



Guidance for renting an apartment at Otto

Not a German national and it's your first time renting an apartment in Germany? Need a little assistance? On this page we'll give you a little guidance as to how things work over here, in addition to introducing you to a few keywords that you'll need to understand when looking for a place to call home.

A few things to be aware of before you start:

In Germany apartments usually come completely unfurnished. Apartments normally come without: furniture, light fittings or kitchen fixtures, fittings or appliances. If you wish to rent an apartment with a fitted kitchen then you need to look for one with an "Einbauküche".

In Germany all your costs are fixed and added in with the rent, this is known as "Gesamtmieta". This figure is what you will pay monthly to the co-operative and includes: rent, rubbish removal from the outside bins and caretaking of the building and its grounds, all utility costs including heating but excluding electricity.

In Germany apartments are not described as having a number of bedrooms plus living room(s)/study/kitchen/bathroom, instead they are described as having a number of rooms which are in addition to the kitchen and bathroom and can be used as desired. For example, if a department is described as having 2 rooms, that means there is a bathroom and a kitchen (unless it's an open plan apartment), plus two other rooms which can be used as bedroom/living room/study as per desire or requirement. In Germany it is possible to rent 1 room apartments.

WBG Otto von Guericke eG is a housing co-operative, as such for the majority of its properties it is not necessary to pay a bond but you are required to become a member of the co-operative and in order to do so to pay an upfront, once only co-operative membership fee. The value of the membership fee varies according to the property. The membership fee is reclaimable upon moving out of the apartment and applying to leave the co-operative. For certain properties it is necessary to pay a bond.

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Wohnungsbaugenossenschaft
Otto von Guericke eG

Step one – Finding an apartment

Simply go to www.wohnen-magdeburg.de and apply through the site, drop in personally to our headquarters at 9 Scharnhorstring or give us a call on 0391 726 1111.

Through the website:

Go to the homepage and scroll down to under the map, here you will find eight boxes to help you narrow your search.

- » **Stadtteil** – Suburb. If you already know a little of Magdeburg or friends have made recommendations to you this is where you can enter your desired suburb. Just click on the arrow for a drop down list.
- » **Zimmer von** – enter the minimum number of rooms you want to have, excluding the kitchen and bathroom.
- » **Zimmer bis** – enter the maximum number of rooms required.
- » **Fläche von** – If you have an idea of the number of square metres you would like your apartment to have you can enter your minimum requirement here.
- » **Fläche bis** – maximum square metres desired.
- » **Preis ab** – here you can enter the minimum amount of rent that you would like to pay.
- » **Preis bis** – here you can enter the maximum amount of rent that you would like to pay. On this website this figure is taken as the maximum Gesamtmiete.

All set! Hit “Filter”.

You are now looking at a list of apartments which fall under your given criteria. Under each picture is a title and under that the building’s address. At the bottom of each box, from left to right, is: the total sum of monthly rent, the number of rooms (Zimmer), the apartment size, and an option “Dieses Objekt merken” to click on if you would like to add the apartment to your favourites list (Merkzettel).

Clicked on something you liked the look of? Here’s a list of some of the German terms you need to understand:

- » **Anzahl Zimmer** – the number of rooms the apartment has in addition to the kitchen and bathroom.
- » **Fläche** – the total size of the apartment in square metres
- » **Etage** – the floor the apartment is on. Please note, the German floor numbering system is the same as that of the British, with the level that you walk into from the street being the “Ground floor”, the level above that is the first floor and so on thereafter.
- » **Netto-Kalt-Miete** – Total cold rent. This is the amount of rent charged for the apartment before any of the extra charges are added on.
- » **Gesamtmiete** – this is the important figure to look at. In Germany all your costs are fixed and added in with the rent. This figure is

what you will pay monthly to the co-operative and includes: rent, rubbish removal from the outside bins and caretaking of the building and its grounds, all utility costs including your heating but excluding electricity.

- » **Betriebskosten** – Operating costs. This is the fee for the upkeep of the building and utilities excluding electricity.
- » **Genossenschaftsanteile** – this is the amount due upfront for membership of the co-operative.
- » **Wohnberechtigungsschein** – If you are entitled to sheltered housing and have one of these then you need a “Ja” to be next to this for you to be able to live here.
- » **Baujahr** – the year the building was built.
- » **Heizungsart** – Type of heating:
- » **Energieausweis-Art** – Energy Efficiency Certificate.
- » **EA-V** – amount of energy use per year
- » **Energieausweis-Datum** – Date the Energy Efficiency Certificate was issued.
- » **Verfügbar ab** – The date from which the flat is available for occupancy.

All of this important information can be found in the grey box below the pictures. After checking the important information keep scrolling down until you come to the title “Ausstattungsmerkmale” - Amenities. Directly below the title is additional information regarding the apartment’s amenities. The amenities you can check about here are:

- » **Badewanne** – bathtub, if it’s not stated here that the apartment comes with a bathtub then the bathroom only has a shower.
- » **Balkon** – balcony
- » **Dusche** – shower
- » **Aufzug** – elevator
- » **Einbruchshemmende WE - Tür** – Burglar-proof door
- » **PVC** – Belag – PVC flooring
- » **Fliesen** – Bodenfliesen – Tiled flooring
- » **Wandfliesen in der Küche** – Tiled walls in the kitchen
- » **Laminat** – Laminated flooring
- » **Tapeziert** – wallpapered
- » **Ohne Tapete** – not wallpapered
- » **Einbauküche** – Furnished kitchen! Otto’s furnished kitchens come equipped with cupboards and work surfaces, refrigerator with freezer drawer, oven and stove.
- » **Möbliert** – furnished
- » **Herd** – Stove
- » **Rauchwarnmelder** – smoke detectors
- » **Zentralheizung** – Gas – Gas Central heating
- » **Gasetagenheizung** – personal gas boiler within the apartment for hot water and heating, bills paid directly by tenant to gas provider
- » **Fernwärme** – District heating system

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Step two – expressing interest in an apartment

If you're interested in the apartment that you're looking at on the website and would like to arrange to view it then scroll back up to the picture. To the right of the picture you can enter your details and write a message expressing interest in the apartment. It is sufficient simply to enter your details without a message and click "Senden" however it is a good idea to add a few personal details about yourself and how you would prefer to be contacted.

- » **Ihr Vorname** – Your first name
- » **Ihr Nachname** – Your surname
- » **Ihre Mailadresse** – Your email address
- » **Ihre Telefon-Nr** – Your telephone number
- » **Ihre Nachricht** – Your message

A member of the Otto team will then contact you as soon as possible to arrange a viewing.



Step three – the application process

Once you have decided to take an apartment you will be asked to fill in several forms of application. These forms are available in English and self-comprehensible. Along with these documents it is necessary to provide:

- » Your passport for inspection
- » Bank details if you wish to pay by direct debit
- » Proof of income for the last 3 months for inspection. If you are unable to provide this due to unemployment, student or apprentice status, then it may be necessary for you to have a guarantor who can provide proof of income and who is willing to sign a guarantee accepting all responsibility for financial liabilities for the flat. Or, you need to provide a certificate of eligibility to subsidised or sheltered housing.
- » A certificate from your previous landlord stating that you have no outstanding rent due and that there are no violations of contract within the last 5 years which are still under contention. If you are unable to provide this due to country of origin do not hesitate to discuss it with an Otto representative.
- » If you are planning to keep a dog in your apartment you will need to provide a photograph of the dog and proof of "Haftpflichtversicherung" for your dog. Haftpflichtversicherung is an insurance against damage caused by your dog to other people, animals or property.

After the relevant paperwork has been completed you will be asked to pay your co-operative membership fee. This can be paid either by cash or bank transfer.

Once you are a member of the housing co-operative a tenancy agreement will be drawn up. The tenancy agreement must be signed by the tenant, the CEO of the co-operative and, if applicable, the guarantor.

After the tenancy agreement has been signed by all necessary parties an appointment will be arranged for the handing over of the keys.

Wishing you all the best in your apartment search!

Your team here at Otto.

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