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You can browse through the topics or also download a PDF version for yourself.Facts about Germany Overview "Resources for You" interesting and important facts about the Federal Republic of Germany UNESCO Unique world heritage Share Overlay schließen Quiz Quiz about Germany Who was the first Federal Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany? How many times has the German men's national soccer team won the FIFA World Cup? What is the name of Germany's highest mountain? How many people live in Germany? Which means of transport was invented in Germany in 1817? Who is the Federal Republic's head of state? The chairperson of the party with the largest number of votes What is the name of Germany's largest island? Which author and Nobel laureate was born in Germany in 1917? How many states (Länder) are there in Germany? Why is the German economy so strong? Ten facts about the job market in Germany Does Germany have ...? Does Germany have a ...? Introduction & Quick Facts References & Edit History Facts & Stats Geography & Travel Countries of the World Germany, country of north-central Europe, traversing the continent's main physical divisions, from the outer ranges of the Alps northward across the varied landscape of the Central German Uplands and then across the North German Plain.One of Europe's largest countries, Germany encompasses a wide variety of landscapes: the tall, sheer mountains of the south; the sandy, rolling plains of the north; the forested hills of the urbanized west; and the plains of the agricultural east. At the spiritual heart of the country is the magnificent east-central city of Berlin, which rose phoenixlike from the ashes of World War II and now, after decades of partition, is the capital of a reunified Germany, and the Rhine River, which flows northward from Switzerland and is celebrated in visual art, literature, folklore, and song. Along its banks and those of its principal tributaries—among them the Neckar, Main, Moselle, and Ruhr—stand hundreds of medieval castles, churches, picturesque villages, market towns, and centers of learning and culture, including Heidelberg, the site of one of Europe's oldest universities (founded in 1386), and Mainz, historically one of Europe's most important publishing centers. All are centerpieces of Germany's thriving tourist economy, which brings millions of visitors to the country each year, drawn by its natural beauty, history, culture, and cuisine (including its renowned wines and beers). Audio File: Anthem of Germany (see article) Head Of Government: Chancellor: Friedrich Merz Capital: Berlin3 Population: (2025 est.) 83,433,000 Currency Exchange Rate: 1 USD equals 0.871 euro Head Of State: President: Frank-Walter Steinmeier Form Of Government: federal multiparty republic with two legislative houses (Bundesrat, or Federal Council [691]; German Bundestag, or Federal Assembly [6312]) Official Language: German Official Religion: none Official Name: Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Federal Republic of Germany) Total Area (Sq Km): 357,596 Total Area (Sq Mi): 138,068 Monetary Unit: euro (€) Population Rank: (2025) 19 Population Projection 2030: 84,888,000 Density: Persons Per Sq Mi: (2025) 604.3 Density: Persons Per Sq Km: (2025) 233.3 Urban-Rural Population: Urban: (2018) 77.3% Rural: (2018) 22.7% Life Expectancy At Birth: Male: (2021–2023) 78.2 years Female: (2021–2023) 83 years Literacy: Percentage Of Population Age 15 And Over Literate: Male: 100% Female: 100% Gni (U.S.\$ '000,000): (2023) 4,563,534 Gni Per Capita (U.S.\$): (2023) 54,800 Officially: Federal Republic of Germany The name Germany has long described not a particular place but the loose, fluid polity of Germanic-speaking peoples that held sway over much of western Europe north of the Alps for millennia. Although Germany in that sense is an ancient entity, the German nation in more or less its present form came into being only in the 19th century, when Prussian Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck brought together dozens of German-speaking kingdoms, principalities, free cities, bishoprics, and duchies to form the German Empire in 1871. This so-called Second Reich quickly became Europe's leading power and acquired colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. That overseas empire was dismantled following Germany's defeat in World War I and the abdication of Emperor William II. Economic depression, widespread unemployment, and political strife that verged on civil war followed, leading to the collapse of the progressive Weimar Republic and the rise of the Nazi Party under Adolf Hitler. After gaining power in 1933, Hitler established the Third Reich and soon thereafter embarked on a ruinous crusade to conquer Europe and exterminate Jews, Roma (Gypsies), homosexuals, and others.The Third Reich disintegrated in 1945, brought down by the Allied armies of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, France, and other countries. The victorious powers divided Germany into four zones of occupation and later into two countries: the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany), separated for more than 40 years by a long boundary. In East Germany this boundary was, until the fall of its communist government in 1989, marked by defenses designed to prevent escape. The 185 square miles (480 square km) of the "island" of West Berlin were similarly ringed from 1961 to 1989 by the Berlin Wall running through the city and by a heavily guarded wire-mesh fence in the areas abutting the East German countryside. Although Berlin was a flashpoint between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, the city declined in national and international significance until 1989–90, when a popular and peaceful uprising toppled the East German government and soon after restored a united Berlin as the capital of a reunified Germany.Since World War II, Germany has made great efforts to both commemorate the victims and redress the crimes of the Holocaust, providing strong material and political support for the state of Israel and actively prosecuting hate crimes and the propagation of neo-Nazi doctrine; the latter became an issue in the 1990s with the rise in Germany of anti-immigrant skinhead groups and the availability of Hitler's Mein Kampf over the Internet. Clearly, modern Germany struggles to balance its national interests with those of an influx of political and economic refugees from far afield, especially North Africa, Turkey, and South Asia, an influx that has fueled ethnic tensions and swelled the ranks of nationalist political parties, particularly in eastern Germany, where unemployment was double that of the west. Tensions became especially acute in the second decade of the 21st century, when more than one million migrants entered Germany in the wake of the revolutions of the Arab Spring and the Syrian Civil War. Which Country Is Larger By Population? Quiz How did Berlin become the capital of reunified Germany?Overview of the decision to make Berlin—rather than Bonn—the capital of reunified Germany.See all videos for this articleThe constitution of the republic, adopted in 1949 by West Germany, created a federal system that gives significant government powers to its constituent Länder (states). Before unification there were 11 West German Länder (including West Berlin, which had the special status of a Land without voting rights), but, with the accession of East Germany, there are now 16 Länder in the unified republic. The largest of the states is Bavaria (Bayern), the richest is Baden-Württemberg, and the most populous is North Rhine-Westphalia (Nordrhein-Westfalen).Matters of national importance, such as defense and foreign affairs, are reserved to the federal government. At both the state and federal levels, parliamentary democracy prevails. The Federal Republic has been a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) since 1955 and was a founding member of the European Economic Community (see European Union). During the four decades of partition, the Federal Republic concluded a number of agreements with the Soviet Union and East Germany, which it supported to some extent economically in return for various concessions with regard to humanitarian matters and access to Berlin. West Germany's rapid economic recovery in the 1950s (Wirtschaftswunder, or "economic miracle") brought it into a leading position among the world's economic powers, a position that it has maintained. Much of Germany's post-World War II success has been the result of the renowned industriousness and self-sacrifice of its people, about which novelist Günter Grass, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1999, remarked, "To be a German is to make the impossible possible." He added, more critically, "For in our country everything is geared to growth. We're never satisfied. For us enough is never enough. We always want more. If it's on paper, we convert it into reality. Even in our dreams we're productive. This devotion to hard work has combined with a public demeanor—which is at once reserved and assertive—to produce a stereotype of the German people as aloof and distant. Yet Germans prize both their private friendships and their friendly relations with neighbors and visitors, place a high value on leisure and culture, and enjoy the benefits of life in a liberal democracy that has become ever more integrated with and central to a united Europe. Germany's economic success since World War Two is to a large extent built on its export industries, fiscal discipline, and consensus-driven industrial relations and welfare policies. It is particularly famed for its high-quality and high-tech goods.Germany's export-dependent economy was initially hit hard by the global financial crisis of 2008–9, which triggered the worst recession since 1949. But by 2010 its exports had helped to rebound more robustly than most other EU members.The pain of Germany's Nazi legacy remains a sensitive issue. Out of the devastation of the Second World War grew an awareness of the need to guard against any such catastrophe recurring in Europe.In the 1950s Germany was one of the six founding nations of the European Economic Community from which the European Union eventually developed and in which Germany is a key player. Franco-German cooperation was central to European economic integration in the 1980s and 1990s.After decades of lagging behind its economic strength, Germany's international profile has been growing. The country sent peacekeepers to the Balkans and its forces have been involved in operations in Afghanistan. Germany has also taken a leading role in dealing with Russia's armed intervention in Ukraine.The government's decision in 2015 to allow large numbers of migrants from the Middle East and Africa has led to considerable social and political tension, and spurred the anti-migrant Alternative for Germany party's parliamentary breakthrough in the elections two years later. What makes Germany a unique country to travel to? Country Description Germany is a modern and stable democracy. Tourist facilities are highly developed. In larger towns, many people can communicate in English. Crime Violent crime is rare in Germany but can occur, especially in larger cities or high-risk areas such as on large metropolitan subway systems and in train stations, primarily during late night or early morning hours. There have been several reports of aggravated assault against U.S. citizens in higher-risk urban areas. However, most incidents of street crime involve the theft of unattended items and pickpocketing. Take the same precautions that you would in any large city. Don't buy counterfeit and pirated goods, even if they are widely available. Not only are the bootlegs illegal to bring back into the United States, but by purchasing them you could also be breaking local law. Criminal Penalties While traveling in Germany, you are subject to its laws, even if you are a U.S. citizen. Foreign laws and legal systems can be vastly different from our own. While you are overseas, U.S. laws do not apply, and if you do something illegal in your host country, your U.S. passport won't help you avoid arrest or prosecution. It is very important to know what is legal and what is not, as criminal penalties vary from country to country. There are also some things that may be legal where you are traveling, but illegal in the United States; for example, if you engage in sexual conduct with children or use or disseminate child pornography in a foreign country, you can be prosecuted in the United States. The Embassy has learned of some incidents of German lawyers, working on behalf of media companies, aggressively identifying individuals who are illegally downloading copyrighted content and then billing those people 1000 Euros or more per incident. If these cases are brought to court, German courts will likely rule in favor of the companies. You are strongly advised not to download media content except from reputable legal sites. Arrest Notifications in Germany: While some countries will automatically notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate if a U.S. citizen is detained or arrested in a foreign country that is not the case in Germany. To ensure that the United States is aware of your circumstances, request that the police and prison officials notify the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you are arrested or detained. Languages German (official); note - Danish, Frisian, Sorbian, and Romani are official minority languages; Low German, Danish, North Frisian, Sater Frisian, Lower Sorbian, Upper Sorbian, and Romani are recognized as regional languages under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages Medical Facilities and Health Information Germany has good medical care and facilities. If you are not a resident of Germany, doctors and hospitals may expect immediate payment in cash. Most doctors, hospitals, and pharmacies do not accept credit cards. Due to Germany's strict customs regulations, generally, you are not allowed to receive prescription medication by mail without special permission. During your trip, you should only carry the amount you plan to use. Safety and Security German authorities are vigilant in combating terrorism and other threats to security. Authorities have uncovered and disrupted several extremist plots including some targeting U.S. interests. The most recent deadly attack occurred in March 2011, when two U.S. Airmen were killed and two others wounded when a lone Islamic extremist opened fire on them at the Frankfurt International Airport. Like other countries in the Schengen area, Germany's open borders with its European neighbors limit its ability to track suspicious individuals entering and exiting the country with anonymity. Germany's robust democracy is often expressed in large, public demonstrations on a variety of political and economic issues. Such demonstrations are common on politically significant holidays, such as German Labor Day on May 1, and during international summits hosted in Germany. In order to stage a demonstration, groups must obtain prior police approval, and police routinely oversee participants and passersby. Nonetheless, these demonstrations can attract counter-demonstrations and have the potential to turn violent. Avoid areas around protests and demonstrations and check local media for updates on the situation and traffic advisories. U.S. citizens should exercise caution when congregating in areas known as expatriate hangouts such as restaurants, bars, and discos frequented by high numbers of resident U.S. citizens and/or U.S. citizen tourists. In addition, hooligans, most often drunken "skinheads," have been known to harass or even attack people whom they believe to be foreigners or members of rival groups. On occasion, German police reported assaults that appeared to have been motivated by racial reasons, and U.S. citizens have reported that they were assaulted for racial reasons or because they appeared "foreign." Traffic Safety and Road Conditions In Germany, road conditions can be significantly different from those in the United States. If you hold a valid U.S. driver's license, you can drive in Germany for up to six months without acquiring a German driver's license. Drivers should be aware that traffic signs in Germany differ from those in the United States, and it is important to be familiar with road signage prior to driving. Basic information about road signs in Germany is available here. German road conditions in general are excellent, although you should exercise caution while traveling on older roads in eastern Germany. Contrary to popular belief, there are posted speed limits on large stretches of the highway, or Autobahn, mostly when traveling through urban areas or when the road has many curves. The high speed permitted on the Autobahn, adverse weather conditions, and unfamiliar road markings can pose significant hazards. Driver error is a leading cause of accidents involving U.S. citizen motorists in Germany. Bicycles are another cause of mishaps. Many German streets and sidewalks have dedicated bike lanes. Whether you are driving or walking, be aware that bicycles have priority use of these lanes. If you are walking, watch for bicyclists before crossing or stepping into bike lanes. Bicyclists also have priority over cars when turning onto side streets. If you are driving, check whether a bicyclist is approaching from either direction before attempting to enter side streets, even when the light is in your favor. If you are turning into a side street and hit a bicyclist using a marked bike lane, you will be held responsible for any injury or damage caused. Driver right-of-way rules are different from the United States. Unless you are traveling on a priority road, vehicles coming from the right have the right-of-way. It is generally illegal in Germany to pass vehicles on the right. The threshold for determining whether a person has been driving under the influence of alcohol is lower than in the United States. Under German law, it is illegal to operate a vehicle if the blood level is 0.5 per mill or higher. The law imposes a penalty and the withdrawal of the driver's license for specified periods of time depending upon the gravity of each violation. It is illegal to use your cell phone while driving in Germany. Moritzburg Palace ©DZT (Francesco Carovillano) Stralsund: St.Nikolai church and the old town hall at the market in the Hanseatic city ©DZT (Francesco Carovillano) Berlin: Observation Trabi in the German Spy Museum ©Deutsches Spionagemuseum Ramsau: Hintersee mit dem Berg Hochkalter ©Getty Images (Cyril Gosselin) Berlin: Government district, Spree, Reichstag, Paul-Löbe-Haus, centre ©visitBerlin (Dagmar Schwelle) Berchtesgaden: Nationalpark bei Sonnenaufgang ©Getty Images (DieterMeyr) Potsdam: Wolfgang Mattheuer's Century Step in front of the Museum Barberini ©TMB-Fotoarchiv (Steffen Lehmann) Berlin: Bode Museum with TV Tower at sunset, UNESCO World Heritage Site ©Getty Images (RICOWde) Learn more Discover Germany Germany, situated in Central Europe, covers a total area of approximately 357,022 km2 (about 137,847 mi2). This country shares its borders with nine countries: Denmark to the north, Poland and the Czech Republic to the east, Austria and Switzerland to the south, and France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Netherlands to the west. The Baltic Sea and the North Sea form the northern maritime borders. The geography of Germany generally consists of four regions: the North German Plain, the Central Uplands, the Southern German Scarplands, and the Bavarian Alps.The North German Plain is a flat, low-lying area that extends from the country's northern coastline to as far south as the foothills of the Central Uplands; it is a small segment of the North European Plain. The region displays a range of terrain, from sandy beaches and marshlands along the coast to fertile farmlands more centrally located. The North German Plain also incorporates major urban centers, including Hamburg and Berlin.The Central Uplands: To the south of the North German Plain lies the Central Uplands, which are essentially a collection of several low mountain ranges. The Harz Mountains, the Thuringian Forest, the Black Forest, the Ore Mountains, and the Schwäbische Alb are among the most notable features of this region. The Central Uplands offer an undulating terrain, interspersed with forests, valleys, and rivers. The region forms a watershed divide between the major river systems of Germany, namely the Rhine and Elbe. The Southern German Scarplands, which encompass the Swabian and Franconian Jura, as well as the Bavarian Plateau, occupy the region south of the Central Uplands. This geographical region, featuring Jurassic limestone plateaus, is characterized by its stepped topography, rolling hills, and extensive forests. The Bavarian Alps: On the extreme southern edge of the country lie the Bavarian Alps, part of the greater European Alps range. The Zugspitze, the highest peak in Germany at 2,962 meters (about 9,718 feet), resides here. These mountains, renowned for their snow-covered peaks and glacial valleys, are a significant part of Germany's geographical profile. Bodies of Water: The North Sea and the Baltic Seas, connected by the Kiel Canal, serve as important waterways for international shipping in and around Germany. In the interior, Lake Constance is the largest freshwater lake, bordering Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Lake Müritz is another notable body of water, being the largest lake entirely within Germany's borders. Rivers: The most substantial rivers in Germany are the Rhine, the Elbe, and the Danube. The Rhine, the longest river in Germany, originates in the Swiss Alps and meanders northwards, and the upper Rhine portion forms a natural border with France before flowing through western Germany and into the North Sea. The Elbe, flowing from the Czech Republic through eastern Germany, also empties into the North Sea. The Danube, the second-longest river in Europe, rises in the Black Forest of southwest Germany and flows eastwards across multiple countries before reaching the Black Sea. Islands: Germany is also home to a collection of islands, mostly found in the North and Baltic Seas. The largest of these are Sylt, Rügen, and Usedom. Sylt, a part of the North Frisian Islands, is known for its long sandy beaches. Rügen and Usedom, situated in the Baltic Sea, feature popular beach resorts and nature reserves. Germany (officially, the Federal Republic of Germany) is divided into 16 states (Länder, sing. Land) [commonly, referred to as Bundesländer (federal states)]. In alphabetical order, the states are: Baden-Wuerttemberg, Bayern (Bavaria), Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen (Hesse), Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania), Niedersachsen (Lower Saxony), Nordrhein-Westfalen (North Rhine - Westphalia), Rheinland-Pfalz (Rhineland-Palatinate), Saarland, Sachsen (Saxony), Sachsen-Anhalt (Saxony-Anhalt), Schleswig-Holstein and Thuringen (Thuringia). The states are further divided into 401 administrative districts, of which there are 294 rural districts (Kreise) and 107 urban districts (Kreisfreie Städte). [Note: Sachsen, Sachsen and Thuringen refer to themselves as Free states (Freistaat, sing. Freistaat), while Bremen calls itself a Free Hanseatic City (Freie Hansestadt) and Hamburg considers itself a Free and Hanseatic City (Freie und Hansestadt)] With an area of 357,022 sq. km, Germany is the 7th largest country in Europe. It is also the 2nd most populous country in Europe and the most populous member-state of EU. Located in north eastern Germany, in the east of Elbe River is, Berlin - the capital and the largest city of Germany. It is also the most populous city of EU. The city of Frankfurt is the financial center of the country, while the city of Ruhr is the largest urban area in Germany. Germany is located in central Europe. It is positioned both in the Northern and Eastern hemispheres of the Earth. Germany is bordered by 9 countries: by Denmark in the north; by Poland and Czech Republic in the east; by Austria in the southeast; by Switzerland in the southwest; by France, Luxembourg and Belgium in the west; and by Netherlands in the northwest. Germany is bounded by the North Sea in the northwest and by the Baltic Sea in the northeast. Germany Bordering Countries: The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Austria, The Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Poland. Regional Maps: Map of Europe This page was last updated on August 4, 2023