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Visa for Germany — Which Do You Need?

Schengen visa, national visa, Blue Card: find out which visa you need and how to apply. Status: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Visum | Aufenthaltserlaubnis | Schengen-Visum | nationales Visum | Botschaft

Visa for Germany — Which Do You Need?

> Status: March 2026. All information without guarantee.

Do I Need a Visa?

- **EU/EEA Citizens + Switzerland:** No visa needed. Free residence and work.
- **Short stay (up to 90 days):** Citizens of many countries (e.g., USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, Israel, Brazil) **don't need a visa** for tourist visits.
- **Everyone else:** Apply for a visa at the German embassy/consulate.

The Two Main Types

1. Schengen-Visum (Type C)

- **Duration:** Up to **90 days** within 180 days
- **Purpose:** Tourism, business travel, family visit, conference
- **Validity:** Throughout the Schengen area (27 countries)
- **Cost:** €80 (adults), €40 (children 6-12), free (under 6)
- **No work permit** — you cannot work with this visa!

2. Nationales Visum (Type D)

- **Duration:** Over 90 days
- **Purpose:** Work, study, family reunification, training
- **Validity:** Germany only
- **Cost:** €75 (general), €37.50 (study/language course)
- After entry: Apply for **Aufenthaltserlaubnis** at the immigration office

Special Visa Categories

Visa	For Whom	Salary/Requirements
Blaue Karte EU	Academics	Min. €50,700/year (shortages: €45,934)
Fachkräftevisum	Skilled workers	Recognized degree + job offer
Jobsuchervisum	Academics	6 months job search, no work allowed
Studiervisum	Students	Admission + financial proof (€11,904/year)
Familiennachzug	Spouses/children	German A1 + secured livelihood

How to Apply for a Visa

- 1. Book an appointment** at the German embassy/consulate (online, often weeks of waiting)
- 2. Fill out the application form** (online at videx.diplo.de)
- 3. Submit documents:** Passport, photo, insurance, financial proof, purpose documentation
- 4. Appear in person** at your appointment (biometric data)
- 5. Wait: 2-12 weeks** (Schengen faster, national visa longer)

Tips

- **Book an appointment immediately** — waiting times of 2-6 months at many embassies!
- All documents in **German or English** (certified translation)

- **Travel health insurance** is mandatory (coverage min. €30,000)
- If rejected: **Remonstrations** (appeal) possible within 1 month

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