



Germany

MIDEASTERN WEATHER GREET'S US IN FRANKFURT, WHERE WE PROMOTE BAHRAIN AS A STOPOVER DESTINATION

About Germany

A rich and powerful country which has made a deep impact on history. Germany (pop. 83 million) shares its border with Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland and Switzerland.



When To Visit

Any time from March to November. Peak tourist season is May-September. Ski resorts are popular in winter.

Visa Requirements

EU citizens can enter with an official identity card. Americans, Australians, Canadians, New Zealanders and Japanese just need a valid passport, everyone else must have a visa.

Getting There

Frankfurt, Munich and Düsseldorf all receive international flights. If you're already in Europe, it's generally cheaper to get to Germany by train or bus, or you can take the ferry from the UK or Scandinavia.

Bahrain Connection

Germany is another F1 host, like Bahrain. The ITB travel fair in Berlin is always well attended by Bahrain travel operators.



By Petra Beuchert



Residents and visitors enjoy the sun and scenery from an outdoor café in Frankfurt.

GERMANY, MY HOME COUNTRY, IS WHERE I rejoined the Friendship Tour, having earlier left off in Scotland, where I currently live. It's good to be back with Ali, and the weather here is sunny and warm – shades of Bahrain!

I flew in to Frankfurt, which has the busiest airport in Europe after London Heathrow. Frankfurt is often viewed only as a transit hub or the business capital, but it's so much more. In some ways it is like Bahrain. More than a quarter of Frankfurt's citizens are foreign, and just like Ali's home country, the city has something of an international flavour.

Frankfurt's-am-Main's soaring skyline has led to its nickname of 'Mainhattan'. Much of the city suffered destruction in 1944, but extensive restoration has preserved many Old Town buildings, including the Römer, town hall and coronation place of German emperors since 1562. Some ancient buildings survived the war, including part of the cathedral and



PAGE OPPOSITE: Buildings soar into the skies in Frankfurt's financial district.



the 13th-century chapel that once adjoined Frederick Barbarossa's Palace.

In the City Museum there is a perfect scale model of the old town and also the astonishing city silver. The stark Paulus Church was home to the first German parliament in 1848. Other attractions in the city include the zoo; the birthplace of Goethe; the Opera House; the suburbs of Sachsenhausen and Hoechst, both formerly towns in their own right; and the Messe, the exhibition halls complex.

Of course the sightseeing was not the main reason we were here, and we did our part in promoting Bahrain and the message of the Friendship Tour. We visited the Gulf Air agency office in Frankfurt and discussed ways to promote Bahrain as a three-day stopover destination for travellers heading for Asia, the Far East or beyond.

We also had a dinner meeting with members of the German press (kindly arranged by Gulf Air), which was an excellent way of spreading our message.

From Frankfurt, we drove to Bavarian capital Munich (München), which is rivalled only by national capital Berlin in terms of tourist popularity.

Munich is a compact city, but you could easily spend several weeks exploring its museums, architectural treasures and idyllic surrounds. The 800-year-old city has numerous museums and several fine Baroque and Renaissance churches. The Altstadt (old town)





Left, the quaint seaside town of Travemünde, where the Friendship Tour adventurers arrived via ferry from Sweden. Bottom, the Alte Oper concert hall in Frankfurt.



is a pleasure to stroll around.

Elsewhere in the city, motoring enthusiasts will find the BMW (Bayerische Motorwerke) Museum dedicated to the famous marque manufactured in Munich.

Munich also hosts the best-known of all German events, the Oktoberfest beer festival.

This had its origins in 1810 when Crown Prince Ludwig of Bavaria married Princess Therese von Sachsen-Hildburghausen.

The people liked the festival so much that it became a regular feature and now takes place annually for two weeks – the first Sunday in October is always the last day of the festival.

While in Munich, we visited Billing Components, an IT company with business ties to Bahrain, and explored how we could promote Bahrain to other German companies who were looking to set up ventures abroad.

All in all, our tour of Germany had been a success.



Fast Fact
Courtesy dictates that when entering a shop, visitors should utter a greeting such as *Guten Tag*, and say *Auf Wiedersehen* when leaving.