

iPod Traveller

"The Best in European Travel"



▲ Berlin - TV Tower, Berliner German & EU Flag

Create your own Berlin

Overview

Berlin is one of those 'must see' cities on every travellers' check list. You'll find evidence from past struggles mixed with the flare of modern Berlin coming together to form one fantastic melting pot of creativity and culture.

This city is no stranger to world events, famous to most for the Berlin Wall, a grave symbol of the Cold War and more recently hosting centre stage for the 2006 World Cup. Berlin is arguably one of the most creative cities in the world. The city sees towering new skyscrapers overlooking years of dereliction, that have for years been reinterpreted by the city's determined street artists.

Berlin is a blank canvas, make of it what you will. Each of the many boroughs has something different to offer, from quality home-made cuisine from every corner of the world, to residential courtyards selling everything from second-hand relics to political art.

Top tips for Berlin

Berlin has so much to offer visitors that it would be absurd for us to suggest a 'Top 5' or 'Top 10' places to see. There are some pretty obvious landmarks on the tourist trail that you shouldn't miss, such as Brandenburg Gate, the Television Tower, the Rathaus, Berlin Wall, Checkpoint Charlie and of course the new Reichstag. Below is our pick of places in the East you might not have otherwise visited.

Ampelmann

Ampelmann really is one of those shops you just won't find anywhere else. Germany is a great place for symbols, one of the most iconic ones being the East Berlin Ampelmann. The Ampelmann was created in 1961 by traffic psychologist Karl Peglau, who theorised that people would respond better to traffic signals if they were presented by a friendly character.

Visit the Ampelmann store and their extensive range of quirky products:
Rosenthaler Str. 40-41, 10178, Berlin. Nearest Station Hackescher Mkt. www.ampelmann.de

Kastanienallee (Tram M1, 12 or U-Bahn Eberswalder Str or Rosenth Pl.)

Kastanienallee is a fascinating street to take a wonder down. Situated in the east of Berlin, you will be amazed by the many kitch shops, bars and restaurants. As you heard in the podcast, there are all sorts of shops selling anything and everything, with one difference, it is all beautifully presented by fashion, furniture and product designers.

Aside from the fantastic shops selling everything from three-piece-suites to place mats with photography from Berlin, there are an intriguing number of concept cafes and bars. No two bars are the same, or even similar for that matter. Try pavement dining on 1970's highly stylised furniture or picking your clothes from an old Butchers, where little has changed but the products!

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VEB Orange

For those determined to pick up a worthwhile souvenir of their visit to Berlin, VEB Orange is the only shop you'll need. Another truly unique one-off, VEB only sells products that are over 20 years old and from the former GDR. Surprisingly, after maturing for over two decades all of the items sold here (literally thousands) would turn heads however you wear or use them.

There is something for everyone. VEB sells everything from kitchenware to clothing, including accessories like a former GDR cigarette dispenser!

The shop is suitably located just metres from where the former wall used to stand, and not intentionally, so we're told, beside the only remaining part of the wall left. If you can't find the time to nip down to Berlin, visit their website and ebay store for a very different online shopping experience.

VEB Orange open Monday to Saturday 10.00 - 20.00, Oderberger Str. 14 (nearest U-Bahn Eberswalder Str). T. 030 9788 6886 www.veborange.de

Kwik Shop

The creation of two wonderfully inspired artists, Kwik Shop is concept shopping gone mad. As you walk down Kastanienalle, you can't help but notice Kwik Shop as the shop with a Kwik Kiosk, better resembling a McDonalds drive-thru than an up-market designer shop, selling a few carefully chosen items.

The Kwik Pay window serves two purposes, we're told, the first is to bridge the gap between the store and its customers, by simply cutting a whole in the middle through which they can lean out and others can lean in. The second is to draw attention to the store by offering people a fast paying system.

Kwik Shop has a fairly limited product range, but what they do sell is essential kit for any creative, take for example the City Style Guides.

Visit them on Kastanienalle 44, 10119, Berlin. T. 030 41 99 71 50, www.kwikshop.de

Getting there and away

By Air

Berlin is one of the best connected cities in Europe, owing largely to its central location. The city has three airports, Schoenefeld, Tegel and Tempelhof. Tempelhof is due to close in March and handles European and Private flights, Tegel is the main airport if you are flying from other continents and if you choose to fly low-cost then you will undoubtedly be landing at Schoenefeld, ironically the best connected by fast trains and S-Bahn. By 2011 all Berlin airports will be merged into a brand new BBI (Brandenburg International) based at Schoenefeld.

By Train

The main station is Berlin Hauptbahnhof, although many national and international trains also stop at Ostbahnhof and Zoologischer Garten. Direct trains to Moscow, Paris, Brussels and other major cities. From London, take Eurostar and connect at Brussels for the night train and arrive in Berlin the next morning. www.bahn.de for bookings and timings.



▲ A creative city - Notice anything odd about this U-Bahn Station? email nick@ipodtraveller.net

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