

# Frankfurt

SEEN THROUGH INTERNATIONAL EYES

*Rhea Wessel has been living near Frankfurt for longer than she cares to recall. The native Texan has adopted the region as her home and lives comfortably – suspended somewhere between the city's German culture and that of its 162,000-strong multinational community.*





*Frankfurt gets a bad rap sometimes. It looks a bit like New York, but it's not. It has a lot of banks, but jobs in London somehow seem more appealing. Still, 'Mainhattan', as the city on the Main river is lovingly called, offers far more of a cultural mix and lifestyle than one might imagine.*

On a Saturday morning in the heart of Frankfurt, street cafés brim with life, and if you listen closely, you'll hear many languages, including those that are made up as fast as they are spoken. People of Turkish heritage have a way of blending their language and German in a mix that sounds sing-songy and slightly odd to outsiders, but which is completely understandable to insiders. English speakers do the same and even have a name for the blend of Deutsch and English: Denglish. If you're open to linguistic gymnastics, you may even understand a bit as you work your way through the city streets.

#### CAFÉ CULTURE AND STROLLS

Frankfurt is a city for work, and young, hip-looking people sip coffee and relax at weekends after putting in a good week at the office. Try the centrally located **Café Karin**, where the breakfast

combos are named after Frankfurt neighbourhoods, or the Viennese-style **Café Metropol**, also in the central shopping district. Chiaki Yokota, originally from Japan and who has been in Frankfurt for 15 years, particularly enjoys **Café Moloko** for its relaxed, friendly buzz. It's not far from the river's edge. A stroll there, as Yokota recommends, is a favourite for locals and tourists.

As you walk, you may come across Frankfurt's **flea market** on the **Sachsenhausen** side of the river. It takes place every second Saturday morning, and draws colourful crowds. The finds? Maybe a keepsake from a Frankfurt basement recently cleaned out or, with luck, a piece of furniture that would qualify as retro. Along the river, look for a variety of open-air festivals during the evenings. Varvara Pomoni of Greece,



a finance specialist who has lived in Frankfurt for six years, says, "I was surprised at how many open street festivals are held in Frankfurt."

#### A WORLD OF TASTES

Of course, Frankfurt's cuisine reflects the multicultural feel of the city. Ilias Mohammed, a strategy consultant living in Frankfurt for nearly 10 years,

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likes going to restaurants near the old opera, in Sachsenhausen, or on **Berger Strasse** when he wants to enjoy a convivial atmosphere. For the best Chinese, Mohammed recommends **San San** for its authentic cooking and trendy décor, or the unassuming but equally genuine **Palms Garden**, near the main station. Alternatively, try his favourite Korean restaurant, **Mama Kim**, and Japanese eatery, **Iko**. For perfect sushi where standards are exacting, sample the dishes at **Sushimoto** in the Westin Grand hotel. When Mohammed misses the taste of home, he never feels far away when he eats at **Saravana Bhavan** for South Indian and **Delhi Tandoori** for North Indian cuisine.

Let's not discount the German take on international cooking. Markella Katidou, a scientist who hails from Greece, favours the food and expansive views of the city and its new ECB tower, at **Oosten restaurant and lounge**.

Recently, I enjoyed the rustic Italian food combined with urban industrial design at **Vai Vai** in **Westend** so much that I returned there two nights in a row.

**LOCAL FRANKFURT SHOPPING FINDS**

Rosemarie Overstreet, an American who has lived in Frankfurt since 1995, frequently takes visiting friends and family through the city and has become an expert at suggesting unique Frankfurt gifts to bring home.

How about something for the menfolk – even those who are hard to buy for? Overstreet recommends a professional football jersey from Frankfurt's team, **Eintracht**. The distinctive red-and-black jerseys are instantly recognisable. Overstreet says, "The team is not full of international stars, but it does have a reputation for being one of Germany's traditional teams, and their fans are known for being very devoted. Eintracht games



are often sold out, even if they are a middle-of-the-pack team in the German standings."

Other gift ideas include the local marzipan and rosewater treats **Bethmännchen**. They can be found at chocolate shops, particularly at Christmas time.

Finally, one for the kids is the story of **Struwwelpeter**, by the Frankfurt-born author Heinrich Hoffmann. It's an illustrated book that tells tales of children misbehaving. Overstreet says, "After all, the Germans have a long history of fairy-tales and fantastic stories for kids."

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**A UNIQUE VIEW – UNEXPECTED FRANKFURT MUSEUMS**  
Sevil Türker, who moved to Germany from Turkey to travel Europe for a year and wound up staying more than 14 years, says that despite the city’s small size, Frankfurt has a very rich cultural life. He passes his spare time visiting a variety of museums in the city that have unusual collections. “I am used to the typical museums, such as history, modern art, natural history, etc. In Frankfurt, you can also visit the **Film Museum**, the **Dialog Museum** (where you can experience life as a blind person), the **Museum of Caricatures**, the **German National Architecture Museum**, a **communications museum**, and even a **leather museum**.”

Museum events alone could fill a resident’s social calendar. The various museums feature their own ‘Night of the Museums’, countless parties to mark the opening of exhibitions, and host live music or open-air cinema. ✈



Museum Moderne Kunst



Senckenbergmuseum



Städel Museum



Städel Museum

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**CHILD-FRIENDLY THINGS TO DO**  
**Natural History Museum, the Senckenberg**  
If you need to get energetic children out of the hotel early, try the Senckenberg. Open as early as 9am, it is one of Germany’s largest natural history museums. You’ll find everything from insect collections to dinosaur models for teaching and entertaining little ones. Parents can enjoy a break at the café on the top floor, which has a wide-open feel and excellent German cake. [senckenberg.de](http://senckenberg.de)

**Indoor Playground**  
On rainy days, or simply those times when kids need to run off steam, try an expansive indoor fun park that features multiple levels of padded jungle gym equipment for scooting, slipping, sliding, hanging, and flipping. **Halligalli MyZeil**, on the top floor of a shopping centre, is what Germans would call a *Kinderparadies*, a kid’s paradise. It opens at 11am on Fridays to Sundays, and, importantly, it’s open on public holidays, days when it’s sometimes difficult to find things to do with children. [halligalli-myzeil.de](http://halligalli-myzeil.de) ✈

✈ | FLIGHT FREQUENCY

Qatar Airways has two flights a day from Doha to Frankfurt



**A DIFFERENT VIEW OF THE AIRPORT**  
Though you’ve seen parts of Frankfurt airport, you probably haven’t seen it all. How about a night-time tour? Resident Varvara Pomoni says, “It’s a nice behind-the-scenes tour. Combine it with the Lufthansa flight training centre which offers different kinds of flight simulations.” Book tours through [rundfahrten.frankfurt-airport.de](http://rundfahrten.frankfurt-airport.de) and flight simulations at [proflight.com/en/](http://proflight.com/en/).



**FOREST CLIMBING PARK**  
Find out if you have vertigo by taking the whole family north of Frankfurt to **Kletterwald Taunus** for a climb in the trees. No experience is necessary to work through the obstacles along this elevated climbing path that will have you balancing on car tyres, jumping off platforms, and zip-lining through the leaves. On a gorgeous autumn day, it’s a wonderful, brisk, and arm-flexing challenge. [kletterwald-taunus.de](http://kletterwald-taunus.de)



**ENGLISH THEATRE**  
English unites the international community in Frankfurt, and there’s no better way to get involved than going to the theatre or even an improvisation class. See a comedy show every third Thursday at **Orange Peel**, put on by FITS, a local acting troupe affiliated with the Theatre Language Studio (TLS) in Bornheim. The artistic director of TLS, American Abigail Paul, has lived in Frankfurt for 15 years, and says, “I didn’t think there was enough theatre in English for the international community, so I started my own.” [tlsfrankfurt.com](http://tlsfrankfurt.com)