



IS IT SAFE?

Cologne

SOLO TRAVELER SAFETY GUIDE

SAFETY GUIDE SERIES

Overall Safety Assessment

RATING: Safe — one of Germany's safer major cities; standard vigilance around the Hauptbahnhof and Ebertplatz after dark.

Cologne is generally safe for tourists, with relatively low violent crime rates and a well-organized public transport system. The area immediately around the Hauptbahnhof (central station) received significantly increased surveillance, lighting, and police patrols following the widely publicized New Year's Eve 2015 incidents, and security has remained visibly strong since — including robust, well-coordinated measures during large events like Carnival.

The primary risk is petty theft — pickpocketing near the cathedral and central station, and on crowded public transport. Genuinely dangerous incidents are uncommon and tend to be linked to nightlife disputes or localized issues rather than random attacks on visitors.

RATING SCALE

★★★★ = Very safe ★★★ = Safe ★★ = Use awareness ★ = Avoid at night = Avoid

NEIGHBOURHOOD SAFETY

Neighbourhood Safety at a Glance

AREA	RATING	NOTES
Cologne Cathedral / Rhine Promenade	★★★★	Heavily patrolled, filled with tourists morning until late evening.
Altstadt (Old Town)	★★★★	Active day and night; standard pickpocketing awareness in the busiest lanes.
Belgian Quarter	★★★★	Boutiques, cafés, creative vibe — lively but relaxed, safe at most hours.
Deutz	★★★★	Across the river, generally safe, good museum–district foot traffic.
Ehrenfeld	★★★★	Multicultural, creative, generally safe for daytime exploring.
Hauptbahnhof area (night)	★★★	Increased security since 2015, but still the city's clearest “extra caution” zone after dark.
Ebertplatz	★★	Reported trouble at the square itself (not just the underground station) — avoid alone at night.
Chorweiler	★★	Outer district, higher crime rate, not part of a standard visitor itinerary.

COMMON SCAMS & RISKS

Common Scams & Risks

Pickpocketing:

The main documented risk, concentrated around the cathedral, Hauptbahnhof, and on crowded U-Bahn/S-Bahn carriages. Standard bag-forward, zipped-pocket awareness resolves most of the risk.

Nightlife altercations:

Isolated incidents of bar-related disputes have been reported — staying in groups when possible and sticking to well-lit, busy streets reduces the already-low risk further.

Unattended drinks:

Standard nightlife caution — never leave a drink unattended or accept one from a stranger without watching it poured.

Homelessness / panhandling:

Present in central areas and around the station; not dangerous, but persistent — a polite decline is sufficient.

HEALTH & MEDICAL

Health & Medical

Uniklinik Köln (University Hospital Cologne)

Kerpener Straße 62, Köln. A major teaching hospital with a full emergency department.

Healthcare capacity note

Germany maintains very high hospital-bed capacity (roughly 8 beds per 1,000 residents) and consistently strong healthcare quality ratings. EHIC/GHIC cards are accepted for EU/UK citizens; non-EU visitors should carry comprehensive travel insurance, as emergency care costs can be high without coverage.

Pharmacies (Apotheke)

Widely available, marked with a red "A" symbol; look for posted signage indicating the nearest night/emergency pharmacy (Notdienst) when regular pharmacies are closed.

SOLO WOMEN TRAVELERS

Solo Women Travelers

Cologne is generally considered safe for solo women travelers — low overall crime rate, friendly and open-minded residents, and efficient, well-used public transport even in the evening.

Reports on street harassment vary: some travelers note occasional catcalling, particularly near the station or from individuals loitering in that area, while most describe the city center and main tourist zones as comfortable. Standard precautions apply: stay in well-populated, well-lit areas after dark, avoid Ebertplatz alone at night, and use licensed taxis (via a local taxi app, since Uber has limited presence) rather than walking long distances late at night.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

Emergency Contacts

SERVICE	CONTACT
Emergency (EU-wide)	112
Police (non-emergency also available)	110
Uniklinik Köln (University Hospital)	Kerpener Straße 62, Köln
Tourist Police (near the Cathedral, peak hours)	Stationed at the Domplatte