



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF WOMEN AND ISLAMIC CULTURES

Muslim Demographics: Germany

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EWIC Staff: Datasheet

- ❖ Germany has the largest Muslim population in Western Europe after France. There are an estimated 3.5 million Muslims in Germany (3.7% of the population). This number could be higher as Germany does not require people state their religious affiliations on census information. Islam is the largest minority religion in the country.¹
- ❖ Germany does not officially ban veils and headscarves. In 2003 the federal constitutional court ruled that individual states had the right to ban veiling and headscarves. As a result of this ruling 8 out of 16 German states ban the use of veils and headscarves by school teachers. In 2011, the German state of Hesse prohibited government employees from wearing Muslim headscarves or veils.²
- ❖ In 2014 German public schools began offering classes on the Muslim religion for primary school children. These classes are led by state-trained instructors who use specially written textbooks. The goal of the courses is to better integrate the country's large Muslim population and to counter the "influence of radical thinking."³
- ❖ Most Muslims in Germany are concentrated in Berlin and in the larger cities of former West Germany. Muslim populations in Germany have also established themselves in rural communities, particularly the states of Baden –Württemberg and Hesse. The Muslim population in former East Germany is considerably lower due to lack of labor immigration before 1989.⁴
- ❖ During the 1960s West Germany invited foreign workers to the country. Large numbers of Muslims immigrated to Germany from Turkey.⁵ The second largest ethnic group in Germany is Turkish, representing 2.4% of the population.⁶
- ❖ The construction of mosques in Germany began on a nationwide scale at the end of the twentieth century. These mosques served not only as meeting places but as a means of expressing self-identity and self-assurance.⁷
- ❖ In Germany Turkish-German bilingualism is prevalent. Classroom instruction is often provided in both German and Turkish. Initially this was done as the German government thought that the Turkish "guest workers" would return to Turkey.

¹ <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gm.html>

² http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/18/veil-bans-by-country_n_3949110.html#slide=2926121

³ http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/07/world/europe/germany-adds-lessons-in-islam-to-better-blend-its-melting-pot.html?_r=0

⁴ Ala Al-Hamarneh, Jörn Thielmann. *Islam and Muslims in Germany*. BRILL, 2008. ISBN 90-04-15866-9, ISBN 978-90-04-15866-5. Pg 310

⁵ [Rauf Ceylan: Immigration and Socio-Spatial Segregation - Opportunities and Risks of Ethnic Self-Organisation](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2066555/Baby-Jihad-born-Berlin-weighing-13-pounds-named-Muslim-word-holy-war.html)

⁶ <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2066555/Baby-Jihad-born-Berlin-weighing-13-pounds-named-Muslim-word-holy-war.html>

⁷ Kraft, Sabine. "Space: Mosques: Western Europe." *Encyclopedia of Women & Islamic Cultures*. General Editor Suad Joseph.