

IRTG
Kaiserslautern/Germany
Survival Guide

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Getting to Kaiserslautern

- Best flights (in terms of connecting trains to Kaiserslautern) are to Frankfurt, Germany but flights to Paris, France would also be possible. NOTE: In Germany you do not go through customs upon arrival, customs is completed during your departure.
- Trains from Frankfurt to Kaiserslautern depart quite often so it is not necessary to book a train in advance. However, train tickets are usually cheaper if purchase in advance and some of the faster trains may become sold out (this happens rarely and mainly on weekends). Tickets can be purchased online at www.bahn.com and are approximately 20-40 €. I would recommend purchasing a train ticket from the travel center (detailed below) once you arrive in Frankfurt, just in case of flight delays.
- There is a train station underneath the Frankfurt airport, just follow the signs in the airport once you exit the arrivals area. There is a travel center for the trains (red signs that say DB Bahn travel). The people working in the travel center will be able to book your train ticket for you and will speak English. They will also be able to print you an itinerary, with the train departure times and gates. Outside of business hours there are also electronic stands that will allow you to book train tickets (which have an option to be displayed in English). NOTE: The electronic stand will likely only accept cash (NO credit cards), but the travel center usually accepts credit cards.
- Routes to Kaiserslautern: There may be a train that goes directly from the airport, but most of the time you will have to go to the main train station in Frankfurt and transfer to another train to go to Kaiserslautern. Also it is quite common to have to transfer trains in Mannheim. NOTE: The main train station in any town is called the Hauptbahnhof (abbreviated Hbf).
- The trains in Frankfurt that go from the airport (Frankfurt flughafen) to the Frankfurt Hbf are S8 and S9 in the Hanau Hbf direction. A map of the Frankfurt train system can be found here:
http://www.rmv.de/en/Linien_und_Netze/Streckennetz_EN/Liniennetzplae ne/49392/RMV-Liniennetzplaene_.html
- Allow 1.5-2 hours to get to Kaiserslautern from Frankfurt.
- If you need to stay in Frankfurt overnight I would recommend the Meininger hotels (there are two in Frankfurt one by the airport and one closer to the city center) www.meininger-hotels.com. Rooms are reasonably priced, clean and there are private and dorm-style rooms available.
- There are two train stations in Kaiserslautern. The Kaiserslautern Hbf station is the best place to arrive. Exit on the side of the train station that has buses and taxis.

- To get to your accommodations ask if a member of the lab you are visiting can pick you up from the train station. If this is not possible a taxi would be the next best option and should only cost 10 €. When taking a taxi print off the address of your accommodations to show to the driver (most will speak English but most addresses are very difficult to pronounce unless you already know a little bit of German). I would not recommend taking a bus when you arrive because this would probably be very confusing and you may have to walk up to 15 minute to reach your accommodations from the nearest bus stop.

Accommodations

- TU Kaiserslautern guest house address: Building 31 at TU Kaiserslautern, Paul-Ehrlich-StraBe, 67663 Kaiserslautern across the street from the Unifit.
 - There are individual or double apartments. Double apartments have individual rooms (which can be locked separately from the rest of the apartment) and a shared bathroom and kitchen.
 - There is a tv and internet cable in each room, and for an extra charge there is a phone.
 - Towels, and bed sheets are provided. Towels can be exchanged for new towels every week, and bed sheets can be exchanged every 2nd week.
 - When arriving bring your own toilet paper as there is none provided.
 - Kitchens are fully equipped with a microwave, stove, oven, toaster, and coffee pot. Cutlery and cooking utensils are also provided.
 - On the main floor there is a common room with a tv.
 - In the basement there is a laundry facility (at the end of the hall) with English instructions for the washer and drier. Each use of the washer or drier costs 1 € and requires 2X 50 cent coins. The laundry facility also contains a vacuum and other cleaning supplies for the apartment.
 - Garbage bins are in front of the building.
- Schmitt's boarding house address: 39 Im Dunkeltalchen, Kaiserslautern
 - <http://www.schmittsboardinghouse.de/>
 - Approximately 15 minute walk from the university. Closest bus stop is Herman-Lons-StraBe.
 - 3 apartments all have separate entrances.
 - The owners speak very little English, but provide a phone number of a relative to who speaks English.
 - Each apartment has a tv, internet cable, fully equipped kitchen (with a microwave, stove, oven, toaster, coffee pot, cutlery and cooking utensils), and bathroom.
 - There is a washing machine (without English instructions) but no drier.

- Typically buildings in Germany do not have central heating (ie heating vents) and use hot water heaters instead. As a result in order to have air exchange you must air out the apartments twice a day by opening the windows for about 15 min. This must be done year round (even in winter) to ensure the apartment does not become moldy.
- Washing machines in Germany are normally front loaders and have a wide variety of options:
 - Koch = hot! (Koch / Buntwäsche = Hot wash for coloureds)
Buntwäsche = multicoloured laundry (coloureds)
Kurz = Briefly = Quick (Buntwäsche Kurz = quick wash for coloureds)
Spülen = Rinse
Weichspülen = Soft-Rinse (softener/conditioner)
Schleudern = centrifuges = Spin
Pflegeleicht = Wash and Wear
Feinwasche = Fine wash = Delicates
Pumpen = Pump
Wolle = Wool
Wassermenger = Water Level
Temperatur = Temperature
 - If there is a quick wash option of some sort use this setting (approximately 1 hour) otherwise some settings can take upto 2 hours to wash your clothes.
- Refrigerators are normally the size of a bar fridge in Canada and have a very small freezer inside.
- Accommodations will be approximately 400 €/month.

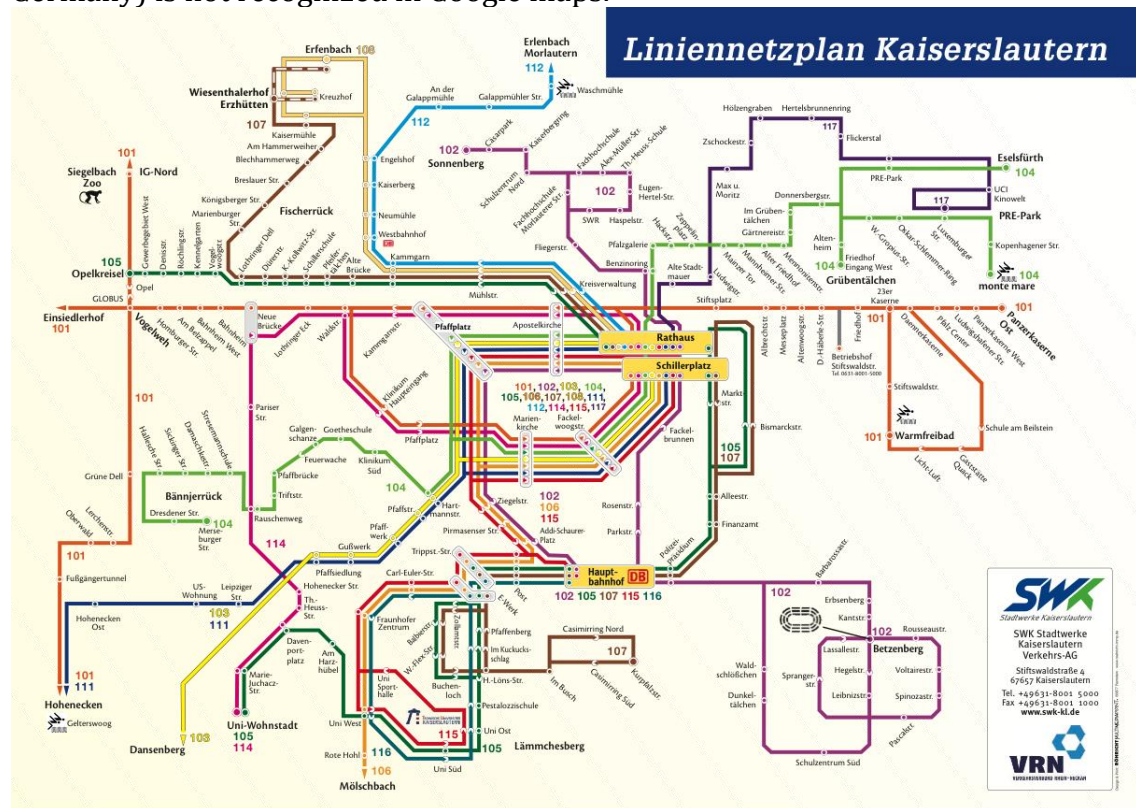
Food

- There are two grocery stores near the University, Lidl and Treff Discount both close to Trippstadter StraBe. The Lidl is a larger grocery store. Both stores do not accept credit cards.
- Produce, bread, deli meat and cheese are usually cheaper compared to Canada. Pork and chicken are quite cheap, but lamb and beef are more expensive. Other items (ie pasta, frozen food etc) are comparable to Canadian prices.
- There are a few Asian grocery stores in Kaiserslautern (downtown) which may have more variety.
- Downtown Kaiserslautern has a farmers market Saturday morning in the main town square. It has a large variety of fresh produce, eggs, cheese, meats and fresh baking. There are also hot food trucks serving bratwurst sausages, fries, and fried fish. The farmers market has reasonable prices.
- There is an option to get a meal plan with the university and eat at the cafeteria, but you may also purchase food with cash at the cafeteria. The cafeteria food is quite cheap and you can usually get a full meal for under 5 €.
- On campus there is a restaurant Unique that serves a variety of dishes (including pasta, pizza and german food) which is reasonably priced.

- A few Italian/pizza restaurants and a bakery are near the Treff Discount grocery store near the University.
- Downtown Kaiserslautern has a very good traditional German restaurant called the Spinnradl. There is also a good microbrewery called Brauhaus am Markt. There are several other restaurants, cafes, bakeries, and fast food options in this area as well.
- Many restaurants have English menus, especially in Kaiserslautern.

Other things to know about Kaiserslautern

- The bus system in Kaiserslautern is quite reliable and costs 1.90 € per use. However, schedules are hard to find online and sometimes confusing to understand. The recommended way to understand the bus schedule is to go to the bus stop itself. NOTE: The bus system in Kaiserslautern (and most of Germany) is not recognized in Google maps.



- There are several walking trails through the forest behind the University, which are quite nice. There is also a hotel (Bramerhof) in this direction, with a beer garden (beer garden is only open during the summer), about 20 minutes away from the University.
- There is a gym at the University called the Unifit, which is quite expensive (75 € for ten passes to the classes offered, and is even more expensive ~100

€? to use the treadmills/weight for ten passes). The gym also offers a rock-climbing wall.

- The Japanese gardens are very pretty.
- Kaiserslautern is close to a large American army base. There are many Americans in Kaiserslautern and as a result many of the businesses are used to dealing with customers in English.

Miscellaneous information

- VERY IMPORTANT:
 - Credit cards are not widely accepted in Germany. The only method of payment in many places is cash. Also you must have a four-digit (NOT FIVE DIGIT) pin for you credit cards and debit cards in order for them to work in Europe.
 - Almost all businesses are closed on Sundays and holidays. This includes grocery stores and restaurants. Some exceptions are gas stations, which are open on Sundays.
- On Monday evenings (5:15-6:30) there are seminars from invited speakers in English.
- On Wednesday evenings (5:00-6:00) there are IRTG seminars.
- After presentations people do not clap instead they knock on the desks.

Places to visit

- Paris is very close (1.5 hour train ride), but book tickets in advance to obtain better prices. Good weekend trip.
- Frankfurt is also very nice to visit. I would recommend the walk tour Frankfurt on foot (<http://www.frankfurtonfoot.com/>) it is 3-4 hours and very informative. Local specialties in Frankfurt are apfelwein (apple wine) and schnitzel with Frankfurter green sauce. Good weekend or day trip.
- Heidelberg is very pretty. It has a large castle on a hill over looking the city. The old University area is very nice as well. Can be done as a day trip.
- Mainz has good shopping and lots of good restaurants. The Guttenberg museum is here and very nice (contains the Guttenberg bible). The HDW restaurant (House of Duestch Wine) is a very good restaurant. Good day trip.
- Neustadt an der Weinstrabe as a day trip. (Didn't go but it was recommended).