

A PRACTICAL PHRASEBOOK

Kitchen German

The words you really need to work
in a restaurant kitchen in Germany

- About 200 words and phrases, with article and plural
- What the chef shouts during service — and what to say back
- The 14 allergens, hygiene words and the 'Rote Karte'
- Contract, shifts and payslip words explained
- Ready script for calling in sick

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German · English

PART 0

How to use this book

This is not a grammar book. It is the German you actually hear and need in a restaurant kitchen in Germany — on your first day, during a busy service, and when you read your contract or payslip.

Every table has three columns. **German** is what you will hear or say. **English** is the meaning. **When / tip** tells you where it comes up, or a small trap to avoid. Nouns come with their article (**der, die, das**) and the plural after a slash, because in German you cannot guess them.

Best way to learn: pick one part per day. Read the words out loud three times. Then use two of them at work the same day. Ten words you use beat a hundred you only read.

THE DU / SIE RULE

In almost every German kitchen people say **du** to each other — from the dishwasher to the chef. With guests, the manager, or anyone in an office (Jobcenter, doctor, landlord) use **Sie**. If you are not sure, start with Sie. Nobody is angry when you are too polite.

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PART 1

First day — people and places

On day one nobody expects you to cook well. They expect you to know who is who and where things are.

German	English	When / tip
der Küchenchef / die Küchenchefs	head chef	Usually just called Chef . You answer "Ja, Chef!"
der Souschef	second chef	Runs the kitchen when the chef is away.
der Koch / die Köche	cook	Female: die Köchin / die Köchinnen.
die Küchenhilfe / die Küchenhilfen	kitchen helper	Very common first job title.
der Spüler / die Spüler	dishwasher (person)	The machine is die Spülmaschine .
der Azubi / die Azubis	apprentice	Short for Auszubildender.
der Service / die Servicekraft	front of house / waiter	"Service!" also means: plate is ready, come pick it up.
der Schichtleiter	shift leader	The person you tell if you are late.
die Küche / die Küchen	kitchen	
die Spülküche	dish area	Where the dirty plates go.
das Kühlhaus	walk-in fridge	Close the door every time.
der Kühlschrank / die Kühlschränke	fridge	
der Tiefkühler / die Tiefkühler	freezer	Also: die Tiefkühltruhe (chest freezer).
das Lager / die Lager	store room	Dry goods: Mehl, Reis, Dosen.
der Pass	pass	The counter where finished plates go out.
die Umkleide	changing room	Your locker: der Spind.
der Pausenraum	break room	Ask: "Wann ist meine Pause?"
die Stempeluhr	time clock	"Hast du gestempelt?" = did you clock in?

FROM THE KITCHEN

On your first day ask one question to everybody: **"Wo finde ich ...?"** (Where do I find ...?). Write the answers on a small card and keep it in your pocket. By Friday you will not need the card.

PART 2

Equipment and tools

If the chef says "Gib mir mal ..." (give me ...), the next word is usually on this page.

German	English	When / tip
das Messer / die Messer	knife	Kochmesser = chef's knife. Never leave it in the sink.
das Schneidebrett / die Schneidebretter	cutting board	Often colour-coded: red meat, blue fish, green veg.
der Topf / die Töpfe	pot	Großer Topf = big pot.
die Pfanne / die Pfannen	pan	
der Deckel / die Deckel	lid	
die Kelle / die Kellen	ladle	Schöpfkelle.
der Schneebesen	whisk	Literally "snow broom".
der Pfannenwender	spatula / turner	
die Zange / die Zangen	tongs	
das Sieb / die Siebe	sieve / strainer	
die Schüssel / die Schüsseln	bowl	
das Blech / die Bleche	baking tray	"Ein Blech in den Ofen."
der Ofen / die Öfen	oven	Combi oven: der Kombidämpfer.
der Herd / die Herde	stove	
die Fritteuse / die Fritteusen	deep fryer	Fett wechseln = change the oil.
der Salamander	overhead grill	For browning on top.
die Waage / die Waagen	scale	"Wieg das ab" = weigh it.
der Behälter / die Behälter	container	GN-Behälter = gastronorm tray.
die Frischhaltefolie	cling film	Often just: die Folie.
das Etikett / die Etiketten	label	Every container needs a date on it.
der Lappen / die Lappen	cloth	Also: das Tuch.
die Handschuhe (plural)	gloves	

PART 11

25 sentences that save you

If you learn only one page, learn this one.

German	English	When / tip
Guten Morgen! / Moin!	Good morning! / Hi!	In Hamburg and the north: Moin, all day.
Ich bin neu hier.	I'm new here.	
Was soll ich zuerst machen?	What should I do first?	
Zeig mir bitte, wie das geht.	Please show me how it works.	
Habe ich das richtig gemacht?	Did I do it right?	
Wo soll das hin?	Where does this go?	
Wie viel brauchen wir?	How much do we need?	
Für wie viele Portionen?	For how many portions?	
Ist das noch gut?	Is this still OK to use?	
Soll ich das wegwerfen?	Should I throw this away?	
Ich bin fertig. Was jetzt?	I'm done. What now?	Chefs love this one.
Kann ich helfen?	Can I help?	
Ich verstehe das nicht.	I don't understand.	Saying it is smart, not weak.
Was bedeutet ...?	What does ... mean?	
Wie sagt man ... auf Deutsch?	How do you say ... in German?	
Ich lerne noch Deutsch.	I'm still learning German.	
Bitte sprich langsam.	Please speak slowly.	
Ich komme zehn Minuten später.	I'll be ten minutes late.	Call before, not after.
Wann fängt meine Schicht an?	When does my shift start?	
Wann habe ich frei?	When am I off?	
Kann ich die Schicht tauschen?	Can I swap the shift?	
Kann ich bitte meinen Dienstplan haben?	Can I have my rota, please?	
Wann kommt das Gehalt?	When does the pay come?	
Ich habe eine Frage zu meiner Lohnabrechnung.	I have a question about my payslip.	
Schönen Feierabend!	Have a good evening (after work)!	Say it to everyone when you leave.

A LAST WORD

Twenty years ago I stood in my first kitchen abroad and understood almost nothing. The cooks were not unkind — they were busy. What changed everything was not a course. It was ten words a day, said out loud, used the same day. You can do the same. Viel Erfolg — good luck!