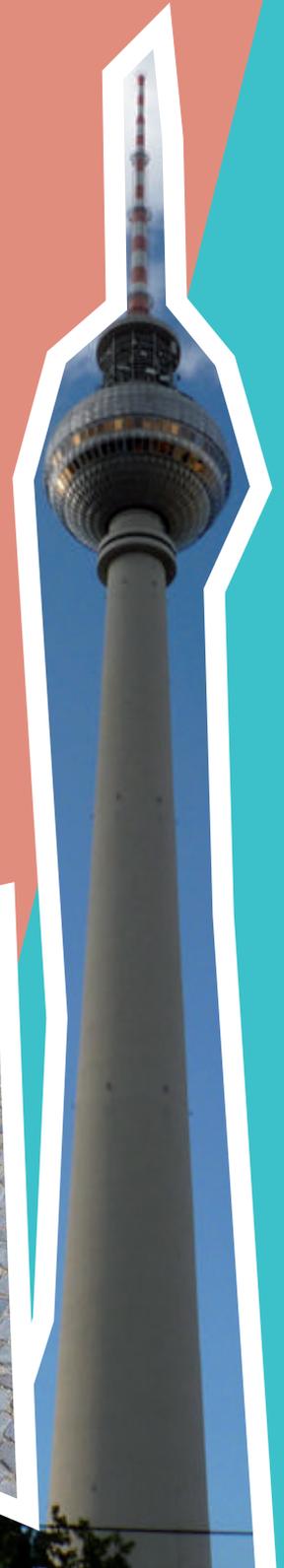


# ALT

# B

The  
Alternative  
Guide  
to  
Berlin



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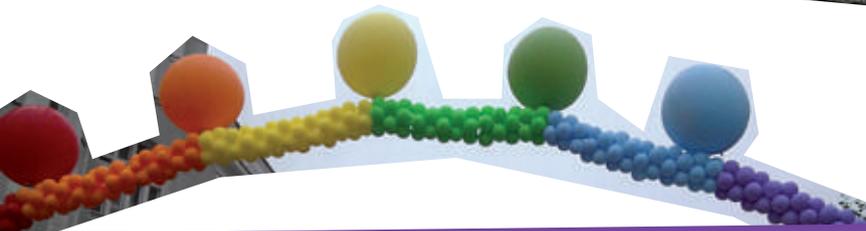
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ALT

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# Section One:

## Introduction & Survival Guide

Willkommen!

Berlin is a city resplendent with history, art and culture while retaining the feel of a much newer place – it was only recently unified in 1989. This ever-evolving metropolis has something to offer everyone and with so much to see and do this guide hopes to help you find your own favourite corners of the city without wasting time, or money.

Why Alt B?

There are so many ways to enjoy Berlin that no two trips will ever be exactly the same. We created this guide to share our own perspective on how best to spend your stay. Alt-B has two main focuses: the old ['alt' in German ;-)] and the alternative. Old Berlin comprises the city's vast, and often dark history; its grand, striking architecture and its many museums and monuments (from page 13). Alternative Berlin gives you a taste of the 21st century and describes a city at the cultural avant-garde. A melting pot welcoming LGBT people (see section, page 75), international food, artists, vegans, musicians, immigrant communities including Turkish, Polish, Vietnamese and many more. With such variety Berlin can be described in the same way as some of its monuments: open to interpretation.

The main population of Berlin is young, predominantly 18 – 40, and personify a mix of the stereotypical frank German demeanour with a modern rebellious restlessness. This is seen in the city's graffiti-ed walls and re-purposed buildings, housing art galleries and a diverse and idiosyncratic club scene; its larger-than-life flea markets, and its many international and fusion restaurants. Berlin is not a place to 'find yourself' but somewhere you can appreciate the chaos and uncertainty of not knowing, or caring, who you are supposed to be.

Where to start?

The structure of this guide places the old alongside the alternative and will give you an idea of the price, atmosphere and quality of each location. All the basics will be covered in the survival, history and transport sections and there are in-depth reviews on the must-see sights as well as our own findings along the way. All of the features detail new and exciting parts of the city, which we hope you enjoy and find just as fascinating, enlightening, delicious and fun as we did!

M. G. & H. C. C.

# SURVIVAL GUIDE

## Learning the Lingo

It is important that you are able to communicate with the locals, particularly if you get lost. Additionally, you will get along better and find people are more helpful when you show that you are making an effort with the language. The following are some basic words and phrases that are a necessity to any tourist in Berlin:

*Hallo*- Hello

*Danke*- Thanks

*Sprechen sie English?* - Do you speak English?

*Bitte*- Please

*Entschuldigung*- Sorry

*Wo ist..?*- Where is..?

*Fahrkarte*- Ticket

*WLAN*- WIFI

*Ich habe nicht verstanden.* - I have not understood.

*Wie sagt man... auf Deutsch?* - How do you say... in German?

*Was kostet das?* – How much does this cost?

*Montag*- Monday

*Dienstag*- Tuesday

*Mittwoch*- Wednesday

*Donnerstag*- Thursday

*Freitag*- Friday

*Samstag*- Saturday

*Sonntag*- Sunday (Top Tip- on Sundays you will find that most shops are closed, including supermarkets)

## Getting to Know the City

Take a bus or walking tour around the city on your first day, this will help you get your bearings and figure out where all of the main tourist spots are in relation to each other. Some companies even do a free tour that you can either come along to or book online.

The 100 Bus is also a great way of seeing many of the tourist highlights on a budget and in one day. It is a hop on, hop off bus which allows you as much or as little time as possible at each destination (see page 38 for full review ). We also suggest that you invest in a map: many shops, cafes, hostels etc. provide them for free, so keep an eye out for a transport one, which is particularly helpful and time saving.

## Dress Code

In short there is not one! Most places in Berlin are very casual, with many bars doubling as cafes during the day. However, prepare to pack for all weather, often it may feel like you experience all four seasons in one day! A light rain jacket that can be stored in your bag at all times is the best option, equally sunglasses and sun cream are necessities too.

## Emergency Numbers

Police- 110

Berlin Police Hotline- (+49 30) 46 64 46 64

Medical emergency/ accident services; fire brigade- 112

## Local Custom and Law

It is customary to tip in restaurants and cafes in Berlin; the acceptable rate is between ten and twenty percent and should be handed over personally to the server. It is considered rude to leave the money on the table. In terms of local law, jay walking is illegal and considering there are many crossings for pedestrians there is no need to anyway.

Berlin is incredibly efficient in terms of recycling and takes it very seriously. Every bin is marked with what is acceptable to put in it and there are people employed to make sure this is obeyed. Moreover stores in Berlin will charge a deposit on most plastic and glass bottles and cans. This pfand (deposit) system encourages people to recycle their rubbish, when you return these items to specific places you can get up to 0.25C back. Many clubs and bars have implemented a similar method, often adding a 1€ deposit to bottles and glasses and giving out badges, or cards as proof of purchase.

### Nightclubs

When going out in Berlin be prepared to not get into your first choice nightclub; have a couple of backups just in case. Also, some are stricter than others and only allow those aged twenty-one and over entry, this is something that you should look into before heading out because you do not want to find out at the door and end up having to look for somewhere else to go while most other places are already filling up. Additionally, you are less likely to get in if you are in an overly large group, this can often lead to some people going to one place and the others having to go elsewhere. On the other hand, Berlin is very casual when it comes to clubbing and drinking; nightclubs are often open till 7am and public drinking is widely accepted. It is not unusual to see people drinking on the tram after a long day's work or before a night out, equally many people head out to sit along the river or in parks in the early evening for a few casual drinks. However, it is dangerous to walk through the parks late at night or early in the morning, particularly by yourself.

### Budgeting

If you are a student, you are in luck because your student card will be accepted at almost anywhere that has a reduced price for admission/tickets. With the many museums that Berlin has to offer, the difference of a few euros off of some of your tickets can really add up. If you are unsure whether they provide a student discount, do not be afraid to ask. If you are not a student, do not worry, there are plenty of ways for you to budget while in Berlin. Check out the Top 10 Best Free Things to Do in Berlin on page for an expansive list that will ensure you have fun while on a budget. Additionally, if you are staying in accommodation in which you have access to a kitchen you could prepare some of your meals there. Berlin has various supermarket options; Netto, Aldi and Lidl seem to be the least expensive.

**K.B.**

# TRANSPORT

Getting around in Berlin is simple and largely stress-free. The city's public transport includes the S-Bahn over-ground train system, the U-Bahn underground trains and extensive Tram and Bus services – all of which are accessible through a single ticket. Despite being a complex, integrated system, it's easily navigable and efficient. The city is also serviced by a network of beige coloured taxis and bike rental is an attractive, affordable option.

Ticket wise, Berlin is separated into three main price categories: the AB, BC and ABC tariffs. The AB will service much of what is covered in this guide, while the ABC may be an option for those looking to see more rural areas, like lakes and palaces, or those travelling to and from the Schönefeld airport. Tickets can be purchased either at a ticket office or from ticket machines around the city, as well as on the trams. As mentioned in the survival section, there are no ticket barriers or turnstiles; tickets must be validated to avoid a fine. Validation is done on a separate machine – these can be found within train platforms and on trams. The S-Bahn is structured around the central S41 and S42 Ringbahn lines, which cover several areas and have connections with many important S, U, and Tram lines. The S5, S7 and S75 lines run at least every five minutes during the day and stop at several sites of interest, including Museum Island and the Television Tower at Alexander Platz.

The U-Bahn, a quick, bustling method of making your way around the city, stops at nearly all major sites (and even the not so major, inconspicuous ones).

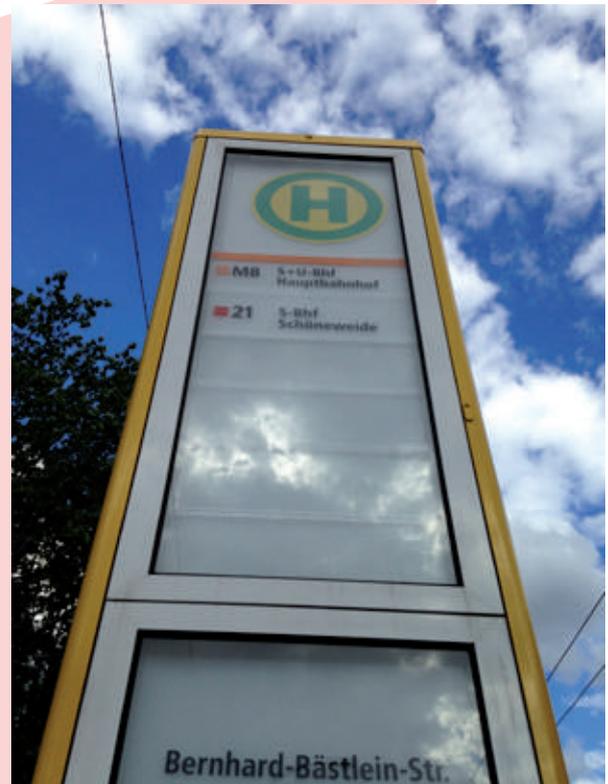
Much like London's Tube or Paris' Metro, the sprawling tunnels to and from specific lines can sometimes seem confusing, and all look relatively similar. However, U-Bahn platforms always have both a two-directional route map for the specific line – be it U8 to Wittenau or Neukölln, or U1 if you want to drop by Kreuzburg or head to Warchauer Straße – a small LED screen with both the expected arrival time of the train, and the direction it is heading in. There are almost always ticket machines on the platform and in the station's lobby.

If a more scenic, ground level method of travel is preferred, the 100 and 200 bus routes (see page 38 for more information), at only 2€ per ticket offer all the sights of Berlin you would see on a typical sightseeing journey, without the indecipherable buzzing from the tour guide you can never quite properly hear. The ride is busy and cramped at almost all times, but is more than worth it for the whistle-stop tour of the city it provides.

The Tram is an efficient, well connected way to traverse the city. More than 20 lines service the city, mostly found in the east. The same ticket used for S and U Bahns can be used on here. Whilst fairly regular, the lines can be quite changeable and routes can get redirected, so allot extra time for important journeys if they are being made by tram.

Almost all the methods of transport you can use to get around the city decrease in number of services after around midnight. This doesn't mean you'll get stranded in the dark though, you might just have to wait a bit longer for that tram or U-Bahn after a night of techno-induced partying. There are also certain night buses available.

The best option for those spending longer than a weekend in the city, or planning to travel a lot, is a day or weekly ticket. A day ticket for one person costs 7.60€ whilst up to five people can travel unlimited for 17.80€; both are valid in all three areas A B & C, and expire at 03.00. A 7-day ticket will cost 37.20€ for travel in areas A B & C and expires at midnight on the seventh day. A more touristy option is the Berlin WelcomeCard, which provides unlimited travel between two and six days and comes with added discounts and free entry into Museum Island – prices range from 20€ to 50€. A single ABC ticket is 3.30€ and is valid for two hours; this may be an option for those looking to walk or cycle more whilst travelling throughout Berlin.



## A.M., M.G.



# TOP 10 FREE THINGS TO DO IN BERLIN

Whether you are travelling on a tight budget or having trouble narrowing down everything that you want to do while in Berlin, we have got you covered. There are lots of options, even if you are looking to be thrifty with your money. There are of course much more than ten free attractions in Berlin, but we have helpfully narrowed it down to the very best options that we consider unmissable.

## 1. The Reichstag

- Take a tour of the dome and experience the magnificent views for free, you can even go up at in the early evening and enjoy the sunset. However: remember to book this in advance to avoid disappointment. (See page 22 for full review).

## 2. The East Side Gallery

- This outdoor gallery is not only magnificent to look at, but also plays an intricate part in Berlin's history. Each piece in the gallery is painted on the Berlin Wall and are all quirky yet political in their own way. This is unmissable and considering it is free there is no reason not to go. See page 44 for full review.

## 3. The Berlin Wall Memorial

- Head over to the memorial and take in the poignant atmosphere at the former 'Death Strip'. There is also a Berlin Wall Memorial Information Centre across the road, which is also free. You will leave more informed as to what it was like living in a divided Berlin. See page 18 for full review

## 4. Topography of Terror

- This museum is both intense and informative; if you are interested in Berlin's dark history or you do not know much about it, then you should definitely make the Topography of Terror a priority on your itinerary. See page 21 for full review.

## 5. The Memorial for the Murdered Jews of Europe

- A beautiful tribute that can be interpreted in many ways. Spend as long as you want wandering amongst all of the columns and decide for yourself what it was meant to symbolize. A trip to Berlin is not complete without a visit here. See page 15.

## 6. Parks

- Berlin has many spectacular parks to offer; some are exquisite gardens free for you to wander around and take in all of the surrounding beauty, whilst others are family orientated and full of sunbathers, cyclists and play parks. Most parks are free entry and allow you to drink alcohol in them; they can be perfect for a few casual drinks with friends or even a barbeque at one of the designated areas.

## 7. Lakes

- There are many different lakes in and around Berlin, and they are great for cooling off on a hot day or even just escaping the busy city atmosphere for a couple of hours. Most are free, though some do charge extra for the pleasure of sitting on the sand. See page 49 for full details.

## 8. Tempelhof

- The old abandoned airport grounds are open for you to go for a wander, a run, picnic or even just to top up your tan. A must see in Berlin! See page 47 for details.

## 9. Bear Pit Karaoke, Mauer Park

- A great way to spend a free Sunday afternoon; listen or get up and sing, either way you will have a good laugh! See page 82 for full review.

## 10. The Brandenburger Tor

- Although it is far from alternative, the beauty, extensive history and significance this monument holds warrants its place on the list. It may be one of the most common selfie stops but you will not want to miss it. See page 40 for full review.

**K.B.**