



Info Road trip Australia - Germany

All information collected here is based on my road trip from Australia to Germany in 2018. I drove a Toyota Landcruiser VDJ76R and registered it in Germany later in 2019.

In this respect, addresses, travel opportunities and regulations (for example for visas, insurances and border crossings), email addresses, websites and phone numbers as well as prices and costs also refer to the year 2018.

Please also note that I am a German citizen with a German passport and the car was registered to me in Australia.

For other combinations, for example a trip from Germany to Australia with a car registered in Germany, you might have to consider other regulations. In particular, other visa regulations may also apply to holders of non-German passports.

I gathered all information by myself before and during the trip. Through internet research, email inquiries and conversations. In this respect it is possible that there are other/further possibilities for this trip, but I am not know them.

I was driving alone, so I had no possibility to leave the car plus a companion somewhere on the way. For example, to fly to Germany to apply for a new visa. If you are more than one, some planning and considerations should be easier prior to the trip.

All the topics discussed below were sent to me as email requests from people interested in such a road trip. I have tried to bundle them here and answer them in a more or less structured way. So to say 'along my route'.

Therefore, the topic 'car' is dealt with in Australia (purchase, papers, Rego etc.) as well as on the road (border crossings, border insurance) and in Germany (customs, TÜV, registration). But because many things are connected (for example the technical car papers from Australia with the registration later in Germany or the bank account in Australia with the Rego/liability insurance) I can't completely exclude duplications.

If I have forgotten something or you have questions that are not listed here, please send me an e-mail to ruedi.retyres@gmail.com. Of course, even if something has changed or something should be displayed not correctly.

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My Route

Originally, I wanted to take a southern route. From Singapore via Malaysia – Thailand – Myanmar/Burma – India – Pakistan – Iran – Turkey to Europe.

I changed my mind for three reasons. Firstly, in Southeast Asia it is monsoon time in summer. It is not really funny to drive then.

Secondly, my visa agent advised me against this route. Despite all the permits, it can happen that individual travelers with a car are not allowed to enter Myanmar/Burma and then have to return to Singapore to ship their car from there.

And thirdly, through large parts of Pakistan you can travel only with local police escort from town to town. So, you have to wait for the availability of the police escort. And you probably get a bulletproof vest and a Kalashnikov in your hand. Neither was for me.

So, I decided to go north. The car was brought from Brisbane to Vladivostok by ship container and then I drove through the following countries: Russia (Siberia) – Mongolia – Russia (Altay) – Kazakhstan (eastern part) – Kyrgyzstan – Kazakhstan (western part) – Caspian See (by ferry) – Azerbaijan – Georgia – Armenia – Georgia – Black Sea (by ferry) – Bulgaria – Greece – Bulgaria – Romania – Hungary – Slovakia – Austria – Germany.



That I didn't drive through China was due to the costs. The car should have been registered there and I would have had to get a Chinese driver's license. Both would have cost around EUR 15,000.

Because of the drone I had with me, I was unfortunately unable to drive through Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. And the entry formalities, at least in Turkmenistan, are probably pretty blatant. I would have liked to have traveled through Turkey instead of across the Black Sea, but there I was banned from transit. I had a passport from country A and a car registration in country B. However, according to Turkish regulations, both documents must come from one country. Nevertheless, I would give it a try first, because different border officials may handle it differently.

Conversely, it seems to be similar. Another traveler told me that he was not allowed to enter Georgia with his car from Turkey because the border policeman has never seen such an Australian registration and believed that it was not an original. He then drove from southern Turkey to Iran ...

Be sure to check out the website <https://caravanistan.com/>, which is specialized in the Silk Road. And there the page „[Border crossings](#)“. Here are the border crossings listed that are possible for foreigners. But otherwise they have a very good overview of visas/immigration, etc. And a forum where the latest news is usually posted.

Once you have entered the EU (Bulgaria), I would suggest to stay in the EU on your further route. So do not continue on the western Balkans, but east over Romania, Hungary, Austria. Because you have already brought your car well across the EU border....

One last thought about the route. There are countries for which you have to show a 'carnet de passage' upon entry. This is a document that you can get from your home country's automobile club if you deposit money there. In these countries, it serves as proof that you are taking your vehicle out of the country again. In Germany you would get it from ADAC, <https://www.adac.de/reise-freizeit/reiseplanung/fahrzeug-weltreise/carnet-de-passages/english/>. There you will also find information on how this works with a carnet. You will get your deposited money back from the ADAC when you are back with the car in Germany and you can show a stamp for import and export for the car for every country you traveled to. In 2018, a carnet was required for Iraq, Iran and Pakistan.

But you want to drive an Australian vehicle to Germany. The Carnet doesn't work there. The RACQ Australia won't issue you one because you won't bring the car back to Australia. And if they did, you wouldn't get your deposit back because your car is not there again. And the ADAC wouldn't issue you one because it's not a German registered car and you don't start your travel in Germany. I can only strongly advise you not to include a carnet-bound country in your travel plans. Otherwise you could be stranded at the border...

Visa

In the first place, you should plan your route that way that you get by with as few visas as possible. A visa to be applied for in Germany beforehand on this route was only necessary for me for Russia. All other visas were given directly at the borders (mostly for 30 days, in Georgia even for 180 days).

For the current status of visa issuance for German citizens, you should check with the Foreign Office at <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/laenderinformationen> and then the topic "Travel and Security Information - Entry and Customs". How it works for citizens of other countries you have to find out with the authorities of your home country.

For Russia, you should definitely apply for a two-entry visa. First entry into Vladivostok, the second later in the Altay, after Mongolia.

And try to get a 90-day business visa. Normally they only grant 30-day tourist visas. The problem is that the visa duration continues even if you are in another country, e.g. Mongolia, in between. Example Visa Russia 5.6. - 4.7.: Entry Russia 5.6. - stay in Russia until 18.6. - entry Mongolia 18.6. - stay in Mongolia until 5.7. - your 30-day Russian visa expired on 4.7. and you cannot enter Russia anymore.

You would probably have to go back to Ulaanbaatar to the Russian Embassy to clarify the situation there. And if you can get another visa there is at least questionable. Because according to my information you can only apply for a visa for Russia in your home country. And it would be difficult to fly back to Germany quickly. Because you entered Mongolia with your car. They then won't let you leave Mongolia without a car.

The last possibility would be that you contact a visa agent in Germany and send your passport by courier to get the visa. They will then have to send your passport back to you with the visa. In the meantime, you will probably have to extend your stay in Mongolia at the local authorities.

It is also not possible to apply for Russian visas "in stock". You can only apply for a new visa when the validity of the old one has expired.

Therefore, my basic advice: Apply for such cases in any case a 2nd passport in Germany before you travel. And have the (first) Russian visa entered in it. For the entry e.g. into Mongolia you take your first passport. Because then you can - if the Russian visa expires in between - send the 2nd passport by DHL to Germany for applying for a new visa. But you can still identify yourself in your country of residence with your 1st passport and if necessary extend your stay there.

For your first visa to Russia you should plan your entry date in Russia as exactly as possible. And keep to this, so that you have the maximum visa time. For the Russian visa application you had to indicate a few cities you want to visit. No exact planning, only the main cities. You can also check the current requirements on the page <https://russische-botschaft.ru/de/consulate/visafragen/> (in German language only).

Depending on how long your journey is supposed to be, you may have to apply for a new visa for Russia at a later date. In this case I would choose a "waiting country" where you can stay for at least 30 days - better longer. Because the Russian visa issuance takes at least 2-3 weeks, plus the postal ways. It depends on your planned route how complicated the whole process with the Russian visa(s) will be.

If you don't have any other visa-technically "complicated" countries in your trip (e.g. Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan), the Russian visa is also the most difficult part in the entire planning process. I applied for the visa via <http://www.pro-visa.de/> (in German language only), but there are a lot of other offers on the Internet.

Personal Insurance

Before applying for a Russian visa, you must clarify your health insurance.

If you are legally health insured, you will definitely need a private health insurance with return transport in case of severe illness, operations etc. before applying for the Russian visa, because confirmation of the health insurance company is required together with the Russian visa application.

If you are privately medically insured, your private insurance usually confirms this without you having to have an International Health Insurance at the time you're applying for the Russian visa.

Nevertheless, even in this case you must still take out an International Health Insurance before departure. This is because your private health insurance in Germany is only valid abroad for 30 days per calendar year. Conclusion: Without an International Health Insurance you cannot start your trip.

At that time, I took the Hanse Merkur insurance for 365 days, which can be taken out either online or by telephone, <https://www.hansemerkur.de/langfristige-auslandskrankenversicherungen> (in German language only).

In 2018 that cost around € 3.80 per day (over 65 years). But it will be significantly cheaper for young people.

The insurance can be canceled at any time when you are back in Germany. An informal letter is enough if you are traveling by car. Otherwise the boarding pass must be submitted from the return flight. The insurance will then be billed to the day.

Another tip: If you are privately insured in Germany and you live abroad for a longer period (> 6 months), then you can convert your German private insurance into an entitlement insurance for that time. It only costs about 10% of the normal monthly contributions...

However, the insurance companies require you to deregister in Germany and only switch the insurance to an entitlement upon presentation of the deregistration.

By the way, I let my German liability insurance valid worldwide continue to run at that time. You don't know whether you demolish a Mongolian yurt or drop the teapot....

I would suggest the following order of approach to these issues:

- Apply for a second passport (reason: Russia - Turkmenistan etc., you need a passport, which you must hand in on your travel for further visa applications)
- Gleichzeitig Internationalen Führerschein beantragen, der gilt 3 Jahre
- Make exact travel plans during that time
- If you know your countries, for which visas are required, plan the order and the entry dates
- Book the container transport for your car in Australia, so that you can specify a fixed date of entry for your Russia visa
- Take out the International Health Insurance
- Apply for the Russian visa and other visas

Your Vehicle

Car Purchase

Anyone who has not yet bought a car in Australia should consider the following questions before buying. Do you want to sleep in the car or rather in a tent, motels or hotels? Do you want to drive off-road or just on roads and paths? Do you want to scrap or sell the car after your trip? Or do you want to register it later in Germany?

I had a Toyota Landcruiser VDJ76R, so no van. It was bought as a used car in Brisbane at <https://www.eastcoastcommercials.com.au/>. A reputable dealer who also did the registration and the necessary technical inspection when buying it. He also sells cars that were previously driven by the authorities. Our LC was e.g. driven for 5 years by some Queensland road authority. You can of course also go to any other major dealer (Toyota, Nissan, etc.) and look for used cars. Then there is a sales portal on the Internet, <https://www.carsales.com.au/> (if necessary, enter the link directly in the browser, it does not work for me from the document!). But you have the problem that you have to take care of the registration and the technical requirements of the registration by yourself if it is a private sale.

If you skip a few travel sections, you can also do this tour with a van or car without four-wheel drive and a suspension lift. In that case, I would only stay on the highways in the countries. Sometimes, when building there, it is not possible to avoid driving tracks. But in that case, I would definitely leave out the Song Kul in Kyrgyzstan and the Abano Pass in Georgia. However, springs, wheel suspensions and axles of a 'normal car' should be at the latest in Georgia - well - pretty much at the end...

Spare Parts For Your Car

If you have time enough in Australia, buy right-hand headlights there and have them installed shortly before shipping. But with Toyota it takes 6 weeks until they are delivered. I came to Germany with headlights for left-hand traffic, but I always had a bad feeling. Because in all countries (except Germany and Austria) you have to turn on the headlights during the day. I only turned on parking lights, so that the 'wrong' lighting was not noticed. Therefore, I would never drive in winter.

Take one or two spare tires from Australia, the roads are from very good to no road at all. And such small things as oil-, water- and diesel filters, fuses and light bulbs. If you also own a compressor take

it with you. Because in many countries you cannot adjust air pressure at the gas station, but only at the tire dealer. And finding the right spare parts and tire dealers can be a bit annoying.

Then you should have the car inspected by the dealer before shipping, oil change, lubrication, filter change, etc. Bosch maintains the air conditioning systems in Australia, many garages don't do that. Also no welding work, for example for such work on the exhaust you have to go to an exhaust service. Or for a stone chip repair in the windshield go to Novus auto glass. However, the car should be optically o.k. because the police will be happy to check this in the countries you cross...

Apart from that, I could have the car serviced well by Toyota all the way to Greece. Further north it became more difficult because this model is not sold in Central Europe. It can't hurt to check in Australia if you are driving an 'exotic' car. Or in an everyday model for which you can get parts everywhere.

If not already in the car, you should also buy a warning triangle and a first aid kit. According to my information, this is not a requirement in Australia, but in all countries from Russia onwards. And it was pretty difficult to tell a mechanic in Russia what I wanted to buy...

And finally you should get an oval nationality badge (AUS) in Australia in time. They don't sell it in Australia because hardly any Australian drives his car abroad. I had ordered this on the Internet from the USA, the delivery time was 4 weeks. The police in the countries from Russia to Bulgaria pay attention to this. If you don't have it, you can pay several times a day. Little things that can get expensive...

Technical Documents For Your Car

At the end of this document you will find a separate chapter on the subject of registration of your car in Germany. But if you later want to have your car registered as easily as possible, you should get as much information as possible about your car in Australia already.

According to the information from the German TÜV, it is the case that your car can only be registered in Germany if it complies with the emissions standards applicable in Germany at the time of the first registration of the car in Australia. It is therefore advisable to have a look at the emissions standard of the car before buying a used one in Australia.

So when you buy a car, the first thing you should do is to check according to which ADRs (Australian Design Rules) it was first registered in Australia. The Motor Vehicle Standard Act [year] and the Approval No. are on a sign, usually in the engine compartment. Then you can call Germany and ask if this car with a certain first registration date and a certain engine which complies to a certain ADR would be generally acceptable here. In my case, for example, I could only register the Toyota because it was registered in Australia in November 2011. The same model was still sold in Australia in 2012. But in Germany the emission standards had changed on January 1, 2012. So if I had had a (same) car with first registration in Australia in January 2012, this car would not have been registered in Germany anymore.

It would be best to obtain a CoC for Europe from the manufacturer (Certificate of Conformity). This is the name of the document cars imported from other EU countries. Unfortunately, I do not know what such a certificate is called in Australia. Later I wrote to Toyota Australia for the registration in Germany "... For a registration in Germany I need the technical car details and a CoC (Certificate of Conformity)". They certainly understood what I needed. But for this purpose I should take the car to an Australian Toyota dealer for a check. To check that I haven't added or modified anything. But unfortunately that was not possible anymore, because the car and I were already in Germany. That's why they didn't give me the certificate. Make sure that you get this certificate in Australia, so to

speak the "birth certificate" of the car. In the first step you can get in contact with a garage of the manufacturer and tell them that you want to register the car in Germany later.

This saves you later in Germany the preparation of a data sheet and individual expert checks by the TÜV (approx. 1,200 EUR). Possibly much higher costs if your model is not in the database and you have many add-on and conversion parts on it. Therefore you should also take the certificates from Australia for these conversion parts (for example a suspension lift). To get such a suspension certificate afterwards cost me 300 EUR. And sometimes it is not even possible if the Australian manufacturer has no branch in Europe. Then you would have to have the suspension lift remove before the registration in Germany....

By the way, a bullbar in the front is no problem as long as you have a winch on it. Then that counts as equipment carrier. However, it must be an original bullbar from the manufacturer or it should have a mark for eligibility in the EU. By the way, this also applies to all other parts like rear lights, rear fog light, reversing lights, window panes etc. With all these parts the TÜV looks on it whether they have an EU mark. If not, they all have to be replaced later before registration in Germany.

You have to have the original purchase contract with you anyway. Already at the borders and later at German customs and for registration in Germany.

Car Registration In Australia

I don't know if tourists can register a car in Australia. Usually you need a home address (certificate from the landlord, gas or electricity bill, a hotel room is not enough). It worked for me because my son bought the car, and he had been living in Australia for a year already. When the registration was transferred to me, he was the only one who spoke at the registration office shortly before closing time on Friday – and it worked. However, it is necessary that the car is registered on your name because you have to cross 10+ borders with it.

Before you start your road trip, your car must be registered in Australia (Rego). You should keep the Rego until your car is registered in Germany. Someone once told me that the Rego is only valid in Australia – but without Rego it is not possible to travel. You don't have a registration in Germany yet and you won't get one for a car that is not in Germany. I didn't even ask if the Rego is invalid outside Australia and thus the registration of the car expires. If you ask a lot of questions you get a lot of answers. I simply continued to pay the Rego online until the car was registered in Germany.

Registration papers are requested at each border. I crossed all borders with that Rego printout. Print a few of those. But I was also told that another traveler had to log in into the Australian registration system at a border to prove to the officials that his car had a valid registration. Because the Rego printout is just a piece of paper, without stamp and signature.

As you have to make a credit card transfer for the Rego every six months or once a year in the Australian registration system, I recommend you to keep your bank account in Australia and to have a corresponding amount of money on it. In any case, I wanted to avoid being asked by an authority why I pay the Rego costs with a German credit card. To open a bank account in Australia you need your German tax **identification** number.

In addition, foreign transfer fees would be incurred when paying with a German credit card.

A liability insurance for personal injury is included in the Rego in Australia. I have not taken out any other insurances (liability insurance for property damage and comprehensive insurance). Despite inquiries at different insurers I was unanimously told that there is no such thing for foreign countries

in Australia. The only alternative would have been an international insurer like Lloyds in London or Clements in the USA. But they were too expensive.

Vehicle Transport Australia – Vladivostok

I had the car transported on the route Brisbane - Vladivostok. Other ports in Australia are also possible (Darwin, Perth, Melbourne, Sydney), but they are more expensive.

I have already coordinated the transport of the car including container booking for the vehicle with an Australian agent from home. Only the car was transported by container ship, I myself flew - you couldn't even go on the container ship.

The agency I had already engaged from Germany (found on the Internet under 'car transport recommendations') is called CollessYoung in Brisbane, <https://www.collessyoung.com.au/>, contact Daniel Young.

The cost of car transport in Australia was about AUD 4,500, about 2,800 Euros according to the exchange rate at that time. Only about 1.800 AUD were for the pure transport, the rest consisted of countless single items for the shipping (port fee, packing in container, container transport in the port, use of the loading facilities, reloading of the container in Korea, any fees etc.).

I did not even ask for several offers, I could have possibly done that in Brisbane, but not from Germany. I simply didn't have the time. And the big international forwarding companies I called from Germany all turned me down: No car transport, no private customers – and certainly not both.

And all of them had no branch in Vladivostok except one. Colless Yong doesn't have it either, but they arranged a forwarding agency for me there:

Vladimir Petrakov / Владимир Петраков
Branch manager / Директор филиала
Subsidiary of F.S. Mackenzie in Vladivostok
Tel: +7 (423) 262-04-05
Cell.: +7-902-053-84-80 / +7-914-725-53-50
E-mail: vladimir.petrakov@fsmac.ru
Skype: vavan_99
www.fsmac.ru
www.fsmac.com
www.lcl-vlv.ru

And this company referred me to a Russian freight forwarder, who took the container out of the port there:

Evgeniy Karavaykin
Sales Manager
Baikal Group
tel.: 8 800 222 05 06
cell.: +7 914 341 73 88
skype: Baikal-karavaykin
<https://baikalvl.ru/>

In this respect you could also get in touch with the Baikalgroupp right away. I would do that, too, as soon as the contract for shipping is fixed in Australia. And ask if they can help you to get the container out of the port in Vladivostok and hand it over to you.

If they have agreed in principle, you can later send the final 'bill of landing' with the container data to Baikalgrou. This bill of landing will only be completed by the agent in Australia when the container is loaded on the ship. It should contain the date of arrival, container number etc.

Colless Young will also advise you of the possibility of taking out a marine insurance. This would pay for any damage to the container in port or on the ship. I finally did it for AUD 396 (insured value AUD 71,000), the car was quite new and belonged to my son. So that I could at least give him the money if something happened. The question is how safe and reliable you think the shipping company and the ports are. For me it was a Hapag Lloyd container ship from Brisbane to Busan (Korea), but from there to Vladivostok it was some Russian shipping company. Sure, even with an insurance, if the ship sank, if the container went overboard or if it falls from a crane, your journey would be history for the time being. But at least then you would not have any financial loss with your car. If your budget is not too tight, I would do it (again). In such waters I would simply feel better with it, although something like that can also happen in the Baltic Sea, see the Estonia sinking. And I think, if the insurance value is lower, the costs should be lower, too. You should make your decision depending on the value of your car, monetary and from heart.

The port fees in Vladivostok were again RUB 76,000, around EUR 1,100. Paying in cash, I had to pull the money with the credit card at an ATM. You will only experience these costs when the car is delivered. This is probably because many costs are offset with other participants in the whole process. About 20% -25% of the cost remains with the agent as a profit.

So was the bill from Colless Young in Brisbane. Besides the position "Freight & Surcharges" there were about 12 other positions for "Pick-up", "Delivery to Wharf", "Wharf Charges", "Shipping Line Doc Fees", "Landing Fees", "Handling Fees", "Export Docs", "Weightbridge Fees", "Infrastructure" and and and....

By the way, after 5 - 7 days of storage in the port the container costs additional storage fees. Therefore it is wise to be at the destination at least on the same day as the container. So that you can advise the customs agent that they should take action now.

It is the case in every port that the export/import/customs agent has to divide up the money collected and forward it to many parties. Usually this can only be done online via the various IT systems of the parties involved. Therefore it might not work - as I have been asked - if you can bring the car out of the port yourself. In times of digitalization, I think it is - well - quite impossible to get a "routing slip" and pay the various costs in cash at the various parties involved..

By involving the agent, you get the car outside the port, the container is opened in your presence and you have nothing to do with the internal processes in the port. If you wanted to do this yourself, you would have to do and to pay for all the single internal procedures yourself in the right order. And in the end you would have to hire a company to take the container out of the port. And in all the relevant forums on the Internet you only read 'hands off' from doing this yourself. And with the Russian authorities nobody should speak English. So, if it took my agent from my first contact in Vladivostok three days to get the car out of the harbor, I definitely don't think you would be able to do it yourself in less than 14 days. And you might end up paying more for "lessons" than the agent's fee. And you can't argue about the price. As long as you don't pay, you won't get the stamps and the car. I definitely wouldn't try to import the container into Russia myself, which can only be frustrating because of the procedures in the ports and the language difficulties. You would also have to make it clear to Russian customs that it is not a car import, but that you will export the car later. Otherwise the customs will collect import duty first. And whether you'll get the money back when you leave the country is written in the stars... From my perspective therefore: Hands off the self-import!!

The ship transport took about 3-4 weeks (including a transshipment in Korea). However, about 1 week before the departure of the ship the car had to be handed over to the forwarding agent for packing and container transport to the port etc.

Transport by ship can also become problematic. I had booked from Germany in March with Colles Young, and I was told to deliver the car on May 9th. On April 25th I received an e-mail that the ship was 3 weeks late ... I contacted Daniel immediately and asked him to find an alternative. Because it was absolutely necessary that the car is also in Russia on the first day of validity of my Russian visa so that I wouldn't lose any days. That worked out fine, he changed the booking to another ship. But it could just as well have gone wrong. Alone for such a reason, a 90-day Russian visa is nice, instead of a 30-day visa!!

You should then think about where and how you want to spend the 3-5 weeks until your container arrives in Vladivostok (to stay in Australia, to travel in the Pacific area, visit the Philippines, Indonesia, Taiwan, Japan or Korea...). In any case, you should also be in Vladivostok exact the same day your container arrives. And then contact the Baikalgroupp directly that they should start to work.

Vehicle Liability Insurance On The Trip

A national liability insurance for the car is required in every country. In addition to the Rego in Australia which should definitely continue to run during your trip so that the car is registered somewhere (see car registration in Australia). Sometimes (like in Georgia or Russia) you are advised of the insurance right at the border. Or the containers with the insurance offices are still in the border area.

In Russia, the insurance company in Vladivostok was in a bank. I had the problem to find this insurance at all, but the Baikalgroupp helped me. And the insurance company had the problem that my passport could not be read into their IT system. And there was no manual bypass. Since the Baikalgroupp employee was there, he registered as policy holder with his ID card ... By the way, you can plan half a day for that. The branch manager and the regional manager also came, and to all of them had the Baikalgroupp employee had to confirm, that everything was correct.

In other countries you are not informed at the border about the insurance for the car, but you have to take care of it yourself and look for an insurance office (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan). I would actively ask for it at every border. Because without the local insurance certificate driving around can be really expensive during a police control. I didn't know that in Kazakhstan until someone told me by chance after 14 days that I need the insurance here as well. That could have been a problem, but I was not checked. Instead I spent half a day in a farm on the countryside, where an old woman struggled with her laptop to get the insurance printed in into the form, but nothing worked out. Until she finally called Astana and the head office prepared everything for her. She printed it out and I finally had the note, anyway for me not readable...

These border insurances cost the equivalent of only 15 to 30 euros for 15 or 30 days, but you can show the slip of paper in case of a police control. They are also not available for defined periods of time for all countries, this is different in every country. Sometimes for 7 or 14 days, sometimes for 1 month, sometimes for 3 or 6 months. I would always take out a policy for a period that definitely exceeds your planned stay in the country. Because nothing is more stupid than if the insurance expires in the meantime and you have to try to find an insurance agent somewhere in a small town. Therefore, it is best to take out the insurance at the border or in the first village behind the border. They know about here - but not in the country anymore. Or only in the capital. In this case it is best to go to a bigger hotel (Best Western, Holiday Inn etc.) and ask where you can insure your car.

If someone tells you something about a 'Green Insurance Card', don't be confused. It's only for cars registered in Europe, not for cars registered in Australia. And in addition, it is only valid for European countries, Russia up to the Urals and North Africa. From Australia you only have the Rego printout. And you show the Rego printout at the border and in the car insurers offices. Some border guards don't know the Rego in Australia and its online system and always want the original 'Maschina Pass'. With a little persuasion you have to make it clear that there is no such thing in Australia and that this piece of paper is the Maschina Pass. I still pointed with my finger exactly at the plate number printed on the Rego slip and the VIN number... By the way, for a translation of the Rego slip no border official or policeman ever asked me.

Fuel Supply

Finally a relaxed topic, as long as you drive on the main routes. In my countries, diesel was not an issue. Cheap and available in any place. And I think the same is true for gasoline. But with a 170l tank I had a range of at least 1000 km. Check your range and plan your daily distances accordingly. Every bigger town (> 1000 inhabitants) had several gas stations, but in the countryside there are sometimes none. This could be a problem in Mongolia, you have to plan your sections accordingly and you should not get lost too much ... I don't know if you have diesel or gasoline, but I personally don't appreciate spare fuel canisters on the roof, especially not in hot countries. And in the car I would definitely NOT store diesel or gas because of fumes and danger of poisoning, much too dangerous!!

From Russia to Georgia, by the way, the fuel was cheap, between € 0.30 and € 0.60 per liter.

Leave some fuel in the tank before shipping from Australia or in the case of ferries across the Black and Caspian Sea, 10-15l. Diesel also like 30-50l. To get from the pier to the next gas station. Normally, petrol tanks have to be completely empty, diesel can carry up to 400l in the tank. Diesel should never be completely drained because the car must then be towed to a workshop and the tank must be vented (risk of engine damage). The company that packed my car in the container in Brisbane did not check that anyway ... And the ferry companies on the Caspian and Black Sea did not ask for it either. If you arrive in Vladivostok with an empty tank, the Baikalgroup will certainly help you with a spare canister when unpacking the car.

Travelling By Car In Foreign Countries

No matter how strange the traffic regulations in a country are and how low the speed limits in towns and villages are: Stick to it!!! Otherwise, as a foreigner, you pay quite a lot of money. I once drove through a long village in Kazakhstan over a distance of 30 km with 20 km!/h, because there were speed signs.

Often you can't see the end of such villages. It is possible that the end of the village sign comes only 2 km after the last houses, and on that part of the road the speed is controlled. Street lights are a good orientation. As long as they are there, there is still village.

Also outside of villages drive according to the mostly 70 - 80 km/h. Because often radar controls are made from a hill further away.

In the same way stop (i.e. stand still!) before every level crossing. On the other side the police can already wait to collect the money. Check the local traffic rules on the Internet first.

And remember that in all countries (except Austria and Germany) you have to drive with your headlights on even in the most beautiful sunshine. With my car this doesn't work automatically when

starting and I forgot to switch it on in Kazakhstan. I had to pay 12 Euro and only when I insisted on talking to the office the penalty was reduced by 50%.

You shouldn't drive after dark, in any country. First, because of animals and the other drivers. And second, because of the roads/tracks and potholes or sloping roadsides. And thirdly and finally, because Australian lighting is not made for right-hand traffic. In the evening you will immediately get into trouble with oncoming traffic (and possibly the police) because your headlights will dazzle. It would be clever if you had your headlights replaced by right-hand traffic lights shortly before departure in Australia.

Of course, as a (supposedly rich) foreigner you often pay more, except at gas stations, supermarkets and restaurants with a menu list. In Mongolia, I also got a SIM card without function in a supermarket shortly after the border. But it was also my own fault that I didn't try it right away.

And in the queue at the exit from Mongolia a uniformed woman wanted to make me believe that I would have to pay 3 Euros for the exit. Since I knew that this was not true (in many countries there are posters at the border, no money to pay to officials and to report claims), I just smiled friendly and shook my head - and she went to the next car.

I was also asked the question about crime. To that I can say, no, I have not been "threatened or robbed" in any form by anyone in any country anywhere. The car has often aroused interest. But only when I actively approached people took a look inside. But I also exercised normal caution: Never made long walks or sightseeing tours at night, except from the hotel to a restaurant and back. Never discussed politics or religion issues with the locals, but instead I frequently mentioned the beauty and sightseeing of the country and the friendliness and helpfulness of the people. I kept away from demonstrations or groups with loud shouting (drunk people?). I left the papers (passport etc.) in the hotel and only took copies with me, as well as just as much money as I needed in the evening. The car was usually parked in a fenced area of a hotel or directly in front of the hotel, in the view of the concierge. All in all, I simply tried to exclude possible sources of danger

Nevertheless, almost every evening I addressed people myself. Because if you travel alone, you'll be lonely after two weeks. Mostly younger people who spoke English. But I always let them talk first and tried to hear what they were thinking. For example, I've heard from young Russians that they don't really agree with politics. I didn't say anything else about that, but rather that I noticed how complicated the payment process is handled by the waitress in the Russian pub. And about that a long discussion about the partly still very bureaucratic procedures in Russia has resulted.

Overnight Stay

Since I was driving alone, I rarely camped. Except in some parts of Russia there are hardly any campsites on the route, and free camping was too unsafe for me. Mostly I looked for a cheap motel or hotel. The car has no place to sleep and was loaded with all the camping equipment of my son from Australia. I could not sleep in it (except for two emergencies).

If you want to camp, you can ask in many countries on the edge of a village for a private place where you can stay. For a small fee you can even take a shower in one of the houses in the morning.

If you want to camp in Russia, you have to make your own registration on site. I have stayed in hotels, they do this for guests, but I usually pointed this out to them at check-in. I also don't know if you have to be registered every day or only once at the beginning in Russia. But maybe the visa agent knows that.

Credit Cards / Money Supply

It is best to take two credit cards with you, a Visa and a Mastercard. I only needed the Visa card, but you never know. An EC card is only relevant in the euro area (from Bulgaria/Greece onwards), otherwise you do not need it.

I used the credit card permanently for cash and hotel payments. I was also able to pay larger amounts such as car inspections with credit card without any problems. But I do not know how you want to travel. Rather sleep in the car/tent or rather in motels/hotels. I chose hotels, mainly because I was travelling alone and felt safer with them. I couldn't sleep in the car either because my son had packed it full. So if you camp/ sleep in the car, you will need more cash than I did, because I stayed in hotels with breakfast paid by credit card.

For the hotel bookings I used exactly 2 apps in my mobile phone: Whenever possible, the app from <https://de.hotels.com/>. I registered with them and was able to pay every booking in Germany with my credit card in Euro. That means that there was no fee for the international use of the credit card. And I could collect rewards.

In places where hotels.com had no offer I used [booking.com](https://www.booking.com). But there you could not always pay with your German credit card, sometimes you had to pay cash on site.

Most of the times, I made the booking in such a way that I drove from the morning until noon. And then I parked myself at the roadside in a village at 1 or 2 p.m., because there was internet reception everywhere in the villages (see below). At this time I could estimate, how far I still can drive until it gets dark. And for that village I booked an accommodation. With 2 exceptions (once in Kazakhstan and once in Greece) this worked out without any problems.

Back to the money. Wherever possible I have drawn cash from an ATM by credit card. To exchange at banks may take sometimes 2 - 4 hours. There the banknotes are taken to the back office and checked for authenticity with the available lists. So if you want to take cash with you, then take ONLY BANKNOTES OF THE NEWEST SERIES with corresponding security features. This applies to both Euros and US-Dollars!

Exchanging other currencies is usually totally complicated and involves a lot of running and waiting. I had about 300 Euro and 100 USD in cash as emergency reserve during the whole trip. In addition to that I had the remaining money from Australia, 900 Australian dollars. For this I needed half a day in Ulaanbaatar to exchange it, because there was exactly one bank there that exchanged something other than Euro or USD.

The first cash machine (ATM) you will encounter is usually right on the border in the customs area. And there I would draw so much money already, that you can buy a local SIM card, the liability insurance for the car, possibly fuel, and food for the first 2 days. Until you make it to the next bigger city. ATMs are available in all cities, even in larger hotels or at banks. In these bigger cities I used the ATMs to get money for the country. Most of the time I thought about how much money I would need in the country (without overnight stays, because booked and paid via the app in Germany) plus a security reserve. In some countries the daily cash supply at the ATM was limited, then I just went back to an ATM the next day or in the next town. Except in the Mongolian desert there are ATMs everywhere.

If you want to pay hotels directly on site, smaller hotels may not take a credit card. I would ask for that at check-in. In that case, you'll need to get more local currency accordingly.

If you want to take cash with you (as I said, not absolutely necessary except for an emergency reserve), consider whether you can safely deposit it somewhere in the car. I met a German in Kazakhstan who only had cash with him and stowed it somewhere between the frame and the chassis.

Also, you should only exchange cash at banks, you will get a receipt there. This may be important when leaving the country if you have money left over and want to exchange it into the currency of the next country. I have tried to plan so that I had almost no cash left at the end of a country and had not to struggle with an exchange. Like I said, exchange on banks can take a while. If necessary I used the remaining money just before the border to fill up fuel.

However, if you plan to travel to more remote areas of a country, you may not find an ATM there. Then you should plan how long you will be there, how many nights you will stay overnight and what else you will need, and then take local money with you.

If there is no ATM somewhere, the exchange of Euro or Dollar will be difficult as well there.

Communication

One thing in advance: I would not take a sat phone with me. Too expensive, too heavy and too complicated. If you want to take an emergency system with you, check out the offer of <https://www.findmespot.com> from Globalstar. The part (hardware) cost 150€ in 2018 and the service contract including emergency assistance 300€ per year. I bought this and signed the contract. With this hardware you can be tracked (if you turned it on!). And you can send 3 messages for your loved ones (e.g. Everything is ok, but I have no reception yet / I have a problem, but I can manage it myself / I am in trouble, inform the German embassy with my coordinates). And then there is a SOS button. If you press it, a private company in the USA will start a rescue service (if the corresponding part of the contract has been signed before), including helicopter deployment and whatever else is necessary. Up to costs of 2x 100.000 US Dollar per year. With this I felt pretty safe and did my trip without a Sat phone.

In any case you should buy a local SIM card for each country. If possible already at the border in the new country, otherwise in the first bigger town behind the border. And best of all from a phone shop/phone card provider directly. They should insert and activate the card immediately, then you can try it out on site. In Mongolia I had bought a card at the border in a supermarket and it didn't work. But I only noticed that later. And promptly I had difficulties to get into Ulaanbaatar or find the hotel because I couldn't load Google Maps. It was already in the evening and it got dark and so I wasn't in the hotel until midnight. For this reason alone you should start border crossings as early as possible in the morning. With two controls (exit / entry) it can take 5 hours or more...

But for the local SIM card you need a smartphone that is NOT bound to a provider, so don't buy a 1€ part from Telekom or Telstra. Ask your provider first, if the device is unlocked! Buy a new smartphone if yours is locked. In the country of purchase, you must have made at least 10 minutes of calls with a SIM card from that country. Otherwise, the phone may not work if you first start with a foreign SIM card in another country.

There are various sites on the Internet where you can check the SIM card providers, the Internet volume and costs, and the best coverage for a country in advance. For example [https://prepaid-data-sim-card.fandom.com/wiki/Prepaid SIM with data](https://prepaid-data-sim-card.fandom.com/wiki/Prepaid_SIM_with_data). Simply google for prepaid SIM-Card [xxx country].

I used the following prepaid SIM card providers

Australia	–	Telstra
Russia	–	MTS (MTC)
Mongolia	–	Mobicom
Kazakhstan	–	beeline KZ
Kyrgyzstan	–	beeline KY
Azerbaijan	–	Bakcell
Georgia	–	Geocell
Armenia	–	MTS Vivacell
Bulgaria	–	A1
Greece	–	Cosmote
Romania	–	Orange
Hungary	–	Telekom
Slovakia	–	Telekom
Austria	–	Telekom Austria

And don't make the mistake I made: In Germany I had already installed security software on the mobile phone. As usual, when changing the SIM card, the system wanted the security code of this security software in addition to the German SIM card PIN and the PIN for the new Russian SIM card. And I entered it 3 times wrong, because the documents were in my luggage. So the mobile was locked. In the hotel I had a chat with the company in Germany for 3 hours via WLAN on my laptop before they unlocked my mobile phone again. From then on I immediately stopped the PIN-query my SIM-Card has been changed....

I would recommend a dual SIM card cell phone. I had the then new Samsung Galaxy S9 plus and could always leave the German SIM card in it (for emergencies). But in that case, don't forget to switch off the German card while roaming, etc.!!

I navigated almost exclusively with Google Maps. I also had other Nav Apps on my phone, "here" and "maps.me" and another one. Other travelers had told me they were better. But then I almost only used Google because it was the easiest.

Before I traveled outside of network coverage (practically every day outside Europe), I entered the planned route and downloaded the map section for the area I wanted to go offline. That went quite well in the hotels, they almost all had WiFi.

If you camp a lot it looks different, then you have to take a higher data volume. I got along well with 4 - 8 GB per 14 days.

I had a translation app on my phone. With it I could take pictures (menus or street signs!), I could speak into it and of course type to translate. I can't remember which one it was, I think it was a Russian one, because I downloaded it there first. Of course it should be one for these countries that can translate German - Russian / Kazakh etc. As I just read, the Google Translate App and the Microsoft Translator are also rated quite good.

Technical Devices

As technical devices I would only take with me: smartphone - camera - laptop + external hard drive - possibly the SPOT GPS tracker - and possibly a dash cam if you want to take pictures from the driver's perspective.

Together with your laptop, the smartphone is your communication centre. Also for hotel bookings and to be able to make any necessary bookings from your bank account at home. Remember that since 9.9.2019 this is no longer possible with just one device for European accounts. Since the 2-factor identification, you usually need two devices. At some banks, the mobile phone must first be activated for this. You should clarify this in time with your German bank.

In addition, the laptop and its additional external hard drive should be used **every evening** to back up the camera, smartphone and, if necessary, the dashcam. It would be a pity if the camera or the smartphone would be gone or broken 3 days before the end of the trip with all pictures on it. By the way, you should take a spare SD card for the camera, dashcam and the smartphone. Don't take a cheap card, but a branded product with a memory size and an access time that matches the devices. This is a bit more expensive, but pays off later. And not all devices work with every card

Whether you want to buy a drone is up to you. This is nice for pictures, but you can't enter every country with it (2018 Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan). It would be stupid not to declare it at customs when entering the country, because you can very quickly be considered as an agent ... I have actively pointed to my drone at every border. In Azerbaijan I was lucky, by the way. Since I had entered via the port on the Caspian Sea, there was no major customs control. The drone of other travelers who had come by land has been confiscated at the border. They had to go back to the same border crossing to pick it up when leaving the country. This would not have been possible with me on the one-way tour. So, a drone is rather unfavorable if you want to travel smoothly.

You should try out all the technical devices well beforehand. Especially the apps for online banking, the email program and the social media if you want to post something. Everything should work 100% because your mobile phone is your communication center. And you should activate a person of trust at home who can post for you on Insta or fb. You can send him your pics and comments via dropbox or similar. Because in some countries social media are blocked. Then you will not be able to post, like on insta or LinkedIn in Russia.

If you want to buy the SPOT device, check out the instructions at <https://www.motophil.ch/spot-gps-maps-on-your-website/>. It describes how to preserve all data. By default, tracked data is only stored for 10-14 days. So you have to add a free program. And the SPOT device needs a constant voltage. They recommend a special brand of batteries which is not everywhere available.

Entry Into The EU

At some point towards the end of your trip you will enter the EU. With me it was in Bulgaria. When I entered the country, I was asked by the customs, if I wanted to pay the import sales tax and the customs for the car right here or if I wanted to pay it in my home country (=Germany) later. I decided to pay later in Germany. Because I'm not sure if a payment in another EU country is also recognized in Germany, or if I might have to pay twice in the end.

The statement of the Bulgarian customs was that I could drive around in the EU with the Australian license plate for one year. And there was also the tip from customs, if this time was not enough for me, I should go to Switzerland for a few days. Then I would be allowed to drive around the EU for another year with the Australian license plate. If this is true, I don't know.

I also think that at the latest when the car is parked for a longer time at your home town, there will be inquiries from the authorities at some point. Besides, I wanted to register the car in Germany as soon as possible anyway.

In the EU, as in every country before, I must take out a liability insurance for the car at the border. And that was not so easy there. There were no insurance offices in the port of Burgas. I was told to

find an insurance company in the city. But all the big European companies that had branches here (Allianz, Generali etc.) refused. Only with a Bulgarian insurance company (National Bureau of Bulgarian Motor Insurers, OZK Insurance AD) I was lucky. Here I got not only the insurance for Bulgaria, but also a European green insurance card, which was valid for the whole EU.

However, the Bulgarian sum insured was quite low at EUR 15,000. Therefore, I only took out this insurance for a minimum period of 3 months in order to find a new insurance with a higher sum insured later on, if necessary, in Germany.

After Bulgaria I stayed in the EU for the rest of my trip. So I didn't go via the Western Balkans back to Germany, but after a detour to Greece via Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and Austria. Once I was in the EU, I didn't want to go through the entry procedure again. The border controls within the EU were simple, after the Romanian-Hungarian border there were no more controls at all. I was also lucky with the Austrian-German border. On a small country road from Innsbruck to Garmisch (because I still wanted to go to the Zugspitze) there were no controls at all.

Get a green sticker on your Australian license plate immediately after entering Germany. Otherwise you won't be able to enter the inner city in many cities. That was no problem for me, the specification that the car was built in 2011 was enough.

Since the registration of the car took a little longer here, I once again took out another liability car insurance for the EU in Germany with the company [tourinsure](#), Hamburg.

Registration Of The Car In Germany

If you have not already done so on your trip, the first thing you should do in Germany is go to a garage or car dealer and have your headlights changed from left-hand to right-hand traffic. They will probably have to be replaced completely. For Toyota Landcruiser spare parts there is a company in the Netherlands, where the parts are a bit cheaper, [All American Imports](#). The workshop can also find out immediately whether the other parts (lights, windows, bullbar etc.) have a European label. And if not, replace them as well.

Then it depends on whether you were able to bring an official data sheet for your car from Australia or not. That means with all the data that will later be in the car registration document and possibly with further special entries. And the documents for conversions, e.g. a suspension lift.

If yes, you can go to the TÜV with it and apply for an individual inspection according to §21 StVO. Not every TÜV inspector is allowed to do this, but only certain test engineers. Maybe you have to drive to a larger town for this.

If not, you must have a data sheet prepared before the individual inspection. You can either try to get it from the German headquarters of your car manufacturer. That didn't work for me. Toyota didn't move for months despite constant calls, even by my garage. Work overload, they said. But my guess is that they weren't really interested because this model is not sold in Germany.

You don't even need to ask the manufacturer in Australia, they will only issue the document if you present the car again at an Australian dealer of your brand.

A local TÜV inspector then gave me the tip to have the data sheet made at TÜV Nord in Hannover. They check EVERYTHING there, including noise test, top speed, exhaust gas behavior, dimensions, weights and special bodies (bullbar, spare tires at the rear, long range tank etc.). This expertise cost 850 Euro. Because the car is higher, I had to provide a certificate from the suspension lift

manufacturer as well. I was lucky, my son had a suspension lift from TJM Australia installed. And they have a distribution for Europe in Switzerland. From the Swiss I got for 300 Euro a 2-page certificate about the suspension lift. So if you want to have something done on the suspension in Australia, only from TJM (or the car manufacturer). But in no case from ARB, FourWheelDrive Supercenter or other after sales companies. You won't get such a certificate later or only with a lot of effort.

For the data sheet you can make an appointment with TÜV Nord.

SIMEX – Service for Import and Export
TÜV NORD Mobilität GmbH & Co. KG
IFM - Institut für Fahrzeugtechnik und Mobilität
Am TÜV 1
30519 Hannover
Tel.: +49-511-9986-1359
Fax: +49-511-9986-1316
e-mail: jbruehmann@tuev-nord.de

If the TÜV has given you this data sheet, then you can have the individual inspection according to §21. By the way, the TÜV Süd in or near Stuttgart probably also has an office that prepares this data sheet. If the other parts of your car meet the EU standards, the TÜV, which prepares the data sheet, can of course also do the individual inspection.

During this individual inspection it is checked whether lamps, seat belts, windows, tires and everything else on the car is approved for Europe. I cannot remember the name of the imprint on the parts, EU number, or EVB number, or EEC number or something like that. But the TÜV can tell you that.

Unfortunately, this did not work for me, there was still too much to exchange. All just little things, but it came together too much. The side windows in front were covered from the inside with sun protection film. Must go down, not allowed in Europe. The lights in the back didn't have the European label. There was no rear fog light. There were no safety pins on the spare wheel mountings. The reverse gear light was too bright(!) and had no European certification mark. By the way: Bullbar works. If there is a winch in it. Then it is an equipment carrier. And it must also have this EU-sign, so no mounting by after sales dealers, but preferably an original from the manufacturer.

When the necessary conversions had been carried out, I was finally able to have the individual inspection according to §21. This was carried out by a TÜV inspector nearby.

Once again on the subject of engine/exhaust gas. Here it is important to know at which time a certain car with a certain engine/exhaust gas value was registered for the first time (in Australia). And which regulations applied to a registration in Germany on the same date. Our Landcruiser VDJ76R with a 4.5l 8-cylinder turbo-diesel (engine type 1VD-FTV) is year of construction 09/2011 with first registration 11/2011. And this engine with this first registration date was still just registerable in Germany. In Europe this engine is covered by the regulation 98/69/EG III; B. Background: Actually, the EU had already tightened up these exhaust gas regulations on 1.1.2011 to such an extent that the car would no longer be eligible for a registration here. But the German government did not implement this EU directive until 1.1.2012. This means that with the first registration in 11/2011 in Australia our car has just slipped into this time window. If the car with the same engine would have had a first registration of 01/2012, I would not have got it here by the individual inspection at the TÜV. So for the time being the eligibility for a registration in Germany has nothing to do with the emission class (Euro 1 – 4). By the way: If a car cannot be registered here, it will more or less not be

sellable in the EU. Then you can only think about leaving the EU again. Or shipping it back to Australia and renting it out there 😊

While the TÜV is working, you can start looking for a car insurance in Germany. Depending on the model, this is not so easy. Most of the insurance companies refused me because this model is not sold here and therefore not in the insurance IT. At the HUK I finally got an acceptance.

You should only go to customs if you have your individual approval from the TÜV. Because it could be that you do not get the individual approval and have to export the car again.

Since your car is to be registered for the first time in Germany, you need a so-called customs clearance certificate (Zoll-Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung) from the customs authorities. This is simply a form for the car registration office. With it you are allowed to put goods into free circulation in Germany and the EU, i.e. sell, scrap, burn – in short, to make money. Or even register a car.

You get this form when the customs authorities have decided whether you have brought the car as duty-free removal goods or whether you have paid import sales tax and customs duty. By the way, I asked whether I would get the import VAT and customs duty back if I paid first, but later decided to export the car again. These taxes will not be refunded or only under one condition: For example, the car is repaired here for the continuation of your trip, but will be exported again after a maximum of four weeks.

Before you go to customs, you have to go to a customs broker. This is because everything that has to be cleared through customs has to be entered into a customs IT system. And that seems to be more difficult than an income tax return. So you should not do it yourself. If you are lucky, a customs broker will be located in the same building as the customs authorities. Then you can have your car entered there into the IT-system just before you talk to customs. That costs about 70 - 100 Euros. I don't know whether you have to have your car entered into the system if it is accepted as a removal item - but I guess so.

My car was not accepted as removal goods. Although my son was in Australia for 2 years and I was abroad for a year. A condition for the acceptance as removal goods is that you must also have been DEREGISTERED IN GERMANY FOR AT LEAST 1 YEAR. And neither my son nor I knew that.

This means that on the purchase price of the car in Australia (bring along the invoice!) 19% import sales tax plus 10% customs duty were due. And if the car had been brought here by container, these fees would have been due on the transport costs as well.

By the way, at customs you will be asked how long you have been in Germany by car already. For the time from the entry to Germany until the registration in Germany you have to pay motor vehicle taxes for the car. So bring enough money with you! This can result in double payment of the motor vehicle tax if you can register the car earlier than you have stated at customs. You will pay the normal motor vehicle tax from the time of registration anyway. This double payment can be refunded later (takes about 8 weeks). Therefore, you should keep the documents from customs for the motor vehicle tax carefully, the originals must be submitted for refund.

By the way, there is a limit of 2,000 euros for card payments at customs. You have to pay the amount over 2,000 euros in cash.

For your appointment at the car registration office you now carry along with you

- The documents from the TÜV (data sheet and individual inspection papers according to §21
- The electronic insurance confirmation (eVB) of your car insurance company

- The customs clearance certificate (Zoll-Unbedenklichkeitsbescheinigung)
- Proof of the vehicle owner's right of disposal for a vehicle registration, shown by the purchase contract or the original invoice of the vehicle
- And other documents that you need for a registration also with a German car, such as direct debit authorization for the motor vehicle tax (SEPA Lastschriftmandat), identity card/passport etc.

Nevertheless, it can happen that your appointment takes longer than with a German car. Because not all entries in your data sheet or individual approval can be decided by the person in charge, some of them have to be approved by the head of the authority. And he must have time first. And the registration is more expensive than for a German car (approx. 200 Euro).

And if the worst comes to the worst, as it did with me, then you have to go to another authority during the registration process to get certain permits - and pay for them as well. In my case it was the exemption for the electronic anti-theft device. The TÜV was unable to clarify whether it meets European standards or not. That's why I had to get a special permit from the Senator for Climate Protection, Environment, Mobility, Urban Development and Housing (my son owns the car and it was registered in Bremen). I was damn good luck that they had office hours there, so the registration could be completed the same day anyway.

By the way, you should avoid a registration in Hesse if possible. Here you have to get and pay another document before your car can be registered. A so-called bundling authority (Bündelungsbehörde) checks the documents from the TÜV again and asks there again if necessary. Not only does this cost additional time and money, the bundling authority could also refuse the registration despite individual approval by the TÜV. But to my knowledge there is such a thing only in Hesse.

Now I have reached the end of this info – it has become longer than planned 😊

There is still one question that I was asked many times. 'What did it all cost you?' Difficult to say, I didn't write it down. Roughly estimated 30,000 euros, thereof

- Overnight stays 13.000 Euro
- Vehicle transport (Pacific, Caspian Sea and Black Sea) 5.000 Euro
- Fuel (cheap until Georgia and expensive in the EU, especially in Greece) 3.000 Euro
- Insurances (health insurance for me and liability insurance for my car) 1.000 Euro
- Flights in the Pacific area and from Brisbane to Vladivostok 2.000 Euro
- Food 3.000 Euro
- Other (car inspections, spare parts, admissions etc.) 3.000 Euro

I still have my Australian bank account, by the way. I think it can only be terminated in person or perhaps by phone. But who knows, maybe I'll come back to Australia one day again...