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Naturalization — Become a German Citizen

Requirements, costs, and process for naturalization: How to obtain German citizenship. Status: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Einbürgerung | Staatsbürgerschaft | Einbürgerungstest | doppelte Staatsbürgerschaft

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Requirements (since 2024/2025 Reform)

- 1. 5 years** of lawful residence in Germany (previously 8; fast-track 3-year option was discontinued in 2025)
- 2. Unlimited right of residence** or EU Blue Card
- 3. Livelihood** secured independently (no welfare benefits — exceptions for those over 67 and involuntary unemployment)
- 4. German language skills** B1 (certificate or German school diploma)
- 5. Naturalization test** passed (or German school diploma)
- 6. No criminal convictions** (fines up to 90 daily rates or suspended sentence up to 3 months are disregarded)
- 7. Commitment to the Basic Law** and the free democratic order

Dual Citizenship

Since June 2024, **multiple nationalities are generally permitted**: You no longer have to **give up your previous citizenship!**

Naturalization Test

- **33 questions** from a catalog of 310 questions (+ 10 state-specific)
- **17 correct answers** = pass
- Topics: German politics, history, society, fundamental rights
- **Cost:** €25
- **Preparation:** Free online test trainer at einbuengerungstest.bund.de
- With a **German school diploma**, the test is waived

Process

- 1. Advisory meeting** at the naturalization office (book appointment)
- 2. Submit application** with all documents
- 3. Take the naturalization test** (if required)
- 4. Processing** by the office (duration: 3-18 months, depending on city!)
- 5. Receive naturalization certificate** and take the **oath**

Costs

- **Adults:** €255
- **Children (with parents):** €51
- Naturalization test: €25
- **Fee reduction** possible for low income

Required Documents

- Valid **passport**
- **Residence permit**
- **Birth certificate** (with official translation)
- **Registration certificate**
- **Income proof** (salary statements, tax return)
- **B1 language certificate** (or school diploma)
- **Naturalization test result**
- If applicable: marriage certificate, divorce decree

Benefits of German Citizenship

- **Voting rights** at all levels (municipality, state, federal, EU)
- **EU freedom of movement** — live and work in all 27 EU countries
- **Travel freedom** — German passport ranks among the strongest worldwide
- **No residence permit** required
- **Protection from deportation**

Tips

- **Waiting times** at naturalization offices are long — apply early
- **Obtain B1 language certificate** beforehand — it speeds up the process
- **Practice the naturalization test** online — questions are publicly available