

Germany

The more you know about Germany the less you understand it. Think Germans only drink beer? Wait until you spend a week drinking nothing but excellent white wines in cute little wine bars. Think the food is all about sausage? Wait until you find your meal choices span the globe with nary a wurst in sight. Think Germans are closed minded and cold? Wait until one chats you up and you experience their good-natured humility and progressive world view.

What Churchill called Russia, 'a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma' could just have easily applied to Germany. Dismiss everything you think you know about it and start from scratch. As you travel Germany's regions you'll find that given all their differences they might as well be separate countries. And that's the real fun of visiting Germany – first having your stereotypes blown away and then trying to make sense of what you've found.

From the ongoing reinvention of Berlin to the celebration of tradition in Munich you will find contradictions everywhere. Your best course of action is to savour the richly financed museums and culture, revel in the nation's soul (the land) and join in the serious pursuit of consumption – be it beer, wine and yes, sausage, or something exotic. Through experience you'll relish one of Europe's richest cultures.

FAST FACTS

- **Area** 356,866 sq km (138 Luxembourgs, two-thirds of France)
- **Capital** Berlin
- **Currency** euro (€); A\$1 = €0.60; ¥100 = €0.67; NZ\$1 = €0.50; UK£1 = €1.48; US\$1 = €0.78
- **Famous for** sausages, beer, culture, cars, history
- **Official Language** German
- **Phrases** *Guten Tag* (good day); *Auf Wiedersehen* (goodbye); *Ja/Nein* (yes/no); *Danke* (thank you); *Sprechen Sie Englisch?* (Do you speak English?)
- **Population** 83 million
- **Telephone Codes** country code ☎ 49; international access code ☎ 00



HIGHLIGHTS

- Party day and night in **Berlin** (p428); save sleep for somewhere else as there's no time what with the clubs, museums, bars and mind-blowing culture.
- Time your journey for **Oktoberfest** (p477), Munich's big booze up, or just hang out in a beer garden.
- Seek out the villages less visited in the **Moselle Valley** (p507) home to the crisp white wine of the same name.
- Go cuckoo in the **Black Forest** (p499), discovering its chilly crags, misty peaks and endless trails.
- Get into the vibe of **Leipzig** (p453), the surprisingly vibrant star of the east.

ITINERARIES

- **One week** Starting in Berlin spend three days in and around the city, then head south through the wonderful little Bavarian town of Bamberg before ending up in Munich.
- **One month** Start in Munich for some Bavarian joy, then head up to the goofy castles in Füssen. Take in some of the Bavarian Alps and Lake Constance before the fun of Freiburg. Explore the Black Forest, soak up Baden-Baden and settle in for a boat voyage down the Rhine in Mainz. Detour up the Moselle to Trier and then hit Cologne. Pop up to Hamburg and Lübeck before heading back to Bavaria and Bamberg. Head north into the old East and Weimar and then enjoy Leipzig and Dresden. Finish it all in Berlin.

CLIMATE & WHEN TO GO

German weather can be variable, so it's best to be prepared for many conditions throughout the year. The most reliable weather is from May to October, coinciding with the standard tourist season (except for skiing). The shoulder periods (late March to May and September to October) can bring fewer tourists and surprisingly pleasant weather. See Climate Charts p1100.

HISTORY

Events in Germany have often dominated the European stage, but the country itself is a relatively recent invention: for most of its history Germany has been a patchwork of semi-independent principalities and city-states, occupied first by the Roman Empire,

HOW MUCH?

- **Budget hotel room** €50
- **Tasty sausage meal** €6
- **Baden-Baden spa** €21
- **Bottle of Rhine wine** €6
- **U-Bahn ticket** €1.80

LONELY PLANET INDEX

- **1L petrol** €1.35
- **1L bottled water** €1
- **Beer (0.3L local Pils)** €2
- **Souvenir T-shirt** €15
- **Döner kebab** €2

then the Holy Roman Empire and finally the Austrian Habsburgs. Perhaps because of this, many Germans retain a strong regional identity, despite the momentous events that have occurred since.

The most significant medieval events in Germany were pan-European in nature – Martin Luther brought on the Protestant Reformation with his criticism of the Catholic Church in Wittenberg in 1517, a movement that sparked the Thirty Years' War. Germany became the battlefield of Europe, only regaining stability after the Napoleonic Wars with increasing industrialisation and the rise of the Kingdom of Prussia. In 1866 legendary Prussian 'Iron Chancellor' Otto von Bismarck brought the German states together, largely by force, and a united Germany emerged for the first time in 1871, under Kaiser Wilhelm I.

WWI & the Rise of Hitler

With the advent of the 20th century, Germany's rapid growth soon overtaxed the political talents of Kaiser Wilhelm II and led to mounting tensions with England, Russia and France. When war broke out in 1914, Germany's only ally was a weakened Austria-Hungary. Gruelling trench warfare on two fronts sapped the nation's resources, and by late 1918 Germany sued for peace. The kaiser abdicated and escaped to the Netherlands. Amid widespread public anger and unrest a new republic, which became known as the Weimar Republic, was proclaimed.



The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 chopped huge areas off Germany and imposed heavy reparation payments. These were impossible to meet, and when France and Belgium occupied the Rhineland to ensure continued payments, the subsequent hyperinflation and miserable economic conditions provided fertile ground for political extremists. One of these was Adolf Hitler, an Austrian drifter, would-be artist and German army veteran.

Led by Hitler, the National Socialist German Workers' Party (or Nazi Party) staged an abortive coup in Munich in 1923. This landed Hitler in prison for nine months, during which time he wrote *Mein Kampf*.

From 1929 the worldwide economic Depression hit Germany hard, leading to unemployment, strikes and demonstrations. The Communist Party under Ernst Thälmann gained strength, but wealthy industrialists began to support the Nazis and police turned a blind eye to Nazi street thugs.

The Nazis increased their strength in general elections and in 1933 replaced the Social Democrats as the largest party in the Reichstag (parliament), with about one-third of the seats. Hitler was appointed chancellor and one year later assumed absolute control as *Führer* (leader).

WWII & the Division of Germany

From 1935 Germany began to re-arm and build its way out of depression with strategic public works such as the autobahns. Hitler reoccupied the Rhineland in 1936, and in 1938 annexed Austria and, following a compromise agreement with Britain and France, parts of Czechoslovakia.

All of this took place against a backdrop of growing racism at home. The Nuremberg Laws of 1935 deprived non-Aryans – mostly Jews and Roma (sometimes called Gypsies) – of their German citizenship and many other rights. On 9 November 1938, the horror escalated into *Kristallnacht* ('night of broken glass'), in which synagogues and Jewish cemeteries, property and businesses across Germany were desecrated, burnt or demolished.

In September 1939, after signing a pact that allowed both Stalin and himself a free hand in the east of Europe, Hitler attacked Poland, which led to war with Britain and France. Germany quickly occupied large parts of Europe, but after 1942 began to

suffer increasingly heavy losses. Massive bombing reduced Germany's cities to rubble, and the country lost 10% of its population. Germany accepted unconditional surrender in May 1945, soon after Hitler's suicide.

At the end of the war, the full scale of Nazi racism was exposed. 'Concentration camps', intended to rid Europe of people considered undesirable according to Nazi doctrine, had exterminated some six million Jews and one million more Roma, communists, homosexuals and others in what has come to be known as the Holocaust, history's first 'assembly line' genocide.

At conferences in Yalta and Potsdam, the Allies (the Soviet Union, the USA, the UK and France) redrew the borders of Germany, making it around 25% smaller than it had become after the Treaty of Versailles 26 years earlier. Germany was divided into four occupation zones.

In the Soviet zone of the country, the communist Socialist Unity Party (SED) won the 1946 elections and began a rapid nationalisation of industry. In September 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was created out of the three western zones; in response the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was founded in the Soviet zone the following month, with (East) Berlin as its capital.

From Division to Unity

As the West's bulwark against communism, the FRG received massive injections of US capital, and experienced rapid economic development (the *Wirtschaftswunder* or 'economic miracle') under the leadership of Konrad Adenauer. The GDR, on the other hand, had to pay US\$10 billion in war reparations to the Soviet Union and rebuild itself from scratch.

A better life in the west increasingly attracted skilled workers away from the miserable economic conditions in the east. As these were people the GDR could ill afford to lose, it built a wall around West Berlin in 1961 and sealed its border with the FRG.

In 1971 a change to the more flexible leadership of Erich Honecker in the east, combined with the *Ostpolitik* (East Politics) of FRG chancellor Willy Brandt, allowed an easier political relationship between the two Germanys. In the same year the four

occupying powers formally accepted the division of Berlin.

Honecker's policies produced higher living standards in the GDR, yet East Germany barely managed to achieve a level of prosperity half that of the FRG. After Mikhail Gorbachev came to power in the Soviet Union in March 1985, the East German communists gradually lost Soviet backing.

Events in 1989 rapidly overtook the GDR government, which resisted pressure to introduce reforms. When Hungary relaxed its border controls in May 1989, East Germans began crossing to the west. Tighter travel controls resulted in would-be defectors taking refuge in the FRG's embassy in Prague. Meanwhile, mass demonstrations in Leipzig spread to other cities and Honecker was replaced by his security chief, Egon Krenz, who introduced cosmetic reforms. Then suddenly on 9 November 1989, a decision to allow direct travel to the west was mistakenly interpreted as the immediate opening of all GDR borders with West Germany. That same night thousands of people streamed into the west past stunned border guards. Millions more followed in the next few days, and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall began soon thereafter.

The trend at first was to reform the GDR but, in East German elections held in early 1990, citizens voted clearly in favour of the proreunification Christian Democratic Union (CDU). A Unification Treaty was drawn up to integrate East Germany into the Federal Republic of Germany, enacted on 3 October 1990. All-German elections were held on 2 December that year and, in the midst of national euphoria, the CDU-led coalition, which strongly favoured reunification, soundly defeated the Social Democrat opposition. CDU leader Helmut Kohl earned the enviable position of 'unification chancellor'.

Into the Millennium

In 1998 a coalition of Social Democrats, led by Gerhard Schröder, and Bündnis 90/die Grünen (the Greens party) took political office from Kohl and the CDU amid allegations of widespread financial corruption in the unification-era government.

Schröder and the SDP-Greens only narrowly managed to retain office in the 2002 general election. In 2004 things looked even

worse. The slashing of university funding brought students out in protest for several weeks, and a botched reform of the public health insurance system was one of the most unpopular pieces of legislation ever, resulting in massive gains for the supposedly discredited CDU at subsequent local elections.

These advances paid off in September 2005 as a fumbling Schröder went down in national elections, although just barely. The winner by a very narrow margin was Angela Merkel and the CDU. Not only is Merkel the first woman chancellor in German history but she is also the first one who grew up in the old GDR.

A trained physicist who studied quantum chemistry, Merkel may find a use for her old training in her government. Because of the CDU's narrow victory it was forced into a 'grand coalition' with the SDP in which the latter gets half of the cabinet seats. Truly it's a situation where unexpected and unwanted reactions could be the norm.

Surprisingly, however, despite her tiny margin of victory, Merkel's popularity soared in the months after she took power. Perhaps it was her unusual background or her straight-talking style that had Germans of all stripes intrigued by what they saw. But with unemployment hitting 12% in 2006, Merkel and her unlikely coalition have their work cut out for them.

PEOPLE

Germany has a population of around 83 million, making it the most populous in Europe after Russia. Germany's main native minority is the tiny group of Slavonic Sorbs in the eastern states of Saxony and Brandenburg, who maintain their own folk traditions. In political and economic terms, Germany is Europe's most decentralised nation, but considerable variation in population density exists. The Ruhr district in the northern Rhineland has Germany's densest concentration of people and industry, while Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in the northeastern corner is relatively sparsely settled. About one-third of the population lives in 84 cities, each with more than 100,000 people.

Immigration compensates for the extremely low birth rate among the established German population, and more than seven million foreigners now live in Germany. Most hail from Turkey, Italy, Greece and

the former Yugoslavia, and have arrived as 'guest workers' in the FRG since the early 1960s to work in lower-paid jobs. In 1999 archaic immigration laws dating back to 1913 were changed to make it easier for residents without German ancestry to gain citizenship. Integration is generally fairly successful, although larger immigrant communities tend to stick together.

RELIGION

The majority religions in Germany are Protestantism and Catholicism, which claim roughly equal numbers of followers. Some regions have higher concentrations of one branch – Bavaria is staunchly Catholic, for example.

The most significant minority religion is Islam, with about 1.8 million adherents, many of them immigrants. Around 60,000 Jews also live in Germany, little more than a tenth of pre-WWII numbers. Many are actually from the former Soviet Union, attracted by the relaxed immigration and citizenship deals offered around the time of reunification.

Germans who belong to a registered denomination have to pay a church tax on top of their income tax, usually around 10% of their salary. Unsurprisingly, fewer and fewer people are choosing to declare their religious affiliation!

ARTS

Germany's meticulously creative population has made major contributions to international culture, particularly during the 18th century when the Saxon courts at Weimar and Dresden attracted some of the greatest minds of Europe. With such rich traditions to fall back on, inspiration has seldom been in short supply for the new generations of German artists, despite the upheavals of the country's recent history.

Literature

The undisputed colossus of the German arts was Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: poet, dramatist, painter, politician, scientist, philosopher, landscape gardener and perhaps the last European to achieve the Renaissance ideal of excellence in many fields. His greatest work, the drama *Faust*, is the definitive version of the legend, showing the archetypal human search for meaning and knowledge.

Goethe's close friend Friedrich Schiller was a poet, dramatist and novelist. His most famous work is the dramatic cycle *Wallenstein*, based on the life of a treacherous general of the Thirty Years' War who plotted to make himself arbiter of the empire. Schiller's other great play, *William Tell*, dealt with the right of the oppressed to rise against tyranny.

On the scientific side, Alexander von Humboldt contributed much to environmentalism through his studies of the relationship of plants and animals to their physical surroundings. His contemporary, the philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, created an all-embracing classical philosophy that is still influential today.

Postwar literature in both Germanys was influenced by the politically focused Gruppe 47. It included writers such as Günter Grass, winner of the 1999 Nobel Prize for Literature, whose modern classic, *Die Blechtrommel* (The Tin Drum), humorously follows German history through the eyes of a young boy who refuses to grow up. Christa Wolf, an East German novelist and Gruppe 47 writer, won high esteem in both Germanys. Her 1963 story *Der geteilte Himmel* (Divided Heaven) tells of a young woman whose fiancé abandons her for life in the West.

A wave of recent novelists has addressed modern history in a lighter fashion. *Helden wie wir* (Heroes Like Us) by Thomas Brussig, an eastern German, tells the story of a man whose penis brings about the collapse of the Berlin Wall, while the GDR's demise is almost incidental to the eponymous barfly in Sven Regener's *Herr Lehmann* (Mr Lehmann). Also from Berlin is Russian-born Wladimir Kaminer, whose books document the stranger-than-fiction lives of his many friends and acquaintances in the capital. He's currently the hot author and *Russian Disco* has been translated into English. There's also acclaim for Robert Löhr's *Der Schachautomat* (The Chess Automat), a novel about a 19th-century puppet that plays chess.

Cinema & TV

Since the foundation of the UFA studios in Potsdam in 1917, Germany has had an active and successful film industry. Marlene Dietrich (1901–92) became the country's

first international superstar and sex symbol, starting out in silent films and later moving to Hollywood. Director Fritz Lang also made a name for himself, with complex films like *Metropolis* (1926) and *M* (1931).

During the Third Reich, the arts were devoted mainly to propaganda, with grandiose projects and realist art extolling the virtues of German nationhood. The best-known Nazi-era director was Leni Riefenstahl (1902–2003) whose *Triumph of the Will* (1934), depicting the Nuremberg rallies, won great acclaim but later rendered her unemployable. The controversy surrounding her personal politics dogged her for much of her life.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a great revival of German cinema, spearheaded by energetic, politically aware young directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Wim Wenders, Volker Schlöndorff and Margarethe von Trotta.

Most recently, Wolfgang Becker's GDR comedy *Good Bye Lenin!* (2003) was a surprise smash hit worldwide. One of the most powerful recent movies has been Marc Rothemund's *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days* (2006). It's a harrowing true story about a woman who protested against the Nazis in Munich and paid the ultimate price.

Meanwhile, German TV still shows a real predilection for showing musical variety shows long on hokum and schmaltz. After a few beers they're a hoot.

Music

Forget brass bands and oompah music – few countries can claim the impressive musical heritage of Germany. Even a partial list of household names would have to include Johann Sebastian Bach, Georg Friedrich Händel, Ludwig van Beethoven, Richard Strauss, Robert Schumann, Johannes Brahms, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, Richard Wagner and Gustav Mahler, all of whom are celebrated in museums, exhibitions and festivals around the country.

These musical traditions continue to thrive: the Berlin Philharmonic, Dresden Opera and Leipzig Orchestra are known around the world, and musical performances are hosted almost daily in every major theatre in the country.

Germany has also made significant contributions to the contemporary music

scene. Internationally renowned artists include punk icon Nina Hagen, '80s balloon girl Nena, and rock bands from the Scorpions to Die Toten Hosen and current darlings Wir sind Helden. Gothic and hard rock are disproportionately well-followed in Germany, largely thanks to the success of death-obsessed growlers Rammstein.

For real innovation, though, the German dance music scene is second to none, particularly in Frankfurt-am-Main and Berlin. Kraftwerk pioneered the original electronic sounds, which were then popularised in raves and clubs such as Berlin's Tresor in the early '90s. Paul van Dyk was among the first proponents of euphoric trance, which pushed club music firmly into the commercial mainstream; DJs such as Ian Pooley, Westbam and Ellen Allien now play all over the world. Producers and remixers Jazzanova also have a great worldwide reputation on the more jazzy, down tempo side of things.

Meanwhile what's old is new. Max Raabe and his Palast Orchester have been touring the country to sold out performances of the classic Berlin cabaret-style music of the 1920s and 1930s. Less old but still new, many local groups such as Wir sind Helden, Silbermond, Tomte and Kettcar have attracted a loyal following by playing the festival circuit with German-language rock.

Architecture

The scope of German architecture is such that it could easily be the focus of an entire visit. The first great wave of buildings came with the Romanesque period (800–1200), examples of which can be found at Trier Cathedral, the churches of Cologne and the chapel of Charlemagne's palace in Aachen.

The Gothic style (1200–1500) is best viewed at Freiburg's Münster cathedral, Cologne's Dom (cathedral) and the Marienkirche in Lübeck. Red-brick Gothic structures are common in the north of Germany, with buildings such as Schwerin's Dom and Stralsund's Nikolikirche.

For classic baroque, Balthasar Neumann's superb Residenz in Würzburg, the magnificent cathedral in Passau and the many classics of Dresden's old centre are must-sees. The neoclassical period of the 19th century was led by Karl Friedrich Schinkel, whose name crops up all over Germany.

In 1919 Walter Gropius founded the Bauhaus movement in an attempt to meld theoretical concerns of architecture with the practical problems faced by artists and craftspeople. The Bauhaus flourished in Dessau, but with the arrival of the Nazis, Gropius left for Harvard University.

Albert Speer was Hitler's favourite architect, known for his pompous neoclassical buildings and grand plans to change the face of Berlin. Most of his epic works ended up unbuilt or flattened by WWII.

Frankfurt shows Germany's take on the modern highrise. For a glimpse of the future of German architecture, head to Potsdamer Platz, Leipziger Platz and the new government area north of the Reichstag in Berlin, which are becoming glitzy swathes of glass, concrete and chrome.

Visual Arts

The Renaissance came late to Germany but flourished once it took hold, replacing the predominant Gothic style. The draughtsman Albrecht Dürer of Nuremberg was one of the world's finest portraitists, as was the prolific Lucas Cranach the Elder, who worked in Wittenberg for more than 45 years. The baroque period brought great sculpture, including works by Andreas Schlüter in Berlin, while romanticism produced some of Germany's most famous paintings, best exemplified by Caspar David Friedrich and Otto Runge.

At the turn of the 20th century, expressionism established itself with great names like Swiss-born Paul Klee and the Russian-born painter Wassily Kandinsky, who were also associated with the Bauhaus design school. By the 1920s, art had become more radical and political, with artists like George Grosz, Otto Dix and Max Ernst exploring the new concepts of Dada and surrealism. Käthe Kollwitz is one of the era's few major female artists, known for her social realist drawings.

The only works encouraged by the Nazis were of the epic style of propaganda artists like Mjöltnir; nonconforming artists such as sculptor Ernst Barlach and painter Emil Nolde were declared 'degenerate' and their pieces destroyed or appropriated for secret private collections.

Since 1945 abstract art has been a mainstay of the German scene, with key figures

like Joseph Beuys, Monica Bonvicini and Anselm Kiefer achieving worldwide reputations. Leipzig has recently emerged as a hotspot for art. Figurative painters like Neo Rauch are generating much acclaim.

Theatre & Dance

In the 1920s Berlin was the theatrical capital of Germany; its most famous practitioner was the poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956). Brecht introduced Marxist concepts into his plays, aiming to encourage moral debate by detaching the audience from what was happening on stage.

Today Berlin once again has the most dynamic theatre scene in the country, as Volksbühne director Frank Castorf vies with Schaubühne head Thomas Ostermeier to capture the attention of young audiences neglected by the major stages, choosing mainly modern, provocative works. Dance, too, is undergoing a renaissance – although it is in Frankfurt. American William Forsythe has put together what is possibly the world's most innovative dance troupe, the Forsythe Company, which tours almost constantly.

SPORT

Football (soccer) is the number one spectator sport in Germany, as in most other European countries. Germany hosted the cup in 2006 in new or rebuilt stadiums all over the country. Although Germany finished third (Italy beat France in the final in Berlin), it was widely praised for hosting a fantastic series of matches and many Germans took great pride in their time on the world stage.

The German national team actually did better than many expected, even if it couldn't add another World Cup victory to its previous two. The Bundesliga is the top national league, with seasons running from September to June; notable top-flight teams include Bayern München, Borussia Dortmund and Hertha BSC (Berlin's major team). The DFB (www.dfb.de) is the national body responsible for all levels of the game.

International sports are also very well attended, especially when the relevant national teams are in form; major tennis, athletics, Grand Prix, swimming, cycling and water polo events are all features of the German sporting calendar.

ENVIRONMENT The Land

Germany covers 356,866 sq km and can be divided from north to south into several geographical regions.

The Northern Lowlands are a broad expanse of flat, low-lying land that sweeps across the northern third of the country from the Netherlands into Poland. The landscape is characterised by moist heaths interspersed with pastures and farmland.

The complex Central Uplands region divides northern Germany from the south. Extending from the deep schisms of the Rhineland massifs to the Black Forest, the Bavarian Forest, the Ore Mountains and the Harz Mountains, these low mountain ranges are Germany's heartland. The Rhine and Main Rivers, important waterways for inland shipping, cut through the southwest of this region. With large deposits of coal as well as favourable transport conditions, this was one of the first regions in Germany to undergo industrialisation.

The Alpine Foothills, wedged between the Danube and the Alps, are typified by sub-alpine plateaus and rolling hills, and moors in eastern regions around the Danube.

Germany's Alps lie entirely within Bavaria and stretch from the large, glacially formed Lake Constance in the west to Berchtesgaden in Germany's southeastern corner. Though lower than the mountains to their south, many summits are well above 2000m, rising dramatically from the Alpine Foothills to the 2962m Zugspitze, Germany's highest mountain.

Wildlife

Few species of flora and fauna are unique to Germany. Unique, however, is the importance Germans place on their forests, the prettiest of which are mixed-species deciduous forests planted with beech, oak, maple and birch. You'll find that many cities even have their own *Stadtwald* (city forest). Alpine regions bloom in spring with orchids, cyclamen, gentians, edelweiss and more; and the heather blossom on the Lüneburg Heath, north of Hanover, is stunning in August.

Apart from human beings, common mammals include deer, wild pigs, rabbits, foxes and hares. The chances of seeing these in summer are fairly good, especially in eastern Germany. On the coasts you will find

seals and, throughout Germany, falcons, hawks, storks and migratory geese are a common sight.

National Parks

Berchtesgaden (in the Bavarian Alps), the Wattenmeer parks in Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony and Hamburg, and the Unteres Odertal, a joint German-Polish endeavour, are highlights among Germany's 13 national parks. There are also a number of Unesco-listed sites in Germany, including the Wartburg castle in Eisenach.

Environmental Issues

Germans are fiercely protective of their natural surroundings. Households and businesses participate enthusiastically in waste-recycling programmes. A refund system applies to a wide range of glass bottles and jars, while containers for waste paper and glass can be found in each neighbourhood. The government is a signatory of the major international treaties on climate change and runs its own campaigns to save energy and reduce CO2 emissions domestically; a controversial 'eco-tax' was recently added to the price of petrol.

FOOD & DRINK Staples & Specialities

Wurst (sausage), in its hundreds of forms, is by far the most universal main dish. Regional favourites include bratwurst (spiced sausage), *Weisswurst* (veal sausage) and *Blutwurst* (blood sausage). Other popular main dishes include *Rippenspeer* (spare ribs), *Rotwurst* (black pudding), *Rostbrät* (grilled meat), *Putenbrust* (turkey breast) and many forms of schnitzel (breaded pork or veal cutlet).

Potatoes feature prominently in German meals, as *Bratkartoffeln* (fried), *Kartoffelpüree* (mashed), Swiss-style *Rösti* (grated then fried) or *Pommes Frites* (french fries); a Thuringian speciality is *Klöße*, a ball of mashed and raw potato that is then cooked into a dumpling. A similar Bavarian version is the *Knödel*. *Spätzle*, a noodle variety from Baden-Württemberg, is a common alternative.

Germans are keen on rich desserts. Popular choices are the *Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte* (Black Forest cherry cake) – one worthwhile tourist trap – as well as endless varieties of

Apfeltasche (apple pastry). In the north you're likely to find berry *mus*, a sort of compote. Desserts and pastries are also often enjoyed during another German tradition, the 4pm coffee break.

DRINKS

Beer is the national beverage and it's one cultural phenomenon that must be adequately explored. The beer is excellent and relatively cheap. Each region and brewery has its own distinctive taste and body.

Vollbier is 4% alcohol by volume, *Export* is 5% and *Bockbier* is 6%. *Helles Bier* is light, while *dunkles Bier* is dark. *Export* is similar to, but much better than, typical international brews, while the *Pils* is more bitter. *Alt* is darker and more full-bodied. A speciality is *Weizenbier*, which is made with wheat instead of barley malt and served in a tall, 500mL glass. Nonalcoholic beers such as *Clausthaler* are also popular.

Eastern Germany's best beers hail from Saxony, especially Radeberger from near Dresden and Wernesgrüner from the Erzgebirge on the Czech border. *Berliner Weisse* is a low-alcohol wheat beer mixed with woodruff or raspberry syrup, seen as a bit of a tourist drink by locals. The breweries of Cologne produce *Kölsch*, always served in 200mL glasses to keep it fresh; in Bamberg *Schlenkerla Rauchbier* is smoked to a dark-red colour.

German wines are exported around the world, and for good reason. They are inexpensive and typically white, light and intensely fruity. A *Weinschorle* or *Spritzer* is white wine mixed with mineral water. The Rhine and Moselle Valleys are the classic wine-growing regions.

The most popular nonalcoholic choices are mineral water and soft drinks, coffee and fruit or black tea. Bottled water almost always comes bubbly (*mit Kohlensäure*) – order *ohne Kohlensäure* if you're bothered by bubbles.

Where to Eat & Drink

Increasingly, German towns of any size have bright and modern bistro-type restaurants serving a wide range of fresh and creative food. In addition you'll find no shortage of ethnic foods; Italian, Turkish, Greek and Chinese are all popular. Most pubs serve basic German food. If you're on

a low budget, you can get a feed at stand-up food stalls (*Schnellimbiss* or *Imbiss*). The food is usually reasonable and filling, ranging from döner kebabs to traditional German sausages with beer.

Much of the German daily and social life revolves around daytime cafés, which often serve meals and alcohol as well as coffee. The late-opening variety are great places to meet people.

For self-caterers, supermarkets are inexpensive and have a decent range. Make a couple of buying your drinks in supermarkets if your budget is tight.

Students can eat cheaply (though not always well) at university *Mensa* (cafeterias). ID is not always checked.

Vegetarians & Vegans

Most German restaurants will have at least a couple of vegetarian dishes on the menu, although it is advisable to check anything that doesn't specifically say it's meat-free, as bacon and chicken stock both seem to be common undeclared ingredients in German cuisine. Asian and Indian restaurants will generally be quite happy to make vegetarian dishes on demand. Vegans may find themselves having to explain exactly what they do and don't eat to get something suitable.

Habits & Customs

Restaurants always display their menus outside with prices, but watch for daily or lunch specials chalked onto blackboards. Lunch is the main meal of the day; getting a main meal in the evening is never a problem, but you may find that the dish or menu of the day only applies to lunch.

Rather than leaving money on the table, tip when you pay by stating a rounded-up figure or saying '*es stimmt so*' (that's the right amount). A tip of 10% is generally more than sufficient.

BERLIN

☎ 030 / pop 3.45 million

Apologies to Samuel Johnson, who coined the compliment to London, but in the 21st century it's he, or she, who is tired of *Berlin* who is tired of life. Even the English capital can't currently compete with the pace of change in its reborn German counterpart.

Just two decades ago this was still a divided city, split between the rival Cold War blocs of communist east and capitalist west. Today it's the European Shanghai, where building cranes watch over the skyline, and world-beating architectural icons – Norman Foster's Reichstag dome, Daniel Libeskind's Jewish Museum and Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial – pop up every few years.

Renowned for its diversity and tolerance, its alternative culture, its night-owl stamina and its affordability it might be. But the best thing about the German capital is the way it reinvents itself and isn't shackled by its powerful – and still palpable – history.

Tills ring in the halls of the gleaming Potsdamer Platz complex just down the road from Hitler's bunker, university stallholders sell novels opposite the site of a major book-burning and bits of the 'Berlin Wall' (they're not) are hawked everywhere alongside döner kebabs and Würst.

Students rub shoulders with Russian émigrés, fashion boutiques inhabit monumental GDR buildings, and the nightlife has long left the American sector, as clubbers watch the sun rise in the city's east.

In short, all human life is here, and don't expect to get much sleep.

HISTORY

United, divided, united again, Berlin has a rollercoaster past. The merger of two medieval trading posts, it enjoyed its first stint as a capital when in 1701 it became the leading city of the state of Brandenburg-Prussia. Under Prussian King Friedrich I and his son, Friedrich II, it flourished culturally and politically.

The Industrial Revolution, when commercial giants like Siemens emerged, also boosted the city. As workers flooded to Berlin's factories, its population doubled between 1850 and 1870. 'Deutschland' was a latecomer to the table of nationhood, but in 1871 Berlin was again proclaimed a capital, this time of the newly unified Germany.

By 1900 the city was home to almost two million people, but it fell into decline after WWI. Defeated and left to pay heavy war reparations, Germany suffered economic crisis and hyperinflation. There was a brief, early communist uprising in the capital, led by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg (whose names now adorn East Berlin

streets). However, that was quickly quashed and during the following Weimar Republic (1919–1933) Berlin gained a reputation for decadence. Cabaret, the savage political theatre of Bertolt Brecht (see p443), expressionist art and jazz all flourished as Berliners partied to forget their troubles.

Worse horrors arose with Hitler and the Third Reich. Berlin became a showground for Nazi power from the mid-1930s – including during the 1936 Olympics – and so suffered heavily during WWII. During the 'Battle of Berlin' from August 1943 to March 1944, British bombers hammered the city nightly. The Soviets also shelled Berlin and invaded from the east.

In August 1945 the Potsdam Conference (see Schloss Cecilienhof, p446) split the capital into zones occupied by the four victorious powers – the USA, Britain, France and the Soviet Union. In June 1948 the three Western Allies introduced a separate currency and administration in their sectors. In response, the Soviets blockaded West Berlin. Only a huge airlift by the Allies managed to keep the city stocked with food and supplies. In October 1949 East Berlin became the capital of the GDR.

The Berlin Wall, built in August 1961, was originally intended to prevent the drain of skilled labour from the East, but soon became a Cold War symbol. For decades, East Berlin and West Berlin developed separately, until Hungarians breached the Iron Curtain in May 1989 and the Berlin Wall followed on 9 November. By 1 July 1990, when the western *Deutschmark* was adopted in the GDR, the Wall was being hacked to pieces. The Unification Treaty signed on 3 October that year designated Berlin the official capital of Germany, and in June 1991 the parliament voted to move the seat of government from Bonn back to Berlin. In 1999, that was finally achieved.

Not everything has been plain sailing since. Without the huge national subsidies provided during the decades of division, the newly unified Berlin has struggled economically. In 2001 the centre-right mayor resigned amid corruption allegations, leaving the city effectively bankrupt. Current centre-left mayor Klaus Wowereit is popular but has made few inroads into the crisis, and the city's public debts now exceed €58 billion. Wowereit tries to look on the bright

BERLIN IN TWO DAYS

Investigate the **Brandenburg Gate** (opposite) area, including the **Reichstag** (p434) and the **Holocaust Memorial** (p434). Walk east along Unter den Linden, stopping at the **Bebelplatz book-burning memorial** (p435). Veer through the **Museumsinsel** (p435) for window-shopping and café-hopping through **Hackescher Markt** (p435). In the evening, explore the bars of Prenzlauer Berg, along Kastanienallee, Pappelallee and the 'LSD' triangle between Lette-, Stargarder- and Duckerstrasse. Stop in **Wohnzimmer** (p444).

Start the next day at the **East Side Gallery** (p437) remnant of the Berlin Wall, before heading for **Checkpoint Charlie** (p437) and the nearby **Jewish Museum** (p437). Take the U-Bahn to **Kurfürstendamm** (p437) and catch a scenic bus 100 back to the **Fernsehturm** (p436). Later, explore Friedrichshain nightlife around Simon-Dach-Strasse and Boxhagener Platz and perhaps go clubbing – **Watergate** (p443) is good. Alternatively head for the **Philharmonie** (p443) or the **Berliner Ensemble** (p443).

side, once famously declaring, 'Berlin is poor, but sexy'. He got that right, at least.

ORIENTATION

Standing at Berlin's Brandenburg Gate, on the former east-west divide, you can see many major sights. Looking east, your eye follows the road Unter den Linden, past the Museumsinsel (Museum Island) in the Spree River, to the needle-shaped Fernseh-turm (TV tower) at Alexanderplatz.

If you turn west, you face the golden Sie-gessäule (Victory Column) along the equally huge thoroughfare of Strasse des 17 Juni, which cuts through the middle of Berlin's central park, the Tiergarten. To your right, just near the Brandenburg Gate, is the glass-domed Reichstag (Parliament) and beyond that the new government district and even newer Hauptbahnhof (main train station). The cluster of skyscrapers diagonally off to the left, with the unusual, circus-tent roof, is Potsdamer Platz.

On the other, far west side of the Tiergarten, out of sight near Zoo station, lies the one-time centre of West Berlin, including the shopping street of the Kurfürstendamm (or 'Ku'damm').

Although wealthier, more mature Berliners still happily frequent the west, the eastern districts are the most vibrant. Even 'Mitte', or the centre, now lies east of the former Wall. As Mitte heads northeast, it merges into the trendy district of Prenzlauer Berg. Friedrichshain, another nightlife hotspot, is found several kilometres east of the centre, around Ostbahnhof.

Kreuzberg, south of Mitte, was the alternative hub of West Berlin and is still hanging

in there, with some interesting restaurants and bars. So, too, are the better-heeled southwestern districts of Charlottenburg, Schöneberg and Wilmersdorf.

Maps

Excellent free maps of the centre are available from tourist offices and many hotels. If you're heading to the suburbs, newsagents and bookshops sell full-size maps from publishers Falk, Michelin and ADAC.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

Dussman (Map pp432-3; ☎ 205 1111; Friedrichstrasse 90; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 S-Bahn Friedrichstrasse) Books (including in English), CDs and DVDs over five huge floors.

Discount Card

Berlin-Potsdam Welcome Card (48/72hr card €16/22) Free public transport, plus museum and entertainment discounts.

Internet Access

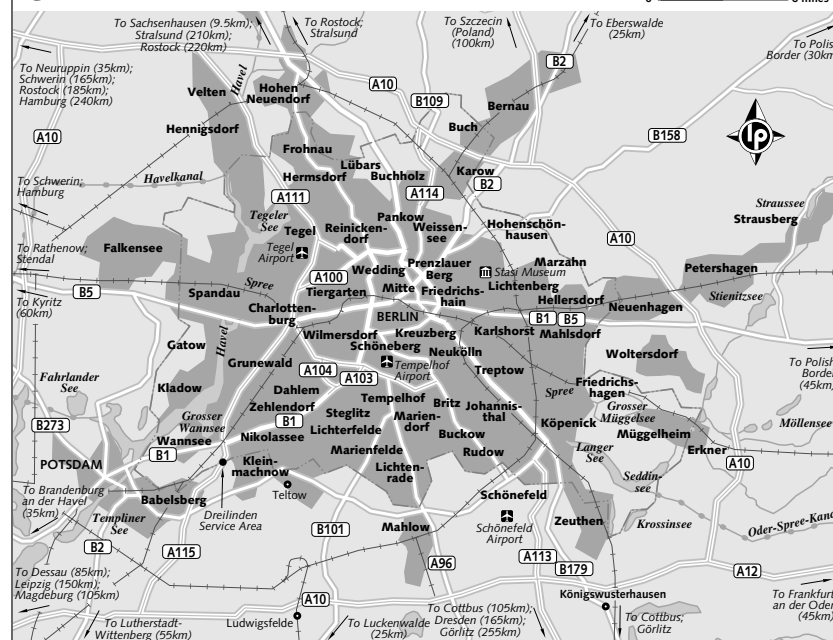
@ **Internet** (Map p438; ☎ 2977 6270; 1st fl, main hall, Ostbahnhof; per 15 min €1; ☎ 10am-10pm)

Al Hamra (Map pp432-3; ☎ 4285 0095; Raumerstrasse 16; per 15 min €1; ☎ from 10am; 🚶 Eberswalder Strasse)

easyInternetcafé (Map p439; ☎ 7870 6446; www.easyInternetcafe.com; Kurfürstendamm 224; ☎ 6.30am-2am; 🚶 Kurfürstendamm/Zoologischer Garten) One of several throughout the city.

Surf & Sushi (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2838 4898; Oranienburger Strasse 17; per 30 min €2.50; ☎ from noon Mon-Sat, from 1pm Sun; 🚶 Oranienburger Strasse/Hackescher Markt)

GREATER BERLIN



Laundry

Schnell und Sauber (€5; ☎ 6am-11pm) Charlottenburg (Map p439; Uhländstrasse 53); Mitte (Map pp432-3; Torstrasse 115)

Medical Services

Kassenärztliche Bereitschaftsdienst (Public Physicians' Emergency Service; ☎ 310 031) Phone referral service.

Post

Post office (Map pp432-3; Georgenstrasse 12; ☎ 8am-10pm) Inside Friedrichstrasse station.

Tourist Information

Berlin Tourismus Marketing (☎ 250 025; www.berlin-tourist-information.de) Europa-Center (Map p439; Budapeststrasse 45; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun); Brandenburger Tor (Map pp432-3; ☎ 10am-6pm); Fernsehturm (Map pp432-3; ☎ 10am-6pm)

EurAide (Map p439; www.euraide.de; Zoo Station; ☎ 8.30am-noon Mon-Sat Jun-Oct, 1-4.45pm Mon-Fri Nov-May) English-language service.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Berlin is generally safe and tolerant. Walking alone at night on city streets isn't risky.

Begging on the street and in the U-Bahn is increasing, but aggressive demands are rare. Take the usual precautions against theft in major stations.

SIGHTS

Unless otherwise indicated, where sights are grouped together they are all accessed by the same station listed at the beginning of the section.

Brandenburg Gate

Finished in 1791 as one of 18 city gates, the neoclassical **Brandenburger Tor** (Map pp432-3; Pariser Platz; 🚶 S-Bahn Unter den Linden) became an east-west crossing point after the Wall was built in 1961. A symbol of Berlin's division, it was a place US presidents loved to grandstand. John F Kennedy passed by in 1963. Ronald Reagan appeared in 1987 to appeal to the Russian leader, 'Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!'. In 1989, more than 100,000 Germans poured through it, as the Wall fell. Five years later, Bill Clinton somewhat belatedly noted: 'Berlin is free'. The crowning Quadriga statue, a winged

MITTE & PRENZLAUER BERG

INFORMATION	Deutsche Guggenheim.....	23 D5	SLEEPING	Ackselhaus.....	42 F3
Al Hamra.....	24 D5	Adlon.....	43 B5	Arcolet Velvet.....	(see 83)
Australian Embassy.....	2 E6	Filmuseum.....	44 E6	Art'otel Berlin Mitte.....	44 E6
Berlin Tourismus Marketing.....	(see 25)	Former Site of Hitler's Bunker.....	27 B6	Aurora.....	45 F1
Berlin Tourismus Marketing.....	(see 21)	Gemäldegalerie.....	28 A6	Circus Hostel.....	46 E4
Canadian Embassy.....	3 B6	Hackesche Höfe.....	29 E4	Clyxstay Hostel.....	47 E3
Dussman.....	4 C5	Hamburger Bahnhof.....	30 B3	Clyxstay Hostel.....	47 E3
French Embassy.....	5 B5	Haus der Kulturen der Welt.....	31 A5	Dorint am Gendarmenmarkt.....	49 C6
Irish Embassy.....	6 C6	Holocaust Memorial.....	32 B5	Eastener Hostel.....	50 C3
Netherlands Embassy.....	7 E5	Humboldt Universität.....	33 D5	EastSeven.....	51 E3
New Zealand Embassy.....	8 C6	Lift.....	34 B6	Garden Hotel Honigmond.....	52 C3
Post Office.....	9 C5	Neue Synagogue.....	35 D4	Heart of Gold.....	53 D4
Schnell & Sauber.....	10 E3	Neues Kanzleramt.....	36 B5	Kunstlerheim Luise.....	54 B5
South African Embassy.....	11 A6	Panorama Observation Deck.....	37 B6	Lux 11.....	55 E4
Surf & Sushi.....	12 D4	Pergamonmuseum.....	38 D5	Reichstag.....	39 B5
UK Embassy.....	13 C5	Sony Center.....	(see 26)	Pension Amsterdam.....	57 E1
US Embassy.....	14 C5	Wall Victims Memorial.....	40 B5	Prinz Albert.....	58 E3
		World Time Clock.....	41 E4	Radisson SAS.....	59 E5

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Alte Nationalgalerie.....15 D5
- Altes Museum.....16 D5
- Bebelplatz.....17 D5
- Berliner Dom.....18 D5
- Berliner Mauer
- Dokumentationszentrum.....19 C2
- Bodemuseum.....20 D4
- Brandenburger Tor.....21 B5
- Carillon.....22 A5

EATING

- Amrit.....60 C4
- Borchardt.....61 C5
- Die Zwölf Apostel.....62 D5
- Duy Thai.....63 F2
- Imbiss W.....64 E2
- Kollwitzplatz Market.....65 F2
- Konnopke.....66 F2
- Nosh.....67 E4
- RNBS.....68 D1
- Sankt Oberholz.....69 D3
- Zoe.....71 E4

DRINKING

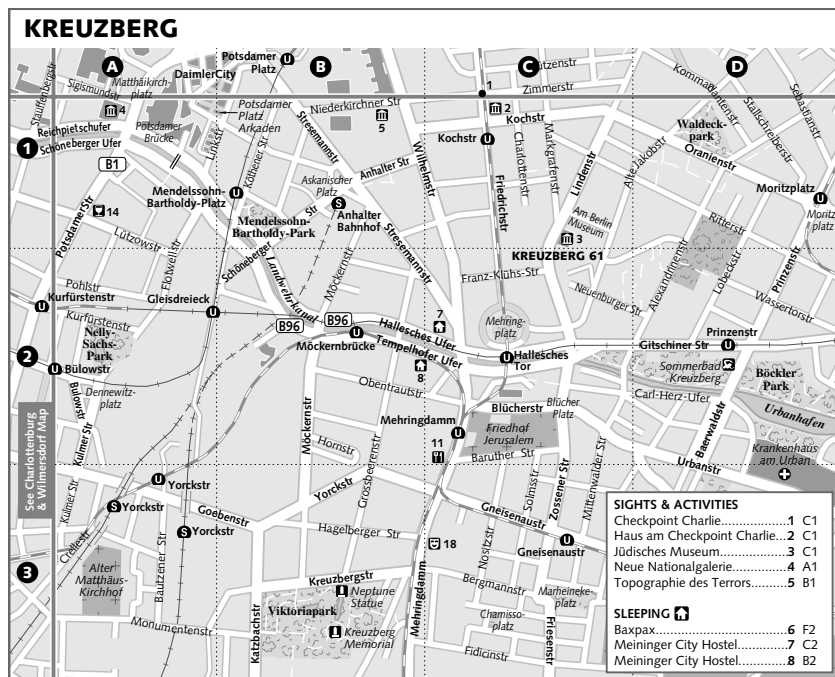
- Erdbeer.....72 E4
- Hotelbar.....73 E2
- Kauf Dich Glücklich.....74 E2
- Weinerei Cafe.....75 E3
- Wohnzimmer.....76 F1
- Zu Mir oder zu Dir?.....77 F1

ENTERTAINMENT

- Berliner Ensemble.....78 C4
- Berliner Philharmonie.....79 A6
- Kafe Moskau.....80 F5
- Kaffee Burger.....81 C3
- Staatsoper Unter den Linden.....82 D5
- Taches.....83 C4
- Weekend.....84 E4
- Zum Schmutzigen Hobby.....85 F2

SHOPPING

- Berlin Art and Nostalgia Market.....86 D5
- Galerie Lafayette.....87 C5



goddess in a horse-drawn chariot (once kidnapped by Napoleon and briefly taken to Paris), was cleaned in 2000 along with the rest of the structure.

Just to the west stands the glass-domed **Reichstagsgebäude** (Parliament Bldg; Map pp432-3; ☎ 2273 2152; www.bundestag.de; Platz der Republik 1; admission free; ☞ 8am-midnight, last admission 10pm), with four national flags fluttering. A fire here in 1933 allowed Hitler to blame the communists and grab power, while the Soviets raised their flag here in 1945 to signal Nazi Germany's defeat. Today, the building is once again the German seat of power, but it's the glass cupola added during the 1999 refurbishment that some 10,000 people a day flock to see. Walking along the internal spiral walkway by British star architect Lord Norman Foster feels like being in a postmodern beehive, and there are excellent vistas. To beat the one-hour queues, book a table for breakfast, lunch or dinner at the rooftop restaurant **Käfer** (☎ 2262 9935; www.feinkost-kaefer.de), which uses a separate entrance. With young children in tow, you're allowed to bypass the queue, too.

The Reichstag is part of the new **Government District**, which also includes the **Neues Kanzleramt** (New Federal Chancellery; Map pp432-3; Willy-Brandt-Strasse 1), the office and residence of the chancellor.

The Reichstag overlooks the **Tiergarten** (see p436). Meanwhile to the building's south stands the **Wall Victims Memorial** (Map pp432-3; Scheidemannstrasse), commemorating the 191 people who died trying to cross from East to West – the last just nine months before the Wall fell.

Further south again is the **Denkmal für die ermordeten Juden Europas** (Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe or Holocaust Memorial; Map pp432-3; ☎ 2639 4336/4311; www.stiftung-denkmal.de; Cora-Berliner-Strasse 1; admission free; field ☞ 24hr, information centre 10am-8pm Tue-Sun, last entry 7.15pm; ☒ Potsdamer Platz/S-Bahn Unter den Linden) a grid of 2711 'stelae' or differently shaped concrete columns set over 19,000m² of gently undulating ground. This 'forest' can be entered from any side, but presents different perspectives as you move through it. For historical background, designer Peter Eisenman has created an underground in-



formation centre in the southeast corner of the site. Weekly **English tours** (€3; ☞ 4pm Sun) meet near the **lift** (Map pp432-3) here.

Unter den Linden

Celebrated in literature and lined with lime (or linden) trees, the street **Unter den Linden** (☒ S-Bahn Unter den Linden) was the fashionable avenue of old Berlin. Today, after decades of communist neglect, it's been rebuilt and regained that status. The thoroughfare stretches east from the Brandenburger Tor to the Museumsinsel, passing shops, embassies, operas, the **Deutsche Guggenheim** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 202 0930; www.deutsche-guggenheim.de; Unter den Linden 13-15; adult/concession €4/3, free Mon; ☞ 11am-8pm, to 10pm Thu; ☒ Französische Strasse) and the **Humboldt Universität** (Map pp432-3; ☒ S-Bahn Friedrichstrasse).

Stop by **Bebelplatz** (Map pp432-3; ☒ Französische Strasse), opposite the university, where there's a **book-burning memorial** – a reminder of the first major Nazi book-burning, which occurred in May 1933. A transparent window tile in the stone pavement reveals empty bookshelves below.

SAVE ON MUSEUMS ENTRY

With some leading Berlin museums costing €8 each, don't ignore the **SchauLust Museum Berlin Pass** (☎ 250 025). Available from tourist offices for €12, it allows you free admission to more than 70 museums (not including Checkpoint Charlie or the Jewish Museum) over three days. Without any pass, all museums listed on www.smb.museum are free on Thursday for four hours before closing time.

Museumsinsel

The so-called **Museums Island** (Map pp432-3; ☒ all museums 2090 5577; www.smb.museum; adult/concession €8/4 each, or €12/6 all; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 10pm Thu; ☒ S-Bahn Hackescher Markt) lies in the Spree River. On it stands the **Pergamonmuseum** (Map pp432-3; Am Kupfergraben; ☒ S-Bahn Hackescher Markt), which is to Berlin what the British Museum is to London: a feast of Mesopotamian, Greek and Roman antiquities looted by archaeologists. The museum takes its name from the Pergamon Altar inside, but the real highlight of the collection is the Ishtar Gate from Babylon.

Meanwhile, the **Alte Nationalgalerie** (Old National Gallery; Map pp432-3; Bodestraße 1-3; ☒ S-Bahn Hackescher Markt) houses 19th-century European sculpture and painting; the **Altes Museum** (Map pp432-3; Am Lustgarten; ☒ S-Bahn Hackescher Markt) has art from ancient Rome and Greece; and the reopened **Bodemuseum** (Map pp432-3; Monbijoubrücke; ☒ S-Bahn Hackescher Markt) houses sculpture, Byzantine art and painting from the Middle Ages to the 19th century. Watch for special exhibitions at each.

Overlooking the 'island' is the **Berliner Dom** (Berlin Cathedral; Map pp432-3; adult/concession/under 14 €5/3/free). The nearby **Deutsches Historisches Museum** (German History Museum; Map pp432-3; ☎ 203 040; www.dhm.de; Unter den Linden 2; admission €4, free Mon; ☞ 10am-6pm) has a new permanent exhibition on national history, but is still arguably most notable for the glass-walled spiral staircase by modernist architect IM Pei (creator of the Louvre's glass pyramid).

Hackescher Markt

A complex of shops and apartments around eight courtyards, the **Hackesche Höfe** (Map pp432-3; ☒ S-Bahn Hackescher Markt) is Germany's largest live/work space and a major attraction

of 21st-century Berlin. Despite increasing commercialisation – Adidas, Puma and, gulp, Hugo Boss recently opened stores – the neighbourhood retains sufficient cutting-edge streetwear boutiques to woo savvy young consumers.

Shops, cafés and restaurants are the main draw here, but you'll also find the **Neue Synagoge** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 8802 8451; www.cjudaicum.de; Oranienburger Strasse 28-30; adult/concession €3/2; 🕒 10am-8pm Sun & Mon, to 6pm Tue-Thu, to 5pm Fri, reduced hr Nov-Apr), with its history of local Jewish life. Plus, there's the counter-cultural cum shopping centre of **Tacheles** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 282 6185; Oranienburger Strasse 54-56) in a bombed-out department store.

Further north, the spectacular gallery of the **Hamburger Bahnhof** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 3978 3439; www.smb.museum; Invalidenstrasse 50, Mitte; adult/concession €6/3; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Hauptbahnhof/Lehrter Stadtbahnhof) showcases works by Warhol, Lichtenstein, Rauschenberg and Joseph Beuys.

TV Tower

Call it Freudian or call it *Ostalgie* (nostalgia for the communist East or *Ost*), but Berlin's once-mocked socialist **Fernsehturm** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 242 3333; www.berlinerfernsehturm.de; adult/concession €7.50/3.50; 🕒 10-1am; 🚶 Alexanderplatz) is fast becoming its most-loved symbol. Originally erected in 1969 and the city's tallest structure, its central bauble was decorated as a giant football for the 2006 Fifa World Cup™, while its 368m outline still pops up in numerous souvenirs. That said, ascending 207m to the revolving (but musty) Telecafé is a less singular experience than visiting the Reichstag dome.

The Turm dominates **Alexanderplatz**, a former livestock and wool market that became the lowlife district chronicled by Alfred Döblin's 1929 novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* and then developed as a 1960s communist showpiece.

Even in a city so often described as one big building site, today's Alexanderplatz is an unusual hive of construction activity as it is transformed into the next Potsdamer Platz-style development. However, its communist past still echoes through the retro **World Time Clock** (Map pp432-3) and along the portentous **Karl-Marx-Allee**, which leads several kilometres east from the square to Friedrichshain.

Tiergarten

From the Reichstag (see p434), the Tiergarten park's **carillon** (Map pp432-3; John-Foster-Dulles-Allee; bus 100 or 200) and the **Haus der Kulturen der Welt** (House of World Cultures; Map pp432-3; John-Foster-Dulles-Allee) are clearly visible. The latter was the US contribution to the 1957 International Building Exposition and it's easy to see why locals call it the 'pregnantyster'.

Further west, the wings of the **Siegessäule** (Victory Column; Map p439; bus 100 or 200) were the *Wings of Desire* in that famous Wim Wenders film. This golden angel was built to commemorate Prussian military victories in the 19th century. Today, as the end point of the annual Christopher Street Parade, she's also a gay icon. However, there are better views than those at the column's peak.

A short walk south from here is a cluster of interesting embassy buildings and museums, including the **Bauhaus Archiv** (off Map pp434-5; ☎ 254 0020; www.bauhaus.de; Klingelhöferstrasse 14; adult/concession €6/3; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Mon; 🚶 Nollendorfplatz), with drawings, chairs and other Modernist objects from the famous Bauhaus school of design – as well as a very tempting shop. The school itself survives in Dessau (see p464).

The **Berliner Philharmonie**, founded in 1961, (see p443) and yet more museums are found a little east in the **Kulturforum** (Map pp432-3; 🚶 S-Bahn Potsdamer Platz). These include the spectacular **Gemäldegalerie** (Picture Gallery; Map pp432-3; ☎ 266 2951; www.smb.museum; Matthäuskirchplatz 4-6; adult/concession €6/3; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 10pm Thu) showing European painting from the 13th to the 18th centuries. Nearby is the **Neue Nationalgalerie** (Map pp434-5; ☎ 266 2951; www.smb.museum; Potsdamer Strasse 50; adult/concession €6/3; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, to 10pm Thu, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun). Housing 19th- and 20th-century works by Picasso, Klee, Miró and many German expressionists, it was built by Bauhaus director Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Potsdamer Platz

The lid was symbolically sealed on capitalism's victory over socialism in Berlin when this postmodern temple to mammon was erected in 2000 over the former death strip. Under the big-top, glass-tent roof of the **Sony Center** (Map pp432-3; 🚶 or S-Bahn Potsdamer Platz) and along the malls of the Lego-like **DaimlerCity** (Map pp432-3; 🚶 or S-Bahn Potsdamer Platz), people swarm in and around shops,

restaurants, offices, loft apartments, clubs, a cinema, a luxury hotel and a casino – all revitalising what was the busiest square in prewar Europe.

During the Berlin Film Festival (see p438), Potsdamer Platz welcomes Hollywood A-listers. In between, you can rub shoulders with German cinematic heroes – particularly Marlene Dietrich – at the **Filmmuseum** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 300 9030; www.filmmuseum-berlin.de; Potsdamer Strasse 2, Tiergarten; adult/concession €6/4; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu). There's also 'Europe's fastest' lift to the **Panorama Observation Deck** (Map pp432-3; www.panoramapunkt.de; adult/concession €3.50/2.50; 🕒 11am-8pm).

But, as ever in Berlin, the past refuses to go quietly. Just north of Potsdamer Platz lies the former site of **Hitler's Bunker** (Map pp432-3). A little southeast lies the **Topographie des Terrors** (Map pp434-5; ☎ 2548 6703; www.topographie.de; Niederkirchner Strasse; admission free; 🕒 10am-8pm May-Sep, to dusk Oct-Apr), a sometimes shockingly graphic record of the Gestapo and SS headquarters that once stood here.

Jewish Museum

The Daniel Libeskind building that's the **Jüdisches Museum** (Map pp434-5; ☎ 2599 3300; www.juedisches-museum-berlin.de; Lindenstrasse 9-14; adult/concession €5/2.50; 🕒 10am-10pm Mon, to 8pm Tue-Sun, last entry 1hr before closing; 🚶 Hallesches Tor) is as much the attraction as the Jewish-German history collection within. Designed to disorientate and unbalance with its 'voids', cul-de-sacs, barbed metal fittings, slit windows and uneven floors, this still-somehow-beautiful

structure swiftly conveys the uncertainty and sometime terror of past Jewish life in Germany. It's a visceral experience, after which the huge collection itself demands your concentration. A highlight is the Garden of Exile, with tall concrete columns like trees and an uneven floor. The building's footprint is a ripped-apart Star of David.

Kurfürstendamm

West Berlin's legendary shopping thoroughfare, the Ku'damm has lost some of its cachet since the Wall fell, but is worth visiting. You will find the **Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche** (Map p439; ☎ 218 5023; Breitscheidplatz; Memorial Hall 🕒 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, Hall of Worship 🕒 9am-7.30pm) here, which remains in ruins – just as British bombers left it on 22 November 1943 – as an antiwar memorial. Only the broken west tower still stands.

Stasi Museum

The one-time secret police headquarters now houses the **Stasi Museum** (Map p431; ☎ 553 6854; House 1, Ruchestraße 103; adult/concession €3/2; 11am-6pm Tue-Fri, 2-6pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 Magdalenenstrasse). It's largely in German, but worth it to see the cunning surveillance devices and communist paraphernalia.

Tours

Guided tours are phenomenally popular; you can choose Third Reich, Wall, bunker, communist, boat or bicycle tours, as well as guided pub-crawls. Most cost €10 to €12 each.

TRACING THE BERLIN WALL

Just as the infamous Wall snaked across Berlin, so today's remnants are scattered across the city. The longest surviving stretch is the so-called **East Side Gallery** (Map p438; www.eastsidegallery.com; Mühlenstrasse; 🚶 S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) in Friedrichshain. Panels along this 1.3km of graffiti and art include the famous portrait of Soviet leader Brezhnev kissing GDR leader Erich Honecker and a Trabant car seemingly bursting through the (now crumbling) concrete.

Climbing the tower at the **Berliner Mauer Dokumentationszentrum** (Berlin Wall Documentation Centre; Map pp432-3; ☎ 464 1030; Bernauer Strasse 111; admission free; 🕒 10am-5pm; 🚶 S-Bahn Nordbahnhof) you overlook a memorial across the street – an artist's impression of the death strip behind an original stretch of wall. Photos and eyewitness testimonies are also on show.

In Kreuzberg, the famous sign at **Checkpoint Charlie** (Map pp434-5) still boasts 'You are now leaving the American sector'. But it and the reconstructed US guardhouse are just a bit of fun now. To learn about the seriously tragic past, visit **Haus am Checkpoint Charlie** (Map pp434-5; ☎ 253 7250; www.mauer-museum.com; Friedrichstrasse 43-45; adult/concession €9.50/5.50; 🕒 9am-10pm; 🚶 Kochstrasse/Stadtmittel). Tales of spectacular escape attempts include through tunnels, in hot-air balloons and even using a one-man submarine.

New Berlin (☎ 017-9973 0397; www.newberlintours.com) even offers free (yup, free) 3½-hour introductory tours. These leave at 11am and 1pm outside the Starbucks that's rather controversially located in Pariser Platz near the Brandenburg Gate. Guides are enthusiastic, knowledgeable... and accept tips.

Alternatively, you can beetle around Berlin in a Trabant car. **TrabiSafari** (☎ 2752273; www.trabi-safari.de; €25-35) operates from Gendarmenmarkt.

Other operators include:

Brewer's Berlin Tours (☎ 017-7388 1537; www.brewersberlintours.com).

Insider Tours (☎ 692 3149; www.insidertour.com)

Original Berlin Walks (☎ 301 9194; www.berlinwalks.com)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

International Film Festival Berlin (☎ 259 200; www.berlinale.de) The Berlinale, held in February, is Germany's answer to the Cannes and Venice film festivals.

Christopher Street Day (☎ 017-7277 3176; www.csd-berlin.de) On the last weekend in June, this is Germany's largest gay event.

Love Parade (☎ 308 8120; www.loveparade.net) At the time of research, Berlin's huge techno street parade was making a comeback, hopefully sustainable.

SLEEPING

Mitte & Prenzlauer Berg

BUDGET

Berlin's independent hostels far outdo the DJH (www.jugendherberge.de) offerings in the city.

Circus Hostels (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2839 1433; www.circus-hostel.de; Rosa-Luxemburg-Strasse 39 & Weinbergsweg 1a; dm €15-20, s/d €32/48, 2/4-person apt €75/130; ☎; M U-Bahn Rosenthaler Platz) These two are widely regarded as the best hostels in town, with great central locations, efficient staff, good bars and upbeat, tastefully decorated rooms in cheerful colours.

Citystay Hostel (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2362 4031; www.citystay.de; Rosenstrasse 16; dm €15-20, s/d €34/48; ☎; M S-Bahn Alexanderplatz/Hackescher Markt) Tucked away on a quiet street between the Fernsehturm and Hackescher Markt, this loft-style establishment uses expensive finishes and bright colours to create an upbeat atmosphere. Showers (none ensuite) are clean, but the sparse rooms lack cupboards.

Heart of Gold (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2900 3300; www.heartofgold-hostel.de; Johannistrasse 11; dm €14-19, s/d €40/60, apt €120-160, d without bathroom €48; ☎; M Oranienburger Tor) Even if you're not into the subtle *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* theming, this new building in Mitte still offers comfortable accommodation and a convenient location. A nice touch is the stylish tiled niches with stainless-steel sinks.

EastSeven (Map pp432-3; ☎ 9362 2240; www.eastseven.de; Schwedter Strasse 7; dm €17-23, s/d €35/55, bedding €3; ☎; M Senefelder Platz) It sounds like a boy band and this wonderful, cosy place is squeaky clean. Even the retro '70s look that emulates many nearby Prenzlauer bars has been achieved with the help of IKEA(!). The kitchen adjoins a lovely garden perfect for summer barbecues.

Aurora (Map pp432-3; ☎ 46995524; www.aurora-hostel.com; Pappelallee 21; s/d with bathroom €42/66, s/d/tr €26/48/64; ☎; M Eberswalder Strasse) The way of

the future, this sleek streamlined pad straddles the gulf between budget and boutique hotel. Decorated in neutral tones, it even has customisable coloured lighting, as in some famous Phillippe Starck abodes.

Pension Amsterdam (Map pp432-3; ☎ 448 0792; www.pension-amsterdam.de; Gleimstrasse 24; s €36.50, d €70-90, tr €75-120; ☎; M Schönhauser Allee) There's plenty to like about this contemporary *pension*: big apartments, full kitchens, rooms with four-poster beds and a buzzy downstairs café popular with a mixed gay crowd.

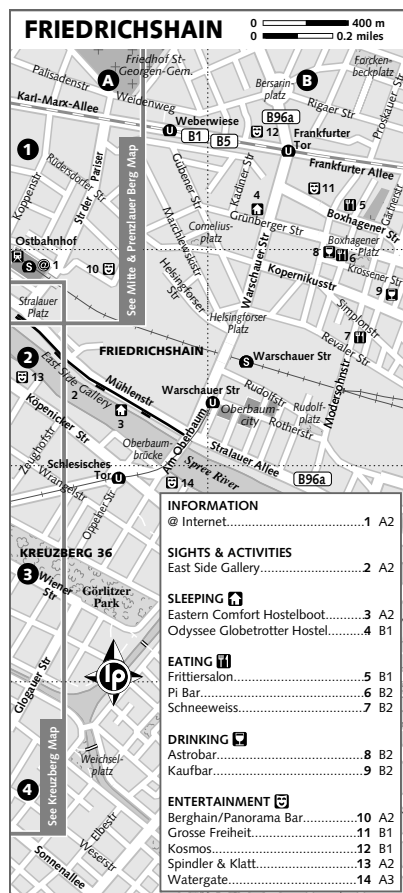
Other recommendations:

Eastener Hostel (Map pp432-3; ☎ 017-5112 3515; www.eastener-hostel.de; Novalisstrasse 15; dm €15-20, s/d €30/44; ☎) Small quiet, unassuming-looking hostel, where guests rave about the personal touch.

Mitte's (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2839 0965; www.backpacker.de; Chausseestrasse 102; dm €15-19, d €44-66; ☎; M Zinnowitzer Strasse) and **Baxpax** (Map pp434-5; ☎ 6951 8322; www.baxpax.de; Skalitzer Strasse 104; M Görlitzer Bahnhof) These sister establishments are a bit ramshackle, especially Mitte's, but fun and funky, with rooms themed by nationality in Baxpax.

MIDRANGE

Arcotel Velvet (Map pp432-3; ☎ 278 7530; www.arcotel.at; Oranienburger Strasse 52; s €60-100, d €70-110; ☎ ☎; M Oranienburger Tor) Floor-to-ceiling windows give front rooms a bird's-eye view of the bustling street and, combined with bathrooms separated only by gauze curtains, create a feeling of loft living. Back rooms are more traditional.



Prinz Albert (Map pp432-3; ☎ 293 833; www.prinz-albert-berlin.de; Veteranenstrasse 10; s €65-85, d €90-110; ☒; M Rosenthaler Platz) Although minutes from hipster-central Kastanienallee, this sweet, gay-friendly hotel has a neighbourhood feel. Six of the seven generously sized, neutrally decorated rooms overlook the pleasant Weinbergspark, and there's a restaurant downstairs.

Kunstlerheim Luise (Map pp432-3; ☎ 284 480; www.kuenstlerheim-luise.de; Luisenstrasse 19; s/d from €85/120, s/d without bathroom €50/80; P ☒; M Friedrichstrasse) A room with Andy Warhol-style bananas and golden crowns, another with a giant bed and yet another with Edward Hopper-style murals – every room in the wonderful Kunstlerheim Luise is a work of art, and those on the top floors (no lift) are quite affordable too.

Ackselhaus (Map pp432-3; ☎ 4433 7633; www.ackselhaus.de; Belforter Strasse 21; s €85-120, d €95-160; M Senefelder Platz) A Mediterranean oasis in Prenzlauer Berg, this relaxing and elegant terrace comes with a garden and Italian or African apartments (with kitchens). Its sister three doors down boasts various 'blue' themes, plus all-day restaurant Club del Mar.

Garden Hotel Honigmond (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2844 5577; www.honigmond-berlin.de; Invalidenstrasse 122; s €90-110, d €115-160; P ☒; M Zinnowitzer Strasse/S-Bahn Nordbahnhof) This classic, romantic hotel is kitted out with such flair that even urban hipsters will be enchanted. Creaky wooden floors, some four-poster beds and the lush garden make it feel worlds away from the busy street.

Lux 11 (Map pp432-3; ☎ 936 2800; www.lux-eleven.com; Rosa-Luxemburg-Strasse 9-13; r from €115, ste from €135; ☒; M Weinmeisterstrasse/Alexanderplatz) A liberal use of white – off-white, cream, beige and light grey – make this slick, streamlined hotel a haven of calm in Mitte. Its restaurant, Shiro I Shiro, is also winning plaudits for its innovative cuisine and striking white-and-blue interior.

TOP END

Art'otel Berlin Mitte (Map pp432-3; ☎ 240 620; www.arthotel.de; Wallstrasse 70-73; s/d from €130/260; P ☒ ☒ ☒; M Märkisches Museum) This Georg Baselitz-inspired Art'otel was the first of Berlin's new-generation hotels, and its highlight remains the breakfast/dining room. Here, new building meets old in an inner courtyard, and you realise what a

broad, but still cool, mix of people you're staying with.

Dorint am Gendarmenmarkt (Map pp432-3; ☎ 203 570; www.dorint.de; Charlottenstrasse 50-52; s/d from €160/190, breakfast €25; ☒; M Französische Strasse) The Adlon notwithstanding, this is some people's Berlin favourite. Frosted glass, chocolate brown tones and a wonderful enclosed terrace in the top-floor spa area show real style. However, it's the sly hint of fun – the old gym rings, for example – that's always won us over.

Both the prestigious **Hotel Adlon** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 226 10; www.hotel-adlon.de, www.kempinski.com; Am Pariser Platz, Unter den Linden 77; s/d from €280/325; P ☒ ☒ ☒) and the new **Radisson SAS** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 238 280; www.radissonsas.com; Karl-Liebknecht-Strasse 1-3; r €130-350; P ☒ ☒ ☒), with its giant aquarium lobby, are themselves sightseeing attractions. Breakfast is not included at the Radisson.

Friedrichshain & Kreuzberg

Eastern Comfort Hostelboot (Map p438; ☎ 6676 3806; www.eastern-comfort.com; Mühlenstrasse 73-77; dm €14-18, s/d from €42/46, bedding €5; ☒; M S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) This floating hostel near the last standing bit of Wall is refreshingly unusual. Upper cabins enjoy river views here and there's a nicely designed bar at the back, where Captain Edgar and crew organise regular events and gigs. Campers can pitch a tent on the deck for €10 a night.

Other recommendations:

Odyssee Globetrotter Hostel (Map p438; ☎ 2900 0081; www.globetrotterhostel.de; Grünberger Strasse 23; dm €10-16, s/d from €29/39; ☒; M S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) Popular party hostel in bohemian Friedrichshain.

Meininger City Hostel (Map pp434-5; ☎ 6663 6100; www.meininger-hostels.de; Hallesches Ufer 30; dm €13.50-25, s/d €49/66; P ☒ ☒ ☒) Dorms are clean but spartan, while cheerfully furnished doubles and singles stand out. Branches at Tempelhofer Ufer 10 (Map pp434-5) and Meininger Strasse 10 (Map p439).

Charlottenburg & Schöneberg

Pension Kettler (Map p439; ☎ 883 4949; Bleibtreustrasse 19; s €50-75, d €60-90; M Uhlandstrasse) If you want quirk and true Berlin character, you'll find heaps of it at this nostalgic retreat, strewn with objects best described as 'esoterica'. The place's most eccentric and memorable feature, though, is its owner!

Propellor Island City Lodge (off Map p439; ☎ 891 9016; www.propeller-island.de; Albrecht-Achilles-Strasse

58; s €65-125, d €90-195; ☒; M Adenauer Platz) Berlin's most eccentric hotel is the brainchild of artist/musician Lars Stroschen, who crafted these 30 unique environments. Here walls slant, beds seemingly hang above the floor, wardrobes hide showers, and there are other surreal features.

Hotel-Pension Art Nouveau (Map p439; ☎ 327 7440; www.hotelartnouveau.de; Leibnizstrasse 59; s €95-140, d €110-165; ☒; M Adenauer Platz/S-Bahn Savignyplatz) A rickety bird-cage lift drops you off on the 4th floor in one Berlin's best pensions, with handpicked antiques and creative use of colour. The owners are its greatest asset, though, treating guests like family friends.

Askanischer Hof (Map p439; ☎ 881 8033; www.askanischer-hof.de; Kurfürstendamm 53; s €100-110, d €125-145; ☒; M Adenauer Platz/S-Bahn Savignyplatz) Decorated in decadent 1920s style (with a few other eras thrown in), it's little surprise this became David Bowie's favourite hotel in the creative cradle of 1970s West Berlin. It's still an artistic meeting spot.

EATING

Berliners love eating out and you needn't walk far for a feed. Restaurants usually open from 11am to midnight, with varying *Ruhe-tage* or rest days; many close during the day from 3pm to 6pm. Cafés often close around 8pm, though equal numbers stay open until 2am or later.

Berlin is a snacker's paradise, with Turkish (your best bet), Wurst (sausage), Greek, Italian, Chinese, even Sudanese *Imbiss* stalls throughout the city.

Self-caterers will find Aldi, Lidl, Plus and Penny Markt discount supermarkets throughout Berlin. There's the excellent organic **Kollwitzplatz market** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 9am-4pm Sat & Sun) and the **Winterfeldtplatz farmer's market** (Map p439; ☎ Wed & Sat).

Mitte & Prenzlauer Berg

Knopke (Map pp432-3; Schönhauser Allee 44a; ☎ 5.30am-8pm Mon-Fri; M Eberswalder Strasse) Even former chancellor Gerhard Schröder has eaten Wurst here under the S-Bahn tracks in Prenzlauer Berg.

RNBs (Map pp432-3; ☎ 540 2505; Oranienburger Strasse 50; mains €2-4; M Oranienburger Strasse/Hackescher Markt) We can't vouch for the 'beauty tea' (sadly didn't work for us), but the Asian soups and noodle dishes served up by this tiny orange-and-white outlet are as delicious as they are

healthy: no preservatives, no MSG, no artificial flavourings.

Sankt Oberholz (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2408 5586; Rosenthaler Strasse 72a; dishes €3.50-5; M Rosenthaler Platz) Not so much a café as a hilarious social experiment, where Berlin's 'Urbanen Pen-nern' (office-less, self-employed creatives) flock with their laptops for the free wi-fi access. The deli fare of soups, lasagne and savoury polenta cake is pretty good too.

Monsieur Vuong (Map pp432-3; ☎ 3087 2643; Alte Schönhauser Strasse 46; mains €6.50; M Weinmeisterstrasse/Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz/Alexanderplatz) Because this Vietnamese is where everyone says you should eat, this is where everyone is. Arrive early to avoid queuing. Mr Vuong himself shakes regulars' hands in the red-lacquered room, and the soups are toothsome.

Nosh (Map pp432-3; ☎ 4404 0397; Pappelallee 77; mains €6-13, ☎ dinner only in winter; M Eberswalder Strasse) Relaxed diner-style eatery, with a daily changing blackboard menu and staples of spring rolls, Asian and European dishes. Sunday brunch is a great time to come.

Zoe (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2404 5635; Rochstrasse 1; mains €8-18, 2-course lunch menus €6-7; M Weinmeisterstrasse/Alexanderplatz) The all-white fittings and trendy customers fortunately don't denote a case of style over substance here. Mediterranean and Asian flavours are skilfully mixed to create a piquant tang. Excellent lunch deals.

Borchardt (Map pp432-3; ☎ 8188 6250; Französische Strasse 47; mains €13-20; M Französische Strasse) On every Berlin *promi's* (celeb's) speed-dial list, this refined French-German bistro also tolerates ordinary civilians.

Other recommendations:

Imbiss W (Map pp432-3; ☎ 4849 2657; Kastanienallee 49; mains €3-6; M Rosenthaler Platz) Canadian-run joint offering Southeast Asian food and naan pizzas.

Duy Thai (Map pp432-3; ☎ 4431 7116; Kollwitzstrasse 89; mains €5-14; M Eberswalder Strasse) Dishes are made to order in this relaxed canteen.

Die Zwölf Apostel (The 12 Apostles; Map pp432-3; ☎ 201 0222; Georgenstrasse; mains €9-16; M Friedrichstrasse) Ecclesiastical décor and huge pizzas, including a 'Judas'. Good weekday lunch deals.

Friedrichshain & Kreuzberg

Curry 36 (Map pp434-5; ☎ 881 4710; Mehringdamm 36; ☎ 9am-5pm; M Mehringdamm) This is Kreuzberg's – some believe Berlin's – best sausage stand.

Frittiersalon (Map p438; Boxhagener Strasse 104; M Frankfurter Tor) The enormous choice here

includes Wurst, organic fries, tofu and even a Camembert burger.

Hasir (Map pp434-5; Adalbertstrasse 10; ☎ 24hr; ☑ Kottbusser Tor) The birthplace (yes, really) of the döner kebab is a sit-down restaurant, too.

Café V (Map pp434-5; ☎ 612 4505; Lausitzer Platz 12; dishes €5.50-9.50; ☑ Görlitzer Bahnhof) Yellow, red and gilt trimmings greet you as you enter this old-school veggie/vegan café. Everything comes with a soya/caffeine-free/tofu alternative, although you can also choose straight-up dishes like pizza or Thai fish curry.

Schneeweiss (Map p438; ☎ 2904 9704; Simponstrasse 16; day menu €5.50-11, dinner mains €13-20; ☎ dinner only Mon-Fri, all day Sat & Sun; ☑ S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) Subtly embossed vanilla wallpaper, rectangular glass lights along the long, central table and parquet flooring keep neutral 'Snow White' feeling more après-ski than icy. The vaguely Swiss/Austrian 'Alpine' food is a '70s throwback, but still enjoyable. Evenings here are megafashionable, so book.

Amrit Kreuzberg (Map pp434-5; ☎ 612 5550; Oranienstrasse 202; dishes €7-14.50; ☑ Görlitzer Bahnhof); Mitte (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2888 4840; Oranienburger Strasse 45; ☑ Oranienburger Tor); Schöneberg (Map p439; ☎ 2101 4640; Winterfeldtstrasse 40; ☑ Nollendorfplatz) One of three busy Amrits around town, that serve the same tasty pan-Indian cuisine.

Pi-Bar (Map p438; ☎ 2936 7581; Gabriel-Max-Strasse 17; mains €7-17; ☑ S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) A salubrious Friedrichshain stalwart that has seen off countless pretenders, Pi continues to serve a tasty combination of vegetarian and fish-based cuisine, plus great breakfasts. The comfy sofas remain, but the walls have a new lick of red/tangerine paint.

Weltrestaurant Markthalle (Map pp434-5; ☎ 617 5502; Pücklerstrasse 34; mains €8-15; ☑ Görlitzer Bahnhof) This wood-lined, century-old pub draws a mixed clientele of ageing hipsters and neighbourhood folk with its relaxed vibe and simple no-nonsense food.

Charlottenburg & Schöneberg

Raststätte Gnadebrot (Map p439; ☎ 2196 1786; Marin-Luther-Strasse 202; mains €3.50-6; ☑ Victoria-Luise-Platz/Nollendorfplatz) An ironic, retro '70s take on a motorway roadhouse, this wins loyal fans for its friendly atmosphere (you share bench seats) and good, cheap food and drinks.

Schwarzes Café (Map p439; ☎ 313 8038; Kantstrasse 148; dishes €4.50-9; ☑ S-Bahn Zoo/Savignyplatz) Founded in 1978, this 24-hour food'n'booze

institution must have been half of Berlin pass through it (or out in it) at some point. Interesting toilets, too.

Mutter (Map p439; ☎ 216 4990; Hohenstaufenstrasse 4; mains €4-14; ☑ Nollendorfplatz) Sushi, Thai soups and often wonderfully presented Asian dishes are complemented by a list of cocktails that includes coconut-flavoured *Muttermilch* (mother's milk) in this opulent, gold-bedecked café.

Engelbecken (off Map p439; ☎ 615 2810; Witzlebenstrasse 31; mains €8-16; ☎ dinner only Mon-Sat, lunch & dinner Sun; ☑ Sophie Charlotte Platz) Come here for what many rate as Berlin's best Bavarian food, with Schweinsbraten, schnitzels, dumplings and sauerkraut. All meats are organic.

DRINKING

After dark, each Berlin district offers something different, but for the past decade, the hottest action has lain east. Prenzlauer Berg was the first GDR sector to develop a happening nightlife and still attracts student, creative and gay customers. Later, more clubs and bars sprang up in Mitte around Hackescher Markt, catering to a cool, slightly older and wealthier crowd. The area around Simon-Dach-Strasse and Boxhagener Platz in Friedrichshain is the latest to have emerged.

In the west, Kreuzberg remains alternative, becoming grungier as you move east. Charlottenburg and Winterfeldtplatz are fairly upmarket and mature, but liberal.

Bars without food open between 5pm and 8pm and may close as late as 5am (if at all).

Astrobar (Map p438; ☎ 2966 1615; Simon-Dach-Strasse 40; ☑ S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) One of the first on the Friedrichshain scene and still going strong, the Astro offers the future as it looked in the 1960s, with spaceships, robots and classic computer games in the back room.

Erdbeer (Map pp432-3; Max-Beer-Strasse 56; ☑ Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz) A warren of interconnected rooms, this rambling cocktail bar derives its name not only from its red colour scheme, but also its customers' favourite brand of daiquiri (*Erdbeer*, or strawberry).

Kumpelnest 3000 (Map pp434-5; ☎ 8891 7960; Lützowstrasse 23; ☑ Kurfürstenstrasse) Once a brothel, always an experience – the Kumpelnest has been famed since the '80s for its wild, inhibition-free nights. Much of the original warehouse décor remains intact. According to some locals, your bag may not

(remain intact, that is) unless you keep a beady eye on it.

Hotelbar (Map pp432-3; ☎ 4432 8577; Zionkirchstrasse 5; ☑ Rosenthaler Platz) This cosy subterranean bar has a broad music policy, with jazz, latin beats and electropop to things like 'balkandub', 'Hammondorgel' and even spoken word.

Green Door (Map p439; ☎ 215 2515; Winterfeldtstrasse 50; ☑ Nollendorfplatz) Ring the doorbell to get them to open the namesake green door and let you into this tiny neighbourhood bar. Cocktails are on offer.

Other recommendations:

Möbel Olfe (Map pp434-5; ☎ 6165 9612; Reichenberger Strasse 177; ☎ closed Mon; ☑ Kottbusser Tor) Sparsely furnished beer hall good for Polish beer and table football.

Tabou Tiki Room (Map pp434-5; Maybuhufer 39; ☎ closed Mon; ☑ Schönleinstrasse) A slice of kitschy '60s Hawaii in Berlin. Exotic cocktails.

ENTERTAINMENT

Berlin's legendary nightlife needs little introduction. Whether alternative, underground, cutting-edge, saucy, flamboyant or even highbrow, it all crops up here.

Nightclubs

Clubs rarely open before 11pm (though earlier 'after-work' clubs and Sunday sessions are also popular) and stay open well into the early hours – usually sunrise at least. As the scene changes so rapidly, it's always wise to double-check listings magazines or ask locals. Admission charges, when they apply, range from €5 to €15.

Berghain/Panorama Bar (Map p438; www.berghain.de; Wriener Bahnhof; ☎ from midnight Thu-Sat; ☑ Ostbahnhof) Techno fans from across the world pump it up in a huge cathedral-like former railway workshop, or chill out in the quieter Panorama Bar upstairs. Cutting-edge sounds in industrial surroundings.

Café Moskau (off Map pp432-3; ☎ 2463 1626; www.das-moskau.com; Karl-Marx-Allee 34; ☑ Schillingstrasse) It doesn't really matter what's on, this one-time GDR restaurant is the epitome of retro Soviet kitsch and has to be seen. At the time of research, intermittent funk/reggae events were the order of the day, although the WMF techno/house evenings might return.

Kaffee Burger (Map pp432-3; ☎ 2804 6495; www.kaffeeburger.de; Torstrasse 60; ☑ Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz) A cornerstone of Berlin's so-bad-it's-good alternative scene, decked out in original

GDR '60s wallpaper. Come here for indie, rock, punk and cult author Wladimir Kaminer's fortnightly *Russendisko* (Russian disco; www.russendisko.de).

Kosmos (Map p438; ☎ 4004 8130; www.kosmos-berlin.de; Karl-Marx-Allee 131a; ☎ from 10am; ☑ Frankfurter Tor) This monolithic GDR cinema has been reborn as one of Berlin's newest club/bar/bistros, with a huge main floor.

Spindler & Klatt (Map p438; ☎ 609 3702; www.spindlerklatt.com; Köpenicker Strasse 16-17; ☎ from 8pm Wed-Sun; ☑ Ostbahnhof/Schlesisches Tor) Unusually upmarket for Berlin, this club's combination of horizontal loungers and food service (hiccup!) has garnered plenty of headlines. In summer, there's a nice terrace.

Wargate (Map p438; ☎ 6128 0394; www.water-gate.de; Falckensteinstrasse 49a; ☎ from 11pm Fri & Sat; ☑ Schlesisches Tor) Watch the sun rise over the Spree River through the floor-to-ceiling windows of this fantastic lounge. The music is mainly electro, drum'n'bass and hip-hop.

Weekend (Map pp432-3; www.week-end-berlin.de; Am Alexanderplatz 5; ☎ from 11pm Thu-Sat; ☑ Alexanderplatz) Tear your eyes from the beautiful people and gaze through the 12th-floor windows, across the *Blade-Runner* landscape of dug-up Alexanderplatz and over Berlin. (Alexanderplatz 5 is the one with the Sanyo logo.)

Berlin also has a thriving scene of no-holds-barred sex clubs. The notorious **KitKat Club** (off Map p439; ☎ 7889 9704; Bessemerstrasse 14; ☑ Alt-Tempelhof) is the original and best.

Music & Theatre

Berliner Philharmonie (Map pp432-3; ☎ information 254 880, tickets 2548 8999; www.berliner-philharmoniker.de; Herbert-von-Karajan Strasse 1; ☑ Potsdamer Platz) Director Sir Simon Rattle has consolidated the orchestra's supreme musical reputation and the hall is praised for its acoustics, too.

Staatsoper Unter den Linden (Map pp432-3; ☎ information 203 540, tickets 2035 4555; www.staatsoper-berlin.de; Unter den Linden 5-7; ☑ S-Bahn Unter den Linden) This is the handiest and most prestigious of Berlin's three opera houses, where unsold seats go on sale cheap an hour before curtains-up.

Berliner Ensemble (Map pp432-3; ☎ information 284 080, tickets 2840 8155; www.berliner-ensemble.de; Bertolt-Brecht-Platz 1; ☑ Friedrichstrasse) *Mack the Knife* had its first public airing here, during the *Threepenny Opera*'s premiere in 1928. Bertolt Brecht's former theatrical home continues to present his plays.

IN BERLIN'S LIVING ROOM

Berlin was once famous for its ramshackle squat bars. And while many snow-white nightlife venues are going upmarket, others have been trying to reclaim that anarchic legacy. A spate of new bars exists decorated like 1950s, 1960s or 1970s domestic living rooms. They feature flock wallpaper, bead curtains and mismatched, sometimes threadbare, sofas seemingly rescued from the rubbish tip.

The most famous exponent of this 'second-hand design' is the dimly lit pub/café called **Wohnzimmer** (Living Room; Map pp432-3; ☎ 445 5458; Lettstrasse 6; ☎ 10am-4am; 🚶 Eberswalder Strasse). In hip Prenzlauer Berg, it combines styles from Louis XVI to, primarily, GDR c 1950.

Weinerei Cafe (Map pp432-3; ☎ 440 6983; crn Veteranenstrasse & Fehrbellinerstrasse; ☎ 10am-midnight; 🚶 Eberswalder Strasse) feels even more ad hoc, like stepping into someone's house. On Friday and Saturday nights, you simply rent a wine glass for €1, enjoy as many refills as you want and pay what you think is appropriate at the evening's end. (Be fair, otherwise they'll go broke!)

Zu Mir oder zu Dir? (Your place or mine?; Map pp432-3; Lychener Strasse 15; ☎ from 8pm; 🚶 Eberswalder Strasse) is a slightly more plush and trendy bar, with a double bed and some eye-catching pop-art features.

In two venues, **Kaufbar** (Buy-Bar or Purchasable; Map p438; ☎ 464 1030; Gärtnerstrasse 4; ☎ 11am-1am; 🚶 S-Bahn Warschauer Strasse) and the sunny ice-cream café **Kauf Dich Glücklich** (Shop Yourself Happy; Map pp432-3; ☎ 4435 2182; Oderberger Strasse 44; ☎ noon-midnight; 🚶 Eberswalder Strasse), even the furniture is on sale. As you enjoy one of the latter's famous waffles, just pray someone doesn't come in and snap up the chair or table you're using.

SHOPPING

Department store **KaDeWe** (Map p439; Tauentzienstrasse 21; 🚶 U-Bahn Wittenbergplatz) is Germany's most renowned retail emporium, equivalent to Harrods. The 6th-floor gourmet food halls are extraordinary, and the store is near the principal western shopping thoroughfare of Kurfürstendamm. Famous Parisian store **Galeries Lafayette** (Map pp432-3; ☎ 209 480; Friedrichstrasse 76-78; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Sat; 🚶 S-Bahn Friedrichstrasse) also has a ritzy branch in Mitte.

While **Hackescher Markt** (p435) is increasingly commercial, plenty of cutting-edge boutiques are found in Prenzlauer Berg, especially along Kastanienallee (nicknamed 'casting alley' for its beautiful people) and Stargarder Strasse.

With flea markets across town, the **Berlin Art & Nostalgia Market** (Map pp432-3; Georgenstrasse, Mitte; ☎ 8am-5pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 S-Bahn Friedrichstrasse) is heavy on collectibles, books, ethnic crafts and GDR memorabilia.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

The plan is to turn Schönefeld into the city's main hub, Berlin-Brandenburg-International (BBI). That won't be for several years, however, and presently **three airports** (www.berlin-airport.de) operate.

Schönefeld (SXF) is the furthest from the centre but increasingly the busiest, with flights to/from Europe, Israel and North Africa, including easyJet (www.easyjet.com) services to the UK and Netherlands.

Tegel (TXL) has a similarly European focus and is the Air Berlin (www.airberlin.com) hub. Direct Delta Airlines (www.delta.com) services to/from New York also rotate out of here.

The landing hub for Allied airlifts during the Berlin blockade of 1948-49, **Tempelhof** (THF) today serves domestic and Danish destinations only.

Bus

Berlin is well connected to the rest of Europe by a network of long-distance buses. Most buses arrive at and depart from the **Zentraler Omnibusbahnhof** (ZOB; off Map p439; ☎ 302 5361; Masurenallee 4-6; 🚶 Kaiserdamm/Witzleben), opposite the Funkturm radio tower. Tickets are available from travel agencies or at the bus station.

Car

Lifts can be organised by **ADM Mitfahrzentrale** (ride-share agencies; ☎ 194 40); Zoo station (Map p439; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun); Alexanderplatz U-Bahn (Map pp432-3; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun).

Train

Regular long-distance services arrive at the new Hauptbahnhof (also called Lehrter Bahnhof), with many continuing east to Ostbahnhof and Lichtenberg. You'll probably need to switch to local services to get to the former major terminus of Berlin Zoo (although local petitioning *might* change this). ICE and IC trains leave hourly to every major city in Germany and there are connections to central Europe. Sample fares include to Leipzig (€36, 1½ hours), Hamburg (€48 to €58, 1½ to two hours), Stralsund (€32.30, three hours) and Prague (€53.80, five hours).

GETTING AROUND

Berlin's public transport system is excellent and much better than driving around the city. The comprehensive network of U-Bahn and S-Bahn trains, buses, trams and ferries covers most corners.

To/From the Airport

There are two principal ways of reaching Schönefeld. The half-hourly S9 travels through all the major downtown stations, taking 45 minutes from Friedrichstrasse. Faster 'Airport Express' trains (mainly RE4, RE5) travel the same route, also half-hourly, taking 31 minutes from the Hauptbahnhof, 21 minutes from Alexanderplatz and 15 minutes from Ostbahnhof. A taxi costs up to €35. The airport station is 400m from the terminal, linked by covered walkway.

Tegel airport is connected by bus 109 to Zoo station, via Kurfürstendamm and Luisenplatz. JetExpress Bus TXL (€4.10) goes via Unter den Linden, Potsdamer Platz and

the Reichstag. A taxi between Tegel airport and Zoo station will cost around €20.

Tempelhof airport is reached by the U6 (Platz der Luftbrücke) and by bus 119 from Kurfürstendamm via Kreuzberg. A taxi costs around €15.

Car & Motorcycle

Although garage parking is expensive (about €1.50 per hour), it makes sense to ditch your wheels as soon as possible in Berlin. Few hotels have their own garages.

Public Transport

One type of ticket is valid on all transport – including the U-Bahn, buses, trams and ferries run by **Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe** (☎ 194 49; www.bvg.de) as well as the S-Bahn and regional RE, SE and RB trains operated by **Deutsche Bahn** (www.bahn.de).

Three tariff zones exist – A, B and C. Unless venturing to Potsdam or the outer suburbs, you'll only need an AB ticket. The following are available:

Ticket type	AB	BC	ABC
Single	€2.10	€2.30	€2.60
Day Pass	€5.80	€5.70	€6
Group Day Pass (up to 5 people)	€14.80	€14.30	€15
7-Day Pass	€25.40	€26.20	€31.30

Most tickets are available from vending machines located in the stations, but must be validated before use. If you're caught without a validated ticket, there's a €50 on-the-spot fine.

GAY & LESBIAN BERLIN

Up there with Amsterdam as one of the gayest cities in Europe, Berlin boasts a wild scene reminiscent of the anything-goes 1920s. Venues are concentrated around Nollendorplatz in Schöneberg and Schönhauser Allee station in northern Prenzlauer Berg. Consult gay and lesbian freebie *Siegessäule* to bone up (oo-er) on the scene.

Dance club Schwuz (Map pp434-5; ☎ 693 7025; www.schwuz.de; Mehringdamm 61; ☎ from 11pm Fri & Sat; 🚶 Mehringdamm) is one of the longest-running mixed institutions; there's a café here all week too.

SO36 (Map pp434-5; ☎ 6140 1307; Oranienstrasse 190; 🚶 Kottbusser Tor) is a thrashy punk venue also popular with gays and lesbians.

Men cruise at **Grosse Freiheit** (Map p438; Boxhagener Strasse 114; ☎ from 10pm; 🚶 Frankfurter Tor) and lesbians hang out at **Schokofabrik** (Map pp434-5; ☎ 615 1561; Mariannenstrasse 6; 🚶 Kottbusser Tor).

A popular new bar, attracting a mixed crowd is **Zum Schmutzigen Hobby** (Map pp432-3; Rykestrasse 45; ☎ from 5pm; 🚶 Eberswalder Strasse) run by well-known drag queen Nina Queer.

U-Bahn and S-Bahn services operate from 4am until just after midnight on weekdays, with many *Nachtbus* (night bus) services in between. At weekends, major U-Bahn lines run every 15 minutes all night, while most S-Bahns operate hourly.

Taxi

Taxi stands are located at all main train stations and throughout the city. Ring **TAXIFON** (☎ 0800-8001 1554) or **Funk Taxi** (☎ 0800-026 1026).

BRANDENBURG

Despite its proximity to Berlin, Brandenburg has suffered from a poor reputation since reunification. Many western Germans still think of Brandenburgers as archetypal Osis, ambivalent about the demise of the GDR and perhaps even a touch xenophobic. However, even the most sneering Wessi will happily go to Potsdam on a day trip.

POTSDAM

☎ 0331 / pop 131,000

With ornate palaces and manicured gardens dotted around a huge riverside park, the Prussian royal seat of Potsdam is the most popular day trip from Berlin. Elector Friedrich Wilhelm of Brandenburg laid the ground for the town's success when he made it his second residence in the 17th century. But Friedrich II (Frederick the Great) commissioned most of the palaces in the mid-18th century.

In August 1945, the victorious WWII Allies chose nearby Schloss Cecilienhof for the Potsdam Conference, which set the stage for the division of Berlin and Germany into occupation zones.

In the suburb of Babelsberg is the site of a historic – and now once again functioning – film studio (with less historic theme park).

Orientation

Potsdam Hauptbahnhof is just southeast of the city centre, across the Havel River. As this is still quite a way – 2km – from Sanssouci Park, you might like to change here for a train going one or two stops to Charlottenhof (for Schloss Sanssouci) or Sanssouci (for Neues Palais). Some RB trains from Berlin stop at all three stations.

Information

Potsdam Information (☎ 275 580; www.potsdam-tourismus.de; Brandenburger Strasse 3; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–4pm Sat & Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9.30am–4pm Sat & Sun Nov–Mar) Near the Hauptbahnhof.

Sanssouci Besucherzentrum (☎ 969 4202; www.spsg.de; An der Orangerie 1; ☎ 8.30am–5pm Mar–Oct, 9am–4pm Nov–Feb) Near the windmill and Schloss Sanssouci.

Sights

SAUSSOUCI PARK

At the heart of **Sanssouci Park** (adult two-day pass incl all interiors €15; ☎ dawn–dusk) lies a celebrated rococo palace, **Schloss Sanssouci** (☎ 969 4190; mandatory tour adult/concession €8/5; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, to 4pm Nov–Mar). Built in 1747, it has some glorious interiors. Only 2000 visitors are allowed entry each day (a Unesco rule), so tickets are usually sold by 2.30pm, even in quiet seasons. Tours run by the tourist office guarantee entry.

The late-baroque **Neues Palais** (New Palace; ☎ 969 4255; adult/concession €5/4; ☎ 10am–5pm Sat–Thu) was built in 1769 as the royal family's summer residence. It's one of the most imposing buildings in the park and the one to see if your time is limited. The tour takes in about a dozen of its 200 rooms.

The **Bildergalerie** (Picture Gallery; ☎ 969 4181; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun 15 May–15 Oct) contains a rich collection of 17th-century paintings by Rubens, Caravaggio and other big names.

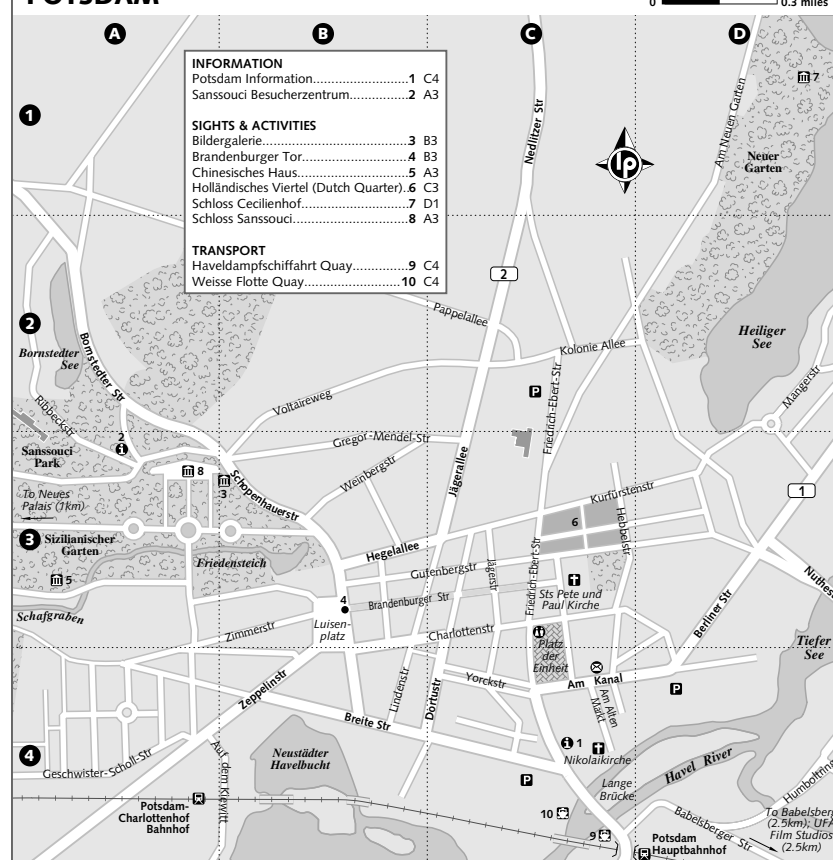
Many consider the **Chinesisches Haus** (Chinese Teahouse; ☎ 969 4222; admission €1; ☎ 10am–5pm Tue–Sun 15 May–15 Oct) to be the pearl of the park. It's a circular pavilion of gilded columns, palm trees and figures of Chinese musicians and animals, built in 1757. Look out for a monkey with Voltaire's face!

NEUER GARTEN

When outgoing British PM Winston Churchill and his accompanying successor Clement Attlee arrived at **Schloss Cecilienhof** (☎ 969 4244; tours adult/concession €4/3; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun) in 1945 they must have immediately felt at home. Located in the separate New Garden, northeast of the centre on the bank of the Heiliger See, this is an incongruously English-style country manor in rococo-heavy Potsdam.

Churchill and Attlee, along with US President Truman and Soviet leader Stalin, were

POTSDAM



here for the Potsdam Conference on administering postwar Germany. Large photos of the participants are displayed inside.

FILMPARK BABELSBERG

Germany's small retreat to Hollywood, the **UFA Film Studios** (☎ 721 2755; www.filmpark.de; Grossbeerenstrasse; adult/concession/child €17/15.50/12.50; ☎ 10am–6pm 15 Mar–2 Nov) was where Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* was shot, FW Murnau filmed the first *Dracula* movie, *Nosferatu*, and Marlene Dietrich starred in *The Blue Angel*. Since a relaunch in 1999, it's helped Berlin regain its film-making crown, with Jean-Jacques Annaud's *Enemy at the Gates* and Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* also made here. However, the visitor experience

is not that thrilling – just par-for-the-course theme-park rides and a studio tour. The studios are east of the city centre.

ALTSTADT

In April 1945, Royal Air Force bombers devastated the historic centre of Potsdam, including the City Palace on Alter Markt. Fortunately some features – and the palaces of Sanssouci Park – survived undamaged.

The **Brandenburger Tor** (Brandenburg Gate) at the western end of the old town on Luisenplatz isn't a patch on that in Berlin but it is older, dating from 1770. From here, pedestrian Brandenburger Strasse runs due east, providing the town's main eating strip.

Standing out from its surrounds is the pretty **Holländisches Viertel** (Dutch Quarter). Towards the northern end of Friedrich-Ebert-Strasse, it has 134 gabled red-brick houses, built for Dutch workers who came to Potsdam in the 1730s at the invitation of Friedrich Wilhelm I. The homes have been well restored and now house all kinds of interesting galleries, cafés and restaurants.

Tours

Boats belonging to **Weisse Flotte** (☎ 275 9210; www.schiffahrt-in-potsdam.de; Lange Brücke 6; ⌚ 8.45am-4.15pm Apr-Oct) cruise the Havel and the lakes around Potsdam, departing regularly from the dock near Lange Brücke, with frequent trips to Wannsee (€8/10 one way/return) and around the castles (€9). Sister company **Haveldampfschiffahrt** (☎ 275 9233; www.schiffahrt-in-potsdam.de; Lange Brücke 6; tours from €9.50) has equivalent steamboat tours.

Getting There & Away

S-Bahn line S7 links central Berlin with Potsdam Hauptbahnhof about every 10 minutes. Some regional (RB/RE) trains from Berlin stop at all three stations in Potsdam. Your ticket must cover Berlin Zones A, B and C (€2.60) to come here.

Getting Around

Potsdam is part of Berlin's S-Bahn network but has its own trams and buses; these converge on Lange Brücke near the Hauptbahnhof. A two-zone ticket costs €1.60 and a day pass €3.70.

SACHSENHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

In 1936 the Nazis opened a 'model' *Konzentrationslager* (concentration camp) for men in a disused brewery in Sachsenhausen, some 35km north of Berlin. By 1945 about 220,000 prisoners had passed through the gates – labelled, as at Auschwitz in Poland, *Arbeit Macht Frei* (Work Sets You Free). About 100,000 were murdered here.

After the war, the Soviets and the communist leaders of the new GDR set up Speziallager No 7 (Special Camp No 7) for political prisoners, ex-Nazis, monarchists and other 'misfits', jailing 60,000 and killing up to 12,000.

The **Sachsenhausen Memorial and Museum** (☎ 03301-200 200; ⌚ 8.30am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep,

8.30am-4.30pm Oct-Mar) consists of several parts. The **Neues Museum** (New Museum) includes a history of anti-Semitism and audiovisual material. East of it are **Barracks 38 & 39**, reconstructions of two typical huts housing most of the 6000 Jewish prisoners brought to Sachsenhausen after Kristallnacht (9–10 November 1938). Number 38 was rebuilt after being torched by neo-Nazis in September 1992.

The easiest way to get to Sachsenhausen from Berlin is to take the frequent S1 to Oranienburg (€2.60, 50 minutes). The walled camp is a signposted 20-minute walk from Oranienburg station.

SAXONY

Saxony is in many ways the most successful of the old East German states. Leipzig is a growing city with a dynamic centre. Dresden is a major tourist draw and is nearing the culmination of decades of rebuilding. Linked to the latter by the fabled Elbe River, Meissen is a gem of a medieval town with a palace and cathedral high on a hill.

With a long history dating back to the Germanic tribes of over 1000 years ago, Saxony embodies many of the classic qualities associated with Germany. Its two main cities have a long tradition in the arts and are today centres of culture. And even though the local dialect can be impenetrable to those with mere schoolbook German, that same classic German traces its roots right back here.

The state is fairly compact and high-speed rail links make the region easily accessible from all corners of Germany.

DRESDEN

☎ 0351 / pop 483,000

In death, Dresden became even more famous than in life. In life, she was famous throughout Europe as 'Florence on the Elbe', owing to the efforts of Italian artists, musicians, actors and master craftsmen who flocked to the court of Augustus the Strong, bestowing countless masterpieces upon the city. Shortly before the end of WWII, Allied bombers blasted and incinerated much of the historic centre, a beautiful jewel-like area dating from the 18th century. More than 35,000 died and in bookstores throughout

town you can see books showing the destruction (or read about it in Kurt Vonnegut's classic *Slaughterhouse Five*).

Rebuilding began under the communist regime in the 1950s and accelerated greatly after reunification. The city celebrated its 800th anniversary in 2006 and the event was capped by opening Frauenkirche, an icon that had been a pile of rubble for the previous five decades. With a beautiful baroque centre and vibrant nightlife, Dresden is a major tourist attraction that's best enjoyed outside of the peak summer season.

Orientation

The Elbe River splits the town in a rough V-shape, with the Neustadt to the north and the Altstadt to the south.

Dresden has two main train stations: the Hauptbahnhof on the southern side of town, and the contemporary Dresden-Neustadt north of the river. Most trains stop at both. Dresden-Mitte is little more than a forlorn platform between the two.

From the Hauptbahnhof, pedestrian-only Prager Strasse leads north into the Altstadt. Here there's a mix of communist-era triumphalism and modern-day commercialism. The lovely Brühlsche Terrasse runs along the Elbe between the Albertinum and the Zwinger, with boat docks below.

In the Neustadt, home to much of the city's nightlife, the main attractions for visitors are the Albertplatz and Antonstadt quarters. In and around Louisenstrasse you'll find all manner of shops, galleries, funky boutiques and dozens of cafés, bars and clubs. Hauptstrasse is pedestrianised and connects Albertplatz with the Augustusbrücke.

Information

Dresden Information Prager Strasse 21 (☎ 4919 2100; www.dresden.de); Theaterplatz 2 (⌚ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) Discount cards from €19.

E@sy Internet (☎ 017-2579 5652; Pfarrgasse 1; per hr €4; ⌚ 9am-midnight) Note that wi-fi access and Internet terminals are common in Dresden's cafés.

Haus Des Buches (☎ 497 369; Dr-Külz-Ring 12) Bookshop with huge selection on local history and culture.

Sights

MONUMENTS & LANDMARKS

One of Dresden's most beloved icons, the **Frauenkirche** (Church of Our Lady; ☎ 439 3934; www.frauenkirche-dresden.org; Neumarkt; ⌚ 10am-6pm

was rebuilt in time for city's 800th anniversary celebrations. Built between 1726 and 1743 under the direction of baroque architect George Bähr, it was Germany's greatest Protestant church until February 1945, when bombing raids flattened it. The communists decided to leave the rubble as a war memorial; after reunification, calls for reconstruction prevailed and the huge project began in 1992.

Look for the very few blackened stones on the exterior, these were salvaged from the rubble of the original. Otherwise – not surprisingly – the church feels brand new, especially inside. Most moving is the melted cross from the original. You can also climb to the top for good views. The surrounding Neumarkt is part of a massive redevelopment designed to evoke prewar Dresden.

The neo-Renaissance opera house, **Semperoper** (☎ 491 1496; www.semperoper.de; Theaterplatz; tour adult/child €6/3; ⌚ varies), designed by Gustav Semper, is Dresden. The original building opened in 1841 but burned down less than three decades later. Rebuilt in 1878, it was pummelled in WWII and reopened in 1985 after the communists invested millions restoring it. The best way to appreciate it is through one of the many performances.

The **Schloss** (☎ 491 4619; Schlossplatz), a massive neo-Renaissance palace, has ongoing restoration projects. Its many features include the **Hausmannsturm** (Servants' Tower; adult/child €2.50/1.50; ⌚ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) and the baroque Catholic **Hofkirche** (⌚ 9am-5pm Mon-Thu, 1-5pm Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun), which contains the heart of Augustus the Strong. Outside, you'd need a really wide-angle lens to get a shot of Wulhelm Walther's amazing 102m-long tiled mural, the **Fürstenzug** (Procession of Princes; Augustusstrasse), on the wall of the former Stendehaus (Royal Stables). The scene, a long row of royalty on horses, was painted in 1876 and then transferred to some 24,000 Meissen porcelain tiles in 1906. The Schloss also houses museums, see below.

MUSEUMS

For information on most of Dresden's museums, see the website www.skd-dresden.de. Allow at least two full days for a sampling of what's on offer.

The imposing block, **Albertinum** (☎ 491 4619; Brühlsche Terrasse; adult/child €5/2.50; ⌚ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon), houses many of Dresden's art

treasures, including the **Münzkabinett** collection of antique coins and medals, and the **Skulpturensammlung**, which includes classical and Egyptian works. The **Galerie Neue Meister**, with renowned 19th- and 20th-century paintings from leading French and German impressionists, was closed during 2006 for expansion and renovation.

Dresden's elaborate 1728 fortress **Zwinger** (☎ 491 4622; Theaterplatz 1; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) is an attraction in its own right, with a popular ornamental courtyard, and also houses six major museums. The most important are the **Rüstkammer** (armoury; adult/child €3/2), with its superb collection of ceremonial weapons, and the **Galerie Alte Meister** (adult/child €6/3.50,

incl entry to Rüstkammer), which features masterpieces including Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*. The dazzling **Porzellansammlung** (Porcelain Collection; adult/child €5/3) is another highlight.

Located in the Schloss, the **Grünes Gewölbe** (Green Vault; adult/child €6/3.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Mon) is one of the world's finest collections of jewel-encrusted precious objects. Treasures include the world's biggest green diamond, tiny pearl sculptures and a stunning group of 137 gem-studded figures by Johann Melchior Dinglinger, court jeweller of Augustus the Strong.

Also in the Schloss, the **Verkehrsmuseum** (Transport Museum; ☎ 864 40; Augustusstrasse 1; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) is fittingly located in the Johanneum, the old stables. Motoring back towards the 20th century, this is a fascinating collection including penny-farthings, trams, dirigibles and carriages. Included in the admission is a great 40-minute film with original black-and-white footage of 1930s Dresden.

One of the oddest museums is the product of a mouthwash baron. The **Deutsches Hygiene-Museum** (☎ 484 6670; Lingnerplatz 1; adult/child €6/3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun) is awash in displays relating to the ravages of venereal disease, the theory of eugenics and reasons to bathe.

Tours

Cruise the Elbe to the world's oldest fleet of paddle-wheel steamers with **Sächsische Dampfschiffahrt** (☎ 866 090; www.saechsische-dampfschiffahrt.de; adult/child €11/5.50). Ninety-minute tours leave from the Terrassenufer dock at 11am, 1pm, 3pm and 5pm daily. There's also service to villages along the river.

Sleeping

Accommodation in Dresden can be very expensive in the high season. Luckily, several good-value budget places can be found in the lively Neustadt. New luxury hotels are opening as the Altstadt is renovated.

BUDGET

DJH Jugendgästehaus Dresden (☎ 492 620; jgh.dresden@djh-sachsen.de; Maternistrasse 22; dm €17; ☎) This tower block was once a Communist Party training centre; now it's a great hostel, with 480 beds in small dorms and a bistro (breakfast included). Take tram 7 or 10 to the corner of Ammonstrasse and Freiburger Strasse.

Hostel Louise 20 (☎ 889 4894; www.louise20.de; Louisenstrasse 20; dm/s/d €15/30/40; ☎) Rooms are divided between two buildings here. Basic ones are off a courtyard at the back while more expensive – and stylish – units are up front. Families can rent entire suites of rooms. There are kitchen facilities; most rooms share baths.

Hostel Mondpalast (☎ 804 6061; www.mondpalast.de; Louisenstrasse 77; dm/s/d €15/39/50; ☎) The Moon Palace has rooms decorated by theme (Australia, Greece, space travel – see the website) and a great bar/café. It's one of many good value places in this fun-filled neighbourhood.

EV-Ref Gemeinde zu Dresden (☎ 438 230; www.ev-ref-gem-dresden.de; Brühlscher Garten 4; s/d €45/70) Amazing value in a great location – right across from the Albertinum and on the river. This historic retirement home makes rooms available for travellers whenever a resident has permanently 'checked out'. Rooms have baths and TV and often great views, although obviously they'd prefer you keep quiet.

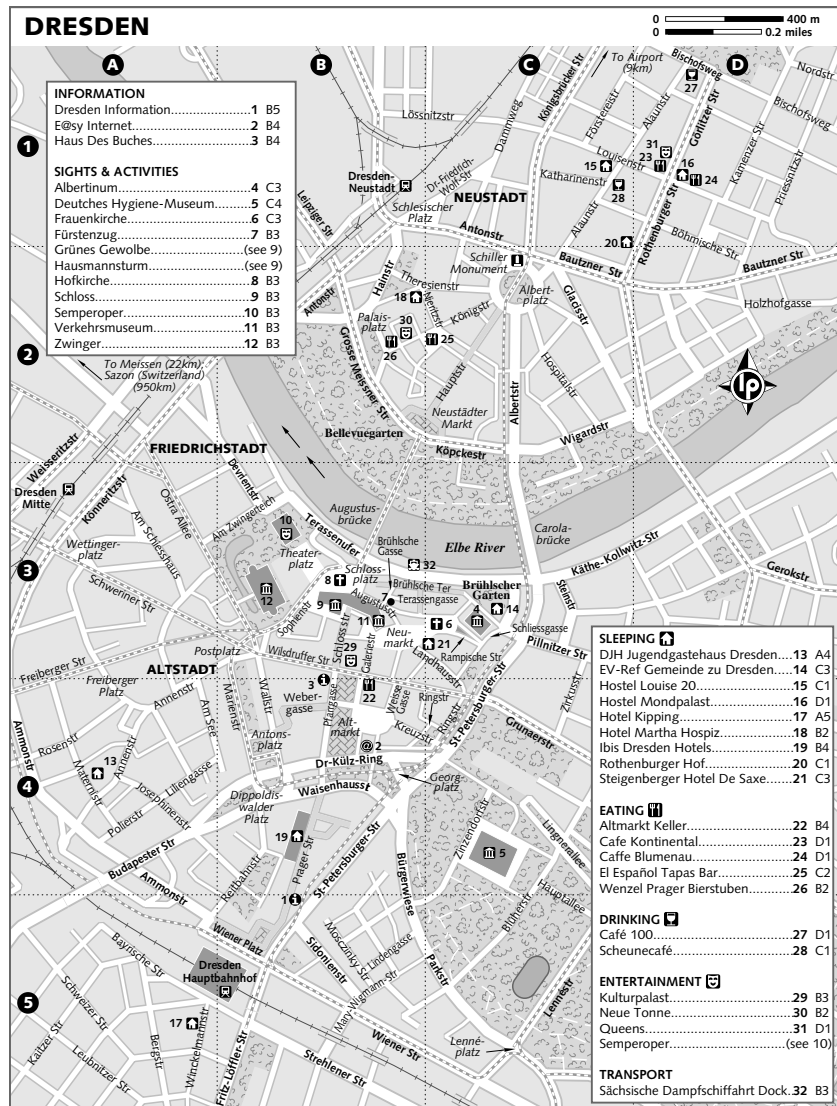
MIDRANGE

Hotel Kipping (☎ 478 500; www.hotel-kipping.de; Winkelmannstrasse 6; s/d from €75/90; ☎) Just south of the Hauptbahnhof, this is a family-run, family-friendly hotel that comes with 20 comfortable rooms in a house right out of the *Addams Family*. The bar and café are especially appealing and there's wi-fi.

Ibis Dresden Lilienstein (☎ 4856 6663; www.ibis-hotel.com; Prager Strasse 13; r €50-120; ☎) Together with the adjoining Ibis Dresden Bastei and the Ibis Dresden Königstein, this huge communist-era complex has over 900 rooms. The décor has been redone in 'cheap and cheerful' and pluses include wi-fi and a good chance at a vacancy in summer. The breakfast buffet is vast.

Hotel Martha Hospiz (☎ 817 60; www.vch.de; Nieritzstrasse 11; r €54-120; ☎) Quiet reigns in this 50-room inn with country furnishings, built over 100 years ago by a church. The location is central and it has many amenities, including wi-fi.

Rothenburger Hof (☎ 812 60; www.rothenburger-hof.de; Rothenburger Strasse 15-17; r €75-140; ☎) In the middle of Neustadt you'll find this well-appointed 26-room place in a renovated 1865 mansion. It offers many health treatments in its spa and sauna.



TOP END

Steigenberger Hotel De Saxe (☎ 438 60; www.desaxe-dresden.steigenberger.com; Neumarkt 9; r from €200; ☒ ☑ ☒) This 178-room grand hotel opened in 2006 on the site of a historic hotel of the same name. It's part of the scheme to recreate the prewar Neumarkt around the Frauenkirche. The hotel offers a spa, sauna, wi-fi and many more luxuries.

Eating

It's no problem finding somewhere to eat in the Neustadt, with oodles of cafés and restaurants found along Königstrasse and the streets north of Albertplatz. This is definitely the most interesting part of town at night. South of the river, look near the Altmarkt, and Münzgasse/Terrassengasse, between Brühlsche Terrasse and the Frauenkirche, for restaurants representing all kinds of local and international cuisine.

Cafe Kontinental (☎ 801 3531; Görlitzer Strasse 1; mains €5-15; ☒ 24hr; ☒) A bustling place open around the clock, this trendy café caters to a broad swath of Neustadt characters.

Caffe Blumenau (☎ 802 6502; Louisenstrasse 67; mains €5-15; ☒ 8am-2am; ☒) Flowers abound in this beautiful café and bar, which also has a sunny back patio. A long breakfast menu is served through the day as well as sandwiches, salads, pasta and cakes.

Wenzel Prager Bierstuben (☎ 804 2010; Königstrasse 1; mains €7-20; ☒ 11am-midnight) This busy beer hall serves up oceans of Czech lager under arched brick ceilings. Always crowded, the menu leans towards traditional meaty mains. The garlic soup is sublime, the cured pork with horseradish a delight.

El Español Tapas Bar (☎ 804 8670; An der Dreikönigskirche 7; meals €7-20; ☒ 11am-1am) On a leafy square overlooking the newly restored Three Kings Church, this tapas place glows with good seasoning and good cheer. When it's warm dine on the square, when it's cold settle into the woody interior. The tapas menu is long and varied.

Altmarkt Keller (☎ 481 8130; Altmarkt 4; mains €8-25; ☒ 11am-midnight) The foods of Saxony and neighbouring Bohemia (in the Czech Republic) are featured in this underground restaurant. Look for lots of hearty pork and beef dishes and as well as all manner of dumplings. On many nights there's live music that gets the tourist toes a-tapping.

Drinking & Entertainment

As elsewhere, many of the places listed under Eating above are also good just for a drink.

Dresden is synonymous with opera, and performances at the spectacular **Semperoper** (☎ 491 1496; www.semperoper.de; Theaterplatz) are brilliant. Tickets cost from €10, but they're usually booked out well in advance. Some performances by the renowned philharmonic are also held there, but most are in the communist-era **Kulturpalast** (☎ 486 60; www.kulturpalast-dresden.de; Schlossstrasse 2), which hosts a wide range of concerts and events.

Neue Tonne (☎ 802 6017; www.jazzclubtonne.de; Königstrasse 15; entry free-€15) This well-known place has live music almost nightly.

Scheunecafé (☎ 802 6619; Alaunstrasse 36-40; mains €7-12) Set back from the street, Indian food, a vast beer garden, live music and deejays all combine here for a fun and funky stew.

Café 100 (☎ 801 7729; Alaunstrasse 100) Off a courtyard, you'll pass hundreds of empty bottles on the way in, a foreshadowing of the lengthy wine list and delights that follow. Candles give the underground space a romantic yet edgy glow.

Queens (☎ 810 8108; Görlitzerstrasse 3) This hopping gay bar/lounge/disco is a good first stop to find out what's happening locally.

Getting There & Around

Dresden's **airport** (DRS; www.dresden-airport.de), served by Lufthansa, DBA, Air Berlin among others, is 9km north of the city centre, on S-Bahn line 2 (€1.70, 30 minutes). The Airport City Liner bus serves Dresden-Neustadt (€3) and the Hauptbahnhof (€4), with stops at key points in town. A taxi to the Hauptbahnhof is about €15.

Dresden is well linked to the regular service through the day to Leipzig (€26, 70 minutes), Berlin-Hauptbahnhof by IC/EC train (€30.20, 2¼ hours) and Frankfurt-am-Main (€76, 4½ hours).

Dresden's **public transport network** (www.dvbag.de) charges €1.70 for a single ticket; day tickets cost €4.50. Tram 3, 6, 7 and 8 provide good links between the Hauptbahnhof and Neustadt.

AROUND DRESDEN
Meissen

☎ 03521 / pop 29,000

Some 27km northwest of Dresden, Meissen is a compact, perfectly preserved old town and the centre of a rich wine-growing re-

gion. It makes for a good day trip out of Dresden by train or boat and beguiles with its red-tiled roofs and historic charm.

Meissen's medieval fortress, the Albrechtsburg, crowns a ridge high above the Elbe River and contains the former ducal palace and Meissen Cathedral, a magnificent Gothic structure. Augustus the Strong of Saxony created Europe's first porcelain factory here in 1710. The town celebrated its 1075th anniversary in 2004.

Like Dresden, Meissen straddles the Elbe River, with the old town on the western bank and the train station on the eastern. Both sides were struck by record flood levels in 2002, with water pushing quite a distance into the Altstadt; look out for plaques marking the highest points. Cafés line the streets and are popular on warm days.

The tourist office is at **Meissen-Information** (☎ 419 40; www.touristinfo-meissen.de; Markt 3; ☒ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun, to 4pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat Nov-Mar). Staff can help find accommodation.

Step stepped lanes lead up to Meissen's towering 13th-century **Albrechtsburg Cathedral** (☎ 452 490; Domplatz 7; adult/child €3.50/2; ☒ 10am-6pm Mar-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Feb), which contains an altarpiece by Lucas Cranach the Elder.

Beside the cathedral is the remarkable 15th-century **palace** (☎ 470 70; Domplatz 1; adult/child €3.50/2.50; ☒ 10am-6pm Mar-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Feb), widely seen as the birthplace of Schloss architecture, with its ingenious system of internal arches. A combined ticket for both buildings costs adult/child €5/2.50.

Meissen has long been renowned for its chinaware, with its trademark insignia of blue crossed swords. The Albrechtsburg palace was originally the manufacturing site, but the factory is now 1km southwest of the Altstadt in an appropriately beautiful building, the **Porzellan Manufaktur** (Porcelain Factory; ☎ 468 700; Talstrasse 9; adult/child €8/4; ☒ 9am-6pm May-Oct, 9am-5pm Nov-Apr), which dates to 1916. There are often long queues for the workshop demonstrations, but you can view the porcelain collection upstairs at your leisure.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Half-hourly S-Bahn trains run from Dresden's Hauptbahnhof and Neustadt train stations (€5.10, 45 minutes). To visit the porcelain factory, get off at Meissen-Triebischtal (one stop after Meissen).

A more interesting way to get here is by steamer (between May and September). Boats leave from the Sächsische Dampfschiffahrt (see p451) dock in Dresden at 9.45am and head back at 2.45pm (€16.10 return, two hours).

Saxon Switzerland

Sächsische Schweiz (Saxon Switzerland) is a 275 sq km national park 50km south of Dresden, near the Czech border. Its wonderfully wild, craggy country is dotted with castles and tiny towns along the mighty Elbe. The landscape varies unexpectedly and radically: its forests can look deceptively tropical, while the worn cliffs and plateaus recall the parched expanses of New Mexico or central Spain (generally without the searing heat).

The highlight of the park is the **Bastei** lookout, on the Elbe some 28km southeast of Dresden. One of the most breathtaking spots in the whole of Germany, it features towering outcrops 305m high and unparalleled views of the surrounding forests, cliffs and mountains, not to mention a magnificent sightline right along the river itself.

LEIPZIG

☎ 0341 / pop 498,000

Leipzig is the busiest city in Saxony, a livelier alternative to Dresden. Although it lacks the capital's bus-load of museums, Leipzig in many ways feels more vibrant in an everyday sense. It's not weighed down by the past and like its shopping passages, invites exploration.

Leipzig also has some of the finest classical music and opera in the country, and its art and literary scenes are flourishing. Once home to Bach, Wagner and Mendelssohn, and to Goethe (who set a key scene of *Faust* in the cellar of his favourite watering hole), it more recently earned the sobriquet *Stadt der Helden* (City of Heroes) for its leading role in the 1989 democratic revolution.

The city has a compact centre worth wandering and a growing arts scene. It's definitely worth a day or two of your travels.

Orientation

Leipzig's centre lies within a ring road that outlines the town's medieval fortifications. To reach the city centre from the Hauptbahnhof, cross Willy-Brandt-Platz and continue south along Nikolaistrasse for five minutes.

The central Markt (square), which was being redeveloped for a new station at the time of research, is a couple of blocks southwest, and east down Grimmische Strasse is the massive Augustusplatz, home to some of the city's most important (if not prettiest) GDR-era buildings and also the modern MDR Tower.

The Hauptbahnhof contains a modern mall with over 140 shops and (radically for Germany) it is open from 6am to 10pm daily. You'll find good bookshops, a post office, banks and much more. There's wi-fi in the DB Lounge.

Information

Internetcafé (☎ 993 9530; Reichsstrasse 18; per 15 min €1; ☎ 10am-10pm) A full service shop for CD burning and Internet.

Leipzig Tourist Service (☎ 710 4260; www.leipzig.de; Richard-Wagner-Strasse 1; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 9am-2pm Sun) One of the most helpful in Germany, with discount cards from €7.40.

Sights

Don't rush from sight to sight – wandering around Leipzig is a pleasure in itself, with many of the blocks around the central Markt crisscrossed by old internal shopping passages. Four good ones: **Steibs Hof** (100-year-old blue tiles and classic cafés), **Specs Hof** (soaring atrium, bookshops, cafés), **Jägerhofpassage** (galleries, theatre, antiques) and the classic **Mädlerpassage** (grand design, the famous Auerbachs Keller, see p456).

MONUMENTS & LANDMARKS

Off the southern ring road is the 108m-high tower of the baroque **Neues Rathaus** (new town hall; ☎ 1230; Martin-Luther-Ring; ☎ 7am-4.30pm Mon-Fri). Though the origins date to the 16th century, its current manifestation was completed in 1905. The interior makes it one of the finest municipal buildings in Germany; the lobby houses rotating art exhibitions, mostly on historical themes.

Located 4km southeast of the centre, the **Völkerschlachtdenkmal** (Battle of Nations Monument; Strasse des 18 Oktober; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar) is a massive 91m-high monument commemorating the decisive victory here by the combined Prussian, Austrian and Russian forces over Napoleon's army in 1813. Climb the 500 steps for a view of the region. Take tram 15 from the station (direction Meusdorf).

MUSEUMS

Leipzig's finest museum, the **Museum der Bildenden Künste** (Museum of Fine Arts; ☎ 216 990; Grimmische Strasse 1-7; adult/child €5/3.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 10am-8pm Wed), is housed in a stunning new building that provides both a dramatic – and echoey – backdrop to its collection, which spans old masters and the latest efforts of local artists.

Haunting and uplifting by turns, the **Zeitgeschichtliches Forum** (Forum of Contemporary History; ☎ 222 20; Grimmische Strasse 6; admission free; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) tells the story of the GDR from division and dictatorship to resistance and reform. It does a good job of chronicling the 1989 revolution, which started here and it captures the tragic drama of the original Iron Curtain division.

Former headquarters of the East German secret police, the **Stasi Museum** (☎ 961 2443; Dittrichring 24; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm) has exhibits on propaganda, amazingly hokey disguises, surveillance photos and other forms of 'intelligence'. There are also mounds of papier-mâché that were created when officers shredded and soaked secret documents before the fall of the GDR.

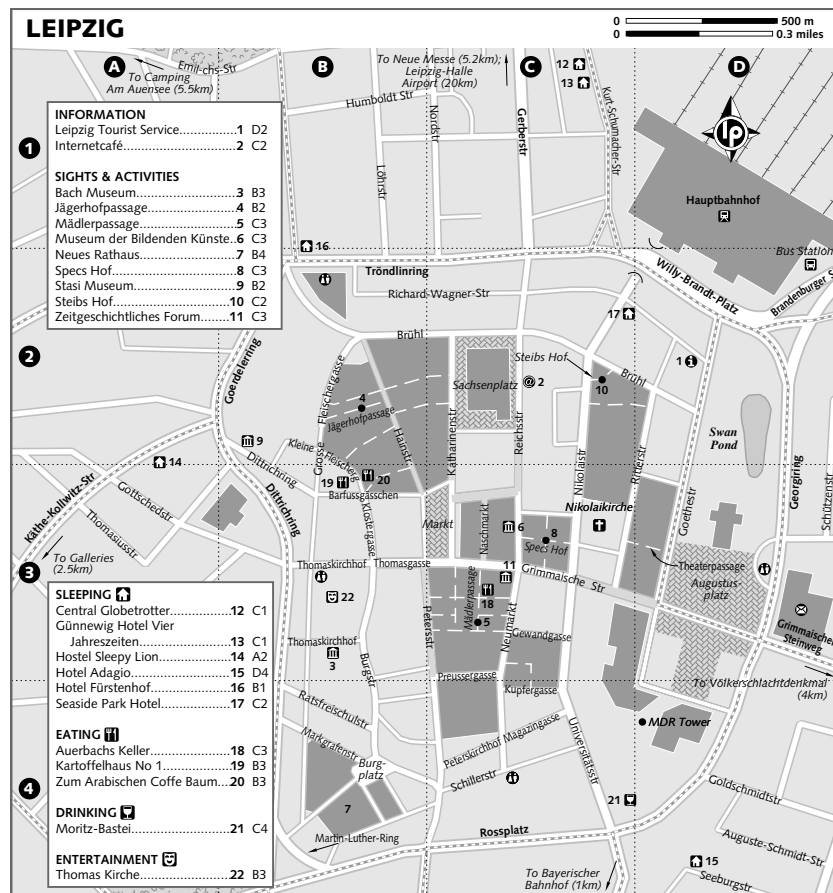
Opposite the Thomaskirche, is the **Bach Museum** (☎ 964 110; Thomaskirchhof 16; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 10am-5pm), where JS Bach worked from 1723 until his death in 1750. This collection focuses on the composer's busy life in Leipzig. There are portraits, manuscripts and other Bach memorabilia.

ART

Leipzig has a thriving art scene thanks to the Art Academy of Leipzig, a famous old school where figurative painting never went out of style. Now the efforts of its many local grads such as Neo Rauch, Tim Eitel and Tilo Baumgärtel are all the rage. You can see some of the best works at the Museum der Bildenden Künste (see above) or you can go out to the many galleries found along Spinnereisstrasse, 2km west of the centre (take tram 14 to stop S-Bf. Miltitzer Allee). The tourist office has useful gallery information.

Sleeping

Leipzig Tourist Service (see left) offers free booking in private homes near the centre. Average cost is €30 to €45.



BUDGET

Camping Am Auensee (☎ 465 1600; www.motel-auensee.de; Gustav-Esche-Strasse 5; camp sites per person from €3, cabins €28-35) This camping ground is in a pleasant wooded spot on the city's northwestern outskirts (take tram 10 or 28 to Wahren). The cabins are A-frame bungalows.

Central Globetrotter (☎ 149 8960; www.globetrotter-leipzig.de; Kurt-Schumacher-Strasse 41; dm €14, s/d €24/36; ☎) In a busy location just north of the train station, this 80-room hostel offers bare-bones accommodation, although some rooms boast murals, albeit ones that won't win any scholarships to the Art Academy of Leipzig.

Hostel Sleepy Lion (☎ 993 9480; www.hostel-leipzig.de; Käthe-Kollwitz-Strasse 3; dm €15, s/d €28/40; ☎ ☎)

All rooms have their own baths at this 59-room facility in a renovated building. Some come with fake trees as well.

MIDRANGE

Midrange accommodation in the centre is fairly unexciting and usually the preserve of the big chains (particularly the many Accor brands).

Hotel Adagio (☎ 216 699; www.hotel-adagio.de; Seeburgstrasse 96; r €72-95; ☎) The 32 rooms here are smartly decked out with a black-and-white theme. You can take breakfast in the garden and there's a certain intimate charm.

Günnewig Hotel Vier Jahreszeiten (☎ 985 10; www.gunnewig.de; Kurt-Schumacher-Strasse 23; r €60-130; ☎ ☎) Close to the train station, this

anonymous place has wi-fi in all 67 comfortable rooms and serves up a good buffet breakfast in the atrium.

Seaside Park Hotel (☎ 985 20; www.seaside-hotels.de; Richard-Wagner-Strasse 7; r €95-140; 🚿) Leipzig could hardly be further from the sea, but the Seaside makes a real name for itself with 288 well-furnished rooms. Behind the Art Nouveau façade is a modern interior. It's right across from the train station.

TOP END

Hotel Fürstnhof (☎ 1400; www.starwood.de; Tröndlingring 8; r €135-350; 🚿 🚿 🚿 🚿) The best place to stay in town has roots going back 200 years. The current edition has 92 rooms, a fine garden and reeks of old world elegance. It's part of the Starwood conglomerate.

Eating

Kartoffelhaus No 1 (☎ 960 4603; Barfussgässchen 12; mains €6-12) Kids love the spuds, and you can get 'em baked, fried, boiled, grilled and more (that's the tubers not the kids).

Zum Arabischen Coffe Baum (☎ 965 1321; Kleine Fleischergasse 4; mains €6-15) Leipzig's oldest coffee bar has a restaurant and café offering excellent meals over three floors, plus a free coffee museum at the top. Composer Robert Schumann met friends here, and if you ask nicely you can sit at his regular table.

Bayerischer Bahnhof (☎ 124 5760; Bayerischer Platz 1; mains €7-20) Leipzig has its own local beer style, Gose, that is sadly all but extinct. But not here at this microbrewery where you can get the light, herby brew by the litre. The food is hearty and the place remains open while the real train station is rebuilt next door. Take tram 9, 10 or 16.

Auerbachs Keller (☎ 216 100; www.auerbachs-keller-leipzig.de; Mädlerpassage; mains €14-22) Founded in 1525, Auerbachs Keller is one of Germany's classic restaurants, serving typically hearty fare. Goethe's *Faust – Part I* includes a scene here, in which Mephistopheles and Faust carouse with some students before they ride off on a barrel. The historic section of the restaurant includes the Goethe room and the Fasskeller; note the carved tree-trunk in the latter, depicting the whole barrel-riding adventure.

Drinking & Entertainment

Barfussgässchen and Kleine Flieschergasse, west of the Markt, form one of Leipzig's two 'pub miles', packed with outdoor tables that

fill up the second the weather turns warm. The other is on Gottschedstrasse, a wider cocktail strip just west of the Altstadt.

Moritz-Bastei (☎ 702 590; www.moritzbastei.de; Universitätsstrasse 9) One of the best student clubs in Germany, in a spacious cellar below the old city walls. It has live music or DJs most nights and runs films outside in summer.

To hear the works of native-born Bach and others, try the 18th-century **Thomaskirche** (☎ 212 4676; Thomaskirchhof 18), which has frequent recitals and other performances.

Getting There & Away

Leipzig-Halle airport (LEJ; www.leipzig-halle-airport.de), roughly equidistant from both cities, is served by the Airport Express (€4, 15 minutes) every 30 minutes. Other trains from the region also stop there. Air Berlin and Lufthansa are the main carriers, the former with flights to London. Ryanair serves tiny and remote **Altenburg airport** (ADC; www.flughafen-altenburg.de). There's a shuttle bus (€14, 1½ hours) timed to coincide with the flights to/from London.

Leipzig is an important rail hub and fittingly has a monumental Hauptbahnhof. Regular service through the day includes Dresden (€26, 70 minutes), Munich by ICE (€74, five hours), Berlin-Hauptbahnhof by ICE (€36, 70 minutes) and Frankfurt-am-Main (€61, 3½ hours).

Getting Around

Trams are the main public transport option, with most lines running via the Hauptbahnhof. The S-Bahn circles the city's outer suburbs. A single ticket costs €1.70 and a day card €4.90. A vast project of building an S-Bahn line under the city centre is due for completion in 2009.

THURINGIA

Thuringia likes to trade on its reputation as the 'Green Heart' of Germany, an honour helped by the former GDR's dodgy economy, which limited development. These days its main towns of Erfurt, Weimar and Eisenach are popular for their historic centres and deserve visits, even if it's just a break in a train journey.

While the communist era may have been relatively benign, the previous decades were

not. The Nazis had numerous concentration camps here including the notorious Buchenwald and the nightmare of Mittelbau Dora. But yet again, in contrast, Weimar was the place where Germany tried a liberal democracy in the 1920s and in previous centuries it was home to notables such as Bach, Schiller, Goethe, Thomas Mann and many more.

ERFURT

☎ 0361 / pop 202,000

Thuringia's capital was founded by St Boniface as a bishopric in 742. In the Middle Ages the city shot to prominence and prosperity as an important trading post. The Altstadt's many well-preserved 16th-century and later buildings attest to its wealth.

During WWII, damage was extensive, and the GDR regime did little to restore the city's former glories. Over the past decade, however, Erfurt has spiffed up what it has and a stroll through the old streets and across the rivers is a delight.

Orientation

Most of the car traffic is routed around the Altstadt via two ring roads, making it a pleasure to walk between the main sights. The train and bus stations are just beyond the southeastern edge of the town centre, and were undergoing a massive reconstruction at the time of research. It's a five-minute walk north along Bahnhofstrasse to Anger, the main shopping and business artery. The little Gera River bisects the Altstadt, spilling off into numerous creeks.

Information

Erfurt Tourismus (☎ 664 00; www.erfurt-tourist-info.de; Benediktspatz 1; 🕒 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun) Has a discount card from €9.90.

Internettreff (☎ 262 3834; Ratskellerpassage, Fischmarkt 5; per hr €1.50; 🕒 1-8pm Mon-Sat) Has Internet access.

Sights

It's hard to miss Erfurt's cathedral, **Dom St Marien** (☎ 646 1265; Domplatz; tours adult/child €2.50/1.50; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun, less in winter), which casts its massive shadow over Domplatz from an artificial hill built specially to hold it. Ironically, it was originally only planned as a simple chapel in 752; by the time it was completed it was the rather strange, huge amalgam you see today (if only

a divine hand could reach down and rearrange things a bit...). In July the stone steps leading up to the cathedral are the site of the **Domstufenfestspiele**, where operas are performed against the dramatic background.

Next to the cathedral, the 1280 **Severikirche** (☎ 576 960; 🕒 9am-12.30pm & 1.30-5pm Mon-Fri, less in winter) is an impressive five-aisled church hall boasting a stone Madonna (1345) and a 15m-high baptismal font (1467), as well as the sarcophagus of St Severus, whose remains were brought to Erfurt in 836.

The **Augustinerkloster** (☎ 576 600; Augustinerstrasse; adult/child €6/5; 🕒 tours 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sat, 11am-2pm Sun), now a nunnery, has a strong pedigree: Martin Luther was a monk here from 1505 to 1511 and, after being ordained beneath the chapel's stained-glass windows, read his first mass. You can view Luther's cell and an exhibit on the Reformation. The grounds and church are free.

North of the Dom complex and west of Andreasstrasse, many of the city's lesser churches were demolished to erect the impressively tough-looking **Citadelle Petersberg** (Petersberg fortress; ☎ 211 5270) – hence the reason why Erfurt has so many steeples without churches attached. There is a fascinating series of subterranean tunnels within the thick walls, which can only be seen on a guided tour from the tourist office.

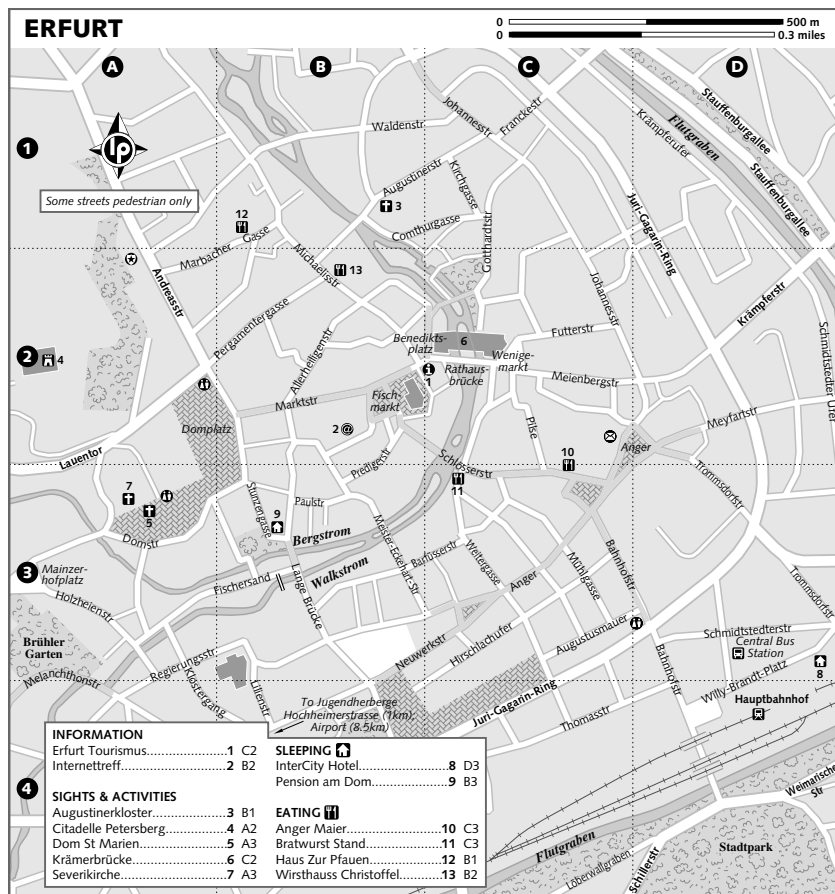
Unique in this part of Europe, the medieval **Krämerbrücke** (Merchants' Bridge) is an 18m-wide, 120m-long curiosity spanning the Gera River. Quaint houses and shops line both sides of the narrow road.

Sleeping

Jugendherberge Hochheimerstrasse (☎ 6013 2600; www.djh.de; Hochheimer Strasse 12; dm from €17; 🚿 🚿) This modern 200-bed hostel is 2km south of the city (take tram 5 to Steigerstrasse).

PensionamDom (☎ 5504 8660; www.pension-am-dom-erfurt.de; Lange Brücke 57; r €29-69; 🚿) True to its name, this friendly little central *pension* has superb views of the cathedral from the breakfast room and terrace. Rooms are light and airy with natural wood floors. It's located over some trendy stores.

InterCity Hotel (☎ 560 00; www.intercityhotel.com; Willy-Brandt-Platz 11; r €60-120; 🚿 🚿 🚿) Part of the new train station complex, this modern and comfortable abode has good views of the choo-choos and is convenient for the centre. It has wi-fi.



Eating

Look for interesting and trendy restaurants and cafés along Michaelisstrasse and Marbacher Gasse. For a quick treat, have a *Thuringer Bratwurst* hot off the grill from a stand (☎ 793 5250; Schlösserstrasse; meal €1.50) near a small waterfall.

Wirsthauss Christoffel (☎ 262 6943; Michaelisstrasse 41; mains €6-11) History oozes out of the wooden walls at this quaint little café. As the name implies, local sausage is a house specialty. On some nights films are shown in the basement.

Anger Maier (☎ 566 1058; Schlösserstrasse 8; mains €6-12) This tunnel-like restaurant is an Erfurt institution, with cheap, quality eats in a busy, smoky old warren.

Haus Zur Pfauen (☎ 211 5209; Marbacher Gasse 12; mains €7-10) An atmospheric microbrewery with a large beer garden and tasty brews. If you're reduced to crawling, you might just head upstairs to the simple rooms (accommodation from €45).

Getting There & Around

Erfurt's Hauptbahnhof is on a line with frequent service linking Leipzig (€25, one hour), Weimar (€7, 15 minutes) and Eisenach (€9 to €17, 30 to 50 minutes). Hourly ICE/IC service goes to Frankfurt (€46, 2½ hours) and Berlin-Hauptbahnhof (€47, 2¾ hours).

Public transport in the city centre costs €1.50 but you're likely to just walk.

AROUND ERFURT

Eisenach is home to the Wartburg, the only German castle to be named a Unesco World Heritage Site. Composer Johann Sebastian Bach was born here but he plays second fiddle to the amazing edifice in stone and half-timber high on the hill.

The small town has a good **tourist office** (☎ 792 30; www.eisenach.de; Markt 9; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon, 9am-6pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun), which can help you find accommodation if your day trip gets extended.

The **Wartburg** (☎ 2500; www.wartburg-eisenach.de; tour adult/child €6/3; ☎ tours 8.30am-5pm), parts of which date to the 11th century, is perched high above the town on a wooded hill, is said to go back to Count Ludwig der Springer (the Jumper); you'll hear the story of how the castle got its name many times, but listen out for how Ludwig got his peculiar moniker as well.

The castle owes its huge popularity to Martin Luther, who went into hiding here from 1521 to 1522 after being excommunicated; during this time he translated the entire New Testament from Greek into German, contributing enormously to the development of the written German language. His modest, wood-paneled **study** is part of the guided tour (available in English), which is the only way to view the interior. The **museum** houses the famous Cranach paintings of Luther and important Christian artefacts from all over Germany. Most of the rooms you'll see here are extravagant 19th-century impressions of medieval life rather than original fittings; the re-imagined Great Hall inspired Richard Wagner's opera *Tannhäuser*. Between Easter and October, crowds can be horrendous; arrive before 11am.

Frequent direct trains run to Erfurt (€9 to €17, 30 to 50 minutes) and most continue on the short distance to Weimar.

WEIMAR

☎ 03643 / pop 64,000

The city of Goethe is not impressive on first glance. There are no vast cathedrals or palaces, nor are there any world-renowned museums. But spend a little time wandering its very attractive old streets and visiting its fascinating little museums and historic houses and soon you will understand the allure. You'll feel the presence of notables like Luther, Schiller and Liszt and you'll begin

to understand the remarkable cultural accomplishments achieved in Weimar over the centuries.

Because of its historical significance, Weimar has received particularly large hand-outs for the restoration of its many fine buildings, and in 1999 it was the European Capital of Culture. While the city can sometimes feel like a giant museum teeming with tourists, it is one of Germany's most fascinating places and should not be missed.

Orientation

Weimar's compact and walkable centre is a 20-minute jaunt downhill from the station.

Information

There are scores of little book and music shops in town.

Tourist Information (☎ 240 00; www.weimar.de; Markt 10; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat & Sun) Discount cards good for most admissions from €13.

Vobis (☎ 902 925; Schwansee Strasse; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-8pm) Internet access.

Sights

A good place to begin a tour is in front of the neo-Gothic 1841 **Rathaus** on the Markt. For in-depth museum information and high-end souvenirs try the **Stiftung Weimarer Klassik** (Weimar Classics Foundation; ☎ 545 401; www.swkk.de; Frauentorstrasse 4; ☎ 10am-6pm).

Those who visit the **Goethe Nationalmuseum** (☎ 545 347; Frauenplan 1; adult/child €6.50/5; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun) expecting to learn all about the great man of letters will probably be disappointed. Rather than focusing on Goethe himself, the museum offers a broad overview of German classicism, from its proponents to its patrons.

The adjoining **Goethe Haus**, where such works as *Faust* were written, focuses much more on the man himself. He lived here from 1775 until his death in 1832. Goethe's original 1st-floor living quarters are reached via an expansive Italian Renaissance staircase decorated with sculpture and paintings brought back from his travels to Italy. You'll see his dining room, study and the bedroom with his deathbed. Because demand often exceeds capacity, you'll be given a time slot to enter. Once inside, you can stay as long as you want. The **Faustina café** has a controversial Christoph Hodgson mural depicting Weimar's famous and infamous.

The Bauhaus school and movement were founded in Weimar in 1919 by Walter Gropius, who managed to draw top artists including Kandinsky, Klee, Feininger and Schlemmer as teachers. The exhibition at the **Bauhaus Museum** (☎ 545 961; Theaterplatz; adult/child €4.50/3.50; 🕒 10am-6pm) chronicles the evolution of the group, explains its innovations and spotlights the main players. In 1925 the Bauhaus moved to Dessau and in 1932 to Berlin, where it was dissolved by the Nazis the following year.

Housed in the **Stadtschloss**, the former residence of the ducal family of Saxe-Weimar, the **Schlossmuseum** (☎ 545 960; Burgplatz 4; adult/child €5/4; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar) displays encompass sculpture, paintings and arts-and-craft objects. Highlights include the Cranach Gallery, several portraits by Albrecht Dürer and collections of Dutch masters and German romanticists. Several restored residence rooms can also be seen.

Goethe's fellow dramatist Friedrich von Schiller lived in Weimar from 1799 until his early death in 1805; unlike his mentor, he had to buy his own house, now known as **Schiller Museum** (☎ 545 350; Schillerstrasse 12; adult/child €6.50/5; 🕒 9am-6pm Wed-Mon). The study at the 2nd floor contains the desk where he penned *Wilhelm Tell* and other works, and also holds his deathbed.

Liszt Haus (☎ 545 388; Marienstrasse 17; adult/child €2.50/2; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) on the western edge of **Ilm Park**. Composer and pianist Franz Liszt lived here in 1848 and again from 1869 to 1886, when he wrote *Hungarian Rhapsody* and *Faust Symphony*.

Sleeping

The tourist office can help find accommodation, especially at busy times. There are many *pensions* scattered about the centre, which is where you should try to stay.

Hababusch (☎ 850 737; www.hababusch.de; Geleitstrasse 4; dm €10, s/d €15/24) Get in touch with the town's past at this unrestored 19th-century house. Conditions are, well, historic, but if you're looking for atmosphere this is it. The charming fountain out front is dedicated to the city.

Jugendherberge Germania (☎ 850 490; www.djh.de; Carl-August-Allee 13; dm from €17; ☒) The 121-bed Germania, south of the station, is convenient for a quick getaway but a little far from the centre.

Hotel Fürstenhof (☎ 833 231; www.fuerstenhof-weimar.de; Rudolf-Breitscheid-Strasse 2; r €46-100; ☒) A nice modern alternative to the ubiquitous 'period' décor elsewhere, the 17 rooms boast abstract prints. There's a vivid yellow breakfast room.

Ringhotel Kaiserin Augusta (☎ 2340; www.hotel-kaiserin-augusta.de; Carl-August-Allee 17; r €66-140; ☒) Directly across from the train station, this 242-bed business hotel offers many services and well-equipped rooms with wi-fi. It has a good terrace and breakfast buffet.

Hotel Elephant (☎ 8020; www.starwood.com; Markt 19; r €100-250; ☒) A true classic, the marble Bauhaus-Deco splendour of the 99-room Elephant has seen most of Weimar's great and good come and go; just to make the point, a golden Thomas Mann looks out over the Markt from a balcony in front. Its **Elephantenkeller** restaurant is also a local institution. Was that Goethe you just saw stroll past? The terrace is a delight.

Eating

Residenz-Café (☎ 594 08; Grüner Markt 4; mains €5-15) Known as the 'Resi' by regulars, this is one of Weimar's most popular haunts and has been for more than 160 years. The food is hearty and local, look for filling, starchy treats. The Sunday brunch draws hordes.

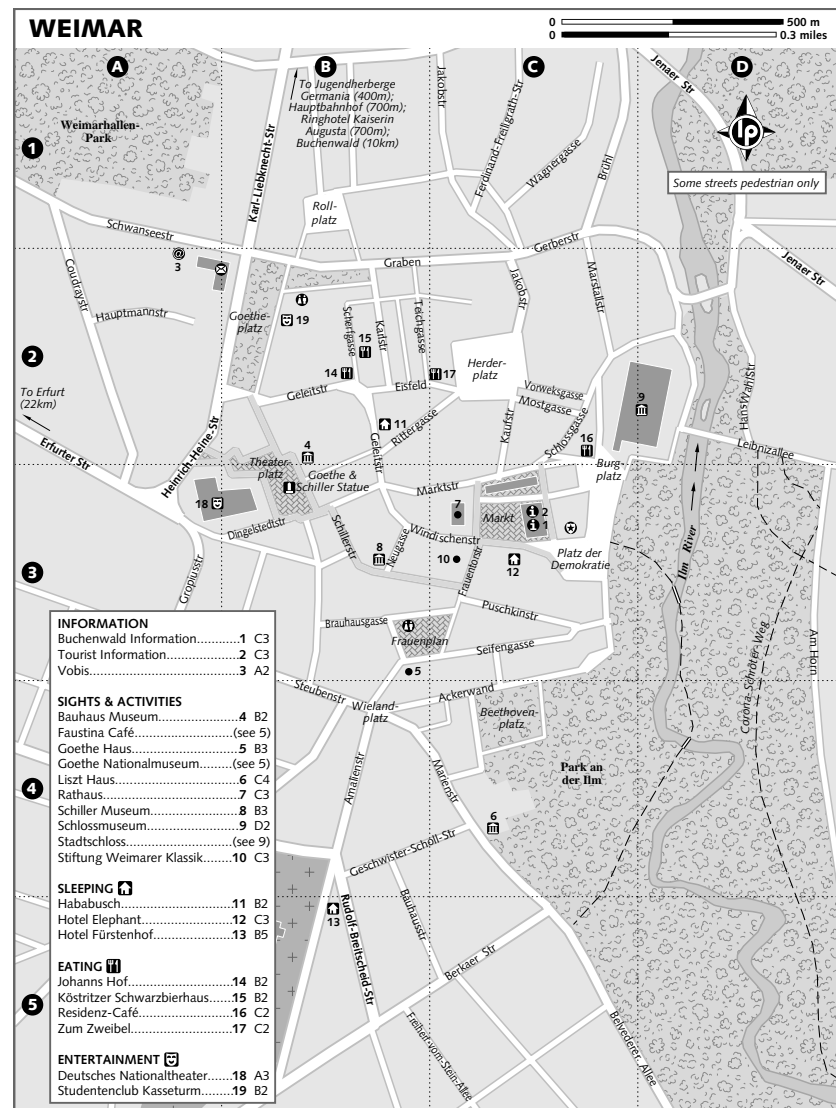
Johanns Hof (☎ 493 617; Scherfgasse 1; mains €6-14) Large windows punctuate the maroon walls in this historic and stylish café. The long wine list specialises in German white wines. Creative dishes include a fine garlic soup.

Zum Zwiebel (☎ 502 375; Teichgasse 6; mains €7-13; ☒ dinner) Look for the cute statue and logo at this unassuming place with exposed brick walls. The menu combines potatoes, sausage and, of course, onions. Yum.

Köstritzer Schwarzbierhaus (☎ 779 337; Scherfgasse 4; mains €7-18) Fans of dark beer and substantial traditional Thuringian cooking are in exactly the right place here – the listed half-timbered house has been converted into a restaurant and *pension* (double €80).

Entertainment

Deutsches Nationaltheater (German National Theatre; ☎ 755 334; www.nationaltheater-weimar.de; Theaterplatz; ☒ closed Jul-Aug) This historic venue was used to draft the constitution of the ill-fated Weimar Republic in 1919. Expect a mix of classic and contemporary plays, plus ballet, opera and classical concerts.



Studentenclub Kasseturm (☎ 851 670; www.kasseturm.de; Goetheplatz 10; 🕒 6pm-late) A classic, the Kasseturm is a historic round tower with three floors of live music, DJs and cabaret.

Getting There & Away

Weimar's Hauptbahnhof is on a line with frequent service linking Leipzig (€22, one

hour) and Erfurt (€7, 15 minutes). Hourly ICE/IC services go to both Frankfurt (€49, 2½ hours) and Berlin-Hauptbahnhof (€44, 2½ hours).

The town centre is a 20-minute walk south of the Hauptbahnhof. Most buses serve Goetheplatz, on the northwestern edge of the Altstadt.

AROUND WEIMAR

The **Buchenwald** (☎ 03643-4300; www.buchenwald.de; ☹ 10am-6pm May-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct-Apr) concentration camp museum and memorial are 10km north of Weimar. The contrast between the brutality of the former and the liberal humanism of the latter is hard to comprehend.

Between 1937 and 1945, more than one-fifth of the 250,000 people incarcerated here died. The location on the side of a hill only added to the torture of the inmates, as there are sweeping views of the region – a place where people were free while those here died. Various parts of the camp have been restored and there is an essential museum with excellent exhibits. There's also a heart-breaking display of art created by the prisoners. Murals of flowers speak volumes about what was lost.

After the war, the Soviet victors turned the tables by establishing Special Camp No 2, in which 7000 so-called anticommunists and ex-Nazis were literally worked to death. Their bodies were found after the reunification in mass graves north of the camp and near the Hauptbahnhof.

In Weimar, **Buchenwald Information** (☎ 430 200; Markt 10; ☹ 10am-12.30pm & 1-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) is a good resource.

To reach the camp, take bus 6 (€1.60, 15 minutes), which runs often.

SAXONY-ANHALT

Once the smog-filled heart of GDR industry and now unfortunately home to the worst unemployment in a united Germany, Saxony-Anhalt (Sachsen-Anhalt) isn't on everyone's must-visit list. In fact, while the landscape is looking much greener these days, the flow of human traffic is mainly in an outbound direction, as the 25% of the population out of work looks west in search of a job.

Still, the state has some strong drawcards, making it worthwhile venturing in, especially Dessau's Bauhaus legacy and the wonderful bordering landscape of the Harz region.

MAGDEBURG

☎ 0391 / pop 228,000

Sometimes, just turning the corner in Magdeburg can take you back 100 years. Generally, Saxony-Anhalt's capital is a city

of wide boulevards and huge concrete *Plattenbauten* apartment complexes, where a recent injection of euros hasn't completely disguised an underlying poverty. However, the moment you step onto tree-lined Hegelstrasse, you find yourself on pristine cobbled footpaths, surrounded by restored terrace buildings from the early 1900s.

Looking north, you see Magdeburg's famous medieval cathedral. Continue south to Hasselbachplatz and you remain in an enclave of pretty-as-a-picture historic streets. It looks like a film set plonked down in the middle of GDR-town, as the patrons in the trendy bars here would probably agree.

Orientation

To reach the centre from the Hauptbahnhof, take the city exit, skirt left around the Cinemaxx movie theatre into Ernst-Reuter-Allee, and continue ahead until you come to the city's main north-south artery Breiter Weg. The tourist office is just after this intersection, on the left side of Ernst-Reuter-Allee.

Northwards, Breiter Weg leads to Universitätsplatz; heading south it takes you to the cathedral and Hasselbachplatz.

Information

Internet & Game Café (Kepler Passage, Keplerstrasse 9; per hr €2; ☹ 2pm-midnight)

Tourist Information Magdeburg (☎ 194 33; www.magdeburg-tourist.de; Ernst-Reuter-Allee 12; ☹ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat May-Sep, 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat Oct-Apr)

Sights

Magdeburg is famous for its 13th-century **Dom** (☎ 543 2414; Domplatz; admission free, English booklet €3; ☹ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-4pm Sun), apparently the oldest on German soil. However, it also has a new, 21st-century attraction in Friedensreich Hundertwasser's **Green Citadel** (Grüne Zitadelle; ☎ 400 9650; www.gruene-zitadelle.de; Breiter Weg 8-10; German tours €5; ☹ information office 10am-6pm, tours 11am, 3pm & 5pm Mon-Fri, hourly 10am-5pm Sat & Sun). The last design by the famous Austrian architect, this apartment and shopping complex was completed in 2005, five years after his death. It evinces all his signature features – irregular windows, free-form walls and golden domes. The building's pink, but derives its name from its natural architecture and grass-covered roof.

WORTH A TRIP: MITTELBAU DORA

From late 1943, thousands of slave labourers – mostly Russian, French and Polish prisoners of war toiled under horrific conditions to dig enormous tunnels in the chalk hills north of Nordhausen. From a 20km labyrinth of immense proportions, they produced the V1 and V2 rockets that rained destruction on London, Antwerp and other cities late in the war.

The camp, **Mittelbau Dora** (☎ 03631-495 820; www.buchenwald.de; ☹ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Apr), was created as a satellite of the Buchenwald concentration camp after British bombers destroyed the missile plants in far northeastern Germany. During the last two years of WWII, at least 20,000 prisoners died at Dora.

A museum with permanent exhibits of this horror opened in 2006. The grounds are open during daylight hours but to see the tunnels – many still filled with partially assembled rockets, you need to take a **tour** (☹ 11am & 2pm Tue-Fri, 11am, 1pm & 3pm Sat & Sun).

During the GDR era Dora mouldered away, with but a couple of small memorials to mark the site. Since reunification, recognition of what happened at Dora has been slowly growing, with visitors only allowed into the tunnels since 1995. The horrible truth of the place belies any need for extensive facilities and a visit to the camp may be among the most unforgettable experiences you have in Germany.

Getting There & Away

Mittelbau Dora is 5km north of Nordhausen, an unfortunate town you'll want to visit only to change trains. The Harzquerbahn (www.hsb-wr.de) train line links Nordhausen to Wernigerode (see 'Bewitching Harz' p464). The stop closest to Mittelbau Dora is Nordhausen-Krimmerode, 11 minutes by almost hourly trains (€4) from tracks adjacent to the DB station. From the stop it is a 20-minute walk to the memorial.

Nordhausen is linked to Halle and Göttingen (both €15, 1½ hours) by frequent trains.

The historic area surrounding **Hasselbachplatz** is an attraction in its own right and full of bars, clubs and restaurants. Just wander or check listing magazine *Dates* for tips.

Sleeping & Eating

DJH Jugendherberge Magdeburg (☎ 532 101; www.jugendherberge.de; Leiterstrasse 10; dm junior/senior €18/21; ☎ ☹ ☹) The smart, modern premises, generous space, good facilities and quiet but central location make this a winner. The staff are friendly and there's a late curfew.

Green Citadel (☎ 620 780; www.hotel-zitadelle.de; Breiter Weg 9; r from €105; ☎ ☹) One of only two Hundertwasser hotels in the world and certainly the cheaper, this allows you to savour up-close the architect's penchant for uneven, organic forms. The attached café (dishes €3.50 to €4.50, ☹ 7am to 7pm) is open to the public, serving breakfast and light meals.

Bingöl 2 (☎ 744 8640; Breiter Weg 226; mains €2-8.50; ☹ 10am-midnight, to 6am Fri & Sat) This superior döner kebab shop has a large sit-down section and a menu that includes falafel, Turkish pizza, börek and dishes from the grill.

Liebig (☎ 555 6754; Liebigstrasse 1-3; snacks €3-9, meals €5-16; ☹ 10am-1am) Private alcoves and pleated curtains lining the walls create a feeling of warmth and privacy amid this trendy bar/café/restaurant. Mediterranean fare, curries and steaks are all served.

Getting There & Away

There are trains to/from Berlin (€22, one hour and 40 minutes, hourly), while regular IC and RE trains run to Leipzig (€19 to €23, 1¼ to two hours, twice hourly).

DESSAU

☎ 0340 / pop 79,500

'Less is more' and 'form follows function' – both these dictums were taught in Dessau, home of the influential Bauhaus school. Between 1925 and 1932, some of the century's greatest artists and architects breathed life into the ground-breaking principles of modernism here, among them Walter Gropius, Paul Klee, Wassily Kandinsky and Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe. Their legacy still stands proud, in the immaculate Bauhaus school building, the lecturers' purpose-built homes and other pioneering constructions.

BEWITCHING HARZ

The **Harz Mountains** constitute a mini-Alpine region straddling Saxony-Anhalt and Lower Saxony. Here, medieval castles overlook fairy-tale historic towns, while there are caves, mines and numerous hiking trails to explore.

The region's highest – and most famous – mountain is the Brocken, where one-time visitor Johann Wolfgang von Goethe set the 'Walpurgisnacht' chapter of his play *Faust*. His inspiration in turn came from folk tales depicting Walpurgisnacht as an annual witches' coven. Every 30 April to 1 May it's celebrated enthusiastically across the Harz region, particularly in Thale.

Goslar

Goslar is a truly stunning 1000-year-old city with beautifully preserved half-timbered buildings and an impressive **Markt**. The town's **Kaiserpfalz** is a reconstructed Romanesque 11th-century palace. Just below there's the restored **Domvorhalle**, which displays the 11th-century 'Kaiserstuhl' throne, used by German emperors.

One way to reach the **Brocken's summit** is to take a bus (810) or train (faster) from Goslar to Bad Harzburg and then a bus (820) to Torfhaus, where the 8km Goetheweg trail begins.

The **tourist office** (☎ 05321-780 60; www.goslar.de, in German; Markt 7; ☞ 9.15am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-4pm Sat, to 2pm Sun May-Oct; 9.15am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat Nov-Apr) can help with accommodation, which includes a **DJH Hostel** (☎ 05321-222 40; www.jugendherberge.de; Rammelsbergerstrasse 25; dm junior/senior €16.50/19.50; (P)) and hotels **Die Tanne** (☎ 05321-343 90; www.die-tanne.de; Bäringstrasse 10; s €40-65, d €65-100) and **Kaiserworth** (☎ 05321-7090; www.kaiserworth.de; Markt 3; s €70-100, d €120-180).

As well as being serviced by buses (www.rbb-bus.de), Goslar is connected by train to Hanover (€13.40, one hour and 10 minutes) and Wernigerode (€7.60, 50 minutes).

Wernigerode

Flanked by the foothills of the Harz Mountains, Wernigerode boasts colourful half-timbered houses, many with uniquely distinctive features. A fairy-tale ducal castle – one of the most-visited in Germany – watches above. The town is the northern terminus of the steam-powered **Harzquerbahn railway** (☎ 03943-5580; www.hsb-wr.de), which chugs to the summit of the Brocken from here.

Wernigerode Tourismus (☎ 03943-633 035; www.wernigerode-tourismus.de; Nicolaiplatz 1; ☞ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun May-Oct, slightly reduced hr winter) can provide more details.

The Bauhaus was born in Weimar in 1919, and it sought brief respite in Berlin (see p436) before being disbanded by the Nazis in 1933. But as the site of the movement's heyday and the 'built manifesto of Bauhaus ideas', Dessau is the true keeper of the flame.

Orientation

The leading Bauhaus sights are west of the Hauptbahnhof, clearly signposted and within easy walking distance. The town centre lies east, also reachable on foot.

Information

Bauhaus Foundation (☎ 650 8251; www.bauhaus-dessau.de; Gropiusallee 38; ☞ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri) Has info on, and tours of, Bauhaus buildings, including in English. **Tourist office** (☎ 204 1442, accommodation reservations 220 3003; www.dessau-tourismus.de; Zerbster Strasse 2c;

☞ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat Apr-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat Nov-Mar) Offers city tours and sells a three-day discount card.

Sights

Bauhaus founder Walter Gropius considered architecture the ultimate creative expression. So his first realised project, the **Bauhaus Building** (Bauhaus Gebäude; ☎ 650 8251; www.bauhaus-dessau.de; Gropiusallee 38; exhibition hall adult/concession €4/3, with Meisterhäuser €8/5, tours €4/3; ☞ 10am-6pm, German tours 11am & 2pm, extra tours Sat & Sun), is extremely significant. Once home to the Institute for Design (Hochschule für Gestaltung) where the architect and colleagues taught, the recently renovated building today houses a postgraduate college but remains open to the public. You can visit the changing exhibitions and wander through a small section. However,

Accommodation options include a private **Jugendgästehaus** (☎ 03943-632 061; Friedrichstrasse 53; dm junior/senior €16.50/20; (P)) and **Altwerzigerder Aparthotel** (☎ 03943-949 260; www.appart-hotel.de, in German; Marktstrasse 14; s/d €45/75, apt from €85; (P) ☞)

Direct buses run to most major towns in the region. For trains to Quedlinburg (€7.60, 50 minutes) and Thale (€9.10, one hour and 10 minutes), change at Halberstadt.

Quedlinburg

Quedlinburg's spectacular castle district, perched on a 25m-high plateau above its historic half-timbered buildings, was established during the reign of Heinrich I, from 919 to 936. The present-day Renaissance **Schloss** dates from the 16th century. Its centrepiece is the restored baroque **Blauer Saal** (Blue Hall).

Contact **Quedlinburg-Tourismus** (☎ 03946-905625; www.quedlinburg.de; Markt2; ☞ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Apr-Oct; 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat Nov-Mar) for more information. Lodgings include a **DJH hostel** (☎ 03946-811 703; www.jugendherberge.de; Neudorf 28; dm junior/senior €14/18, bedding €3; (P)) and the hotels **Zum Alten Fritz** (☎ 03946-704 880; Pökenstrasse 18; s/d €45/65; (P)) and **Romantik Hotel Theophano** (☎ 03946-963 00; www.hoteltheophano.de; Markt 13-14; s/d from €70/100).

There are frequent trains to Thale (€1.80, 11 minutes) and Magdeburg (€11.70, one hour, hourly).

Thale

Two rugged outcrops, the **Hexentanzplatz** and **Rosstrappe**, flank the sensational **Bode Valley**, which is a hikers' favourite. There's a cable car to the rather overdeveloped Hexentanzplatz. Meanwhile, the Rosstrappe, reached by chairlift, bears a strange hoof imprint, supposedly left when the mythological Brunhilde jumped the gorge on horseback to escape her unloved husband Bode. (He fell to his death.) Both outcrops become bacchanalian party sites on Walpurgisnacht.

Thale Tourismus (☎ 03947-2597; www.thale.de; Rathausstrasse 1; ☞ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun) can help with accommodation, which includes a **DJH Hostel** (☎ 03947-2881; www.jugendherberge.de; Bodetal-Waldkater; dm junior/senior €14.50/17.50, s/d from €19.50/24.50; (P)) and **Hoffmanns Gästehaus** (☎ 03947-2881; www.hoffmanns-gaestehaus.de; s €50-65, d €65-75, f €75-105).

There are trains and buses to Wernigerode and Quedlinburg, as well as trains from Magdeburg (€13.40, 1½ hours).

taking a tour is best; it gets you into otherwise closed rooms, even if you don't understand German.

Since a key Bauhaus aim was to 'design for living', the three white, concrete **Master Craftsmen's Houses** (Meisterhäuser; www.meisterhaeuser.de; Ebertallee 63-71; admission to all three adult/concession €5/3; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun summer, to 5pm winter), are a fascinating insight into the style. These villas were built by Gropius for senior institute staff, including himself, Klee, Kandinsky, Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Lyonel Feiniger. In addition to this, Marcel Breuer – creator of the iconic steel frame chair – occasionally meddled in the homes' interior design.

The many other Bauhaus buildings include the world's first housing estate **Törten**. Take tram 1 to Dessau Süd, alighting at Damashckestrasse.

Sleeping & Eating

In Dessau, you really can eat, drink and sleep Bauhaus. For a different diet, investigate the main thoroughfare of Zerbster Strasse.

Bauhaus dorms (☎ 650 8318; oede@bauhaus-dessau.de; Gropiusallee 38; r per person from €28; (P) ☞) Since the Bauhaus school was renovated in 2006, you can really live the modernist dream, by hiring the former students' dorms inside. If the main building's booked out, opt for a taste of the GDR instead, by reserving a cheaper bed (€15) in a 1970s **Plattenbau** apartment complex at Heidestrasse 33.

An den 7 Säulen (☎ 619 620; www.pension7saeulen.de, in German; Ebertallee 66; s €47-52, d €65-72; (P) ☞) This relaxed **pension** has a spa and a glass-fronted breakfast room overlooking the Master Craftsmen's Houses across the leafy street.

Bauhaus Klub (☎ 650 8444; Gropiusallee 38; dishes €3-7) Starting to see a pattern here? The occasional cool dude in black polo-neck jumper and horn-rimmed glasses can be seen among the broad mix of people in this basement bar of the Bauhaus school.

Kornhaus (☎ 640 4141; Kornhausstrasse 146; mains €7-13) Treat yourself to traditional local specialities and a refined evening in the curved Bauhaus dining room, with its striking 1930s carpet. Or, enjoy a light meal on the balcony overlooking the Elbe River.

Getting There & Away

IC and RE trains run to Berlin every two hours (€22, 1½ hours). Dessau is equidistant from Leipzig and Magdeburg (both €9.10, one hour), with frequent services to each.

MECKLENBURG-WESTERN POMERANIA

Mecklenburg-Vorpommern combines historic Hanseatic-era towns like Schwerin, Wismar and Stralsund with holiday areas such as Warnemünde and Rügen Island. It is off the path for many travellers but in summer it seems like half the country is here in some state of undress lolling on the sands. Outside of these somewhat mild times (this is a region where the beaches are dotted with large wicker beach baskets to provide shelter) the intrepid visitor is rewarded with journeys far from the maddening crowds.

SCHWERIN

☎ 0385 / pop 97,000

State capital Schwerin has a modest dignity befitting its status. The oldest city in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, it has numerous lakes, including one that is the town's centrepiece. Buildings are an interesting mix of 16th- to 19th-century architecture. It's small enough to explore on foot and if you're on the move, you can see it as part of a half-day break on a train journey. But Schwerin's beauty and charm are invariably infectious, and few people regret spending extra time here.

Orientation

The Altstadt is a 10-minute walk south from the Hauptbahnhof along Wismarsche Strasse.

A couple of blocks east of the Hauptbahnhof is the rectangular Pfaffenteich, a pretty artificial pond with the garish apricot-coloured 1840 Arsenal (now government offices) at its southwest corner. Heading east from here will take you to the central Markt.

Information

In-Ca Internet (☎ 500 7883; Wismarsche Strasse 123; per hr €3; ☎ 10am-midnight)

Schwerin-Information (☎ 592 5212; www.schwerin.de; Markt 14; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun, reduced hr winter)

Sights

Southeast of the Alter Garten, over the causeway on the Burginsel (Burg Island), Schwerin's superb neo-Gothic palace, the **Schloss Schwerin** (☎ 525 2920; www.schloss-schwerin.de; adult/child €4/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm 15 Apr-14 Oct, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun 15 Oct-15 Apr), was built in the mid-1800s around the chapel of a 16th-century ducal castle and is quite rightly the first attraction visitors head to upon arrival. The causeway is overlooked by a statue of **Niklot**, an early Slavic prince, who was defeated by Heinrich der Löwe in 1160. The huge, graphic picture of his death is a highlight of the castle's interior.

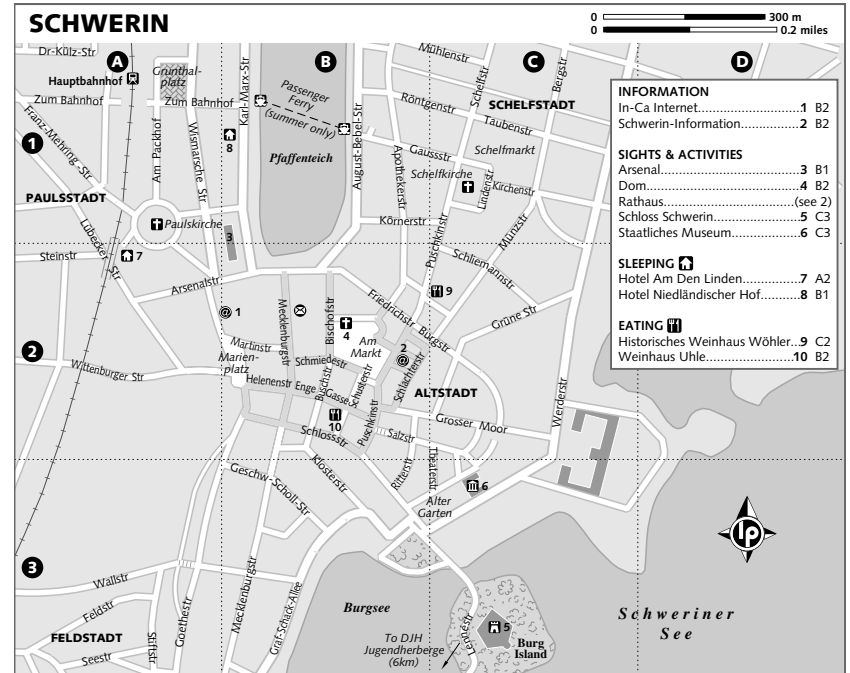
You don't get better examples of north German red-brick architecture than this 14th-century Gothic **Dom** (☎ 565 014; Am Dom 4; tower €1; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, noon-5pm Sun), towering above the Markt. You can climb up to the platform in the 19th-century tower.

The enormous neoclassical building in the Alter Garten, the **Staatliches Museum** (☎ 595 80; Alter Garten 3; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue, 10am-6pm Wed-Sun), couldn't really be anything other than a museum, and the contents fit the imposing exterior well: the permanent displays showcase old Dutch masters including Rembrandt, Rubens and Brueghel, as well as oils by Lucas Cranach the Elder and collections of more modern works by Marcel Duchamp and Ernst Barlach.

Sleeping & Eating

There are numerous cafés in the pedestrianised centre.

DJH Jugendherberge (☎ 326 0006; www.djh.de; Waldschulweg 3; dm from €17) This hostel is about 4km south of the city centre, just opposite the zoo. Take bus 14, which has stops at the Hauptbahnhof and Marienplatz.



Hotel Am Den Linden (☎ 512 084; Franz-Mehring-Strasse 26; s/d €64/77) Close to the train station and the centre, this dignified 25-room hotel looks onto the impressive Paulskirche. Rooms are comfortable and there is a good breakfast.

Hotel Niederländischer Hof (☎ 591 100; www.niederlaendischer-hof.de; Karl-Marx-Strasse 12-13; s/d from €90/118; P) You can't beat the Pfaffenteich location or the swank rooms and marble bathrooms at this exceedingly classy hotel. There's even a library with an open fire for those contemplative German winters.

Historisches Weinhaus Wöhler (☎ 555 830; Puschkinstrasse 26; mains €8-16) The stained-glass windows framed in lead tell you that this place is indeed historic. Opened in 1895, the building dates to the 18th century. The food is classic German and on weekends you can enjoy live music. The beer garden is alluring and you can sleep it off in the comfortable rooms (€80 to €130) upstairs.

Weinhaus Uhle (☎ 562 956; Schusterstrasse 13-15; mains €9-24) This long-standing traditional family wine merchant (the building is from the 18th century) has vaulted ceilings in the

downstairs restaurant and a lovely *weinstube* upstairs. As you'd guess, the wine list is long.

Getting There & Away

Schwerin is on the line linking Hamburg (€23, one hour) with Stralsund (€28, two hours). Service to Rostock (€13.40 to €17, one hour) is frequent, as is that to Wismar (€6.20, 30 minutes). There are RE trains to Berlin-Hauptbahnhof (€29, 2½ hours).

WISMAR

☎ 03841 / pop 46,000

Wismar, a Hanseatic gem that's fast being discovered, is about halfway between Rostock and Lübeck. It joined the powerful trading league in the 13th century – the first town east of Lübeck to do so. For centuries it was in and out of Swedish control, and traces of that rule can still be seen, particularly in the 'Swedish heads' all over town. Quieter than Rostock or Stralsund, Wismar can fill up with visitors quickly in high season; it's definitely worth an overnight stay, and is also the gateway to **Poel Island**, a lovely little piece of green to the north.

WORTH A TRIP: BAD DOBERAN

For centuries the amazing 13th-century **Munster** (☎ 038203-627 16; Klosterstrasse 2; admission €3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-6pm Sun, reduced hr winter) slumbered away in a green pasture near the centre of the small town of Bad Doberan. In recent years it has been rediscovered and its 1.2 million bricks are getting a cleaning, while the nearby medieval monastery is getting a complete renovation. You can easily spend a few hours wandering this site that's at its best when the wind rustles through the surrounding trees. Inside look for the carved wood altar (1310) from Lübeck.

The Munster complex is a 15-minute walk from the train station, which has hourly service on the scenic branchline linking Rostock (€2.60, 20 minutes) and Wismar (€6.20, 45 minutes). From the station walk towards the mannered centre and look for the steeple.

Orientation & Information

The Altstadt is built up around the Markt, which is the largest medieval town square in northern Germany. The Bahnhof is at the northeastern corner of the Altstadt and the Alter Hafen port is in the northwest.

In the Altstadt you'll find **tourist information** (☎ 251 3025; www.wismar.de; Am Markt 11; ☎ 9am-6pm).

Sights & Activities

The old harbour, **Alter Hafen**, with old boats swaying in the breeze, evokes trading days from centuries ago. Featured in the 1922 film *Nosferatu* it is still a focal point of activity in Wismar. **Clermont Reederei** (☎ 224 646; www.reederei-dermont.de; adult/child €7/6) operates hour-long harbour cruises five times daily from April to October, leaving from Alter Hafen. Daily boats also go to Poel Island (€14/7 return). Various other companies run tours on historic ships during summer; contact the harbour for details.

Running through town, the **Grube** (channel) is the last artificial medieval waterway in the north and should be a part of any stroll through the historic quarter. The **Wasserkunst** is a 12-sided well from 1602 that anchors a corner of the attractive **Markt**.

The town's historical museum **Schabbellhaus** (☎ 282 350; www.schabbellhaus.de; Schweinsbrücke 8; adult/child €2/1, free Fri; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue-Sun May-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Apr) has taken over a former Renaissance brewery (1571), just south of the Nikolaikirche across the canal. The museum's pride and joy is the large tapestry *Die Königin von Saba vor König Salomon* ('The Queen of Sheba before King Solomon'; 1560-75).

CHURCHES

Wismar was a target for Anglo-American bombers just weeks before the end of WWII.

Of the three great red-brick churches that once rose above the rooftops only **St-Nikolai-Kirche** (St-Nikolai-Kirchhof; admission €1; ☎ 8am-8pm May-Sep, 10am-6pm Apr & Oct, 11am-4pm Nov-Mar), built from 1381 to 1487, remains intact. Massive **St-Georgen-Kirche** is being restored for use as a church, concert hall and exhibition space with a much-doubted completion date of 2010. Cars now park where 13th-century **St-Marien-Kirche** once stood, though its great brick **steeple**, (☎ 10am-8pm Apr-Oct), built in 1339, still towers above the city.

Sleeping & Eating

Pension Chez Fasan (☎ 213 425; www.pension-chez-fasan.de; Bademutterstrasse 20a; r €21-50) The best budget deal in town. Rooms in the three-building complex come with baths, satellite TV and a great central location.

Hotel Reuterhaus (☎ 22230; www.hotel-reuterhaus.de; Am Markt 19; r €60-90) With views over the Wasserkunst from many of the 10 rooms, this family-run hotel makes for an atmospheric stay. The restaurant here is good and there are tables on the Markt when the sun shines.

Fischerklause (☎ 252 850; Fischerreihe 4; mains €7-13; ☎ lunch & dinner Tue-Sat) A small place popular with locals that serves up the catch brought into the nearby Alter Hafen. The place swims with character.

Brauhaus am Lohberg (☎ 250 238; Kleine Hohe Strasse 15; mains €7-13) Spread over a series of warehouses dating back to the 16th century, this popular spot is honouring Wismar's long tradition of brewing by once again making its own beer. There's a good seafood menu.

Getting There & Away

Trains travel the coastal branchlines to Rostock (€9.10, 65 minutes, hourly) and Schwerin (€6.20, 30 minutes, hourly).

ROSTOCK & WARNEMÜNDE

☎ 0381 / pop 198,000

Rostock, the largest city in sparsely populated northeastern Germany, is a major Baltic port and shipbuilding centre. Its chief suburb – and chief attraction – is Warnemünde, 12km north of the centre. Counted among eastern Germany's most popular beach resorts, it's hard to see it as a small fishing village these days, but the boats still bring in their catches, and some charming streets and buildings persist amid the tourist clutter.

First mentioned in 1161 as a Danish settlement, Rostock began taking shape as a German fishing village around 1200. In the 14th and 15th centuries, it was an important Hanseatic trading city; parts of the city centre, especially along Kröpeliner Strasse, retain the flavour of this period.

Orientation & Information

The city begins at the Südstadt (Southern City), south of the Hauptbahnhof, and extends north to Warnemünde on the Baltic Sea. Much of the city is on the western side of the Warnow River, which creates a long shipping channel due north to the sea.

The Altstadt is an oval area approximately 1.5km north of the Hauptbahnhof. Rosa-Luxemburg-Strasse runs north from the station to Steintor, which unofficially marks the southern boundary of the old town.

Tourist Information (☎ 381 2222; www.rostock.de; Neuer Markt 3; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, closed Sun Oct-Apr)

Warnemünde-Information (☎ 548 000; www.warnemuende.de; Am Strom 59; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun)

Sights

Lined with 15th- and 16th-century burghers' houses, Kröpeliner Strasse is a lively, cobbled pedestrian street that runs west from Neuer Markt to the **Kröpeliner Tor**, a 55m-high tower, which contains the **Regional History Museum** (☎ 454 177; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Wed-Sun).

The mostly intact **Kloster Zum Heiligen Kreuz** (Holy Cross convent; ☎ 203 590; Klosterhof 18), was established in 1270 by Queen Margrethe I of Denmark; today it houses the **Cultural History Museum** (adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun), with an excellent and varied collection including sculptures by Ernst Barlach and large numbers of everyday items used by locals over the centuries.

Rostock's pride and joy, the **Marienkirche** (☎ 453 325; Am Ziegenmarkt; admission €2; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 11.15am-noon Sun), built in 1290, was the only one of Rostock's four main churches to survive WWII unscathed. The long north-south transept was added after the ceiling collapsed in 1398. Notable features include the 12m-high astrological clock (1470-72), the Gothic bronze baptismal font (1290), the baroque organ (1770) and some fascinating tombstones on the floor.

The crowded seafront promenade to the north at **Warnemünde**, lined with hotels and restaurants, is where the tourists congregate. Its broad, sandy beach stretches west from the **lighthouse** (1898) and the **Teepott** exhibition centre, and is chock-a-block on hot summer days with bathers.

Sleeping

Accommodation in Warnemünde can be like gold dust in summer. For private rooms, contact the tourist office. At other times – especially in the spring and fall – it is a lovely alternative to Rostock.

Baltic-Freizeit Camping und Ferienpark (☎ 04 544-800 30; www.baltic-freizeit.de; Dünenweg 27, Markgrafenheide; camp sites per person €9-17) On the east side of Warnow River, this enormous city-run affair has 1200 sites. Take tram 4 to Dierkower Kreuz, then bus 18 (45 minutes).

City-Pension (☎ 252 260; www.city-pension-rostock.de; Krönkenhagen 3; r €40-90) A small family *pension* occupying a lovely quiet street near the harbour, in the heart of the old-fashioned northern Altstadt. Rooms are simple but comfortable.

Hotel Kleine Sonne (☎ 497 3153; www.die-kleine-sonne.de; Steinstrasse 7; r €60-100; ☎ ☎) The bargain offshoot of the swanky Hotel Sonne across the street, this is actually a fine place in its own right, with a very modern style and art by landscape painter Nils Ausländer.

InterCity Hotel (☎ 495 00; www.intercityhotel.de; Herweghstrasse 51; r €85-120; ☎ ☎) Right by the train station, the InterCity has wi-fi and 174 comfortable modern rooms. Ask for one with a view other than the lightwell however.

Eating

On many mornings fish-smokers set up shop on the Neuer Markt, as well as Warnemünde's harbour. Kröpeliner Strasse in Rostock is a good place to find cafés. Warnemünde

abounds in stands selling fish and chips, ice cream and other gut-popping fare.

Krahnstöver Likörfabrik (☎ 252 3551; Grosse Wasserstrasse 30/Grubenstrasse 1; mains €5-12) This late-15th-century old liquor factory is an excellent example of late Gothic architecture. The wine bar has an inventive menu; around the corner, the Kneipe seems as old as the building and dishes up hearty fare.

Zum Alten Fritz (☎ 208 780; Warnowufer 65; mains €7-18) This locally popular pub/restaurant honours two Rostock traditions at its harbour-side location: seafaring and brewing. Lucky sailor! The creative menu feature organic ingredients.

Seekist zur Krim (☎ 521 14; Am Strom 47, Warnemünde; mains €9-20) On a tree-shaded and quiet stretch of Am Strom, this restaurant serves steaks, schnitzel and seafood. Try a platter of the latter for €15. There's a nice patio.

Getting There & Around

Rostock is on the busy line linking Hamburg (€28 to €35, two hours) to Stralsund (€12, one hour). Services to Schwerin (€13.40 to €17, one hour) are frequent as is the branch line to Wismar (€9.10, 70 minutes, hourly). There are RE trains to Berlin Hauptbahnhof (€32, three hours, every two hours).

Various ferry companies operate from Rostock seaport. **Scandlines** (☎ 673 1217; www.scandlines.de) has daily services to Trelleborg in Sweden (€20, 5½ hours) and Gedser in Denmark (€5 to €10, two hours). **TT-Line** (☎ 670 790; www.ttline.de) departs for Trelleborg several times daily (€20 to €30, three to six hours).

There's frequent S-Bahn service linking Rostock to Warnemünde (€1.40, 20 minutes). In Rostock tram lines 5 and 6 link the train station with the centre. The entire area lends itself to bike touring. **Radstation** (☎ 252 3990; Hauptbahnhof; per day from €15; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) is very convenient for rentals.

STRALSUND

☎ 03831 / pop 59,000

Possessing an unmistakable medieval profile, Stralsund was the second-most powerful member of the medieval Hanseatic League, after Lübeck. In 1648 Stralsund, Rügen and Pomerania came under the control of Sweden, which had helped in their defence. The

city remained Swedish until it was incorporated into Prussia in 1815.

An attractive town of imposing churches and elegant townhouses, Stralsund boasts more examples of classic red-brick Gothic gabled architecture than almost anywhere else in northern Germany. It has some good, growing museums and is great place if you want to feel the culture of the Baltic.

Orientation

The Altstadt is effectively on its own island, surrounded by lakes and the sea. Its main hubs are Alter Markt in the north and Neuer Markt in the south. The Hauptbahnhof is across the Tribseer Damm causeway, west of the Neuer Markt. The harbour is on the Altstadt's eastern side.

Information

Toffi's Web Cafe (☎ 309 385; Lobshagen 8a; per min €0.05; ☎ noon-10pm) This groovy place has a long list of coffees, tea and beers to help lubricate your surfing.

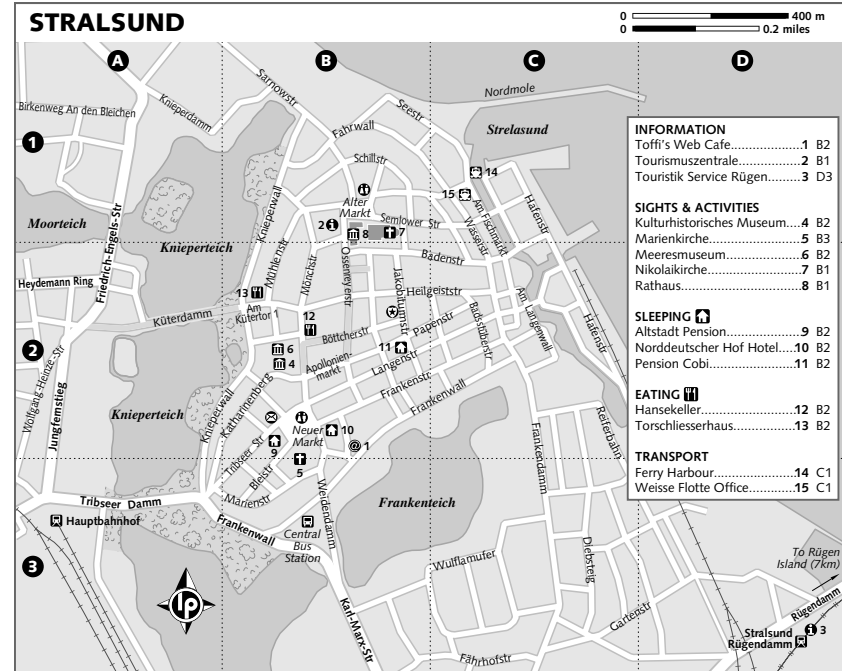
Tourismuszentrale (☎ 246 90; www.stralsundtourismus.de; Alter Markt 9; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat Oct-Apr)

Sights

One of the two structures dominating the Alter Markt is the gorgeous 14th-century **Rathaus**, with its late-Gothic decorative façade. The upper portion has slender copper turrets and gables that have openings to prevent strong winds from knocking over the façade; this ornate design was Stralsund's answer to its rival city, Lübeck, which has a similar town hall. The sky-lit gallery overhanging the vaulted walkway is held aloft by shiny black pillars on carved and painted bases.

Exit through the eastern walkway to the main portal of the other dominant presence in the Alter Markt, the 1270 **Nikolaikirche** (☎ 299 799; Alter Markt; ☎ 10am-noon & 2-4pm). Modelled after the Marienkirche in Lübeck (p541) and bearing a fleeting resemblance to Notre Dame, it's filled with art treasures. Also worth a closer look are the **high altar** (1470), 6.7m wide and 4.2m tall, showing Jesus' entire life, and the mostly inaccurate **astronomical clock** (1394), allegedly the oldest in the world.

The Neuer Markt is dominated by the massive 14th-century **Marienkirche** (☎ 298 965; Neuer Markt; ☎ 10am-7pm May-Oct, 10am-noon, 2-4pm



Nov-Apr), another superb example of north German red-brick construction. Check out the huge **F Stellwagen organ** (1659), festooned with music-making cherubs. You can climb the steep wooden steps up the **tower** (admission €1) for a sweeping view of the town and Rügen Island. Ongoing renovations through to 2010 are intended to restore the church to its original look.

MUSEUMS

North of Neuer Markt, a 13th-century convent church is now the **Meeresmuseum** (Oceanographic Museum; ☎ 265 010; www.meeresmuseum.de; Katharinenberg 14-20; adult/child €6.50/4.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Sep, 10am-5pm Oct-May). It has extensive displays on local sealife and the people who catch it. A major new addition opening in 2008 will focus on the Baltic and have several huge tanks of live fish.

Stralsund's cultural history museum, **Kulturhistorisches Museum** (☎ 287 90; Mönchstrasse 25-27; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun), has a large historical collection, paintings by Caspar David Friedrich and Philipp Otto Runge, **faïence** (tin-glazed earthenware), playing

cards and Gothic altars, as well as various outlying exhibitions in restored houses.

Tours

Ferries operate seven times daily by **Weisse Flotte** (☎ 0180-321 2120; www.weisse-flotte.com; Fährstrasse 16; one way €2.30; ☎ May-Oct) to the scenic fishing village of Altefähr on Rügen. One-hour **harbour cruises** depart four times daily (€6) in summer.

Sleeping & Eating

Pension Cobi (☎ 278 288; www.pension-cobi.de; Jakobiturmstrasse 15; s/d €32/46) In the shadow of the Jakobikirche, this is a great location for exploring the Altstadt, and also offers bike hire to get a bit further afield. The 14 rooms are smart, clean and some have balconies.

Altstadt Pension (☎ 303 580; Tribseer Strasse 15; s/d €45/65; ☎) This 12-room inn is on the main drag into town and is popular with touring cyclists. The modern rooms contrast with the vintage building and precinct. There's a sunny terrace for breakfast or a drink.

Norddeutscher Hof Hotel (☎ 293 161; www.nd-hof.de; Neuer Markt 22; r €40-90) This maroon

vision has a great central location and 13 historic rooms. Some have ancient roof beams plunging through the walls. All are comfortable. The restaurant is a stylish mélange of tin walls and carved wood.

Torschliesserhaus (☎ 293 032; Am Kütertor 1; mains €7-16) In a 1281 building right by a fragment of the city wall, this place has a good beer garden and tasty local chow (fishy treats and meaty mains).

Hanse Keller (☎ 703 840; Mönchstrasse 48; mains €7.50-13) A simple exterior belies the fact that this underground place lies within. It serves up hearty regional dishes at moderate prices in its vaulted brick cellar.

Finally, there's a great stand (sausage €1.50) with grilled sausages at the morning farmers market on Neuer Markt. Look for the line of locals.

Getting There & Away

Stralsund is on the busy line to Hamburg (€44, 3¼ hours) via Rostock (€12, one hour) and Schwerin (€28, two hours). There are direct IC trains to Berlin Hauptbahnhof (€42, 2¾ hours, every two hours).

RÜGEN ISLAND

Germany's largest island, Rügen has 574km of coast. It is at times hectic, relaxed, barren, windblown and naked. If you don't mind losing a little epidermis to the scouring sands, you can have a very German beach holiday here. Otherwise, it makes a good day trip out of Stralsund, especially if you have your own car.

The resort tradition here reflects all aspects of Germany's recent past. In the 19th century, luminaries such as Einstein, Bismarck and Thomas Mann came to unwind in the fashionable coastal resorts. Later, both Nazi and GDR regimes made Rügen the holiday choice for dedicated comrades.

From the bridge near Stralsund that links the mainland and Rügen, the island is easily traversed by numerous well-marked roads.

Information

Tourismus Rügen (☎ 03838-807 70; www.ruegen.de; Am Markt 4, Bergen) Has extensive accommodation listings.
Touristik Service Rügen (☎ 03831-285 70; www.insel-ruegen.com; Bahnhof Rügendamm, Werftstrasse 2; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-8pm Sat, 10am-7pm Sun) The place for information in Stralsund.

Sights

The island's highest point is the **Königsstuhl** (king's throne) at 117m, reached by car or bus from Sassnitz. The **chalk cliffs** that tower above the sea are the main attraction. Much of Rügen and its surrounding waters are either national park or protected nature reserves. The **Bodden** inlet area is a bird refuge popular with bird-watchers. **Kap Arkona**, on Rügen's north shore, is famous for its rugged cliffs and two lighthouses, one designed by Karl Friedrich Schinkel.

The main resort area is in eastern Rügen, around the towns of **Binz**, the main tourist town which boasts a lengthy seafront, **Sellin** and **Göhren**. A picturesque hike from Binz to Sellin skirts the cliffs above the sea through beech and pine forests, offering great coastal views. Another popular tourist destination is **Jagdschloss Granitz** (1834), which is surrounded by lush forest. **Prora**, situated up the coast from Binz, is the location of a 2km-long workers' retreat built by Hitler before the war. It is a surreal sight and is home to several museums including the **Dokumentationszentrum Prora** (☎ 038393-139 91; www.proradok.de; Objektstrasse 1; admission €3; ☎ 10am-6pm), which looks at the huge construction's history.

Getting There & Around

Trains from Stralsund reach Sassnitz (€9.10, 50 minutes, hourly) and Binz (€12, 45 minutes, every two hours). Trains from the latter also serve Hamburg (€51, four hours).

To get around the island however and really appreciate it, you'll need a car.

Scandlines (☎ 0381 543 50; www.scandlines.de) car ferries run from Sassnitz Mukran, several kilometres south of Sassnitz, to Trelleborg in Sweden (one way €12 to €15, 3¼ hours, five daily). The port is linked to the train station by bus.

BAVARIA

For many, Bavaria (Bayern) is every German stereotype rolled into one. Lederhosen, beer halls, oompah bands and romantic castles are just some Bavarian clichés associated with Germany as a whole. But as any Bavarian will tell you, the state thinks of itself as Bavarian first and German second. And as any German outside of Bavaria will tell you, the *Bavarian* stereotypes aren't

representative of the rest of Germany. It's a mostly Catholic place and the politics are often conservative (almost 90 years ago this was the land of beer hall putsches), even if people drink serious quantities of beer.

Bavaria was ruled for centuries as a duchy under the line founded by Otto I of Wittelsbach, and eventually graduated to the status of kingdom in 1806. The region suffered amid numerous power struggles between Prussia and Austria and was finally brought into the German empire in 1871 by Bismarck. The last king of Bavaria was Ludwig II (1845-86), who earned the epithet 'the mad king' due to his obsession with building fantastic fairy-tale castles at enormous expense. He was found drowned in Starnberger See in suspicious circumstances and left no heirs.

Bavaria draws visitors year-round. If you only have time for one part of Germany after Berlin, this is it. Munich, the capital, is the heart and soul. The Bavarian Alps, Nuremberg and the medieval towns on the Romantic Road are other important attractions.

MUNICH

☎ 089 / pop 1.25 million

Munich (München) is truly the capital of all things Bavarian. It's a heady mix of world-class museums, historic sites, cosmopolitan shopping, exhausting nightlife, trendy restaurants, roaring beer halls, vast parks and, of course, Oktoberfest.

It can easily occupy several days of your time and it will indeed be time well spent. The efficient public transport system can whisk you around town – although if you stay above ground you might be surprised at how compact the centre really is. Against all this urban life is the backdrop of the Alps, peaks that exude an allure that many locals – and visitors – find inescapable.

It is hard to imagine any visit to Germany feeling complete without at least some time spent in this vibrant city.

History

Originally settled by monks from the Benedictine monastery at Tegernsee in the 7th and 8th century, the city itself wasn't founded until 1158 by Henry the Lion. In 1255 Munich became the home for the Wittelsbach dukes, princes and kings who ruled for the next 700 years. The city suffered through the

Black Plague first in 1348 and again in 1623, when two-thirds of the population died.

Munich has been the capital of Bavaria since 1503, but didn't really achieve prominence until the 19th century under the guiding hand of Ludwig I. Ludwig became more conservative and repressive, and carried on an affair with the actress and dancer Lola Montez. He was forced to abdicate in favour of his son, Maximilian II, who started a building renaissance, promoting science, industry and education.

At the turn of the last century there were half a million residents, but in the aftermath of WWI Munich became a hotbed of right-wing political ferment. Hitler staged a failed coup attempt in Munich in 1923 but the National Socialists seized power only a decade later. WWII brought bombing and more than 6000 civilian deaths until American forces entered the city in 1945. Then, in 1972, the Munich Olympics turned disastrous when 11 Israeli athletes were murdered.

Today it is the centre of Germany's hi-tech industries, besides being the home of Siemens and BMW.

Orientation

The main train station is just west of the city centre. From the station, head east along Bayerstrasse, through Karlsplatz, and then along Neuhauser Strasse and Kaufingerstrasse to Marienplatz, the hub of Munich.

North of Marienplatz are the Residenz (the former royal palace), Schwabing (the famous student section) and the parklands of the Englischer Garten through which the Isar River runs. East of Marienplatz is the Platzl quarter for beer houses and restaurants, as well as Maximilianstrasse, a fashionable street that is ideal for simply strolling and window-shopping.

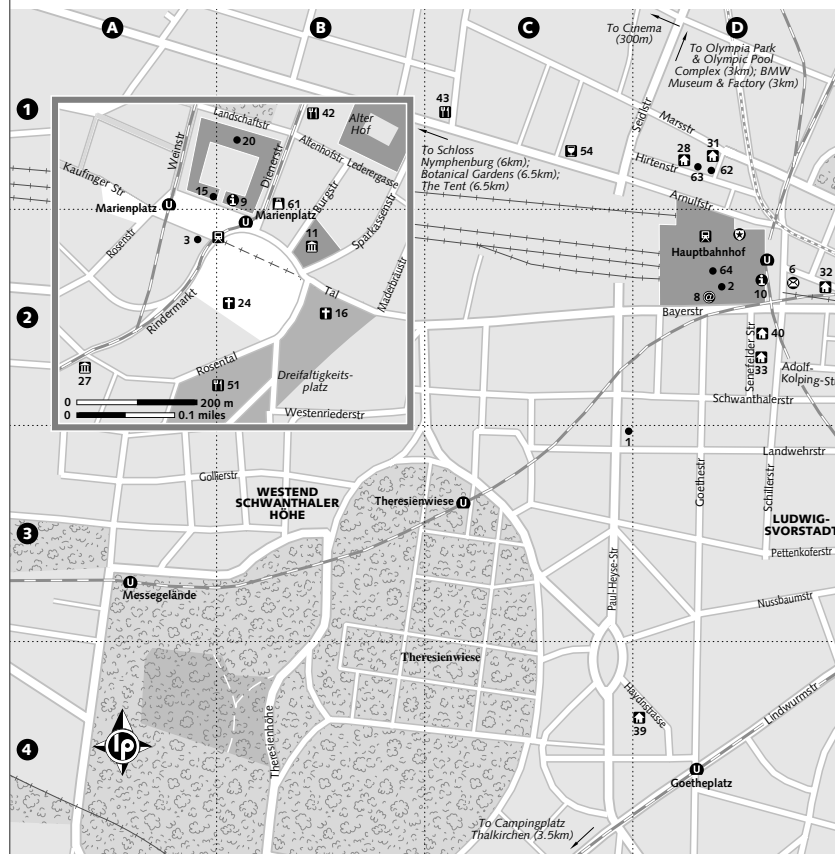
Information

For late-night shopping and services such as pharmacies and currency exchange, the Hauptbahnhof's multilevel shopping arcades cannot be beat.

BOOKSHOPS

Hugendubel Marienplatz (☎ 484 484; Marienplatz 22); Salvatorplatz (☎ 484 484; Salvatorplatz 2) Has a good selection of guides and maps and the Salvatorplatz outlet has all English titles.

CENTRAL MUNICH



Max&Milan (☎ 260 3320; Ickstattstrasse 2) Gay bookshop and unofficial community centre.

INTERNET ACCESS

easyInternetcafé (☎ 5599 9696; Bahnhofplatz 1; per 80 min €2; ☎ 24hr) In the post office building, part of a chain of Internet cafés. Has hundreds of terminals and is normally packed with cyber surfers.

Internet Café (☎ 2070 2737; Tal 31; per 30 min €1; ☎ 24hr) Full service shop.

Times Square Internet Cafe (☎ 5126 2600; Hauptbahnhof; per 5 min €0.50; ☎ 7.30am-1am) Large bar and restaurant across from track 11.

LAUNDRY

City SB-Waschcenter (Paul-Heystasse 21; ☎ 7am-11pm; €4) Close to the Hauptbahnhof.

MEDIA

Expats in Bavaria (www.expats-in-bavaria.com) Quirky, colourful and useful site for all manner of local info.

Munich Found (www.munichfound.de; €3) Long-running English language local magazine with a good website. Good entertainment coverage.

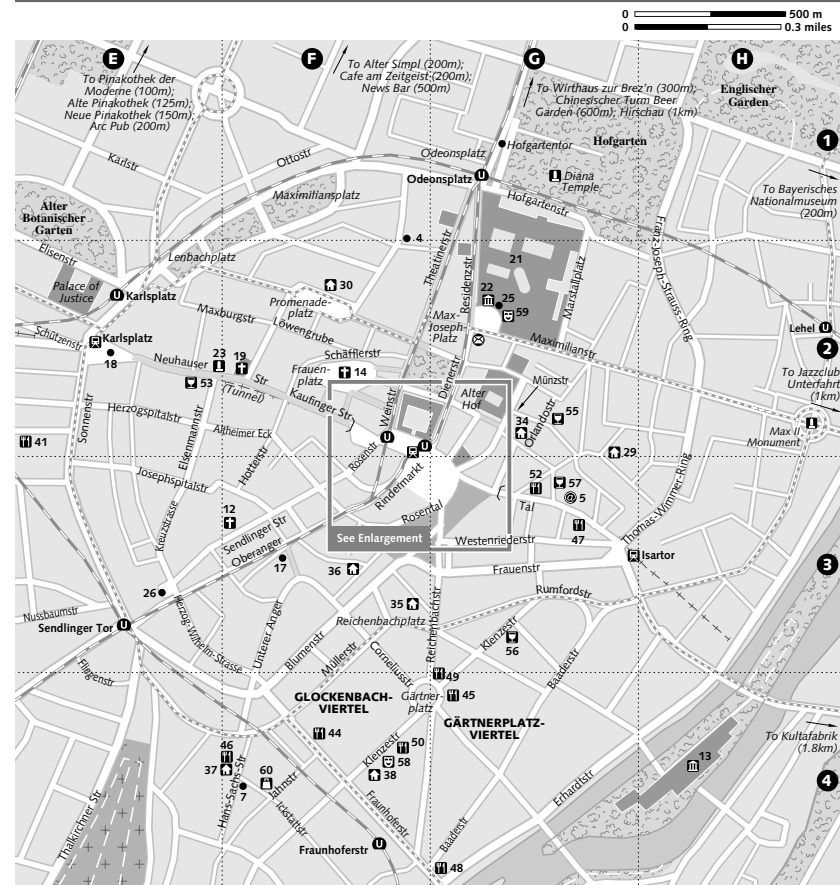
Munich Transport (www.mvv-muenchen.de/en) Everything you need to know about Munich's transport system.

Municipal Website (www.muenchen.de) The city government's site is stuffed with useful info and links.

Toytown Munich (www.toytowngermany.com) Irreverent English-language recommendations from locals and expats. Good bar and club reviews.

POST

Main post office (Bahnhofplatz 1; ☎ 7.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat) The poste restante address is:



Hauptpostlagernd (Poste Restante), Bahnhofplatz 1, 80074 München.

TOURIST INFORMATION

EurAide (☎ 593 889; www.euraide.com; Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 8am-noon & 1-4pm Jun) Next to platform 11 at the main train station, EurAide validates rail passes, sells train tickets and tours and dispenses savvy advice in English.

Tourist office (☎ 2333 6500; www.muenchen-tourist.de) Main tourist office (Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun); branch office (Marienplatz; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Both offices sell the Munich Welcome Card (from €7.50), which allows one to three days unlimited travel on public transport, plus discounts for many museums, galleries and other attractions. The main tourist office is to the right as you exit the Hauptbahnhof via the eastern entrance; its room-finding service is free. The branch

office is beneath the Neues Rathaus. Be sure to ask for the excellent and free guide *Young and About in Munich*.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

DER Reisebüro (☎ 120 40; Hauptbahnhof)

Sights

PALACES

The huge **Residenz** (Max-Joseph-Platz 3) housed Bavarian rulers from 1385 to 1918 and features more than 500 years of architectural history. Apart from the palace itself, the **Residenzmuseum** (☎ 290 671; www.schloesser.bayern.de; Residenzstrasse 1; adult/child €6/5; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) has an extraordinary array of 100 rooms containing no end of treasures and artworks.

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Hugendubel.....4 F1	SLEEPING ☑	Viktualienmarkt.....51 B2	Viktualienmarkt.....51 B2
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Jüdisches Museum.....17 F3	Wombat's.....40 D2	Fuckuall.....60 F4	Fuckuall.....60 F4
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In the same building, the **Schatzkammer** (☎ 290 671; enter from Max-Joseph-Platz 3; adult/child €6/3; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) exhibits jewels, crowns and ornate gold.

If this doesn't satisfy your passion for palaces, visit **Schloss Nymphenburg** (☎ 179 080; www.schloesser.bayern.de; adult/child museum €5/4, museum & gallery €10/8; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), northwest of the city centre via tram 17 from the main train station (Hauptbahnhof). This was the royal family's equally impressive summer home. Parts date to the 17th century. The surrounding park deserves a long, regal stroll.

ART GALLERIES

A treasure-house of European masters from the 14th to 18th centuries, recently renovated **Alte Pinakothek** (☎ 238 052 16; www.alte-pinakothek.de; Barer Strasse 27; adult/child €5.50/4, €1 Sun; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue, 10am-5pm Wed-Sun), a stroll northeast of the city, includes highlights such as Dürer's Christ-like *Self Portrait* and his *Four Apostles*, Rogier van der Weyden's *Adoration of the Magi* and Botticelli's *Pieta*.

Immediately north of the Alte Pinakothek, the **Neue Pinakothek** (☎ 238 051 95; www.neue-pinakothek.de; Barer Strasse 29; adult/child €5.50/4, €1 Sun; ☎ 10am-8pm Wed, to 5pm Thu-Mon) contains mainly 19th-century works, including Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, and sculpture.

One block east of the Alte Pinakothek, the **Pinakothek der Moderne** (☎ 2380 5360; www.pinakothek-der-moderne.de; Barer Strasse 40; adult/child €9/5, €1 Sun; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Wed, Sat & Sun, to 8pm Thu & Fri) displays four collections of modern art, graphic art, applied art and architecture in one suitably arresting building.

MUSEUMS

An enormous science and technology museum, **Deutsches Museum** (☎ 217 91; www.deutsches-museum.de; Museumsinsel 1; adult/child €8.50/3, planetarium €2; ☎ 9am-5pm) celebrates the many achievements of Germans and humans in general. Kids become gleeful kids as they interact with the exhibits. So do adults. Many get a charge out of the shocking electrical displays. Take the S-Bahn to Isartor.

The **Bayerisches Nationalmuseum** (☎ 211 2401; www.bayerisches-nationalmuseum.de; Prinzregentenstrasse 3; adult/child €5/4; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu), east of the Hofgarten, houses an impressive collection of Bavarian and southern German artefacts.

Tracing the lives of local Jews before, during and after the Holocaust, the **Jüdisches Museum** (☎ 2332 8189; www.juedisches-museum.muenchen.de; St Jakobsplatz 16) is moving to an impressive new space in March 2007. It promises to document a culture once important to Munich that was almost wiped out by the Nazis.

North of the city, auto-fetishists can thrill to the **BMW Museum** (☎ 3822 3307; www.bmwmobile-tradition.de), adjacent to the BMW headquarters. As part of the recent corporate image arms race among German car-makers (see p492), BMW is opening a vast new celebration of its brand in mid-2007. Take the U3 to Olympiazentrum.

PARKS & GARDENS

One of the largest city parks in Europe, the **Englischer Garten**, west of the city centre, is a great place for strolling, especially along the Schwabinger Bach. In summer, nude sunbathing is the rule rather than the exception. It's not unusual for hundreds of naked people to be in the park during a normal business day, with their clothing stacked primly on the grass. If they're not doing this, they're probably drinking merrily at one of the park's three **beer gardens** (p482).

Munich's beautiful **Botanical Gardens** (☎ 1786 1350; adult/child €3/2; ☎ varies with season, generally 9am-6pm) are two stops past Schloss Nymphenburg on tram 17.

OLYMPIA PARK COMPLEX

If you like heights, then take a ride up the lift of the 290m **Olympiaturm** (tower) situated in the **Olympia Park complex** (☎ 672 750; www.olympiapark-muenchen.de; adult/child €4/3.50; ☎ tower 9am-midnight). And if you fancy a swim, then the **Olympic Pool Complex** (☎ 3067 2290; Olympic Park; admission €3.50; ☎ 7am-11.15pm) will have you feeling like Mark Spitz while you imagine seven gold medals around your neck – or just work on your breast stroke. Take the U3 to Olympiazentrum.

Tours

The hordes of visitors and plethora of sights mean there's lots of people willing to show you around – an excellent way to gain background and context on what you see.

Mike's Bike Tours (☎ 2554 3987; www.mikesbiketours.com; tours from €24) Enjoyable (and leisurely) city cycling tours in English. Tours depart from the archway at the Altes Rathaus on Marienplatz.

Munich Walk Tours (☎ 2070 2736; www.munichwalk-tours.com; Tal 31; tours from €10) Walking tours of the city and a tour focused on 'beer, brewing and boozing'.

Original Munich Walks (☎ 5502 9374; www.radius-munich.com; Hauptbahnhof near track 32; tours from €10) Runs English-language tours: a two-hour walk of the city heart and an excellent tour of Third Reich sites.

Festivals & Events

Hordes come to Munich for **Oktoberfest** (www.oktoberfest.de) running the 15 days before the first Sunday in October. Reserve accommodation well ahead and go early in the day so you can grab a seat in one of the hangar-sized beer 'tents'. The action takes place at the Theresienwiese grounds, about a 10-minute walk southwest of the Hauptbahnhof. While there is no entrance fee, those €7 1L steins of beer add up fast. Although its origins are in the marriage celebrations of Crown Prince Ludwig in 1810, there's nothing regal about this beery bacchanalia now; expect mobs, expect to meet new and drunken friends, expect decorum to vanish as night sets in and you'll have a blast.

Sleeping

Munich has no shortage of places to stay – except at Oktoberfest or during some busy summer periods, when the wise (meaning those with a room) will have booked. Many of the budget and midrange places can be found in the anonymous streets around the train station. There's no good reason to stay here if you can avoid it as you'll find more charm and genuine fun elsewhere.

BUDGET

Munich's youth hostels that are DJH and HI affiliated do not accept guests over age 26, except group leaders or parents accompanying a child.

Campingplatz Thalkirchen (☎ 7243 0808; www.camping-muenchen.de; Zentralländstrasse 49; camp sites per person/tent €4.50/4, heated cabin per person €11; ☎ mid-Mar–end Oct) To get to this camping ground, southwest of the city centre, take the U3 to Thalkirchen and then catch bus 57 (about 20 minutes).

The Tent (☎ 141 4300; www.the-tent.com; In den Kirschen 30; bed in main tent €9, camp sites per tent/person €5.50/5.50; ☎ Jun-Sep) Pads and blankets provided for the bagless, bring your own lock for the lockers. Take tram 17 to the Botanic Gardens then follow the signs to a legendary international party.

Euro Youth Hotel (☎ 5990 8811; www.euro-youth-hotel.de; Senefelderstrasse 5; dm €15-18, r €39-60; ☎) The party never stops at the friendly Euro Youth Hotel, where happy noncampers work on international relationships in the bar and lounge. Rooms and facilities in this classic old building are well maintained.

4 you München (☎ 552 1660; www.the4you.de; Hirtenstrasse 18; dm €17-25; r €34-54; 📺) The 4 you is proud of its ecofriendly practices (check out the virgin wool blankets). Dorms have four to 12 beds while the private rooms have their own baths.

Wombat's (☎ 599 8918; www.wombats-hostels.com; Senefelderstrasse 1; dm €19, d €62; 📺) Despite the name this 300-bed hostel is refreshingly free of Aussie shtick. Dorms have six to eight beds. There's a fun and relaxed vibe at this well-run place.

Easy Palace Station Hotel (☎ 558 7970; www.easypalace.com; Schützenstrasse 7; dm €20, r €29-69; 📺) This once-seedate midrange hotel has been converted into a budget haven (you can still see traces of its past stodgy life). Dorm rooms have four to six beds. Singles and doubles have both shared and private baths.

MIDRANGE

Pension Haydn (☎ 5440 4703; www.pension-haydn.de; Haydnstrasse 9; r €38-95) Not far from Goetheplatz U-Bahn station on a quiet residential street, the Haydn's rooms are tended with care. More money buys private bathrooms.

Hotel am Viktualienmarkt (☎ 225 014; www.hotel-am-viktualienmarkt.de; Utzschneiderstrasse 14; r €40-150; 📺) Near the Viktualienmarkt (duh!), the 27 renovated rooms have a nice, light feel. It's good value in a great location.

Creatif Hotel Elephant (☎ 555 785; www.munich-hotel.net; Lämmerstrasse 6; r €50-150; 📺) The Creatif is a delightful and friendly place bursting with flowers. Its 44 rooms are stylish and comfortable, in an Ikea sort of way and there's free wi-fi.

Hotel Alcron Garni (☎ 228 3511; www.hotel-alcron.de; Ledererstrasse 13; r €60-100; 📺) Nicely located near the Marienplatz, the 14 rooms here are furnished with vintage furniture. It's a good place to crash in the very middle of town.

Hotel Blauer Bock (☎ 231 780; www.hotelblauerbock.de; Sebastiansplatz 9; r €60-102, with shared bathroom €41-79; 📺) This hotel traces its hostelry roots back more than a century. The 75 rooms now are modern and comfortable and the location on a quieter side street is excellent.

Pension am Gärtnerplatztheater (☎ 202 5170; www.pension-gaertnerplatztheater.de; Klenzestrasse 45; r €65-180; 📺) An antique-filled classic just down the street from hip and happening Gärtnerplatz. The 10 rooms have a timeless air, although that scent is wood polish.

TOP END

Hotel Olympic (☎ 231 890; www.hotel-olympic.de; Hans-Sachs-Strasse 4; r €90-180; 📺) This hotel has classy yet with unfussy decor that highlights the many fine antiques and artworks. There are 38 very nice, spacious rooms and they have wi-fi. You can't beat the relatively quiet location.

Apartments & Hotel Maximilian (☎ 242 580; www.maximilian-munich.com; Hochbrückenstrasse 18; r €130-300; 📺) This new and stylish place has 54 studios and apartments in a great location. All units come with kitchen facilities and wi-fi. There's a garden out back and the staff are truly lovely. This is a great place for longer stays or for those sick of hotel rooms. Look for deals.

Bayerischer Hof (☎ 212 00; www.bayerischerhof.de; Promenadeplatz 2-6; r from €210; 📺) Opened in 1841, generations of world leaders have made the Bayerischer Hof their home in Munich. The beautiful glass domed atrium, marble and gold leaf details and bustling efficiency are just some of the exquisite details. Breakfast on the top-floor terrace is a sublime treat.

Eating

Clusters of restaurants can be found anywhere there's pedestrian life. The streets in and around Gärtnerplatz and Glockenback-Viertel are the flavour-of-the-moment. You can always do well in and around Marienplatz and the wonderful Viktualienmarkt, while Schwabing is always full of eating delights.

RESTAURANTS

Riva Bar Pizzeria (☎ 220 240; Tal 44; mains €7-12) Straight from fashionable Milan, this authentic pizza place packs 'em in for wood-fired treats. Wait for a table inside or out at the long bar up front, toss a *ciao* or two to the cheery chefs.

Fraunhofer (☎ 266 460; Fraunhoferstrasse 9; mains €7-14; 📺) The always-crowded Fraunhofer serves up good Bavarian cuisine from a changing menu. The setting is old and the patrons young at this hip place.

Wirthaus zur Brez'n (☎ 390 092; Leopoldstrasse 72; mains €7-15) Tradition abounds at this Bavarian beer hall and restaurant. Of the many levels, go for the *keller* (basement) for real authenticity. There's season brews on tap and choice menu items like duck. Look for the bad jokes on the walls.

MUNICH WALKING TOUR

The pivotal **Marienplatz** is a good starting point for a walking tour of Munich. Dominating the square is the towering neo-Gothic **Neues Rathaus** (new town hall; Marienplatz), with its ever-dancing **Glockenspiel** (carillon), which performs at 11am and noon (also at 5pm from March to October), bringing the square to an expectant standstill (note the fate of the Austrian knight...). Two important churches are on this square: the baroque star **St Peterskirche** (Rindermarkt 1; tower €1.50; 🕒 9am-7pm Apr-Oct, to 6pm Nov-Mar) and, behind the **Altes Rathaus**, the often forgotten **Heiliggeistkirche** (Tal 77; 🕒 7am-6pm). Head west along shopping street Kaufingerstrasse to the landmark of Munich, the late-Gothic **Frauenkirche** (Church of Our Lady; ☎ 423 457; Frauenplatz; tower adult/child €3/1.50; 🕒 tower 10am-5pm Mar-Oct) with its then-trendy 16th-century twin onion domes. Go inside and join the hordes gazing at the grandeur of the place, or climb the tower for majestic views of Munich. Continue west to the large grey 16th-century **Michaelskirche** (☎ 609 0224; Neuhauserstrasse 52; 🕒 8am-7pm), Germany's earliest and grandest Renaissance church.

Further west is the **Richard Strauss Fountain** and the medieval **Karlstor**, an old city gate. Double back towards Marienplatz and turn right onto Eisenmannstrasse, which becomes Kreuzstrasse and converges with Herzog-Wilhelm-Strasse at the medieval gate of **Sendlinger Tor**. Go down the shopping street Sendlinger Strasse to the **Asamkirche** (Sendlinger Strasse 34), a flamboyant 17th-century church designed by brothers Cosmas Damian and Egid Quirin Asam. The ornate marble façade won't prepare you for the opulence inside, where scarcely an inch is left unembellished.

Continue along Sendlinger Strasse and turn right on Hermann-Sack-Strasse to reach the **Stadtmuseum** (☎ 233; St-Jakobs-Platz 1; adult/child €4/2; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), where a mixed but good bag of exhibits cover beer brewing, fashion, musical instruments, photography and puppets (who *don't* get top billing).

Santini (☎ 202 2658; Fraunhoferstrasse 43; mains €8-15) Jaunty red-and-white checked tablecloths set the mood at this cheery pizzeria and pasta place. There are tables outside and candles providing a romantic glow inside.

Seven Fish (☎ 2300 0219; Gärtnerplatz 6; mains €8-20) Outside there's a stylish café, inside it's a higher-end stylish restaurant with blue accents on exposed brick walls. As the name implies, fish is the speciality here and the line-up depends on what's fresh.

Alhambra (☎ 5488 1741; Schwanthaler Strasse 13; mains €9-18) A great place near the Hauptbahnhof, this stylish tapas place serves up Mediterranean and Spanish treats that range from hummus to tortillas. There's a great long bar.

Weisses Brauhaus (☎ 290 1380; Tal 7; mains €9-20) The place for classic Bavarian fare in an ancient beer-hall setting. Everything from *weisse wurst* (beloved local white sausage) to hearty traditional fare such as boiled ox cheeks is on offer.

CAFÉS

Two in One (☎ 2024 4595; Klenzestrasse 39; snacks €3-6; 🕒 10am-7.30pm Tue-Sat) That amazing smell may be the fresh cut flowers or the fine tea. It's hard to tell at this florist-cum-tea shop

near Gärtnerplatz. Have a cake at one of the tiny tables and try to decide.

News Bar (☎ 281 787; Amalienstrasse 55; sandwiches €5; 📺) Besides food and drinks, newspapers and magazines are available at this popular Schwabing hang-out. Enjoy the *Herald-Tribune* with a latte.

Café am Zeitgeist (☎ 2865 6873; Türkenstrasse 74; meals €6-12) This casual place stretches back off the street so you can enjoy an outside table without exhaust. There are toys for the kids and treats like *flammenkuchen* for one and all.

Nil (☎ 265 545; Hans-Sachs-Strasse 2; meals €7-12; 🕒 8am-4am) Right in trendy Glockenback-Viertel, this hip place draws a straight and gay crowd in the know. Tables outside are packed when the sun shines, inside it's packed all night long.

Interview (☎ 202 1646; Gärtnerplatz 1; mains €7-15) Patrons at this thriving and trendy café are more interested in eyeing each other than their food. Too bad, as the breakfasts served to 5pm (as well as the pastas, salads and drinks) are worth more than a glance.

SELF-CATERING

Viktualienmarkt, just south of Marienplatz, is a large open-air market open daily except

Saturday afternoon and Sunday, where you can put together a picnic feast to take to the Englischer Garten. The fresh produce, cheese and baked goods are hard to resist. Or relax here under the trees, at tables provided by one of the many beer and sausage vendors.

Alois Dallmayr (☎ 213 50; Dienerstrasse 14) One of the world's great delicatessens, behind the mustard-yellow awnings you'll find sparkling cases filled with fine foods. This is the place to come if you want a pet crayfish (see their fountain home).

Drinking

Apart from the beer halls and gardens, Munich has no shortage of lively pubs. Schwabing and Glockenback-Viertel are good places to follow your ears. Many serve food.

Alter Simpl (☎ 272 3083; Türkenstrasse 57) On a quieter Schwabing street than most, this historic pub exudes atmosphere. Thomas Mann hung out here 100 years ago and probably still would today.

Arc Pub (☎ 0178-3256423; Schraudolphstrasse 24) A popular sports bar with expats and travellers who want to catch live broadcasts of the action from home – wherever that may be. Popular and lively.

Klenze 17 (☎ 228 5795; Klenzestrasse 17) The extensive whisky selection is almost as large as Klenze 17's two small rooms, usually populated with young folks, many scarfing down nachos at midnight.

Entertainment

CINEMAS & THEATRE

Munich is one of the cultural capitals of Germany; the publications and websites listed on p474 can guide you to the best events. For tickets, try **Munchen Ticket** (☎ 5481 8154; www.muenchenticket.de).

Residenztheater (☎ 2185 1920; Max-Joseph-Platz 2) Home of the Bavarian State Opera (www.staatsoper.de) and the site of many cultural events (particularly during the opera festival in July).

Cinema (☎ 555 255; www.cinema-muenchen.com; Nymphenburger Strasse 31) Current films in English are screened here. Take the U1 to Stiglmaier Platz, exit at Nymphenburgerstrasse.

NIGHTCLUBS

Jazzdub Unterfahrt (☎ 448 2794; Einsteinstrasse 42-44) Near the Max-Weber-Platz U-Bahn station.

It has live music from 7.30pm nightly, and open jam sessions on Sunday night. Things often go until 3am.

Kultafabrik (www.kultafabrik.de; Grafingerstrasse 6; ☎ 8pm-6am or later) From potatoes to clubbing. This former spud factory has been reborn as a vast playground of clubs. There's over 25 that you can sample before you end up mashed or fried. The themes range from live rock to techno (of course) to post-Soviet squalor. It's close to the Ostbahnhof station.

GAY & LESBIAN VENUES

Much of Munich's gay and lesbian nightlife is around Gärtnerplatz and the Glockenback-Viertel. Any of the places in this area listed above (such as Nil) will have a mixed crowd. *Our Munich* and *Sergej* are monthly guides easily found in this neighbourhood. Another good resource is Max&Milian (p473).

Morizz (☎ 201 6776; Klenzestrasse 43) is a popular haunt for gay men that takes its cue from a classic Paris nightspot. It has a long wine and cocktail list and goes until dawn.

Shopping

All shoppers converge on the Marienplatz to buy designer shoes or kitschy souvenirs. The stylish department store **Ludwig Beck** (☎ 236 910; Marienplatz 11) has something for everyone. Bypass Calvin et al for more unusual European choices.

For the well-heeled, check out the *haute couture* shops on Maximilianstrasse. Meanwhile Schwabing boasts its fair share of quirky, artistic boutiques, especially along Hohenzollernstrasse.

The edgy, trendy culture of Glockenback-Viertel is exemplified by **Fuckuall** (☎ 2323 1816; Jahnstrasse 6), a purveyor of German gangsta clothing and whose distinctive and declarative logo is pasted up all over town.

Christkindlmarkt (Marienplatz) in December is large and well stocked but often expensive, so buy a warm drink and just wander around. A huge flea market, the **Auer Dult** (Mariahilfplatz), has great buys and takes place during the last weeks of April, July and October.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Munich's sparkling white **airport** (MUC; www.munich-airport.de) is second in importance only to Frankfurt-am-Main for international and

national connections. Flights will take you to all major destinations worldwide. Main German cities are serviced by at least half a dozen flights daily. easyJet and DBA are major budget carriers here.

BUS

Munich is linked to the Romantic Road by the popular **Deutsche-Touring** (☎ 889 895 13; www.deutsche-touring.com; Hirtenstrasse 14) Munich-Frankfurt service (see p482). Buses stop along the northern side of the train station on Arnulfstrasse.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Munich has autobahns radiating out on all sides. Take the A9 to Nuremberg, the A92 to Passau, the A8 east to Salzburg, the A95 to Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the A8 to Ulm or Stuttgart. The main rental companies have counters together on the second level of the Hauptbahnhof. For arranged rides, the **ADM-Mitfahrzentrale** (☎ 194 40; www.mitfahrz.org; Lämmerstrasse 6; ☎ 8am-8pm) is near the Hauptbahnhof. The cost is split with the driver and you can reach most parts of Germany for well under €40.

TRAIN

Train services to/from Munich are excellent. There are rapid connections at least every two hours to all major cities in Germany, as well as daily EC trains to other European cities such as Paris (€105, nine hours), Vienna (€68, four hours) and Zurich (€59, 4½ hours).

High-speed ICE services from Munich include Frankfurt (€75, 3¼ hours, hourly), Hamburg (€115, six hours, hourly) and Berlin (€96, six hours, every two hours).

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Munich's international airport is connected by the S8 and the S1 to Marienplatz and the Hauptbahnhof (€8.80). The service takes about 40 minutes and there is a train every 10 minutes from 4am until around 12.30am. The S8 route is slightly faster.

Taxis make the long haul for at least €60.

BICYCLE

Pedal power is popular in relatively flat Munich. **Radius Bike Rental** (☎ 596 113; www.radiusmunich.com; Hauptbahnhof near track 32; ☎ 10am-

6pm May-Sep) rents out two-wheelers from €17 per day.

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

It's not worth driving in the city centre – many streets are pedestrian only. The tourist office has a map that shows city parking places (€2 or more per hour).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Munich's excellent public transport network (MVV; www.mvv-muenchen.de) is zone-based, and most places of interest to tourists (except Dachau and the airport) are within the 'blue' inner zone (Innenraum; €2.20). MVV tickets are valid for the S-Bahn, U-Bahn, trams and buses, but they must be validated before use. The U-Bahn stops operating around 12.30am Monday to Friday and 1.30am on Saturday and Sunday, but there are some later buses and S-Bahns. Rail passes are valid exclusively on the S-Bahn.

Kurzstrecke (short rides) cost €1.10 and are good for no more than four stops on buses and trams, and two stops on the U- and S-Bahns. *Tageskarte* (day passes) for the inner zone cost €4.80, while three-day tickets cost €11.80, or €20 for two adults travelling together (partner ticket).

TAXI

Taxis are expensive (€2.80 flag fall, plus €1.50 per kilometre) and not much more convenient than public transport. For a radio-dispatched taxi dial ☎ 216 10.

DACHAU

The first Nazi concentration camp was **Dachau** (☎ 08131-669 970; www.kz-gedenkstaette-dachau.de; Alte-Roemerstrasse 75; admission free; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), built in March 1933. Jews, political prisoners, homosexuals and others deemed 'undesirable' by the Third Reich were imprisoned in the camp. More than 200,000 people were sent here; more than 30,000 died at Dachau and countless others died after being transferred to other death camps. An English-language documentary is shown at 11.30am and 3.30pm. A visit includes camp relics, memorials and a very sobering museum. Take the S2 (direction Petershausen) to Dachau and then bus 726 or 724 to the camp. A Munich XXL day ticket (€6.50) will cover the trip.

ROMANTIC ROAD

The popular and schmaltzily named Romantic Road (Romantische Strasse) links a series of picturesque Bavarian towns and cities. It's not actually one road per se but rather a 353km route chosen to highlight as many quaint towns and cities as possible in western Bavaria.

From north to south it includes the following major stops:

- Würzburg – Starting point and featuring 18th-century artistic splendour among the vineyards.
- Rothenburg ob der Tauber – The medieval walled hub of cutesy picturesque Bavarian touring.
- Dinkelsbühl – Another medieval walled town replete with moat and watchtowers, a smaller Rothenberg. The town is best reached by the Romantic Road by bus or car.
- Augsburg – A medieval and Renaissance city with many good places for a beer.
- Wieskirche – This Unesco World Heritage church (☎ 08862 932 930; www.wieskirche.de; ☎ 8am-5pm) is a truly amazing work of 18th-century rococo excess. It towers over

a tiny village 25km northeast of Füssen. The church is best reached by the Romantic Road bus or car.

- Füssen – The southern end of the route and the cute and over-run home of mad King Ludwig's castles.

In addition to these principal stops, more than a dozen more little towns clamour for attention – and your money.

Getting There & Around

The principal cities and towns listed above are all easily reached by train – see the individual listings for details. But to really explore the route, you are best off with your own transportation. The entire length is copiously marked with brown signs in German, English and Japanese. With a car, you can blow through places of little interest and linger at those that attract.

A popular way to tour the Romantic Road is the **Deutsche-Touring Romantic Road bus** (www.deutsche-touring.com). Starting in Frankfurt in the north and Munich in the south, a bus runs in each direction each day covering the entire route between Würzburg and Füs-

sen. However, seeing the entire route in one day is only for those with a love of buses and unusual fortitude. Stops are brief (15 minutes for Wieskirche, *Schnell!* 30 minutes for Rothenburg, *Schnell!* etc) so you'll want to choose places where you can break the trip for a day (stopovers are allowed). But of course this leads you to decide between a 30-minute visit and a 24-hour one.

The buses depart April to October from Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof at 8am and from Munich Hauptbahnhof at 8.15am and take about 13 hours. The total fare (tickets are bought on board) is a pricey €139. Railpass holders get a 60% discount and flexipass holders do not need to use a travel day for the discount. You can also just ride for individual segments (eg Rothenberg to Augsburg costs €27).

WÜRZBURG

☎ 0931 / pop 133,000

Nestled among river valleys lined with vineyards, Würzburg beguiles even before you reach the city centre. Three of the four largest wine growing estates in all of Germany are here and most of the delicate whites produced locally never leave the region – the locals will always reach for a wine glass first. Over 1300 years old, Würzburg was rebuilt after bombings late in the war (it took only 17 minutes to almost completely destroy the city). Today it's a centre of art, beautiful architecture and delicate wines.

The **tourist office** (☎ 372 335; www.wuerzburg.de; Oberer Markt; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun May-Oct, reduced hr & closed Sun other times), in the rococo masterpiece Haus zum Falken.

Sights

The magnificent, sprawling **Residenz** (☎ 355 170; www.schloesser.bayern.de; Residenzplatz 2; adult/child €5/4; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Nov-Mar), a baroque masterpiece by Neumann, took a generation to build and boasts the world's largest ceiling fresco (graphic artists take note: he didn't need no stinking Photoshop!); the **Hofgarten** at the back is a beautiful spot. The interior of the **Dom St Kilian** (☎ 386 261; Kilianplatz; admission €5; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 5pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) and the adjacent **Neumünster**, an 11th-century church in the old town housing the bones of St Kilian – the patron Saint of Würzburg – continue the baroque themes of the Residenz.

Neumann's fortified **Alter Kranen** (old crane), which serviced a dock on the riverbank south of Friedensbrücke, is now the **Haus des Frankenweins** (☎ 390 1111; Kranenkai 1), where you can taste Franconian wines (for around €3 per glass).

The medieval fortress **Marienberg**, across the river on the hill, is reached by crossing the 15th-century stone **Alte Mainbrücke** (bridge) from the city and walking up Tellstiege, a small alley. It encloses the **Fürstenbau Museum** (☎ 438 38; admission €4; ☎ 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) featuring the Episcopal apartments, and the regional **Mainfränkisches Museum** (☎ 430 16; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Mar). See both on a combined card (€5). For a simple thrill, wander the walls enjoying the panoramic views.

Sleeping & Eating

Würzburg's many *Weinstuben* are excellent places to sample the local vintages. Look for crests of gilded grapes over entrances. Sanderstrasse has a good strip of lively bars.

Kanu-Club (☎ 725 36; Mergentheimer Strasse 13b; camp sites per person/tent €5/5; ☎ Apr-Sep) A camping ground on the west bank of the Main; take tram 3 or 5 to Jugendbühlweg.

Hostel Babelfish (☎ 3040430; www.babelfish-hostel.de; Prymstrasse 3; dm/d from €16/45; ☎) Close to the centre, this new hostel is ultra-clean and well run. Dorms have four to 10 beds each. From the train station walk east 200m.

Pension Spohnkuch (☎ 547 52; www.pension-spohnkuch.de; Röntgenring 7; s/d from €29/60) Located by the train station, the seven simple rooms are kept spotless by the charming family.

Hotel Till Eulenspiegel (☎ 355 840; www.hotel-till-eulenspiegel.de; Sanderstrasse 1a; s/d from €63/85; ☎) Oxygen-lovers celebrate: this is a non-smoking hotel. Run by the gregarious Johannes, the 18 rooms are comfortable and some have sunny balconies. There's also a small but good *weinstube* and a pub serving unusual Bavarian microbrews.

Karma X (☎ 329 4149; Kardinal-Fraulhaber-Platz 4; meals €4-8; ☎ 7am-7.30pm Mon-Sat; ☎) A kind of Danish modern café done up in creams and orange – sort of like fresh-squeezed orange juice (which you can order). This upscale deli offers breakfasts, soups, salads, sandwiches, desserts and picnics to go.

Weinstuben Juliuspital (☎ 540 80; Juliuspromenade 19; meals €8-20) This rambling place serves

BEER HALLS & BEER GARDENS

Beer-drinking is not just an integral part of Munich's entertainment scene, it's a reason to visit. Germans drink an average of 130L of the amber liquid each per year, while Munich residents manage to drink much more. Locals will be happy to help ensure that you don't bring down the average.

Beer halls can be vast boozy affairs seating thousands or much more modest neighbourhood hang-outs. The same goes for beer gardens. Both come in all shapes and sizes. What's common is a certain camaraderie among strangers, huge litre glasses of beer (try putting one of those in your carry on) and lots of cheap food – the saltier the better. Note that in beer gardens tradition allows you to bring your own food, a boon if you want an alternative to pretzels, sausages and the huge white radishes served with, you guessed it, salt.

On a warm day there's nothing better than sitting and sipping among the greenery at one of the Englischer Garten's classic beer gardens. **Chinesischer Turm** (☎ 383 8730) is justifiably popular while the nearby **Hirschau** (☎ 369 942) on the banks of Kleinhesseloher See is less crowded.

Augustiner Keller (☎ 594 393; Arnulfstrasse 52) Only five minutes from the Hauptbahnhof, the Keller has a large and leafy beer garden and a fine cavernous hall when the weather keeps you indoors.

Augustiner Bierhalle (☎ 5519 9257; Neuhauser Strasse 27) What you probably imagine an old-style Munich beer hall looks like, filled with laughter, smoke and clinking glasses.

Zum Dürnbräu (☎ 222 195; Tal 21) Tucked into a corner off Tal, this is a great and authentic little alternative to the Hofbräuhaus. There's a small beer garden and drinkers of dark drafts enjoy pewter-topped mugs.

Hofbräuhaus (☎ 2901 3610; Am Platzl 9) The ultimate cliché of Munich beer halls. Tourists arrive by the busload but no-one seems to mind that this could be Disneyland (although the theme park wasn't once home to Hitler's early speeches, like this place was).

from a long list of wines. You can have a meal or just a drink at one of the many old wooden tables.

Zum Stachel (☎ 527 70; Gressengasse 1; mains €12-25) This cosy *weinstube* traces its roots back to the 15th century. The ambitious menu has numerous local specialties including excellent beef and seafood dishes. There's a garden seating area and the ceiling inside is decorated with murals showing a *stachel* (mace) in action. Book ahead.

Getting There & Away

Würzburg is served by frequent trains from Frankfurt (€21 to €28, one to two hours) and one hour from Nuremberg (€14 to €19, 40 minutes to one hour). It's a major stop for the ICE trains on the Hamburg–Munich line. It is also on the Deutsche-Touring Romantic Road bus route (€14, 2¼ hours to/from Rothenburg). The stop is in front of the train station.

BAMBERG

☎ 0951 / pop 70,000

Off the major tourist routes, Bamberg is celebrated by those in the know. It boasts an amazing and preserved collection of 17th- and 18th-century buildings, palaces and churches. It is bisected by a large canal and a fast-flowing river that are spanned by cute little bridges and it even has its own local style of beer. No wonder it has been recognised by Unesco as a World Heritage Site. Could it be the best town in Germany?

The **tourist office** (☎ 871 161; www.bamberg.info; Geyerswörthstrasse 3; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, to 2.30pm Sat year-round & Sun May–Oct) is on an island in the Regnitz River.

Sights

Bamberg's main appeal is its fine buildings – their sheer number, their jumble of styles and the ambience this creates. Most attractions are spread either side of the Regnitz River, but the colourful **Altes Rathaus** (Obere Brücke; ☎ 9.30am–4.30pm Tue–Sun Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Tue–Sun Oct–Mar) is actually precariously perched on its own islet.

The princely and ecclesiastical district is centred on Domplatz, where the Romanesque and Gothic **cathedral** (Domplatz; ☎ 8am–6pm Apr–Sep, 8am–5pm Oct–Mar), housing the statue of the chivalric king-knight, the *Bamberger Reiter*, is the biggest attraction. Across the

square, the imposing 17th-century **Neue Residenz** (☎ 519 390; Domplatz 8; adult/child €3/2; ☎ 9am–6pm Apr–Sep, 10am–4pm Oct–Mar) is filled with treasures and opulent décor.

Above Domplatz is the former Benedictine monastery of St Michael, at the top of Michaelsberg. The **Kirche St Michael** (Franziskanergasse 2; ☎ 9am–6pm) is a must-see for its baroque art and the herbal compendium painted on its ceiling. The garden terraces afford another marvellous overview of the city's splendour.

Sleeping & Eating

Bamberg's unique style of beer is called *Rauchbier*, which literally means smoked beer. With a bacon flavour at first, it is a smooth brew that goes down easy. Happily, many of the local breweries also rent rooms.

Campingplatz Insel (☎ 563 20; www.campinginsel.de; Am Campingplatz 1; camp sites per person/tent €3.50/6) A well-equipped place in a tranquil spot right on the river. Take bus 18 to Campingplatz.

Jugendherberge Wolfsschlucht (☎ 560 02; www.djh.de; Oberer Leinritt 70; dm €15; ☎ closed mid-Dec–mid-Jan) On the river's west bank, take bus 18 to Rodelbahn, walk northeast to the riverbank, then turn left to this cute 92-bed hostel.

Brauerei Spezial (☎ 243 04; www.brauerei-spezial.de; Obere Königstrasse 10; r €20–55, meals €8–15) Across from Fässla, this half-timbered brewery has cosy drinking and dining areas featuring old tile stoves. The seven rooms are quite simple but comfortable.

Petrolthof Fässla (☎ 265 16; www.faessla.de; Obere Königstrasse 19–21; s/d €37/55) It's a dream come true – a bed in a brewery. The 21 rooms are large, clean and comfy. Look for the keg over the door.

Hotel Alte Post (☎ 980 260; Heiliggrabstrasse 1; r €38–100; 📺) A five-minute walk from the train station, this 40-room place has simple rooms that come with wi-fi.

Teeggiesserei (☎ 297 2595; Pfahlplätzchen 2; meals €6–10; ☎ 11am–7.30pm Tue–Sun) Like an upscale home featured in a Sunday supplement, this stylish café at first seems all style over substance. But sample the many cakes and teas and you'll see the depths of its goodness.

Schlenkerla (☎ 560 60; Dominikanerstrasse 6; meals €7–15) This ancient half-timbered building is *the* place to sample Rauchbier. The traditional menu boasts many a porky platter and there's always seasonal specials.

Getting There & Away

There are hourly trains to/from both Würzburg (€15.50, one hour) and Nuremberg (€10, one hour). Bamberg is also served by ICE trains running between Munich (€48, 2½ hours) and Berlin (€69, four hours) every two hours.

ROTHENBURG OB DER TAUBER

☎ 09861 / pop 12,000

In the Middle Ages, Rothenburg's town fathers built strong walls to protect the town from siege; today they are the reason the town is under siege from tourists. The most stereotypical of all German walled towns, Rothenburg can't help being so cute.

Granted 'free imperial city' status in 1274, it's a confection of twisting cobbled lanes and pretty architecture enclosed by towered stone walls. The **tourist office** (☎ 404 92; www.rothenburg.de; Marktplatz 2; ☎ 9am–noon, 1–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat) can help you find a room, which might be a good idea because after dark the streets are quiet and the underlying charm comes out.

Note that the gaggle of Christmas shops and 'museums' are quite wiley – once in you have to walk the entire labyrinth in order to escape.

Sights

The **Rathaus am Markt** was commenced in Gothic style in the 14th century but completed in Renaissance style. The **tower** (admission €1) gives a majestic view over the town and the Tauber Valley. According to legend, the town was saved during the Thirty Years' War when the mayor won a challenge by the Imperial general Tilly and downed more than 3L of wine at a gulp. The **Meistertrunk** scene is re-enacted by the clock figures on the tourist office building (eight times daily in summer). Actors re-enact other famous scenes from the past (but not the mythical assault on the tour bus by fudge vendors) at 6.30pm Friday, May to September.

Totally uncommercial, **Jakobskirche** (☎ 700 60; Klingengasse 1; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 9am–4pm) is sober and Gothic. Marvel at the carved *Heilige Blut Altar* (Holy Blood Altar).

The **Reichsstadt Museum** (☎ 939 043; Klosterhof 5; adult/child €3/1.50; ☎ 9.30am–5.30pm Apr–Oct, 1–4pm Nov–Mar), in the former convent, features the superb *Rothenburger Passion* in 12 panels and the Judaica room, with a collection of gravestones with Hebrew inscriptions.

Sleeping & Eating

Resist the temptation to try a *Schneeball*, a crumbly ball of bland dough with the taste and consistency of chalk – surely one of Europe's worst 'local specialties'.

Das Lädle (☎ 6130; www.das-laedle.de; Spitalgasse 18; r €22–48) A good budget option, with light, modern rooms in a central location.

Hotel & Cafe Uhl (☎ 4895; www.hotel-uhl.de; Plölein 8; r €35–70, meals €6–10; ☎) Downstairs there's a nice bakery and café with views, upstairs the 12 rooms are bright and modern.

Altfränkische Weinstube (☎ 6404; Klosterhof 7; r €48–70; mains €7–15) Vine covered and cosy, the Altfränkische Weinstube is justifiably popular, with a varied and well-priced menu, and a fantastic atmosphere set by the wine barrels out front. The rooms are simple and comfortable.

Getting There & Away

There are hourly trains to/from Steinach, a transfer point for service to Würzburg (total journey €10, 70 minutes). Rothenburg is a cross-road for tourist buses. The Deutsche-Touring Romantic Road bus pauses here for 30 minutes. A companion bus serving the Castle Road route provides daily links May to September to Heidelberg (€46, three hours) and Nürnberg (€14, two hours).

NUREMBERG

☎ 0911 / pop 494,000

Levelled during the war, Nuremberg has spent the last few decades rebuilding itself. It's hard to sense that the town was once a half-timbered medieval wonder but that's OK, as the current version has charms of its own. The narrow backstreets reward wanderers, who can take sustenance at places grilling up the town's seductive namesake sausage. Germanisches Nationalmuseum is a reason to not just get off the train but to make the journey. In winter the famous Christmas market draws hordes.

Nuremberg played a major role during the Nazi years, as documented in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Triumph of Will* and during the war crimes trials afterwards. It has done an admirable job of confronting this ugly past with museums and exhibits.

Orientation

The main train station is just outside the city walls of the old town. The main artery, the

mostly pedestrian Königstrasse, takes you through the old town and its major squares. Breite Gasse, Königsstrasse and Karolinenstrasse are the main shopping streets.

Information

Both tourist offices sell the two-day Nürnberg Card (€18), which provides free public transport and entry to all museums and attractions, including those in nearby Fürth.

Netzkultur (☎ 211 0782; 3rd fl, Maximum Bldg, Färberstrasse 11; per hr €3.50; ☎ 9-1am) Burn CDs, surf the Internet.

Post office (Bahnhofplatz 1)

Schnell und Sauber Laundry (☎ 180 9400; Sulzbacher Strasse 86; per load €4; ☎ 6am-midnight) Tram 8 to Deichslerstrasse.

Tourist offices (www.tourismus.nuernberg.de) Main office (☎ 233 6132; Königstrasse 93; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat); branch office (☎ 233 6135; Hauptmarkt 18; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-4pm Sun May-Sep)

Sights

The stunning **Germanisches Nationalmuseum** (☎ 133 10; www.gnm.de; Kartäusergasse 1; adult/child €5/4; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed) is the most important general museum of German culture. It displays works by German painters and sculptors, an archaeological collection, arms and armour, musical and scientific instruments and toys. Look for the globe dating from 1492.

Close by, the sleek and harmonious **Neues Museum** (☎ 240 200; Luitpoldstrasse 5; adult/child €4/3; ☎ 10am-8pm Tue-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun) contains a superb collection of contemporary art and design.

The scenic **Altstadt** is easily covered on foot. On Lorenzer Platz there's the **St Lorenzkirche**, noted for the 15th-century tabernacle that climbs like a vine up a pillar to the vaulted ceiling.

To the north is the bustling **Hauptmarkt**, where the most famous Christkindlesmarkt in Germany is held from the Friday before Advent to Christmas Eve. The church here is the ornate **Pfarrkirche Unsere Liebe Frau**; the clock's figures go strolling at noon. Near the Rathaus is **St Sebalduskirche**, Nuremberg's oldest church (dating from the 13th century), with the shrine of St Sebaldus.

Climb up Burgstrasse to the enormous 15th-century **Kaiserburg complex** (☎ 225 726; Burg 13; adult/child €5/4; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Oct-Mar) for good views of the city. The walls

spread west to the tunnel-gate of **Tiergärtner-tor**, where you can stroll behind the castle to the gardens. Nearby is the renovated **Albrecht-Dürer-Haus** (☎ 231 2568; Albrecht-Dürer-Strasse 39; adult/child €5/2.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Thu), where Dürer, Germany's renowned Renaissance draughtsman, lived from 1509 to 1528.

Nuremberg's role during the Third Reich is well known. The Nazis chose this city as their propaganda centre and for mass rallies, which were held at **Luitpoldhain**, a (never completed) sports complex of megalomaniac proportions. After the war, the Allies deliberately chose Nuremberg as the site for the trials of Nazi war criminals. Not to be missed is the **Dokumentationzentrum** (☎ 231 5666; www.museum.nuernberg.de; Bayernstrasse 110; adult/child €5/2.50; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun) in the north wing of the massive unfinished Congress Hall, which would have held 50,000 people for Hitler's spectacles. The museum's absorbing exhibits trace the rise of Hitler and the Nazis and the important role Nuremberg played in the mythology. Take tram 9 or 6 to Doku-Zentrum.

Sleeping

Lette'm Sleep (☎ 992 8128; www.backpackers.de; Frauentormauer 42; dm €16-20, r with shared bathroom €44-52; ☎) Dorms are available, as well as quirky private rooms designed with colour and flair not often seen in hostels.

Pension Sonne (☎ 227 166; Königstrasse 45; s/d with shared bathroom €30/60) It's a steep climb up three flights of stairs to the cosy and bright rooms with high ceilings.

Hotel Lucas (☎ 227 845; www.hotel-lucas.de; Kaiserstrasse 22; r €50-90; ☎ ☎) Some of the 11 tidy rooms here have balconies, others have small adjoining rooms for doing work – which for you might mean scrutinising a guidebook. The location is very central.

Merian-Hotel (☎ 214 6 90; www.merian-hotel.de; Unschlittplatz 7; r €85-130) The 21 rooms here are simply decorated but that means there's no competition for your attention, which should be focused on the nearby fast-flowing Pegnitz River. The hotel has a good outdoor café in this attractive and quiet part of the old town.

Hotel Agneshof (☎ 214440; www.agneshof-nuernberg.de; Agneshofgasse 10; r €100-250; ☎ ☎) In the middle of Nuremberg's well-preserved historic centre, the Agneshof has 74 bright and well-appointed rooms with wi-fi. The small sauna is a plus.

Eating

Don't leave Nuremberg without trying its famous finger-sized grilled sausages. Order 'em by the dozen with *Meerrettich* (horseradish) on the side.

Bratwursthäusle (☎ 227 695; Rathausplatz 2; meals €6-10) Here the local sausages are flame-grilled and scrumptious. Get them with *Kartoffel-salat* (potato salad). There are also nice tree-shaded tables outside.

Zwinger (☎ 220 48; Lorenzer Strasse 33; mains €6-12) Up front you can have a meal of local favourites at this popular meeting place. In back there's live music or DJs until late.

Kettensteg (☎ 221 081; Maxplatz 35; mains €7-15) Right by the river and with its own suspension bridge to the other side, this beer garden and restaurant is fine on a summer day and cosy in winter. The basic fare is tasty and absorbs lots of beer.

Lindbergh (☎ 214 25 95; Burgstrasse 1; mains €8-15) This contemporary café and bar has huge windows overlooking the St Sebalduskirche. There's a good wine list and smattering of creative continental hits on the varied menu.

Getting There & Around

Nuremberg's **airport** (NUE; www.airport-nuernberg.de) is a hub for budget carrier Air Berlin, which has service throughout Germany, as well as flights to European capitals including London, Paris and Rome. There's frequent service to the airport on the S-2 line (€1.80, 20 minutes).

The city is also a hub for train service. ICE trains run to/from Berlin-Hauptbahnhof (€77, 4½ hours, every two hours), Frankfurt-am-Main (€39, two hours, hourly) and on the new fast line to Munich (€41, 79 minutes, hourly). Trains run hourly to Stuttgart (€28, 2¼ hours).

Tickets on the bus, tram and U-Bahn system cost €1.80 each. Day passes are €3.60.

REGENSBURG

☎ 0941 / pop 129,000

On the wide Danube River, Regensburg has relics of all periods as far back as the Romans, yet doesn't have the tourist mobs you'll find in other equally attractive German cities. Oh well, their loss. The centre escaped the war's carpet bombing and Renaissance towers that could be in Florence mix with half-timbered charm. Throngs

of students keep things from getting too mouldy.

Orientation & Information

From the main train station, you walk up Maximilianstrasse for 10 minutes to reach the centre. There's Internet access at coin-operated terminals (per 15 minutes €1) on the top level of the train station.

Tourist office (☎ 507 4410; www.regensburg.de; Altes Rathaus; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun)

Sights

Dominating the skyline are the twin spires of the Gothic **Dom St Peter** (☎ 597 1002; Domplatz; admission free; tours in German adult/child €2.50/1.50; ☎ tours 10am, 11am, 2pm Mon-Sat, 1 & 2pm Sun May-Oct; 11am Mon-Fri & 1pm Sun Dec-Apr) built during the 14th and 15th centuries from unusual green limestone.

The **Altes Rathaus** (Rathausplatz 1; guided tours €6; ☎ tours in German through the day, tours in English 3.30pm Mon-Sat May-Sep) was progressively extended from medieval to baroque times and remained the seat of the Reichstag for almost 150 years.

The **Roman wall**, with its **Porta Praetoria** arch, follows Unter den Schwibbögen onto Dr-Martin-Luther-Strasse.

Lavish **Schloss Thurn und Taxis** (☎ 504 8133; Emmeramsplatz 6; adult/child €11.50/9; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun) is near the train station and includes the castle proper (Schloss) and the royal stables (Marstall). The adjoining **Basilika St Emmeram** (☎ 510 330; Emmeramsplatz; ☎ 9am-5pm) is a riot of rococo and has a perfect cloister.

Sleeping & Eating

Azur-Camping (☎ 270 025; fax 299 432; Weinweg 40; camp sites per person/site €5/6) Bus 6 from the train station goes to the entrance.

DJH Hostel (☎ 574 02; www.djh.de; Wöhrdstrasse 60; dm €17; ☎) Regensburg's modernised hostel is in a beautiful old building on Unterer Wöhrd island about a 10-minute walk north of the Altstadt. Take bus 3 from Albertstrasse to Eisstadion.

Spitalgarten Hotel (☎ 847 74; www.spitalgarten.de; St Katharinenplatz 1; s/d €23/46) Across the river is the Spitalgarten, with basic rooms in a large imposing building. A beer garden is attached.

Hotel Am Peterstor (☎ 545 45; www.hotel-am-peterstor.de; Fröliche-Türkenstrasse 12; s/d €40/55)

The 36 clean, basic rooms are simply decorated in an attractive and unfussy way.

Hotel Kaiserhof (☎ 585 350; www.kaiserhof-am-dom.de; Kramgasse 10-12; r €60-125; ☑) The best rooms at this 30-room inn face the Dom. The décor is understated, which adds to the feeling of spaciousness. Ask for a room with a new bathroom.

Roter Hahn (595 090; www.rotter-hahn.com; Rote-Hahnen-Gasse 10; s/d from €80/90; ☑) Look for the namesake red cock as you penetrate the narrow cobblestone streets in the heart of the old town. The 30 rooms have an edgy contemporary feel and wi-fi. The café (mains €7 to €15) has a creative modern fusion menu.

Historische Würstküche (☎ 466 210; Thundorferstrasse 3; meals €6) The Danube rushes past this little house that's been cooking up the addictive local version of Nuremberg sausages (slightly spicier) for centuries.

Bodega (☎ 584 0486; Vor der Grieb 1a; meals €8-16) Hidden in a little alley, this contemporary tapas bar has an array of tempting dishes on display in glass cases. Sample the long wine list while hanging out outside or settle in inside for a trip to Spain.

Getting There & Away

Regensburg is on the train line between Nuremberg (€16 to €21, one hour, hourly) and Austria. There are hourly trains to Munich (€21, 1½ hours).

AUGSBURG

☎ 0821 / pop 259,000

Originally established by the Romans, Augsburg later became a centre of Luther's Reformation. Today it's a lively provincial city, criss-crossed by little streams, that has an appealing ambience and vitality. It makes a good day trip from Munich.

The **tourist office** (☎ 502 0724; www.augsburg-tourismus.de; Maximilian Strasse 57; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) can help with accommodation.

Sights

Look for the very impressive onion-shaped towers on the **Rathaus** (☎ 3240; Rathausplatz; ☎ 10am-6pm) and the adjacent **Perlachturm**. North of here is the 11th-century **Dom Maria Heimsuchung** (Hoher Weg; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat), which has more 'modern' additions, such as the 14th-century doors showing scenes from the Old Testament.

The Fuggers – a 16th-century banking family – left their mark everywhere. They have lavish tombs inside **St Anna Kirche** (Anastasse; ☎ 10am-12.30pm & 3-6pm Tue-Sat, noon-6pm Sun), a place also known for being a Martin Luther bolthole. The 16th-century **Fuggerei** (no laughing!) was built with banking riches to house the poor. The excellent **museum** (☎ 319 881; Mittlere Gasse 13; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 10am-6pm) shows how they lived.

Sleeping & Eating

Jakoberhof (☎ 510 030; www.jakoberhof.de; Jakoberhofstrasse 41; s/d €49/64, with shared bathroom €26/39) Rooms at this dignified inn are sparsely decorated, which makes it easier not to lose something. Look for this temple of good value under its own onion dome.

Dom Hotel (☎ 343 930; www.domhotel-augsburg.de; Frauentorstrasse 8; s/d from €67/76; ☑) The 52 comfortable rooms here are modern and have wi-fi. Some have their own solariums, while some attic rooms have open beams and great views.

König von Flandern (☎ 158 050; Karolinenstrasse 12; meals €6-10) This underground brewery is always packed. The food is tasty and goes well with the many house beers on tap. Try the piquant Alligator döppelbock.

Getting There & Away

Trains between Munich and Augsburg are frequent (€10 to €18, 40 minutes). The Deutsche-Touring Romantic Road bus stops at the train station and the Rathaus.

FÜSSEN

☎ 08362 / pop 14,000

Close to the Austrian border and the foothills of the Alps, Füssen has some splendid baroque architecture, but it is primarily visited for the two castles in nearby Schwangau associated with King Ludwig II. The **tourist office** (☎ 938 50; www.fuessen.de; Kaiser-Maximilian-Platz 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) is often overrun.

Sights

Neuschwanstein and **Hohenschwangau castles** provide a fascinating glimpse into the romantic king's state of mind (or lack thereof) and well-developed ego. Hohenschwangau is where Ludwig lived as a child, but more interesting is the adjacent Neuschwanstein, his own creation (albeit with the help of a

theatrical designer). Although it was unfinished when he died in 1886, there is plenty of evidence of Ludwig's twin obsessions: swans and Wagnerian operas. The sugary pastiche of architectural styles, alternatively overwhelmingly beautiful and just a little-too-much, reputedly inspired Disney's Fantasyland castle.

Tickets may only be bought from the **ticket centre** (☎ 930 830; www.ticket-center-hohen-schwangau.de; Alpeestrasse 12; each castle adult/child €9/free, both €17/free; ☎ 9am-6pm mid-Apr-mid-Oct, 10am-4pm mid-Oct-mid-Apr). In summer it's worth the €1.60 surcharge to reserve ahead. To walk to Hohenschwangau takes 10 minutes while Neuschwanstein is a 30-minute steep hike. Horse-drawn carriages (€5) and shuttle buses (€2) shorten but don't eliminate the hike.

Take the bus from Füssen train station (€1.55, eight minutes, hourly) or share a taxi (☎ 7700; €8.50 for up to four people). Go early to avoid the worst of the rush.

Sleeping & Eating

A pavilion near the tourist office has a computerised list of vacant rooms in town; most of the cheapest rooms, at around €15 per person, are in private homes just a few minutes from the Altstadt. Füssen is a pretty quiet place after dark and most people will stay only long enough to see the castles. There are a couple of cafés in the centre to grab lunch at.

DJH Hostel (☎ 7754; www.djh.de; Mariahilferstrasse 5; dm €16; ☑) It gets a bit loud when the 134 beds are full, but otherwise it's quiet and only a signposted 10-minute walk from the train station.

Hotel Sonne (☎ 9080; www.hotel-sonne.de; Reichenstrasse 37; r from €80; ☑) Just across from the tourist office, the pastel-coloured Sonne is hard to miss. The 32 rooms are comfortable, if not exactly as bright as the name.

Getting There & Away

Trains to Munich (€20, two hours) run every two hours. Füssen is the start of the Romantic Rd. Deutsche-Touring buses start in Munich and are the best way to reach Wieskirche (€6, 50 minutes) if you don't have a car.

RVO bus 9606 (www.rvo-bus.de) connects Füssen, via Oberammergau, with Garmisch-Partenkirchen (€8, two hours, five to six daily).

BAVARIAN ALPS

While not quite as high as their sister summits further south in Austria and Switzerland, the Bavarian Alps (Bayerische Alpen) are really a bunch of drama queens, owing to their abrupt rise from the rolling Bavarian foothills. Stretching westward from Germany's southeastern corner to the Allgäu region near Lake Constance, the Alps take in most of the mountainous country fringing the southern border with Austria.

Getting There & Around

While the public transport network is good, the mountain geography means there are few direct routes between main centres; sometimes a short cut via Austria is quicker (such as between Füssen and Garmisch). Road rather than rail routes are often more practical. For those driving, the German Alpine Rd (Deutsche Alpenstrasse) is a scenic way to go.

BERCHTESGADEN

☎ 08652 / pop 8300

Berchtesgaden is easily the most dramatically scenic corner of the Bavarian Alps, which hang down into Austria like an appendix here. The views over the steep valleys and craggy peaks go on forever. To reach the centre from the train station, cross the footbridge and walk up Bahnhofstrasse. The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 9670; www.berchtesgaden.de; Königsseer Strasse 2; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 9am-3pm Sun mid-Jun-Sep) is just across the river from the train station.

Sights & Activities

A tour of the **Salzbergwerk** (☎ 600 220; Bergwerkstrasse 83; adult/child €13/8; ☎ 9am-5pm May-mid-Oct, 12.30-3.30pm mid-Oct-Apr) combines history with a carnival. Visitors descend into the salt mine for a 1½-hour tour.

Nearby **Obersalzberg** is an innocent-looking place with an ugly legacy as the second seat of government for the Third Reich. Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels and the rest of the Nazi bigwigs all maintained homes here. The **Dokumentation Obersalzberg Museum** (☎ 947 960; www.obersalzberg.de; Salzbergstrasse 41; adult/child €2.50/free; ☎ 9am-5pm April-Oct, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) documents their time in the area, as well as the horrors their policies produced,

through photos, audio and film. The admission fee also gets you into the creepy **Hitler's bunker**. Catch bus 9538 (€5 return, nine minutes, hourly) from the Nazi-constructed Berchtesgaden train station to 'Dokumentation'.

Kehlstein (☎ 2969; admission €13.50; ☞ May-Oct) is a spectacular meeting house built for, but seldom used by, Hitler. Despite its reputation as the '**Eagle's Nest**', it's a popular destination because of stunning views. Entry includes transport on special buses, which link the summit with Obersalzberg-Hintersee between 8.55am to 4.50pm, as well as the 120m lift through solid rock to the peak. Or you can make the steep ascent or descent on foot in two to three hours.

The best way to see Obersalzberg and Kehlstein is with **Eagle's Nest Tours** (☎ 649 71; www.eagles-nest-tours.com; €40), which has tours in English lasting four hours and covering the entire history of the area during WWII.

You can forget the horrors of war at the **Königssee**, a beautiful alpine lake situated 5km south of Berchtesgaden (and linked by hourly buses in summer). There are frequent boat tours across the lake to the picture-perfect chapel at St Bartholomä (€12), or all the way to Obersee (€16).

The wilds of Berchtesgaden National Park offer some of the best **hiking** in Germany. A good introduction to the area is a 2km path up from St Bartholomä beside the Königssee to the Watzmann-Ostwand, a massive 2000m-high rock face where scores of overly ambitious mountaineers have died.

Sleeping & Eating

Of the five camping grounds around Berchtesgaden, the nicest are at Königssee.

Grafenlehen (☎ 4140; www.camping-grafenlehen.de; camp sites per person/site €5.50/6) This place has a playground and mountain views.

DJH Hostel (☎ 943 70; www.djh.de; Gebirgsjägerstrasse 52; dm €14; ☞ closed Nov & Dec) Take bus 9539 to Jugendherberge and this swarming 307-bed hostel.

Hotel Floriani (☎ 660 11; www.hotel-floriani.de; Königsseer Strasse 37; s/d from €35/58) The cheerful, homey rooms all have spectacular vistas plus cable TV and access to the kitchen.

InterContinental Resort Berchtesgaden (☎ 975 50; www.ichotelsgroup.com; Hintereck 1; r from €160; ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞) You might say this beautiful new 138-room resort is a silk purse made

from a sow's ear. It's built right in Obersalzberg next to the Dokumentation Museum and is an ambitious attempt to reclaim the area's stunning beauty from the stain of the Nazis.

Getting There & Away

There is hourly service to Berchtesgaden from Munich (€30, 2¾ hours), which usually requires a change in Frilassing. There's direct service to nearby Salzburg in Austria (€7.60, one hour, hourly).

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN

☎ 08821 / pop 27,000

The towns of Garmisch and Partenkirchen were merged by Hitler for the 1936 Winter Olympics. Munich residents' favourite getaway spot, this often-snooty, year-round resort is also a big draw for skiers, snowboarders, hikers and mountaineers.

The **tourist office** (☎ 180 700; www.garmisch-partenkirchen.de; Richard Strauss Platz 2; ☞ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-noon Sun) is in the centre of town. Check the Internet at **Play Maxx** (☎ 943 4086; Hindenburgstrasse 30; per 30 min €2; ☞ 10am-1am).

Sights & Activities

The huge **ski stadium** outside town hosted the Olympics. From the pedestrian Am Kurpark, walk up Klammstrasse, cross the tracks and veer left on the first path to reach the stadium and enjoy the spectacular views.

An excellent short hike from Garmisch is to the **Partnachklamm gorge**, via a winding path above a stream and underneath the waterfalls. You take the Graseck cable car and follow the signs.

An excursion to the **Zugspitze** summit, Germany's highest peak (2962m), is a popular outing from Garmisch. There are various ways up, including a return trip by the **Bayerische Zugspitzbahn rack-railway** (www.zugspitz.de; day pass from €36), just west of the main train station, summit cable car or Eibsee cable car, or you can scale it in two days. For detailed information concerning guided hiking or mountaineering courses, check with **Bergsteigerschule Zugspitze** (☎ 589 99; www.bergsteigerschule-zugspitze.de; Dreitorspitzstrasse 13, Garmisch).

Garmisch is bounded by three separate ski areas – **Zugspitze plateau** (the highest), **Alpspitze/Hausberg** (the largest) and **Eckbauer** (the cheapest). Day ski passes range from €18 for

Eckbauer to €36 for Zugspitze. The hopefully named **Happy Ski Card** is a pass for the entire region (from €86 for three days). A web of cross-country ski trails runs along the main valleys.

Flori Wörndle (☎ 583 00; www.skischule-woerndle.de) has ski-hire outlets at the Alpsspitze and Hausbergbahn lifts. The tourist office has detailed information on the many local ski schools.

Sleeping & Eating

DJH Hostel (☎ 2980; www.djh.de; Lochstrasse 10; dm €20; ☞ closed mid-Nov-Dec) Situated in the suburb of Burgrain, this hostel has 200 beds. From the train station take bus 3 or 4 to the Burgrain stop.

Hotel Schell (☎ 957 50; www.hotel-schell.de; Partnachauenstrasse 3; s/d from €30/50; ☞) In a quaint and fairly modest house a short walk from the train station, the Schell has 25 compact well-maintained rooms.

Hotel Zugspitze (☎ 9010; www.hotel-zugspitze.de; Klammstrasse 19; r €76-105; ☞ ☞) The 48 cosy timber-lined rooms and an elegant indoor pool make you feel at home – a very nice home.

Bistro Mukkefuck (☎ 734 40; Zugspitzstrasse 3; meals €6-12) If you can get past the curious name, an outdoor beer garden and a tasty menu of salads, sandwiches and pastas awaits.

Getting There & Away

From Garmisch there is train service to Munich (€16, 80 minutes, hourly) and to Innsbruck via Mittenwald (€13, 80 minutes, every two hours). RVO bus 9606, from in front of the train station, links Garmisch

HOT & COLD FUN IN THE ALPS

The Bavarian Alps are extraordinarily well organised for outdoor pursuits, with skiing, snowboarding and hiking being the most popular. The ski season usually runs from mid-December to April. Ski gear is available for hire in all the resorts, with the lowest daily/weekly rates including skis, boots and stocks at around €15/50. Five-day skiing courses start from €100.

During the warmer months, the activities include hiking, canoeing, rafting, biking and paragliding.

with Füssen (€8, two hours, five to six daily) via Oberammergau.

OBERSTDORF

☎ 08322 / pop 10,400

Over in the western Bavarian Alps, Oberstdorf sits in a pretty flat meadow below the peaks. Besides skiing, it offers superb hiking. At busy times, car use in the centre is restricted – a good thing.

The main **tourist office** (☎ 7000; www.oberstdorf.de; Bahnhofplatz 3; ☞ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-noon Sat) is near the train station.

Savvy skiers value Oberstdorf for its friendliness, its reasonable prices and the generally uncrowded slopes. The village is surrounded by several ski areas: the **Nebelhorn** (www.dashoehste.de), **Fellhorn/Kanzelwand** (www.dashoehste.de) and **Söllereck** (www.soellereckbahn.de). Combined daily/weekly ski passes that include all three areas (plus the adjoining Kleinwalsertal lifts on the Austrian side) cost €34/174. Check with the tourist office for information on schools and equipment rental.

For an exhilarating day **hike**, ride the Nebelhorn cable car to the upper station then walk down via the Gaisalpsen, two lovely alpine lakes.

There's a **campingground** (☎ 6525; www.camping-oberstdorf.de; Rubingerstrasse 16; camp sites per tent €3-5, per person €5-5.50) 2km north of the station beside the train line.

The **DJH Hostel** (☎ 2225; www.djh.de; Kornau 8; dm €15) is on the outskirts of town near the Söllereck chairlift – take the Kleinwalsertal bus to the Reute stop.

Hotel Kappeler Haus (☎ 968 60; www.kappeler-haus.de; Am Seeler 2; s/d from €38/74) has 47 spacious rooms with nice views right near the centre. There's on-site parking and many of the rooms have wrap-around balconies. The breakfast is tops.

Südtiroler Sonnenkeller (☎ 3140; Weststrasse 5; meals €6-12) is a great basement restaurant with a large number of beers on tap and well-prepared regional foods. Try the Südtiroler Schlutzkrapfen for an amazing local take on ravioli.

There are hourly RB trains to/from Immenstadt where you connect to Lindau (€15, 1¾ hours). Munich has direct trains (€25, 2½ hours, hourly). On weekdays, bus connections to Füssen go via Pfronten (€9.30, 2½ hours, two daily).

BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG

With the exception of cuckoo clocks in the Black Forest, Baden-Württemberg runs distant second in the cliché race to Bavaria. But that's really all the better, as it is a rich and varied place with just about everything that might inspire a visit to Germany – plus a few surprises.

OK, so on the top of the hour the Black Forest goes, well, cuckoo. But it is also a pretty land of hills, trees and cute villages that rewards exploration. If you want a big and quaint German village with lots of history, then there's Heidelberg. Baden-Baden is the sybaritic playground for spa-goers and Freiburg has youthful vibrance in an intriguing package. Finally, Lake Constance is a misty redoubt bordering Switzerland that has all the pleasures a large body of water can offer.

The prosperous modern state of Baden-Württemberg was created in 1951 out of three smaller regions: Baden, Württemberg and Hohenzollern (thank goodness the names stopped at two).

STUTTGART

☎ 0711 / pop 590,000

Hemmed in by grape-covered hills, residents of prosperous Stuttgart enjoy a high quality of life. Just watch them zip about in their Mercedes. Nevertheless it is Baden-Württemberg's state capital and the hub of its industries. At the forefront of Germany's economic recovery from the ravages of WWII, Stuttgart started life less auspiciously in 950 as a horse stud farm. About 80% of the city centre was destroyed in the war, but there are a few historical buildings left and – no surprise – car museums. Mostly however, it is a good hub for exploring other parts of the state.

Information

Call & Internet C@fé (☎ 259 9103; Esslingerstrasse; per hr €2; ☎ 9.30am-11pm)

Post office (Bolzstrasse 3)

Tourist office (☎ 222 80; www.stuttgart-tourist.de; Königstrasse 1a; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun) Opposite the main train station on the main pedestrian strip, the office sells the three-day StuttCard (€17.50), which allows free public transport and free entry to some museums.

Waschsalon (☎ 241 275; Hohenheimer Strasse 33; per load €7.50; ☎ 8am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat) Self-serve and drop-off.

Sights

The tower at the grotty main train station sports the three-pointed star of the Mercedes-Benz. It's also an excellent vantage point for the sprawling city and surrounding hills, and is reached via a **lift** (admission free; ☎ 10am-10pm Tue-Sun).

Stretching southwest from the Neckar River to the city centre is the **Schlossgarten**, an extensive strip of parkland divided into three sections (Unterer, Mittlerer and Oberer), complete with ponds, swans, street entertainers and modern sculptures. At their northern edge the gardens take in the **Wilhelma Zoo & Botanical Gardens** (☎ 540 20; Neckarstrasse; adult/child €11/5.50; ☎ 8.15am-6pm May-Aug, reduced hr winter). At the gardens' southern end they encompass the sprawling baroque **Neues Schloss** (Schlossplatz) and the Renaissance **Altes Schloss**, which houses a **regional museum** (☎ 279 3400; Schillerplatz 6; adult/child €3/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) where exhibits include Roman-era discoveries.

Next to the Altes Schloss is the city's oldest square, Schillerplatz, with its monument to the poet **Schiller**, and the 12th-century **Stiftskirche** (Stiftstrasse 12; ☎ 9am-5.30pm Mon-Wed, Fri & Sun, noon-5.30pm Thu). Adjoining the park you'll find the **Staatsgalerie** (☎ 212 4050; Konrad-Adenauer-Strasse 30; adult/child €4.50/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu), which houses an excellent collection from the Middle Ages to the present. It's especially rich in old German masters from the surrounding Swabia region.

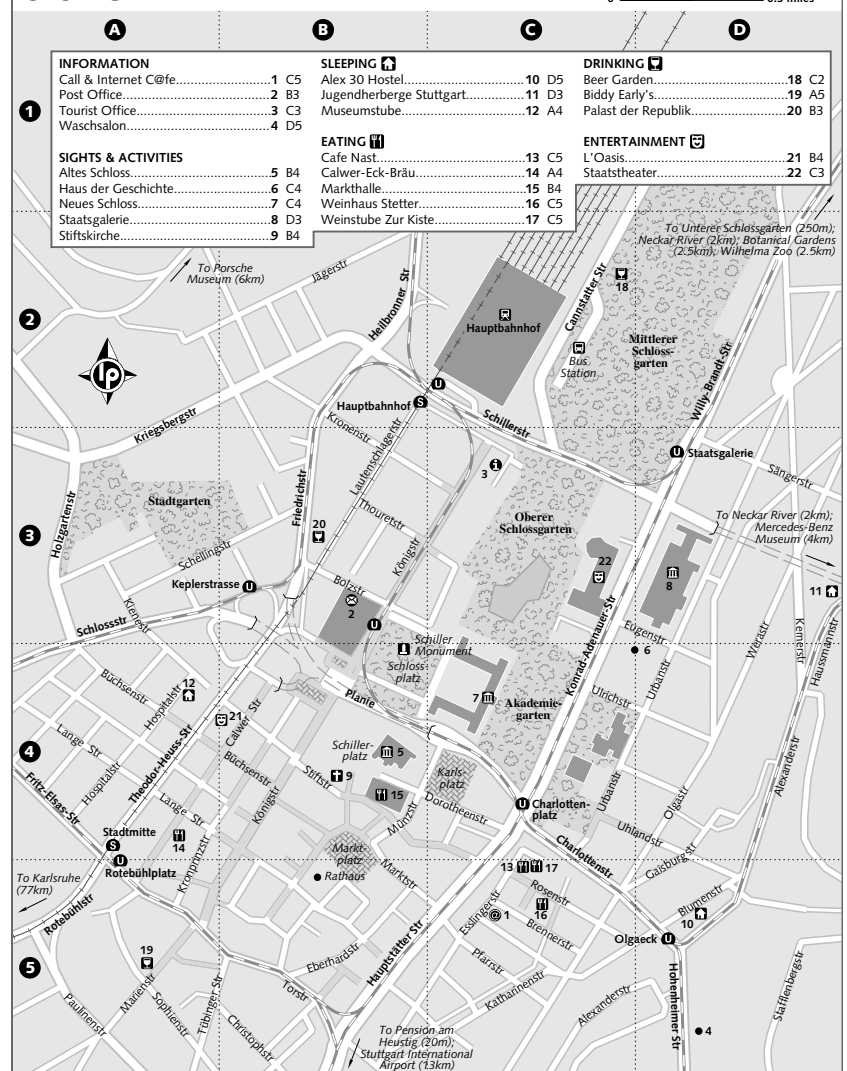
Next door there's the **Haus der Geschichte** (House of History; ☎ 212 3950; Urbansplatz 2; admission €3). This is an eye-catching postmodern museum that covers the past 200 years of the Baden-Württemberg area in film, photography, documents and multimedia.

MOTOR MUSEUMS

An arms race has broken out among the local auto companies, with both building new and costly monuments to themselves.

The motor car was first developed by Gottlieb Daimler and Carl Benz at the end of the 19th century. The impressive new-for-2006 **Mercedes-Benz Museum** (☎ 172 2578; Mercedesstrasse 137; admission €8; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun)

STUTTGART



is in the suburb of Bad-Cannstatt; take S-Bahn 1 to Neckarstadion. For even faster cars, cruise over to the striking new-for-2007 **Porsche Museum** (☎ 911 5685; Porscheplatz 1; ☎ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat & Sun); take S-Bahn 6 to Neuwirtshaus, north of the city. Admission prices for the new place were not set but expect them to rival Mercedes.

Sleeping

Alex 30 Hostel (☎ 838 8950; www.alex30-hostel.de; Alexanderstrasse 30; dm/s/d from €19/20/25; ☎) Tidy and orderly in an interesting neighbourhood. Take U-Bahn lines 5, 6 or 7 to Olgaeck.

Jugendherberge Stuttgart (☎ 241 583; www.jugendherberge-stuttgart.de; Haussmannstrasse 27; dm €17-23) It's a steep climb to this modern

hostel, which is a signposted 15-minute walk from the train station or take U9 or U14 to Staatsgalerie.

Museumstube (☎ 296 810; www.museumstube.de; Hospitalstrasse 9; s/d from €35/55) The 10 rooms are pretty much no-frills at the Museumstube but it's only a short walk to local nightlife.

Pension am Heusteig (☎ 239 300; www.central-classic.de; Heusteigstrasse 30; s/d from €59/75; 📺) Only a few minutes southeast of the city centre, the 14 rooms here are comfortable. This is a small, modest and intimate place.

InterCity Hotel (☎ 222 8233; www.intercityhotel.com; Hauptbahnhof; s/d from €70/100; 📺 📺) Right in the train station, the 101 rooms here have wi-fi and are rather large. This is the perfect location if you plan a quick getaway or late arrival.

Eating

Stuttgart is a great place to sample Swabian specialities such as *Spätzle* (homemade noodles) and *Maultaschen* (a hearty ravioli in broth).

Markthalle (Dorotheenstrasse 4; 🕒 7am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat) An excellent Art Nouveau-style market that's jam-packed with fresh fare (often from the region) and great cafés.

Cafe Nast (☎ 238 970; Esslinger Strasse 40; snacks €2-5; 🕒 7am-6.30pm, to 3pm Sat) A vast array of tarts and other tempting treats await at this old bakery. Nice café area.

Weinhaus Stetter (☎ 240 163; Rosenstrasse 32; mains €5-8; 🕒 dinner Mon-Fri, lunch Sat) The results of all those grapes you see growing in the hills line the wine list here. Locals jam the place for the *Maultaschen*.

Calwer-Eck-Bräu (☎ 222 494 40; Calwerstrasse 31; mains €7-14) The menu at this upstairs restaurant and brewery combines Bavarian and Swabian specialties. Have some *spätzle* with your *weissewurst*.

Weinstube Zur Kiste (☎ 244 002; Kanalstrasse 2; mains €8-17) Generations of Stuttgarters have patronised this old classic in the Bohnenviertel (Bean Quarter). Enjoy local chow and wines in the creaky old building or at tables outside.

Drinking & Entertainment

Though in German, *Lift Stuttgart* (€1), a comprehensive guide to local entertainment and events is useful. There's a **beer garden** (☎ 226 1274; Canstatterstr 18) in the Mittlerer

Schlossgarten northeast of the main train station, with beautiful views over the city.

L'Oasis (☎ 300 0481; Theodor-Heuss-Strasse 21) One of several trendy bars and clubs on this stretch of street. Many, like this one, have seating on the pavement. There's all sorts of seating inside and pillows are strewn about. DJs play late at night.

Biddy Early's (☎ 615 9853; Marienstrasse 28) This Irish pub is actually run by real Irish people. It has live music four nights a week.

Palast der Republik (☎ 226 4887; Friedrichstrasse 27) A legendary and tiny bar that pulls a huge crowd of laid-back drinkers. Many a world problem has been sorted at the stand-up tables.

Staatstheater (☎ 202 090; www.staatstheater.stuttgart.de; Oberer Schlossgarten 6) Home of the famous Stuttgart Ballet, this theatre holds regular symphony, ballet and opera performances.

Getting There & Around

Stuttgart's international **airport** (SGT; www.stuttgart-airport.com) is south of the city and includes service from discount carriers DBA (Germany, Nice) and Germanwings (Germany, London, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean). It's served by S2 and S3 trains (€2.90, 30 minutes from the Hauptbahnhof).

There are frequent train departures for all major German, and many international, cities. ICE trains run to Frankfurt (€49, 1½ hours, hourly) and Munich (€39 to €46, 2¼ hours, two hourly). Trains run hourly to Nuremberg (€28, 2¼ hours).

One-way fares on Stuttgart's public transport network (www.vvs.de) are €1.80 in the central zone; a central zone day pass is €5.10.

AROUND STUTTGART Tübingen

☎ 07071 / pop 83,000

Gliding swans set the mood for this picturesque town. It's a perfect place to spend a day wandering along winding alleys of half-timbered houses and old stone walls, and taking a boat ride down the Neckar River. Given that the local university has 22,000 students, there's an appealing edge to it all.

The **tourist office** (☎ 913 60; www.tuebingen-info.de; An der Neckarbrücke; 🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat) is beside the bridge.

On **Marktplatz**, the centre of town, is the 1435 **Rathaus** with its baroque façade and astronomical clock. The nearby late-Gothic **Stiftkirche** (Am Holzmarkt; 🕒 9am-5pm Feb-Oct, to 4pm Nov-Jan) houses the tombs of the Württemberg dukes and has excellent medieval stained-glass windows. From the heights of the Renaissance **Schloss Hohentübingen** (Burgsteig 11), now part of the university, there are fine views over the steep, red-tiled rooftops of the old town. Inside, the **museum** (☎ 297 7384; 🕒 10am-5pm Wed-Sun) covers local history.

The **Jugendherberge Tübingen** (☎ 230 02; www.djh.de; Gartenstrasse 22/2; dm €20-24; 📺) has a delightful location by the river.

Hotel Am Schloss (☎ 929 40; www.hotelamsschloss.de; Burgsteig 18; s/d from €51/86) is an attractive hotel with 37 simple and pleasant rooms. Its restaurant serves over two dozen varieties of *Maultaschen*, the local stuffed pasta (€6 to €10).

Boulanger (☎ 233 45; Collegiumsgasse 2; meals €6-10) is a classic old student bar and café. There are several more of this type nearby on Kornhausstrasse.

Neckarmüller (☎ 278 48; Gartenstrasse 4) is a brewery with a terrace on the river. It has good *weisse beer*.

There are hourly RE trains between Tübingen and Stuttgart (€10, one hour).

HEIDELBERG

☎ 06221 / pop 143,000

The French destroyed Heidelberg in 1693; they may have been the last visitors to dislike this charming town on the Neckar River. Its castle ruins and medieval town are irresistible drawcards for most travellers in Germany. Mark Twain recounted his succinct observations in *A Tramp Abroad*. Britain's JMW Turner loved the place and it inspired him to produce some of his finest landscape paintings. Throw in nice weather and lively pubs, and you understand why many of Heidelberg's students (attending the oldest university in the country) rarely graduate on time. But be warned: this place seethes with tourists during July and August.

Orientation

Heidelberg's captivating old town starts to reveal itself after a 15-minute walk that will interest few west of the main train station, along the Kurfürsten-Anlage. Hauptstrasse is the pedestrian way leading eastwards

through the heart of the Altstadt from Bismarckplatz via Marktplatz to Karlstor.

Information

Buchhandlung Schmitt & Hahn (☎ 845 196; Hauptstrasse 8) Classy bookshop with lots of English titles.

Post office (Sophienstrasse 8-10) Near the Altstadt.

Tourist office (☎ 194 33; www.cvb-heidelberg.de; Willy-Brandt-Platz 1; 🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Sat year-round, 10am-6pm Sun Apr-Nov) Outside the train station. The €14 Heidelberg Card offers free public transport and free admission to many sights.

Waschtrommel (☎ 485 775; Rohrbacher Strasse 10; 🕒 8.30am-9.30pm Mon-Fri, to 8.30pm Sat) A self-service laundry (per load €4) and an Internet café (per 30 min €1).

Sights

Heidelberg's imposing **Schloss** (☎ 538 421; adult/child €3/1.50, tours €4; 🕒 10am-5.30pm) is one of Germany's finest examples of grand Gothic-Renaissance architecture. The building's half-ruined state actually adds to its romantic appeal (Twain called it 'the Lear of inanimate nature'). Seen from anywhere in the Altstadt, this striking red-sandstone castle dominates the hillside. The entry fee covers the castle, the **Grosses Fass** (Great Vat), an enormous 18th-century keg capable of holding 221,726L, and the **Deutsches Apothekenmuseum** (German Pharmaceutical Museum; ☎ 258 80; Schlosshof 1; adult/child €3/1.50; 🕒 10am-5.30pm).

You can take the **funicular railway** (adult/child return €5/4; 🕒 9am-5pm) to the castle from lower Kornmarkt station, or enjoy an invigorating 10-minute walk up steep, stone-laid lanes. The funicular continues up to the **Königstuhl**, where there are good views.

Dominating **Universitätsplatz** are the 18th-century **Alte Universität** and the **Neue Universität**. Nearby there's the **Studentenkarzer** (student jail; ☎ 543 554; Augustinergasse 2; adult/child €2.50/2; 🕒 10am-noon & 2-5pm Tue-Sat Apr-Oct, 10am-2pm Tue-Fri Nov-Mar). From 1778 to 1914 this jail was used for misbehaved students. Sentences (usually two to 10 days) were earned for 'heinous' crimes such as drinking, singing and womanising. The **Marstall** is the former arsenal, now a student *mensa*.

The **Kurpfälzisches Museum** (Palatinate Museum; ☎ 583 402; Hauptstrasse 97; adult/child €3/2; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Wed) contains paintings, sculptures and the jawbone of the 600,000-year-old Heidelberg Man.

The Heidelberg region has been a major global supplier of printing equipment, much

Getting There & Around

There are ICE/IC trains to/from Frankfurt (€14 to €17, one hour, hourly) and Stuttgart (€21, 40 minutes, hourly). The frequent service to Mannheim (€5, 15 minutes) has connections to cities throughout Germany.

The **Deutsche-Touring bus** (www.deutsche-touring.com) serving the Castle Road route provides daily direct links to Rothenberg Ob Der Tauber (€46, three hours, May to September) from the train station.

Bismarckplatz is the main public transport hub. One-way tickets for the excellent bus and tram system are €2. Shorten the journey from the train station to the Altstadt with bus 11 or 33 to the Kornmarkt/Rathaus stop.

BADEN-BADEN

☎ 07221 / pop 54,000

Who wouldn't want to bathe naked with a bunch of strangers? That's the question at the heart of the matter in Baden-Baden, the storied and ritzy spa town. The answer of course should be anyone who wants to enjoy a truly self-indulgent experience.

And let's see, shall we call them, well, prudes, can still get a bit of the pleasure while staying suited and segregated. The natural hot springs have attracted visitors since Roman times, but this small city only really became fashionable in the 19th century. It is a stately, closely cropped and salubrious place. As noted sybarite Bill Clinton said: 'Baden-Baden is so nice you had to name it twice'.

Orientation & Information

The train station is 7km northwest of town. Leopoldplatz and Sophienstrasse are the hubs. North of here are the baths, the Stiftskirche and the Neues Schloss. Across the little river to the west you will find the Trinkhalle (pump room) and the tourist office, and past Goetheplatz both the Kurhaus and Spielhalle (casino). Unless noted, everything listed below is within the centre.

The **tourist office** (☎ 275 200; www.baden-baden.com; Kaiserallee 3; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat, 2-5pm Sun) is in the Trinkhalle. There is a spa *Kurtaxe* (visitors' tax) of €3.10, entitling you to a *Kurkarte* from your hotel that brings various discounts. Drink from the source of it all here for €0.20 (it's warm and salty).

Surf the Web at **Internet & C@lshop** (☎ 398 400; Lange Strasse 54; per hr €2; ☎ 10am-10pm).

Sights & Activities

The 19th-century **Friedrichsbad** (☎ 275 920; www.roemisch-irisches-bad.de; Römerplatz 1; bathing programme €21-29; ☎ 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-8pm Sun) is the reason for your journey. It's decadently Roman in style and provides a muscle-melting 16-step bathing programme. No clothing is allowed inside, and several bathing sections are mixed on most days. The more modern **Caracalla-Therme** (☎ 275 940; Römerplatz 11; per 2 hr €12; ☎ 8am-10pm) is a vast, modern complex of outdoor and indoor pools, hot- and cold-water grottoes. You must wear a bathing suit and bring your own towel.

The 2000-year-old **Römische Badruinen** (Roman Bath Ruins; ☎ 275 934; Römerplatz 1; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 11am-5pm) are worth a quick look, but for a real taste of Baden-Baden head to the **Kurhaus**, built in the 1820s, which houses the opulent **casino** (☎ 302 40; Kaiserallee 1; admission €3, guided tours adult/child €4/2; ☎ tours 9.30am-noon; gambling after 2pm), which inspired Dostoyevsky to write *The Gambler*. Wear what you want for tours, for gambling wear a coat and tie (rentals €11).

The **Merkur Cable Car** (☎ 2771; admission €4; ☎ 10am-10pm) takes you up to the 670m summit, where there are fine views and numerous walking trails (bus 204 or 205 from Leopoldplatz takes you to the cable-car station).

Sleeping & Eating

DJH Hostel (☎ 522 23; www.djh.de; Hardbergstrasse 34; dm €18-22) This modern three-storey hostel is on a hillside 3km northwest of the centre – it's a steep hike up a long flight of stairs to the entrance. Take bus 201 to Grosse Dolnenstrasse then walk for 10 minutes.

Hotel Bischoff (☎ 223 78; www.hotelsbaden-baden.de; Römerplatz 2; s/d €50/70; 🍷) Centrally located close to the spas, the Bischoff has 50 comfortable rooms spread over four floors, some with balconies.

Steigenberger Europäischer Hof (☎ 9330; www.steigenberger.de; Kaiserallee 2; s/d from €120/180; 🍷 🍷 🍷) A true grand hotel, this regal beauty has its own little park across from the Kurhaus. Luxuries abound and the breakfast is worth an hour or two. Look for excellent off-season specials.

Hirsch's (☎ 281 110; Kaiserallee 4; mains €7-12) This candle-lit corner specialises in great Swabian dishes. It's a low-key bargain by local standards and there's a good range of beers on tap (you'll sweat them out tomorrow).

Leo's (☎ 380 81; Luisenstrasse 8; lunch special €9) A great spot for a leisurely meal. It's justifiably popular, has a varied menu and a large terrace.

Garibaldi (☎ 302 840; Luisenstrasse 4; mains €12-20) A stylish Italian bistro with pavement tables. A good wine list, pasta and fresh seafood are the features.

Getting There & Around

Baden Airpark (FKB; www.badenairpark.de) is the local airport. It has daily Ryanair service (Barcelona, Dublin, London and Rome) but like many tiny airports served by the budget carrier, getting to/from the airport can be a challenge. Consult the airport website for details on the sketchy service.

Baden-Baden is on the busy Mannheim-Basel train line. Local trains serve Karlsruhe (€7, 15 minutes) frequently and Offenburg (€8, 30 minutes, hourly), from where you can make connections to much of Germany.

Bus 201, 205 and 216 run frequently to/from Leopoldsplatz (€2).

BLACK FOREST

The Black Forest (Schwarzwald) gets its name from the dark canopy of evergreens, though it's also dotted with open slopes and farmland. Although some parts heave with visitors, a 20-minute walk from even the most crowded spots will put you in quiet countryside interspersed with enormous traditional farmhouses and patrolled by amiable dairy cows. It's not nature wild and remote, but bucolic and picturesque.

The Black Forest is east of the Rhine between Karlsruhe and Basel. It's shaped like a bean, about 160km long and 50km wide. From north to south there are four good bases for your visit: Freudenstadt, Schiltach, Triberg and Titisee. Each has good train links.

Those with a car will find their visit especially rewarding, as you can wander the rolling hills and deep valleys at will. One of the main tourist roads is the Schwarzwald-Hochstrasse (B500), which runs from Baden-Baden to Freudenstadt and from Triberg to Waldshut. Other thematic roads with maps provided by tourist offices include Schwarzwald-Bäderstrasse (spa town route), Schwarzwald-Panoramastrasse (panoramic

view route) and Badische Weinstrasse (wine route). Whatever you do, make certain you have an excellent commercial regional road map with you.

And, yes, there are many, many places to buy cuckoo clocks (you pay at least €150 for a good one).

Regional specialities include *Schwarzwälderschinken* (ham), which is smoked and served in a variety of ways. Rivalling those ubiquitous clocks in fame (but not price), *Schwarzwälderkirschtorte* (Black Forest cake) is a chocolate and cherry concoction. Most hotels and guesthouses have restaurants serving traditional hearty (but expensive) German fare.

FREUDENSTADT

Freudenstadt is a good base for exploring the northern Black Forest and hikes into the surrounding countryside. It's most notable feature is a vast **marketplace** that is the largest in the country. The **tourist office** (☎ 07441-8640; www.freudenstadt.de; Am Markt-platz; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat & Sun Mar-Nov, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm Sat & Sun Dec-Feb) has Internet access and is especially helpful with ideas for local walks.

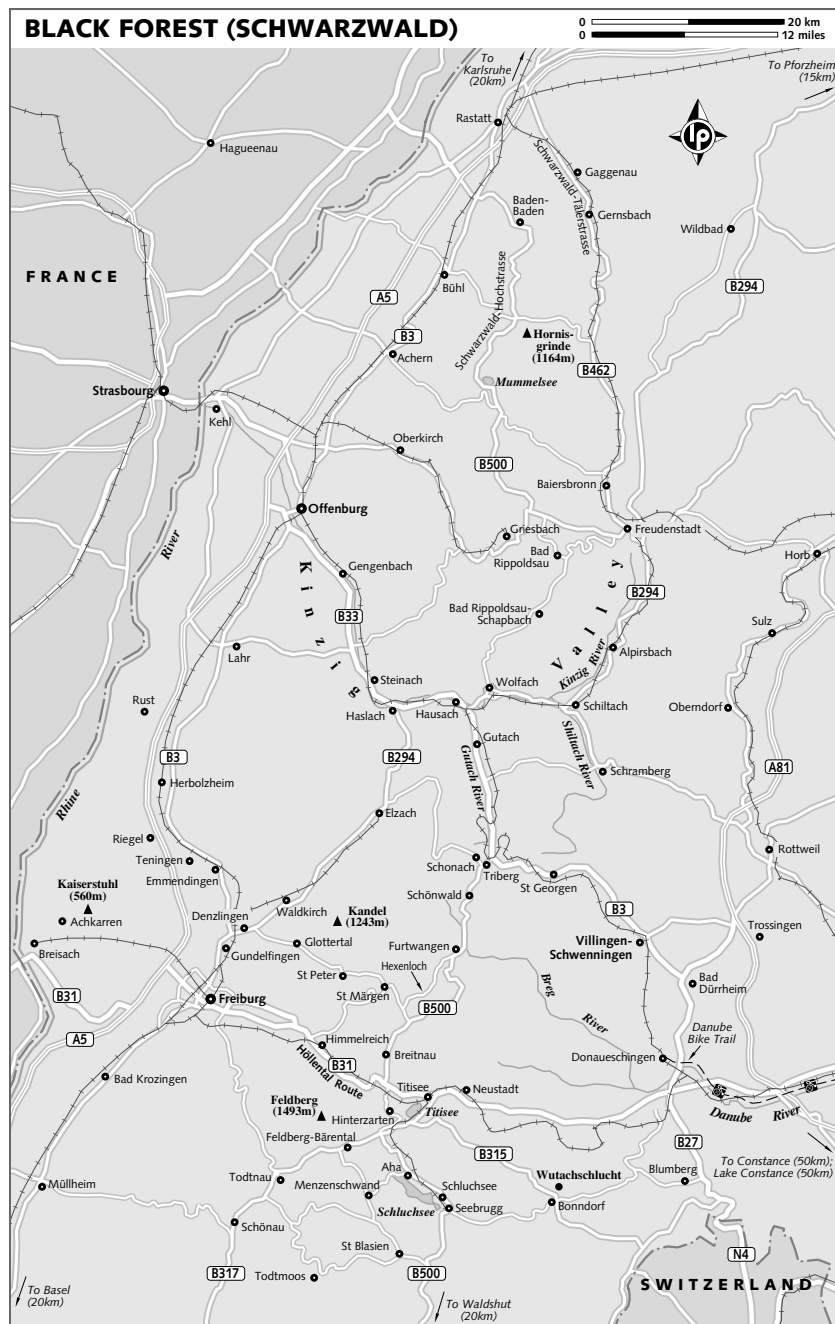
The **DJH Hostel** (☎ 07441-7720; www.djh.de; Eugen-Nägele-Strasse 69; dm from €18) has 138 beds in a central and classic 1960s building. **Pension Traube** (☎ 07441-917 450; fax 853 28; Markt 41; s/d €35/70) has 26 rooms right in the midst of everything. The Markt has many excellent cafés, some with wi-fi.

From Freudenstadt, train lines run south to Schiltach (€5, 30 minutes) and north to the important transfer point of Karlsruhe (€14, two hours).

SCHILTACH

The prettiest town in the Black Forest is easily Schiltach, where there is the always underlying roar of the Kinzig and Schiltach Rivers, which meet here. Half-timbered buildings lean at varying angles along the crisscrossing hillside lanes.

The **tourist office** (☎ 07836-5850; www.schiltach.de; Hauptstrasse 5; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat) can help with accommodation and has a lot of English-language information. Be sure not to miss the **Schüttesäge-museum** (Hauptstrasse 1; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct), which is part of an old mill built on the river. It shows what water power could do. The **Markt** (square) has several tiny museums that cover local



history and culture. Most are open in the afternoons during the tourist season.

There are numerous hotels and restaurants in the compact centre. **Zum Weysen Rössle** (☎ 07836-387; www.weysen-roessle.de; Schenkzeller Strasse 42; s/d from €47/69; ☑) dates from 1590 and has nine lovely rooms with four-poster beds and wi-fi. The excellent restaurant serves creative versions of local fare. **Zur alten Brücke** (☎ 07836-2036; www.altebruecke.de; Schramberger Strasse 13; s/d from €35/62) is another cosy choice and has a restaurant serving various maultaschen.

Schiltach is on a small train line linking Offenburg (€8, 45 minutes) via Hausach to Freudenstadt (€5, 30 minutes) with hourly service.

Around Schiltach

Alpirsbach, 10km north of Schiltach, is a small town that is worth a trip for its 12th-century **Benedictine abbey** (adult/child €3/1.50; ☞ 10am-4.30pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4.30pm Sun). It's often uncrowded and if you find yourself alone in the large Romanesque complex it can be quite eerie. The cloisters are impressive, as is the small museum that documents the lives of those who lived here.

Alpirsbach is a stop for the hourly trains linking Schiltach and Freudenstadt.

TRIBERG

Framed by three mountains – hence the name – Triberg has two duelling cuckoo clocks that claim to be the world's largest – it's a close call on these house-sized oddities.

It has an appealing old centre and plenty of chances to go for a stroll. There's a one-hour walk to a roaring **waterfall** that starts near the **tourist office** (☎ 07722-866490; www.triberg.de; Wallfahrtstrasse 4; ☞ 10am-5pm). In the same building is the **Schwarzwaldmuseum** (☎ 07722-4434; adult/child €4/3; ☞ 10am-5pm, Sat & Sun only Nov-Apr) with displays of local crafts.

The **DJH Hostel** (☎ 07722-4110; www.djh.de; Rohrbacher Strasse 35; dm from €18) has 128 beds and spectacular views from its peak location. Take any bus from the train station to Markt and then walk 1.2km uphill.

Hotel Pfaff (☎ 07722-4479; www.hotel-pfaff.com; Hauptstrasse 85; s/d €38/72) offers comfortable lodgings near the waterfall; some rooms have balconies with views. There is also a fine restaurant.

Triberg is midway on the Karlsruhe (€20, 1½ hours) to Konstanz (€20, 1½ hours) train

STRETCHING YOUR LEGS IN THE BLACK FOREST

With more than 7000km of marked trails, hiking possibilities during summer are, almost literally, endless. Three classic long-distance **hiking trails** run south from the northern Black Forest city of Pforzheim as far as the Swiss Rhine: the 280km Westweg to Basel; the 230km Mittelweg to Waldhüt-Tiengen; and the 240km Ostweg to Schaffhausen.

The southern Black Forest, especially the area around the 1493m Feldberg summit, offers some of the best hiking; small towns such as Todtmoos or Bonndorf serve as useful bases for those wanting to get off the more heavily trodden trails. The 10km Wutachschlucht (Wutach Gorge) outside Bonndorf is justifiably famous.

line. There's hourly service and good connections. Change at Hausach for Schiltach and Freudenstadt. The station is 1.7km from the centre, take any bus to Markt.

Around Triberg

In Furtwangen, 17km south of Triberg, visit the **Deutsches Uhrenmuseum** (German Clock Museum; ☎ 07723-920117; Gerwigstrasse 11; adult/child €4/2.50; ☞ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 10am-5pm Nov-Mar) for a look at the traditional Black Forest skill of clock-making. A fun demo shows what puts the 'cuc' and the 'koo' in the namesake clock.

TITISEE

The iconic glacial **lake** here draws no shortage of visitors to the busy village of Titisee. Walking around Titisee or paddle-boating across it are major activities. But if you can drive into the surrounding rolling meadows to see some of the truly enormous traditional house-barn combos.

The **tourist office** (☎ 07651-98040; www.titisee.de; Strandbadstrasse 4, Kurhaus; ☞ 8am-noon & 1.30-5.30pm Mon-Fri year-round, 10am-noon Sat & Sun May-Oct) can help you arrange a farm stay.

Terrassencamping Sandbank (☎ 07651-8243; fax 8286; Seerundweg; camp sites per person €5-6, site €5.50-8; ☞ Apr-Oct) is one of four camping grounds on the Titisee.

The **DJH Hostel** (☎ 07652-238; www.djh.de; Bruderhalde 27; dm from €18) is in a huge farmhouse and is reached by bus 7300 from Titisee.

WORTH A TRIP: HEAVEN & HOLE

Just south of Furtwangen, look for a tiny road off to the west evocatively called the **Hexenloch** (Witch's Hole). This narrow road penetrates deep into a narrow valley of rushing white water and tall trees. It alone is worth the cost of a car rental – which is the only way to enjoy the hole. Even on warm days it's cold as a witch's... you know what, down here. The road follows the bends in the river and you'll see shaded banks of snow months after it has melted elsewhere. Look for small roadhouses with little spinning water wheels.

West of the south end of the Hexenloch road, **St Peter** is a tiny town that offers redemption with a big church. Two onion-domed towers mark the town's namesake old abbey. It's an 18th-century vision in gold, glitter and gilt that would do any Las Vegas designer proud. You can ponder your own place in heaven at the cute little cafés out front.

Hotel Sonneneck (☎ 07651-8246; fax 881 74; Parkstrasse 2; s/d €39/72) provides spacious comfort near the lake and boasts an excellent restaurant downstairs.

Titisee is linked to Freiburg by frequent train service (€9, 40 minutes). To reach Tribberg to the north, there are very scenic hourly connections via Neustadt and Donaueschingen (€14, two hours).

Around Titisee

The Black Forest **ski season** runs from late December to March. While there is good downhill skiing, the area is more suited to cross-country skiing. The centre for winter sports is around Titisee, with uncrowded downhill ski runs at **Feldberg** (www.liftverbund-feldberg.de; day passes €23; rental equipment available) and numerous graded cross-country trails.

In summer you can use the lifts to reach the summit of Feldberg (1493m) for a wondrous panorama that stretches to the Alps.

Feldberg is 15km south of Titisee. It can be reached by bus 7300 from Titisee (€4, 12 minutes, hourly).

FREIBURG

☎ 0761 / pop 213,000

Nestled between hills and vineyards, Freiburg im Breisgau is a delightful place, thanks to the city's large and thriving university community. There's a sense of fun here best exemplified by the tiny medieval canals (*bächle*) running right down the middle of streets.

Founded in 1120 and ruled for centuries by the Austrian Habsburgs, Freiburg has retained many traditional features, although major reconstruction was necessary following WWII. The monumental 13th-century cathedral is the city's key landmark but the

real attractions are the vibrant cafés, bars and street-life, plus the local wines. The best times for tasting are July for the four days of *Weinfest* (Wine Festival), or August for the nine days of *Weinkost* (wine tasting).

Orientation

The city centre is a convenient 10-minute walk from the train station. Walk east along Eisenbahnstrasse to the tourist office, then continue through the bustling pedestrian zone to Münsterplatz, dominated by the red-stone cathedral.

Information

Main post office (Eisenbahnstrasse 58-62)

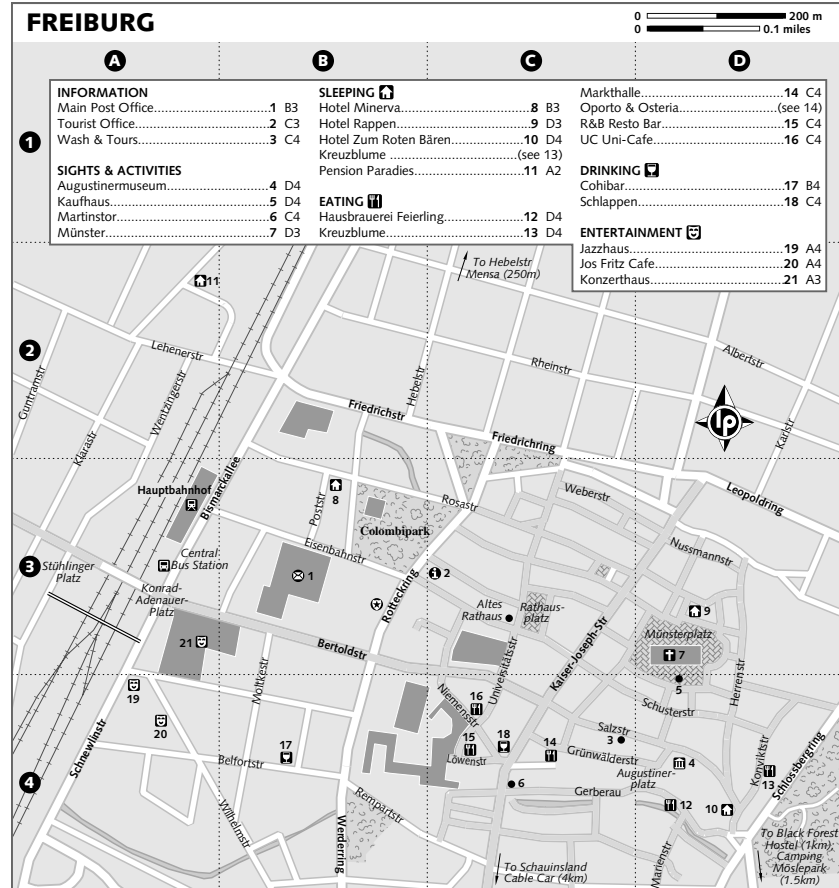
Tourist office (☎ 388 1880; www.freiburg.de; Rotteckring 14; ☎ 9.30am-8pm Mon-Fri, to 5pm Sat, 10am-noon Sun Jun-Sep, 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2.30pm Sat, 10am-noon Sun Nov-Apr) Amazingly helpful and loads of information on the Black Forest.

Wash & Tours (☎ 288 866; Salzstrasse 22; wash €4, Internet per 30 min €2; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat, Sun closed) There's a drop-off laundry downstairs and an Internet café upstairs. How's that spin your web?

Sights

The major sight in Freiburg is the 700-year-old **Münster** (Cathedral; Münsterplatz; steeple adult/child €1.50/1.00; ☎ 9.30am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun year-round), a classic example of both high and late-Gothic architecture that looms over Münsterplatz, Freiburg's market square. Ascend the west tower to the stunning pierced spire for great views of Freiburg and, on a clear day, the Kaiserstuhl wine region and the Vosages Mountains to the west. South of the Münster stands the picturesque **Kaufhaus**, the 16th-century merchants' hall.

The bustling **university quarter** is northwest of the **Martinstor** (one of the old city gates).



Freiburg's main museum, the **Augustiner-museum** (☎ 201 2531; Salzstrasse 32; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) has a fine collection of medieval art. Through 2007 the main building is being restored and much of the collection is in storage. Until completion only a few notable pieces are on exhibit and admission is free.

The popular trip by **cable car** (one way/return €7.50/10.70, concession €4.50/6.50; ☎ 9am-5pm Jan-Jun, to 6pm Jul-Sep, 9.30am-5pm Oct-Dec) to the **Schauinsland peak** (1284m) is a quick way to reach the Black Forest highlands. Numerous easy and well-marked trails make the Schauinsland area ideal for day walks. From Freiburg take tram 4 south to Günterstal and then bus 21 to Talstation.

Sleeping

Camping Möslepark (☎ 767 9333; www.camping-freiburg.com; Waldseestrasse 77; camp sites per person/tent €6/3) To reach this camping ground take tram 1 to Stadthalle (direction: Littenweiler), turn right under the road, go over the train tracks and follow the bike path.

Black Forest Hostel (☎ 881 7870; www.blackforest-hostel.de; Kartäuserstrasse 33; dm/s/d €13/23/28) Take tram 1 to Oberlinden (direction: Littenweiler) for this hostel.

Pension Paradies (☎ 273700; www.paradies-freiburg.de; Friedrich-Ebert-Platz; r €35-80; ☎) This is a real find over the train tracks (take tram 4). The rooms are simple but stylish. There is a vast café with vegetarian specials and a large terrace.

Hotel Rappen (☎ 313 53; www.hotelrappen.de; Münsterplatz 13; s/d €60/80; ☒ ☑) This hotel has lovely rooms decorated in 'Black Forest' style with close-up views of the Münster. A good central choice.

Hotel Kreuzblume (☎ 311 9495; www.hotel-kreuzblume.de; Konviktrasse 31; s/d €60/90) On an especially charming street, the eight-room Kreuzblume has a lovely grapevine growing right over the street. The rooms are comfortable and traditional, and the restaurant is excellent.

Hotel Minerva (☎ 386 490; www.minerva-freiburg.de; Poststrasse 8; s/d €69/90) The 26-room Minerva, only a block from the train station, has an elegant feel, with thick carpet on the floor and even thicker drapes on the walls.

Hotel Zum Roten Bären (☎ 387 870; www.roter-baeren.de; Oberlinden 12; s/d €105/145; ☒ ☑) Prices were undoubtedly more reasonable when the Roten Bären originally opened its doors early in the 12th century, but it's still good value for those looking for luxury. The restaurant is first class as well.

Eating & Drinking

There's a good selection of wurst and other quick eats from stalls set up in the market square during lunchtime.

UCUni-Café (☎ 383 355; Niemenstrasse 7; meals €3-7) A popular hang-out that serves snacks on its see-and-be-seen outdoor terrace.

Markthalle (Grünwälderstrasse 2; meals €3-8; ☎ 7am-7pm) A huge number of stands selling ethnic food cluster around a bar selling local wine. A fun and fine deal.

Oporto (☎ 387 0038; Grünwälderstrasse 2; meals €5-10) This gorgeous wine bar and café looks like a classic from the 19th century. The bar and dining area are richly detailed. In the rear, the adjoining Osteria is all exposed brick and mimes an Italian wine cellar.

Cohibar (☎ 767 8550; Milchstrasse 9; snacks €3-5) Mellow and candlelit, this café doesn't close till 3am at weekends. At any time it's the kind of place where you may be inspired to work on your novel. Besides booze it has good coffees.

R & B Resto Bar (☎ 217 2204; Universitätstrasse; meals €6-10) In the heart of the university café district, this chic place serves fresh and creative soups, salads and sandwiches as well as pasta. In the back there's a funky bar with jazzy music. Grab a table outside and order breakfast any time.

Schlappen (☎ 334 94; Lowenstrasse 2; meals €6-9) A very old but still very happening student nightspot. It's a large, sprawling bar with a lively vibe, a budget menu and late closing.

Hausbrauerei Feierling (☎ 266 78; Gerberau 46; meals €6-12) A microbrewery in one of the most attractive preserved parts of town. In decent weather there's a huge terrace for tossing back the house product.

Restaurant Kreuzblume (☎ 311 9495; Konviktrasse 31; meals €8-15) Traditional local meals are served in a historic setting here. All those grapes growing overhead would say – if they had voices – 'look at the wine list'.

Entertainment

Konzerthaus (☎ 388 8552; Konrad-Adenauer-Platz 1) This concert hall has an impressive range of orchestral performances.

Jazzhaus (☎ 349 73; Schnewlinstrasse 1) Jazzhaus offers live jazz alternating with dance clubs. Recommended. Admission starts at €6, depending on who's playing.

Jos Fritz Cafe (☎ 300 19; www.josfritzcafe.de; Wilhelmstrasse 15) Down a little alley past the recycling bins, this café hosts concerts of alternative bands (Bernadette & the Suckers once brought the house down) and events such as political discussions. (Want to get things going? Say: "That W is doing a heckuva job!")

Getting There & Around

Freiburg is on the busy Mannheim to Basel (€20, 45 minutes, hourly) train line. ICE service includes Berlin (€115, 6½ hours, every two hours), Cologne (€90, three hours, every two hours) and Frankfurt (€54, two hours, hourly). Freiburg is linked to Titisee by frequent trains (€9, 40 minutes).

Single rides on the efficient local bus and tram system cost €2. A 24-hour pass costs €4.80. Trams depart from the bridge over the train tracks.

LAKE CONSTANCE

Lake Constance (Bodensee) is an oasis in landlocked southern Germany. Even if you never make contact with the water, this giant bulge in the sinewy course of the Rhine can offer a splash of refreshment. There are many historic towns around its periphery, which can be explored by boat or bicycle

and on foot. While sun is nice, the lake is best on one of the many misty days when it is shrouded in mystery.

Constance's southern side belongs to Switzerland and Austria, where the snow-capped Alps provide a perfect backdrop when viewed from the northern shore. The German side of Lake Constance features three often-crowded tourist centres in Constance, Meersburg and the island of Lindau. It's essentially a summer area, when it abounds with aquatic joy.

Getting There & Around

Trains link Lindau and Constance, and buses fill in the gaps to places like Meersburg. By car, the B31 hugs the northern shore of Lake Constance, but it can get rather busy. The Constance-Meersburg car ferry (p506) provides a vital link for those who don't want to circumnavigate the entire lake.

The most enjoyable, albeit slowest, way to get around is on the **Bodensee-Schiffsbetriebe boats** (BSB; www.bsb-online.com) which, from Easter to late October, call several times a day at the larger towns along the lake; there are discounts for rail pass-holders.

The **Erlebniskarte** (3 days/1 week €69/89) is a handy pass that allows free boat travel and free access to a host of activities around the lake. Numerous other discount cards are available. Ask at tourist information offices.

CONSTANCE

☎ 07531 / pop 81,000

Constance (Konstanz) sits right on the Swiss border. It's a tidy lake town and is a good place for gazing across the waters. Its main attraction is fittingly named Mainau Island.

It achieved historical significance in 1414, when the Council of Constance convened to try to heal huge rifts in the Catholic Church. The consequent burning at the stake of the religious reformer Jan Hus as a heretic, and the scattering of his ashes over the lake, did nothing to block the Reformation.

The **tourist office** (☎ 133 030; www.konstanz.de/tourismus; Bahnhofplatz 13; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, 10am-1pm Sun Apr-Oct; 9.30am-12.30pm, 2-6pm Mon-Fri Nov-Mar) is 150m to the right from the train station exit. **Clixworkx.net** (☎ 991 211; Bodanstrasse 21; per 15 min €1; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat) has Internet access.

WHEELING AROUND LAKE CONSTANCE

A 270km international bike track circumnavigates Lake Constance through Germany, Austria and Switzerland, tracing the often-steep shoreline beside vineyards and pebble beaches. The route is well signposted, but you may want one of the many widely sold cycling maps. The tourist booklet *Rad Urlaub am Bodensee* lists routes, rental places and a wealth of other information about the region.

In Constance, **Kultur-Rädle** (☎ 07531-273 10; Bahnhofplatz 29; bike rental per day from €10; ☎ 9am-12.30pm & 2.30-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat year-round, 10am-12.30pm Sun Apr-Oct) rents out bikes and organises cycling tours.

Sights & Activities

The city's most visible feature is the Gothic spire of the cathedral, added in 1856 to a church that was started in 1052, which has excellent views over the old town. Visit the **Niederburg** quarter or relax in the parklands of the **Stadtgarten**. Head across to **Mainau Island** (☎ 3030; www.mainau.de; adult/child €12; ☎ 7am-8pm mid-Mar–Nov, 9am-6pm Nov–mid-Mar), with its baroque castle set in vast and gorgeous gardens that include a butterfly house. Take bus 4 (€2, 25 minutes) or a BSB ferry from the harbour behind the station. Five **beaches** are open from May to September, including the Strandbad Horn, with bush-enclosed nude bathing. Take bus 5 or walk for 20 minutes around the shore.

Sleeping & Eating

Campingplatz Bodensee (☎ 33057; www.dkv-camping.de; Fohrenbühlweg 45; camp sites per person/tent €4/5) This is a lovely spot to camp. Take bus 1 to the car-ferry terminal, then walk south along the shore for 10 minutes.

Jugendherberge Konstanz (☎ 322 60; www.jugendherberge-konstanz.de; Zur Allmannshöhe 16; dm €21-24) To reach Jugendherberge Konstanz take bus 1 or 4 from the station to the Jugendherberge stop and stay in this converted water tower.

Hotel Goldener Sternen (☎ 252 28; www.hotel-goldener-sternen.de; Bodanplatz 1; s/d from €50/80) The 20 rooms are basic but comfortable at this modest place right near the train station.

Hotel Barbarossa (☎ 128 990; www.barbarossa-hotel.com; Obermarkt 8-12; s/d from €48/88; ☒ ☑) Charming old place has been carefully

restored (although the floors still creak). White walls set off beautiful wooden antiques. There's a good restaurant (mains €8 to €20) downstairs with local specialities.

Hafenalle Biergarten (☎ 211 26; Hafenstrasse 10) A perfect spot for a beer garden, Hafenalle catches the breeze off the lake. There's the usual array of pretzels and sausages.

Aran (☎ 365 2556; Marktstätte 6; meals €4-7; ☎ 7am-5pm) The current star of Constance cafés, Aran has a stylish interior where you can buy garden plants, cute décor items and excellent soups, salads and sandwiches. The bread is from its bakery.

Getting There & Away

Constance has trains to Offenburg via Triberg in the Black Forest (€26, 2¼ hours, hourly) and connections via Singen to Stuttgart (€35, 2¼ hours, hourly). There are good connections into Switzerland including Zurich (€16, one hour, hourly).

BSB Ferries on various schedules serve numerous destinations including Meersburg (€4.20, 30 minutes) and Lindau (€11.20, three to four hours).

MEERSBURG

☎ 07532 / pop 15000

Constance is the big city compared to Meersburg across the lake. The winding cobblestone streets, vine-patterned hills and a sunny lakeside promenade make it a good stop if travelling by ferry or car.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 440 400; www.meersburg.de; Kirchstrasse 4; ☎ 9am-noon & 2-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) is in the Altstadt and can help find accommodation if you decide to stay.

Steigstrasse is lined with delightful half-timbered houses, each boasting a gift shop. The 11th-century **Altes Schloss** (☎ 800 00; adult/child €6/4; ☎ 9am-6.30pm) is the oldest structurally intact castle in Germany.

The useful Constance to Meersburg **car ferry** (☎ 07531-803 666; person/car €2/7.20, 30 min) runs every 15 minutes year-round from the northeastern Constance suburb of Staad. BSB ferries stop on their shore-hugging voyages between Constance (€4.20, 30 minutes) and Lindau (€10.50, 2½ to three hours).

LINDAU

☎ 08382 / pop 26,500

A forgotten corner of Bavaria, most people assume the lovely little island-city is part of

Baden-Württemberg but it's not. Here you'll see the blue and white Bavarian state colours and maybe it's just us, but there's a renewed emphasis on beer compared to the wine-drinkers elsewhere on the lake.

The **tourist office** (☎ 260 030; www.lindau-tourismus.de; Ludwigstrasse 68; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, reduced hr winter) is directly opposite the train station. **Internet Cafe Salem** (☎ 943 1297, Bahnhofplatz 08, per 15 min €1; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) is close to the station.

Connected to the nearby lakeshore by bridges, key sights of this oh-so-charming island town have murals: **Altes Rathaus** (Reichsplatz), the **city theatre** (Barfüßler-platz) and the harbour's **Seepromenade**, with its Bavarian Lion monument and lighthouse. When the haze clears, the Alps provide a stunning backdrop for photos.

Park Camping Lindau am See (☎ 722 36; www.park-camping.de; Fraunhoferstrasse 20; camp sites per person/tent €6/2.50) is on the foreshore 3km southeast of Lindau. Take bus 1 or 2 to the bus station, then bus 3.

The attractive-looking façade of **Hotel Gasthof Goldenes Lamm** (☎ 5732; www.goldenes-lamm-lindau.de; Schafgasse 3; s/d from €47/84) is mirrored by the 21 comfortable rooms inside. The restaurant is good and has many fish dishes.

The maroon **Alte Post** (☎ 934 60; www.alte-post-lindau.de; Fischergasse 3; s/d €44/80) has 19 beautifully maintained rooms. The restaurant (mains €7 to €18) serves Bavarian/Austrian fare and has a large terrace. Guests can use bikes for free.

The personality begins over the door at **Zurtischerin Galerie und Weinstube** (☎ 5428; Ludwigstrasse 50; snacks under €4; ☎ 5pm-2am); look for the big fish. Inside there's local art on the walls and some of the characters who painted it might just let you buy them a drink. Regional wines are featured.

Lindau has trains to/from Ulm on the Munich-Stuttgart line (€20, 1¾ hours, hourly), Munich (€33, 2¼ hours, four times daily). There are hourly RB trains to/from Immenstadt where you connect to Oberstdorf (€15, 1¾ hours). Trains to nearby Bregenz (€3.20, nine minutes, hourly) let you connect to the rest of Austria.

BSB Ferries on various schedules serve destinations including Meersburg (€10.50, 2½ to three hours) and Constance (€11.20, three to four hours).

RHINELAND-PALATINATE

Rhineland-Palatinate (Rheinland-Pfalz) has an unsettled topography characterised by thinly populated mountain ranges and forests cut by deep river valleys. Created after WWII from parts of the former Rhineland and Rhenish Palatinate regions, its turbulent history goes all the way back to the Romans, as seen in Trier (p508). In recent centuries it was hotly contested by the French and a variety of German states.

This land of wine and great natural beauty reaches its apex in the verdant Moselle Valley towns such as Cochem, and along the heavily touristed Rhine, where rich hillside vineyards provide a backdrop for noble castles and looming medieval fortresses. For this part of Germany, focus your attention on the water and the land it courses through.

MOSELLE VALLEY

Exploring the vineyards and wineries of the Moselle (Mosel) Valley is an ideal way to get a taste of German culture and people – and, of course, the wonderful wines. Take the time to slow down and savour a glass or two.

The Moselle is bursting at the seams with historical sites and picturesque towns built along the river below steep rocky cliffs planted with vineyards (they say locals are born with one leg shorter than the other so that they can easily work the vines). It's one of the country's most romantically scenic regions, with stunning views rewarding the intrepid hikers who brave the hilly trails.

Many wine-makers have their own small *pensions* but accommodation is hard to find in May, on summer weekends or during the local wine harvest (mid-September to mid-October). Note also that much of the region – like the vines themselves – goes into a deep slumber from November to March.

Getting There & Around

The most scenic part of the Moselle Valley runs 195km northeast from Trier to Koblenz; it's most practical to begin your Moselle Valley trip from either of these two.

It is not possible to travel the banks of the Moselle River via rail. Local and fast

trains run every hour between Trier and Koblenz, but the only riverside stretch of this line is between Cochem and Koblenz (however it's a scenic dandy). Apart from this run – and the scenic Moselweinbahn line taking tourists between Bullay and Traben-Trarbach – travellers must use buses, ferries, bicycles or cars to travel between most of the upper Moselle towns.

Moselbahn (☎ 0651-147 750; www.moselbahn.de) runs eight buses on weekdays (fewer at weekends) between Trier and Bullay (three hours each way), a very scenic route following the river's winding course and passing through numerous quaint villages. Buses leave from outside the train stations in Trier and Bullay.

A great way to explore the Moselle in the high season is by boat. Between May and early October, **Köln-Düsseldorfer (KD) Line** (☎ 0221-208 8318; www.k-d.com) ferries sail daily between Koblenz and Cochem (€22.40 one way, 4¾ hours). Various smaller ferry companies also operate on the Moselle from some of the towns. Eurail and German Rail passes are valid for all normal KD Line services, and travel on your birthday is free.

The Moselle is a popular area among cyclists, and for much of the river's course there's a separate 'Moselroute' bike track. Most towns have a rental shop or two, ask at the tourist offices. Many of the Moselbahn buses also carry bikes.

Koblenz

☎ 0261 / pop 109,000

Koblenz is an important ferry and train junction at the confluence of the Rhine and Moselle Rivers. The **tourist office** (☎ 303 880; www.koblenz.de; Bahnhofplatz 7; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat year-round, 10am-6pm Sun Apr-Oct) is in a very modern building in front of the Hauptbahnhof.

The **Deutsches Eck** is a park at the dramatic meeting point of the rivers. It's dedicated to German unity and is a good reason for a riverside stroll.

South of Koblenz, at the head of the beautiful Eltz Valley, **Burg Eltz** (☎ 02672-950 500; adult/child €6/4.50; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Apr-Nov) is not to be missed. Towering over the surrounding hills, this superb medieval castle has frescoes, paintings, furniture and ornately decorated rooms. Burg Eltz is best reached by train to Moselkern, from where it's a 50-minute walk up through the forest. Alternatively,

you can drive via Münster-Maifeld to the nearby car park.

In town, Altenhof and the area around Münzplatz in the Altstadt offer a variety of good eating options. The small towns in either river valley offer more salubrious accommodation than that locally.

The busy KD line ferry dock is a 10-minute walk from the train station. Trains fan out in all directions. Up the Moselle to Trier (€17, 1½ hours, hourly) via Cochem and Bullay, north along the Rhine to Cologne (€18, one hour, two hourly) and south on the Rhine to Mainz (€18, one hour, two hourly).

Cochem

☎ 02671 / pop 5400

This pretty German town has narrow alleyways and one of the most beautiful castles in the region. It's also a good base for hikes into the hills. The staff are very helpful in Cochem's **tourist office** (☎ 600 40; www.cochem.de; Endertplatz), next to the Moselbrücke bridge.

For a great view, head up to the **Pinnerkreuz** with the chairlift on Endertstrasse (€5). The stunning **Reichsburg Castle** (☎ 255; ☞ 9am–5pm mid-Mar–mid-Nov) is just a 15-minute walk up the hill from town. There are regular daily tours (adult/child €3.50/2) and English translation sheets are available.

Cochem's **HH Hieronimi** (☎ 221; Stadionstrasse 1–3), just across the river is one of many friendly, family-run vineyards that offers tours.

Campingplatz Am Freizeitszentrum (☎ 4409; Stadionstrasse; camp sites per person/tent/car €5/4/6) is downstream from the northern bridge, alongside the river.

Moseltal-Jugendherberge (☎ 8633; www.djh.de; Klottener Strasse 9; dm €17–24) is beautifully situated on the banks of the river, the 148 beds are in spotless four-bed rooms.

Hotel-Pension Garni Villa Tummelchen (☎ 910 520; www.villa-tummelchen.com; Schlossstrasse 22; s/d from €47/80) is a bit up the hill from town and thus has sweeping Moselle views. It's worth an extra couple of euros to get a room with a balcony and a view.

This is the terminus for KD Line boats from Koblenz. Trains run twice hourly to Bullay (€4, 10 minutes), where you can pick up the Moselbahn bus.

Cochem to Trier

Take the train – or a boat – from Cochem to Bullay where you can catch the Moselbahn

bus for the little river towns the rest of the way to Trier.

Full of fanciful Art Nouveau villas, the double town of **Traben-Trarbach** is a welcome relief from the 'romantic-half-timbered-town' circuit. Pick up a map of the town at the **tourist office** (☎ 839 80; www.traben-trarbach.de; Bahnstrasse 22).

The twin town of **Bernkastel-Kues** is at the heart of the middle Moselle region. On the right bank, Bernkastel has a charming **Markt**, a romantic ensemble of half-timbered houses with beautifully decorated gables. For a primer on the local vino – one of many, try Bernkastel's **Weingut Dr Willkomm** (☎ 8054; Gestade 1). Located in a lovely old arched cellar, the vineyard also distils its own brandy. The **tourist office** (☎ 4023; www.bernkastel-kues.de; Am Gestade 6) is on the Bernkastel side.

TRIER

☎ 0651 / pop 100,000

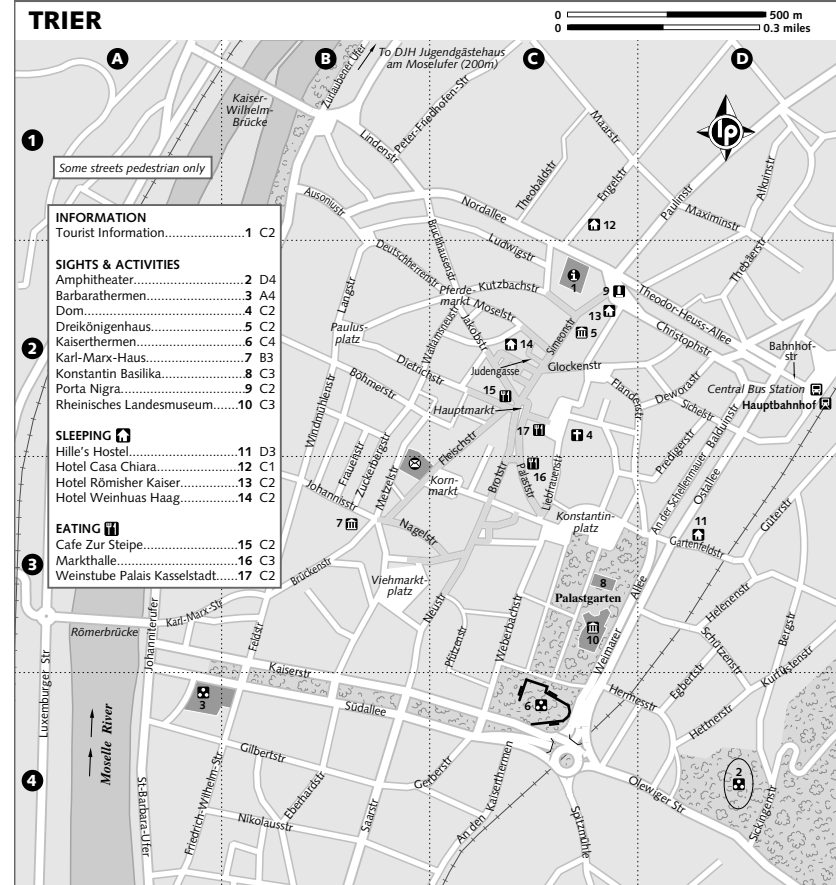
Trier is touted as Germany's oldest town and you'll find more Roman ruins here than anywhere else north of the Alps. Although settlement of the site dates back to 400 BC, Trier itself was founded in 15 BC as Augusta Treverorum, the capital of Gaul, and was second in importance only to Rome in the Western Roman Empire. Its proximity to France can be tasted in its cuisine, while its large student population injects life among the ruins.

Orientation & Information

From the main train station head west along Bahnhofstrasse and Theodor-Heuss-Allee to the Porta Nigra, where you'll find Trier's nearby **tourist office** (☎ 978 080; www.trier.de; ☞ 9am–6pm Mon–Sat, 10am–3pm Sun May–Oct; reduced hr winter). There are good two-hour guided **city walking tours** (adult/child €6/3; ☞ 1.30pm Sat May–Oct) in English. The Trier-Card (€12) is a combined ticket for the city's main attractions and public transport. From Porta Nigra, walk along Simeonstrasse's pedestrian zone to Hauptmarkt, the heart of the old city. Most of the sights are within this area of roughly 1 sq km. Several places around the station offer Internet access.

Sights

The town's chief landmark is the **Porta Nigra** (adult/child €2.10/1; ☞ 9am–6pm Apr–Sep, to 5pm Mar & Oct, to 4pm Nov–Feb), the imposing city gate on



the northern edge of the town centre, which dates back to the 2nd century AD. The interesting **Rheinisches Landesmuseum** (Weimarer Allee 1; adult/child €2.50/0.50; ☞ 9.30am–5pm Tue–Fri, 10.30am–5pm Sat & Sun, 9.30am–5pm Mon May–Oct) puts the Roman era into context.

Trier's massive (and massively restored) Romanesque **Dom** (www.dominformation.de; Liebfrauenstrasse 12; ☞ 6.30am–6pm Apr–Oct, to 5.30pm Nov–Mar) shares a 1600-year history with the nearby and equally impressive **Konstantin Basilika** (☎ 724 68; Konstantinplatz; tours by appt €25; ☞ 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, noon–6pm Sun Apr–Oct). Also worth visiting are the Roman **Amphitheater** (Olewigstrasse), the **Kaiserthermen** (Im Palastgarten) and **Barbarathermen** (Roman baths; Südallee). The early-Gothic **Dreikönigenhaus** (Simeonstrasse 19) was built around 1230

as a protective tower; the original entrance was on the second level, accessible only by way of a retractable rope ladder.

The **Karl Marx Haus Museum** (☎ 970 680; Brückentrasse 10; adult/child €3/1.50; ☞ 10am–6pm Apr–Oct, to 5pm & closed Mon Nov–Mar) is the suitably modest birthplace of the man. It is a major pilgrimage stop for the growing numbers of mainland Chinese tourists to Europe.

Sleeping

Camping Trevis (☎ 869 21; Luxemburger Strasse 81; camp sites per person/tent/car €6/4/4; ☞ Apr–Oct) This camping ground is central and beside the Moselle River.

Hille's Hostel (☎ 710 2785; www.hilles-hostel-trier.de; Gartenfeldstrasse 7; dm €15) The rooms here are

furnished with 25 IKEA bunk beds and are set back from the road and quiet. The courtyard now boasts a palm tree.

DJH Jugendgästehaus am Moselufer (☎ 146 620; www.djh-info.de; An der Jugendherberge 4; dm €17-24; 📺) This place is by the Moselle River.

Hotel Weinhaus Haag (☎ 975 750; www.hotel-weinhaus-haag.de; Stockplatz 1; s/d from €47/50) A traveller favourite in the Altstadt, this hotel has a certain 1950s charm and a good selection of wine for sale.

Hotel Casa Chiara (☎ 270 730; www.casa-chiara.de; Engelstrasse 8; s/d from €50/80; 📺 📺) This is a family run hotel with very clean rooms and a lovely breakfast room.

Hotel Römischer Kaiser (☎ 97700; www.hotels-trier.de; Am Porta-Nigra-Platz 6; s/d €67/98; 📺 📺) The Kaiser is in an elegant old building. Rooms are comfortable and have wi-fi; some have balconies. Ceilings are very high and regal.

Eating

The narrow and historic Judengasse, near the Markt, has several small bars and clubs. There's a cluster of stylish places on Viehmarktplatz. The **Markthalle** (🕒 9am-10pm Mon-Sat), set back from Palaststrasse, has places selling fresh produce and wines from the region, as well as numerous small delis and cafés where you can eat in or take away.

Cafe Zur Steipe (☎ 145 5456; Markt 14; meals €4-9; 📺) This is a classic bakery and café with tables outside. There's wi-fi to surf while you sip the excellent coffee.

Weinstube Palais Kesselstadt (☎ 411 78; Liebfrauenstrasse 9; mains €6-10) Across from the Dom, there's an excellent outdoor garden and a long list of local wines on offer here. The food is creative.

Getting There & Away

Trier has a train service to Koblenz (€17, 1½ hours, hourly) via Bullay and Cochem, as well as to Luxembourg (€13, 45 minutes, hourly).

RHINE VALLEY – KOBLENZ TO MAINZ

A trip along the Rhine is on the itinerary of most travellers, as it should be. The section between Koblenz and Mainz offers vistas of steep vineyard-covered mountains punctuated by scores of castles. It's really rather magical. Spring and autumn are the best times to visit; in summer it's overrun and in winter most towns go into hibernation. For information on Koblenz, see p507.

Every town along the route offers cute little places to stay or camp and atmospheric places to drink and eat.

Activities

The Koblenz-to-Mainz section of the Rhine Valley is great for wine tasting, with Bacharach, 45km south of Koblenz, being one of the top choices for sipping. For tastings in other towns just follow your instincts.

Though the trails here may be a bit more crowded with day-trippers than those along the Moselle, hiking along the Rhine is also excellent. The slopes and trails around Bacharach are justly famous.

Getting There & Around

Koblenz and Mainz are the best starting points. The Rhine Valley is also easily accessible from Frankfurt on a long day trip, but it could drive you to drink, as it were.

Each mode of transport on the Rhine has its own advantages and all are equally enjoyable. Try combining several of them. The **Köln-Düsseldorfer (KD) Line** (☎ 0221-208 83 18; www.k-d.com) runs many slow and fast boats daily between Koblenz and Mainz (as well as the less-interesting stretch between Cologne and Koblenz). The journey takes about four hours downstream and about 5½ hours upstream (€45, free with rail pass). Boats stop at many riverside towns along the way.

Train services operate on both sides of the Rhine River, but are more convenient on the left bank. You can travel nonstop on IC/EC trains or travel by slower regional RB or RE services. The ride is amazing, sit on the right heading north and on the left heading south.

Touring the Rhine Valley by car is also ideal. The route between Koblenz and Mainz is short enough for a car to be rented and returned to either city. There are no bridge crossings between Koblenz and Rudesheim, but there are several ferry crossings.

St Goar/St Goarshausen

☎ 06741

These two towns are on opposite sides of the Rhine, St Goar is on the left bank. One of the most impressive castles on the river is **Burg Rheinfels** (☎ 383; adult/child €4/2; 🕒 9am-6pm Apr-Oct, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun in good weather Nov-Mar) in St Goar. An absolute must-see, the labyrinthine

ruins reflect the greed and ambition of Count Dieter V of Katzenelnbogen, who built the castle in 1245 to help levy tolls on passing ships ('African or European?'). Across the river, just south of St Goarshausen, is the Rhine's most famous sight, the **Loreley Cliff**. Legend has it that a maiden sang sailors to their deaths against its base. It's worth the trek to the top of the Loreley for the view.

For camping **Campingplatz Loreleyblick** (☎ 2066; camp sites per person/site €3/2.50; 🕒 Mar-Oct) is on the banks of the Rhine, opposite the legendary rock.

St Goar's **Jugendherberge** (☎ 388; www.djh.de; Bismarckweg 17; dm €13) is right below the castle. You can sip the house wine here in a rural atmosphere. The **Schlosshotel Rheinfels** (☎ 8020; www.schlosshotel-rheinfels.de; s/d from €95/145; 📺 📺 📺) in the castle is the top address in town. Rooms are posh and the views sublime.

Bacharach

☎ 06743 / pop 2400

Walk beneath one of its thick-arched gateways in Bacharach's medieval walls and you'll find yourself in a beautifully preserved medieval village. Drop by the **tourist office** (☎ 919 303; www.bacharach.de; Oberstrasse 45; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat Apr-Oct) for information on Bacharach's sights and lodging.

Bacharach's **Jugendherberge** (☎ 1266; www.djh.de; dm €17) is a legendary facility housed in the Burg Stahleck castle. In town, **Hotel Kranenturm** (☎ 1308; www.kranenturm.com; Langstrasse 30; s/d from €40/55) is charming and offers an array of neat rooms, some with river views.

Zum Grünen Baum (☎ 1208; Oberstrasse 63; mains €6-10) is a wonderful place to sample Rhine wines.

Mainz

☎ 06131 / pop 183,000

A short train ride from Frankfurt, Mainz has an attractive old town that makes for a good day trip. Though it can't compare to the compact beauty of the nearby towns along the Rhine, Mainz impresses with its massive **Dom** (cathedral; ☎ 253 412; Domstrasse 3; 🕒 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 12.45-3pm Sun), which has a smorgasbord of architecture: Romanesque, Gothic and baroque. **St Stephanskirche** (Weisspetrolse 12; 🕒 10am-noon, 2-5pm) has stained-glass windows by Marc Chagall. Mainz's museums include the

RHINE TOWNS

Besides those listed in this section, here's the low-down on some other towns along the route. All have train and boat service.

Boppard Roman walls and ruins (left bank).

Oberwesel Numerous towers and walkable walls of a ruined castle (left bank).

Assmannshausen Small relatively untouristed village with nice hotels and sweeping views; good hikes (right bank).

Rüdesheim Overrated and over-visited town of trinkets and hype.

Gutenberg Museum (☎ 122 640; Liebfrauenplatz 5; adult/child €3.50/1.50; 🕒 9am-5pm Tue-Sat, 11am-3pm Sun), which contains two namesake copies of the first printed Bible. For more information on attractions in Mainz, visit the **tourist office** (☎ 286 210; www.mainz.de; Brückenturm am Rathaus; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-2.30pm Sat).

Trains along the Rhine to Koblenz (€18, one hour) run twice hourly. Heidelberg (€18, one hour, hourly) is an easy trip as is Frankfurt via the Frankfurt airport (€9, 35 minutes, several per hour).

HESSE

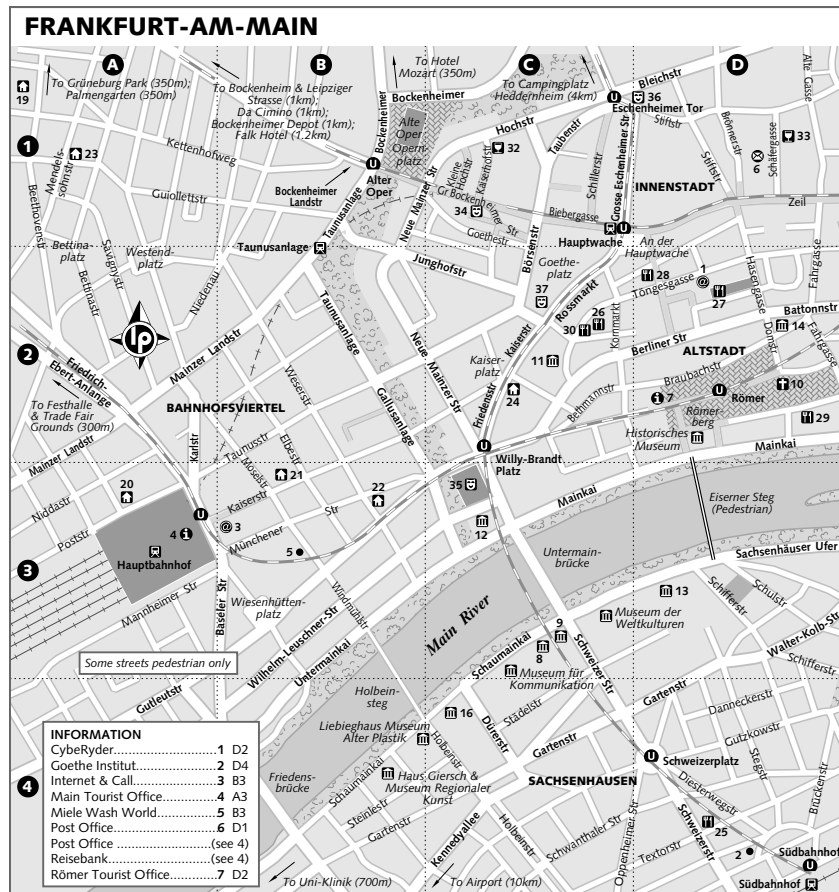
The Hessians, a Frankish tribe, were among the first to convert to Lutheranism in the early 16th century. Apart from a brief period of unity in that same century under Philip the Magnanimous, Hesse (Hessen) remained a motley collection of principalities and, later, of Prussian administrative districts until proclaimed a state in 1945. Its main cities are Frankfurt-am-Main, Kassel and the capital, Wiesbaden.

As well as being a transport hub, Frankfurt-am-Main offers its own diversions, although you'll most likely soon leave the state entirely.

FRANKFURT-AM-MAIN

☎ 069 / pop 643,000

Called 'Mainhattan' and 'Bankfurt', and much more, Frankfurt is on the Main (pronounced 'mine') River, and, after London, it is Europe's centre of finance. Both sobriquets also refer to the city's soaring skyline of skyscrapers, a profile found nowhere else on the continent.



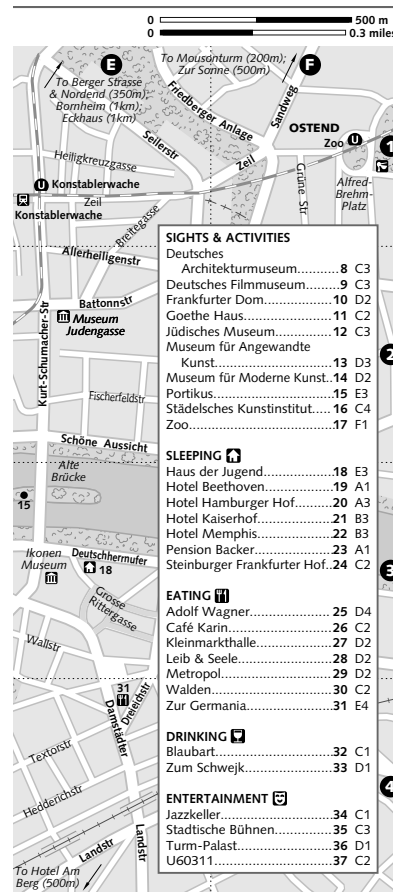
But while all seems cosmopolitan, it is often just a small town at heart. Things tend to get quiet in the evenings and the long list of museums is devoid of any really outstanding stars. Then again, it has cute old pubs you would only ever find in a small town. Mind you, when a major trade fair is in town, it feels as bustling as any metropolis.

Frankfurt-am-Main is Germany's most important transport hub for air, train and road connections, so you will probably end up here at some point. Note that it is generally referred to as Frankfurt-am-Main, or Frankfurt/Main, since there is another Frankfurt (Frankfurt-an-der-Oder) located near the Polish border.

Orientation

The airport is 11 minutes by train southwest of the city centre. The Hauptbahnhof is on the western side of the city, but it's still within walking distance of the city centre.

The best route to the city centre through the sleazy train station area is along Kaiserstrasse. This leads to Kaiserplatz and on to a large square called An der Hauptwache. The area between the former prison/police station (Hauptwache), and the Römerberg, in the tiny vestige of Frankfurt's original old city, is the centre of Frankfurt. The Main River flows just south of the Altstadt, with several bridges leading to one of the city's livelier areas, Sachsenhausen. Its



northeastern corner, known as Alt-Sachsenhausen, is full of quaint old houses and narrow alleyways.

Information BOOKSHOPS

The Hauptbahnhof is an excellent place to go book shopping. Stores near tracks 9 and 17 have scores of English language books and periodicals, as well as guidebooks and maps.

INTERNET ACCESS

CyberRyder (☎ 396 754; Töngesgasse 31; per 30 min €2; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat) Full service shop.

Internet & Call (☎ 2424 7939; Kaiserstrasse 81; per hr €2; ☎ 9am-11pm)

LAUNDRY

Miele Wash World (Moselstrasse 17; wash/dry €4/1; ☎ 6am-11pm) Near the train station.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Doctor Referral Service (☎ 192 92; ☎ 24hr)
Uni-Klinik (☎ 630 10; Theodor Stern Kai, Sachsenhausen; ☎ 24hr)

MONEY

Reisebank Train station (☎ 6.30am-10pm); airport (Terminal 1, arrival hall B; ☎ 6am-11pm) The train station branch is near the southern exit at the head of platform 1.

POST

Post office (Zeil 90; ground fl, Krastadt department store; ☎ 9.30am-8pm) Hauptbahnhof (☎ 7am-7.30pm Mon-Fri, 8am-4pm Sat); airport (departure lounge B; ☎ 7am-9pm)

TOURIST INFORMATION

Main tourist office (☎ 212 388 00; www.frankfurt-tourismus.de; ☎ 8am-9pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, Sun) In the main hall of the train station. For its efficient room-finding service the charge is €3. Römer branch (Römerberg 27; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) Northwest corner of the Römerberg square. The Frankfurt-am-Main Card (one day/two days €8/12) gives 50% off admission to important attractions and unlimited travel on public transport.

Sights

About 80% of the old city was wiped off the map by two Allied bombing raids in March 1944, and postwar reconstruction was subject to the hurried demands of the new age. Rebuilding efforts were more thoughtful in the **Römerberg**, the old central area of Frankfurt west of the cathedral, where restored 14th- and 15th-century buildings provide a glimpse of the beautiful city this once was. The old town hall, or **Römer**, is in the north-western corner of Römerberg and consists of three 15th-century houses topped with Frankfurt's trademark stepped gables.

East of Römerberg, behind the Historischer Garten (which has the remains of Roman and Carolingian foundations), is the **Frankfurter Dom** (Domplatz 14; tour adult/child €2/1; ☎ 9am-noon Mon-Thu, Sat & Sun, 2.30-6pm daily), the coronation site of Holy Roman emperors from 1562 to 1792. It's dominated by the elegant 15th-century Gothic **tower** – one of the few structures left standing after the 1944 raids.

Anyone with an interest in German literature should visit **Goethe Haus** (☎ 138 800; Grosser Hirschgraben 23-25; adult/child €5/3; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri Apr-Sep, to 4pm Mon-Fri Oct-Mar, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun year-round). Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was born in this house in 1749.

A little further afield, there's the botanical **Palmengarten** (☎ 2123 6689; Siemayerstrasse 63; adult/child €5/2; ☎ 9am-6pm), next door to **Grüneburg Park**. The **Frankfurt Zoo** (☎ 212 337 35; Alfred-Brehm-Platz 16; adult/child €8/4; ☎ 9am-7pm, to 5pm Oct-Apr) is also a good place to unwind. It is also a nice 40-minute walk from the zoo east along the south bank of the Main River to the **lock** in Offenbach – just before it there's a good beer garden.

There's a great **flea market** (☎ 8am-2pm Sat) along Museumsufer.

MUSEUMS

Frankfurt's museum list is long but a mixed bag. To sample them all, buy a 48-hour Museumsufer ticket (€12). North of the cathedral, the excellent **Museum für Moderne Kunst** (☎ 2123 0447; Domstrasse 10; adult/child €6/3; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 8pm Wed) features works of modern art by Joseph Beuys, Claes Oldenburg and many others.

For more modern art, check out the new **Portikus** (☎ 9624 4540; www.portikus.de; Alte Brücke 2 Maininsel; admission free; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 8pm Wed) in a dramatic building on an island in the river.

Also on the north bank there's the **Jüdisches Museum** (Jewish Museum; ☎ 2123 5000; Untermainkai 14-15; adult/child €4/2; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 8pm Wed), a huge place with exhibits on the city's rich Jewish life before WWII.

Numerous museums line the south bank of the Main River along the so-called *Museumsufer* (Museum Embankment). Pick of the crop is the **Städelsches Kunstinstitut** (☎ 605 0980; Schaumainkai 63; adult/child €8/6; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, Fri-Sun, to 9pm Wed & Thu), with a world-class collection of paintings by artists from the Renaissance to the 20th century, including Botticelli, Dürer, Van Eyck, Rubens, Rembrandt, Vermeer, Cézanne and Renoir.

Other highlights include the **Deutsches Filmmuseum** (☎ 2123 8830; Schaumainkai 41; adult/child €2.50/1.30; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue, Thu & Fri, to 7pm Wed & Sun, 2-7pm Sat); the fascinating, design-oriented **Museum für Angewandte Kunst** (Museum of Applied Arts; ☎ 2123 4037; Schaumainkai 17; admission €5; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 9pm Wed); and

the **Deutsches Architekturmuseum** (☎ 2123 8844; Schaumainkai 43; admission €6; ☎ 11am-6pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 8pm Wed).

Sleeping

Predictably, most of Frankfurt's budget accommodation is in the grotty Bahnhofsviertel, which surrounds the station. The streets between here and the Messe (convention centre) aren't especially interesting but are convenient for early departures or meetings. During large trade fairs the town is booked out months in advance and rates soar.

BUDGET

Campingplatz Heddernheim (☎ 570 332; An der Sandelmühle 35; camp sites per site/person/car €4/6/5) This camping ground is in the Heddernheim district northwest of the city centre. It's a 15-minute ride on the U1, U2 or U3 from the Hauptwache U-Bahn station – get off at Heddernheim.

Haus der Jugend (☎ 610 0150; www.djh.de; Deutschhermufer 12; dm/€17-22) Within walking distance of the city and Sachsenhausen's nightspots, this hostel is a good choice. From the train station take bus 46 to Frankensteinerplatz, or take S-Bahn lines S3, S4, S5 or S6 to Lokalbahnhof, then walk north for 10 minutes. Check-in begins at 1pm, curfew is 2am.

Pension Backer (☎ 747 992; fax 747 900; Mendelssohnstrasse 92; s/d from €25/40) The Backer has 25 basic rooms with shared bathrooms but is in a nice residential neighbourhood.

Hotel Am Berg (☎ 612 021; www.hotel-am-berg-ffm.de; Grethenweg 23; s/d from €40/50; ☎) In pleasant Sachsenhausen, this 21-room hotel is in a pretty old sandstone building. Rooms come in all shapes and sizes.

MIDRANGE

Hotel Memphis (☎ 242 6090; www.memphis-hotel.de; Münchenerstrasse 15; s/d from €60/80; ☎) The stylish modern rooms here are fully equipped and the front desk staff are trained to assist with all your needs, business or otherwise.

Hotel Kaiserhof (☎ 256 1790; www.kaiserhof-frankfurt.de; Kaiserstrasse 62; s/d from €65/80; ☎) This remodelled hotel three minutes from the Hauptbahnhof has 42 rooms that are easy on the eyes and have wi-fi. Those on the top floor have a small terrace.

Hotel Hamburger Hof (☎ 2713 9690; www.hamburgerhof.com; Poststrasse 10-12; s/d €69/79) An excellent choice, the Hamburger Hof's 60 rooms are

done up in stark, contrasting colours. There's wi-fi in all and a good level of service from the staff.

Hotel Beethoven (☎ 746 091; www.hotelbeethoven.de; Beethovenstrasse 44; s/d €80/120; ☎) The elegant Beethoven is in a quiet neighbourhood north of the train station. The 31 rooms are a bit regal.

Falk Hotel (☎ 719 188 70; www.hotel-falk.de; Falkstrasse 38; r €80-180; ☎) In the fun neighbourhood of Bockenheim, this pleasant hotel has 29 rooms decorated in comfortable yet minimalist style.

TOP END

Hotel Mozart (☎ 156 8060; www.hotelmozart.de; Parkstrasse 17; s/d from €95/150; ☎) A 10-minute walk north from the Alter Opera (opera house), the Mozart is nicely furnished, has excellent breakfasts and is directly across the street from peaceful Grüneburg Park. The 35 rooms are spacious and have wi-fi.

Steigenberger Frankfurter Hof (☎ 215 02; www.steigenberger.de; Am Kaiserplatz; s/d from €150/200; ☎) Schopenhauer used to lunch here but his pessimism is unlikely to dampen your enthusiasm for this cosmopolitan and elegant 19th-century neo-Renaissance institution. The 131 rooms are traditionally luxurious.

Eating

Known to the locals as Fressgasse (Munch-Alley), the Kalbächer Petrolse and Grosse Bockenheimer Strasse area, between Opernplatz and Börsenstrasse, has some medium-priced restaurants and fast-food places with outdoor tables in summer.

The area around the main train station has lots of ethnic eating options. Baseler Strasse in particular has a Middle Eastern tone. Wallstrasse and the surrounding streets in Alt-Sachsenhausen also have lots of ethnic mid-priced restaurants.

Another good place for ravenous hunters and gatherers is the cosmopolitan Berger Strasse and Nordend areas north of the Zeil.

RESTAURANTS

Da Cimino (☎ 771 142; Abdelstrasse 28; pizza €5-9) Customers flock here for the tasty pizza, possibly the best in town.

Leib & Seele (☎ 281 529; Kommarkt 11; mains €6-12) Modern yet old-fashioned at the same time, Leib & Seele has large windows, a terrace

and tables lit with candles. The menu extends beyond Germany and features many seasonal specials.

Eckhaus (☎ 491 197; Bornheimer Landstrasse 45; meals from €7) This is a relaxed restaurant and bar that serves well-priced salads and main dishes well into the evening. Nice outside area. Take the U-4 to Merianplatz.

CAFÉS

Walden (☎ 9288 2700; Kleiner Hirschgraben 7; meals €6-12) An über-trendy café near the centre. Breakfast is served until 5pm and you can go right from eggs to the lengthy cocktail list. At night there are DJs, soul and jazz.

Metropol (☎ 288 287; Weckmarkt 13-15; mains €7) Near the Dom, this popular place serves up café fare until late. Savour a coffee for hours with a book.

Café Karin (☎ 295 217; Grosser Hirschgraben 28; mains €9-15) Breakfast and whole-grain baked goods are the specialities at this understated place near the Zeil. The coffee is a treat as well.

APPLE-WINE TAVERNS

Apple-wine taverns are a Frankfurt's great local tradition. They serve *Ebbelwoi* (Frankfurt dialect for *Apfelwein*), an alcoholic apple cider, along with local specialities like *Handkäse mit Musik* (literally, 'hand-cheese with music'). This is a round cheese soaked in oil and vinegar and topped with onions; your bowel supplies the music. Some good *Ebbelwoi* are situated in Alt-Sachsenhausen.

Zur Germania (☎ 613 336; Textorstrasse 16; meals €7-15) This Sachsenhausen apple-wine tavern has a good outdoor area and is well-known for its huge pork roasts.

Zur Sonne (☎ 459 396; Berger Strasse 312; mains €7-16) This place has a fine yard for fair-weather imbibing in Bornheim. The schnitzels are excellent. Take the U4 to Bornheim-Mitte to get there

Adolf Wagner (☎ 612 565; Schweizer Strasse 71; meals €8-15; ☎) This old place has one of the most atmospheric interiors in Sachsenhausen. The garden is appealing as well.

SELF-CATERING

Off Hasenpetrolse, **Kleinmarkthalle** (Hasengasse 5-7; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat) is a great produce market with loads of fruit, vegetables, meats and hot food.

Drinking

Many of the places listed under Eating are good for a drink, especially the apple wine joints.

Blaubart (☎ 282 229; Kaiserhofstrasse 18-20) In a large basement, the ceiling here is arched bricks. The long tables are lined with jolly beer-drinkers.

Zum Schwejk (☎ 293 166; Schäfferpetrolse 20) This is a popular gay bar. It is one of several on this street. Look for the blue mannequins out front.

Entertainment

Ballet, opera and theatre are strong features of Frankfurt's entertainment scene. Free *Frizz* has good listings (in German) of what's on in town. For information and bookings, go to **Städtische Bühnen** (☎ 134 0400; Willy-Brandt-Platz).

Forsythe Company (☎ 2123 7586; www.theforsythe.com; Bockenheimer Depot; Carlo-Schmid-Platz 1) Easily the world's most talked-about dance company right now; the work of William Forsythe is often on tour.

Turm-Palast (☎ 281 787; Am Eschenheimer Turm) This is a multiscreen cinema with films in English.

Jazzkeller (☎ 288 537; Kleine Bockenheimer Strasse 18a) This club attracts top acts.

Mousonturm (☎ 4058 9520; Waldschmidtstrasse 4) Arty rock, dance performances and politically oriented cabaret are on tap at this converted soap factory in Bornheim.

U60311 (☎ 297 060 311; Rossmarkt 6) A top local club for techno, U60311 draws the best talent from around Europe. It's underground, literally.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Germany's largest airport is **Frankfurt airport** (FRA; ☎ 6901; www.airportcity-frankfurt.com), a vast labyrinth with connections throughout the world. It's served by most major airlines, although not many budget ones.

Only cynics like Ryanair would say that Frankfurt has another airport. **Frankfurt-Hahn airport** (HHN; www.hahn-airport.de) is 70km west of Frankfurt. Buses from Frankfurt's Hauptbahnhof take about two hours – longer than the flight from London. Given the journey time it's fitting the bus company is called **Bohr** (☎ 06543-501 90; www.bohr-omnibusse.de; adult/child €12/6; ⏰ hourly).

BUS

The Deutsche-Touring Romantic Road bus (see p482) leaves from the south side of the Hauptbahnhof.

CAR

Frankfurt-am-Main features the famed Frankfurter Kreuz, the biggest autobahn intersection in the country. All the main car rental companies have offices in the main hall of the train station and at the airport.

TRAIN

The Hauptbahnhof handles more departures and arrivals than any station in Germany. Among the myriad of services: Berlin (€98, four hours, hourly), Hamburg (€93, 3½ hours, hourly) and Munich (€75, 3¾ hours). For Cologne take the fast (75 minutes) ICE line or the slower and more scenic line along the Rhine (€40, 2½ hours, hourly).

Many long-distance trains also stop at the airport. This station is beyond the S-Bahn station under Terminal 1.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

S-Bahn lines S8 and S9 run every 15 minutes between the airport and Frankfurt Hauptbahnhof (€3.35, 4.15am to 1am, 11 minutes), usually continuing via Hauptwache and Konstablerwache. Taxis (about €30) take 30 minutes without traffic jams.

The airport train station has two sections: platforms 1 to 3 (below Terminal 1, hall B) handle S-Bahn connections, while IC and ICE connections are in the long-distance train station 300m distant.

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Why not enjoy Frankfurt's iconic apple wine while seeing the city? The **Ebbelwei-Express** (€5, apple wine extra; ⏰ 1.30-5.30pm Sat & Sun) is a special tram that makes a circuit of all the city's principal sights every weekend year-round. The trams are decades old but the wood seats are the perfect venue for quaffing, munching a fresh pretzel and enjoying the sites. There's a reason every time you see one of these go by everyone on board has a huge grin. The trams stop all over town; get a schedule from the tourist offices.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Both single or day tickets for Frankfurt's excellent transport network (RMV; www.traffiQ.de) can be purchased from automatic machines at almost any train station or stop. The peak period short-trip tickets (*Kurzstrecken*) cost €1.35, single tickets cost €1.90 and a *Tageskarte* (24-hour ticket) costs €4.90 (€7.40 with the airport).

TAXI

Taxis are slow compared to public transport and expensive at €2.50 flag-fall plus a minimum of €1.60 per kilometre. There are numerous taxi ranks throughout the city, or you can book a cab (☎ 230 001, 25 00 01, 54 50 11).

NORTH RHINE-WESTPHALIA

One quarter of Germany's population, and an even larger chunk of its heavy industry, is crammed into the Rhine-Ruhr region. This is not only Germany's economic powerhouse, but also one of the most densely populated conurbations in the world. Though the area has some bleak industrial centres, Cologne and some other cities are steeped in history.

COLOGNE

☎ 0221 / pop 1 million

Cologne (Köln) seems almost ridiculously proud to be home to Germany's largest cathedral; the twin-tower shape of its weather-beaten Gothic hulk adorns the strangest souvenirs – from egg cosies and slippers to glassware and expensive jewellery. However, this bustling Rhine-side metropolis has much more to offer than its most recognisable and ubiquitous symbol. As early as the first century AD, Colonia Agrippinensis was an important Roman trading settlement. Today it's one of Germany's most multicultural spots, with a vibrant nightlife only partly fuelled by the local *Kölsch* beer.

Almost completely destroyed in WWII – except a fortuitously unscathed cathedral – Cologne has been rebuilt and meticulously restored since. *Et es, wie et es* (it is how it is) runs a familiar motto in the city dialect. Well, how is it exactly? *Joot* (good)!

Orientation

It's hard to miss the cathedral (Dom) on the doorstep of the main train station. From this, the centre of the tourist action, the pedestrianised and hideously congested Hohe Strasse runs south through the old town. Alternatively, there's a pleasant riverfront stroll 500m to the east.

The nightlife hubs of the Belgisches Viertel (tram 3, 4 or 5 to Friesenplatz) and the Zülpicher Viertel (trams 8 or 9 to Zülpicher Viertel/Bahnhof Süd) are several kilometres southwest.

Information

Future-Point (☎ 206 7251; Richmodstrasse 13; per 10 min €1; ⏰ 10.30am-9pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-8pm Sat & Sun) Internet access inside the trendy Café Lichtenberg.

Internet Café Colony (☎ 272 0630; per 10 min €0.40; Zülpicher Strasse 38-40; ⏰ 10am-2am Mon-Sat, 11am-2am Sun) Wide range of services, including online laptop connection.

Köln Welcome Card (€9/14/19 for 24/48/72hr) Free public transport and discounted museum admission.

Main post office (☎ 01802-3333; WDR Centre, Breite Strasse 6-26; ⏰ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat)

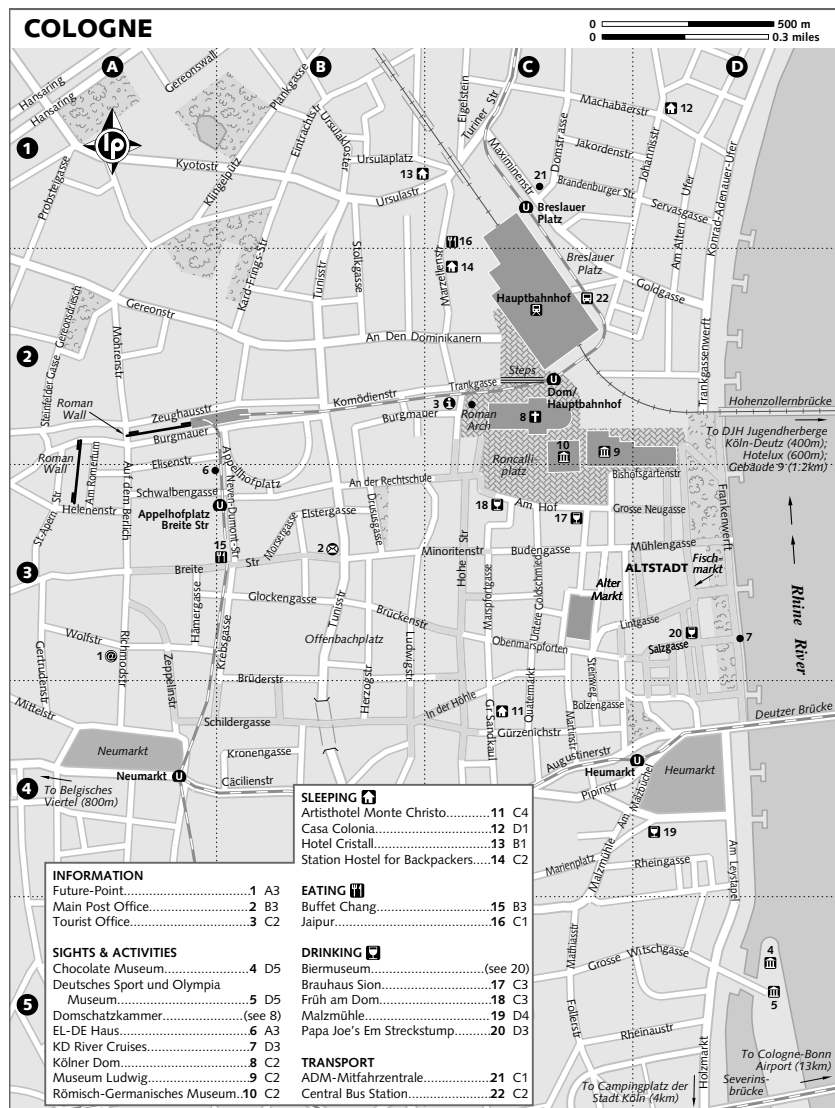
Tourist office (☎ 2213 0400; www.koelntourismus.de; Unter Fettenhennen 19; ⏰ 9am-9pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun & hols Oct-Jun; 9am-10pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun & hols Jul-Sep)

Sights & Activities

DOM

As easy as it is to get church-fatigue in Germany, the huge **Kölner Dom** (www.koelner-dom.de; admission free; ⏰ 6am-7.30pm, no visitors during services) is one you shouldn't miss. Blackened with age, this gargoyle-festooned Gothic cathedral has a footprint of 12,470 sq metres, with twin spires soaring to 157m. Although its ground stone was laid in 1248, stop-start construction meant it wasn't finished until 1880, as a symbol of Prussia's drive for unification. Just over 60 years later it escaped WWII's heavy night-bombing largely intact. (No miracle, by the way. Allied pilots used it to navigate in an era before reliable radar.) Sunshine filtering softly through stained-glass windows and the weak glow of candles are the only illumination in the moody, high-ceilinged interior.

Behind the altar lies the cathedral's most precious reliquary, the **Shrine of the Three Magi** (c 1150-1210), which reputedly contains the bones of the Three Wise Men.



Brought to Cologne from Milan in the 12th century, it can just be glimpsed through the gates to the inner choir – although even this is impossible during Confession, when the entire choir is shut.

To see the shrine properly, you need to take a **guided tour** (adult/concession €4/2; 10.30am & 2.30pm Mon-Sat, 2.30pm Sun in English). Groups

meet inside the main portal and tours in German (same price) are more frequent.

Alternatively, you can embark on the seriously strenuous endeavour of climbing the 509 steps of the Dom's **south tower** (adult/concession €2/1; 9am-5pm Mar-Sep, to 4pm Oct-Feb). You pass the 24-tonne **Peter Bell**, the world's largest working clanger, be-

fore emerging at 98.25m to magnificent views.

The renovated cathedral **treasury** (1794 0300; www.domschatzkammer-koeln.de; adult/concession €4/2; 10am-6pm) has a glittering collection of crowns and reliquaries.

MUSEUMS

South along the riverbank is the glass-walled **Chocolate Museum** (931 8880; www.schokoladenmuseum.de; Rheinauhafen; adult/concession €6/3.50; 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-7pm Sat & Sun, last entry 1hr before closing), famous for its fountain of liquid chocolate, whose aroma permeates the entire exhibition.

The neighbouring **Deutsches Sport und Olympia Museum** (336 090; www.sportmuseum-koeln.de, in German; Rheinauhafen 1; adult/concession €5/2.50; 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-7pm Sat & Sun) engagingly tells the history of the games with original souvenirs and multimedia displays.

Two prominent museums next to the cathedral might also take your fancy. The **Römisch-Germanisches Museum** (Roman Germanic Museum; 2212 2304; www.museenkoeln.de; Roncalliplatz 4; adult/concession €4/2; 10am-5pm Tue-Sun) displays artefacts from the Roman settlement in the Rhine Valley. The **Museum Ludwig** (2212 6165; www.museenkoeln.de; Bischofsgartenstrasse 1; adult/concession €7.50/5.50; 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, closed during Carnival) has an astoundingly good collection of 1960s Pop Art, German expressionism and Russian avant-garde painting, as well as photography.

The sombre **EL-DE Haus** (2212 6331; Appellohplatz 23-25; adult/concession €2.50/1; 10am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun) documents Cologne's Nazi era.

Tours

Day cruises and Rhine journeys can be organised through **KD River Cruises** (208 8318; www.k-d.com; Frankenwerf 35). Day trips (10am, noon, 2pm and 6pm) cost €6.80. Sample one-way fares are €11.40 to Bonn and €35.60 to Koblenz.

Festivals & Events

Held just before Lent in late February or early March, Cologne's **Carnival** (Karneval) rivals Munich's Oktoberfest for exuberance, as people dress in creative costumes and party in the streets. Things kick off the Thursday before the seventh Sunday before

Easter and last until Monday (*Rosenmontag*), when there are formal and informal parades.

Sleeping

Accommodation prices in Cologne increase by at least 20% when fairs are on. For more options, the tourist office offers a room-finding service (€3).

BUDGET

Campingplatz der Stadt Köln (831 966; camp sites per person/site €4/4; Easter-mid-Oct) This place is on the riverbank on Weidenweg in Poll, 5km southeast of the city centre. There are excellent kitchen facilities and a small shop. Take the U16 to Marienburg and cross the Rodenkirchener bridge.

Jugendherberge Köln-Deutz (814 711; www.jugendherberge.de; Siegesstrasse 5a; dm €20) This is a behemoth of a hostel and while there's not much character in its green-grey rooms, those on the top floors have great views. Plus, everything feels clean and spanking new. It's a relatively easy 15-minute walk east from the main train station over the Hohenzollernbrücke.

Station Hostel for Backpackers (912 5301; www.hostel-cologne.de; Marzellenstrasse 44-56; dm €17-22, s €28-35, d €42-50, breakfast €3;) Brightly patterned curtains can't quite disguise the basic quality of the dorms here. However, the place is convenient and the staff friendly and knowledgeable. It's a great spot to meet people.

Pension Jansen (251 85; www.pensionjansen.de; 2nd fl, Richard Wagner Strasse 18; s/d with shared bathroom from €40/65) This cute, well-cared-for *pension* has six individually decorated rooms with cheerful colours and motifs. Details like handmade wreaths hanging on aqua walls – or a big red rose screen-printed on the bed linen – convey a homey atmosphere. Book early.

MIDRANGE

Casa Colonia (160 6010; www.casa-colonia.de; Machabäerstrasse 63; s/d from €50/70) The young new owners plan to have this cosy Mediterranean charmer transformed into a cheap(ish) design hotel from early 2007, with sleek, minimalist rooms at affordable prices. Check the website for the latest details.

Artsthotel Monte Christo (277 4883; www.artsthotel-monte-christo.com; Grosse Sandkaul 24-26; s/d

€50/70) Above a club (ear-plugs provided) and with 5pm check-out, this louche hotel attracts dedicated bohemians, from Russian architecture professors to struggling DJs. The décor is camp and kitsch, with bright walls, plastic flowers, glitter-sprayed animal trophies and religious icons arranged in ways the Vatican probably wouldn't approve.

Hotel Chelsea (☎ 207 150; www.hotel-chelsea.de; Jülicher Strasse 1; s €70-160, d €80-175, ste €170-230; (P) (Q)) Another long-standing 'art' hotel, the Chelsea has an eye-catching roof extension. Its interior detailing is a little ordinary and nonsmokers might wish its rooms were aired more, but the overall vibe is good.

Hotel Cristall (☎ 163 000; www.hotelcristall.de; Ursulaplatz 9-11; s/d €70/90; (P) (Q)) The design here is a sort of womb-like, modern baroque, with low lighting and a gilt-framed romantic portrait of a woman in every room, but it also has black-and-white bathrooms and wooden floors (or black-and-white carpet tiles). Angular red, orange and purple sofas also greet you in the lobby.

Hotel Hopper et cetera (☎ 924 400; www.hopper.de; Brüsseler Strasse 26; s/d from €90/120; (P) (X) (Q)) Parquet flooring, white linen and red chairs lend an elegant simplicity to this former monastery's rooms. The package is rounded off with a bar and sauna in separate parts of the vaulted cellar.

Eating

Cologne's beer halls serve meals but the city overflows with restaurants, especially around the Belgisches and Zülpicher Viertels.

Habibi (☎ 271 7141; Zülpicher Strasse 28; dishes €3-8; ☎ 11am-1am, to 3am Fri & Sat) A takeaway/restaurant with sturdy wooden tables and a smattering of decorated tiles, 'Beloved' it truly is among its young customers. Falafel joins kebabs, schawarma, halloumi cheese, hubbi (mince and almonds), mint tea on the house, and sweets.

Feynsinn (☎ 240 9210; Rathenauplatz 7; mains €5-10) The glint of artfully arranged glasses behind the mirrored bar will catch your eye from the street, as will the broken-glass chandeliers. Inside under murals, students, creative types and tourists tuck into curries, stews and other fare.

Alcazar (☎ 515 733; Bismarckstrasse 39; snacks €4-9, mains €9-15) The food and atmosphere are both hearty and warming at this old-school,



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slightly hippie pub. The changing menu always has one veggie option.

Hotelux (☎ 241 136; Von-Sandt Platz 10; €9-17; ☎ dinner only) Soviet leader Lenin and sailors from the Battleship Potemkin overlook the proceedings in this fun, red-lined restaurant. There's a 'metro' underground train compartment while the food runs the gamut from Russian and Georgian to Ukrainian and Armenian.

Jaipur (☎ 137 322; Marzellenstrasse 50-56; mains €9-18) The food is as authentic as the décor is excessive in Cologne's best Indian restaurant.

Fischermann's (☎ 283 6285; Rathenauplatz 21; mains €10-17, 3-course set menu €26; ☎ dinner only) Elegant, with well-executed Eurasian cuisine, Fischermann's is a favourite with locals celebrating a twenty- or thirty-something birthday or trying to impress a first-time date. But who needs an excuse to indulge?

Other recommendations:

CurryCologne (☎ 589 4556; Antwerperstrasse 5; dishes €2.50-6; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Thu, 11.30am-midnight Fri & Sat, 1-11pm Sun) A Wurst outlet goes designer and trendy.

Buffet Chang (☎ 250 9909; top fl, DuMont Carré Centre, Breite Strasse 80-90; all-you-can-eat buffet €6; ☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Sat, noon-7pm Sun) Plastic-and-formica Chinese canteen offering great value.

Drinking

As in Munich, beer in Cologne reigns supreme. More than 20 local breweries turn out a variety called *Kölsch*, which is relatively light and slightly bitter. The breweries run their own beer halls and serve their wares in skinny 200ml glasses.

BEER HALLS

Früh am Dom (☎ 258 0394; Am Hof 12-14) This three-storey beer hall and restaurant (including cellar bar) is the most central, with black-and-white flooring, copper pans and tiled ovens keeping it real, despite the souvenir shop. It's open for breakfast.

Päffgen (☎ 135 461; Friesenstrasse 64-66) Another favourite, this thrumming wood-lined room has its own beer garden. It's not far from the bars of the Belgisches Viertel.

Malzmühle (☎ 210 117; Heumarkt 6) Attracting more locals than most, possibly because of the 10L 'Pittermännchen' kegs that customers can roll home.

Brauhaus Sion (☎ 257 8540; Unter Taschenmacher 9) A traditional-looking, low-lit option, with Wurst sold by the metret.

BARs

For more options, take a tram to Zülpicher Platz and explore.

Biermuseum (☎ 257 7802; Buttermarkt 39) This is a good-time place with 18 varieties of the amber liquid on tap but not one iota of class.

Papa Joe's Em Streckstrump (☎ 257 7931; Buttermarkt 37) Live New Orleans jazz provides the

MY BEAUTIFUL LAUNDRETTE

No, even we can't quite believe we're enthusing about a self-service laundrette here. However, there can't be many better places to air your dirty laundry than Cologne's **Cleanicum** (www.cleanicum.de; Brüsseler Strasse 74-76; loads from €3; ☎ 10am-1am Mon-Fri, 9am-1am Sat, 11am-10pm Sun). Its washing machines and dryers sit in the middle of a 'lounge' establishment that also includes sofas, magazines, a TV area, Internet terminals, a retro 1970s cocktail bar and a vibrating massage chair (€1 for 15 minutes). There's even a double bed should doing the housework make you particularly tired or frisky.

A similar, albeit less central, operation exists in Hamburg, too (p536).

soundtrack in this intimate pub, serving beer in larger than normal glasses for Cologne.

Hallmackenreuther (☎ 517 970; Brüsseler Platz 9) Oatmeal, white and lilacs are used in this popular café bar's retro interior. Good for a late breakfast or a late drink.

Hotelux (☎ 350 0870; Rathenauplatz 22) The little sister of the Hotelux restaurant (see Eating) serves cocktails and 'Soviet water' (ie vodka) in a similarly themed environment.

Entertainment

Gebäude 9 (☎ 814 637; Deutz-Mülheimer Strasse 127-129) Once a factory, this is now a Cologne nightlife stalwart, with clubbing, concerts, a cinema and theatre. Expect anything from drum'n'bass, indie pop, gypsy music and '60s trash to film noir and puppets.

M20 (☎ 519 666; Maastrichter Strasse 20) This popular retro cocktail bar sports cube-shaped lights and brown leather sofas. Regular DJ evenings favour indie guitar rock, but some live acts play more laid-back Latin music.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Cologne-Bonn airport (CGN; www.airport-cgn.de) is growing in importance. There are now direct flights to New York, while budget airline German Wings (www.germanwings.com) uses this as its hub, notably offering cheap flights to Moscow and St Petersburg, among others.

CAR

The city is on a main north-south autobahn route and is easily accessible for drivers and hitchhikers. The **ADM-Mitfahrzentrale** (☎ 194 40; www.citynetz-mitfahrzentrale.de; Maximinen Strasse 2) is near the train station.

TRAIN

There are frequent RE services operating to both nearby Bonn (€6, 18 minutes) and Düsseldorf (€10 to €16, 25 to 30 minutes) as well as to Aachen (€12.50, 45 to 50 minutes). Frequent EC, IC, and ICE trains go to Hanover (€56, three hours), Frankfurt-am-Main (€55, 1¼ hours, three hourly) and Berlin (€93, 4¼ hours, hourly). Frequent Thalys high-speed services connect Cologne to Paris (€85.50, four hours) via Aachen and Brussels; rail pass-holders get only a small discount on this.

Getting Around

S-Bahn 13 runs between Cologne/Bonn airport and the main train station every 15 minutes from 5.30am to 11.20pm daily (€2.20, 20 minutes). Key in code 2000 for Köln Hauptbahnhof. Bus 670 goes to Bonn every half-hour.

Buses and trams serve the inner city, with local trains handling trips up to 50km away, including Bonn. A one-day pass costs €6 if you're staying near the city (one or two zones), €9 for most of the Cologne area (four zones); and €13.30 including Bonn (seven zones). Single city trips cost €1.20, while 1½-hour two-zone tickets are €2.20.

AROUND COLOGNE

Bonn

☎ 0228 / pop 293,000

South of Cologne on the Rhine's banks, Bonn became West Germany's temporary capital in 1949. But exactly 50 years later it was demoted when most (but not quite all) government departments returned to Berlin.

The city's brief tenure as capital, however, has left it with an excellent collection of museums. These, plus its status as Beethoven's birthplace and some 18th-century baroque architecture, make it worth a day trip.

The **tourist office** (☎ 775 000; www.bonn-regio.de; Windeckstrasse 1; ☎ 9am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun) is a three-minute walk along Poststrasse from the Hauptbahnhof, and can fill you in with any extra details.

Ludwig van Beethoven fans will head straight to the **Beethoven-Haus** (☎ 981 7525; www.beethoven-haus-bonn.de; Bonngasse 24-26; adult/concession €4/3; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun Apr-Oct, closing at 5pm Nov-Mar), where the composer was born in 1770. The house contains memorabilia concerning his life and music, including his last piano, with an amplified sounding board to accommodate his deafness. There's a new multimedia section and a shop selling kitschy souvenirs tinnily chiming the Ninth Symphony. The annual Beethoven Festival takes place September to October.

The **Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland** (FRG History Museum; ☎ 916 50; www.hdg.de; Willy-Brandt-Allee 14; admission free; ☎ 9am-7pm Tue-Sun) presents Germany's postwar history. It is part of the **Museumsmile**, four museums that also includes the **Kunstmuseum** (☎ 776 260; Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 2; adult/concession €5/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Wed); and the **Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland** (☎ 917 1200; Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 2; adult/concession €7/3.50; ☎ 10am-9pm Tue & Wed, 10am-7pm Thu-Sun).

Those wanting to go a bit further might consider combining their trip to Bonn with a visit to the spa town of Bad Godesberg.

From Cologne, it's quicker to take an RE train to Bonn (€6, 18 minutes) than a tram (€13.30 day pass, 55 minutes each way). For river trips, see p519.

DÜSSELDORF

☎ 0211 / pop 571,000

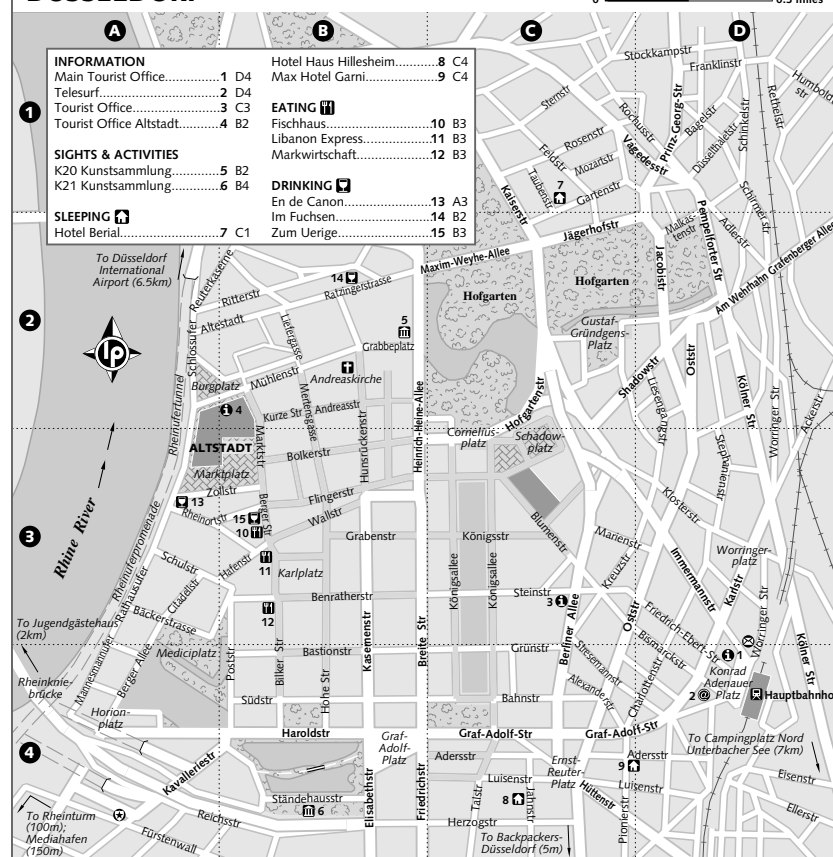
'D-Town' or 'The City D', as local magazine editors like to call Düsseldorf, is Germany's fashion capital. But that means Jil Sander and Wolfgang Joop rather than cutting-edge streetwear, as you'll soon discover observing fur-clad *Mesdames* with tiny dogs along the ritzy shopping boulevard of the Königsallee.

Indeed, this elegant and wealthy town could feel stiflingly bourgeois if it weren't for its lively old-town pubs, its position on the Rhine, its excellent art galleries and the postmodern architecture of its Mediahafen. Fortunately, those are more than enough to make up for its pretensions.

Orientation

The train station lies at the southeastern edge of the old town, about 1km west of the Rhine River. The Mediahafen and Rheinturm are much further south, on the riverbank.

DÜSSELDORF



Information

Telesurf (Graf-Adolf-Strasse 102; per 15 min €0.50;

☎ 10am-4am Mon-Sat, 10am-midnight Sun) Minutes left of the train station.

Tourist office (www.duesseldorf-tourismus.de) Main office (☎ 172 0222; Immermannstrasse 65B; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat); branch office (☎ 602 5753; Burg Platz; ☎ noon-6pm) branch office (☎ 300 4897; Sparkasse bldg, Berliner Allee 33; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Sat)

Sights & Activities

Düsseldorf has a lively **Altstadt** (old town), filled with enough restaurants, beer halls and pubs to have earned it the slightly exaggerated title of the 'longest bar in the world'. In the central **Marktplatz** you'll find a statue of the former ruler, or elector, Jan Wellem.

What really sets the city apart, however, is the contemporary architecture of its **Mediahafen**. Here, in the city's south, docks have been transformed into an interesting commercial park, most notably including the **Neuer Zollhof**, three typically curved and twisting buildings by Bilbao Guggenheim architect Frank Gehry. You'll find a map of the park on a billboard behind (ie on the street side of) the red-brick Gehry building.

For a bird's-eye view of the Mediahafen, and indeed all of Düsseldorf, catch the express elevator to the 168m viewing platform of the neighbouring **Rheinturm** (adult/child €3.50/1.50; ☎ 10am-11.30pm). There's also a revolving restaurant and cocktail bar a level above, at 172.5m.

It's a pleasant stroll between the Mediahafen and the Altstadt along the riverside **Rheinuferpromenade**. River cruises are also possible (see KD River Cruises, p519).

Alternatively, you can join the city's elite window-shopping along the **Königsallee**, or 'Kö' – Düsseldorf's answer to Rodeo Drive or the Ginza strip.

Two excellent galleries, sharing the same collection, form the backbone of Düsseldorf's reputation as a city of art.

K20 (☎ 838 10; www.kunstsammlung.de; Grabbeplatz 5; adult/concession €6.50/4.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun), containing earlier 20th-century masters, is frequently given over to blockbuster special exhibitions with lengthy queues.

K21 (☎ 838 1600; www.kunstsammlung.de; Ständehausstrasse 1; adult/concession €6.50/4.50, combination ticket €10/8) concentrates on art from 1990 onwards. Highlights include Nam June Paik's TV Garden, local artist's Katarina Fritsch's giant black mouse sitting on a sleeping man, the psychedelically decorated bar and the glassed-in roof. Sadly, there are only two panoramic photos by famous Düsseldorfer Andreas Gursky.

Sleeping

Backpackers-Düsseldorf (☎ 302 0848; www.backpackers-duesseldorf.de; Fürstenwall 180; dm €20; ☎) This modern hostel adds bright colours and table football to soft beds and great service to come out a real winner. Near the Mediahafen, it's reached from the train station by bus 725 to Kirchplatz, from where there are several trams into town.

Jugendgästehaus (☎ 557310; www.jugendherberge.de; Düsseldorf Strasse 1; dm €22, s/d from €26/48) On the other bank of the Rhine in posh Oberkassel, this will remain open while undergoing renovation until 2008.

Hotel Haus Hillesheim (☎ 386 860; www.hotel-hillesheim.de; Jahnstrasse 19; s/d €60/70, with shared bathroom €40/55; ☎) Crammed with animal trophies, plants and all manner of bric-a-brac, this dimly lit pub has homey rooms both above it and quieter ones in the garden behind.

Hotel Berial (☎ 490 0490; Gartenstrasse 30; www.hotelberial.de; s/d €60/80; ☎) A youthful ambience reigns here, thanks to the staff and the contemporary furnishings. Décor features lots of blue, blond wood, glass bathroom doors and some bright prints.

Max Hotel Garni (☎ 386 800; www.max-hotelgarni.de; Adersstrasse 65; s/d/tr €65/75/90; ☎) With touches of lime green, up-lighting, red carpet along the wall of one hall and some squiggly original portraits, this lovely modern place has a cheerful atmosphere. Ring ahead to snaffle one of the 11 rooms.

Eating

Cheap meals are also served in the beer halls listed under Drinking.

Libanon Express (☎ 134917; Berger Strasse 19-21; café €2.50-13, restaurant €8-19) Crammed with mirrors and tiles – and with recommendations stickered on the window – this café serves great kebabs, falafel and other Middle-Eastern specialities. Belly dancers perform Wednesday to Saturday in the restaurant next door.

Marktwirtschaft (☎ 860 6848; Benrather Strasse 7; mains €6.50-14.50) With American diner-like red-leather banquettes, this neighbourhood restaurant serves comforting home-style food, ranging from a plate of steamed vegetables to Dutch *matjes*, Wiener schnitzel and Argentinean steak.

Fischhaus (☎ 854 9864; Berger Strasse 3-7; mains €9-26) This huge, glass-fronted seafood restaurant is the sort of classic affair that never goes out of fashion, and buzzes with all ages and demographics. The setting is just formal enough to make it feel special, without being intimidating.

Drinking

Alt beer, a dark and semisweet brew, is typical of Düsseldorf.

Zum Uerige (☎ 866 990; Berger Strasse 1) In this noisy, cavernous place, the trademark Uerige Alt beer flows so quickly that the waiters just carry around trays and give you a glass whenever they spy one empty.

Im Fuchsen (☎ 828 955; Ratzingerstrasse 28) The 'Little Fox' is a typically rumbustious Rheinisch beer hall, with *Schweinhexe* (knuckle of pork) and other local fare.

En de Canon (☎ 329 798; Zollstrasse 7) This centuries-old tavern is popular in summer for its beer garden.

Getting There & Away

From **Düsseldorf International** (DUS; www.duesseldorf-international.de), trains go directly to other German cities, while frequent S-Bahn services (1 and 7) head to Düsseldorf train station.

Low-cost carrier Ryanair uses **Niederrhein (Weeze) airport** (NRN; www.flughafen-niederrhein.de) and it is the usual wheeze. The **shuttle bus** (☎ 06543-501 90; www.bohr-omnibus.de) to Düsseldorf (€11; 1¼ hours) leaves soon after the plane's scheduled arrival.

The many train services from Düsseldorf include to Cologne (€10 to €16, 25 to 30 minutes), Frankfurt-am-Main (€65, 2 hours), Hanover (€46 to €49, 2¾ hours) and Hamburg (€63 to €73, 3½ to four hours).

Getting Around

The metro, trams and buses are useful to cover Düsseldorf's distances. Up to three stops (*Kurzstrecke*) costs €1.10, a ticket for the centre €2 and for the greater city €3.80. Day-passes start at €4.70

AACHEN

☎ 0241 / pop 244,000

If you fancy an indulgent mini-break, Aachen has the perfect recipe. Before reaching its relaxing thermal baths, you'll find yourself wandering narrow cobbled streets past quirky fountains, shops full of gingerbread, one of Germany's most famous cafés, and a small but perfectly formed cathedral.

The town's curative thermal springs were the reason the great Frankish conqueror Charlemagne (Karl der Grosse) made this his capital in 794, and the cathedral he built consolidated its fame. Its proximity to the Netherlands and Belgium gives Aachen – Aken or Aix La Chappelle in Dutch or French – a dynamic international personality, while its large student population saves it from being too touristy and twee.

THE DEVIL'S IN THE DETAIL

If the devil has all the best music, he also has the funniest myths. Aachen lore, for example, has it that you haven't really visited the town unless you've touched the thumb of hell's black prince.

The legend goes that a mysterious benefactor appeared when the town needed more money to finish its cathedral. Locals recognised him as Lucifer by his cloven hoofs, but being *lues* (cunning and crafty, in the local dialect) hatched a plan to deal with him. They agreed when he asked to be paid with the soul of the first being to enter the cathedral, and when the time came released a wolf into the building. Satan pounced on the creature, but flew into a rage on realising he'd been cheated. Storming out of the cathedral, he slammed the door so hard he trapped his thumb.

Today, a statue of the wolf (or Roman bear) stands in the cathedral's antechamber, with a hole in its chest from where its soul was ripped. Meanwhile, 'the devil's thumb' remains stuck in the main cathedral doors – between the side doors currently used. Inside the lion's head on the right-hand door, you can feel, well, a digit-shaped something.

Orientation

Aachen's compact centre is contained within two ring roads roughly tracing the old city walls. The inner ring road, or Grabenring, changes names – most ending in 'graben' – and encloses the old city proper. To get to the tourist office from the Hauptbahnhof, cross Römerstrasse, follow Bahnhofstrasse north and then go left along Theaterstrasse to Kapuzinergraben.

Information

The Web (☎ 997 9210; Kleinmarschierstrasse 74-76; per 10 min €0.50; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Thu, to 3am Fri & Sat, 11am-10pm Sun)

Tourist office (☎ 180 2960/1; www.aachen.de; Atrium Eisenbrunnen, Kapuzinergraben; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat year-round, plus 10am-2pm Sun Apr-Dec)

Sights

OLD TOWN & FOUNTAINS

Next to the tourist office is the **Eisenbrunnen**, the only town fountain with drinkable water; despite its sulphuric 'rotten eggs' smell, it's supposedly good for the digestion.

In the far left-hand corner of the park behind the Eisenbrunnen, you'll find the **Geldbrunnen**, which represents the circulation of money. The comical figures around the pool clutch their coins or purses while the water is sucked down the central plughole (jokingly known as 'the taxman').

Head east along the top of the park here, towards Forum M, and turn left into Buchkremmerstrasse. Soon you'll reach a fountain with a scary-looking creature. This is the mythological **Bahkauv**, which was rumoured to jump on the backs of those returning late

from the pub and demand a lift all the way home.

Buchkremerstrasse becomes Buchel. Turn left just past **Leo van den Daele** (see right), then right again, you'll come to Hühnermarkt, with its **Hühnerdiebbrunnen** (Chicken thief fountain). The hasty thief hasn't noticed one of his stolen chickens is a rooster and is about to unmask him by crowing.

From here, Aachen's main **Markt** is visible just to the northeast. The 14th-century **Rathaus** (adult/concession €2/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 1pm & 2-5pm Sat & Sun) overlooks the Markt, while a fountain statue of **Charlemagne** is in the middle.

Head back down the hill along Krämerstrasse until you come to the **Puppenbrunnen** (Puppet fountain), where you're allowed to play with the movable bronze figures.

Continuing in the same direction for 50m, you'll arrive at Aachen's famous Dom.

DOM

While Cologne's cathedral wows you with its size and atmosphere, Aachen's similarly Unesco-listed **Dom** (Kaiserdom or Münster; www.aachendom.de; ☎ 7am-7pm) impresses with its shiny neatness. The small, Byzantine-inspired **octagon** at the building's heart dates from 805 but was refurbished in 2003, so its ceiling mosaics glitter and its marble columns gleam.

The building's historical significance stems not just from Charlemagne's having ordered it built, but that 30 Holy Roman emperors were crowned here from 936 to 1531.

The brass **chandelier** hanging in the centre was donated by Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa in 1165. Meanwhile, standing at the main altar and looking back towards the door, it's just possible to glimpse Charlemagne's simple marble throne. The man himself lies in the golden **shrine** behind the altar. The cathedral became a site of pilgrimage after his death; there's a major pilgrimage at the start of June 2007.

Multilingual leaflets in the antechamber provide a concise cathedral guide.

THERMAL BATHS

The 8th-century Franks were first lured to 'Ahha' (water) for its thermal springs. And just over 1200 years later, the state-of-the-art **Carolus Thermen** (Carolus Thermal Baths; ☎ 182 740; www.carolus-thermen.de; Stadtgarten/Passtrasse 79;

without/with sauna from €9.50/19) are still reeling them in.

That's hardly surprising, for the complex is part therapeutic spa – good for rheumatism etc – and part swimming centre. Quirky currents whiz you around one pool, water jets bubble up in another and taps pour out cold water in yet another (under which single travellers might wish to shove the many canoodling couples...). Only diehard fans should pay for the sauna, as there's – bizarrely – a steam room accessible to all.

The baths are in the city garden, northeast of the centre.

Sleeping

Jugendgästehaus (☎ 711 010; www.jugendherberge.de; Maria-Theresia-Allee 260; dm €22, s/d €36.50/54; ☎ ☑) This modern DJH outpost sits on a hill overlooking the city, and gets lots of school groups. Take bus 2 to Ronheide.

Hotel Marx (☎ 375 41; www.hotel-marx.de; Hubertusstrasse 33-35; s/d €50/75, with shared bathroom from €35/60) There's a garden with pond out of the back of this traditional family-run place. Inside the rooms are decent, even if the bathrooms are a little cramped.

Hotel Domicil (☎ 705 1200; www.domicil.aachen.de; Lütticher Strasse 27; s €75-85, d €100-110; ☎ ☑) This elegant, neutrally decorated hotel feels like an apartment complex. It's set across two 19th-century terrace houses with its own garden in a quiet district, yet just 10 minutes on foot from the centre.

Hotel Drei Könige (☎ 483 93; www.h3k-aachen.de; Büchel 5; s €80-90, d €110-120, ste from €120; ☎ ☑) The renovated Drei Könige has classy rooms with iron-frame beds (some four-poster) and different Mediterranean colour schemes in each, from cool pale green to sienna red.

Eating & Drinking

Aachen's students have their own 'Latin Quarter' along **Pontstrasse**, with dozens of bars and cheap eats. The street heads northeast off the Markt and runs for nearly a kilometre.

Vitaminbar (☎ 409 3912; Alexaniergraben 13-15; dishes €2.50-6.50) Exotic options like Iranian and Russian are among this café's dozens of tasty sandwich fillings. The salads are just as diverse.

Leo van den Daele (☎ 357 24; Büchel 18; dishes €4.50-8.50) A warren of 17th-century rooms linked by crooked stairs across four mer-

chants' homes, this nationally renowned café specialises in gingerbread, or Printen. Yet you can also enjoy light meals – soups, sandwiches, quiches and *pastetchen* (vol au vents) – among its tiled stoves and antique knick-knacks.

Rose am Dom (☎ 287 82; Fischmarkt 1; mains €8-16) Being stationed in the cathedral's former kitchen gives this place a medieval atmosphere, although its partly seasonal menu is more modern and international. When mussels are on, it's hard to believe you're not in Belgium.

Getting There & Away

There are twice-hourly trains to Cologne (€12.50, 45 to 50 minutes) and Liège (€9.90, 40 minutes), as well as transfers from Düsseldorf and Köln-Bonn airports. The high-speed Thalys train passes through regularly on its way to Brussels and Paris (€80.50, 3½ hours). There's also a frequent bus to Maastricht. The bus station is at the north-eastern edge of Grabenring on the corner of Kurhausstrasse and Peterstrasse.

Getting Around

Most points of interest are easily reached on foot, although the baths are a bit of a hike. Buses cost €1.45 (trip of a few stops), €2 (regular single) or €5 (day pass).

LOWER SAXONY

Lower Saxony (Niedersachsen) likes to make much of its half-timbered towns. Hamelin is certainly a true fairy-tale beauty, and leaning Lüneberg is quite unlike any other you'll see. However, the state is also home to the famous Volkswagen car company, while even the business-minded capital, Hanover, has its diversions. See also 'Bewitching Harz', p464.

HANOVER

☎ 0511 / pop 523,000

German comedians – yes, they do exist – like to dismiss Hanover as 'the autobahn exit between Göttingen and Walsrode'. However, the capital of Lower Saxony is nowhere near that grim. While it's famous for hosting trade fairs, particularly the huge CEBIT computer show in March, it also boasts acres of greenery in the Versailles-like Herrenhäuser Gärten (gardens).

Parts of the central Altstadt (old town) look medieval, but few of them are. They're mostly clever fakes built after intense WWII bombing.

Information

Hannover Tourismus (☎ information 1234 5111, ☎ room reservations 1234 555; www.hannover.de; Ernst-August-Platz 8; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) **Teleclick Hannover** (Schillerstrasse 23; ☎ 10am-11pm Mon-Sat, noon-10pm Sun) Internet access.

Sights & Activities

The enormous **Grosser Garten** (Large Garden; admission €3, free in winter) is the highlight of the **Herrenhäuser Gärten** (☎ 1684 7576; www.hannover.de/herrenhausen/start.htm; ☎ 9am-sunset). It has a small maze and Europe's tallest fountain. Check the website in summer for Wasserspiele, when all fountains are synchronised, and the night-time **illuminations**. The **Niki de Saint Phalle Grotto** is a magical showcase of the artist's work. She was French – her colourful figures adorn the famous Stravinsky fountain outside the Centre Pompidou in Paris – but developed a special relationship with Hanover. There's a popular beer garden in the Grosser Garten. Alternatively, the flora of the **Berggarten** (Mountain Garden; €2, combined entry with Grosser Garten €4) is interesting.

The **Neues Rathaus** (new town hall) was built between 1901 and 1913. Town models in the foyer reveal the extent of WWII devastation. There's a pleasant lakeside café and, if you don't mind queuing, a **curved lift** (adult/child €2/1.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Nov) to a 98m viewing platform.

Beside the Leine River since 1974, are **Die Nanas**, three fluorescent-coloured, earth-mama sculptures by de Saint Phalle. Although major Hanover landmarks, they're best seen on Saturday, when there's a flea market at their feet.

In summer, the **Machsee** (lake) has **ferries** (crossing €3, tour €6) and numerous boats for hire. There's a free public **swimming beach** on the southeast shore.

Sleeping

The tourist office only finds private rooms during trade fairs but can arrange hotel bookings year-round for a fee.

Jugendherberge (☎ 131 7674; www.jugendherberge.de; Ferdinand-Wilhelm-Fricke-Weg 1; dm junior/senior from €18/21; ☎ ☑) This large space-lab

MORE FAIRY-TALE TOWNS

Kids in particular will love Hamelin, just one of 60 towns situated on Germany's so-called **Märchenstrasse** (Fairytale Road; ☎ 0561-707 707; www.deutsche-maerchenstrasse.de; Obere Königsstrasse 15, Kassel). Many Grimms' fairy tales originated along this meandering route, which stretches 600km north from Hanau to Bremen. Polle boasts 'Cinderella's castle' for example, the Rapunzel tale hails from a tower in Trendelburg, and Puss in Boots first stepped out in Oedelsheim. For more details, visit the comprehensive multilingual website.

looking structure houses a modern hostel with breakfast room and terrace bar overlooking the river. Take U3 or U7 to Fischerhof, cross the Lodemannbrücke bridge and turn right.

Gästeresidenz PelikanViertel (☎ 399 90; www.gaesteresidenz-pelikanviertel.de; Pelikanstrasse 11; s €40-230, d €60-260, tr €80-280; 📍) Upmarket student residence meets budget hotel, this huge complex has a wide range of plain but very pleasant rooms, all with kitchenettes. Prices fluctuate wildly, so try to avoid trade fair periods. Take U9 to Pelikanstrasse.

City Hotel Flamme (☎ 388 8004; www.cityhotel.flamme.de; Lammstrasse 3; s €50-65, d €75-90; 📍) Rooms are arranged around a light-filled courtyard with a glass curtain-wall frontage, and the owners will pick you up from the nearby train station.

Lühmanns Hotel am Rathaus (☎ 326 268; www.hotelamrathaus.de; Friedrichswall 21; s €60-85, d €75-90, f €120-140; 📍) Arty posters and even the odd original work of art fill this comfy, tasteful choice. Although it is located on a busy street, double glazing keeps the noise at bay.

Other recommendations:

City Hotel am Thielenplatz (☎ 327 691; www.smartcity.hotel.de; Thielenplatz 2; s €40-50, d €50-60; 📍) Could be fabulous when a retro 1950s conversion is finished.

Etap Hotel (☎ 235 5570; www.etaphotel.com; Runde Strasse 7; s/d €40/50; 📍) Garish but comfortable chain hotel, right near the train station.

Eating & Drinking

Markthalle (Karmarschstrasse 49; dishes €3.50-8) This huge covered market of food stalls and gourmet delicatessens is a no-nonsense

place for a quick bite – both carnivorous and vegetarian.

Maestro (☎ 300 8575; Sophienstrasse 2; mains €4.50-8) This atmospheric subterranean restaurant offers an all-you-can-eat vegetarian buffet (€7) at lunch daily. Its tucked-away courtyard beer garden (shh!) is perfect in summer.

Mr Phung Kabuki (☎ 215 7609; Friedrichswall 10; sushi €2-6, most mains €7-14) Boats bob by on the water-based sushi chain, but you can order all manner of pan-Asian and wok dishes in this airy, trendy restaurant with an enormous range of spirits.

Pier 51 (☎ 807 1800; Rudolf von Bennigsen Ufer 51; mains €6-18) This atmospheric glass-walled cube juts out into the Maschsee, and has an outside 'Piergarten' with old-fashioned covered straw seats. Cuisine is modern and international.

Brauhaus Ernst August (☎ 365 950; Schmiedestrasse 13a) A local institution, the Brauhaus Ernst August brews its own Hannöverscher beer.

Getting There & Around

Hanover's **airport** (HAJ: www.hannover-airport.de) has many connections, including on low-cost carrier Air Berlin (www.airberlin.com).

There are frequent train services to Hamburg (€36, 1¼ hours), Berlin (€53, 1½ hours), Cologne (€56, three hours) and Munich (€101, five hours), among others.

U-Bahn lines from the Hauptbahnhof are boarded in the station's north (follow the signs towards Raschplatz), except the U10 and U17, which are overground trams leaving near the tourist office.

Most visitors only travel in the central 'Hannover' zone. Single tickets are €1.90 and day passes €3.60.

The S-Bahn (S5) takes 16 minutes to the airport (€3.20).

**AROUND HANOVER
Hamelin**

☎ 05151 / pop 59,000

Some German towns just look like they came straight from a fairy story. Thanks to the Brothers Grimm, others are even more inextricably linked. In the 19th century, the two brothers documented national folklore, and their subsequent collection of tales means the name Hamelin (Hameln in German) will be forever associated with 'the Pied Piper of'.

Of course, according to the story, this quaint, ornate town got rid of all its rats when the piper (*Der Rattenfänger*) lured them into the Weser River in the 13th century – and then lost all its children when it refused to pay him. However, you wouldn't really know it. Today, rat-shaped bread, marzipan-filled *Rattenfängertorte* (Pied Piper cake) and fluffy rat toys fill the shops, while 'the Pied Piper' himself can be seen in various tourist guide guises, mesmerising onlooking children with haunting tunes.

The train station is about 800m east of the centre. To get to **Hameln Tourist Information** (☎ 957 823; www.hameln.de/touristinfo; Diesterallee 1; 🕒 9am-6pm Mon-Fri year-round; 9.30am-4pm Sat, 9.30am-1pm Sun May-Sep, 9.30am-1pm Sat Oct-Apr) take bus 2, 3, 4, 12, 21, 33 or 34.

The best way to explore is to follow the **Pied Piper trail** – the line of white rats drawn on the pavements. There are information posts at various points. They're in German, but at least you know when to stop to admire the various restored 16th- to 18th-century half-timbered houses.

LÜNEBURG: THE WOBBLY TOWN

With an off-kilter church steeple, buildings leaning on each other and houses with swollen 'beer-belly' façades, it's as if charming Lüneburg has drunk too much of the Pilsener lager it used to brew.

Of course, the city's wobbly angles and uneven pavements have a more prosaic cause. For centuries until 1980, Lüneburg was a salt-mining town, and as this 'white gold' was extracted from the earth, ground shifts and subsidence knocked many buildings sideways. Inadequate drying of the plaster in the now-swollen façades merely added to this asymmetry.

But knowing the scientific explanation never detracts from the pleasure of being on Lüneburg's comic-book crooked streets.

Between Hanover (€23, one hour; or €17 return Niedersachsen Ticket for 1¼-hour ME services) and Hamburg (€11, 30 minutes), the city's an undemanding day trip from either. From the train station, head west into town towards the highly visible, 14th-century **St Johanniskirche**, whose 106m-high spire leans 2.2m off true. Local legend has it that the architect tried to kill himself by jumping off it. (He fell into a hay cart and was saved, but celebrating his escape later in the pub drank himself into a stupor, fell over, hit his head and died after all.)

The church stands at the eastern end of the city's oldest square, **Am Sande**, full of typically Hanseatic stepped gables. At the western end stands the beautiful black-and-white **Industrie und Handelskammer** (Trade and Industry Chamber).

Continue one block past the Handelskammer and turn right into restaurant-lined Schröderstrasse, which leads to the **Markt**, where the **ornate Rathaus** contains the **tourist office** (☎ 207 6620; www.lueenburg.de; 🕒 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, to 2pm Sat Oct-Apr).

Admire the square, before continuing west along Waagestrasse and down our favourite Lüneburg street, **Auf dem Meere**, en route to the **St Michaeliskirche**. Here the wonky façades and wavy pavements are like something from the 1919 German expressionist movie *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, or out of a Tim Burton film. Just look at the steps leading to the church!

It's too late now to regain your equilibrium, so head for the pubs along **Am Stintmarkt** on the bank of the Ilmenau River.

The **Rattenfängerhaus** (Rat Catcher's House; Osterstrasse 28), from 1602, is perhaps the finest example, with its steep and richly decorated gable. Also not to be missed is the **Hochzeitshaus** (1610-17) at the Markt (square) end of Osterstrasse. The **Rattenfänger Glockenspiel** at the far end chimes daily at 9.35am and 11.35am, while a **carousel of Pied Piper figures** twirls at 1.05pm, 3.35pm and 5.35pm.

Frequent S-Bahn trains (S5) head from Hanover to Hamelin (€9.10, 50 minutes). By car, take the B217 to/from Hanover.

WOLFSBURG

☎ 05361 / pop 124,000

There's no doubt in Wolfsburg that Volkswagen is king – from the huge VW emblem adorning the company's global headquarters (and a factory the size of a small country) to the insignia on almost every vehicle. 'Golfsburg', as it's nicknamed after one of it's most successful models, does a nice sideline in modern architecture. But here in 'the capital of Volkswagen', a brave-new-world theme park called Autostadt is top of the bill.

Orientation & Information

Wolfsburg's centre lies just southeast of the Hauptbahnhof. Autostadt is north across the train tracks. Head through the 'tunnel' under the Phaeno science centre, and you'll see the footbridge.

Wolfsburg tourist office (☎ 899 930; www.tourismus-wolfsburg.de, for English www.wolfsburg.de; Willy Brandt-Platz 3; ☎ 9am-7pm) In the train station.

Sights & Activities

AUTOSTADT

Spread across 25 hectares, **Autostadt** (Car City; ☎ 0800-2886 782 38; www.autostadt.de; Stadtbrücke; adult/concession/child/family €14/11/6/38; ☎ 9am-8pm Apr-Oct, 9am-6pm Nov-Mar) is a celebration of all things VW – so no muttering about the company's recent boardroom scandals up the back there, please! Exhibitions run the gamut of automotive design and engineering, the history of the Beetle and the marketing of individual marques, including VW itself, Audi, Bentley, Lamborghini, Seat and Skoda.

Included in the admission price are 45-minute shuttle **tours** (☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, every 15 min, in English 1.30pm daily) of the enormous Volkswagen factory. The place is larger than Monaco, so you only get to see a snippet on the tour.

Most excitingly, there are **obstacle courses** and **safety training** (€25 each) if you have a valid licence and are comfortable with a left-hand drive car. Ring ahead to organise an English-speaking instructor.

Two hours before closing time, there's a discounted **Abendticket** (€6).

AUTOMUSEUM

For diehard fans not sated by Autostadt, the **AutoMuseum** (☎ 520 71; Dieselstrasse 35; adult/concession/family €6/3/15; ☎ 10am-5pm) has a collection of classic VW models. The collection includes *Herbie*, *the Love Bug*, a beetle made of wood, one of lace iron and the original 1938 Cabriolet presented to Adolf Hitler on his 50th birthday. Take bus 208 from the main bus station to AutoMuseum.

PHAENO

The space-age building beside the train station is **Phaeno** (☎ 0180-106 0600; www.phaeno.de; Willy Brandt-Platz 1; adult/concession/family €11/7/25; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), an expensive new science centre designed by British-based Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid and frequently

populated by hundreds of teenage school children on physics outings. Some 250 hands-on exhibits and experiments – wind up your own rocket, watch thermal images of your body – provide hours of fun. It's very physical, but also requires concentration. Instructions and explanations come in German and English.

Sleeping & Eating

DJH hostel (☎ 133 37; Lessingstrasse 60; dm junior/senior €16.50/19.50; ☎ ☎) Slightly cramped and fairly old, with pine furniture and checked linen, this hostel is nevertheless friendly and extremely central.

Hotel Wolf (☎ 865 60; www.alterwolf.de; Schlossstrasse 21; s/d from €35/50, f €75-85; ☎ ☎) While the rooms inside this attractive, black-and-white half-timbered house aren't particularly fashionable, some are huge. Handy for families, but not for the city's nightlife, it's in a quiet, leafy part of town just behind Autostadt and the city castle.

Cityhotel Journal (☎ 292 662; www.cityhotel-journal.de; Kaufhofpassage 2; s/d from €40/70) Above a pub on the city's main drinking strip, this must get pretty noisy in summer. However, if you're not planning on an early night, it's friendly, homey and convenient.

Global Inn (☎ 2700; www.globalinn.de; Kleistrasse 46; s; €45-65, d €90; ☎ ☎) Some cheaper single rooms are small in this central hotel, but all are of a comfortable corporate standard. There's a very popular Italian restaurant on site, too.

Other recommendations are the **Penthouse Hotel** (☎ 2710; www.penthouse-hotel.de; Schachtweg 22; s apt €45, d apt €55-65; f apt €75), where apartments all have kitchenettes, or the five-star **Ritz Carlton** (☎ 607 000; www.ritzcarlton.com; Autostadt; r from €200; ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎).

There are eight **Autostadt restaurants** within the park, ranging from a cheap American diner (Cylinder) to an upmarket Mediterranean (Chardonnay).

Kebab shops are dotted all along Porschestraße and there are wall-to-wall bar/cafés along the Kaufhofpassage. Other convenient options include the Italian and pizzeria **Aalto Bistro** (☎ 891 689; Porschestraße 1; mains €10-15; ☎ dinner Mon-Sat) and the more upmarket **Walino** (☎ 255 99; Kunstmuseum, Porschestraße 53; mains €16-17.50 or per person 3-courses for 2 €18.50; ☎ closed Mon) located high up in the Kunstmuseum.

Getting There & Around

Frequent ICE train services go to Hanover (€19, 30 minutes) and Berlin (€39, one hour). If you use RE services from Hanover (one hour), a Niedersaschsen ticket will get you to Wolfsburg and back in a day for €17.

Most major sights are easily reached on foot, although a free shuttle bus also runs from the train station down Porschestraße to the town centre.

For longer journeys, single bus tickets cost €1.70. A day pass costs €4. The major bus transfer point (ZOB) is at the northern end of Porschestraße.

BREMEN

☎ 0421 / pop 550,000

Bremen is what Germans call *schön klein*, the equivalent of good things coming in small packages. You can easily travel on foot between the main attractions of its red-brick market place, Art-Deco Böttcherstrasse and the dollhouse-sized Schnoor district.

Best known from the fairy tale of the *Town Musicians of Bremen* – four animals who ran away from their owners to find fame here – Bremen is predictably cute and pretty. But the waterfront promenade along the Weser River is a wonderful place to enjoy a drink and the student district along Ostertorsteinweg is just downright alternative.

ORIENTATION

Head south (straight ahead) from the train station to reach the centre, on banks of the Weser River. The Schlachte waterfront promenade is west of the centre; the Schnoor district lies just east. The student and nightlife district is further east still, along Ostertorsteinweg.

INFORMATION

ErlebnisCARD (adult & 2 children 1/2 days €6.50/8.50) Free public transport and discounts on sights.

Internet.Center Bremen (☎ 277 6600; Bahnhofplatz 22-28; per hr €5; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat, noon-8pm Sun)

Tourist office (☎ 01805-101030; www.bremen-tourism.de; Hauptbahnhof; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 6pm Sat & Sun) Organises daily city tours; branch office (Oberstrasse/Liebfrauenkirchhof; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, to 4pm Sat & Sun)

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Bremen's **Markt** is striking, particularly its ornate, gabled **Rathaus** (town hall). In front stands a 13m-tall medieval statue of the knight **Roland**, Bremen's protector. On the building's western side, you'll find a sculpture of the **Town Musicians of Bremen** (1951). Local artist Gerhard Marcks has cast them in their most famous pose, scaring the robbers who invaded their house, with the rooster atop the cat, perched on the dog, on the shoulders of the donkey.

Also on the Markt is the twin-towered **Dom St Petri** (cathedral), whose most interesting – and slightly macabre – feature is its **Bleikeller** (Lead Cellar; ☎ 365 0441; adult/concession €1.50/1; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, noon-5pm Sun Apr-Oct) Here, open coffins reveal eight corpses that have mummified in the dry underground air. The Bleikeller has its own entrance, south of the main cathedral door.

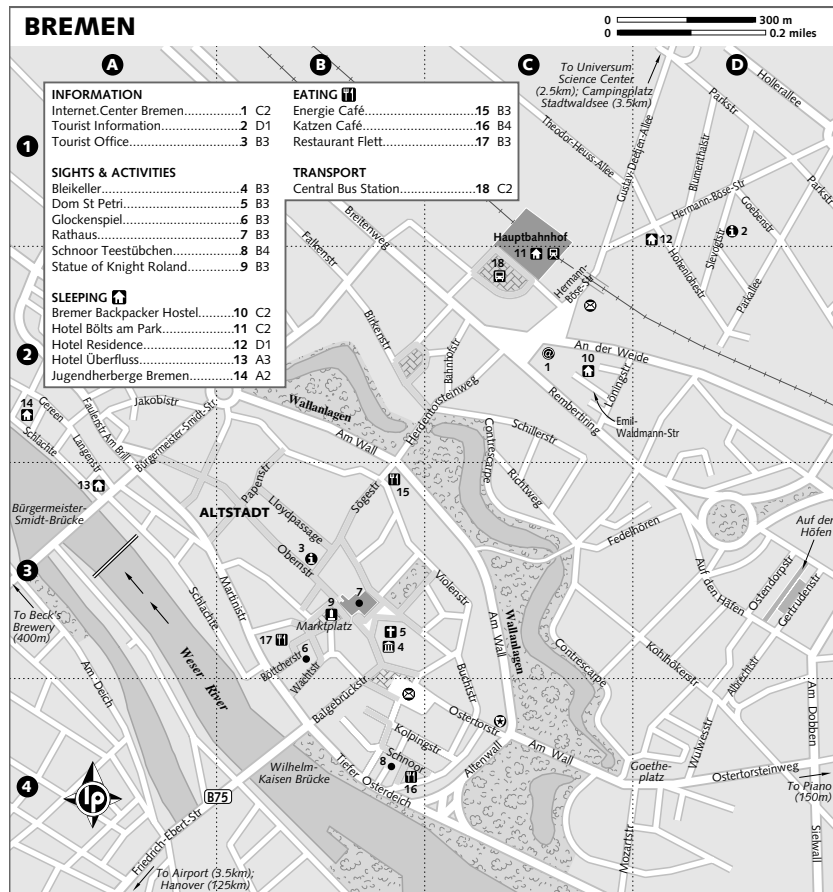
If the Markt is memorable, then nearby **Böttcherstrasse** is unique. It's an opulent Art-Deco alley commissioned by Ludwig Roselius, the inventor of decaffeinated coffee and founder of the company Hag. He later managed to save it from the Nazis, who thought it 'degenerate'. Under the golden relief you enter a world of tall brick houses, shops, galleries, restaurants, a **Glockenspiel** and several museums (which can easily be skipped). If you can, peek in the back door of 'Haus Atlantis' (aka the Hilton hotel), for its phantasmagorical, multicoloured, glass-walled **spiral staircase**.

The maze of narrow winding alleys known as the **Schnoorviertel** was once the fishermen's quarter and then the red-light district. Now its dollhouse-sized cottages are souvenir shops and restaurants. The cute **Schnoor Teestübchen** (Teashop; Wüste Stätte 1) serves Frisian tea and cakes.

With more time, make a visit to the oyster-shaped **Universum Science Center** (☎ 334 60; www.usc-bremen.de; Wiener Strasse 2; adult/concession & child €11/7; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun, last entry 90 min before closing), or the **Beck's Brewery** (☎ 5094 5555; Am Deich 18-19; tours in German & English €7.50; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Sat, to 3pm Sun, in English 2pm Tue-Sun).

SLEEPING

Camping Stadtwaldsee (☎ 841 0748; www.camping-stadtwaldsee.de; Hochschulring 1; camp sites per adult/tent/car €7/4/1.50) Totally rebuilt in late 2005, this



camping ground features modern amenities, a supermarket and café with a lakeside terrace. By car, take the A27 to the university exit in Bremen Nord. Tram 6 will get you close and bus 28 is on the doorstep.

Jugendherberge Bremen (☎ 163 820; www.jugendherberge.de; Kalkstrasse 6; dm junior/senior €21/24, s/d €32/56; ☒ ☒) Like a work of art from the exterior, with a yellow and orange Plexiglas façade and slit rectangular windows, this refurbished building is even better inside. Comfortable dorms are all ensuite, there's a bar/breakfast room with huge glass windows overlooking the Weser River, and a rooftop terrace. Take tram 3 or 5 to Am Brill.

Bremer Backpacker Hostel (☎ 223 8057; www.bremer-backpacker-hostel.de; Emil-Waldmannstrasse 5-6;

dm €16, s/d €27/44, bedding €3; ☒ ☒) Five minutes from the train station, tucked away on a quiet street, you'll find simply furnished but spotless rooms, a kitchen and living room. The communal showers are all on the ground floor – thanks to low water pressure, we presume from the taps on the first floor.

Hotel Böltz am Park (☎ 346 110; www.hotel-boeltz.de; Slevogtstrasse 23; s/d €50/80; ☒) This family-run hotel in a leafy neighbourhood has real character, from the old-fashioned breakfast hall to its well-proportioned rooms. A few singles with hall showers and toilets cost €40.

Hotel Residence (☎ 348 710; www.hotelresidence.de; Hohlenstrasse 42; s €65-100, d €80-140; ☒ ☒)

Some rooms in this century-old terrace are a bit snug, but all are modern, comfortable and clean, while the best doubles – rooms 12 and 22 – have balconies overlooking a quiet street. A sauna, solarium and bar complete the package.

Hotel Überfluss (☎ 322 860; www.hotel-ueberfluss.com; Langenstrasse 72/Schlachte; s/d €135/180; ☒ ☒ ☒) Dragging quantum Bremen into the 21st century is this jaw-dropping design hotel. It's all green-tinted windows overlooking the Weser River, black bathrooms and glowing fibre-optic curtains imported from Las Vegas. However, the friendly staff prevent it from ever becoming intimidating.

EATING

The student quarter in and around Ostersteinweg, **Das Viertel**, is full of restaurants and cafés. The waterfront promenade, **Schlachte**, is more expensive and mainstream, but pleasant nonetheless.

Piano (☎ 785 46; Fehrfeld 64; mains €5.50-9.50) One of the most enduringly popular cafés in the student quarter, Piano serves pizza, pasta, steaks and veggie casseroles. Breakfast can also be enjoyed until 4pm.

Energie Café (☎ 277 2510; cnr Sögestr. & Am Wall; mains €3.50-12.50; ☒ closed Sun) A delightfully upbeat café run by a local power company, this one serves delicious cut-price lunches and solid evening meals. Amuse yourself while waiting between by watching the model surfer on the wave-motion display.

Restaurant Flett (☎ 320 995; Böttcherstrasse 3-5; mains €7-15) Come here for local specialties like *Labskaus* (a hash of beef or pork with potatoes, onion and herring) or *Knipp* (fried hash and oats). Slightly touristy it might be, but it's hard to take against the photo-bedecked room, featuring first-hand snaps of celebs from Elvis to Clinton to Gerhard Schröder.

Katzen Café (☎ 326 621; Schnoor 38; mains €8.50-16.50, 3-course menu €19.50) This Moulin Rouge-style restaurant opens out into a rear sunken terrace bedecked with flowers. The menu runs the gamut from Alsatian to Norwegian, with seafood a strong theme.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Flights from **Bremen airport** (BRE; www.airport-bremen.de) include easyJet (www.easyjet.com) flights to London-Luton.

Frequent trains go to Hamburg (€18.30 to €22, one hour), Hanover (€18.70 to €27,

one hour to one hour and 20 minutes) and Cologne (€52, three hours). Some IC trains run direct to Frankfurt-am-Main (€76, 3½ hours) and Munich (€100, six hours) daily.

GETTING AROUND

Tram 6 leaves the airport frequently, heading to the centre (€2.05, 15 minutes). Other trams cover most of the city. With single bus/tram tickets costing €2.05, a day pass (€5 for one adult and two children) is excellent value.

HAMBURG

☎ 040 / pop 1.7 million

Water, water everywhere – Germany's leading port city has always been outward-looking. Its dynamism, multiculturalism and hedonistic red-light district, the Reeperbahn, all arise from its maritime history.

Joining the Hanseatic League trading bloc in the Middle Ages, Hamburg has been enthusiastically doing business with the rest of the world ever since. In the 1960s, it nurtured the musical talent of the Beatles. Nowadays, it's also a media capital and the wealthiest city in Germany.

The Alster Lakes, the Elbe River and the canals between the Speicherstadt warehouses are all perfect for leisure cruises. Hagglng at the rowdy fish market early on a Sunday is also an unrivalled experience.

ORIENTATION

The Hauptbahnhof is quite central, near the Binnenalster and Aussenalster (Inner and Outer Alster Lakes); the Speicherstadt and port lie south/southwest of these, on the Elbe River. The nightlife districts of St Pauli (containing the Reeperbahn) and the Schanzenviertel are further west. The city's sprawl means using public transport is necessary.

INFORMATION

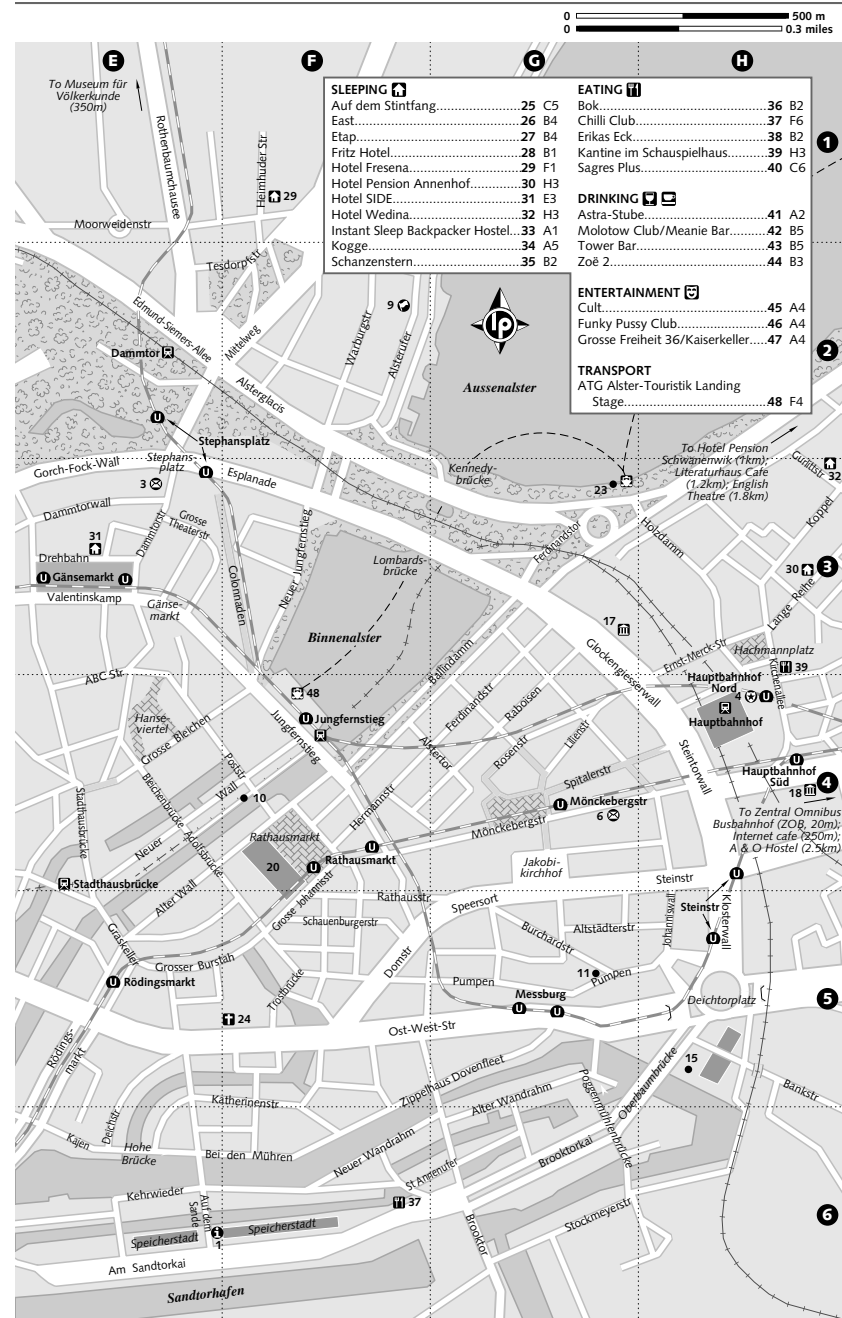
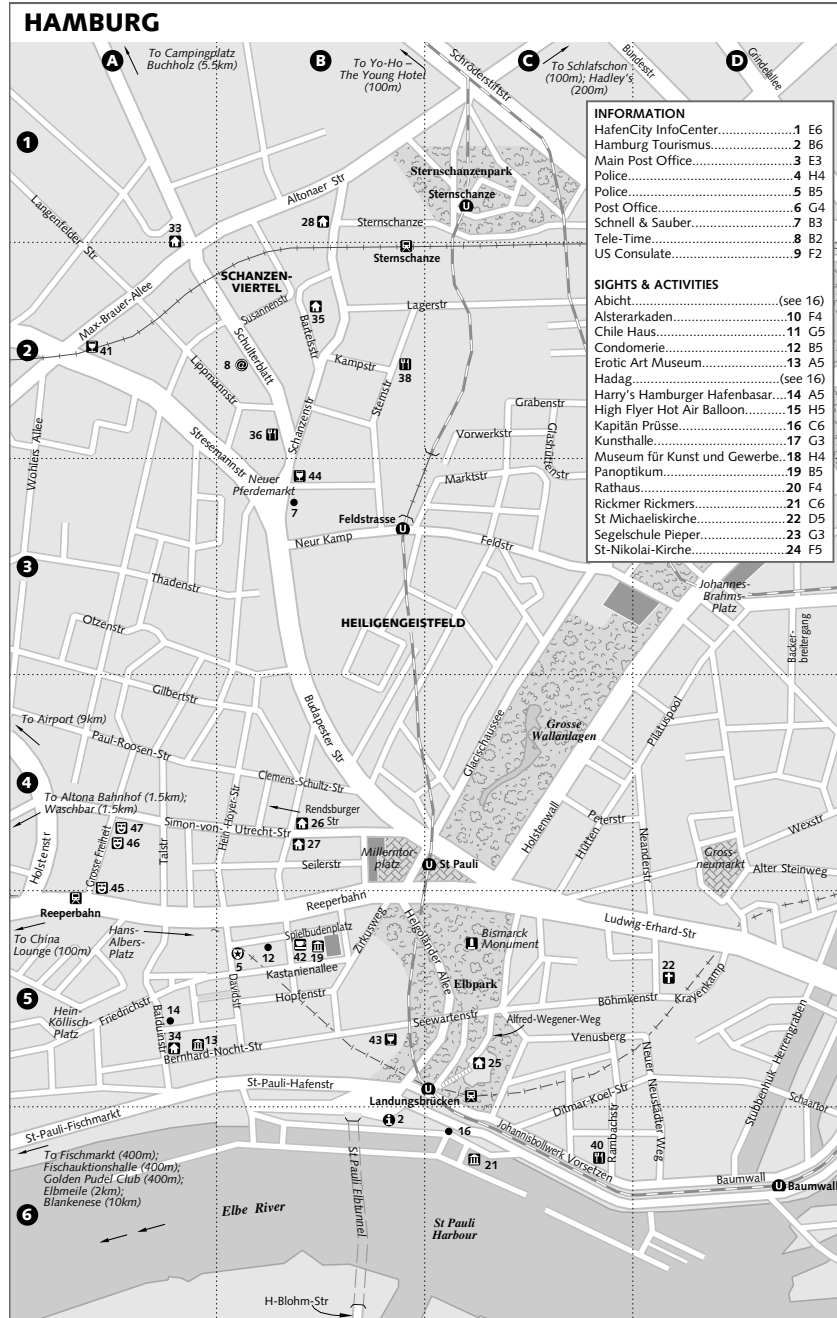
EMERGENCY

Police Hauptbahnhof (Kirchenallee exit); St Pauli (Davidwache, Spielbudenplatz 31; ☒) Reeperbahn)

INTERNET ACCESS

Internet Café (☎ 2800 3898; Adenauerallee 10; per hr €2; ☒ ☒) 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, to 1pm Sun; ☒ Hauptbahnhof)

Tele-Time (☎ 4131 4730; Schulerblatt 39; per hr €3; ☒ ☒) 10am-midnight; ☒ Feldstrasse/Sternschanze)



LAUNDRY**Schnell und Sauber** (Am Neuer Pferdemarkt 27;☎ 6am-11pm; **M** Feldstrasse)**Waschbar** (☎ 8972 6425; Ottenser Hauptstrasse 56;☎ 10am-midnight; **M** Altona) See p521.**POST****Main post office** (☎ 01802-3333; Dammthorstrasse14;☎ 8.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat; **M** Jungfernstieg)**Post office** (☎ 01802-3333; Mönckebergstrasse 7;☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, to 3pm Sat; **M** Hauptbahnhof)**TOURIST INFORMATION****Der Power Pass** (€7 for 1st day, €3 each extra day up to a week) For under-30s, this offers free public transport, reduced museums and sightseeing tours, some free club entries and a free listings magazine.**Hamburg Card** (€7.50/15 1/3 days) Free public transport and museums discounts.**Tourist information** Hamburg Tourismus main train station (☎ information 3005 1200, hotel bookings 3005 1300; www.hamburg-tourismus.de; Kirchenallee exit; ☎ Mon-Sat 8am-9pm, Sun 10am-6pm); Landungsbrücken, btwn piers 4 & 5 (☎ 8am-6pm Mon, Wed & Sun, to 7pm Tue, Thu-Sat Apr-Sep, 10am-6pm Oct-Mar; **M** Landungsbrücken); airport (☎ 5075 1010; ☎ 5.30am-11pm)**DANGERS & ANNOYANCES**

Although safe, Hamburg is undeniably sleazy in parts, with red-light districts around the train station and Reeperbahn. Junkies and drunks also congregate at the Kirchenallee exit of the Hauptbahnhof and at Hansaplatz in St Georg. Fortunately, there's a strong police presence in these areas, too.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES**Old Town**Hamburg's medieval **Rathaus** (☎ 4283 120 10; tours adult/concession €2/1, ☎ tours in English hourly from 10.15am-3.15pm Mon-Thu, to 1.15pm Fri-Sun; **M** Rathausmarkt/Jungfernstieg) is one of Europe's most opulent. North of here, you can wander through the **Alsterarkaden**, the Renaissance-style arcades sheltering shops and cafés alongside a canal or 'fleet'.For many visitors, however, the city's most memorable building is south in the Merchant's District. The 1920s, brown-brick **Chile Haus** (cnr Burchardstrasse & Johannisswall; **M** Mönckebergstrasse/Messberg) is shaped like an ocean liner, with remarkable curved walls meeting in the shape of a ship's bow and staggered balconies to look like decks.**Alster Lakes**A cruise on the Inner and Outer Alster Lakes (Binnenalster and Aussenalster) is one of the best ways to appreciate the elegant side of the city. **ATG Alster-Touristik** (☎ 3574 2419; www.alstertouristik.de; 2hr trip adult/child €10/5; ☎ Apr-Oct; **M** Jungfernstieg) offers regular trips. The company also offers 'fleet' tours.Better yet, hire your own rowboat or canoe. Opposite the Atlantic Hotel you'll find **Segelschule Pieper** (☎ 247 578; www.segelschule-pieper.de; An der Alster; per hr from €12; **M** Hauptbahnhof).**Speicherstadt & Harbour**The beautiful red-brick, neo-Gothic warehouses lining the Elbe archipelago south of the Altstadt once stored exotic goods from around the world. Now the so-called **Speicherstadt** (**M** Messberg/Baumwall) is a popular sightseeing attraction. Although housing many museums (most missable, but check the Hamburg Tourismus website), it's best appreciated by simply wandering through its streets or taking a **Barkassen** boat up its canals. **Kapitän Prüsse** (☎ 313 130; www.kapitaen-pruesse.de; Landungsbrücke No 3; adult/child €12/6) offers regular Speicherstadt tours, leaving from the port (see following). Other Barkassen operators simply tout for business opposite the archipelago.Another way to see the Speicherstadt is from the **High-Flyer Hot Air Balloon** (☎ 3008 6968; www.highflyer-hamburg.de; per 15 min €15; ☎ 10am-midnight, to 10pm winter) moored nearby.The Speicherstadt merges into **HafenCity**, a major project to transform the old docks. Get details at the **InfoCenter** (☎ 3690 1799; Am Sandtor kai 30).Meanwhile, **port and Elbe River cruises** start in summer at the St Pauli Landungsbrücken (**M** Landungsbrücken). The cheapest cruise operator is **Hadag** (☎ 311 7070; www.hadag.de; Brücke 2; 1hr harbour trip adult/child from €9/4.50), while **Abicht** (☎ 317 8220; www.abicht.de; Brücke 1; adult/child €10/5; ☎ noon daily Mar-Nov) offers English commentary.A famous ship museum here is **Rickmer Rickmers** (☎ 319 5959; www.rickmer-rickmers.de; Brücke 1; adult/concession €3/2.50; ☎ 10am-6pm).**Reeperbahn**No discussion of Hamburg is complete without mentioning St Pauli, home of the sleazy, sexadelic **Reeperbahn** (**M** Reeperbahn). While tamer than Amsterdam, it's still Europe's

biggest red-light district – a kind of Champs Elysées of sex shops, peep shows, dim bars and raucous clubs.

Among the 'sights' are the men-only **Herbertstrasse**, the **Erotic Art Museum** (☎ 317 4757; www.erotcartmuseum.de; Bernhard-Nocht-Strasse 69; adult/concession €8/5; ☎ noon-10pm, to midnight Fri & Sat), and the **Condomerie** (Spielbudenplatz 18), with its extensive collection of prophylactics and sex toys.**Harry's Hamburger Hafenbasar** (☎ 312 482; www.hafenbasar.de; cnr Balduinstrasse & Erichstrasse; adult/child €2.50/1.50, redeemable against any purchase; ☎ noon-6pm Tue-Sun) is bursting with African statues, Asian masks and other ephemera shipped back from abroad.**Fischmarkt**Here's the perfect excuse to stay up all Saturday night. Every Sunday between 5am and 10am, curious tourists join locals of every age and walk of life at the famous Fischmarkt in St Pauli. The market has been running since 1703, and its undisputed stars are the boisterous **Marktschreier** (market criers) who hawk their wares at full volume. Live bands also entertainingly crank out cover versions of ancient German pop songs in the adjoining **Fischauktionshalle** (Fish Auction Hall). Take bus 112 to Hafentreppe.**Blankenese**The upmarket western district of **Blankenese** (**M** Blankenese, then bus 48 to Krögers Treppe or Weseberg), a former fishing village, is wonderful to explore, as are its fine houses also set on a hillside labyrinth of narrow, cobbled streets. There's a network of **58 stairways** (4864 steps total!). The best views of the broad Elbe River and the container ships putting out to sea are enjoyed from the 75m-high **Süllberg** hill.**Museums**Three of Hamburg's dozens of museums stand out. The **Hamburger Kunsthalle** (☎ 428 131 200; www.hamburger-kunsthalle.de; Glockengiesserwall; adult/concession €8.50/5; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu; **M** Hauptbahnhof) consists of two buildings – and old one housing 20th-century art, and a new white concrete cube of contemporary works – linked by a memorable underground passage.The **Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe** (Museum of Arts & Crafts; ☎ 428 542 732; www.mkg-hamburg.de; Steintorplatz 1; adult/concession €8/5, both from 4pmTue & 5pm Thu €5; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu; **M** Hauptbahnhof) isn't quite so exalted, but its posters, ornaments and temporary exhibitions are always lots of fun.The **Museum für Völkerkunde** (Museum of Ethnology; ☎ 01805-308 888; www.voelkerkundemuseum.com; Rothenbaumchaussee 64; adult/concession €6/3, Fri all €3; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 9pm Thu; **M** Hallerstrasse) demonstrates sea-going Hamburg's acute awareness of the outside world. The giant statues from Papua New Guinea at the top of the stairs are unforgettable.**Churches**From the tower of the **St Michaeliskirche** (tower adult/concession €3/1.50; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Oct, to 5pm Nov-Mar; **M** Stadthausbrücke) you have panoramic views.The WWII-damaged **St-Nikolai-Kirche** (Ost-West-Strasse; adult/child €2/1; ☎ 11am-5pm; **M** Rödingsmarkt) is now an antiwar memorial, with some chilling photos of the then-bombed-out city.**SLEEPING Budget**For private rooms, contact **Bed & Breakfast** (☎ 491 5666; www.bed-&-breakfast.de), which has singles from €27 to €45 and doubles from €40 to €70.**Campingplatz Buchholz** (☎ 540 4532; www.camping-buchholz.de; Kieler Strasse 274; camp sites per person/car €5/5, tent €8-11; **M** Hamburg-Stellingen/Hagenbecks Tierpark) This small, family-run site has decent washing facilities, lots of shade and now some private hotel rooms. It's well connected to the city. When driving, take the A7/E45 and take exit 26 to Hamburg-Stellingen.**A & O Hostel** (☎ 2104 0294; www.aohostel.com; Hammer Landstrasse 170; dm €12, s/d €29/32, breakfast €5, bedding €3; **P** ☎ **M**; **M** Hammer Kirche) Typical of the A & O chain – new and clean, but a trifle bland – the Hamburg branch has a slightly out-of-the-way location.**Instant Sleep Backpacker Hostel** (☎ 4318 2310; www.instantsleep.de; Max-Brauer-Allee 277; dm €15-20, s/d €28/44; **M**; **M** Sternschanze) Brightly painted murals distract you from this place's relatively spartan surrounds. It's friendly, though, and in the happening Schanzenviertel.**AufdemStintfang** (☎ 313 488; www.jugendherberge.de; Alfred-Wegener-Weg 5; dm €19-22, d €47; **P** ☎ **M**; **M** Landungsbrücken) Modern, clean and convenient (head out of the U-Bahn station, up some steps and you're at the front door),

this DJH hostel overlooks the Elbe and the harbour. With lots of large, noisy school groups, however, it's very keen on rules, and you're locked out part of the day.

Hotel Pension Annenhof (☎ 243 426; www.hotelannenhof.de; Lange Reihe 23; s/d €40/70; ☒ ☒ ☒) Behind the grubby façade, Annenhof's surprisingly attractive rooms have polished wooden floorboards and bright colour schemes, but no breakfast.

Other recommendations:

Schanzenstern (☎ 439 8441; www.schanzenstern.de; Bartelsstrasse 12; dm €18, s/d/tr €36/52/62; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Sternschanze) Backpackers' hostel with older rooms and healthy café.

Kogge (☎ 312 872; www.kogge-hamburg.de; Bernhard-Nocht-Strasse 59; s/d €29.50/48.50; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) Quirkily themed rock and roll pub with 5pm check-out.

Etap (☎ 306 220; www.etaphotel.com; Simon-von-Utrecht Strasse 64; s/d €44/52; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M St Pauli) Unusually central location for this budget chain.

Midrange

Schlafschön (☎ 4135 4949; www.schlafschoen.de; Monetastrasse 4; s with shared bathroom €55-75, d with shared bathroom €85; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Schlump). In the same former hospital as Hadley's, you'll find this separate B&B, where sunny beach-house colours are complemented by Turkish throws and Moroccan tiles. The centrepiece is a huge breakfast room, with a courtyard balcony. Look for the door saying 'Schwesterhaus' on the left side of the street near Beim Schlump.

Hotel Fresena (☎ 410 4892; www.hotelfresena.de; Moorweidenstrasse 34; s €56-70, d €84; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Dammtor) Bright walls, 1970s graphic-design posters, and vaguely Oriental touches and a largely nonsmoking policy make this an excellent choice in the five-floor, five-pension Dammtorpalais. Breakfast is extra.

Hadley's (☎ 417 871; www.bed-&-breakfast-hamburg.de; Beim Schlump 85; s/d from €60/70; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Schlump) This B&B's beds are set on a mezzanine platform (reached by ladder) above living areas mostly decorated in grey-blue tones. Most rooms have shared bathrooms. The place is set in a former hospital and while you can order breakfast in your room (€5 extra), we recommend heading to Hadley's warmly decorated café, just around the corner in the totally transformed ER.

Yo-Ho – The Young Hotel (☎ 284 1910; www.yoho-hamburg.de; Moorkamp 5; s/d €70/90; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Schlump/Christuskirche) Fashionable without being pretentious, the Yo-Ho is an exotic mix of

ascetic, vaguely Japanese rooms, a magnificent 1001-nights breakfast room and a great Syrian restaurant. Under-26s get €20 off room rates.

Hotel Wedina (☎ 280 8900; www.wedina.de; Gurlittstrasse 23; s €75-145, d €110-165; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Hauptbahnhof) JK Rowling and Michel Houellebecq (now, that would be an interesting conversation) are just two authors who've been billeted in this arty relaxed hotel when doing public readings in the nearby Literaturhaus. There's 'urban living' in the green, blue and yellow-schemed houses. The group- and family-friendly red house also takes longer bookings.

Other recommendations:

Fritz Hotel (☎ 822 2283 0; www.fritzhotel.com; Schanzenstrasse 101-103; s/d €60/90; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Sternschanze) This stylish townhouse hotel, decorated in white and grey with touches of red, is convenient but a tad noisy at the front.

Hotel-Pension Schwanenwik (☎ 220 0918; www.hotel-schwanenwik.de; Schwanenwik 29; s/d €70/90; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Hauptbahnhof, then bus 6 to Mundsburger Brücke) Well-run place overlooking the Aussenalster. Also has some rooms with shared facilities (s/d €45/65).

Top End

Hamburg has many ritzy hotels, both designer and traditional, but you could do worse than starting with these.

East (☎ 309 933; Simon-von-Utrecht-Strasse 31; r €150-375; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M St Pauli) Pillars, walls and lamps emulate organic forms in the public areas of this warm, richly decorated design hotel. Floors are themed by plants and spices.

SIDE (☎ 309 990; www.side-hamburg.de; Drehbahn 49; r €190-230; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Stephansplatz/Gänsemarkt) Italian designer Matteo Thun has created a space-age millionaire's bachelor pad here.

EATING

The **Schanzenviertel** (M Feldstrasse/Schanzenstern) swarms with cheap eateries; try **Schulterblatt** for Portuguese outlets or **Susanenstrasse** for Asian and Turkish. Conversely, be aware that many fish restaurants around the Landungsbrücken are rather over-rated and quite touristy.

Erikas Eck (☎ 433 545; Sternstrasse 98; dishes €4.50-7.50; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Feldstrasse/Sternschanze) Hamburg's night-owls flock to this red-eye specialist, which starts serving breakfast at 1am.

Kantine im Schauspielhaus (☎ 2487 1239; Kirchallee 39; lunches €4.50-7.50; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Landungsbrücken) For a more ele-

THE ELBMEILE

Hamburg's western riverfront from Altona to Övelgönne – the Elbmeile or Elbe Mile – is Germany's hottest dining scene. Best known is **Das Weisse Haus** (☎ 390 9016; Neumühlen 50; menus €28 & €36), owned by TV chef Tim Mälzer, a sort of local Jamie Oliver. However, serious restaurant critics tip **Le Canard** (☎ 8812 9531; www.lecanard-hamburg.de; Elbchausee 139; mains €16-28) for an out-of-this-world experience. Both restaurants serve modern international cuisine.

More relaxed is **Lust auf Italien** (☎ 382 811; Grosse Elbstrasse 133; mains €7-17), with its communal wooden benches. The completely informal venues are the summertime 'beach' clubs. There's one along Grosse Elbstrasse not far from Lust auf Italien, or try the kiosk **Strandperle** (Schulberg 2), further west from Das Weisse Haus.

(M Hauptbahnhof) There's as much theatre in this bustling basement restaurant as there is on the stage above, as waiters patrol between the tables calling out ready orders of pasta, salad or meat, and thespians gossip between rehearsals over the almost obligatory glass of house red.

Literaturhaus Café (☎ 220 1300; Schwanenwik 38; dishes €5-15; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Hauptbahnhof) With golden walls and heavy chandeliers, this stunningly baroque café positively glows, as you will too after partaking of its Mediterranean bistro fare.

Chilli Club (☎ 3570 3580; Am Sandtorkai 54; dishes €4-20; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Baumwall) This trendy noodle bar is tucked away in the industrial-looking Hafens City. Asian tapas, dim sum and sushi are also served within the restaurant's red-and-black interior.

Bok (☎ 4318 3597; Schulterblatt 3; mains €9-15; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Feldstrasse/Sternschanze) Thai, Korean and Japanese food is on the menu at this cool but casual pan-Asian restaurant in the Schanzenviertel. It's large, and if fully booked has at least three sister outlets nearby to direct you to.

DRINKING & ENTERTAINMENT

Zoë2 (Neuer Pferdemarkt 17; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Feldstrasse) The battered sofas, rough-hewn walls and old lampshades here prove that the ad-hoc, second-hand look so popular in Berlin is a Hamburg hit, too. Bottled beers and cocktails provide all the sophistication needed.

Astra-Stube (☎ 4325 0626; www.astra-stube.de; Max-Brauer-Allee 200; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) This is a lo-fi DJ bar with some live bands that pulls in curious tourists and all types and ages from the St Pauli neighbourhood or 'Kiez'.

Tower Bar (☎ 311 137 0450; Seewartenstrasse 9; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Landungsbrücken) For a more ele-

gant, mature evening, repair to this 14th-floor eerie of the Hotel Hafen for unbeatable harbour views.

Meanie Bar/Molotow Club (☎ 310 845; www.molotowclub.com; Spielbudenplatz 5; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) One of the few venues along the Reeperbahn with real local cred, the retro Meanie Bar sits above the Molotow Club, where an alternative, independent music scene thrives by hosting the likes of the White Stripes, the Hives, the Kills and the Bravery.

Cult (☎ 2982 2180; Grosse Freiheit 2; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) Claiming to be Hamburg's most beautiful club, Cult serves up an unimpeachable, good-time mix of '70s and '80s music in its shiny, cathedral-like main room.

Grosse Freiheit 36/Kaiserkeller (☎ 3177 7811; Grosse Freiheit 36; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) Wedged between live sex theatres and peep shows, this is popular for live rock and pop, particularly as the Beatles played in the basement Kaiserkeller.

Funky Pussy Club (☎ 314 236; Grosse Freiheit 34; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) Despite the dreadful name, this artistically decorated place is a hit for its mainstream chart-toppers and hip-hop, dance and house. Most drinks are €1 on a Thursday.

China Lounge (☎ 3197 6622; Nobistor 14; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) This leading club has four areas playing electro, house, hip-hop and R&B – the main floor is under a huge laughing Buddha. Thursday is students' evening.

Golden Pudel Club (☎ 3197 9930; Fischmarkt 27; ☒ ☒ ☒; ☒ ☒ ☒) (M Reeperbahn) In a ramshackle fisherman's hut near the waterfront, this underground bar/club plays an eclectic mix of, electronica, hip-hop, R'n'B and reggae to a mixed crowd.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Hamburg's **airport** (HAM: www.flughafen-hamburg.de) has frequent flights to domestic and European cities, including on low-cost carrier Air Berlin (www.airberlin.com).

For flights to/from Ryanair's so-called 'Hamburg-Lübeck' see p542.

Bus

The **Zentral Omnibus Busbahnhof** (ZOB, central bus station; ☎ 247 5765; Adenauer Allee 78; 🕒 6.30am-9pm) is southeast of the Hauptbahnhof and most popular for services to central and eastern Europe. **Eurolines** (☎ 4024 7106; www.eurolines.com) has buses to Prague (one way/return €55/98) and Warsaw (one way/return €55/86), for example. However, if you call or visit, you'll find several specialist operators.

Autokraft (☎ 208 8660) travels to Berlin frequently for €24/39 one way/return. Elsewhere, **Berlin Linienbus** (☎ 030-861 9331; www.berlinlinienbus.de) and **Rainbow Tours** (☎ 3209 3309; www.rainbowtours.de, in German) are both very good options for travelling to Berlin or London, respectively.

Car & Motorcycle

The A1 (Bremen-Lübeck) and A7 (Hanover-Kiel) cross south of the Elbe River.

Train

When reading train timetables, remember that there are two main train stations: Hamburg Hauptbahnhof and Hamburg-Altona. There are frequent RE/RB trains to Lübeck (€10, 45 minutes), as well as various services to Hanover (€36, 1½ hours) and Bremen (€18.30 to €22, one hour). In addition there are EC trains to Berlin (€48 to €58, 1½ to two hours), Cologne (€68 to €78, four hours) and Munich (€111, six to nine hours). Overnight train services also travel to international destinations such as Copenhagen and Paris.

GETTING AROUND To/From the Airport

The **Airport Express** (☎ 227 1060; www.jasper-hamburg.de) runs between the Hauptbahnhof and airport (€5; 25 minutes, every 15 to 20 minutes, 🕒 6am-11pm). You can also take the U1 or S1 to Ohlsdorf, then change to bus 110.

Public Transport

There is an integrated system of buses, U-Bahn and S-Bahn trains. Day tickets, brought from machines before boarding, cost €5.80, or €4.90 after 9am. From midnight to dawn the night-bus network takes over from the trains, converging on the main metropolitan bus station at Rathausmarkt.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN

Sandwiched between the North and Baltic seas, Schleswig-Holstein is Germany's answer to the Côte d'Azur. Of course, the northern European weather here on the Danish border often makes it a pretty funny sort of answer, as dark clouds and strong winds whip in across this flat peninsula. Still, people flock to the beaches on the coasts and the countryside in between has a stark beauty.

LÜBECK

☎ 0451 / pop 215,000

Oh, how the mighty have fallen! But Lübeck doesn't look like she cares. Once the 'queen' of the Hanseatic League – a powerful medieval trading bloc – she's now just a provincial town, yet she still boasts an extraordinary appearance.

The two pointed cylindrical towers of Lübeck's Holstentor (gate) lean towards each other across the stepped gable that joins them, behind which the streets are lined with medieval merchants' homes and spired churches forming the city's so-called 'crown'. It's hardly surprising that this 12th-century gem is on Unesco's World Heritage List. The place looks so good you could eat it – especially the colourful displays of its famous marzipan, which you actually can.

Orientation & Information

Lübeck's old town is set on an island ringed by the canalised Trave River, a 10-minute walk east of the main train station. Leaving the station, head through the bus station and veer left along Hansestrasse. The tourist office is just across the Puppenbrücke (Doll Bridge), near the Holstentor. There are billboard maps all over town and signs in English.

Lübeck Travemünde Tourismus (☎ 01805 882 233; www.luebeck-tourism.de; Holstentorplatz 1; 🕒 9.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun Jun-Sep,

9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat Oct-May) With café and Internet terminals, staff can organise city tours and sell discount cards.

Sights

The impossibly cute city gate or **Holstentor** (☎ 122 4129; adult/concession €5/3; 🕒 10am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) serves as Lübeck's museum as well as its symbol. It's been under renovation, but should be out of its clever *trompe l'oeil* wraps by now. The six gabled brick buildings east of the Holstentor are the **Salzspeicher**, once used to store the salt (from Lüneburg, p529) that was pivotal to Lübeck's Hanseatic trade.

Behind these warehouses, the Trave River forms a moat around the old town, and if you do one thing in Lübeck in summer, it should be a **boat tour**. From April to September, **Maak-Linie** (☎ 706 3859; www.maak-linie.de) and **Quandt-Linie** (☎ 777 99; www.quandt-linie.de) depart regularly from either side of the Holstentorbrücke. Prices are adult/student/child €7/5.50/3.50.

Each of Lübeck's seven churches offer something different. The shattered bells of the **Marienkirche** (Schüsselbuden 13; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Sep, to 5pm Oct, to 4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) still lie on the floor where they fell after a bombing raid. There's also a little devil sculpture outside, with an amusing fairy tale (in English). The tower lift in the **Petrikirche** (Schmiedstrasse; adult/concession €2.50/1.50; 🕒 11am-4pm Tue-Sun, to 6pm mid-Nov-mid-Dec, closed Feb) affords superb views.

The **Rathaus** (town hall; ☎ 122 1005; Breite Strasse 64; adult/concession €3/1.50; tours 🕒 11am, noon & 3pm Mon-Fri) is ornate, but the tours are in German and, frankly, most visitors will prefer a visit to **JG Niederegger** (Breite Strasse 89) opposite. This is Lübeck's mecca of chocolate-coated **marzipan**, with lots of sweet gifts and an adjoining café.

Lübeck has some 90 lovely *Gänge* (walkways) and *Höfe* (courtyards) tucked away behind its main streets, the most famous being the **Füchtingshof** (Glockengiesserstrasse 25; 🕒 9am-noon & 3-6pm) and the **Glandorps Gang** (Glockengiesserstrasse 41-51).

Both of these are near the **Günter Grass-Haus** (☎ 122 4192; www.guenter-grass-haus.de; Glockengiesserstrasse 21; adult/concession €4/2.50, 'Kombi' card with Buddenbrookhaus €7/4; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Dec, 11am-5pm Nov-Mar). The author of *The Tin Drum* (*Die Blechtrommel*) has lived in town for years.

Fellow Nobel Prize-winning author Thomas (*Death in Venice*) Mann was born in Lübeck and he's commemorated in the award-winning **Buddenbrookhaus** (☎ 122 4190; www.buddenbrookhaus.de; Mengstrasse 4; adult/concession €5/3; 'Kombi' card with Buddenbrookhaus €7/4; 🕒 10am-6pm Apr-Dec, 11am-5pm Nov-Mar).

For children, there's a fantastic **Marionettentheater** (Puppet Theatre; ☎ 700 60; cnr Am Kolk & Kleine Petersgrube; 🕒 Tue-Sun). Alternatively, ask the tourist office about the nearby seaside resort of **Travemünde**.

Sleeping BUDGET

Campingplatz Schönböcken (☎ 893 090; fax 892 287; Steinrader Damm 12; camp sites per person/tent/car €4.50/3.50/1; 🕒 Apr-Oct) This modern camping ground has a kiosk, entertainment room and children's playground, although two readers have complained about the lack of shade in summer. It's 15 minutes by bus west of the city centre (take bus 7).

Jugendgästehaus Altstadt (☎ 702 0399; www.jugendherberge.de; Mengstrasse 33; dm junior/senior €18/21) If you prefer convenience, opt for this central DJH hostel. It isn't particularly new, but it's cosy and comfortable enough.

Vordem Burgtor (☎ 33433; www.jugendherberge.de; Am Gertrudenkirchhof 4; dm junior/senior €17/20; (P) 📺) Those fussier about their furnishings might prefer the huge, modern Vor dem Burgtor, however, it's popular with school groups, and outside the old town – just.

Hotel zur Alten Stadtmauer (☎ 737 02; www.hotelstadtmauer.de; An der Mauer 57; s/d €45/75, with shared bathroom from €38/65; (P) 📺) With pine furniture and splashes of red or yellow, this simple 25-room hotel is bright and cheerful. The wooden flooring means sound carries, but customers tend not to be the partying type. Back rooms overlook the river.

Two very cheap and basic places are **Sleep-Inn** (☎ 719 20; www.cvim-luebeck.de/cvim; Grosse Petersgrube 11; dm €12.50; 🕒 mid-Jan-mid-Dec) and the **Rucksackhotel** (☎ 706 892; www.rucksackhotel-luebeck.de; Kanalstrasse 70; dm €13-15, d €34-40, bedding €3; 📺). The latter has a vegetarian café open to the public.

MIDRANGE & TOP END

Hotel Lindenhof (☎ 872 100; www.lindenhof-luebeck.de; Lindenstrasse 1a; s €65-80, d €85-110, f €100-135; (P) 📺) Its rooms are business-like and small, but a healthy breakfast buffet,

friendly service and little extras, (free biscuits, newspapers, and a 6am to midnight snack service) propel the Lindenhof into a superior league.

Hotel Jensen (☎ 702 490; www.hotel-jensen.de; An der Obertrave 4-5; s €65-85, d €85-110) Classic and romantic, this old Patrizierhaus (mansion house) is conveniently located facing the Salzspeicher across the Trave River. Its seafood restaurant, Yachtzimmer, is also excellent.

Klassik Altstadt Hotel (☎ 702 980; www.klassik-altstadt-hotel.de; Fischergrube 52; s/d €75/130, ste from €135; ♻️) Each room here is dedicated to a different, mostly German, writer or artist (somehow Russia's Nikolai Gogol creeps in). It's a token gesture, though, and the overwhelming impression is of a decent, traditionally furnished hotel.

Radisson SAS Senator Hotel (☎ 1420; www.senatorhotel.de, Willy-Brandt-Allee 6; s/d €135/160; ♻️) The Senator's three rectangular brick wings are spectacularly cantilevered out into the Trave River, like something from *War of the Worlds*. Rooms are newly refurbished in opulent Southeast Asian colonial style, and there are wonderful restaurant views.

Eating

Suppentopf (☎ 400 8136; Fleischerstrasse 36; soups €3.50; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri, closed Jul & Aug) Join Lübeck's office workers for a stand-up lunch of delicious, often spicy soup, in this progressive modern kitchen.

Tipasa (☎ 706 0451; Schlumacherstrasse 12-14; mains €4-16) Pizzas, curries and other budget meals are served below the faux caveman frescos of animals and Australian Aboriginal dot paintings.

Nui (☎ 203 7333; Beckergrube 72; sushi €2-16, mains €9-17; ☎ dinner only Sat, closed Sun) Tempting smells waft from the artfully organised designer plates in this trendy but relaxed Thai-cum-Japanese restaurant.

Schiffergesellschaft (☎ 767 76; Breite Strasse 2; mains €10-23) The fact it's a tourist magnet can't detract from this 500-year-old guildhall's thrilling atmosphere. Ships' lanterns, a gilded chandelier and orange Chinese-style lamps with revolving maritime silhouettes all join 17th-century ship models in hanging from the painted, wooden-beamed ceiling. Staff in long white aprons serve fishy Frisian specialities and local beer.

Getting There & Away

Lübeck's **airport** (LBC; www.flughafen-luebeck.de) is linked to London by budget carrier Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) and to Gdansk in Poland by Hungarian low-cost carrier Wizzair (www.wizzair.com).

To head into town, catch scheduled bus 6 to the Hauptbahnhof and the neighbouring central bus station. If you're flying on Ryanair to 'Hamburg-Lübeck' there are synchronised shuttle buses direct to Hamburg (one way €8, 1¼ hours).

Otherwise, trains head to Hamburg at least once an hour (€10, 45 minutes) and there are frequent services to Schwerin (€11.70, 1¼ hours). Trains to/from Copenhagen also stop here.

Getting Around

Frequent double-decker buses run to Travemünde (€3.50, 45 minutes) from the central bus station. City buses also leave from here; a short journey of a few stops costs €1.40, a normal single costs €1.90 and a trip from the airport is €2.15.

NORTH FRISIAN ISLANDS

Germany's North Frisian Islands are a strange proposition. Hearing of their long grass-covered dunes, shifting sands, bird colonies and rugged cliffs, you'd imagine them as the domain of hardy nature-lovers. Instead, they're a favourite of the German jetset and actually feel more like Martha's Vineyard. Traditional reed-thatched cottages now house luxury goods stores, such as Cartier and Louis Vuitton, while car parks on Sylt are frequently crammed with Mercedes and Porsches.

Still, bicycle-riding nobodies can still be seen taking in the pure sea air in the remoter corners of glamorous Sylt. Amrum and Föhr are more peaceful still.

SYLT

☎ 04651 / pop 21,600

Even on Sylt, the most accessible and hence busiest island, it's possible to get back to nature. Admittedly not in Westerland, which is the largest town and Sylt's Miami Beach. Here high-rises obscure views of the beach, although some of the **world's best windsurfing** is off this shore.

However, even by the time you reach Kampen things are changing. Kampen might resemble St Tropez, with ritzy restaurants and celebrity guests. But it's also home to the 52.5m-tall **Uwe Dune**. Climb the wooden steps to the top for a 360-degree view.

Towards List, on the island's northern tip, is the popular **Wanderdünengebiet**, where people hike between grass-covered dunes. Or try List's **beach-side sauna**.

Inside the Westerland train station, there's an **information pavilion** (☎ 846 1029; ☎ 9am-4pm in summer, reduced hr winter) or try **Westerland Tourism** (☎ 9980 or 0180 550 9980; www.westerland.de; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Thu, to 2pm Fri).

Accommodation is at a premium in summer, but ask the tourist office about cheaper private rooms. Beware that credit cards are not always accepted – even in some mid-range hotels. A small *Kurtaxe*, or resort tax, will be added to your bill.

Campingplatz Kampen (☎ 420 86; Möwenweg 4; camp sites per person/tent/car €3.50/4.50/1.50; ☎ Easter-Oct) Admittedly with more caravans than tents, this is still beautifully set amid dunes near Kampen, 500m from the beach.

Hostels include the Hörnum **Jugendherberge** (☎ 880 294; www.jugendherberge.de; Friesenplatz 2; dm €15.50), in the south of the island, and List's **Jugendherberge** (☎ 870 397; www.jugendherberge.de; List; dm €19). Neither is very central, but bus services bring you close.

Hotel Gutenberg (☎ 988 80; www.hotel-gutenberg.de; Friedrichstrasse 22, Westerland; s €65-75, d €115-135; ☎) Sea-green stained wood sets the tone for this clean, friendly and light-filled place. The hotel takes credit cards. The cheaper doubles (€100) share spotless facilities.

Hotel Wünschmann (☎ 5025; www.hotelwunschmann.de; Andreas-Dirks-Strasse, Westerland; s €80-140, d €120-250; ♻️) The foyer has a modern designer ambience and more traditionally decorated rooms, some with seaside balconies.

Gosch (fish sandwiches €2-3.50, meals €6-10) The Gosch fast-fish chain has colonised mainland Germany, but it originated in Sylt and remains here in force.

Kupferkanne (☎ 410 10; Stapelhooger Wai, Kampen; meals €5.50-9) Giant mugs of coffee and huge slices of cake are served outdoors at this *Alice in Wonderland*-style café, where wooden tables surrounded by a maze of low bramble hedges overlook the Wadden Sea. Meals are served in the attached Frisian house.

Sansibar (☎ 964 646; Hörnum Strasse 80; Rantum; mains €6-32) This large grass-roof pavilion on the beach north of Hörnum is ideal for a drink or dinner at sunset.

Getting There & Around

Sylt is connected to the mainland by a narrow causeway exclusively for trains. Regular services travel from Hamburg (Altona and Hauptbahnhof) to Westerland (€39, three hours).

If driving, you must load your vehicle onto a **car train** (☎ 995 0565; www.syltshuttle.de; one way €43) in Niebüll near the Danish border. There are constant crossings (usually at least once an hour) in both directions, and no reservations can be made.

There's also a **car ferry** (☎ 0180-310-3030; www.sylt-faehre.de; one way per person/car €6/38.50) from Rømøin Denmark to List in the north.

Air Berlin (www.airberlin.com) has several services a week from Berlin and Düsseldorf to **Sylt/Westerland airport** (GWT; www.flughafen-sylt.de), Hapag-Lloyd Express (www.hl.com) flies from Hannover, Köln-Bonn and Stuttgart, and Lufthansa (www.lufthansa.com) arrives from Frankfurt, Hamburg and Munich, among others.

Sylt's two north-south bus lines run every 20 to 30 minutes, and three other frequent lines cover the rest of the island.

AMRUM & FÖHR

Tiny Amrum is renowned for its fine white *Kniepsand*. There's a 10km stroll from the tall **lighthouse** at Wittdün to the village of Norddorf, and an 8km return hike along the beach. The **tourist office** (☎ 04682-194 33; fax 04682-940 394; ferry landing, Wittdün) can provide accommodation information.

The 'green isle' of Föhr is interesting for its Frisian culture. Its main village, Wyk,

WALK ON WATER

Okay, that's an exaggeration. You can't quite play Jesus in the North Frisian Islands, but you can walk between the islands at low tide. The best *Wattwandern*, as this activity is called (the same as Dutch *Wadlopen*), is between the islands of Amrum and Föhr, a full-day excursion (€25.50) also involving boat and bus trips. Contact **Adler-Schiffe** (☎ 04651-987 00; www.adler-schiffe.de).

boasts plenty of windmills, there are 16 northern hamlets tucked behind dikes up to 7m tall, and there's the large 12th-century church of **St Johanns** in Nieblum. The **Föhr information service** (☎ 04681-3040; fax 04681-3068; Wyk harbour) can help with more details. There is no camping here.

Getting There & Around

WDR (☎ 800; www.wdr-wyk.de) has ferries to Föhr (€5.50, 45 minutes) and Amrum (€7.80, 1½ hours) from Dagebüll Hafen (change in Niebüll).

Adler-Schiffe (☎ 04651-987 00; www.adler-schiffe.de; Boysenstrasse 13, Westerland; return adult/child €22/12) offers day cruises from Hörnum harbour in Sylt, and has quicker journeys on its *Adler Express* ship.

On Amrum, there are buses between the ferry terminal in Wittdün and Norddorf.

GERMANY DIRECTORY

ACCOMMODATION

Local tourist offices are great resources for accommodation in Germany – almost all offer a *Gastgeberverzeichnis* (accommodation list) and a *Zimmervermittlung* (room-finding service), and staff will usually go out of their way to find something in your price range.

In this book, options are listed by price, with the cheapest first. Accommodation usually includes breakfast, except in camping grounds and holiday apartments. Prices include private bathrooms unless otherwise specified.

Germany has more than 2000 organised camping grounds, several hundred of which stay open throughout the year. Prices are around €3 to €5 for an adult, plus €3 to €7 for a car and/or tent. Look out for ecologically responsible camping grounds sporting the Green Leaf award from the ADAC motoring association.

Deutsches Jugendherbergswerk (DJH; www.djh.de) coordinates the official Hostelling International (HI) hostels in Germany. Guests must be members of an HI-affiliated organisation, or join the DJH when checking in. The annual fee is €12/20 for junior/senior, which refers to visitors below/above 26 years old. Bavaria is the only state that enforces a strict maximum age of 26 for

visitors. A dorm bed ranges from around €15 to €20 for juniors and €16 to €25 for seniors. Camping at a hostel (where permitted) is generally half-price. Sheet hire costs from €2.50 to €4.

Private rooms and guesthouses can be excellent value, especially for lone travellers, with prices starting as low as €25. Budget hotels and *pensions* typically charge under €70 for a double room (under €50 with shared bathroom), while good-value mid-range options come in around €70 to €140. Anything over €140 can generally be considered top end, and should offer enough amenities to justify the price – spa facilities are a common extra.

Renting an apartment for a week or more is a popular option, particularly for small groups. Again, tourist offices are generally the best source of information, or have a look in newspaper classifieds under *Ferienwohnungen* (FeWo) or *Ferien-Apartments*. Rates vary widely but decrease dramatically with the length of stay. Local *Mitwohzentralen* (accommodation-finding services) can help in finding shared houses and longer-stay rentals.

ACTIVITIES

Germany, with its rugged Alps, picturesque uplands and fairy-tale forests, is ideal for hiking and mountaineering. There are well-marked trails crisscrossing the countryside, especially in popular areas such as the Black Forest (see p499), the Harz Mountains (p464), the Saxon Switzerland area (p453) and the Thuringian Forest. The Bavarian Alps (p489) offer the most dramatic and inspiring scenery, however, and are the centre of mountaineering in Germany. Good sources of information on hiking and mountaineering are: **Verband Deutscher Gebirgs- und Wandervereine** (Federation of German Hiking Clubs; ☎ 0561-938 730; www.wanderverband.de); and **Deutscher Alpenverein** (German Alpine Club; ☎ 089-140 030; www.alpenverein.de).

The Bavarian Alps are the most extensive area for winter sports. Cross-country skiing is also good in the Black Forest and Harz Mountains. Ski equipment starts at around €15 per day, and daily ski-lift passes start at around €15. Local tourist offices are the best sources of information.

Cyclists will often find marked cycling routes, and eastern Germany has much to

offer in the way of lightly travelled back roads. There's an extensive cycling trail along the Elbe River, and islands like Rügen Island (p472) are also good for cycling. For more details and tips, see *Getting Around* on (p549).

BOOKS

For a more detailed guide to the country, pick up a copy of Lonely Planet's *Germany*. Lonely Planet also publishes *Bavaria*, and *Berlin* and *Munich* city guides.

The German literary tradition is strong and there are many works that provide excellent background to the German experience. Mark Twain's *A Tramp Abroad* is recommended for his comical observations on German life.

For a more modern analysis of the German character and the issues that are facing Germany, dip into *Germany and the Germans* by John Ardagh.

BUSINESS HOURS

By law, shops in Germany may open from 6am to 8pm on weekdays and until 4pm on Saturday. In practice, however, only department stores and some supermarkets and fashion shops stay open until 8pm. But this is changing and in large cities more places are finding ways to stay open later and even on Sunday.

Banking hours are generally 8.30am to 1pm and 2.30pm to 4pm weekdays, but many banks remain open all day, and until 5.30pm on Thursday. government offices close for the weekend at 1pm or 3pm on Friday. Museums are often closed on Monday; opening hours vary greatly, although many are open later one evening per week.

Restaurants are usually open from 11am to midnight, with varying *Ruhetage* or closing days; many close for lunch during the day from 3pm to 6pm. Cafés often close around 8pm, though equal numbers stay open until 2am or later. Bars that don't serve food open between 5pm and 8pm and may close as late as 5am (if at all) in the larger cities.

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Although the usual cautions should be taken, theft and other crimes against travellers are relatively rare in Germany. Africans, Asians and southern Europeans may

encounter racial prejudice, especially in eastern Germany, where they can be singled out as convenient scapegoats for economic hardship. However, the animosity is usually directed against immigrants, not tourists.

DISCOUNT CARDS

Many cities offer discount cards. These cards will usually combine up to three days' free use of public transport with free or reduced admission to major local museums and attractions. They're generally a good deal if you want to fit a lot in; see the Information section under the relevant destination and ask at tourist offices for full details.

EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

German Embassies & Consulates

Australia (☎ 02-6270 1911; 119 Empire Circuit, Yarralumla, ACT 2600)

Canada (☎ 613-232 1101; 1 Waverley St, Ottawa, Ont K2P 0T8)

France (☎ 01-53 83 45 00; 13-15 Ave Franklin Roosevelt, 75008 Paris)

Ireland (☎ 01-269 3011; 31 Trimleston Ave, Booterstown, Dublin)

New Zealand (☎ 04-473 6063; 90-92 Hobson St, Wellington)

The Netherlands (☎ 070-342 0600; Groot Hertogin-nelaan 18-20, 2517 EG The Hague)

UK (☎ 020-7824 1300; 23 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PZ)

USA (☎ 202-298 4000; 4645 Reservoir Rd, NW Washington, DC 20007-1998)

Embassies & Consulates in Germany

The following embassies are all in Berlin. Many countries also have consulates in cities such as Frankfurt-am-Main and Munich.

Australia (Map pp432-3; ☎ 880 0800; Wallstrasse 76-78)

Canada (Map pp432-3; ☎ 203 120; Leipziger Platz 17, Tiergarten)

France (Map pp432-3; ☎ 590 039 000; Pariser Platz 5)

Ireland (Map pp432-3; ☎ 220 720; Friedrichstrasse 200)

New Zealand (Map pp432-3; ☎ 209 560; Friedrichstrasse 60)

South Africa (Map pp432-3; ☎ 220 730; Tiergartenstrasse 18)

The Netherlands (Map pp432-3; ☎ 209 560; Klosterstrasse 50)

UK (Map pp432-3; ☎ 204 570; Wilhelmstrasse 70-71)

USA (Map pp432-3; ☎ 238 5174; Neustädtische Kirchstrasse 4-5)

FESTIVALS & EVENTS

January-February

Carnival season Shrovetide – also known as ‘*Fasching*’ or ‘*Karneval*’ – sees many Carnival events begin in large cities, most notably Cologne, Munich, Düsseldorf and Mainz. The partying hits a peak just before Ash Wednesday.

International Film Festival Held in Berlin (see p438).

March

Frankfurt Music Fair

Frankfurt Jazz Fair

Spring Fairs Held throughout Germany.

Bach Festival

April

Munich Ballet Days

Mannheim May Fair

Stuttgart Jazz Festival

Walpurgisnacht Festivals Held the night of 30 April/1 May in the Harz Mountains.

May

Dresden International Dixieland Jazz Festival

Dresden Music Festival Held in last week of May into first week of June.

Red Wine Festival Held in Rudesheim.

June

Händel Festival Held in Halle.

International Theatre Festival Held in Freiburg.

Moselle Wine Week Held in Cochem.

Munich Film Festival

Sailing regatta Held in Kiel.

July

Berlin Love Parade See p438.

Folk festivals Held throughout Germany.

International Music Seminar Held in Weimar.

Kulmbach Beer Festival

Munich Opera Festival

Richard Wagner Festival Held in Bayreuth.

August

Heidelberg Castle Festival

Wine festivals Held throughout the Rhineland area.

September

Berlin Festival of Music & Drama

Oktoberfest Held in Munich (see p477).

October

Bremen Freimarkt

Berlin Jazzfest

Frankfurt Book Fair

November-December

Christmas fairs Held throughout Germany, most famously in Munich, Nuremberg, Berlin, Essen and Heidelberg.

St Martin's Festival Held throughout Rhineland and Bavaria.

Silvester New Year's Eve, celebrated everywhere.

GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

German people are generally fairly tolerant of homosexuality, but gays (*Schwule*) and lesbians (*Lesben*) still don't enjoy the same social acceptance in Germany as in some other northern European countries. Most progressive are the larger cities, particularly Berlin, Frankfurt-am-Main and Munich, which have dozens of gay and lesbian bars and meeting places. The age of consent is 18 years. Christopher Street Day, in June, is the biggest Pride festival in Germany, with events held in Berlin and many other major towns.

HOLIDAYS

Germany has many public holidays, some of which vary from state to state. Holidays include:

New Year's Day 1 January

Easter March/April

Labour Day 1 May

Ascension Day 40 days after Easter

Whitsun/Pentecost May/June

Day of German Unity 3 October

All Saints' Day 1 November

Day of Prayer & Repentance 18 November

Christmas 24–26 December

MEDIA

Magazines

Germany's most popular magazines are *Der Spiegel*, *Focus* and *Stern*. *Die Zeit* is a weekly publication about culture and the arts.

Newspapers

The most widely read newspapers in Germany are *Die Welt*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine*, Munich's *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the left-leaning *Die Tageszeitung (Taz)*. *Bild* is Germany's favourite sensationalist tabloid, part of the Axel Springer publishing empire.

Radio

German radio sticks to a fairly standard diet of news and discussion or Europop, inane chatter and adverts, though most regions and cities have their own stations so quality can vary. The BBC World Service

(on varying AM wavelengths) broadcasts in English.

TV

Germany's two national TV channels are the government-funded ARD and ZDF. They are augmented by a plethora of regional broadcasters, plus private cable channels such as Pro7, SAT1 and RTL, which show a lot of dubbed US series and films with long ad breaks. You can catch English-language news and sports programmes on cable or satellite TV in most hotels and *pensions*.

MONEY

The easiest places to change cash in Germany are the banks or foreign exchange counters at airports and train stations, particularly those of the Reisebank. The main banks in larger cities generally have money-changing machines for after-hours use, although they don't often offer reasonable rates. Some local Sparkasse banks have good rates and low charges.

There are international ATMs virtually everywhere in Germany. Typically, withdrawals over the counter against cards at major banks cost a flat €5 per transaction. Check other fees and the availability of services with your bank before you leave home.

Travellers cheques can be cashed at any bank and the most widely accepted are Amex, Thomas Cook and Barclays. A percentage commission (usually a minimum of €5) is charged by most banks on any travellers cheque, even those issued in euros.

POST

Standard post office hours are 8am to 6pm weekdays and to noon on Saturday. Many train station post offices stay open later or offer limited services outside these hours.

Within Germany and the EU, standard-sized postcards cost €0.45 and a 20g letter is €0.55. Postcards to North America and Australasia cost €1, a 20g airmail letter is €1.55. Surface-mail parcels up to 2kg within Europe are €8.20, €12.30 to destinations elsewhere. Airmail parcels up to 1kg are €10.30/21 within Europe/elsewhere.

TELEPHONE

Calling from a private phone is most expensive between 9am and 6pm. From telephone boxes, city calls cost €0.10 per minute, calls

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

- Ambulance ☎ 112
- Fire ☎ 112
- Police ☎ 110
- ADAC breakdown service ☎ 0180-222 2222

to anywhere else in Germany €0.20 per minute.

Expensive reverse-charge (collect) calls can be made to some countries through home-direct services. Check with your long-distance carrier or phone company before you leave home. The best bet is to have somebody at home use their cheap rates to call you.

For directory assistance within Germany call ☎ 118 33 (☎ 118 37 in English); both cost €0.25 plus €0.99 per minute. International information is ☎ 118 34 (€0.55 per 20 seconds).

Mobile Phones

Mobile phones ('handies') are ubiquitous in Germany; the main operators are T-Mobile, Vodafone, O2 and E-Plus. You can pick up a pre-pay SIM card for around €30; top-up cards are available from kiosks, various shops and vending machines. Mobile numbers generally begin with a ☎ 016 or ☎ 017 prefix. Calling from a landline costs up to €0.54 per minute.

Phone Codes

The country code for Germany is ☎ 49. To ring abroad from Germany, dial ☎ 00 followed by the country code, area code and number.

An operator can be reached on ☎ 0180-200 1033.

Phonecards

Most pay phones in Germany accept only phonecards, available for €5, €10 and €20 at post offices, news kiosks, tourist offices and banks. One call unit costs a little more than €0.06 from a private telephone and €0.10 from a public phone.

TIME

Germany runs on Western European time, one hour ahead of GMT.

TRAVELLERS WITH DISABILITIES

Germany is fair at best (but better than much of Europe) for the needs of physically disabled travellers, with access ramps for wheelchairs and/or lifts in some public buildings.

Deutsche Bahn operates a **Mobility Service Centre** (☎ 01805-512 512; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Fri, 8am-2pm Sat) whose operators can answer questions about station and train access. With one day's notice, they can also arrange for someone to meet you at your destination.

VISAS

Citizens of the European Union and some other Western European countries can enter Germany on an official identity card. Americans, Australians, Canadians, Israelis, Japanese, New Zealanders and Singaporeans require only a valid passport (no visa). Germany is also part of the Schengen visa scheme (see p1109). Three months is the usual limit of stay, less for citizens of some developing countries.

WORK

With unemployment always high, Germany offers limited prospects for employment unless you have high-level specialist skills such as IT expertise. EU citizens can work in Germany with an *Aufenthaltsurlaubnis* (residency permit); non-EU citizens require a work permit as well.

TRANSPORT IN GERMANY

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

The main arrival and departure points in Germany used to be Frankfurt-am-Main, and Munich. But with the explosion of budget carriers, almost any town with a tarmac seems to be getting a few flights. Places such as Düsseldorf, Berlin, Nuremberg and even Baden-Baden have cheap flights to parts of Europe. See p1112 for details on how you can find cheap flights within Europe.

Ryanair, easyJet, Air Berlin, DBA and Germanwings are among the foremost cheap options in Germany, but don't count Lufthansa out: it has been aggressively competing on price as well.

The following airlines all fly to/from Germany:

Air Berlin (code AB; ☎ 01805-737 800; www.airberlin.de)

Alitalia (code AZ; ☎ 01805-074 747; www.alitalia.it)

British Airways (code BA; ☎ 01805-266 522; www.britishairways.com)

Czech Airlines (code OK; ☎ 01805-006 737; www.csa.cz)

DBA (code DI; ☎ 0900 1100322; www.flydba.com)

easyJet (code BH; ☎ 01803-654 321; www.easyjet.com)

Germania Express (code ST; ☎ 01805-737 100; www.gexx.de)

Germanwings (code 4U; ☎ 01805-955 855; www.germanwings.com)

Iberia (code IB; ☎ 01803-000 613; www.iberia.es)

LOT (code LO; ☎ 01803-000 336; www.lot.com)

Lufthansa (code LH; ☎ 01803-803 803; www.lufthansa.com)

Ryanair (code FR; ☎ 0190-170 100; www.ryanair.com)

SAS (code SK; ☎ 01803-234 023; www.scandinavian.net)

Wizzair (code W6; www.wizzair.com)

Land

BUS

Travelling by bus between Germany and the rest of Europe is cheaper than by train or plane, but journeys will take a lot longer.

Eurolines is a consortium of national bus companies operating routes throughout the continent. Sample one-way fares and travel times include: London-Frankfurt (€80, 16 hours); Amsterdam-Frankfurt (€39, eight hours); Paris-Hamburg (€69, 11½ hours); Paris-Cologne (€39, 6½ hours); Prague-Berlin (€29, seven hours) and Barcelona-Frankfurt (€89, 20 hours). Eurolines has a discounted youth fare for those under-26 that saves you around 10%. Tickets can be purchased throughout Germany at most train stations. Eurolines' German arm is **Deutsche-Touring** (☎ 069-790 350; www.deutsche-touring.com).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

Germany is served by an excellent highway system. If you're coming from the UK, the quickest option is the Channel Tunnel. Ferries take longer but are cheaper. You can be in Germany three hours after the ferry docks.

Within Europe, autobahns and highways become jammed on weekends in summer and before and after holidays. This is especially true where border checks are still carried out, such as going to/from the Czech

Republic and Poland. For details on road rules when driving in Germany, see p550.

TRAIN

A favourite way to get to Germany from elsewhere in Europe is by train.

Long-distance trains between major German cities and other countries are called EuroCity (EC) trains. The main German hubs with the best connections for major European cities are Hamburg (Scandinavia); Cologne (Thalsys trains to France, Belgium and the Netherlands, with Eurostar connections from Brussels going on to London); Munich (southern and southeastern Europe) and Berlin (Eastern Europe).

Often longer international routes are served by at least one day train and often a night train as well.

Sea

If you're heading to/from the UK or Scandinavia, port options include Hamburg, Lübeck, Rostock, Sassnitz and Kiel. The Puttgarden-Rødbyhavn ferry to Copenhagen is popular. In eastern Germany, ferries run daily between Trelleborg (Sweden) and Sassnitz, on Rügen Island (p472).

There are daily services between Kiel and Gothenburg (Sweden) and Oslo (Norway). The Kiel-Gothenburg trip takes 13½ hours and costs from €37 to €85. A ferry between Travemünde (near Lübeck) and Trelleborg (Sweden) runs one to four times daily. The journey takes seven hours and costs from €20 to €40. Car-ferry service is good from Gedser (Denmark) to Rostock.

GETTING AROUND

Air

There are lots of flights within the country, many by budget carriers such as Air Berlin, DBA and Germanwings. See opposite for additional details. Note that with check-in times and the like, flying is often not as efficient as a fast train.

Bicycle

Radwandern (bicycle touring) is very popular in Germany. Pavements are often divided into separate sections for pedestrians and cyclists – be warned that these divisions are taken very seriously. Favoured routes include the Rhine, Moselle, Elbe and Danube Rivers and the Lake Constance area. Of course, cy-

cling is strictly *verboten* (forbidden) on the autobahns. Hostel-to-hostel biking is an easy way to go, and route guides are often sold at DJH hostels. There are well-equipped cycling shops in almost every town, and a fairly active market for used touring bikes.

Simple three-gear bicycles can be hired from around €10/35 per day/week, and more robust mountain bikes from €15/50. DB publishes *Bahn&Bike*, an excellent annual handbook (in German) covering bike rental and repair shops, routes, maps and other resources. DB (☎ 0180-515 14 14; www.bahn.de/bahnbike) also has extensive live information on bike rentals and carriage.

A separate ticket must be purchased whenever you carry your bike on trains (generally €3 to €6). Many trains (excluding ICEs) have at least one 2nd-class carriage with a bicycle compartment.

Germany's main cycling organisation is the **Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad Club** (ADFC; ☎ 0421-346 290; www.adfc.de).

Boat

Boats are most likely to be used for basic transport when travelling to or between the Frisian Islands, though tours along the Rhine, Elbe and Moselle Rivers are also popular. During summer there are frequent services on Lake Constance but, with the exception of the Constance-Meersburg and the Friedrichshafen-Romanshorn car ferries, these boats are really more tourist crafts than a transport option. From April to October, excursion boats ply lakes and rivers in Germany and can be a lovely way to see the country.

Bus

The bus network in Germany functions primarily in support of the train network. That is, they go to destinations that are not serviced by trains. Bus stations or stops are usually located near the train station in any town. Consider using buses when you want to cut across two train lines and avoid long train rides to and from a transfer point. A good example of where to do this is in the Alps, where the best way to follow the peaks is by bus.

Within Germany **Eurolines** (☎ 069-790 350) operates as Deutsche-Touring GmbH; services include the Romantic and Castle Roads buses in southern Germany, as well as

organised bus tours of Germany lasting a week or more.

Car & Motorcycle

AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATIONS

Germany's main motoring organisation is the Munich-based **Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil Club** (ADAC; ☎ 089-767 60; www.adac.de), which has offices in all major cities.

DRIVING LICENCE

Visitors do not need an international driving licence to drive in Germany; technically you should carry an official translation of your licence with you, but in practice this is rarely necessary.

FUEL & SPARE PARTS

Prices for fuel vary from €1.30 to €1.35 per litre for unleaded regular. Avoid buying fuel at the more expensive autobahn filling stations. Petrol stations are generally easy to find, although they can be scarce in the centres of many towns.

HIRE

You usually must be at least 21 years of age to hire a car in Germany. You'll need to show your licence and passport, and make sure you keep the insurance certificate for the vehicle with you at all times.

Germany's four main rental companies are **Avis** (☎ 0180-555 77; www.avis.de), **Europcar** (☎ 0180-580 00; www.europcar.de), **Hertz** (☎ 0180-533 3535; www.hertz.de) and **Sixt** (☎ 0180-526 0250; www.sixt.de).

INSURANCE

You must have third-party insurance to enter Germany with a vehicle.

ROAD CONDITIONS

The autobahn system of motorways runs throughout Germany. Road signs (and most motoring maps) indicate national autobahn routes in blue with an 'A' number, while international routes have green signs with an 'E'. Though efficient, the autobahns are often busy, and visitors frequently have trouble coping with the high speeds. Secondary roads (usually designated with a 'B' number) are easier on the nerves and much more scenic, but can be slow going.

Cars are impractical in urban areas. Vending machines on many streets sell parking

vouchers which must be displayed clearly behind the windscreen. Leaving your car in a central *Parkhaus* (car park) costs roughly €10 per day or €1.25 per hour.

ROAD RULES

Road rules are easy to understand and standard international signs are in use. You drive on the right, and most cars are right-hand drive. Right of way is usually signed, with major roads given priority, but on unmarked intersections traffic coming from the right always has right of way.

The usual speed limits are 50km/h in built-up areas and 100km/h on the open road. The speed on autobahns is unlimited, though there's an advisory speed of 130km/h; exceptions are clearly signposted.

The blood-alcohol limit for drivers is 0.05%. Obey the road rules carefully: the German police are very efficient and issue heavy on-the-spot fines. Germany also has one of the highest concentrations of speed cameras in Europe.

Local Transport

Public transport is excellent within big cities and small towns, and is generally based on buses, *Strassenbahn* (trams), *S-Bahn* and/or *U-Bahn* (underground trains). Tickets cover all forms of transit; fares are determined by zones or time travelled, sometimes both. Multiticket strips and day passes are generally available offering better value than single-ride tickets.

Make certain that you have a ticket when boarding – only buses and some trams let you buy tickets from the driver. In some cases you will have to validate it on the platform or once aboard. Ticket inspections are frequent (especially at night and on holidays) and the fine is a non-negotiable €30 or more.

Train

Operated almost entirely by Deutsche Bahn (DB; www.bahn.de), the German train system is the finest in Europe, and is generally the best way to get around the country.

Trains run on an interval system, so wherever you're heading, you can count on a service at least every two hours. Schedules are integrated throughout the country so that connections between trains are time-saving and tight, often only five minutes. Of course this means that when a train is late,

connections are missed and you can find yourself stuck waiting for the next train.

CLASSES

It's rarely worth buying a 1st-class ticket on German trains; 2nd class is usually quite comfortable. There's more difference between the train classifications – basically the faster a train travels, the plusher (and more expensive) it is.

Train types include:

ICE InterCityExpress services run at speeds up to 300km/h. The trains are very comfortable and feature restaurant cars.

IC/EC Called InterCity or EuroCity, these are the premier conventional trains of DB. When trains are crowded, the open-seating coaches are much more comfortable than the older carriages with compartments.

RE RegionalExpress trains are local trains that make limited stops. They are fairly fast and run at one- or two-hourly intervals.

RB RegionalBahn are the slowest DB trains, not missing a single cow town.

S-Bahn These DB-operated trains run frequent services in larger urban areas. Not to be confused with U-Bahns, which are run by local authorities who don't honour rail passes.

EN, ICN, D These are night trains, although an occasional D may be an extra daytime train.

COSTS

Standard DB ticket prices are distance-based. You will usually be sold a ticket for the shortest distance to your destination.

Sample fares for one-way, 2nd-class ICE travel include Hamburg–Munich €115, Frankfurt-am-Main–Berlin €98 and Frankfurt-am-Main–Munich €75. Tickets are good for four days from the day you tell the agent your journey will begin, and you can make unlimited stopovers along your route during that time. In this chapter train fares given between towns are all undiscounted second class.

There are hosts of special fares that allow you to beat the high cost of regular tickets. DB is now selling tickets like airlines (ie trains with light loads may have tickets available at a discount). The key is to ask at the ticket counters. Most DB personnel are happy to help you sort through the thicket of ticket prices.

The following are among the most popular train fares offered by DB (2nd class):

BahnCard 25/50/100 Only worthwhile for extended visits to Germany, these discount cards entitle holders to 25/50/100% off regular fares and cost €50/200/3000.

Schönes Wochenende 'Good Weekend' tickets allow unlimited use of RE, RB and S-Bahn trains on a Saturday or Sunday between midnight and 3am the next day, for up to five people travelling together, or one or both parents and all their children/grandchildren for €28. They are best suited to weekend day trips from urban areas.

Sparpreis Round-trip tickets offered at major discounts.

Surf&Rail As the name implies these are bargains found online. Think €59 round-trip Munich-Berlin.

RESERVATIONS

Nearly all DB stations offer the option of buying tickets with credit cards at machines for long-haul trips; these usually have English-language options, but if in doubt consult the ticket window. Buying a ticket or supplement (*Zuschlag*) from a conductor carries a penalty (€1.50 to €4.50). If you're stuck you can *technically* use a credit card on the train, but in practice it may not be possible.

On some trains there are no conductors at all, and roving inspectors enforce compliance. If you are caught travelling without a valid ticket the fine is €30, no excuses.

During peak periods, a seat reservation (€3) on a long-distance train can mean the difference between squatting near the toilet or relaxing in your own seat. Express reservations can be made at the last minute.

SCHEDULE INFORMATION

The DB website (www.bahn.de) is excellent. There is extensive info in English and you can use it to sort out all the discount offers and schemes. In addition it has an excellent schedule feature that works not just for Germany but the rest of Europe.

For a phone schedule and fare information (available in English), call ☎ 01805-996 633 (€0.13 per minute).

TRAIN PASSES

Agencies outside Germany sell German Rail passes for unlimited travel on all DB trains for a number of days in a 30-day period. Sample 2nd-class prices for adults/under 26 are €160/130 for four days. Most Eurail and Inter-Rail passes are valid in Germany.

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