

# Living in Germany - Tips & Tricks

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# Living in Germany



# Accommodation

Please take note of your rental contract – German landlords are quite strict with it, e.g.:

## Cancelation period

- Normally there is a cancellation period of 3 months, running until the end of a month. If e.g. you cancel your contract on June 14th, you have to rent the apartment until end of september.
- If you live in a shared flat (WG), please talk to your flatmates and ask for details.

## Deposit

- Normally you have to pay a deposit when renting a room/flat (around 3 monthly rents, after signing the contract)
- Confirmation of the deposit: e.g receipt or note in the rental agreement
- When you move out, you only get the (whole) amount back if you leave the apartment clean and tidy. It may take some months until you get the deposit back.

## „Kalt- und Warmmiete“ (basic rent + additional costs)

- The basic rent (Kaltmiete) is paid for the use of the rooms.
- The additional costs and operating costs (Warmmiete) are e.g. for water, heating, garbage disposal, janitor etc..
- Cold rent + service charges = warm rent (paid to the landlord).
- Attention: In addition, there are usually costs for electricity, Internet / telephone, etc..





# Waste separation / recycling



## Gelber Sack (Yellow bag)

- Plastic
- Metal (e.g. tins)
- Packaging  
(e.g. milk cartons,  
yoghurt cups...)
- Aluminum foil



## Kompost/ Bio (organic waste)

- Leftovers from  
fruits and  
vegetables
- Eggshells
- Tea bags
- Leftover from food  
(not cooked)



## Papier (paper)

- Newspaper
- Magazines
- Carton
- Cardboard



## Glas (glass)

- Bottles and jars  
(sorted by colour:  
Green, brown,  
white)



## Restmüll (residual waste)

- Everything else (but  
no electronic  
devices/ pieces)  
→ Werkstoffhof  
(recycling centre)
- You give batteries  
to drug stores (DM,  
Müller, etc.)



**Further information:** <https://www.siegen.de/leben-in-siegen/buergerservice/abfallentsorgung/abfall-abc/>  
<https://www.siegen.de/fileadmin/cms/pdf/Abfallentsorgung/AbfallTrennenMehrsprachig.pdf>  
<https://www.siegen.de/leben-in-siegen/buergerservice/abfallentsorgung/abfallkalender/>

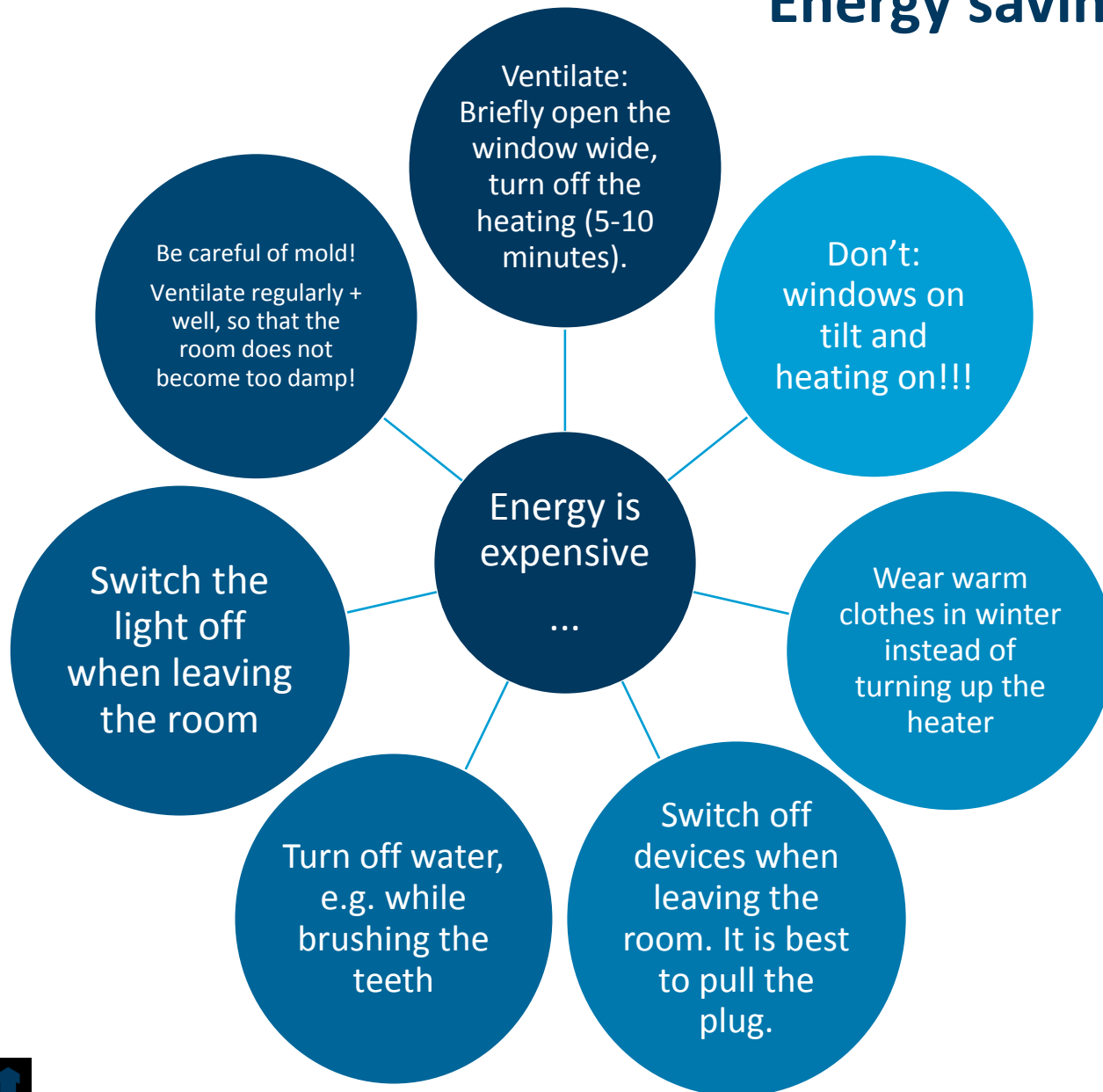
# Bottle deposit



If you buy drinks in glass, plastic bottles or in cans, mostly you have to pay a deposit of between 8 and 25 cent.

As soon as you bring the empty bottles/cans back to the supermarket, you'll get the money back. So do not just throw them into the waste!

# Energy saving tips







# Typical German behavior...

(of course not all Germans are like this... ;-) )

# Rules



Germans tend to love rules. They have rules for a lot of situations and like to follow them very strictly.

(e.g. traffic lights)

Rule breaks can have consequences!





# Punctuality & Reliability



Germans take punctuality very seriously!

Especially at:

- work (job interviews, meetings, etc.)
- university (exams, lectures, etc.)
- Invitations (except parties)
- Appointments

→ Up to 5 minutes earlier or later is (just!) ok, apart from that better inform the person about your delay.

→ If something has been agreed upon, it should be kept.

# Rest periods



Attention: The understanding of "loud" and "quiet" can be very different -> If in doubt, ask the neighbor.

In Germany, there are legally regulated resting time periods:

- Night rest: 10 p.m. to 7 a.m.
- All day on Sundays and public holidays
- Noon rest: regulated by landlord

That means, at this time:

- "indoor volume"
- no loud work
- no loud conversations
- no loud music (-> headphones!)
- no meetings / parties

Germans usually take this very seriously!

In case of disregard, the police can be called!

If a party or something similar is planned, please friendly inform your neighbors beforehand (and invite them ;- ) ).





# Direct communication



- Germans have a very direct way of communicating
- It is appreciated when you are open and honest (even if it sometimes feels rude).
- Admitting mistakes is appreciated (and expected)!

# Bargaining



- Bargaining is very uncommon in Germany (except at flea markets and in the business world).
- **Not** a good idea: Attempting to negotiate grades / exam results.
- Attempts to negotiate / bargain usually have negative consequences!



# Bureaucracy



- There is a lot of bureaucracy in Germany.
- Lots of rules, lots of paperwork, lots of forms....

## Tips:

- Keep calm.
- Stay friendly.
- Ask and / or get help.
- And: Even Germans often do not understand the forms ! ;-)

# Privacy



- Privacy is important to Germans
- Separation of work and career
- Possibilities of retreat, being alone
- Clear separation between "yours" and "mine"



# Respect & Boundaries

- **Personal Zone:**

also called private sphere,  
allowed for acquaintances and friends, for greetings and smalltalk

- **Intimate Zone**

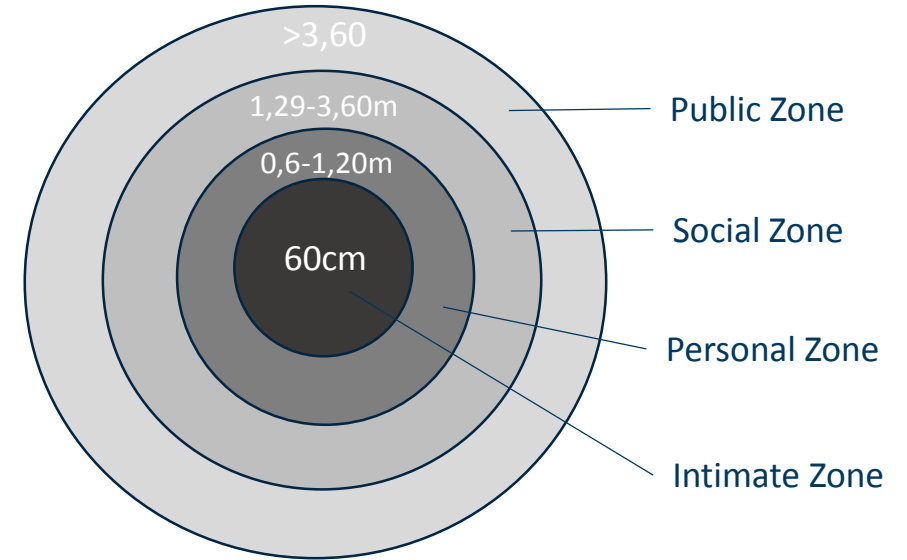
also called intimate sphere,  
just for close friends, family or partner, should not be crossed by other people

→ western european average value, can be different in other cultures

**If your personal zones are crossed, do not hesitate to make this clear!!**



Distance Zones by Hall



If you experience any violation of your personal zones, please contact us!  
(Department ISA – International Student Affairs)



# Other contact points for harassment, sexualised violence or discrimination

- **Dezernat 5: Security on Campus:** Maximilian Fassbender  
Phone: 0271/7403879  
[Maximilian.Fassbender@uni-siegen.de](mailto:Maximilian.Fassbender@uni-siegen.de)
- **Equal Opportunities Officer University of Siegen:** Dr. Elisabeth Heinrich  
Phone: 0271/740-2227  
[gleichstellungsbeauftragte@uni-siegen.de](mailto:gleichstellungsbeauftragte@uni-siegen.de)
- **Women's Counseling Center Siegen:** Freudenberger Straße 28, 57072 Siegen (close to the ZOB & train station),  
Phone: 0271 21887, E-Mail: [frauenberatung@frauenhelfenfrauen-siegen.de](mailto:frauenberatung@frauenhelfenfrauen-siegen.de)
- Equality Body of the City of Siegen: Haus Seel, Kornmarkt 20, 57072 Siegen  
**Miss Kratzel, Room: 233**  
Phone:(0271) 404-3457, E-Mail: [m.kratzel@siegen.de](mailto:m.kratzel@siegen.de)





# Social manners



## „Siezen“ and „Duzen“

- There are two pronouns to address someone: “Du” is rather personal, “Sie” is more respectful:
- As a rule, you use “Sie” with people you do not know and/or who are persons of respect (i.e. lecturers, people at work, etc.)
- Students say “du” to each other
- If in doubt, wait until someone offers you the “Du”

## Eating

- Normally you wait until everyone is seated before you start eating
- You try to eat quietly (no smacking) and have a friendly conversation



**Be attentive and observe. It takes a little time to get to know a country and its rules of behavior.**

**Ask if you don't understand something (-> Stronger together on Thursday!).**

