

1. GOOD TO KNOW

Language travel is a very complex subject area. This is why we offer numerous resources with information on the most important issues to consider before, during and after a language stay.

Language stays have become increasingly popular in the age of global communication. In today's world, good language skills and cultural knowledge are key factors for success.

Furthermore, the requirements of schools, universities and employers are constantly evolving. In this context, language proficiency and practical international experience are becoming increasingly important. Be it as a kick-start and motivation boost for a child's language classes at school, as a stepping stone for preparing or qualifying for a certain career or simply as a meaningful way to spend a holiday, language stay programmes can be rewarding and valuable experiences for adults and young learners. With our Language-Stay Finder you will have no problem finding the right language stay programme for you.

Today, language stays are increasingly viewed as a lifestyle product that satisfies our desire for meaningful travel experiences by offering an ideal combination of personal development, interesting acquaintanceships and various sports and cultural activities. Language stays also offer a perfect travel format for solo travellers because, after you arrive, it is easy to make contact with like-minded people from around the world and team up with them for interesting tours of discovery.

No matter what type of language stay you choose, you should always book through a high-quality language school or tour operator in your home country. Tour operators only work with the highest-quality schools and programmes and are able to accurately assess their customer's needs and offer professional advice. Moreover, a tour operator in your home country is a competent partner who can help defend your interests in the event of a conflict.

In terms of teaching methods, accommodations, on-site supervision and extracurricular activities, language stays for adults differ greatly from the language stay programmes offered for young learners. This is why these two types of language-stays are covered in separate sections of our website.

Be sure to take advantage of the tour operators' advisory services and find the language stay that best fits your needs and interests – enjoy immersing yourself in the adventure of language-learning!

2. WHAT IS A LANGUAGE STAY, AND WHAT OPTIONS ARE THERE?

Language stays of various durations are available for travellers of practically any age. A wide range of languages can be learned or improved in numerous countries around the world.

A language stay includes regular language classes, accommodation, travel to and from the destination and a programme of leisure and cultural activities. In the traveller's free time, there are many opportunities for getting to know not only the country and its people, but also the other international participants. Language courses are run in groups of learners from different countries and offered in various formats, ranging from private tuition and group lessons to highly intensive business language courses in mini-groups.

The language courses for young learners can easily be organised during the school holidays.

For young people who have already finished secondary school, language courses in a foreign country can be a great way to improve language proficiency and gain international experience before starting university studies or vocational training.

Language stay programmes can also be combined with other types of activities such as volunteer work, internships or travel. In such cases, the language course generally takes place at the beginning of the trip to help the traveller acclimatise to the culture and mentality of the host country.

3. TARGET GROUPS

A language stay is the perfect travel option for anyone interested in combining learning with pleasure. What better way is there to learn a new language or improve your language skills while getting to know a country and its people? Language stays are suitable for travellers of all ages who are open-minded and interested in other cultures and languages. There is no upper age limit, which is why language stays have also become a very popular form of travel among older adults.

JUNIORS

The minimum age is 8, but young people generally go on their first language trip between the ages of 12 and 14.

FAMILIES

Younger participants can also take part in family language trips accompanied by their parents, who are either supervised outside of school or take part in language classes for juniors.

YOUNG ADULTS

From the age of 16, students are considered to be young adults and can choose to take part in junior language courses or language courses for adults. Young adults already enjoy more freedom and can optionally participate in an age-appropriate leisure program. There are also special preparatory courses for prospective high school graduates.

ADULTS

From the age of 18, everyone can take part in the classic adult language courses.

SENIORS

50 + / 60 + courses are suitable for the "best-agers" among those interested in language travel. However, it is up to you whether you book these special courses from the age of 50 or whether you take part in normal, classic adult language courses.

Recently, courses from 30 + / 40 + have also been offered. Here you will find language courses tailored to the respective target group.

4. AVERAGE PROGRAMME LENGTH

Most language stay programmes are 2 to 12 weeks in length and year round. For young learners most of the language courses take place during the school holidays.

Longer programmes are generally aimed at young people who have graduated from secondary school or university and may last up to 12 months.

5. WHAT TYPES OF COURSES ARE OFFERED?

The most popular type of course is the classic language stay programme with morning classes – or both morning and afternoon classes if an intensive course is chosen – combined with a homestay. The choice of language course is generally based on the needs and aims of the participant.

Options range from standard and intensive courses to mini-group courses, business courses, academic language preparation courses and bespoke private tuition. These options can also be combined: e.g. a mini-group course (max. 8 participants) with private tuition. Targeted, one-to-one tuition, usually offered in combination with group courses, enables pupils to focus on specific school requirements.

Holiday Course	15 lessons per week. Covers general language skills, e.g. vocabulary, grammar and conversation.
Main Course / Standard Course	20 lessons per week. Covers general language skills, e.g. vocabulary, grammar and conversation.
Intensive Course / Mini-Group Course / Combination Course	25 – 30 lessons per week in standard groups of no more than 15 participants. Mini-group courses are particularly effective owing to the small group size of 6 – 8 participants. In addition to courses covering general language skills, it is also possible to book one-to-one tuition on specific topics. Intensive and mini-group courses with a focus on business or academic preparation are also available.
Private Tuition	An ideal alternative for language travellers with a limited amount of time. This option enables the participant to achieve optimal results within a short time frame. These courses can be booked with a specified number of lessons or areas of focus. The minimum programme length is one week.

In addition to the classic types of courses, numerous special formats are available.

OTHER SPECIAL COURSES:

- Business course
- Exam preparation course
- University preparation course
- Combination course (group and individual training combined)

- Summer Camp (boarding school for school students during the holidays)
- Family language stays
- Internship program
- Work & Travel
- Volunteering

6. TYPES OF ACCOMMODATION

The participant can choose to live with a host family or stay at a student residence or boarding school/college.

The least expensive and certainly most authentic option is usually a homestay (host family). Participants who need more independence and prefer to spend their time in a group of people with similar interests should choose accommodation at a student residence or boarding school. Those who do not mind sacrificing a little flexibility for the chance to fully immerse themselves in local life should choose a homestay.

However, although this form of accommodation can be chosen for language learners of all ages, it is important to bear in mind that children staying with a host family cannot be supervised around the clock owing to their trips to and from the school. Therefore, accommodation at a boarding school/college should be chosen for young learners who are very inexperienced and less independent. At these accommodation sites, group leaders are on duty 24 hours a day. In addition, the child does not have to travel long distances alone, as is sometimes the case with homestays.

Adults can also choose between student dormitories, shared apartments, apartments, hostels or hotels.

7. WHAT IS THE ADDED VALUE OF A LANGUAGE STAY?

Language stay programmes are much more than simply a means of improving language skills. In the case of young learners, such programmes are often the child's first solo trip to another country and can therefore be an important step on their journey to becoming more independent. Language stay programmes promote not only personal development but also confidence in the use of the language. In addition, they enable the participant to experience the culture and mentality of the respective host country first-hand.

8. WHAT SHOULDN'T YOU EXPECT FROM A LANGUAGE STAY?

Schoolchildren should not expect their language marks to improve drastically after their trip. This is impossible to achieve through a programme that only lasts an average of 14 days with approx. 20 lessons per week. However, participants will certainly notice an improvement in their language proficiency and feel considerably more confident, particularly in their communication skills. In general, the extent to which improvements can be achieved will depend on the length of the programme, the intensity of the language course and the size of the group. Owing to the numerous cultural and language differences, many things will feel unfamiliar to the participant. It helps to have

reasonable expectations, be flexible and keep an open mind. With this attitude, you are sure to enjoy an exciting and successful language stay experience.

9. TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL LANGUAGE TRIP

- Take advantage of free and competent advice.
- Booking and advice from a renowned language school or language tour operator - this provides security and creates transparency and added value. In addition, you can also benefit from the protection of German travel law.
- A detailed programme description should be available: The contact details of the organizer, payment modalities, travel documents and services for meals, arrival and departure as well as leisure program should be known in advance.
- A maximum of 15 participants per learning group; small learning groups (mini group max. 8 participants) are more effective.
- An on-site placement test should be part of the language course - ideally in writing and orally on the first day of school. Some organizations offer an online language test before the trip.
- In addition to the appropriate language course, an age-appropriate sports and leisure program should also be included. This point is particularly important for young learner courses.
- Check to what extent travel and transfer are accompanied and whether the transfer from / to the airport is already included in the price or clearly identified.
- Ideally, no more than two guests with the same native language will live in the guest accommodation. On request, shared accommodation with friends is possible.

10. HOW IMPORTANT ARE LEISURE ACTIVITIES?

Leisure activities complement the language lessons and play a very important role in the overall language stay experience. These activities give the participants more opportunities to improve their skills and spend time with other language learners while getting to know the country and its people. In this sense, excursions and tours are important components of the language stay. The leisure programme should be appropriate to the age of the language learner. For example, older teens expect to have more freedom while younger participants still require very close supervision.

Programmes at boarding schools tend to offer more sports activities than the classic language-school programme because boarding schools have the appropriate facilities.

Some language stay programmes for young learners allow participants to choose either a mix of activities or a specific type of sports training, like tennis, golf or horse riding. A mixed leisure programme generally consists of various sightseeing, sports, cultural and creative activities.

Adults can book an optional sports and leisure program on site.

11. TRAVEL AND LOCAL TRANSFER

For most of the programmes, customers can either organise and book their own travel or choose an all-inclusive package that covers travel to and from the location.

Customers who plan to use their own car or think they could find less expensive travel options themselves should choose the option "independent travel arrangements". It is also possible to request that the travel costs be subtracted from an all-inclusive package. However, bear in mind that booking your own travel does not always pay off in the end.

12. THE FDSV – WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

The Association of German Language-Tour Operators (FDSV) is a consortium of leading German language schools and language-tour operators that have committed to compliance with the strict quality guidelines of the FDSV – on the basis of the European standard for language-study tour providers (EN 14804). Founded in 1977, the FDSV played a leading role in the development of the standard for language-study tour providers.

The FDSV provides guidance for language learners of all ages who are interested in language stays in any country. We offer concrete recommendations on all matters that need to be considered before, during and after a language stay. The Association also provides quality assurance and verifies compliance with FDSV Quality Guidelines in cooperation with an independent Scientific Advisory Board.

13. RESPONSIBILITIES

The independent assessment of language stay programmes by external experts, as one of the most effective means of ongoing quality control, is absolutely essential. This is why for nearly 40 years the Scientific Advisory Board of the FDSV has been regularly reviewing the catalogues and websites of the FDSV members and evaluating their services through on-site inspections.

The FDSV Scientific Advisory Board evaluates the Association members on a regular basis to verify compliance with the FDSV Quality Guidelines and the European standard for language-study tour providers (EN 14804) by

- reviewing the members' catalogues, websites and travel documents and
- performing on-site inspections of the language schools.

The language schools and accommodation sites of the FDSV members are evaluated in the context of routine inspection visits. Interviews are conducted with the school management, language teachers and group leaders regarding the language programmes, teacher training and programmes of leisure activities. The inspectors sit in on lessons, evaluate teaching materials and ask participants about their level of satisfaction with the respective programme.

The independent Scientific Advisory Board assesses the quality of the language tours and courses offered by the FDSV's members and is in constant dialogue with the FDSV. It makes suggestions about maintaining and improving the quality of the language stays.

14. OUR AIMS

The aim of the FDSV is to support consumers by ensuring that its members comply with high quality standards. Furthermore, the Association creates transparency through its continuous monitoring of the market and helps language learners find the language stay that best suits their needs.

The FDSV actively promotes the achievement and maintenance of high quality standards in the field of language stays. Once all the requirements have been fulfilled, the FDSV seal is awarded to the member.



15 ADVANTAGES FOR CONSUMERS

A one-stop shop for language stays!

With so many different options, it can be difficult to make the best choice. The FDSV, a consortium of leading language schools and tour operators, can help you sort through the options. We offer certified quality, e.g. through

- our Language-Stay Finder for quick and easy navigation,
- our independent Scientific Advisory Board, which verifies the quality of the programmes,
- the FDSV quality seal in accordance with the industry norm EN 14804 and
- objective advising, transparency and security in the booking process.

16. FDSV QUALITY GUIDELINES – EUROPEAN STANDARD FOR LANGUAGE STUDYTOUR PROVIDERS (EN 14804)

- Provision of all travel documents, e.g. coach, train, ferry or airline tickets with the corresponding timetables, contact information and emergency phone numbers for the language school and accommodation site, information on the supervision of young learners and data sheets with information on the host country, including tips on what to expect
- High-calibre and appropriately trained personnel from the respective home country and abroad
- Appropriately trained and qualified language teachers
- Well-equipped classrooms
- At least fifteen 45-minute lessons per week or 11.25 total hours
- A maximum of 15 participants per course; mini-groups with a maximum of 8 participants
- Placement tests for adults and young learners
- Homogeneous learning groups
- Separate classes and leisure-time activities for adults and young learners
- Certificate of course attendance or completion, or written assessment
- Routine inspection of all offered accommodation sites
- Supervised programme of leisure activities for young learners included in the travel package

The catalogues and websites provide clear information about the following:

- Terms and conditions of participation
- Services included in the price
- Optional services that can be booked e.g. leisure activities for adults
- Means of transport (outward and return journey) as well as local transfers
- Training and qualifications of the language teachers
- Course prerequisites
- Mix of nationalities and age distribution of the participants
- Equipment used in the classrooms
- Types of accommodations and meals, including the associated standards
- Maximum number of language students per host family and number of guests per family who speak the same language
- Distance between the accommodation site and the school
- Travel accompaniment and programme of leisure activities
- Certificate of course attendance or completion, or written assessment

17. INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY BOARD

When it comes to language stays, nothing is more important to the success of the learner than the quality of the programme. This is why the Scientific Advisory Board of the Association regularly reviews the catalogues and websites of the FDSV members and evaluates their services through on-site inspections. The regular assessment of the language schools, courses and accommodation sites ensures compliance with the Quality Guidelines of the FDSV and the requirements of the European standard for language-study tour providers (EN 14804). More than 1,000 of these school inspections have been carried out to date.

The Scientific Advisory Board is an independent body of experts. Its sole obligation is to verify compliance with the Quality Guidelines of the FDSV.

PROF. DR. ANTONIO JUÁREZ MEDINA, HEILBRONN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Prof. Dr Antonio Juárez-Medina was born in the province of Granada (Spain). He studied political science, economics, history and romance philology in Paris, Strasbourg, Madrid and Bamberg (doctorate 1986).

Since September 1991 he has been a professor in the Department of Spanish for Business and Tourism (linguistics, cultural studies, political science, social studies, tourism and economic geography of the Spanish-speaking world) at the Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences. Prof. Dr Juárez-Medina teaches at several different universities and educational organisations, e.g. in Germany, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay, France, Italy and the UK. He was a co-founder of the research group SLEST (Standard Linguistico Europeo per il Settore Turistico, Rome).

He has been a member of the FDSV's Scientific Advisory Board since 2007. In this role, he evaluates the language tours and courses offered by the FDSV members and their partner schools to verify compliance with the European standard EN 14804.

Since 2012 he has also been responsible for coordinating the annual "language stay analysis" of the Association of German Language-Tour Operators (FDSV), Berlin.

PROF. DR. OLAF BÄRENFÄNGER, DIRECTOR OF THE LANGUAGE CENTER AT LEIPZIG UNIVERSITY

Prof. Dr. Olaf Bärenfänger has authored numerous publications on competence diagnostics, elearning and the role of language in education. As a member of the Evaluation Commission of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, he advises the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees on all issues related to language training and civic education. Olaf Bärenfänger has taught at universities in Germany, the United States, China, Portugal and Switzerland. His numerous lecture tours have taken him to

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Russia, Finland, Hungary, Austria, Spain, Portugal, Switzerland, Italy, France, Turkey, Bahrain, China, Korea, Canada, the USA, Mexico and Brazil.

He has been a member of the FDSV's Scientific Advisory Board since 2015. In this role, he evaluates the language tours and courses offered by the FDSV members and their partner schools to verify compliance with the European standard EN 14804.

PROF. DR. BRITTA BERGEMANN, HEILBRONN UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Prof. Dr Britta Bergemann is a Professor of International Marketing at the Heilbronn University of Applied Sciences. Previously, she held the Professorship of International Marketing at Furtwangen University, where she also served as Vice-Rector for International Affairs and Director of the International MBA Programme. In addition, she has founded and directed MBA programmes in Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Tajikistan and has routinely taught courses in these programmes. She has also been a guest speaker and lecturer at numerous venues in China, Russia, Tunisia and Vietnam.

Prior to her university career, Prof. Bergemann held a top management position at the London-based Aegis Media, now Dentsu Aegis, one of the largest international communications agencies. Previously, she had served as Marketing Director for the international consulting firm Arthur Andersen, now Deloitte Consulting, after holding marketing positions for several years at Unilever and Kraft Jacobs Suchard, where she was Marketing Director in the US.

She has been a member of the FDSV's Scientific Advisory Board since 2017. In this role, she evaluates the language stays and courses offered by the FDSV members and is responsible for the Association's marketing activities.