Bremen is a commercial and industrial city with a major port on the River Weser in Northern Germany and lies some 60 km south from the mouth on the North Sea. The marshes and moraines near Bremen have been settled since about 1200 BC. The first stone city walls were built in 1032. Around this time trade with Norway, England and the northern Netherlands began to grow, thus increasing the importance of the city.

The Focke-Wulf aircraft manufacturer was founded in Bremen in 1923 and today forms part of the aircraft giant Airbus Industries. Bremen is the second largest Airbus site in Germany, in addition to EADS Astrium and OHB-System, the first and the third biggest aerospace companies of the European Union. Borgward, an automobile manufacturer, was founded in Bremen in 1929 and is now part of Daimler AG building Mercedes-Benz series of cars in the city. Beck & Co's headlining brew Beck's and St Pauli Girl beers are brewed in Bremen. The largest wine cellar in the world is located in Bremen (below the city's main square), which was once said to hold over 1 million bottles. A large number of German or European headquarters for the food producing or trading companies are also located in Bremen.

The Marktplatz (Market square) is dominated by the opulent facade of the Town Hall of Bremen. The building was erected between 1405 and 1410 in Gothic style, but the facade was built two centuries later in the Renaissance style. Today, it hosts a restaurant in original decor with gigantic wine barrels, and the wine lists boasts more than 600 exclusively German wines. It is also home of the twelve oldest wines in the world, stored in their original barrels in the Apostel chamber. In 2004, along with the Bremen Roland, the building was added to the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The University of Bremen is home to the international Goethe-Institut and the Fallturm Bremen. Additionally, Bremen has a University of the Arts and the Bremen University of Applied Sciences. All major German research foundations maintain institutes in Bremen, with a focus set on marine sciences.

The Weserstadion, the home stadium of the SV Werder Bremen football team, is almost completely surrounded by solar cells making it one of the biggest buildings in Europe delivering alternative energies.