



AILA 2008

Travel tips and useful information:

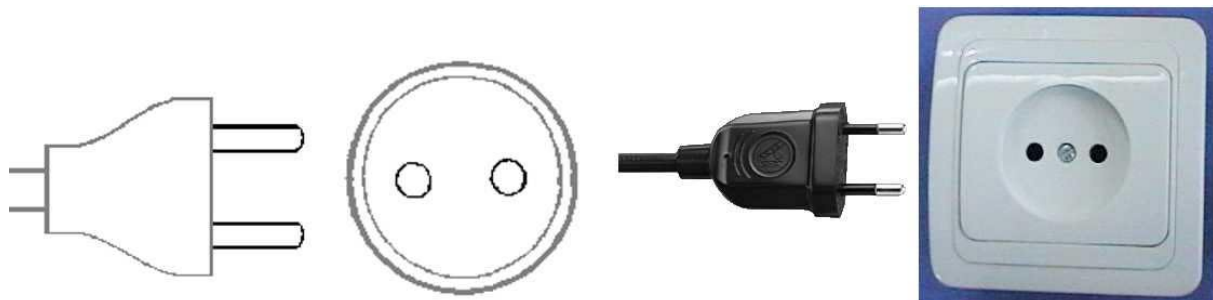
General

- **Time zone:** The whole of Germany lies within one time zone, Central European Time (CET)
- **Electricity:** If you need an **adapter**, Germany uses a round two pin plug and socket system (electricity: 220 V, 50 Hz)

For example



or



- **Weather:** German weather is not the most reliable, with some rain even in summer, so make sure to bring some protection. Average temperature in August is between 17 – 25 degrees Celsius, sometimes up to 30 degrees Celsius.
- Germany follows the **metric system**
- **Currency:** Euro!! Always have some **cash** with you as credit cards are not universally accepted
- Plan ahead: **Shops** are closed on Sundays
- Print out and bring with you: The **“Welcome to Essen”** document, which serves as your free regional public transport ticket inside the VRR-area before check-in at AILA 2008.

Banks & Post Offices

Opening hours vary greatly for individual banks although no branches stay open later than 6pm and on Saturdays and Sundays all banks are closed. Normally, banks have a foyer with ATMs which can be accessed 24 hours a day. Banks and post offices close by 6pm at the latest and are not open on Saturdays and Sundays.

However, there is a Reisebank/Western Union in Essen main railway station, which is open on Saturdays and Sundays.

Credit cards

The airports and major railway stations have currency changing facilities which can be used to exchange foreign currency into Euros. Credit cards have a low level of usage compared to other European countries; most Germans prefer to pay in cash or use debit cards, i.e. cards which are part of the MAESTRO system. Travellers cheques can be cashed in at any major bank. The most common credit cards are Eurocard/Mastercard and Visa. Please note: Credit cards are not universally accepted, particularly in smaller shops.

Customs formalities

For restrictions on import from EU and non-EU countries and prohibited items please visit the official customs (Zoll) homepage:

http://www.zoll.de/english_version/b0_prohibitions_and_restrictions/index.html

Shopping: Opening times

The tourist information centre in Essen (Essen Marketing - EMG) opposite Essen main railway station is open during normal business hours. During the congress, EMG is offering a counter at CCE West.

Shops open on weekdays between 9am and 10am and stay open until 7 or 8 pm, although some bakeries and newsagents open at 6am. Pharmacies open from 8am. Most shops do not close for lunch. Closing time on Saturdays varies from 6 to 8 pm, with some smaller shops closing at 2 pm, though major shopping precincts and malls offer opening hours until 8 pm also on Saturdays. Shops are closed on Sunday, with the exception of bakeries which generally open on Sunday mornings. Cafés and cake shops are open on Sunday afternoons. Many filling stations have very long opening hours, sometimes around the clock. It is possible to shop there outside normal opening hours, as they often sell food, newspapers and other everyday basics as well as fuel.

Useful telephone numbers

International phone calls are obviously cheaper if you use private phone companies. You can either use one of the many international call centres or a prepaid card.

In emergencies dial 110 for the police and 112 for the fire brigade or medical care. The call is for free, but abuse of this service is severely punished.

Useful links

Learn more about Germany:

Germany Quiz Competition by the German National Tourist Board

<http://www.germany-tourism.de/gewinnspiel/popup.htm>

Helpful sites:

http://www.zoll.de/english_version/b0_prohibitions_and_restrictions/index.html

http://www.germany-tourism.co.uk/EGB/practical_information

<http://www.about-germany.org/life/weather-in-germany.php>

<http://www.justgermany.org/germany>