

The Coats of Arms of the Federal States

At first glance the coat of arms of the Federal Republic of Germany and the coats of arms of the federal states all look very different from each other. On closer inspection, however, one can see that various motifs occur quite frequently. Several of them are to be found in the coats of arms of other countries as well.

Animals often occur as symbols, standing for strength, power, or perseverance:

The Lion

The lion is a heraldic animal that occurs in the coats of arms of the states of Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, Schleswig-Holstein, and Thuringia.

The Eagle

The eagle decorates the coat of arms of the Federal Republic of Germany. The states of Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt bear the eagle on their coats of arms as well.

The Horse

Lower Saxony and North Rhine-Westphalia have incorporated the horse in their coats of arms.

The Bear

This animal is found in the coats of arms of Berlin and Saxony-Anhalt.

The Bull

The bull is the animal found in the coat of arms of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania.

Different objects are used as symbols in these coats of arms as well:

Diamond-Shaped Pattern

The Bavarian coat of arms refers to a blue and white diamond-shaped shield.

The Key

The coat of arms of Bremen has a silver key. This symbol goes back to the 14th century, when the apostle Peter, who could be recognized by means of a silver key, was the patron saint of the city of Bremen.

The City Gate

The coat of arms of Hamburg shows a gate which allows entry to three buildings. A cross on one building shows that it is a church.

The River

In the coat of arms of North Rhine-Westphalia a river indicates the Rhine, which flows through the state.

The Cross

The cross in the coats of arms of Rhineland-Palatinate and the Saarland refers to the coat of arms of the archbishopric Trier, the main ecclesiastical throne in this region.

The Wheel

The wheel decorates the coat of arms of Rhineland-Palatinate. It was the coat of arms of the archbishopric Mainz. A legend says that one of the bishops of Mainz in the 10th /11th century was the son of a manufacturer of wheels. Other legends say that the wheel goes back to Celtic or Germanic symbols for the sun.

The Spike Crown ("spiked" like an ear of wheat)

It is contained in the coat of arms of Saxony-Anhalt and indicates the agricultural nature of the region.

In addition **stripes, stars, crowns, scepters, swords, rosettes, and hammers** are used.