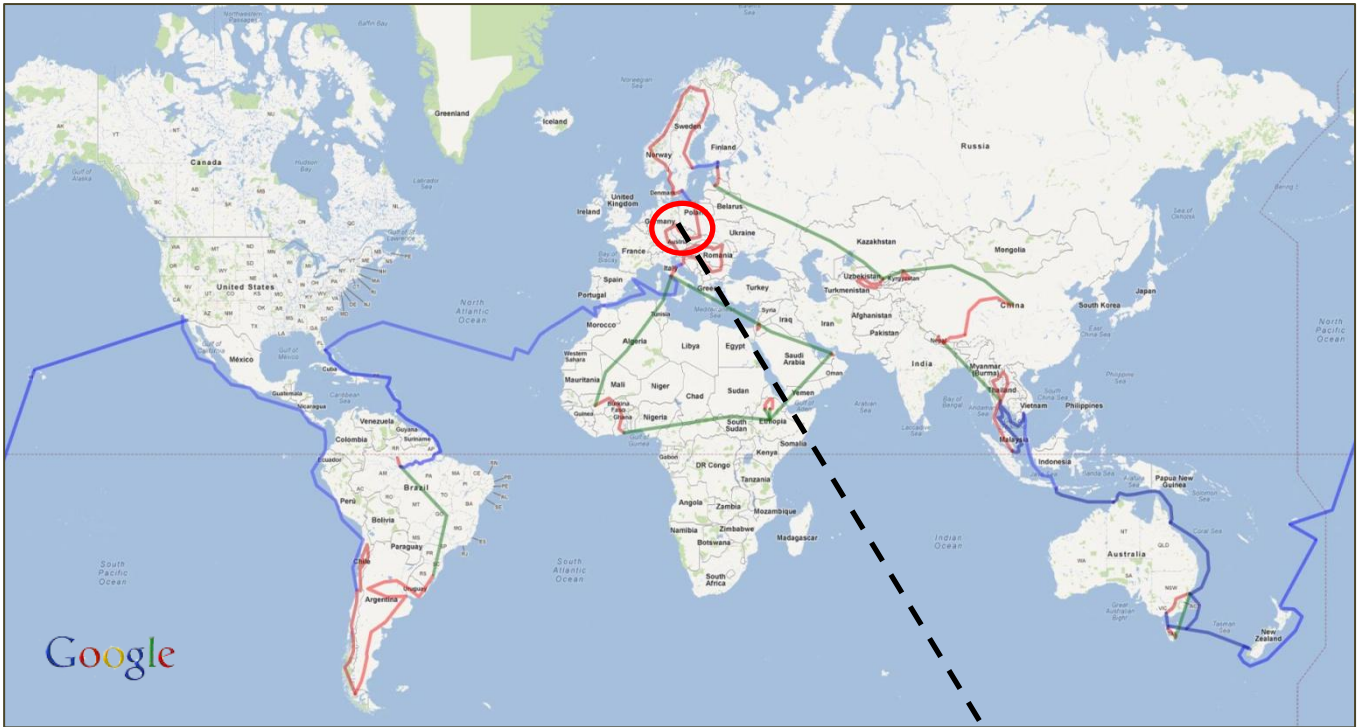# Trekking the Planet

Discovering the Cultural and Natural Significance of the World

Where are we now?

- Darren and Sandy are in Dresden, Germany, located at 52° N and 13° E.

- We have traveled approximately 32,373 miles (52,099 kilometers) from our starting point in California.

People and Culture

- Prior to World War I, Germany was governed by the Frankish Empire (3rd to 10th century), Holy Roman Empire (962 - 1806) and the German Empire (1871 - 1918).

- Germany had central roles in both World Wars. After World War II it was split into western and eastern states. The country was reunited in 1990.

- Germany is the second-most populated European country (after Russia) with about 81 million inhabitants. Approximately 18% of the population is of non-German descent. About 25% of Americans have at least partial German ancestry.

- German is the official language of the country. It is the most widely spoken language in the European Union and with over 90 million native speakers.

- The economy of Germany is the largest in Europe and fourth largest in the world. It is the world's second largest exporter.

- Oktoberfest is held in Munich, beginning in September and ending the first weekend in October. It dates back to 1810, when the wedding of King Ludwig I took place. Besides the emphasis on beer gardens, Oktoberfest also includes carnival rides, booths, food and entertainment. Six million people attend each year.

Did you know?

Germans have made contributions in areas such as:
Music: Famous composers include Bach, Handel, Beethoven, Brahms and Wagner
Philosophy: Philosophers Kant, Hagel and Nietzsche
Discoveries/ Inventions: Insulin, clarinet, gas and diesel engines, motorcycle, LCD screen, pocket watch, gummy bears and light bulbs

Click the picture above to watch an excerpt from Beethoven's 9th Symphony (15:46) (sources: Wanttokonwit.com, Eupedia.com)

Oktoberfest view (source: Viatour.com)

Map and view of the Rhine River (sources: Famouswonders.com, MWHistory2010scott.wikispaces.com)

The Black Forest

Known as the Schwarzwald in German, the Black Forest is an area in southwest Germany about 120 miles (200 kilometers) long and 37 miles (60 kilometers) wide. It originally received its name from the Romans who referred to the dense growth of trees blocking out the light. The forest contains pine and fir trees. There are about 14,000 miles (23,000 kilometers) of trails for hiking, biking and cross country skiing and the area is a popular tourist destination.

sources: Flickr.com/Timeyres, Wikipedia.org

Nature and Environment

- Germany is about the size of the U.S. state of Montana and borders nine other countries, more than any other in Europe. It is Europe's the sixth largest country.

- A series of major European rivers flow through Germany, including the Danube, the Elbe, the Moselle, the Weser and the Rhine. At about 800 miles (1,300 kilometers) long, the Rhine is Germany's busiest waterway.

- Germany is the third largest agricultural provider in Europe, after France and Italy. Potatoes, wheat, barley and cabbages are major crops.

- Timber and lumber are a major source of production. Even so, 29% of Germany's land mass is covered by forests.

- Germany is a significant producer of wind energy. There are over 20,000 wind turbines present in the country.

- There are over 400 zoos in Germany, the most of any country in the world. The Berlin Zoologischer Garten is the largest zoo in the world with 14,000 animals.

Our Plans

- We plan to spend three days in Dresden, visiting historical places and museums. Next, we will visit the city of Bamberg. The town is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

- Our travels will continue to Slovenia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

- As we continue in Europe be sure and let us know what questions that you have. Contact us by Facebook, Twitter or by email via our website. We look forward to hearing from you!

Castles

Germany has one of the largest numbers of castles in the world, with over 150 castles in the country. Some are now hotels and others are museums. One of the most famous castles is Neuschwanstein, in southern Germany. It was built by Ludwig II, the king of Bavaria. It was inspiration for Walt Disney's Sleeping Beauty Castle.

Neuschwanstein Castle
(sources: Flickr.com/Xiquinhosilva, Wikipedia.org, 2020site,org)

More Information

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wind_power
- http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/places/find/germany/
- http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107568.html
- http://german.about.com/library/blbraeuche_sep.htm
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Germany
- http://www.buyfromdeveloper.com/country/Germany/193/Climate,-Geology-and-Vegetation
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/German_language
- http://www.germany.co.za/rhine_valley.html
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Economy_of_Germany

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