

The Berlinside scoop

A young persons guide to Berlin

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From bomb shelters to beach bars, Berlin has it all. It may not be your typical capital city but Berlin has so much character and an endless amount of things to do. For art enthusiasts, there is some of the most interesting graffiti and street art in the world, as well as a vast number of art galleries and exhibitions. For history buffs, there are over 50 museums, hundreds of historical sights and a plethora of memorials to Germany's past. In a city so honest about the troubled times it underwent, you will never go short of a museum, no matter what your interest. If you're a partier, you can make the most of Berlin's famous 72 hour club-marathons or sip cocktails in one of Berlin's many bars. As the home of techno music, this genre is almost inescapable in the clubs but you will soon learn to embrace it! For food lovers, there are hundreds of bistros, restaurants and cafes, all with quirky themes and an interesting clientele.

In a city that sees itself as only 22 years old, Berlin is now a breeding ground for young talent and this is why so many people are making a pilgrimage here every year. In a city famed for its ability to regenerate, Berlin is constantly growing and changing, but we have managed to compile a guide of some of the best places to go: So read, visit and fall in love with Berlin, just like we have.

Chris Meigh
Editor



The History of Berlin

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The founding of Berlin

Berlin was founded in the early 13th century from the nearby settlements of Cölln and Berlin. Starting as a small trading town, over the next few centuries Berlin steadily expanded. In 1709 Friedrich I, King of Prussia, unified Berlin with the towns Friedrichswerder, Dorotheenstadt, and Friedrichstadt, creating a population of 55,000 people.

Friedrich II (the Great)

From 1740-1786, Germany was ruled by Friedrich II. Commonly referred to as Friedrich the great, this militant master led from the front; he changed the way people thought, paved the way for religious tolerance and abolished the death penalty. Under his influence, Prussia be-

came one of the leading nations in Europe and Berlin became an enlightened centre for art, culture and science.

Industrialisation

In the early 19th century Berlin saw a period of economic growth. This attracted new workers to the city, leading to an increase in industry. By 1847 the population had grown to more than 400,000; however with so many people to support, poverty began to set in. In 1871 Berlin was named the capital of the German Reich. This gave the city a new political status and over the next few decades Berlin's economy, industries and business's boomed.

World War I

WWI began in 1914 when Germany, alongside Austria-Hungary, went to war with France, Russia and Britain. In 1918 the war ended and the countries involved signed a peace treaty – the Treaty of Versailles. This treaty placed the blame on Germany and required the German people to pay reparation for the damages caused.

The Weimar Republic

1919 saw a new system of Government for Germany. A national assembly was held in Weimar where a new constitution for the German Reich was decided: a representative democracy adopting the name the Weimar Republic.

However, the Weimar Republic

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lic faced an uphill battle. Left with vast amounts of debt from the agreements in the Treaty of Versailles, extra money was printed to try and lessen the burden. The result was hyperinflation and a destroyed economy. Many of Berlin's people turned to alcohol to drown their sorrows, and prostitution as a source of income. From this, a liberal Berlin was born. The city became a cheap place to let off steam and was soon rebranded as a creative and cultural centre for cabaret, film, art and entertainment.

This positive turn of events was, however, short lived. In 1929 the Wall Street crash left 450,000 people unemployed; by 1932, this figure had increased to 630,000 and violence frequented the streets.

The reign of Hitler

Hitler used the period of unrest that followed to advance his political status. In 1933 he was made chancellor and within weeks the Weimar Republic was replaced with Hitler's dictatorship: The Third Reich. World War II broke out in 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland and continued for the next six years. During this time over 6 million Jewish people and 5 million non-Jewish people were murdered by the Nazis. The war ended in 1945 with the Battle for Berlin and Hitler's suicide.

The division of Germany and the Berlin Wall

Following the end of WWII, Germany and Berlin were each divided into four sections and split amongst the victors:

France, Britain, America and the Soviet Union. However, they soon fell into disagreement as to how Germany should be run; the Soviets wanted communism whilst the other sectors wanted a democracy. In 1949 a physical division, known as the iron curtain, was created between the Soviet's section in East Germany and the other three sections in West Germany.

Despite this division, an open border policy between the four sections of Berlin (located in East Germany) meant that people were still able to migrate from east to west via the American sector. However, on 13th August 1961, known as barbed wire Sunday, the Soviets closed off access to West Berlin, erecting a wall around their East Berlin section. Overnight families, friends, lovers and lives were separated.

Reunification

The Berlin Wall stood for more than 28 years. In 1989, under increasing pressure from the German people, Günter Schabowski, spokesman for the Soviet Union, announced that new travel regulations would allow East Berliners to apply for a visa to cross to the west – with imminent effect. Thousands of people flocked to the east and west side of the wall and with no prior warning or instruction as to how to handle the chaos, the guards had no choice but to stand back as people began to tear down the wall.

On the 3rd October 1990 Germany was officially reunified. Berlin was made capital and the German Parliament was relocated from Bonn to Berlin.

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The Berliner Dom



Survival Guide

Emergency numbers

Ambulance	110
Fire Department	112
Police	110

Cyclists and traffic lights

Watch out for cyclists! Though they have designated cycle paths, you will often find them on pavements or on the road. Listen out for the bell but rest assured that if there is a cycle path and they are on the pavement, you are under no obligation to walk in the road for them. However, it is best to be polite and courteous and they will do the same for you.

Also, be aware of the traffic lights. Even though you can cross on a green man, so can the cars turning. Just

stand your ground and walk across the road, most drivers are patient and won't rush you across... unless the red man appears.

Supermarkets

Here, you won't find any Tesco's or Sainsbury's. Instead you will find a number of Lidl's, Aldi's and their most popular chain, Kaisers. Look for the red and yellow sign that resembles a jug. Here you will find a wide range of food and drinks, as well as a machine that will reimburse you for all of your bottle deposits (pfand). You will pay 15cent on every small glass and plastic bottle and 25cent on every large plastic bottle. Simply put in your bottles and get a receipt, then take it to the till to get your cash.

Business hours

Most shops in large shopping streets are open from 10am to 8pm, Monday to Saturday. Many shops and smaller boutiques don't open until midday and close at 6 - 7pm.

The majority of shops in Berlin do not open on Sundays, with the exception of those in major railway stations and airports, so be sure to stock up your fridge on Saturday afternoon.

Spätkaufs are small independent neighbourhood stores, stocked with the basics, and stay open until 2am or later. Some supermarkets (including many Kaisers) are open until midnight.

Bars usually open from 6pm and clubs from 11pm/ midnight.

Restaurants and cafés are usually open from 11am – 10.30pm.

Banks open from 8am – 12 noon, then from 2pm – 4pm.

Money

The easiest way to obtain cash is from ATMs (Geldautomat). It is advisable to only use the ATMs at the larger banks, for example Berliner Bank, to avoid credit card fraud. Before you leave check with your bank for fees and daily withdrawal limits.

Telephone

Most public payphones work with phone cards, available from convenience stores,

post offices and tourist offices.

Buying a prepaid local SIM card may work out cheaper if you are staying for a while. These can be bought from convenience stores as well as Netto, Lidl and Aldi.

Berlin's city code 030
Germany's country code 49

Tipping

It's important to tip whilst you're in Berlin, as there is no minimum wage and a lot of workers rely heavily on the tips they receive. In restaurants it's polite to tip 5 – 10%, unless the service was absolutely dreadful. Give hotel porters €1 – €2 per bag, and leave some cash in your room for the cleaners when you leave. Taxi drivers will expect around 10% and bartenders around 5 – 10%.

Chemists

Unlike the UK, Germany is not self-medicating, meaning that you can't just buy paracetamol from the supermarket when you feel a headache coming on. Instead, you must go to a chemist (look for the Apotheke signs) and explain your symptoms to a person working there, who will then recommend you some medicine. Don't worry, most chemists in Berlin can speak some English and are very understanding.

Medical problems

If you are unfortunate enough to have to visit a doctor during your stay, make sure you take your EHIC card (or equivalent), passport and €10 to pay the "Praxisgebühr" (treatment fee, which is mandatory in Germany).

Kate Naughton



Street art in Berlin

ANGELA COLLEY

Fondly referred to as the 'dark horse' of the group, Angela Colley lives a bit of a double life. By day, she likes to roam the streets of Berlin, with a love of all things cultural, popping in and out of the city's many museums and galleries. But by night, glass of red wine in hand she will happily stay out until the sun comes up chatting to all the locals. She also has a serious addiction to Mustafa's kebabs!

DELPHINE LEANG

An experienced translator, with a degree in English Language, Literature and Civilization, from her comes that french touch emerging here and there in this book. One of the most proficient speakers of the local idiom in the team, her intercession with the less tourist-friendly shopkeepers turned out to be of capital importance to get an onion-free döner or the next size up of that vintage dress.

CHRIS MEIGH

You couldn't ask for a better Editor; always ready to take a hit for the team this lovable Brit is full of knowledge. Never short of a witty conversation or a quirky tidbit, spending time with Chris means there is never a dull moment.

Likes wine, likes chicken, LOVES to talk.

KIRSTEN WOOD

Recent graduate and globetrotter; Kirsten Wood is often to be found in Berlin's chicest cafes working her way through the menu. A great fan of burning the candle at both ends she has successfully managed to make the most of Berlin nightlife while persevering with morning German classes. She would like to return to Berlin again at some point for the coffee, the culture and the cake, but mostly for the cocktails.

CLAIRE FERRIE

Australia obsessed Claire is defiantly the mother of the group. Once she's made sure her flatmates are safely in bed, she can settle and prepare for a long day of souvenir shopping and looking at bears (her new obsession) around the city. With a degree in broadcasting, lovable Claire is now getting some print experience and will most likely publish her guide to bears in the next 12 months.

PHOEBE PRING

An essential part of both the writing and design team, Phoebe is a girl of many talents. With her exuberant smile, endless amounts of energy and passion for travel, Phoebe has enjoyed sampling the best of Berlin, from nightlife to cafes, museums to shopping. A perfectionist to the end, Phoebe really is someone you want on your team!

AOIFE BOYLE

Aoife, currently studying law at the Queens University Belfast, has a truly remarkable talent for creating puns. Bursting with the charm of the Irish and always laughing, she managed to brighten up all those early morning German lessons. When not writing, she can be found painting her nails or dancing into the wee hours of the morning. Astonishingly quick-witted and with an Irish accent that's impossible to tire of, Aoife has been a pleasure to spend time with and an invaluable member of the team.

ANDREA PITTORI

The dark-haired mysterious Andrea comes to us straight ahead from Turin, Italy. Behind the appearance of a dreamer, he personifies the modern Renaissance man. This student of English and German literature spends his time testing coffee in coffee chains for the common good when he's not playing the guitar. But he also masters some very modern skills such as graphic design, which made him a precious member of the layout team.

HANNAH DOWDS

Creative, cool, calm and collected, Hannah is a true professional and was an absolute godsend on the layout team. Having been here a month longer than everyone else, she was always happy to offer advice and share her newly gained insider tips. As to be expected from someone who studied fashion design, she has an enviable wardrobe and sense of style and always managed to look perfectly put-together, even after a night out.

KATE NAUGHTON

Born for the role of Shopping Editor, Kate is the Queen of Ku'dam. Gorgeous, fashionable, intelligent and talented – it's no wonder she always has a smile on her face. The friendliest girl ever; you cannot enter the same room as her without being offered a beer, a snack or her seat, and I'm pretty sure if you ever needed a kidney you'd just have to ask! Living proof that you are what you eat, Kate is as sweet as the cocktails she so frequently has to hand.