



## Employment & earnings

Many employee benefits and above-average salaries in various industries: Here you can find out how much life costs in Germany.

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## Low unemployment rates in Germany

In 2021, Germany had an unemployment rate of 3.6 per cent. The country therefore has one of the lowest unemployment rates in the world. While elsewhere in Europe youth unemployment has risen significantly in the past few years, Germany's [dual education system](#) has paid off. In 2021, only 7.8 per cent of 15- to 24-year-olds were registered as "unemployed".

## Gross is not the same as net

When signing a work contract for employment subject to social security contributions in Germany, your contract states your gross salary. But gross is not the same as net. It means that you will receive less than what is stated in your work contract.

For instance, in 2023 the average gross salary across all salary levels ranged between €4,866.67 and €2.200 per month. In the case of employees in jobs subject to social security contributions, employers automatically deduct income tax and the statutory social security contributions. The advantage is that your social security contributions cover any financial burdens in case of losing your job, falling ill, or in need of care (in old age). The employers themselves cover some costs as well. The amounts deducted may vary depending on your income, [federal state](#), tax bracket, health insurance fund and family status. The [solidarity surcharge](#) (*Solidaritätszuschlag*) was abolished for almost everyone in January 2021. In 2023, an unmarried person in tax bracket I in the Western German states received an average net salary of around €1,584.15 up to €3,044.31.

## Short working hours, plentiful vacation and public holidays

In an international comparison of economies, Germany occupies the first place in many disciplines. You might think that Germans have achieved their ranking thanks to their proverbial hard work, long working hours, scant holiday and fewer public holidays than other countries. Yet the statistics prove the contrary. As for working hours, with 1,574 collectively agreed hours per full-time employee, Germany posted the lowest value in the EU-27 zone. (Public) holidays also vary widely within the EU: in 2014, German employees had 41 days of holiday and public holidays, whereas the EU average was 35.7.

## This is the cost of living in Germany

Albert Einstein once said: “The best things in life are not the ones that one can buy with money.” That may well be true. In 2021 however, the Germans spent an average €2,623 per household every month on all additional expenses. Most of their money was spent on accommodation, energy and housing maintenance (€966). This was followed by food, beverages and tobacco (€402) and transport (€322). But recreation and culture were not neglected: every month, Germans spend €255 on activities such as sports and cinema outings.

## Information on the web

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### Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs

[Employment of foreigners in Germany](#)

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### Federal Ministry of the Interior, Building and Community

[Brochure Welcome to Germany - Information for Immigrants](#)

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### European Commission

[The European Commission's official currency converter](#)

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