

Moving To Germany -- Fraught With Possibilities

Moving to Germany is really a wonderful experience as you come face to face with a culture that is decidedly foreign and a language that sounds harsh even when mouthing sweet nothings.

Frivolities apart, there's the enormous amount of paperwork that may need the services of a translator to help you work your way through. Other than the formal immigration requirements there may be a few things to bear in mind or at least be aware of as you embark on your decision of moving to Germany.

There's no escaping paperwork as is usual these days whether you're marrying or dying. So it should come as no surprise when you're moving to Germany.

Some important documents would be your passport and of all members of your family traveling with you, visa, driver's license, insurance records, birth certificate, marriage/divorce papers, medical/dental records if you need to see a doctor, and prescriptions if you're on medications. Find out whether your insurance covers you while in Germany. In any case it would be a wise thing to get German insurance for life and property, if your employer doesn't give you one.

It would be of inordinate help if you could learn some German, at least a few basics such as Please, Thank you, Excuse Me, and so on. It will definitely serve you well and ease your way through your initial days before you automatically pick up the language.

Read up on Germany and its [history](#), landmarks, and current affairs. Get into the habit of using German without worrying about the accent or sounding like an idiot. As any expat will tell you, your efforts are appreciated. Walking is a German way of life, so stroll around to get acquainted with the locality and enjoy the new air and scenery.

Moving to Germany would mean living there and it may require the services of a friend or acquaintance to help you pick up suitable accommodation. If you've moved there on work, your office may help you but then more often than not, you may have to find your own abode.

Having some one who could find out and translate for you the necessary information from the local papers would be a boon indeed. In fact, you should start on this even before you actually get here as friends and friends of friends have a very effective way of knowing exactly the right place that may suit you. Often it might be an attic for rent but then that's as good a place as any to get started.

A German speaking friend can prove invaluable in other areas as well. S/he can help gently ease you past the culture shock that is bound to stir things up and scare away the faint hearts.

While some thrive on getting their first taste of a foreign culture, others scare away too easily. If you

belong to the latter group, you should seriously consider cultivating friendships before you get here. Wherever you're from, there's bound to be an expat community in the new city meant for folks just like you.

Getting your first German bank account, buying a cell phone, or even figuring out a menu without pictures in a local restaurant might seem pretty challenging if your German isn't up to scratch.

Under most circumstances you are allowed to bring along your used household goods free of duty when you move to Germany long term. It would help to have documentation to this effect, such as, a letter from your German employer, a lease or rent agreement, and the mandatory German police registration receipt.

Unfortunately this does not apply to larger amounts of liquor and cigarettes and you have to pay duty for the import of these "life-savers." But then of course, keep in mind you're coming to the land of beergartens and wine fests.

Other restricted items would include pornography, fire-arms (unless you have a license issued from Germany), narcotics/drugs, and explosive materials.

You can bring your vehicle if you can show you've owned it for a minimum of 6 months before travel. You would have to change registration and be compliant with German automobile standards.

When moving to Germany, you could do yourself a favor and leave all electronics behind, except for your trusty laptop of course. There's no sense lugging old heavyweights such as fridge and washing machines to Germany where you'll definitely find better ones (and this to surprisingly good prices). Besides the extra baggage there's the issue of the electrical outlet which may not accept your plugs without an adaptor. (Germany's power is at 220 Volt.)

German people can be quite friendly and helpful if you will only step out from behind your visitor façade and decide to mingle. Though the language has a harsh accent it should not be taken to construe rudeness; it's just how it sounds.

Before you know it you will be congratulating yourself on your decision to move to Germany. ;-)