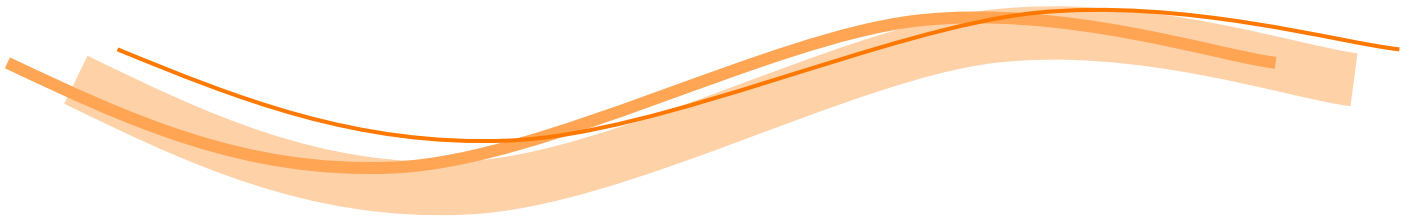




# GERMANY – XMAS MARKETS





<b>GERMANY'S XMAS MARKETS</b>	<p>Come explore Germany and its delightful Christmas traditions. Embrace the Christmas spirit as you stroll through brightly decorated streets, and explore the enchanting Christmas Markets with their seasonal music and choir singing. Often set in charming medieval cities, the markets offer exceptional local crafts and delicious delicacies. Listen to the sounds of bells and trumpeters and attend one of the many concerts from classical to gospel in the churches and on outdoor stages.</p> <p>In addition there are celebrations this year marking the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. This is a fabulous time to visit Germany! Not least because at the moment you can discover excellent deals, great value packages and affordable accommodations at <a href="http://www.cometogermany.com">www.cometogermany.com</a>. There is a choice of six ways to travel in Germany, each leading to an array of attractive deals and hundreds of fair-value offers. All can be booked directly online or by email.</p> <p>City Welcome Cards that offer discounted public transit, accommodation and attractions and are a great way to save. All major German cities, many towns and a number of key tourism regions offer them. Welcome Cards usually offer free use of public transit plus reduced rates or free admissions for everything from sightseeing tours, museums, theatre and concert performances, swimming, wellness and spa facilities, family fun parks, cable car and boat trips, and much more.</p>
<b>Location</b>	<p>Germany lies in the heart of Europe, bordered by Switzerland and Austria to the south; France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands to the west; Denmark to the north; and Poland and the Czech Republic to the east. It has a coastline of 2,389 km</p>
<b>Geography</b>	<p>Germany has the second largest population in Europe (after European Russia) and is seventh largest in area. The territory of Germany covers 357,021 km<sup>2</sup>, consisting of 349,223 km<sup>2</sup> of land and 7,798 km<sup>2</sup> of water. Elevation ranges from the mountains of the Alps (highest point: the Zugspitze at 2,962 metres) in the south to the shores of the North Sea (Nordsee) in the north-west and the Baltic Sea (Ostsee) in the north-east. Between lie the forested uplands of central Germany and the low-lying lands of northern Germany (lowest point: Wilstermarsch at 3 metres below sea level), traversed by some of Europe's major rivers such as the Rhine, Danube and Elbe. Because of its central location, Germany shares borders with more European countries than any other country on the continent. Its neighbours are Denmark in the north, Poland and the Czech Republic in the east, Austria and Switzerland in the south, France and Luxembourg in the south-west and Belgium and the Netherlands in the north-west.</p>
<b>Name</b>	<p>The Romans gave it the name of Germanus, meaning "neighbors" originally bestowed by the Gauls.</p>

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<b>Population</b>	82 million
<b>Language</b>	German; but much English is spoken
<b>Currency</b>	The euro (€), the new single European currency, became the official currency of Germany and 11 other participating countries on January 1, 1999. However, the euro didn't go into general circulation until early in 2002. The old currency, the German mark, disappeared into history on March 1, 2002, replaced by the euro, whose official abbreviation is "EUR." Currently 1.00 Euros = 1.57 Canadian Dollars as at 22 October 2009
<b>Tipping</b>	If a restaurant bill says "Bedienung", that means a service charge has already been added, so just round up to the nearest euro. If not, add 10% to 15%. Round up to the nearest mark for taxis. Bellhops get 1€ (\$1.50) per bag, as does the doorman at your hotel, restaurant, or nightclub. Room-cleaning staffs get small tips in Germany, as do concierges who perform some special favors.
<b>Government</b>	The Federal Republic of Germany is a democracy with a liberal market economy, religious freedom and freedom of the press. It is a member of the European Union (EU) and of NATO. The Federal Republic of Germany is a federation of individual states. There are 16 "Bundesländer" which are federal states with their own government. They have their own regional constitutions which have to comply with the principles of a republican, democratic and social state governed by the rule of law as laid down in the Basic Law (Germany's federal constitution). This guarantees that all German people have the same rights, obligations and living conditions.
<b>Documentation</b>	Your passport must be valid for at least another four months after entry into Germany or the Schengen area.
<b>Time zone</b>	Germany operates on Central European time (CET), which means that the country is 6 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (EST)
<b>Health</b>	Germany does not pose any major health hazards. The heavy cuisine may give some travelers mild diarrhea, so take along some anti-diarrhea medicine and moderate your eating habits. The water is safe to drink throughout Germany. German medical facilities are among the best in the world. If a medical emergency arises, your hotel staff can usually put you in touch with a reliable doctor. Medical and hospital services aren't free, so be sure that you have appropriate insurance coverage before you travel.
<b>Safety tips</b>	Normal precautions required, otherwise Germany is considered a safe destination for travellers

<b>CLIMATE</b>	
<b>General climate</b>	Germany is not prey to dramatic climatic extremes, although there are regional differences. The most reliably good weather is from May to October, with high summer a good bet for mid 20°C shorts-and-t-shirt

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	conditions, even in the north. Autumn is a good time to visit Germany. As the tourist scrum disperses and the forests turn golden, it's not too stifling to be active but still warm enough to leave you thirsty for a few well-deserved steins. Winter is frosty and wet, especially in the south, with snow rarely settling for long except in the high country.
<b>Today's weather</b>	12 degrees Centigrade and sun/cloud mix in Berlin (24 October 2009)
<b>Best time to visit</b>	The most popular tourist months are May to October, although winter travel to Germany is becoming increasingly popular, especially to the ski areas in the Bavarian Alps. Germany's climate varies widely. In the north, winters tend to be cold and rainy; summers are most agreeable. In the south and in the Alps, it can be very cold in the winter, especially in January, and very warm in summer, but with cool, rainy days even in July and August. Spring and fall are often stretched out.

<b>PLANNING</b>	
<b>Flying time</b>	Approximately 7 hours Toronto to Frankfurt from Toronto
<b>Cities</b>	<p>The five largest cities in Germany:  Berlin (capital of Germany) with 3,391,407 inhabitants  Hamburg with 1,736,752 inhabitants  Munich with 1,397,537 inhabitants  Cologne with 975,907 inhabitants  Frankfurt am Main with 657,126 inhabitants</p> <p><b>Cologne (Köln)</b>, the largest city in the Rhineland, is so rich in antiquity that every time a new foundation is dug, the excavators come up with archaeological finds. Devastating though the World War II bombing was, reconstruction brought to light a period of Cologne's history that had been a mystery for centuries. Evidence showed that Cologne was as important and powerful during the early Christian era as it was during Roman times and the Middle Ages. Cologne traces its beginnings to 38 B.C., when Roman legions set up camp here. As early as A.D. 50, the emperor Claudius gave it municipal rights as capital of a Roman province. In the early Christian era, a bishopric was founded here and a number of saints were martyred, including the patron of the city, St. Ursula. During the Middle Ages, as Cologne became a center for international trade, Romanesque and Gothic churches were built with prosperous merchants' gold. Today there is much to see from every period of the city's 2,000-year history - from the old Roman towers to the modern opera house. But Cologne is also a bustling modern city and is becoming the fine-art capital of Germany</p> <p><b>Düsseldorf</b> is a wealthy city - the richest in Germany. It's big and commercial, full of banks and industrial offices and skyscrapers, but it's also refreshingly clean. Düsseldorf got its start as a settlement on the</p>

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	<p>right bank of the Rhine, but today it's spread out on both sides - the older part on the right, and the modern, commercial, and industrial part on the left. Five bridges connect the two sections, the most impressive being the Oberkassel. Parks and esplanades line the riverbanks. After 85% of the right bank was destroyed in World War II, Düsseldorf followed a modern trend in reconstruction, and today it's the most elegant metropolis in the Rhine Valley.</p>
<b>The River Rhine</b>	<p>The Rhine River begins at the Rheinwaldhorn Glacier in the Swiss Alps and flows north and east approximately 1,320 km. The glacier is located northeast across the mountains from the town of Andermatt in the Uri canton (state/province). The Rhine begins as a tumultuous Alpine stream churning through deep gorges, and although the river's flow is moderated somewhat as it passes through the Lake of Constance (Bodensee), the river remains a torrent westward to Basel. Just south of Chur, Switzerland, the Hinter Rhine, flowing north-westerly from the glacier, joins the Vorder Rhine streaming from Lake Tuma, to form the Rhine proper at Reichenau. The river then flows north to Lake Constance and west through Schaffhausen to Basel, Switzerland. Near Schaffhausen it plunges 23 m over a spectacular waterfall, the Rheinfall. At Basel the river turns north and enters the Rhine Graben, a flat-floored rift valley lying between the Vosges Mountains on the west and the Black Forest (Schwarzwald) on the east. Strasbourg, France, a focal point for merging water routes from the Paris Basin, is located at the valley's northern extremity.</p> <p>With the junction of the Main River at Mainz, in Germany, the Rhine's seasonal regime becomes more stabilized. Along its course from Bingen to Bonn is a beautiful stretch of the Rhine Valley. The river has cut the deep, steep-sided Rhine Gorge through the Rhineland Plateau and the Rhenish Slate Mountains. This picturesque gorge, with terraced vineyards and castle-lined cliffs, has often been called the "heroic Rhine," renowned in history and romantic literature. It is complete with fairy tale castles and vineyards snuggled in the overhanging rock face, known as the Mittelrhein. The river flows past Bonn, Germany and becomes the Lower Rhine and emerges onto the North German Plain before it empties into the North Sea. Leading cities on the stream's banks are Cologne, Düsseldorf, and Duisburg.</p> <p>At the Netherlands frontier, it divides into two parallel distributaries, the Lek and the Waal, as it crosses a wide, marshy plain and a great delta before entering the North Sea. Much of this area is at or below sea level, but dikes contributed to its becoming one of the most densely populated and important economic regions on the continent. Rotterdam, the leading port of continental Europe, is located near the river's mouth. It passes through or borders on the countries of Liechtenstein, Austria, Germany, France, and the Netherlands.</p>

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	<p>It is navigable from the North Sea to Basel, Switzerland, a distance of some 800 km. Eighty percent of its ship-carrying waters pass through Germany. The entire distance cannot support ocean going vessels and they must end their journey in Cologne, Germany. Cologne is located between Koln and Bonn. From there cargo must go by barges pushed by smaller ships until the Rhine reaches the three point intersection of the borders of France, Germany, and Basel, Switzerland.</p>
<b>Boats</b>	<p>It is also possible to reach Germany by sea. A number of ferries and cruise liners ply the North and Baltic Seas. The most important North Sea ports are Bremen/Bremerhaven, Hamburg, Emden and Wilhelmshaven. The most important Baltic ports are Kiel, Rostock and Lübeck-Travemünde.</p> <p>Perhaps Germany's most beautiful features are its lakes and rivers. The mighty Rhine is the country's most traveled waterway. German cruise ships also run on the Main River between Mainz and Frankfurt; on the Danube from Nürnberg to Linz (Austria), going on to Vienna and Budapest; and on the Mosel between Cochem and Trier.</p> <p>Avalon Waterways river cruises are an ideal way of cruising the Rhine – see more detailed notes below</p>
<b>Trains</b>	<p>Whether you travel first or second class, you'll find that the trains of GermanRail (DB Rail; tel. 0800/1507090; <a href="http://www.bahn.de">www.bahn.de</a>) deserve their good reputation for comfort, cleanliness, and punctuality. All are modern and fast. A snack bar or a dining car, serving German and international cuisine as well as good wine and beer, can usually be found on all trains except locals.</p> <p>For city sightseeing, you can leave your baggage in a locker or check it at the station's baggage counter. In many cities, GermanRail provides door-to-door baggage service, allowing passengers to have luggage picked up at or delivered to their hotels. Accompanying baggage can be checked for a nominal fee. Suitcases, baby carriages, skis, bicycles, and steamer trunks are permitted as baggage. Insurance policies of various kinds, including a travel medical plan, are also available.</p> <p>About 20,000 InterCity (IC) passenger trains offer express service every hour between most large and medium-size German cities. IC trains have adjustable cushioned seats and individual reading lights, and often offer telephone and secretarial services. Bars, lounges, and dining rooms are available, too. A network of EuroCity (EC) trains connecting Germany with 13 other countries offers the same high standards of service as those of IC.</p> <p>Germany's <b>high-speed rail network</b>, known as InterCity Express (ICE) trains, is among the fastest in Europe, reaching speeds of 280kmph. One of these trains runs from Hamburg via Würzburg and Nürnberg to Munich; another from Frankfurt via Stuttgart to Munich; and yet another from Berlin via Frankfurt to Munich. Each train makes stops along the</p>

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	<p>way. ICE significantly reduces travel time, making transits north to south across the country easily possible in the course of a single day. Some 200 east-west connections have been added to the GermanRail timetable to link the Deutsche Bundesbahn (west) and the Deutsche Reichsbahn (east). Additional connections make Leipzig and Dresden more accessible.</p> <p>See the Real Europe with <b>Rail Europe</b> - where over 75 years of experience connect you to more than 35 European railroads. You can buy seat reservations and pay in dollars before you leave North America – so no fluctuating exchange rates and no surprises. Traveling by train will enhance your entire European experience. Enjoy leisurely gourmet dining and gaze through panoramic windows as you are whisked from city centre to city centre. Plus the train is a low-impact, energy efficient form of travel that preserves the regions and natural areas you cross.</p> <p>Tel: 1800-361-7245 Website: <a href="http://www.RailEurope.ca">www.RailEurope.ca</a></p>
<b>Car Rental</b>	All major car rental companies are represented in the major cities and the larger airports
<b>Buses</b>	An excellent, efficient bus network services Germany. Many buses are operated by Bahnbus, which is owned by the railway. These are integrated to complement the rail service. Bus service in Germany is particularly convenient during slow periods of rail service, normally around midday and on Saturday and Sunday. German post offices often operate local bus services (contact local post offices for schedules and prices).
<b>Passes</b>	You can buy a <b>German Rail Pass</b> from a travel agent before you leave home. The pass allows 4 days of travel in 1 month and costs \$260 first class or \$180 second class. Additional days cost \$34 first class and \$24 second class. For Rail Europe: <a href="http://www.raileurope.ca">www.raileurope.ca</a>

<b>ACCOMMODATION TYPES</b>	Germany offers a range of accommodation to suit every taste and pocket, from youth hostels to castle stays, from guesthouses and inns to hotels in every category. See <a href="http://www.ComeToGermany.com">www.ComeToGermany.com</a> to get detailed information.
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<b>TARGET GROUPS</b>	
<b>Kids</b>	<p>Germany is ideal for family holidays - everyone feels at home here from toddlers to grandparents.</p> <p>Germany's major rivers, the Rhine, the Danube and the Elbe, are fascinating both by water and on land. Their banks are dotted with medieval castles and palaces where ancient myths and legends come to life. But family holidays on the smaller German rivers also appeal to</p>

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	<p>all ages. There is the Moselle that flows through the historic, 2,000 year-old town of Trier, the Main that passes the modern city of Frankfurt, as well as the Weser, Havel and Nahe rivers. The conditions on the river Lahn are ideal for canoeing, and a cycle route runs through the magnificent scenery along the Neckar.</p> <p><b>Taunus Wonderland</b> has lots of kids' attractions and is just half an hour's drive from Frankfurt. Time flies when you're climbing the padded tower, enjoying the fairytale forest or exploring the haunted castle. For animal lovers there is a petting zoo and a prehistoric forest with dinosaur show. Action-hungry youngsters can look forward to a whirlwind wildwater ski ride and the Taunus Lightning roller coaster <a href="http://www.taunuswunderland.de">www.taunuswunderland.de</a></p>
<b>Teens</b>	<p>At Germany's theme parks teens can have the time of their lives. They can take their pick from the best roller coaster in the world, a flying carousel with spectacular sea views or breathtaking stunt shows packed with movie-style action.</p> <p>Visitors to the <b>Movie Park Germany</b> shouldn't be surprised to suddenly find themselves on a film set following film directors' instructions or witnessing spectacular stunts. The spot is on film here in Bottrop in the middle of the Ruhr Region. Who wouldn't have fun getting to the bottom of the mysteries of the Bermuda Triangle, or living to tell the tale of a hot pursuit in a flight simulator? And there are breathtaking roller-coaster rides for whoever's got nerves of steel. <a href="http://www.moviepark.de">www.moviepark.de</a></p>
<b>Romance</b>	<p>The ruins of <b>Heidelberg Castle</b> rise majestically on the site of a medieval castle complex high above the lanes and the picturesque jumble of roofs of the old town. The architecture contains elements of the Gothic and Renaissance periods and have been rightly listed as one of the most romantic spots on the planet.</p>
<b>Honeymoons &amp; Weddings</b>	<p>Germany's romantic castles, rivers and scenery make it the ideal honeymoon destination for couples seeking a romantic break from it all. Why not become King and Queen of the castle and book into one of Germany's many castles and palaces for the night? Take a cruise along Germany's rivers and view picturesque castles perched on hilltops. Rent a car and follow Germany's Romantic Road, home to the fairytale "Disney" castle of Neuschwanstein. Or book into one of Baden-Baden's stunning hotel spas and relax with a His &amp; Hers Massage before enjoying a night at the city's Casino. The list is endless and a honeymoon in Germany unforgettable</p>
<b>Seniors</b>	<p>River cruises in Germany are a perfect way to see many of Germany's highlights in a stress-free, relaxed and convivial way – check out the details in the separate sections in Destinations.</p>

<b>UNIQUES</b>	
<b>Surprising</b>	There are over 500 galleries and 6000 museums in Germany!

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<b>History</b>	<p>9 B.C.-A.D. 9--Romans attempt to conquer Teutonic tribes.  486--Clovis founds Frankish kingdom, ruling from Paris.  496--Franks converted to Christianity.  800--Pope crowns Charlemagne in Rome.  962--Pope crowns Otto I as Holy Roman Emperor.  1152-90--Frederick Barbarossa's reign leads to a greater centralization of power, but his invasion of Italy is beaten back by the Lombard League.  1158--Munich founded by Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony.  1241--Hanseatic League founded to protect the trade of such cities as Bremen, Hamburg, and Lübeck.  1432--Maximilian I, "last of the German knights," becomes Holy Roman Emperor, the beginning of the hegemony of the Hapsburgs.  1456--Johannes Gutenberg prints the first book in Europe using movable type.  1517--Martin Luther nails his "Ninety-Five Theses" to a church door in Wittenberg, beginning the Protestant Reformation in Germany.  1618-48--Thirty Years' War devastates Germany, as Protestant forces defeat Catholic Hapsburgs.  1740-86--Prussian might grows under Frederick the Great in the Age of Enlightenment.  1806--Armies of Napoleon invade Prussia, which is incorporated briefly into the French Empire.  1813--Prussians defeat Napoleon at Leipzig.  1815--At the Congress of Vienna, the German Confederation of 39 independent states is created.  1862--Otto von Bismarck (1815-98) becomes prime minister of Prussia.  1870-71--Germany invades and defeats France in the Franco-Prussian War.  1871--Wilhelm I is crowned emperor of the newly created German Empire; Bismarck becomes chancellor.</p>
<b>Books</b>	<p>Frommer's Germany 2009  Mark Twain's A Triumph Abroad (Hippocrene Books, 1989). The American humorist's travels through Germany are comically detailed.</p>
<b>1000 Places to see before you die</b>	<p>Too many to detail them all, but here's a few:  The Rhine Valley – legend and history  Baden-Baden – the summer capital of Europe  Cologne's cathedral Quarter – 1000 years of European art  Heidelberg's Schloss – romance personified</p>
<b>Must Sees</b>	<p>It's so difficult with a country as rich in must-see's as Germany...There are 33 UNESCO World Heritage Sites alone! For more information:  <a href="http://www.cometogermany.com/ENU/culture_and_events/unesco.htm">http://www.cometogermany.com/ENU/culture_and_events/unesco.htm</a>  World heritage sites include:  <b>Upper Middle Rhine Valley (2002)</b></p>

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	<b>Aachen Cathedral (1978)</b> <b>Castles of Augustusburg and Falkenlust at Brühl (1984)</b> <b>Cologne Cathedral (1996)</b> <b>Roman Monuments, Cathedral of St Peter and Church of Our Lady in Trier (1986)</b> <b>Speyer Cathedral (1981)</b> <b>Völklingen Ironworks (1994)</b> <b>Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex in Essen (2001)</b> <b>Maulbronn Monastery Complex (1993)</b>
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<b>SPORTS ACTIVITIES</b>	
<b>Golf</b>	<p>Most German golf courses welcome visiting players who are members of courses at home. Weekday greens fees are usually around 45€ (\$56), rising to as much as 85€ (\$106) on Saturday and Sunday. For information about the various golf courses, write to the Deutscher Golf/Verband, Victoriastrasse 16, 65011 Wiesbaden (tel. 0611/990200; <a href="http://www.golf.de/dgv">www.golf.de/dgv</a> ).</p>
<b>Fishing</b>	<p>Wherever they go in Germany, anglers will come across plenty of places with large, varied fish stocks. All of Germany's regions have any number of lakes, rivers, brooks and canals offering a combination of excellent water quality and large, varied fish stocks. From a little rowing boat on a lake to some serious deep-sea angling - in Germany, you can do it all. For information about the choice of rivers and lakes - and about angling regulations, which vary from region to region (close seasons, etc.) - visit <a href="http://www.anglerverband.com">www.anglerverband.com</a> (German only) or contact the regional angling associations.</p> <p>Fishing permits: To go angling in Germany, you have to have a certificate of competence (fishing permit), though people whose permanent residence is outside Germany are exempt from this regulation. For more information, contact the fishing associations of the individual federal states. In addition to a fishing permit, you also need to have authorisation to fish in a particular stretch of water during a specific period. This can be purchased locally from the owner or leaseholder (generally an angling club). Local tourist information offices can tell you where to do this.</p>
<b>Sailing &amp; Windsurfing</b>	<p>The North Sea and the Baltic have a whole string of places that could have been designed with sailing and windsurfing in mind. Top of the North Sea destinations - for experienced windsurfers especially - are Sylt, Amrum and St. Peter-Ording, resorts that also have plenty of après-surf. For sailors and windsurfers who prefer fewer waves, the Baltic is ideal: a true sailing paradise. Sailing on the Schlei is a real insider's tip. Kiel Bay, Lübeck Bay and the Flensburg Firth are good for combining sailing with some city sightseeing or one of many international sailing events.</p>

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<b>Hiking</b>	<p>Germany is a traveler's paradise with its romantic forests, picturesque hill and mountain landscapes, and tranquilly embedded seas. From hikes along tidal shores to trips through the low mountain regions all the way to mountain-top tours, everything is possible. Along many of these routes are hotels and inns that provide specialized accommodations for hikers. Many trip-organizers offer comfortable "hiking without luggage" packages.</p> <p>The <b>Rheinsteig</b> trail runs 320 km along the right bank of the river Rhine between Bonn, Koblenz and Wiesbaden along predominantly narrow paths and challenging inclines, uphill and downhill, leading to forests, vineyards and spectacular views. The Rheinsteig is a wonderful area for hiking. But it is also demanding: the steep paths are both challenging and pleasurable. This exceptionally well sign-posted and closely networked trail offers opportunities for ambitious long-distance walking tours or for a variety of short tours. It can easily be reached by train, boat and car and is near several airports. The Rheinsteig offers the most beautiful portal to the cultural richness of the Rhine Valley. The cultural history of Middle-Europe the Rhine's romantic epoch and many historical landscapes all come together into this one small area. You will find 40 castles, stately homes and fortresses in the upper middle-Rhine Valley, between Bingen and Koblenz. This concentration of culture is unique in the world, and has been declared a World Human Heritage site by UNESCO since 2002. The Rheinsteig opens onto two wine producing areas, both rich in tradition: Mittelrhein and Rheingau. In the daytime the rambler enjoys the inns and rural wine cellars, in the evening the restaurants and the rambler-friendly hostels</p>
<b>Cycling</b>	<p>The brochure "Discovering Germany by Bike" presents a variety of offers on the most attractive routes and regions. Sign posts, bike-friendly overnight accommodations, good bicycle travel maps and main information centers are only some of the important points covered in this catalog.</p> <p>In Germany you can bike through green valleys and past rivers while enjoying rural landscapes and villages. Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club, P.O. Box 107747, 28077 Bremen (tel. 0421/346290; <a href="http://www.adfc.de">www.adfc.de</a>), offers complete information on biking in Germany.</p>
<b>Diving</b>	<p>You might not think so at first, but diving in Germany can be an amazing experience. Wreck diving and cave diving in the Baltic are increasing in popularity (<a href="http://www.nordic-experience.de">http://www.nordic-experience.de</a>, <a href="http://www.kreidefelsen.de/">http://www.kreidefelsen.de/</a>).</p>

<b>CULTURE</b>	<p><b>Beethoven House is Bonn's</b> pride and joy. Beethoven was born in 1770 in the small house in back, which opens onto a little garden. On its second floor is the room where he was born, decorated only with a simple marble bust of the composer. Many of Beethoven's personal</p>
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	<p>possessions are in the house, including manuscripts and musical instruments. In the Vienna Room, in the front of the house overlooking the street, is Beethoven's last piano. The instrument was custom-made, with a special sounding board to amplify sound for the hearing-impaired composer.</p>
<b>Arts</b>	<p><b>Germany's Art, Music and History</b>          With over 5,000 art and exhibit houses there is something for everyone; Berlin's Museum Island is just one outstanding spot amongst many others. You can listen to classical music in stunning locations; follow in the footsteps of Goethe in Weimar, Bach in Leipzig and Luther in Eisenach. Or, you can tour one of Germany's many scenic routes, enjoy one of the many concerts and festivals well known in Germany's culture, or visit one of the country's internationally acclaimed museums.</p> <p><b>Germany's Culture</b>          Get in touch with some of the great artistic thinkers and leaders in the early 20th century like Carl Spitzweg, Max Beckmann, and Franz Marc. You'll be able to learn more about different kinds of German music that can be heard at many opera houses, musical theaters, jazz clubs, and pop/rock events. And you'll get more information on the spectacular world-famous Museum Island in Berlin, which houses the Altes Museum, the first public museum in the Prussian state. Go to <a href="http://www.cometogermany.com">www.cometogermany.com</a></p>
<b>Music</b>	<p>In the field of music, Germany's influence is noted through the works of, among others, Bach, Mozart, Händel, Telemann, Schütz, Beethoven, Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Humperdinck, Nicolai, Lortzing, Brahms, Schumann, Wagner, Pachelbel, Offenbach, Furtwängler, Eisler, Reger, Strauss, Hindemith, Orff, Stockhausen, Henze and Lachenmann. Today, the musical scene in Germany is as vibrant as ever. Every major city has an opera house and an orchestra, many of them world-renowned. New composers are encouraged, and productions are often at the cutting edge.</p> <p><b>Cologne Philharmonic</b> is an architectural showcase was completed during the late 1980s. The concert hall features a soaring roof, enviable acoustics, and some of the finest classical music along the country's western tier. The building is the home of two separate orchestras, the Gürzenich Kölner Philharmoniker and the Westdeutscher Rundfunk Orchestra. Pop and jazz programs are also presented.</p>
<b>Theatre</b>	<p><b>Theater der Stadt Frankfurt</b>, Untermainanlage 11 (tel. 069/1340400; U-Bahn: Willy-Brandt-Platz), has three stages. One belongs to the Frankfurt Municipal Opera, whose productions have received worldwide recognition in recent years. Two stages are devoted to drama. If your German is adequate, you may want to see a performance of Städtische Bühnen/Schauspiel (tel. 069/1340400), a forum for classic German plays as well as modern drama. A variety theater, Künstlerhaus Mouson</p>

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	<p>Turm, Waldschmidtstrasse 4 (tel. 069/40589520; U-Bahn/S-Bahn: Merianplatz), hosts plays, classical music concerts, and dance programs almost every night of the week.</p>
<b>Museums</b>	<p>From science and technology, cinematic history, photography and sculpture, to emigration and depictions of everyday life in the former GDR - the depth and breadth of the topics covered by Germany's prestigious museums is astounding. Thrilling worlds of discovery are revealed in its many interactive museums. Joining in and trying things out is all part of the fun.</p> <p><b>Museum Ludwig in Cologne</b> is a stunningly upgraded museum and home of one of the world's largest collections of the works of Pablo Picasso, bested only by the Picassos in Paris and Barcelona. Irene Ludwig, widow of the late German art patron Peter Ludwig, for whom the museum is named, donated 774 works of Picasso to the museum.</p> <p><b>The Städel Museum, Frankfurt:</b> This is Frankfurt's most important art gallery, containing a fine collection of most European schools of painting. The first floor features French Impressionists such as Renoir and Monet, along with German painters of the 19th and 20th centuries. Note in particular Kirchner's <i>Nude Woman with Hat</i>. Also on the first floor is Tischbein's <i>Portrait of Goethe in the Campagna in Italy</i>. If you're short on time, go directly to the second floor to view the outstanding collection of Flemish primitives, 17th-century Dutch artists, and 16th-century German masters such as Dürer, Grünewald, Memling, Elsheimer, and many others.</p>
<b>Festivals</b>	<p><b>The Christmas Markets are a unique feature of visits to Germany in November and December – see the separate section below for details.</b></p> <p><b>The big celebrations just around the corner will be for the 20th Anniversary of the Fall of the Wall on November 9<sup>th</sup> 2009:</b>  After more than 28 years of German division, the Berlin Wall fell overnight from November 9 through 10, 1989, marking a historical event of global significance. Today, 20 years later, Germany, Europe and the whole world look back, in order to look forward. Thanks to the peaceful revolution and the Fall of the Wall, millions of people were united to form one country of Germany. The balance between East and West was re-established.</p> <p>Experience history where it unfolded and discover a piece of virgin soil in Germany, which the Fall of the Wall elevated to a symbol of fresh starts, hope and a new future. You, too, can become a border-crosser and visit historical locations: St. Nicholas' Church in Leipzig, the numerous GDR museums in Thuringia or the Wall Trail and the legendary Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, the capital which presents itself in a whole new light since reunification. As a tourist destination</p>

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Germany has become a country without borders, attracting visitors from all over the world. A country which is unique in the way it connects the past, present and future; a country which also cordially invites you to visit the relics of that time and relive history.

### **Checkpoint Charlie**

Checkpoint Charlie was the former border crossing point between East and West Berlin after the construction of the Wall in 1961 where a sign "You are leaving the American Sector" marked the entrance to the eastern part of Berlin occupied by the Russians. This was the only border crossing point for the Allies, foreigners, employees of the Permanent Representation and officials of the GDR during the years 1961 to 1990. The border sign and a soldier's post are still in place, today. Together with the museum "Haus am Checkpoint Charlie", they tell the history of the Berlin Wall.

Friedrichstrasse at Zimmerstrasse 10969 Berlin

### **East Side Gallery**

The Berlin Wall was once a popular target for graffiti sprayers on the west side during the time of division. Later, famous artists have also immortalized themselves on the east side of the longest remaining section of the wall at Mühlenstrasse. This largest open-air gallery in the world was opened on September 28, 1990, between Ostbahnhof (Eastern Railway Station) and the Oberbaum Bridge.

Muehlenstrasse 110243 Berlin

**The Cologne Carnival** is one of the biggest street parties in Europe - the famous Altstadt (old town) is transformed into a dazzling and colourful celebration, with what seems like the entire population of the city in fancy dress. Prepare for lots of dancing and partying in the streets, pubs and bars and plenty of Kölsch, the delicious local beer. At 11.11am on 11 November, Germany's "fifth season", Karneval, begins and the whole country goes barking mad. But the craziness reaches its real climax the week before Ash Wednesday.

At 11.11am on 19 February the main carnival week in Cologne is declared officially open with the Women's Carnival Day, when the women of Cologne are deemed in charge of the city. On Carnival Sunday (22 February) a parade of local school children takes place. Then on Monday 23 February it's the turn of the main event (known in Germany as Rosenmontag), when a cavalcade of 42 groups with 79 fabulously decorated lorries, 67 tractors and 126 bands (approximately!) starts out on a six-kilometre route through the centre of Cologne. Keep an eye out for the lorries carrying huge effigies lampooning Germany's politicians. The day after (Shrove Tuesday), various parades take place in Cologne's suburbs, but if you're unaccustomed to partying Cologne-style you should probably just prepare for a hangover instead!

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	<p>It all draws to a more sedate close on Ash Wednesday when the tradition is to eat fish - pick any pub or restaurant on this day and you'll find it on the menu.</p> <p><b>Carnival in Düsseldorf</b> is one of the biggest and most ebullient party seasons in Germany. The climax is the Rosenmontag parade, when more than 6000 revellers dressed in screaming colours and uniforms make their way around the city. One of the highlights is the Altweiberfastnacht on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday, when the women of the city storm the town hall at 11.11am, planning to take control of the city for a day. A street carnival through the Old Town follows. The following Sunday sees a carnival making its way along Düsseldorf's main shopping street. The more outrageous the costumes, the better. To wrap it all up there's the main parade on the Monday (Rosenmontag), when sweets are thrown out into the crowds from the decorated floats.</p>
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<b>ATTRACTIONS</b>	
<b>Beaches</b>	<p>Go north from the Rhine region to the rugged North Sea and the gentler Baltic: life at an island pace, bracing air, more than 1,000 kilometres of beach and plenty of sun. Add to that, a never-ending choice of sports, spectacular events and nightlife into the early hours...</p> <p>The North Friesian islands are the most north-westerly holiday destination in Germany, consisting of the three sunny islands of Amrum (with the widest sandy beach in Europe), Föhr (with a particularly mild climate due to the Gulf Stream) and Sylt (Germany's largest island), plus the unique, tiny Hallig islands.</p>
<b>Wildlife and National Parks</b>	<p>The National Parks are great places to view wildlife.</p> <p><b>Eifel National Park</b> - Majestic beech forests sweep across the Eifel National Park, interspersed with gnarled oak woods and secret ravines with babbling brooks. Situated in the north of the Eifel region, this national park closes the western gap in the existing network of national parks. It is the first to provide a protected habitat for the variety of upland beech forest which thrives on acid soils and is influenced by an Atlantic climate. Where trees were once commercially managed, wild, natural forests are now beginning to develop, providing a vital retreat for more than 230 endangered plant and animal species.</p> <p>Wild cats are now hunting for mice in the swathes of forest and beavers are building their lodges in the clean water. The kingfisher and several species of bat flourish in the peace and quiet of the national park, as does the wild yellow narcissus which delights nature lovers with its beautiful flowers in spring. Visitors can look forward to a unique blend of woodland and water.</p> <p>There is plenty to see and do here. You can explore the national park</p>

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	independently, or let the experts show you around. On "Ancient Forest Days" (every Sunday during school holidays), rangers give guided tours of the park, revealing some of nature's secrets. The well-equipped visitor centre, set in the charming hydrotherapy health resort of Gemünd on the edge of the Eifel National Park, offers a variety of interesting activities and exhibitions for every age group.
<b>Parks</b>	<p><b>Frankfurt</b> has a lot of parks. Locals like to point out that while the city has no Central Park as New York does, it is itself a central park. A botanic city ring has replaced the enclosing city walls of old Frankfurt. Along the Main is a park landscape where you'll see bankers taking their lunch break beneath statues of heroes from the past.</p> <p>The <b>Palmengarten</b>, Siesmayerstrasse 61 (tel. 069/21233939; U-Bahn: Westend; bus: 32), is a park and a botanical garden. During the last decade, the gardens have been renewed and the conservatories and historic greenhouses completely reconstructed. You can admire a perennial garden, an expanded rock garden, and a beautiful rose garden. A huge gallery that serves as an exhibition hall for flower shows and other botanical exhibitions surrounds the 1869 palm house. In recent years, new conservatories have been added: The Tropicarium is a complex for tropical vegetation; the Sub-Antarctic House displays plants from southern Chile, Argentina, and New Zealand; and the Entrance Conservatory houses insectivorous plants and bromeliads. Collections of orchids, palms, succulents, water lilies, and many others are also on display.</p>
<b>Gardens</b>	<p>Most German towns have gardens as an integral part of their urban life and this is particularly true in the Rhine region.</p> <p>The <b>Herrengarten in Darmstadt</b> was laid out at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century and is a particularly beautiful example.</p>
<b>Castles</b>	<p>The castles and palaces which Germany has to offer you are all original. There are not just a handful of well-preserved ones, but several hundred from all epochs and of every genre. Each has its own long and thrilling history, which is being kept alive within its walls.</p> <p>Set in an idyllic garden landscape, <b>Augustusburg</b> Castle (the sumptuous residence of the prince-archbishops of Cologne) and the Falkenlust hunting lodge (a small rural folly) are among the earliest examples of Rococo architecture in 18th-century Germany</p> <p>The <b>Grandhotel Schloss Bensburg</b> 14 km from Cologne offers a romantic stay in a 300 year old Baroque castle on top of a hill  <a href="http://www.schlossbensburg.com">www.schlossbensburg.com</a></p>
<b>Cathedrals</b>	<p><b>Cologne Cathedral</b> is one of the world's great cathedrals - the spiritual and geographical heart of the city. It's the largest Gothic cathedral in Germany. From the top of the south tower, you get panoramic views of</p>

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	<p>the city and surrounding area. Construction began in 1248, in order to house the relics of the three Magi brought to Cologne in 1164 by Archbishop Reinald von Dassel, chancellor to Frederick Barbarossa. After the completion of the chancel, south tower, and north-side aisles (around 1500), work was halted and not resumed until 1823. In 1880, the great enterprise was completed, and unlike many time-consuming constructions that change styles in midstream, the final result was in the Gothic style, true to the original plans.</p>
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OTHER ACTIVITIES	
<b>Shopping</b>	<p>There are so many things that make a shopping tour around cities like Cologne particularly special: German "originals", for example, such as BOSS, Meissen porcelain, Faber-Castell and Adidas. Traditional products such as Nuremberg gingerbread and the excellent German wines are also well worth seeking out.</p> <p><b>Cologne Water</b> - The word cologne has been a part of the common language since the introduction many years ago of the scented water called Kölnisch Wasser (eau de cologne). Eau de Cologne, Glockengasse 4711 (tel. 0221/9250450; U-Bahn: Neumarkt), sells the scented water first developed at this address by Italian chemist Giovanni Maria Farina in 1709. Originally employed to hide the stench of aristocrats who rarely bathed, cologne is now simply a sweet-smelling tradition and a cheap way to take home a little piece of Cologne. The smallest 25-milliliter flacon costs a mere 5€ (\$7.50).</p>
<b>Markets</b>	<p>In <b>Bonn</b>, a market called the Flohmarkt, at Rheinaue, Ludwig-Erhard-Strasse (tram: 66), is where you'll find all manner of secondhand goods and collectibles. It's held the third Saturday of each month April to October. A weekly market, Wochenmarkt, on the square of the same name, is held Monday to Saturday. You can enjoy a good lunch here, buying cooked food as you walk along inspecting the produce and various flea market items.</p> <p>Flea markets are held in <b>Cologne's</b> inner city. The most appealing are held within the Alter Markt (U-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof), at irregular intervals throughout the year, usually at least once a month (ask at the tourist office). More regular are the outdoor food and vegetable markets, the largest of which is held on the Wilhelmsplatz, in the Nippes district (U-Bahn: Florastrasse), Saturdays 8am to at least 2pm.</p>
<b>Nightlife</b>	<p>The place to go for nightlife in <b>Düsseldorf</b> is the Altstadt. This .8 sq. km (1/3 sq. mile) of narrow streets and alleyways, between Königsallee and the Rhine River, is jam-packed with restaurants, dance clubs, art galleries, boutiques, nightclubs, and some 200 song-filled beer taverns. Düsseldorfers refer to a night cruising the Altstadt as an Altstadtbummel.</p> <p>For <b>jazz in Cologne</b>, go to Klimperkasten (also known as Papa Joe's</p>

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	<p>Biersalon), Alter Markt 50-52 (tel. 0221/2582132; U-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof). It is an intimate jazz and piano bar open from 11 am to 3 am, with live music every night beginning around 8 pm. The jazz is also hot at Papa Joe's Jazzlokal, Buttermarkt 37 (tel. 0221/2577931; U-Bahn: Heumarkt).</p> <p>A 110-year-old bar in Cologne, Pöfgen Bräuhaus, Friesenstrasse 64-66 (tel. 0221/135461; U-Bahn: Friesenplatz), serves its Kölsch brand of beer, along with regional cuisine. Seating is available indoors and out.</p>
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<b>CUISINE</b>	<p>Out of over 1200 breweries, from the North Sea to the Alps, flow 5000 different kinds of beer on tap. A meal is also as versatile as the beer in Germany. Whether fresh fish from the traditional Hamburg fish market, or potatoes, the apples of the earth - which have been served either as salt potatoes, stewed potatoes or as potato-cakes since the 18th century - nothing more could be missing from a menu. However, what would Germany be without sausage - with plenty of mustard - prepared plain-boiled, boiled with spices, raw or as bratwurst?</p> <p>For breakfast or at snack time, one of 300 healthy kinds of bread and fine pastries, made famous by German bakers, await you. You can also drink natural mineral water again and again. It bubbles here from 550 sources. The true connoisseur praises the German wine, some dry and some sweeter, but always smooth and filigree like nowhere else in the world.</p>
<b>Food</b>	<p>Some of the best inexpensive places to eat (and drink) in Cologne are beer taverns. Come to <b>Bräuhaus Sion</b>, Unter Taschenmacher 5-7 (tel. 0221/2578540; U-Bahn: Heumarkt; tram: 5 or 7), if you want a traditional local tavern where the beer is good, the wood paneling smoky with time and frequent polishing, and the food portions generous</p>
<b>Wine</b>	<p>German wine does not grow next to olive trees and cork-oaks. It grows on the same degree of latitude as Newfoundland. The difference is that it is nursed by the warm climate of the Gulf Stream. This results in wines with fruity acidity and a wide range of wonderful scents.</p> <p>These are already two of the 13 German wine growing regions of Rheinhessen, Palatinate, Baden, Mosel-Saar-Ruwer, Württemberg, Franconia, Nahe, Rheingau, Mittelrhein, Ahr, Hessische Bergstraße, Saale-Unstrut and Saxony: Mosel, Saar and Ruwer in the west with tangy Riesling and Müller-Thurgau, the Elbe in the east with Rivaner and delicately fruity Weißburgunder and Grauburgunder.</p> <p>You will find a true paradise for the wine connoisseur when you travel the Rhine route from Lake Constance in the south to north of Bonn. People drink solid Gutedel, powerful Rulander, which today is called Grauer Burgunder and in the sunny Kaiserstuhl region fruity Weißherbst (rosé wine). The fertile Rhineland-Palatinate tempts not only with Rivaner, but also with full-flavoured Morio, Muskat, Kerner and</p>

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	<p>Scheurebe. Rheinhessen's Silvaner offers more than just Liebfraumilch - the white wines range from mild to spicy and elegant. These can also be found in the neighbouring Nahe region.</p> <p>Additionally red wine is cultivated between Landau and Mainz. Mainly smooth Portugieser but powerful Dornfelder as well. The volcanic and slate soil of the northern part of the Ahr region mainly yields the fruity Spätburgunder. Overall, general three quarters of the German wines are white wines.</p>
<b>Rhine Wine</b>	<p>Most of Germany's vineyards owe their existence to the Rhine river. It flows past a wide fertile valley past the Baden vineyards. The Pfalz, on the east facing slopes on the Haardt Mountains is the most southerly of these Rhine wine regions. Next comes the Rheinhessen with its finest vineyard sites around the Neirstein on the so-called Rheinfront or Rheinterrasse. North of Mainz, the Rhine meets the mass of the Taunus Mountains and is forced west along a short stretch between Weisbaden and Assmannshausen. This area is called the Rheingau. At Bingen, the Nahe River flows in and along its banks where some of the best south-facing vineyards are located. North of Bonn is the tiny river Ahr, which is a tourist spot with its own vineyards. All of these German regions produce different styles of wine, but in general, Rhine wine is fuller and richer than Mosel wines. As in the Mosel, the primary grape is the Reisling, but there are other varieties of grapes too. There are a few Weissburgunder (pinot blanc) and some Chardonnay. The German wine research center at Geisenheim has created many new vine hybrids, such as Ehrenfelser, Scheurebe, and Kerner. They are not as popular as the native Rheingau.</p>
<b>Restaurants</b>	<p>So many to choose from! Here's a few suggestions for that special meal in the Rhine region:</p> <p><b>Frankfurt: Weinhaus Brückenkeller:</b> Located in the heart of the Altstadt, this is one of Frankfurt's leading restaurants and a favorite spot of well-heeled North American visitors. Tables are candlelit, and strolling musicians encourage singing. Here the age of Bismarck lives again. Franconian carvings adorn the alcoves, and huge wooden barrels are decorated with scenes from Goethe's Faust. The food is light and subtle. A typical meal may begin with cream of sorrel soup or more substantial roast gooseliver with green beans, perhaps a small salmon cake with caviar crème. The Tafelspitz (boiled beef) is the best in town. Filet of roast turbot with a white-wine cream sauce and a parsley risotto, or saddle of lamb served with mashed potatoes flavored with truffles and pimento, are also delicious. For a perfect finish, try the soufflé of strawberries with vanilla sauce. The evening meal includes homemade sourdough bread. The wine cellar holds 285 selections of German wines, including the Rhineland's best. Personal attention and efficient service are hallmarks.</p>

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	<p><b>Zur Lese, Bonn:</b> This restaurant's polite service and outdoor terrace with a sweeping view over the Rhine attract many local residents, especially in the afternoon, when visitors drop in for coffee, cakes, and glasses of wine after strolling in the nearby Hofgarten. Elegant, well-prepared lunches are also offered. Dinner is served in the cafe. A menu of German specialties (with English translations) includes pork with curry sauce and the chef's superb Gulasch Lese (goulash).</p> <p><b>Dusseldorf: Rheinturm Top 180 Restaurant</b> - This futuristic restaurant is set atop the spool-shaped summit of the city's tallest tower (172m/564 ft.) and revolves slowly, affording a 360-degree panorama of Düsseldorf's buildings and parks. Most people come here for the view, but the food is good and includes grills, game dishes, fish, and soups. Try the slices of smoked duck breast with creamy savoy cabbage or rolls of salmon stuffed with turbot filling and served in Riesling and saffron sauce.</p>
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<b>MORE INFO</b>	
<b>Brochures</b>	1-877-315-6237 for German National Tourist Office brochures See your Travel Agent for Globus Tours and River Cruises in Germany
<b>Websites</b>	For Germany: <a href="http://www.CometoGermany.com">www.CometoGermany.com</a> For Maritim Hotels: <a href="http://www.maritim.com">www.maritim.com</a> For Lufthansa: <a href="http://www.lufthansa.com">www.lufthansa.com</a> For Swiss International Airlines: <a href="http://www.Swiss.com">www.Swiss.com</a> For Rail Europe <a href="http://www.raileurope.ca">www.raileurope.ca</a>

<b>HOTEL PRIZE PARTNER – MARITIM HOTELS</b>	<p>Maritim has been playing a decisive role in the development of Germany's hotel industry since its founding in 1969 and the country's best known hotel chain now enjoys an international reputation. The comprehensive portfolio includes centrally located city hotels, conveniently located airport hotels, coastal beach resorts, lakeside family hotels, course-adjointing golf hotels and parkland spa hotels. While every property is uniquely individual with its own advantages, they are united under Maritim's motto of 'meetings and accommodation under one roof'.</p> <p>One of the ingredients for Maritim's recipe for success is its emphasis on wining and dining. Most hotels have multiple restaurants serving both regional specialties and a wide selection of international favourites. Depending on which hotel they stay in, guests can enjoy Japanese sushi, Arabian maza, Turkish Gözleme or the culinary excellence of an award-winning Michelin star restaurant. Regardless of which hotel, the day always gets off to a perfect start with Maritim's sumptuous breakfast buffet.</p> <p>As a family owned and run company, Maritim understands the decisive role each and every employee has to play in its ongoing success.</p>
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	<p>The company's portfolio has also experienced rapid international expansion in the last decade: Mauritius, Latvia, Malta, Majorca, Egypt and Turkey. While certain design elements are often in keeping with local and historical architecture, the fine aesthetics that put guests in a relaxed, holiday mood are universal. Natural lighting, landscaping, furnishing, colours, placement, proportion, acoustics - all have to be just right so that no matter where in the world Maritim guests are staying, they immediately enjoy a sense of wellbeing.</p> <p>Tel: 1800-843-3311</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.Maritim.com">www.Maritim.com</a></p>
<b>Berlin</b>	<p>Located in the heart of Germany's capital, the Maritim Hotel Berlin occupies a prime spot on the city's Tiergarten park in the tranquil diplomatic quarter, close to the Kurfürstendamm and Potsdam Square. The luxury hotel recaptures the glamorous flair of the Roaring '20s and affords travellers all of the modern comforts one can expect from a four star superior hotel. The state of the art appointment combined with the classical ambience ensures every stay is an experience to remember.</p> <p><b>Hotel Highlights</b></p> <p>505 stylish, spacious rooms of 31sqm in size each, including 66 suites, ranging from 50 to 35 sqm. Superior Lounge Exclusive 'Elysium' wellness area</p>
<b>Dresden</b>	<p>The elegant hotel is situated right on the banks of the Elbe, between the Semperoper and the International Congress Centre Dresden. The Maritim Hotel Dresden is impressive, with its stylish rooms housed in a building that is a protected monument. The direct connection to one of the most modern Congress Centres in Germany makes the hotel an ideal hosting venue for events. The old city with the famous Frauenkirche ("Church of Our Lady") and the Zwinger are just 10 minutes away on foot.</p> <p><b>Hotel Highlights</b></p> <p>328 elegant, spacious rooms with floor areas ranging from 29 to 32 sqm, including 31 luxurious suites occupying anything between 57 to 176 sqm of area Elegant restaurant with winter garden and terraces overlooking the Elbe Exclusive wellness area with pool, saunas, fitness, massage and cosmetics</p>
<b>Frankfurt</b>	<p>This modern hotel awaits its guests, located centrally at the trade fair, just a few paces from the Festhalle and the Trade Fair Tower. Business travellers value the good connections to the railways, road and airport. Delegates to the trade fair and conferences can walk up directly from their room to the Congress Centre Frankfurt and to the adjoining trade fair halls. City travellers can take short paths leading to the Römer, the museum bank and several other sights worth seeing.</p> <p><b>Hotel Highlights</b></p> <p>543 elegant, spacious rooms 30 square metres in size, including 24</p>

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	luxurious suites, ranging from 42 to 80 square metres Superior Lounge with snacks and drinks Frankfurt's most loved sushi restaurant
<b>Stuttgart</b>	<p>The elegant Maritim Hotel Stuttgart adjoins the green Hoppenlau-Park and is located centrally, not far from the main railway station and the cultural attractions of the lively city. The direct link with the cultural and congress centre of Liederhalle makes it an ideal starting point for business and private occasions. The Bosch-Areal with cinema hall, fitness centre and shopping facilities is just a few paces away.</p> <p><b>Hotel Highlights</b></p> <p>555 comfortably furnished rooms with floor areas ranging from 28 to 85 sqm in size, including 78 suites, ranging from 45 to 85 sqm in size The "Alte Stuttgarter Reithalle" dating back to 1885, integrated harmoniously with the hotel architecture, can host events up to 800 persons</p>
<b>AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNER - LUFTHANSA</b>	<p>Lufthansa has been flying Canadians to Germany for over 50 years. Fly with Lufthansa and you will arrive at your destination on-time, relaxed and ready for the day. Lufthansa offers daily nonstop flights from Toronto to Frankfurt. Great, low fares to Germany starting at \$290 one-way (excl. taxes, fees and surcharges) can be found on the airline's website - <a href="http://lufthansa.com">lufthansa.com</a>. At <a href="http://lufthansa.com">lufthansa.com</a> you can also book your flight, reserve your seat, check-in and have your boarding pass downloaded to your mobile phone.</p> <p>Tel: 1-800-56-FLY-LH</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.Lufthansa.com">www.Lufthansa.com</a></p>
<b>AIRLINE PRIZE PARTNERS - SWISS</b>	<p>Swiss International Air Lines operates one flight daily from Montreal-Trudeau International Airport to Zurich or Geneva. On Swiss International Air Lines's website, <a href="http://www.swiss.com">www.swiss.com</a>, you can find low fares for travel on any of their daily flights from Montreal to nine cities in Germany via Zurich. SWISS serves 90 destinations in 42 countries and is a member of the Star Alliance.</p> <p>Tel: 1877-FLY-SWISS</p> <p>Website: <a href="http://www.Swiss.com">www.Swiss.com</a></p>
<b>CURRENT DEALS</b>	Lufthansa have flights from Toronto to Berlin starting from \$580 return if booked before October 28 <sup>th</sup> 2009 for travel to December 8 <sup>th</sup> 2009
<b>PERSONAL EXPERIENCES</b>	Rhine Valley; Frankfurt; Heidelberg; Berlin; Dresden; Black Forest; Cologne; Trier; Hamburg; Munster; Munich; Munster

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<b>XMAS MARKETS</b>	<p>There are so many wonderful things to see and do in Germany at Christmas. Stroll through festively decorated streets and explore the enchanting Christmas markets with their seasonal music and choir singing. Listen to the sounds of bells and trumpeters and attend one of the many concerts from classical to gospel in the churches and on outdoor stages. Adorned with decorations and festively lit, the pedestrian precincts and shopping centres offer everything your heart could desire. The arts and entertainment scene also takes a seasonal turn in December: in Germany's major cities, you'll find everything from plays, operettas and musicals to spellbinding readings. In addition, theme parks are open throughout Christmas for their winter seasons – take the whole family to magical Europa-Park Rust, a winter wonderland in white brimming with thrills, spills and surprises. There are also numerous winter sports you can get involved in and high-profile events such as the New Year ski jumping in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. You see, it's not just Christmas trees and twinkling lights, Germany has something for everyone during the festive season</p>
<b>Xmas Recipes</b>	<p>The festive season in Germany is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy delicious food and drink. All year, children and adults will have been looking forward to all kinds of special treats. Mouth-watering aromas surround the festive stalls at the Christmas markets; shops and bakeries are laden with gingerbread, biscuits, stollen cake, Father Christmases, marzipan potatoes, chestnuts and much more. Many people bake Christmas biscuits and stollen cake at home. Popular ideas are cinnamon stars, macaroons, butter cookies, spritz cookies and regional specialties such as Printen gingerbread from Aachen, Bethmännchen marzipan biscuits from Frankfurt, Stollen cake from Dresden and Lebkuchen gingerbread from Nuremberg. Restaurant menus, particularly in southern Germany, feature crispy Christmas goose with red cabbage and potato dumplings, while carp is particularly popular in northern Germany. Tasty baked apples are a traditional Christmas dessert. And don't miss glühwein and punch - the perfect winter warmers. Enjoying mouth-watering delicacies is an essential part of visiting Germany's romantic Christmas markets. You can also bake your own special treats back home with these tasty recipes. Guten Appetit!</p>
<b>Xmas Traditions</b>	<p><b>Advent</b>  Advent - the four weeks before Christmas - is the most atmospheric season everywhere in Germany. Age-old customs are celebrated and enriched by new, vibrant ideas year after year. During Advent there is a wonderful sense of expectation in the air. On each of the 24 days before Christmas, children and many adults excitedly open a window on their Advent calendar or the next in a series of small, numbered gifts. Many buildings, especially town halls at the heart of the festivities, are</p>

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transformed into giant "Advent calendars". Each Sunday in Advent another candle is lit on the Advent wreath in people's homes. Hand-carved Christmas pyramids from the Erzgebirge mountains twirl in the candlelight, windows are lit by decorative Christmas arches and garden trees are adorned with illuminations. Angels and Father Christmases appear, shop windows in towns and city centres look simply stunning and illuminated Christmas trees can be seen everywhere you look. Christmas trees are also lovingly decorated in people's homes in preparation for the celebrations. Experience the magic of Advent in Germany - a festive atmosphere and wonderful customs.

**The advent wreath** - Advent, advent, a candles is lit...

Johann Hinrich Wichern, a Hamburg theologian, first had this idea in the 19th century. He decorated his chandelier with evergreens and placed 24 candles on top - one for each day in December until Christmas Eve. An Advent wreath with 4 candles, one for each Sunday of Advent, was first hung in a church in Cologne in 1925, then Munich also adopted the practice. 10 years later, wreaths decorated with fir, spruce and moss became popular in domestic kitchens and living rooms, where they create a homely atmosphere. The scented, green needles and the candlelight are symbols of a new, brighter time.

**The Christmas tree** - O Tannenbaum, O Christmas Tree...

The custom of decorating rooms with evergreen twigs and branches goes back 600 years. This tradition later developed into Advent wreaths and decorated Christmas trees hung from the ceiling. It was not until the 17th century that Christmas trees were set up as they are today and decorated with homemade cookies, gingerbread, rosy red apples and tissue paper roses. Since then Christmas trees have been decorated in ever more creative ways. In Germany they are often adorned with candles and laden with mouth-blown glass baubles and bells, intricate carved wooden decorations, golden angels, sweets, tiny gifts, tinsel, angel hair and craft items. Setting up and decorating the tree is a delight for children and adults alike - a work of art to admire in the soft glow of candlelight.

**The nativity scene - Baby Jesus is born**

Nativity scenes are part of the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus. Baby Jesus is believed to have been born in a stable in Bethlehem and laid in a manger. Churches have used Nativity scenes to recall the birth of Jesus since the 12th century, a tradition later taken up by families. Baby Jesus lies in the straw in the manger with his parents Mary and Joseph kneeling beside him. Also part of the scene are an ox, a donkey,

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	shepherds with their sheep and the Three Wise Men bearing gifts for Baby Jesus. Germany has an almost endless variety of Nativity scenes with beautifully carved figures - and Nativity scene trails - which can be admired from the beginning of December until 6 January.
<b>Locations</b>	There are over 2,500 Xmas Markets in Germany, spread in cities and towns all over the country. Below, I have chosen just a few of the more important ones for you to consider.
<b>Königstein Fortress</b>	"Königstein Fortress – a winter fairytale" is the theme for this enchanting Christmas market. A seasonal extravaganza within historical walls, it is hosted by Königstein's very own Father Christmas and Friedrich von Kyaw, the fortress commander. Travelling entertainers put on enthralling performances, medieval players present classic fairytales, musicians play delightful Christmas pieces from centuries past and artisans display exquisite wares. The Nativity scene with real farmyard animals is always popular among children. In this unusual Christmas attraction, the little ones can also let their creativity run wild in the elves' workshop in the casemate courtyard. Don't miss the 112-metre-long Alte Kaserne (old barracks), which is transformed into the longest advent calendar in Germany. A new window opens every day. Opening times 11/28/2009 - 12/20/2009 Sat - Sun 11:00 - 19:00 Weekends only: 28 & 29 Nov, 5 & 6, 12 & 13 and 19 & 20 Dec 2009
<b>Frankfurt</b>	Frankfurt's Christmas market is one of the oldest (1393) and prettiest in Germany. It attracts more than three million people every year from all over the world. On Römerberg square, Paulsplatz and Mainkai quay, 200 stalls offer arts, crafts and seasonal food and drink. A wide range of entertainment around the 30-metre Christmas tree includes concerts, trumpet fanfares from the balcony of St. Nicholas's Church and the church carillon. Discover the inside secrets and hidden delights of Frankfurt's Christmas market on a guided tour themed around glühwein, seasonal stories and delicious baked goods. Group bookings are also available. Opening times 11/25/2009 - 12/22/2009 Mon - Sat 10:00 - 21:00 Sun 11:00 - 21:00 <a href="http://www.frankfurt-tourismus.de">www.frankfurt-tourismus.de</a>
<b>Stuttgart</b>	For four weeks in the run-up to Christmas, Stuttgart is transformed into a magical winter wonderland. More than 250 stallholders offer seasonal wares, while concerts in the courtyard of the Old Palace set the festive tone. The superbly decorated roofs of the traditional wooden booths add to the overall charm. Amid the enchanting ambience of Stuttgart's Christmas market people from all over the world enjoy the city's famous Black Forest fruit loaf washed down with a mug of warming glühwein. Opening times 11/25/2009 - 12/23/2009 Mon - Sat 10:00 - 21:00 Sun: 11am - 9pm <a href="http://www.stuttgart-tourist.de">www.stuttgart-tourist.de</a>
<b>Berlin</b>	Berlin is a fairytale in lights at Christmas. It has around 60 traditional Christmas markets with cultural events, endless shopping opportunities

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	<p>and unusual winter attractions. Get into the Christmas spirit at evocative festive concerts, or on Gendarmenmarkt square, the historical setting for the "WeihnachtsZauber", one of Berlin's prettiest and most magical Christmas markets.</p> <p>Opening times 11/23/2009 - 12/31/2009 Sun - Thu 11:00 - 22:00          Fri - Sat 11:00 - 23:00 24 Dec: 11am - 6pm 25 &amp; 26 Dec: 11am - 10pm          New Year's Eve: 11am - 11pm <a href="http://www.visitBerlin.de">www.visitBerlin.de</a></p>
<b>Dresden</b>	<p>The Striezelmarkt on the old market square in Dresden is a thriving tradition that dates all the way back to 1434. Its name comes from "Striezel", better known as the original Dresden Christstollen. Every year, the Stollen festival and grand parade are held in honour of this famous cake: an enormous Stollen weighing around four tonnes makes its way to the Striezelmarkt where it is ceremoniously cut and handed around. On its way through the streets, the giant cake passes Zwinger Palace, Semper Opera House, Dresden Cathedral and the Church of Our Lady. A truly mouth-watering experience. The stalls are a treasure trove of traditional local crafts: carved wooden items from the mountain villages of the Erzgebirge, blue printed items and pottery from Lusatia, gingerbread from Pulsnitz, intricate hand-made lace from Plauen and advent stars from Herrnhut. At the heart of proceedings is the world's largest Christmas pyramid in the Erzgebirge style. It stands at 14 metres and provides the setting for the pyramid festival, a singing contest with a seasonal slant.</p> <p>Opening times 11/26/2009 - 12/24/2009 Sun - Thu 10:00 - 20:00          Fri - Sat 10:00 - 21:00 24 Dec 2009: 10am - 2pm          Stollen festival: 5 Dec 2009          Pyramid festival: 12 Dec 2009  <a href="http://www.dresden-tourist.de">www.dresden-tourist.de</a>  <a href="http://www.dresden.de/striezelmarkt">www.dresden.de/striezelmarkt</a></p>

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