

Importing a car from Germany

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<p>The project started in February 2015, and Finished at the end of March 2015.</p> <p>Since 1997 many people from Finland have travelled abroad to buy a car to save money on buying a similar car in Finland. At the same time the ones who choose to travel themselves can think of it as a quick car enthusiast get away holiday and experience.</p> <p>This project was given to me to by my client, but was supposed to be done as a free time project. I realized the project would be an opportunity for me to showcase and document my project management skills.</p> <p>The biggest motivation for the project was purely the fact that I had always wanted to import a car from Germany, to understand and possibly do it in the future.</p> <p>The bibliography is scarce, mainly because theory for such a project does not exist. This is the first proper guide to importing a car from Germany to Finland.</p> <p>The project went mainly according to plan with only a few minor problems, and all according to schedule and budget.</p>	
Keywords travel, guide, tourism, car importing, project management	

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1 Introduction

Finland, along with Denmark and Norway has the pleasure of selling cars with high taxes. This in Finland has led to many companies importing cars straight from Germany. While on some models the price saving may only be a mere few thousand euros, one has to just dig a bit deeper to understand why importing a car is a much better idea than buying a new or used car in Finland.

Many companies in Finland offer a service where, you are asked for a budget, car make and model. These companies then find the perfect one for you in Germany and bring it back. These companies usually take a provision of a few thousand euros, which includes registering and trip costs. Some companies ferry the car by truck to Finland and other companies drive the car directly to Finland.

The problem, however is the complex process in both Germany and Finland and as it became evident, without any linguistic skills extremely difficult.

The aim of the thesis is to further understand the Finnish car tax system and how to import a car from Germany, as many sources on the internet have different ways of how to do it. At the same time it would be important to try and arrange some experiences along the trip.

The trip itself was a total of 6 days of, which 2 days were reserved for the drive back to Finland.

This whole process took over a month to plan with no margin for errors, once the car had been found. The budget for the car was to be 50,000 euros including the Finnish taxes. This did not include travel expenses.

The trip consisted of 2 drivers, together having 20 years of driving experience. Also both drivers had enough experience working in the car industry to understand what car would be safe to bring back. In addition, a third person was frequently consulted. He has a degree in car engineering and works as a vehicle inspection officer (katsastaja in Finnish) in Finland.

This is a product based thesis. The aim is to help other people who may want to do the same but are not aware of what importing a car from Germany consists of. It will also answer questions on whether to go to Germany yourself and buy a car or use a company. This thesis also can be used a guide for an automotive centered holiday in Europe for a week.

This project is a detailed report, which will not be published or updated upon completion.

2 Theoretical framework

It is important to understand the size of the project when acquiring a car from Germany. It is not enough to have a budget, fly to Germany and purchase a car. There are many more variables, which have to be taken into account such as price, make, why, when, for whom, what and how.

2.1 Marketing and image

Searching online for “auto saksasta” (car from Germany) brings various results of different companies who are willing to provide import services from Finland to Germany. These companies do take a provision of a few thousand euros. But as they are companies, according to Finnish law they have to provide a 6 month guarantee. Automotive guarantees are usually extendable on used vehicles if they are bought at the dealership. For example BMW offer up to two year guarantees on their “premium selection” used vehicles. In addition there is a lot of controversy when bringing German cars to Finland, due to paper fraud and stolen cars in Germany. Most dealerships market used vehicles in Finland as “Suomi Auto” a car bought from Finland, to bring more credibility to the cars history. One important image, German import cars in Finland are marketed by, are the amount of optional equipment compared to Finnish cars. In Germany optional equipment have a fixed price. For example leather seats on a BMW 535d touring variant will set Germans back 1.990€. In Finland the same option depends on CO² emissions, which brings the price to 2721.29€, with the reason being car taxes.

2.2 Car and clientele

For a customer, who wants no error and easy buy, Finland is the right choice. For the more demanding customer who knows they can get more value for their money at a bigger risk Germany is the answer. A perfect car to bring back to Finland would depend on many factors such as age, mileage, make and model. An important factor to remember is service intervals. These can either be every 15,000km or 30,000km depending on the car model. Modern diesels more commonly have 30,000km and high powered petrol engines have 15,000km.

Searching car forums it becomes evident that an important thing to remember is the region where the car is from in Germany. Car's from the North of Germany tend to have the reputation for having more rust due to more salt being used compared to the cars in the South of Germany.

Bringing cars from Germany has changed a lot from the 90s mainly due to the German government making stricter laws on registering export vehicles. This has brought down the amount of risk involved in buying a second hand car. The effect was that the amount of stolen cars in Germany has decreased.

2.3 Legislation

When importing a car from abroad, depending on if it is from the EU or outside of the EU, will make the process different. Also cars outside of the EU bring along with them the value-added tax, which in Finland is 24%. This in return increases the price of the car depending on the value-added tax calculated. As the bought car was from Germany no VAT was added making importing easier.

2.3.1 Car taxation if bought from the EU

According to Tulli (Finnish customs) every car is individually taxed, making it a more complicated process, which depending on the time of the year can take anywhere between 1-5 weeks to receive the TAX. In table 1, an example of how calculations are made. The tax percent depends on what year was the car first registered and what the co2 emissions are. Depending on the year the car would be taxed by either weight or Co2 emissions. These can be found on the Tulli website.

Table 1. Example of a car tax calculation made by Customs (Tulli 2015)

General selling price	10 000	€
CO ²	139	g/km
Tax	23,7	%
Amount of tax	2 370	€

2.3.2 Car taxation if bought from outside of the EU

According to customs, "Vehicles imported from outside the EU are subject to customs duty and a 24% Vat on import. The commercial value of the vehicle is used as its customs clearance value." (Tulli 2015). The author of the thesis has imported once a car outside of the EU, but declared it differently according to the customs, getting a lower tax rate but with selling limitations.

2.3.3 Euro CoC

When a car is purchased, it must include these papers, labelled as CoC. The CoC paper will give important information such as CO² emission, curb weight, and other technical specifications. Without this paper it is impossible to do the vehicle inspection. It is possible

to acquire the paper straight from the manufacturer using the car VIN number. These documents vary by manufacturer, but tend to be between 100-200 euros. “Part of the “EC-92” effort was to remove the technical barriers preventing the free movement of products within the EU market. The greatest impact of this effort has been in the area of standards in the automotive sector. The EU Commission is seeking to harmonise the automotive, technical and environmental standards between all the member states. EU legislation defines the standards in the areas of noise, particle emissions and safety. In addition, the EU’s directive on Type Approval (EU Council Directive 92/53) eliminates the need for national type approval requirements by establishing one set of rules for automobiles and their components throughout the EU.” (Euro Certificate of Conformity, 2015).

3 The project

It was planned at an early stage that this project would be my thesis. The customers needed a new car so it was agreed that this project would be conducted according to the writer's plans. As a project there were many things to consider. The hardest of them is always time management. In a project such as this, it would be important to see as many cars as possible and to be able to gamble on the one that seemed right. Variables include vehicle age, mileage, general condition and ownership. Travel dates were difficult since both people had either school or a full time job, so a third person was kept in reserve in case the second person who was accompanying the author of the thesis could not come.

3.1 Preparations and precautions

As the route was planned it was important to incorporate things such as meeting friends and wanting to visit a few museums to do with automotive history. At the same time it had to be decided upon our route back to Finland and where to sleep for the nights.

The project was started a month before the trip in February 2015. This meant trying to find a car, which when taxes paid would cost around 50,000 euros. For this we started going through websites such as mobile.de and autscout24.de. Also at the same time a detailed schedule for each day was done. We also had to decide on the easiest way of paying for the car on site, which turned out would be in cash. All in all 43,000 euros were taken on the trip, with a 40,000 budget for the car, and 3,000 euros as emergency money in cash. Another 2000 euros was put on a bank card. This way back up money was not an issue. Also in Germany in the majority of gas stations it was easier to pay by cash.

The conditions of the customer were that if the perfect car was not found during the trip we would take a flight back home from Munich.

The biggest problem was trying to find the time to find a car and travel all the way to Stockholm and take a ferry to Turku in the given time frame.

It also included planning where to fly and start the trip. It was found that most cars we were interested in, which fit the price and options brackets perfectly were situated in Munich. However flights to Munich were over 300 euros so it was decided to fly to Stuttgart, stay one night, acquire a rental car and drive to Munich, where we would keep the rental car for 3 days and then return it to Munich airport.

3631km were driven during the 6 days. Of these 2563km were the trip back home from Augsburg to Helsinki and was driven in about 23 hours. The rental car was not returned to Munich airport as planned but to Thalmassing with the aid of the local who sold the car since the rental company did not speak English. When renting the car I had by mistake chosen the option to drop off the car at any location, luckily the rental company had an office in Regensburg, next to Thalmassing.

For safety reasons many documents were taken along. These included documents proving the car order from the client and why such large sums of money were being moved around, insurance and health insurance papers. Also all tickets for the airplane ferry and hotel documents were printed beforehand with many extra copies. All copies were also on an iPad as back up.

3.2 The customer and the car

The customer who this project was done for was a retired man in his early 60's. His previous car had been an Audi A7 sportback diesel, which he claimed was the best car in the world based on previous cars he had owned. It was easy to build on top of this. One important thing to remember was that the car would need to have enough space for a dog cage for a medium sized dog. In the end we offered the choice between the following; C7 Audi A6 Avant 3.0Biturbo diesel, F11 BMW 530d or 535d biturbo, and finally a BMW 335i Gran Turismo biturbo. Each car had to have less than 50,000km. Engine displacement minimum was put at 3.0 litres and could be petrol or diesel. Power, ranging from 250hp (horsepower) to 350hp and a 0-100km/h time of around 6 seconds or under.

As the customer was used to having such luxury amenities in his previous car such as xenon headlights, metallic colour and integrated navigation these were a must in the car. Checking cars on Finnish websites many people marketed their used vehicles with the following options; sunroof and leather upholstery, which meant that the car would have to have these as well since they seemed to be options Finnish people look for and bring up resale value (this is based on personal observations). Navigation in Finland is not valued due to its price when and knew and as a result a lack of interest in used vehicles. It was agreed that the following options were to be compulsory in the vehicle;

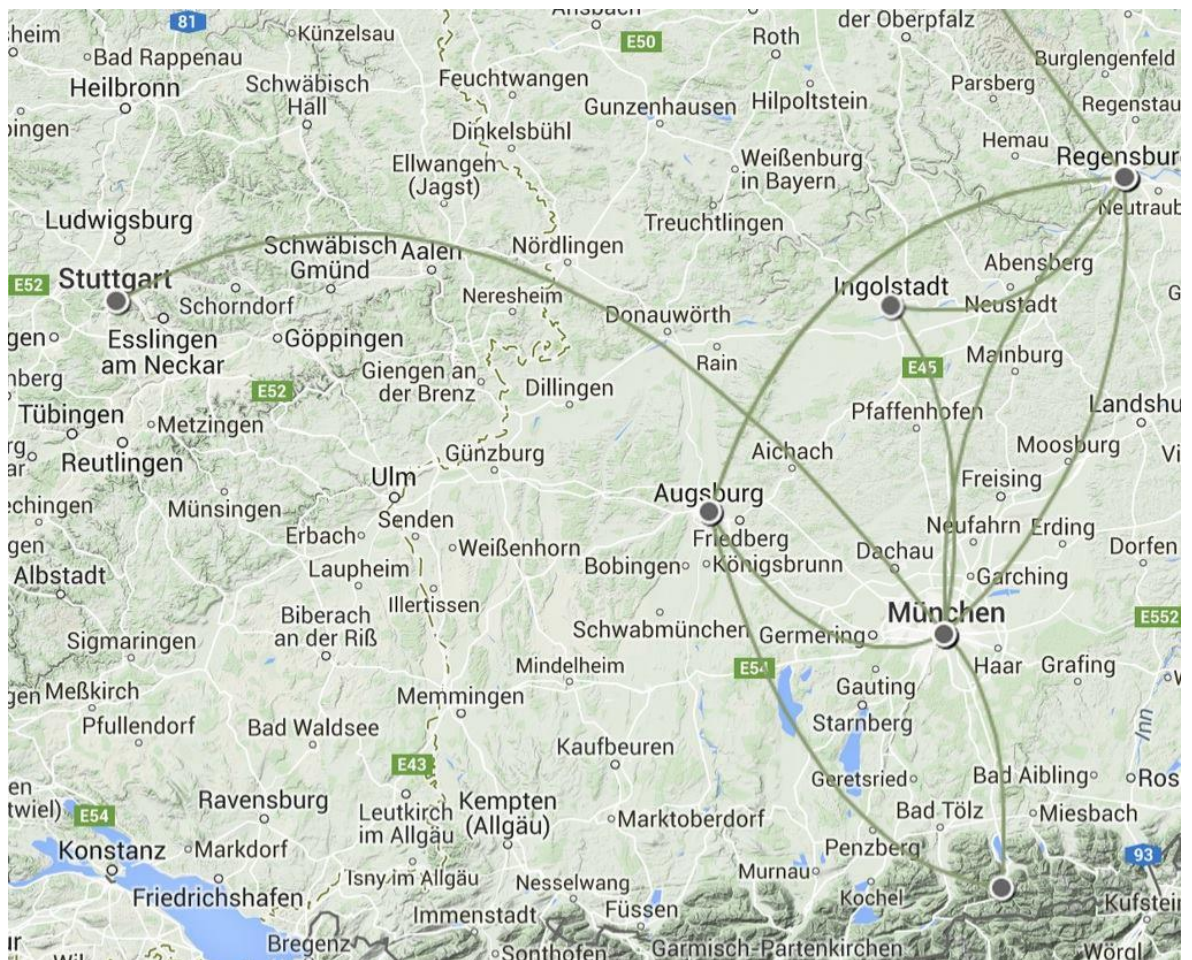
- Full xenon or LED headlights for more clarity at night.
- Automatic transmission
- Built in Navigation preferably with the bigger screen (MMi plus or Navigation professional)
- Leather upholstery
- Sunroof
- Better speakers than the standard ones

- Metallic colour
- Sports package, “S-line” in Audi’s and “M-Sport” on BMW’s. These include stiffer suspension, aerodynamic improvements and sports seats in the front.

4 Schedule

Flights left Helsinki on Tuesday the 10th of March at 18:35 via Copenhagen to Stuttgart. The next crucial date was Sunday the 15th of March, because at 20:00 the ferry connection with Viking Line left towards Turku from Stockholm, which would arrive at Turku at 07:00 on Monday morning. As the beginning and the end points had been established it was easy to build upon. A few friends were met, which changed our schedule. Instead of sleeping in Munich on Friday the 13th, it was spent with friends in Regensburg, which was an hour north of Munich and meant that on Saturday the departure would be a bit later due to being a bit closer to Copenhagen. During this time spent in Germany (figure 1), Wednesday was the only full day spent at searching for the perfect car. This left us time for other activities such as experiencing a few museums and visiting the Bavarian Alps.

Figure 1. Showing our travels within Germany

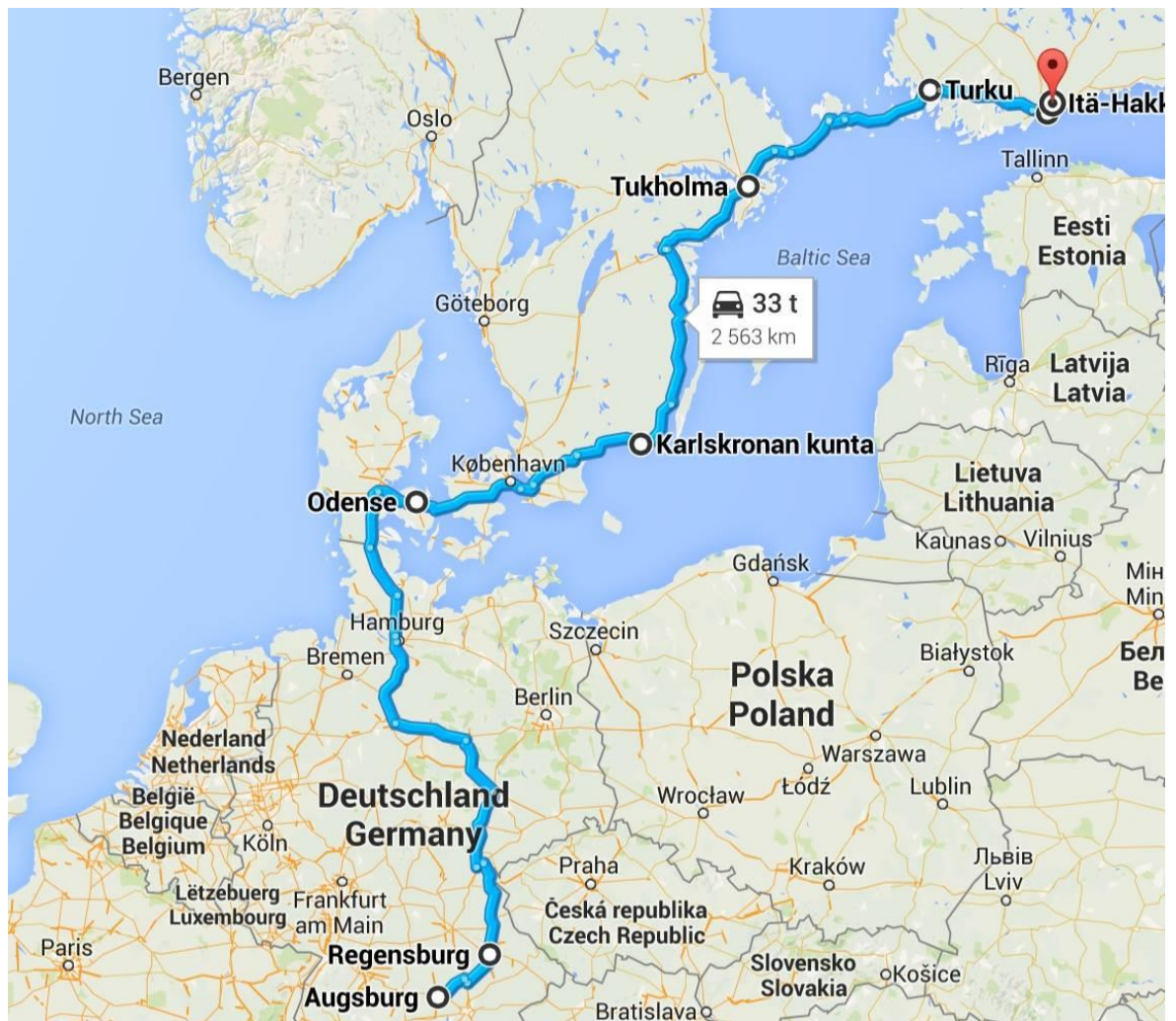


To our luck we managed to find our car on the first day but only picked it up the next day from Thalmassing (Regensburg). Also on the last day, one sightseeing trip was made to Kreuth to see the Bavarian Alps since I have lived by the alps for 20 years.

4.1 Travelling back to Finland

From Augsburg our distance back home (figure 2) was 2563km, which was to be driven in 2 days. We decided to leave on Saturday morning from Regensburg towards Stockholm, where our ferry, bound for Turku would leave. We had to refuel 4 times during the trip. Our cruising speed in Germany was 190km/h but reaching maximum speeds of 256km/h. Average fuel consumption was 10.1L/100km of diesel. Around 256 litres of diesel went on our trip back.

Figure 2. The route back to Finland



Our halfway point was in Copenhagen, where we had a hotel booked. We arrived to Stockholm on Sunday afternoon at 17:00. Ferry left at 19:00. We had booked priority tickets in advance, which means we got to drive into the ship first and leave the ship first in Turku.

5 Theory versus project

Shortly into the trip it becomes evident why many companies offer these services. It requires a lot of planning and executing to just bring back one car. There is a lot of stress involved and the timetable is very tight. A positive thing is the fact that you are able to find exactly the type of car the customer wants. At the same time a few problems rose up due to lack of German speaking skills. For example at the Kraftfahrzeug-Zulassung we would have been in trouble if it weren't for the seller of the BMW since he had also read about exporting the car to Germany. They for one did not know about the country Finland and secondly they did not believe it was part of the EU, which made it even harder because they require the VAT to be paid if the car goes outside of the EU. On top of all this there was no guarantee on the car that brought back against the automatic 6 month guarantee car companies give in Finland. What was good, were the quality of the vehicles. All the stories about fraud and rust in the cars were not true, especially because this was in the south of Germany and secondly because the cars we were considering buying had low mileage. The BMW 335i GT had 16,000km and the car we brought back had 32,000km.

Many cars we looked at had service due in the next 2,000km. Our bought car had had its service just a few months prior to its purchase. This was a bonus as it did not need servicing on the way back home.

The process back in Finland was straight forward mainly because language was not an issue. The key here was not to reveal that the car was in fact in excellent condition. It was marked as good, because anything under gets checked personally by Tulli. It took 3 months for the tax papers for the car to arrive and the taxes were approximately 11,830€, which brought the total price of the car to 49,930€ excluding travel costs, which were a few thousand euros.

This means companies who do this business have two options; either bring more expensive cars, which do not sell as well but have a bigger profit margin or bring average cars, which would sell easier but contain a smaller profit.

6 Conclusion

All in all the trip went well, but as the diary in the attachment shows, it was not a holiday. It was constant moving around and only one dinner was worth mentioning. I wouldn't say it was the ideal holiday, but a fun and actioned packed one, not knowing what the end result will be. We managed to find the car and bring it back. To this day the customs of Finland have not sent their car tax calculation yet but we are adamant it will not exceed over 12,000 euros. Travel expenses for me were around 1300 euros. The total value of the car in Finland if it was to be sold would be around 67,000 euros. The car with the options mentioned was around 110,000 euros new in Finland. I would recommend any one to get their car from Germany because of the better price and optional equipment in the car. Also Germany does not put salt and gravel on the roads as in Finland, which shows on the paintwork of the car. In the pictures it can be seen that the gloss on the paint is much shinier than in Finland. The process of exporting the car was less complicated than expected but with a few words of German anybody should be able to do the process. I felt like it was an experience that I will want to use in the future. Not only do you increase value for money, you get a car which is in better condition. Our timetable was very tight, but for others taking the ship might be a better and easier option from Lübeck-Travemünde.

The Cambridge dictionary defines experience as "(the process of getting) knowledge or skill from doing, seeing, or feeling things or something that happens to you that affects how you feel." (Cambridge Dictionaries online, 2015).

According to another author her description of an experience is something which is meaningful, multi-sensory, positive and comprehensive, which may provide the receiver with personal feelings of change (Tarssanen & Näsi, 2005).

Looking at these two it is evident, that the definition described by Cambridge is only scraping the surface of the definition.

Understanding what experience really is might also help the individual understand what the person has gone through on the trip in terms of emotions. In this project it can be clearly said we had vast experiences during this project from start to finish, and this creates a whole new meaning to those who want to do experience travel.

For real car enthusiasts this type of trip is close to their own Nirvana being able to have a short amount of time in their own freedom.

Should this thesis be published throughout the internet, it might attract a considerable amount of interest for people who wish to and achieve the same, but lack common

knowledge and courage to take the correct decisive actions in importing a car from Germany.

For an update, the car has been in everyday use with the client since this project was implemented. The car currently has 53,000km and no problems have arisen. This can be considered a true success for both parties. A phot of the car can be found in the appendices.

7 Managerial implications

The project was built up on what was expected to happen in Germany. This called for some harder decisions and a good ability to be able to analyze and change according to the situation. Our results reveal that no matter how well trips can be planned there are always force majeure issues. For example the situation where the rental car had to be returned to Munich Airport but seemed useless as the car company had an office in Regensburg as well. Thanks to quick organizational skills this was changed.

Mostly the trip from a manager's point of view was to understand what was planned and then adapt accordingly and inform the team of what was going to happen. No surprises came on that trip. Communication was a key element during the whole trip. Because of it many things were able to be solved in a fraction of the time it actually would have taken. Some things you do dwell about afterwards. The BMW 335i GT was a very strong contender with only 16,000km and the deal would have been even better than with the 535d. But it had to be remembered what the criteria of the customer was.

This trip taught many things, project management, time management and travel planning, all important in the field of modern traveling and tourism. It also gave an opportunity to work with a strict timeline and budget.

8 How to get the export plates

When purchasing a vehicle must have a valid HU/AU and, which is attained through the Technischer Überwachungsverein (TÜV). This means the car is safe to drive in Germany. Every 2 years the cars in Germany must go through the car inspection. If they fail the tests the HU/AU sticker, (which is found on the back registration plate) the government will not give the round sticker. If a car has a valid HU/AU, this is accepted by Tulli in Finland and pushes the Finnish MOT back to the date of the next German MOT.

8.1 ADAC

After purchasing your vehicle, which has a valid HU/AU should you go to ADAC. They are the ones who provide insurance for your vehicle. The maximum duration is 1 month, until you have to move it to your country of residences insurance.

8.2 Kraftfahrzeug-Zulassung

Find out when these are open, since they are government owned and close early on Thursdays and Fridays. Time required for this part can take many hours. With you, you should have your bank account in IBAN (International Bank Account Number) form, a proof of purchase document, which show the cars previous owners, and proof of insurance from ADAC. During this process you will be sent to get license plates. These places are usually next to the Kraftfahrzeug-Zulassung and have a sign, which reads "schilder". After getting the plates you are directed back to the Kraftfahrzeug-Zulassung, where all papers are finalized and the state sticker is received and put on the red export plates. Before leaving they will inspect your vehicle and VIN number.

8.3 Documents

For safety reasons many documents were taken along. These included documents proving the car order and why such large sums of money were being moved around, insurance and health insurance papers. Also all tickets for the airplane fairy and hotel documents were printed beforehand with many extra copies. All copies were also on an iPad as back up.

9 Being careful what you buy

Germany has had a reputation of many cars being frauds. Having experience in buying cars is always important. It is important to understand the following information regarding the purchase of a used car. The first step when seeing the car physically is checking the paintwork. If any visible re-spray is visible, it is a sign the car has had an accident. Secondly, your surroundings, where the car is being sold. We ran into a good deal but backed away when we saw it was a backyard type dealer. Thirdly look at service history. With most cars the servicing is done every 15,000 or 25,000km or 2 years, whichever comes first. The car we acquired had the servicing done at 15,000km, which means the owner had taken care of the car. Remember to check the VIN number of the car on the computer and engine bay to make sure they match. If buying from a private seller go to their home to see the car. All cars bought directly from a shop will help you get the export plates. Private sellers might not be willing, as even they do not know the process and would hate the amount of waiting needed to be done.

10 The car we brought back

On the first day after seeing many cars and test driving only 2; the BMW 335i GT and the BMW 535dA touring it was decided that it was either one of these cars.

The car had 32,000km on it, and had been a leasing car from BMW with a full and clear history. The current owner had acquired the car a year earlier but was selling it because he had gotten a company car. The car came with winter tires but I refused to take them as they are of no use in Finland. The car was on sale in Germany for 40,000 euros but after negotiating I managed to drop the price to 38,100euros. Taxes for the car according to the Finnish customs were under 12,000€.

10.1 The options

The car had everything specified on the list. Just the important ones to mention:

- 8 Speed ZF sport automatic
- Navigation professional, with a 10.1 inch screen and HDD
- Harman/Kardon Logic 7 speakers, 16 speakers 650watts
- Panorama sunroof
- Xenon adaptive headlights with LED daylight running lights
- Sophistograu pearlescent metallic color
- Cinnamon brown all leather interior
- 3.0 twin turbo engine, 306hp and 600nm of torque, diesel.
- Black headlining
- Dark wood interior trim
- M-sport package, body kit, seats, steering wheel, and chassis
- Adaptive drive
- Dynamic drive
- Voice control
- Heads up display
- Speed limit camera
- 19" m-sport rims with run flat tires

The only drawback was the lack of Bluetooth, which would have enabled hands free connectivity. This however can be fitted later on at the BMW Finland dealer just by coding. Other things to do are to update navigation maps and car software and purchase 19" winter tires, preferably BMW OEM and mud flaps, which cost 200€. Picture of the car in figure 3.

Figure 3. BMW 535dA Touring with export plates



More pictures available under attachments.

11 Diary

Day 1

Departure from Helsinki airport at 18:35 towards Stuttgart with a layover in Copenhagen. Arrival in Stuttgart at 22:00. After this head towards the rental car company where we had a booking for a car which was to be given to us at 22:30, from there we would drive to the guesthouse 10km away to spend the night. Car Rental Company does not accept my debit Master card. Only credit cards were accepted. The only way to accept is by taking an additional insurance for the car. This is finally accepted and we get a free car class upgrade from a Volkswagen polo to a Skoda rapid. Leave the airport at around 23:00. Find the guest house located in Filderstadt at 23:30. Basic amenities are in the room but no heating. Go to bed at 01:00 on Wednesday the 11th of May. Alarm set for 5am.

Day 2

Wake up at 5am, quickly pack up our things and get into the car bound for Munich. A few minutes later we start wondering why the car clock shows 04:21. Realize I had not changed my phone time to the German time from the Finnish time. Drive half an hour to a big petrol station to get breakfast. Realize we had only slept 3 hours last night and the day ahead would be a long one. Our first destination was BMW in Munich, which had a collection of thousands of used BMWs. Arrive at 9 am. Look through all the cars, which fit our criteria. Zero found. Either the prices did not fit the criteria or the cars had been driven too much. Back to the ones we found on the mobile.de car site. Realize there is a very good deal on a BMW 335iA GT in Augsburg. Have lunch in the center of Munich. Drive to Augsburg, test drive the car but realize the car has no parking sensors, but otherwise had everything needed. It was a 2013 year car with only 16,000km and a leasing car from BMW. The price was 32,000euros.

Look at the papers of a BMW 535dA touring, which was located in Thalmassing, a 2 hour drive from Augsburg to the North of Munich. Agree with the owner on the phone that we can come see the car. Arrive at 16:00 to Thalmassing. The car looks great. Meet the owner's family. Test drive the car, check the VIN number and the whole history of the car. History of the car matches and the car is in impeccable condition. At the end of the drive whilst drinking coffee, I agree to buy the car for 38,100euros instead of the asking price of 40,000euros. The owner was skeptical when I was willing to give them 38,100euros in cash. Realize the car cannot be registered today. Agree to meet him the next day on Thursday at 10am at his house. Drive back 120km back to our hotel in Munich. Get stuck in a 30km long "stau" (traffic jam). During this time I called my customer and told them I had found and purchased the BMW, which met all their criteria. Everything ok. Get back to

the hotel at around 20:00. Had to meet a friend I had gotten to know whilst living in Hong Kong who was in Munich for Business. Meet her in the center at 21:00. Go to an old fashioned brewery with placement for hundreds of people. Not too impressed. Too noisy but the food was good, but we were both very tired. Head back home at 23:00. Go to sleep at 00:00. Alarm is set for 07:00.

Day 3

Wake up tired, but excited at the same time. Drive to Thalmassing through the morning Stau of Munich. Arrive at the seller's house at 10:02. Not exactly at 10am like the stereotypical Germans, but close enough. The seller respected and laughed that we had made it to Thalmassing nearly on the dot. Drink coffee, pay the money, and off to Regensburg to start the car export process. First the money was taken to the bank to deposited to the sellers bank account and the money to be checked. The bank machine refused to take the money. On the 4th try it accepted it, which was a relief. Next we went to get car insurance from ADAC, which took 15minutes. Then after to the Kfz.- Zulassungsstelle. No word of English was spoken there. They also thought Finland was not part of the EU and we had to tell them three times it was. Checked all my bank details and papers.

Get sent to get plates from autoschilder. Came back after 5 minutes with the plates. Government sticker added. Then the vehicle was inspected by the government official. Plates were given to us and they wished us a happy trip. Ask seller where it would be possible to wash the car. Takes us to the closest self-service car wash. Wash the car. Then realize our rental car has to be taken to Munich airport. This was a bit of trouble for us. Luckily Regensburg had the same car rental company as at the airport. Go to the local car rental company. With the help of the local agree that we can return the car there. Back to Thalmassing pick up rest of the cars keys and documents and take the rental car back to Regensburg. Everything done we decided to go to the Audi Museum located in Ingolstadt. Price was 1euro, which included the parking fee. Walked around the museum for a few hours and then left back to Munich. Tired but happy we decided to eat at the Hotel restaurant. I was not expecting much, but it turned out to be one of the best dinners I had had in a long time. Tartar for starters, pesto gnocchi as a main course and Crème brûlée for dessert. Off to bed early.

Day 4

We woke up at around 08:00 went to eat breakfast and left towards the Bavarian Alps. We did have the room booked for one more night but decided we would sleep at my friends place in Regensburg, who also was in Hong Kong when I lived there. Arrive in a place called Kreuth, look at the scenery and head back towards Munich to the BMW World mu-

seum. Price was 2 euros. Head towards Augsburg where my friend was working. Meet him there and drove 2 hours back to Regensburg at high speeds on the autobahn. Dark, a twisty motorway, and fast speeds of nearly 200km/h. Careful was the word of the day. Went out to a brewery for dinner. Perfect food with not too many people. Then off to a few bars and then to sleep.

Day 5

Wake up at 9. Quick shower and on the road. We had around 1600km ahead of us to Copenhagen, and we were late on our schedule. Say goodbye to my friend and set the cruise control to 190km/h. The road just kept going and so did the rain. Stopped in a huge shopping center to eat lunch and purchased lots of food to be taken back to Finland. 3 hours went by in the mall. After this Überraschung, stau! This in German means Surprise, traffic jam. Luckily it was not that long. Drive even faster to make up for lost time. Night time by the time we reached Hamburg. As the night settled in we kept driving. On the border of Germany and Denmark it read 200km left on the navigator. Not bad it was only 21:00. When we reached Odense we realized the 200km was to Odense, and that we still had 200km to Copenhagen. Drive on into the night. Make it to our Hotel AC Bella Sky in Copenhagen very late. Sleep.

Day 6

Today we had around 800km to drive so we weren't under that much pressure. Ate the Hotel Buffet, which was amazing as it was a five star hotel. Left towards Stockholm at around 10am. On the Swedish border the Swedish customs ask me to get out of the car and show me what's in the boot. They laugh when they find that instead of alcohol I had a boot full of food. They allowed me to pass and to have a safe trip. The road towards Stockholm on the coast was calm and the drivers equally as calm. Stopped only once to eat lunch at a random fuel stop. Enter Stockholm and drive to the port at around 1800. Later on drive inside the ship and go to our cabin. Eat the buffet dinner without alcohol and go to sleep.

Day 7

Out of the boat at exactly 7:30. My friend needed to be at work in Helsinki at 09:00. Make haste. Lots of swearing involved because of all the rocks flying on the motorway. Why?. Make it to Pitäjänmäki a bit after 09:00. Go home, wash the car and take it to the customer's house. Trip finally over.

For photos along the way, please see attachments.

12 Dictionary

During our trip we ran into many words, which I thought were of importance for the future.

ADAC, Allgemeiner Deutscher Automobil-Club. The largest automobile club in Europe. They provide road side assistance with their mobile mechanics and in addition own a number of ambulance helicopters and airplanes. They offer car insurance for the duration of the trip.

AU, Abgasuntersuchen stands for emissions test.

Autoschilder, Vehicle registration plates. These small companies will produce the registration plates for your car. These are not valid without the sticker given by the Kraftfahrzeug- Zulassungsstelle.

CoC, Certificate of Conformity, is a mandatory paper, which is issued with each car, which states that the given car meets a minimum set of regulatory requirements by the EU.

Gebrauchtwagen, Used vehicle.

HU, Hauptuntersuchen, which means that MOT (or Katsastus in Finnish) has been made and is valid until given date.

Kraftfahrzeug- Zulassungsstelle, The office run by the German government, where change of ownership is possible.

Stau, Traffic jam.

TÜV, Technischer Überwachungsverein, every car registered in Germany must have one, which is valid. This means the car has been technically inspected is close to a HU.

Überraschung, Surprise.

VIN, Vehicle identification number, or chassis number. This is the cars identification, which can be found in the engine bay in modern cars.

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Appendices







