



CROSS CULTURAL AWARENESS PROGRAM



INTRODUCTION

German international students choose to come to Canada because they are interested in you! Canada has its own special type of culture, one which German students would like to further understand. This is often one of the driving reasons for international students to decide to study abroad.

So, how does this benefit Canadians?

In a world which is increasing in the degree of unity from people around the world, having international students gives Canadians a chance to broaden their knowledge of the world and other cultures and communities. This also gives students in host countries an opportunity to learn and understand more about other countries and cultures, in different parts of the world.

There are long term benefits for you;

Many friendships formed through international students and host students can be lifelong friendships. Once you've decided to travel, wouldn't it be nice to know you have friends in other countries?

There are even benefits for your country;

The money that is brought into Canada from international students is an economic value! Following are some differences and interesting facts to know about culture in Germany which may help to understand German international students. However, do keep in mind that people and students, from anywhere in the world are different from one another and of course some students may not follow these general trends at all!

GENERAL ATTITUDE

- Germans work efficiently. They don't see the need to work long hours for a job that could be done in a shorter time frame.
- They are excellent planners and organizers; they think ahead and consider the consequences for their actions and choices.
- Overall, Germans are a quieter bunch and prefer not to stand out so much. A Canadian audience is overall much livelier than a German audience.



German Beach with typical Beach Chair

There are of course differences depending on individuals and also depending on what region of the country they are from!

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS



- In Germany, it is not as common that people will smile at each other as they walk down the street.
- Germans tend to worry about everything and every detail. They simply like to know what the 'plan' is, even when there may not necessarily be one!
- Germans enjoy their privacy and don't like it when other people interfere with their business. They may have a positive relationship with their neighbor, where a 'hello, good day' is issued, however this often goes no further.
- They will not give a compliment or offer help to someone, unless they really mean it.

ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS

- It can sometimes seem as if a German is being very direct or rude, however, this is usually not the case, but merely due to the differences in language. The German language is a very direct language and is very 'to the point', often students may be directly translating their language and this is why it may come across as rude.
- The German culture and language can be very formal compared to the Canadian culture.

PRIVACY, FREEDOM AND INDIVIDUALITY

- In Germany, students are given more freedom from a much earlier age - this is often why German students can seem so much more mature than their Canadian counterparts, or shocked as to why they are not allowed to meet friends after dinner on school nights.
- The drinking age is much lower (16 years) in Germany, and they are allowed to attend parties at an earlier age.
- In German homes, closing doors is the 'normal' thing to do - mostly to keep the heat in rooms! German students sometimes are unaccustomed to the 'knock before you enter' rule and will also naturally tend to close doors.

INFRASTRUCTURE

- German cities have very well connected train and bus systems, and main cities in Germany are often much smaller than cities such as Toronto for example. Being used to doing things for themselves and being quite independent, it can be difficult for German students to be so dependent on their host family for being able to get to different places.
- In Germany (and many other European cities) bikes are very commonly used to go places and it is optional to wear a helmet!

HOUSING AND LIVING CONDITIONS

- It is more common for families to live in apartments than to have their own houses. There is not as much land per person in Germany, but also houses can be very expensive.
- Germans are also very attached to their houses and living spaces and can be quite particular about their surroundings.
- Houses normally have a cellar, one or two levels and also an attic.
- Germans recycle about 80% of their glass and paper. They are the leader in garbage separation in the whole world!
- In comparison to Canadian families, not so many families in Germany have house pets.



SCHOOL STRUCTURE

- Typically, school begins at 8am in Germany and can finish anywhere between 2-4pm.
- There are no 'house systems' in German schools and hardly any sports. Their sport is done outside of school through clubs.
- English is a compulsory subject. All classes are very structured.
- Relationships between teachers and students are much more formal than those between students and teachers in Canada.
- The German school system typically requires every student to take about 8-12 subjects.
- Germans have a very structured, planned and full 'day life'. It is not unusual for a student to be involved in one or two sports, an instrument, social activities and/or further tutoring in some subjects, all fitting into one week.

MEALS

- Germans often have a large breakfast to begin their day (often including cheese and cold cuts!), and they tend to switch their lunch and dinner meals. This means that many German families have their main meal of the day in the middle of the day.
- There are many different types of bread, bread rolls, cheese and cured meats in Germany - all of which are very popular and much less expensive than in Canada

- Lunch in Germany, for those still in school, tends to be later than the normal 12.30pm time frame. This is due to the structure of schools in Germany.
- Germans really love their 'organic/Bio/environmentally friendly' products.
- People in Germany typically do not drink water from the tap - they have sparkling mineral water as their normal drinking water.



Typical German breakfast

MONEY

- It can be a common assumption that international students have a lot of money. This is not always the case. German families generally have similar financial situations as those in Canada. There is always a scale, in all developed countries.

