



## **Germany Travel Planning Podcast**

Ep 4 - Is the Deutschland-Ticket Right for You?

Transcript

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Welcome to episode four of the Germany Travel Planning Podcast. Are you considering the Deutschland Ticket on your trip to Germany? In this episode, I break down everything you need to know to decide if this Ticket is the right fit for your travels. I explain how it works, how to buy it, and I answer common questions so that you can travel with confidence and make the most of Germany's public transportation system.

If you're dreaming of traveling to Germany, you're in the right place. Hey, I'm Cate co-founder with my husband Aaron of MyGermanyVacation.com and host of this podcast. Our goal is to help you plan and enjoy a meaningful and unforgettable trip to Germany and surrounding countries. So let's dive in.

Hey, welcome back everyone. I'm Cate, your host, and each week I share practical travel tips, insider insights, and firsthand experiences to help you plan the best trip possible to Germany and surrounding countries. If you're new here, welcome.

Be sure to hit that subscribe button so you never miss an episode.

Today we're diving into one of the most common questions I get in the one-on-one travel consults I do, which is, should I use the Deutschland Ticket on my trip? This Ticket has been a game changer for us and many of our clients because it offers unlimited travel on regional trains and city public transit all over Germany for one low monthly fee. Aaron and I have used this Ticket on several trips and it has been fantastic and it has saved us so much money.



On one trip, we were doing travel research for three months and we traveled exclusively using the Deutschland Ticket. so just using regional trains and city public transit. And we traveled all over Germany. We went from Bechtesgaden way down in Bavaria all the way up to the island of Sylt in northern Germany and everywhere in between, just using the Deutschland Ticket.

On another trip, we mostly traveled by car, but we did do some train travel and we were in some cities. So we did get the Deutschland Ticket. And even though we didn't use it all the time, it still was really convenient and we still did use it. It was a great thing to purchase.

On our most recent trip, we were in Germany for almost three months, visiting a lot of Christmas markets, doing a lot of travel research again. and we used a combination of the Deutschland Ticket and some high-speed trains. we really needed to maximize our time. some legs between cities, we booked high-speed trains so that we could just get there very quickly. but we still use the Deutschland Ticket frequently.

But here's the thing, it's not a one-size-fits-all solution for every traveler or every itinerary. Depending on the specifics of your trip, it could save you a lot of money. It could, however, also just be more hassle than you want to deal with. So in today's episode, I'll explain how the Deutschland Ticket works, how to buy it, and how to decide whether it makes sense for your trip. By the end, you'll know exactly if this Ticket is right for you or if there might be a better option.

First, let's break down what the Deutschland Ticket actually is. Deutschland Ticket is a subscription-based public transportation pass that allows unlimited travel on regional and local trains. Those are the ones that are primarily labeled as RE and RB trains and also S-Bahn. And then also you can use it on city public transit on things like buses, trams and subways.



The big benefit of this ticket is that you can use these forms of public transit everywhere in Germany.

It sounds great, right? Instead of buying individual tickets for each leg of your journey and in each city or town you visit, you can simply hop on and hop off regional trains and city public transit whenever you want, wherever you want, for only 58 euros per month per person. That's the price at the time of this recording.

This is a fantastic deal if you're going to be taking multiple regional trains and using public transportation frequently. But before you rush out and buy it, let's talk about the fine print. While the Deutschland Ticket is great for many locals, it wasn't actually designed with tourists in mind. So here are eight important things you need to know about this Ticket. Number one, it's a subscription based Ticket.

This isn't a pass you can buy at the Ticket machine when you land in Germany. You have to subscribe to it via an app ahead of time and the Ticket renews automatically every month unless you cancel.

Number two, it's valid per calendar month. The Ticket runs from the first to the last day of each month. That means if you arrive in Germany on July 25th, you pay for the entire month, even though you would only use the Ticket for the last few days. If your Ticket straddles two calendar months, say you arrive on July 25th and you leave on August 5th, you'll need to pay for two months of the Ticket, both July and August. Number three, you have to cancel your subscription. If you don't want to be charged for the next month, you have to cancel before the 10th of the preceding month. So if you only need the Ticket in July, you would need to cancel the Ticket by July 10th in order for it not to renew for August. And I always recommend canceling by the sixth or the seventh of the month.

just to be safe. And in the app we use, there is a big red cancellation button, so it's really easy to go in, click that and cancel your Ticket.



Number four, you can't use this Ticket on high-speed trains. This is a big one. So the Deutschland Lend Ticket is not valid on ICE trains, which are intercity express trains. This is the fastest way to travel between major cities in Germany.

It's also not valid on the IC or EC trains, which is intercity and euro city trains. These are also high speed trains. You also cannot use the Deutschland Ticket on private buses, boats, or specialty transportation. so things like the bus shuttle up to Eagles Nest or the cogwheel train that goes to Zugspitze from Garmisch. You can't use it on Flix train, Night Jet, et cetera.

That means if you're planning to take the ICE train from Berlin to Munich, the Deutschland Ticket won't work for that. But in Berlin and in Munich, but you would need to buy a separate Ticket for the ICE train. If you're still figuring out which trains you want to take to get from one city to the other or for day trips, do this research before you purchase the Deutschland Ticket.

Regional trains are great for some trips because sometimes it's only a regional train that goes to the destination that you want to go to. And other times taking a regional train only takes a little bit longer than if you were to go by a high-speed train. But they can be significantly slower and have far more connections you cannot book seat reservations on regional trains. So that means if you get to the regional train and it's full, you will end up standing with your luggage. And that is something we have done a couple of times. in the grand scheme of all the times we have taken regional trains, with the Deutschland Ticket, we have only had to stand with our luggage, I think two or three, I think three times. And that is out of close to nine months of use.

So it doesn't happen, it hasn't happened too often to us, but it has happened a few times.



So don't simply plan to just use regional trains on your trip. If you're only going to Germany for a week or two, depending on where you're going, you could easily spend the entire time on the train if you just use regional trains.

I highly recommend using the Deutsche Bahn website to look at all the options for each leg of your trip so you can see how long it would take on a regional train, how many connections you would have versus using a faster train. And then decide which legs of your trip you would rather go by high-speed train versus regional train.

Number five, each person needs to have their own Deutschland Ticket. There's no group or family version of the Deutschland Ticket, and so everyone six years and older needs to have their own Ticket.

So depending on the size of your group and the age of your travelers and how many days you'll be in Germany and how many regional trains you'll take,

This could be a good Ticket or perhaps not. Number six, you'll need internet access from your phone. The Deutschland Ticket is digital only and it's stored in an app on your phone. So you'll need constant internet access to show your Ticket to a conductor if you're asked to show it. You're not always asked to show it on every train. Some travelers in our Facebook group have said they have had success simply taking a screenshot of their Ticket and just showing that.

And I always do take a screenshot of my Ticket just in case. But officially, from everything I have read, you are supposed to have the live Ticket available in the app. I've been able to access Wi-Fi on some trains, but not all. So I definitely wouldn't depend on Wi-Fi.

I've had a few times when we would pull up the Ticket on our phone and it would just take a really long time to load. And the conductors were pretty accommodating. I would show them it's loading and then they would come back and check it or they



would see that it loaded on Aaron's phone and I would tell them I'm still waiting for it on my phone and they were okay with it. And I did see some conductors also accommodating other people who couldn't bring up the Ticket.

But I think now that the Ticket has been around for a couple of years, they could start being less accommodating. So I wouldn't count on that. I would make sure that you can show your Ticket.

Number seven, now I kind of already went into this a little bit earlier, but I want to reiterate, travel by regional trains often takes longer than by high speed trains. And there are no seat reservations on regional trains. So a lot of people don't realize that you have to add a seat reservation when you book a high speed train. It doesn't automatically come with your Ticket. and on regional trains, it's first come first serve, there are no seat reservations possible.

So traveling all over Germany for 58 euros sounds pretty awesome until you look at how long it will take to get from one city to another. If you're traveling from Munich to Nuremberg, taking a regional train just adds a little bit of extra time. that's what we took the last time we went from Munich to Nuremberg. We just used the Deutsch Land Ticket, took a little bit of extra time compared to the high speed train. But.

If you're going from Munich to Berlin, it is going to take you like eight hours versus around four. so I encourage you to consider how important it is to have a seat reservation. and if that is important to you, definitely consider taking the high-speed trains over the regional trains, especially if you're traveling in groups. have luggage, have kids, if anyone has mobility issues, trains where you can book seat reservations and get to your destination faster, probably it's a better choice than taking the slower trains.



Number eight. You cannot use the Deutschland Ticket outside of Germany. But there are a few places where you can use it to reach some locations that are just over the border, like Salzburg, Austria.

So is the Deutschland Ticket a good fit for your trip? Here's how to decide. I recommend making a list of when you'll use regional trains and city public transportation on your trip. Add up the price to purchase everything separately and then compare that to how much it will cost to use the Deutschland Ticket. Then look at the calendar and see how many months you would need to subscribe to the Deutschland Ticket.

On one trip, we decided to subscribe for four months, even though we only really needed it for half of two of those months, because it actually still saved us a lot of money.

But if you're only going to be in Germany for one or two days of a month, it might not be worth it to get the Deutschland Ticket for that month.

the next thing I'd recommend is to consider how many people you're traveling with. Is it worth it to have everyone purchase their own Deutschland Ticket? Or would purchasing a couple of group tickets like the Bavaria Ticket or group day tickets for public transportation in Munich or Berlin,

Would something like that be a better fit for your trip?

to purchase, especially if you're traveling as a group or if you have kids who might travel for free. There are a lot of other Ticket options that could work just as well, if not better for your trip, like using the regional day tickets like the Bavaria day Ticket for Germany.



Here's one more thing to consider. If it's the flexibility of having one Ticket that is what is tempting about getting the Deutschland Ticket, but you've realized that you actually want to take several fast trains, consider a German rail pass or a Eurail pass if you'll be going to Germany and other countries in Europe.

I don't always recommend these passes because they often cost more than purchasing the cheapest point-to-point tickets. But in some cases, the flexibility you get from having a German rail pass or a Eurail rail pass can be well worth the expense.

For ultimate flexibility, consider getting a German rail pass or a Eur rail pass for the high-speed trains and the Deutschland Ticket for everything else. let's talk about how to purchase the Deutschland Ticket because as I mentioned, it's not as simple as just getting off the plane, walking to a Ticket machine and getting the Ticket. now, if you purchase the Deutschland Ticket via the Deutsche Bahn, you'll need to transfer money from your bank account to the Deutsche Bahn to pay for the Ticket each month. This is very common in Germany. in order to do this, your bank account needs to have an IBAN, which is an international bank account number. account, you will have this automatically and it's easy to transfer money to the Deutsche Bahn each month for your Ticket.

The problem is that for those of us without a German bank account, it's unlikely that we will have an IBAN.

But that said, depending on which country you live in, you might actually have one, so do check on that first. So if you do not have a bank account with the IBAN, the International Bank Account Number, here are two workarounds.

The first is to create a WISE account online and that will enable you to transfer money from that WISE account, which comes from your bank account, but goes into the WISE account and then you transfer it to the Deutsche Bahn.





to purchase the Ticket through a local public transportation systems app that allows purchases via credit card or PayPal. And the one that we use is the Rheinbahn. And I will link these up in the show notes.

Since the Ticket is valid all over Germany, it doesn't matter which local public transportation system you purchase from.

Initially, I was leaning towards using Wwise and I actually did set up an account and I have used it every once in a while to transfer money to hotels or for renting an apartment or something.

So we have actually used the account. But we decided we wanted to pay for the Deutschland Ticket with our credit cards just so we can get more airline miles. So we each got the Rheinbahn app and we set up our credit card and that's what we use whenever we purchase the Ticket. And now we have it all set up. So right before we leave, we...resubscribe and then when we're ready to come home, we unsubscribe.

So definitely check the show notes for this episode and you'll see the links to both of these options and you can check out which one will work for you.

You may still be wondering, is the Deutschland Ticket worth it for my trip? Maybe, but also maybe not. If your entire trip is within one calendar month and you plan to frequently use regional trains and city public transit, so bus, tram, U-Bahn, S-Bahn, et cetera, and you're sure that you'll remember to unsubscribe in time, it could be a really great deal for you.

Let's take a look at two Here's scenario number one. Two people are traveling together for two weeks in July, visiting Munich and Nuremberg with several day trips. They're traveling exclusively by train and will use city public transit or regional trains almost every day. They plan to take public transit to and from the airport and they



each have a cell phone with continuous connectivity, either through their service provider or a SIM card. In this case, the Deutschland Ticket is likely the best choice. Let's look at scenario number two. In scenario number two, we have a family of five with three teens who are traveling for 10 days, seven days in July and three days in August.

They're traveling to Berlin, Cologne, and Munich with one day trip via a guided tour.

They've booked airport transfers, plan to take the ICE train between cities, and will primarily focus their sightseeing on each city's downtown or old town area. In this case, the Deutschland Ticket is most likely not the best choice.

If the Deutschland Ticket, if it's starting to sound like the Deutschland Ticket maybe isn't right for you, here are a few other great options. The first one is the German rail pass that I mentioned earlier. If you want a lot of flexibility and you would like unlimited travel on all trains, including regional and high speed trains, this pass could be a great deal. The other option is the Eu rail pass.

And that's perfect if you'll be going to Germany and other countries. There's also regional day tickets, like the Bavaria Ticket. And this Ticket allows up to five people to take unlimited regional trains in one state for a day. You can get this Ticket for each state in Germany. And then there's also one that is good for all of Germany.

So that can be a great option if you're just planning to take one or two day trips.

Another option is to purchase point-to-point tickets. If you're only going to be taking one or two long distance train rides, buying individual tickets in advance might be the cheapest and easiest option. you use the Deutschland Ticket for your trip? Maybe. But as we've covered today, it's not always the best fit. The key is knowing your itinerary, comparing costs, and choosing the Ticket that offers the best balance of flexibility, convenience, and savings.



Which train tickets to get is something that I help a lot of our clients with because there are so many options. This is something that I advise people on in one-on-one consults

And with our custom itinerary option, we do all the research and we tell you exactly which tickets and passes will work best for your trip. sorting out the best transportation options for your trip, book a one-on-one consult with me and I would be happy to help you.

If you're just getting started planning your trip and you're feeling overwhelmed by all the places you could go and all the transportation options and you're not sure how long to spend in each place and which trains to take, then take a look at our custom itinerary option because we do all the research and all the work for you and we map out an itinerary in a Google document that you can continue to edit and use. then you have a very solid plan that you can continue to tweak and customize. as you finalize your plans. and if you have our Germany travel planner, which does come with our one-on-one consults and our custom itineraries, be sure to check the video information and cheat sheets we have in the transportation section. That will help you decide whether you want to take the train or rent a car, which train tickets will work best for you, and I show you how to buy tickets, make seat reservations, and navigate train stations and tell you everything you need to know using public transportation in Germany.

Okay, that's it for today.

Thanks for listening and I'll see you in the next episode. Until then, happy travel planning.

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