We do the same as you, we do for the uk, as you, Germany. And as I, totally agree with you, when it comes to planning to go to a new destination, I look for the destination specialist that will help me put it together, because there's nobody better to do it than somebody who knows the destination that you're going to visit. So. Well, you know, absolutely. It really is absolutely worth it. So that's great. And, where can people find you, Kate?

Cate: We are @mygermanyvacation.com and then we also have a Facebook group and we are launching a podcast. So when this comes out, our podcast will probably be live. So if you just go to our website, mygermanyvacation.com then you can find all the places we are online.

Tracy: That's brilliant. Well, thanks so much for joining us this week, Kate and talking about Germany and hopefully you'll be on later on in the air to maybe like talk about

some of the cities in Germany. I think that would be really good to kind of or regions. It'll be really good to kind of. I think drill down onto some of the tips for visiting those sort of areas and cities I think would be great.

Cate: Absolutely. I would love to do that. Thanks so much for having me.

This episode of the Global Travel Planning Podcast features some interesting topics

Tracy: Thank you for joining us on this episode of the Global Travel Planning Podcast.

Tracy: For more details and links to everything.

Tracy: We discussed today, check out the show notes @globaltravelplanning.com
Remember, if you enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on.

Tracy: Your favorite podcast app because your feedback.

Tracy: Helps us reach more travel enthusiasts just like you. Anyway, that leaves me to say, as always, happy Global Travel Planning.

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