

# German Immersion

*Willy Piñón* heads to Europe to see what Germany has to offer to the German learner

**In the heart of Europe, Germany has the world's third largest economy.** Since the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, and the reunification process which formally concluded in 1990, Germany has undergone massive efforts, both governmental and individual, to restore the sense of unity that the manly created barrier had broken since the wall was built in 1961. Germany is politically divided into 16 federal states, each of which is a world of adventure in itself.

The state of Bavaria, located in the south east corner of the country, is famous for its beautiful forests, lakes, and the best beer in the world. The state capital is the lively and fashionable city of Munich, which is a young, liberal city ideal for students. Bavaria is also the birthplace of Pope Benedict XVI, and home of the famous Oktoberfest, attended by six million people each year.

The state of Hesse, often referred to as the forest state, since over 40 percent of it is wooded, is one of the mid-western German states. If you are after modern urban living, then Frankfurt has everything you could ask for. Its wide variety of theaters, malls and nightclubs is very impressive, and its Museum of Modern Art is famous for its architecture as well as its collection. Not far north from Frankfurt is the city of Düsseldorf, located on the banks of the River Rhine. Dating back to 1159, the capital of Northrhine-Westfalia is a flourishing commercial centre and the fashion capital of Germany. It is also famous for producing glass, textiles and boasts Germany's first skyscraper, the Wilhelm-

Marx-Haus, built in 1924. The city is home to several museums, and the library holds a collection of works by the poet Heinrich Heine.

Berlin, located in the northeast, is the nation's capital, as well as its largest city. It is home to world-renowned universities, and boasts architectural sights of great cultural and historical significance. If you are a sports fan, a tour of Berlin's *Olympiastadion*, home to the final match of the 2006 soccer World Cup, and the 1936 Olympic Games, is a must.

In the northwest of Germany, lies Hamburg, home of the ninth largest harbor in the world. Emperor Charlemagne, in the year 808 AD, ordered the construction of the Hamburg Castle, from which the city later took its name. The architecture of Hamburg's central promenade is fabulous to behold, and a guaranteed feature of every visitors' slideshows.

Whether you drive through Germany in one of its famous luxury vehicles — if you can afford it — or travel on its efficient rail system, or even backpack in the summer, Germany has everything to offer, from sophisticated cities to beautiful lakes, from enchanting lowland plains to the high peaks of the Alps. Contrary to popular stereotypes, Germans are friendly and relaxed; and so welcoming that they are always eager to practice their impeccable English, so immersion students may have to insist on speaking German if they are to get the most out of their stay.



## A Selection of German Immersion Programs

### Lichtenberg-Kolleg

Lichtenberg-Kolleg, centrally located in the heart of West Berlin (off Kurfürstendamm near Savigny-Platz), offers a variety of language courses to meet students' needs. Although it was established in 1986, it continues a tradition of pedagogical excellence dating back to 1907. The college offers all-year-tuition and a summer program of German as a foreign language.

Students benefit from small class sizes (5-12 participants), allowing for fast progress through close contact with caring and experienced teachers. The school offers a graded test and/or a trial lesson, both free of charge, to students who already have some knowledge of German. For beginners, courses start at the beginning of each month. In the summer, the school offers special programs.

They offer a wide range of language programs including: intensive adult and junior programs; executive courses for business people; cultural activities; morning and evening classes; grammar and conversation; and interpreting and translating services. Their students have consistently succeeded at external academic and Goethe Institute examinations. As a non-profit organization, they are also able to offer budget prices.

### Goethe Institutes

For more than 50 years, the Goethe-Institut, as the official cultural institute of Germany, has been promoting knowledge of the German language. There are 13 institutes in Germany, in attractive locations such as Berlin, Munich, Hamburg or Freiburg, where they offer a wide range of German courses varying in length, intensity and level — from beginner to university level. The Summer Youth Course program is very popular, but programs for professionals, company courses and one-on-one-instruction are also offered.

Certificates issued by the Goethe-Institut are recognized by companies and educational institutions around the world. More than 75,000 learners of German around the world take Goethe-Institut's proficiency certification examinations annually.

In addition to committed instructors teaching in multicultural groups, comprehensive tutoring and all examinations, the Goethe-Institutes also offer self-study centers, a vast program of extracurricular cultural and leisure activities as well as time-saving and easily made arrangements for accommodation with families or in guest-houses. These extensive programs help students to become familiar with Germany while improving language skills, and having fun with new friends from all over the world.

### Carl Duisberg Centers

The Carl Duisberg Training Centers, with over 40 years of experience in the field, offer training in eight locations throughout Germany, specializing in intensive German programs from two to 40 weeks.

With their ISO 9001 Quality Certificate and highly-qualified teachers, they offer recognized examinations at all levels, accommodation with a German host family or in a hotel or apartment, and free cultural, sporting, and other leisure activities.

Its Berlin school is located in the center of the city, and staffed by capable, generous, and patient language instructors.

Berlin's cultural heritage is famous, and Berliners are known for being gentle and friendly.

Whatever your interests, the chances are Berlin can meet them.

### International House Berlin — PROLOG

With over 20 years of experience in language teaching, thousands of students from more than 70 countries have been taught at International House Berlin PROLOG. They have fully-equipped, bright and attractive classrooms with highly motivated and professional teachers. The many international students and Berlin's multicultural ambiance offer a welcoming atmosphere.

Their German teachers have usually completed IH Berlin's own teacher training program, and are carefully selected according to their academic and pedagogic abilities.

### Did Deutsch-Institut München

The Bavarian city of Munich is the gateway to the Bavarian Alps and one of the country's most popular tourist destinations. The institute is located next to the central railway station and within walking distance of the heart of the city. It occupies two stories of a traditional style building with 11 classrooms, a large cafeteria, a computer area, and a huge roof terrace. As Munich is one of the sunny cities in Germany, students love to hang out on the roof terrace in all seasons, playing ping pong, having a chat or doing their homework in the fresh air.

They offer small and multinational classes, and all of their teachers are native speakers. One of the core concepts of their methodological approach is to use language in real-life situations, and students are encouraged to do so as often as possible, e.g. in the context of interviews with native German speakers as a popular learning activity. They offer accommodation with host families, and organize activities including trips through Munich (churches, buildings, places, parks), visits to the local and Royal castles, or excursions to beautiful historic cities and natural resorts nearby.