



Doing Germany

Agnieszka Paletta

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Doing Germany Agnieszka Paletta

DOING GERMANY is a series of books for those who are looking for an easy read and to laugh.

Agnieszka Paletta did what most of us only dream about doing – she quit her job, family and friends and travelled to live in a foreign country. And what's more, she did this more than once. Call it reckless or fearless, that is she.

This laid-back, entertaining book is the story of this Polish-Canadian-lover-of-Italy's move to Germany, a new frontier. Through her eyes, discover the curiosities of her surroundings; love some and gape at others, yearn for home, try to buy one, laugh with her and at her.

DOING GERMANY is travel writing at its best: a funny, irresistible portrait of Germany, set against the backdrop of Paletta's relationship and vigorous loyalties as well as her devotion to Poland, Canada and Italy.

Doing Germany Details

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Soobie's scared says

Not what I expect; quite a disappointment if I may say so.

So, *Frau* Paletta, you really look like one of those Army wives that lives in my town. Married to their soldier and never out of the house by themselves. Because they don't know the language, because they're afraid, because they don't have any means of transportation. They just spend their days at home. I had an example right next door, begging me to drive her to H&M... Really, that's not what I want my married life to be.

Frau Paletta. you reminded me of her. Never learning German, spending your days at home (OK, you had lots of trouble with your ankle, I can give you that) and always depending on someone else to live your life in a foreign country.

You know, sometimes I have the feeling that North Americans are somehow more naïve than Europeans. More prone to being enthusiastic about simple things and usually convinced that every country in the world looks like North America. And by reading this book I really saw that in the narrator.

I read the book because I wanted to read something about Germany. I've studied German for 9 years of my life. I've studied Polish for two years at the university though I haven't been to Poland yet; I've spent some two months in Germany also attending a local high school. But his book is not about Germany. Maybe 40% of it is dedicated to Germany but the rest of it it's just about *Frau* Paletta's life in the *Vaterland*, which I find slightly less interesting than the party about Germany itself.

I don't know what to say about this book. It presented itself as «travel writing at its best» but it's more of an autobiography than travel writing.

Sorry for being so rude about it but I felt somehow cheated.

Thanks to Lilo for pointing out my ~~spelling mistakes~~ typo. ?•?•?

Ladylike0 says

Deutschland mal ein wenig anders erleben

Klappentext:

„Agnieszka Paletta did what most of us only dream about doing - she quit her job, family and friends and travelled to live in a foreign country. And what's more, she did this more than once. Call it reckless or fearless, that is she. This laid-back, entertaining book is the story of this Polish-Canadian-lover-of-Italy's move to Germany, a new frontier. Through her eyes, discover the curiosities of her surroundings; love some and gape at others, yearn for home, try to buy one, laugh with her and at her. DOING GERMANY is travel writing at its best: a funny, irresistible portrait of Germany, set against the backdrop of Paletta's relationship and vigorous loyalties as well as her devotion to Poland, Canada and Italy.“

Meinung:

Bei diesem Buch handelt es sich um eine wahre Geschichte und die Protagonistin ist gleichzeitig auch die Autorin. Mit einigen Wurzeln in Polen, ist sie dennoch in Kanada aufgewachsen. Irgendwann hat sie sich entschieden, all ihre Sachen zu packen und wegzuziehen und zwar nach Italien, wo sie dann M kennenlernt. Er wiederum ist aus Deutschland und als es zwischen den Beiden geradezu funkt, fragt er sie, ob sie nicht mit ihm nach Deutschland kommen will.

Agnieszka weiß wie man Geschichten aus Kanada, Polen, Italien und Deutschland erzählt, damit man sich in etwa ein Bild darübermachen konnte. Während sie viel auf ihre interessanten und auch abenteuerlichen Erfahrungen berichtet, die einem auch als Einheimischer überall passieren könnten (vorausgesetzt man lässt sich dazu hinreißen, mit abenteuerlich meine ich nämlich auch abenteuerlich), erzählt sie auch von vielen Dingen, die wahrscheinlich nur Touristen auffallen würden. Zum Beispiel fand ich es mehr als interessant zu lesen, was jemandem alles auffällt, wenn er das erste Mal in Deutschland ist. Von lustigen Erfindungen wie Packstationen, Flaschenrückgabeautomaten, die dabei tatsächlich auffallen, bis hin zu den Menschen in Bussen und Straßenbahnen, die einem nie in die Augen schauen, sondern eher versuchen den Blicken auszuweichen. Über ihre Entdeckung von einem Dirndl musste ich so lachen, davon war sie nämlich gar nicht angetan. Bei so manchen Sachen, die ihr auffallen, ob positiv, negativ oder einfach nur neutral, kann man nur mit dem Kopf nicken, darüber lachen oder amüsiert schauen, während man bei anderen Sachen sicherlich auch mal anderer Meinung ist. Allerdings sollte man da wohl nichts zu ernst nehmen, sondern mit lachen können und mal ein wenig entdecken, wie wir auf Andere vielleicht wirken.

Besonders gefallen haben mir auch die Beschreibungen aus Italien. Nach all ihren Erlebnissen, ihren Erfahrungen dort und all den wundervollen Beschreibungen, fällt es einem echt schwer, nicht sehnsuchtsvoll kurz in Google-Bilder vorbeizuschauen und „Italien“ einzugeben. Man merkt, dass Agnieszka dieses Land liebt und eine schöne Zeit dort verbracht hat, wodurch man unbedingt selbst seine Erfahrungen dort machen möchte. Also ganz ehrlich, gegen einen Italien-Urlaub hätte ich jetzt nichts einzuwenden.

Auch wenn das Buch nicht sehr viel auf Spannung setzt (da ist man hier einfach in dem falschen Genre für), so ist es aber interessant, an was sich Agnieszka Paletta für Details erinnert. All das packt sie in einen wundervollen Humor mit dem man praktisch auf jeder Seite laut auflachen kann. Der Humor, ihrer Erzählweise und vor allem mit ihrer Liebe zu Schokolade, wird die Frau einem sehr schnell sympathisch, wodurch man gerne etwas von ihrem Leben liest.

Fazit:

Es hat Spaß gemacht, mal über eine Person zu lesen, die sich tatsächlich ein Herz gefasst hat und in ein anderes Land gezogen ist und das nicht nur einmal. Durch Agnieszkas Augen konnte man einige schöne Orte entdecken und sich selbst auch mal aus einem anderen Blickwinkel betrachten. Es ist sicherlich kein Buch, das einen an die Seiten fesselt, allerdings einen mit viel Humor begrüßt.

Zitat:

"Germany crept a bit further into my heart while I wasn't looking - I was too busy eating."

Marizela says

Doing Germany is a book for those who love adventure and thrill of the unknown, this story could be the inspiration for you to change something, to live the life you always dreamed of.

It's entertaining and easy to read. It takes you on a wonderful journey you will truly enjoy.

Justyna says

Amazing, brilliant and soul touching book. Interesting story which takes you to all the nice and unique places the author mentions.

It is easy to read, funny and emotional.

The book shows the beauty of travel, discovering and experiencing the world on your own. The story influences and inspires you.

Definitely makes your reading more colorful and enriches your imagination. It takes you to the author's world and thoughts.

Beautiful story about finding yourself and your own place in the world.

Clare O'Beara says

This is an unpretentious look at life abroad; specifically a Polish-born Canadian-resident Agnieszka who has spent time in Italy now moves to Germany. She fell for a German guy after a whirlwind romance, moved with him to Munich - nobody ever says they want to move to Germany, she adds - and describes her next two years during which she tries to learn German, injures her foot, marries and becomes a mother.

All this occurs without any support from good friends or family in the country, so the jobless author is totally dependent on her husband, which could have worked out badly. Luckily all seems to have gone well and Agnieszka describes contrasts. Books must by law be sold at the same price everywhere, so Amazon tries to win sales with free delivery. The goods are delivered to a DHL storage locker and a text is sent to confirm; this is the next day after ordering. Oktoberfest fills the streets with tourists and Germans alike bound on drinking beer and eating sausage. So the stereotypes are fulfilled, but interesting additions like complete recycling and use of Ebay to sell goods, the epic struggle to buy a house, complete the picture.

I would give this book better marks if the author had been able to tell us more about doing something to look for work or make herself independent or useful. She just mopes about her boring day, or having been in Munich without really living in it, or not knowing German, far too often. Why didn't she work on line for a Polish or Canadian magazine or something? Why not make more effort to understand German?

I did find the observations interesting and sometimes funny, and I'd recommend this read to anyone thinking of living or working in Germany.

Pamela King says

I found this book to be a disappointment. I was expecting a fun travel memoir but really all I got was a frustrated and, at times, bitter resident of a country that was not her first choice. She ends up living in Germany only because the man she marries lives and works there. It falls short in comparison to her home

countries of Canada and Poland as well as Italy where she would prefer to be living.

I would not class this book as a travel memoir. It includes some stories about her time in Italy but she doesn't do a great deal of traveling in Germany. It continually compares Germany to the few countries chef has experienced with Germany invariably coming off second best.

I expected this to be an amusing, light hearted read and to learn more about Germany, a country I would love to visit, and felt I was let down. The writing is more like diarised recollections with girlish ramblings about trivial things and the attempts at humour left me flat.

I don't usually finish books that disappoint me as much as this one did. I kept hoping for so much more.

This book was provided to me for free for an honest and unbiased review.

My rating 1.5* rounded up to 2*

This review is also available on my website www.pam.id.au

Melanie says

Erst einmal finde ich es immer interessant, was zugereiste Personen allgemein über Deutschland sagen. Sind wir wirklich so diszipliniert, so gut strukturiert und können wir nur Spaß haben, wenn wir Alkohol trinken?

Ein paar der allgemeinen Klischees über die "Krauts" werden in Doing Germany angerissen, ein paar endlich mal richtig gestellt und ein paar leider so stehen gelassen.

Dass es das Buch nur auf Englisch gibt, hat mich nicht gestört. Der Handlung konnte ich immer gut folgen. Ab an wird auch ein Abstecher nach Italien unternommen, die meiste Zeit spielt die Story aber in Good Old Germany.

Was mich nun aber leider etwas gestört hat, war die fehlende Geschichte in diesem Buch. Man erlebt den Umzug der Protagonistin von München nach Karlsruhe, ihre Einkäufe im Supermarkt, man ist bei ihren Reisen mit ihrem Freund M. dabei, aber das war es dann auch schon. Dadurch fehlte mir die Spannungskurve und das wiederum bewirkte, dass ich das Buch öfters zur Seite legte, um etwas anderes zu lesen.

Aufgrund der mangelnden Deutschkenntnisse der Figur, wird kein Versuch verübt, Deutschland richtig kennen zu lernen. In all den Jahren, in denen die Protagonistin in Deutschland gewohnt hat, wurde auch kein Sprachkurs besucht, sondern die Protagonistin verbrachte ihre Zeit alleine zuhause, wartend auf den Mann. Für mich war das unverständlich und es fiel mir schwer, dem Buch etwas abzugewinnen, da ich der Meinung bin, dass um ein Land kennen zu lernen, es auch bedeutet, mit den Menschen in Kontakt zu kommen und nicht ein Finanzamt, Hofbräuhaus oder Dirndl anzuschauen und sogleich zu erraten, wie "die Deutschen" ticken.

Mein Fazit

Es war sicher mal interessant, die Sicht einer Kanadierin über Deutschland vermittelt zu bekommen, allerdings kam auch dieses Buch nicht ohne die gängigen Klischees aus.

English review

First off, I was very curious what immigrants think about good old Germany. Are we really so serious, stubborn and funny, only when we get drunk?

A few of the common stereotypes also exist in this book, a few made correctly and a few..left standing.

The Book was easy to read, even for me with collar English-Knowledge.

What bothered me, was the missing communication between the main character and her new country and of course the actual and important story. In this book we follow A. from Munich to Karlsruhe, her shopping events, when she's eating chocolate all the time and...that was it. The book was not exciting at all. I often put it aside and read a new one.

At the End

Interesting reading, but we learn nothing new about Germany. It was very dimensionally written.

Jil says

Review – Once upon a time in good old Germany

Once upon a time there was a young Polish-Canadian girl who fell in love with a fellow from Germany. Or at least one living there. Despite all of her adventurous travels she's done so far on her own, falling in love for a – sort of – German unravels itself to be her biggest task yet. But let me go back a little further.

Agnieszka is a courageous woman who left everything behind – family, friends, work – for the unknown.

“Finding romance, adventure, yourself.”

For the adventure. She wanted to start anew. Not just live, but be alive and vibrant. Go to Italy and find herself drinking wine, enjoying the romantic assets of the Southern European lifestyle. Go to Poland to get back to her roots. Being out there, meeting lots of new friends, having fun. So she took off for Eastern Europe and eventually met the One. At that time, she was least expecting it. But falling in love moves mountains, changes lives. We all know that. So it comes as no surprise that the protagonist is giving love a try to bloom in moving to Germany with M. M. is the One – the constant in her everyday struggle to fit in where she never dreamt of going. He's her anchor, her oasis of tranquility. Germany was never on her list. But then again: Most adventures come as an unexpected surprise. So comes living here.

I got this book as a review copy, which in no ways influences my subjective opinion on it. I – as a German who lived in the US for a few months due to work – found ‘Doing Germany’ enlightening and a fun read. I know about the struggles to blend in in a country that is so very different from your homeland. I know about the stereotypes that go with it – some of them you find to be true, others to be altered. I also have a family member who got married to a North American, so I'm sort of familiar with the tasks Agnieszka found herself faced with – just vice versa. Seeing her way of coming to Germany, getting to know our country was interesting. At some points it made me shrug and shake my head. For instance: She did not learn German. She gave it a short try, but that was it. German is a very tough language – I know. But that makes it even more important to learn it – to get along, to understand everything and to better connect with the people here. She also didn't go out that much in her first two years here. She had some issues with her ligament though –

but eventually you have to get out and explore your surroundings if you want to feel at home someplace else. If you want to feel you could belong. That's not just her fault. M. was working much because she didn't have a job here in the beginning. But with working much and coming home very late, it makes it hard helping a loved one to settle in. Only going out every once in a while, in the evening, is not enough to come to terms with a new place.

But other than these two points, it was a very nice and light-hearted read. You feel vibrancy and life in every word. She was trying the best she could. It just was very hard for her in the beginning. Reading her story on how she finally comes to fall in love with Germany – and she will! – was like a first impressions on our country and step by step solving the puzzle on the ever present struggle to settle in a foreign land. Of course in doing so, she was faced with many challenges (different language, unique food choices, huge expectations that turn into chastening findings, but also great surprises). And she took the reader with her while meeting those challenges. Reading the novel – or modern memoir, if you wish – was like talking to her. Letting her tell you her story, just the way she feels it. That was refreshing, different, entertaining and despite some minor spelling and grammar issues a very welcoming change. She has had good days – on which she found love in the very details of Germany, she has had bad days when she was missing her travel time and Canada. On those days she compared good old G to Italy – which she glorified in her memories. That's understandable, but it was very hard for Germany to compete. But the more she gets to know our country, the less she compares it to another. Throughout the book you can watch her grow, widen her horizons and wage more.

Over all I can say that I enjoyed reading 'Doing Germany'. It was fun learning about a woman who wants to pursue adventure, travel and live her restless spirit. It makes me want to travel more too. It creates wanderlust – you just have to be open-minded to read it, to forget about all the stereotypes you might have about a stranger coming to Germany and becoming a bit of a German herself. The author's style of writing is easy, a little sharp, sarcastic every once in a while, but funny to the core. Her way of communicating with her loved one is mirrored in a snappy but also lovely tone – depending on the struggles she's currently facing.

“At that, I did what any real lady would do. I showed him my tongue.”

It's a page turning modern memoir – something like reading a very personal, but enlightening blog – about an immigrant that finds herself – because that is what the book is about: finding herself, finding a home – in a very unexpected place. It's bitter and slightly frustrating, but also welcoming and joyful – the whole roller coaster ride of emotions, what you would expect to happen when you leave a life behind to make a new one. Exciting, thrilling and adventurous. I was curious to see how she came to know Germany, what her individual experiences were. There's just one small criticism I need to put here: The book is mainly centered on Germany – that's what you expect from its title at least – so it was a little too much of Italy in it for me. But maybe that changes with volume two.

To get you hooked:

- Will she learn German?
- What struggles will she find herself faced with in the novel and how will these impact on her relationship with M.?
- Will she find what she's been looking for with M.? (a.k.a. a home?)

They say: Home is where the heart is. And the book holds one giant surprise to make your heart belong to Germany – at least a bit and forever.

Go read and find it out yourself. 'Doing Germany' is a very entertaining and fun read – if you view it with an open-minded heart.

Recommend reading it – esp. when you find yourself settling for the unknown too.

Yours, Jil Aimée

Caitlin Simm says

I thought this book was a really good book, even though it took me a month to read. I liked reading one or two chapters at a time, and it felt like I was reading a short story each time, like short story of the day! I won this book and I got a Congratulations! letter in purple writing, and it said that if I found time Agnieszka Paletta would like a review, and I've finally found the time under all of my school work and finishing all the library books I get out at once! I am being 100% honest in this review, like I am every time I read a book. This book was really comforting to read for some reason, and it encourages me to travel even more than I wanted to before. I learnt a lot of awesome things from this book and I give it a 4.5 stars.

Some of them were:

- ♠ Lou Bega, the guy who sings Mambo No.5, is German
 - ♠ There are 'Lego Houses' (Houses put together piece at a time, but don't last too long)
 - ♠ That a fun event called Oktober Fest is in Germany and it's VERY popular
 - ♠ By law, books are the SAME price everywhere you go in Germany
 - ♠ Parcels in Germany are very quick to arrive
 - ♠ The DHL Box (die Pack-station) is a metal big yellow box that you could get your parcels and packages in. I still don't fully understand it though.
 - ♠ They have a recycling box that you get money from (I think) if you recycle bottles
 - ♠ They have chocolate yogurt in supermarkets (Like us in New Zealand)
 - ♠ You can drink in public (Like in New Zealand)
 - ♠ They have a few similar laws as New Zealand does
 - ♠ Werthers Originals are from Germany (My nana used to buy them and they're really nice!)
 - ♠ They have these weird bikes with no pedals (before original bikes were invented) and kids use them instead of training wheels.
-

RYCJ says

The Good. The writing is high-quality...& let me slip in here...HILARIOUS... wit, and it continues from page to page. I mean, not a single page is missed, making for a delightful page-turning event.

The Mmeh Okay. The books is under 200 pages! I wanted to read Agnieszka for a lot longer.

The Best Part. Fantastic, from beginning to end, there is a lot to romance reading about how an engaging young woman found her prince and fell in love with “doing Germany.”

It really made me nostalgic thinking back on all I'd forgotten about this country! Naturally I didn't want to miss anything...which for starters, you have to see the way Agnieszka sees, and then loosely ascribe these associations through a satirical lens, reading a natural speaking voice using an all upbeat approach. Ever heard of Torontonians mentally?

Gosh, from the way she met her prince and that marriage proposal...sigh...so romantic... to the German's love of exercising (sidesplitting observation)... about as laugh out loud funny as snapping the photo of a toilet seat (another place, not Germany)...to her father meeting her prince... her brother and his bachelor pad... the friend-socials (the consultants living in the hotel...haha)... to the part about German sleeping arrangements... or rather how the beds are built with that split down the middle. Just too much to love about this memoir, which on the latter, there also is as much insight to be gleaned from a societal and historical

perspective, as there was humor to be devoured. Highly recommended!

Carole P. Roman says

Well-written memoir about a Polish born Canadian finding love and a new home in Germany. Agnieszka Paletta writes as though you're sitting together drinking wine or having a cup of coffee. In a gossipy tone, she describes finding her unexpected soul-mate one evening and relocating with him to Munich. She's observant and witty, with charming tidbits of life as a reluctant outsider. She is not happy in Germany, has preconceived notions of what life is like, yet over time she is seduced enough to grow comfortable with the new culture. Sharp and funny, the author's style reminds me of Lianne Moriarty. More like a diary of a mad German housefrau, Paletta is a stranger in a strange land, out of her element and refreshingly candid. I can't wait to hear what she has to say about motherhood. I received this book for an honest review.

J says

I learn German and I love Germany! I want to read this book so I can know more about Germany!!!

Lana ★ says

I got this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

My copy just arrived in the mail today! Thank you so much to the author, Miss Paletta, and to Goodreads. The note and the bookmark are really cute. :) I'll start reading as soon as possible, and get on with my review. Can't wait!

*******EDIT*******

Before I pour my thoughts in here, I need to remind people who will read this (if there's any) review that I'm no expert in anything, that what's written below this statement are unbiased and honest.

Also, no summaries. You can read that up there in the description of the book.

I have conflicting thoughts about Doing Germany. Half of me wanted to throw it off the wall and scream at it (in a good way), and half of me wanted to throw it off the wall and scream at it (in a bad way). So which one should I explain first?

Nothing.

Let me tell you first why I wanted to read this book. I'm a bit of a daydreamer; travelling and living somewhere else for a time are always on my mind. Maybe I could relate if I read this. Hmm, maybe...

(view spoiler)

So I went on with the negative opinion without notice. Sorry about that.

What I liked about the book is M. M, I think, is one of the kindest men left on earth. Miss (or should I say Mrs?) Paletta is extremely lucky to have him. I hope he'll never change.

Some entries are (I read of one review here saying that this book is like diary entries, and I think he/she is correct) good, makes you think halfway like "what the fck is the point?" and then the ending would just come and "there's the point." Like "what's the moral of the story?" kinda thing.

Also, we get a glimpse of what life is like in Germany from the eyes of someone who never grew up there. That's refreshing.

I really thought I could relate a bit, because I've lived/traveled in other countries too, and learned to live/work with LOTS of nationalities. I think, at some point, I did. Maybe at the language barrier and culture differences. I was a weeaboo earlier in my life, too. XD

To end this, I would like to thank the author again for choosing me to win at her giveaway! I would recommend this book to those aspiring/dreaming to live/travel in another country for a bit of inspiration.

I'm giving this book 2.5 stars.

N.N. Light says

Have you ever wanted to leave everything behind and immigrate to another country? I did and so did Agnieszka Paletta. She quit her job, left behind her family and friends and off she went. In this short travel memoir, we get an inside glimpse into her experiences as an ex-pat. We read her trying to adjust to her surroundings while tamping down the urge to return home. I laughed, I nodded my head in agreement and wanted to give her a hug. Being an ex-pat is tricky yet Paletta's wit and humor shines in this debut book. Highly recommend!

My Rating: 5 stars

Mary Lou says

This was an entertaining light read. In the process, you can learn some tidbits about German culture. If you'd like to travel to Germany (or Italy as she also traveled there) but wonder if you will ever get there, this book is recommended.
