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# Shopping in Germany — Supermarkets, Pfand and Prices

Aldi, Lidl, Rewe, Edeka: supermarket types, Pfand deposit system (8 ct / 25 ct) and shopping tips.

**Deutsche Begriffe:** Pfand | Discounter | Supermarkt | Bargeld | Kassenbon

## Supermarket Types

### Discounter — Budget Shopping

- **Aldi** (Nord/Süd) and **Lidl** — the cheapest groceries
- Smaller selection, house brands, weekly offers
- Also: **Netto, Penny, Norma**

### Full-Range Supermarkets — Larger Selection

- **Rewe** and **Edeka** — more branded products, fresh counter (cheese, deli meat, meat)
- More expensive than discounters, but larger selection
- Organic supermarkets: **Alnatura, denn's, Bio Company**

### Drug Stores

- **dm** and **Rossmann** — hygiene, cosmetics, baby products, cleaning supplies
- Often cheaper than in supermarkets

## The Pfand System

Germany has a **Pfand deposit system** for bottles and cans:

| Type | Pfand | Recognizable by |
|---|---|---|
| Single-use plastic bottles | **€0.25** | Logo with arrow |
| Single-use cans | **€0.25** | Logo with arrow |
| Reusable glass bottles | **€0.08–0.15** | No single-use logo |
| Reusable PET | **€0.15** | No single-use logo |

Return bottles and cans to the **Pfand machine** in the supermarket. You'll receive a receipt that you can redeem at the checkout.

## Payment

- **EC-Karte (Girocard)** — most commonly accepted
- **Bargeld** — always carry cash; many small shops are cash-only
- **Credit card** — often possible in large supermarkets, but not everywhere
- **Contactless (NFC)** — increasingly common, but not everywhere

**Important:** At checkout, you must **place your items on the belt yourself** and **pack quickly after scanning** — German cashiers are very fast!

## Opening Hours

- **Mon–Sat:** approx. 7:00–22:00 (major cities), until 20:00 (small towns)
- **Sunday: Closed** (exception: train stations, gas stations)
- **Public holidays:** closed

## Money-Saving Tips

- **Check flyers** — weekly offers (apps: Kaufda, MeinProspekt)
- **Buy house brands** — "Ja!" (Rewe), "Gut & Günstig" (Edeka) are significantly cheaper
- **Buy bread from the bakery** — fresher and often cheaper than in supermarkets
- **Weekly market** — fresh fruits and vegetables, often cheaper for bulk purchases
- **Best-before date** — products nearing expiration are discounted (up to -50%)

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