

FLAG OF GERMANY - A BRIEF HISTORY



Where In The World



Trivia

An alternative proposal for the modern-day Federal Republic of Germany would have seen it adopt a Scandinavian cross, in the colours of black, red and gold.

Technical Specification

Adopted:	1949
Proportion:	3:5
Design:	A tricolour, with three equal horizontal stripes of black, red and gold, from top to bottom
Colours:	PMS - Red: 485 C, Gold: 7405 C CMYK - Red: 0% Cyan, 100% Magenta, 100% Yellow, 0% Black; Gold: 0% Cyan, 12% Magenta, 100% Yellow, 5% Black

Brief History

Germany's history is long and complex.

The Holy Roman Empire, which emerged in the 9th or 10th Century, is perhaps the earliest coherent manifestation of a distinctly German nation. An imperial banner of a black eagle on a gold background was used at this point.

In the 13th and 14th centuries it changed to having the eagle's claws and beak coloured red, this was a symbol of the Holy Roman Empire's crusades abroad. Between the 15th and 19th century a double-headed eagle was used.



Banner of the Holy Roman Empire (14th Century)

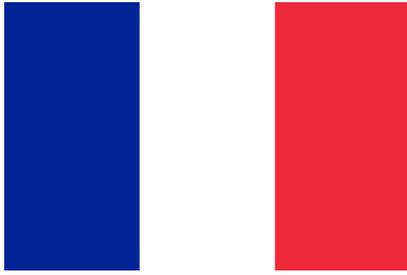


Banner of the Holy Roman Empire (15th to 19th Century)

Weakened by the Thirty Years' War, the Holy Roman Empire collapsed in 1806. This led to the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine, which was made up of the 16 German states that was under Napoleonic control. At this point they did not have their own flag. Instead they used the blue-white-red Flag of France.

In 1816, Russia, Britain and their allies defeated Napoleon and created a German Confederation. It was little more than a joint attempt by the Kingdom of Prussia and the Austrian Empire to stabilise and normalise the Germanic territories, while simultaneously keeping each other at arms' length.

After the revolutions of 1848 the Liberals took power and a national assembly was formed. The Frankfurt Parliament made the black-red-gold tricolour the official colours of Germany. The war ensign used these colours but also had the double headed eagle banner in the top left hand corner.



**Flag of France
(1806 – 1816)**



**The war ensign of the Reichsflotte
(1848 – 1852)**

Prussia, under Otto von Bismarck, took advantage of the arrangement to exert significant influence over the Confederation, to the point of political unification of the northern German states with Prussia.

What was at this time the Northern German Confederation became the German Empire in 1871, under the rule of Wilhelm I, the King of Prussia. The black-white-red tricolour was adopted as the flag of Germany and remained until the end of the German Empire in 1918.



The Flag of the German Empire

Following Germany's defeat in 1918, Kaiser Wilhelm II's abdication created a power vacuum.

The Social Democratic Party took control and created the Weimar Republic.

The old black-red-gold tricolour was restored, however many Germans saw this as an insult following their defeat in World War One.



The Flag of the Weimar Republic

When the Nazi regime took power on the 30th 1933 the tricolor was discarded.

On March 20th the black-white-red tricolour was re-introduced along with the swastika flag of the Nazi Party as Germany's National Flags.



The Flag of Nazi Germany

Germany's loss in World War Two saw the end of the National Socialist Party. Germany was divided into five zones of occupation.

At this time, Germany as an independent nation did not exist, but a national flag was needed for ships sailing international waters.

A C-Pennant was commissioned as the German civil and naval ensign.



The German C-Pennant

By 1948 It was decided that the best way to prevent all of Germany from falling into Soviet control was to reinstate the country's nationhood, and the following year the Federal Republic of Germany came into being.

The black-red-gold tricolour became the Flag of the Republic of Germany. The Soviet Union developed its eastern division as the German Democratic Republic, using the black-red-gold tricolour with the National Emblem of the German Democratic Republic in the centre. The hammer represents the workers, the compass being the intelligentsia and the ring of rye represents the farmers.

After the collapse of Soviet empire in the 1990s the black-red-gold tricolour became the Flag of the Federal Republic of Germany.

A post-war guilt prevailed in Germany for decades; a fear that nationalism was a cause for the rise of National Socialism paralyzed patriotic feeling. The display of German flags was rare.

It wasn't until the 21st Century, beginning with the 2002 World Cup, that Germany found its own post-post-war brand of patriotism; and only when that had happened, did the flags begin to wave again.



**The Flag of German Democratic Republic
(1959 – 1990)**



**The Flag of the Federal Republic of Germany
(1949 – Present day) as well as
The Flag of German Democratic Republic
(1949 – 1959)**

Other Flags of Germany

The German National Flag is also its civil ensign. There is a state Flag, bearing the device of an eagle, dating back to the days of the Holy Roman Empire. The Navel Ensign is the same, apart from its square swallowtail.



The State Flag of Germany



The Navel Ensign of Germany