



# A Diverse Nation

## Modern Cities And Rustic Village Charm



West Germany is a densely populated, extraordinarily wealthy country that traditionally has been one of Europe's strongest military and economic powers. Primarily because of American aid and the industriousness of the German people, the country has bounced back from World War II and stands today as one of the most prosperous nations in the world.

The 62 million West Germans inhabit a land area no larger than Wyoming, yet one-third of the country is forested and more than half is farmed. If the U.S. were as densely populated, about three billion people would live in the 50 states.

Most German cities are quite old — some began as Roman settlements 2000 years ago — and residents preserve the charm and character of their "old town" districts.

In sharp contrast to many American urban centers, German cities are lived in, not just worked in. At night, theaters, concerts, clubs and window shoppers keep things lively. Most of the restaurants, taverns and coffee houses have been designed with style and an eye to *Gemuetlichkeit* — a cozy, cheerful atmosphere.

For a small country, West Germany contains a startling diversity of landscapes. It's just 500 miles from the beaches

on the North and Baltic seas in the north to the soaring Bavarian Alps in the south. In between, you find the sprawling North German Plain with its lush dairy farms; several mountain ranges; the Rhine and Mosel rivers with their terraced vineyards; the Black Forest; and several other regions.

Moreover, the German tribes that originally settled the country imparted distinct personalities to its various areas. The Bavarians and Franconians in the southeast are thought to be the most gregarious Germans. You can see them at their backslapping best during Munich's Oktoberfest.

To the extreme north, along the coast, the Friesians, descendants of old seafaring folk, could be called the German counterparts of the New England Yankees — taciturn and stubborn, but friends for good if friends at all.

The other tribes — the Hessians, the Franks, the Saxons, the Rhinelanders, the Swabians — are closer to the middle on the sociability scale. In short, there is no "typical" German. Still, many Americans go to Germany assuming that the "average" German is a ruddy-faced, gnome-like individual who eats lots of sauerkraut, wears leather pants and produces either Hummel figurines or beer mugs.

The one characteristic you can count on finding among Germans, however, is industriousness. The postwar "economic miracle" that lifted the country from ruin to wealth

