

Doing Groceries in Berlin

Executive Summary

Germany's grocery landscape is very different from the Philippines. Stores close on Sundays (by law), you need to bring your own bags, produce often needs to be weighed by you, and bottles carry refundable deposits (Pfand). The good news: groceries are affordable if you shop at discounters (Aldi, Lidl), and Berlin has a solid network of Asian supermarkets where you can find most Filipino staples. This guide covers everything you need to know.

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1. German Supermarket Tiers

German supermarkets fall into clear tiers. Understanding them is the first step to shopping smart.

Budget Discounters

These are your go-to for everyday groceries. A full weekly basket costs 20-30% less than at full-service supermarkets.

Chain	What to Expect	Key Notes
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Aldi	Bare-bones layout, limited selection, excellent prices. Two separate companies: Aldi Nord (Berlin) and Aldi Sud (southern Germany).	Slightly cheaper than Lidl on average. In-store bakery. Store brand products regularly match or beat premium brands in blind tests.
Lidl	Similar to Aldi but with broader selection and better fresh produce sections. Single national chain.	Best bakery section among discounters. Weekly rotating non-food specials (Mondays and Thursdays) can be great deals.
Penny	Owned by REWE Group. Budget-friendly but quality can be inconsistent.	More locations in inner-city Berlin than Aldi/Lidl. Good for quick stops. Slightly more expensive than Aldi/Lidl.
Netto	Similar tier to Penny. Found in many neighborhoods.	Two different Netto chains exist (Marken-Discount vs. Stavenhagen). The red-yellow Netto Marken-Discount is more common in Berlin.

Mid-Range Full-Service Supermarkets

Chain	What to Expect	Key Notes
REWE	Wide selection including international products. Good for specialty items you can't find at discounters.	Best for international ingredients among mainstream chains. Has a loyalty program (REWE Punkte). Online ordering and delivery available.
Edeka	Cooperative structure means each store varies. Generally premium quality and the most expensive mainstream chain.	Best fresh produce and deli counters. "Gut & Gunstig" is their budget store brand. Individual stores may carry regional specialties.
Kaufland	Hypermarket model -- huge stores with everything. Prices between discounters and Edeka/REWE.	Often open until 10 PM (later than most). Good for one-stop shopping including household items. Accepts the widest variety of Pfand bottles.

Premium Organic & Specialty

Chain	What to Expect	Key Notes
Bio Company	Berlin-based organic supermarket chain. Everything is organic (Bio).	30-50% more expensive than discounters. Good quality but not necessary for daily shopping.
Alnatura	National organic chain with wide selection of organic products.	Also sells at dm (drugstore) at lower prices for some items.
denn's Biomarkt	Another organic chain. Several locations at Berlin train stations (open Sundays).	Useful on Sundays when located at train stations.

Strategy for Filipinos: Do your weekly bulk shopping at **Aldi or Lidl** for staples (rice, oil, eggs, vegetables, bread, milk, pasta). Go to **REWE or Edeka** only for specific items you can't find at discounters. Visit **Asian supermarkets** monthly for Filipino-specific ingredients (see Section 2).

2. Where to Find Filipino & Asian Ingredients in Berlin

Berlin has a robust network of Asian supermarkets. While there is no dedicated large-scale Filipino supermarket in central Berlin, several Asian stores carry Filipino products (Mama Sita's sauces, coconut cream, calamansi, ube, fish sauce, shrimp paste, etc.). The **go asia** chain is particularly well-stocked.

Major Asian Supermarkets in Berlin

go asia Supermarkt (Multiple Locations) **Filipino Items**

The largest Asian supermarket chain in Berlin with 6+ locations. Carries Southeast Asian products including Filipino brands. Known for stocking ube (purple yam), coconut products, fish sauce, and Mama Sita's mixes.

- **Moabit:** Turmstrasse 29, 10551 -- Mon-Sat 9-21:00
- **Charlottenburg:** Kantstrasse 101, 10627 -- Mon-Sat 9-21:00
- **Schoneberg:** Hauptstrasse 132, 10827 -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00
- **Tempelhof:** Tempelhofer Damm 120, 12099 -- Mon-Sat 9:30-20:00
- **Alexanderplatz:** Alexanderpl. 8, 10178 -- Mon-Sat 9-22:00
- **Friedrichshain:** Frankfurter Allee 89, 10247 -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00
- **Potsdamer Platz (Station):** Bahnhof Potsdamer Platz -- **Open Sundays 8-20:00**
- **Kurfurstendamm:** im UG GALERIA, Kurfurstendamm 231 -- Mon-Sat 10-20:00 (10% off first Saturday monthly)

Asia Market Lee GmbH

Dircksenstrasse 101-103, 10179 Mitte (under the S-Bahn arches) -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00

Highly rated (4.5/5, 1765+ reviews). Stocks Indian, Korean, Southeast Asian products including frozen items and Asian sauces. Good variety of spices.

VINH-LOI Asien Supermarkt (2 Locations)

- **Wedding:** Mullerstrasse 141, 13353 -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00
- **Schoneberg:** Ansbacher Str. 16, 10787 -- Mon-Sat 9-19:00

Vietnamese-owned but carries pan-Asian products. Good for fresh vegetables, frozen seafood, sauces, and prepared foods.

Asia Mekong Supermarket

Henriette-Herz-Platz 1 & Wichertstrasse 72 -- Opens 10:00

Well-stocked pan-Asian store. Multiple locations.

Hoa Mai Asia-Supermarket

Frankfurter Allee 104, 10247 Friedrichshain -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00

Good for spices, condiments, fresh vegetables, herbs, and sushi-making supplies.

Timi Asia Supermarket

Kieler Str. 4, 12163 Steglitz -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00

Known for fresh herbs, rare Asian vegetables, and homemade kimchi.

Filipino-Specific Online Stores (Ship to Berlin)

Filipino Asian Store **Filipino Focus**

Physical store in Basdorf (near Bernau, ~40 min from central Berlin) -- Mon-Fri 9-18:00, Sat 9-18:00

1,500+ items with emphasis on Philippine products. Online store with free shipping on orders over 100 EUR. Same-day dispatch available.

filipinoasianstore.de

Nica's Pinoy Store **Filipino Focus**

Schillerstr. 24, 68753 Waghausel (ships Germany-wide)

Filipino-owned. Carries Filipino desserts, fruits/vegetables, ready meals, fish/meat, beverages, spices, canned goods, rice, sauces, snacks, and frozen products. Free shipping on orders over 65 EUR. Chilled items ship Mon-Wed only (+3 EUR thermal packaging).

nिकास-pinoy-store.de

Pinoy Food Store **Filipino Focus**

Siegtalstrasse 206, 57080 Siegen (ships Germany-wide via DHL)

1,000+ Asian products, 90% Filipino. Includes an "Ube Corner" specialty section. Ships nationwide Mon-Sat. Loyalty points program.

pinoyfood.de

Filipino Ingredients Cheat Sheet -- Where to Find Them:

- **Rice (jasmine, sticky):** Any Asian supermarket (much cheaper than REWE/Edeka). Also available at Aldi/Lidl (basic long-grain).
- **Fish sauce (patis), soy sauce, vinegar:** go asia, Vinh-Loi, Asia Market Lee, or any Asian store.
- **Coconut milk/cream:** Aldi and Lidl carry canned coconut milk. Asian stores have wider selection (Gata brand etc.).
- **Calamansi:** Frozen at go asia or Filipino online stores.
- **Ube (purple yam):** go asia carries frozen ube and ube extract/powder. Online Filipino stores for more variety.
- **Mama Sita's mixes:** Filipino online stores, occasionally at go asia.
- **Bagoong (shrimp paste):** Asian supermarkets (look in the Filipino/SEA section) or online stores.
- **Lumpia wrappers (spring roll):** Any Asian supermarket (frozen section).
- **Pancit noodles:** go asia, Asian stores (look for bihon, canton, sotanghon).
- **Banana ketchup, Jufra:** Filipino online stores. Occasionally at larger go asia locations.
- **Dried fish (tuyo, dilis):** Filipino online stores are most reliable.

3. Sunday & Holiday Shopping

Important: Almost all supermarkets in Germany are **closed on Sundays and public holidays** by law (Ladenschlussgesetz). This is one of the biggest culture shocks for Filipinos. Plan your

shopping for Saturday at the latest!

What IS Open on Sundays

Supermarkets at Train Stations

An exception in the law allows shops at major train stations to open on Sundays. These are your best bet for a proper grocery run:

Store	Location	Sunday Hours
REWE	Hauptbahnhof, Europaplatz 1, Moabit	8-22:00
REWE	Ostbahnhof, Am Ostbahnhof 9, Friedrichshain	6-24:00
Edeka	Friedrichstrasse Station, Friedrichstr. 142, Mitte	8-22:00
Edeka	Sudkreuz Station, Hildegard-Knef-Platz 1, Schöneberg	8-22:00
Edeka	Lichtenberg Station, Weitlingstr. 22	9-22:00
Penny	Ostbahnhof, Am Ostbahnhof 9, Friedrichshain	7-23:00
HIT am Zoo	Kantstrasse 7, Charlottenburg	8-22:00
go asia	Potsdamer Platz Station	8-20:00
denn's Biomarkt	Hauptbahnhof, Bahnhof Zoo, Gesundbrunnen, Ostkreuz	7/8-22:00
REWE	BER Airport Terminal 1	Open 24/7

Warning: Sunday grocery stores at train stations are **extremely busy**. There are often queues outside. Go early in the morning for the best experience.

Other Sunday Options

- **Spatis (Spatkauf/Spatverkauf):** Corner convenience stores unique to Berlin. Most are open on Sundays (technically in a gray legal area). They sell basics: drinks, snacks, bread, cigarettes, some frozen meals. Prices are higher than supermarkets. Hours vary, most open by 10:00.
- **Gas stations (Tankstellen):** Shell, Aral, and others sell basic groceries, bread, milk, and snacks. Open 24/7 but expensive.
- **Bakeries (Backereien):** Open on Sundays. Good for fresh bread, rolls (Brotchen), pastries, and sometimes sandwiches.
- **Restaurants and cafes:** All open on Sundays.

- **Some Asian stores:** A few small Asian markets operate on Sundays (e.g., Asia Markt at Osloer Strasse, 11:00-21:00 Sundays; Nguyen Asian Market near Spittelmarkt).

Pro tip: Do a big grocery shop on **Saturday**. Keep your pantry stocked with rice, canned goods, and frozen items so you're never caught off-guard on a Sunday. Also note: grocery delivery services (REWE, Flink) generally do NOT deliver on Sundays.

4. Money-Saving Tips

Store Strategy

- **Shop discounters for staples:** Aldi and Lidl for rice, eggs, milk, butter, pasta, bread, vegetables, cooking oil, canned goods. You save 20-30% compared to REWE/Edeka.
- **Buy store brands (Eigenmarke):** German store brands are excellent quality. Key ones:
 - "Ja!" (REWE) -- cheapest tier
 - "Gut & Gunstig" (Edeka) -- cheapest tier
 - "Milbona" (Lidl dairy), "Milsani" (Aldi dairy)
 - These regularly match or outperform premium brands in independent tests
- **Use drugstores for non-food:** dm and Rossmann sell toiletries, cleaning supplies, and baby products 8-12% cheaper than supermarkets.
- **Check bottom shelves:** Supermarkets place budget items low and premium brands at eye level.
- **Compare by price per kg/100g:** German law requires stores to display the per-unit price on the shelf label. Use this, not the package price.
- **Shop before closing:** Produce, meat, and dairy counters often mark down items near closing time.

Apps & Digital Tools

App	What It Does	Cost
Too Good To Go	Buy "surprise bags" of surplus food from bakeries, supermarkets, and restaurants at 1/3 the price. Very popular in Berlin.	Free app; bags typically 3-5 EUR
Markt guru	Browse and compare weekly flyers (Prospekte) from all supermarkets. Set alerts for specific products.	Free
KaufDA	Similar to Markt guru -- digital weekly flyers and store finder.	Free

Smhaggle	Cashback app -- scan receipts to get money back on specific products.	Free
Payback	Loyalty points card accepted at REWE, dm, and many others. Accumulate points for discounts.	Free card/app
DeutschlandCard	Loyalty card for Netto, Esso, and other partners.	Free
Lidl Plus	Lidl's own app with weekly coupons and digital receipts.	Free

Other Tips

- **Weekly specials (Angebote):** Every supermarket has weekly specials displayed in paper flyers (available at the entrance) and in their apps. Aldi and Lidl rotate non-food specials Mon/Thu.
- **Seasonal produce:** Buy fruits and vegetables in season -- they're significantly cheaper and better quality. Asparagus (Spargel) in spring, berries in summer, root vegetables in winter.
- **Visit weekly markets (Wochenmarkt):** Berlin has many weekly farmers' markets. Produce can be cheaper (especially at closing time) and is fresher than supermarkets. Try the Turkish Market at Maybachufer (Tue/Fri) for affordable produce.
- **Bulk rice at Asian stores:** Buy 5-10kg bags of jasmine rice at go asia or similar -- much cheaper per kg than the small 500g packets at Aldi/Lidl.
- **Collect Pfand:** Always return your bottles! 25 cents per bottle adds up. Some people collect extra bottles from parks/events for additional income.

5. Key Differences from Philippine Grocery Shopping

Coming from the Philippines, here are the things that will surprise you most:

Bags Bring Your Own

There are **no free plastic bags**. You must bring reusable bags (Stoffbeutel/Jutebeutel) or buy bags at the checkout (0.10-0.50 EUR each). Paper bags are sometimes available. Keep bags in your backpack so you're never caught without one.

Pfand Bottle Deposits

Most bottles and cans have a deposit (Pfand):

- Single-use plastic bottles & cans: **0.25 EUR**
- Reusable glass/PET bottles: **0.08-0.15 EUR**
- Beer crates: **1.50 EUR**

Return at any supermarket's Leergutautomat (reverse vending machine). You get a receipt (Bon) to redeem at checkout. Bottles must be uncrushed with readable barcodes. No Pfand on wine, spirits, milk, or juice cartons.

Weighing Produce Scales

At some stores (especially Edeka, sometimes REWE), you must **weigh your own produce** at a scale in the produce section, select the item number on the screen, and print a price sticker to attach to the bag. At discounters (Aldi, Lidl), this is handled at the checkout.

Checkout Speed Pack Fast!

German checkout cashiers scan items **extremely fast**. There's no bagging area -- items go into a small space and you're expected to pack quickly or move to a separate counter to bag. This is the #1 source of stress for newcomers. Have your bags ready and open.

Cart Deposit Coin for Cart

Shopping carts require a **0.50 EUR or 1.00 EUR coin** as a deposit (insert into the chain lock). You get it back when you return the cart. Keep a coin ready or buy a plastic chip (Einkaufswagenchip) for this purpose.

Sunday Everything Closed

Unlike the 24/7 Philippine sari-sari stores and malls open daily, **almost all shops close on Sundays**. See Section 3 for exceptions. Even on weekdays, most supermarkets close by 20:00-22:00 (not midnight).

Payment Cash is Still Common

Germany is more cash-dependent than the Philippines' GCash/Maya culture. While card payments (EC-Karte/Girocard) are accepted everywhere, some smaller shops and weekly markets are **cash only**. Aldi and Lidl accept cards and contactless. Credit cards (Visa/Mastercard) are accepted at

most supermarkets now but not universally.

Recycling Waste Sorting

Germany has a strict 5-bin recycling system. Your building will have separate bins for: paper (blue), packaging/plastic (yellow), organic waste (brown), glass (sorted by color at street containers), and residual waste (black/grey). Incorrect sorting can result in complaints from neighbors or landlord.

Things you'll miss and where to find substitutes:

- **Sari-sari convenience:** Spatis are Berlin's version -- small, informal, open late.
- **Wet markets:** Weekly farmers' markets (Wochenmarkt) are the closest equivalent, but much more organized. Meat/fish comes pre-packaged at supermarkets; you won't find live fish or custom-cut meat at a counter in the Philippine style.
- **Tingi (single-serving sachets):** Not common in Germany. Everything comes in full-size packaging.
- **Palengke-style bargaining:** Prices are fixed. No negotiation at any store.
- **Delivery from sari-sari:** Use Flink or REWE delivery instead (see Section 6).

6. Online Grocery Delivery Options

Service	Type	Delivery Time	Delivery Fee	Notes
REWE Delivery	Full supermarket	Next-day / scheduled slots	Varies (free slots available but rare)	Full REWE selection. Order online, choose delivery window. Best for large weekly shops. Not available on Sundays.
Flink	Quick commerce	Minutes (10-30 min)	~1.80 EUR (higher for small orders)	Now partnered with REWE. 2,600+ products. Great for forgotten items. Operates from dark stores across Berlin.
Picnic	Scheduled delivery	Next-day, fixed time slots	Free (min order applies)	Milk-run model (like a delivery route). Very reliable. Competitive prices. Highly rated (4.0/5 on Trustpilot).
Knuspr	Same-day/next-day	Same-day possible	Varies	Czech-origin service. Good selection including fresh items. Available in Berlin.

Amazon Fresh	Full grocery + Amazon	2-hour windows	Free with Prime (min order)	Requires Amazon Prime. Good selection but not the cheapest.
Getir	Quick commerce	Minutes	~1.80 EUR (min order 10 EUR)	Good for quick top-ups. Daily promotions.

For Filipino ingredients online: Use the dedicated Filipino online stores (filipinoasianstore.de, nicas-pinoy-store.de, pinoyfood.de) for items you can't find locally. Stock up monthly to meet free shipping thresholds.

7. Monthly Grocery Budget

Household	Budget Range (EUR/month)	Strategy
Single person (frugal)	150-200 EUR	Discounters only (Aldi/Lidl), store brands, meal planning, seasonal produce
Single person (comfortable)	200-300 EUR	Mix of discounters and REWE/Edeka, some organic, eating out occasionally
Couple	300-450 EUR	Shared cooking, bulk buying, discounters for staples
Family of four (budget)	400-550 EUR	Disciplined discount shopping, meal planning, seasonal produce, minimal eating out
Family of four (comfortable)	550-750 EUR	Mix of stores, some organic, occasional specialty items, eating out

Filipino cooking note: Budget an extra **30-50 EUR/month** for Asian/Filipino specialty ingredients (rice in bulk, fish sauce, coconut milk, calamansi, etc.) on top of the regular grocery budget. Buying rice (jasmine, 10kg bags) at Asian stores costs around 15-20 EUR and lasts a family about a month.

What Costs More vs. Less Than the Philippines

Cheaper in Germany	More Expensive in Germany
Bread (excellent quality, from 0.69 EUR/loaf at discounters)	Rice (2-3x more than PH prices)
Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, butter)	Tropical fruits (mangoes, papayas -- seasonal and expensive)

Pork and chicken (often cheaper per kg)	Fish and seafood (much more expensive)
Potatoes, carrots, onions (very cheap)	Filipino specialty items (imported = premium prices)
Pasta, flour, eggs	Eating out / takeout (10-15 EUR per meal minimum)

8. Research Journey

Search Queries & Sources Consulted

- **Search:** "Berlin supermarket guide expats comparison" -- housinganywhere.com, liveingermany.de
- **Search:** "cheapest supermarkets Berlin Aldi Lidl Penny" -- Reddit r/germany, iamexpat.de, tripadvisor.com, welcome-center-germany.com
- **Search:** "Asian grocery store Berlin Filipino ingredients" -- Yelp (top 10 Filipino stores Berlin), berlin10.com, filipinoasianstore.de, nicas-pinoy-store.de, pinoyfood.de
- **Search:** "Filipino store Berlin Asian supermarket" -- planforgermany.com, pinoyfood.de
- **Search:** "grocery shopping tips Berlin expat save money" -- thelocal.de (10 ways to save), instagram expat guides
- **Search:** "Berlin supermarket Sunday closed where to buy food" -- berlin.de, allaboutberlin.com, theberlinlife.com, helloberl.in, berlinwalk.com
- **Search:** "Pfand bottle deposit Germany expat guide" -- settle-in-berlin.com, liveingermany.de, simplegermany.com
- **Search:** "grocery delivery Berlin Flink Knuspr Picnic 2025 2026" -- expatrio.com, reddit, globalfoodhub.com
- **Search:** "Too Good To Go Germany supermarket apps save money" -- thelocal.de, reddit
- **Search:** "monthly grocery budget Germany family" -- welcome-center-germany.com, housinganywhere.com
- **Search:** "Filipino expat Berlin grocery shopping experience" -- pinayingermany.wordpress.com, Philippine Embassy Berlin Facebook
- **Search:** "Berlin grocery weighing produce self-service scale" -- Reddit r/germany (multiple threads on self-checkout and produce weighing)

12 searches across 3 SearXNG nodes (bitmagnet-lax, bitmagnet-nl, bitmagnet-de). 11 pages fetched and analyzed via WebFetch. Key sources: housinganywhere.com, liveingermany.de, berlin10.com, allaboutberlin.com, helloberl.in, thelocal.de, settle-in-berlin.com, expatrio.com, filipinoasianstore.de, pinoyfood.de, nicas-pinoy-store.de.

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