

PERFECT PHRASES in



German

for Confident Travel

The No *Faux-Pas* Phrasebook for the Perfect Trip

Hyde Flippo

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Contents

Introduction	v	
Pronunciation Guide	vii	
Chapter 1	Good Manners	1
Chapter 2	Money Matters	17
Chapter 3	Accommodations	23
Chapter 4	Travel and Transportation	29
Chapter 5	Driving and the Autobahn	39
Chapter 6	Shopping	51
Chapter 7	Laundry and Good Grooming	59
Chapter 8	Food and Drink	65
Chapter 9	Shopping for Food	79
Chapter 10	Entertainment and Leisure Time	89
Chapter 11	Museums and Memorials	97
Chapter 12	Emergency German	103
Chapter 13	Health Issues	109

Contents

Chapter 14	Communication	119
Chapter 15	Sports	127
Chapter 16	Friendship and Romance	135
Chapter 17	Numbers, the Calendar, and Time	141
Chapter 18	Weather	151
Chapter 19	Celebrations and Holidays	157

Introduction

Unlike the typical phrasebook, *Perfect Phrases in German for Confident Travel* treats the cultural aspect of the language as an essential element. Not only will you be able to communicate at a basic level in German, but you'll also know when and why to say what you want to say. Speaking German (or any language) involves much more than mere words or grammar. *Perfect Phrases* will give you the fundamental cultural awareness and knowledge of daily life that can help you communicate more effectively, get things done, and avoid cultural embarrassment.

In each theme-based section of this phrasebook you'll find essential phrases along with cultural information that goes hand-in-hand with those phrases. Although the primary focus of this book is Germany, it can be used in all three of the main German-speaking countries: Austria, Germany, and Switzerland.

German-speakers appreciate it when visitors make the effort to speak their language. Be assured that they don't expect perfection, and they will forgive any minor mistakes you might make. But *Perfect Phrases in German for Confident Travel* is designed to help you avoid many potential faux pas, both when using the language and when immersed in the culture.

The phrases within this book are grouped into major themes that include dining out, driving, accommodations, money matters,

Introduction

shopping, talking about the weather, and many other activities. Each phrase has an English translation and a phonetic guide to help you pronounce the German correctly. Each chapter contains useful sentences and expressions designed to make your trip easier and more enjoyable. The main phrases at the beginning of each section within the chapters are frequently followed by detailed cultural insights explaining their context. Those entries are then usually followed by extra German phrases that will greatly improve your ability to communicate and converse.

We hope you will enjoy using *Perfect Phrases in German for Confident Travel* and that it will not only help make your journey more fun but will also give you a better, deeper understanding of life in German-speaking Europe.

Gute Reise!

Have a good trip!

GOO-tuh RYE-zuh

Pronunciation Guide

In addition to an English translation, each entry provides a phonetic representation of the German pronunciation designed so that you will feel confident speaking in German. Simply pronounce the syllables in the phonetic guide as they would be said in English. Most of these phonetic representations are self-explanatory, but this guide will clarify some elements of German pronunciation that differ from English.

First, an important point about German spelling and German pronunciation in general: Unlike English, German spelling is very consistent, and once you learn the way the spelling and sounds match, you can pronounce German words you've never seen before. Some examples:

- The **ei** spelling in German is always pronounced like the English word *eye*.
- The opposite **ie** spelling always sounds like the *ee* in *feel*. (No “i before e except after c”!)
- The German **eu** spelling always sounds like the *oy* in *toy*.
- The German **w** is almost always pronounced like an English *v*.

The few exceptions to these rules are usually found in words borrowed from English or French.

Most consonants are pronounced similarly in German and English, although the German **r** is crisper and shorter (not rolling on as in American English). Some other consonant exceptions to keep in mind are:

- The consonants **b** and **d** have a different sound when they are at the end of a word in German. The **b** sounds like an English *p*, while the German **d** has a *t* sound at the end of a word.
- The English *th* sound (as in *the*) does not exist in German; **th** in German sounds the same as a **t**.
- The German **ß** letter (called an *ess-tsett*) sounds like a double-**s** (**ss**). Recent German spelling reform has changed some German words that were formerly spelled with an **ß** to an **ss** spelling: **daß/dass** (*that*), **Kuß/Kuss** (*kiss*). But the **ß** is still used in many common German words: **Straße** (*street*). The **ß** is not used at all in Swiss German.
- The German **sch** spelling at the front of a word or syllable is always pronounced like the English *sh*.
- The sound of the German **sp** or **st** spelling at the front of a word or syllable is shown in the guide as **shp** or **sht**.

The pronunciation of vowels and diphthongs (two vowels combined, like the *oy* in *boy*) can be very different in German and English. In order to use the phonetic representations in this book to their full advantage, follow these guides for vowel sounds. The letters in bold represent what you will see in the phonetic representations.

- **ah** is pronounced like the *a* in *father*
- **ay** is pronounced like the *ay* in *say*
- **ee** is pronounced like the *ee* in *eel*

- **ow** (German **au**) is pronounced like the *ow* in *how* or *now* (never as in *tow* or *throw*)
- **oy** (German **eu** or **äu**) is pronounced like the *oy* in *boy* or *toy*

The umlauted vowels **ä**, **ö**, and **ü** have unique sounds in German that do not exist in English. Using English, it is not really possible to duplicate their true pronunciation in German. Our guide offers only an approximation as follows:

- for **ä**, **ay** represents the sound as in the *ay* in *say*
- for **ö**, **er** represents the sound as in the *er* in *fern*
- for **ü**, **ew** represents the sound as in the *u* in *lure*, but pronounced with pursed lips

The phonetic representation **kh** stands for the German **ch** sound at the end or near the end of some German words. It sounds somewhat like an English *k*, but is softer, with air continuing to flow over the tongue, very similar to the *ch* sound in the Scottish word *loch*.

Remember as you use this book, however, that you don't need to have a perfect German pronunciation to be understood, and that German-speakers will appreciate your efforts to speak their language.