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South of germany

Region in which Upper German dialects are spoken Southern Germany (German: Süddeutschland) as a region has no exact boundary but is generally taken to include the areas in which Upper German dialects are spoken. This corresponds roughly to the historical stem duchies of Bavaria and Swabia or, in a modern context, to Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg within the Federal Republic of Germany, to the exclusion of the areas of the modern states of Austria and Switzerland. The Saarland and the southern parts of Hesse and Rhineland-Palatinate are sometimes included as well and correspond to the historical Franconia. Alsace, German-speaking Switzerland, Austria, Liechtenstein, and South Tyrol are no longer considered to be part of Southern Germany, but historically, culturally, and linguistically, they are related to Southern Germany in many ways. The Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Moldova and Ukraine also had large Upper German minorities before the 1940s. Boundaries Southern Germany roughly corresponds to the area of Germany south of the Speyer line, below which Upper German dialects are spoken (shown in the green are that also includes Austria, parts of Switzerland and Italy). Southern Germany primarily contrasts with Northern Germany. The term mostly corresponds to those territories of modern Germany which did not form part of the North German Confederation in the nineteenth century. Between Northern and Southern Germany is the loosely defined area known as Central Germany (Mitteldeutschland), roughly corresponding to the areal of Central German dialects (Franconia, Thuringia, Saxony). The boundary between the spheres of political influence of Prussia (Northern Germany) and Austria (Southern Germany) within the German Confederation (1815-1866) was known as the "Main line" (Mainlinie, after the River Main). Frankfurt am Main being the seat of the federal assembly. The "Main line" did not follow the course of the River Main upstream of Frankfurt, however; it instead corresponded to the northern border of the Kingdom of Bavaria. Linguistically, Southern Germany corresponds to the Upper German dialects. Southern Germany is culturally and linguistically more similar to German-speaking Switzerland, Austria, and German-speaking South Tyrol than to Central and Northern Germany. A jocular term referring to a cultural boundary defining Bavarian culture is Weißwurstäquator, i.e. the "equator" dividing Northern Germany from the homeland of the Weißwurst sausage. Geography The River Main, flowing westward, through Upper and Lower Franconia and Southern Hesse, through the city of Frankfurt, into the River Rhine at Mainz, is often cited as a natural border between Southern and Middle Germany while the border west of Mainz is, in that respect, less clearly determined. The border between the Palatinate and the Rhineland—roughly a line between Bonn and Bingen, in the mountain ranges (Mittelgebirge) of the Westerwald, the Taunus, and the Eifel, along the Rhine and Mosel rivers—is seen as the cultural border between Southern and Western Germany. Population Two of the most populous states of Germany, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, are part of Southern Germany. They have a combined population of 23.5 million people. In the broader sense (with Rhineland-Palatinate and the Saarland), Southern Germany includes roughly 30 million people. Thus, about 40% of the German population and almost 30% of all native speakers of the German language live there. The region has a Catholic majority, but also a significant Lutheran Protestant population (especially in Northern Württemberg and some parts of Baden and Franconia (Northern Bavaria)), in contrast to the almost entirely Protestant Northern Germany. Due to the immigration of non-Christians, mainly Turks (see Turks in Germany) during the last decades of the twentieth century, there is also a small number (roughly 250,000, i.e. 2-3% of the population) of Muslims. Major cities Where a city has different names in English and German, the English name is given first. State capital Rank City Pop. 1950 Pop. 1960 Pop. 1970 Pop. 1980 Pop. 1990 Pop. 2000 Pop. 2010 Area [km²] Densityper km² Growth [%](2000–2010) surpassed100,000 State(Bundesland) 1. Munich / München 831,937 1,101,384 1,311,978 1,298,941 1,229,026 1,210,223 1,353,186 310,69 4,355 11.81 1852 Bavaria 2. Frankfurt am Main 532,037 675,009 666,179 629,375 644,865 648,550 679,664 248,31 2,737 4.80 1875 Hesse 3. Stuttgart 496,490 637,366 634,202 580,648 579,988 583,874 606,588 207,35 2,925 3.89 1874 Baden-Württemberg 4. Nuremberg / Nürnberg 362,459 458,401 478,181 484,405 493,692 488,400 505,664 186,38 2,713 3.53 1881 Bavaria 5. Mannheim 245,634 311,383 332,378 304,303 310,411 306,729 313,174 144,96 2,160 2.10 1897 Baden-Württemberg 6. Karlsruhe 198,840 240,450 259,091 271,892 275,061 278,558 294,761 173,46 1,699 5.82 1901 Baden-Württemberg 7. Wiesbaden 220,741 257,293 250,715 274,464 260,301 270,109 275,976 203,93 1,353 2.17 1905 Hesse 8. Augsburg 185,183 206,422 213,230 248,346 256,877 254,982 264,708 146,84 1,803 3.81 1909 Bavaria 9. Freiburg 109,717 141,637 163,568 175,106 191,029 205,102 224,191 153,06 1,465 9.31 1934 Baden-Württemberg 10. Mainz 88,369 133,089 174,858 187,392 179,486 182,870 199,237 97,74 2,038 8.95 1908 Rhineland-Palatinate Rank City Pop. 1950 Pop. 1960 Pop. 1970 Pop. 1980 Pop. 1990 Pop. 2000 Pop. 2010 Area [km²] Densityper km² Growth [%](2000–2010) surpassed100,000 State(Land) Characteristics Economically, Southern Germany is the strongest part of Germany, with Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria being the powerhouses of manufacturing, especially in the automobile and machinery industry. Furthermore, it is home to some of the country's most prestigious universities (such as the ones in Heidelberg, Munich, Tübingen, and Würzburg). The specific features of the landscape are rolling hills, Mittelgebirge (mid-range mountains). Southern Germany also has a part of the Alps, in the southeast of the region (Allgäu and Bavarian Alps). In the culinary field, both beer and wine are produced in many varieties throughout the region. The regional cuisine consists of stews, sausages, cabbage, noodles, and other pasta dishes as well as a variety of holiday cookies, cakes, and tarts. See also Northern Germany Central Germany (geography), Central Germany (cultural area) Western Germany, Eastern Germany Weißwurstäquator Upper German Alemannic dialects Austro-Bavarian dialects East Franconian German South Franconian German References Handbook for Travellers in Southern Germany: Being a Guide to Wuerttemberg, Bavaria, Austria, Tyrol, Salzburg, Styria, &c., the Austrian and Bavarian Alps, and the Danube from Ulm to the Black Sea, Murray's foreign handbooks, 1871 Coordinates: 49°N 10°E﻿ / ﻿49°N 10°E﻿﻿ / 49; 10 Retrieved from " Germany is the 7th-largest country in Europe, covering an area of 137,847 square miles (⅓ of which is covered in forests and woodlands), which means the absolute best way to explore this stunning country is by 4 wheels (and 2 feet!) And since 65% of the Autobahn (highway) has no speed limit, it's actually really exciting to drive in Germany!Southern Germany offers dramatic scenery, ancient castles, friendly people, and quaint villages. Our proposed road trip itinerary will take you to all of the highlights in this beautiful region and should take you 2-3 weeks to complete. Enjoy!Southern Germany Road Trip BasicsThings to Know Before You GoFun Facts About GermanyFestivals in Southern GermanySouthern Germany Road Trip Leg One: Intro to Bavarian CultureConsidering the fact that Munich is the capital and the most populated city in the German state of Bavaria, with an estimated population of approximately 1.5 million people, it's pretty amazing that the city center can remain so quaint and pedestrian-friendly.With churches displaying amazingly intricate architecture and beer gardens rich in history on practically every corner, you'll never run out of things to see or drink in this darling city. You could easily spend a month exploring, but even with just 2 days in Munich you can hit the highlights.If you want to see some of the finest architecture in the region, start with a morning stroll around the Marienplatz. It's the central square in the center of the city and one of the most instagrammable places in Munich!Be sure to stop at the Rathaus-Glockenspiel right before 11:00am to witness this large mechanical clock in the middle of Marienplatz containing 43 bells and 32 life-sized figures come to life daily in the 260-foot tower.You'll want to peek your head into all of the churches in the square but be sure not to miss our favorite, Assam Church, which is quite small but will leave you speechless.From there head over to the Munich Residenz for a tour of the exquisite museum that served as the seat of government and residence of the Bavarian dukes, electors and kings from 1508 to 1918. It will take you several hours to see all that this gorgeous mansion has to offer!Finally, end your day with a sunset stroll through the Englischer Garten. This giant park is located centrally in the city and is a hot spot for (occasionally naked) locals when the sun comes out. Not only is there a bustling beer garden in the center of the park, but also surfers who are taking a shot at the narrow wave caused by a standing wall in the man-made river. Imbibe!You'll need to rest your weary feet after all that walking so take a pit stop at Hofbräuhaus which is arguably the most famous beer hall in all of Bavaria! It was originally built in 1589 but not opened to the general public until 1828. All of the rooms except the historic beer hall were destroyed in WWII bombings but it was reopened in 1958 after post-war restoration work. If you're looking for something refreshing, try the radler!When you're ready for another pit of Germany's finest ale, stop at the Biergarten am Chinesischen Turm in the center of the Englischer Garten!One could spend weeks exploring all that Munich has to offer but you're on the move! Time to drive about 45 minutes to camp on the beautiful Fohn-See Lake.For a campsite right on the lake, check out Zweiter Campingplatz Fohnsee where you can sit on the dock and to watch an amazing sunset and then wake up early in the morning for a relaxing stroll around the lake.Linderhof PalaceFrom Munich, it's about 60 miles to Linderhof Palace and should take you an hour and 20 minutes to drive. You'll be visiting two homes of the eccentric King Ludwig II who was crowned king of Bavaria in 1864 during this leg of your journey. The first is the gorgeous Linderhof Palace which was the king's summer home and was modeled after the Palace of Versailles.The palace exterior is spectacular – as are the gardens – but a tour of the inside of the palace is truly fascinating and worth the small fee. Since he didn't like to be bothered by his servants during his meals, the dining room table (that was only large enough for one) could be lowered to the floor below so that the servants could set the table and then hoist it back up to the king awaiting his dinner without being seen!Your next stop is just a short, 30-minute drive from the palace, to Garmisch-Partnachklamm.Like this post?! How about...Complete Road Trip Packing ListGarmisch-PartnachklammAs you walk through the Olympic Ski Stadium (Olympia Skistadion Ausstellung) you'll notice a few things; first of all how impressive and intimidating the steep, towering ski jump is and secondly how few people could actually fit in the stands (although allegedly it could originally house up to 40,000 guests and was expanded to fit more).Stop for a bite here before starting your hike. You'll need to continue walking about a half of a mile to the start of the Partnachklamm (Partnach Gorge).The first half of the Partnach Gorge hike is fairly flat and takes you through several caves that run alongside the Partnach river with waterfalls overhead. Stop frequently to soak in all of your surroundings, you'll be surprised by just how many waterfalls there are along the way.Once you reach the end of the gorge hike, turn left to head uphill to turn the hike into a loop. The walk up is steep but once at the top you'll be rewarded with stunning views of the Alps and even a quaint biertgarten where you can rest your weary legs while enjoying a refreshing beer. Be sure to take a ride on the alpine slide before you leave the area!Time to head –45 miles west (with a quick pop through the tip of Austria) to see the famous castle which was the inspiration for Walt Disney's fairytale castle.Quickly cross over the border to Ehrwald, Austria for the most amazing mountain views that you'll see on your entire trip! If it's getting late, spend the night at Alpencamp-Marienberg to be surrounded by views and for every amenity you could wish for!Neuschwanstein Castle!This awe-inspiring castle was constructed by King Ludwig II in 1886 as he was a shy king and wanted to withdraw from the public eye. Little did he know that his private castle would be visited by 1.4 million people annually!As you are driving up Neuschwansteinstraße road, Neuschwanstein Castle will begin to come into view high above you. Stop and take some pictures – the views of the castle from the road are some of the best you'll see during your visit!Explore the CastlesArrive at the village of Hohenschwangau early to purchase your tour tickets as they sell out quickly (for most visitors this is one of those must-see places in Germany). You will be given a specific tour time and you'll need to make your way up the hill to the castle. It's about a 30-minute uphill walk or you can opt for a shuttle bus ride or a horse-drawn carriage ride (but keep in mind that these fill up fast!). Make sure you arrive at the castle about an hour before your tour time so you can continue your walk up to the bridge that overlooks the backside of the castle!Be sure to have a walk around Hohenschwangau Castle as well, built by King Ludwig II's father. They also offer a guided tour through this amazing gothic wonder and the grounds are lovely and serene.After your guided tour of the interior of both castles, head back down for a bite to eat in town before setting off for your next stop! It's about a 30-mile drive to the Allgäu Region.Southern Germany Road Trip Leg Two: Lush Valleys and Towering Mountain ViewsThe Allgäu Region is a gorgeous mountain region that makes for a lovely drive and also offers several hiking options for the outdoor enthusiast!ObsterdorfOberstdorf is a small town in the region that is popular with tourists due to its giant chairlift offering sweeping views of the area in the summertime and challenging ski runs in the winter. You can opt for the ride up for panoramic views and then a fairly easy walk back down, or head to the nearby Moorweiher Lake for a short and easy afternoon stroll.Breitach GorgeWhile in the area, don't miss Breitachklamm (Breitach Gorge)! This easy out-and-back hike through the deepest gorge in middle Europe follows a path that takes you high above the treacherous and powerful river rushing below you.Lake Constance (aka Lake Konstanz aka Lake Bodensee)Lake Constance/Konstanz/Bodensee is a top tourist destination in Southern Germany, and for good reason... it is a large, picturesque lake straddling the borders of Germany, Switzerland, and Austria with stunning views of the alps which makes it the perfect destination for your motorhome adventure! There are two popular destinations around the lake – the towns of Lindau and Konstanz.LindauStart your lake itinerary in Lindau which is the largest town on Lake Constance and is split between the mainland and an island via a bridge. The island has a harbor offering views of the lake and of Austria from the top of the old lighthouse. It is apparent that the island was an influential and wealthy port town in its heyday and to this day you'll find it to be incredibly clean and quaint, with delectable eating and drinking options scattering along the waterfront.Bonus Stop: Be sure to stop at Basilika Birnau en route to Konstanz for a tour of the lavish church right on the lake!KonstanzAnd stop in Konstanz where you should be sure to check out the spectacular 110-acre "flower island" of Mainau. It's pricey to visit but worth it to stroll through the beautiful parks and gardens. Konstanz sits right on the border so if you haven't been to Switzerland yet, cross over and put a foot in each country!From Lindau to Freiburg, your next stop, it's a little over 100 miles and should take you 2.5 hours to drive.Southern Germany Road Trip Leg Three: The Black Forest Sitting on the western edge of the Black Forest, Freiburg is the perfect hub to explore the southern side of the Black Forest. In classic German old town style, you'll find cobblestone streets, beautiful architecture, and, of course, plenty of beer gardens.Freiburg is also known as Germany's warmest city due to the year-round sunshine that it experiences. And it is right in the heart of the Baden wine-growing region so you'll have no shortage of imbibing options here!Be sure to check out the English Swabian Gate (Schwabentor) on your way up the hill to the Kanonenplatz panorama lookout point. You'll find 360 views from the top as well as dozens of shady hiking trails.Triberg WaterfallsPlunging 535 feet into the river below, Triberg Waterfall is the highest waterfall in all of Germany! There is a small fee to enter the hiking area but once inside you can choose a variety of hiking options of varying difficulty. After you've had your fill of the waterfall, be sure to have a stroll through this adorable little town and stop for some famous Black Forest cake!The Black Forest is not only the birthplace of its namesake cake, but also of the cuckoo clock. If you are looking to pick one up during your trip, Triberg is the place to do it!Allerheiligen ValleyThe next stop on your itinerary is Allerheiligen Valley to see the Kloster Allerheiligen (All Saints' Abbey) and the nearby waterfall, Wasserfälle Allerheiligen.The All Saints' Abbey was a Premonstratensian monastery that dates back to 1192. At its height, it was considered one of the major religious and political centers of the region but sadly, multiple fires over several centuries took their toll. The ruins are still a sight to behold and sit at the start (or the end - depending on where you park) of a lovely hike along several waterfalls on the Lierbach River.The entire hike is only about a mile from the monastery to the parking lot on the other end and it's well worth doing the hike in its entirety.Baden-BadenNo German road trip is complete without a trip to a traditional German bathhouse! You've been doing a lot of hiking through the Black Forest so why not end your trip with a relaxing soak in the thermal baths of Baden-Baden, the city of beauty and wellness?The Baths at Baden-BadenOpt for the 3-hour soak so you have plenty of time to enjoy the indoor/outdoor public baths before heading upstairs for a more traditional (no clothes allowed) experience. You'll find a variety of relaxing thermal pools, saunas of varying ambiances, and other spa experiences to suit your fancy.Be sure to check the rules before settling in (for instance, you'll need a towel in the sauna and you'll want to situate it so that neither your feet or your bum touch the wood benches) and don't be alarmed - most bathhouses in Germany are co-ed.Southern Germany Road Trip Leg Four: Exploring CastlesHeidelberg is a lovely, quaint town on the River Neckar where you'll find pedestrian cobblestone streets through their Baroque-style old town.The impressive Heidelberg Palace sits high above the city and is an easy walk to the top from the center of town. Marvel at the views from the top and check out the free apothecary museum for an entertaining history lesson.When you head back to the center of town you'll have a variety of outdoor restaurants and cafes to choose from as well as boutiques filled with local handmade goods, so give yourself ample time to explore.Camping Heidelberg-Neckartal is a well-equipped campground right outside of town with a convenient bus stop right at the entrance. You'll love relaxing outside with your morning coffee while enjoying views of the river running right beside your motorhome!Eltz CastleThe 850-year-old Burg Eltz (Eltz Castle) sits high in the hills above the Elzbach River just outside of the town of Münstermaifeld in Western Germany.The castle is referred to as a "Ganerbenburg" which is a castle belonging to a community of joint-heirs. It was divided into several parts as it was owned by different families and over 100 members of the owners' families occupied the rooms of the castle. It is one of the few European castles that escaped destruction despite an eventful history.Today although the castle is still privately owned, it is open to the public from April through the end of October. Visitors can opt for a guided tour of the interior or simply stroll through the grounds and enjoy a cup of coffee at one of the restaurants inside the castle walls.Park in the large lot and take the footpath to the castle which should take you about 30 minutes to walk. Stop when you get close as the views from afar are spectacular.Across the river you'll find the spectacular Burg Thurant (Thurant Castle) surrounded by vineyards and offering beautiful views of the river below. There's a small fee to enter but it's worth it to see the bizarre torture contraptions and the dungeon complete with what appear to be actual human bones!Once you've explored the castle, head down to the small town of Hatzenport where there is a stunning campground – Campingsinsel Sonnenwerth – that sits right on the river. If you arrive before sunset you'll be rewarded by beautiful views of the surrounding greenery while you sip your German wine and cook yourself a delicious traditional meal!Like this post?! How about...9 Essential Tips for Surviving Van LifeCologne (aka Köln)Cologne is the 4th largest city in Germany and after spending so much time in Bavaria, it may be a bit of a culture shock to see just how diverse Germany really is! While most of the other cities along your road trip have been cute and quaint with cobblestone streets, Cologne feels much more like a thriving metropolis.Park your motorhome outside of the city and take their convenient public transportation into the city center and plan on spending a few hours exploring.Southern Germany Road Trip Leg Five: Cities and WineCologne to Würzburg is a fairly long drive - almost 3 hours. So if you are looking to stretch your legs or grab a bite to eat, Wiesbaden is an excellent stop en route to your next destination!WürzburgBetween 1626 and 1631 there was one of the biggest mass-trials and mass-executions ever seen in Europe during the Thirty Years War – the Würzburg Witch Trials. 157 men, women, and children were burned alive at the stake in Würzburg, Germany. Thankfully the witches have been replaced by gorgeous architecture and lots of wine!Start your day with a counter-clockwise hike up to the Marienberg Fortress – the prominent landmark looming over the bank of the river. Loop around the castle so you pass through the grapevines on your trek back to the city center.Head across the Old Bridge (the Alte Mainbrücke) where you can get a glass of wine to-go (with a small deposit on the glass) to enjoy while you marvel at the statues along the picturesque bridge.From there head over to the Würzburg Residence for a stroll through the magnificent gardens before taking a tour of one of the wineries in the area.Imbibe!There are several wonderful wineries in the area but our favorite is Weingut Am Stein where you can stroll through the steep grapevines while getting beautiful views of the city. They offer tastings of their delicious wines while providing you with helpful information on their organic wine-growing operation. Pick up a bottle of the Würzburger Silvaner – perfect for a sunny afternoon!But don't drink too much because you have a 65-mile drive to Nuremberg coming up!Nuremberg (aka Nürnberg)Nuremberg is the quintessential medieval Bavarian town filled with stunning architecture, outdoor markets, museums, and a dark and sordid history. And with over a half-million residents, it is the second-largest city in Bavaria. It's history dates way back but it is most often linked to World War II as it was the headquarters for the Nazis and later was nearly destroyed by allied bombing.And finally, it was the site of the famous post-war Nuremberg Trials. There was symbolic value in making it the city of the Nazi demise as they held the party's rallies here and the laws that stripped Jewish people of their citizenship were passed in Nuremberg.Like this post?! How about...Spend a Whirlwind 24 hours in Berlin, GermanyUlmThe Danube runs through the middle of the quaint town of Ulm and creates a natural barrier between Ulm and Neu-Ulm. Ulm being classified as Germany and Neu-Ulm being Bavaria. And this barrier creates a bit of a friendly rivalry between the two.Return to MunichFrom Ulm, you'll head back to Munich, drop off your campervan, and sadly head back home to reality. Or if you have time you can catch the train north to Berlin!We hope this has helped you to plan your epic road trip through Southern Germany!Want more adventures in Germany? Check out our favorite travel guides!SHARE THIS ON PINTEREST

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