**Overview: Germany**

 As Europe's largest economy and second most populous nation (after Russia), Germany is a key member of the continent's economic, political, and defense organizations. European power struggles immersed Germany in two devastating World Wars in the first half of the 20th century and left the country occupied by the victorious Allied powers of the US, UK, France, and the Soviet Union in 1945. With the advent of the Cold War, two German states were formed in 1949: the western Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the eastern German Democratic Republic (GDR). The democratic FRG embedded itself in key western economic and security organizations, the EC, which became the EU, and NATO, while the communist GDR was on the front line of the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact. The decline of the USSR and the end of the Cold War allowed for German unification in 1990. Since then, Germany has expended considerable funds to bring eastern productivity and wages up to western standards. In January 1999, Germany and 10 other EU countries introduced a common European exchange currency, the euro.

**[Geography :: GERMANY](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/gm.html)**

[Location:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2144&term=Location)

Central Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea and the North Sea, between the Netherlands and Poland, south of Denmark

[Geographic coordinates:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2011&term=Geographic%20coordinates)

51 00 N, 9 00 E

[Map references:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2145&term=Map%20references)

Europe

[Area:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2147&term=Area)

total: 357,022 sq km

land: 348,672 sq km

water: 8,350 sq km

[Area - comparative:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2023&term=Area%20-%20comparative)

three times the size of Pennsylvania; slightly smaller than Montana

[Land boundaries:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2096&term=Land%20boundaries)

total: 3,714 km

border countries: Austria 801 km, Belgium 133 km, Czech Republic 704 km, Denmark 140km, France 418 km, Luxembourg 128 km, Netherlands 575 km, Poland 467 km, Switzerland 348 km

[Coastline:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2060&term=Coastline)

2,389 km

[Maritime claims:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2106&term=Maritime%20claims)

territorial sea: 12 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

[Climate:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2059&term=Climate)

temperate and marine; cool, cloudy, wet winters and summers; occasional warm mountain (foehn) wind

[Terrain:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2125&term=Terrain)

lowlands in north, uplands in center, Bavarian Alps in south

[Elevation:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2020&term=Elevation)

mean elevation: 263 m

elevation extremes: lowest point: Neuendorf bei Wilster -3.54 m

highest point: Zugspitze 2,963 m

[Natural resources:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2111&term=Natural%20resources)

coal, lignite, natural gas, iron ore, copper, nickel, uranium, potash, salt, construction materials, timber, arable land

[Land use:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2097&term=Land%20use)

agricultural land: 48%, arable land 34.1%; permanent crops 0.6%; permanent pasture 13.3%

forest: 31.8%, other: 20.2% (2011 est.)

[Irrigated land:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2146&term=Irrigated%20land)

6,500 sq km (2012)

[Total renewable water resources:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2201&term=Total%20renewable%20water%20resources)

154 cu km (2011)

[Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2202&term=Freshwater%20withdrawal%20%28domestic/industrial/agricultural%29)

total: 32.3 cu km/yr (16%/84%/0%)

per capita: 391.4 cu m/yr (2007)

[Natural hazards:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2021&term=Natural%20hazards)

flooding

[Geography - note:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2113&term=Geography%20-%20note)

strategic location on North European Plain and along the entrance to the Baltic Sea; most major rivers in Germany - the Rhine, Weser, Oder, Elbe - flow northward; the Danube, which originates in the German Alps, flows eastward

**[Introduction :: ITALY](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/it.html)**

[Background:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2028&term=Background)

Italy became a nation-state in 1861 when the regional states of the peninsula, along with Sardinia and Sicily, were united under King Victor EMMANUEL II. An era of parliamentary government came to a close in the early 1920s when Benito MUSSOLINI established a Fascist dictatorship. His alliance with Nazi Germany led to Italy's defeat in World War II. A democratic republic replaced the monarchy in 1946 and economic revival followed. Italy is a charter member of NATO and the European Economic Community (EEC). It has been at the forefront of European economic and political unification, joining the Economic and Monetary Union in 1999. Persistent problems include sluggish economic growth, high youth and female unemployment, organized crime, corruption, and economic disparities between southern Italy and the more prosperous north.

**[Geography :: ITALY](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/it.html)**

[Location:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2144&term=Location)

Southern Europe, a peninsula extending into the central Mediterranean Sea, northeast of Tunisia

[Geographic coordinates:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2011&term=Geographic%20coordinates)

42 50 N, 12 50 E

[Map references:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2145&term=Map%20references)

Europe

[Area:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2147&term=Area)

total: 301,340 sq km

land: 294,140 sq km

water: 7,200 sq km

note: includes Sardinia and Sicily

country comparison to the world: [72](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2147rank.html#it)

[Area - comparative:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2023&term=Area%20-%20comparative)

almost twice the size of Georgia; slightly larger than Arizona

Area comparison map:

[Land boundaries:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2096&term=Land%20boundaries)

total: 1,836.4 km

border countries (6): Austria 404 km, France 476 km, Holy See (Vatican City) 3.4 km, San Marino 37 km, Slovenia 218 km, Switzerland 698 km

[Coastline:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2060&term=Coastline)

7,600 km

[Maritime claims:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2106&term=Maritime%20claims)

territorial sea: 12 nm

continental shelf: 200-m depth or to the depth of exploitation

[Climate:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2059&term=Climate)

predominantly Mediterranean; alpine in far north; hot, dry in south

[Terrain:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2125&term=Terrain)

mostly rugged and mountainous; some plains, coastal lowlands

[Elevation:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2020&term=Elevation)

mean elevation: 538 m

elevation extremes: lowest point: Mediterranean Sea 0 m

highest point: Mont Blanc (Monte Bianco) de Courmayeur 4,748 m (a secondary peak of Mont Blanc)

[Natural resources:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2111&term=Natural%20resources)

coal, mercury, zinc, potash, marble, barite, asbestos, pumice, fluorspar, feldspar, pyrite (sulfur), natural gas and crude oil reserves, fish, arable land

[Land use:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2097&term=Land%20use)

agricultural land: 47.1%

arable land 22.8%; permanent crops 8.6%; permanent pasture 15.7%

forest: 31.4%

other: 21.5% (2011 est.)

[Irrigated land:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2146&term=Irrigated%20land)

39,500 sq km (2012)

[Total renewable water resources:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2201&term=Total%20renewable%20water%20resources)

191.3 cu km (2011)

[Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2202&term=Freshwater%20withdrawal%20%28domestic/industrial/agricultural%29)

total: 45.41 cu km/yr (24%/43%/34%)

per capita: 789.8 cu m/yr (2008)

[Natural hazards:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2021&term=Natural%20hazards)

regional risks include landslides, mudflows, avalanches, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding; land subsidence in Venice

volcanism: significant volcanic activity; Etna (elev. 3,330 m), which is in eruption as of 2010, is Europe's most active volcano; flank eruptions pose a threat to nearby Sicilian villages; Etna, along with the famous Vesuvius, which remains a threat to the millions of nearby residents in the Bay of Naples area, have both been deemed Decade Volcanoes by the International Association of Volcanology and Chemistry of the Earth's Interior, worthy of study due to their explosive history and close proximity to human populations; Stromboli, on its namesake island, has also been continuously active with moderate volcanic activity; other historically active volcanoes include Campi Flegrei, Ischia, Larderello, Pantelleria, Vulcano, and Vulsini

[Geography - note:](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/docs/notesanddefs.html?fieldkey=2113&term=Geography%20-%20note)

strategic location dominating central Mediterranean as well as southern sea and air approaches to Western Europe