



# AMAZING CAPITALS

## D Ü S S E L D O R F



THE E-BOOK FOR DÜSSELDORF PACKED WITH INSIGHTS FOR EXPATS RESIDING IN THE STATE CAPITAL OF NRW.

### EMBRACE YOUR FRIENDLY CITY

Big city business and small town charm unite to create a vibrant location and a safe choice of new home for expats. Contemporary and traditional architecture sit comfortably together alongside wide river banks and charming urban districts. Experience wonderful times in cozy and beautiful Düsseldorf.



# A WARM WELCOME



Life as an international resident in one of the world's fascinating destinations is unique. Led by design or by fortune to this magnificent city, Amazing Capitals Düsseldorf helps you engage in a new culture, new language and new routine full of surprises.

Amazing Capitals helps companies and cities to attract and retain expats through publishing online resources which paint an excellent image of the location. Designed specifically to cover the expat ecosystem and close the gaps, they assist international talent to settle in, discover more about their new home and to lead better lives. Enjoy this eBook, packed with articles full of opening insights on aspects of life plus a selection of assorted stories that compliment your comprehensive online eGuide.

A perpetual expat, your publisher is highly experienced in the exciting phenomenon of living in various countries that include Germany. Contacts in diplomatic and administrative circles in Düsseldorf led to the birth of the first location guide for international employees in 2007.

International business professionals are on the move in ever greater numbers. Düsseldorf has changed much over time and so too, thank goodness, has the general definition of an expat. The demands and requirements of foreigners in the city remain the same. Knowledge.

Düsseldorf is the state capital of powerhouse North-Rhine Westphalia viewed through the eyes and mind of one of us. My mission is to empower international residents through providing online insights and relevant local knowledge.

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# A FINE CITY



Famous neighbours lived long, long ago where clear waters flow from a spring some thirty-five kilometres away from the city. They form a narrow brook that meanders towards the west. Weaving its way through the valley of Neanderthal, it twists and turns on its short journey through pleasant, lush countryside. Nearing its destination, the rivulet widens before disappearing much of the time underground and separating into five arms. Finally, they pour into the majestic river Rhine.

Here is the spot where a settlement was founded which took its name from those timeless waters. This is Düsseldorf, literally the village on the Düssel, as the small river is known.

The Rhine meanwhile flows north slicing the city in two. One of the great European waterways, it reaches all the way from Switzerland to the Netherlands. It was the “raison d’être” for the settlement, used for passage and transport since Roman days.

The river is mostly calm, yet occasionally a massive torrent. Now and again it floods the surrounding river banks with dramatic consequences. Many years ago, expat friends once commented that they had experienced the highest waters in a century. Two years in a row!

The old city on the walled eastern bank is a vibrant hive of activity. The neighbourhoods to the west boast wide, flat spaces stretching away from the river. These are cultivated opposite the city centre, becoming ever wilder farther afield. The closest neighbourhood known as Oberkassel stems to a great degree from the art nouveau period.

# URBAN ASPECTS

Compact yet spacious, downtown reveals urban architecture as a typical juxtaposition of ultramodern complimenting the old. Treelined avenues, riverside promenade, narrow streets, spacious parks and magnificent buildings mix well and impress newcomers. A compact city centre is surrounded by many interesting and diverse, concentrically formed communities.

The city is wealthy and run well. Industry and commerce are powerful. Düsseldorf is home to a surprising number of international or internationally operative corporations. The law courts finalise decisions on many issues and academia is highly respected in several fields. Museums and art venues are prominent.

Many of the world's largest trade fairs spill millions of international business visitors onto the streets throughout the year. Tourists play an ever increasing role in the local economy. All are astounded by the close proximity of the city's airport.

Residents originate from a wide selection of countries. Japanese influence is very noticeable while expats of other nationalities also play a very significant role. The workforce is skilled, people are both friendly and welcoming.

The city was founded seven centuries ago and has been the seat of government of the state of North-Rhine Westphalia for seventy years. Düsseldorf is a highly desirable place to live.



# FIRST IMPRESSIONS



Taste all the various flavours of Düsseldorf. Arrival in the city brings numerous surprises. First impressions of the locals may cause newcomers to doubt their friendliness. That misguidance is rapidly rectified. Thankfully the city's residents are extremely welcoming to foreigners.

It is less likely for Germans to offer their smile to strangers than many other nationals. Upon approach, locals do engage openly in conversation in this region, are often quite gregarious and also smile more frequently than first perceived. Most are rapid in offering assistance.

Expats are astonished at the international feel of Düsseldorf. This aspect is very prevalent since Düsseldorf is often unheard of prior to relocation. Another characteristic is its size. To be surrounded by so many languages in a city of such short distances is rare.

The urban feel of the state capital is relaxed, bubbly and sociable. On sunny days, its streets act as a magnet for the surrounding population. They are lively yet calm. A stroll along the promenade beside the waters of the Rhine is a perfect way to unwind. Walking on through the old town to follow Düsseldorf's other waterway through the famous Königsallee brings sightseers to the beautiful Hofgarten. Germany's oldest public park rounds up an appealing insight into your new location. While spacious and open it also has beautifully shaded spots.

Countless people enthuse over the city's retail selection. A wide choice of stores large and small, all within a short distance of each other, create a shopper's paradise. International brands mix well with national players and unique boutiques.

# FRIENDLY RESIDENTS



A true home from home, events are highly popular in Düsseldorf too. The France festival, China festival and Japan Day celebrate those nations. An obligatory marathon and a crazy carnival season sit well amongst other activities throughout the year. The annual Jazz Rally and Düsseldorf Festival performances are second to none.

A summer hot spot is the enormous funfair opposite the old town. Recreational rides stretch the length of the river bank between two bridges. A collection of annual Christmas markets light up the winter. Booths in many spaces in the city centre and districts offer seasonal gifts, tasty morsels and mulled wine.

The art academy laid the foundation long ago for a vibrant creative scene. Numerous art venues and museums host renowned collections while presenting notable exhibitions that impress critics the world over.

The flavour of Düsseldorf is greatly influenced by business. Many international as well as national corporations draw expat employees from across the globe. Furthermore, highly successful international trade fairs and congresses attract millions of business visitors.

All things considered, it is easy to see why this is a city with a heart. Düsseldorf offers the uniqueness of big city business combined with small town charm.

[City Topics on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# MAYOR'S WELCOME

© Landeshauptstadt Düsseldorf

Düsseldorf is a truly welcoming place. In fact, it is one of the most favoured cities for expats in Germany and Europe. Its high quality of living, career opportunities for international professionals and the well-known open-mindedness of its citizens, all these factors make settling down and building a personal network smooth and easy. As a city of short distances with a metropolitan and urban feel, Düsseldorf reveals just the right size and all the conditions for expats to quickly feel at home.

Düsseldorf offers excellent schooling for youngsters and most partners are able to find a suitable and promising position too. It can be easy to make new friends and there many nice things to do during leisure time.

There are also many institutions, network groups and service providers in Düsseldorf supporting newcomers: The Expat Service Desk ME&DUS and the newly founded City Office of Migration and Integration are just two examples to mention. In addition, a great number of events, networking opportunities and digital platforms like Facebook groups and Meetups, help expats to make friends and to figure out how things are done here.

I would like you to have good start in Düsseldorf. This new Amazing Capitals eBook will provide you with a lot of useful information and tips to help you to get started in the state capital.

Yours,



Thomas Geisel,  
Mayor of Düsseldorf

## SOCIETY & FOLK



Many say the Germans are highly respected yet, their folk lack humour, are complicated and walk too slowly. Germany is a juggernaut and is too strong and powerful too. Customs, habits and humour are certainly unique.

Locals believe that hosting the soccer world cup many years ago transformed the country. Your writer disagrees. German society had already changed so much emotionally that the whole event was a resounding success. Germans became loved at last. Thankfully, younger generations have been freed from much stigma since.

Germans are often frustrated at their own obsession with cars, shaking hands, hours of quiet, punctuality, jaywalking, service quality and lack of humour. Opening hours can also be an irritation. By the way, emergency food can be bought at the station or the airport!

Many foreigners ponder the local sense of humour. Especially since the country of poets and thinkers, Dichter und Denker, as they are known, with a mix of Bavarian down-to-earthiness and Prussian obedience, heaps of regulations, interdictions and pessimism never became famous for their wit.

But despite all, sensitive humour with deeper meaning has a long tradition in the country. German humour is strong, unique and mostly of the thigh-slapping kind. Yes, Germans love to laugh and it shows. Challenge your preconceptions and you may agree.

Locals may appear timid at first but, given a chance, the majority reveal their true nature.

[Society & Folk on the eGuide](#)

# SLEEPING OVER



Once again Düsseldorf surprises with its impressive variety of hotels in the city. As a thriving trade fair and congress destination, the need for places to sleep over in and around the city has customarily been high. Despite a notable increase in capacity over the years, hotels can still be completely booked at certain times throughout the year

Demand for quality has risen exponentially in recent decades. For such a compact city, the number of five star establishments is astounding. Alongside the more traditional Steigenberger and Breidenbacher Hof, other brands such as Intercontinental, Hyatt and De Medici have made the city their home.

Four star hotels include many renowned chains, a few of which offer pleasant rooms in a number of neighbourhoods. Melia, Mercure, Leonardo and many more brands can be found. Boutique hotels such as Me and All are highly popular too.

With many expats choosing to live in smaller homes during their time in Düsseldorf, longer lease opportunities and hotels can offer necessary opportunities for friends and family to stay.

The widespread tradition of bed and breakfast or private rentals in and around the city started a long time ago. AirBnB has more recently become popular and widespread.

[Sleeping Over on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# POPULAR DISTRICTS



Quirky, calm or lively? As periodical survey results reveal, Düsseldorf is an appealing city for international professionals to live in. Talented people relocate to the city from many parts of the world. Over the years, several neighbourhoods have become popular with expats.

The choice of a particular quarter can hinge on the vicinity of schools, amenities, public transport, nightlife or simply peace and quiet. A few favourites are worth mentioning.

## OBERKASSEL & NIEDERKASSEL

Oberkassel is a classic favourite on the west bank that has long attracted architecture aficionados. A great number of narrow streets reveal period properties from an early era of wealth and expansion. Muggel and Pauls are popular venues.

Originally farmland, many apartment buildings date from the early nineteenth hundreds. The district stretches south of the main thoroughfare to touch the wilder river bank and east to face the city over the Rhine. Many shops, a market twice a week as well as bistros, delis and bars serve residents and revellers.

Located to the north of the Luegallee is Niederkassel, a quieter district than its neighbour with many more individual houses. A few amenities can be found as well as a curious and entertaining little lane known as Alt-Niederhassel. One favourite is Meuser, famous for its speciality, halfway between pancake and omelette packed with pieces of bacon. Others are Dorfschänke and Osteria Saitta.

## HEERDT & LÖRICK

Heerdt and Lörick have also become popular following the extensive construction of many new properties. More residential, both neighbourhoods offer easy access to expansive river banks and the city centre via public transport. An open air swimming pool is popular during warm summers.

## PEMPELFORT & DERENDORF

Perhaps the most intact urban street for neighbourhood shopping is the Nordstrasse. It offers a surprising number of bakeries, many organic shops and everything else besides. These two districts are vibrant without being overwhelming. Many families and young people mix with elderly residents. An incredible variety of bistros, restaurants and cafés can be discovered. A enormous expanse of cultivated grassland invites residents to relax beside the riverbank nearby.



## UNTERBILK & HARBOUR

An eclectic area of the city for decades, Unterbilk is fascinating. The neighbouring harbour area has been in transition for just as long. Young people have been moving in next door to delightful elderly gents and ladies to create a vibrant, interactive mix of residents. The Lorettostrasse offers a variety of great eateries and bistros as well as desirable stores. The old harbour reveals many great places to stay out late.

## FLINGERN

This neighbourhood oozes a certain simplistic honesty. It is what it is and it's folk are who they are. A large area of contrasting styles and surroundings, this is also a terrific place to live.

Flingern is very centrally located, lively and mostly down to earth. Düsseldorf has a fascinating, semi-gentrified squat here, many places to go out and desirable gastronomy.



## ZOO & KAISERSWERTH

Expats who desire a more relaxed lifestyle, the vicinity to open countryside, woodlands and the local international school often choose either of these neighbourhoods. Kaiserswerth is an old settlement beside the river on the outskirts of Düsseldorf. Living here is akin to being in a self contained village with all that entails. An open air evening drink or meal beside the river is highly enjoyable.

Zoo takes its name from the time animals were housed in the district. Wider avenues, gardens and a good infrastructure include the Rethelstrasse. All manner of amenities can be enjoyed here including a great culinary scene.

# GETTING AROUND



Germany invests heavily in infrastructure and Düsseldorf is no exception. Extensive tunnelling for new subway lines came to a close a while ago, resulting in trams disappearing underground more often. Sensitive redesigning and landscaping have enabled the city to recover its sheen.

Using the public transport system is easy and popular. The Rheinbahn is the municipal organisation operating trams and busses, transporting over seven hundred thousand passengers to their destination every single day. They have been working on their people skills. On the whole they do an excellent job. A large variety of tickets are available.

S-Bahn trains criss-cross the city overground and are operated by the Deutsche Bahn. They offer a frequent and mostly reliable option to and from the international airport.

Taxis in Düsseldorf are modern and clean, mostly Mercedes and always beige. They also offer fairly good value for money and the majority of drivers are friendly. The first journey from the airport can be a surprise for some foreign passengers when the vehicle speeds from the access road and over the main highway to the city centre. Or if the car sits for lengthy periods in gridlock.

Other apps such as Uber and myDriver are available, if used less than in other capitals.

The joys of cycling in Düsseldorf depend very much on the route taken. Many cycle paths have been installed and it is possible to reach most areas safely. The bike rental system is easy to use and inexpensive. Bike stands can be found at numerous locations.



# CYCLING IN DÜSSELDORF



Bike paths have been available in Düsseldorf for a long time. The city administration has improved the situation by implementing more and more dedicated lanes over recent years. The traffic may feel a little threatening in some places but riding a bike in the city is normally safe and terrific fun.

One of the most enjoyable rides has to be alongside the river. A cycle path weaves its way from Heerdt, underneath all three inner city bridges, beyond Oberkassel, Niederkassel and Lörick to continue north for many kilometres.

Welcoming areas of open grassland and stretches of sandy beach open up along the way. They seem to invite passers by to pause for a picnic or to enjoy the gentle waters lapping at the shore. Lighting an open fire here is normally not permitted since many swathes of landscape here are protected areas. At times, cyclists also pass tall, majestic old plane and poplar trees that offer shade to those that pass underneath.

## WONDERFUL ROUTES

At Illverich a ferry takes cyclists across the Rhine to the ancient district of Kaiserswerth. Here it is possible to view the ruins of the old castle and to relax at one of Düsseldorf's great beer gardens, the quirky Galerie Burghof.

A return journey can head down the eastern banks of the river, past the sports stadium, trade fair and congress centres. It leads past delightful, cultivated grasslands alongside the Cecilienallee to the city centre and old town.

Heading beyond the harbour district to the south can take bike riders once again along the river into clean and spacious nature. Here it is possible to view expansive flower beds as well as the gardens of former stately homes. The farther cyclists travel, the quieter nature becomes. Much of the area supplies drinking water and is also a nature park.

# PUBLIC TRANSPORT



Getting around in Düsseldorf is simple. Whether on foot, by bike, bus, tram or subway, the city is compact and easy to navigate. Those contemplating public transport can rest assured that the system functions well. In fact, some seven hundred thousand souls trust in them each and every day

Busses criss cross the whole town from district to district, many heading through the centre of the city. On the whole, they run frequently and distances between bus stops are short. The route maps that are posted on bus shelters may need some studying at first glance but their logic is simple to grasp.

The trams weave their way overground through mostly close vicinity neighbourhoods, disappear under the city centre, to then head on their journey above ground once again.

The subway system offers a reliable and frequent network. An ongoing scheme of raising platforms to aid accessibility has been almost overshadowed by the latest opening of new tunnels. The service is impeccable and carriages are normally spotless.

Two routes are available to reach or leave Düsseldorf airport. The easy S11 train terminates underneath the terminal building to enable easy arrival and departure as well as a reliable journey of some twenty minutes from downtown. Other trains halt at the airport railway station near the runway. The terminal is then reached via a suspended people mover so the journey takes longer and can be less predictable.

# PLANES & TRAINS



The city is easily accessible by air and Düsseldorf airport offers several international flights to more far off destinations. Some airlines also offer routes to more far flung places with long range connections through their own hubs.

New York, Atlanta, Beijing or Tokyo are nine to twelve hours nonstop flight away. To Abu Dhabi and Dubai passengers will need to calculate some six and a half hours.

Some aircraft are the very latest generation, providing fresher air, mood lighting and a more comfortable environment. The largest planes in the skies have also been landing in Düsseldorf.

The airport is situated just a short distance from the city. Public transport offers frequent local trains and busses whilst a taxi ride is normally just a mere fifteen minutes. Depending on the traffic during rush hours, journey times can be more hit and miss.

Travelling by train to and from Düsseldorf can be easy. The national rail system runs many high speed trains to other cities in Germany, north, south or east. The city is also connected to Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris and other capitals in Europe.

Even London can be reached by train via Liege or Paris within six hours on a good day. Perfect for those who don't feel comfortable flying, wish to avoid airport procedures or can't face the at times arduous journey into the City.

[Airport Getaway on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# DIVERSE SURROUNDINGS

© Tourismus NRW, Oliver Franke



Düsseldorf is located to the far west of Germany and more or less midway between the northern shores and southern peaks. The surrounding countryside is fairly flat, becoming more undulating towards the east and the south.

The region is one of many names. The city is located in an area known traditionally as the lower Rhine, in the Rhine region and in the Rhine-Ruhr region too. It is also nestled in the federal state of North Rhine Westphalia, NRW, of which it is the capital.

More than six hundred and fifty thousand residents are registered in Düsseldorf while some eighteen million live in NRW. There are many people, yet the city feels far from overcrowded. The area defies old prejudices, revealing much greenery and open spaces.

In the south is Cologne, a city of great contrast. It too is located on the Rhine, is far larger and is proud of its ancient cathedral. A few kilometres further, the former German capital comes into view. Bonn is a cosy university town with many fascinating museums.

Head west to discover Roman heritage in nearby Neuss. Aachen, an hour or so away, attracts tourists with its impressive architecture, as do spectacular natural finds further south in the volcanic region of the Eifel. Surprisingly, from time to time an odd minor tremor can be felt originating here.

The Eifel landscape also excites with its outstanding scenery. Dense forest, high plateaus, vistas, ski resorts and the ability to lose oneself attract nature lovers. Trier is also a perfect destination to visit and discover magnificent insights to a time long past.

# EASTERN ATTRACTIONS



The Rhine Ruhr region is shaped like a banana. In the south are the cities of Bonn and Cologne. To the east, the Ruhr Metropolis, a large area of urban spread fans out from the river Ruhr.

A balancing act of joint and individual challenges faces ongoing, provocative decisions. Some of these have already led to phenomenal results. The Ruhr is attractive in many ways. Still an industrial powerhouse, the area does, however, present a cleaner, greener environment with many recreational and cultural highlights.

Creations include grand parks, converted industrial premises, hundreds of museums and art venues, world renowned events, diving zones and many music festivals. The region is a mix of urbanisations interspersed by, at times, expansive open spaces, for instance. Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord, Nordsternpark Gelsenkirchen as well as lakes, such as Baldeney See Essen, Kemnader See Bochum, Stausee Haltern. Thoughtfully redeveloped UNESCO Welterbe Zeche Zollverein offers a diversity of impressions and pure inspiration.

Vast undulating hills and low mountainous ranges provide more inspiring aspects for enjoying quality time. Pathways can be found alongside many of the rivers, great for leisurely walks or invigorating runs. Trails also pass through dense woods and wild natural habitats. Agricultural activities follow their perpetual dance with the seasons.

Motorways cut their way throughout the whole region in each and every direction. Driving reveals how nature and mankind compete, cattle grazing silently in a nearby pasture. With five million residents, it will come as no surprise that the Ruhr Metropolis is densely populated. Larger cities include Essen, Dortmund, Hagen, Duisburg and Bochum, though the vast number of spectacular vistas in the Ruhr remains astonishing.

# PURE RECREATION



Almost one third of Germany is covered by trees and the Ruhr Metropolis has its fair share. Stunning landscapes await expats who wish to get active in close vicinity to Düsseldorf. Besides walking or hiking, larger distances can be covered by bike. The Rad Revier Ruhr initiative includes [Railway Line Cycling](#) which follows repurposed routes, whereas the impressive [RS1](#) is a dedicated, fast and purpose built cycle route that crosses the Ruhr. The [Ruhrtal Radweg](#), offers insights along the valley of the river Ruhr, while the [Römerlippe Route](#) follows the river Lippe for 400 km and passes fascinating areas of Roman influence.

Culturally, the Ruhr Metropolis wins hands down. This vibrant region presents a phenomenal creative scene. The best way to indulge is with a [RuhrKultur Card](#), which gives free entry to twenty phenomenal museums and art venues belonging to the [Ruhr Kunst Museen](#), as well as half priced tickets at eleven theatres and locations of the [Ruhr Bühnen](#) and five important and highly attractive annual festivals.

Besides amusement parks, funfairs, ski slope, zoos, ancient architecture and modern landscape art, events and festivals occur throughout the year. Music gigs from classic to reggae occur during warmer months, as do marathons, cycling races, city and park illuminations, industrial heritage, CSD and an international short film festival, for instance. Christmas markets appear almost everywhere in winter to offer flying Santa or a 45 m tall tree adorned with 1,000 lamps.

International residents will be pleased to hear of two projects from the Tourism Association of NRW that [Ruhr Tourismus](#) is supporting. [Urbanana](#) is uniting creatives from all fields of life to create a web of interaction across the region. They are revealing more eclectic aspects of the region including themes so diverse as design, fashion, digital, startups, music, food, drink and even kiosks. The movement will continue with FLOW, which presents Cologne, Düsseldorf and the Ruhr packaged particularly towards expats.

# INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS



Several national companies with their headquarters or regional offices in Düsseldorf commenced international operations long ago. The city has also managed to attract a wide variety of dynamic international corporations over many decades.

Popular fields of business include manufacturing, media and telecommunications. Many contribute to Germany's record breaking exports.

Messe Düsseldorf hosts numerous, worldwide largest or most important congresses and trade fairs annually. Some are held annually and reopen to the public. These include the water sports, caravanning and outdoor adventure exhibitions.

Renowned, worldwide names have settled in and around Düsseldorf. Many companies attract a large number of expats to the state capital from across the globe. The Heinrich-Heine university, international schools and the university clinic also draw upon a global pool of academics. International sports such as football, ice hockey and basketball add to their numbers. So do musicians and performers at the city's symphony orchestra and opera.

The wide spectrum of international professionals that are resident in Düsseldorf and who have become key players in the local economy today is astounding.

# THE HARBOUR



With one of Europe's great waterways on its doorstep, it will come as no surprise that Düsseldorf possesses a harbour. It was fundamental to development over many centuries and a busy, industrialised port for a great many decades.

The last twenty years have seen a transformation from high tonnage to lively footfall. Structures have been restored, others incorporated in contemporary designs. Attractive new creations by renowned national and international architects continue to be erected.

Known locally as the media harbour, the area is characterised and flanked by a few iconic buildings. They include the NRW state parliament, Frank O Gehry's quirky trio, the media tower and an innovative glass marvel called the Stadttor.

Numerous premises are occupied by businesses in the fields of media, communication, fashion and architecture. Employees spill out each and every day to partake of the diverse culinary delights available, creating a vibrant, enjoyable atmosphere. Several restaurants offer outdoor eating, some with a beautiful view over the water basin and marina.

Bars and clubs can be enjoyed again when the whole district livens up after work. It is a highly attractive destination for evenings and nightlife. People wander from place to place, enjoying friendly interaction with others in a unique milieu.

The ambience to be found is diverse. It ranges from sophisticated and modern to cosy and traditional. Some places can tend to be rowdy, others more intimate. A great mix and in area transformed.

# DÜSSELDORF CONSULATES

Embassies from across the globe are located in the German capital. Besides Berlin, many countries maintain diplomatic representation in other locations too.

Many Consulates and Consulate Generals can be found in Düsseldorf, the state capital of North Rhine Westphalia. Canada, China, France, Japan, United Kingdom and United States have long-standing representations in the city.

Others include the Republic of Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Republic of Hungary, Kingdom of Morocco, Portuguese Republic, Republic of Serbia, Kingdom of Spain, Republic of Turkey and the Ukraine.

At the time of writing, honorary consulates are Angola, Austria, Brasil Congo, Ethiopia, Estonia, Finland, Guatemala, Iceland, Jordan, Latvia, Liberia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malta, Macedonia, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Pakistan, Peru, Russia, Sweden. Switzerland, Senegal, Seychelles, Slovenia, Suriname, Swaziland

## CONTACT ADDRESSES

British Consulate General Düsseldorf  
Oststrasse 86, 40210 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 944 80

Consulate of Canada / Consulat du Canada in Düsseldorf  
Benrather Strasse 8, 40213 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 172 170

Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Düsseldorf  
Schanzenstrasse 131, 40549 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 909 963 90

Consulat Général de France  
Martin Luther Platz 26, 40212 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 828 5460

Consulate General of Japan  
Breite Strasse 27, 40213 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 164 820

Consulaat-Generaal van het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden  
Kennedydamm 24, 40476 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 179 3010

U.S. Consulate General Düsseldorf  
Willi-Becker-Allee 10, 40227 Düsseldorf, Germany  
Phone: +49 211 788 8927

[Consular Representation on State of NRW](#)

### CONSULAR SUPPORT:

TODAY, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION FOR INDIVIDUALS IS GENERALLY UNAVAILABLE.

CONSULATES HAVE DOWNSIZED AND ARE FOCUSED ON REPRESENTATION OR SUPPORT FOR TRADE AND COMMERCE.

ANYONE IN NEED OF ASSISTANCE DUE TO MISSING DOCUMENTS OR OTHER PROPERTY CAN CONTACT THE LOST AND FOUND OFFICE.

THE POLICE ARE ALSO VERY SYMPATHETIC AND MAY BE OF HELP.

THE CONTACT NUMBER TO CANCEL LOST OR STOLEN CREDIT CARDS AND SIMILAR IS 116 116.

# GASTRONOMIC DELIGHTS

From Michelin to fast foods, Germans adore their food. Fortunately, besides traditional fare, many in Düsseldorf have long loved to experiment with alternative cuisine. The delightful gastronomic landscape of the state capital offers variations of exciting eateries in all districts.

Early influences came through the arrival of Japanese residents many decades ago. After a very lengthy struggle, the vegetarian movement is now well established. Vegan is available here and there. Lighter, Mediterranean style dishes are now widespread, due also to an expanding influx of foreign residents from southern regions.

International visitors and expats can enjoy a fascinating spectrum of places to dine.

## STREET FOOD

The Carlsplatz in the old town is the oldest market in the city. Surprisingly, Sunday opening was already permitted during the fourteenth century. A novelty many consumers would enjoy today.

Traditional stands offer fruits, vegetables, cheeses, breads, quality meat, seafood, flowers and many more items. An expansive selection of cooked food can be enjoyed in this unique location. A special curiosity sits among Indian, Italian and German eateries.



## VEGETARIAN & VEGAN

A must see is memorable Laura's Deli. Puritans please be aware they serve meat and fish too.

485 Grad serves vegan pizzas, Oktopussy is a unique option. Sattgrün are a purely vegetarian chain with various locations, now well established in Düsseldorf.

Vegan and vegetarian dishes are also served at many more eateries around the city that offer full range menus.



## SASHIMI, SUSHI & EASTERN

A large selection of Japanese food is available across the city centre and beyond. The Immermannstrasse and side streets are home to KiKaKu, the oldest sushi bar and many more besides. Asian and Middle Eastern additions to the scene include Yabase, Adjito, Papa Yong, Yoshi by Nagaya, Zen, Baba Green and Luang-Prabang. All you can eat lunch or dinner deals at Okinii have proven to be popular.

## GERMAN BREWERIES

An icon in the heart of the old town is Uerige. Dark, local Altbeer is served alongside traditional cold cuts, sausages and, on occasions, warm dishes. Patrons spill out onto the street during warm evenings and cold ones too. Other great breweries are the popular Im Fückschen, Schumacher, Zum Schlüssel and Joh. Albrecht. Their tasty food selections include soups and the famous speciality of boiled or roast pig's knuckle.



## DÜSSELDORF STARS

A mention in the Michelin Guide is appealing to many diners. Awarded two stars, Im Schiffchen leads in 2020. More restaurants in Düsseldorf possess one star: Agata's, Berens am Kai, Bread & Roses, Enzo im Schiffchen, Le Flair, Nagaya, Nenio and Tafelspitz 1876.

Those hard on their heels include exceptional Tante Anna, a favourite with locals.

## RESTAURANTS

The city overflows with a variety of excellent restaurants. The abundance of Düsseldorf's tasty Italian cuisine is led by Osteria Saitta. Another favourite is Menta. Many German eateries such as Brasserie Hülsmann also serve international dishes. Fine examples of French, Belgian and Turkish diners scattered across the city vie for clientele too.



## BISTROS & BLENDS

When it comes to lighter eating, the city has come alive over the last decade. A selection of iconic places such as Roberts Bistro, Muggel, Münstermanns, Bistro Zicke and Olio still hold their own against newcomers.

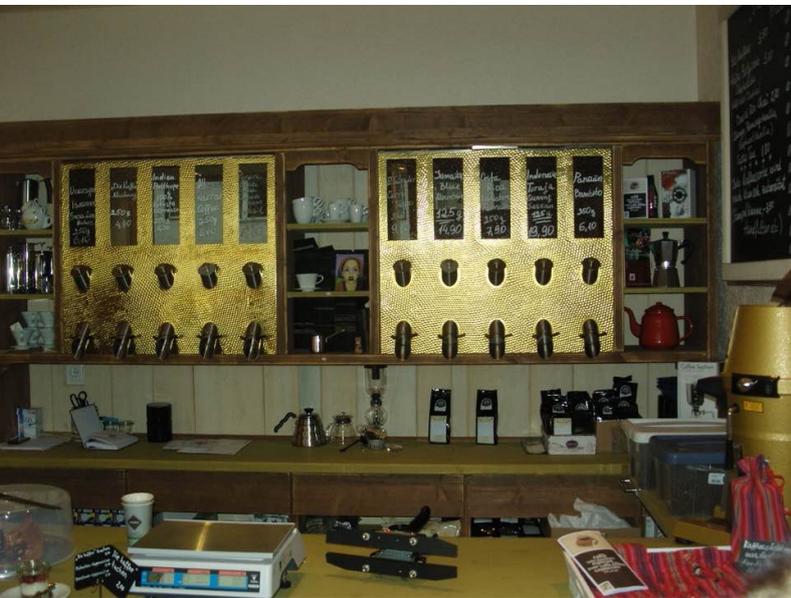
The variety is enormous with exciting finds everywhere. A few to mention are Em Brass, Zweigleisig, Rosie's, Agata's, Gingerboy, Scaramanga's, Vossen, EssBar, Brot & Olive, Bread & Roses, Les Halles St. Honore, Hans Im Gluck, Askitis, Ab der Fisch, Menta, Die Kurve and Löffelbar.



## COFFEE SHOPS

The term flat white is a rarity among the local froth brigade in Düsseldorf. Opening over twenty years ago, Bazzar led the way in changing local coffee culture. They continue to offer consistently great espresso with or without the addition of dairy.

Da Forno, Seifen Horst and Café Knülle are considered institutions. Newer baristas such as Die Kaffee, Baustoff, Kaffeeschmiede and Covent Garden are opening constantly. Oat, soya or lactose free milk are offered on far more occasions nowadays.



## ICE CREAM PARLOURS

One of a kind, Unbehaun presents pure and simple Italian ice cream throughout a lengthy summer near Aachener Platz. Downtown, a wait in the queue at Pia reveals a huge variety including seasonal delights such as fig ice cream. Giovanni L and Dulce also offer an incredible selection while Nordmanns present some of the most unusual flavours available in the city.



## BEER GARDENS

Come rain or come shine, below zero or above thirty degrees, beer gardens can be wonderful places. Chill and refresh, enjoy a drink and a pretzel or a full, tasty meal among friends.

A magnificent aspect of these popular watering holes is that strangers interact with others more than willingly. Conversation strikes up with ease seated at large tables.

Icons include Galerie Burghof located in the district of Kaiserswerth and the Rheinterasse, which is closer to the city centre.



## BARS & NIGHTLIFE

Nightlife in Düsseldorf sees bars and clubs opening till late on weeknights and often very late on weekends. Great places are tucked away in several districts to spend the evening and meet people over tasty drinks and great music.

Popular places include Melody, Cubanos, Liq, Alexander, Chérie, Bar Fifty Nine, Ufer 8, Mojitos, Most offer authentic, strong and beloved cocktails. The enormous rise in the fortunes of gin has not been missed in the city. Many bars offer a wide selection of brands.

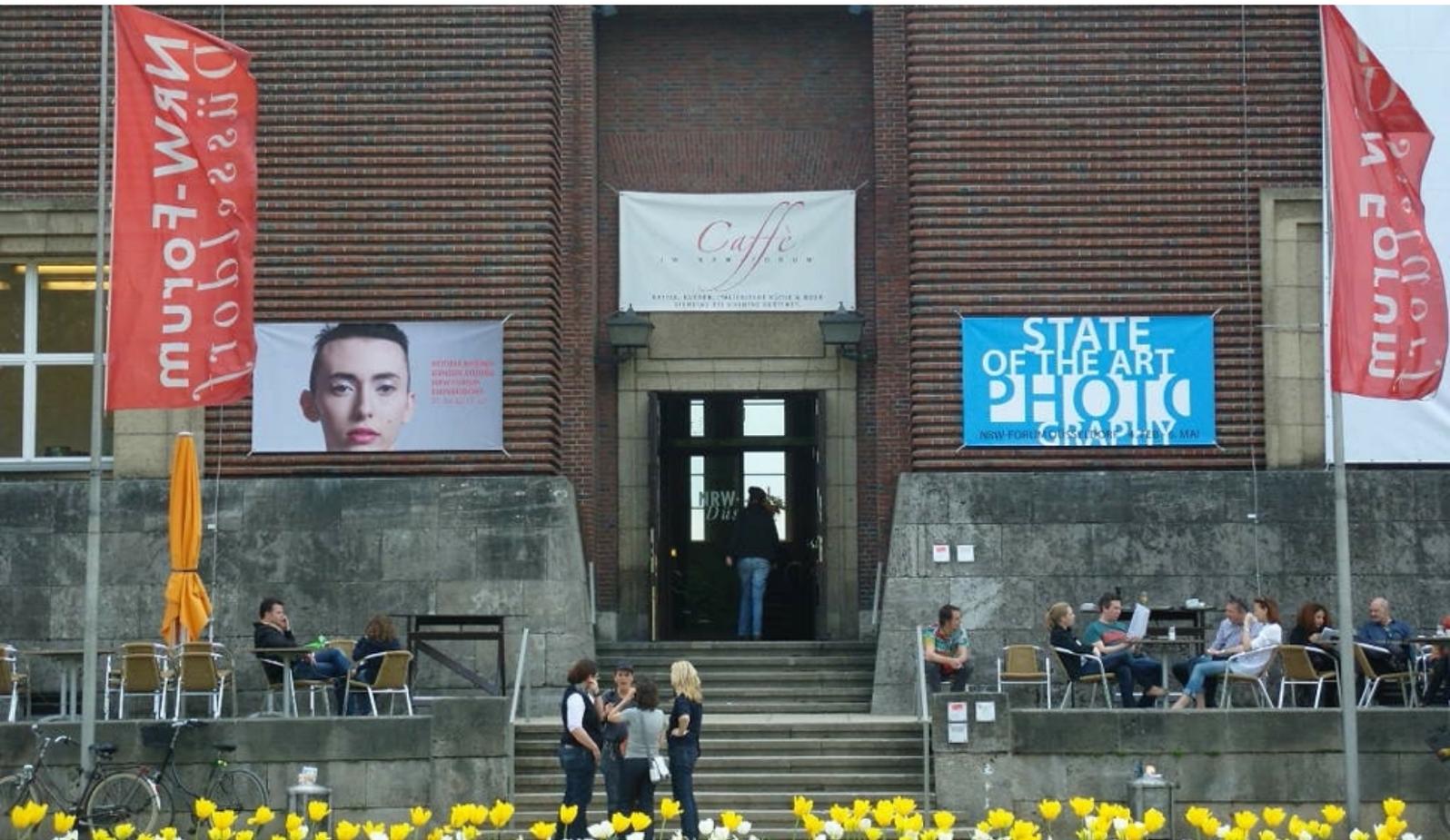
## FAST FOODS

Jade is a simple, admirable Asian snack bar near the Aachener Platz flea market serving clean vegetarian fare for many years. Na Ni Wa is fast if the queue of patrons is short. Ham Ham offers an insight to a longstanding tradition of roast pork roll with crackling. Turkish food has long been Germany's favourite fast food and Saray was an early arrival. Thymian prepares delicious pizzas. Surprisingly, Emma's Enkel serves fresh sushi to go in Grafenberg. Offering yummy falafel, Lebanon Express in the old town is a favourite from the Middle East.



[Going Out on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# CULTURAL LANDSCAPE



The residents of Düsseldorf love to have a good time. So do large numbers of visitors. All year round, the narrow bar-lined streets of the city's old town are packed with revellers. This holds true especially on long summer evenings and during the period leading up to year's end. Partying here is practically an expression of local patriotism.

Nourishment for mind and soul can be found in numerous interesting locations in the city. The Akademie, Benrath, Film, Goethe, Hetjens, K20, K21, Kunsthalle, Kunstpalast, Kunstverein, KIT, Löbbecke, NRW Forum, Shipping, Stadt and Theater art venues and museums have all accumulated fascinating works.

Baroque buildings sit well amongst an aqua zoo, history, screen and stage themes, ceramics as well as Germany's most famous son. In the arts, students and professors from the art academy, twentieth and twenty-first century, sixteen to nineteen hundreds or contemporary works as well as modern installations form magnificent collections.

Exhibitions run throughout the year, some displaying pieces from local collections, others impressive guest exhibits. Two events are noteworthy, held normally during February and March. During Museums Night most museums open beyond midnight, attracting long queues.

The annual Rundgang at the impressive art academy enables art lovers to view works from students. Over a period of a few days, a magical atmosphere impresses all visitors.

# PERFORMANCES & ACTIVITIES

Stage performances offer aficionados in Düsseldorf a wide selection of delights from near and far. The opera and symphony orchestra offer excellent classical and more contemporary pieces during their long seasons. Capitol theatre stages several exciting acts and musicals through the year. Roncalli's Apollo Varieté is the home of spectacular variety shows or vaudeville.

Tanzhaus has become the home to modern dance, offering courses to enthusiasts as well as presenting marvellous professional performers.

A heart-warming event takes place during late summer every year. Düsseldorf Festival erects a large marquee in the old town to present exceptional guest performances from across the globe. Audiences can drift off to a special place for an hour or so.

Düsseldorf has seen increased popularity over recent years. Visitors from other parts of Germany as well as international tourists have identified this somewhat quirky city as a desirable destination. Foreign residents adore Düsseldorf too.

Having asked why, Düsseldorf Marketing have identified several true core values and redefined strategies. A fascinating new approach has also drawn the expat community into the fold, offering many unique activities for all.

[Things To Do on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

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Photo © Jörg Hempel

# ORIGINAL LANGUAGE MOVIES



Under normal circumstances, movie lovers can rush to an early screening. Or relax and take time to visit one of their local movie theatres after the rush. Movie nights are not so easy if you are an expat in a foreign land.

In Germany, original language films tend to arrive later, in smaller numbers and are shown for shorter periods. Thousands of foreigners in Düsseldorf pale in comparison to the number of national residents. This governs the availability of original language films.

A major player is Filmkunstkinos. Their collection of cosy cinemas show many art house films in the original English language with German subtitles. Movies in French and Spanish are regularly available as are the occasional Japanese, Finnish, Portuguese, Dutch, Polish, Russian, Farsi, Hindi, Urdu or Mandarin.

The Cinestar multiplex regularly screens blockbusters, many of which can be viewed for several weeks. Most of their original movies are shown in the English version without subtitles. Occasional screenings in foreign language can also be found elsewhere.

Movie aficionados in the city rejoice the fact that a few individuals are passionate in their quest to welcome international residents to the cinema. Amazing Capitals Düsseldorf is proud to publish weekly updates with titles and times.

[Original Movies on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# EVENTS AND FESTIVALS



© Destination Düsseldorf

A kaleidoscope of major events take place all year in Düsseldorf. Surprising and fascinating recreational activities come along during virtually every month offering joyous occasions.

The Rhineland region is where virtually any excuse will do for a parade or a street event. Most are accompanied by beer, sausage and assorted delicacies on a grand scale.

The year kicks off with a bang. Many, many bangs. Locals adore setting off their fireworks on New Year's night, lighting up the skies. Many head to the riverbanks to celebrate.

The carnival season starts in November with festivities culminating the following February or March, depending upon lunar-cycles. One Thursday at precisely eleven minutes past eleven, masses of women storm the town hall, following which, chaos breaks out. All are enticed to party while men have their ties cut off by drunken dames.

Activities continue for days with revellers hitting the streets and bars until Monday arrives. A huge procession of satirical floats is proudly guided on a loop through the city for hours. Sweets are thrown to onlookers. Festivities finally come to a close on Ash Wednesday. Until the next year.

[Events Overview on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# LARGEST FUNFAIR



During the summer millions of people old and young flock to enjoy the Düsseldorf funfair. Traditional funfair rides, roller coasters, carousels sit well beside more modern inventions. Visitors enjoy their favourite tasty foods and beverages such as fried battered fish and local ale known as Altbier.

The largest funfair on the Rhine takes place every year along the shoreline of the river in the district of Oberkassel opposite the old town.

From late November a varied and beautifully themed collection of Christmas market booths can be found across the centre of Düsseldorf.



Traditional German gingerbread, marzipan, roasted chestnuts and tasty mulled wine are on offer to tease the palate. Most know the red variety, trying the white is a must. Artisan crafts such as crib figures can also be seen.

A few districts host their own smaller Christmas markets too. They can normally be found in Derendorf, Gerresheim and Oberkassel.

For sports lovers, the marathon, half marathon and bridge run are held annually. There is even a cartwheeling tournament. Unique happenings continue throughout the year.

# MALLS AND EMPORIA

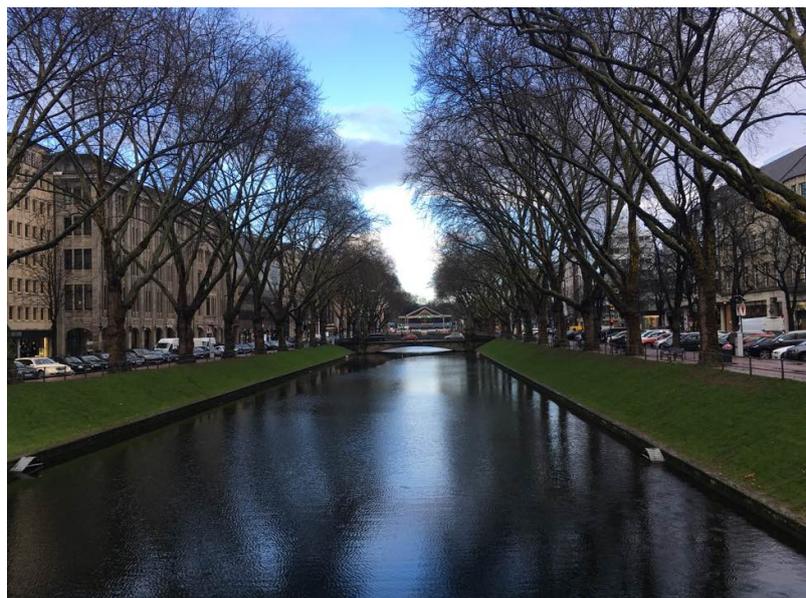


With stylish boutiques to stunning fashion emporia, malls and department stores, the city caters to all tastes. This magnificent shopper's paradise attracts its clientele from near and far. At times, very far, with many arriving from Dubai and beyond.

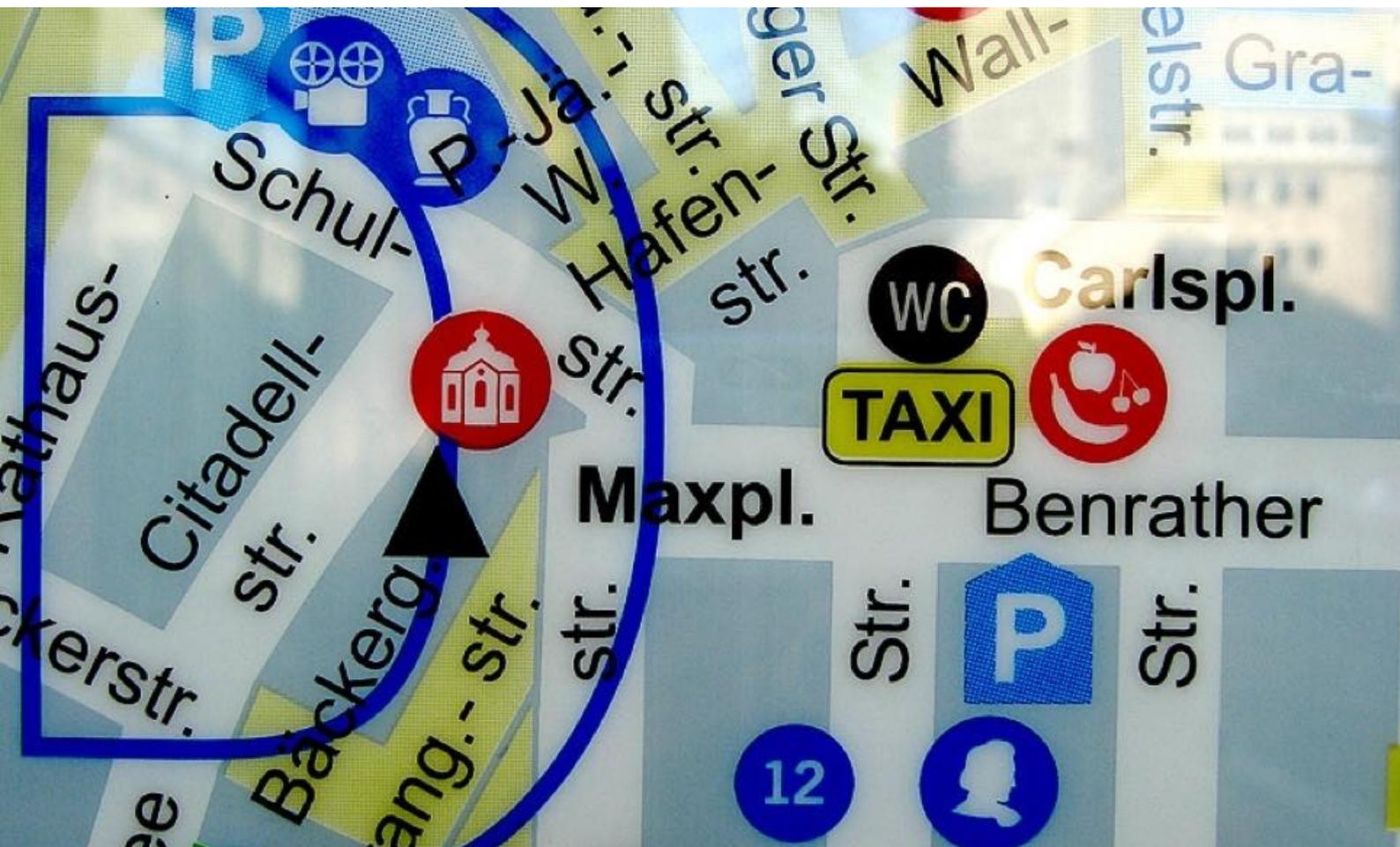
Düsseldorf reveals everything for the most discerning clientele. Sophisticated fashion emporia sit well with Düsseldorf's reputation as fashion capital. Several shopping malls offer fabulous shopping experiences too.

Quirky narrow streets in and around the Altstadt, old town, also offer more inspiration to acquire items for the self and for the home. Further stores are on Immermannstrasse, the nearby Schadowstrasse and in the close vicinity.

The Königsallee is the gem in the city's crown. This beautiful, spacious tree-lined avenue offers a chance to pause next to the Düssel. The juxtaposition of calmness combined with retail frenzy is unique. The Kö is Düsseldorf's proud, high-end home to numerous renowned fashion brands.



## RELOCATION HINTS



It may be a fact that many Germans still find the topic of personal service challenging. The word service translates to *Dienstleistung*. Built upon the concepts to serve and to perform, it sounds and feels antiquated, almost subservient.

Generational gaps, pseudo egalitarian tendencies and cultural challenges can all combine to frustrate expats. It is easy to feel offended, misunderstood, disappointed or even lonely.

That said, many have come a long way including the Düsseldorf *Ausländerbehörde*, the foreigners office. Staff are generally considered to be helpful and friendly. It is necessary to register within one week of moving to a new home. Public agencies are also available for converting driver licences and registering vehicles.

The service infrastructure includes excellent relocation agencies that are located in the city. Keep your eyes open for Progedo and Palladium. When necessary, tax consultants too. Three worthy of note are Schmidt, Weise as well as Erkens Gerow Schmitz Weiss.

The Expat Service Desk can be extremely helpful. As an official organisation, they bundle information, networks and institutions. Expats can gain comprehensive support from them on official procedures, professional qualifications and careers, social integration and many aspects of everyday life in Düsseldorf.

# RESIDENCY IN GERMANY



Germany is in a tight spot. Businesses and exports continue to boom yet the population is ageing and qualified staff are in short supply for many industries.

Fortunately, a multitude of qualified expats from across the globe are willing to relocate. Many consider Germany in spite of traditional political heart-wrenching on immigration.

Citizens from EU member states can, more or less, move to and work freely in another country belonging to the European Union. Concerning others, the EU Blue Card was introduced several years ago. All parties benefit from more structure and transparency.

Expats from non EU countries need to apply at their local German embassy or consulate. Those from Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, Korea, New Zealand and United States are permitted to enter without a visa and apply for residency at the local immigration office within three months of arrival in Germany. Work is permitted thereafter. Qualifying criteria are very specific and changing employers early can be an issue.

Setting up a business and self-employment reveal many more prerequisites such as a feasible business plan, necessity of the type of business, capital investment, personal finances and health insurance.

Düsseldorf well planned. Full, up to date and binding details are available through the federal foreign office.

[Details on the Federal Foreign Office](#)

# REGISTRATION IN DÜSSELDORF



Bureaucratic procedures exist in every country for setting up in a new location. And those moving to the state capital of Düsseldorf will find that Germany is no exception.

In general, anyone who plans to remain here for more than three months will need to register with the local authorities, ideally within the first week after arrival. Much depends on country of birth and nationality.

This highly important must do requires another. Upon departure, omitting to de-register can be costly, so a simple visit to the local citizen's office is highly recommended.

Driving within Germany is well regulated. Permission to drive is governed again by nationality. Even the last place of residency can influence the ease of acquiring a German driver licence.

If a driver license has been issued by an EU member state, it is recognised throughout the European Union. Nationals from some other countries such as Israel, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Japan, Republic of Korea and Canada benefit from specific agreements. As do some twenty eight states in the US. Ten others require a theoretical test. For the rest it seems the individual is left to their own resources. Search online for the "Staatenliste nach Anlage 11".

Most importantly for those planning on living in Germany, a new driver licence must be applied for within the first six months of arrival.

# SOCIAL NETWORKS & CLUBS



Expats who wish to connect with their own nationals and meet with other English speakers can make use of a variety of options in Düsseldorf. These including international clubs as well as social media groups.

Popular meetings and healthy memberships can be found at the American International Women's Club, American Chamber of Commerce, British Women's Club, British Business Club, British Chamber of Commerce, Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft, Portuguese Club, Amitié des Françaises, Polish Institute and Japanese Club, for example.

A powerful tool to interact in Düsseldorf is Facebook. Noteworthy groups with thousands of members are Expat Meetups and English-Speaking Expats. Regular get-togethers and impromptu gatherings are offered here too.

More internationals with common interests find each other in numerous local groups via the Meetup platform. These are of a recreational or entrepreneurial nature. InterNations also provide access to active themed groups.

Since a few downtown locations attract expats, the likelihood of a coincidental bumping into and interacting with other foreign souls is especially high.

[Socialising on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Telecoms are a necessity of life. We talk or show at one end, listen or view at the other. Technology may be complex but the act is simple. So why are contracts so complex or illegible?

Access to internet, mobiles and perhaps a landline or TV is not a luxury but a most fundamental need. Phoning someone or interacting with the web are everyday acts.

Yet providers of such services still seem to consider them high-end. Telecommunications is a classic industry where service is hit and miss. In Germany especially. The country differs from other more friendly, service oriented countries. Naturally long queues exist in stores in Finland, UK, France or Spain too, for instance. However, expecting professional advice on contracts that can be understood and not just full of legal-speak seems to be especially tough in this country.

Several major suppliers of telecoms are available in Düsseldorf to those wishing to book a package.

Former state owned monopolist Deutsche Telekom offers packages. Often holding the keys to the door of innovation, creating modern infrastructure is still topical in many regions.

Worldwide mega player on the mobile stage is UK's Vodafone. Their European headquarter is based in Düsseldorf. They also provide the full package through partnerships.

Owned by Vodafone, Unity Media connect homes via cable or fibre if the landlord, previous owner, or purchaser of the property has approved installation. Apartment blocks can be more complex.

The fourth brand group are O2 and E-plus. Both belong to Spanish Telefónica, suppliers of mobile and DSL.

Finally 1&1 also offer services that can be booked separately.

Many other brands are subsidiaries of one or other of these major companies. Yet more smaller providers are independent firms offering solely mobile and data services using any available networks. These include Lyca Mobile and Lebara.

Blogs reveal several issues related to service. Deals are varied. Especially for expats, length of contract and exit clause are highly important issues. Some companies cancel upon proof of de-registration when clients leave the country. In some stores staff can be inclined to make promises that do not appear in the small print of their German language contracts.

[Telecoms on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

## PERSONAL NOTE:

STAYING IN FINLAND DURING THE SUMMER, I CHOOSE DNA 4G UNLIMITED BROADBAND AND CALLS FOR A PLEASANTLY LOW DAILY CHARGE UNDER 1 EURO. THE SERVICE CAN BE PAUSED OR CANCELLED AT ANY TIME.

LIVING IN FRANCE FOR A FEW MONTHS, I BOOKED 100GB BROADBAND PLUS UNLIMITED CALLS TO 100 COUNTRIES WITH FREE FOR FOR 20 EUROS PER MONTH. AFTER CANCELLING I WAS REIMBURSED FOR UNUSED DAYS.

EXPATS REQUIRE HONESTY, SERVICE AND OPT-IN NOT TRAPPED-IN OPTIONS.

# LANGUAGE SCHOOLS



We've all been there. The experience of standing in a foreign culture finding ourselves pointing, gesticulating, maybe even praying to be understood is memorable. Fortunately most Germans speak at least some English.

With extended residency, awkward moments mount up and can become overwhelming. Due to the nature of employment, some expats can find themselves locked into an English language environment at work. Others face similar challenges at home.

Enlightened interpretation of language nuances is a gem to possess. Those wishing to take a German language course in Düsseldorf can find many institutions in the city that specialise in full time immersion or evening classes.

The array of language schools in the city is impressive, however, expat groups reveal differing opinions and comments concerning preference. Alphabetically and without preference, they include ASG, Berlitz, Global, Goethe Institut, IDaF, IIK, Inlingua, Limba, Sprachcaffe, Sprachforum, Studyon and VHS. Investments and teaching methods vary markedly.

Curiously, those wishing a more relaxed or even recluse method can turn to an iconic name and utilise online learning with Deutsche Welle, or use a private teacher.

[German for Fun on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLING



One element of expat life becomes very relevant when families travel the globe. Education is high on the list of priorities and fortunately, first class education is available in Düsseldorf

Germany has long been proud of its educational methods. Although the system has been adopted in many countries, early OECD Pisa studies revealed flaws. Education comes under state jurisdiction as opposed to national legislation. North-Rhine Westphalia is responsible for local education and holds the middle ground at best.

Ongoing changes are being implemented and some schools in Düsseldorf perform better. Classes lasting for a full day have more recently replaced shorter teaching hours. The education ministry and schools have recognised an increased demand for international compatibility. The national system thus offers some bilingual education, with English used as a second language for teaching. Availability is, however, still very limited.

Fortunately, a choice of four international educational institutions in and around Dusseldorf are available to discerning parents. Expats who wish to invest more in their children's future have chosen their new destination well.

The most experienced and early established is the ISD. The innovative International School of Düsseldorf, is, located near Kaiserswerth, a favourable district of the state capital.

[ISD on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# NEIGHBOURING SCHOOLS

Opening its doors more recently, ISR International School on the Rhine is in nearby Neuss. It has also become well established in the local community and local business environment.

The latest addition is IS Ruhr International School Ruhr based a short distance away in the city of Essen, centrally located in the Ruhr Metropolis, which is to the east of Düsseldorf's airport.



St Georges International English School is located in Duisburg, a relatively short distance from Düsseldorf.

A harmonious sense of community is an important goal of International schools. So too, successful preparation for later careers and contribution to worldly affairs. Enrol youngsters in kindergarten pupils from primary to diploma years. The International Baccalaureate (IB) programme is available in all schools, enabling easy integration and subsequent relocation



# ISD

**INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF DÜSSELDORF**

SINCE 1968



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IB World School

Three photos showing students: one jumping on a trampoline, two working on a project, and three in a science lab.

# ENGLISH CHURCH



Whether one is Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Agnostic, Atheist, undecided, practicing or not, religion is interwoven with all of our lives. In Germany the state collects money directly from the salary of those who declare they belong to a church.

This vicinity may come as a surprise to foreign nationals whose native home sees state and religion separated from each other. Those who wish to pay church tax need do nothing, those that don't should act immediately to remove themselves from the semi-automatic signup. Over time the sum is significant and any money deducted will not be returned.

Arguably, that income is put to a good cause, and is part of the fabric of society. A more traditional method of collection as practiced in Britain is visible in the English language churches of Düsseldorf. They hold well attended Sunday services and other events.

The Anglican Christ Church is an Evangelical church and is part of the Church of England. Some twenty nationalities visit weekly Sunday services beside the Rhine.

The International Baptist Church is also Evangelical. Their woodland location sees people from over thirty nations attending their two services every Sunday.

The Jewish community is traditionally very strong, the Muslim community's new mosque is nearing completion, Buddhism is found at the Japanese EKO Haus and Tibetan Karma Kagyü centre, Hinduism is at the Manawa Bharti temple and active in the community too.

[Religion on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# HEALTH INSURANCE



Had your writer's Grandmother lived beyond her one hundred and two years, she would still claim the secret to a long life is to possess grit, determination and a healthy frame of mind..

Attitude could have implications on, say, an active lifestyle and on dietary preferences. Living an expat life frequently leads to changes in culinary preferences in locations that differ from one's origins. Sources of nourishment vary, as does the quality of drinking water.

This can equate to unpredictable visits to a health professional, for which compulsory health insurance known as *Krankenversicherung* is required in Germany. Private, PKV or state, GKV, are offered, heavily regulated and choice is limited by personal circumstances.

Employees who earn an annual salary of less than € 62.550 in the year 2020 are required to go public. Those above can be privately insured or choose a mix of the two. Typically, contribution to insurance charges by employers is fifty percent of the monthly fees. Self employed expats are not governed by the income hurdle.

Coverage options such as dentistry, hospitalisation or deductible sums can be chosen and added with either method. Age, joint insurance of a partner or children all play a role in the calculation of an optimal policy. Such factors can also define the best decision over shorter or longer term periods.

[Insurance on the Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# UTILITY PROVIDERS



When leasing a house or flat in Germany, the property owner demands a nominal monthly charge for additional costs above and beyond the rent. This is to cover such services as cable tv, waste disposal, water, cleaning, maintenance and other fees. An itemised statement is issued annually when the balance is either reimbursed or demanded from the tenant.

Electricity, gas or telecoms connection are normally not included, so expect to make separate payments to each service provider. Consumers in Düsseldorf are free to choose between many suppliers of electricity. The same holds true for gas, which is widespread in Düsseldorf. It is also possible to bundle several services together from one company.

The local supply of water originates mostly through seepage from the river Rhine. While water is often a matter of taste, the quality in the city is very high and is safe to drink, if somewhat hard.

Germany is among one of the first countries in the world to start saving important resources and, commencing decades ago, the nation has pioneered recycling and separation systems.

Domestic bins are colour coded in grey for general waste, blue for paper and cardboard, yellow for plastic, metal and cartons or brown for biological, food and garden waste. Glass belongs in containers on the streets.

[Utilities on the Dusseldorf eGuide](#)

# JOBS IN DÜSSELDORF



Many jobs in Düsseldorf reflect the fact that the city has traditionally managed to attract a wide variety of firms. The economy is vibrant and local businesses are able to develop well.

The city's function as capital of North Rhine Westphalia adds potential as does the vast marketplace provided by its eighteen million residents. NRW possesses the largest state population in Germany. High levels of exports also drive the regional economy.

A well educated workforce travels more extensively, becomes more proficient in many foreign languages and acquires qualifications that are internationally recognisable.

Düsseldorf is without doubt a popular expat destination. Opportunities can be found in many fields of business. Yet many companies that cite a lack of qualified personnel still often refuse to employ staff that are unable to communicate proficiently in German. Demographics are catching up and the clock is ticking inexorably!

## INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL COMPANIES IN & AROUND DÜSSELDORF INCLUDE:

3M, AIR LIQUIDE, AMAZON, ASICS, BAYER, BEKO, BBDO, BIRD & BIRD, C&A, ERICSSON, ESPRIT, FIEGE, GERRESHEIMER, GREY, GROHE, HANIEL, HENKEL, JOHNSON & JOHNSON, KNAUF, LANXESS, L'OREAL, MAN, MESSE DÜSSELDORF, METRO, MITSUBISHI, MITUTOYO, ORACLE, PIERBURG, RWE, SCHENKER, SIEMENS, SITEL, SMIRFIT, KAPPA, SONY, TATA, TELEFONICA, TOSHIBA, TRIVAGO, UBISOFT, UPS, UNIPER, VODAFONE, VOLUNTEER WORLD, XEROX, YAKULT.

# VOLUNTEERING



International residents possess a natural propensity to settle into their location. Part of interaction with the German community is volunteering time or donating funds to local non-profit organisations. Some organise their own initiatives.

An aspect of troubled times is reflected in homeless and poor people. Possibly of interest to expats able to speak basic German are two initiatives that serve food. Bruder Firminus Klause is located on the Oststrasse while the Altstadt Armenküche can be found on the Burgplatz.

Organisations recommended by expats include the wonderful Königinnen und Helden, who focus on art and culture. Two church based charitable causes are Diakonie and Caritas. They are active in many fields. The latter even up-cycles furniture and runs thrift stores with terrific bargains for one and all.

Düsseldorf clean ups have been gathering popularity, especially along the banks of the Rhine. Inspired by the local Dreck Weg Tag held annually, encouraging initiatives have developed to assist in the removal of rubbish left behind by floods and inconsiderate individuals.

[Bruder Firminus Klause](#)  
[Altstadt Armenküche](#)  
[Diakonie Düsseldorf](#)

# LUCKY TRANSLATION



It was after work one late afternoon. The weather was marvellous. I was cycling to swim in the outdoor pool in Lörick. Since I lived in Oberkassel, my route took me along a scenic pathway that provided a view of the river Rhine. Am Pappelwäldchen offered a bike path along one side of tall, majestic old trees and a path for pedestrians on the other.

The long line of pretty poplars stretched far into the distance. They presented a canopy of rich and dense dark green leaves. I was thankful for the magnificent shade they provided against the bright afternoon sun.

This area of Düsseldorf has long been a wonderful place for recreation. The swimming pool gave me a marvellous respite from my busy days. I was cheerfully riding my bike, passing others from time to time.

I became aware of two cyclists heading towards me. Presumably, I subconsciously expected them to line up one behind the other. Suddenly I became aware this was not the case and an impact was imminent.

## BRUSH WITH THE LAW

The path was the width of only two bikes and I was on one of them. The eyes of one cyclist widened at the impending danger, the other remained completely oblivious.

I could not avoid him due to a massive tree trunk next to me. I grasped my handle bars, braked hard, he thumped into me shoulder to shoulder. I turned my head and looked over to the body on the ground. He had flown from his bike and hit the tarmac like a sack of potatoes. He was motionless.

I descended my bike and leaned it against a tree. Crouching over the man, I could see he was breathing but he appeared to be unconscious. It transpired that the other cyclist was not his friend but a stranger who was being overtaken. A few other people stopped but seemed helpless.

It was the time before mobile phones so I suggested I bike to the pool to call for an ambulance. I rebutted a couple of protests that I may not return and raced off. The pool attendants were sympathetic and phoned the authorities. I explained the location of the accident as best I could.

Trying to judge where emergency services could drive onto the path, I was able to intercept the ambulance. After a few minutes, the police arrived. They questioned what had happened. I explained. One man that I had overtaken previously blurted that I was travelling extremely fast. I protested.

Thankfully, two women who I had also calmly overtaken interceded. They claimed that was just not true. "He passed us cautiously and warned the other cyclist." she said. "Really?" I thought. One policeman enquired further. "I distinctly heard him shout Pass auf! very loudly" It took a while but then I realised that I had rather embarrassingly issued an English expletive. I was young and under duress. Sincere apologies

The paramedics headed to the hospital and I was saved by a simple linguistic misinterpretation. The police were satisfied that it was an accident. Personal details were exchanged, people drifted off and I went for my swim. That evening the phone rang.

## ENLIGHTENING ESCAPE

The caller was the son of the injured cyclist. He said his father had been drinking and asked if I would be making any claims for damages. My shoulder was painful but it was nothing serious. I said no, asked how father was and where he was hospitalised. The next day I visited him.

He was bruised yet cheerful. His pride was worse off than his body. He was very apologetic. I mentioned that I only wished to make sure he was okay. His son entered and became nervous. During our conversation it transpired that he was a lawyer, hence his interest in any litigation. His dad was a former policeman!

No legal conflict followed the incident. However, a liability insurance policy did.

# GETTING REGISTERED



Germans take registration very seriously. The law in Düsseldorf entails registering within one week of a move. If renting, the landlord can be required to confirm occupancy. Leaving for a new location means de-registering.

I have had the good fortune to live in some nice places during a lengthy period of life in Düsseldorf. A few districts of the town appeal to expats in a special way.

Following short early stints in a few areas, my neighbourhood became Oberkassel. One move entailed metaphorically dropping my belongings over the balcony. A later one saw my wife and I relocate just one block away. We kept the same phone number and postal code. We notified our utility company. And our friends.

We gave not one single thought to what Germany considers to be the the primary activity entailed in a change of residency. A letter arrived several weeks after we had settled into our new home. It was in an official city envelope. The news was bad. We had performed an unforgivable act.

We had omitted to inform authorities that we had moved. Yet that same administrative department knew of our change of address. The name of the street and house number were inserted proudly below our names and above the correct postcode and city. We were identified, considered guilty and charged.

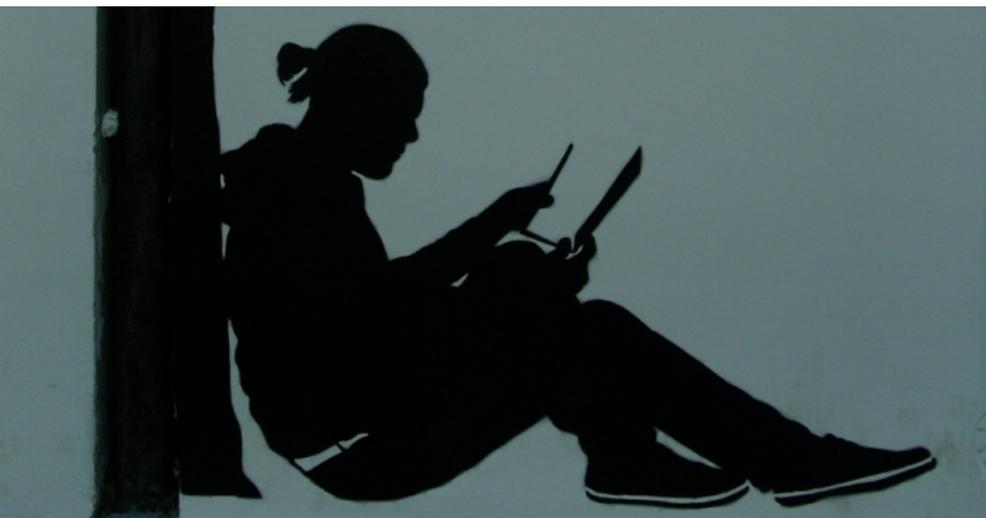
## MOVING EXPERIENCE

I rang a phone number printed on the single sheet of legal speak. The friendly gent at the other end of the phone line was highly sympathetic yet unrelenting when it came to the fine. It's the German way of doing things. Already accustomed to there being as many exceptions as there are rules, I haggled. But this time there was no way out.

He then mentioned that since I was now working as a freelancer, I would have to supply two years of accounts. I came under different regulations nowadays. I had only that year begun so could unfortunately not comply. A strange phenomenon kicked in and for this situation he kindly performed a marvellous task of racking his brain for a relevant option.

My wife is from Finland, was an employee and held an unlimited residency permit for the EU, which she had received through being married to me. Now I was to benefit from her by declaring my status as husband. Marvellous. Yet again, an exception. Those days I was fined a minor sum, today it can be higher.

# FORGETFUL RESIDENT



Foreign residents are required to ensure they stick to the rules with their papers in good order. Identification should also be carried on their person at all times in Germany.

I was born in a country that belonged to the marvellous political and economic alliance known as the European Union or EU. When I decided to work permanently in Germany, I was issued with a permit of residency valid for five years.

Many regulations in the EU were murky. The process of negotiations between member states is slow, progress full of compromise and resulting agreements complex. Today freedom of movement even for EU citizens is still a fallacy beyond the mandatory three months.

Employment enabled me to stay without care. After a stint of five years I received an offer of unlimited residency, so called to make an appointment. To no avail. I could come before opening hours and wait hours to be the first one, I was told. Time passed, I forgot the letter.

## FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

When I eventually visited the foreign office in Düsseldorf it was and astounding two years later, I handed my letter of unlimited residency to the woman seated behind a screen opposite me. She instigated the administrative process. Then suddenly lost her demeanour upon noticing the date of the correspondence. She demanded to why I took so long to visit. "I couldn't get an appointment" was my reply. She became even more flustered. "What are you going to do, deport me?" I asked. Highly annoyed, she ripped the letter to shreds.

Uttering a few words about my actions having consequences, she gave me another five years instead of unlimited. I apologised, she calmed and I received her reprimand with humility.

We went our separate ways but unique consequences followed. She was so irate that she entered the date of validity the wrong way around on my new permit. Unwittingly, I presume. My next border control revealed all. Entering East Germany, the DDR, officers of increasingly important rank debated for hours whether or not a document should be validated by its date of issue or by date of expiry. Why, because the numerals she had inserted incorrectly were in the year of expiry. The fateful date was thus years earlier than that of issue!

I proceeded to Berlin. But the process brought a ridiculously small fine and the experience of a lifetime. For that, I remain eternally grateful to the city employee who never knew.

# FINANCIAL TRAP



After visiting Germany for my company for a second lengthy period of troubleshooting, I was requested to stay to work permanently in Düsseldorf. New contracts were signed and life continued until one day I was asked to give more details about my personal circumstances.

My employers wished to know which church I belonged to. I enquired what business it was of theirs and why they were asking. To pay tax to either the Protestant or Catholic church, I'm told. I'm British. Although our head of state is also the head of the Anglican church, a separation between state and religion is respected. Donations only occur during services on Sundays or by bequest.

Not so in Germany. The vast majority of funds are transferred directly from source and each company is responsible to declare where those monies go. I stated that I am not prepared to pay church tax. I was duly told the atheist box would be ticked.

I protested that I was raised Church of England and believed in God in the sense of a universal force. I was willing to debate whether religion meant the same but did not consider myself an atheist, so did not accept that choice. The impasse ensued.

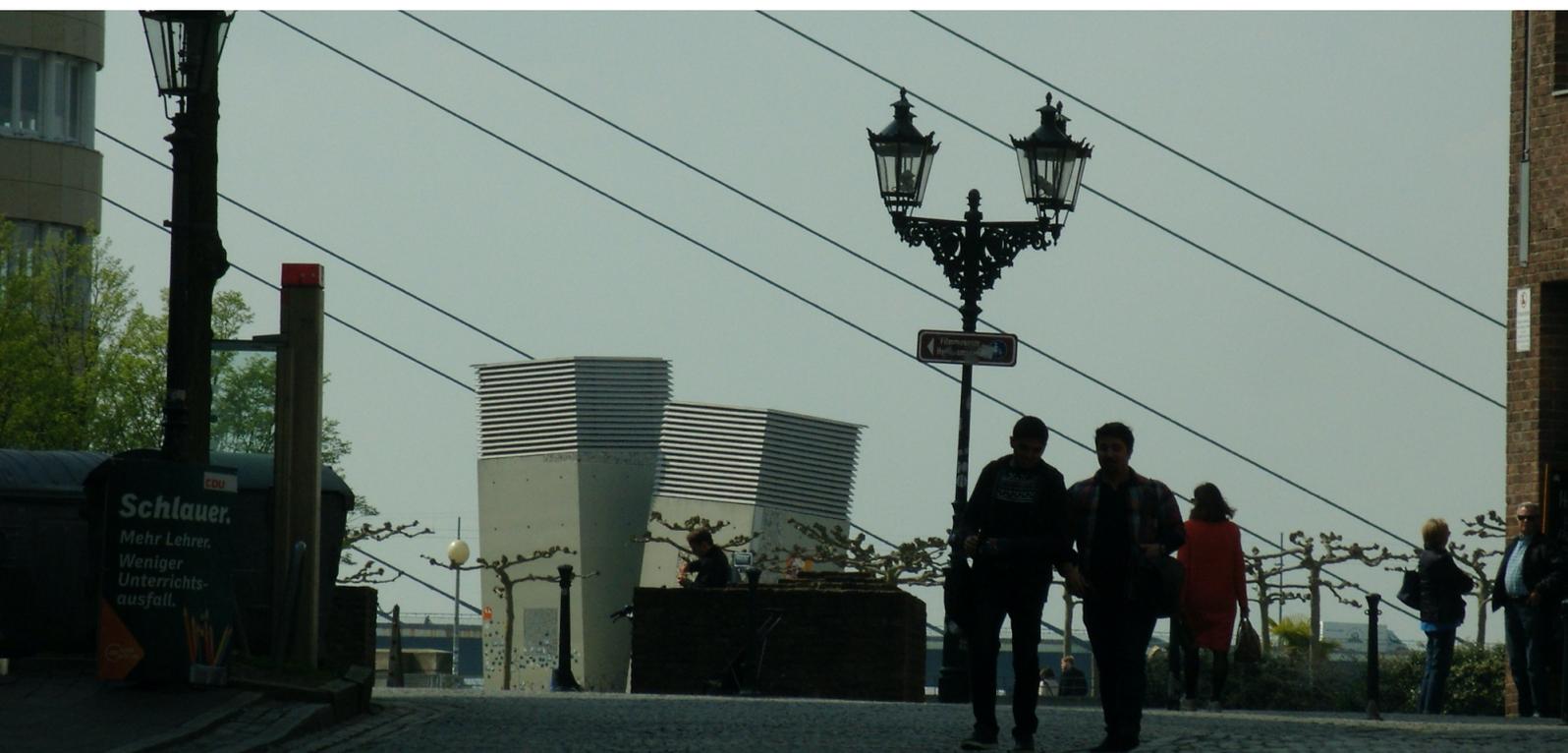
## HELPFUL INSTRUCTION

The form was completed with the entry of C of E. Nothing was due, nothing paid. If Germany wished this system upon its citizens, that is fine by me. I was not prepared to be part of it. I'm sure much good comes from well over eleven billion euros annually.

This may seem trivial. However, at the time of writing, church tax amounts to nine percent in the state of North Rhine Westphalia, of which Düsseldorf is the capital. If an expat leaves the country, overpaid income tax is normally reimbursed. Church tax is not.

When entering employment in Düsseldorf or elsewhere in Germany, it may be relevant for each individual to make a conscious decision concerning this often neglected topic.

# EXPAT COMMUNITY



Kindness and compassion are traits that are often extended to international professionals in Düsseldorf in particular. Expats value being welcomed with open minds and friendliness. International employees become part of a minority community numbering a few thousands and can feel isolated. Noticing awareness and acceptance from local residents is invaluable.

Expats, hit the ground running, rapidly entering a new position and getting on with a busy lifestyle. One that can become an emotional rollercoaster. Some can feel misunderstood, others lonely. Language is an obvious topic, local culture often the hidden challenge. Doing is easier than being.

Beyond professional skills, expats have much to offer the city and its German residents. A multitude of cultural insights can be gleaned from dozens of diverse nationalities that are gathered in the city. International residents engage in ways that benefit society in Düsseldorf.

## INFORM, SUPPORT & UNITE

The Amazing Capitals Düsseldorf eGuide unites the various local communities. Readers benefit from knowledge. Abundant expat topics such as socialising, relocation, healthcare, clubs, utilities, telecoms, schools, entertainment, recreation, events, movies, location, public transport, urban feel, society, culture all give insights to help improve wellbeing in this marvellous city.

Companies are helped in attracting and retaining expat talent. Public agencies benefit through better informed foreign residents. Businesses can target services and products. For local nationals, it is an opportunity to comprehend the unique challenges that international residents encounter. Together we can all appreciate special circumstances.

[Amazing Capitals Düsseldorf eGuide](#)

# EXPAT EMPLOYMENT



Without expats much of Düsseldorf would not function. Foreign sounding names have been uttered in the region for a long time. The city and its surroundings have been a migrational port of call for centuries with people arriving from numerous countries.

Today, many still follow a somewhat similar calling. Whereas predecessors often hoped to stay, large numbers of expats can move on after a relatively short period of time. Experienced employers of international business professionals are geared to such circumstances.

However, as the available pool of experts in the labour market continues to deplete, many companies are being introduced to the phenomenon of finding and engaging staff from abroad. This can be highly challenging.

## INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RESOURCES

While EU citizens can move freely, engaging expats from farther afield brings with it the added headache of regulatory restrictions. That included Canada, US, UK, India, China and many more countries. The authorities in Düsseldorf have streamlined their approach. Furthermore, a host of experienced service providers are on hand to help manage a smooth welcome and fruitful relationship with new arrivals.

International specialists from over one hundred and fifty countries have moved to the state capital. Besides their business acumen, they contribute to the diversity and success of the city.

# EXPAT CLIENTELE

EXPAT CONSUMERS  
IN & AROUND DÜSSELDORF:

BUY OR RENT A HOME AND PURCHASE ALL  
THAT IS NEEDED TO START A NEW LIFE  
CONSUME EACH AN EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR  
UTILISE SERVICES AND PRODUCTS AVAILABLE  
OFFER LOYALTY FOR GOOD SERVICE  
RECOMMEND TO OTHER EXPATS

Viewing the city from a foreign perspective is often more complex than mere language. Barriers to understanding can be especially daunting when expats communicate with suppliers.

It is often impossible for expats to use the mother tongue in a normal manner and be fully understood. Many international residents are not proficient in local speak. Add the topic of service to the mix.

## LOYAL CUSTOMERS

The question thus becomes valid whether or not companies wish to address the needs of those in the expat community. How many consider targeted marketing to an often neglected group of several tens of thousands of highly educated, well earning, international professionals.

Creating loyal customers couldn't be easier, so here are a few hints for those with a desire to do business with foreigners.

## UNITED FOREIGNERS

International residents have more differences than commonalities that define them as a group. Two characteristics that unite expats with each other is holding a nationality and speaking a mother tongue neither of which are German. Secondly, expats are nearly always ignored as a target group with specific needs.

Furthermore, we use the German language in a different manner to Germans. Tonality and phonetics are guided by cultural backgrounds. We await service in a way that differs from that of Germans and reveal high expectations. We often misunderstand the uniqueness of Germany

## DIVERSE ASPECTS

Expats come from very many places other than Germany and speak almost as many national languages. Expats are from all age groups and are not homogenous. Expats are highly trained, educated and work hard while being prepared to face the unknown.

Expats may stay longer than the two to five year norm, are reliant on recommendations and honesty. Expats normally need everything upon arrival, so often rely on recommendations. Expats are highly enthusiastic, like to volunteer and to join causes.

## SLOW RESPONSES

Expats have not necessarily misunderstood, have normally heard, and not in need of shouting. Expats do not contemplate so much for that long but are likely formulating words of response.

# SERVING EXPATS



Amazing Capitals holistically joins the dots. Partners in Düsseldorf have been working together with us from the beginning. Some give their support out of community spirit, recognising the high value of international business professionals to Düsseldorf. Yet more acknowledge and recognise the value and unique positioning of the expat guide within this important ecosystem.

## SUPPORTING ECOSYSTEMS

The Mayor has long declared his desire to create a most expat-friendly city. Other well known personalities and organisations in Düsseldorf have a similar goal. A wide variety of clients from many fields, representing a wide cross-section of companies, administration, education and entertainment, have worked with us to date.

## SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

Beyond job descriptions of employers, strong competition radiates from attractive locations the world over. Attracting international talent to fill key positions in your company can be challenging. The implications of persuading global expats to relocate can be intimidating. So too, the greater task of retaining them over time.

Amazing Capitals strategically unites all valuable resources within the city of Düsseldorf, thus working together in helping to make the lives of international professionals easier and more rewarding. This benefits you and your business.

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



Amazing Capitals help businesses to attract and retain expat employees by addressing key factors in the process. For instance, potential expats moving to a new location can face anxiety. When researching their options, they wish to make the wisest choices possible, especially if accompanied by a spouse or children.

## AN EXPAT FOR EXPATS

As an international resident in several locations, I have been requested several times by city representatives, diplomats and business leaders to assist them. In 2007, the first online resources were created. My goal has always been and remains to make them available to the wider community as well as all players within the expat ecosystem.

## TESTIMONY & RESEARCH

“Local companies are supported and profit from the knowledge of the eGuide. In this manner, particularly medium-sized businesses are assisted in attracting expats to their company and thus counteracting a shortage of skilled workers.” - Peter Fischer, Stadt Neuss

“It is well known in expat circles that many assignments fail because spouses or the kids are unhappy. According to AXA’s own “World of Work” report 54% of HR directors at multi-national companies say that staff terminating international assignments early did so due to family concerns.” - Lucille Abendanon on AXA Global Healthcare.

# BUSINESS SUPPORT



Attempted engagements can fail because potential expat employees are not aware of the full offer that the city and the region provides. Support is offered throughout by

- ✦ Helping businesses to present a full picture of life outside of the job
- ✦ Reducing expat's concerns about relocating to the employer's location
- ✦ Aiding the company's employees to be more productive while at work

Those engagements that have a positive outcome require much individual support for a relocation to succeed. In order for them to be more engaged at work, international employees need to experience quality of life. I assist businesses attract expats through

- ✦ Presenting an inviting image of the city to foreigners across the globe
- ✦ Showing positive aspects and the beauty of life in the location
- ✦ Shifting the perspective that people may hold of the city
- ✦ Enticing international talent to focus their lives elsewhere

The prospect of retaining foreign employees can also seem demanding with a failure rate of between 30%-50% while the cost of finding a replacement can, according to global statistics, be beyond 100-200% of their salary. Help is offered by

- ✦ Assisting businesses to save the considerable costs of replacing staff
- ✦ Providing information and insights to help new expats acclimate rapidly
- ✦ Enabling expats to adjust better to their new country and culture
- ✦ Supporting expats in their desire for contentment and to lead better lives.

Retaining expats is fundamentally linked to their ability to integrate and lead better lives in their new location. They cannot achieve that without access to knowledge. Their circumstances are addressed by inspiring with, amongst others

- ✦ Weekly listings of English language movies in original
- ✦ A full overview of expat groups and relevant publications
- ✦ Posting large and small events as well as happenings and gatherings
- ✦ Trustworthy information, easy to navigate with fresh design

Providing a key factor in the expat ecosystem to help processes flow more smoothly, close the gaps in the system and provide trust is achieved by publishing online expat community resources. City based eGuides and eBooks offer a complete overview of life in the new home as well as exclusive insights purely from the perspective of expats.

Call +49 151 665 522 32 or [mail](mailto:mailto:) to discover how I can help you.

# Love A FAIR

**When heart meets business.** Every new encounter has a certain vibrancy. Global players and local heroes find themselves inextricably drawn to one another. New perspectives open up and the world feels somehow enlarged. And business finds the one it's been looking for:

[www.messe-duesseldorf.com](http://www.messe-duesseldorf.com)

Messe Düsseldorf GmbH  
P.O. Box 10 10 06  
40001 Düsseldorf\_Germany  
Tel. +49 211 4560-01  
Fax +49 211 4560-668

[www.messe-duesseldorf.de](http://www.messe-duesseldorf.de)

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