

Cultural Differences between the USA and Germany (3) Shopping

USA	GERMANY
SHOPPING See Shopping in Germany for more	
Credit card acceptance is almost universal.	Credit card acceptance is much more limited, even in restaurants.
Bank debit cards and autopay are gradually replacing personal checks.	The EC bank card is used universally in Germany; no personal checks.
0-10.75% sales tax is added to the price of your purchase, depending on the state, county, city.	Sales price always includes 19% VAT (sales tax, 20% in Austria, 7.6% in Switzerland). Lower tax rate for groceries.
24/7 shopping – nights and Sundays	Shopping hours are much more limited; no shopping on Sunday.
Good customer service is expected. Returns are usually accepted for any reason.	Customer service can be poor. Returns are allowed only for a defective product.
Most businesses have a toll-free number.	Few businesses have a toll-free number. You have to pay 14 euro cents a minute to call them!
Specialty shops are a dying breed. Big-box discount stores are prevalent.	There are discount stores, but specialty shops are more common, offering expertise not found in discount stores.
Shopping is mostly in large malls and super stores. Downtowns usually offer few shopping opportunities.	Although there are shopping malls, German town and city centers are still lively places offering retail shopping.
USA	GERMANY
POSTAL MATTERS: <i>die Post</i> See The German Post Office for more.	
You can leave stamped outgoing mail in your residential postal box (with the red flag indicator for street-side boxes), which will be picked up by the mail carrier for delivery.	There is no equivalent in Germany or most of Europe. You have to place stamped outgoing mail in official yellow Deutsche Post mailboxes, or take it to the post office.
US domestic postage rates are lower than in Germany and most of Europe. A 1oz./29g standard letter costs \$0.50. But First Class Mail International rates are similar: 1oz./29g letter: \$1.15 (to anywhere outside the US). (<i>Rates/euro value as of Oct. 2018</i>)	German domestic postage rates are higher than in the US. A standard domestic letter (max. 20g/0.7oz.): €0.70 (\$0.80). German international letter rates (to anywhere outside Germany), max. 20g/0.7oz., are about the same: €0.90 (\$1.03).
Post office business hours are pretty standard in the United States. Some large airports may have a post office nearby, but not inside the	Large train stations and airports in Germany often have post offices with extended hours, even on weekends.

terminal. Even at LAX the nearest post office is located at 9029 Airport Blvd., not in the terminal.

The [Frankfurt](#) and [Munich](#) airports have post offices inside the terminal.

<https://www.german-way.com/history-and-culture/cultural-comparisons/cultural-comparisons-part-2/>