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GET
VISA
GERMANY

Get Visa Germany

by Nicole Abramowski

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WHO IS THIS GUIDE FOR?

Unfortunately not all countries have the same relationship with Germany, which means that it is much harder for citizens of some countries to get work permits in Germany than others.

Some can come to Germany as a tourist for up to three months without a visa and then apply for a work permit within Germany while others cannot. Citizens from the following countries can apply for work permits from within Germany:

Australia
Israel
Japan
Canada
Republic of Korea
New Zealand
United States of America

These countries have the same or similar regulations with regards to the application process.

This guide is only suggested for citizens of the above countries, as the procedures to get a work permit for citizens of other countries differs.

If you are from one of the above countries and are interested in obtaining a work or residence permit, but are not based in Berlin, this eBook is also for you. Most of the links included in the guide are for the Berlin offices, however you can easily look up the local versions of the same offices for your preferred location and follow the same steps and checklists.



If you are from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Japan, or the Republic of Korea, you also have other options such as the Working Holiday or Youth Mobility Scheme (ages 18 to 35) permits for up to two years residence and permission to work in Germany. If you have already finished a degree in Germany, there are other post-study permits as well. This guide will not go into these options, but it is well documented online if you do a search. Be sure to check the requirements for your own country, as some countries require you apply and receive a permit before leaving your home country.

DISCLAIMER



I am not an immigration lawyer or attorney nor have I been formally trained in immigration law. The following eBook serves as a summary of my own experiences as a United States citizen who has been granted a variety of work permits in Berlin, Germany, my own intensive research and my experiences working as a relocation coach and helping others.

Following the instructions in this eBook does not guarantee that you will be granted a work or residence permit. It is also recommended to supplement this eBook with information directly from the Ausländerbehörde (Foreigner's Office) to ensure that all current standards and regulations are met. This eBook is focused solely on getting the different types of freelance, artist and language learning permits and does not contain any information about sponsored visas for salaried jobs. Please also note that depending on your country of citizenship, there may be different visa or immigration requirements (See section Who is this guide for?). If you have a more complicated situation, for example, emigrating with children or a spouse, it is suggested that you get in touch with an immigration lawyer directly.

A few of the links in this book referencing third-party products are affiliate links.

INTRODUCTION



So, you want to move to Berlin and you're not an EU citizen? Hurrah, you need a visa! While there are many different types of visas in Germany and different rules and loopholes for different nationalities, the freelance visa is one of the most popular and accessible visas to start off with, along with the German language-learning visa. Okay, but what if I'm not based in Berlin, you ask? Good question! The visa regulations are the same throughout Germany, but the specific links and experiences explained herein are Berlin-centric. If you are not in Berlin, you can search for the appropriate forms and addresses for your local area by looking up "Ausländerbehörde [city or closest larger city]" in an online search. I've also included a couple links in the Resources section below for those who are not Berlin-based.

Being Germany, there is some paperwork involved in applying for a visa, but fret not, this eBook is here to walk you through each item necessary to complete the application for the work or residence permit of your choice. By the end of this eBook, you should feel prepared to assemble your application for the Ausländerbehörde (Foreigner's Office) in Berlin.

WHO AM I?

My name is Nicole and I am an American who has lived in Berlin since 2011. My first experience living abroad was in Brighton, England during my university years. Post-graduation, I moved back abroad to Prague to take a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) training course and to gain some experience teaching English.



After an unfortunate and unsuccessful experience applying for a visa with an immigration lawyer in Prague, I set off on a five month Eurotrip, which is where I stumbled upon Berlin for the first time. A few weeks exploring Berlin and I was hooked. I headed back to America having decided that I had to live in Berlin. I spent a year preparing for the move by learning German, saving money and researching all things visa-related online. After getting in touch with as many people who had been through the process as possible, I decided I'd do the whole thing myself rather than depend on a lawyer like last time.

By the time I arrived in Berlin, I was thoroughly prepared. Starting out as a freelance English teacher, I put together my paperwork and got my work permit on my first try during a walk-in appointment on the same day. During the years following, I managed to add several categories to my freelance work permit, first permission tied to my job at an international university as a Project Assistant in Marketing and later an open category that allowed me to work anywhere as an English-speaking Project Assistant. After three years in Berlin, I acquired a visa that allowed me to take up any job, either freelance or a salaried position at a company. With this visa, I was able to get a salaried position at a small private Liberal Arts university. I am now a permanent resident of Germany as of summer 2017. This means no more immigration for me! So, you can see it takes some effort, but it's totally possible to make a sustainable move over to Germany.



Since I've been in Berlin, I've helped many friends, friends of friends and acquaintances get their work and residence permits. After awhile, word spread and I had a lot of people writing me to help them. Not having much time anymore to meet with each individual person to explain the visa process, I decided to write an eBook to help all those visa-less potential Berliners out there!

The information described below has been the method I've used to help myself and others get their freelance, language learning, preparing to study and artist permits in Berlin and in Germany as a whole. I've compiled all of my experience and research into this one eBook over several years, including templates for those pesky letters of intent and tips for choosing and/or adding a category to your freelance or artist visa. You'll also find contacts for health insurance brokers who can guide you in choosing the best health insurance for your situation that fits German visa requirements, and advice for what you'll need to prepare once you have your visa.