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German Public Holidays 2026 — Dates, Traditions and Bridge Days

All statutory holidays in Germany 2026: federal and regional holidays, traditions and bridge days.

Deutsche Begriffe: Feiertag | Gesetzlicher Feiertag | Brückentag | Weihnachten | Ostern | Karneval

Statutory Holidays 2026

On public holidays, work is **off** — shops, authorities and many services are **closed**. Your salary is still **paid** (Holiday Law).

Federal Holidays 2026

These holidays apply in **all 16 federal states**:

Date	Day of Week	Holiday
January 1	Thursday	New Year's Day
April 3	Friday	Karfreitag (Good Friday)
April 6	Monday	Ostermontag (Easter Monday)
May 1	Friday	Labour Day
May 14	Thursday	Christi Himmelfahrt (Ascension Day/Father's Day)
May 25	Monday	Pfingstmontag (Whit Monday)
October 3	Saturday	German Unity Day
December 25	Friday	Christmas Day
December 26	Saturday	Boxing Day

Regional Holidays 2026

These holidays apply only in **certain federal states**:

Date	Holiday	Federal States
January 6	Epiphany	BY, BW, ST
March 8	International Women's Day	BE, MV
April 5	Easter Sunday	BB
June 4	Corpus Christi	BY, BW, HE, NW, RP, SL, SN (partial), TH (partial)
August 8	Peace Festival	Augsburg only (BY)
August 15	Assumption of Mary	BY (partial), SL
September 20	World Children's Day	TH
October 31	Reformation Day	BB, HB, HH, MV, NI, SN, SH, ST, TH
November 1	All Saints' Day	BY, BW, NW, RP, SL
November 19	Day of Penance and Prayer	SN

Abbreviations: BY=Bavaria, BW=Baden-Württemberg, BE=Berlin, BB=Brandenburg, HB=Bremen, HH=Hamburg, HE=Hesse, MV=Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, NI=Lower Saxony, NW=North Rhine-Westphalia, RP=Rhineland-Palatinate, SL=Saarland, SN=Saxony, ST=Saxony-Anhalt, SH=Schleswig-Holstein, TH=Thuringia

Bridge Days 2026 — Smart Holiday Planning

Bridge days are working days between a holiday and the weekend. With minimal vacation, you can get **many free days**:

Holiday	Bridge Day(s)	Vacation Days	Free Days
New Year's Day (Thu, 1.1.)	Fri 2.1.	1 day vacation	4 days off (Thu-Sun)
Ascension Day (Thu, 14.5.)	Fri 15.5.	1 day vacation	4 days off (Thu-Sun)
Labour Day (Fri, 1.5.)	—	0	3 days off (Fri-Sun)
Christmas (Fri, 25.12.)	Mon 28.12.-Wed 30.12.	3 days vacation	9 days off (Fri 25.12.-Sun 3.1.)

Tip: Request bridge days **early** — they are very popular with colleagues!

What's Open on Holidays?

Closed

- **Shops** — supermarkets, shopping centres, DIY stores (exception: some bakeries in the morning, petrol station shops)
- **Authorities** — registration office, immigration office, tax office
- **Banks** — branches closed (ATM works)
- **Schools and kindergartens**
- **Post office** — no delivery

Open

- **Restaurants and cafés** — many are open (especially Christmas markets!)
- **Hospitals and emergency rooms** — always
- **Pharmacies** — emergency pharmacies
- **Petrol stations** — always open
- **Public transport** — runs (weekend/holiday schedule!)
- **Cinema, museum, zoo** — often open

Traditions of Major Holidays

Christmas (December 25–26)

Christmas is the **most important festival** in Germany:

- **Christmas Eve** (December 24) — the main celebration: gift-giving, Christmas tree, family dinner
- **Christmas Markets** — from late November, mulled wine, bratwurst, handicrafts
- **Typical Food:** Potato salad with sausages (Christmas Eve), roast goose (25.12.)
- **Shops:** Open only until 2 p.m. on 24.12., closed 25–26

Easter (Good Friday to Easter Monday)

- **Good Friday:** Quiet day, dancing ban in many states
- **Easter Sunday:** Easter egg hunts for children, family meals

- **Easter Monday:** Free day, walks, family visits
- **Typical Food:** Easter lamb cake, Easter eggs, Easter roast

Carnival/Fasching (February/March)

Carnival is **not a statutory holiday**, but in some regions (Rhineland, southern Germany) it's **celebrated on a large scale:**

- **Women's Carnival Day** (Thursday) — women cut men's ties
- **Rose Monday** — big parade (Cologne, Düsseldorf, Mainz)
- **Ash Wednesday** — end of carnival
- Many companies in the Rhineland give **Rose Monday off**

New Year's Eve (December 31)

- **Not a statutory holiday** (but many have the day off)
- **Fireworks** at midnight (firecracker sales only 28–31.12.)
- **Raclette or fondue** for dinner
- **"Dinner for One"** — short film broadcast on TV every year since 1963

Ascension Day / Father's Day

- **Statutory holiday** (always Thursday, 40 days after Easter)
- **Father's Day:** Men traditionally go on **hiking trips with hand carts and beer**
- **Bridge day** on the following Friday is very popular

Employment Law and Holidays

Wage Continuation

- On statutory holidays, you receive your **normal salary** — even if you don't work (§ 2 EFZG)
- If a holiday falls on a **Saturday or Sunday**, there is **no replacement day off** (exception: some collective agreements)

Working on Holidays

- Work on holidays is generally **prohibited** (§ 9 ArbZG)
- **Exceptions:** Hospitals, gastronomy, police, fire brigade, media, transport

- **Holiday Surcharge:** 50-150% surcharge (depending on collective agreement)

Vacation

- Holidays are **not** deducted from vacation entitlement
- If a holiday falls during your vacation, that day is **not** counted as a vacation day

Tips for Foreigners

1. Know your state's holidays — Bavaria has the most (13), Berlin/Hamburg the fewest (10)

2. Stock up — supermarkets are crowded before holidays, plan ahead

3. Use bridge days — get many free days with minimal vacation

4. Join in traditions — Christmas markets, carnival, Easter egg hunts — it's fun and helps with integration

5. Respect quiet holidays — Good Friday has a dancing ban and special silence

--- As of March 2026. All information without guarantee.