



## FAQs – Summer Program in German and European Studies in Heidelberg, Germany

*These questions might come up for you as you get ready for your trip to Germany and the summer program. There might be other questions you have which are not answered here. In that case, send us an email, and we will try to address your questions and concerns on an individual basis.*

### **Which travel documents do I need?**

Obtain or renew your passport. Students who are U.S. Citizens need only a valid passport. **There is no visa requirement for U.S. citizens.**

### **What if I'm not a U.S. citizen?**

If you are not a citizen of the U.S., Canada or a country within the European Union, you need to contact a German Consulate (or the German Embassy) closest to you to obtain a visa.

### **What should I pack?**

German students usually dress casually. However, you will want to bring along at least one good outfit for special occasions such as concerts or theater.

### **We recommend that you bring:**

- an extra supply of any prescription medicine you need
- an extra pair of glasses, cleaning solution for contact lenses,
- walking shoes (we do a fair amount of walking)
- an all-weather jacket
- a light sweater for cooler evenings
- a battery-powered alarm clock,
- a towel and wash cloth
- a swimsuit

If you have a laptop computer, you will probably want to bring it along. Virtually all laptops are configured to handle European as well as U.S. electrical current without need of a separate transformer. But you may wish to check with your manufacturer just to be safe. You will definitely need a plug adapter to fit German-style sockets (available in the U.S. at places such as Best Buy).

### **What should I NOT pack?**

Electrical appliances, such as hair dryers or hair curlers. You can purchase such items for less than \$10 or borrow them from your host family in most cases.

### **How much money should I bring and where can I exchange it?**

For your initial needs it is a good idea to bring along approximately 200 Euro in cash. You can easily change your dollars into Euro at Frankfurt airport upon your arrival.

Can I use my US cell phone in Germany?

We recommend the following website for any questions regarding phones in Germany:

<https://www.ricksteves.com/travel-tips/phones-tech/cell-phone-europe>

### **Do Germans have ATM machines, and can I use my debit card?**

Yes - Most summer students use ATM machines to withdraw cash from their U.S. bank accounts using a credit card or a debit card. This is a convenient method of transferring money with relatively low transaction fees. **Please inform your bank/-credit card company that you will be using your card abroad.** Some companies require a clearance for the use of their card abroad.

### **How expensive is it to live in Heidelberg, Germany?**

Your expenses will be fairly low since most of your meals are provided for. Students learn quickly to stay away from the tourist areas and frequent stores and restaurants which the locals use. How much money you spend will also depend on your general shopping habits, how many souvenirs you plan to purchase, how often you plan to travel independently on weekends, how often you will frequent the Italian ice-cream stores . . .

### **What does public transportation cost?**

A public transportation pass for Heidelberg and the region is included in the program fee. This pass is valid for the duration of the program and will let you travel on all streetcars, buses, and selected trains. Heidelberg has an extensive network of bike paths, and in the past, some host families provided a bicycle for their guest.

### **What insurance coverage should I have?**

The program provides accident and liability insurance but you are responsible for your own health and travel insurance. Check with your insurance company whether you are covered for the duration of the summer program. If you need to purchase coverage for the duration of your stay in Heidelberg, we recommend that you consider HanseMercur insurance coverage. Information about it can be found in the online insurance coverage form (see summer pre-departure documents).

### **Which airport do I fly into when coming to Heidelberg?**

You will fly into Frankfurt/Main International airport which is approximately 1 hour north of Heidelberg.

### **Will someone meet me at the airport?**

Yes – the program will charter a bus to pick up all summer students arriving at Frankfurt International Airport on or around 10:30 a.m. Please make sure to send us your flight information by filling out the online form provided on our pre-departure website.

### **What if I plan to travel in Europe before the start of the program?**

Often students book a flight prior to the start of the program in order to visit German friends or relatives, or to travel on their own. Please understand that we cannot accommodate you in Heidelberg before the start of the program. You are responsible for paying your own way to Heidelberg if you choose to arrive on another date than the official start of the summer program.

### **Who is my host family?**

Before the Program selects a host family, we visit and meet each individual family. We look over your room carefully to make sure it meets our standards. All families enjoy hosting a foreign student. Often they have young children. Sometimes, the children are older, and they might be studying at the university already. In most instances, both parents work. You will see them in the morning at breakfast, and then again at night for dinner. We will give you name and address of your family, and an email address before your flight so that you may get in touch with them (and they with you) before your arrival in Heidelberg. Many former summer students are still in touch with their host families and come back to visit!

### **What will my room look like?**

It will be a single room furnished like a guest room with a bed, a wardrobe, shelves, a desk, etc. Your family will provide pillows, comforters, and linen as well as towels (though we ask you to bring a towel and a washcloth along for our trip to Berlin). Most families have internet access in their home.

### **How far is it from my house to the classrooms and the Heidelberg at Heidelberg Summer program office?**

It may take you between 30 to 45 minutes from your house to the classrooms depending in which part of town you live. All families live very near to a bus stop or a streetcar stop. We will make sure that two or three of the program participants live in the same neighborhood so that you can take the bus/Streetcar to and from class together. During orientation sessions we will familiarize you with the public transportation system.

### **Where are the classrooms?**

Classrooms are located downtown at University Square in the American Junior Year Study Center.

### **Are there book fees for the courses I am taking?**

You will have to purchase a text/workbook for your language class and a reader for the German/European Studies seminar. Costs: Approx. \$50.

### **Do I have Internet access anywhere?**

Most host families will make Internet access available to you. There are internet cafés near the university cafeteria where you will have lunch, and there are numerous internet cafés throughout town. There is Wi-Fi at the American Junior Year study center. Bring your MacBook or your laptop.

### **Will there be an orientation session when we arrive?**

Yes – we will have several orientation sessions upon your arrival at which point you will receive practical information about student life in Heidelberg.

### **What are some of the topics we talk about at the orientation session?**

We will talk generally about safety, shopping, public transportation, recreational facilities, social customs and behavior, etc.

### **I'd like to know more about religious life in Heidelberg.**

- We will provide you with a list of churches and religious groups during orientation session.
- There are synagogues and Jewish community centers in Heidelberg and neighboring Mannheim.
- The largest mosque in Germany is also in Mannheim.
- The two major religious denominations in the area are the Roman Catholic Church and the Badische Landeskirche, which draws from both Lutheran and Reformed traditions.
- A number of other churches and religious groups are also represented in the Heidelberg area: Methodist, Anglican, Baptist, Mormon, Quaker, Mennonite, Seventh-Day Adventist, etc. You may wish to consult [www.kirche-heidelberg.de](http://www.kirche-heidelberg.de).

### **What kind of trips does the program plan for us?**

The study trip to Berlin is one of the program highlights. In past summers, our day trips have taken us to the town of Wissembourg, France, to Schwetzingen castle, or to Strasbourg, France, seat of the European parliament. Using their German Rail Pass, students have travelled to Basel, Switzerland; Salzburg, Austria; Prague, Czech Republic; Dresden, Nürnberg, Hamburg and more.

### **Where can I find information about the city of Heidelberg, and Germany in general?**

*Selected Web Sites:*

*Heidelberg:* [www.heidelberg.de](http://www.heidelberg.de)

*The Federal Republic:* [www.deutschland.de](http://www.deutschland.de) (Press and Information Office of the Federal Republic)

[www.germany-info.org](http://www.germany-info.org) (The German Information Center in New York)

[www.usembassy.de](http://www.usembassy.de) (with information on living in Germany)

*Travel in Germany:* [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de) (Deutsche Bundesbahn)