

# Germany

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Germany is a country located in central Europe, northeast of France. Even though it is a very small fraction of the size of the U.S., the population is about one fourth of the American population, at eighty two million, seven hundred ninety seven thousand, four hundred and eight people. The German currency is the "mark," and two marks are worth one dollar. Quite obviously, the language spoken in Germany is German.

Germany is one of the largest countries in all of Europe, even though it is only the size of the American state of Montana, at one hundred thirty seven thousand, eight hundred twenty-one square miles. Germany is broken up into sixteen different states, and each state has it's own capital, even though the real capital of Germany is Berlin, which also happens to be the largest city in the country. Berlin is it's own state. Some other famous cities in Germany are: Cologne, Stuttgart, Hamburg, and Munich.

A large portion of northern Germany is plains, although some of the country's richest farmland lies in the northern region. Central Germany consists of rivers, mountains, and valleys. That particular area is home to foxes, pigs, and deer. Southern Germany has a small part of the Alps in it. The highest point in the country is on Zugspitze, a mountain reaching nine thousand, seven hundred, and twenty-one feet.

The Black Forest, which is known for it's hiking trails, springs, and dark fir trees, is in southwest Germany. Several rivers are in the Black Forest. All the rivers form the Danube, which is one of the longest rivers in Europe. The Danube is nearly eighteen hundred miles long and empties out into the Black Sea. The beauty of the Danube has been inspiring to artists for centuries. There are other rivers in Germany that are not as famous, such as the Elbe, and the Rhine River.

Most of Germany's residents are have lived in Germany their whole lives. But about nine percent of the country population is originally from another country. Most of the immigrants are from Turkey. For over forty years, the Turkish have come to find work in Germany and often end up raising their families in the country. There are foreigners from other countries, and most come to escape the harsh rulings of their own countries.

Most of Germany's people live in the large cities. Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin have more than a million people apiece. Several other cities have at least a couple hundred thousand people. Next to no people live in the rural countryside. Nearly one-third of all Germans are Protestant, and another third are Roman Catholic. The rest of the population is Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, or other faiths. Some people don't participate in the religious practice.

Some of the world's biggest musical geniuses were from Germany. Johannes Brahms, Sebastian Bach, and the infamous Ludwig Van Beethoven all originated from Germany. Brahms wrote music for many instruments including violins, singers, pianos, and orchestras. Bach was a master composer whose works are still heard in concert halls all over the world. And Beethoven composed magnificent music, even after he became deaf. These three musicians are known as the "three Bs."

Over the years, European countries began to grow tensions against each other, always competing to have stronger armies and better governments. In 1914, World War I

broke out. The outcome of the war was devastating to Germany. By the time it was over four years later, over six million Germans had lost their lives. The countries that beat Germany forced them to hand over all the riches the country had. Germany's economy failed. There was a shortage of jobs, and the prices of necessities like food and clothing were hiked up to a price that people couldn't afford. After the war, the Germans were desperate for a strong leader that would keep their country together. They made the mistake of choosing Adolf Hitler.

In 1933, Hitler became Germany's chancellor. The Germans adored him, but what they didn't know was that he was a man with no morals, who was willing to kill anyone who threatened his power. He also killed many people that he believed were inferior to him. He plotted to weed Germany of all people like Jews, who were different. It was he who started World War II.

World War II went on for six years, after which it lost again. The country divided into two parts after the war: East Germany and West Germany. The capital, Berlin, was also divided, right down the middle. West Germany and West Berlin were democratic, and East Germany and East Berlin were under a communist government.

In 1961, the communist part of Germany built a wall to divide the two parts of Germany. Since it was right down the middle of Berlin, it was referred to as the "Berlin Wall." Many people hated the wall, and in 1989 East Germany tried to overtake their government. One night, many people tore the wall down. One year afterward, Berlin was reunited, and Germany was a united nation again.

Most people in Germany live in apartments. From there, people can usually walk to wherever they need to go. Many people work in factories, and German factories are very well known for their fine products. German electronics, machines, cars, cameras, and planes are highly valued all over the world. Germany is also known world over for its handmade items such as wooden toys, glassware, crystal items, jewelry, and furniture. About one out of sixty people in Germany work on a farm. Some farmers raise cattle, and some grow fruits and vegetables such as potatoes, wheat, apples, and beets.

Germans enjoy recreation, and some of their favorite recreational activities are bicycle riding and soccer. They also like to do something that Americans cannot usually do, such as skiing and hiking in the mountains. Germans very much enjoy visiting other parts of the country, and they often take the train, or drive on their freeways, which they call "autobahns."

Germany's food is loved all over the world. Some famous German cuisine includes: apple strudel, potato dumplings, sausage, and sauerkraut. Germany is also very famous for its beer and wine. People especially enjoy the fine foods and drinks during Oktoberfest, a wonderful food festival that takes place in Munich every September.

Visitors have much to enjoy other than Oktoberfest, though. People often come to visit the beautiful towns and countryside. Near the Baltic Sea, people relax in the beautiful white beaches. In Passau, visitors can listen to the largest pipe organ in Europe, and in Cologne, tourists love to visit Germany's most famous cathedral.

Germans have much pride in their fine country and all the beautiful things they have given the world. It is a wonderful country that has succeeded in holding on to all its history and culture.