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Westphalia

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Westphalia (**German:** *Westfalen* pronounced [vɛstˈfa:lən]) is a region in [Germany](#), centred on the cities of [Arnsberg](#), [Bielefeld](#), [Bochum](#), [Detmold](#), [Dortmund](#), [Gelsenkirchen](#), [Hagen](#), [Minden](#) and [Münster](#) and included in the state of [North Rhine-Westphalia](#).

Westphalia is roughly the region between the rivers [Rhine](#) and [Weser](#), located north and south of the [Ruhr](#) River. No exact definition of borders can be given, because the name "Westphalia" was applied to several different entities in history. For this reason specifications of area and population differ greatly. They range between 16,000 and 22,000 km² (6,200 and 8,500 sq mi) in land area, and between 4.3 million and 8 million inhabitants. There is, however, a general consensus that Münster as well as Bielefeld and Dortmund are part of Westphalia.

A linguistic definition of Westphalia (see [Westphalian language](#)) includes the former Prussian [Province of Westphalia](#) (except [Siegen-Wittgenstein](#)), [Lippe](#), the region around [Osnabrück](#) and the greater area of the [Emsland](#). Present-day common use, however, often restricts the notion to the present part of [North Rhine-Westphalia](#).

Westphalia is known for the 1648 [Peace of Westphalia](#) which ended the [Thirty Years' War](#), as the two treaties were signed in [Münster](#) and [Osnabrück](#).



Three entities known (or partly known) as Westphalia, superimposed upon the modern state borders of Germany:
Green: [Kingdom of Westphalia](#) (1807–1813), borders as of 1811
Red: [Province of Westphalia](#) (1815–1946)
Dark grey: [North Rhine-Westphalia](#) (1946-)

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Symbols

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The traditional symbol of Westphalia is a white horse on a red field (the *Westfalenpferd* or *Sachsenross*), representing the Saxons. This image



Prussian Westphalia



North Rhine-Westphalia



Westphalia



Lower Saxony

has been used in the coats of arms of Prussian Westphalia and the modern state of North Rhine-Westphalia. The white horse is also the traditional symbol of neighboring Lower Saxony.

Composed in Iserlohn in 1886 by Emil Rittershaus, the "*Westfalenlied*" is an unofficial anthem of Westphalia.

History

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Roman incursion

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Around 1 A.D. there were numerous incursions through Westphalia and perhaps even some permanent Roman or Romanized settlements. The *Battle of Teutoburg Forest* took place near Osnabrück (as mentioned, it is disputed whether this is in Westphalia) and some of the tribes who fought at this battle came from the area of Westphalia.

Charlemagne

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Charlemagne is thought to have spent considerable time in Paderborn and nearby parts. His *Saxon Wars* also partly took place in what is thought of as Westphalia today. Popular legends link his adversary Widukind to places near Detmold, Bielefeld, Lemgo, Osnabrück and other places in Westphalia. Widukind was buried in Enger, which is also a subject of a legend.

Middle Ages

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Along with Eastphalia and Engern, Westphalia (*Westfalahi*) was originally a district of the *Duchy of Saxony*. In 1180 Westphalia was elevated to the rank of a duchy by Emperor Barbarossa. The *Duchy of Westphalia* comprised only a small area south of the Lippe River.

Early modern era

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As a result of the *Protestant Reformation*, there is no dominant religion in Westphalia. Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism are on relatively equal footing. Lutheranism is strong in the eastern and northern parts with numerous free churches. Münster and especially Paderborn are thought of as Catholic. Osnabrück is divided almost equally between Catholicism and Protestantism.

Parts of Westphalia came under Brandenburg-Prussian control during the 1600s and 1700s, but most of it remained divided duchies and other feudal areas of power. The *Peace of Westphalia* of 1648, signed in Münster and Osnabrück, ended the *Thirty Years' War*. The concept of nation-state sovereignty resulting from the treaty became known as "*Westphalian sovereignty*".



Ratification of the *Peace of Westphalia* of 1648 in Münster by Gerard Terborch (1617-1681)

Prussia

[[edit](#)]

After the defeat of the [Prussian Army](#) at the [Battle of Jena-Auerstedt](#), the [Treaty of Tilsit](#) in 1807 made the Westphalian territories part of the [Kingdom of Westphalia](#) from 1807–13. It was founded by [Napoleon](#) and was a [French vassal state](#). This state only shared the name with the historical region; it contained only a relatively small part of Westphalia, consisting instead mostly of [Hessian](#) and [Eastphalian](#) regions.

After the [Congress of Vienna](#), the [Kingdom of Prussia](#) received a large amount of territory in the Westphalian region and created the [province of Westphalia](#) in 1815. The northernmost portions of the former kingdom, including the town of [Osnabrück](#), had become part of the states of [Hanover](#) and [Oldenburg](#).



The Prussian [Province of Westphalia](#) in 1905

Modern Westphalia

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The present state of [North Rhine-Westphalia](#) was created after [World War II](#) from the former Prussian province of Westphalia, the northern half of the former Prussian [Rhine Province](#), and the former [Free State of Lippe](#). North Rhine-Westphalia is subdivided into five government regions (*Regierungsbezirke*), so one can say that Westphalia today consists of the *Regierungsbezirke* of [Münster](#), [Detmold](#) and [Arnsberg](#). People in these areas call themselves Westphalians and call their home area Westphalia even though there is no governmental unit by that name.

References

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External links

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- [Internet-Portal Westfälische Geschichte](#) (German)



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