

Bavaria

Bavaria, formally the **Free State of Bavaria** (German: *Freistaat Bayern*) is a state of Germany, located in the southeast of Germany. The Kingdom of Bavaria existed from 1806 to 1918, and Bavaria has since been a free state (republic). Modern Bavaria also includes parts of the historical regions of Franconia and Swabia.

Since World War II, Bavaria has been rehabilitated from a poor agrarian province into a prosperous industrial hub. A massive reconstruction effort restored much of Munich's and other places historic cores. The state capital hosted the 1972 Summer Olympics. More recently, native son Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger was elected Pope Benedict XVI in 2005.



Bavaria shares international borders with Austria and the Czech Republic as well as with Switzerland (across Lake Constance). Neighbouring states within Germany are Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, Thuringia and Saxony. Two major rivers flow through the state, the Danube (*Donau*) and the Main. The Bavarian Alps define the border with Austria, and within the range is the highest peak in Germany, the Zugspitze. The Bavarian Forest and the Bohemian Forest form the vast majority of the frontier with the Czech Republic and Bohemia.

The major cities in Bavaria are Munich (*München*), Nuremberg (*Nürnberg*), Augsburg, Regensburg, Würzburg, Ingolstadt, Fürth and Erlangen.

The motorcycle and automobile makers BMW (*Bayerische Motoren-Werke*, or Bavarian Motor Works) and Audi, Allianz, Grundig (consumer electronics), Siemens (electricity, telephones, informatics, medical instruments), Continental (Automotive Tire and Electronics), Adidas, and Puma, have (or had) a Bavarian industrial base.



While 56.4% of the population adhere to the Catholic Church, 21% are affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Bavaria.

Bavarians commonly emphasize pride in their traditions. Traditional costumes known as Tracht are worn on special occasions and include Lederhosen for males and Dirndl for females. Centuries-old folk music is performed. The Maypole and the bagpipes in the Upper Palatinate region bear witness to the ancient Celtic and Germanic remnants of cultural heritage of the region.

Source: Wikipedia