

FAQ

Going houseboating in Germany



Who knows the most about houseboating?

We do!

KUHNLE-TOURS has been in the business since 1981 and with over 120 boats is the largest german operator. We have our own boatyard and bases in Germany, France and Poland. Our founder, Harald Kuhnle is Vice President of the German Marine Federation and works with the Waterway Authorities to make boating fun for everybody. We pride ourselves on superb customer service, above all we want everybody to have a great holiday.

What is a "houseboat?"

As the name tells us, it is a mixture between a house and a boat. There is no clear definition in german language, but the definition we use :

Houseboats:

- move slowly and mostly inshore on rivers, lakes and canals or on protected salt water
- are moved by engine rather than sail
- are comfortable to live in
- have berths, a kitchen, a bathroom

They are sometimes called floating homes and stay moored in one place. Houseboats have engines and are designed to be moved.

Do I need a boating license?

Not really. But ...

1. Boats with less than 15 hp are license-free in Germany for everybody, except on the river Rhein and on a short stretch along the chancellor's office in Berlin.
2. Boats with more than 15 hp are license-free under certain circumstances, e.g. not faster than 12 km/h and on particular waterways around Berlin and two short stretches further south in Germany. Fortunately the waterways selected are idyllic with breathtaking views.
3. Non-Residents are liable to the rights of their home country so if there is no boating lincense for internal waterways in your country, you do not need a license on german internal waterways.

Do I have to be able to swim?

No, but please wear a lifejacket when you are in the outside areas of a boat.

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Is there a minimum age for children?

Kids of any age have fun on boats, it's just about preparing for their safety. Children between 8 months and 2 years need someone completely focussed on their well-being when they are awake and the boat is moving. Once a child can understand and obey rules safety become less onerous, but there must still be a responsible adult present. Make sure that kids wear a lifejacket that fits them by weight and size as soon they are in the outside areas of a boat or in the marina.

How do I know where to go and where to stay at night?

In our cruising areas you will find many mooring possibilities: Well-equipped marinas, lively ports in Towns or just a jetty out-of-the-way with no more than trees in the neighbourhood. And you can always drop your anchor and become an island on your own in a quiet bay on the lake. We will provide you with waterway guides and maps so you can plan your trip.

What if I have never been on boat before?

Don't worry. We have a crew of old salts who have their way of teaching, telling and showing. We promise our boating is easy and fun! Plus remember your maximum speed is just 10 km/h so there is always plenty of time to check what the signs mean and make a plan.

What are the german waterways like?

They are gorgeous! Fantastic, plenty of room for everyone, well maintained, clean and with breathtaking peaceful, colorful nature surrounding. Around 1700 kilometers of rivers, lakes and canals, all connected to discover Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Berlin and Brandenburg. The Mecklenburg Lake District with the queen of lakes and the 117 square kilometers of Mueritz is worth every effort to discover. The waterways are easy to navigate and mostly sheltered. There are some locks and some bridges where you will need to wait for them to be opened, but it's all part of the fun of boating.

Amongst the beautiful scenery are castles, ancient farm houses, churches in typical gothic brickwork, modern museums and historic sites.

WWII Sites along the waterways

Most towns and villages in Germany have their own regional museum which always contains the german history from 1933 to 1945. The most specialist museums also cover the nazi past.

Raben-Steinfeld (near Schwerin): Sculpture "Die Mutter" The end of the death march.

Rechlin (Lake Müritz): Luftfahrttechnisches Museum shows the development and testing of aircraft propulsions, test pilots and the invention of the "V1" (Doodlebug).

Fürstenberg (River Havel/Brandenburg): Memorial Mahn- und Gedenkstätte Ravensbrück shows information about life and death in the former women's concentration camp.

Oranienburg: Memorial KZ-Gedenkstätte und Museum Sachsenhausen provides information about life and death in the former concentration camp.

Brandenburg (City): Fundusausstellung der Landes- klinik shows the psychiatric treatments in the nazi-past. Dokumentationsstelle für NS-Opfer is a memorial to victims of nazi past and euthanasia.

Berlin-Wannsee: Max-Liebermann-Villa is a memorial to the nazi-persecuted painter.

Berlin-Zehlendorf: Haus der Wannseekonferenz where NSDAP and various ministries met to discuss their cooperation in the planned deportation and murder of the European Jews.

Berlin-Spandau: Zitadelle where Hitlers vice Rudolf Hess was imprisoned for life.

Berlin-Tempelhof: Building and airfield where nazi architecture can be viewed.

Woltersdorf: Memorial fort.

Philadelphia: Museum exhibiting the rocket experiments.

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