

General Information

With a population of approximately 1.5 million people, Munich is the capital of the southern German state, Bavaria. The city is also home to some of Germany's finest universities, where over 100,000 students pursue topics ranging from archaeology to biochemical engineering.

Munich is also the location of choice for many large companies such as BMW and Siemens. The presence of these international corporations infuses the city with prosperity and cosmopolitan flair.

In general, *Münchner* are conservative and proud of their cultural distinctness from the rest of Germany. Their dialect, Bavarian, can be difficult to comprehend, even for other Germans. Fortunately for Erasmus students, however, the classes at the university are conducted in *Hochdeutsch*, the standard German taught in classes around the world.

As is typical in a continental climate, in Munich, the winter is cold, stormy, and windy, while the late spring and early summer days are milder and sunnier.

Communication and Transportation

Munich's main airport, Franz Josef Strauss, facilitates flights between Munich and many European and intercontinental destinations. The only difficulty you may encounter when using the airport is its location 30km outside of the city. An average taxi fare into the city is 50€. Cheaper alternatives include the Lufthansa Airport Bus which will take you to the subway station Nordfriedhof for 9€, or the public transportation system (streetcars, subways, and busses), the cost of which varies depending on your final destination. Monthly and weekly passes for public transportation are available to students at a discounted rate. The airport is located at the end of the *S-Bahn* subway lines S1 and S8. The best places to make connections with the other subway lines when riding the S1 or S8 are the stations *Marienplatz* and *Hauptbahnhof*, or central station.

Hauptbahnhof is also an important transit center, with trains arriving from and departing to regional and international destinations. If you plan on traveling by train frequently, you may want to purchase a *DB Karte* for 60€. The card then entitles you to a 50% reduction on train tickets for a year. The best way to travel in Bavaria and the surrounding areas is to use either the *Bayernkarte* or the *Schönes Wochenende Ticket*. With these fares, up to 5 people can travel for a group price of approximately 25€.

Another way to explore Germany and neighboring countries is through arranged rides with private drivers. Centers called *Mitfahrzentrale* will help you organize your trip.

An online center is available at www.mitfahrzentrale.de.



Schnellbahnen im Münchner Verkehrs- und Tarifverbund



Accommodations

Finding a place to stay in Munich is the main problem of almost all foreign students there. Your best opportunity to find a place to stay is likely the offer that the municipal student services, *Studentenwerk* will send you. www.studentenwerk.mhn.de. The *Studentenwerk* offers rooms on year-long contracts, however, if you are lucky enough to find somewhere nicer to live, you can cancel your contract or sublet your room to another student.

Most Erasmus students find places to stay in the city's numerous student residences, the largest of which is the *Studentenstadt*. www.stusta.mhn.de. *Studentenstadt* features charming studio apartments with kitchenettes and personal bathrooms as well as bungalows where students share kitchen and bathroom facilities. The average price for these accommodations is 200€ per month, with a refundable deposit of a month's rent at the beginning of your contract to cover damages.

Your Basic Needs

During your first days in Munich, it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the supermarkets in your area. PLUS www.plus.de and PENNY MARKET www.penny.de offer a limited selection of cheaply priced products of average quality. TENGELMANN offers a more varied selection of goods at slightly higher prices. If you are willing to take the bus to the edge of town, quality and value can be found in combination at MARKTKAUF www.marktkauf.de. A good

selection of cheaply priced household items is available at WALMART www.walmart.de. To get there, take the free bus from either of the subway stations *Am Hart* on the line U2 or *Kieferngarten* on the line U6.

To get the discounted public transportation ticket for students, mentioned earlier, you must be matriculated at one of the universities in Munich. As matriculation takes place during October, if you arrive earlier, you may want to purchase a weekly pass (*Wochenkarte*) for the number of subway zones that you travel. Be aware that the penalty for traveling on the subway without a ticket is 40€, and that the controllers are not uniformed and may appear at any instant.

It is very important that you attend the meeting for ERASMUS students in the foreign relations office of the TUM (http://www.iz.hr.tu-muenchen.de/beratung/index_de.tuml). At this meeting, you'll get information about the activities scheduled as a part of the ERASMUS program, and you'll have the opportunity to ask questions about your course of study and other matters. The easiest way to get to the office is to take the *U-Bahn* line U2 to *Königsplatz*: Additionally, you will be able to turn in your ERASMUS accreditation from your home university, which you need to matriculate at the university.

At this meeting you will also get a list of tasks to take care of during your first days. Some of these tasks are as follows.

- Sign a **rental contract** (*Mietvertrag*) in the housing office of your student residence (*Hausverwaltung*). Be prepared to pay a month's rent as a deposit, which you will be able to get back when you move out.
- **Open a bank account** where you can keep money for future rent payments. Most German banks offer special accounts for students; look for a bank near your residence, as employees there will have experience with foreign students' needs. To qualify for a student account, you need to present a student ID, such as the ISIC if you do not already have your TUM student ID. It is also possible to obtain proof of student status at the office of foreign students (*Akademische Auslandsamt*).
- Obtain the **magnetic card of the university**. This card will allow you to pay for your matriculation, buy food in the university cafeterias, and pay for use of copy machines, etc. at the university. The card can be purchased outside the main university cafeteria (*Mensa*) for 2.50 €.
- **Register for health insurance** at one of the health insurance offices (*Krankenkasse*), such as the AOK located at *Maistrasse 43* (take the U3 or the U6 to *Goetheplatz*.)
- **Register at the matriculation office** (*Immatriculationsamt*) which is located in the *TUM Hauptgebäude*
- **Remember to bring with you:**
 - Matriculation forms sent to you before you arrived in Germany including
 - § Justification of admission

§ Declaration of intention to stay no longer than two semesters

§ Personal information form

- The magnetic card with at least 29€ in value
- The receipt from your *Krankenkasse* registration
- Passport or official ID
- ERASMUS accreditation
- **Register your presence** with the local government authorities. You will need to fill out a white form called *Anmeldung*, which you can deliver at the office at *Ruperstrasse 11-19*. To get there take the U6 to *Poccistrasse*.
- **Obtain permission for residence.** You may reside in Germany for 3 months without official permission as a tourist, however an *Aufenthaltserlaubnis* is necessary if you would like to work. You can also obtain a permission for residence at the office complex on *Ruperstrasse 11-19*. It is recommendable to get to the office as early as possible to avoid a long wait. While you are there, it is a good idea to register for taxes. When you register, you will receive a *Lohnsteuerkarte*, which is also a requirement to be able to work.
- **Obtain a student card for public transportation.** With this card, you will be able to purchase tickets for public transportation at student prices. The cards are available at the customer service office of the *MVV*, which are located in *Hauptbahnhof*. To get the card, you will need
 - Student ID
 - ID-sized photograph
 - Registration form (this form should be available at the ERASMUS meeting discussed earlier.)

German courses

The TUM offers German courses for foreign students. These courses are divided into three levels, and each level takes one semester to complete.

Deutsch für Anfänger ohne Vorkenntnisse

(For students with no previous knowledge of German, 4 hours a week)

Deutsch für Anfänger mit Vorkenntnisse

(For students with previous knowledge of German, 4 hours a week)

Deutsch für Fortgeschrittene

(For advanced students, 2 hours a week)

More information about the courses is available at http://www.iz.hr.tu-muenchen.de/sprachen/index_de.tuml. In my opinion, the courses are not bad, although the quality of the instruction varies according to the professor and the courses may not suit your individual ability due to the wide range of sub-levels that they try to incorporate. The courses are, however, enjoyable and are a good opportunity to get to know ERASMUS students from other countries. The

classes take place around 18:00, so they should not conflict with your other classes.

If you would like to devote more time to studying German, you have the option to attend any of a number of schools ranging from the Goethe Institute www.goethe.de, which is expensive and prestigious, to subsidized classes that cost only two euros per hour and are also effective. Courses in German and a wide variety of other subjects are also available through the community college, the *Volkshochschule* www.mvhs.de. These courses are quite economical and are an excellent learning opportunity. If you are interested, however, it is important that you apply early, as the number of students per class is limited and the courses fill quickly.

Food

At the TUM there are a variety of places to eat lunch. The university cafeteria, the *Mensa*, which is open until 13:30, offers three main dishes every day in addition to a range of side dishes, all at low prices. There is also an additional cafeteria where the prices are somewhat higher, but you have a better selection of sandwiches, snacks, sweets, and drinks. Here it is necessary to pay with a magnetic card that you can add value to using the machines near the cafeteria. You can also buy pastries and sandwiches at the coffee shops and bakeries surrounding the TUM. For dinner, communities such as *Studentenstadt* and *Olympiazentrum* feature student-run bars and restaurants where you can enjoy eating out at affordable prices.

Work

In a city as expensive as Munich, nearly all the students work. In the university cafeterias there are always posters advertising work opportunities. In the *LMU Mensa* located at *Giesellastrasse* there is also an office called the *Job-Börse*. At this “job-market” you can register to search computer databases of available jobs.

If you urgently need work for two or three days, you can take part in the daily job lottery for students at the unemployment office (*Arbeitsamt, U3/U6 to Goetheplatz*). The lottery drawings take place at 8:00 and 13:00. Each entrant receives a number and then numbers are drawn to determine priority in selecting a job for that day from the list of available positions. The *Arbeitsamt* is also able to assist you in finding a conventional job.

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