

## **Living in Heidelberg and in Germany – our ABC – it’s easy as 1,2,3 to come along in Heidelberg!**

### **Addressing People**

The polite form of address in German is “Sie” and is used to address new adults. Colleagues often maintain this address to keep a formal distance. The less formal “Du” is in most cases only introduced after a while and at an adequate occasion. Usually, the older (colleague) offers it to the younger one. In younger social circles, the “Du” is handled more flexibly and is often used from the first meeting. If you are not sure which form to use, it is recommended to wait how you are addressed and then to respond correspondingly.

### **Biking**

Taking the bike is a cheap and fast alternative to public transportation to get around Heidelberg. If you consider buying a bike or need a bike service, you find suggestions at the following addresses.

#### **Second-hand bicycles**

[https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/md/zuv/international/gaeste/2\\_gebrauchte\\_r\\_\\_der.pdf](https://www.uni-heidelberg.de/md/zuv/international/gaeste/2_gebrauchte_r__der.pdf)

Besides bike stores, the university offers a workshop ([URRMEL](#)) where you can use the required tools to repair your bike on your own.

### **Cultural Events**

You enjoy yourself in attending concerts or plays? Heidelberg [Theatre and Orchestra](#) have an ever changing and broad repertoire which is presented throughout the whole year. At [Karlstorbahnhof](#), you can encounter upcoming young bands, movie presentations and music from all over the world. If you are unsure, what is going on, you can browse through the [cities’ webpage](#) for events.

### **Driving**

It is necessary to have a valid driver’s licence to drive in Germany. German and EU driver’s licences can be legally used here without restrictions. Foreign or international driver’s licences are valid for a limited time-period of six months. If you are using your foreign driver’s licence, it is usually necessary to carry a German translation of the licence with you. The websites of [How to Germany](#) and the Automobil Club ([ADAC](#)) provide further information about driver’s licences, vehicle import regulations, permits, registration, taxes and insurances as well as about buying a car in Germany.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Young female students and researchers at each step of their career are supported to receive the same opportunities as men by the [equal opportunities office](#) Examples of offered services are the family program and the walk safe campaign.

### **Finding your Way around**

As the town is small, finding your way around is simple. Nevertheless, these maps help you to orientate yourself in the cities’ heart and on campus.

- [Historic City Centre](#)
- [Campus Im Neuenheimer Feld](#)

## Going out

Fancy a dance or a nice bar for some drinks? You'll find that throughout the old town and especially in "Untere Straße", which is the best place for pub crawls. From Sunday to Wednesday nights, bars in the old town are open until 2 am. On the other days until 4 am.

## Health (and social security)

German social security is a statutory insurance system providing coverage for potential risks such as illness, unemployment, old age, accidents at work and dependency on nursing care. Most people and organisations are obligated to pay into the social security system for:

- Health insurance
- Pension scheme
- Unemployment insurance
- Occupational accident insurance
- Nursing care insurance.

Fellowships are usually exempt from statutory social security payments except for health insurance which even fellows are required to have. If you conduct your research in Germany based on an employment contract, you are required to pay fixed statutory social security contributions (~ 20 % of your gross salary). The [handbook](#) for international scholars provides very detailed information on the health care system and on social security:

## Important Telephone Numbers

Police 110

Firefighters 112

Ambulance 112

Poisoning 0761/ 19240

Emergency service 116117

## Journeys and Trips

There are a lot of destinations worth visiting in close distance to the town. [Heidelberg University's International office](#) as well as the [Erasmus Student Network](#) offer organized group-trips.

## Kino (Cinemas)

Movies and series are often dubbed and shown in German language. Sometimes, cinemas present movies in their original language ("OV") or in their original language with German subtitles ("OmU").

## Libraries

All over campus, there are freely accessible [libraries](#) distributed. Opening times vary, but the main library opens even until late in the night.

## Mensa & Cafés (on Campus)

Both, on the campus in Neuenheimer Feld and in the old-town, there are several canteens and cafés. In most of them, you have the choice between a changing buffet and several dishes of the day.

Payment is done with your “CampusCard” which you need to charge with money. For further information, please consider the webpages from [Studierendenwerk](#).

Besides, there are many cafés and restaurants spread around the whole city offering their services. In restaurants, cafés, at the hairdresser and in taxis tips are given to acknowledge good service. 10 % of the spent sum is a common amount and usually one rounds up to an even total. When going out with friends, it is common to pay separated bills in restaurants and cafés.

## No smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all public authorities, train stations, airports and means of public transportation, in cultural institutions, recreational- and sports facilities. Normally, smoking is also banned from cafés, bars and restaurants. Exceptions can apply for separated rooms or smoking areas.

## Opening hours

Please check your closest local supermarket for its exact opening hours. Stores are usually open between 9 am and 8 pm. Supermarkets might have longer opening times whereas smaller stores might open later and close earlier. Especially on Saturdays, their opening times might be shorter. On Sundays and on public holidays, stores are not open. Exceptions are bakeries and gas stations which are often open on Sundays.

## Public holidays

Throughout the year, we celebrate several public holidays either in the whole country (C) or only in some states (S).

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New Year's Day, January 1 <sup>st</sup> (C)	Good Friday, Friday before Easter (C)	Labour Day, May 1 <sup>st</sup> (C)	Ascencion Day, Thursday, 10 days before Whitsunday (C)	German Unification Day, October 3 <sup>rd</sup> (C)	Christmas Eve, December 24 <sup>th</sup> (C)
	Easter Sunday/ Monday, End of March/ April (C)	Whitsunday/ Whitmonday, In June(C)			Christmas day and Boxing day, December 25 <sup>th</sup> and 26 <sup>th</sup> (C)
					New Year's Eve, December 31 <sup>st</sup> (C)

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Epiphany, January 6 <sup>th</sup> (S)	Corpus Christi, Second Thursday after Whitsun (S)	Assumption Day, August 15 <sup>th</sup> (S)	Reformation Day, October 31 <sup>st</sup> (C)	All Hallows, November 1 <sup>st</sup> (S)
				Day of Repentance, Third Wednesday in November (S)

## Questions

For general doubts regarding the CellNetworks post-doctoral program, please contact the [respective instutitons](#). For project-related questions, please address your institute or local supervisor.

## Religion

Article 4 of the German Basic Law guarantees the freedom of belief: Every person is free to choose and practice his or her own religion. Equally, every person has the freedom not to choos or practice a religion, to leave a religious community or to join another religious community. Services in Heidelberg are conducted by Protestant, Catholic, Muslim and many other communities. For more information about religion and churches in Germany, the [Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community](#) helps you out.

## Safety

Germany and Heidelberg are in general considered to be very safe. Nevertheless, it doesn't harm to have an eye on your personal belongings in crowds or on the tram.

If it is late at night and you'd like to get home safely, the town offers a [taxi system](#) especially for women. To profit from this service, you are asked to buy a ticket in advance which you can then use in case of need. The service is offered from 11 pm to 6 am during the whole week.

## Transportation (public)

Public transportation is given by a net of busses, trams and short-distances trains. Heidelberg main station has also got a good access to long-distances trains. In town and in the region you get around via services offered by the [Verkehrsverbund Rhein-Neckar](#) and the [Rhein-Neckar Verkehr](#). The most common single way ticket in town for adults costs 2.60 €. There are also 1-day and 30-day or 1-year tickets which will give you a discount if you frequently use the transportation.

Here you find a map of the [network of routes](#).

## University sports

The university offers a broad [spectrum of sport courses](#). Most of them are free of charge and do not require a prior registration. University employees can participate after having registered at the [administrative office of college sports](#).

## Volt (Electricity)

The electricity grid distributes 220 V and 50 Hz alternating current from the sockets. "Euronorm"-plugs fit to all sockets. Depending on the country of origin, different adaptors and/ or transformers may be required.

## Waste Separation

For recycling purposes, waste is separated into six different classes. To distinguish them easier, please find further information on this [leaflet](#).

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## Zentrales Sprachlabor

You can attend language courses in the "[Zentrales Sprachlabor](#)" which is the universities' language school. If you come from abroad and are interested in learning German, CellNetworks has a cooperation with the "[Internationales Studienzentrum](#)". International Scientists who are part of a CellNetworks Member lab can participate in for free in German classes. Please register with the CellNetworks Project Management Office indicating the Cellnetworks research group you belong to.

Starting date is always at the beginning of a semester. Registration closes two weeks before the Semester begins.