

Berlin – Cool City with Dynamic Past

Berlin is a city that has practically grown from nothing (a divided and bombed out city) to become one of the most diverse and interesting cities in the globe. On 9th November 1989, the entire universe watched as Berliners climbed on a wall that once divided the city and also stood as the Cold War's symbol. It staged an extraordinary comeback over the last 25 years to become capital of cool in Europe despite its dastardly past as Nazi's capital in Germany.



Among the attractions of Berlin are world class art galleries, museums, restaurants, music venues, beautiful public parks, boutiques and nightclub scene that can only be rivaled by very few cities. The good news for tourists is that they can enjoy all this for a fraction of what you would spend in Paris or London enjoying the alternative scene that makes the city so cool.

It is important to note that the reunification of Berlin was not easy and the years while the Wall finally came down can only be described as anarchic and wild. It took about 10–15 years but today the city is on an overdrive.

A lot has changed over the years and some of the notable ones include Kreuzberg. This was an area that was once flanked by Berlin Wall on all sides. It offered cheap housing attracting many immigrants who mostly came from Turkey and the neighborhoods also drew squatters, hippies, punk rockers and artists. Nowadays, it's not as cheap as before but it still maintains an edge that reminds people of the New York's East Village. This is the best place for people who enjoy parties.

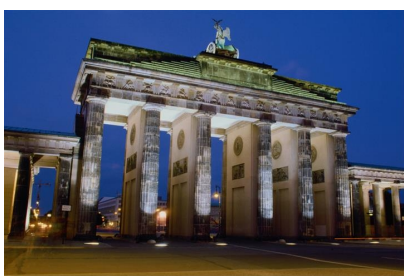


Kreuzberg is what Prenzlauer Berg (East Berlin Neighborhood) used to be after the wall crumbled down. It was once home to students, dissidents and working class Berliners. This was actually one of the most interesting parts of the city after the wall finally came down. It can be described as a former brewery turned into an amazing cultural and entertainment center. All the apartments that were constructed over a century ago were also refurbished as art galleries, cafes and boutiques opened. Eventually the

students and dissidents grew up and started families and now you can see strollers everywhere.

There are some things that you will probably only experience in the great city of Berlin. For instance, it is possible to find a bar that operates on an honor system. This is where patrons only pay 2 euro to rent a wine glass and they can fill it up as often as they like. Once a person is done, they only pay what they think they owe.

The city also offers unique dining experience where you can choose from the numerous restaurants available where you would like to eat. All of these offer creative menus where you can get to indulge in pizza that has been made with naan.



Here you can also run into very interesting projects such as Tuntenhaus. This is a housing project that is run by lesbians and gays something that is well known for its graffiti covered walls. Graffiti as an art become quite popular even before the wall was brought down. West Berlin side was used as a canvas by various artists while the other side (East Berlin) stayed blank. After the Wall was brought down, artists quickly spread their work to the East. There are some characters that recur on the walls such as a wide eyed playful girl, a soldier who is carrying a rifle that has been signed by El Bocho a famous Berlin artist in sketch form and a little girl who has a rose bouquet on her hand and horns on her hand that has been signed by Alias.

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