

Borrowing words in English from German

The English language has an enormous amount of words that have been borrowed (or loaned) from other languages. This is a collection of tables listing words from the many languages that have contributed words to English. For some languages the word list is complete; for others (French, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Spanish) only a selection of borrowed words is given as there are so many. There are brief explanations for most words and the original literal meaning if appropriate.

Loanwords are words adopted by the speakers of one language from a different language (the source language). A loanword can also be called a borrowing. The abstract noun borrowing refers to the process of speakers adopting words from a source language into their native language. "Loan" and "borrowing" are of course metaphors, because there is no literal lending process. There is no transfer from one language to another, and no "returning" words to the source language. The words simply come to be used by a speech community that speaks a different language from the one these words originated in.

This is a list of German expressions used in English; some are relatively common (e.g. hamburger), but most are comparatively rare. In many cases the loanword has assumed a meaning substantially different from its German forebear.

Most of these words will be recognized by many English speakers; they are commonly used in English contexts. Some, such as *wurst* and *pumpernickel*, retain German connotations, while others, such as *lager* and *hamburger*, retain none. Not every word is recognizable outside its relevant context. A number of these expressions are used in American English, under the influence of German immigration, but not in British English.

Food and drink



Berliner Weisse, sour beer infused with fruit syrup

Biergarten, open-air drinking establishment

Braunschweiger, a liverwurst cold-cut.

Bratwurst (sometimes abbrev. brat), type of sausage

Bundt cake, a ring cake (from *Bundkuchen*)

Delicatessen, speciality food retailer, fine foods (German spelling *Delikatessen*)

Sports and recreation

Abseil (German spelling: *sich abseilen*, a reflexive verb, to rope (seil) oneself (sich) down (ab)); the term *abseiling* is used in the UK and commonwealth countries, "roping (down)" in various English settings, and "rappelling" in the US.

Blitz, taken from Blitzkrieg (lightning war). It is a team defensive play in American or Canadian football in which the defense sends more players than the offense can block.

Foosball, probably from the German word for table football, *Tischfußball*,^[2] although foosball itself is referred to as *Kicker* in German.



Other aspects of everyday life



–bahn as a suffix, e.g. [Infobahn](#), after [Autobahn](#)
Blücher, a half-boot named after Prussian Field Marshal [Gebhard Leberecht von Blücher](#) (1742–1819); also a hand in the British card game [Napoleon](#).

[Dachshund](#), literally *badger dog*; a dog breed (usually referred to as *Dackel* in German usage)

[Doberman Pinscher](#), a dog breed

[Doppelgänger](#), literally *double-goer*, also spelled in English as *doppelganger*; a double or look-alike. However, in English the connotation is that of a ghostly apparition of a duplicate living person.

[Dreck](#), literally *dirt* or *smut*, but now meaning trashy, awful (through [Yiddish](#), [OED](#) s.v.)

[Dummkopf](#), literally *stupid head*; a stupid, ignorant person, similar to *numbskull* in English

German terms sometimes appear in English academic disciplines, e.g. history, psychology, philosophy, music, and the physical sciences; laypeople in a given field may or may not be familiar with a given German term.

Arts

Gesamtkunstwerk, "the whole of a work of art", also "total work of art" or "complete artwork"

Gestalt (lit. "shape, figure") a word used the same way as "entity" or "thing" in common language. "The Whole is greater than the sum of the parts"



Music



Crumhorn, from German *Krummhorn*

Fach, method of classifying singers, primarily opera singers, by the range, weight, and color of their voices

Flutterzunge Playing technique for wind-instruments (flutter tongue)

Flugelhorn (German spelling: *Flügelhorn*), a type of brass musical instrument

Glockenspiel, a percussion instrument

Heldentenor, "heroic tenor"

German terms mostly used for literary effect

There are a few terms which are recognized by many English speakers but are usually only used to deliberately evoke a German context:

Autobahn — particularly common in British English and American English referring specifically to German motorways.

Achtung — Literally, "attention" in English.

Frau and Fräulein — Woman and young woman or girl, respectively in English. Indicating marital state, with Frau — Mrs. and *Fräulein* — Miss; in Germany, however, the diminutive *Fräulein* lapsed from common usage in the late 1960s. Regardless of marital status, a woman is now commonly referred to as *Frau*, because from 1972 the term *Fräulein* has been officially phased out for being politically incorrect and should only be used if expressly authorized by the woman concerned.

References

1. Collins English Dictionary - Definition of “schmalz” <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/schmalz>
2. "[Definition of foosball](#)". Merriam Webster. Retrieved 26 April 2011.
3. "[Definition of Kutte in German](#)". Digitales Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache, [DWDS](#). Retrieved 3 November 2011.

Thanks for your attention!!!

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