[Template:About](/wiki/Template:About" \o "Template:About) [Template:Redirect](/wiki/Template:Redirect) [Template:Pp-semi](/wiki/Template:Pp-semi) [Template:Pp-move-indef](/wiki/Template:Pp-move-indef) [Template:Use British English](/wiki/Template:Use_British_English) [Template:Use dmy dates](/wiki/Template:Use_dmy_dates) [Template:Featured article](/wiki/Template:Featured_article) [Template:Coord](/wiki/Template:Coord) [Template:Infobox country](/wiki/Template:Infobox_country) **Germany** ([Template:IPAc-en](/wiki/Template:IPAc-en); [Template:Lang-de](/wiki/Template:Lang-de), [Template:IPA-de](/wiki/Template:IPA-de)), officially the **Federal Republic of Germany** ([Template:Lang-de](/wiki/Template:Lang-de), [Template:Audio](/wiki/Template:Audio)),[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn)[[1]](#cite_note-1) is a [sovereign state](/wiki/Sovereign_state) and [federal](/wiki/Federation) [parliamentary republic](/wiki/Parliamentary_republic) in [central](/wiki/Central_Europe)-[western](/wiki/Western_Europe) [Europe](/wiki/Europe). It includes 16 [constituent states](/wiki/States_of_Germany), covers an area of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), and has a largely temperate seasonal climate. Its [capital](/wiki/Capital_city) and [largest city](/wiki/List_of_cities_in_Germany_by_population) is [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin). With about 81.8 million inhabitants, Germany is the most populous [member state](/wiki/Member_state_of_the_European_Union) of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). After the [United States](/wiki/United_States), it is the second most popular [human migration destination](/wiki/Immigration_to_Germany).[[2]](#cite_note-2) Various [Germanic tribes](/wiki/Germanic_tribes) have occupied the northern parts of current Germany since [classical antiquity](/wiki/Classical_antiquity). A region named [Germania](/wiki/Germania) was [documented](/wiki/Germania_(book)) before 100 AD. During the [Migration Period](/wiki/Migration_Period) the Germanic tribes expanded southward. Beginning in the 10th century, German territories formed a central part of the [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire).[[3]](#cite_note-3) During the 16th century, northern German regions became the centre of the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation).

In 1871 [most of the German states unified](/wiki/Unification_of_Germany) into the [Prussian](/wiki/Prussia)-dominated [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire). After [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I) and the [German Revolution of 1918–1919](/wiki/German_Revolution_of_1918–1919), the Empire was replaced by the parliamentary [Weimar Republic](/wiki/Weimar_Republic). [The establishment](/wiki/Nazi_seizure_of_power) of the [national socialist](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) dictatorship in 1933 led to [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II) and systematic [genocide](/wiki/Genocides_in_history#Germany_and_Nazi-occupied_Europe). After a period of [Allied occupation](/wiki/Allied-occupied_Germany), two German states were founded: the [Federal Republic of Germany](/wiki/West_Germany) and the [German Democratic Republic](/wiki/German_Democratic_Republic). [In 1990](/wiki/German_Unity_Day), the country was [reunified](/wiki/German_reunification).[[4]](#cite_note-4) In the 21st century, Germany is a [great power](/wiki/Great_power) and has the world's [fourth-largest economy by nominal GDP](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal)), as well as the [fifth-largest by PPP](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)). As a global leader in several industrial and technological sectors, it is both the world's [third-largest exporter](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_exports) and [importer](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_imports) of goods. Germany is a [developed country](/wiki/Developed_country) with a [very high standard of living](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_Human_Development_Index) sustained by a skilled and productive society. It upholds a [social security](/wiki/Welfare_in_Germany) and [universal health care](/wiki/Healthcare_in_Germany) system, environmental protection and a tuition-free [university education](/wiki/Higher_education_in_Germany).[[5]](#cite_note-5) Germany was a founding member of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) in 1993. It is part of the [Schengen Area](/wiki/Schengen_Area), and became a co-founder of the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) in 1999. Germany is a member of the [United Nations](/wiki/United_Nations), [NATO](/wiki/NATO), the [G8](/wiki/G8), the [G20](/wiki/G-20_major_economies), and the [OECD](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development). The national military expenditure is the 9th highest in the world. Known for its rich [cultural](/wiki/Culture_of_Germany) history, Germany has been continuously the home of influential [artists](/wiki/German_art), [philosophers](/wiki/German_philosophy), [musicians](/wiki/Music_of_Germany), [sportspeople](/wiki/Sport_in_Germany), [entrepreneurs](/wiki/List_of_Germans#Company_founders), [scientists and inventors](/wiki/Science_and_technology_in_Germany).

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## Etymology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=1)]

[Template:Further](/wiki/Template:Further) The English word *Germany* derives from the Latin [Germania](/wiki/Germania), which came into use after [Julius Caesar](/wiki/Julius_Caesar) adopted it for the peoples east of the [Rhine](/wiki/Rhine).[[6]](#cite_note-6) The [German](/wiki/German_language) term *Deutschland*, originally *diutisciu land* ("the German lands") is derived from [*deutsch*](/wiki/Wikt:deutsch#German) (cf. [*dutch*](/wiki/Dutch_(disambiguation))), descended from [Old High German](/wiki/Old_High_German) *diutisc* "popular" (i.e. belonging to the *diot* or *diota* "people"), originally used to distinguish the [language of the common people](/wiki/Vernacular) from [Latin](/wiki/Latin) and its [Romance descendants](/wiki/Romance_languages). This in turn descends from [Proto-Germanic](/wiki/Proto-Germanic) [\**þiudiskaz*](/wiki/Wikt:Appendix:Proto-Germanic/þiudiskaz) "popular" (see also the Latinised form [Theodiscus](/wiki/Theodiscus)), derived from [\**þeudō*](/wiki/Wikt:Appendix:Proto-Germanic/þeudō), descended from [Proto-Indo-European](/wiki/Proto-Indo-European_language) [\**tewtéh₂-*](/wiki/Wikt:Appendix:Proto-Indo-European/tewtéh₂) "people".[[7]](#cite_note-7)

## History[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=2)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|The](/wiki/File:Nebra_Scheibe.jpg) [Nebra sky disk](/wiki/Nebra_sky_disk), c. 1600 BC The discovery of the [Mauer 1](/wiki/Mauer_1) mandible shows that ancient humans were present in Germany at least 600,000 years ago.[[8]](#cite_note-8) The oldest complete hunting weapons found anywhere in the world were discovered in a coal mine in [Schöningen](/wiki/Schöningen) where three 380,000-year-old wooden javelins were unearthed.[[9]](#cite_note-9) The [Neander Valley](/wiki/Neandertal) was the location where the first ever non-modern human fossil was discovered; the new species of human was called the [Neanderthal](/wiki/Neanderthal). The [Neanderthal 1](/wiki/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](/wiki/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,[[10]](#cite_note-10) the 40,000-year-old Ice Age [Lion Man](/wiki/Lion-man) which is the oldest uncontested figurative art ever discovered,[[11]](#cite_note-11) and the 35,000-year-old [Venus of Hohle Fels](/wiki/Venus_of_Hohle_Fels) which is the oldest uncontested human figurative art ever discovered.[[12]](#cite_note-12) The [Nebra sky disk](/wiki/Nebra_sky_disk) is a [bronze](/wiki/Bronze) artifact created during the [European Bronze Age](/wiki/European_Bronze_Age) attributed to a site near [Nebra](/wiki/Nebra_(Unstrut)), [Saxony-Anhalt](/wiki/Saxony-Anhalt). It is part of [UNESCO's](/wiki/UNESCO) [Memory of the World Programme](/wiki/Memory_of_the_World_Programme).[[13]](#cite_note-13)

### Germanic tribes and Frankish Empire[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=3)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|Migrations in Europe (100–500 AD)](/wiki/File:Invasions_of_the_Roman_Empire_1.png) The [Germanic tribes](/wiki/Germanic_peoples) are [thought to date from](/wiki/Ethnogenesis) the [Nordic Bronze Age](/wiki/Nordic_Bronze_Age) or the [Pre-Roman Iron Age](/wiki/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](/wiki/Celt) tribes of [Gaul](/wiki/Gaul) as well as [Iranian](/wiki/Iranian_peoples), [Baltic](/wiki/Balts), and [Slavic](/wiki/Slavic_peoples) tribes in [Central](/wiki/Central_Europe) and [Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Europe).[[14]](#cite_note-14) Under [Augustus](/wiki/Augustus), Rome began to invade Germania (an area extending roughly from the [Rhine](/wiki/Rhine) to the [Ural Mountains](/wiki/Ural_Mountains)). In 9 AD, three [Roman legions](/wiki/Roman_legion) led by Varus were [defeated](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Teutoburg_Forest) by the [Cheruscan](/wiki/Cheruscan) leader [Arminius](/wiki/Arminius). By 100 AD, when [Tacitus](/wiki/Tacitus) wrote [*Germania*](/wiki/Germania_(book)), Germanic tribes had settled along the Rhine and the Danube (the [Limes Germanicus](/wiki/Limes_Germanicus)), occupying most of the area of modern Germany; Austria, [Baden Württemberg](/wiki/Baden_Württemberg), southern [Bavaria](/wiki/Bavaria), southern [Hessen](/wiki/Hessen) and the western [Rhineland](/wiki/Rhineland), however, were Roman provinces.[[15]](#cite_note-15) In the 3rd century a number of large West Germanic tribes emerged: [Alemanni](/wiki/Alemanni), [Franks](/wiki/Franks), [Chatti](/wiki/Chatti), [Saxons](/wiki/Saxons), [Frisii](/wiki/Frisii), [Sicambri](/wiki/Sicambri), and [Thuringii](/wiki/Thuringii). Around 260, the Germanic peoples broke into Roman-controlled lands.[[16]](#cite_note-16) After the invasion of the [Huns](/wiki/Huns) in 375, and with the decline of Rome from 395, Germanic tribes moved further south-west. Simultaneously several large tribes formed in what is now Germany and displaced or absorbed smaller Germanic tribes. Large areas known since the [Merovingian](/wiki/Merovingian) period as [Austrasia](/wiki/Austrasia), [Neustria](/wiki/Neustria), and [Aquitaine](/wiki/Duchy_of_Aquitaine) were conquered by the Franks who established the [Frankish Kingdom](/wiki/Frankish_Kingdom), and pushed further east to subjugate [Saxony](/wiki/Duchy_of_Saxony) and [Bavaria](/wiki/Duchy_of_Bavaria). Areas of what is today the eastern part of Germany were inhabited by [Western Slavic](/wiki/West_Slavs) tribes of [Sorbs](/wiki/Sorbs), [Veleti](/wiki/Veleti) and the [Obotritic confederation](/wiki/Obotrites).[[15]](#cite_note-15)[Template:Clear left](/wiki/Template:Clear_left)

### East Francia and Holy Roman Empire[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=4)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) In 800, the Frankish king [Charlemagne](/wiki/Charlemagne) was crowned emperor and founded the [Carolingian Empire](/wiki/Carolingian_Empire), which was later [divided in 843](/wiki/Treaty_of_Verdun) among his heirs.[[17]](#cite_note-17) 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](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire),[[18]](#cite_note-18) which subsequently emerged from the eastern portion of Charlemagne's original empire. The territory initially known as [East Francia](/wiki/East_Francia) stretched from the Rhine in the west to the [Elbe River](/wiki/Elbe) in the east and from the [North Sea](/wiki/North_Sea) to the [Alps](/wiki/Alps).[[17]](#cite_note-17) The [Ottonian](/wiki/Ottonian) rulers (919–1024) consolidated several major [duchies](/wiki/Stem_duchy) and the German king [Otto I](/wiki/Otto_I) was crowned [Holy Roman Emperor](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor) of these regions in 962. In 996 [Gregory V](/wiki/Pope_Gregory_V) became the first German Pope, appointed by his cousin [Otto III](/wiki/Otto_III), whom he shortly after crowned Holy Roman Emperor. The Holy Roman Empire absorbed northern Italy and [Burgundy](/wiki/Burgundy_(historical_region)) under the reign of the [Salian](/wiki/Salian) emperors (1024–1125), although the emperors lost power through the [Investiture Controversy](/wiki/Investiture_Controversy).[[19]](#cite_note-19) [thumb|upright=0.7|](/wiki/File:Lucas_Cranach_d.Ä._-_Martin_Luther,_1528_(Veste_Coburg).jpg)[Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther) (1483–1546) initiated the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation). In the 12th century, under the [Hohenstaufen](/wiki/House_of_Hohenstaufen) emperors (1138–1254), German princes increased their influence further south and east into territories inhabited by [Slavs](/wiki/Slavs); they encouraged [German settlement](/wiki/History_of_German_settlement_in_Central_and_Eastern_Europe) in these areas, called the eastern settlement movement *(*[*Ostsiedlung*](/wiki/Ostsiedlung)*)*. Members of the [Hanseatic League](/wiki/Hanseatic_League), which included mostly north German cities and towns, prospered in the expansion of trade.[[20]](#cite_note-20) In the south, the Greater Ravensburg Trade Corporation (*Große Ravensburger Handelsgesellschaft*) served a similar function. The edict of the [Golden Bull](/wiki/Golden_Bull_of_1356) issued in 1356 by Emperor [Charles IV](/wiki/Charles_IV,_Holy_Roman_Emperor) provided the basic constitutional structure of the Empire and codified the election of the emperor by seven [prince-electors](/wiki/Prince-elector) who ruled some of the most powerful principalities and archbishoprics.[[21]](#cite_note-21) Population declined in the first half of the 14th century, starting with the [Great Famine](/wiki/Great_Famine_of_1315–1317) in 1315, followed by the [Black Death](/wiki/Black_Death) of 1348–50.[[22]](#cite_note-22) 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](/wiki/Italian_city-states) as [Venice](/wiki/Republic_of_Venice), [Florence](/wiki/Republic_of_Florence) and [Genoa](/wiki/Republic_of_Genoa). Artistic and cultural centers throughout the German states produced such artists as the Augsburg painters [Hans Holbein](/wiki/Hans_Holbein_the_Elder) and his [son](/wiki/Hans_Holbein_the_Younger), and [Albrecht Dürer](/wiki/Albrecht_Dürer). [Johannes Gutenberg](/wiki/Johannes_Gutenberg) introduced moveable-type [printing](/wiki/Printing) to Europe, a development that laid the basis for the [spread of learning to the masses](/wiki/Democratization_of_knowledge).[[23]](#cite_note-23) [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Holy_Roman_Empire_1648.svg) [Holy Roman Empire](/wiki/Holy_Roman_Empire) in 1648, after the [Peace of Westphalia](/wiki/Peace_of_Westphalia), which ended the [Thirty Years' War](/wiki/Thirty_Years'_War)

In 1517, the [Wittenberg](/wiki/Wittenberg) monk [Martin Luther](/wiki/Martin_Luther) publicised [The Ninety-Five Theses](/wiki/The_Ninety-Five_Theses), challenging the [Roman Catholic Church](/wiki/Roman_Catholic_Church) and initiating the [Protestant Reformation](/wiki/Protestant_Reformation). In 1555, the [Peace of Augsburg](/wiki/Peace_of_Augsburg) established [Lutheranism](/wiki/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](/wiki/Cuius_regio,_eius_religio). The agreement at Augsburg failed to address other religious creed: for example, the [Reformed faith](/wiki/Calvinism) was still considered a [heresy](/wiki/Heresy) and the principle did not address the possible conversion of an ecclesiastic ruler, such as happened in [Electorate of Cologne](/wiki/Electorate_of_Cologne) in 1583. From the [Cologne War](/wiki/Cologne_War) until the end of the [Thirty Years' Wars](/wiki/Thirty_Years'_War) (1618–1648), religious conflict devastated German lands.<ref name=Philpott>[Template:Cite journal](/wiki/Template:Cite_journal)</ref> The latter reduced the overall population of the German states by about 30 percent, and in some places, up to 80 percent.[[24]](#cite_note-24) The [Peace of Westphalia](/wiki/Peace_of_Westphalia) ended religious warfare among the German states.<ref name=Philpott/> German rulers were able to choose either Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism or the Reformed faith as their official religion after 1648.[[25]](#cite_note-25) In the 18th century, the Holy Roman Empire consisted of approximately 1,800 [territories](/wiki/List_of_states_in_the_Holy_Roman_Empire).[[26]](#cite_note-26) The elaborate legal system initiated by a series of [Imperial Reforms](/wiki/Imperial_Reform) (approximately 1450–1555) created the [Imperial Estates](/wiki/Imperial_State) and provided for considerable local autonomy among ecclesiastical, secular, and hereditary states, reflected in [Imperial Diet](/wiki/Imperial_Diet_(Holy_Roman_Empire)). The [House of Habsburg](/wiki/House_of_Habsburg) held the imperial crown from 1438 until the death of [Charles VI](/wiki/Charles_VI,_Holy_Roman_Emperor) in 1740. Having no male heirs, he had convinced the [Electors](/wiki/Prince-elector) to retain Habsburg hegemony in the office of the emperor by agreeing to the [Pragmatic Sanction](/wiki/Pragmatic_Sanction_of_1713). This was finally settled through the [War of Austrian Succession](/wiki/War_of_Austrian_Succession); in the [Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle](/wiki/Treaty_of_Aix-la-Chapelle_(1748)), [Maria Theresa's](/wiki/Maria_Theresa) [husband](/wiki/Francis_I,_Holy_Roman_Emperor) became Holy Roman Emperor, and she ruled the Empire as [Empress Consort](/wiki/Queen_consort). From 1740, [dualism](/wiki/German_dualism) between the Austrian [Habsburg Monarchy](/wiki/Habsburg_Monarchy) and the [Kingdom of Prussia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Prussia) dominated the German states in the 18th century. As a consequence of the [French Revolutionary Wars](/wiki/French_Revolutionary_Wars), and the subsequent [final meeting of the Imperial Diet](/wiki/Final_Recess_of_the_Reichsdeputation), most of the secular [Free Imperial Cities](/wiki/Free_Imperial_Cities) were annexed by dynastic territories; the ecclesiastical territories were secularized and annexed. In 1806 the *Imperium* was dissolved; German states, particularly the [Rhineland states](/wiki/Confederation_of_the_Rhine), fell under the influence of France. Until 1815, France, Russia, Prussia and the Habsburgs competed for hegemony in the German states during the [Napoleonic Wars](/wiki/Napoleonic_Wars).[[27]](#cite_note-27)[Template:Clear left](/wiki/Template:Clear_left)

### German Confederation and Empire[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=5)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Following the fall of [Napoleon](/wiki/Napoleon), the [Congress of Vienna](/wiki/Congress_of_Vienna) (convened in 1814) founded the German Confederation (*Deutscher Bund*), a loose league of [39 sovereign states](/wiki/States_of_the_German_Confederation). The appointment of the [Emperor of Austria](/wiki/Emperor_of_Austria) as the permanent president of the Confederation reflected the Congress's failure to accept Prussia's influence among the German states, and acerbated the long-standing competition between the Hohenzollern and Habsburg interests. Disagreement within [restoration](/wiki/European_Restoration) politics partly led to the rise of [liberal](/wiki/Liberalism_in_Germany) movements, followed by new measures of repression by Austrian statesman [Metternich](/wiki/Klemens_von_Metternich). The [*Zollverein*](/wiki/Zollverein), a tariff union, furthered economic unity in the German states.[[28]](#cite_note-28) [National](/wiki/Nationalism) and liberal ideals of the [French Revolution](/wiki/French_Revolution) gained increasing support among many, especially young, Germans. The [Hambach Festival](/wiki/Hambach_Festival) in May 1832 was a main event in support of [German unity](/wiki/German_question), freedom and democracy. In the light of a [series of revolutionary movements in Europe](/wiki/Revolutions_of_1848), which established a republic [in France](/wiki/French_Revolution_of_1848), intellectuals and commoners started the [Revolutions of 1848 in the German states](/wiki/Revolutions_of_1848_in_the_German_states). King [Frederick William IV of Prussia](/wiki/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.[[29]](#cite_note-29) [thumb|Foundation of the](/wiki/File:Wernerprokla.jpg) [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire) in [Versailles](/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles), 1871. [Bismarck](/wiki/Otto_von_Bismarck) is at the center in a white uniform.

King [William I](/wiki/William_I,_German_Emperor) appointed [Otto von Bismarck](/wiki/Otto_von_Bismarck) as the new [Minister President of Prussia](/wiki/Minister_President_of_Prussia) in 1862. Bismarck successfully concluded [war on Denmark](/wiki/Second_Schleswig_War) in 1864, which promoted German over Danish interests in the Jutland peninsula. The subsequent (and decisive) Prussian victory in the [Austro-Prussian War](/wiki/Austro-Prussian_War) of 1866 enabled him to create the [North German Confederation](/wiki/North_German_Confederation) (*Norddeutscher Bund*) which excluded [Austria](/wiki/Austrian_Empire) from the federation's affairs. After the French defeat in the [Franco-Prussian War](/wiki/Franco-Prussian_War), the German princes proclaimed the founding of the German Empire in 1871 at [Versailles](/wiki/Palace_of_Versailles), uniting all scattered parts of Germany except Austria. Prussia was the dominant constituent state of the new empire; the [Hohenzollern](/wiki/House_of_Hohenzollern) King of Prussia ruled as its concurrent Emperor, and Berlin became its capital.[[29]](#cite_note-29) [left|thumb|The](/wiki/File:Deutsches_Reich_1871-1918.png) [German Empire](/wiki/German_Empire) (1871–1918), with the [Kingdom of Prussia](/wiki/Kingdom_of_Prussia) in blue

In the [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang) period following the [unification of Germany](/wiki/Unification_of_Germany), Bismarck's foreign policy as [Chancellor of Germany](/wiki/Chancellor_of_Germany) under Emperor William I secured Germany's position as a great nation by forging alliances, isolating [France](/wiki/French_Third_Republic) by diplomatic means, and avoiding war. Under [Wilhelm II](/wiki/Wilhelm_II,_German_Emperor), Germany, like other European powers, took an [imperialistic](/wiki/New_Imperialism) 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](/wiki/Dual_Alliance_(1879)) with the [multinational realm](/wiki/Multinational_state) of [Austria-Hungary](/wiki/Austria-Hungary), promoting at least [benevolent neutrality](/wiki/Benevolent_neutrality) if not outright military support. Subsequently, the [Triple Alliance of 1882](/wiki/Triple_Alliance_(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.[[30]](#cite_note-30) At the [Berlin Conference](/wiki/Berlin_Conference) in 1884, Germany claimed several [colonies](/wiki/List_of_former_German_colonies) including [German East Africa](/wiki/German_East_Africa), [German South-West Africa](/wiki/German_South-West_Africa), [Togo](/wiki/Togoland), and [Cameroon](/wiki/Cameroon).[[31]](#cite_note-31) Later, Germany further expanded its [colonial empire](/wiki/German_colonial_empire) to include [German New Guinea](/wiki/German_New_Guinea), [German Micronesia](/wiki/German_Micronesia) and [German Samoa](/wiki/German_Samoa) in the Pacific. In what became known as the "First Genocide of the Twentieth-Century", the German colonial government in South-West Africa (present-day [Namibia](/wiki/Namibia)) ordered the [annihilation of the local Heroro and Namaqua peoples](/wiki/Herero_and_Namaqua_genocide), as a punitive measure for an uprising against the German colonial rule. In total, around 100,000 people — 80% of the [Herero](/wiki/Herero_people) and 50% of the [Namaqua](/wiki/Nama_people) — perished form imprisonment in [concentration camps](/wiki/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.[[32]](#cite_note-32)[[33]](#cite_note-33) The [assassination](/wiki/Assassination_of_Archduke_Franz_Ferdinand_of_Austria) of [Austria's crown prince](/wiki/Archduke_Franz_Ferdinand_of_Austria) on 28 June 1914 provided the pretext for the Austrian Empire to attack Serbia and trigger [World War I](/wiki/World_War_I). After four years of warfare, in which approximately two million German soldiers were killed,[[34]](#cite_note-34) a [general armistice](/wiki/Armistice_with_Germany) ended the fighting on 11 November, and German troops returned home. In the [German Revolution](/wiki/German_Revolution_of_1918–1919) (November 1918), Emperor Wilhelm II and all German ruling princes [abdicated](/wiki/Abdication) their positions and responsibilities. Germany's new political leadership signed the [Treaty of Versailles](/wiki/Treaty_of_Versailles) in 1919. In this treaty, Germany, as part of the [Central Powers](/wiki/Central_Powers), accepted defeat by the [Allies](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_I) in [one of the bloodiest](/wiki/World_War_I_casualties) 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](/wiki/Adolf_Hitler).[[35]](#cite_note-35)[[36]](#cite_note-36)[[37]](#cite_note-37) After the defeat in the First World War, Germany lost around thirteen percent of its European territory (totaling more than 27,000 square miles) and all of its colonial possessions in Africa and the South Sea.[[38]](#cite_note-38)

### Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=6)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) Germany was declared a [republic](/wiki/Republic) at the beginning of the [German Revolution](/wiki/German_Revolution_of_1918–19) in November 1918. On 11 August 1919 [President](/wiki/President_of_Germany) [Friedrich Ebert](/wiki/Friedrich_Ebert) signed the democratic [Weimar Constitution](/wiki/Weimar_Constitution).[[39]](#cite_note-39) In the subsequent struggle for power, the radical-left [Communists](/wiki/Communists) [seized power in Bavaria](/wiki/Bavarian_Soviet_Republic), but conservative elements in other parts of Germany attempted to overthrow the Republic in the [Kapp Putsch](/wiki/Kapp_Putsch). It was supported by parts of the [*Reichswehr*](/wiki/Reichswehr) (military) and other conservative, nationalistic and monarchist factions. After a tumultuous period of bloody street fighting in the major industrial centers, the [occupation of the Ruhr](/wiki/Occupation_of_the_Ruhr) by Belgian and French troops and the rise of inflation culminating in the [hyperinflation of 1922–23](/wiki/Hyperinflation_in_the_Weimar_Republic), a [debt restructuring plan](/wiki/Dawes_Plan) and the creation of a [new currency](/wiki/German_Rentenmark) in 1924 ushered in the [Golden Twenties](/wiki/Golden_Twenties), an era of increasing artistic innovation and liberal cultural life. Underneath it all, though, lay a current of animosity and frustration over the Treaty of Versailles, widely perceived as a [stab in the back](/wiki/Stab-in-the-back_myth), which provided the basis of much of the anti-Semetism rife in the next two decades.[[40]](#cite_note-40) The economic situation remained volatile. Historians describe the period between 1924 and 1929 as one of "partial stabilization."[[41]](#cite_note-41) The world-wide [Great Depression](/wiki/Great_Depression) hit Germany in 1929. After the [federal election of 1930](/wiki/German_federal_election,_1930), Chancellor [Heinrich Brüning's](/wiki/Heinrich_Brüning) government was enabled by [President Paul von Hindenburg](/wiki/Paul_von_Hindenburg) to [act](/wiki/Article_48_(Weimar_Constitution)) without parliamentary approval. Brüning's government pursued a [policy of fiscal austerity](/wiki/Causes_of_the_Great_Depression#Leave-it-alone_liquidationism_(1929–1933)) and [deflation](/wiki/Weimar_Republic#Brüning's_policy_of_deflation_(1930–1932)) which caused high unemployment of nearly 30% by 1932.[[42]](#cite_note-42) [thumb|left|upright=0.7|](/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-S33882,_Adolf_Hitler_retouched.jpg)[Adolf Hitler](/wiki/Adolf_Hitler), leader of [Nazi Germany](/wiki/Nazi_Germany) (1933–1945)

The [Nazi Party](/wiki/Nazi_Party) won [the special federal election of 1932](/wiki/German_federal_election,_July_1932). After a series of unsuccessful cabinets, Hindenburg appointed [Adolf Hitler](/wiki/Adolf_Hitler) as Chancellor of Germany in 1933.[[43]](#cite_note-43) After the [Reichstag fire](/wiki/Reichstag_fire), a [decree](/wiki/Reichstag_Fire_Decree) abrogated basic [civil rights](/wiki/Civil_rights) and within weeks the first [Nazi concentration camp](/wiki/Nazi_concentration_camps) at [Dachau](/wiki/Dachau_concentration_camp) opened.[[44]](#cite_note-44)[[45]](#cite_note-45) The [Enabling Act of 1933](/wiki/Enabling_Act_of_1933) gave Hitler unrestricted legislative power; subsequently, his government established a centralised [totalitarian state](/wiki/Totalitarian_state), [withdrew from the League of Nations](/wiki/German_referendum,_1933) following a national referendum, and began military rearmament.[[46]](#cite_note-46) Using deficit spending, a government-sponsored program 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.[[47]](#cite_note-47) The most famous of the projects was the high speed roadway, the *Reichsautobahn*, known as the [German autobahns](/wiki/German_autobahns).[[48]](#cite_note-48) Other capital construction projects included such [hydroelectric](/wiki/Hydroelectric) facilities as the [Rur Dam](/wiki/Rur_Dam), such water supplies as [Zillierbach Dam](/wiki/Zillierbach_Dam), and such transportation hubs as [Zwickau Hauptbahnhof](/wiki/Zwickau_Hauptbahnhof).[[49]](#cite_note-49) Over the next five years, unemployment plummeted and average wages both per hour and per week rose.[[50]](#cite_note-50) In 1935, the regime withdrew from the Treaty of Versailles and introduced the [Nuremberg Laws](/wiki/Nuremberg_Laws) which targeted [Jews](/wiki/Jews) and other minorities. Germany also reacquired control of the [Saar](/wiki/Saar_(League_of_Nations)) in 1935,[[51]](#cite_note-51) [annexed](/wiki/Anschluss) Austria in 1938, and [occupied Czechoslovakia](/wiki/German_occupation_of_Czechoslovakia) in early 1939.

In August 1939, Hitler's government signed the [Molotov–Ribbentrop pact](/wiki/Molotov–Ribbentrop_pact) with [Stalin](/wiki/Stalin) that divided Eastern Europe into German and Soviet spheres of influence. Following the agreement, on 1 September 1939 Germany [invaded Poland](/wiki/Invasion_of_Poland), marking the beginning of [World War II](/wiki/World_War_II).[[52]](#cite_note-52)[[53]](#cite_note-53) In response to Hitler's actions, Britain and France declared war on Germany.[[54]](#cite_note-54) In the spring of 1940, Germany [conquered Denmark and Norway](/wiki/Operation_Weserübung), [the Netherlands](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Netherlands), [Belgium](/wiki/Battle_of_Belgium), [Luxembourg](/wiki/Invasion_of_Luxembourg), and [France](/wiki/Battle_of_France) forcing the French government to sign an armistice after German troops occupied most of the country. The British [repelled German air attacks](/wiki/Battle_of_Britain) in the same year. In 1941, German troops [invaded Yugoslavia](/wiki/Invasion_of_Yugoslavia), [Greece](/wiki/Battle_of_Greece) and [the Soviet Union](/wiki/Operation_Barbarossa). By 1942, Germany and other [Axis powers](/wiki/Axis_powers) controlled most of [continental Europe](/wiki/Occupied_Europe) and [North Africa](/wiki/North_Africa), but following the Soviet Union's victory at the [Battle of Stalingrad](/wiki/Battle_of_Stalingrad), the allies' [reconquest of North Africa](/wiki/North_African_Campaign) and [invasion of Italy](/wiki/Italian_Campaign_(World_War_II)) in 1943, German forces suffered repeated military defeats.[[52]](#cite_note-52) In June 1944, the Western allies [landed in France](/wiki/Operation_Overlord) and the Soviets [pushed into Eastern Europe](/wiki/Eastern_Front_(World_War_II)#Summer_1944). By late 1944, the Western allies had entered Germany despite one final German [counter offensive in the Ardennes Forest](/wiki/Battle_of_the_Bulge). Following [Hitler's suicide](/wiki/Death_of_Adolf_Hitler) during the [Battle of Berlin](/wiki/Battle_of_Berlin), [German armed forces surrendered](/wiki/Victory_in_Europe_Day) on 8 May 1945, ending World War II in Europe.[[55]](#cite_note-55) In what later became known as [The Holocaust](/wiki/The_Holocaust), the German government persecuted minorities and used a network of [concentration](/wiki/Nazi_concentration_camps) and [death](/wiki/Nazi_death_camps) camps across Europe to conduct a [genocide](/wiki/Genocide) of what they considered to be inferior races. In total, over 10 million civilians were systematically murdered, including 6 million Jews, between 220,000 and 1,500,000 [Romani](/wiki/Porajmos), 275,000 [persons with disabilities](/wiki/Action_T4), thousands of [Jehovah's Witnesses](/wiki/Jehovah's_Witnesses), thousands of [homosexuals](/wiki/Persecution_of_homosexuals_in_Nazi_Germany_and_the_Holocaust), and hundreds of thousands of [members of the political and religious opposition](/wiki/The_Holocaust#The_political_left).[[56]](#cite_note-56) Nazi policies in the German occupied countries resulted in the deaths of 2.7 million [Poles](/wiki/Poles),[[57]](#cite_note-57) 1.3 million [Ukrainians](/wiki/Ukrainians),[[58]](#cite_note-58) and an estimated 2.8 million [Soviet war prisoners](/wiki/Nazi_crimes_against_Soviet_POWs).[[58]](#cite_note-58)[[59]](#cite_note-59) German military [war casualties](/wiki/German_casualties_in_World_War_II) were estimated at between 3.2 million and 5.3 million soldiers,[[60]](#cite_note-60) and up to 2 million German civilians.[[61]](#cite_note-61) German [territorial losses](/wiki/Former_eastern_territories_of_Germany) resulted in the [expulsion of circa 12 million of ethnic Germans](/wiki/Expulsion_of_Germans_after_World_War_II) from Eastern Europe. Germany ceded roughly one-quarter of its [pre-war territory](/wiki/Weimar_Republic).[[4]](#cite_note-4) Strategic bombing and land warfare [destroyed](/wiki/Strategic_bombing_during_World_War_II) many cities and cultural heritage sites. After World War II, former members of the Nazi regime were tried for [war crimes](/wiki/War_crimes_of_the_Wehrmacht) at the [Nuremberg trials](/wiki/Nuremberg_trials).[[59]](#cite_note-59)[[62]](#cite_note-62)

### East and West Germany[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=7)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Map-Germany-1945.svg)[Occupation zones](/wiki/Allied_Occupation_Zones_in_Germany) in Germany, 1947. Territories east of the [Oder-Neisse line](/wiki/Oder-Neisse_line) under Polish and Soviet *de facto* annexation, and the French controlled [Saar Protectorate](/wiki/Saar_Protectorate) marked in light tan. After Germany surrendered, the [Allies](/wiki/Allies_of_World_War_II) 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](/wiki/West_Germany) (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*); on 7 October 1949, the Soviet Zone became the [German Democratic Republic](/wiki/East_Germany) (*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](/wiki/Bonn) as a provisional capital, to emphasise its stance that the two-state solution was an artificial and temporary status quo.[[63]](#cite_note-63) West Germany was established as a federal parliamentary republic with a "[social market economy](/wiki/Social_market_economy)". Starting in 1948 West Germany became a major recipient of reconstruction aid under the [Marshall Plan](/wiki/Marshall_Plan) and used this to rebuild its industry.[[64]](#cite_note-64) [Konrad Adenauer](/wiki/Konrad_Adenauer) was elected the first [Federal Chancellor](/wiki/Federal_Chancellor_of_the_Federal_Republic_of_Germany) (*Bundeskanzler*) of Germany in 1949 and remained in office until 1963. Under his and [Ludwig Erhard's](/wiki/Ludwig_Erhard) leadership, the country enjoyed prolonged economic growth beginning in the early 1950s, that became known as an "[economic miracle](/wiki/Economic_miracle)" ([*Wirtschaftswunder*](/wiki/Wirtschaftswunder)).[[65]](#cite_note-65) West Germany joined [NATO](/wiki/NATO) in 1955 and was a founding member of the [European Economic Community](/wiki/European_Economic_Community) in 1957.

[thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Thefalloftheberlinwall1989.JPG) [Berlin Wall](/wiki/Berlin_Wall) during [its fall](/wiki/Berlin_Wall#The_fall) in 1989, with the [Brandenburg Gate](/wiki/Brandenburg_Gate) in the background.

East Germany was an [Eastern Bloc](/wiki/Eastern_Bloc) state under political and military control by the USSR via occupation forces and the [Warsaw Pact](/wiki/Warsaw_Pact). Although East Germany claimed to be a democracy, political power was exercised solely by leading members ([*Politbüro*](/wiki/Politburo)) of the communist-controlled [Socialist Unity Party of Germany](/wiki/Socialist_Unity_Party_of_Germany), supported by the [Stasi](/wiki/Stasi), an immense secret service controlling many aspects of the society.[[66]](#cite_note-66) A Soviet-style [command economy](/wiki/Command_economy) was set up and the GDR later became a [Comecon](/wiki/Comecon) state.<ref name=loc-cs>"Germany (East)", Library of Congress Country Study, [Appendix B: The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance](http://memory.loc.gov/frd/cs/germany_east/gx_appnb.html)</ref> While [East German propaganda](/wiki/Communist_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.[[67]](#cite_note-67) The [Berlin Wall](/wiki/Berlin_Wall), built in 1961 to stop East Germans from escaping to West Germany, became a symbol of the [Cold War](/wiki/Cold_War).[[29]](#cite_note-29) It was the site of [Ronald Reagan's](/wiki/Ronald_Reagan) "[Mr. Gorbachov](/wiki/Mikhail_Gorbachov), [Tear down this wall!](/wiki/Tear_down_this_wall!)" speech of 12 June 1987, which echoed [John F. Kennedy's](/wiki/John_F._Kennedy) famous [*Ich bin ein Berliner*](/wiki/Ich_bin_ein_Berliner) speech of 26 June 1963. The fall of the Wall in 1989 became a symbol of the [Fall of Communism](/wiki/Fall_of_Communism), [German Reunification](/wiki/German_Reunification) and [*Die Wende*](/wiki/Die_Wende).[[68]](#cite_note-68) Tensions between East and West Germany were reduced in the early 1970s by Chancellor [Willy Brandt's](/wiki/Willy_Brandt) [Template:Lang](/wiki/Template:Lang). In summer 1989, Hungary decided to dismantle the [Iron Curtain](/wiki/Iron_Curtain) and open the borders, causing the emigration of thousands of [East Germans](/wiki/East_Germans) to West Germany via Hungary. This had devastating effects on the GDR, where regular [mass demonstrations](/wiki/Monday_demonstrations_in_East_Germany) 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*](/wiki/Treaty_on_the_Final_Settlement_with_Respect_to_Germany) a year later on 12 September 1990, under which the four occupying powers renounced their rights under the [Instrument of Surrender](/wiki/German_Instrument_of_Surrender), and Germany regained full sovereignty. This permitted [German reunification](/wiki/German_reunification) on 3 October 1990, with the accession of the [five re-established states](/wiki/New_states_of_Germany) of the former GDR.[[29]](#cite_note-29)

### Reunified Germany and EU[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=8)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|270px|](/wiki/File:Reichstag_building_Berlin_view_from_west_before_sunset.jpg)[German unity](/wiki/German_reunification) was established on 3 October 1990.[[69]](#cite_note-69) Since 1999, the [Reichstag building](/wiki/Reichstag_(building)) in Berlin has been the meeting place of the [Bundestag](/wiki/Bundestag), the German parliament.

The united Germany is considered to be the enlarged continuation of the Federal Republic of Germany and not a [successor state](/wiki/Successor_state). As such, it retained all of West Germany's memberships in international organizations.[[70]](#cite_note-70) Based on the [Berlin/Bonn Act](/wiki/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.[[71]](#cite_note-71) The relocation of the government was completed in 1999.[[72]](#cite_note-72) Following the [1998 elections](/wiki/German_federal_election,_1998), [SPD](/wiki/Social_Democratic_Party_of_Germany) politician [Gerhard Schröder](/wiki/Gerhard_Schröder) became the first Chancellor of a [red–green coalition](/wiki/Red–green_alliance) with the [Alliance '90/The Greens](/wiki/Alliance_'90/The_Greens) party.

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.[[73]](#cite_note-73) [thumb|left|Germany became a co-founder of the](/wiki/File:Tratado_de_Lisboa_13_12_2007_(081).jpg) [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) (1993), introduced the [Euro](/wiki/Euro) currency (2002), and signed the [Lisbon Treaty](/wiki/Lisbon_Treaty) in 2007 (pictured).

Since reunification, Germany has taken a more active role in the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union). Together with its European partners Germany signed the [Maastricht Treaty](/wiki/Maastricht_Treaty) in 1992, established the [Eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) in 1999, and signed the [Lisbon Treaty](/wiki/Lisbon_Treaty) in 2007.[[74]](#cite_note-74) Germany sent a peacekeeping force to secure stability in the [Balkans](/wiki/1999_NATO_bombing_in_Yugoslavia) and sent a force of [German troops](/wiki/Bundeswehr) to [Afghanistan](/wiki/Afghanistan) as part of a NATO effort to provide [security in that country](/wiki/War_in_Afghanistan_(2001–present)) after the ousting of the [Taliban](/wiki/Taliban).[[75]](#cite_note-75) These deployments were controversial since Germany was bound by domestic law only to deploy troops for defence roles.[[76]](#cite_note-76) In the [2005 elections](/wiki/German_federal_election,_2005), [Angela Merkel](/wiki/Angela_Merkel) became the first female Chancellor of Germany as the leader of a [grand coalition](/wiki/Grand_coalition_(Germany)).[[29]](#cite_note-29) In 2009 the German government approved a €50 billion economic stimulus plan to protect several sectors from a downturn.[[77]](#cite_note-77) In 2009, a [liberal](/wiki/Free_Democratic_Party_(Germany))-[conservative](/wiki/Christian_Democratic_Union_(Germany)) [coalition under Merkel](/wiki/Second_Merkel_cabinet) assumed leadership of the country. In 2013, a grand coalition was established in a [Third Merkel cabinet](/wiki/Third_Merkel_cabinet). Among the major German political projects of the early 21st century are the advancement of [European integration](/wiki/European_integration), the [energy transition](/wiki/Energy_transition_in_Germany) (*Energiewende*) for a [sustainable](/wiki/Sustainable_energy) energy supply, the "[Debt Brake](/wiki/Balanced_budget_amendment#Germany)" for balanced budgets, measures to increase the [fertility rate](/wiki/Ageing_of_Europe#Germany) significantly ([pronatalism](/wiki/Natalistic_politics)), and high-tech strategies for the future transition of the German economy, summarized as [Industry 4.0](/wiki/Industry_4.0).[[78]](#cite_note-78) Germany was affected by the [European migrant crisis](/wiki/European_migrant_crisis) in 2015 as it became the final destination of choice for most migrants entering the EU. The country took in over a million refugees and developed a quota system which redistributed migrants around its federal states based on their tax income and existing population density.[[79]](#cite_note-79)

## Geography[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=9)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|Topographic map](/wiki/File:Deutschland_topo.jpg) Germany is in [Western](/wiki/Western_Europe) and [Central Europe](/wiki/Central_Europe), with [Denmark](/wiki/Denmark) bordering to the north, Poland and the [Czech Republic](/wiki/Czech_Republic) to the east, Austria to the southeast, Switzerland to the south-southwest, France, [Luxembourg](/wiki/Luxembourg) and Belgium lie to the west, and the [Netherlands](/wiki/Netherlands) to the northwest. It lies mostly between latitudes [47°](/wiki/47th_parallel_north) and [55° N](/wiki/55th_parallel_north) and longitudes [5°](/wiki/5th_meridian_east) and [16° E](/wiki/16th_meridian_east). 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](/wiki/Lake_Constance), the third largest lake in Central Europe.[[80]](#cite_note-80) German territory covers [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert), consisting of [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of land and [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of water. It is the seventh largest country by area in Europe and the [62nd largest in the world](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_area).[[81]](#cite_note-81) Elevation ranges from the mountains of the [Alps](/wiki/Alps) (highest point: the [Zugspitze](/wiki/Zugspitze) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert)) in the south to the shores of the [North Sea](/wiki/North_Sea) (*Nordsee*) in the northwest and the [Baltic Sea](/wiki/Baltic_Sea) (*Ostsee*) in the northeast. The forested uplands of central Germany and the lowlands of northern Germany (lowest point: [Wilstermarsch](/wiki/Wilstermarsch) at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) below sea level) are traversed by such major rivers as the [Rhine](/wiki/Rhine), [Danube](/wiki/Danube) and [Elbe](/wiki/Elbe). Germany's alpine glaciers are experiencing deglaciation. Significant natural resources include iron ore, coal, [potash](/wiki/Potash), timber, [lignite](/wiki/Lignite), [uranium](/wiki/Uranium), copper, natural gas, salt, nickel, [arable land](/wiki/Arable_land) and water.[[81]](#cite_note-81)

### Climate[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=10)]

Most of Germany has a [temperate seasonal climate](/wiki/Temperate) dominated by humid westerly winds. The country is situated in between the [oceanic](/wiki/Oceanic_climate) Western European and the [continental](/wiki/Continental_climate) Eastern European climate. The climate is moderated by the [North Atlantic Drift](/wiki/North_Atlantic_Current), the northern extension of the [Gulf Stream](/wiki/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 [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) of [precipitation](/wiki/Precipitation_(meteorology)) per year; there is no consistent dry season. Winters are mild and summers tend to be warm: temperatures can exceed [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert).[[82]](#cite_note-82) 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.[[82]](#cite_note-82) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image)

### Biodiversity[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=11)]

The territory of Germany can be subdivided into two [ecoregions](/wiki/Ecoregion): [European-Mediterranean montane mixed forests](/wiki/European-Mediterranean_montane_mixed_forests) and Northeast-Atlantic shelf marine.[[83]](#cite_note-83) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) the majority of Germany is covered by either arable land (34%) or forest and [woodland](/wiki/Woodland) (30.1%); only 13.4% of the area consists of permanent pastures, 11.8% is covered by settlements and streets.[[84]](#cite_note-84) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Aquila_chrysaetos_Flickr.jpg) [golden eagle](/wiki/Golden_eagle) is a protected bird

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](/wiki/Central_European_red_deer), [wild boar](/wiki/Central_European_boar), [mouflon](/wiki/Mouflon) (a subspecies of wild sheep), [fox](/wiki/Red_fox), [badger](/wiki/European_badger), [hare](/wiki/European_hare), and small numbers of the [Eurasian beaver](/wiki/Eurasian_beaver).[[85]](#cite_note-85) The [blue](/wiki/Prussian_blue) [cornflower](/wiki/Cornflower) was once a German [national symbol](/wiki/Floral_emblem).[[86]](#cite_note-86) The 14 [national parks in Germany](/wiki/List_of_national_parks_of_Germany) include the [Jasmund National Park](/wiki/Jasmund_National_Park), the [Vorpommern Lagoon Area National Park](/wiki/Vorpommern_Lagoon_Area_National_Park), the [Müritz National Park](/wiki/Müritz_National_Park), the [Wadden Sea National Parks](/wiki/Wadden_Sea_National_Parks), the [Harz National Park](/wiki/Harz_National_Park), the [Hainich National Park](/wiki/Hainich_National_Park), the [Black Forest National Park](/wiki/Black_Forest_National_Park), the [Saxon Switzerland National Park](/wiki/Saxon_Switzerland_National_Park), the [Bavarian Forest National Park](/wiki/Bavarian_Forest_National_Park) and the [Berchtesgaden National Park](/wiki/Berchtesgaden_National_Park). In addition, there are 14 [Biosphere Reserves](/wiki/Biosphere_Reserves_in_Germany), as well as 98 [nature parks](/wiki/Nature_parks_(Germany)). More than 400 registered zoos and animal parks operate in Germany, which is believed to be the largest number in any country.[[87]](#cite_note-87) The [Berlin Zoo](/wiki/Berlin_Zoological_Garden), opened in 1844, is the oldest zoo in Germany, and presents the most comprehensive collection of species in the world.[[88]](#cite_note-88)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Urbanization[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=12)]

[Template:See also](/wiki/Template:See_also) Germany has a number of large [cities](/wiki/List_of_cities_and_towns_in_Germany). There are 11 officially recognised [metropolitan regions in Germany](/wiki/Metropolitan_regions_in_Germany). 34 cities have been identified as [regiopolis](/wiki/Regiopolis). The largest [conurbation](/wiki/Conurbation) is the [Rhine-Ruhr](/wiki/Rhine-Ruhr) region (11.7 million [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of)), including [Düsseldorf](/wiki/Düsseldorf) (the capital of [North Rhine-Westphalia](/wiki/North_Rhine-Westphalia)), [Cologne](/wiki/Cologne), [Bonn](/wiki/Bonn), [Dortmund](/wiki/Dortmund), [Essen](/wiki/Essen), [Duisburg](/wiki/Duisburg), and [Bochum](/wiki/Bochum).[[89]](#cite_note-89)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear) [Template:Largest cities of Germany](/wiki/Template:Largest_cities_of_Germany)

## Politics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=13)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

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| [120px](/wiki/File:Woche_der_Umwelt_2012_(7344500700).jpg) | [120px](/wiki/File:Angela_Merkel_(August_2012)_cropped.jpg) |
| [Joachim Gauck](/wiki/Joachim_Gauck) [President](/wiki/President_of_Germany) since 2012 | [Angela Merkel](/wiki/Angela_Merkel) [Chancellor](/wiki/Chancellor_of_Germany) since 2005 |

Germany is a [federal](/wiki/Federal_republic), [parliamentary](/wiki/Parliamentary_democratic), [representative democratic](/wiki/Representative_democracy) republic. The German political system operates under a framework laid out in the 1949 constitutional document known as the [*Grundgesetz*](/wiki/Basic_Law_for_the_Federal_Republic_of_Germany) (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](/wiki/Rule_of_law) are valid in perpetuity.[[90]](#cite_note-90) The [president](/wiki/President_of_Germany), [Joachim Gauck](/wiki/Joachim_Gauck) (18 March 2012–present), is the [head of state](/wiki/Head_of_state) and invested primarily with representative responsibilities and powers. He is elected by the [*Bundesversammlung*](/wiki/Bundesversammlung_(Germany)) (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](/wiki/German_order_of_precedence) is the *Bundestagspräsident* ([President of the *Bundestag*](/wiki/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](/wiki/Head_of_government) is the Chancellor, who is appointed by the *Bundespräsident* after being elected by the *Bundestag*.[[29]](#cite_note-29) [thumb|left|The political system of Germany](/wiki/File:Political_System_of_Germany.svg)

The chancellor, [Angela Merkel](/wiki/Angela_Merkel) (22 November 2005–present), is the head of government and exercises [executive power](/wiki/Executive_(government)), similar to the role of a [Prime Minister](/wiki/Prime_Minister) in other parliamentary democracies. Federal [legislative power](/wiki/Legislative_power) is vested in the parliament consisting of the [*Bundestag*](/wiki/Bundestag) (Federal Diet) and [*Bundesrat*](/wiki/Bundesrat_of_Germany) (Federal Council), which together form the legislative body. The *Bundestag* is elected through [direct elections](/wiki/Direct_election), by [proportional representation](/wiki/Proportional_representation) ([mixed-member](/wiki/Mixed_member_proportional_representation)).[[81]](#cite_note-81) The members of the *Bundesrat* represent the governments of the sixteen federated states and are members of the state cabinets.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Since 1949, the party system has been dominated by the [Christian Democratic Union](/wiki/Christian_Democratic_Union_(Germany)) and the [Social Democratic Party of Germany](/wiki/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](/wiki/Free_Democratic_Party_(Germany)) (in parliament from 1949 to 2013) and the [Alliance '90/The Greens](/wiki/Alliance_'90/The_Greens) (in parliament since 1983) have also played important roles.[[91]](#cite_note-91) The [debt-to-GDP ratio](/wiki/Debt-to-GDP_ratio) of Germany had its peak in 2010 when it stood at 80.3% and decreased since then.[[92]](#cite_note-92) According to [Eurostat](/wiki/Eurostat), the [government gross debt](/wiki/Government_debt) of Germany amounts to €2,152.0 billion or 71.9% of its [GDP](/wiki/Gross_domestic_product) in 2015.[[93]](#cite_note-93) The federal government achieved a budget surplus of €12.1 billion ($13.1 billion) in 2015.[[94]](#cite_note-94) Germany's [credit rating](/wiki/Credit_rating) by [credit rating agencies](/wiki/Credit_rating_agencies) [Standard & Poor's](/wiki/Standard_&_Poor's), [Moody's](/wiki/Moody's) and [Fitch Ratings](/wiki/Fitch_Ratings) stands at the highest possible rating *AAA* with a stable outlook in 2016.[[95]](#cite_note-95)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Law[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=14)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|Judges of the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (Federal Constitutional Court) in Karlsruhe in 1989](/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_B_145_Bild-F083310-0001,_Karlsruhe,_Bundesverfassungsgericht.jpg)

Germany has a [civil law system](/wiki/Civil_law_(legal_system)) based on [Roman law](/wiki/Roman_law) with some references to [Germanic law](/wiki/Germanic_law). The [*Bundesverfassungsgericht*](/wiki/Federal_Constitutional_Court_of_Germany) (Federal Constitutional Court) is the German Supreme Court responsible for constitutional matters, with power of [judicial review](/wiki/Judicial_review).[[29]](#cite_note-29)[[96]](#cite_note-96) 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](/wiki/Inquisitorial_system) [Federal Court of Justice](/wiki/Federal_Court_of_Justice_of_Germany), and for other affairs the courts are the [Federal Labour Court](/wiki/Federal_Labor_Court_of_Germany), the [Federal Social Court](/wiki/Bundessozialgericht), the [Federal Finance Court](/wiki/Federal_Finance_Court_of_Germany) and the [Federal Administrative Court](/wiki/Federal_Administrative_Court_of_Germany).

Criminal and private laws are codified on the national level in the [*Strafgesetzbuch*](/wiki/Strafgesetzbuch) and the [*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*](/wiki/Bürgerliches_Gesetzbuch) respectively. The German penal system seeks the rehabilitation of the criminal and the protection of the public.[[97]](#cite_note-97) Except for petty crimes, which are tried before a single professional judge, and serious [political crimes](/wiki/Political_crime), all charges are tried before mixed tribunals on which [lay judges](/wiki/Lay_judge) ([*Template:Lang*](/wiki/Template:Lang)) sit side by side with professional judges.[[98]](#cite_note-98)[[99]](#cite_note-99) Many of the fundamental matters of [administrative law](/wiki/Administrative_law) remain in the jurisdiction of the states.

### Constituent states[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=15)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

Germany comprises sixteen federal states which are collectively referred to as *Bundesländer*.[[100]](#cite_note-100) Each state has its own state constitution[[101]](#cite_note-101) and is largely autonomous in regard to its internal organisation. Because of differences in size and population the [subdivisions of these states](/wiki/States_of_Germany#Subdivisions) vary, especially as between [city states](/wiki/City_states) (*Stadtstaaten*) and states with larger territories (*Flächenländer*). For regional administrative purposes five states, namely Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse, North Rhine-Westphalia and Saxony, consist of a total of 22 [Government Districts](/wiki/Regierungsbezirke) (*Regierungsbezirke*). [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) Germany is divided into 402 [districts](/wiki/Districts_of_Germany) (*Kreise*) at a municipal level; these consist of 295 [rural districts](/wiki/List_of_rural_districts_of_Germany) and 107 [urban districts](/wiki/Urban_districts_of_Germany).[[102]](#cite_note-102)

[Template:German Federal States](/wiki/Template:German_Federal_States)

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| |  |  |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | | [**State**](/wiki/States_of_Germany) | **Capital** | **Area (km2)** | **Population** [**[103]**](#cite_note-103) | **Nominal GDP billions EUR in 2014** | **Nominal GDP per capita EUR in 2014** [**[104]**](#cite_note-104) | | [Baden-Württemberg](/wiki/Baden-Württemberg) | [Stuttgart](/wiki/Stuttgart) | 35,752 | 10,569,100 | 440 | 41,200 | | [Bavaria](/wiki/Bavaria) | [Munich](/wiki/Munich) | 70,549 | 12,519,600 | 524 | 41,400 | | [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) | [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) | 892 | 3,375,200 | 118 | 34,200 | | [Brandenburg](/wiki/Brandenburg) | [Potsdam](/wiki/Potsdam) | 29,477 | 2,449,500 | 62 | 25,300 | | [Bremen](/wiki/Bremen_(state)) | [Bremen](/wiki/Bremen) | 404 | 654,800 | 30 | 46,000 | | [Hamburg](/wiki/Hamburg) | [Hamburg](/wiki/Hamburg) | 755 | 1,734,300 | 104 | 59,000 | | [Hesse](/wiki/Hesse) | [Wiesbaden](/wiki/Wiesbaden) | 21,115 | 6,016,500 | 252 | 41,400 | | [Mecklenburg-Vorpommern](/wiki/Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) | [Schwerin](/wiki/Schwerin) | 23,174 | 1,600,300 | 39 | 24,200 | | [Lower Saxony](/wiki/Lower_Saxony) | [Hanover](/wiki/Hanover) | 47,618 | 7,779,000 | 255 | 32,600 | | [North Rhine-Westphalia](/wiki/North_Rhine-Westphalia) | [Düsseldorf](/wiki/Düsseldorf) | 34,043 | 17,554,300 | 627 | 35,600 | | [Rhineland-Palatinate](/wiki/Rhineland-Palatinate) | [Mainz](/wiki/Mainz) | 19,847 | 3,990,300 | 128 | 32,000 | | [Saarland](/wiki/Saarland) | [Saarbrücken](/wiki/Saarbrücken) | 2,569 | 994,300 | 34 | 34,000 | | [Saxony](/wiki/Saxony) | [Dresden](/wiki/Dresden) | 18,416 | 4,050,200 | 109 | 26,900 | | [Saxony-Anhalt](/wiki/Saxony-Anhalt) | [Magdeburg](/wiki/Magdeburg) | 20,445 | 2,259,400 | 56 | 24,900 | | [Schleswig-Holstein](/wiki/Schleswig-Holstein) | [Kiel](/wiki/Kiel) | 15,763 | 2,806,500 | 84 | 29,900 | | [Thuringia](/wiki/Thuringia) | [Erfurt](/wiki/Erfurt) | 16,172 | 2,170,500 | 55 | 25,300 | |

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### Foreign relations[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=16)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Germany hosted the](/wiki/File:33rdG8Leaders.jpg) [G8 summit](/wiki/33rd_G8_summit) in [Heiligendamm](/wiki/Heiligendamm), 6–8 June 2007 Germany has a network of 227 diplomatic missions abroad[[105]](#cite_note-105) and maintains relations with more than 190 countries.[[106]](#cite_note-106) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) it is the largest contributor to the budget of the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union) (providing 20%)[[107]](#cite_note-107) and the third largest contributor to the UN (providing 8%).[[108]](#cite_note-108) Germany is a member of [NATO](/wiki/NATO), the [OECD](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development), the [G8](/wiki/G8), the [G20](/wiki/G20), the [World Bank](/wiki/World_Bank) and the [IMF](/wiki/International_Monetary_Fund). It has played an influential role in the European Union since its inception and has maintained a [strong alliance with France](/wiki/Franco-German_cooperation) and all neighboring countries since 1990. Germany promotes the creation of a more unified European political, economic and security apparatus.[[109]](#cite_note-109)[[110]](#cite_note-110) 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.[[111]](#cite_note-111) It is the world's third biggest aid donor in 2009 after the United States and France.[[112]](#cite_note-112)[[113]](#cite_note-113) In 1999, Chancellor [Gerhard Schröder's](/wiki/Gerhard_Schröder) government defined a new basis for German foreign policy by taking part in the NATO decisions surrounding the [Kosovo War](/wiki/Kosovo_War) and by sending German troops into combat for the first time since 1945.[[114]](#cite_note-114) The governments of Germany and the United States are close political allies.[[29]](#cite_note-29) Cultural ties and economic interests have crafted a bond between the two countries resulting in [Atlanticism](/wiki/Atlanticism).[[115]](#cite_note-115)

### Military[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=17)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|thumbtime=32|The](/wiki/File:Eurofighter_9803.ogg) [Eurofighter Typhoon](/wiki/Eurofighter_Typhoon) is part of the [Luftwaffe](/wiki/German_Air_Force) fleet

Germany's military, the *Bundeswehr*, is organised into [*Heer*](/wiki/German_Army) (Army and special forces [KSK](/wiki/Kommando_Spezialkräfte)), [*Marine*](/wiki/German_Navy) (Navy), [*Luftwaffe*](/wiki/German_Air_Force) (Air Force), [*Bundeswehr Joint Medical Service*](/wiki/Bundeswehr_Joint_Medical_Service) and [*Streitkräftebasis*](/wiki/Streitkräftebasis) (Joint Support Service) branches. In absolute terms, German military expenditure is the 9th highest in the world.[[116]](#cite_note-116) In 2015, military spending was at €32.9 billion, about 1.2% of the country's GDP, well below the NATO target of 2%.[[117]](#cite_note-117) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) the Bundeswehr employed roughly 178,000 service members, including 9,500 volunteers.[[118]](#cite_note-118) Reservists are available to the Armed Forces and participate in defence exercises and deployments abroad.[[119]](#cite_note-119) Since 2001 women may serve in all functions of service without restriction.[[120]](#cite_note-120) About 19,000 female soldiers are on active duty. According to [SIPRI](/wiki/SIPRI), Germany was the fourth largest exporter of major arms in the world in 2014.[[121]](#cite_note-121) [thumb|left|A](/wiki/File:Fregatte_Mecklenburg-Vorpommern_F218.jpg) [German Navy](/wiki/German_Navy) [Brandenburg class frigate](/wiki/Brandenburg_class_frigate)

In peacetime, the Bundeswehr is commanded by the Minister of Defence. In [state of defence](/wiki/State_of_Defence_(Germany)), the Chancellor would become commander-in-chief of the *Bundeswehr*.[[122]](#cite_note-122) The role of the *Bundeswehr* is described in the [Constitution of Germany](/wiki/Constitution_of_Germany) as defensive only. But after a ruling of the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994 the term "defense" 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](/wiki/Security) of Germany anywhere in the world. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the German military has about 2,370 troops stationed in foreign countries as part of international peacekeeping forces, including about 850 Bundeswehr troops in the NATO-led [ISAF](/wiki/International_Security_Assistance_Force) force in Afghanistan and [Uzbekistan](/wiki/Uzbekistan), 670 German soldiers in [Kosovo](/wiki/Kosovo), and 120 troops with [UNIFIL](/wiki/UNIFIL) in Lebanon.[[123]](#cite_note-123) Until 2011, [military service](/wiki/Conscription_in_Germany) 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*](/wiki/Zivildienst) (civilian service), or a six-year commitment to (voluntary) emergency services like a [fire department](/wiki/Volunteer_fire_department) or the [Red Cross](/wiki/German_Red_Cross). In 2011 conscription was officially suspended and replaced with a voluntary service.[[124]](#cite_note-124)[[125]](#cite_note-125)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

## Economy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=18)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Germany maintains a large](/wiki/File:2015_Mercedes-Benz_S63_AMG_Coupé,_front_left_(US).jpg) [automotive industry](/wiki/Automotive_industry_in_Germany), and is the world's third largest [exporter](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_exports) of goods.[[126]](#cite_note-126)

Germany has a [social market economy](/wiki/Social_market_economy) with a highly skilled [labour force](/wiki/Labour_force), a large [capital stock](/wiki/Capital_stock), a low level of corruption,[[127]](#cite_note-127) and a high level of [innovation](/wiki/Innovation).[[128]](#cite_note-128) It is [the world's third largest exporter](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_exports) of goods,[[126]](#cite_note-126) and has the largest national economy in Europe which is also [the world's fourth largest by nominal GDP](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(nominal))<ref name=wbpdf>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)  
[Field listing – GDP (official exchange rate)](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2195.html)</ref> and the [fifth one by PPP](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)).[[129]](#cite_note-129) The [service sector](/wiki/Tertiary_sector_of_industry) contributes approximately 71% of the total GDP (including [information technology](/wiki/Information_technology)), industry 28%, and agriculture 1%.[[81]](#cite_note-81) The unemployment rate published by [Eurostat](/wiki/Eurostat) amounts to 4.7% in January 2015, which is the lowest rate of all 28 EU member states.[[130]](#cite_note-130) With 7.1% Germany also has the lowest [youth unemployment](/wiki/Youth_unemployment) rate of all EU member states.[[130]](#cite_note-130) According to the [OECD](/wiki/Organisation_for_Economic_Co-operation_and_Development) Germany has one of the highest [labour productivity](/wiki/Workforce_productivity) levels in the world.[[131]](#cite_note-131) [thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Frankfurt_Skyline_(16259801511).jpg)[Frankfurt](/wiki/Frankfurt) is a leading financial center in Europe and seat of the [ECB](/wiki/European_Central_Bank).

Germany is part of the [European single market](/wiki/Internal_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](/wiki/Euro) in 2002.<ref name=euroc>[Template:Cite news](/wiki/Template:Cite_news)</ref>[[132]](#cite_note-132) It is a member of the Eurozone which represents around 338 million citizens. Its monetary policy is set by the [European Central Bank](/wiki/European_Central_Bank), which is headquartered in [Frankfurt](/wiki/Frankfurt), the financial centre of continental Europe.

Being home to the [modern car](/wiki/History_of_the_automobile#19th_century), the [automotive industry in Germany](/wiki/Automotive_industry_in_Germany) is regarded as one of the most competitive and innovative in the world,[[133]](#cite_note-133) and is [the fourth largest by production](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_motor_vehicle_production).[[134]](#cite_note-134) 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.[[135]](#cite_note-135)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Companies[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=19)]

Of the world's 500 largest stock-market-listed companies measured by revenue in 2014, the [Fortune Global 500](/wiki/Fortune_Global_500), 28 are headquartered in Germany. 30 Germany-based companies are included in the [DAX](/wiki/DAX), the German stock market index. Well-known international brands include [Mercedes-Benz](/wiki/Mercedes-Benz), [BMW](/wiki/BMW), [SAP](/wiki/SAP_AG), [Volkswagen](/wiki/Volkswagen), [Audi](/wiki/Audi), [Siemens](/wiki/Siemens), [Allianz](/wiki/Allianz), [Adidas](/wiki/Adidas), [Porsche](/wiki/Porsche), and [DHL](/wiki/DHL_Express).[[136]](#cite_note-136) Germany is recognised for its large portion of specialised [small and medium enterprises](/wiki/Small_and_medium_enterprises), known as the [*Mittelstand*](/wiki/Mittelstand) model. Around 1,000 of these companies are global market leaders in their segment and are labelled [hidden champions](/wiki/Hidden_Champions).[[137]](#cite_note-137) Berlin developed a thriving, cosmopolitan [hub](/wiki/Startup_ecosystem) for [startup companies](/wiki/Startup_company) and became a leading location for venture capital funded firms in the European Union.[[138]](#cite_note-138) The list includes the largest German companies by revenue in 2014:[[139]](#cite_note-139) [thumb|Germany is part of a monetary union, the](/wiki/File:BlueEurozone.svg) [eurozone](/wiki/Eurozone) (dark blue), and of the [EU single market](/wiki/Internal_Market_(European_Union)).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Rank** | **Name** | **Headquarters** | **Revenue (mil. €)** | **Profit (mil. €)** | **Employees (world)** |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)1. | [Volkswagen](/wiki/Volkswagen) | [Wolfsburg](/wiki/Wolfsburg) | 268,566 | 14,571 | 592,586 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)2. | [Daimler](/wiki/Daimler_AG) | [Stuttgart](/wiki/Stuttgart) | 172,279 | 9,235 | 279,972 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)3. | [E.ON](/wiki/E.ON) | [Düsseldorf](/wiki/Düsseldorf) | 151,460 | −4,191 | 58,503 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)4. | [Allianz](/wiki/Allianz) | [Munich](/wiki/Munich) | 136,846 | 8,252 | 147,425 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)5. | [BMW](/wiki/BMW) | [Munich](/wiki/Munich) | 106,654 | 7,691 | 116,324 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)6. | [Siemens](/wiki/Siemens) | [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin), [München](/wiki/München) | 74,000 | 6,300 | 360,000 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)7. | [BASF](/wiki/BASF) | [Ludwigshafen](/wiki/Ludwigshafen) | 98,595 | 6,838 | 113,292 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)8. | [Metro](/wiki/Metro_AG) | [Düsseldorf](/wiki/Düsseldorf) | 85,505 | 172 | 227,868 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)9. | [Deutsche Telekom](/wiki/Deutsche_Telekom) | [Bonn](/wiki/Bonn) | 83,117 | 3,878 | 228,000 |
| [Template:0](/wiki/Template:0)10. | [Munich Re](/wiki/Munich_Re) | [Munich](/wiki/Munich) | 81,685 | 4,182 | 43,316 |

### Transport[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=20)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:ICE3_in_Cologne.jpg) [ICE 3](/wiki/ICE_3) in Cologne railway station

With its central position in Europe, Germany is a transport hub for the continent.[[140]](#cite_note-140) Like its neighbours in Western Europe, Germany's road network is among the densest in the world.[[141]](#cite_note-141) The motorway ([Autobahn](/wiki/Autobahn)) network ranks as the third-largest worldwide in length and is known for its lack of a general speed limit.[[142]](#cite_note-142) Germany has established a polycentric network of [high-speed trains](/wiki/High-speed_rail). The [InterCityExpress](/wiki/InterCityExpress) or *ICE* network of the [Deutsche Bahn](/wiki/Deutsche_Bahn) serves major German cities as well as destinations in neighbouring countries with speeds up to 300 km/h (186 mph).[[143]](#cite_note-143) The German railways are subsidised by the government, receiving €17.0 billion in 2014.[[144]](#cite_note-144) The largest German airports are [Frankfurt Airport](/wiki/Frankfurt_Airport) and [Munich Airport](/wiki/Munich_Airport), both hubs of [Lufthansa](/wiki/Lufthansa), while [Air Berlin](/wiki/Air_Berlin) has hubs at [Berlin Tegel](/wiki/Berlin_Tegel_Airport) and [Düsseldorf](/wiki/Düsseldorf_International_Airport). Other major airports include [Berlin Schönefeld](/wiki/Berlin_Schönefeld_Airport), [Hamburg](/wiki/Hamburg_Airport), [Cologne/Bonn](/wiki/Cologne_Bonn_Airport) and [Leipzig/Halle](/wiki/Leipzig/Halle_Airport).[[145]](#cite_note-145) The [Port of Hamburg](/wiki/Port_of_Hamburg) is one of the top twenty [largest container ports in the world](/wiki/List_of_world's_busiest_container_ports).[[146]](#cite_note-146)

### Energy and infrastructure[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=21)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), Germany was the world's sixth-largest consumer of energy,[[147]](#cite_note-147) and 60% of its primary energy was imported.[[148]](#cite_note-148) 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%).[[149]](#cite_note-149) The government and the [nuclear power industry](/wiki/Nuclear_power_in_Germany) agreed to phase out all [nuclear power plants](/wiki/Nuclear_power_plant) by 2021.[[150]](#cite_note-150) It also enforces [energy conservation](/wiki/Energy_conservation), [green technologies](/wiki/Green_technology), emission reduction activities,[[151]](#cite_note-151) and aims to meet the country's electricity demands using 40% [renewable sources](/wiki/Renewable_energy) by 2020. Germany is committed to the [Kyoto protocol](/wiki/Kyoto_protocol) and several other treaties promoting biodiversity, low emission standards, [water management](/wiki/Water_management), and the [renewable energy commercialisation](/wiki/Renewable_energy_commercialisation).[[152]](#cite_note-152) The country's household recycling rate is among the highest in the world — at around 65%.[[153][153]](#cite_note-153) Nevertheless, the country's [greenhouse gas emissions](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_greenhouse_gas_emissions) were the highest in the EU [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).[[154]](#cite_note-154) The [German energy transition](/wiki/Energy_transition_in_Germany) (*Energiewende*) is the recognised move to a sustainable economy by means of energy efficiency and renewable energy.[[155]](#cite_note-155)

### Science and technology[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=22)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|](/wiki/File:Einstein1921_by_F_Schmutzer_3.jpg)[Albert Einstein](/wiki/Albert_Einstein), physicist. The [Nobel Prize](/wiki/Nobel_Prize) has been awarded to [104 German laureates](/wiki/List_of_Nobel_laureates_by_country#Germany). Germany's achievements in the sciences have been significant, and [research and development](/wiki/Research_and_development) efforts form an integral part of the [economy](/wiki/Economy_of_Germany).[[156]](#cite_note-156) The [Nobel Prize](/wiki/Nobel_Prize) has been awarded to [104 German laureates](/wiki/List_of_Nobel_laureates_by_country#Germany).[[157]](#cite_note-157) In the beginning of the 20th century, German laureates had more awards than those of any other nation, especially in the sciences ([physics](/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Physics), [chemistry](/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Chemistry), and [physiology or medicine](/wiki/Nobel_Prize_in_Physiology_or_Medicine)).[[158]](#cite_note-158)[[159]](#cite_note-159) Notable German physicists before the 20th century include [Hermann von Helmholtz](/wiki/Hermann_von_Helmholtz), [Joseph von Fraunhofer](/wiki/Joseph_von_Fraunhofer) and [Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit](/wiki/Gabriel_Daniel_Fahrenheit), among others. [Albert Einstein](/wiki/Albert_Einstein) introduced the relativity theories for light and gravity in 1905 and 1915 respectively. Along with [Max Planck](/wiki/Max_Planck), he was instrumental in the introduction of [quantum mechanics](/wiki/Quantum_mechanics), in which [Werner Heisenberg](/wiki/Werner_Heisenberg) and [Max Born](/wiki/Max_Born) later made major contributions.[[160]](#cite_note-160) [Wilhelm Röntgen](/wiki/Wilhelm_Röntgen) discovered [X-rays](/wiki/X-ray).[[161]](#cite_note-161) [Otto Hahn](/wiki/Otto_Hahn) was a pioneer in the fields of [radiochemistry](/wiki/Radiochemistry) and discovered [nuclear fission](/wiki/Nuclear_fission), while [Ferdinand Cohn](/wiki/Ferdinand_Cohn) and [Robert Koch](/wiki/Robert_Koch) were founders of [microbiology](/wiki/Microbiology). Numerous [mathematicians](/wiki/Mathematician) were born in Germany, including [Carl Friedrich Gauss](/wiki/Carl_Friedrich_Gauss), [David Hilbert](/wiki/David_Hilbert), [Bernhard Riemann](/wiki/Bernhard_Riemann), [Gottfried Leibniz](/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz), [Karl Weierstrass](/wiki/Karl_Weierstrass), [Hermann Weyl](/wiki/Hermann_Weyl) and [Felix Klein](/wiki/Felix_Klein).

[thumb|left|](/wiki/File:Views_in_the_Main_Control_Room_(12052189474).jpg)[European Space Operations Centre](/wiki/European_Space_Operations_Centre) (ESOC) in [Darmstadt](/wiki/Darmstadt)

Germany has been the home of many [famous inventors and engineers](/wiki/List_of_German_inventors_and_discoverers), including [Hans Geiger](/wiki/Hans_Geiger), the creator of the [Geiger counter](/wiki/Geiger_counter); and [Konrad Zuse](/wiki/Konrad_Zuse), who built the first fully automatic digital computer.[[162]](#cite_note-162) Such German inventors, engineers and industrialists as Count [Ferdinand von Zeppelin](/wiki/Ferdinand_von_Zeppelin),[[163]](#cite_note-163) [Otto Lilienthal](/wiki/Otto_Lilienthal), [Gottlieb Daimler](/wiki/Gottlieb_Daimler), [Rudolf Diesel](/wiki/Rudolf_Diesel), [Hugo Junkers](/wiki/Hugo_Junkers) and [Karl Benz](/wiki/Karl_Benz) helped shape modern automotive and air transportation technology. German institutions like the [German Aerospace Center](/wiki/German_Aerospace_Center) (DLR) are the largest contributor to [ESA](/wiki/European_Space_Agency). [Aerospace engineer](/wiki/Aerospace_engineering) [Wernher von Braun](/wiki/Wernher_von_Braun) developed the [first space rocket](/wiki/V-2_rocket) at [Peenemünde](/wiki/Peenemünde_Army_Research_Center) and later on was a prominent member of [NASA](/wiki/NASA) and developed the [Saturn V](/wiki/Saturn_V) Moon rocket. [Heinrich Rudolf Hertz's](/wiki/Heinrich_Rudolf_Hertz) work in the domain of [electromagnetic radiation](/wiki/Electromagnetic_radiation) was pivotal to the development of modern telecommunication.[[164]](#cite_note-164) Research institutions in Germany include the [Max Planck Society](/wiki/Max_Planck_Society), the [Helmholtz Association](/wiki/Helmholtz_Association_of_German_Research_Centres) and the [Fraunhofer Society](/wiki/Fraunhofer_Society). The [Wendelstein 7-X](/wiki/Wendelstein_7-X) in [Greifswald](/wiki/Greifswald) hosts a facility in the research of [fusion power](/wiki/Fusion_power) for instance.[[165]](#cite_note-165) The [Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize](/wiki/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.[[166]](#cite_note-166)

### Tourism[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=23)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Hintersee.jpg) [Berchtesgaden](/wiki/Berchtesgaden) alpine region. [Bavaria](/wiki/Bavaria) is the overall most visited German state, and [Mecklenburg-Vorpommern](/wiki/Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) by domestic tourists.

Germany is the seventh most visited country in the world,[[167]](#cite_note-167)[[168]](#cite_note-168) with a total of 407 million overnights during 2012.[[169]](#cite_note-169) This number includes 68.83 million nights by foreign visitors. In 2012, over 30.4 million international tourists arrived in Germany. [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) has become the third most visited city destination in Europe.[[170]](#cite_note-170) Additionally, more than 30% of Germans spend their holiday in their own country, with the biggest share going to [Mecklenburg-Vorpommern](/wiki/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).[[171]](#cite_note-171) Germany is well known for its diverse tourist routes, such as the [Romantic Road](/wiki/Romantic_Road), the [Wine Route](/wiki/German_Wine_Route), the [Castle Road](/wiki/Castle_Road), and the [Avenue Road](/wiki/German_Avenue_Road). The [German Timber-Frame Road](/wiki/German_Timber-Frame_Road) (*Deutsche Fachwerkstraße*) connects towns with examples of these structures.[[172]](#cite_note-172)[[173]](#cite_note-173) There are 40 [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) [World Heritage Sites in Germany](/wiki/List_of_World_Heritage_Sites_in_Germany), including the [old town cores](/wiki/Altstadt) of [Regensburg](/wiki/Regensburg), [Bamberg](/wiki/Bamberg), [Lübeck](/wiki/Lübeck), [Quedlinburg](/wiki/Quedlinburg), [Weimar](/wiki/Weimar), [Stralsund](/wiki/Stralsund) and [Wismar](/wiki/Wismar). Germany's most-visited landmarks include i. e. [Neuschwanstein Castle](/wiki/Neuschwanstein_Castle), [Cologne Cathedral](/wiki/Cologne_Cathedral), [Berlin Bundestag](/wiki/Reichstag_building), [Hofbräuhaus Munich](/wiki/Hofbräuhaus), [Heidelberg Castle](/wiki/Heidelberg_Castle), [Dresden Zwinger](/wiki/Dresden_Zwinger), [Fernsehturm Berlin](/wiki/Fernsehturm_Berlin) and [Aachen Cathedral](/wiki/Aachen_Cathedral). The [Europa-Park](/wiki/Europa-Park) near [Freiburg](/wiki/Freiburg_im_Breisgau) is Europe's second most popular theme park resort.[[174]](#cite_note-174)

## Demographics[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=24)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|German population development from 1800 to 2010](/wiki/File:Population_of_German_territories_1800_-_2000.JPG)[[175]](#cite_note-175)

With a population of 80.2 million according to the 2011 census,[[176]](#cite_note-176) rising to 81.5 million as at 30 June 2015[[177]](#cite_note-177) and to at least 81.9 million as at 31 December 2015,[[178]](#cite_note-178) Germany is the most populous country in the European Union, the second most populous country in Europe after [Russia](/wiki/Russia), and ranks as the [16th most populous country](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_population) in the world.[[179]](#cite_note-179) Its [population density](/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_and_dependent_territories_by_population_density) stands at 227 inhabitants per square kilometre (588 per square mile). The overall [life expectancy in Germany](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_life_expectancy) at birth is 80.19 years (77.93 years for males and 82.58 years for females).[[81]](#cite_note-81) The [fertility rate](/wiki/Total_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](/wiki/List_of_sovereign_states_and_dependent_territories_by_fertility_rate).[[81]](#cite_note-81) Since the 1970s, Germany's [death rate](/wiki/Death_rate) has exceeded its [birth rate](/wiki/Birth_rate).[[180]](#cite_note-180) However, Germany is witnessing increased birth rates and migration rates since the beginning of the 2010s,[[181]](#cite_note-181) particularly a rise in the number of well-educated migrants.[[182]](#cite_note-182)[[183]](#cite_note-183) Four sizable groups of people are referred to as "national minorities" because their ancestors have lived in their respective regions for centuries.[[184]](#cite_note-184) There is a [Danish](/wiki/Danes) minority (about 50,000) in the northernmost state of [Schleswig-Holstein](/wiki/Schleswig-Holstein).[[184]](#cite_note-184) The [Sorbs](/wiki/Sorbs), a [Slavic population](/wiki/Slavic_people) of about 60,000, are in the [Lusatia](/wiki/Lusatia) region of [Saxony](/wiki/Free_State_of_Saxony) and [Brandenburg](/wiki/Brandenburg). The [Roma](/wiki/Romani_people) and [Sinti](/wiki/Sinti) live throughout the whole federal territory and the [Frisians](/wiki/Frisians) live on Schleswig-Holstein's western coast, and in the north-western part of [Lower Saxony](/wiki/Lower_Saxony).[[184]](#cite_note-184) Approximately 5 million [Germans live abroad](/wiki/German_nationality_law#Germans_living_abroad).[[185]](#cite_note-185)

### Immigrant population[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=25)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|270px|Germany is home to the](/wiki/File:COB_data_Germany.PNG) [second-highest number of international migrants](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_immigrant_population).[[186]](#cite_note-186)

In 2014, about seven million of Germany's 81 million residents did not have German citizenship. Ninety-six percent of these people lived in western Germany and mostly in [urban](/wiki/Urban_area) areas.[[187]](#cite_note-187)[[188]](#cite_note-188) In the 1960s and 1970s, the German governments invited "guest workers" ([Gastarbeiter](/wiki/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. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), about six million foreign citizens (7.7% of the population) were registered in Germany.[[176]](#cite_note-176) The [Federal Statistical Office](/wiki/Federal_Statistical_Office_of_Germany) classifies the citizens by immigrant background. Regarding immigrant background, 20% of the country's residents, or more than 16 million people, were of immigrant or partially immigrant descent in 2009 (including persons descending or partially descending from [ethnic German](/wiki/Ethnic_German) repatriates).[[189]](#cite_note-189) In 2010, 29% of families with children under 18 had at least one parent with immigrant roots.[[190]](#cite_note-190) In 2015, the Population Division of the [United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs](/wiki/United_Nations_Department_of_Economic_and_Social_Affairs) listed Germany as host to the [second-highest number of international migrants worldwide](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_immigrant_population), about 5% or 12 million of all 244 million migrants.[[191]](#cite_note-191) Germany ranks [7th amongst EU countries](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_immigrant_population) and 37th globally in terms of the percentage of migrants who made up part of the country's population. [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the largest national group was from Turkey (2,859,000), followed by Poland (1,617,000), Russia (1,188,000), and Italy (764,000).[[192]](#cite_note-192) Since 1987, around 3 million ethnic Germans, mostly from the former [Eastern Bloc](/wiki/Eastern_Bloc) countries, have exercised their [right of return](/wiki/German_Law_of_Return) and emigrated to Germany.[[193]](#cite_note-193)

### Religion[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=26)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image) Since its foundation in 1871, Germany has been about two-thirds [Protestant](/wiki/Protestant) and one-third [Roman Catholic](/wiki/Roman_Catholic), with a notable [Jewish](/wiki/Jews) minority. Other faiths were also present, but to a much lesser degree. The 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.[[194]](#cite_note-194) According to the [2011 German Census](/wiki/2011_German_Census), [Christianity](/wiki/Christianity) is the largest religion in Germany, claiming 66.8% of the total population.[[195]](#cite_note-195) Relative to the whole population, 31.7% declared themselves as [Protestants](/wiki/Protestants), including members of the [Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)](/wiki/Evangelical_Church_in_Germany) (30.8%) and the [free churches](/wiki/Free_churches) ([Template:Lang-de](/wiki/Template:Lang-de)) (0.9%), and 31.2% declared themselves as [Roman Catholics](/wiki/Roman_Catholicism_in_Germany).[[196]](#cite_note-196) [Orthodox](/wiki/Eastern_Orthodox) believers constituted 1.3%, while [Jews](/wiki/Judaism)–0.1%. Other religions accounted for 2.7%. In 2014, the Catholic Church accounted for 23.9 million members (29.5% of the population)<ref name=DBK15>[Official membership statistics of the Roman Catholic Church in Germany 2014/15](http://www.dbk.de/fileadmin/redaktion/Zahlen%20und%20Fakten/Kirchliche%20Statistik/Bevoelkerung%20und%20Katholiken%20BL/2014-Tabelle-Bevoelkerung-Katholiken-Laender.pdf), retrieved 20. June 2016</ref> and the Evangelical Church for 22.6 million (27.9% of the population).<ref name=EKD15>[Official membership statistics of the Evangelical Church in Germany 2014](http://www.ekd.de/download/kirchenmitglieder_2014.pdf), retrieved 05. June 2016</ref> Both large churches have lost significant number of adherents in recent years.

Geographically, Protestantism is concentrated in the northern, central and eastern parts of the country. These are mostly members of the EKD, which encompasses [Lutheran](/wiki/Lutheran), [Reformed](/wiki/Reformed) and [unions of both](/wiki/United_and_uniting_churches) traditions dating back to the [Prussian Union](/wiki/Prussian_Union_of_churches) of 1817. Roman Catholicism is concentrated in the south and west.

In 2011, 33% of Germans were not members of officially recognised religious associations with special status.[[196]](#cite_note-196)[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn) [Irreligion in Germany](/wiki/Irreligion_in_Germany) is strongest in the former East Germany and major metropolitan areas.[[197]](#cite_note-197)[[198]](#cite_note-198)[[199]](#cite_note-199) [Islam](/wiki/Islam_in_Germany) is the second largest religion in the country. In the 2011 census, 1.9% of Germans declared themselves to be Muslims.[[196]](#cite_note-196) More recent estimation suppose, there are between 2.1 and 4 million Muslims living in Germany.[[200]](#cite_note-200) Most of the Muslims are [Sunnis](/wiki/Sunni_Islam) and [Alevites](/wiki/Alevites) from Turkey, but there are a small number of [Shi'ites](/wiki/Shia_Islam), [Ahmadiyyas](/wiki/Ahmadiyya) and other denominations.[[201]](#cite_note-201) Other religions comprising less than one percent of Germany's population[[196]](#cite_note-196) are [Buddhism](/wiki/Buddhism) with 250,000 adherents (roughly 0.3%) and [Hinduism](/wiki/Hinduism) with some 100,000 adherents (0.1%). All other religious communities in Germany have fewer than 50,000 adherents each.[[202]](#cite_note-202)

### Languages[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=27)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|Knowledge of the German language in EU member states (2010)](/wiki/File:Knowledge_of_German_EU_map.svg)[Template:Efn](/wiki/Template:Efn)

[German](/wiki/German_language) is the official and predominant spoken language in Germany.[[203]](#cite_note-203) It is one of 24 official and working languages of the European Union,[[204]](#cite_note-204) and one of the three [working languages](/wiki/Working_language) of the [European Commission](/wiki/European_Commission). German is the most widely spoken first language in the [European Union](/wiki/European_Union), with around 100 million native speakers.[[205]](#cite_note-205) Recognized native minority languages in Germany are [Danish](/wiki/Danish_language), [Low German](/wiki/Low_German), [Sorbian](/wiki/Sorbian_languages), [Romany](/wiki/Romany_language), and [Frisian](/wiki/Frisian_languages); they are officially protected by the [European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](/wiki/European_Charter_for_Regional_or_Minority_Languages). The most used immigrant languages are [Turkish](/wiki/Turkish_language), [Kurdish](/wiki/Kurdish_language), [Polish](/wiki/Polish_language), the [Balkan languages](/wiki/Balkan_languages), and [Russian](/wiki/Russian_language). 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.[[203]](#cite_note-203) [Standard German](/wiki/Standard_German) is a [West Germanic language](/wiki/West_Germanic_languages) and is closely related to and classified alongside [Low German](/wiki/Low_German), [Dutch](/wiki/Dutch_language), Frisian and English languages. To a lesser extent, it is also related to the [East Germanic](/wiki/East_Germanic_languages) (extinct) and [North Germanic](/wiki/North_Germanic_languages) languages. Most German vocabulary is derived from the Germanic branch of the Indo-European language family.[[206]](#cite_note-206) Significant minorities of words are derived from Latin and Greek, with a smaller amount from French and most recently English (known as [Denglisch](/wiki/Denglisch)). German is written using the Latin alphabet. [German dialects](/wiki/German_dialect), traditional local varieties traced back to the Germanic tribes, are distinguished from [varieties](/wiki/Variety_(linguistics)) of standard German by their [lexicon](/wiki/Lexicon), [phonology](/wiki/Phonology), and [syntax](/wiki/Syntax).[[207]](#cite_note-207)

### Education[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=28)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The](/wiki/File:Heidelberg_Universitätsbibliothek_2003.jpg) [Heidelberg University](/wiki/Heidelberg_University), established in 1386, is a [German university of excellence](/wiki/German_Universities_Excellence_Initiative).

Responsibility for educational supervision in Germany is primarily organised within the individual [federal states](/wiki/States_of_Germany). Optional [kindergarten](/wiki/Kindergarten) education is provided for all children between three and six years old, after which school attendance is [compulsory](/wiki/Compulsory_education) for at least nine years. Primary education usually lasts for four to six years.[[208]](#cite_note-208) Secondary education includes three traditional types of schools focused on different academic levels: the [*Gymnasium*](/wiki/Gymnasium_(school)) enrols the most gifted children and prepares students for university studies; the [*Realschule*](/wiki/Realschule) for intermediate students lasts six years and the [*Hauptschule*](/wiki/Hauptschule) prepares pupils for vocational education.[[209]](#cite_note-209) The [*Gesamtschule*](/wiki/Comprehensive_school) unifies all secondary education.

A system of apprenticeship called [*Duale Ausbildung*](/wiki/Dual_education_system) leads to a skilled qualification which is almost comparable to an academic degree. It allows students in [vocational training](/wiki/Vocational_training) to learn in a company as well as in a state-run trade school.[[208]](#cite_note-208) This model is well regarded and reproduced all around the world.[[210]](#cite_note-210) Most of the [German universities](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Germany) are public institutions, and students traditionally study without fee payment.[[211]](#cite_note-211) The general requirement for university is the [*Abitur*](/wiki/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.[[212]](#cite_note-212)According to an OECD report in 2014, Germany is the world's third leading destination for international study.[[213]](#cite_note-213) Germany has a long tradition of higher education reflecting the global status as a modern economy. The established [universities in Germany](/wiki/List_of_universities_in_Germany) include some of the [oldest in the world](/wiki/List_of_oldest_universities_in_continuous_operation), with [Heidelberg University](/wiki/Heidelberg_University) (established in 1386) being the oldest.[[214]](#cite_note-214) It is followed by the [Leipzig University](/wiki/Leipzig_University) (1409), the [Rostock University](/wiki/University_of_Rostock) (1419) and the [Greifswald University](/wiki/University_of_Greifswald) (1456).[[215]](#cite_note-215) The [University of Berlin](/wiki/University_of_Berlin), founded in 1810 by the liberal educational reformer [Wilhelm von Humboldt](/wiki/Wilhelm_von_Humboldt), became the academic model for many European and Western universities. In the contemporary era Germany has developed eleven [Universities of Excellence](/wiki/German_Universities_Excellence_Initiative): [Humboldt University Berlin](/wiki/Humboldt_University_Berlin), the [University of Bremen](/wiki/University_of_Bremen), the [University of Cologne](/wiki/University_of_Cologne), [TU Dresden](/wiki/TU_Dresden), the [University of Tübingen](/wiki/University_of_Tübingen), [RWTH Aachen](/wiki/RWTH_Aachen), [FU Berlin](/wiki/FU_Berlin), [Heidelberg University](/wiki/Heidelberg_University), the [University of Konstanz](/wiki/University_of_Konstanz), [LMU Munich](/wiki/LMU_Munich), and the [Technical University of Munich](/wiki/Technical_University_of_Munich).<ref name=ivy>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref>

### Health[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=29)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|The *Hospice of the Holy Spirit* in](/wiki/File:Luebeck-Heiligen-Geist-Hospital_von_Westen_gesehen-20100905.jpg) [Lübeck](/wiki/Lübeck), established in 1286, is a precursor to modern hospitals.[[216]](#cite_note-216) Germany's system of hospices, called *spitals*, dates from medieval times, and today, Germany has the world's oldest [universal health care](/wiki/Universal_health_care) system, dating from [Bismarck's social legislation](/wiki/Otto_von_Bismarck#Social_legislation) of the 1880s,[[217]](#cite_note-217) 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](/wiki/World_Health_Organization), Germany's [health care system](/wiki/Health_care_system) was 77% government-funded and 23% privately funded [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of).<ref name=health>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)</ref> In 2005, Germany spent 11% of its GDP on health care. Germany ranked 20th in the world in life expectancy with [77 years for men and 82 years for women](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_life_expectancy), and it had a very low [infant mortality rate](/wiki/Infant_mortality_rate) (4 per 1,000 [live births](/wiki/Live_birth_(human))).<ref name=health/>

[Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), the principal cause of death was cardiovascular disease, at 41%, followed by malignant tumours, at 26%.[[218]](#cite_note-218)[Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of), about 82,000 Germans had been infected with [HIV/AIDS](/wiki/HIV/AIDS) and 26,000 had died from the disease (cumulatively, since 1982).<ref name=cp>[Template:Cite web](/wiki/Template:Cite_web)  
This article may incorporate text from this source, which is in the public domain.</ref> According to a 2005 survey, 27% of German adults are smokers.<ref name=cp/> [Obesity](/wiki/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.[[219]](#cite_note-219)[[220]](#cite_note-220)

## Culture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=30)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|A *Weihnachtsmarkt* (](/wiki/File:ChristmasMarketJena.jpg)[Christmas market](/wiki/Christmas_market)) in Germany

Culture in German states has been shaped by major intellectual and popular currents in Europe, both religious and [secular](/wiki/Secularism). Historically Germany has been called *Das Land der Dichter und Denker* ("the land of poets and thinkers"),[[221]](#cite_note-221) because of the major role its [writers](/wiki/German_literature) and [philosophers](/wiki/German_philosophy) have played in the development of Western thought.[[222]](#cite_note-222) Germany is well known for such folk festival traditions as [Oktoberfest](/wiki/Oktoberfest) and [Christmas customs](/wiki/Weihnachten), which include [Advent wreaths](/wiki/Advent_wreath), [Christmas pageants](/wiki/Nativity_play), [Christmas trees](/wiki/Christmas_tree), [Stollen cakes](/wiki/Stollen), and other practices.[[223]](#cite_note-223)[[224]](#cite_note-224) [Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of) [UNESCO](/wiki/UNESCO) inscribed [40 properties in Germany on the World Heritage List](/wiki/World_Heritage_Sites_in_Germany).[[225]](#cite_note-225) There are a number of [public holidays in Germany](/wiki/Public_holidays_in_Germany) determined by each state; 3 October has been a [national day](/wiki/National_day) of Germany since 1990, celebrated as the *Tag der Deutschen Einheit* ([German Unity Day](/wiki/German_Unity_Day)).[[226]](#cite_note-226) In the 21st century [Berlin](/wiki/Berlin) has emerged as a major international creative center.[[227]](#cite_note-227) 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).[[228]](#cite_note-228)[[229]](#cite_note-229)[[230]](#cite_note-230) A global opinion poll for the [BBC](/wiki/BBC) revealed that Germany is recognised for having the most positive influence in the world in 2013 and 2014.[[231]](#cite_note-231)[[232]](#cite_note-232)

### Music[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=31)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|upright|](/wiki/File:Beethoven.jpg)[Ludwig van Beethoven](/wiki/Ludwig_van_Beethoven) (1770–1827), composer  
[Symphony No. 5](/wiki/Symphony_No._5_(Beethoven)) [100px](/wiki/File:Ludwig_van_Beethoven_-_Symphonie_5_c-moll_-_1._Allegro_con_brio.ogg)

German [classical music](/wiki/Classical_music_era) includes works by some of the world's most well-known composers. [Dieterich Buxtehude](/wiki/Dieterich_Buxtehude) composed oratorios for organ, which influenced the later work of [Johann Sebastian Bach](/wiki/Johann_Sebastian_Bach) and [Georg Friedrich Händel](/wiki/George_Frideric_Handel); these men were influential composers of the [Baroque period](/wiki/Baroque_music). During his tenure as violinist and teacher at the Salzburg cathedral, Augsburg-born composer [Leopold Mozart](/wiki/Leopold_Mozart) mentored one of the most noted musicians of all time: [Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart). [Ludwig van Beethoven](/wiki/Ludwig_van_Beethoven) was a crucial figure in the transition between the Classical and [Romantic](/wiki/Romantic_music) eras. [Carl Maria von Weber](/wiki/Carl_Maria_von_Weber) and [Felix Mendelssohn](/wiki/Felix_Mendelssohn) were important in the early Romantic period. [Robert Schumann](/wiki/Robert_Schumann) and [Johannes Brahms](/wiki/Johannes_Brahms) composed in the Romantic idiom. [Richard Wagner](/wiki/Richard_Wagner) was known for his operas. [Richard Strauss](/wiki/Richard_Strauss) was a leading composer of the late Romantic and early [modern](/wiki/20th-century_classical_music) eras. [Karlheinz Stockhausen](/wiki/Karlheinz_Stockhausen) and [Hans Zimmer](/wiki/Hans_Zimmer) are important composers of the 20th and early 21st centuries.[[233]](#cite_note-233) Germany is the second largest music market in Europe, and fourth largest in the world.[[234]](#cite_note-234) German popular music of the 20th and 21st century includes the movements of [Neue Deutsche Welle](/wiki/Neue_Deutsche_Welle), [pop](/wiki/Pop_music), [Ostrock](/wiki/Ostrock), [heavy metal](/wiki/Heavy_metal_music)/[rock](/wiki/German_rock), [punk](/wiki/German_punk), [pop rock](/wiki/Pop_rock), [indie](/wiki/Indie_rock) and [schlager pop](/wiki/Schlager_music). German [electronic music](/wiki/Electronic_music) gained global influence, with [Kraftwerk](/wiki/Kraftwerk) and [Tangerine Dream](/wiki/Tangerine_Dream) pioneering in this genre.[[235]](#cite_note-235) DJs and artists of the [techno](/wiki/Techno) and [house music](/wiki/House_music) scenes of Germany have become well known (e.g. [Robin Schulz](/wiki/Robin_Schulz), [Paul van Dyk](/wiki/Paul_van_Dyk), [Paul Kalkbrenner](/wiki/Paul_Kalkbrenner), and [Scooter](/wiki/Scooter_(band))).[[236]](#cite_note-236)[Template:Clear](/wiki/Template:Clear)

### Art[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=32)]

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German painters have influenced [western art](/wiki/Art_of_Europe). [Albrecht Dürer](/wiki/Albrecht_Dürer), [Hans Holbein the Younger](/wiki/Hans_Holbein_the_Younger), [Matthias Grünewald](/wiki/Matthias_Grünewald) and [Lucas Cranach the Elder](/wiki/Lucas_Cranach_the_Elder) were important German artists of the [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance), [Peter Paul Rubens](/wiki/Peter_Paul_Rubens) and [Johann Baptist Zimmermann](/wiki/Johann_Baptist_Zimmermann) of the [Baroque](/wiki/Baroque), [Caspar David Friedrich](/wiki/Caspar_David_Friedrich) and [Carl Spitzweg](/wiki/Carl_Spitzweg) of [Romanticism](/wiki/Romanticism), [Max Liebermann](/wiki/Max_Liebermann) of [Impressionism](/wiki/Impressionism) and [Max Ernst](/wiki/Max_Ernst) of [Surrealism](/wiki/Surrealism).<ref name=Marzona>Marzona, Daniel. (2005) *Conceptual Art.* Cologne: Taschen. Various pages</ref> Such German sculptors as [Otto Schmidt-Hofer](/wiki/Otto_Schmidt-Hofer), [Franz Iffland](/wiki/Franz_Iffland), and [Julius Schmidt-Felling](/wiki/Julius_Schmidt-Felling) made important contributions to German art history in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.<ref name=Berman>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref><ref name=Payne>[Template:Cite book](/wiki/Template:Cite_book)</ref>

Several German art groups formed in the 20th century, such as the [November Group](/wiki/November_Group_(German)) or [Die Brücke](/wiki/Die_Brücke) (The Bridge) and [Der Blaue Reiter](/wiki/Der_Blaue_Reiter) (The Blue Rider), by the Russian-born [Wassily Kandinsky](/wiki/Wassily_Kandinsky), influenced the development of [Expressionism](/wiki/Expressionism) in Munich and Berlin. The [New Objectivity](/wiki/New_Objectivity) arose as a counter-style to it during the [Weimar Republic](/wiki/Weimar_Republic). Post-World War II art trends in Germany can broadly be divided into [Neo-expressionism](/wiki/Neo-expressionism), [performance art](/wiki/Performance_art) and [Conceptualism](/wiki/Conceptual_art). Especially notable neo-expressionists include [Georg Baselitz](/wiki/Georg_Baselitz), [Anselm Kiefer](/wiki/Anselm_Kiefer), [Jörg Immendorff](/wiki/Jörg_Immendorff), [A. R. Penck](/wiki/A._R._Penck), [Markus Lüpertz](/wiki/Markus_Lüpertz), [Peter Robert Keil](/wiki/Peter_Robert_Keil) and [Rainer Fetting](/wiki/Rainer_Fetting). Other notable artists who work with traditional media or figurative imagery include [Martin Kippenberger](/wiki/Martin_Kippenberger), [Gerhard Richter](/wiki/Gerhard_Richter), [Sigmar Polke](/wiki/Sigmar_Polke), and [Neo Rauch](/wiki/Neo_Rauch). Leading German conceptual artists include or included [Bernd and Hilla Becher](/wiki/Bernd_and_Hilla_Becher), [Hanne Darboven](/wiki/Hanne_Darboven), [Hans-Peter Feldmann](/wiki/Hans-Peter_Feldmann), [Hans Haacke](/wiki/Hans_Haacke), [Joseph Beuys](/wiki/Joseph_Beuys), [HA Schult](/wiki/HA_Schult), [Aris Kalaizis](/wiki/Aris_Kalaizis), [Neo Rauch](/wiki/Neo_Rauch) ([New Leipzig School](/wiki/New_Leipzig_School)) and [Andreas Gursky](/wiki/Andreas_Gursky) (photography). Major art exhibitions and festivals in Germany are the [documenta](/wiki/Documenta), the [Berlin Biennale](/wiki/Berlin_Biennale), [transmediale](/wiki/Transmediale) and [Art Cologne](/wiki/Art_Cologne).<ref name=Marzona/>

### Architecture[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=33)]

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Architectural contributions from Germany include the [Carolingian](/wiki/Carolingian_architecture) and [Ottonian styles](/wiki/Ottonian_architecture), which were precursors of [Romanesque](/wiki/Romanesque_architecture). [Brick Gothic](/wiki/Brick_Gothic) is a distinctive medieval style that evolved in Germany. Also in [Renaissance](/wiki/Renaissance_architecture) and [Baroque](/wiki/Baroque_architecture) art, regional and typically German elements evolved (e.g. [Weser Renaissance](/wiki/Weser_Renaissance) and [*Dresden*](/wiki/Dresden) *Baroque*). Among many renowned Baroque masters were [Pöppelmann](/wiki/Matthäus_Daniel_Pöppelmann), [Balthasar Neumann](/wiki/Johann_Balthasar_Neumann), [Knobelsdorff](/wiki/Georg_Wenzeslaus_von_Knobelsdorff) and the [Asam brothers](/wiki/Asam_brothers). The [Wessobrunner School](/wiki/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](/wiki/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](/wiki/Johann_Michael_Feuchtmayer), one of the foremost members of the [Feuchtmayer](/wiki/Feuchtmayer) family and the brothers [Johann Baptist Zimmermann](/wiki/Johann_Baptist_Zimmermann) and [Dominikus Zimmermann](/wiki/Dominikus_Zimmermann).[[237]](#cite_note-237) [Vernacular](/wiki/Vernacular_architecture) architecture in Germany is often identified by its [timber framing](/wiki/Fachwerkhaus) (*Fachwerk*) traditions and varies across regions, and among carpentry styles.[[238]](#cite_note-238)[[239]](#cite_note-239) When industrialisation spread across Europe, [Classicism](/wiki/Classicism) and a distinctive style of [historism](/wiki/Historicism_(art)) developed in Germany, sometimes referred to as [*Gründerzeit*](/wiki/Gründerzeit) *style*, due to the economical boom years at the end of the 19th century. Regional historicist styles include the [*Hanover School*](/wiki/Hanover_school_of_architecture), [*Nuremberg*](/wiki/Nuremberg) *Style* and Dresden's [*Semper*](/wiki/Gottfried_Semper)*-*[*Nicolai*](/wiki/Georg_Hermann_Nicolai) *School*. Among the most famous of German buildings, the [Schloss Neuschwanstein](/wiki/Schloss_Neuschwanstein) represents [Romanesque Revival](/wiki/Romanesque_Revival). Notable sub-styles that evolved since the 18th century are the [German spa](/wiki/List_of_spa_towns_in_Germany) and [seaside resort](/wiki/List_of_seaside_resorts_in_Germany) architecture. German artists, writers and gallerists like [Siegfried Bing](/wiki/Siegfried_Bing), [Georg Hirth](/wiki/Georg_Hirth) and [Bruno Möhring](/wiki/Bruno_Möhring) also contributed to the development of [Art Nouveau](/wiki/Art_Nouveau) at the turn of the 20th century, known as *Jugendstil* in German.[[240]](#cite_note-240) [Template:Multiple image](/wiki/Template:Multiple_image)

[Expressionist architecture](/wiki/Expressionist_architecture) developed in the 1910s in Germany and influenced [Art Deco](/wiki/Art_Deco) and other modern styles, with e.g. [Fritz Höger](/wiki/Johann_Friedrich_Höger), [Erich Mendelsohn](/wiki/Erich_Mendelsohn), [Dominikus Böhm](/wiki/Dominikus_Böhm) and [Fritz Schumacher](/wiki/Fritz_Schumacher_(architect)) being influential architects. Germany was particularly important in the early [modernist movement](/wiki/Modern_architecture): it is the home of [Werkbund](/wiki/Deutscher_Werkbund) initiated by [Hermann Muthesius](/wiki/Hermann_Muthesius) ([New Objectivity](/wiki/New_Objectivity_(architecture))), and of the [Bauhaus](/wiki/Bauhaus) movement founded by [Walter Gropius](/wiki/Walter_Gropius). Consequently, Germany is often considered the cradle of modern architecture and design. [Ludwig Mies van der Rohe](/wiki/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](/wiki/Skyscraper).[[241]](#cite_note-241) Renowned contemporary [architects](/wiki/List_of_German_architects) and offices include [Hans Kollhoff](/wiki/Hans_Kollhoff), [Sergei Tchoban](/wiki/Sergei_Enwerowitsch_Tschoban), [KK Architekten](/wiki/Christoph_Kohl_(architect)), [Helmut Jahn](/wiki/Helmut_Jahn), [Behnisch](/wiki/Behnisch_Architekten), [GMP](/wiki/Gerkan,_Marg_and_Partners), [Ole Scheeren](/wiki/Ole_Scheeren), [J. Mayer H.](/wiki/Jürgen_Mayer_(architect)), [OM Ungers](/wiki/Oswald_Mathias_Ungers), [Gottfried Böhm](/wiki/Gottfried_Böhm) and [Frei Otto](/wiki/Frei_Otto) (the last two being [Pritzker Prize](/wiki/Pritzker_Prize) winners).[[242]](#cite_note-242)

### Literature and philosophy[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=34)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|upright|left|The](/wiki/File:Grimm.jpg) [Brothers Grimm](/wiki/Brothers_Grimm) collected and published popular German [folk tales](/wiki/Grimms'_Fairy_Tales).

German literature can be traced back to the Middle Ages and the works of writers such as [Walther von der Vogelweide](/wiki/Walther_von_der_Vogelweide) and [Wolfram von Eschenbach](/wiki/Wolfram_von_Eschenbach). Well-known German authors include [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe), [Friedrich Schiller](/wiki/Friedrich_Schiller), [Gotthold Ephraim Lessing](/wiki/Gotthold_Ephraim_Lessing) and [Theodor Fontane](/wiki/Theodor_Fontane). The collections of folk tales published by the [Brothers Grimm](/wiki/Brothers_Grimm) popularised [German folklore](/wiki/German_folklore) on an international level.[[243]](#cite_note-243) The Grimms also gathered and codified regional variants of the German language, grounding their work in historical principles; their [*Deutsches Wörterbuch*](/wiki/Deutsches_Wörterbuch), or German Dictionary, sometimes called the Grimm dictionary, was begun in 1838 and the first volumes published in 1854.<ref name = DWBhistory>History of the *Deutsches Wörterbuch* from the [DWB 150th Anniversary Exhibition and Symposium](http://150-grimm.bbaw.de/start.htm), Berlin: Humboldt-Universität, 2004. [Template:De icon](/wiki/Template:De_icon), retrieved 27 June 2012.</ref>

Influential authors of the 20th century include [Gerhart Hauptmann](/wiki/Gerhart_Hauptmann), [Thomas Mann](/wiki/Thomas_Mann), [Hermann Hesse](/wiki/Hermann_Hesse), [Heinrich Böll](/wiki/Heinrich_Böll) and [Günter Grass](/wiki/Günter_Grass).[[244]](#cite_note-244) German-speaking book publishers produce some 700 million books every year, with about 80,000 titles, nearly 60,000 of them new. Germany comes third in quantity of books published, after the English and Chinese speaking book markets.[[245]](#cite_note-245) The [Frankfurt Book Fair](/wiki/Frankfurt_Book_Fair) is the most important in the world for international deals and trading, with a tradition spanning over 500 years,[[246]](#cite_note-246) also the [Leipzig Book Fair](/wiki/Leipzig_Book_Fair) retains a major position in Europe.[[247]](#cite_note-247) German philosophy is historically significant: [Gottfried Leibniz's](/wiki/Gottfried_Leibniz) contributions to [rationalism](/wiki/Rationalism); the [enlightenment](/wiki/Age_of_Enlightenment) philosophy by [Immanuel Kant](/wiki/Immanuel_Kant); the establishment of classical [German idealism](/wiki/German_idealism) by [Johann Gottlieb Fichte](/wiki/Johann_Gottlieb_Fichte), [Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel](/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel) and [Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling](/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Joseph_Schelling); [Arthur Schopenhauer's](/wiki/Arthur_Schopenhauer) composition of metaphysical pessimism; the formulation of [communist theory](/wiki/Communist_theory) by [Karl Marx](/wiki/Karl_Marx) and [Friedrich Engels](/wiki/Friedrich_Engels); [Friedrich Nietzsche's](/wiki/Friedrich_Nietzsche) development of [perspectivism](/wiki/Perspectivism); [Gottlob Frege's](/wiki/Gottlob_Frege) contributions to the dawn of [analytic philosophy](/wiki/Analytic_philosophy); [Martin Heidegger's](/wiki/Martin_Heidegger) works on Being; the development of the [Frankfurt school](/wiki/Frankfurt_school) by [Max Horkheimer](/wiki/Max_Horkheimer), [Theodor Adorno](/wiki/Theodor_Adorno), [Herbert Marcuse](/wiki/Herbert_Marcuse) and [Jürgen Habermas](/wiki/Jürgen_Habermas) have been particularly influential; and [Oswald Spengler's](/wiki/Oswald_Spengler) historical philosophy, including his book [*The Decline of the West*](/wiki/The_Decline_of_the_West), in which he predicts the fall of the western European civilization and describes the [Germanic culture](/wiki/Germanic_culture) as [Faustian](/wiki/Faust).[[248]](#cite_note-248)

### Media[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=35)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Deutsche_Welle.jpg)[Deutsche Welle](/wiki/Deutsche_Welle) headquarters in [Bonn](/wiki/Bonn) (center).

The largest internationally operating [media](/wiki/Mass_media) companies in Germany are the [Bertelsmann](/wiki/Bertelsmann) enterprise, [Axel Springer SE](/wiki/Axel_Springer_AG) and [ProSiebenSat.1 Media](/wiki/ProSiebenSat.1_Media). The [German Press Agency DPA](/wiki/Deutsche_Presse-Agentur) is also significant. [Germany's television market](/wiki/Television_in_Germany) is the largest in Europe, with some 38 million TV households.[[249]](#cite_note-249) Around 90% of German households have cable or satellite TV, with a variety of [free-to-view public](/wiki/Public_broadcasting#Germany) and [commercial](/wiki/Commercial_broadcasting) channels.[[250]](#cite_note-250) There are more than 500 public and private [radio stations in Germany](/wiki/List_of_radio_stations_in_Germany), with the public [Deutsche Welle](/wiki/Deutsche_Welle) being the main German radio and television broadcaster in foreign languages.[[251]](#cite_note-251) Germany's national radio network is the [Deutschlandradio](/wiki/Deutschlandradio) while [ARD](/wiki/ARD_(broadcaster)) stations are covering local services.

Many of Europe's best-selling [newspapers](/wiki/List_of_newspapers_in_Germany) and [magazines](/wiki/List_of_magazines_in_Germany) are produced in Germany. The papers (and internet portals) with the highest circulation are [*Bild*](/wiki/Bild) (a [tabloid](/wiki/Tabloid_journalism)), [*Die Zeit*](/wiki/Die_Zeit), [*Süddeutsche Zeitung*](/wiki/Süddeutsche_Zeitung), [*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*](/wiki/Frankfurter_Allgemeine_Zeitung) and [*Die Welt*](/wiki/Die_Welt), the largest magazines include [*Der Spiegel*](/wiki/Der_Spiegel), [*Stern*](/wiki/Stern_(magazine)) and [*Focus*](/wiki/Focus_(German_magazine)).[[252]](#cite_note-252) The [German video gaming market](/wiki/Video_gaming_in_Germany) is one of the largest in the world.[[253]](#cite_note-253) The [Gamescom](/wiki/Gamescom) in Cologne is the world's leading gaming convention.[[254]](#cite_note-254) Popular game series from Germany include [*Turrican*](/wiki/Turrican), the [*Anno* series](/wiki/Anno_(series)), [*The Settlers* series](/wiki/The_Settlers), the [*Gothic* series](/wiki/Gothic_series), [*SpellForce*](/wiki/SpellForce), the [*FIFA Manager* series](/wiki/FIFA_Manager_(video_game_series)), [*Far Cry*](/wiki/Far_Cry) and [*Crysis*](/wiki/Crysis). Relevant game developers and publishers are [Blue Byte](/wiki/Ubisoft_Blue_Byte), [Crytek](/wiki/Crytek), [Deep Silver](/wiki/Deep_Silver), [Kalypso Media](/wiki/Kalypso_Media), [Piranha Bytes](/wiki/Piranha_Bytes), [Yager Development](/wiki/Yager_Development), and some of the largest [social network game](/wiki/Social_network_game) companies like [Bigpoint](/wiki/Bigpoint_Games), [Gameforge](/wiki/Gameforge), [Goodgame](/wiki/Goodgame_Studios) and [Wooga](/wiki/Wooga).[[255]](#cite_note-255)

### Cinema[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=36)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article)

[German cinema](/wiki/Cinema_of_Germany) has made major technical and artistic contributions to film. The first works of the [Skladanowsky Brothers](/wiki/Max_Skladanowsky) were shown to an audience in 1895. The renowned [Babelsberg Studio](/wiki/Babelsberg_Studio) in Berlin's suburb [Potsdam](/wiki/Potsdam) was established in 1912, thus being the first large-scale film studio in the world. Today it is Europe's largest studio.[[256]](#cite_note-256) Early German cinema was particularly influential with [German expressionists](/wiki/German_expressionism) such as [Robert Wiene](/wiki/Robert_Wiene) and [Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau](/wiki/Friedrich_Wilhelm_Murnau). Director [Fritz Lang's](/wiki/Fritz_Lang) [*Metropolis*](/wiki/Metropolis_(1927_film)) (1927) is referred to as the first major science-fiction film.[[257]](#cite_note-257) In 1930 [Josef von Sternberg](/wiki/Josef_von_Sternberg) directed [*The Blue Angel*](/wiki/The_Blue_Angel), the first major German [sound film](/wiki/Sound_film), with [Marlene Dietrich](/wiki/Marlene_Dietrich).[[258]](#cite_note-258) Films of [Leni Riefenstahl](/wiki/Leni_Riefenstahl) set new artistic standards, in particular [Triumph of the Will](/wiki/Triumph_of_the_Will).[[259]](#cite_note-259) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Filmstudio_Babelsberg_Eingang.jpg)[Babelsberg Studio](/wiki/Babelsberg_Studio) near Berlin, the world's first large-scale film studio

After 1945, many of the films of the immediate post-war period can be characterised as [*Trümmerfilm*](/wiki/Trümmerfilm). Such films included [Wolfgang Staudte's](/wiki/Wolfgang_Staudte) [*Die Mörder sind unter uns*](/wiki/Die_Mörder_sind_unter_uns) *(The Murderers are among us)* (1946). Notable East German films included [*Der Untertan*](/wiki/Der_Untertan_(film)) (1951); [Konrad Wolf's](/wiki/Konrad_Wolf) [*Der geteilte Himmel*](/wiki/Divided_Heaven_(film)) *(Divided Heaven)* (1964) and [Frank Beyer's](/wiki/Frank_Beyer) [*Jacob the Liar*](/wiki/Jacob_the_Liar_(1975_film)) (1975). The defining film genre in West Germany of the 1950s was arguably the [*Heimatfilm*](/wiki/Heimatfilm) ("homeland film"); these films depicted the beauty of the land and the moral integrity of the people living in it.[[260]](#cite_note-260) During the 1970s and 1980s, [New German Cinema](/wiki/New_German_Cinema) directors such as [Volker Schlöndorff](/wiki/Volker_Schlöndorff), [Werner Herzog](/wiki/Werner_Herzog), [Wim Wenders](/wiki/Wim_Wenders), and [Rainer Werner Fassbinder](/wiki/Rainer_Werner_Fassbinder) brought West German auteur cinema to critical acclaim. German movies such as [*Das Boot*](/wiki/Das_Boot) (1981), [*The Never Ending Story*](/wiki/The_NeverEnding_Story_(film)) (1984), [*Good Bye, Lenin!*](/wiki/Good_Bye,_Lenin!) (2003), [*Head On*](/wiki/Head-On_(film)) (2004), [*The White Ribbon*](/wiki/The_White_Ribbon) (2009), [*Animals United*](/wiki/Animals_United) (2010), and [*Cloud Atlas*](/wiki/Cloud_Atlas_(film)) (2012) also had international success. The [Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film](/wiki/Academy_Award_for_Best_Foreign_Language_Film) ("Oscar") went to the German production [*Die Blechtrommel (The Tin Drum)*](/wiki/The_Tin_Drum_(film)) in 1979, to [*Nirgendwo in Afrika (Nowhere in Africa)*](/wiki/Nowhere_in_Africa) in 2002, and to [*Das Leben der Anderen (The Lives of Others)*](/wiki/The_Lives_of_Others) in 2007.[[261]](#cite_note-261) The annual [European Film Awards](/wiki/European_Film_Award) ceremony is held every other year in Berlin, home of the [European Film Academy](/wiki/European_Film_Academy). The [Berlin International Film Festival](/wiki/Berlin_International_Film_Festival), known as "Berlinale", awarding the "[Golden Bear](/wiki/Golden_Bear)" and held annually since 1951, is one of the world's leading [film festivals](/wiki/Film_festival).[[262]](#cite_note-262) The "Lolas" are annually awarded in Berlin, at the [German Film Awards](/wiki/Deutscher_Filmpreis), that have been presented since 1951.[[263]](#cite_note-263)

### Cuisine[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=37)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Black_Forest_gateau.jpg)[Black Forest Gâteau](/wiki/Black_Forest_cake), a [German dessert](/wiki/List_of_German_desserts)

German cuisine varies from region to region and often neighboring regions share some culinary similarities (e.g. the southern regions of [Bavaria](/wiki/Bavarian_cuisine) and [Swabia](/wiki/Swabian_cuisine) share some traditions with Switzerland and Austria). International varieties such as [pizza](/wiki/Pizza), [sushi](/wiki/Sushi), [Chinese food](/wiki/Chinese_food), [Greek food](/wiki/Greek_cuisine), [Indian cuisine](/wiki/Indian_cuisine) and [doner kebab](/wiki/Doner_kebab) are also popular and available, thanks to diverse ethnic communities.

[Bread](/wiki/Bread_in_Europe#Germany) 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](/wiki/List_of_German_cheeses) account for about a third of all cheese produced in Europe.<ref name=IG>[The Complete Idiot's Guide to Cheeses of the World - Steve Ehlers, Jeanette Hurt](https://books.google.com/books?id=sjW9adVFS2kC&pg=PA113). pp. 113-115.</ref> 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](/wiki/Bratwurst), [Weisswursts](/wiki/Weisswurst), and [Currywursts](/wiki/Currywurst).[[264]](#cite_note-264) In 2012, [organic foods](/wiki/Organic_food) accounted for 3.9% of total food sales.[[265]](#cite_note-265) Although [wine](/wiki/German_wine) is becoming more popular in many parts of Germany, especially in [German wine regions](/wiki/List_of_German_wine_regions),[[266]](#cite_note-266) the national alcoholic drink is [beer](/wiki/Beer_in_Germany). German beer consumption per person stands at [Template:Convert](/wiki/Template:Convert) in 2013 and remains among the [highest in the world](/wiki/List_of_countries_by_beer_consumption_per_capita).[[267]](#cite_note-267) [German beer purity regulations](/wiki/Reinheitsgebot) date back to the 15th century.[[268]](#cite_note-268) The 2015 [Michelin Guide](/wiki/Michelin_Guide) awarded eleven restaurants in Germany [three stars](/wiki/List_of_Michelin_starred_restaurants#Germany), the highest designation, while 38 more received two stars and 233 one star.[[269]](#cite_note-269) German restaurants have become the world's second-most decorated after France.[[270]](#cite_note-270)[[271]](#cite_note-271)

### Sports[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=38)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|left|The](/wiki/File:Germany_champions_2014_FIFA_World_Cup.jpg) [German national football team](/wiki/Germany_national_football_team) after winning the [FIFA World Cup](/wiki/2014_FIFA_World_Cup) for the fourth time in 2014. [Football](/wiki/Football_in_Germany) 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.[[272]](#cite_note-272) [Association football](/wiki/Football_in_Germany) is the most popular sport. With more than 6.3 million official members, the [German Football Association](/wiki/German_Football_Association) (*Deutscher Fußball-Bund*) is the largest sports organisation of its kind worldwide, and the German top league, the [Bundesliga](/wiki/Bundesliga), attracts the second highest [average attendance](/wiki/List_of_attendance_figures_at_domestic_professional_sports_leagues) of all professional sports leagues in the world.[[272]](#cite_note-272) The [German men's national football team](/wiki/Germany_national_football_team) won the [FIFA World Cup](/wiki/FIFA_World_Cup) in 1954, 1974, 1990, and 2014, and the [UEFA European Championship](/wiki/UEFA_European_Championship) in 1972, 1980 and 1996. Germany hosted the [FIFA World Cup in 1974](/wiki/1974_FIFA_World_Cup) and [2006](/wiki/2006_FIFA_World_Cup) and the UEFA European Championship in [1988](/wiki/UEFA_Euro_1988).

Other popular spectator sports include [winter sports](/wiki/Sport_in_Germany#Wintersports), [boxing](/wiki/Sport_in_Germany#Boxing), [basketball](/wiki/Basketball_Bundesliga), [handball](/wiki/Handball-Bundesliga), [volleyball](/wiki/Germany_men's_national_volleyball_team), [ice hockey](/wiki/Ice_hockey_in_Germany), [tennis](/wiki/German_Open_Tennis_Championships), [horse riding](/wiki/Equestrianism) and [golf](/wiki/Sport_in_Germany#Golf). [Water sports](/wiki/Water_sports) like [sailing](/wiki/Sailing), [rowing](/wiki/Rowing_(sport)), and [swimming](/wiki/Swimming_(sport)) are popular in Germany as well.[[272]](#cite_note-272) Germany is one of the leading [motor sports](/wiki/Sport_in_Germany#Motorsport) countries in the world. Constructors like [BMW](/wiki/BMW) and [Mercedes](/wiki/Mercedes-Benz) are prominent manufacturers in motor sport. [Porsche](/wiki/Porsche) has won the [24 Hours of Le Mans](/wiki/24_Hours_of_Le_Mans) race 17 times, and [Audi](/wiki/Audi) 13 times ([Template:As of](/wiki/Template:As_of)). The driver [Michael Schumacher](/wiki/Michael_Schumacher) has set many motor sport records during his career, having won more [Formula One World Drivers' Championships](/wiki/List_of_Formula_One_World_Drivers'_Champions) with seven titles, than any other. He is one of the highest paid sportsmen in history.[[273]](#cite_note-273) [Sebastian Vettel](/wiki/Sebastian_Vettel) is also among the top three most successful Formula One drivers of all time.[[274]](#cite_note-274) Historically, [German athletes](/wiki/Germany_at_the_Olympics) have been successful contenders in the [Olympic Games](/wiki/Olympic_Games), ranking third in an [all-time Olympic Games medal count](/wiki/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](/wiki/1936_Summer_Olympics) and the [Winter Games](/wiki/1936_Winter_Olympics) in [Garmisch-Partenkirchen](/wiki/Garmisch-Partenkirchen),[[275]](#cite_note-275) and in [Munich](/wiki/Munich) it hosted the Summer Games of [1972](/wiki/1972_Summer_Olympics).[[276]](#cite_note-276)

### Fashion and design[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=39)]

[Template:Main article](/wiki/Template:Main_article) [thumb|](/wiki/File:Claudia_Schiffer_20091006_Chanel_01.jpg)[Claudia Schiffer](/wiki/Claudia_Schiffer), German [supermodel](/wiki/Supermodel) German designers were leaders of modern [product design](/wiki/Product_design), with the [Bauhaus](/wiki/Bauhaus) designers like [Mies van der Rohe](/wiki/Ludwig_Mies_van_der_Rohe), and [Dieter Rams](/wiki/Dieter_Rams) of [Braun](/wiki/Braun_(company)) being essential.[[277]](#cite_note-277) Germany is a leading country in the [fashion industry](/wiki/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 percent of the products are exported.[[278]](#cite_note-278) The [Berlin Fashion Week](/wiki/Berlin_Fashion_Week) and the fashion trade fair [Bread & Butter](/wiki/Bread_and_Butter_tradeshow) are held twice a year.[[279]](#cite_note-279) Munich, Hamburg and Düsseldorf are also important design, production and trade hubs of the domestic fashion industry, among smaller towns.[[280]](#cite_note-280) Renowned fashion designers from Germany include [Karl Lagerfeld](/wiki/Karl_Lagerfeld), [Jil Sander](/wiki/Jil_Sander), [Wolfgang Joop](/wiki/Wolfgang_Joop), [Philipp Plein](/wiki/Philipp_Plein) and [Michael Michalsky](/wiki/Michael_Michalsky). Important brands include [Hugo Boss](/wiki/Hugo_Boss), [Escada](/wiki/Escada), [Adidas](/wiki/Adidas), [Puma](/wiki/Puma_SE) and [Triumph](/wiki/Triumph_International). The German [supermodels](/wiki/Supermodel) [Claudia Schiffer](/wiki/Claudia_Schiffer), [Heidi Klum](/wiki/Heidi_Klum), [Tatjana Patitz](/wiki/Tatjana_Patitz) and [Nadja Auermann](/wiki/Nadja_Auermann) have come to international fame.[[281]](#cite_note-281)

## See also[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=40)]

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* [Index of Germany-related articles](/wiki/Index_of_Germany-related_articles)
* [Outline of Germany](/wiki/Outline_of_Germany)

## Notes[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=41)]

[Template:Notelist](/wiki/Template:Notelist)

## References[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=42)]

[Template:Reflist](/wiki/Template:Reflist)

## External links[[edit](/index.php?title=(none)&action=edit&section=43)]

[Template:Spoken Wikipedia-2](/wiki/Template:Spoken_Wikipedia-2) [Template:Sister project links](/wiki/Template:Sister_project_links)

* [Official site of the Federal Government](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Webs/Breg/EN/Homepage/_node.html)
* [Official site of the Federal President](http://www.bundespraesident.de/EN/Home/home_node.html)
* [Official site of the German Chancellor](http://www.bundeskanzlerin.de/Webs/BK/En/Homepage/home.html)
* [Deutschland.de](http://www.deutschland.de/en) – Topical website about Germany
* [Official Germany Tourism website](http://www.germany.travel/en/index.html)
* [Template:CIA World Factbook link](/wiki/Template:CIA_World_Factbook_link)
* [Germany](http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/govpubs/for/germany.htm) at [University of Colorado Boulder](/wiki/University_of_Colorado_Boulder) Libraries
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