

Germany has four distinctive types of landscape:

- The northern portion (The North German Plain) is flat.
- The largest portion – the middle and southern region – consists of a hilly landscape with some moderately high mountains called the Sub-Alpine Region.
- In southern Bavaria there is the Alpenvorland, the foothills of the Alps.
- Finally, in the far south, there are the Alps themselves, high mountains along the border with Austria.

**North German**

The North German Plain is a 90 to 310 miles wide section of the east European flatland that is bounded on the north by the North and Baltic Seas and in the south by the Sub-Alpine Region. The countryside is flat and mainly agricultural. In order to protect the valuable farmland, many dams have been built. Ocean currents have created many islands along the coast. The East and North Frisian Islands, separated from the mainland by shallow water [mud flats], are popular vacation areas. The small island of Helgoland is located in the North Sea 37 miles from the mainland.

**Central German**

The middle of Germany is characterized by sub-alpine mountain ranges, plateaus, volcanic formations, valleys and basins. Numerous rivers have cut deep valleys in the landscape. The Rhine Valley is the main feature in the western section. The central part consists of the Harz Mountains, the Thuringian Forest, and the Franconian Forest. The most striking feature of this region is the Harz Mountains, the highest peak of which rises 3,748 feet.

**Southern German**

South of the Danube lie the foothills of the Alps, a 485 miles-long, narrow strip of hilly land north of the Alps. The average elevation is 1,641 feet. The landscape is characterized by mountain chains with picturesque lakes, small villages as well as bogs and moors. The highest mountain in Germany is the Zugspitze in the Bavarian Alps.