

## THINGS I WISH I WOULD HAVE KNOWN WHEN I MOVED TO GERMANY.....

**That** IKEA and MEDIA MARKT do not take any credit cards. (In fact, many German stores and restaurants do not take credit cards.)

**That** stores are closed on Sundays and on German public holidays. (In case of emergencies, you can always go to the airport and use the grocery store there. It is more expensive, but it is open on Sunday! You can also purchase foodstuffs at large gas stations and at main train stations -- "Hauptbahnhof".)

**That** you have to bag your own groceries and have to pay for your own grocery bags (except for Wal-Mart).

**That** you may have to weigh fruits and vegetables before you bring them to the check-out in many German grocery stores. (There is a number listed for the produce that you have chosen which can be matched with the number on the scale, making it easier for those who do not know the German name for all the fruits and vegetables.)

**That** you shouldn't touch and select produce offered at the speciality fruit and vegetable stands. (All you need to do is say what you would like and the quantity and the vendor does the rest for you.)

**That** you need a Euro 1 coin in order to free the shopping cart from its stand at the grocery store. (This is the way of making sure that all carts are properly returned without having to hire someone to retrieve them from the street.) You'll get your EURO back when you return the cart to its stand.

**That** you have to introduce yourself to your neighbors (it isn't the other way around).

**That** you should treat your movers to coffee, soft drinks and sandwiches if you want to keep them at your home working. (Do not serve beer.)

**That** the acceptable tip for your moving crew is Euro 5-10 per person, per day.

**That** the acceptable tip in a German restaurant is 10%. (A tip is already included in the price of your food in most restaurants and German waiters and waitresses earn a salary.) A small tip can be given to taxis by rounding-up to the nearest even number. And a Euro 10 tip (per person) to your garbage men and your mail man at Christmas time is standard practice.

**That** your German washing machine could take up to 1.5 hours to complete a single wash!