



Series

Tourism industry: The travel destination Germany; GerMANY Faces

Akira Nishiyama (German National Tourist Office Tokyo)

Working for the German National Tourist Office over 20 years, Germany has always fascinated me with its dynamism of history and regional diversity, and there is always a new discovery whenever I visit Germany. I am sure that many people share the same feeling as I do. But why is Germany so interesting?

I would like to briefly describe Germany as an interesting travel destination from the following keywords: “diversity” and “unique history”.

General overview about Germany

In the first place, Germany’s unique features will be briefly described in terms of geographical, historical and political aspects.

Geographical characteristics

- (1) Situated in the center of the European continent between the Ural Mountains and the Atlantic Ocean, Germany has been always a crossing point for people from every corner of Europe, whether it was positive or negative. Since the medieval age, trading routes connecting the west and the east, for example Paris and Moscow, and the north and the south, for example Oslo and Rome, were developed through active trade business by merchants, and cities, such as Frankfurt or Leipzig, were developed as trading points of merchants crossing Europe. Today, these cities are known as a “Messestadt” (the city of trade fairs). About two-thirds of leading international trade fairs are hosted by German trade fair cities annually, and these generate a tremendous number of MICE traffic into Germany. Germany is the No.1 host country for trade fair business in the world.
- (2) Situated in the maritime climate zone, Germany enjoys relatively mild temperatures and precipitation with clear four seasons although it is located on very high latitude. Four seasons gives a travel destination higher attractiveness through diverse impressions and rich seasonal cultural traditions. In early spring, the city of Cologne turns into a street festival of Karneval (carnival) parades. The summer season attracts most tourists to Germany with its climate

which is appropriate for outdoor activities such as hiking in the mountains or bathing on the northern sea shore. In the fall, the city of Munich becomes packed with the people from all around the world to enjoy Munich beers at Oktoberfest. Christmas is also a keyword for Germany. Germany has the longest tradition of Christmas markets. Dresden is famous for the oldest Christmas market in the world with almost 580 years history, and over 2500 different Christmas markets nationwide attract tourists even from overseas.

- (3) In the north, Germany has seas, namely the Baltic Sea in the northeast and the North Sea in the northwest. On the seashore, you find many cozy beaches with white sand. In the southern border toward Austria and Switzerland, there is the Alps mountain range with breath-taking landscapes, where you can enjoy hiking in the summer and skiing in the winter. The entire land is more or less flat with some hilly regions with many rivers which mainly cross the country from the south to the north such as the River Rhine, Elbe or Weser. A river cruise is one of the most important tourist attractions Germany can offer to international visitors. Especially the River Rhine is famous with its Romantic Rhine cruise along the middle Rhine valley. This valley is also well-known as a major wine production region in the world, and wine belongs to one of the major tourism themes of Germany.
- (4) Frankfurt and Munich are the major hubs of air transportation for both passenger and freight logistics in Europe. Frankfurt Airport is the third largest airport in Europe after London and Paris in terms of the number of international passengers.
- (5) Germany shares a country border with 9 neighboring nations on the European continent. There is no other country in the world which has so many bordering neighbors as Germany.

Historical and political characteristics

- (1) Under the umbrella of the Holy Roman Empire which existed until the beginning of the 19th century, hundreds of small kingdoms, principalities and free independent cities

existed on the current German soil. Therefore, there is no long history and tradition as a “German” state. They made their own regional and cultural developments, and this contributes to regional diversity even in today’s Germany.

- (2) Contrary to France, in which the totalitarian regime of French Kingdom concentrated all political and economic strength and cultural treasure in its capital Paris, Germany did not develop an exceptionally strong and big capital comparable to Paris. On the other hand, in many regions, a small or middle sized capital city which is often called “a petit Paris” developed. Dresden as the capital of the Kingdom of Saxony and Munich as the capital of the Kingdom of Bavaria are the good examples. These cities have unique and attractive city and cultural landscapes which became tourist attractions for tourists from all over the world in the modern age.
- (3) The country’s politics as well as the entire political landscape surrounding Germany in the 20th century brought quite a negative consequence, and as its result, Germany had to suffer from negatively labeled images. The Federal Republic of Germany reviews its own negative history and has determined not to repeat it. As a reflection of this national determination, Germany offers many memorials related to its own national crimes committed during the National Socialist regime and the division of Germany by the Berlin Wall during the Cold War.
- (4) The reunification of Germany made this country show its own democratic strength and maturity by accomplishing the reunification process without any blood on the street. The anniversaries of the fall of the Wall and the reunification have been repeatedly celebrated and strategically applied for marketing campaigns of the travel destination Germany.
- (5) Germany is a federal republic with 16 so-called “Bundesland” (federal states). This political system enables the regions to be politically, economically and culturally independent and unique. This political structure symbolizes the country’s regional diversity and cultural richness.
- (6) Tourism is one of the key industries for Germany, whereas it is well-known worldwide as one of the highly industrial-

ized countries with many globally competitive industries such as automobile production, logistics, chemical and pharmaceutical industry etc. and its competitiveness in the tourism sector is often overlooked in comparison with France or Italy. The tourism industry generates about 2.9 Million places to work and contributes to 4.4 % of the whole GDP. The automobile industry, as Germany’s symbolic industry, contributes to only 2.3 % of the GDP. This fact gives you a reason to believe why tourism industry is important for the German economy.

Overview of current tourism trends in Germany

Tourism booms globally. According to the World Tourism Organization, the figure of international tourist arrivals marked the record number of 1.183 million in 2015 with a 4.4 % increase from the previous year. The travel destination Germany has also been growing according to this world trend. It is especially remarkable that Germany has broken the record number of overnight stays by international visitors in 6 consecutive years since 2010. In 2015, it reached almost 80 million overnights. A comparison with the figures of the years 1995 and 2005 marks respectively 124 % and 85 % growth. According to the forecast for 2030 announced by the German National Tourist Board in early 2015, the figures of overnight stays by foreign visitors in Germany will reach 121 million overnights, with a 52 % further increase from the results of 2015.

Around 74 % of overnight stays are generated by the visitors from Europe, followed by Asia (12 %) and Americas (10 %). The most important source markets are the Netherlands (11.2 million overnights), Switzerland (6.4 million), U.S.A. (5.6 million) and the United Kingdom (5.5 million). While neighboring European countries are generally ranked high, there are several overseas source markets within the TOP 20 ranking. China is the second most important overseas source market for Germany with 2.5 million overnights and the most important source market in Asia, followed by the Arabic Gulf States (2.1 million) and Japan (1.25 million). These top overseas markets are also regarded as the highest revenue generating markets. The travelers from these markets have a tendency to pay much more for accommodation or shopping than travelers from Europe.

Comparison of direct contributions to gross value added in Germany

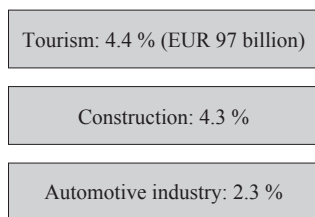


Figure 1: Comparison of the tourism industry’s contribution to gross value added in Germany

Source: Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry/Federal Ministry of Economics and Technology, DIW econ, 2012.

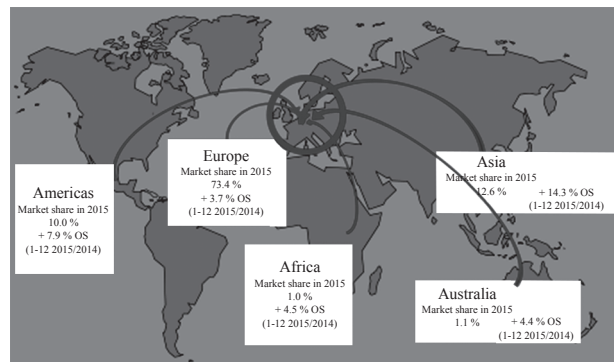


Figure 2: All continents recorded further increases in 2015

Source: Federal Statistical Office.

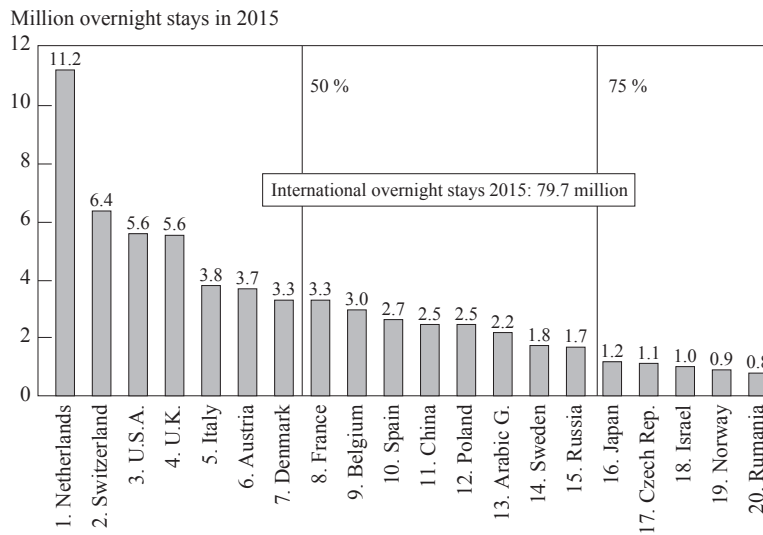


Figure 3: The Netherlands is the most important source market for Germany
Source: Federal Statistical Office.

Table 1: Overseas in 2014 (Top 10 overseas markets by revenue)

Ranking (thousand)	Market	Trips* to Germany	Expenditure** per trip to Germany (EUR)	Revenue** (EUR billion)
1	U.S.A.	1,901	2,127	4.0
2	China	1,116	2,623	2.9
3	Arab Gulf States	522	4,344	2.3
4	Japan	514	2,905	1.5
5	Canada	393	2,060	0.8
6	Brazil	313	2,529	0.8
7	India	278	2,741	0.8
8	Australia	181	4,160	0.8
9	South Korea	244	2,373	0.6
10	Israel	309	1,321	0.4
1-10	Overseas	5,771		15.0

Source: GNTB/WTM, IPK 2015.

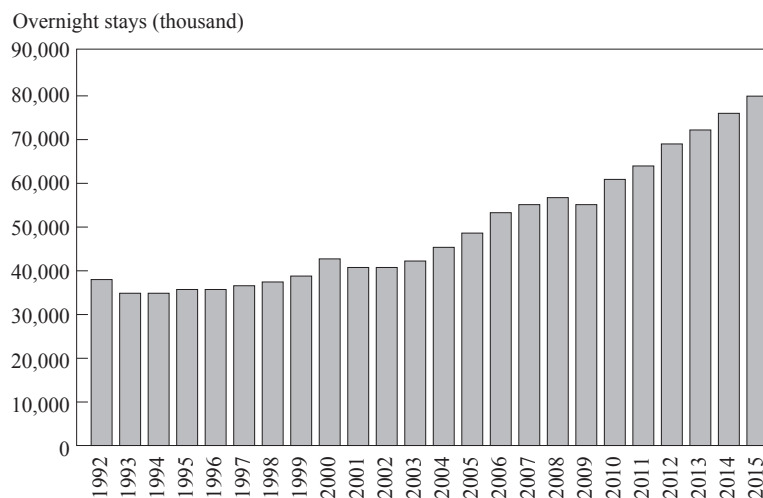


Figure 4: The number of overnight stays in Germany by international visitors
Source: Federal Statistical Office.

Where do the foreign tourists go and stay in Germany?

Germany has no super signature destination of the country such as Paris or London which dominantly absorbs the majority of international visitors. The capital Berlin has around 12 million overnight stays by international visitors, and this is only around 16 % of the whole overnights in Germany (reference: 2014 tourist statistics). “Magic Cities Germany”, the joint tourism promotion board of 11 major cities in Germany, generated 33.1 million overnights in 2014. However, the market share is around 43 % and never reaches 50 %.

As a reflection of regionalism history and current federalism, Germany offers very rich regional diversity, and international visitors to Germany tend to enjoy visiting multiple places across regions, not only cities but also rural areas. According to the federal statistical office, 22 % of overnight stays in Germany by international visitors are generated in rural areas (towns and villages with under 10,000 populations).

According to its travel market research by the German National Tourist Office in Tokyo, 82 cities and towns are offered as places of hotels for overnight stays by 16 leading tour operators in Japan. Not only major flight gateways such as Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich, but also small medieval towns and villages such as Goslar in the region of Harz or Rudesheim on the Rhine are mentioned as attractive places to stay in package tour catalogues of leading Japanese tour operators. It is quite surprising that so many towns and villages draw the interest of the travelers on the other side of the globe who need to fly at least half a day to reach the destination.

Diversity as strength in Germany’s incoming tourism

The travel destination Germany is interesting not only from the aspects of regional diversity, it is also attractive in terms of diversity of offered tourist themes.

Germany is making its tourism branding in both culture and health tourism segments. Take a look at the theme marketing strategy of the German National Tourist Board (GNTB). In

the culture segment, you may find the following major basic themes: cities and events, UNESCO world heritages, castles and parks, music and shows, museums, culinary Germany, etc. In the health and active tourism segment: natural landscapes, wellness, medical tourism, cycling and walking, German islands, and scenic routes are picked up as the major basic themes.

The GNTB runs theme oriented campaigns annually, often based on anniversaries or major events of the year. For example, the annual campaign of 2006 was FIFA World Cup in Germany. In 2014 and 2015, the 25th celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the reunification of divided Germany became focused as the most important marketing theme. In 2017, Germany will celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the religious and political movement which founded Protestantism, and the regions and cities related with the Reformation and Martin Luther will be highlighted in the framework of the Reformation 500 years campaign.

Germany, as the 4th largest GDP country in the world, has many globally competitive industry sectors. This fact has created the image of Germany worldwide as a highly industrialized country. There are still many people who mention that there is nothing to see in Germany. The unfortunate history of National Socialism and the Third Reich is still well remembered by people all around the world. All these contributed to weakening positive and attractive images of Germany as a visit-worthy travel destination.

The history of successful inbound tourism to Germany reflects the history of long lasting struggles of overcoming negative images of Germany.

The 2006 FIFA World Cup™ was the turning point of an image shift of Germany. Not only the exciting games but also the German people who cheer in- and outside the stadiums and their hospitality to welcome the visitors from all over the world gave a completely different impression about Germany and its people among other nations. The results of Anholt-GfK Roper

Table 2: The 2006 FIFA World Cup has had a sustained positive impact on Germany’s image

Period	Ranking* for Germany overall	Ranking* for tourism image	Ranking* for cultural image
2006 1st quarter (before FIFA World Cup)	5th	19th	5th
2006 4th quarter (after FIFA World Cup)	1st	13th	4th
2008	1st	10th	4th
2009	3rd	9th	5th
2010	2nd	9th	4th
2011	2nd	8th	5th
2012	2nd	9th	5th
2013	2nd	8th	5th
2014	1st	7th	1st
2015	2nd	7th	4th

Source: Anholt-GfK Roper Nation-Brands-Index 2006-2014.

Nation Brands Index show constant improvement of Germany's image as a travel destination since the World Cup in 2006.

What the division and reunification brought for tourism

Due to its unique history in the 20th century, in which the country experienced both division and reunification due to the Cold War, Germany's development in incoming tourism has certain unique aspects which are hardly observed in other European countries.

Although negative aspects and effects by the reunification are often focused on by mass media, the reunification brought a very positive impact in the tourism sector, and the tourism industry is one of the key industry sectors which save the former Eastern part of the country.

The GNTB, the national tourist board of unified Germany, was founded originally as the national tourist board of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1948, three years after the end of WWII. The German Democratic Republic (East Germany) established its own national tourism organization called DDR Reisebüro, which was abolished as East Germany accepted the Federal Constitution and gave up its existence in 1990. The GNTB was designated by the German government to take care of tourism promotion in the former East German territory.

During the period of the division from 1949 till 1990, tourism started expanding rapidly on a global scale in accordance with the development of aviation and telecommunication technology. The largest and most important international airports were developed in Frankfurt as well as Munich, where the national carrier of Germany, Lufthansa, made a huge investment to develop its own hub function, and the old capital Berlin, as the front of the Cold War, stayed divided and almost forgotten as a travel destination except for some niche demand for dark tourism aiming at seeing the Berlin Wall. After the reunification, Berlin revived as the capital again. However, the outcome of the Cold War within the development of tourism infrastructure prevented Berlin from becoming Germany's hub of rail and aviation traffic. The capital of the country is often identified as the signature travel destination of the country because the most important international airport is located there. This



Figure 5: Germany's icon "Neuschwanstein Castle" and the Alps in the background



Figure 6: Medieval City Landscape of Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Highlight of Romantische Straße

formula does not apply to Germany.

In the process of inbound tourism increase in the second half of the 20th century, West Germany did not succeed in gaining a signature destination of the country which is comparable with Paris or London because the aviation hub Frankfurt was and is always known as the financial and economic center of Germany but hardly recognized as a major travel destination with abundant attractive tourist offers. The GNTB had to develop an alternative strategy which does not rely on limited well-known signature destinations. The answer was to focus on travelling around and across the country and to show unique and attractive diversity of cities and regions. Holiday routes ("Ferienstraßen" in German) are one of the key tourism products which enable the travel destination Germany to become competitive with other major European countries. The most successful example is Romantic Road (Romantische Straße in German). This famous and popular tourist route was at first introduced in the U.S.A. market in 1950 and later in other overseas markets, especially Japan and other Asian markets after the 1970's. Rothenburg ob der Tauber is one of the most popular destinations on the Romantic Road and well-known with its typical medieval city landscape. Japanese tourists like to stay in this city and it has meanwhile won over 20 % of the market share in overnight stays. There are more than 150 different holiday routes in Germany.

Inbound tourism promotion in the former East Germany was not active at all as the socialist country was interested only in controlling the border traffic to prevent the East citizens from encountering something from the West. The infrastructure in the tourism sector in the East was poorly taken care of during the time of the socialist regime. Tourism became focused only after the reunification as many industry sectors in the former East became dismantled by the unified German government due to inefficiency, and tourism was thus one of the few industries which people could begin with relatively little investment.

The most symbolic place which reflects this unique tourism development in the former East is Dresden. This city was once the capital of the Kingdom of Saxony in the renaissance and baroque periods. The beautiful city center with lots of royal

palaces and patrician buildings was completely destroyed by air raids in February 1945 during WWII. Frauenkirche (Church of Our Ladies), once the symbolic icon of the city landscape, turned into rubble over one night. The National Socialist Germany was capitulated, and Dresden became integrated into the socialist territory. The socialist government left the rubbles in the middle of downtown untouched because the government did not have enough budget for reconstructing this historical building. Although the rubbles lay in the middle of market square in the city center, they were never taken away and stayed in ruin until the reunification in 1990.

The reconstruction was initiated in 1994 mainly by a local private initiative with many donations from all over the world including the former Allied nations such as USA, UK and France. The church reconstruction was completed in 2005, one year prior to the 800th anniversary celebration of the foundation of Dresden.

Frauenkirche has become one of the most popular tourist highlights in Dresden. Politically, it is regarded as a major symbol of the reunification of Germany as well as the reconciliation of the enemies of WWII.

After the reunification in 1990, the investment for developing incoming tourism to the former East territory began. Renovating the entire tourism infrastructure from the city landscape, accommodations, street pavements, transportation system and even the telecommunication system, the destination marketing for the East began a few years after the reunification. The GNTB took over the responsibility to carry out tourism marketing of the East by encouraging cities and regions in the East to be exposed in foreign media and the travel industry.

Table 3: Federal states in Eastern Germany: up by 445 per cent

Overnight stays			
	Federal states in Eastern Germany (excl. Berlin)	Berlin	Federal states in Eastern Germany, total
1993	1,528,341	1,898,454	3,426,795
2016	5,024,735	13,648,135	18,672,870
2015/1993	+ 229 %	+ 619 %	+ 445 %

Source: Federal Statistical Office.

In 2014 and 2015, Germany celebrated the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall respectively the reunification of divided Germany. The tourism figures show us why people highly evaluate 25 years investment and efforts for tourism development in the East.

In 1993, the federal statistical office started to collect tourism figures of the former Eastern part of Germany. Comparing the number of overnight stays by international visitors in the former East in 1993, the East achieved around a 445 % increase and the new capital Berlin even a 619 % increase in 2015 while entire Germany gained 127 % in the same period.

Conclusion

There is much more to introduce about Germany, and I personally feel this essay is unsatisfactory because there were not sufficient information and stories to explain the diverse character of Germany. However, I do hope that the reader has still found Germany an attractive and unique travel destination through this essay.

The GNTB used to have a marketing slogan called “GERMANY Faces”. This simple wording is strong enough to reflect how diverse and unique the travel destination Germany is.



Figure 7: The former East-West Border on the Berlin Wall, Checkpoint Charlie

Note: Today it is one of the most important tourist attractions.



Figure 9: Dresdner Frauenkirche

The picture of the title banner: Dresden © Frederik Schrader.