

13 Things About the USA That I Cannot Live Without | Feli from Germany

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hWutoT5ENaA>

Transcript: <https://dontveter.com/ec/germangirlinus1.pdf>

It's been 5 years of me living in the US! So what do I really think of this country after all this time?

Hello, Servus, and welcome back to my YouTube channel! My name is Felicia, I'm originally from Munich Germany and 5 years ago today is when I arrived in the US for my first long-term stay here.

I had been to the US for a 2 week long high school exchange and for vacation before but I had never actually lived here.

Until August 13th, 2016 when I got on a plane from Munich to Paris and then from Paris to Cincinnati to start my exchange semester at the University of Cincinnati.

And what was supposed to be just a 5 month long stay turned into me coming back over and over again on different visas until I received my Green Card in September 2019.

If you wanna learn more about me winning the Green Card Lottery, I'm gonna link the videos about that down below and also up here.

Since that day 5 years ago I haven't been in the US permanently, I spent a little over a year in Germany during that time too but I still consider this my 5 year US anniversary and I think this is a great occasion "for a recap". (recap is short for recapitulation a noun, recapitulate is a verb)

The meaning of RECAPITULATION is a concise summary.

Which is why I wanna share 13 things – since today is August 13th - about the US with you that I don't wanna live without anymore after living here for 5 years!

I also made a list of things that I still can't get used to here in the US after all this time – which might be an even more interesting topic even but I figured it would sound a little snooty to celebrate this anniversary by basically listing all the complaints I have.

Sooo, I'm sharing the positive things with you guys today and then giving you the other side next week!

Oh, and if you follow me on Instagram or watch my YouTube stories you probably know that I'm actually in Germany at the time that you're watching this, but I'm recording this here in Cincinnati right now.

Number one on my list of things that I don't wanna live without anymore is: air conditioning!

As you guys know, it's pretty normal in the US to have air conditioning in buildings - whether that's stores, public buildings or private homes.

More modern buildings even have CENTRAL air conditioning usually where the air gets circulated through these air vents that you'll find in every room.

Now why is this so special? For those of you who don't know, in Europe and actually in most countries of the world it's actually not standard to have air conditioning inside of buildings.

Noooooow in one of my pretty early videos I actually said that I wasn't a big fan of central AC and many of you commented that I wouldn't say that if I lived in a hotter area.

Now first of all, Cincinnati does get extremely hot and especially humid in the summer.

This year it's been fluctuating a little bit more, but usually from about April to September it's 80 to 90 degrees almost the whole time with a really high humidity which often makes it pretty hard to deal with.

It'll get over 100 degrees a lot too, so like around 38 degrees Celsius.

Now of course we also have cold winters here but it's not like we don't deal with the heat here at all.

If you look at the latitude, Cincinnati is about the same level as Ibiza in Spain or Sardinia in Italy.

The reason why I said I didn't love central AC back then was because when living with other people or in public buildings like at a university, Americans often really overdo it with the AC.

Instead of setting the temperature to a normal average room temperature inside that would already feel cold compared to the hot summer air outside – it often feels like an actual fridge inside.

I'm not kidding, people often set it to 16 to 18 degrees Celsius, like around 63 degrees Fahrenheit which to me is just as inconvenient as the outdoor temperature, it's just the OTHER extreme.

Plus, if you usually wear short summer clothes during that time and it's pretty annoying to always basically have to carry a sweater with you in the middle of the summer because you'll need it when you go inside.

So that was one reason why I said that back then and the other reason was that I find it kind of annoying that in a bigger house when you live with your family or roommates, it's all regulated centrally.

So you can't turn it up or down or even off just in your room or just in the living room.

If the rest of the people want the AC on, you have to live with it.

At most places you can usually close your vent in your room but that doesn't usually make that big of a difference.

I'd personally like it better if you could regulate the temperature individually in every room.

I remember that 5 years ago when I came here on my exchange semester in August, I was sitting in my room doing homework or something, wearing warm clothes that I had brought for later on in the semester and I was also wearing a scarf because I found it so cold inside.

And I also got sick for like a few weeks straight right after I came here because the AC was so cold.

BUT besides that, I think it's awesome that AC exists here because it helps a lot with the humidity and it's also just really, really nice to be in a restaurant or even in a club with a dance floor and not have to sweat your ass off.

In Germany, when it's hot, it's hot everywhere usually. On the subway, in restaurants, at school, in the office – but here, you don't usually have to worry about your legs sticking to a chair when sitting down in the summer so that's pretty awesome!

Plus, ceiling fans are great too and I miss both of those when I'm home in Germany in the summer when it's actually hot there for once I actually do miss both my AC and my ceiling fans.

Number 2 is customer service! I know that many Germans don't share this opinion, especially the ones who only know this from a vacation to the US or from the media but once you've gotten used to it – American customer service is pretty amazing.

Whether it's at a store or a restaurant, overall, people working in customer service just treat you really really nicely here.

They'll be friendly, make small talk with you, and try to accommodate every request you might have.

Even if you're basically asking to create a whole new meal that isn't on the menu.

In Germany, you'd probably just get an answer along the lines of "That's not possible", not even a sorry in a lot of cases.

Of course, this isn't always the case, but overall this is a difference that really sticks out and even though many Germans say that they prefer the direct and sometimes even unfriendly German customer service, I really haven't met anyone who says that after living here for a while.

It definitely takes a little bit to get used to the American way because as a German it might seem disingenuous at first, maybe even fake and over the top, but it's kind of like a cultural language that you'll have to learn how to speak and understand first and I personally don't wanna live without it anymore.

I've had so many people working in customer service just make my day much better just by being so friendly or exchanging some nice small talk. It can even make running errands a much more pleasant experience.

I just recently told a story about when I had to get my Ohio driver's license renewed on the podcast, that was a perfect example of this too! So I'll just link that episode down below.

Of course, I know that especially in the food service industry, a lot of the good customer service goes back to the staff being paid only a few dollars an hour and mainly relying on tips.

But you'll experience the good customer service in other fields as well where people are paid much better so I would argue it's much more than just the tipping culture.

Another cool thing about the US is that there are so many entrepreneurs and creatives in this country that you can learn from – for example on Skillshare which is today's sponsor, so a big shoutout to them!

Skillshare is an online learning community where millions of people come together to take the next step in their creative journey – they have thousands of inspiring video classes on all different kinds of topics, including video creation, photography, entrepreneurship, self improvement or even language classes!

The classes are of high quality, professionally made, and separated into different chapters to give you a good structure and you can even work along with a hands on project!

Now as I said, there are sooo many different kinds of classes on Skillshare and one that I came across recently that I thought might interest a lot of you is this one: Indoor Gardening: Grow Houseplants, Veggies, and Herbs taught by Ekta Chaudhary who runs several social media platforms under the name “Garden Up”.

I feel like in the past few years, having plants has become a huge trend among people of my generation but obviously also among other age groups but it’s not always as easy to take care of plants as it might seem at first.

That’s why this class is awesome because she shares all of her knowledge about how to use the different lighting conditions in your home correctly, which potting mixes are the best for your plants and also how to troubleshoot if something has gone wrong – which I think most of us have been in that situation with plants before.

She also helps us take the next step from keeping regular houseplants to also growing your own microgreens, herbs, or tomatoes and other veggies.

Now, the cool thing about Skillshare is that it’s curated specifically for learning, which means that there are no ad breaks and they’re always launching new premium classes.

If you wanna join Skillshare as well I have an amazing offer for you guys!

Because the first 1,000 of my subscribers to click the link in the description below will get a 1 month free trial of Skillshare so you can start exploring your creativity today!

The next point on my list is convenience! I feel like this one is a pretty obvious one but the US really is the country of consumption and convenience.

You need some milk, a new bathing suit, and a new lamp for your living room?

Just go to Walmart or Target or any of those stores and you’ll find everything in one store. Plus, there’s most likely also gonna be a Starbucks in there too.

You're in a hurry but you need to stop by the store for a couple things?

No worries! Just run in, check out using the self-checkout machine and usually you don't even need to bring your wallet, just pay with your phone.

If you realize at midnight on a Sunday that you’re out of tomatoes – no worries, just go to the grocery store. Many of them don’t close until 1am or – never.

And stores aren’t closed on Sundays like they are in Germany! What a dream!

Or you can just have the tomatoes delivered – or order take out from a restaurant with services like Uber Eats or Doordash or Grubhub etc.

And of course, a big part of this whole convenience thing is also the fact that here in the Midwest, you can just drive to places and you'll usually find parking pretty easily, and the parking spots are huge compared to Germany and so are the streets.

Driving here in Ohio is just so relaxing compared to driving and especially parking in Munich!

Is it environmentally friendly? Definitely not. Is it convenient though? Unfortunately, yes.

Along with the big streets and parking spots also goes the fact that there's just a lot more space in this country than in Germany!

Everything is huge here and I especially enjoy that when it comes to living spaces.

Houses, bedrooms, closets, fridges, all of that is just so much bigger in the US and especially here in Ohio, living space is still relatively inexpensive compared to Munich which is the most expensive city to live in in Germany.

Here, when people say that they have a tiny bedroom it's still big for German standards usually. (usually still big compared to German bedrooms)

And in Ohio, you can buy a regular house with let's say 2 or 3 bedrooms for 100-200 thousand dollars while even just an apartment with three bedrooms in Munich is usually over a million dollars.

The 5th thing that I really wouldn't wanna miss about the US is how easy it is to connect with people here.

Americans in general are so open to meeting new people and making new friends.

You can combine friend groups pretty easily if you're having a party or a BBQ and especially as someone who's new to a country, it's a lot easier to find friends than it would be in Germany where friend groups tend to be a little more closed off and long term.

Plus, I feel like Americans are great at genuinely being interested in another person's story and finding common ground even if you're really different people on the surface.

Number 6 is pretty simple but has become an absolute essential part of my life: Kettle Corn.

It's a mix of sweet and salty popcorn and it's the absolutely best snack in the world!

The best store brand for kettle corn is Boom Chicka Pop by the way.

They're not sponsoring me – even though they should - so if anyone working for Boom Chicka Pop is watching – shoot me an email!

But jokes aside, in Germany it's actually standard to eat sweet popcorn at the movie theater or other places.

So if you don't specify otherwise, ordering popcorn means ordering sweet popcorn, not even mixed, just sweet.

In the US popcorn is salty by default and often has a butter sauce on top so it's more of a salty and buttery snack and they'll also put things like cheese powder on it.

Which has grown on me to be honest. But the crème de la crème is still kettle corn!

Number 7 is Carpet in houses. It's a lot more common in the US to have carpeted floors in the living room but especially in the bedrooms than it is in Germany.

In Germany that's a rather outdated thing and you won't see a lot of houses with carpet anymore these days, you'll mostly find hardwood floors there, parquet usually.

Parquet definition: a floor composed of short strips or blocks of wood forming a pattern, sometimes with inlays of other woods or other materials.

And that's because most Germans PREFER hardwood floors and nowadays, a lot of Americans do too, but I love how common carpet is here because I just find it so much more cozy to wake up in the morning and walk on soft fluffy carpet rather than walking on cold and slippery hardwood floors.

One big thing that I'd like for Germany to adopt – so this is my official request Germany – is the amount of pools that you'll find here in the US.

Not just private pools that you'll find in someones backyard, but neighborhood pools or pools in apartment buildings.

That's not a common thing at all in Germany but here, if you live in the suburbs or a more residential neighborhood, it's super common that there's a public pool that everyone living in the neighborhood can use.

And many apartment complexes have a pool too – kind of like a hotel.

There are even student apartment buildings with pools here!

And needless to say, in the summer that's just reallllly awesome!

You either have a pool in your own neighborhood or you'll go to one in your friend's neighborhood or building. And they often have public grills too.

The next thing that I love here in the US in my daily life is the bar culture.

I feel like overall, it's a much bigger bar/pub culture here than in Germany.

Especially compared to Munich, where we don't have a lot of bars where you just go in and get a drink at the bar and then stand around or sit on a bar stool.

Most places have table service and if you wanna go party party, you'll usually go to a club where you'll have to pay a cover fee and where the party doesn't really start until 1am or later.

Here in the US, I just love how many, let's call them "nonbinding" bars there are, where nobody cares whether you order something or not and you can just get a beer for 3 dollars (or at least here in Cincinnati you can) and you can hang out and many bars have a dance floor too.

No cover fee AND since in Ohio – and many other American states – the sale of alcohol has to end by 2am, most bars close at 2 or 2:30am.

Sounds early and you might wonder – why would I like that?

Well I like it because it means that people start partying much earlier and I get to go to sleep at pretty much my normal sleep time (cause I'm a night owl!) and don't have to ruin the entire next day like in Germany where you often stay out until 6 am or later because the party doesn't even really start until late at night.

Plus, going out here is much cheaper since a lot of the bars simply have a dance floor and you don't need to pay a cover fee so it's more flexible, better hours in my opinion and lot cheaper plus I like the music much better too.

I'm not really into EDM and in my opinion, Germans don't have great taste in music because they don't have a lot of rhythm. (EDM = electronic dance music)

So everything is always just boom, boom, boom, like, the same beat the whole night.

So I personally like the music here in the US much better.

Another really important one is: Mexican Food.

With Mexico being right across the border and Mexicans being the biggest immigrant group here, you'll find Mexican restaurants everywhere which we don't really have in Germany.

And when you do find a Mexican restaurant in Germany, it's usually not very good.

Now before you guys comment "Oh but it's not real Mexican food, it's Tex Mex, it's Americanized".

Well first of all – that tastes really good too, but even in Cincinnati in the Midwest, there are numerous AUTHENTIC Mexican restaurants as well!

I've never been to Mexico myself but if Mexicans who live here say that it's authentic, I'll believe them.

You don't have to travel to certain states to find good Mexican food. It's really all over the country.

The next point is something that I've talked a little more in detail in this video, "What I love about the US" but I really like the positive mindset in this culture.

This is a generalization of course, but overall, Americans have an attitude that's much more "Let's try it, what could go wrong?" rather than Germans who are often more like "Why would we try that, something could go wrong?".

I like to summarize it like this: When Germans would say “Why are you doing that?” Americans are often more like “Why not?” which is something that I personally just really enjoy because I find it to be a much more supportive environment to be creative personally and live your life how you want to live it and not how other people expect you to live it.

I'm pretty sure I wouldn't have this YouTube channel if it weren't for that positive and encouraging mindset here.

Number 12 on my list is flexibility by which I mostly mean that compared to Germany, when it comes to moving, or your job, things are a lot more spontaneous and you can decide things much more last minute here.

Like while in Germany it's common that you have to give a 3 months notice to quit your job – or being fired – it's only a 2 weeks notice here. Even for salary jobs!

Which obviously has a lot of downsides too, but I kinda like how it makes life a little bit more flexible.

Even more so with housing. If you rent a place, it's usually a one year lease in the US.

If you wanna stay after that year you can usually re-sign the lease for another year but it kind of encourages a lot of people to move a lot which, again, – might be perceived as something negative. (re-sign vs. resign)

But I personally like how it's normal for people to move around a lot and thereby keep their lives interesting and keep their options open as to where and how they're gonna live in the future.

In Germany, leases are usually unlimited and people move a lot less in general.

If you buy a house in Germany, you usually plan on staying there permanently or at least for a really long time whereas Americans often just buy houses and then sell them again after a few years to move somewhere new.

Aaaaaand, last but not least, a thing that I could have included in my point on convenience, but I felt like it deserved to have its own point on the list is Drive-Thrus!

One of the most American and most convenient things ever.

There are really drive thru everywhere here – for fast food restaurants obviously, but also for Starbucks and other coffee shops, pharmacies, banks (so like drive thru ATMs), drive thru vaccines which is how I got my Covid vaccine, drive thru convenience stores or even liquor stores, and apparently there are even drive thru wedding chapels.

You can definitely call it lazy but it's also part of that American convenience that has kind of seduced me in a way.

It's just so comfortable to just be in your own car, not worrying about what you look like really, waiting in line while sitting down with your own music, but still getting food and completing other errands.

And that wraps up my list of 13 things about the US that I don't wanna live without after living here for 5 years!

Let me know where you agree with me or where you disagree in the comments below and also what kinds of follow up questions you have for me and of course, stay tuned for my counterpart video of the things that even after 5 years in the US I still can't get used to!

I hope you guys liked this video, thank you so much for all of your support over the last 3 years that I've had my YouTube channel!

And if you wanna KEEP supporting me, make sure that you're subscribed to my channel and also activate the little bell, etc. on [felifromgermany.com](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCfelifromgermany) – that way you'll support my channel and also have a cool t-shirt at home so it's a win win situation.

Of course you can also find me outside of YouTube on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok sometimes, so I hope I'll see you there or on here for my next video. Tschüss!