**German Dietetic Associations:**

Verband der Diplom-Oecotrophologen e.V. (VDOE),
Reuterstr. 161, 53113 Bonn, Germany
Tele: (++49) 2 28 28922-0
FAX: (++49) 2 28 28922-77
e-mail: vdoe@vdoe.de
Internet: www.vdoe.de

Verband der Diatassistenten e.V. (VDD),
Deutscher Bundesverband e.V.
Susannastr. 13, 45136 Essen, Germany
Tele: (++49) 201 9468 5370
FAX: (++49) 201 9468 5380
e-mail: vdd@vdd.de
Internet: www.vdd.de

**Education of German Dietitians:**

In Germany, dietetic programs are taught either at the university or college (Fachhochschulen) level. The following 9 universities offer a dietetics program: Munich, Bonn, Freising-Weihenstephan, Giessen, Halle-Wittenberg, Jena, Kiel, Potsdam and Stuttgart-Hohenheim. There are also 7 colleges that offer a dietetics program: Albstadt-Sigmaringen, Bernburg, Fulda, Hamburg, Moenchengladbach, Muenster and Osnabrueck.

The differences between programs at the university vs. college level is that the university requires 8 to 9 semesters and is more theory and science oriented. Some universities are more geared towards natural sciences and nutrition sciences whereas other universities offer a more interdisciplinary approach including social and economic subjects. Only some universities require part time practical experience (field training), whereas at the Fachhochschulen (college), programs run between 7 and 8 semesters and do include 1 to 2 semesters of practical experience. The college program is more practical experience oriented than the university program. When a dietitian has successfully completed her/his program at the university, she/he earns the degree of **Diplom**, while the degree earned at the college program (Fachhochschule) is called the **Diplom FH**. More recently the titles of Bachelor of Science (BSc) and Master of Science (MSc) are offered at some universities as well.
Employment Opportunities:

There are differences between the two most common German terms for dietitians: Oecotrophologie (or Ernährungswissenschaft) and Diaetassistenten.

The Oecotrophologen number a smaller group in Germany. They are specialized in areas such as community, public health and administrative dietetics. They work in settings such as the food industry, catering services, hotels, consumer organizations both public and private, in the pharmaceutical industry, and in the media. They also teach at schools and universities or are self-employed as nutrition consultants.

Diaetassistenten are clinical dietitians and are the larger group of dietitians in Germany. Their association (VDD) is a member of the EFAD (European Federation of Dietitians, www.efad.org). They are mostly employed in the hospital setting but are also found teaching nutrition in association with health insurance companies, where an array of classes are offered in disease prevention and management. They also teach in kindergarten, schools, or colleges or are also self-employed as nutrition consultants.

Salaries vary depending upon age, level of education, family status and experience. In general, those with a university degree earn a little more than those with a college degree. Salaries run between 2000-3000 Euros a month for a full time dietitian. Hospital and clinic employment earns a bit less, between 1700-2000 Euros a month. A part time dietitian may earn about 750 Euros a month. An experienced dietitian may even earn between 3000 - 3800 Euros per month.

In private practice, 44% charge 41-50 Euros for the first consult (a session of 45 to 60 minutes) with a small 2% charging in upwards of 80 Euros or more. Follow up sessions range from 30 to 45 minutes with 32% charging again 41-50 Euros and 51% charging less than 40 Euros. Fees also vary according to location (city vs. small town). It is also possible that a health insurance company may negotiate and cover up to 80% of a dietitian’s fees. A dietitian offering a seminar may charge about 150 Euros per participant (an 8 to 12 week program with a group of no more than 14 participants, for example) with follow up sessions thereafter being charged separately.

National Health Care System:

Basic health care insurance is mandatory for everyone. There are two types of health insurance, public and private. A combination of the two types is also available for certain services. All employers are required by law to pay a portion (about 50%) of their employees monthly insurance costs as well. These costs include health, retirement, unemployment and disability insurance. Cost containment in the health care sector (hospitals) in Germany exists since mid 1990’s, and is similar to the US DRG system. However, health care costs are still extremely high and as insurance companies must cut costs, individuals are required to pay more out of their pocket for medicine and other health care services.
Continuing Education:

Many types of courses, seminars and conferences are offered to keep dietitians up to date with new information. Some conferences are even offered in the English language. In Germany however, there is no continuing education requirement. Dietitians in Germany may attend courses to attain further credentialing where they will receive a certificate indicating their competence in particular areas. There is, at this time, no reciprocity agreement by the CDR for American trained dietitians with Germany.

Work and Residency Permits:

If an American trained dietitian is interested in working in Germany, there are several requirements that must be fulfilled. First, does she/ he have good command of the German language? If so, second, does she/he have a work permit and a residency permit? There are two ways that permits will be granted. Either the dietitian is married to a local German national or she/he has received a work permit from a place of employment, (usually a transfer or agreement by a US or other international company). If this can be proved, the German government will issue a work and a residency permit. And third, in cases where you are married to a German national and are looking for work on your own, you will have to obtain an equivalent of the German “diploma” (to prove that you are a qualified dietitian). There are two ways to do this.

One way is to contact the DGE (Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Ernaehrung e.V.) or German Nutrition Society, and the VDOe (Verband der Diplom-Oecotrophologen e.V.) or German Dietetic Association and become a member, (currently fees are around 120 Euros). You will be required to send in all your qualification paperwork such as diplomas, resume, official transcripts, ADA membership, etc., (resume and diplomas must have the official stamp of the Hague affixed). Once all paperwork has been accepted, a membership number will be issued to you. This number is sufficient for insurance companies, and employers to pay you. Another way to obtain the equivalent of the German diploma in dietetics is to submit again your qualification paperwork (official transcripts, marriage certificate, etc. all notarized and all translated into the German language) to the Office for Science and Research (Ministerium fuer Wissenschaft und Forschung) in the state where you live for acceptance. After this is accepted and you pay a fee, you will be given a certificate indicating your competence as foreign dietitian to work in Germany.

The US Army may also employ a US civilian dietitian to work on an army base in Germany. In that case, the dietitian must file for civil service employment through the US Department of Defense in Washington, D.C. The dietitian seeking employment as a civil servant may only apply if she/he would like to move to Germany or has lived in Germany for less than one year. If you have lived in Germany for more than one year, you are not eligible to work as a civil servant. This is due to the “status of forces” agreement between the US and Germany.
For further information on living and working in Germany:

www.howtogermany.com  (this is an excellent resource put together by expats.)
http://germany.usembassy.gov  (for technical information from the US government)

Professional Associations / Organizations:

American Overseas Dietetic Association (AODA)
http://www.eatrightoverseas.org

The AODA is an invaluable organization for ADA members living overseas and other interested professionals to establish networking contacts and grow both professionally and personally. Visit the AODA website for information on how to join as well as the numerous benefits that you receive as a member.

DGE or Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Ernaehrung e.V. (German Nutrition Society)
Godesberger Allee 18, 53175 Bonn, Germany
Tele: (++49) 228/ 37 76-600
FAX: (++49) 228/ 37 76-800
http://www.dge.de

The DGE or German Nutrition Society is an agency comprised of dietitians and nutrition scientists that develop nutrition policies, scientific and educational materials as well as conduct conferences, seminars and classes.

Verband fuer Ernaehrung und Diaetetik e.V. (VFED)
Kalkbergerstr. 53, 52080 Aachen, Germany
Tele: (++49) 241 507300
FAX: (++49) 241 507311
e-mail: info@vfed.de
Internet: www.vfed.de

This is an association dedicated to the promotion and networking of healthy nutrition and dietetic information for nutrition, dietetic and medical professionals and any other interested groups or persons. It was founded in 1992 and currently has approx. 3000 members in Europe.

Other professional Organizations:

www.adipositas-gesellschaft.de  (German Society for Adipose)
www.deutsche-diabetes-gesellschaft.de  (German Diabetic Society)
**German Food Customs and Culture:**

Depending upon where you live in Germany, you will find different specialties in each state and even region in some cases. In general, Germans are known for their hundreds of kinds of beers, “wursts” (sausages or luncheon meats) and breads. Specialty foods are also eaten depending upon holidays, seasons or social events. A particular favorite in the Spring is white asparagus. The German diet tends to be high in saturated fat, calories and salt. The local German restaurants pride themselves on big portions and may often ask if perhaps you didn’t enjoy the food if you have not eaten everything. It is not German custom to pack up leftovers as a “doggy bag”. Gourmet German restaurants as well as international cuisine can be found readily as well.

**Nutrition Status Of The German Population:**

On behalf of the Federal Ministry of Health and the Federal Ministry of Nutrition, Agriculture, and Forestry, a national “Nutrition Report” is published every 4 years by the German Nutrition Society (DGE or Deutsche Gesellschaft fuer Ernaehrung e.V.). This report contains the current nutritional status of the German population and also includes the predominate nutrition issues in the country at the time of the report.

Mean life expectancy for males in Germany is currently 76.9 years and 82.3 years for females.

Heart disease is the most frequent cause of death for Germans followed by cancer.

Germany has the largest number of overweight citizens in Europe. According to the most recent nutrition report statistics, normal weight men over the age of 35 yrs and normal weight women over the age of 55 yrs are the minority in Germany. In all adult age groups, men are overweight more than women. Childhood obesity is on the rise equally in both boys and girls.

**Germany's Food Wheel:**

The German Nutrition Society advocates nutritious selections from 7 different food groups as depicted in the nutrition wheel, (not pyramid). The groups are divided as follows: 1) whole grains, whole grain products and potatoes, 2) vegetables and legumes, 3) fruits, 4) milk and milk products, 5) fish, meat and eggs, 6) fats and oils, and 7) beverages.
For further questions or information, please contact me at:

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