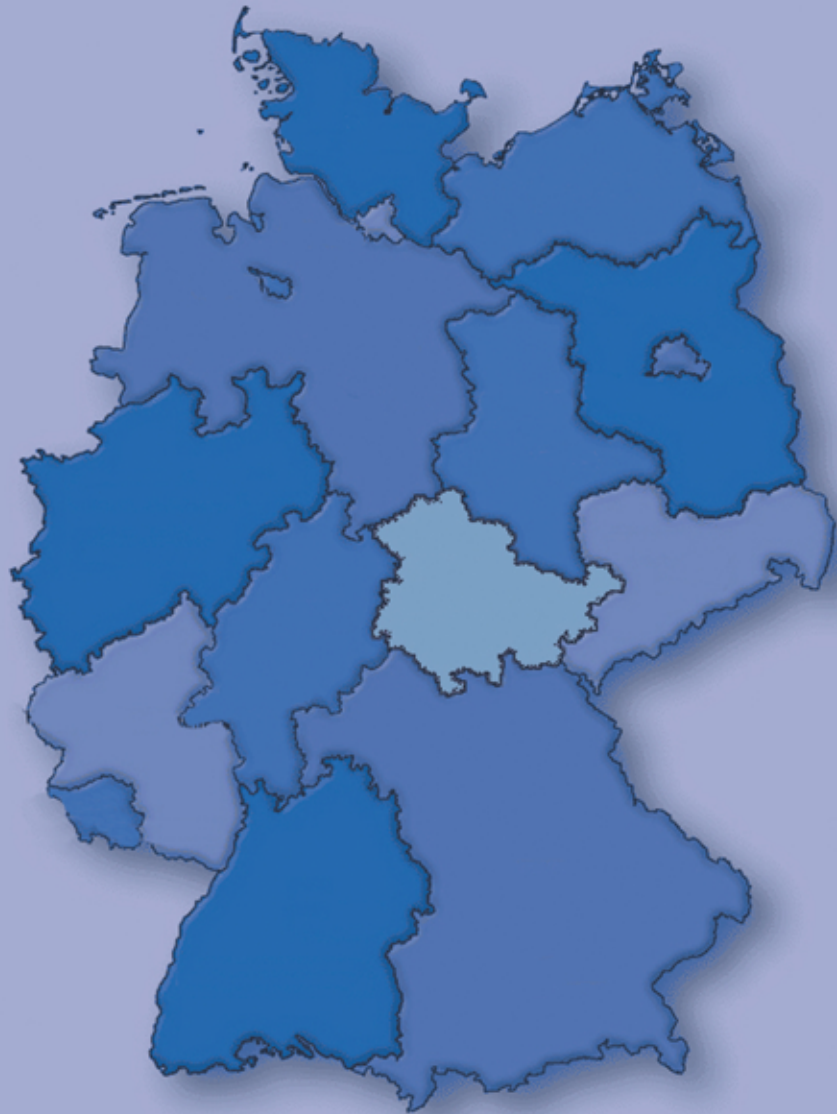




# DO YOU KNOW GERMANY?





# Quick Facts about Germany

Official Name:	Federal Republic of Germany
Official Language:	German
Official Currency:	Euro (€: 1 Euro=100 cents)
Size:	357,022 sq. km (137,810 sq. miles)
Population:	Approximately 82.5 million
Measuring System:	Metric
Federal States:	16 federal states (13 states & 3 city-states)
Federal Flag:	Three same-sized horizontal stripes in black, red, and gold
Federal Seal:	Black eagle over a gold background
National Anthem:	"Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit" (Unity, Justice, and Freedom); third verse of the "Song of Germany," an 1841 August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben poem set to the music of Joseph Haydn's "Emperor Quartet" of 1797
Government System:	Indirect/parliamentary democracy



For more than 150 years the black-red-gold color combination was used in flags during the efforts towards liberty and democracy in Germany. In 1948/1949, the Federal Republic of Germany decided to adopt the black-red-gold color combination to symbolize unity and freedom.



## **DO YOU KNOW GERMANY?**

- 2** Capital, Major Cities, and Tourist Attractions
- 3** Geography
- 4** The European Union and The Euro
- 5** History Timeline
- 8** The Berlin Wall
- 9** Lifestyle & Multiculturalism
- 10** Government, Language, and Religion
- 11** Culture
- 14** Natural Resources, Economy, and Environment
- 15** Education



Berlin's  
Brandenburg  
Gate

**B**erlin is the capital of Germany, as well as one of its largest and most famous cities. In southern Germany, the city of Munich is where a giant Oktoberfest is held every year.

**I**n eastern Germany, the city of Dresden has Raphael Sanzios' famous painting, "The Sistine Madonna." The two little angels at the bottom of the painting are popular around the world.



**I**n western Germany, Düsseldorf is known for being a center of the German fashion world and a great place to shop. Further south is Stuttgart, where German automakers Porsche and Mercedes are based.

**A**ll over Germany there are many cities and towns with castles, cathedrals, even universities and other famous buildings that are hundreds of years old or places with ruins over a thousand years old! Many people come to Germany to look at the towns found in the Brothers Grimm fairy tales. They follow the Fairy Tale Road, which stretches from the little town of Hanau, where the brothers were born, all the way to the city of Bremen, where the fairy tale "The Bremen City Musicians" is set. In between, there are small towns such as Sababurg with Sleeping Beauty's castle and others where the fairy tales took place.



The Bremen  
City Musicians

**G**ermany also has an old route called the Romantic Road. It used to be a trading road through Germany. Now people who travel from Würzburg to Füssen see many of the old towns from the Middle Ages. The famous Neuschwanstein Castle built by King Ludwig the Second of Bavaria ("Mad King Ludwig") is in Füssen. The castle was the inspiration for Cinderella's castle in Walt Disney World.





The Federal Republic of Germany is located in central Europe and surrounded by nine other countries. Germany has mountains, forests, rivers, and beaches. In the winter it can get very cold with snow and in the summertime it can be hot.

At 2,963 meters (9,721 feet) the Zugspitze stands as the highest mountain in Germany. The Zugspitze is in southern Germany, where the Alps mountain range crosses into the country. The lowest point in Germany is a town in the northern part of Germany called Neuendorf bei Wilster. It is only 3.54 meters (11.61 feet) above sea level.



There are also many well-known forests in Germany, such as the Schwarzwald (Black Forest). The Schwarzwald can be found in southwestern Germany and is known for its little villages with half-timber houses. In central Germany, you can find the Harz Mountains, which are famous for old castles and silver mines.

In the north, Germany touches large bodies of water, the Nordsee (North Sea) is on the northwestern border and the Ostsee (Baltic Sea) on the northeastern border.



The Zugspitze

*Fact: The Zugspitze is Germany's tallest mountain*





The EU flag is blue with yellow stars

Germany is one of the six nations that were a part of the first European community in 1951, which eventually led to the European Union. Today, the European Union is a growing community of European nations.

There is a single currency, the Euro, used in many of the EU countries, including Germany. The EU unites 27 member states and nearly 500 million people. The EU seeks to bring the different member countries closer together while each country maintains its independence and cultural traditions.

The EU makes traveling and working abroad much easier for EU citizens.

They can now live and work without a lot of paperwork that was necessary before. While countries within the EU may all speak different languages, they are united through the EU and work together to make Europe a better place.

Germany switched to the Euro on January 1, 2002. Before the Euro, Germany used the Deutsche Mark for many years.



The Euro



*Fact: The EU unites 27 member states and nearly 500 million people*



Around AD 180 – The Romans build a wall around the city of Trier. Today, the remains of the gates can still be seen in the city.



Johannes Gutenberg invents the moveable type printing press. Without it, there would be no bookstores today. The first book printed on his printing press is the Bible.



Johann Sebastian Bach is born in Eisenach.



Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm publish their first collection of fairy tales called "Children's and Household Tales."

Johannes Brahms is born in Hamburg.



Felix Hoffmann synthesizes a pain reliever that later becomes known as aspirin.

Chancellor Otto von Bismarck unifies Germany for the first time. Wilhelm I is proclaimed German Emperor.

180 AD    800    1452    1517    1685    1749    1770    1812    1833    1848    1870    1895    1897



Charlemagne becomes one of the early emperors of the Frankish Empire. Charlemagne fought many wars in order to gain land for his empire, which included what is now called Germany.



Martin Luther nails his famous 95 theses to the door of a church in Wittenberg. This starts the Protestant Reformation.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe is born in Frankfurt am Main.



Ludwig van Beethoven is born in Bonn.

The "March Revolution," between March 1848 and the summer of 1849, was a national, democratic, civil uprising, and a first attempt to create a free, democratic, and unified German nation. The first German national assembly convened in the Paulskirche, Frankfurt/Main.



Albert Einstein develops the theory of relativity.





The catastrophe of World War I cost the lives of almost 15 million people.

Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor. He will eventually become a dictator and lead the Germans into World War II.



Through his invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939, Hitler unleashes WWII. 60 million people perish. Six million Jews from all over Europe are murdered during the Holocaust.



After the end of the war, the four Allied Powers divide Germany. The U.S., France, and Great Britain control the West, while the Soviet Union controls the East.



The Soviet Union tries to block the western part of Berlin, which lies in the heart of the Soviet-controlled part of Germany, but U.S. and British planes bring all the supplies the people in Berlin need. This becomes known as the Berlin Airlift.



1914

1919

1933

1938 1939

1944 1945

1948

1949



After Philipp Scheidemann's proclamation of a republic on November 9, 1918, elections are held for the National Assembly on January 19, 1919.



On November 9, the Nazis destroy Jewish homes, businesses, synagogues, and schools. People are killed. The persecutions intensify.



Individuals like Dietrich Bonhoeffer and groups such as Weisse Rose try to resist Nazi dictatorship. On July 2, Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg and other resistance fighters explode a bomb in a failed attempt to assassinate Hitler.



The *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), a constitutional document establishing democracy again and protecting the rule of law, enters into force. West Germany has a democratic government. The government in East Germany is communist.

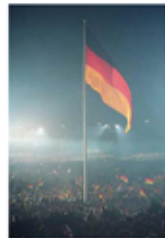


About 1 million people demonstrate in the East to show their discontent with the government. The uprising is crushed by Soviet tanks.



The Berlin Wall is built by East Germany in order to prevent people from leaving the country. East and West Germany are sealed off from each other through a "death strip."

The Treaty of Friendship between Germany and France is signed.



West Germany and East Germany unite on October 3rd, the new German national holiday called the Day of German Unity.



Germany elects its first female Chancellor, Angela Merkel, who is also the first Chancellor to come from the former East Germany.

1953      1957      1961      1963      1970      1989      1990      1995      2005      2007



The Treaties of Rome are signed. They are the founding documents of today's European Union.



West German Chancellor Willy Brandt kneels before the memorial for victims of the uprising in the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw. This becomes the symbol of the German plea for reconciliation.



After many weeks of protests and mass demonstrations by East Germans against the communist government, the Berlin Wall falls on November 9.



A team at the Fraunhofer Institut under Karlheinz Brandenburg invents the audio compression method used for MP3 devices.

2007 DE

Germany holds the rotating EU presidency from January 1 – June 30.



The government of East Germany built a wall around West Berlin in 1961 and sealed off East Germany from the West. People could no longer freely travel between East and West Germany.

This meant that people with family members on both sides of the wall could no longer see each other. The wall stayed in place for 28 years. During those years, many people in East Germany tried to go to West Germany. Sadly, many were hurt or killed.



Wall artwork featuring a Trabant

The Berlin Wall

In the fall of 1989, protests in East Germany against the government intensified and spread rapidly. People wanted to end the communist government, be free to elect their own leaders, and be able to travel whenever they wanted. The Berlin Wall began to fall after weeks of protests on November 9, 1989. The East German government did not stop people from tearing down the wall or crossing the border. On October 3, 1990, East and West Germany officially reunited.



**Fact:** The Berlin Wall fell on November 9, 1989



With almost 83 million people, Germany is by far the largest country in the EU in terms of population. It is a modern, cosmopolitan country. Its society is shaped by many different lifestyles and great diversity. Most people – both young and old – are well-educated and enjoy a high standard of living. German society also faces social challenges, such as an aging society and dealing with immigration.

The family is very important in Germany and is often considered the center of life. Almost 90 percent of the population places the family first in their list of personal priorities. Young people also value it very highly: 70 percent of 12 to 25 year-olds think that being happy is dependent on having a family. Even though family is important, the families are different in Germany now than in the past. Sixty percent of mothers in Germany have jobs. Families have also become smaller. There are more single-child families than those with three or more children.

There are two main immigrant groups in Germany. The first group is made up of foreigners who came from southern and southeastern Europe in the 1950s and Turkey in the 1960s as “guest workers” to participate in the booming German economy. Most of these workers returned to their home countries, but many also stayed in Germany. About 1.5 million foreigners in Germany have taken German citizenship. The second group is made up of people with German heritage, who have been living in the states of the former Soviet Union, Romania, and Poland for many generations.



*Fact: Almost 90% of the population places the family first.*





Inside the German Parliament building

Germany's government is called a parliamentary democracy or indirect democracy. Germans are free to choose their own leaders through elections on the local, state, and national level.

German is the official language in Germany. As the mother tongue of roughly 100 million people, it is spoken by more people than any other language in the European Union. In the Middle Ages, English and German were very similar languages.



The *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law) of the Federal Republic of Germany grants all Germans freedom of religion. There is no state religion. In school, students learn about all major religions and discuss moral and ethical issues.

English	German
grass	Gras
bus	Bus
butter	Butter
hotel	Hotel
hunger	Hunger
kindergarten	Kindergarten



*Fact: There are many words that are still the same in English and German*



*German Bratwurst and Sauerkraut*

Germany is very famous for some of its food. People around the world enjoy eating bratwurst, sauerkraut, gummy bears, or Black Forest cake. German beer and wine are famous around the world.

Organic food is also very popular and stores for organic products are expanding across Germany.



Christmas is a very big holiday in Germany. Christmas trees, advent calendars, and singing carols such as "O, Christmas Tree" are all German traditions that have become popular all over the world. German families open their gifts on December 24. Unlike the U.S., Germany celebrates Christmas over two days - December 25 and December 26.

Karneval (Carnival) is another special German season. Clowns and other costumed figures lead parades and throw candy and other goodies from floats for people to catch. There are many other local holidays that are celebrated all around Germany. Most of these holidays have a religious background.



*Fact: In Germany, Christmas is observed on December 25 and 26.*





German children play many of the same board and video games as children in America. The games often just have German names. The same is true about German children's books. Many of the books popular in America are translated into German and also very popular in Germany. Germany has its own famous books, such as those by Walter Moers, who chronicles the adventures of Käpt'n Blaubär (Captain Bluebear).

Popular songs in Germany come in all different styles and in many different languages. Everything from rock to rap and much more in German, English, and other languages can be heard on German radio stations. Germany has also produced many famous classical composers like Beethoven, Brahms, and Bach.

Children in Germany watch a lot of the same television shows and movies as children in America. Often, it takes just a few months for a popular show or movie to be translated into German. But there are also shows that are different from other countries. The character known as Tigerente was first drawn by German artist Janosch for children's books. Later, Tigerente had his own TV show just for kids.



*Phillip relaxes to music*



*Fact: Many German games and TV shows are the same or similar as in the US.*



Everyday clothes in Germany are like those in America. German kids wear t-shirts, sweaters, and jeans to school. On special holidays in southern Germany, people may wear a Dirndl (traditional women's dress) or Lederhosen (traditional men's leather shorts).

Germany has many famous people from all areas of life, past and present. Famous classical composers such as Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludwig van Beethoven came from Germany. Jacob and Wilhem Grimm, known as the "Brothers Grimm," also lived in Germany. Germany was also home to famous scientists such as Albert Einstein. Gerhard Richter, a famous modern artist, and Heidi Klum, a model and television personality, also call Germany home.



Heidi Klum

German sports stars such as Katarina Witt, a figure skating champion, and Michael Schumacher, a famous race car driver, are known around the world. Dirk Nowitzki is a German basketball player in the NBA.

One of the most popular sports in Germany is *Fußball* (soccer). Fußball literally means football. Germany has twice hosted the World Cup, the world championship of soccer. Other sports such as hockey, car racing, tennis, skiing, cycling, handball, gymnastics, and many more are also popular in Germany.



*Fact: Soccer is one of the most popular sports in Germany.*







Silver was very important to Germany in the past. Germany has many other natural resources such as coal, natural gas, iron ore, copper, nickel, and timber. Germany is one of the most industrialized nations and a top exporter in the world. Giant technology firms such as Siemens are based in Germany and employ people all over the world. Germany also exports many cars. BMW, Mercedes, Porsche, Audi, and Volkswagen are all German car brands. They are just some of the many German products you see around the world.

Germany actively supports environmental protection. For example, Germany is worried about the amount of greenhouse gases it produces. In order to change that, it has already lowered its emissions of greenhouse gases by 18.5 percent and it is now very close to its goal of 21 percent.

Recycling is a significant part of German national environmental efforts. The Grüner Punkt (Green Dot) is Germany's recycling system and one of the most successful recycling systems in the world. The Grüner Punkt has the German

people using less paper, thinner glass, and less metal to produce less waste. A major part of the success of this program is the proper sorting of garbage so it can be easily recycled.



*There are five different bins for recycling materials and each has its own color:*

Blue	Paper
Green	Glass
Yellow	Everything with a "Grüner Punkt"- Cans, plastic, polystyrene, aluminum, tinplate, and composite
Brown	Biological waste - this includes kitchen scraps, peels, leftover food, coffee filters, tea bags, and garden waste.
Grey	Garbage



*Fact: Germany has already lowered its emissions of greenhouse gases by 18.5%*



What Americans know as kindergarten is the same name Germans use for preschool. German school officially begins with first grade, usually at the age of 6. When German students start first grade, they get a large cone filled with candy and school supplies from their parents. Grundschule (elementary school) goes from first grade until fourth grade. Then, parents and teachers choose one of several types of school for children after elementary school.



Many German children go on to a Gymnasium (college preparatory high school) from fifth grade until twelfth or thirteenth grade. When students graduate from Gymnasium, they get a diploma called an Abitur and can go on to college.



Other children may go to Realschule (technical academic high school) until the tenth grade. Students who graduate from Realschule after tenth grade can continue to study at a Gymnasium or start to learn a trade.

Another choice is Hauptschule (secondary school), where students study general subjects. Students must attend Hauptschule for at least 5 years.

*Fact: German college preparatory high school is called Gymnasium.*





Remember to visit Germany for Kids online at [www.germany.info/kids](http://www.germany.info/kids) to meet Phillip, play online games, and look up new information about Germany.

Teachers! Visit [www.Germany.info](http://www.Germany.info) for Germany in Class, our teacher newsletter, along with educational kits and more for your classroom.

To keep up to date on current events, culture, politics, and sports, subscribe to The Week in Germany or Deutschland Nachrichten, the electronic newsletters of the German Information Center USA, at [www.Germany.info](http://www.Germany.info).

Published by:

The German Information Center USA  
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany  
Washington, D.C.  
[www.Germany.info](http://www.Germany.info)

Photo/Graphic Sources:

Auswaertiges Amt: Cover, p. 7  
Bildzentrale: p. 7  
colourbox.com: p. 11, p. 14, p. 15,  
dpa Picture-Alliance GmbH: p. 4, p. 5, p. 6, p. 7, p. 8, p. 14  
German National Tourist Board: Cover, p. 2, p. 3, p. 5, p. 10, p. 11, p. 13  
HK Company: p. 13  
istockphoto.com: Cover, p. 2, p. 3, p. 4, p. 5, p. 6, p. 7, p. 8, p. 9, p. 11, p. 12, p. 15  
Presse-und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (BPA): p. 4, p. 7, p. 8, p. 10, p. 11

German  
Information  
Center USA



© 2007 German Information Center USA  
All rights reserved

A vertical bar on the left side of the page, transitioning from black at the top to red in the middle, and yellow at the bottom.

German  
Information  
Center USA



© 2007 German Information Center USA  
All rights reserved