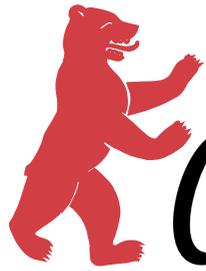


Berlin

The Bear Necessities



Berlin
The Bear
Necessities



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Address



Opening times (if applicable)



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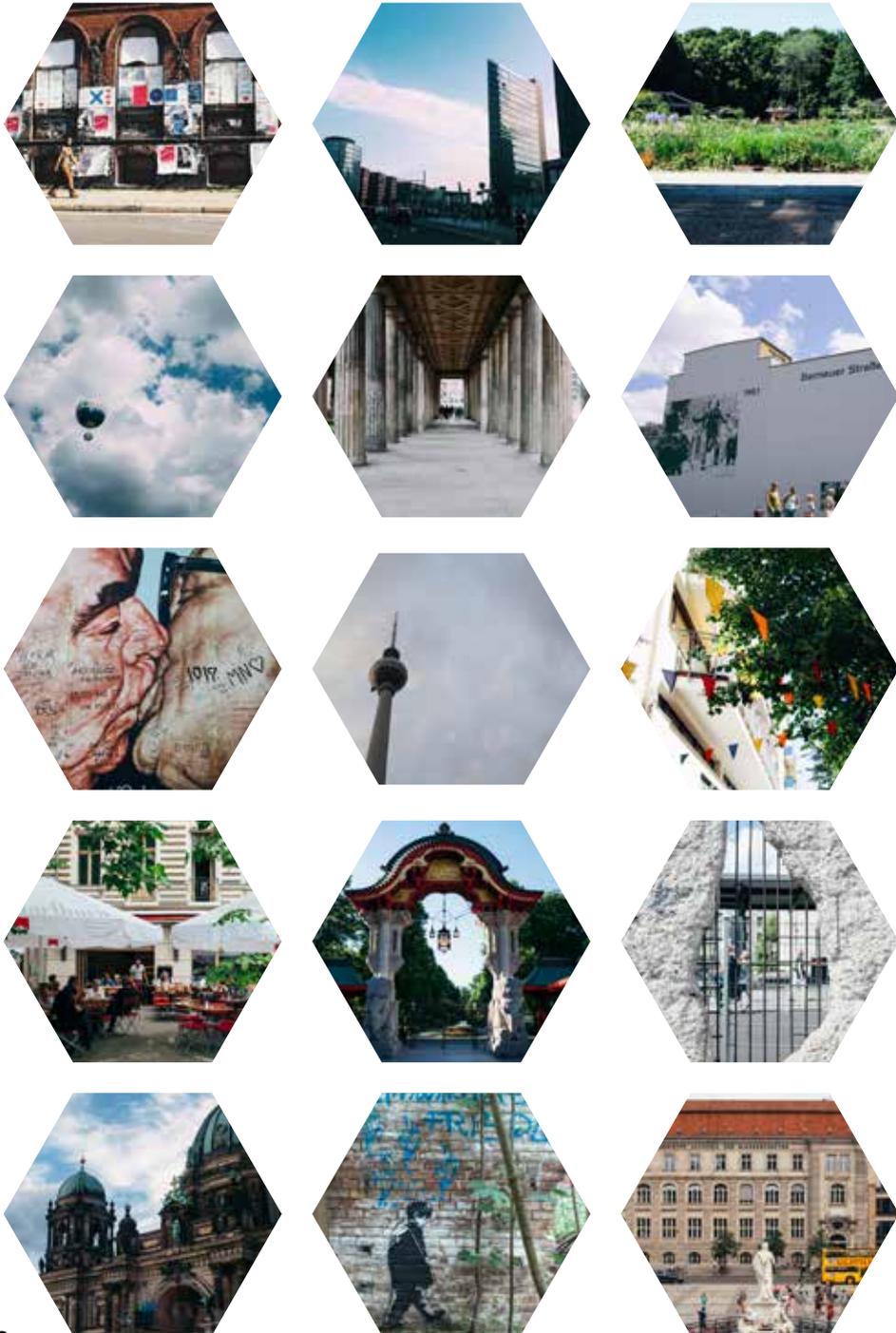


Website



Transport line and nearest station





“Ich bin ein Berliner!”

Made up of multiple boroughs, Berlin is a city of many characters and faces. Not as compact as London or New York, Berlin is a place where you can travel 20 minutes and feel as if you are in a completely different city. Every borough combines to make Berlin a cosmopolitan, diverse and vibrant city. Albeit a relatively new city, Berlin still has a substantial amount of history.

From Napoleon, to unification, to World War I & II, to the Cold War, Berlin has become a point of focus for modern European history. Whilst not forgetting of the past, Berlin has remodelled itself into somewhat of a très chic city. Grand neo-classical monuments are mixed in with new, edgy buildings. From graffiti-covered walls to pop-up imbisses, there is something new around every street corner. Although Germany is seen as a very organised and more serious country, Berlin is a city for enjoying life. You can travel to the well-groomed area of Charlottenburg, or investigate the gritty and artsy borough of Kreuzberg. Berlin has something for everyone, whether it be the famous Orchestra, a street food festival, nightclubs, bars or museums. Moreover, there are places in Berlin that need to be discovered on your own. Unknown gems hide in every borough, and it is just a matter of exploring the city and walking through the pulsing veins of Berlin.

Berlin is such a vibrant and inclusive city, that you never want to leave after visiting. From our personal experience, Berlin is a truly great city. We have used our time to experience and collect as many fun memories, moments and great attractions as possible. Hopefully you can use our guide as a basis for your own trip to Berlin, and we hope our guide will help you realise what this wonderful city has to offer.

Bill McLoughlin

History of Berlin

Berlin has long been reputed as a metropolis and melting-pot. From the time of Frederick William the Great in the 1700s, people from all over the globe have come together here to form communities and subcultures. The capital city of Germany, now home to over 3.5 million people from over 180 nations, is the seventh most populated city in the EU. Unlike London, however, the pace of life in Berlin is a lot more relaxed and carefree. With its many forests, parks, gardens, and lakes, it is easy to escape from urban bustle into an atmosphere of natural beauty and calm, or take a boat ride down the river Spree to absorb the sights of the city at a leisurely pace.

“Berlin is poor, but sexy”

Nowadays, Berlin is renowned for being ‘cool’, boasting a huge choice of clubs, bars, entertainment venues, theaters, and festivals to attend. Talented artists of all varieties flock here to be a part of the raw Berlin underground. Former Mayor Klaus Wowereit once said, “Berlin is poor, but sexy,” a statement that can be translated today to reflect the fantastic standard of living here compared to other European cities.



But like any metropolis, Berlin has had its fair share of trauma and hardship. When Hitler and the Nazi party ruled from 1933-1945, Berlin's Jewish community was all but wiped out. Half of the population either fled to other countries or were sent to death camps like Auschwitz. During World War II, large parts of Berlin were destroyed in air raids, and around 125,000 innocent civilians were killed. After the Battle of Berlin in 1945, the city was divided into four sectors, with the Western Allies (the United States, the United Kingdom and France) making up West Berlin, and the Soviets residing in East Berlin.

Between 1961-1989, East and West Berlin were divided by a barrier constructed by the Soviet GDR, a barrier that came to be known as The Berlin Wall. Snipers placed in guard towers along the wall made it impossible for people in the East to cross; East Berliners were essentially trapped until demolition started in 1990. In October of the same year, East and West Germany were officially reunified and became the Federal Republic of Germany.

In recent years, Berlin has staged a spectacular comeback both socially and economically, and can now claim to be one of the most liberal, tolerant, and creative cities in the world.

Alex Inkley

Survival Guide

Within the captivating capital that is Berlin, it is easy to lose yourself to the city and it's people. Here are the top 10 points to help young people enjoy their visit and enhance their stay to the fullest.

Lucy Painter

Nightlife/Clubbing

1. Though Berlin has rightfully achieved its reputation as the party capital, with districts such as Kreuzberg awakening at sundown, door policy is notoriously strict. It is not uncommon to be turned away for seemingly nonsense reasoning. The dress code is casual with dark colours, and so heels and your finest clubbing attire will hinder the cause. Arrive in smaller, preferably mixed gender groups and try not to draw attention to yourself. Do a little research into your club of choice, checking both the door policy and what DJs will be playing on the night. If turned away, don't feel defeated, as unfair as it may seem. Simply have a backup club in mind and a few German words stored away.

Photographs

2. Taking pictures inside Berlin's nightclubs is prohibited. Being caught may lead to your camera or camera phone being confiscated, with an unreliable promise of its return the next day. However, clubs are not the only place photographs are frowned upon, with many attractions limiting photography to private use, if at all. Be aware of the relevant photography regulations and respect the local's privacy when proceeding to click the shutter.

Budgeting

3. One of the reasons Berlin appeals to a younger crowd is the reasonable price tag it offers for a weekend. It is an easy city to visit in thorough detail without exhausting the purse strings. A day of street food and café breaks can be covered with under €15. Tourist attractions can be found for well under €10 with reduced fares even dropping below €5, and often including a guided tour. It is inevitable that the larger, more popular attractions are more steeply priced, but it is important to remember that many of Berlin's parks, lakes and squares can be less commercial, free and sometimes far more worthy of a visit. Be sure to carry a sufficient amount of cash on your person at all times, as most establishments are cash-orientated and rarely accept payments made by card.

Shopping

4. Shops and businesses are mostly open from 10:00 to 20:00 and limited supermarkets are open from 08:00 onwards. Particularly if visiting for a brief weekend, be cautious of the Sunday licensing laws. All supermarkets, bar a couple, are closed on Sunday. Small corner shops may still be open, but be prepared and stock up on the necessities in advance. Späti are small general stores, stocked with drinks, snacks and the basics. If you are fortunate enough to stumble upon one, they are generally open 24/7 and will cater to the essentials. Not only is shopping limited on Sundays, but many sightseeing attractions also are. Make sure to research opening days and times prior to your visit to ensure entry.

Recycling

5. Berlin is a very clean city and so litter does not go unnoticed. Although Berliners are particularly relaxed, and will often be seen wandering across the stations with a bottle of beer in hand, they are pedantic about recycling. The price for soft drinks is often raised to cover the cost of a 'Pfand,' a deposit for the bottle that is added to the price of the drink. On returning the bottles to a supermarket the Pfand price will be reimbursed. Otherwise remember to abide by their rules and recycle into the designated glass, plastic and paper

bins and keep the streets clean and tidy. It is also likely that you will be given such deposits on glasses and bottles in nightclubs with a Pfand of €0.50 and a token which will be exchanged for the money on returning the glass. Caught littering or putting recycling into the wrong bin may run the risk of a fine if caught.

Travelling

6 Throw yourself into exploring the city by travelling and wandering amongst the many squares and streets. With the cheap price of tickets, which span from daily to monthly and cover all forms of necessary transport, it is a good idea to invest in a transport ticket. The transport systems of the U-Bahn, S-Bahn, trams and buses are very efficient and cover all areas, ensuring you get from A to B. The open system means that no turnstiles are erected at any of the stations, and you are trusted to ensure you both buy and validate the correct tickets. Occasionally a non-uniformed ticket inspector will trawl the public transport. If you are caught without the correct tickets you will be given an on-the-spot fine of up to €60. For more information, visit the transport section.

Walking

7 Never jaywalk. You will find yourself alone when crossing the road if the Ampelmann is anything but green - the Ampelmann being the famous German character to signify safe pedestrian crossing. Locals respect the crossings and traffic signs, and if caught you may receive a fine, as well as the loud blasts of car horns from angry Berliners. Avoid wandering in to the cycling lane, as there is a constant flow of cycling traffic due to its popularity amongst locals. If you can't beat them, join them. A cycling tour is not only a fresh, fun way to view the city, but is factual and covers much more space in a short time. On the other hand, consider taking any one of the free walking tours to get a proper feel for the city. Tours provide you with a stronger understanding of the fundamental background of the country's history and can help you decide on where you would like to focus your sightseeing, especially on a weekend when racing against the clock. With a city steeped in history, each corner hides another place of interest- meaning small, interesting spots are easily overlooked.

Weather

8 Between the grey buildings and sightseeing attractions, Berlin is a very green city, covered with large beautiful parks, lakes and outdoor activities. In the evenings it is difficult to walk far without being drawn in by any one of the many beer gardens. Hence, you may spend a lot of time outside. Though temperatures can leap in the sunny summer months, the weather can be temperamental. Be sure to not be caught in a sporadic downpour. Pack waterproofs as well as sun cream, and be prepared for all eventualities. This will help make sure you can enjoy Berlin from both indoors and outdoors.

Safety

9 Berlin is a relatively safe city, but it still goes without saying that you must be careful to keep money, phones, and all valuable items hidden at all costs. Take care of your possessions and do not allow the opportunity to arise for pickpockets. Whether travelling alone or in a group, opportunists have developed deceptive and cunning methods to steal valuables, which would be easy for even the savviest of tourists to fall victim to. Travel with minimal goods, and though many places prefer smaller, quieter groups, exploring the streets alone may not be the safest idea – particularly not at night.



Speaking German

10. As in any foreign country, be sure to learn a little of the language. Though many Berliners speak English, you will find those who don't, so learning some basic German phrases will go a long way. It will most likely come across as ignorance to assume everyone speaks English. Berlin is a multicultural and diverse city, but such essential phrases are always useful, and might even ensure your entry into the nightclub you've been desperate to visit.

Hello – Hallo

Yes – Ja

No – Nein

Please – Bitte

Thank you – Danke

Sorry – Entschuldigung

Good day – Guten Tag

Good evening – Guten Abend

Do you speak English? – Sprechen Sie Englisch?

How much does it cost? – Was kostet das?

The bill please – Die Rechnung bitte

Where can I find ... – Wo kann ich finden ...

Public Transport



Zones

The capital's transportation system is considered to be fast and well-integrated. It is divided into three zones: A, B and C. Zone A includes Mitte and the railway around it. Zone B stretches from the railway until the border of the city and the Zone C includes suburbs and also the city of Potsdam. Offering numerous opportunities to get around, the most well-known means of transportation are U-Bahn and S-Bahn. Trams, buses and ferries can also be found.

Cost

The cost of the transportation is rather small, considering all the various options available. Tickets can be bought from almost every big station, whether from the BVG machines, kiosks or station shops all around the city – just follow the BVG signs. Day ticket for AB zones is €6.90 and a week ticket for the same zones is €29.50. If you are traveling with a larger group of up to 5 people, you can get the day pass for €16.90. It is important to keep in mind that there is no point in riding around Berlin without a ticket, because the checks for the tickets are frequent and the fine can be €60.

BVG App

For better navigation, it is recommended to download the BVG app to your smartphone. It has schedules, maps and can help plan trips – just type in your starting point and destination. The drawback of this otherwise-useful app is that most features only work when connected to data. Nevertheless, maps can be used while offline. Besides the basic BVG app, Triposo and Berlin Subway BVG apps are available. The last can also be used without data.

U-Bahn

Untergrund-Bahn, or simply the U-Bahn, consists of ten lines. U1, U2, U7 make up the East-West-Lines and U6, U8, U9 make up the North-South-Lines. Routes U5 and U55 are the only ones stretching to the east of Berlin. U4 is the shortest one, with only 5 stations from Mitte to the south. And last but not least the route U3, which stretches to the south-west of the city. It is considered to be one of Berlin's fastest and more convenient means of transport. The U-Bahn timetable is quite flexible and the gap between trains isn't longer than 12 minutes. It runs all night and during the weekend, when it can occasionally get rather uncomfortable because of the frequent appearances of heavily intoxicated people.

S-Bahn

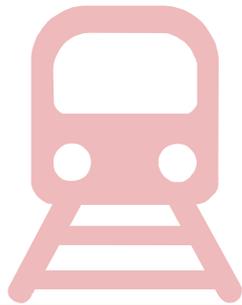
Schnell-Bahn, or simply the S-Bahn, consists of 15 lines which are divided into three core lines: Stadtbahn, Nord-Süd Tunnel and Ringbahn. It is thought to be Berlin's fastest and most well-planned transportation system. On workdays, the S-bahn runs from 4am until 2am. Due to its long working hours, it is extremely popular among the party goers. During rush-hour, the trains come every 3-5 minutes.

Buses

Buses are not very reliable in Berlin, as they tend to be rather slow compared to the other transportation facilities. The only buses recommended are lines 100 and 200, which essentially replace the expensive bus tour rides, as they run by almost every important sight in former East and West Berlin. Buses are the only means of transport where you have to show your ticket to the driver before entering. Besides the usual bus lines, MetroBus, ExpressBus and Night buses are available.

Trams

Berlin has 22 tram lines, which include regular trams and MetroTrams that use the symbol M before the line number. The main tram crossing stop is Alexanderplatz, where most of the trams head to east of Berlin. Trams are considered speedy, trustworthy and have air conditioners which make the ride incredibly pleasant and welcoming during summertime.



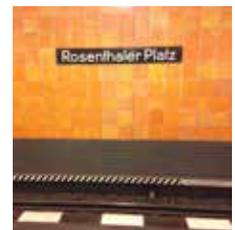
Ferries & Boats

BVG also operates 6 different ferry rides since 1896. Mostly motor boat lines like F10, F11, F12, F21 and F23 can be found. Row boat line F24 departs from the Spreewiesen to Kruggasse. The ride usually takes from 2 to up to 25 minutes and most of the lines depart after every 20 or 60 minutes. The ferry rides are operated by BVG, so you can use your transport pass.

Cycling

If you prefer to explore the city by bike, you can find numerous rental options all over town. Companies like Fat Tire Bike Rentals or Alex Rent A Bike offer bikes for rent starting with €10 for a day. Even tours on bikes are operated by many rental companies that can be easily found in touristy areas like Alexanderplatz or Potsdamerplatz.

Rea Uudeküll





The Circus Hostel

Located next to Rosenthaler Platz U-bahn, the Circus Hostel is a place to suit anybody's needs. Ranging from four-person dorms to studio apartments, good sized and well looked after, the Circus Hostel provides both a good night's sleep and an excellent location from which to explore the city. The staff is friendly and welcoming, and all speak English in case your German is limited to ordering 'Kaffee.'

For those wishing to practice German, however, the hostel hosts the 'Katze und Maus' café. With plenty of seating, settle in and enjoy that Kaffee, or something else from the drinks menu, which ranges from espresso to cocktails. The café also provides food, with prices alternating from €2.50 for a fruit salad to €7.80 for a chilli cheeseburger. Breakfast is available but is not included in the overhead price. In the evening, head downstairs to the Classic Café and Bar which hosts the in-house microbrewery, flowing since 2015 and offering both German and international beers.

If you need to contact home, or want to look up the best bars in neighbouring Kreuzberg, the reception staff is happy to help. The hostel offers the option to borrow an iPad or laptop, and provides free WIFI.

Holly Belcher

-  Weinbergsweg 1A, 10119 Mitte
-  Prices from €23
-  www.circus-berlin.de
-  U8, M1, M8; Rosenthaler Platz

