

Danke Schön

Coming Soon:
tomandlauracraig.com

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Issue 1

Inside this issue:

Welcome	1
The apartment	1
Luxury driving	2
Grocery shopping	2
First days at adidas	2
Just differences	3



Some random picture from Germany! Sorry I can't tell you what it is.

Facts about Gemany:

- Population: 82.5 million
- Size: 357,021 km² (about the size of Montana)
- Borders Nine Countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland)
- Capital: Berlin
- 31% of the country is covered with forest
- Life Expectancy: Men 73, Women 80

Welcome to Danke Schön

As I attempted to think of an appropriate name for my updates from Germany, I kept coming back to a very common phrase, Danke Schön. Translated as "Thank You" it seemed very appropriate for this journey we are about to undertake. We are so incredibly thankful for so many reasons. Thankful to adidas for the job that is ultimately the reason we are here; thankful for our families that have been so amazingly supportive; thankful for our friends who have been a constant source of inspiration, and most importantly thankful to God who we know would not put us in any situation we could not handle.

Now the big question is how consistent I can be with creating these updates. Eventually we hope to have these and many more pictures. etc. posted on tomandlauracraig.com. I am sure this will not happen until Laura arrives and we get a good at home internet connection.

The Apartment

Shortly after my arrival in Germany I was met by our relocation agent and she was kind enough to deliver me to the apartment. The place I would describe as a house divided into three separate units. One unit is lived in by the owners, and the other two are rental units. My unit is a fully furnished three bedroom place. The place is plenty big for all of us for a short period of time. There have been a few quirks that I am still trying to work through, but all in all I have been pleasantly surprised. After five nights in the place I have somewhat gotten used to the differences.

Just to give you an idea of what I am talking about, here is a brief list of some of the challenges:

- Oven does not work
- Must separate trash into five groups (bio, paper, glass, plastics and cartons, everything else) although only three cans are provided
- TV - Only English speaking channels are CNN and the God Channel
- Washer but no dryer

Again, I have been pleasantly surprised with the accommodations. The landlord was kind enough to offer to do my dishes and take out my trash during the week. She even left me some roast for dinner after my first day in the office.



Luxury Driving

You know you have made it in an organization when you show up to pick up the car they have arranged for you and they hand you the keys to a new Mercedes. Well that may be what you think until you walk outside and actually see the car.

I have never been a car snob, and quite honestly this car is fine.....but wow it is small! Like most German cars it is a diesel, and with the current price of gas in Germany (about \$7.50 per gallon) the size is a clear advantage to the pocketbook. I just have to laugh when I think about showing up at the airport upon our return to Germany with Laura, the kids and I, our eight suitcases, and our carry-ons all trying to climb into this car. Clearly there will be multiple trips to the airport to pickup luggage.

Grocery Shopping

Grocery shopping has been one of multiple areas that I have been pleasantly surprised with. I guess I had such negative thoughts about how difficult it would be to find anything that I was setup for a positive experience. For the most part I have been able to find just about everything I would want. There is a good selection of organic foods (which will please Laura) and the prices don't seem that unreasonable. On my multiple trips I have picked up items such as: apples, bananas, Ziploc style bags, frozen pizza, bread, peanut butter, strawberry jelly, chicken breast filets, Special K cereal, Uncle Ben's minute rice, spaghetti sauce, pasta, bottled water, etc.

You may hear a very different story from Laura when she arrives, but so far so good.



Adi-Dassler Platz (only building where I do not have an office)

First Days at adidas

I am a couple of days into the new job, and to be totally honest, I have no idea what I am doing! I am bouncing back and forth between multiple offices, and trying to find ways to get the background info I need. My direct supervisor, Guido, has been great and is doing a wonderful job keeping me relaxing. My first few weeks will be spend networking and trying to talk to my team as much as possible.

When I finally made it to my office on day one, I was pleased to see my computer there waiting for me. I expected to open it up and find directions on how to login, but no such luck. I have spent much time with coworkers and on the phone with IT trying to get everything setup. My big challenge now is trying to figure out how to convert the phone from German to English. I am sure the nice lady is telling me very pleasant things like "Please enter your password," but that would just be a guess. Unfortunately IT does not receive calls everyday from new American employees so they like to send me to the intranet to research my own answer.

I am very excited about the team that is in place here. They seem to be very knowledgeable, hardworking and fun. They will definitely help me through this time of feeling useless.



Q-W-E-R-T-Z?????

Just Differences

On one of my first nights in Germany I received a call from a fellow American coworker inviting me to dinner. He had a lot of great advice for getting setup, but one of the best things he told me was, "You will find that there are more similarities than differences, but we tend to focus on the differences. Don't let the differences drive you crazy."

I have probably told myself this a dozen times already. I try to laugh at many of these, as allowing them to get me down will do no good.

Some of my favorites so far are:

- The German keyboard. Try typing with letters moved and new symbols added. Not to mention Ctrl-Alt-Del is actually Strg-Alt-Entf.
- German police officers can pull you over for no reason other than to check your paperwork.
- Many street lights turn off at night. Better know your street signs!
- Everything is closed on Sundays. Saturdays at stores is like Christmas frenzy.
- The weak US dollar. Try to tell a finance guy to stop converting the cost of everything back to USD. At 1.52 USD per Euro everything looks really expensive (Nintendo Wii for €275 or \$418).

¹³*I can do everything through him who gives me strength.*

Philippians 4:13