

Germany Bound for 8 Weeks: Southern Germany at a Glance (Report #1)

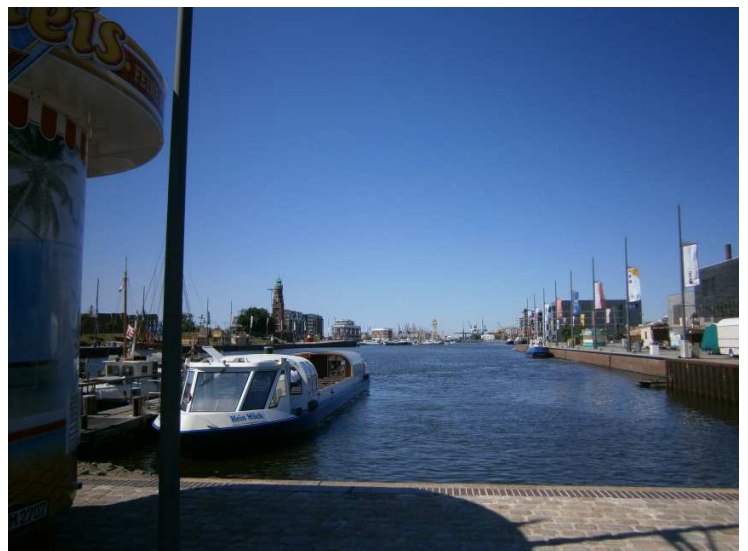
About Me:

My name is Karla Funk. I am 24 years old, and an IFYE Representative from Kansas. I am currently in Germany for 8 weeks. I spent my second 3 ½ weeks in Northern Germany in the State of Niedersachsen, so my experiences and observations are all from within Northern Germany. I chose to come to Germany because I am of German descent from my Dad's side and I have always dreamed of coming to Germany since I studied German in High School for a short time. Enjoy Northern Germany through my eyes!



Germany Facts:

- Federal Republic of Germany
- 16 Federal States
- Capitol: Berlin
- Language: German (although there are various dialects in different states)
- 82 million inhabitants-Europe's largest country
- 357,000 sq km
- Stretches from the North Sea and the Baltic Sea to the Alps in the South
- Home to the Rhine, Elbe, and Danube Rivers
- Landscape: From the North Sea to the Baltic Sea in the North to the Alps in the South, Germany is structured geographically as follows: the North German lowlands, the Mittelgebirge ridge, the Southwest German subdued mountains and terraced landscape, the South German piedmont and the Bavarian Alps



Niedersachsen Facts:

- Second Largest State in area: 47, 618 sq km
- Federal State of Bremen/Bremerhaben is within the state
- Capitol City: Hannover
- Population of 7.8 million
- Location: north-western Germany borders the North Sea and the Netherlands in the West.

Similarities/Differences:

- Festivals
 - In Northern Germany there are several festivals that occur at the end of the summer. The festivals are called Schutzenfest and are a shooting festival. Members of the shooting clubs compete to improve and gain new medals as well as compete for the top awards within the club. Bands also play during these festivals.
- Recycling System
 - In Germany the families separate trash into four sections:
 - Plastic & Cardboard, Paper, Waste, and Compost
- Nine Pin versus Bowling
 - Nine Pin is very similar to bowling. There are nine pins at the end of the lane, and you send a ball down the lane to try and knock as many pins down along the way. The only difference is the size of the balls are smaller, the lane is dipped in the middle so it is harder to put a ball in the gutter, and the pins are repositioned using magnets. Although it seems to be a simple adjustment if you know how to bowl, but it is difficult as the lane and the ball are both smaller! But it is still quite fun to play, especially in a group!



- Animal Parks
 - In Germany there are zoos and animal parks. We visited an animal park the first weekend I was at the Heinemann's. Animal Parks are designed for younger children. There are a few exotic animals in the park, but most of the animals could stay outside or in sheds. But throughout the zoo there were dioramas of fables as well as a large playground right in the center! Definitely a great place to take children.



Food:

- Barbeque (grilled) food is popular all over Germany throughout the summer. It is common to eat grilled food almost every week in Germany in the summer.
- Crazy Traditional German Sandwich: Raw meat on bread with onion and salt/pepper! The meat is only good for 12 hours after it is butchered. I did try this the last day I was in Germany, and I actually found it to taste good, not slimy like you would expect raw meat to be, but flavorfull. (For those wondering, no I did not get sick either; not even a stomach ache!)
- With the Heinemann's I learned how to make **Rouladen** which is a traditional meat dish of thin beef steak, spread with mustard on top, then with salami, pickles, cheese, and other toppings desired, and then rolled and baked in the oven. It is wonderfully good!

One Favorite Activity of Mine:

- One of my favorite activities at the Heinemann's (and this may seem odd) was going to the Corn Maize. In German it is called a Mai Labrynth. There were 5 of us who went: Ines, Bjarne, myself, Talina, and Talina's friend Hannah. It was so much fun to run around in the maze with the girls.

Often I would follow the girls as we searched for the next station, asking the girls: Links (left), Rechts (right), or straight ahead. And while the girls do not know Wizard of Oz, in my mind I made a reference to Scarecrow's reaction when Dorothy asks him for directions. The funny part is that we were in a corn maze as they were in a corn field during that scene!



Besides chasing the girls in the corn maze, I think playing with the children everyday was a highlight. I looked forward to playing with Talina and Bjarne each day and finding ways to communicate and learn new games!

Family #2: Heinemann Family

- Kai, Ines, Talina (4), and Bjarne (1 ½)
- Lives in Gros Mackenstedt/Stuhr (about 15 minutes from Delmenhorst)
 - Population of 2,000 people
- Typical Day:
 - Breakfast at 8 or 8:30am
 - Morning: going to the playground, the store, running other small errands
 - Lunch
 - Afternoon: activities/playing games with the children
 - Supper
 - Bedtime for the kids
 - Gamenight/talking/relaxing
- Activities:
 - Bremen
 - Bremenhaben
 - Corn Maize
 - Swimming
 - Zoo
 - Visiting friends for play dates for the kids or birthday parties
 - Playing games on the Trampoline or in the Garden

