



Spotlight on France

France has long been one of the world's great powers. Its fertile farmland and advantageous geography created ideal conditions for growth in earlier centuries, and despite the wars and revolutions of the past 200 years, France's global leadership has persisted. France is the 5th largest economy in the world and is Europe's 4th wealthiest nation. Ranking 4th in the Fortune Global 500, French brands dominate many industries: Air France is one of the world's largest airlines; GDF-Suez is one of the world's largest energy companies; L'Oreal is one of the world's largest cosmetic companies; the list goes on.

More than any other industrial power, agriculture continues to play an enormous role in France's economy. It is the EU's leading agricultural power, and the second-largest global agricultural exporter. Many of France's products are synonymous with quality: French wine, cheese, and other culinary products are world-renowned, and help maintain constant high demand in the marketplace.

But in recent years, the Eurozone crisis has proven surprisingly stubborn, and France is suffering more than its northern neighbors, despite government attempts to spur the economy. For the next several years, the battle between austerity and government intervention will continue to define French politics. While it has the ability to continue its global economic leadership, an effective and balanced approach has proven elusive. This ancient powerhouse is still one to watch.

Did You Know?

- French is an official language in more than 30 countries.
- France has changed its form of government nine times since 1789, including five republics, two empires, and two constitutional monarchies.
- More than 300 distinct kinds of cheese are made in France.
- Since February 2016, supermarkets in France must donate unsold food to food banks or charities – it was the first country in the world to implement this idea.
- France attracts more tourists than any other country, with 81 million visitors each year.

Official name: French Republic

Capital: Paris

Top languages: French, English

Major industries: Machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics, textiles, tourism

Major agricultural products: Wheat, dairy, pork, apples, beef, sugar beets, wine, potatoes, fish

By the Numbers

\$2.57 trillion Estimated 2017 GDP (USD)

67 million Population

41.1 Median age

\$41,200 Per capita GDP

73% Electricity generated by nuclear energy (1st globally)

643,801 km² Area of metropolitan and overseas regions of France (slightly smaller than Texas)



Spotlight on Germany

As Europe's largest economy, Germany is widely seen as the anchor of the continent's sometimes troubled institutions. Its highly-skilled workforce is the envy of Europe and fuels its low unemployment rates. But Germany's economic stability has forced the nation into the role of creditor in the Eurozone. Though Chancellor Angela Merkel has wielded significant political clout during this time, she's been both praised and maligned for her role in imposing austerity measures on the reluctant nations of southern Europe.

Germany's history is rich with successes in science, technology, art, and culture, but modern stability is still drawn against the backdrop of Nazi Germany and the Cold War. After the country's unification in 1990, Germany expended remarkable effort and expense to bring its national economy up to Western standards, and quickly re-emerged as a European power.

Today, Germany is setting the pace as a model of renewable energy use, a leading exporter of machinery, vehicles, and chemicals, and is home to iconic brands like Volkswagen, Porsche, and Siemens. It also boasts world-class museums and historical sites, scenic drives, beautiful rivers, and famous festivals like Oktoberfest that draw tourists by the tens of thousands. Whether you love or hate its dominance, no one can deny that modern Germany holds the cards. The question now is how it will play them.

Did You Know?

- Some stereotypes are true, it seems! Germans consume an average 107 liters of beer per person, the 2nd most worldwide.
- Germany is ranked by the World Competitiveness Yearbook as #1 for patent and copyright protection.
- Germany was among the first country to introduce daylight savings time. The nation, along with several neighbors, first adopted the practice in 1916, during World War I.
- Germany has the lowest unemployment rate and youth unemployment rate of all the EU Member States at 4.7% and 7.2%, respectively.

Official name: Federal Republic of Germany

Official name: Berlin

Top languages: German, Danish, Low Saxon

Major industries: Machinery, chemicals, automobiles, metallurgy, aircraft, electronics, textiles, tourism, optics

Major agricultural products: Wheat, dairy and beef, wine, sugar beets, potatoes, fish, pork, fruit

By the Numbers

3.5 trillion Estimated 2016 GDP (USD)

80.6 million Population

18 Voting age

68.1% Public debt as % of GDP (2016)

8.84 Minimum wage (as of 2017, in euros)