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Finding Housing Online — Best Portals and Tips

Where and how to find an apartment in Germany: portals, application documents, and fraud prevention tips. Updated: March 2026.

Deutsche Begriffe: Wohnungssuche | Immobilienscout24 | WG | Zwischenmiete | Wohnberechtigungsschein | Vorkasse | Mieterselbstauskunft | Schufa-Auskunft

Most Important Portals

Portal	Specialty
ImmoScout24	largest database of listings
Kleinanzeigen	cheap, but more scams
Immowelt / Immonet	large selection
WG-Gesucht	rooms and WG (shared apartments)

General rules for searching and compiling documents are described in a separate article apartment search step by step.

Beware of Scams (Vorkasse)

The most common scam is **Vorkasse** — demanding prepayment before viewing. **Never pay for keys or "reservation" upfront.** Typical scheme: the alleged owner "is abroad" and wants to send the key by mail after the transfer — after payment, they disappear. Warning signs:

• time pressure and prepayment,

- offer well below market rate,
- photos from a catalog (check with image search),
- request for SCHUFA, pay stubs or copy of ID **before** viewings.

Documents — but at the Right Time

Landlords normally ask for **Mieterselbstauskunft** (questionnaire), SCHUFA certificate on payment ability and pay stubs — but only **during or after viewings**, not before. After finding an apartment, you sign the contract (Mietvertrag) and pay the deposit, and after moving in you do the registration — this takes care of formalities.
