Germany

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This article is about the country. For other uses, see Germany (disambiguation) and Deutschland (disambiguation).

"Federal Republic of Germany" redirects here. For the country from 1949 to 1990, see West Germany.

Germany (German: *Deutschland* German pronunciation: [ˈdɔʏtʃlant]), officially the **Federal Republic of Germany** (German: *Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 🔊 listen (help·info)),[e] is a country in Central and Western Europe, lying between the Baltic and North seas to the north, and the Alps to the south. It borders 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. Germany includes 16 constituent states, covers an area of 357,386 square kilometres (137,988 sq mi),[4] and has a largely temperate seasonal climate. With nearly 83 million inhabitants, it is the second most populous state of Europe after Russia, the most populous state lying entirely in Europe, as well as the most populous member state of the European Union. Germany's capital and largest metropolis is Berlin, while its largest conurbation is the Ruhr, with its main centres of Dortmund and Essen. The country's other major cities are Hamburg, Munich, Cologne, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, Düsseldorf, Leipzig, Bremen, Dresden, Hannover, and Nuremberg.

Various Germanic tribes have inhabited the northern parts of modern Germany since classical antiquity. A region named Germania was documented before 100 AD. During the Migration Period, the Germanic tribes expanded southward. Beginning in the 10th century, German territories formed a central part of the Holy Roman Empire.[10] During the 16th century, northern German regions became the centre of the Protestant Reformation. After the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, the German Confederation was formed in 1815. The German revolutions of 1848–49 resulted in the Frankfurt Parliament establishing major democratic rights.

In 1871, Germany became a nation state when most of the German states (most notably excluding Switzerland and Austria) unified into the Prussian-dominated German Empire. After World War I and the revolution of 1918–19, the Empire was replaced by the parliamentary Weimar Republic. The Nazi seizure of power in 1933 led to the establishment of a dictatorship, World War II and the Holocaust. After the end of World War II in Europe and a period of Allied occupation, two German states were founded: West Germany, formed from the American, British, and French occupation zones, and East Germany, formed from the Soviet occupation zone. Following the Revolutions of 1989 that ended communist rule in Central and Eastern Europe, the country was reunified on 3 October 1990.[11] Today, the sovereign state of Germany is a federal parliamentary republic with an elected president.

In the 21st century, Germany is a great power with a strong economy; it has the world's fourth-largest economy by nominal GDP, and the fifth-largest by PPP. As a global leader in several

Federal Republic of Germany
Bundesrepublik Deutschland (German)[a]

Flag

Coat of arms

Motto:
"*Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit*" (de facto)
"Unity and Justice and Freedom"

Anthem: "Deutschlandlied" (third verse only)[b]
"Song of Germany"

Location of Germany (dark green)
– in Europe (green & dark grey)
– in the European Union (green)

Coordinates: 51°N 9°E

industrial and technological sectors, it is both the world's third-largest exporter and importer of goods. A developed country with a very high standard of living, it upholds a social security and universal health care system, environmental protection, and a tuition-free university education.

The Federal Republic of Germany was a founding member of the European Economic Community in 1957 and the European Union in 1993. It is part of the Schengen Area and became a co-founder of the Eurozone in 1999. Germany is a member of the United Nations, NATO, the G7, the G20, and the OECD. Known for its rich cultural history, Germany has been continuously the home of influential and successful artists, philosophers, musicians, sportspeople, entrepreneurs, scientists, engineers, and inventors.

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Etymology

Capital and largest city	Berlin[c] 52°31′N 13°23′E
Official language and national language	German[1][d]
Ethnic groups (2016)[2]	80.8% Germans 11.7% Other Europeans 4.9% West Asians —3.4% Turks —1.3% Arabs 1.3% Other Asians 0.6% Africans 0.5% Americans 0.1% Other
Religion (2016)[3]	59.3% Christianity 34.4% Irreligion 5.5% Islam 0.8% Other religions
Demonym	German
Government	Federal parliamentary republic
• President	Frank-Walter Steinmeier
• Chancellor	Angela Merkel
• President of the Bundestag	Wolfgang Schäuble
• President of the Bundesrat	Daniel Günther
• President of the Federal Constitutional Court	Andreas Voßkuhle

Legislature	
• Upper house	Bundesrat
• Lower house	Bundestag

Area	
• Total	357,386 km² (137,988 sq mi)[4] (62nd)

Population	
• 2018 estimate	▲ 82,800,000[5] (17th)
• Density	232/km² (600.9/sq mi) (58th)

GDP (PPP)	2018 estimate
• Total	$4.373 trillion[6] (5th)
• Per capita	$52,801[6] (18th)

GDP (nominal)	2018 estimate
• Total	$4.211 trillion[6] (4th)
• Per capita	$50,841[6] (17th)

Gini (2016)	▼ 29.5[7] low
HDI (2017)	▲ 0.936[8] very high · 5th
Currency	Euro (€) (EUR)
Time zone	UTC+1 (CET)
• Summer (DST)	UTC+2 (CEST)
Driving side	right
Calling code	+49
ISO 3166 code	DE
Internet TLD	.de and .eu

Further information: Names of Germany

The English word *Germany* derives from the Latin *Germania*, which came into use after Julius Caesar adopted it for the peoples east of the Rhine.[12] The German term *Deutschland*, originally *diutisciu land* ("the German lands") is derived from *deutsch* (compare *Dutch*), descended from Old High German *diutisc* "popular" (i.e. belonging to the *diot* or *diota* "people"), originally used to distinguish the language of the common people from Latin and its Romance descendants. This in turn descends from Proto-Germanic **þiudiskaz* "popular" (see also the Latinised form *Theodiscus*), derived from **þeudō*, descended from Proto-Indo-European **tewtéh₂-* "people", from which the word *Teutons* also originates.[13]

History

Main article: History of Germany

The discovery of the Mauer 1 mandible shows that ancient humans were present in Germany at least 600,000 years ago.[14] The oldest complete hunting weapons found anywhere in the world were discovered in a coal mine in Schöningen where three 380,000-year-old wooden javelins were unearthed.[15] The Neander Valley was the location where the first ever non-modern human fossil was discovered; the new species of human was called the Neanderthal. The Neanderthal 1 fossils are known to be 40,000 years old. Evidence of modern humans, similarly dated, has been found in caves in the Swabian Jura near Ulm. The finds include 42,000-year-old bird bone and mammoth ivory flutes which are the oldest musical instruments ever found,[16] the 40,000-year-old Ice Age Lion Man which is the oldest uncontested figurative art ever discovered,[17] and the 35,000-year-old Venus of Hohle Fels which is the oldest uncontested human figurative art ever discovered.[18] The Nebra sky disk is a bronze artefact created during the European Bronze Age attributed to a site near Nebra, Saxony-Anhalt. It is part of UNESCO's Memory of the World Programme.[19]

The Nebra sky disk, c. 1700 BC

Germanic tribes and Frankish Empire

Main articles: Germania, Migration Period, and Frankish Realm

Migrations in Europe (100–500 AD)

The Germanic tribes are thought to date from the Nordic Bronze Age or the Pre-Roman Iron Age. From southern Scandinavia and north Germany, they expanded south, east and west from the 1st century BC, coming into contact with the Celtic tribes of Gaul as well as Iranian, Baltic, and Slavic tribes in Central and Eastern Europe.[20] Under Augustus, Rome began to invade Germania (an area extending roughly from the Rhine to the Ural Mountains). In 9 AD, three Roman legions led by Varus were defeated by the Cheruscan leader Arminius. By 100 AD, when Tacitus wrote *Germania*, Germanic tribes had settled along the Rhine and the Danube (the Limes Germanicus), occupying most of the area of modern Germany. However, Austria, Baden Württemberg, southern Bavaria, southern Hessen and the western Rhineland had been conquered and incorporated into Roman provinces: Noricum, Raetia, Germania Superior, and Germania Inferior.[21][22][23][24]

In the 3rd century a number of large West Germanic tribes emerged: Alemanni, Franks, Chatti, Saxons, Frisii, Sicambri, and Thuringii. Around 260, the Germanic peoples broke into Roman-controlled lands.[25] After the invasion of the Huns in 375, and with the decline of Rome from 395, Germanic tribes moved farther southwest. Simultaneously several large tribes formed in what is now Germany and displaced or absorbed smaller Germanic tribes. Large areas known since the Merovingian period as Austrasia, Neustria, and Aquitaine were conquered by the Franks who established the Frankish Kingdom, and pushed farther east to subjugate Saxony and Bavaria. Areas of what is today the eastern part of Germany were inhabited by Western Slavic tribes of Sorbs, Veleti and the Obotritic confederation.[21]

Frankish Realm and its expansion. As it was partitioned in 843, West Francia (blue) and East Francia (red) became predecessors of France and Germany, respectively

East Francia and Holy Roman Empire

Main articles: East Francia and Holy Roman Empire

In 800, the Frankish king Charlemagne was crowned emperor and founded the Carolingian Empire, which was later divided in 843 among his heirs.[26] Following the break up of the Frankish Realm, for 900 years, the history of Germany was intertwined with the history of the Holy Roman Empire,[27] which subsequently emerged from the eastern portion of Charlemagne's original empire. The territory initially known as East Francia stretched from the Rhine in the west to the Elbe River in the east and from the North Sea to the Alps.[26] The Ottonian rulers (919–1024) consolidated several major duchies and the German king Otto I was crowned Holy Roman Emperor of these regions in 962. In 996 Gregory V became the first German Pope, appointed by his cousin Otto III, whom he shortly after crowned Holy Roman Emperor. The Holy Roman Empire absorbed northern Italy and Burgundy under the reign of the Salian emperors (1024–1125), although the emperors lost power through the Investiture Controversy.[28]

In the 12th century, under the Hohenstaufen emperors (1138–1254), German princes increased their influence further south and east into territories inhabited by Slavs; they encouraged German settlement in these areas, called the eastern settlement movement (*Ostsiedlung*). Members of the Hanseatic League, which included mostly north German cities and towns, prospered in the expansion of trade.[29] In the south, the Greater Ravensburg Trade Corporation (*Große Ravensburger Handelsgesellschaft*) served a similar function. The edict of the Golden Bull issued in 1356 by Emperor Charles IV provided the basic constitutional structure of the Empire and codified the election of the emperor by seven prince-electors who ruled some of the most powerful principalities and archbishoprics.[30]

Population declined in the first half of the 14th century, starting with the Great Famine in 1315, followed by the Black Death of 1348–50.[31] Despite the decline, however, German artists, engineers, and scientists developed a wide array of techniques similar to those used by the Italian artists and designers of the time who flourished in such merchant city-states as Venice, Florence and Genoa. Artistic and cultural centres throughout the German states produced such artists as the Augsburg painters Hans Holbein and his son, and Albrecht Dürer. Johannes Gutenberg introduced moveable-type printing to Europe, a development that laid the basis for the spread of learning to the masses.[32]

Martin Luther (1483–1546) initiated the Protestant Reformation.

In 1517, the Wittenberg monk Martin Luther publicised The Ninety-Five Theses, challenging the Roman Catholic Church and initiating the Protestant Reformation. In 1555, the Peace of Augsburg established Lutheranism as an acceptable alternative to Catholicism, but also decreed that the faith of the prince was to be the faith of his subjects, a principle called Cuius regio, eius religio. The agreement at Augsburg failed to address other religious creed: for example, the Reformed faith was still considered a heresy and the principle did not address the possible conversion of an ecclesiastic ruler, such as happened in Electorate of Cologne in 1583. From the Cologne War until the end of the Thirty Years' Wars (1618–1648), religious conflict devastated German lands.[33] The latter reduced the overall population of the German states by about 30 per cent, and in some places, up to 80 per cent.[34] The Peace of Westphalia ended religious warfare among the German states.[33] German rulers were able to choose either Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism or the Reformed faith as their official religion after 1648.[35]

The Holy Roman Empire in 1648, after the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War

In the 18th century, the Holy Roman Empire consisted of approximately 1,800 territories.[36] The elaborate legal system initiated by a series of Imperial Reforms (approximately 1450–1555) created the Imperial Estates and provided for considerable local autonomy among ecclesiastical, secular, and hereditary states, reflected in Imperial Diet. The House of Habsburg held the imperial crown from 1438 until the death of Charles VI in 1740. Having no male heirs, he had convinced the Electors to retain Habsburg hegemony in the office of the emperor by agreeing to the Pragmatic Sanction. This was finally settled through the War of Austrian Succession; in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Charles VI's daughter Maria Theresa ruled the Empire as Empress Consort when her husband, Francis I, became Holy Roman Emperor. From 1740, the dualism between the Austrian Habsburg Monarchy and the Kingdom of Prussia dominated the German history.

In 1772, then again in 1793 and 1795, the two dominant German states of Prussia and Austria, along with the Russian Empire, agreed to the Partitions of Poland; dividing among themselves the lands of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. As a result of the partitions, millions of Polish speaking inhabitants fell under the rule of the two German monarchies. However, the annexed territories though incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia and the Habsburg Realm, were not legally considered as a part of the Holy Roman Empire.[37][38] During

the period of the French Revolutionary Wars, along with the arrival of the Napoleonic era and the subsequent final meeting of the Imperial Diet, most of the secular Free Imperial Cities were annexed by dynastic territories; the ecclesiastical territories were secularised and annexed. In 1806 the *Imperium* was dissolved; many German states, particularly the Rhineland states, fell under the influence of France. Until 1815, France, Russia, Prussia and the Habsburgs (Austria) competed for hegemony in the German states during the Napoleonic Wars.[39]

German Confederation and Empire

Main articles: German Confederation, German Empire, and German Colonial Empire

Following the fall of Napoleon, the Congress of Vienna (convened in 1814) founded the German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*), a loose league of 39 sovereign states. The appointment of the Emperor of Austria as the permanent president of the Confederation reflected the Congress's failure to accept Prussia's rising influence among the German states, and acerbated the long-standing competition between the Hohenzollern and Habsburg interests. Disagreement within restoration politics partly led to the rise of liberal movements, followed by new measures of repression by Austrian statesman Metternich. The *Zollverein*, a tariff union, furthered economic unity in the German states.[40] National and liberal ideals of the French Revolution gained increasing support among many, especially young, Germans. The Hambach Festival in May 1832 was a main event in support of German unity, freedom and democracy. In the light of a series of revolutionary movements in Europe, which established a republic in France, intellectuals and commoners started the Revolutions of 1848 in the German states. King Frederick William IV of Prussia was offered the title of Emperor, but with a loss of power; he rejected the crown and the proposed constitution, leading to a temporary setback for the movement.[41]

A map showing the German Confederation (1815–1836) with its 39 member states.

King William I appointed Otto von Bismarck as the new Minister President of Prussia in 1862. Bismarck successfully concluded war on Denmark in 1864, which promoted German over Danish interests in the Jutland peninsula. The subsequent (and decisive) Prussian victory in the Austro-Prussian War of 1866 enabled him to create the North German Confederation (*Norddeutscher Bund*) which excluded Austria from the federation's affairs. After the French defeat in the Franco-Prussian War, the German princes proclaimed the founding of the German Empire in 1871 at Versailles, uniting all the scattered parts of Germany except Austria and the German-speaking parts of Switzerland. Prussia was the dominant constituent state of the new empire; the Hohenzollern King of Prussia ruled as its concurrent Emperor, and Berlin became its capital.[41]

Foundation of the German Empire in Versailles, 1871. Bismarck is at the centre in a white uniform.

In the *Gründerzeit* period following the unification of Germany, Bismarck's foreign policy as Chancellor of Germany under Emperor William I secured Germany's position as a great nation by forging alliances, isolating France by diplomatic means, and avoiding war. Under Wilhelm II, Germany, like other European powers, took an imperialistic course, leading to friction with neighbouring countries. Most alliances in which Germany had previously been involved were not renewed. This resulted in creation of a dual alliance with the multinational realm of Austria-Hungary, promoting at least benevolent neutrality if not outright military support. Subsequently, the Triple Alliance of 1882 included Italy, completing a Central European geographic alliance that illustrated German, Austrian and Italian fears of incursions against them by France and/or Russia. Similarly, Britain, France and Russia also concluded alliances that would protect them against Habsburg interference with Russian interests in the Balkans or German interference against France.[42]

At the Berlin Conference in 1884, Germany claimed several colonies including German East Africa, German South West Africa, Togoland, and Kamerun.[43] Later, Germany further expanded its colonial empire to include German New Guinea, German Micronesia and German Samoa in the Pacific, and Kiautschou Bay in China. In what became known as the "First Genocide of the Twentieth-Century", between 1904 and 1907, the German colonial government in South West Africa (present-day Namibia) ordered the annihilation of the local Herero and Namaqua peoples, as a punitive measure for an uprising against German colonial rule. In total, around 100,000 people—80% of the Herero and 50% of the Namaqua—perished from imprisonment in concentration camps, where the majority died of disease, abuse, and exhaustion, or from dehydration and starvation in the countryside after being deprived of food and water.[44][45]

The German Empire (1871–1918), with the Kingdom of Prussia in blue

The assassination of Austria's crown prince on 28 June 1914 provided the pretext for the Austrian Empire to attack Serbia and trigger World War I. After four years of warfare, in which approximately two million German soldiers were killed,[46] a general armistice ended the fighting on 11 November, and German troops returned home. In the German Revolution (November 1918), Emperor Wilhelm II and all German ruling princes abdicated their positions and responsibilities. Germany's new political leadership signed the Treaty of Versailles in 1919. In this treaty, Germany, as part of the Central Powers, accepted defeat by the Allies in one of the bloodiest conflicts of all time. Germans perceived the treaty as humiliating and unjust and it was later seen by historians as influential in the rise of Adolf Hitler.[47][48][49] After the defeat in the First World War, Germany lost around 13% of its European territory (areas predominantly inhabited by ethnic Polish, French and Danish populations, which were lost following the Greater Poland Uprising, the return of Alsace-Lorraine and the Schleswig plebiscites), and all of its colonial possessions in Africa and the South Sea.[50]

Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany

Main articles: Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany

Germany was declared a republic at the beginning of the German Revolution in November 1918. On 11 August 1919 President Friedrich Ebert signed the democratic Weimar Constitution.[51] In the subsequent struggle for power, the radical-left Communists seized power in Bavaria, but conservative elements in other parts of Germany attempted to overthrow the Republic in the Kapp Putsch. It was supported by parts of the *Reichswehr* (military) and other conservative, nationalistic and monarchist factions. After a tumultuous period of bloody street fighting in the major industrial centres, the occupation of the Ruhr by Belgian and French troops and the rise of inflation culminating in the hyperinflation of 1922–23, a debt restructuring plan and the creation of a new currency in 1924 ushered in the Golden Twenties, an era of increasing artistic innovation and liberal cultural life. Historians describe the period between 1924 and 1929 as one of "partial stabilisation."[52] The worldwide Great Depression hit Germany in 1929. After the federal election of 1930, Chancellor Heinrich Brüning's government was enabled by President Paul von Hindenburg to act without parliamentary approval. Brüning's government pursued a policy of fiscal austerity and deflation which caused high unemployment of nearly 30% by 1932.[53]

Philipp Scheidemann proclaims the German Republic from the Reichskanzlei window, on 9 November 1918.

The Nazi Party led by Adolf Hitler won the special federal election of 1932. After a series of unsuccessful cabinets, Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor of Germany on 30 January 1933.[54] After the Reichstag fire, a decree abrogated basic civil rights and within weeks the first Nazi concentration camp at Dachau opened.[55][56] The Enabling Act of 1933 gave Hitler unrestricted legislative power; subsequently, his government established a centralised totalitarian state, withdrew from the League of Nations following a national referendum, and began military rearmament.[57]

Adolf Hitler, leader of Nazi Germany (1933–1945)

Using deficit spending, a government-sponsored programme for economic renewal focused on public works projects. In public work projects of 1934, 1.7 million Germans immediately were put to work, which gave them an income and social benefits.[58] The most famous of the projects was the high speed roadway, the *Reichsautobahn*, known as the German autobahns.[59] Other capital construction projects included hydroelectric facilities such as the Rur Dam, water supplies such as Zillierbach Dam, and transportation hubs such as Zwickau Hauptbahnhof.[60] Over the next five years, unemployment plummeted and average wages both per hour and per week rose.[61]

In 1935, the regime withdrew from the Treaty of Versailles and introduced the Nuremberg Laws which targeted Jews and other minorities. Germany also reacquired control of the Saar in 1935,[62] remilitarised the Rhineland in 1936, annexed Austria in 1938, annexed the Sudetenland in 1938 with the Munich Agreement and in direct violation of the agreement occupied Czechoslovakia with the proclamation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in March 1939.

Kristallnacht, or the "Night of Broken Glass", saw the burning of hundreds of synagogues, the destruction of thousands of Jewish businesses, and the arrest of around 30,000 Jewish men by Nazi forces inside Germany. Many Jewish women were arrested and placed in jails and a curfew was placed on the Jewish people in Germany.[63]

In August 1939, Hitler's government negotiated and signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact that divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. Following the agreement, on 1 September 1939, Germany invaded Poland, marking the beginning of World War II in Europe.[64][65]

In response to Hitler's actions, two days later, on 3 September, after a British ultimatum to Germany to cease military operations was ignored, Britain and France declared war on Germany.[66] In the spring of 1940, Germany conquered Denmark and Norway, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France forcing the French government to sign an armistice after German troops occupied most of the country. The British repelled German air attacks in the Battle of Britain in the same year. In 1941, German troops invaded Yugoslavia, Greece and the Soviet Union. By 1942, Germany and other Axis powers controlled most of continental Europe and North Africa, but following the Soviet Union's victory at the Battle of Stalingrad, the allies' reconquest of North Africa and invasion of Italy in 1943, German forces suffered repeated military defeats.[64] In June 1944, the Western allies landed in France and the Soviets pushed into Eastern Europe. By late 1944, the Western allies had entered Germany despite one final German counter offensive in the Ardennes Forest. Following Hitler's suicide during the Battle of Berlin, German armed forces surrendered on 8 May 1945, ending World War II in Europe.[67] After World War II, former members of the Nazi regime were tried for war crimes at the Nuremberg trials.[68][69]

WWII, German-occupied Europe in 1942

In what later became known as The Holocaust, the German government persecuted minorities and used a network of concentration and death camps across Europe to conduct a genocide of what they considered to be inferior peoples. In total, over 10 million civilians were systematically murdered, including 6 million Jews, between 220,000 and 1,500,000 Romani, 275,000 persons with disabilities, thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses, thousands of homosexuals, and hundreds of thousands of members of the political and religious opposition from Germany, and occupied countries (Nacht und Nebel).[70] Nazi policies in the German occupied countries resulted in the deaths of 2.7 million Poles,[71] 1.3 million Ukrainians,[72] and an estimated 2.8 million Soviet war prisoners.[72][68] In addition, the Nazi regime abducted approximately 12 million people from across the German occupied Europe for use as slave labour in the German industry.[73] German military war casualties have been estimated at 5.3 million,[74] and around 900,000 German civilians died; 400,000 from Allied bombing, and 500,000 in the course of the Soviet invasion from the east.[75] Around 12 million ethnic Germans were expelled from across Eastern Europe. Germany lost roughly one-quarter of its pre-war territory.[11] Strategic bombing and land warfare destroyed many cities and cultural heritage sites.

East and West Germany

Main article: History of Germany (1945–90)

After Germany surrendered, the Allies partitioned Berlin and Germany's remaining territory into four military occupation zones. The western sectors, controlled by France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, were merged on 23 May 1949 to form the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*); on 7 October 1949, the Soviet Zone became the German Democratic Republic (*Deutsche Demokratische Republik*). They were informally known as West Germany and East Germany. East Germany selected East Berlin as its capital, while West Germany chose Bonn as a provisional capital, to emphasise its stance that the two-state solution was an artificial and temporary status quo.[76]

American, Soviet, British and French occupation zones in Germany, and the French controlled Saar Protectorate, 1947. Territories east of the Oder-Neisse line transferred to Poland and the Soviet Union under the terms of the Potsdam Conference.

West Germany was established as a federal parliamentary republic with a "social market economy". Starting in 1948 West Germany became a major recipient of reconstruction aid under the Marshall Plan and used this to rebuild its industry.[77] Konrad Adenauer was elected the first Federal Chancellor (*Bundeskanzler*) of Germany in 1949 and remained in office until 1963. Under his and Ludwig Erhard's leadership, the country enjoyed prolonged economic growth beginning in the early 1950s, that became known as an "economic miracle" (*Wirtschaftswunder*).[78] The

Federal Republic of Germany joined NATO in 1955 and was a founding member of the European Economic Community in 1957.

The Berlin Wall during its fall in 1989, with the Brandenburg Gate in the background.

East Germany was an Eastern Bloc state under political and military control by the USSR via occupation forces and the Warsaw Pact. Although East Germany claimed to be a democracy, political power was exercised solely by leading members (*Politbüro*) of the communist-controlled Socialist Unity Party of Germany, supported by the Stasi, an immense secret service controlling many aspects of the society.[79] A Soviet-style command economy was set up and the GDR later became a Comecon state.[80] While East German propaganda was based on the benefits of the GDR's social programmes and the alleged constant threat of a West German invasion, many of its citizens looked to the West for freedom and prosperity.[81] The Berlin Wall, rapidly built on 13 August 1961 prevented East German citizens from escaping to West Germany, eventually becoming a symbol of the Cold War.[41][82] Ronald Reagan's "Mr. Gorbachov, Tear down this wall!" speech at the Wall on 12 June 1987 influenced public opinion, echoing John F. Kennedy's famous *Ich bin ein Berliner* speech of 26 June 1963. The fall of the Wall in 1989 became a symbol of the Fall of Communism, the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, German Reunification and *Die Wende*.[83]

Tensions between East and West Germany were reduced in the early 1970s by Chancellor Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*. In summer 1989, Hungary decided to dismantle the Iron Curtain and open the borders, causing the emigration of thousands of East Germans to West Germany via Hungary. This had devastating effects on the GDR, where regular mass demonstrations received increasing support. The East German authorities eased the border restrictions, allowing East German citizens to travel to the West; originally intended to help retain East Germany as a state, the opening of the border actually led to an acceleration of the *Wende* reform process. This culminated in the *Two Plus Four Treaty* a year later on 12 September 1990, under which the four occupying powers renounced their rights under the Instrument of Surrender, and Germany regained full sovereignty. This permitted German reunification on 3 October 1990, with the accession of the five re-established states of the former GDR.[41]

Reunified Germany and the European Union

Main articles: German reunification and History of Germany since 1990

The united Germany is considered to be the enlarged continuation of the Federal Republic of Germany and not a successor state. As such, it retained all of West Germany's memberships in international organisations.[85] Based on the Berlin/Bonn Act, adopted in 1994, Berlin once again became the capital of the reunified Germany, while Bonn obtained the unique status of a *Bundesstadt* (federal city) retaining some federal ministries.[86] The relocation of the government was completed in 1999.[87] Following the 1998 elections, SPD politician Gerhard Schröder became the first Chancellor of a red–green coalition with the Alliance '90/The Greens party.

German unity was established on 3 October 1990.[84] Since 1999, the Reichstag building in Berlin has been the meeting place of the Bundestag, the German parliament.

Among the major projects of the two Schröder legislatures was the Agenda 2010 to reform the labour market to become more flexible and reduce unemployment.

The modernisation and integration of the eastern German economy is a long-term process scheduled to last until the year 2019, with annual transfers from west to east amounting to roughly $80 billion.[88]

Germany became a co-founder of the European Union (1993), introduced the Euro currency (2002), and signed the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 (pictured).

Since reunification, Germany has taken a more active role in the European Union. Together with its European partners Germany signed the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, established the Eurozone in 1999, and signed the Lisbon Treaty in 2007.[89] Germany sent a peacekeeping force to secure stability in the Balkans and sent a force of German troops to Afghanistan as part of a NATO effort to provide security in that country after the ousting of the Taliban.[90] These deployments were controversial since Germany is bound by domestic law only to deploy troops for defence roles.[91]

In the 2005 elections, Angela Merkel became the first female chancellor of Germany as the leader of a grand coalition.[41] In 2009 the German

government approved a €50 billion economic stimulus plan to protect several sectors from a downturn.[92]

In 2009, a liberal-conservative coalition under Merkel assumed leadership of the country. In 2013, a grand coalition was established in a Third Merkel cabinet. Among the major German political projects of the early 21st century are the advancement of European integration, the energy transition (*Energiewende*) for a sustainable energy supply, the "Debt Brake" for balanced budgets, measures to increase the fertility rate significantly (pronatalism), and high-tech strategies for the future transition of the German economy, summarised as Industry 4.0.[93]

Germany was affected by the European migrant crisis in 2015 as it became the final destination of choice for many asylum seekers from Africa and the Middle East entering the EU. The country took in over a million refugees and migrants and developed a quota system which redistributed migrants around its federal states based on their tax income and existing population density.[94]

Geography

Main article: Geography of Germany

Germany is in Western and Central Europe, with Denmark bordering to the north, Poland and the Czech Republic to the east, Austria to the southeast, Switzerland to the south-southwest, France, Luxembourg and Belgium lie to the west, and the Netherlands to the northwest. It lies mostly between latitudes 47° and 55° N and longitudes 5° and 16° E. Germany is also bordered by the North Sea and, at the north-northeast, by the Baltic Sea. With Switzerland and Austria, Germany also shares a border on the fresh-water Lake Constance, the third largest lake in Central Europe.[95] German territory covers 357,021 km^2 (137,847 sq mi), consisting of 349,223 km^2 (134,836 sq mi) of land and 7,798 km^2 (3,011 sq mi) of water. It is the seventh largest country by area in Europe and the 64th largest in the world.[96]

Physical map of Germany

Elevation ranges from the mountains of the Alps (highest point: the Zugspitze at 2,962 metres or 9,718 feet) in the south to the shores of the North Sea (*Nordsee*) in the northwest and the Baltic Sea (*Ostsee*) in the northeast. The forested uplands of central Germany and the lowlands of northern Germany (lowest point: Wilstermarsch at 3.54 metres or 11.6 feet below sea level) are traversed by such major rivers as the Rhine, Danube and Elbe. Germany's alpine glaciers are experiencing deglaciation. Significant natural resources include iron ore, coal, potash, timber, lignite, uranium, copper, natural gas, salt, nickel, arable land and water.[96]

Climate

Most of Germany has a temperate seasonal climate dominated by humid westerly winds. The country is situated in between the oceanic Western European and the continental Eastern European climate. The climate is moderated by the North Atlantic Drift, the northern extension of the Gulf Stream. This warmer water affects the areas bordering the North Sea; consequently in the northwest and the north the climate is oceanic. Germany gets an average of 789 mm (31 in) of precipitation per year; there is no consistent dry season. Winters are cool and summers tend to be warm: temperatures can exceed 30 °C (86 °F).[97]

Rhine valley in summer at Lorelei.

The east has a more continental climate: winters can be very cold and summers very warm, and longer dry periods can occur. Central and southern Germany are transition regions which vary from moderately oceanic to continental. In addition to the maritime and continental climates that predominate over most of the country, the Alpine regions in the extreme south and, to a lesser degree, some areas of the Central German Uplands have a mountain climate, with lower temperatures and more precipitation.[97]

Though the German climate is rarely extreme, there are occasional spikes of cold or heat. Winter temperatures can sometimes drop to two-digit negative temperatures for a few days in a row. Conversely, summer can see periods of very high temperatures for a week or two. The recorded extremes are a maximum of 40.3 °C (104.5 °F) (July 2015, in Kitzingen), and a minimum of −37.8 °C (−36.0 °F) (February 1929, in Pfaffenhofen an der Ilm).[98]

Biodiversity

The territory of Germany can be subdivided into two ecoregions: European-Mediterranean montane mixed forests and Northeast-Atlantic shelf marine.[99] As of 2008 the majority of Germany is covered by either arable land (34%) or forest and woodland (30.1%); only 13.4% of the area consists of permanent pastures, 11.8% is covered by settlements and streets.[100]

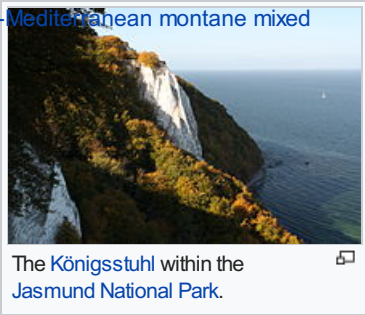Plants and animals include those generally common to Central Europe. Beeches, oaks, and other deciduous trees constitute one-third of the forests; conifers are increasing as a result of reforestation. Spruce and fir trees predominate in the upper mountains, while pine and larch are found in sandy soil. There are many species of ferns, flowers, fungi, and mosses. Wild animals include roe deer, wild boar, mouflon (a subspecies of wild sheep), fox, badger, hare, and small numbers of the Eurasian beaver.[101] The blue cornflower was once a German national symbol.[102]

The Königsstuhl within the Jasmund National Park.

The 16 national parks in Germany include the Jasmund National Park, the Vorpommern Lagoon Area National Park, the Müritz National Park, the Wadden Sea National Parks, the Harz National Park, the Hainich National Park, the Black Forest National Park, the Saxon Switzerland National Park, the Bavarian Forest National Park and the Berchtesgaden National Park. In addition, there are 15 Biosphere Reserves, as well as 98 nature parks. More than 400 registered zoos and animal parks operate in Germany, which is believed to be the largest number in any country.[103] The Berlin Zoo, opened in 1844, is the oldest zoo in Germany, and presents the most comprehensive collection of species in the world.[104]

Urbanisation

See also: List of cities and towns in Germany and List of cities in Germany by population

Germany has a number of large cities. There are 11 officially recognised metropolitan regions in Germany. 34 cities have been identified as regiopolis. The largest conurbation is the Rhine-Ruhr region (11.7 million in 2008), including Düsseldorf (the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia), Cologne, Bonn, Dortmund, Essen, Duisburg, and Bochum.[105]

v · t · e	Largest cities or towns in Germany Statistical offices in Germany (31 December 2015)							
	Rank	Name	State	Pop.	Rank	Name	State	Pop.
	1	Berlin	Berlin	3,710,156	11	Bremen	Bremen (state)	557,464
	2	Hamburg	Hamburg	1,787,408	12	Dresden	Saxony	543,825
	3	Munich	Bavaria	1,450,381	13	Hannover	Lower Saxony	532,163
	4	Cologne	North Rhine-Westphalia	1,060,582	14	Nuremberg	Bavaria	509,975
	5	Frankfurt	Hesse	732,688	15	Duisburg	North Rhine-Westphalia	491,231
	6	Stuttgart	Baden-Württemberg	623,738	16	Bochum	North Rhine-Westphalia	364,742
	7	Düsseldorf	North Rhine-Westphalia	612,178	17	Wuppertal	North Rhine-Westphalia	350,046
	8	Dortmund	North Rhine-Westphalia	586,181	18	Bielefeld	North Rhine-Westphalia	333,090
	9	Essen	North Rhine-Westphalia	582,624	19	Bonn	North Rhine-Westphalia	318,809
	10	Leipzig	Saxony	560,472	20	Münster	North Rhine-Westphalia	310,039

Berlin

Hamburg

Munich

Cologne

Politics

Main articles: Politics of Germany, Taxation in Germany, and Federal budget of Germany

Germany is a federal, parliamentary, representative

democratic republic. The German political system operates under a framework laid out in the 1949 constitutional document known as the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law). Amendments generally require a two-thirds majority of both chambers of parliament; the fundamental principles of the constitution, as expressed in the articles guaranteeing human dignity, the separation of powers, the federal structure, and the rule of law are valid in perpetuity.[106]

The president, Frank-Walter Steinmeier (19 March 2017–present), is the head of state and invested primarily with representative responsibilities and powers. He is elected by the *Bundesversammlung* (federal convention), an institution consisting of the members of the *Bundestag* and an equal number of state delegates. The second-highest official in the German order of precedence is the *Bundestagspräsident* (President of the *Bundestag*), who is elected by the *Bundestag* and responsible for overseeing the daily sessions of the body. The third-highest official and the head of government is the Chancellor, who is appointed by the *Bundespräsident* after being elected by the *Bundestag*.[41]

Frank-Walter Steinmeier
President since 2017

Angela Merkel
Chancellor since 2005

The political system of Germany

The chancellor, Angela Merkel (22 November 2005–present), is the head of government and exercises executive power through their Cabinet, similar to the role of a Prime Minister in other parliamentary democracies. Federal legislative power is vested in the parliament consisting of the *Bundestag* (Federal Diet) and *Bundesrat* (Federal Council), which together form the legislative body. The *Bundestag* is elected through direct elections, by proportional representation (mixed-member).[96] The members of the *Bundesrat* represent the governments of the sixteen federated states and are members of the state cabinets.[41]

Since 1949, the party system has been dominated by the Christian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party of Germany. So far every chancellor has been a member of one of these parties. However, the smaller liberal Free Democratic Party (in parliament from 1949 to 2013) and the Alliance '90/The Greens (in parliament since 1983) have also played important roles.[107] Since 2005, the left-wing populist party The Left, formed through the merger of two former parties, has been a staple in the German *Bundestag* though they have never been part of the federal government. In the German federal election, 2017, the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany gained enough votes to attain representation in the parliament for the first time.

The debt-to-GDP ratio of Germany had its peak in 2010 when it stood at 80.3% and decreased since then.[108] According to Eurostat, the government gross debt of Germany amounts to €2,152.0 billion or 71.9% of its GDP in 2015.[109] The federal government achieved a budget surplus of €12.1 billion ($13.1 billion) in 2015.[110] Germany's credit rating by credit rating agencies Standard & Poor's, Moody's and Fitch Ratings stands at the highest possible rating *AAA* with a stable outlook in 2016.[111]

Law

Main articles: Law of Germany, Judiciary of Germany, and Law enforcement in Germany

Germany has a civil law system based on Roman law with some references to Germanic law. The *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court) is the German Supreme Court responsible for constitutional matters, with power of judicial review.[41][112] Germany's supreme court system, called *Oberste Gerichtshöfe des Bundes*, is specialised: for civil and criminal cases, the highest court of appeal is the inquisitorial Federal Court of Justice, and for other affairs the courts are the Federal Labour Court, the Federal Social Court, the Federal Finance Court and the Federal Administrative Court.

Criminal and private laws are codified on the national level in the *Strafgesetzbuch* and the *Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch* respectively. The German penal system seeks the rehabilitation of the criminal and the protection of the public.[113] Except for petty crimes, which are tried before a single professional judge, and serious political crimes, all charges are tried before mixed tribunals on which lay judges (*Schöffen*) sit side by side with professional judges.[114][115] Many of the fundamental

Judges of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court) in Karlsruhe in 1989

matters of [administrative law](#) remain in the jurisdiction of the states.

Germany has a low murder rate with 0.9 murders per 100,000 in 2014.[116]

Constituent states

Main article: [States of Germany](#)

Germany comprises sixteen federal states which are collectively referred to as *Bundesländer*.[117] Each state has its own state constitution[118] and is largely autonomous in regard to its internal organisation. Two of the states are [city-states](#) consisting of just one city: [Berlin](#) and [Hamburg](#). The state of [Bremen](#) consists of two cities that are separated from each other by the state of [Lower Saxony](#): [Bremen](#) and [Bremerhaven](#).

Because of the differences in size and population the [subdivisions of the states](#) vary. For regional administrative purposes four states, namely Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse and North Rhine-Westphalia, consist of a total of 19 [Government Districts](#) (*Regierungsbezirke*). As of 2017 Germany is divided into 401 [districts](#) (*Kreise*) at a municipal level; these consist of 294 [rural districts](#) and 107 [urban districts](#).[119]

State	Capital	Area (km²)[4]	Population (2015)[120]	Nominal GDP billions EUR (2015)[121]	Nominal GDP per capita EUR (2015)[121]
Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart	35,751	10,879,618	461	42,800
Bavaria	Munich	70,550	12,843,514	550	43,100
Berlin	Berlin	892	3,520,031	125	35,700
Brandenburg	Potsdam	29,654	2,484,826	66	26,500
Bremen	Bremen	420	671,489	32	47,600
Hamburg	Hamburg	755	1,787,408	110	61,800
Hesse	Wiesbaden	21,115	6,176,172	264	43,100
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern	Schwerin	23,214	1,612,362	40	25,000
Lower Saxony	Hanover	47,593	7,926,599	259	32,900
North Rhine-Westphalia	Düsseldorf	34,113	17,865,516	646	36,500
Rhineland-Palatinate	Mainz	19,854	4,052,803	132	32,800
Saarland	Saarbrücken	2,569	995,597	35	35,400
Saxony	Dresden	18,416	4,084,851	113	27,800
Saxony-Anhalt	Magdeburg	20,452	2,245,470	57	25,200
Schleswig-Holstein	Kiel	15,802	2,858,714	86	31,200
Thuringia	Erfurt	16,202	2,170,714	57	26,400
Germany	Berlin	357,386	82,175,684	3025	37,100

Foreign relations

Main article: [Foreign relations of Germany](#)

Germany has a network of 227 diplomatic missions abroad[122] and maintains relations with more than 190

countries.[123] As of 2011, Germany is the largest contributor to the budget of the European Union (providing 20%)[124] and the third largest contributor to the UN (providing 8%).[125] Germany is a member of NATO, the OECD, the G8, the G20, the World Bank and the IMF. It has played an influential role in the European Union since its inception and has maintained a strong alliance with France and all neighbouring countries since 1990. Germany promotes the creation of a more unified European political, economic and security apparatus.[126][127]

Germany hosted the G20 summit in Hamburg, 7–8 July 2017

The development policy of Germany is an independent area of foreign policy. It is formulated by the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and carried out by the implementing organisations. The German government sees development policy as a joint responsibility of the international community.[128] It was the world's third biggest aid donor in 2009 after the United States and France.[129][130]

In 1999, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's government defined a new basis for German foreign policy by taking part in the NATO decisions surrounding the Kosovo War and by sending German troops into combat for the first time since 1945.[131] The governments of Germany and the United States are close political allies.[41] Cultural ties and economic interests have crafted a bond between the two countries resulting in Atlanticism.[132]

Military

Main article: Bundeswehr

Germany's military, the *Bundeswehr*, is organised into *Heer* (Army and special forces KSK), *Marine* (Navy), *Luftwaffe* (Air Force), *Bundeswehr Joint Medical Service* and *Streitkräftebasis* (Joint Support Service) branches. In absolute terms, German military expenditure is the 9th highest in the world.[133] In 2015, military spending was at €32.9 billion, about 1.2% of the country's GDP, well below the NATO target of 2%.[134]

Play media
The Eurofighter Typhoon is part of the Luftwaffe fleet

As of 2017 the Bundeswehr employed roughly 178,000 service members, including about 9,000 volunteers.[135] Reservists are available to the Armed Forces and participate in defence exercises and deployments abroad.[136] Since 2001 women may serve in all functions of service without restriction.[137] About 19,000 female soldiers are on active duty. According to SIPRI, Germany was the fifth largest exporter of major arms in the world from 2012–2016.[138]

A German Navy Brandenburg-class frigate (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern)

In peacetime, the Bundeswehr is commanded by the Minister of Defence. In state of defence, the Chancellor would become commander-in-chief of the *Bundeswehr*.[139]

The role of the *Bundeswehr* is described in the Constitution of Germany as defensive only. But after a ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994 the term "defence" has been defined to not only include protection of the borders of Germany, but also crisis reaction and conflict prevention, or more broadly as guarding the security of Germany anywhere in the world. As of 2017, the German military has about 3,600 troops stationed in foreign countries as part of international peacekeeping forces, including about 1,200 supporting operations against Daesh, 980 in the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, and 800 in Kosovo.[140]

Until 2011, military service was compulsory for men at age 18, and conscripts served six-month tours of duty; conscientious objectors could instead opt for an equal length of *Zivildienst* (civilian service), or a six-year commitment to (voluntary) emergency services like a fire department or the Red Cross. In 2011 conscription was officially suspended and replaced with a voluntary service.[141][142]

Economy

Main article: Economy of Germany

Germany has a social market economy with a highly skilled labour force, a large capital stock, a low level of corruption,[143] and a high level of innovation.[144] It is the world's third largest exporter of goods,[145] and has the largest national economy in Europe which is also the world's fourth largest by nominal GDP[146] and the fifth one by PPP.[147]

The service sector contributes approximately 71% of the total GDP (including information technology), industry

Frankfurt is a leading business centre in Europe and seat of the ECB.

Mercedes-Benz F800. Germany maintains a large automotive industry, and is the world's third largest exporter of goods.[145]

28%, and agriculture 1%.[96] The unemployment rate published by Eurostat amounts to 4.7% in January 2015, which is the lowest rate of all 28 EU member states.[148] With 7.1% Germany also has the lowest youth unemployment rate of all EU member states.[148] According to the OECD Germany has one of the highest labour productivity levels in the world.[149]

Germany is part of the European single market which represents more than 508 million consumers. Several domestic commercial policies are determined by agreements among European Union (EU) members and by EU legislation. Germany introduced the common European currency, the Euro in 2002.[150][151] It is a member of the Eurozone which represents around 340 million citizens. Its monetary policy is set by the European Central Bank, which is headquartered in Frankfurt, the financial centre of continental Europe.

Being home to the modern car, the automotive industry in Germany is regarded as one of the most competitive and innovative in the world,[152] and is the fourth largest by production.[153] The top 10 exports of Germany are vehicles, machinery, chemical goods, electronic products, electrical equipments, pharmaceuticals, transport equipments, basic metals, food products, and rubber and plastics.[154]

Companies

Of the world's 500 largest stock-market-listed companies measured by revenue in 2014, the Fortune Global 500, 28 are headquartered in Germany. 30 major Germany-based companies are included in the DAX, the prime German stock market index which is operated by Frankfurt Stock Exchange of Deutsche Börse. Well-known international brands include Mercedes-Benz, BMW, SAP, Volkswagen, Audi, Siemens, Allianz, Adidas, Porsche, Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Bank and Bosch.[155]

Germany is recognised for its large portion of specialised small and medium enterprises, known as the *Mittelstand* model. More than 1,000 of these companies are global market leaders in their segment and are labelled hidden champions.[156] Berlin developed a thriving, cosmopolitan hub for startup companies and became a leading location for venture capital funded firms in the European Union.[157]

The list includes the largest German companies by revenue in 2015:[158]
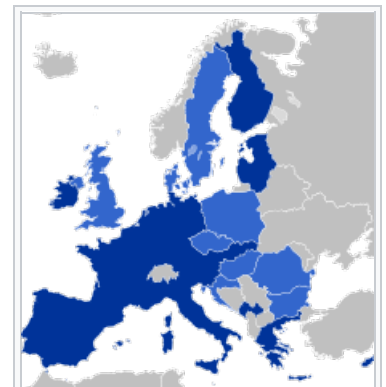
Germany is part of a monetary union, the eurozone (dark blue), and of the EU single market.

Rank	Name	Headquarters	Revenue (bil. €)	Profit (bil. €)	Employees (World)
1.	Volkswagen	Wolfsburg	237	−1.5	610,000
2.	Daimler	Stuttgart	166	9.3	284,000
3.	E.ON	Essen	129	−7.8	56,500
4.	Allianz	Munich	123	7.3	142,500
5.	BMW	Munich	102	7.0	122,000
6.	Siemens	Berlin, Munich	88	8.3	348,000

7.	Robert Bosch	Stuttgart	78	3.5	375,000
8.	BASF	Ludwigshafen	78	4.4	108,000
9.	Deutsche Telekom	Bonn	77	3.6	226,000
10.	Metro	Düsseldorf	71	0.8	204,000

Transport

Main articles: Transport in Germany and Rail transport in Germany

With its central position in Europe, Germany is a transport hub for the continent.[159] Like its neighbours in Western Europe, Germany's road network is among the densest in the world.[160] The motorway (Autobahn) network ranks as the third-largest worldwide in length and is known for its lack of a general speed limit.[161]

Germany has established a polycentric network of high-speed trains. The InterCityExpress or *ICE* network of the Deutsche Bahn serves major German cities as well as destinations in neighbouring countries with speeds up to 300 km/h (190 mph).[162] The German railways are subsidised by the government, receiving €17.0 billion in 2014.[163]

The ICE 3 in Cologne railway station

The largest German airports are Frankfurt Airport and Munich Airport, both hubs of Lufthansa, while Air Berlin has hubs at Berlin Tegel and Düsseldorf. Other major airports include Berlin Schönefeld, Hamburg, Cologne/Bonn and Leipzig/Halle.[164] The Port of Hamburg is one of the top twenty largest container ports in the world.[165]

Energy and infrastructure

Main articles: Energy in Germany, Telecommunications in Germany, and Water supply and sanitation in Germany

In 2008, Germany was the world's sixth-largest consumer of energy,[166] and 60% of its primary energy was imported.[167] In 2014, energy sources were: oil (35.0%); coal, including lignite (24.6%); natural gas (20.5%); nuclear (8.1%); hydro-electric and renewable sources (11.1%).[168] The government and the nuclear power industry agreed to phase out all nuclear power plants by 2021.[169] It also enforces energy conservation, green technologies, emission reduction activities,[170] and aims to meet the country's electricity demands using 40% renewable sources by 2020.

Electricity production in Germany from 1980 to 2012
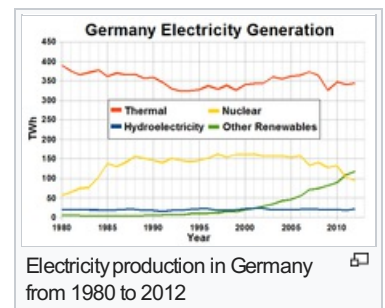
Germany is committed to the Paris Agreement and several other treaties promoting biodiversity, low emission standards, water management, and the renewable energy commercialisation.[171] The country's household recycling rate is among the highest in the world—at around 65%.[172] Nevertheless, the country's total greenhouse gas emissions were the highest in the EU in 2010.[173] The German energy transition (*Energiewende*) is the recognised move to a sustainable economy by means of energy efficiency and renewable energy.[174]

Science and technology

Main article: Science and technology in Germany

Germany is a global leader in science and technology as its achievements in the fields of science and technology have been significant. Research and development efforts form an integral part of the economy.[175] The Nobel Prize has been awarded to 107 German laureates.[176] It produces the second highest number of graduates in science and engineering (31%) after South Korea.[177] In the beginning of the 20th century, German laureates had more awards than those of any other nation, especially in the sciences (physics, chemistry, and physiology or medicine).[178][179]

Notable German physicists before the 20th century include Hermann von Helmholtz, Joseph von Fraunhofer and Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit, among others. Albert Einstein introduced the special relativity and general relativity theories for light and gravity in 1905 and 1915 respectively. Along with Max
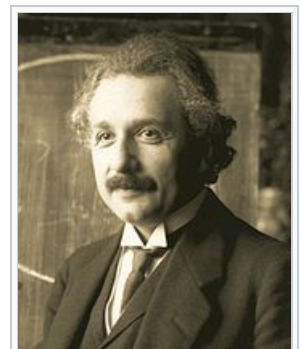
Albert Einstein, physicist. The Nobel Prize has been awarded to 107 German

Planck, he was instrumental in the introduction of [quantum mechanics](), in which Werner Heisenberg and Max Born later made major contributions.[180] Wilhelm Röntgen discovered X-rays.[181] Otto Hahn was a pioneer in the fields of radiochemistry and discovered nuclear fission, while Ferdinand Cohn and Robert Koch were founders of microbiology. Numerous mathematicians were born in Germany, including Carl Friedrich Gauss, David Hilbert, Bernhard Riemann, Gottfried Leibniz, Karl Weierstrass, Hermann Weyl, Felix Klein and Emmy Noether.

European Space Operations Centre (ESOC) in Darmstadt

Germany has been the home of many famous inventors and engineers, including Hans Geiger, the creator of the Geiger counter; and Konrad Zuse, who built the first fully automatic digital computer.[182] Such German inventors, engineers and industrialists as Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin,[183] Otto Lilienthal, Gottlieb Daimler, Rudolf Diesel, Hugo Junkers and Karl Benz helped shape modern automotive and air transportation technology. German institutions like the German Aerospace Center (DLR) are the largest contributor to ESA. Aerospace engineer Wernher von Braun developed the first space rocket at Peenemünde and later on was a prominent member of NASA and developed the Saturn V Moon rocket. Heinrich Rudolf Hertz's work in the domain of electromagnetic radiation was pivotal to the development of modern telecommunication.[184]

Research institutions in Germany include the Max Planck Society, the Helmholtz Association, the Fraunhofer Society and the Leibniz Association. The Wendelstein 7-X in Greifswald hosts a facility in the research of fusion power for instance.[185] The Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize is granted to ten scientists and academics every year. With a maximum of €2.5 million per award it is one of highest endowed research prizes in the world.[186]

Tourism

Main article: Tourism in Germany

Germany is the seventh most visited country in the world,[187] with a total of 407 million overnights during 2012.[188] This number includes 68.83 million nights by foreign visitors. In 2012, over 30.4 million international tourists arrived in Germany. Berlin has become the third most visited city destination in Europe.[189] Additionally, more than 30% of Germans spend their holiday in their own country, with the biggest share going to Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. Domestic and international travel and tourism combined directly contribute over EUR43.2 billion to German GDP. Including indirect and induced impacts, the industry contributes 4.5% of German GDP and supports 2 million jobs (4.8% of total employment).[190]

Neuschwanstein Castle in Bavaria

Germany is well known for its diverse tourist routes, such as the Romantic Road, the Wine Route, the Castle Road, and the Avenue Road. The German Timber-Frame Road (*Deutsche Fachwerkstraße*) connects towns with examples of these structures.[191][192]

Germany's most-visited landmarks include e.g. Neuschwanstein Castle, Cologne Cathedral, Berlin Bundestag, Hofbräuhaus Munich, Heidelberg Castle, Dresden Zwinger, Fernsehturm Berlin and Aachen Cathedral. The Europa-Park near Freiburg is Europe's second most popular theme park resort.[193]

Demographics

Main articles: Demographics of Germany and Germans

With a population of 80.2 million according to the 2011 census,[195] rising to 81.5 million as of 30 June 2015[196] and to at least 81.9 million as of 31 December 2015,[197] Germany is the most populous country in the European Union, the second most populous country in Europe after Russia, and ranks as the 16th most populous country in the world.[198] Its population density stands at 227 inhabitants per square kilometre (588 per square mile). The overall life expectancy in Germany at birth is 80.19 years (77.93 years for males and 82.58 years for females).[96] The fertility rate of 1.41 children born per woman (2011 estimates), or 8.33 births per 1000 inhabitants, is one of the lowest in the world.[96] Since the 1970s, Germany's death rate has exceeded its birth rate.[199] However, Germany is witnessing increased birth rates and migration rates since the beginning of the 2010s,[200] particularly a rise in the number
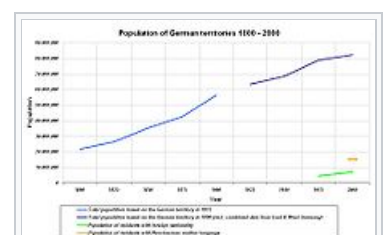
German population development from 1800 to 2010[194]

of well-educated migrants.[201][202]

Four sizeable groups of people are referred to as "national minorities" because their ancestors have lived in their respective regions for centuries.[203] There is a Danish minority (about 50,000) in the northernmost state of Schleswig-Holstein.[203] The Sorbs, a Slavic population of about 60,000, are in the Lusatia region of Saxony and Brandenburg. The Roma and Sinti live throughout the whole federal territory and the Frisians live on Schleswig-Holstein's western coast, and in the north-western part of Lower Saxony.[203]

Approximately 5 million Germans live abroad.[204]

Immigrant population

Main article: Immigration to Germany

After the United States, Germany is the second most popular immigration destination in the world.[205][206] As of 2016, about ten million of Germany's 82 million residents did not have German citizenship, which makes up 12% of the country's population.[207] The majority of migrants live in western Germany, in particular in urban areas.[208][209]

Germany is home to the second-highest number of international migrants.[210]

The Federal Statistical Office classifies the citizens by immigrant background. Regarding the immigrant background, 22.5% of the country's residents, or more than 18.6 million people, were of immigrant or partially immigrant descent in 2016 (including persons descending or partially descending from ethnic German repatriates).[211] In 2015, 36% of children under 5 were of immigrant or partially immigrant descent.[212]

Proportion of Germans without a migrant background (2016)

In 2011 census, as people with immigrant background (*Personen mit Migrationshintergrund*) were counted all immigrants, including ethnic Germans that came to the federal republic or had at least one parent settling here after 1955. The largest part of people with immigrant background is made up of returning ethnic Germans (*Aussiedler and Spätaussiedler*), followed by Turkish, European Union, and former Yugoslav citizens.[213]

In the 1960s and 1970s, the German governments invited "guest workers" (Gastarbeiter) to migrate to Germany for work in the German industries. Many companies preferred to keep these workers employed in Germany after they had trained them and Germany's immigrant population has steadily increased.[195]

In 2015, the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs listed Germany as host to the second-highest number of international migrants worldwide, about 5% or 12 million of all 244 million migrants.[214] Germany ranks 7th amongst EU countries and 37th globally in terms of the percentage of migrants who made up part of the country's population. As of 2014, the largest national group was from Turkey (2,859,000), followed by Poland (1,617,000), Russia (1,188,000), and Italy (764,000).[215] 740,000 people have African origins, an increase of 46% since 2011.[211] Since 1987, around 3 million ethnic Germans, mostly from the former Eastern Bloc countries, have exercised their right of return and emigrated to Germany.[216]

Religion

Main article: Religion in Germany

Upon its establishment in 1871, Germany was about two-thirds Protestant[f] and one-third Roman Catholic, with a notable Jewish minority. Other faiths existed in the state, but never achieved a demographic significance and cultural impact of these three confessions. Germany lost nearly all of its Jewish minority during the Holocaust. Religious makeup changed gradually in the decades following 1945, with West Germany becoming more religiously diversified through immigration and East Germany becoming overwhelmingly irreligious through state policies. It continues to diversify after the German reunification in 1990, with an accompanying substantial decline in religiosity throughout all of Germany and a contrasting increase of evangelical Protestants and Muslims.[217]

Geographically, Protestantism is concentrated in the northern, central and eastern parts of the country.[g]
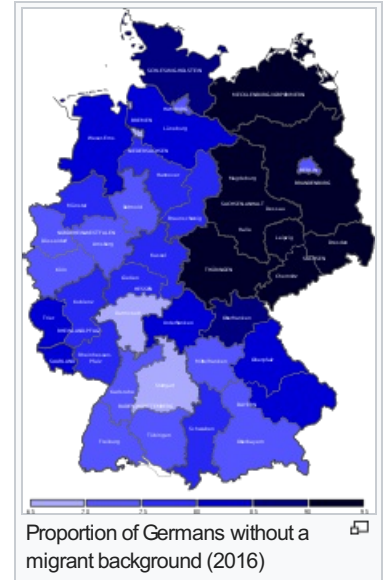
These are mostly members of the EKD, which encompasses Lutheran, Reformed and administrative or confessional unions of both traditions dating back to the Prussian Union of 1817.[h] Roman Catholicism is concentrated in the south and west.

According to the 2011 German Census, Christianity is the largest religion in Germany, claiming 66.8% of the total population.[218] Relative to the whole population, 31.7% declared themselves as Protestants, including members of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD) (30.8%) and the free churches (German: *Evangelische Freikirchen*) (0.9%), and 31.2% declared themselves as Roman Catholics.[219] Orthodox believers constituted 1.3%. Other religions accounted for 2.7%. According to the most recent data from 2016, the Catholic Church and the Evangelical Church claimed respectively 28.5% and 27.5% of the population.[220][221] Both large churches have lost significant numbers of adherents in recent years.

In 2011, 33% of Germans were not members of officially recognised religious associations with special status.[219][i] Irreligion in Germany is strongest in the former East Germany, which used to be predominantly Protestant before state atheism, and major metropolitan areas.[223][224][225]

Islam is the second largest religion in the country.[219] In the 2011 census, 1.9% of the census population (1.52 million people) gave their religion as Islam, but this figure is deemed unreliable because a disproportionate number of adherents of this religion (and other religions, such as Judaism) are likely to have made use of their right not to answer the question.[226] Figures from Religionswissenschaftlicher Medien- und Informationsdienst suggest a figure of 4.4 to 4.7 million (around 5.5% of the population) in 2015.[227] A study conducted by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees found that between 2011 and 2015 the Muslim population rose by 1.2 million people, mostly due to immigration.[228] Most of the Muslims are Sunnis and Alevites from Turkey, but there are a small number of Shi'ites, Ahmadiyyas and other denominations.[229]

Other religions comprising less than one per cent of Germany's population[219] are Buddhism with 270,000 adherents, Judaism with 200,000 adherents, and Hinduism with some 100,000 adherents. All other religious communities in Germany have fewer than 50,000 adherents each.[230]

Baroque Dresden Frauenkirche (Evangelical)

Gothic Cologne Cathedral (Roman Catholic)

Languages

Main articles: German language and Languages of Germany

German is the official and predominant spoken language in Germany.[231] Standard German is a West Germanic language and is closely related to and classified alongside Low German, Dutch, Afrikaans, Frisian and English. To a lesser extent, it is also related to the North Germanic languages. Most German vocabulary is derived from the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family.[232] Significant minorities of words are derived from Latin and Greek, with a smaller amount from French and most recently English (known as Denglisch). German is written using the Latin alphabet.

German dialects, traditional local varieties traced back to the Germanic tribes, are distinguished from varieties of standard German by their lexicon, phonology, and syntax.[233] It is one of 24 official and working languages of the European Union,[234] and one of the three working languages of the European Commission. German is the most widely spoken first language in the European Union, with around 100 million native speakers.[235]

The Goethe Institut, a German language academy, in São Paulo, Brazil

Recognised native minority languages in Germany are Danish, Low German, Low Rhenish, Sorbian, Romany, North Frisian and Saterland Frisian; they are officially protected by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The most used immigrant languages are Turkish, Kurdish, Polish, the Balkan languages, and Russian. Germans are typically multilingual: 67% of German citizens claim to be able to communicate in at least one foreign language and 27% in at least two.[231]

The Goethe-Institut is a non-profit German cultural association operational worldwide with 159 institutes. It is offering the study of the German language and encouraging global cultural exchange.[236]

Education

Responsibility for educational supervision in Germany is primarily organised within the individual federal states. Optional kindergarten education is provided for all children between three and six years old, after which school attendance is compulsory for at least nine years. Primary education usually lasts for four to six years.[237] Secondary education includes three traditional types of schools focused on different academic levels: the *Gymnasium* enrols the most gifted children and prepares students for university studies; the *Realschule* for intermediate students lasts six years and the *Hauptschule* prepares pupils for vocational education.[238] The *Gesamtschule* unifies all secondary education.

A system of apprenticeship called *Duale Ausbildung* leads to a skilled qualification which is almost comparable to an academic degree. It allows students in vocational training to learn in a company as well as in a state-run trade school.[237] This model is well regarded and reproduced all around the world.[239]

Most of the German universities are public institutions, and students traditionally study without fee payment.[240] The general requirement for university is the *Abitur*. However, there are a number of exceptions, depending on the state, the college and the subject. Tuition free academic education is open to international students and is increasingly common.[241][242] According to an OECD report in 2014, Germany is the world's third leading destination for international study.[243]

Germany has a long tradition of higher education. The established universities in Germany include some of the oldest in the world, with Heidelberg University (established in 1386) being the oldest.[244] It is followed by the Leipzig University (1409), the Rostock University (1419) and the Greifswald University (1456).[245] The University of Berlin, founded in 1810 by the liberal educational reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt, became the academic model for many European and Western universities. In the contemporary era Germany has developed eleven Universities of Excellence: Humboldt University Berlin, the University of Bremen, the University of Cologne, TU Dresden, the University of Tübingen, RWTH Aachen, FU Berlin, Heidelberg University, the University of Konstanz, LMU Munich, and the Technical University of Munich.[246]

Health

Germany's system of hospices, called *spitals*, dates from medieval times, and today, Germany has the world's oldest universal health care system, dating from Bismarck's social legislation of the 1880s,[248] Since the 1880s, reforms and provisions have ensured a balanced health care system. Currently the population is covered by a health insurance plan provided by statute, with criteria allowing some groups to opt for a private health insurance contract. According to the World Health Organization, Germany's health care system was 77% government-funded and 23% privately funded as of 2013.[249] In 2014, Germany spent 11.3% of its GDP on health care.[250] Germany ranked 20th in the world in life expectancy with 77 years for men and 82 years for women, and it had a very low infant mortality rate (4 per 1,000 live births).[249]

The *Hospice of the Holy Spirit* in Lübeck, established in 1286, is a precursor to modern hospitals.[247]

In 2010, the principal cause of death was cardiovascular disease, at 41%, followed by malignant tumours, at 26%.[251] In 2008, about 82,000 Germans had been infected with HIV/AIDS and 26,000 had died from the disease (cumulatively, since 1982).[252] According to a 2005 survey, 27% of German adults are smokers.[252] Obesity in Germany has been increasingly cited as a major health issue. A 2007 study shows Germany has the highest number of overweight people in Europe.[253][254]

Culture

Culture in German states has been shaped by major intellectual and popular currents in Europe, both religious and secular. Historically, Germany has been called *Das Land der Dichter und Denker* ("the land of poets and thinkers"),[255] because of the major role its writers and philosophers have played in the development of Western thought.[256]

Germany is well known for such folk festival traditions as Oktoberfest and Christmas customs, which include Advent wreaths, Christmas pageants, Christmas trees, Stollen cakes, and other practices.[257][258]

A typical German *Weihnachtsmarkt*

As of 2016 UNESCO inscribed 41 properties in Germany on the World Heritage List.[259] There are a number of public holidays in Germany determined by each state; 3 October has been a national day of Germany since 1990, celebrated as the *Tag der Deutschen Einheit* (German Unity Day).[260] Prior to reunification, the day was celebrated on 17 June, in honour of the Uprising of 1953 in East Germany which was brutally suppressed on that date.[261]

In the 21st century Berlin has emerged as a major international creative centre.[262] According to the Anholt–GfK Nation Brands Index, in 2014 Germany was the world's most respected nation among 50 countries (ahead of US, UK, and France).[263][264][265] A global opinion poll for the BBC revealed that Germany is recognised for having the most positive influence in the world in 2013 and 2014.[266][267]

Music

Main article: Music of Germany

Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827), composer Symphony No. 5

German classical music includes works by some of the world's most well-known composers. Dieterich Buxtehude composed oratorios for organ, which influenced the later work of Johann Sebastian Bach and Georg Friedrich Händel; these men were influential composers of the Baroque period. During his tenure as violinist and teacher at the Salzburg cathedral, Augsburg-born composer Leopold Mozart mentored one of the most noted musicians of all time: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Ludwig van Beethoven was a crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and Romantic eras. Carl Maria von Weber and Felix Mendelssohn were important in the early Romantic period. Robert Schumann and Johannes Brahms composed in the Romantic idiom. Richard Wagner was known for his operas. Richard Strauss was a leading composer of the late Romantic and early modern eras. Karlheinz Stockhausen and Hans Zimmer are important composers of the 20th and early 21st centuries.[268]

Germany is the second largest music market in Europe, and fourth largest in the world.[269] German popular music of the 20th and 21st centuries includes the movements of Neue Deutsche Welle, pop, Ostrock, heavy metal/rock, punk, pop rock, indie and schlager pop. German electronic music gained global influence, with Kraftwerk and Tangerine Dream pioneering in this genre.[270] DJs and artists of the techno and house music scenes of Germany have become well known (e.g. Paul van Dyk, Paul Kalkbrenner, and Scooter).[271]

Art

Main article: German art

German painters have influenced western art. Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein the Younger, Matthias Grünewald and Lucas Cranach the Elder were important German artists of the Renaissance, Peter Paul Rubens and Johann Baptist Zimmermann of the Baroque, Caspar David Friedrich and Carl Spitzweg of Romanticism, Max Liebermann of Impressionism and Max Ernst of Surrealism.[272] Such German sculptors as Otto Schmidt-Hofer, Franz Iffland, and Julius Schmidt-Felling made important contributions to German art history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[273][274]

C.D. Friedrich, *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1818)

Franz Marc, *Roe Deer in the Forest* (1914)

Several German art groups formed in the 20th century, such as the November Group or Die Brücke (The Bridge) and Der Blaue Reiter (The Blue Rider), by the Russian-born Wassily Kandinsky, influenced the development of Expressionism in Munich and Berlin. The New Objectivity arose as a counter-style to it during the Weimar Republic. Post-World War II art trends in Germany can broadly be divided into Neo-expressionism, performance art and Conceptualism. Especially notable neo-expressionists include Georg Baselitz, Anselm Kiefer, Jörg Immendorff, A. R. Penck, Markus Lüpertz, Peter Robert Keil and Rainer Fetting. Other notable artists who work with traditional media or figurative imagery include Martin Kippenberger, Gerhard Richter, Sigmar Polke, and Neo Rauch. Leading German conceptual artists include or included Bernd and Hilla Becher, Hanne Darboven, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Hans Haacke, Joseph Beuys, HA Schult, Aris Kalaizis, Neo Rauch (New Leipzig School) and

Andreas Gursky (photography). Major art exhibitions and festivals in Germany are the documenta, the Berlin Biennale, transmediale and Art Cologne.[272]

Architecture

Main article: Architecture of Germany

Architectural contributions from Germany include the Carolingian and Ottonian styles, which were precursors of Romanesque. Brick Gothic is a distinctive medieval style that evolved in Germany. Also in Renaissance and Baroque art, regional and typically German elements evolved (e.g. Weser Renaissance and *Dresden Baroque*). Among many renowned Baroque masters were Pöppelmann, Balthasar Neumann, Knobelsdorff and the Asam brothers. The Wessobrunner School exerted a decisive influence on, and at times even dominated, the art of stucco in southern Germany in the 18th century. The Upper Swabian Baroque Route offers a baroque-themed tourist route that highlights the contributions of such artists and craftsmen as the sculptor and plasterer Johann Michael Feuchtmayer, one of the foremost members of the Feuchtmayer family and the brothers Johann Baptist Zimmermann and Dominikus Zimmermann.[275] Vernacular architecture in Germany is often identified by its timber framing (*Fachwerk*) traditions and varies across regions, and among carpentry styles.[276][277]

Resort architecture on Rügen

When industrialisation spread across Europe, Classicism and a distinctive style of historism developed in Germany, sometimes referred to as *Gründerzeit style*, due to the economical boom years at the end of the 19th century. Regional historicist styles include the *Hanover School*, *Nuremberg Style* and Dresden's *Semper-Nicolai School*. Among the most famous of German buildings, the Schloss Neuschwanstein represents Romanesque Revival. Notable sub-styles that evolved since the 18th century are the German spa and seaside resort architecture. German artists, writers and gallerists like Siegfried Bing, Georg Hirth and Bruno Möhring also contributed to the development of Art Nouveau at the turn of the 20th century, known as *Jugendstil* in German.[278]

Hohenzollern Castle in Swabia

Expressionist architecture developed in the 1910s in Germany and influenced Art Deco and other modern styles, with e.g. Fritz Höger, Erich Mendelsohn, Dominikus Böhm, and Fritz Schumacher being influential architects. Germany was particularly important in the early modernist movement: it is the home of Werkbund initiated by Hermann Muthesius (New Objectivity), and of the Bauhaus movement founded by Walter Gropius. Consequently, Germany is often considered the cradle of modern architecture and design. Ludwig Mies van der Rohe became one of the world's most renowned architects in the second half of the 20th century. He conceived of the glass façade skyscraper.[279] Renowned contemporary architects and offices include Hans Kollhoff, Sergei Tchoban, KK Architekten, Helmut Jahn, Behnisch, GMP, Ole Scheeren, J. Mayer H., OM Ungers, Gottfried Böhm and Frei Otto (the last two being Pritzker Prize winners).[280]

Literature and philosophy

Main articles: German literature and German philosophy

The Brothers Grimm collected and published popular German folk tales.

German literature can be traced back to the Middle Ages and the works of writers such as Walther von der Vogelweide and Wolfram von Eschenbach. Well-known German authors include Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing and Theodor Fontane. The collections of folk tales published by the Brothers Grimm popularised German folklore on an international level.[281] The Grimms also gathered and codified regional variants of the German language, grounding their work in historical principles; their *Deutsches Wörterbuch*, or German Dictionary, sometimes called the Grimm dictionary, was begun in 1838 and the first volumes published in 1854.[282]

Influential authors of the 20th century include Gerhart Hauptmann, Thomas Mann, Hermann Hesse, Heinrich Böll and Günter Grass.[283] The German book market is the third largest in the world, after the United States and China.[284] The Frankfurt Book Fair is the most important in the world for international deals and trading, with a tradition spanning over 500 years.[285] The Leipzig Book Fair also retains a major position in Europe.[286]

German philosophy is historically significant: [Gottfried Leibniz](#)'s contributions to [rationalism](#); the [enlightenment](#) philosophy by [Immanuel Kant](#); the establishment of classical [German idealism](#) by [Johann Gottlieb Fichte](#), [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel](#) and [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling](#); [Arthur Schopenhauer](#)'s composition of metaphysical pessimism; the formulation of [communist theory](#) by [Karl Marx](#) and [Friedrich Engels](#); [Friedrich Nietzsche](#)'s development of [perspectivism](#); [Gottlob Frege](#)'s contributions to the dawn of [analytic philosophy](#); [Martin Heidegger](#)'s works on Being; [Oswald Spengler](#)'s historical philosophy; the development of the [Frankfurt School](#) by [Max Horkheimer](#), [Theodor Adorno](#), [Herbert Marcuse](#) and [Jürgen Habermas](#) have been particularly influential.[287]
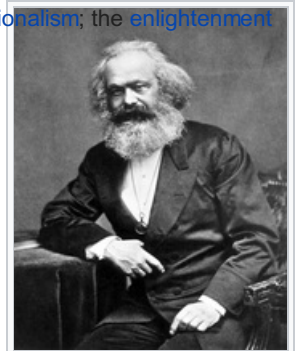
[Karl Marx](#) was a German philosopher and economist who developed the [Marxist communism](#) philosophy.

Media

Main article: [Media of Germany](#)

[Deutsche Welle](#) headquarters in [Bonn](#) (centre).

The largest internationally operating [media](#) companies in Germany are the [Bertelsmann](#) enterprise, [Axel Springer SE](#) and [ProSiebenSat.1 Media](#). The [German Press Agency DPA](#) is also significant. [Germany's television market](#) is the largest in Europe, with some 38 million TV households.[288] Around 90% of German households have cable or satellite TV, with a variety of [free-to-view public](#) and [commercial](#) channels.[289] There are more than 500 public and private [radio stations in Germany](#), with the public [Deutsche Welle](#) being the main German radio and television broadcaster in foreign languages.[290] Germany's national radio network is the [Deutschlandradio](#) while [ARD](#) stations are covering local services.

Many of Europe's best-selling [newspapers](#) and [magazines](#) are produced in Germany. The papers (and internet portals) with the highest circulation are *Bild* (a [tabloid](#)), *Die Zeit*, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and *Die Welt*, the largest magazines include *Der Spiegel*, *Stern* and *Focus*.[291]

The [German video gaming market](#) is one of the largest in the world.[292] The [Gamescom](#) in Cologne is the world's leading gaming convention.[293] Popular game series from Germany include *Turrican*, the *Anno* series, *The Settlers* series, the *Gothic* series, *SpellForce*, the *FIFA Manager* series, *Far Cry* and *Crysis*. Relevant game developers and publishers are [Blue Byte](#), [Crytek](#), [Deep Silver](#), [Kalypso Media](#), [Piranha Bytes](#), [Yager Development](#), and some of the largest [social network game](#) companies like [Bigpoint](#), [Gameforge](#), [Goodgame](#) and [Wooga](#).[294]

Cinema

Main article: [Cinema of Germany](#)

[German cinema](#) has made major technical and artistic contributions to film. The first works of the [Skladanowsky Brothers](#) were shown to an audience in 1895. The renowned [Babelsberg Studio](#) in [Potsdam](#) was established in 1912, thus being the first large-scale film studio in the world (today it is Europe's second largest studio after [Cinecittà](#) in [Rome](#), [Italy](#)).[295][296] Other early and still active studios include [UFA](#) and [Bavaria Film](#). Early German cinema was particularly influential with [German expressionists](#) such as [Robert Wiene](#) and [Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau](#). Director [Fritz Lang](#)'s *Metropolis* (1927) is referred to as the first major science-fiction film.[297] In 1930 [Josef von Sternberg](#) directed *The Blue Angel*, the first major German [sound film](#), with [Marlene Dietrich](#).[298] Films of [Leni Riefenstahl](#) set new artistic standards, in particular *Triumph of the Will*.[299]

After 1945, many of the films of the immediate post-war period can be characterised as *Trümmerfilm* (rubble film). Such films included [Wolfgang Staudte](#)'s *Die Mörder sind unter uns (The Murderers are among us, 1946)* and *Irgendwo in Berlin* (Somewhere in Berlin, 1946) by [Werner Krien](#). The state-owned East German film studio [DEFA](#) produced notable films including *Ehe im Schatten* (Marriage in the Shadows) by [Kurt Maetzig](#) (1947), *Der Untertan* (1951); *Die Geschichte vom kleinen Muck* (The Story of Little Muck, 1953), [Konrad Wolf](#)'s *Der geteilte Himmel (Divided Heaven)* (1964) and [Frank Beyer](#)'s *Jacob the Liar* (1975). The defining film genre in West Germany of the 1950s was arguably the *Heimatfilm* ("homeland film"); these films depicted the

[Babelsberg Studio](#) near Berlin, the world's first large-scale film studio

beauty of the land and the moral integrity of the people living in it.[300] Characteristic for the films of the 1960s were genre films including [Edgar Wallace](#) and [Karl May](#) adaptations. One of the most successful German movie series of the 1970s included the [sex reports](#) called *Schulmädchen-Report* (Schoolgirl Report). During the 1970s

and 1980s, New German Cinema directors such as Volker Schlöndorff, Werner Herzog, Wim Wenders, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder brought West German auteur cinema to critical acclaim.

Among the box office hits, there were films such as *Chariots of the Gods* (1970), *Das Boot* (The Boat, 1981), *The Never Ending Story* (1984), *Otto – The Movie* (1985), *Run Lola Run* (1998), *Manitou's Shoe* (2001), the *Resident Evil* series (2002–2016), *Good Bye, Lenin!* (2003), *Head On* (2004), *The White Ribbon* (2009), *Animals United* (2010), and *Cloud Atlas* (2012). The Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film ("Oscar") went to the German production *Die Blechtrommel (The Tin Drum)* in 1979, to *Nirgendwo in Afrika (Nowhere in Africa)* in 2002, and to *Das Leben der Anderen (The Lives of Others)* in 2007. Various Germans won an "Oscar" award for their performances in other films.[301]

The annual European Film Awards ceremony is held every other year in Berlin, home of the European Film Academy. The Berlin International Film Festival, known as "Berlinale", awarding the "Golden Bear" and held annually since 1951, is one of the world's leading film festivals.[302] The "Lolas" are annually awarded in Berlin, at the German Film Awards, that have been presented since 1951.[303]

Cuisine

Main article: German cuisine

German cuisine varies from region to region and often neighbouring regions share some culinary similarities (e.g. the southern regions of Bavaria and Swabia share some traditions with Switzerland and Austria). International varieties such as pizza, sushi, Chinese food, Greek food, Indian cuisine and doner kebab are also popular.

Black Forest Gâteau, a German dessert

Bread is a significant part of German cuisine and German bakeries produce about 600 main types of bread and 1,200 different types of pastries and rolls (*Brötchen*). German cheeses account for about a third of all cheese produced in Europe.[304] In 2012 over 99% of all meat produced in Germany was either pork, chicken or beef. Germans produce their ubiquitous sausages in almost 1,500 varieties, including Bratwursts and Weisswursts.[305] In 2012, organic foods accounted for 3.9% of total food sales.[306]

Bratwurst, one of the most popular foods in Germany

Although wine is becoming more popular in many parts of Germany, especially close to German wine regions,[307] the national alcoholic drink is beer. German beer consumption per person stands at 110 litres (24 imp gal; 29 US gal) in 2013 and remains among the highest in the world.[308] German beer purity regulations date back to the 15th century.[309]

The 2015 Michelin Guide awarded eleven restaurants in Germany three stars, the highest designation, while 38 more received two stars and 233 one star.[310] German restaurants have become the world's second-most decorated after France.[311][312]

Sports

Main article: Sport in Germany
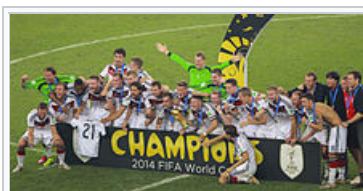
The German national football team after winning the FIFA World Cup for the fourth time in 2014. Football is the most popular sport in Germany.

Twenty-seven million Germans are members of a sports club and an additional twelve million pursue sports individually.[313] Association football is the most popular sport. With more than 6.3 million official members, the German Football Association (*Deutscher Fußball-Bund*) is the largest sports organisation of its kind worldwide, and the German top league, the Bundesliga, attracts the second highest average attendance of all professional sports leagues in the world.[313] The German men's national football team won the FIFA World Cup in 1954, 1974, 1990, and 2014, the UEFA European Championship in 1972, 1980 and 1996, and the FIFA Confederations Cup in 2017. Germany hosted the FIFA World Cup in 1974 and 2006 and the UEFA European Championship in 1988.

Other popular spectator sports include winter sports, boxing, basketball, handball, volleyball, ice hockey, tennis, horse riding and golf. Water sports like sailing, rowing, and swimming are popular in Germany as well.[313]

Germany is one of the leading motor sports countries in the world. Constructors like BMW and Mercedes are prominent manufacturers in motor sport. Porsche has won the 24 Hours of Le Mans race 19 times, and Audi 13 times (as of 2017). The driver Michael Schumacher has set many motor sport records during his career, having won seven Formula One World Drivers' Championships, more than any other. He is one of the highest paid sportsmen in history.[314] Sebastian Vettel is also among the top five most successful Formula One drivers of all time.[315] Also Nico Rosberg won the Formula One World Championship.

Historically, German athletes have been successful contenders in the Olympic Games, ranking third in an all-time Olympic Games medal count (when combining East and West German medals). Germany was the last country to host both the summer and winter games in the same year, in 1936 the Berlin Summer Games and the Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen.[316] In Munich it hosted the Summer Games of 1972.[317]

Fashion and design

> Main article: German fashion

German designers became early leaders of modern product design, with the Bauhaus designers like Mies van der Rohe, and Dieter Rams of Braun being essential pioneers.[318]

Germany is a leading country in the fashion industry. The German textile industry consisted of about 1,300 companies with more than 130,000 employees in 2010, which generated a revenue of 28 billion Euro. Almost 44 per cent of the products are exported.[319] The Berlin Fashion Week and the fashion trade fair Bread & Butter are held twice a year.[320]

Claudia Schiffer, German supermodel

Munich, Hamburg, Cologne and Düsseldorf are also important design, production and trade hubs of the domestic fashion industry, among smaller towns.[321] Renowned fashion designers from Germany include Karl Lagerfeld, Jil Sander, Wolfgang Joop, Philipp Plein and Michael Michalsky. Important brands include Hugo Boss, Escada, Adidas, Puma, Esprit and Triumph. The German supermodels Claudia Schiffer, Heidi Klum, Tatjana Patitz, Nadja Auermann and Toni Garrn, among others, have come to international fame.[322]

See also

- Index of Germany-related articles
- Outline of Germany
- 📖 *Germany* – Wikipedia book

Germany portal
Europe portal

Notes

a. ^ In the recognised minority languages and the most spoken minority language of Germany:
- Danish: *Forbundsrepublikken Tyskland*
- Low German: *Bundesrepubliek Düütschland*
- Upper Sorbian: *Zwjazkowa Republika Němska*
- Lower Sorbian: *Nimska Zwězkowa Republika*
- Romani: *Federalni Republika Jermaniya*
- North Frisian: *Bundesrepubliik Tjiisklun / Tjüschlönj*
- Turkish: *Almanya Federal Cumhuriyeti*

b. ^ From 1952 to 1990, the *Deutschlandlied* was the national anthem but only the third verse was sung on official occasions. Since 1991, the third verse alone has been the national anthem.[1]

c. ^ Berlin is the sole constitutional capital and *de jure* seat of government, but the former provisional capital of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn, has the special title of "federal city" (*Bundesstadt*) and is the primary seat of six ministries; all government ministries have offices in both cities.

d. ^ Danish, Low German, Sorbian, Romany, and Frisian are recognised by the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

e. ^ IPA transcription of "*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*": German pronunciation: [ˈbʊndəsʁepuˌbliːk ˈdɔʏtʃlant][9]

f. ^ German Protestantism has been overwhelmingly a mixture of Lutheran, Reformed (i.e. Calvinist), and United (Lutheran & Reformed/Calvinist) churches, with Baptists, Pentecostals, Methodists, and various other Protestants being only a recent development.

g. ^ Lutheranism is found mostly throughout northern Germany, Württemberg and parts of Franconia; Calvinism in the extreme northwest and Lippe, while the United churches throughout the remainder of Germany.

h. ^ Although the first such union between Lutheran and Calvinist Protestants happened in August 1817 in the Duchy of Nassau (a confessional union, *see Unionskirche, Idstein*); that is before the Prussian Union of September 1817.

There were also unions in other smaller German states happening independent of each other.

i. ^ Such organisations are corporations under public law with the power to levy compulsory taxes on their members. The tax rate is eight percent of income tax (and certain other taxes) in Bavaria and nine percent in other states; in most cases the tax is collected by the state and in other cases data on church members' income is shared.[222] Most people who leave the church do so in order to avoid paying these taxes.[222]

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1. ^ Bundespräsidialamt. "Repräsentation und Integration" (in German). Archived from the original on 7 March 2016. Retrieved 8 March 2016. "Nach Herstellung der staatlichen Einheit Deutschlands bestimmte Bundespräsident von Weizsäcker in einem Briefwechsel mit Bundeskanzler Helmut Kohl im Jahr 1991 die dritte Strophe zur Nationalhymne für das deutsche Volk. [In 1991, following the establishment of German unity, Federal President von Weizsäcker, in an exchange of letters with Chancellor Helmut Kohl, declared the third verse [of the Deutschlandlied] to be the national anthem of the German people.]"

2. ^ "2016" (PDF). *Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis), 2017*. Retrieved 8 June 2018.

3. ^ Numbers and Facts about Church Life in Germany 2016 Report Archived 30 October 2016 at the Wayback Machine.. Evangelical Church of Germany. Retrieved 6 December 2016.

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External links

Government

- Official site of the Federal Government🔗
- Official site of the Federal President🔗
- Official site of the German Chancellor🔗
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General information

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- "Germany"🔗. *The World Factbook*. Central Intelligence Agency.
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Articles related to Germany

v · t · e 🇩🇪 States of the Federal Republic of Germany

States	Baden-Württemberg (since 1952) · Bavaria (since 1949) · Brandenburg (since 1990) · Hesse (since 1949) · Lower Saxony (since 1949) · Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (since 1990) · North Rhine-Westphalia (since 1949) · Rhineland-Palatinate (since 1949) · Saarland (since 1957) · Saxony (since 1990) · Saxony-Anhalt (since 1990) · Schleswig-Holstein (since 1949) · Thuringia (since 1990)
City-states	Berlin (since 1990) · Bremen (since 1949) · Hamburg (since 1949)
Former states	South Baden (1949–1952) · Württemberg-Baden (1949–1952) · Württemberg-Hohenzollern (1949–1952)

Geographic locale

v · t · e Sovereign states and dependencies of Europe

Sovereign states		Albania · Andorra · Armenia[2] · Austria · Azerbaijan · Belarus · Belgium · Bosnia and Herzegovina · Bulgaria · Croatia · Cyprus[2] · Czech Republic · Denmark · Estonia · Finland · France · Georgia · **Germany** · Greece · Hungary · Iceland[1] · Ireland · Italy · Kazakhstan · Latvia · Liechtenstein · Lithuania · Luxembourg · Macedonia · Malta · Moldova · Monaco · Montenegro · Netherlands · Norway · Poland · Portugal · Romania · Russia · San Marino · Serbia · Slovakia · Slovenia · Spain · Sweden · Switzerland · Turkey · Ukraine · United Kingdom · Vatican City
States with limited recognition		Abkhazia[2] · Artsakh[2] · Kosovo · Northern Cyprus[2] · South Ossetia[2] · Transnistria
Dependencies	Denmark	Faroe Islands[1] (autonomous country of the Kingdom of Denmark)
	United Kingdom	Akrotiri and Dhekelia[2] (Sovereign Base Areas) · Gibraltar (British Overseas Territory) · Guernsey · Isle of Man · Jersey (Crown dependencies)
Special areas of internal sovereignty	Finland	Åland Islands (autonomous region subject to the Åland Convention of 1921)
	Norway	Svalbard (unincorporated area subject to the Svalbard Treaty)
	United Kingdom	Northern Ireland (country of the United Kingdom subject to the British-Irish Agreement)

[1] Oceanic islands within the vicinity of Europe are usually grouped with the continent even though they are not situated on its continental shelf.
[2] Some countries completely outside the conventional geographical boundaries of Europe are commonly associated with the continent due to ethnological links.

v · t · e Countries bordering the Baltic Sea

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International membership

v · t · e Member states of the European Union

Austria · Belgium · Bulgaria · Croatia · Cyprus (see also Northern Cyprus) · Czech Republic · Denmark · Estonia · Finland · France · Germany · Greece · Hungary · Ireland · Italy · Latvia · Lithuania · Luxembourg · Malta · Netherlands · Poland · Portugal · Romania · Slovakia · Slovenia · Spain · Sweden · United Kingdom

Future enlargement of the European Union

v · t · e North Atlantic Treaty Organization

History	North Atlantic Treaty · Summit · Operations · Enlargement
Structure	Council · Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (Air Command · Land Command · Maritime Command · JFC Brunssum · JFC Naples) · Allied Command Transformation · Parliamentary Assembly · Standardization Agreement
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Members	Albania · Belgium · Bulgaria · Canada · Croatia · Czech Republic · Denmark · Estonia · France · Germany · Greece · Hungary · Iceland · Italy · Latvia · Lithuania · Luxembourg · Montenegro · Netherlands · Norway · Poland · Portugal · Romania · Slovakia · Slovenia · Spain · Turkey · United Kingdom · United States
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v · t · e	**Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**
History	Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development · OECD Anti-Bribery Convention
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v · t · e	**Group of Eight (G8)** and **Group of Eight + Five (G8+5)**
G8 members	Canada · France · Germany · Italy · Japan · Russia (suspended) · United Kingdom · United States
Representative	European Union
G8+5	Brazil · China · India · Mexico · South Africa
See also	Group of Six · Group of Seven · G7+1

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colspan=2	1 Special administrative regions of the People's Republic of China, participates as "Hong Kong, China" and "Macao China". · 2 Officially the Republic of China, participates as "Separate Customs Territory of Taiwan, Penghu, Kinmen and Matsu", and "Chinese Taipei" in short.

Council of Europe	
v · t · e	**Council of Europe**
Institutions	Secretary General · Committee of Ministers · Parliamentary Assembly · Congress · Court of Human Rights · Commissioner for Human Rights · Commission for the Efficiency of Justice · Commission against Racism and Intolerance
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Observers	Canada · Holy See · Israel · Japan · Mexico · United States · Sovereign Military Order of Malta
Former members	Czechoslovakia (1991–1992) · Saar (assoc. 1950–1956) · Serbia and Montenegro (2003–2006)
[1] Provisionally referred to by the Council of Europe as "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia"; see Macedonia naming dispute.	

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