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Understanding Nebenkostenabrechnung — What You Need to Pay

Warmmiete and Kaltmiete, Betriebskosten and annual settlement: what tenants in Germany need to know. Status: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Nebenkostenabrechnung | Betriebskosten | Warmmiete | Kaltmiete | Heizkosten | Einwendungsfrist | Belegeinsicht | Abrechnungszeitraum

Cold, warm and what gets settled

Rent is divided into **Kaltmiete** (apartment only) and **Warmmiete** (with cost allowances). Once a year you receive a **Nebenkostenabrechnung** — a statement of actual **Betriebskosten** against your allowances: you either owe money or get a refund. What can be settled in general (water, heating, trash, caretaker, etc.) is explained in a separate article additional costs in detail.

Deadlines that protect the tenant

• The landlord has **12 months** from the end of the billing period to provide the settlement (for 2025 — by **31.12.2026**). Late = **loses the right to demand payment** (but your refund is still owed to you).

• You have **12 months** from receipt for **Einwendungsfrist** — written objection to errors.

How to check the settlement

You have the right to **Belegeinsicht** — inspection of invoices and receipts (§556 BGB; from 2025 also electronically). Check: whether the allocation key matches the lease

(Mietvertrag), whether non-allocable costs were not added (e.g. management, repairs), whether the allowances match. The settlement can also be a reason for withholding part of the deposit — see deposit return when you move out.