

Visa

Do you come from a third country, i.e. a country outside Europe?

Then you usually need a visa. (Exceptions: Australia, Israel, Japan, Canada, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea and the USA)

What is a visa?

A visa allows you to enter a country for a specific purpose and stay there for a certain period of time. You must apply for a visa at the embassy/consulate of your home country before travelling. The visa is usually in your passport. It authorises you to stay in the country for a certain period of time and for a certain purpose.

What types of visa are there?

There are two main types of visa:

-  [Schengen visa](#):


For short stays of up to 90 days in a 180-day period.

-  [National visa](#):

For longer stays, e.g. for  [work](#) or for  [family reunification](#).

The procedure:

- Visa applications are submitted to the German diplomatic mission abroad by the persons wishing to come to Germany.
- The mission abroad forwards the applications to the foreigners authority at the intended place of residence.
- The foreigners authority checks whether the requirements for residence have been met. All necessary information is obtained for this purpose. Only then will the persons living here (e.g. family members) be involved.
- The foreigners authority informs the German diplomatic mission abroad of the result of the examination.
- The diplomatic mission or consular post abroad forwards the decision, in the best case by issuing the visa.

The immigration authorities in Germany can only take action once the visa applications have been submitted. You can apply to the Federal Foreign Office at  [here](#).

If you have received an entry visa for a longer stay (e.g. for family reunification or to study), you must register after entering the country and apply for a residence permit at the foreigners authority in your place of residence.