

N/CH
GERMAN
INHERITANCE
LAW

Navigating the German Erbschein:

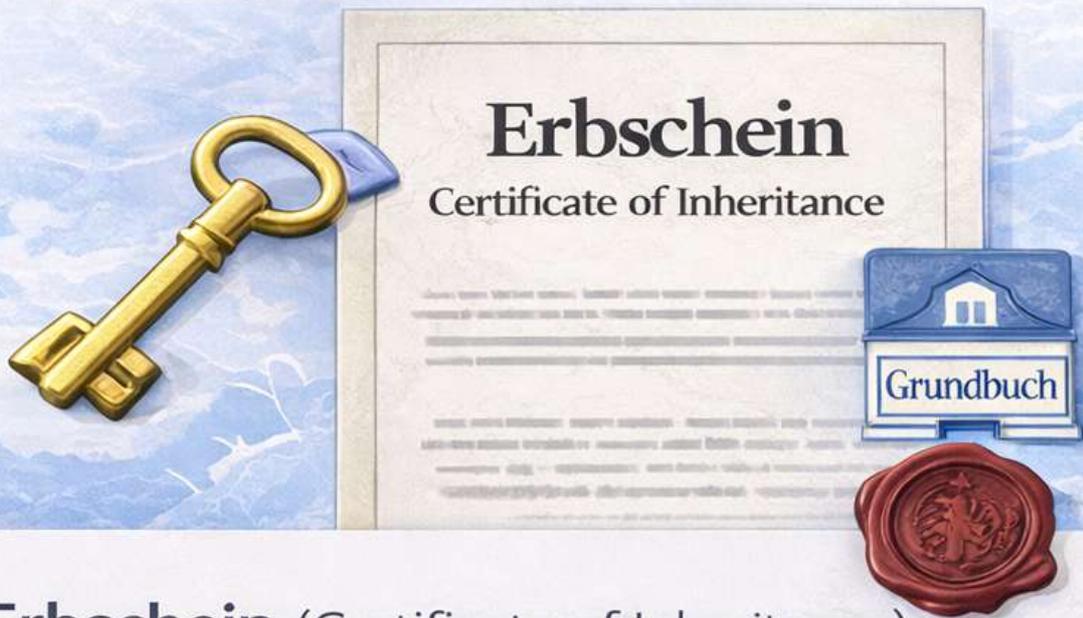
A Guide for
Heirs Abroad

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N/CH Erbschein

The “Key” to Your Inheritance



- **The Erbschein** (Certificate of Inheritance) is generally **mandatory** and required by German banks and the **Grundbuch** (land registry) to release assets.
- **Foreign probate documents** (like a U.S. Grant of Probate) are generally not recognized in Germany.

N/CH Gegenständlich beschränkter Erbschein



- **Alleinerbschein:** For a sole heir.
- **Gemeinschaftlicher Erbschein:** A joint certificate for all heirs; one person can apply for the group.
- **Gegenständlich beschränkter Erbschein:** Recommended for international heirs. It is **limited specifically to assets located in Germany**, making the court review much faster.



N/CH Three Paths to Apply



- **German Embassy:** Fill out a questionnaire and sign at a consulate; note that this several months.
- **German Notary:** Requires the heir to travel to Germany to sign in person.
- **German Court via an Attorney (Fastest):** Apply directly to the German Probate Court through a German attorney. This is typically the fastest way.

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Required Documents and Information

- **Information deceased**
(date of death, residency and citizenship of deceased)
- **Information family members**
(birth certificates, death certificates, marriage certificates)
- **Legal grounds for inheritance**
(last will or family lineage)



N/CH The Sworn Affidavit

(Eidesstattliche Versicherung)

- **Requirement:** A formal affirmation of the application's accuracy
- **Location:** Usually signed at a German Embassy or Court
- **The Waiver:** The court can waive this requirement if they find it unnecessary—



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Final Essential Steps

Understanding the German Erbschein process can be complex—especially when heirs live abroad.

A **German inheritance attorney** can help you determine:

- whether an Erbschein is required
- which German probate court has jurisdiction
- which documents are needed
- how to apply efficiently from abroad

 **Schedule a free 20-minute consultation** to review your situation and discuss the **next steps**.

Most heirs abroad need professional guidance to obtain a German Erbschein.



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