

## DOING BUSINESS : Frankfurt:Life in the (not too) fast lane

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**FRANKFURT:** Frankfurt's skyline of high-rise buildings and its location on the Main River explain the city's nickname, "Mainhattan." The city's pulse seems to quicken a few beats each year, but the pace hasn't quite reached that of its namesake. Perhaps this is what makes Frankfurt one of the most livable cities in all of Germany.

Berlin has creative energy, but the sprawl and harsh winters make it inhospitable. Munich has the Alps at its doorstep, but many find the city unnervingly provincial. Hamburg offers the port and the international flair that comes with it, but there's no escaping its flat terrain. That leaves us with Frankfurt — its compact city center that bears a post-war mark of urban planning is a magnet for people from around the world.

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**HOTELS** The Hilton greets visitors with bright colors and modern décor. Its central location makes dining and shopping easy and the Frankfurt exchange and major banks are only footsteps away. The breakfast room offers an ample buffet and a view of the park. (Hochstrasse 4, tel: 69 1338000.) The Intercontinental Hotel places visitors right on the Main River; several restaurants and Frankfurt's two opera houses are within walking distance. (Wilhelm-Leuschner-Strasse 43, tel: 69 26050.)

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and schnitzel. (Weissfrauenstrasse 3, tel: 69 91399000.) Vinum bar can be found at the bottom of a staircase that descends into a wine cellar. The bar's wooden benches make for uncomfortable seating, but the lighting and mood are enticing. (Kleine Hochstrasse 9, tel: 69 293037)

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**HEALTH CLUBS** If you're dissatisfied with the fitness facilities at your hotel, you can swim at the Hilton from 6:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. for a small fee. The pool is nestled inside a park that makes up Frankfurt's so-called green belt. (Hochstrasse 4, tel: 69 133 801800.) At the Fitness Company, you can purchase a one-day pass for €25, or \$31. The pass gives you access to all the machines and classes. (Zeil 72-82, tel: 69 1338 760.)

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**CULTURE** Frankfurt's "Museum Mile," on the Sachsenhausen side of the Main River, offers art for a multitude of tastes. The Städel-Museum houses masterpieces from seven centuries of European art. (Dürerstrasse 2, tel: 69 605098 200.) Frankfurt's music scene buzzes with international imports. In the city center, the Jazzkeller offers renowned bands in a cave-like comfy atmosphere. (Kleine Bockenheimer Strasse 18a, tel: 69 288537.)

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**SHOPPING** Frankfurt's main shopping areas are consolidated in the city center. Zeil Street is lined with department stores and other major shops. Goethe Strasse, on the other hand, offers upscale boutiques and designer labels. A popular place to shop is Zweitausendeins, a discount music source. The store is always packed with people browsing low-priced CDs, books and videos. (Ferdinand-Porsche-Strasse 37-39, tel: 69 420 8000, [www.zweitausendeins.de/indexengl.htm](http://www.zweitausendeins.de/indexengl.htm))

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**CELLPHONES** Each of Germany's mobile phone operators offers a calling plan for travelers, and debit cards for both mobile phones and fixed-line phones can be purchased at kiosks or telecommunications centers. Take your handset to a telecommunications shop and choose the best deal for you during your stay. Germany's GSM network should be compatible with most dual-band mobile phones from Asia and the United States. The main mobile operators are Deutsche T-Mobile, Vodafone and E-Plus.

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**TIPPING** German etiquette requires only a small tip, as servers are paid full wages. Most German patrons will round up by a couple of euros or give €5 for exceptional service. When the server makes change for you, make it clear what number you are rounding to. It's acceptable — but not the custom — to leave money on the table.

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