Bavaria is the large southeast state in Germany. It has a rich culture distinct from the rest of the country. Many things which the rest of the world associates with Germany as a whole, actually come from this region. 12.5 million people live in Bavaria, and with the largest city being Munich. Bavarians are very proud of their heritage, and have historically been known to disassociate themselves with the rest of the country because of their unique identity.

Because the state is so large relative to the other areas of Germany, Bavaria is further divided into smaller regions, again with their own unique cultural characteristics. Traveling from Oberfranken to the south of Oberbayern, one will find a wide range of customs, food, and dialects.

FUN FACT: because of the way the German language developed, there are hundreds of regional dialects. Some are mutually intelligible, others, such as the German used in southern Bavaria, is not understood by people of other regions.

These heart cookies are generally recognized as German, and come from Bavaria. They are sold at markets and festivals, and the recipient of a heart cookie must wear it around their neck for the day.

Lederhosen, the traditional dress for men, are often worn for festivals or special occasions. In Munich and other large cities, however, you will find commoners in lederhosen on normal days.
In addition to the world renown beer, Bavaria has many food stables unique to the region. Pictured here is a very typical Bavarian breakfast. The white sausages, or Weisswurst, are boiled instead of grilled like most German bratwurst.

Oktoberfest, perhaps one of the largest festivals in the world, is located in the city of Munich. The festival dates back to 1810, and has become an iconic event for the region and country. Attracting 5-6 million visitors each year, the festival is held in a series of huge tents in a vacant lot dedicated to hosting the event for two weeks out of the year.

Many traditions are still upheld in Bavaria, contributing to their rich culture and custom. Pictured to the left is the hoisting of the Maypole in a small town outside Munich. Traditional dress is always worn for these events, and a all day long party with beer and live music usually follows.

The Bavarian Alps define the border between Germany and Austria, a beautiful area on the southern border. Pictured here is Neuschwanstein, a castle in the Alps.