

# WHO ARE THE GERMANS?



# **WHAT IS A STEREOTYPE?**

**A stereotype is a conventional, formulaic, and simplified conception, opinion, or image.**



# So What Are Germans "Really" Like?

Do they really live up to their stereotype of being super-punctual, super-diligent and super-clean?

Is Germany a right-wing country?

And what makes Germans laugh?

Does a German man really care more about his car than about his family?

**Every stereotype contains a certain amount of truth but also a certain amount of derision...**

# Appearance

- Blond hair
- Blue eyes
- Weight
- Colorful dresses (Dirndl)
- Body modifications



# Blonde Hair and Blue Eyes

- Yes and no, but mostly no. Some Germans do have blonde hair and blue eyes. You'll find more blondes in Germany than you would in say, China, but no more than in many Northern European countries.

# Weight

- In spite of the modern trends in Germany away from heavy foods, obesity is still a big problem. In 1999 it was estimated that 47% of Germans were overweight and 11% were obese. So that part of the stereotype is true, but neither Britons nor Americans are going to feel particularly thin in Germany, their obesity rates are similar or worse

# Dodgy Facial Hair

- Take a deep breath. This one is actually true. Some, not all, but some German men are very proud of their luxurious facial hair. The World Beard and Moustache Championships will take place in Berlin, on October 1st 2005 ([www.worldbeardchampionships.com](http://www.worldbeardchampionships.com)). Germans are very prominent in this minority spectator sport. Many cities in Germany have beard clubs where bearded men can get together and enjoy the camaraderie of looking like bears





# Germans are wearing bavarian-style leather-trousers!



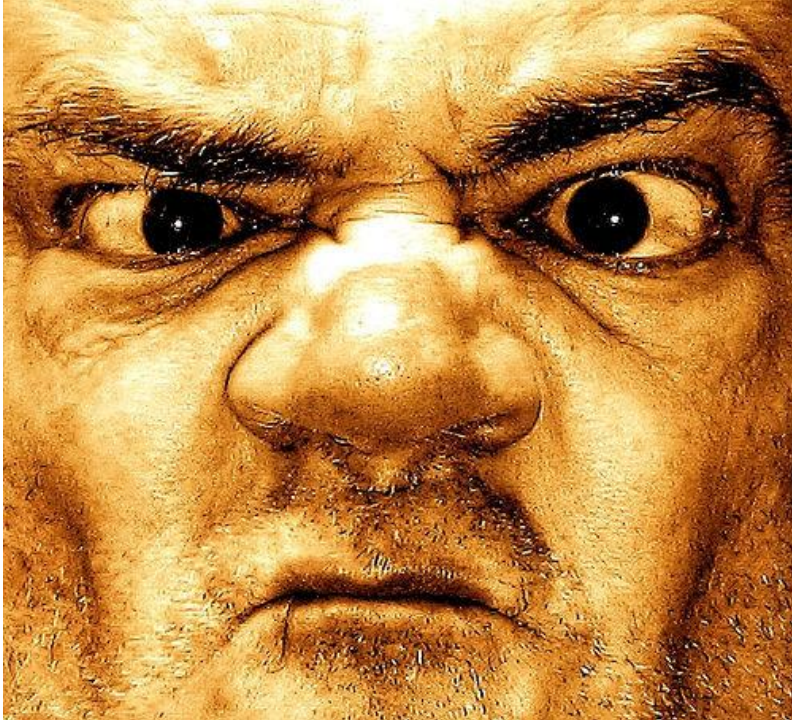
Lederhosen are part of the traditional dress of Bavaria, but not everyone has a pair, and they wouldn't wear them every day if they did. Even Bavarians have style.

# Character traits

- Punctual ([ˈpʌŋktʃuəl ], [-tju-])
- Responsible
- Strict
- Serious
- Polite
- Reserved
- Clever
- Economical/ save money



# Germans are serious and grim!



- Yes and no. Overall, and more so than others, Germans are a fairly reserved people. In general, they don't display too many emotions. It often takes quite some time to develop a close friendship, but then it may last for years. Not surprisingly, one Ukrainian student remarked that Germans are like a thermos: cold on the outside, warm on the inside. Thus, if you're only in Germany for a few months, some Germans may think that building up a friendship is not worth the effort since you're going to move away again anyway. Do not take that personally. If you really want someone's friendship, be patient, polite, and friendly, and chances are you will be rewarded.
- Often, people will not invite you to their home first, but rather meet you for a cup of coffee or dinner at a restaurant. You can accelerate the process by inviting them first. Many Germans will be surprised, but gratefully accept the offer.

# "Germans Don't Like Children"

- Yes and no. On the one hand, most young Germans dream of a family, and intend to have children. On the other hand, Germany has one of the lowest birth rates in the world. Most couples only have one or two children, if any. There are lots of reasons for this contradiction. To name just a few: Contraceptives are very widespread; job opportunities for women have significantly improved over the past decades; people marry late; divorce rates are fairly high; fear of unemployment – and thus poverty – is widespread; due to the German social system, you do not need children to provide for you in your old age; many women are afraid to damage their career when they opt for children; raising children is expensive and can translate into a lower living standard – a no-no in this country that puts a lot of emphasis on personal wealth. Because of this, German society is largely geared towards grown-ups. Some people – especially those who never had children – may act a bit intolerant, and your kid's running, laughing or crying may raise quite a few eyebrows. If you feel that someone unjustly criticizes you and your children, it is best to stay polite and firmly defend that what they do is often perfectly normal for their age.

# "Germans Don't Like Foreigners"

- Yes and no. While there are many reports on Germans' xenophobia (intolerance), what they show is not always representative for the entire country. Many Germans are indeed friendly and hospitable towards foreigners – and that means you. There is no denying there is some open violence, though, and that it has increased noticeably over the past decade. As a rule, hostility prevails where there are a lot of social problems – it's especially bad in some neighborhoods in major cities like Bremen or Berlin, or small towns in the former East German states. Some of these areas have more than 25% unemployment and foreigners wrongly tend to get blamed for the after-effects of the 1990 unification – when a capitalist economy was introduced to East Germany two decades ago, more than a third of all jobs in East Germany was cut faster than you could say "free market," and the economy in this part of the country has not recovered ever since.

# Germans hate Polish People!



Scum а) отбросы, отходы; очистки, шелуха, мусор б)  
мразь, подонок; мерзавец



# Germans are still Nazis!

- Within the school setting, Germany is usually presented to students within the context of World War II. As a result, children learn about Adolf Hitler, the Nazi regime, and concentration camps but are given very little exposure to other aspects of Germany's history, culture, and placement within today's global society.



# Food and Drinks

- BEEEEEEER
- Brezeln крендель
- Sausages
- Greasy food жирная пища
- Schnapps (liqueur)
- bakery





# Germans are heavy beer-drinkers!

- A recent survey of 35,000 people showed that the average German adult drank 120 litres of beer per year, 16 litres more than the average British adult, and that 17 per cent of German adults believe the point of drinking is to get drunk.



# Germans always eat sausage!

- There's no denying Germans love a nice big sausage with their pickled cabbage, but things are changing and you will now find restaurants from every country you can think of in most German cities. Half a point each: Stereotype 2.5 Political Correctness 1.5



# Behavior & Habits

- Visit music festivals/ carnival
- Take everything seriously
- No/ strange sense of humor
- Drinking games
- Tolerance towards disabled people
- Environmentally concerned
- Football fans

# Germans have lots of money!



# Germans drive only luxury cars!



- Due to commercials flaunting “German engineering” and the superiority of such automotive brands as BMW, Mercedes, Audi, and Porsche, people are flooded with the idea that all Germans drive high-performance, luxury cars. This is further amplified by the myth that “There are no speed limits in Germany!”
- Many roads in Germany do have a strictly enforced speed limit.

# "Service in German Shops is Bad"

- True, at least on the whole. In Germany, we say "Der Kunde ist König" (the customer is king) but some people regard that as a call for a palace revolution. As soon as you enter a store, an old German salesperson may pretend not to notice you, hide behind a shelf, get busy with filing receipts, or seem completely absorbed by a thorough discussion of today's weather with their colleagues. Don't worry: In this country, that's perfectly normal. It's also not unusual to be treated with a rudeness that positively borders on passion. Don't ask yourself what you have done to deserve this treatment. In most cases, this has nothing to do with your behavior or with being a foreigner. Bad customer service is an ancient national custom, like drinking beer or manufacturing cars. Things have been getting better over the past few years, though, since storeowners started to notice that bad service begins to do damage to their sales.

# "Stores are Closed on Sundays"

- True. Most of them, that is. A few shops at the train station are open, though. You can also get some basic things at many gas stations twenty-four hours a day – mainly newspapers, overpriced snack food, and (of course) beer.

# "Germans are Chain Smokers"

- Not true. The actual number of smokers has been declining for years. And thanks to laws passed in 2007/8, smoking is now officially prohibited in just about every enclosed space except your own home.
- Please keep in mind that many landlords prefer to rent to non-smokers, so being a smoker might make your search for a place to live somewhat more difficult.



# "Germans Love Soccer"

- Definitely true. If you have male German friends and you're not into soccer yourself, you might not see much of them during the world championship. A lot of German soccer fans regard it as a natural law that Germany must make it to the finals of any international championship.

# Music & movies

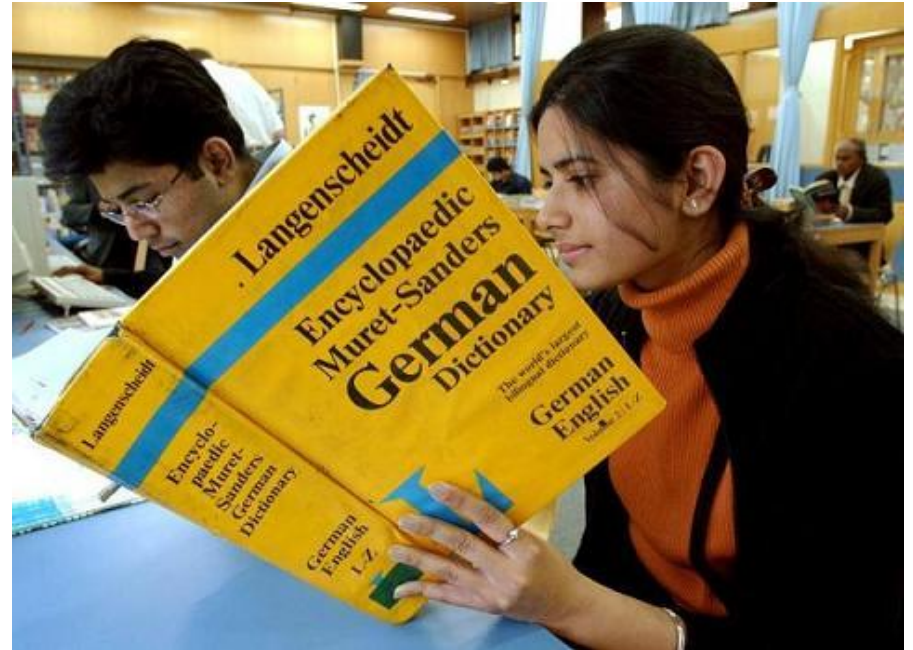
- Folk music
- Rave music
- Aggressive (Rammstein)
- Porn movies
- few famous German movies but the ones that are known are very good (Die Welle, Goodbye Lenin, Das Leben der Anderen, Die fetten Jahre sind vorbei)
- Soap operas (Verliebt in Berlin)



# Language

- Rough sound
- Aggressive
- No beautiful poetry
- Hard to learn
- Long words

*(Feuerwehrrettungshubschraubernotlandeplatzaufseherin)*



# **"German is So Difficult - People Won't Speak German to Me"**

- True, German IS difficult. Don't let that discourage you, though. The more you practice, the better you get.

# Germany is a land with advanced Sex Industry & Prostitution



- Prostitution was legalised in Germany in 2002. The idea was to remove the industry from criminal hands and thus reduce the illegal trafficking of women, make working conditions safer and reduce stigma.
- Prostitutes are now able to join unions and get health insurance, but many sex workers prefer not to register with authorities due to discrimination and stigma. The result is that prostitutes are still often forced to work in dark uninhabited industrial areas, which puts them at risk.
- Registered prostitutes are regularly given free mandatory health checks, and it is also possible for customers to write up contracts with sex workers in order to protect them in the case of the desired 'services' not being rendered. Unfortunately, a legal loophole means that the prostitutes can't do anything if the client fails to pay up after they have sex.
- **stigma** ['stɪgmə] бесславление, бесчестие, позор, пятно
- **mandatory** ['mændət(ə)rɪ] обязательный, принудительный
- **loophole** ['luːphəʊl] лазейка; увёртка