The Last Millionaire

Berlin
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Berlin City Guide

Berlin is not packed with sights or particularly beautiful – but what Berlin is – is artistically more exciting, more vibrant and diverse than any other capital in the world. Rather than steeped in tradition this international cultural hotspot embraces innovation and looks to the future. Berlin is entertainment central – dance, art, fashion, design and music are dynamic forces, and no other city has so many bars, cafes, and clubs in such a concentration ...there is no official closing hour.

The city has had a turbulent and troubled past, and the symbols of modern history can be seen across the city. When the Wall came down in 1989 young West Berliners moved into the Eastern districts and partied hard for a few years. The hedonistic creative independent spirit remains. Reunification in 1989 kick started Berlin’s rejuvenation – construction boomed and the city continues to evolve. Endlessly innovating Berlin never stands still.

With just under 3.4 million inhabitants – Berlin is Germany’s largest city – but it is very un-German. The Germans’ reputation is conservative and humourless, yet its capital is - to quote from the film “Cabaret”- all about “divine decadence”. Berliners are said to be “Berliner luft” - “anything goes”. Berliners don’t suffer fools gladly and are straight talking – to the point of being blunt – open and edgy, although they undermine this unfriendly attitude with a dry sense of humour and wit. Berlin does however display some German traits – there is an extremely well-run and efficient public transport system and the traffic runs freely.

Since reunification Berlin is becoming a cosmopolitan city again – almost 500,000 (18% of the city) non-Germans live in the city representing 182 nations. Turks are the biggest group and Turkish culture and food is a substantial influence in neighbourhoods like Kreuzberg.

It’s a youthful city – 57% of residents are under 44 - with a large student population of approximately 150,000 who attend 3 major universities. German students are older than students in the rest of Europe and don’t usually graduate until their late 20s. The cost of living is cheaper than Paris or London and the average professional salary is around 2000 – 5000 euros a month.
History

Berlin is a former capital of Prussia, the Weimer Republic and the Third Reich. During WWII Berlin remained staunchly anti-Hitler. Immediately after the second World War Berlin was divided into 4 sectors and then later into 2 – East and West Berlin. The East was under the control of the communist Soviets whilst the West came under Western Allied rule. The Wall which physically divided the city for 28 years was built in 1961.

1244  First recorded mention of Berlin
1618-48  The 30 year War with Austrian and Swedish armies which devastated the city.
1701  Frederick 111 proclaims himself King Frederick 1 of Prussia
1806  Napoleon enters Berlin
1871  Berlin made capital of German Empire – ruled by Kaiser Wilhelm 1 and Prime Minister of Prussia – Prince Otto von Bismark
1918  German Republic established
1933  Hitler becomes German Chancellor
1939-45  By the end of WW11 Berlin lies in ruins. Berlin is divided by the Western Allies
1949  Germany is divided into the Federal Republic and communist German Democratic Republic, with Berlin stranded in the GDR.
1961  The Berlin wall is built by the GDR.
1962  JF Kennedy makes his “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech.
1989  Collapse of communism in Eastern Europe and the removal of the Wall.
Neighbourhood Districts

Although it was cut off by the wall for 30 years East Berlin was always the real centre and today is once again the heart of Berlin.

Mitte
Formerly on the Eastern side Mitte is the city’s historic centre, and today is also the centre culturally, politically and commercially. Government buildings, many museums and theatres are based here. South Mitte is where to find the big sights and grand avenues, whilst North Mitte is more bohemian. The historic Jewish quarter
The historic Jewish quarter and the area around Hackescher Markt and Scheunenviertel are lined with narrow streets and pedestrian passageways which are home to cafes and galleries. The areas around Zionskirchplatz and ultra-cool Kastanienallee are the city’s most happening nightlife districts.

Prenzlauer Berg
The most picturesque residential area – this is former East Berlin at its most charming. It’s home to artists, actors and young families as well as a thriving café quarter.

Friedrichshain
The most Eastern feeling district with the Stalin era Karl Marx Allee running through it. The choice for young radicals and bohos is around Simon Dach Strasses and good for nightlife is the industrial area on the bank of the River Spree. Home to a huge student population, it’s one of the cheapest areas in Berlin and has dozens of lo-fi but lively bars. The residents have an annual water fight with their neighbours from Kreuzberg.

Kreuzberg
Capital of Turkish Berlin and packed with donar kebab cafes. The area was traditionally home to radicalism and is still popular with the alternative crowd. The more conservative and affluent areas are around Bergmannstrasse, which retains its Prussian era cobbled streets and buildings, and where antique shops and boutiques attract visitors. The edgier area is around Schlessisches Tor – famed for indie music bars and rock venues which line the Oranienstrabe. With its riverside bars the up and coming district is Treptow.
**Schoneberg**
Largely a residential district with many of the buildings dating from the 19th century with ornamental facades and balconies. The area is home to a chic thirty-something population. There is a popular twice weekly farmers’ market. The gay district stretches along Motzstrasse and Fuggerstrasse.

**Tiergarten**
Centred around the huge Tiergarten park. This important district contains the diplomatic quarter, corporate skyscrapers and the new entertainment and commercial centre - Potsdamer Platz. The Platz complex was conceived as a showpiece to mark Berlin’s reunification. It consists of 3 different precincts – Daimler City – which surrounds an open square and is home to a shopping mall and entertainment venues; - the Beisheim Centre – which contains luxury apartments and 2 five star hotels; and the architecturally spectacular steel and glass Sony Centre – with shops, restaurants and cinemas circling an open plaza. For a birds-eye view of the Potsdamer Platz - as well as great views over the rest of Berlin - take what’s claimed to be the fastest lift in Europe to the observation deck of Panorama-Point, at the top of the Kollhof building.

**Charlottenburg and Wilmersdorf**
Smart and well-heeled – this is Berlin’s West end, with a far more established cultural scene than the transient bar scene that defines the Eastern districts. After reunification the young took over the Eastern districts and that became – and continues to be - the happening side of the city. But recently youth culture has started to trickle back to West districts like Charlottenburg and club and bar openings are on the increase. The area is home to Berlin’s busiest shopping district – along the Ku’dam – and home to KaDeWe- Berlin’s Harrods. Savignyplatz is the place for affluent chic shopping and eating.
The Big Sights

The Wall
Not very much of the Wall remains. But along Mühlenstrasse in Friedrichshain a 1.3km section is preserved as an open-air gallery – known as the East Side Gallery. It features over a hundred murals painted by dozens of international artists as a symbolic celebration of reunification. The Gedenkstätte Berliner Mauer in the Northern Wedding district is a small graffiti-free stretch of the Wall which has been preserved by the authorities. A visitor centre has information about the Wall years, while a chapel is dedicated to the 80 or so victims that died trying to cross it. The most famous symbol of the divided city is the Mauermuseum Haus am Checkpoint Charlie in Kreuzberg, located next to the site where the famous border-crossing stood.

East Side Gallery
Muhlenstrasse
www.eastsidegallery.com
Admission: Free

Gedenkstätte
Bernauer Strasse 111
www.the-berlin-wall.de or www.berlinermauer.de
Opening: Wed-Sun 1000-1700 (visitors centre)
Admission: Free

Haus Am Checkpoint Charlie (Mauermuseum)
Friedrichstrasse 43-45  D-10969
Tel: (030) 253 7250

www.mauer-museum.com
Opening: Daily 0900-2200
Admission: charge
Reichstag
The home of the Bundestag – the German parliament since 1999. British architect Norman Foster was commissioned to transform the original 19th century building – and has done so by keeping the historic façade but adding a stunning glass dome which is meant to symbolise the transparency of democratic government. The walk through the dome gives visitors sweeping views of the city and a view of the decision-making chamber of the government when it’s sitting. Guided tours of the Reichstag also take place when parliament is not sitting.

Deutscher Bundestag
Platz der Republik 1
Tel: (030) 22 73 04 31
www.bundestag.de
Opening: Daily 0800-2400 (last admission 2200).
Admission: Free

Brandenburg Gate
One of Berlin’s most recognisable landmarks, the Brandenburger Tor (Brandenburg Gate), stands at the Western end of Pariser Platz. Once a Cold War symbol the gate now epitomises German reunification. Built in 1791 it is the only one surviving of the original 18 city gates. The sculpture of the winged goddess of victory driving a horse drawn chariot at the top of the columns was stolen by Napoleon and kept in Paris for some years, but eventually returned to Berlin in 1814 by a Prussian general.

Unter den Linden/Strasse des 17 Juni
Admission: Free

Judische Museum (Jewish Museum)
The striking zinc-clad exterior of this Daniel Libeskind designed memorial to 2000 years of Jewish history in Germany is centred on a distorted Star of David – the symbol of Judaism. The walls of the museum rise in an angled zigzag that form an abstract interpretation of the star. Rather than windows, irregular gashes cut through the zinc cladding.

Lindenstrasse 9-14
Kreuzberg,
Tel: (030) 2599 3300
www.juedisches-museum-berlin.de/
Opening: Tues-Sun 1000-2000(last entry 1900), Mon 1000-2200(last entry 2100)
Admission: Charge
Schloss Chalottenburg
Built in 1695 as a summer residence for Queen Sophie-Charlotte, the wife of King Friedrich 1, this Palace is a slice of Prussian history. The Palace has splendid baroque gardens which are great for summer walking and a variety of buildings in the grounds – each with their own admission fee. It’s easiest to go for a combined ticket which allows access to the main Palace, the New Wing of state apartments which house a collection of 18th century French art, and the Pavilion with a collection of works by Van Gogh, Klee, Cezanne and Picasso.

Schloss Charlottenburg
Spandauer Damm 20-24
Tel: (030) 320 911
www.spsg.de
Opening: Old Palace: Tues-Sun 0900-1700, New Wing: 1100-1700; grounds open daily 0600-2100 (summer); daily 0600-2000 (winter)
Admission: charge

Kulturforum (Cultural Forum)
Located in the West of the city, the Kulturforum is a complex of museums, concert halls and libraries, housed in mostly modern buildings. There is a chamber music hall, the Musikinstrumenten-museum - dedicated to musical instruments, and the Philharmonie concert house, home to the Berlin Philharmonic orchestra, considered to be one of the best concert halls in the world. (In May 2008 a fire damaged part of the roof of the concert hall, check locally to see if the concert schedule is affected). The Gemäldegalerie (Painting Gallery) is Berlin’s largest museum and houses a stunning collection of 13th- to 18th-century masterpieces, whilst the Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery) based in a building by Mies van der Rohe, contains 20th century art as well as German Expressionist and Realist art. The complex also features a sculpture garden.

Philharmonie und Kammermusiksaal
Herbert-von-Karajan-Strasse 1
Tel: (030) 2548 8999 (ticket hotline)
www.berlin-philharmonic.com
Opening: Shows generally Fri-Sun 1600 and 2000 (depending on programme); guided tours daily 1300
Admission: Charge, guided tours are free.

Musikinstrumenten-museum
Tiergartenstrasse 1
Tel: (030) 254 810
www.sim.spk-berlin.de
Opening: Tues, Wed, Fri 0900-1700, Thurs until 2200, Sat and Sun 1000-1700
Admission: charge, free Thurs evening.
Gemäldegalerie
Kulturforum, Matthäikirchplatz 4-6
Tel: (030) 266 2951 (information)
www.smb.spk-berlin.de
Opening: Tues, Wed and Fri-Sun 1000-1800, Thurs 1000-2200
Admission: Charge, free Thurs evening.

Neue Nationalgalerie
Kulturforum, Potsdamer Strasse 50
Tel: (030) 266 2951
www.smb.spk-berlin.de
Opening: Tues, Wed and Fri-Sun 1000-1800, Thurs 1000-2200
Admission: Charge, free Thurs evening.
Eating/drinking

Traditional German food does not have a gastronomic reputation, but in Berlin international influences have resulted in a thriving world food scene and getting good food – at any time of the day – is not a challenge. Street food here is sold from stalls known as Imbiss who serve up the classic Berlin snack – currywurst – a hotdog sausage smothered in curried ketchup. Because of Berlin’s large Turkey population, the donar kebab – which it’s claimed was invented in the Berlin district of Kreuzberg in the 70s – is offered on almost every Berlin street.

Berlin delivers many Vietnamese and pan-Asian restaurants and Italian is hugely popular – around half the city’s restaurants are Italian. Finding the traditional heavy meat based traditional German dishes like pigs trotters and cabbage is becoming more difficult but they can still be found in restaurants serving tourists around Berlin’s old quarter - Nikolaiviertel.

Berliners eat out a lot so prices in the city are not budget-busting – and good value when compared to other European capitals. You can fill up from just a few euros and an average mid-range restaurant charges 6-10 euros for a main course. Dining in a club-restaurant (like Splinder and Klatt – see below) is becoming increasingly popular – where a meal is accompanied by a live performance and followed by dancing. The distinction between a bar, restaurant or club is often blurred with restaurants serving drinks at their bars, and bars and clubs serving food.

Something Berliners are very fond of is drinking – and of course what Germany is most famous for is beer. Berliner Pilsener is ubiquitous. The traditional pub is known as Kneipe – and old-school Kneipe are the domain of a unfriendly local crowd of older men. The non-alcoholic favourite, served in the cafes – is “kaffee and kuchen” – coffee served with a big slab of rich cake.

Western neighbourhood Charlottenburg is the place to head to for more established and up-market restaurants. Mitte has had an explosion in hip and fashionable restaurants who serve a fabulous stylish crowd whilst Kreuzberg and Freidrichshain does down-to-earth, boho cafes and euro-stretching cheap eats.
**Restaurants:**

**Zoe**  
Mitte; Rochstrasse 1  
Tel: (030) 2404 5635  
Opening: Mon-Sat 12-11pm; Sun 6pm-11pm  
Named after the owners dog, Zoe is a minimalist heaven and the décor is white, and lime green with lots of empty space. On the menu choose from Mediterranean or Asian.

**Sale e Tabachi**  
Kreuzberg; Kochstrasse 18  
Tel: (030) 252 1155  
Opening: 7 days a week 9am-2am  
Popular Italian. In the summer dining is al fresco in the garden under lemon and orange trees. Rather than just pizza it’s classy Italian food with great fish dishes and an impressive wine list.

**Pan Asia**  
Mitte; Rosenthaler Strasse 38  
Tel: (030) 2790 8811  
Opening: Sun-Thurs 12pm-midnight, Fri/Sat 12pm-1am  
The menu tours Thailand, Vietnam and China, with dishes served at communal tables. Magna films, and light projections make for a high-energy experience.

**Splinder & Klatt**  
Kreuzberg; Kopenicker Strasse 16-17  
Tel: (030) 6956 6775  
Opening: 7 days a week 8pm-late.  
Modern European food is served to diners who can choose a lounging day bed or conventional table to eat at in this waterside converted warehouse. Sometimes there is a live performance during dinner and at the weekend the tables are slid back to turn the restaurant into a club.

**Jolesch**  
Kreuzberg; Muskauer Strasse 1  
Tel: (030) 6111165 / 612 35 81  
Open 10am-1am daily. 10am-4pm breakfast, 12am-5pm lunch. 6pm on evening meals.  
This is an Austrian café/restaurant that begins the day serving coffee and breakfast in a small salon and ends with diners eating Wiener Schnitzel in a banquet room surrounded by gilt-framed art and chandeliers.
Bars/Clubs

Everything from swanky cocktail bars to beer garden dives, spit and sawdust Kneipen (pubs) to warehouse superclubs. Unlike in Britain table-service is the norm, and rather than pay a round at a time it’s usual to keep a tab and pay at the end of the night.

Almost everywhere has a happy hour – which in Berlin is more like 4 hours – usually between 5pm and 10pm and there’s no official last-orders so many places stay open as long as there are customers.

Berlin has been a club capital since the birth of techno an electronica. With either no or low admission costs and no dress code getting into clubs in liberal Berlin is easy. Whether it’s drum and bass, reggae, hip-hop, dancehall, house or punk there is a place to party in Berlin. But clubbers don’t bother turning up until midnight and expect to party until 6am or later at weekends.

The new boomtown for clubbers and bar hoppers is the Friedrichshain district where around Rigaer strasse former squatters run anarchic clubs. Kreuzberg competes with Friedrichshain for Berlin’s liveliest bars and clubs which line up on Oranienstrasse. Berlin’s entrepreneurs are extremely inventive when it comes to converting unlikely spaces into venues. Locations like swimming pools, breweries and even underground U-bahn tunnels have been used to party. During the summer the banks of the River Spree are turned into improvised beaches as party entrepreneurs import sand and set up bars, along with deckchairs and parasols.

There is a thriving illegal party scene which relies on emails and word of mouth. Berlin’s reputation for decadence is unchallenged and the city has several consenting adult “sex-clubs” - the most famous of which is the Kit-Kat Club – erotic dress is compulsory!

Berlin’s club and bar scene is constantly changing so it’s best to talk to locals or check the listings magazines to keep up to date. Tip and Zitty are 2 listings magazines sold at news stands and there is a free magazine called 030 given out in bars, clubs and records shops. Bars and cafes usually have lots of flyers about the latest events. To be led by the hand around Berlin nightspots with fellow young travellers book onto a “pub crawl tour” – where for around 12-15 euros you’ll be taken to watering holes and a club – shots and club admission included.
Pub Crawl Tours

Insomniac Tours Tel: (030) 24 04 79 92 www.insomniactours.com
New Berlin Tours Tel: (030) 510 50030 www.newberlintours.com
My Berlin Tours Tel: (030) 179 326 09 05 www.berlinpubcrawl.eu
Insider Tours Tel: (030) 692 3149 www.insiderberlintours.com

Clubs:

Berghain/Panorama Bar
One of Berlins most celebrated clubs in a converted former power plant on an industrial estate just behind the Ostbahnhof train station. House and techno are played to the clubbers on concrete dance floors. The vast space includes chill bars and rooms. There is usually a queue to get in.

Berghain/Panorama Bar, Am Wriezener Bahnhof, Friedrichshain.
Opening: midnight Fri and Sat

Weekend
Ultra cool and trendy. Sited in a former GDR Travel agency on the 12th floor of an office block, the views over Berlin are spectacular. The organisers F.U.N are well known on the party circuit. Music is house and electronica.

Weekend, Alexanderplatz 5, Haus des riesens 12, Mitte
Tel: (030) 246 259320
Opening: midnight Fri, Sat

Watergate
Fantastic location overlooking the River Spree, this club sprawls over 2 levels with an outdoor deck. This is the most friendly and accessible of Berlin’s cool clubs. Both live bands and top DJs play here.

Watergate, Falckensteinstrasse 49, Kreuzberg.
Tel: (030) 6128 0395, 6128 0394
Opening: 2300 Fri-Sat/occasional weekdays

Club 103
One of the new clubs on the block with 4 enormous rooms and premium lounging space. The glass-floored dancefloor is the coolest place to dance. Music is post-techno.

Club 103, Falckensteinstrasse 47, Kreuzberg.
Opening: Fri and Sat 1200-late
Sage
A super-club with a glamorous clientele, 4 dancefloors, a garden with a pool, a fire-breathing dragon and eclectic music. This club is Berlin’s answer to the Ministry of Sound.

Sage, Kopenicker Strasse 76; Mitte
Tel: (030) 2787 6948
Opening: Weds-Sun.
Arts/Entertainment

Entertain is what Berlin does better than anything else. The arts are at the heart of Berlin life – Berliners love to go out – a Saturday night in front of the box is unheard of. The cultural range of dance, theatre, art, music spans every possible range from hi-brow to experimental avant garde.

There are dozens of performances and events every night of the week and in summer, festivals every weekend.

The city has many “cultural centres” which are multi-purpose theatre and stage venues which a wide range of acts hire out to perform anything from live music to theatre, dance, film and readings. This is often experimental and influenced by the decadence and urban grittiness that defines Berlin.

The listing mags Tip or Zitty and the English monthly guide Ex-Berliner can be bought from newsagents, and are the place to look for a guide to what’s on in the arts across the city.

Music

Berlin is a music hotspot and every taste is catered for – from classical and opera to indie and rock. Berlin is home to more music festivals than any other city in Europe. Particularly good club venues are Magnet, in Prenzlauer Berg where up and coming rock bands play and Wild at Heart in Kreuzberg for rock n roll, indie and punk.

The city has dozens of Jazz and Blues clubs which play host to local and international performers. Charlottenburg is the district for established jazz clubs like the intimate A-Trane, and the small packed Quasimodo jazz club is Berlin’s oldest. The Eastern districts jazz joints are edgier.

Classical music fans are spoilt for choice. The Berlin Philharmonic, led until 1989 by Herbert von Karajan and since 2002 by Simon Rattle, is arguably the world’s best orchestra. There are a great number of classical music performances on any given night and both large and small orchestras and chamber recitals can be heard at venues throughout the city. There are 3 state-funded opera houses. Deutsche Oper in Charlottenburg specialises in Wagner, whilst the Staatsoper stages traditional opera as well as ballet and chamber music.
Magnet, Greifswalder Str. 212
Tel: (030) 44008140
Opening: Mo - Fr, 23:00 - open end Sa, 22:00 - open end

Wild at Heart, Wiener Str. 20
Tel: (030) 61074701
Opening: every day 8. p.m - open end

A-Trane, Pestalozzistr. 105
Tel: (030) 3132550
Opening: daily to 21:00 - 02:00, Fridays + Saturday 21:00 – open end

Quasimodo Jazz Club, Kantstr. 12a
Tel: (030) 312 80 86
Opening: Monday to Friday from 4:30 pm and on Saturday and Sunday from 11 am.

The Berlin Philharmonic, Philharmonie und Kammermusiksaal, Herbert-von-Karajan-Strasse 1
Tel: (030) 2548 8999 (ticket hotline).
Opening: Shows generally Fri-Sun 1600 and 2000 (depending on programme); guided tours daily 1300.

Deutsche Oper, Bismarckstrasse 35
Tel: (030) 343 84 343
Box Office: 11am – 30 mins prior to performance Mon-fri, 10am-2pm Sat.

Staatsoper, Unter den Linden 7
Tel: (030) 203540, 20354555 (tickets)
Ticket lines open: | Mo-Sa 10am-8pm | Sun, bank holidays 2pm-8pm

Cabaret

In the 30s Berlin’s cabaret had a worldwide reputation, with hundreds of clubs home to satirical acts. Hitler put an end to that and cabaret never fully recovered but there is still a small scene. There are 2 kinds of cabaret in the city – the variety show which plays mainly to tourists and kabarett – a stand-up comedy show. The Wintergarten in Tiergarten and Pomp, Duck and Circumstance in Kreuzberg put on expensive and lavish dinner and variety shows featuring top clowns, mime, acrobats, dancers and magicians.

For kabarett where the humour is satirical and can be surreal – you’ll need good German to keep up! Try Bar Jeder Vernunft in Wilmersdorf where performances are in a marquee. For burlesque cabaret that is sometimes risqué there’s Kleine Nachtrevue, in Schoneberg and La Vie en Rose in Kreuzberg is a drag variety revue.
Wintergarten, Potsdamer Straße 96, Tiergarten
Tel: (030) 2500880

Pomp, Duck and Circumstance, Möckernstr. 26
Tel: (030) 2694 9200
Box office: 9am-8pm Mon-Fri; midday-8pm Sat/Sun

Bar Jeder Vernunft, Spiegelzelt, Schaperstraße 24, Wilmersdorf
Tel: (030) 885 6920, 883 1582 (tickets)
Box Office open: Mon-Sat 1200-1900, during holidays 1500-1900.

Kleine Nachtrevue, Kurfürstenstraße 116, Schöneberg
Tel: 21 88 950
La Vie en Rose, Güntzelstr. 55
Tel: (030) 3236006, 69 51 3000 (tickets).
Box office open: Daily 1000-2200. Shows start 2100 Sun-Thurs, 2200 Fri/Sat.

Theatre/Dance

Berlin has a vibrant fringe and experimental theatre scene and actors regularly rent a space and stage their work at the 100 or more stages across the city. Established theatres like the Berliner Ensemble in Mitte, perform Brecht along with more modern texts, whilst at the Gorki Theatre in Mitte, Chekov is a favourite along with modern works. The Gorki also has a reputation of being the place to see the next generation of acting talent. The Schaubuhne in Charlottenburg and Volksbuhne in Mitte are highlights of the experimental scene and attract a young 18-35 crowd, English-language works are sometimes performed.

Dance is defined by original and experimental performances which are held at theatres across the city. Tanzfabrik Berlin in Kreuzberg is home to contemporary performances and is Berlin’s biggest dance school. Statsballett are a ballet company which performs at Staatsoper and Deutsche Oper.

Berliner Ensemble, Bertolt Brecht-square-1
Ticket hotline: (030) 28408-155
Box Office: 8am-6pm Mon-Fri; 11am-6pm Sat-Sun

Gorki Theatre, Am Festungsgraben 2, Mitte
Tel: (030) 20221-115 or 20221-129 (tickets)

Schaubuhne, Kurfurstendamm 153, Charlottenburg,
Tel: (030) 890020, or 890023 (tickets)

Volksbuehne, Linienstraße 227 Mitte
Tel: (030) 24 065-5 Staatsballett, Unter den Linden 7
Tel: (030) 354 282 / 35 45 55 (tickets)
Shopping/Fashion

Berlin doesn’t have a single defined shopping district. The main shopping streets, and home to the big department stores, are Friedrichstrasse in the East and Ku’damm in the West. These two main drags are where to head to track down international designer names, high street brands and shopping malls. Luxury department store KaDeWe – Berlin’s equivalent of Harrods - is at the end of Ku’damm.

Independent fashion design can be found in Mitte, in the boutiques that line Oranienburger Strasse, Neue and Alte Schonhauser, and the courtyards of Hackesche Hofe. Mitte’s answer to Covent Garden is at Scheunenviertal, with small stores, cafes and galleries. A good stomping ground for independent alternative fashion is Oranienstrasse in Kreuzberg and Kastanienalle in Prenzlauer Berg. The Simon-Dach Strasse in Friedrichshain is the place for second hand finds and budget fashion.

Weekend Flea markets like Mauerpark in Prenzlauer Berg and Rathous and Markt am Winterfeldtplatz in Schoneberg are great hunting grounds for vintage fashion and jewellery. Other famous flea markets are in Treptow, Arkona Platz and Boxhagener Platz. There are plenty of places to pick up East German souvenirs and the cult Ampelmann logo – the green and red hat wearing man which appears on East district traffic lights – is printed on T-shirts and souvenirs. The market in Alexanderplatz in Mitte sells Eastern Bloc army uniforms and badges. Shops generally open at 9 or 10am and close around 6pm although some large stores stay open until 8pm. On Sunday almost everywhere is closed. Quite a lot of places do not take credit cards.
Sport/Leisure

Berlin has a great range of facilities for both participating in and watching sport. The Berlin football team is Hertha Berlin – who always seem to just miss out on glory, although they have a World Cup final ground to play in – the Olympiastadion. The lack of a sea-side hasn’t held back Berlins love of a beach and beach sports.

The city has a world class beach volleyball team with the Schlossplatz being turned into a beach for international competitions. There is even an annual sand sculpture competition at Hauptbahhof. The River Spree itself, together with the city’s network of canals and estuaries is home to sailing, canoeing and rowing.

There are lots of swimming pools in the city – a great outdoor one is at the Sommerbad Kreuzberg. Ironically there is even a pool within a river. As the River Spree is not for swimming, an enterprising Berliner has created Badeschiff - a heated open air pool in a converted industrial barge suspended in the Spree.

Cycling is a great way to get around Berlin – it’s flat and there are lots of cycle lanes. Bikes can be hired easily (see transport in Practical Stuff later) and bikes can be taken onto the underground U-bahn outside rush hours. The other eco-friendly way to tour the streets is on skates. Skating is really popular and on selected summer Sundays thousands take to cordoned-off streets in the city centre for Skate Nights. Skates can be rented from stores in the city. Skateboarders are well catered for in city parks and at Skatehalle in Friedrichshain – a big skatepark with the usual ramps and pipes.

**Sommerbad**
Prinzenstrasse, 113-119 Kreuzberg
Tel: (030) 616 1080
Open: 7.00am – 8pm Mon – Sun

**Badeschiff**
Eichenstrasse 4, Eastern Kreuzberg
Tel: (030) 533 2030
Open: daily at 8am – open ended

**Skatehalle**
Revaler Strasse 99, gate 2
Tel: (030) 29 36 29 66
Open: every day except Monday
Media

The 2 essential Berlin listing magazines are Tip and Zitty (in German) – which hit the newsstands on an alternative weeks. The English language magazine Ex-Berliner also contains listings and is published monthly. There are dozens of free arts and entertainment mags available to be picked up at cafes/bars and record stores.

Radio
There is a huge choice of radio stations. The English speaking station is NPR Berlin (104.1). Best local music stations are Fritz Radio (102.6), which plays dance and hip-hop and has an unsigned band show on Sunday night, and Star Radio(87.9) for US rock.

TV
There are 2 national public TV channels – ARD and ZDF – similar to the BBC, and a regional channel – RBB. Commercial channels are dominated by Sat, RTL and VOX. There is a raft of cable channels including local channels TVB and FAB and MTV.
Practical Stuff

**Passport ID**
You should carry your valid passport with you at all times. German police have the right to ask to see identification. For British citizens, the only acceptable form of ID is a valid passport. Passports should be valid for at least another 4 months after departure from Germany.

**Currency**
Germany’s currency is the Euro
Symbol is €

Exchange rate:

1 British pound = 1.26 Euro  
5 British pound = 6.30 Euro  
10 British pound = 12.60 Euro

1 Euro = £0.79  
5 Euro = £3.95  
10 Euro = £7.91

Euro notes come in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500. One Euro is divided into 100 cents or centimes.

**Sample price guide**
Glass of beer € 2.50  
one day public transport ticket € 6.10  
cup of coffee € 1.80  
tabloid newspaper € 0.80  
one currywurst € 2.00  
midweek cinema ticket € 6.50  
doner kebab € 2.50

**Leaving a tip**
Restaurant bills include a 17% service charge so tipping is not absolutely necessary but it is common to give a small tip direct to the waiter – don’t leave it on the table. Many small restaurants and shops do not take credit cards. In taxis round up or add a euro or so to the total.

TIME: GMT + 1 hour

**Sunrise and sunset:**
Mid June: Sunrise, 04:43. Sunset, 21:32
Weather:
Predictably, December to February are the coldest months. When the winds blow from Russia temperatures drop below freezing. Generally though, winters are relatively mild. July and August are the warmest times, though usually not uncomfortably hot.

Dialling codes
The international country dialling code from the UK to Germany is +49 and the Berlin city code is +30.

The outgoing international code dialling out of Germany is 00, followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom).

Dialling within Berlin from a mobile phone use the (030) prefix.
Dialling within Berlin from a land line drop the (030) prefix.

Electricity (230 Volt, 50 Hz)
2 prong round pin plug required

Working hours
Banks: Mon - Fri 8.30am – 4pm (5.30/6pm on Thursdays)
Government Offices: Mon – Thurs 9am – 5pm Fri 9am – 1pm
Shops: Mon – Sat: 10am – 8pm or 10am – 6pm for smaller stores

Public transport
An extensive S-Bahn (urban railway), U-Bahn (underground), bus and streetcar network spanning the entire city gets you quickly, safely and inexpensively around the city. A system of night buses and trains keeps you mobile through the night.

U bahn/S-bahn
Berlin has three fare zones: zone A covers the city centre, zone B ends at the city limits. Zone C includes Berlin’s immediate surroundings.

Tickets can be purchased with the zone combinations AB, BC or ABC at any of the many BVG and S-Bahn Berlin ticket counters and at ticket machines located in the stations. The machines are equipped with convenient on-screen menu navigation and are available 6 languages. Unless you are travelling to the outer suburbs you will only need an AB ticket. Get your tickets stamped at the beginning of your journey.

Most frequently used tickets (fare zone AB):
Single journey ticket € 2.10
Short distance (3 stops) € 1.30
Day ticket € 6.10
7-Days ticket € 26.20
**Bus**

Berlin's buses are slow, but comfortable. Bus stops are marked with a large 'H' and the name of the stop. Drivers sell tickets and can give change. The next stop is usually announced or displayed on a digital board. Night buses operate from around midnight until 04:30, running roughly 30 mins intervals.

**Car**

There's no need to drive in Berlin as it has an excellent public transport system, and parking can be difficult. The city centre is now a 'Particle Free Emission' area and drivers must display a specially approved sticker or risk a fine.

**Taxi**

Taxis are beige coloured Mercedes and are fairly easy to hail on the street. In busy areas there is generally a taxi rank. They're not particularly cheap – there's a 2.50 euros minimum charge, then 1.50 euro per km. For short trips up to 2km there is a cheaper option – the Kurzstreckentarif (short trip rate) costs 3 euros. This only applies when hailing a passing taxi, not from a taxi rank and you need to tell the driver that you would like this fare as soon as you get in before he starts the meter.

Phone numbers of taxi companies
City-Funk: (030) 21 02 02
Funk-Taxi Berlin: (030) 2623147
Quality Taxi: (030) 26 3000 or 0800-26 3000 0 (freecall)
Spree-Funk: (030) 44 33 22
TaxiFunk Berlin: 0800-44 33 22 (freecall)
Taxi-Ruf Würzelfunk: (030) 210101, 0800-Cabcall: 0800-222 22 55 (freecall)

**Velotaxis**

For short journeys you can flag a velotaxi - these are 2 seater rickshaw-style vehicles powered by an electric engine. They run along 4 routes – Kurfurstendamm, Unter den Linden, Potsdamer Platz and Tiergarten. Cost is 2.50 euro per person for first km then 1 euro for each extra km. Drivers can also act as guides and offer tours.

**Bikes**

There are several good places to hire bikes in the city and costs range from 9 to 25 euros a day.

Bike Hire Companies

Fahrradstation – Tel: (030) 0180-510 0800
Kreuzberg outlet – Tel: (030) 2141566
Mitte outlet –Tel: (030) 22508070
Charlottenburg outlet – Tel: (030) 93942757
Pedal Power
Kreuzberg outlet – Tel: (030) 7899 1939
Lichtenberg outlet – Tel: (030) 5515 3270

Fat Tire BikeTours  Tel: (030) 2404 7991

Prenzlberger Orange Bikes Tel: (030) 442 8122

There’s also a really convenient pick-up/drop off bike rental system “Callbikes”. Rental silver and red bikes are parked on street corners and major points around the city centre. They are hired by calling 0700/05 22 55 22 and registering a credit card and mobile. When you call to hire a bike you’ll be given a code to unlock the bike – cost is 0.07 euro per minute – and up to 15 euros for a day.
# Useful Words and Phrases

Sg = singular;  Pl = plural;  frm = formal;  inf = informal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENGLISH</th>
<th>GERMAN</th>
<th>PHONETICS (Where available)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Willkommen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hello</td>
<td>Hallo, Guten Tag</td>
<td>hah-LOH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are you?</td>
<td>Wie gehts? (inf) Wie geht es dir/Ihnen? (inf frm)</td>
<td>vee gayts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’m fine, thank you</td>
<td>Danke, gut</td>
<td>DAN-keh, goot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What's your name?</td>
<td>Wie heißt du? (inf) Wie heißen Sie? (frm)</td>
<td>vee HIGH-sen zee?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My name is…</td>
<td>Ich heiße ...</td>
<td>ikh HIGH-seh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where are you from?</td>
<td>Woher kommst du? (inf) Woher kommen Sie? (frm)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleased to meet you</td>
<td>Schön, dich kennen zu lernen Sehr erfreut (frm)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Good morning</td>
<td>Guten Morgen</td>
<td>GOO-ten MOR-gen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good afternoon</td>
<td>Guten Tag</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good evening</td>
<td>Guten Abend</td>
<td>GOO-ten AH-bent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Good night</td>
<td>Gute Nacht</td>
<td>GOO-tuh nakht</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goodbye</td>
<td>Auf wiedersehen (frm)</td>
<td>owf VEE-der-zay-en</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good luck</td>
<td>Viel Glück! Alles Gute!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Ja</td>
<td>yah</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Nein</td>
<td>nine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please</td>
<td>Bitte</td>
<td>BIT-tuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a nice day</td>
<td>Schönen Tag noch!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t understand</td>
<td>Ich verstehe nicht</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please speak more slowly</td>
<td>Können Sie bitte langsam sprechen?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Please write it down</td>
<td>Können Sie das bitte aufschreiben?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me (to get attention)</td>
<td>Entschuldigen Sie! Entschuldigung! Verzeihung!</td>
<td>ent-SHUL-di-gen zee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse me</td>
<td>Entschuldigung</td>
<td>ent-SHUL-di-goong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you know where...is?</td>
<td>Wissen Sie, wo ... ist?</td>
<td>vissen zee voh ... ist</td>
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<tr>
<td>How much/many?</td>
<td>Wieviel kostet das?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sorry</td>
<td>Entschuldigung</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Thank you</td>
<td>Danke sehr</td>
<td>DAN-keh zayr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanks</td>
<td>danke</td>
<td>DAN-keh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where’s the toilet?</td>
<td>Wo ist die Toilette?</td>
<td>voh ist dee twah-LET-uh, BIT-tuh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do you say ... in German?</td>
<td>Wie sagt man ... auf Deutsch?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help!</td>
<td>Hilfe!</td>
<td>HILL-fuh</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire!</td>
<td>Feuer!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Stop!</td>
<td>Halt!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Call the police!</td>
<td>Ruf die Polizei! (inf)</td>
<td>Rufen Sie die Polizei! (frm)</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>hundert</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000</td>
<td>tausend</td>
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</table>