nileGUIDE
ALL YOU NEED TO PLAN YOUR PERFECT TRIP

Go East

Berlin, 1 Day

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Guide Description

AUTHOR NOTE: This day to night trip will take you to some of the most famous sights in the old East Berlin - from Soviet war memorials to the Berlin Wall. Yummy food stops included along the way, quirky boutiques and old cobbled streets a-plenty. Wind up watching a film at an open air cinema and then check out one of Berlin's hottest clubs to dance the night away.

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Itinerary Overview

things to do
restaurants
hotels
nightlife

Day 1 - Berlin

Hochbahnhof Schlesisches Tor
Berlin's most beautiful underground station

Freischwimmer
Dine on the water

Treptower Park
Riverside park with Soviet memorial and observatory

Molecule Man

Oberbaumbrücke
Double-Decker Bridge

East Side Gallery
Art on the Berlin Wall

Simon-Dach-Straße
Booming nightlife

Rockcafe Halford
For die-hard metal fans

Cassiopeia
Bar, frieluftkino, skatehall, club, outdoor area

Maria am Ostbahnhof (Club Maria at Ostbahnhof)
Rock out on the rails

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Day 1 - Berlin

QUICK NOTE

contact:
tel: +49 (0)30 25 0025
fax: +44 (0)30 2500 2424

location:
Schlesische Straße
Berlin 10997

hours:
Call for details

1 Hochbahnhof Schlesisches Tor

wcities

DESCRIPTION: Elevated high above ground level in a lively part of Kreuzberg, Schlesisches Tor U-Bahn station is one of the most attractive stations in the city. Bestowed with beautiful Romanesque arches and towering stone columns, wooden bay windows and riveted iron beams—this 100 year old construction unifies Gothic, Renaissance and industrial elements. Situated at the end of the line in West Berlin, this used to be the place where the West ended and the East began. Yet nowadays, the trains continue eastward over the Oberbaumbrücke bridge into the former socialist sector. While the station itself hasn't changed much over the years, political events have opened up new horizons. © wcities.com

MY NOTE: Start your day by travelling with the U-Bahn (Tube Line 1) to Schlesisches Tor. Take a stroll down Schlesische Strasse, checking out the funky clothes boutiques on the way, and see the original Schlesische Tor - one of 12 original gates to the city - on your left.

contact:
tel: +49 30 6107 4309
fax: +49 30 6951 6735
www.freischwimmer-berlin.de

location:
Vor dem Schlesichen Tor 2a
Berlin 10997

2 Freischwimmer

DESCRIPTION: Freischwimmer is a beautiful restaurant in a beautiful, open air wooden pavilion in the water. The menu is short and sweet, and you will feel as though you're dining in an exotic lagoon.

MY NOTE: A great place to stock up on energy for the day ahead. This waterside cafe and bar nestles cosily on the canal between Kreuzberg and Treptower Park. They have a brunch buffet on weekends with a wide selection of yummy food and drink, from pasta, to eggs, to couscous. During the week breakfast, lunch and dinner is served. Stays open late so you can enjoy a cocktail here in the evening too.

contact:
tel: +49 (0)30 25 0025
(Touristen Information)
http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/umwelt/berlin_move/en/laufstrecken/laufstrecke6.shtml

location:
Puschkinallee
Berlin

hours:
Call for details

3 Treptower Park

wcities

DESCRIPTION: Treptower Park lines the banks of the river Spree to the south east of the city centre and was created by Johann Gustav Meyer in 1876. Nowadays the park offers a diverse selection of outdoor fun with BBQ boat rides, ping-pong tables and grassy river side sunbathing areas. Located in the former East German district of Treptow, a grand soviet memorial was erected in the park in 1947, dedicated to the 5000 soviet soldiers, killed in action, who are buried there. An abandoned fun park with a big wheel and miniature train set lies to the south of the park just past the Insel der Jugend, or island of youth, a popular place for outdoor summer parties and the Berliners favourite summer past time – grilling. © NileGuide

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MY NOTE: Take a walk through this beautiful park on the banks of the River Spree to start off the afternoon. At the end of the park you will find a soviet war memorial, an old abandoned fun park and the "island of youth". You can spend an afternoon with the locals, playing ping pong, grilling up some sausages or taking a stroll along the river.

contact:
http://www.berlin.de/berlinbilder/data/treptowers_moleculeman.html

Molecule Man

DESCRIPTION: Public art sculpture.

MY NOTE: Walk up from Treptower Park over the river and you will see this magnificent statue dedicated to the reunification of Berlin. East and West embrace against the backdrop of the Oberbaum Bridge and the centre of Berlin.

contact:
tel: +49 (0)30 25 0025 (Touristen Information)
fax: +49 (0)30 2500 2424 (Touristen Information)
http://www.berlin.de/mauer/grenzuebergaenge/oberbaumbruecke/index.de.php

location:
Am Oberbaum
Berlin 10243

hours:
24 hrs

4 Oberbaumbrücke

wcities

DESCRIPTION: The buses are not the only double-deckers in Berlin. There is also a double-decker bridge, the Oberbaumbrücke, which spans the River Spree between Friedrichshain and Kreuzberg. Traffic speeds along the lower part of the bridge while trains steam over the upper section. Built a hundred years ago in the red-brick gothic style popular at the time, the Oberbaumbrücke is crowned by two towers. The bridge got its name from the tree-trunks which were used to shut down the river to traffic at night. © wcities.com

MY NOTE: Walk up Stralauer Allee to see the MTV studios on the left. If you continue straight up you will reach the Oberbaum Brücke.

contact:
tel: +49 (0)30 251 7159
fax: +49 (0)30 2529 9831
http://www.eastsidegallery.com

location:
Mühlenstrasse
Berlin 10243

hours:
Call for details

5 East Side Gallery

wcities

DESCRIPTION: The biggest outdoor gallery in the world, the East Side Gallery runs along the largest remaining section of the Berlin Wall, constructed by the Soviets in 1961 to divide East from West Berlin. When the Iron Curtain fell in 1989 many parts of the wall were destroyed as the city of Berlin was reunited following the end of the Cold War. 160 international artists were invited to paint giant murals along the wall that runs along the River Spree in the eastern district of Freidrichshain. The East Side Gallery has remained untouched for the last 20 years, however its future is uncertain. Restoration is planned however regeneration of the area may threaten this political landmark. © NileGuide

MY NOTE: The largest remaining section of the Berlin Wall stretches out along the river from the Oberbaum Bridge towards the centre of town. This is the largest open air gallery in the world, on which giant murals were painted by 160 artists in 1991.

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contact:
tel: +49 (0)30 25 0025 (Touristen Information)
http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/wohnen/stadterneuerung/de/warschauer/simondachstrasse.shtml

location:
Simon-Dach-Straße
Berlin 10245

hours:
24 hrs

6 Simon-Dach-Straße

wcities

DESCRIPTION: Friedrichshain's answer to Mitte's Oranienburger Straße, Simon-Dach-Straße is home to a vast variety of pubs, cafés, bars and restaurants, the most popular being the legendary Astro Bar. Many of the bars here are fairly new additions to the nightlife scene yet Simon-Dach-Straße has already become extremely popular with students and other young Berliners and is without doubt one of the liveliest places in the eastern part of town. During the warmer months, the pavements on both sides of the street are lined with benches and tables which join together to form one huge bar. The street is fairly narrow and in summertime the trees meet in the middle of the street to form a natural rooftop. © wcities.com

MY NOTE: After all that culture you might be ready for some grub. Walk up into the old eastern district of Friedrichshain and to the beautiful neighborhood of Simon-Dach-Strasse. Here you will find a wide variety of international restaurants, outdoor seating areas, tree-lined streets and quirky boutiques. Shop and eat till you're full!

contact:
tel: +49 30 4193 5333
http://www.halford-berlin.de

location:
Boxhagener Strasse 19-20
Berlin 10245

hours:
Daily 6p-Onwards

7 Rockcafe Halford

Photo courtesy of Rockcafe Halford

DESCRIPTION: When the craving for live metal music strikes, head to Rockcafe Halford for all the headbanging good fun you could want. Here you can mingle with many a tattooed metal fan, resplendent in piercings. The interior is dark and often crowded, and a great setting for live performances. The club also hosts a variety of record release parties that draw large crowds. As a bonus, after a night of wild partying, you can hang around for breakfast at 4a. For a complete list of upcoming events, be sure to visit the website. © wcities.com

MY NOTE: Grab a first drink and hang out with some local metalers. It's an experience and will get you in the mood for a party!

contact:
tel: +49 30 4738 5949
www.cassiopeia-berlin.de

location:
Revaler Strasse
Berlin 10245

8 Cassiopeia

Cassiopeia

DESCRIPTION: Cassiopeia, located in the center of Friedrichshain is a 4,000 meter facility, that features club lounges, an exhibition area, a beer garden, Berlin's highest climbing tower and an indoor skate park. The clubs are booked mainly for big events, festivals and concerts like the Fete de la Musique and Blockparty which draws in the crowds. The concerts performed here feature different genres of music ranging from hip-hop to funk and rock to hardcore. This multi-faceted venue always has something up it's sleeve and promises a pleasurable time always. © wcities.com

MY NOTE: This place is great, especially in summer. There is an outdoor cinema where you can watch German, English and

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French films. A skate hall, cafe, indoor and outdoor bars and club offer something for everyone. Music ranges from hiphop to live bands to 80s to techno.

contact:
tel: 49 30 2123 8190
fax: 49 30 2123 8191
http://www.clubmaria.de/

location:
Stralauer Platz 34/35
Berlin 10423

9 Maria am Ostbahnhof (Club Maria at Ostbahnhof)

DESCRIPTION: This nightclub and discotheque in the Friedrichshain district features DJ's and artists from all over Europe, and is a top choice for many international rock and indie bands. The venue is unassuming at best, and though it does not boast all the amenities of other bigger clubs, it has a genuine rock appeal that keeps the music front and center. Be sure to check out the website for updated schedules of concerts and events, as there is always something new and hot to be seen at Club Maria. © wcities.com

MY NOTE: If your up for a big night and ready to go on take a cab over to Maria. It's a big, comfortable and lively club set in an old factory on the river. They have club nights on the weekend with music ranging from techno to drum and bass to house and showcase big live acts such as DJ Krush to indie bands like The Kills.

Maria am Ostbahnhof

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Berlin Snapshot

Local Info

Berlin has come a long way since the wreckage of World War II-- and since the Berlin Wall came down. Today it's a thriving and open metropolis that's always in the conversation when people talk about Europe's coolest city. It's home to a vibrant arts scene, revitalized old neighborhoods, some of the continent's most innovative new architecture and trendy urban eats.

Sights

If it's your first time in Berlin, you should consider a StattReisen historic walking tour or a City Circle sightseeing tour via bus. Both will give you a quick feel for the city and take you to major attractions and highlights. With or without a guided tour, your itinerary should at a minimum include the Berliner Dom cathedral, the imposing Charlottenburg Palace andMuseumsinsel(Museum Island). To get a spectacular aerial view of the city, climb the TV Tower at Alexanderplatz. For fresh air, spend some time at the charmingTiergarten, the largest and most popular park in Berlin. It's full of trees, flowers and the restored Berlin Zoo. For culture, you can take in a performance at the renownedTheater undKomodie am Kurfurstendamm or a show by the Berliner Ensemble.

Shopping

Travelers who like to shop will find all they can handle here. There's a bewildering array of designer boutiques, malls, flea markets, galleries and more. If you're looking for branded and specialty items, spend some time atKurfurstendamm or Friedrichstrasse in the city center. The Potsdamer Platz Arkaden is another area worth a visit, with about 130 shops selling clothing, high-end fashion accessories and electronics. There are also a lot of cafes and restaurants in the area. If you're hunting for bargains, make your way to Strasse des 17 Juni during the weekend, as this is the best-known flea market in Berlin.

Dining and Nightlife

A hotel room in Berlin is strictly a place to sleep-- and even sleeping is optional, considering all the fun things to do after dark. You can get a taste of any world cuisine among the many restaurants in the city but try to devote at least one dinner to a hearty Berlin specialty like currywurst and fries or bratkartoffeln(potatoes fried with bacon and onion). And, of course, have a Berliner donut, just for JFK's sake. A large number of coffee shops have emerged in Berlin and almost all are jammed with coffee lovers, hanging out and talking till the wee hours. If you like gaming, check out the casinos, including the Casino Berlin at Alexanderplatz or the Spielbank Berlin at Potsdamer Platz. You will also find a number of theaters, concert venues and opera houses to fill your bill if you're a fan of the fine arts.
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History

Berlin is in good shape- and that'sdespite, notbecause, of its 800-year long history.

Back in 1300, the two neighboring trading towns of Berlin and Coelln joined forces centering in the district now calledMitte(meaning"center"). All but destroyed by the Thirty Years War, the young city soon invited in its first batch of immigrants to make up for the loss in population: French Protestants, persecuted in their home country and looking for religious freedom were a welcome addition to Berlin's workforce. Their influence can be seen today in the area around the Französischer Dom(French Cathedral) or in the Berlin dialect, speakers of which still call a sidewalk atrottoir.

It then fell on the Prussian"Soldier King," Frederick William I, to develop the city. In 1709, he made Berlin the capital, and his son, Frederick the Great, strengthened Prussia's role as a major player in Europe. At this time, the Prussian court was a cradle of enlightenment, frequently visited by the philosopher Voltaire. The King's appreciation of the humanities paved the way for a new era of classicist architecture, and fantastic buildings such as the ornate Konzerthaus and the imposing Altes Museum were erected. Berlin's love affair with the arts is reflected in the fact that the city still boasts three opera houses- the Deutsche Oper, Staatsoper, and Komische Oper.

The Napoleonic occupation of Berlin in 1806 was met with fervent patriotism and produced a powerful liberal reform movement. However, the bourgeois revolution of 1848 was short-lived, and William I became emperor of the Second German Reich in 1871, with Berlin as its capital.

Berlin boomed during the Founding Years at the end of the 19th century. Industrial giant Siemens built a modern underground system capable of transporting hundreds of thousands of people every day. Scientists such as Robert Koch led the world in research and development, while artists like Gerhard Hauptmann and Wassily Kandinsky paved new ground in the arts.

All this was cut short by the First World War. After the war, Berlin became the focus of the failed 1918/19 revolution and went on to become the capital of Germany's first fragile democracy, the Weimar Republic, in the 1920s. The city assumed the status of a glamorous arts and entertainment center, while at the same time being an industrial powerhouse. At the time, artists such as Brecht, Gropius and Feininger forged a legacy that left a lasting impression throughout Europe.

Berlin remained the capital of Germany during the Nazi era. Hitler even envisioned the city as"Germania," the capital of a global empire, and began to leave his megalomaniac mark on the architecture and the infrastructure of the city. Berliners suffered under Nazi rule, especially the persecuted left-wing movements and, of course, the large Jewish community. More than 60,000 Berlin Jews, nearly half of the city's population, died in the Holocaust. Thousands more fled the country. Jewish cultural life has only recently known a revival(in the Scheuenviertel).

At the end of World War II, Berlin was reduced to little more than a pile of rubble, its population halved. The Potsdam Agreement divided the city into four sectors, each of which was ruled by one of the Allies- the USA, the USSR, Britain and France. All too soon Berlin

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became the focus and symbol of Cold War animosities(and the preferred location for spy movies). While the German Democratic Republic proclaimed East Berlin its capital, the three western sectors remained under Allied supervision until 1990. On both sides of the Wall — erected in 1961 to stop East Berliners from fleeing, Berlin continued to spearhead reform movements, such as the peace movement in the West and opposition to the one-party regime in the East. Thirty five years later, during his 1998 visit to Berlin, US President Clinton would make a point of echoing John F. Kennedy's famous words,"Ich bin ein Berliner"("I am a Berliner").

The fall of the Wall in 1989 wasn't entirely unexpected. Level-headed politicians on both sides of the Iron Curtain had been working towards a cautious reconciliation since the early 1970s, but few expected the Wall to fall overnight. An entire generation had grown up knowing Berlin only as a divided city.

Nowadays, Berlin is once again the capital of a democratic state, yet unification is very much a work in progress.
©

Hotel Insights

Whatever your budget and whatever your taste, the choice of places to stay in Berlin is vast. From astronomically expensive establishments boasting every conceivable luxury to basic backpackers' hostels; from mammoth international hotel chains to small, family-run boarding houses, this city has it all.

Changing Appeal

Much has changed in the decade since reunification. Many of Berlin's major hotels are now situated in the eastern part of the city, such as the legendary Hotel Adlon next to the Brandenburg Gate or the wonderful Four Seasons on Gendarmenmarkt. Many of West Berlin's traditional flagships such as the Kempinski or InterContinental are now struggling to hold their own against the young upstarts from the east. In fact, it isn't just the hotels that are suffering. The whole of the western part of town seems to have lost its attraction in recent years. Both tourists and locals now tend to head east for shopping, wining and dining, or sightseeing.

At the opposite end of the price scale, another kind of a revolution has taken place. Since Berlin's first backpackers' hostel, Fabrik in Kreuzberg, opened in 1995, similar establishments have mushroomed all over the city. Backpackers now flood to places like Circus. Berlin's traditional youth hostels, such as the extremely central Jugendgästehaus Berlin, are equally inexpensive but have a slightly moth-eaten image in comparison to the trendy new backpackers places.

Berlin is a city of two centers, and this is reflected in the concentration of accommodation aroundKurfürstendamm in the western city center andUnter den Linden in the eastern center.

Charlottenburg Most hotels in the western city center are located on Kurfürstendamm itself or in the quieter side-streets just off the main strip. Many of the major hotels can be found on the upper end of"Ku'damm" between Uhlandstraße and the Memorial Church, such as Kempinski and Steigenberger on Los-Angeles-Platz, or the Savoy on Fasanenstraße. Cheaper accommodation can be found in a number of modern, medium-sized establishments such as Hollywood Media or the Concept Hotel. If you're looking for something slightly smaller yet equally extravagant, try Bleibtreu or Hecker's. Other more intimate and inexpensive alternatives in the western center are Hotel California and Hotel Augusta.

The area between Breitscheidplatz and Lützowplatz is home to several deluxe hotels: The Palace and the InterContinental, as well as the Schweizerhof, the Grand Hotel Esplanade and Hotel Berlin, one of the largest hotels in town.

Mitte

On the other side of the Brandenburg Gate- in Berlin's historic eastern city center there are several more deluxe establishments vying for potential clients: The Westin Grand Berlin, the Hilton Berlin Hotel, the Four Seasons and the Maritim proArte Hotel Berlin. With the exception of the Hotel Adlon, none are situated directly on Unter den Linden, but in the atmospheric Friedrichstadt quarter near Gendarmenmarkt. Another place worthy of mention is the Hotel Agon on Alexanderplatz.

In all the above-mentioned areas, you'll find that you have to pay a bit extra for the privilege of being so centrally located. But if you don't need your lodgings to be totally central, there are plenty of places that offer great value for the money that are slightly out of the city center. Public transport in Berlin is very reliable and runs throughout the night, so it's generally no problem if you're staying in a hotel slightly further afield. In fact, it can often be a relief to get away from the hustle and bustle of the tourist areas and immerse yourself in the real Berlin. Located next to the Exhibition Center are a couple of more affordable options. For example, the D:O:M:I:C:I:L:, the Kanthotel or the Ibis as well as family-run pensions host guests during major trade shows at the Messe. That means that prices can increase dramatically at certain times of the year. **Schöneberg, Kreuzberg, Wilmersdorf& Tiergarten**

The Western residential districts of Schöneberg, Kreuzberg, Wilmersdorf and Tiergarten all have a wide range of places to stay, catering to all tastes and all budgets. And it's not always the case that the classy neighborhoods are full of luxurious lodgings and that less well-off districts are full of dingy dives. Thus you'll come across the moderately priced Hotel St. Michaels-Heim in the heart of exclusive Grunewald, the pricey Park Consul(with private golf facilities) in working-class Moabit and the elegant turn-of-the-century Hotel Riehmers Hofgarten in multicultural Kreuzberg.

Prenzlauer Berg& Friedrichshain

On the other hand, the Eastern residential districts still only have a limited choice of medium-sized hotels, with the Park Inn in Prenzlauer Berg and Upstalsboom in Friedrichshain being two rare examples. There are however, plenty of smaller hotels and guesthouses to choose from, such as Hotel Greifswald near Kollwitzplatz.

Lodging Near the Airports

Last but not least, a large number of hotels are congregated around Berlin's three airports. The Dorint Budget Hotel Tegel, Mercure Tempelhof Airport and the enormous Estrel(1,125 rooms) not far from

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Schönefeld airport in Neukölln, are the most prominent examples.
©

Restaurants Insights

Before the fall of the Wall, eating in Berlin was regarded as a minor sideline to the more important matter of drinking. Guests wanting to sample a"typical Berlin dish" could easily be dissuaded by the mere mention of such alleged delicacies as pig's ear with yellow peas. A liquid diet was definitely the safer option.

Fortunately, Berlin's gastronomic landscape has since changed beyond recognition. Gourmets are now spoiled for choice as more and more first class restaurants open their doors to the public. Great food can also be found in many cafés, which offer a selection of national and international dishes at reasonable prices. Budget travelers are well catered to by hundreds of Imbiss fast food restaurants- once the realm of the greasy sausage- but now brimming with Asian and Middle Eastern delights for just a few Euros.

Charlottenburg

Chic and up-market. The best restaurants and cafés in the western city center are found in the side-streets between Kurfürstendamm and Kantstraße as well as in the area around leafy Savignyplatz.

Gourmets with a deep wallet should pay a visit to Ana e Bruno for exquisite Italian, while those on a normal budget could try the legendary pizzas at XXII Apostel. Otherwise head to Tai Ji for some great Chinese, to Le Canard for fantastic French or to Hitit for Turkish delights with an Oriental flair. Celebrity spotters will be in their element at Paris Bar, a French bistro better known for its well-heeled clientèle and late-night cocktails than for its food.

Fans of the traditional Berlin Currywurst sausage couldn't do any better than at the Imbiss stand at Amtsgerichtplatz in Kantstraße. The queues are always long, but it's well worth the wait! Good bets for a lazy Sunday brunch are Restaurant 31 and Pasticceria e Rosticceria Italiana. And, if you're looking for a bit of pre-Wall flair, pop into Zwiebelfisch, Diener or Dicke Wirtin- traditional Berlin pubs that haven't changed in years.

Friedrichshain

A popular hang-out for students and young Berliners. Friedrichshain is the last bastion of Berlin's"alternative" subculture and is the best district to explore if you're looking for hip bars, cool cafés and underground clubs. Most are centered around Simon-Dach-Straße, Boxhagener Platz and Schreinerstraße. But at the rate that new places are opening up, it won't be long before Friedrichshain loses its insider feel.

Check out the spacey Astro Bar, the cocktail lounge next door to Dachkammer, and finish off the evening in Tagung, a popular bar-cum-club intriguingly decorated with East German political memorabilia. If you can still handle breakfast after a long night on the town, Leander and Apotheke have a good selection at knock-down prices.

Kreuzberg

For conservative radicals. Once a haven for punks and anarchists, Kreuzberg has certainly evolved since the fall of the Wall. While you can still savor some of that old revolutionary flavor in a number of bars around Oranienstraße and Wiener Straße, southern Kreuzberg(around Bergmannstraße) is now dominated by chic cafés and exclusive restaurants.

Riehmers Hofgarten, Altes Zollhaus and Medici serve up some of the best"neue deutsche Küche" in town, while places like Austria and Jolesh are good bets for more traditional fare. Francophiles should head for Le Cochon Bourgeois, while lovers of Mediterranean cuisine should pay a visit to Sale e Tabacchi. Kreuzberg is also home to thousands of Turkish immigrants. So when in Rome... the Imbiss stand next to Schlesisches Tor U-Bahn station is widely reputed to have the bestdöner kebabs this side of Istanbul.

Many of Berlin's most scenic cafés are situated on the banks of the canal at Paul-Lincke-Ufer, the perfect place for a lazy Sunday afternoon brunch. Sit down, relax and watch the world go by from the gardens of Café am Ufer or Café Übersee, or wait until night falls and mingle with Kreuzberg's young generation in Ankerklause.

If you're looking for a taste of legendary hard-core Kreuzberg, check out the likes of Madonna or Intertank. Roses is a popular spot among the gay crowd. Slightly softer, but still very"Kreuzberg" are Morena and Wiener Blut, both of which are highly recommended. If you're the more traditional type, pay a visit to Yorckschlösschen, a rustic pub with hearty local fare and live jazz on Sundays. And when it comes to tradition, there's nothing like Golgatha's beer garden on a warm summer evening.

Mitte

The undisputed center of Berlin nightlife, packed with bars, cafés, restaurants and clubs. While tourists now outnumber locals in many of the establishments around Oranienburger Straße, at least you won't have to search for long until you find a place that you like. From the sleek Café Orange to the wacky Café Zapata in Stachelschweine Kabarett Theater, the Oranienburger Straße strip has something for everyone. But if you want to avoid the masses and fancy a bit of local flair, try Café Ici or Hackbarth's in nearby Auguststraße. Alternatively, head for Mittendrin in Sophienstraße.

The area around Hackesche Höfe is equally busy. Popular lunchtime venues are Café Hackescher Hof and Yosoy tapas bar, evening favorites include the South American restaurant-bar Brazil, while night-owls flock to Cocktailbar Baal or Sage Club. Gourmets can savor the finest new international cuisine at Borchardt and Vau while fans of hearty German food will be in their element at Stäv, Volksgaststätte or Zur Letzten Instanz, said to be Berlin's oldest restaurant.

Prenzlauer Berg

The fashionable, up-and-coming district. Particularly during the warm summer months, beautiful, tree-lined Kollwitzplatz acts as a magnet for tourists who descend in droves on the atmospheric cafés and restaurants that adorn the quaint nineteenth century square.

Locals, on the other hand, prefer to meet at cafés such Anita Wronski and Sowohl Als Auch, or at late-night bars like Luxus Bar. If you wish to drink in a smoke-free atmosphere, check out Cafe Mia. Prater is also a popular destination with a fantastic beer garden.

There's good food aplenty to be had in Prenzlauer Berg: check out the breakfast buffet at Li(bi)do or Schall& Rauch, the great antipasti at Il Pane e le Rose, the spicy curries at Mao Thai, the hearty Russian dishes and live folk music at Pasternak or the Kurdish specialties

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consumed on traditional floor cushions at Miro. For those looking for a quick snack: Zarskes Gaststätte.

Schöneberg

Plenty to do here. Many of the cafés and bars near Winterfeldtplatz and Goltzstraße sprung up in the 1980s, when Schöneberg wasthe place to go out in West Berlin. Check out cult favorites such as Café M and Mutter; try one of the superb cocktails at Green Door.

Schöneberg is also the focal point of Berlin's vibrant gay community, with countless gay bars and clubs located around Motzstraße and Fuggerstraße. Lenz die Bar is popular in the early evening, Tom's Bar, Hafen, Connection or Begine later on.

When it comes to eating in Schöneberg, you're spoiled for choice. Many Berliners come from far afield to breakfast in style at places such as Tomasa, April and Montevideo. Gourmets should head straight to Bamberger Reiter or Fischer's Restaurant for classic and modern German dishes and an enormous selection of wines. Otherwise, try Cheban for great Lebanese, Storch for traditional Alsace cuisine and Baharat or Habibi if you're in the mood for a quick falafel.

Tiergarten

Pricey and not particularly exciting, the southern part of Tiergarten is a popular haunt for businessmen, politicians and visitors staying in the hotels around Lützowplatz. Hotel bars and restaurants naturally dominate the gastronomic scene, the highlight being Harry's New York Bar in the Grand Hotel Esplanade. Guests looking to venture out of the hotel in the evening could try the wonderful Mediterranean cuisine on offer at Am Karlsbad. Alternatively, wine and dine with Berlin's high-society in Paris-Moskau, a first class restaurant with a sumptuous summer terrace, and finish off the evening with a cocktail in the Bar am Lützowplatz, Berlin's high temple of drinking.

If you're here on a warm summer evening, take a stroll through the idyllic Tiergarten park to Café am Neuen See- one of Berlin's most attractive beer gardens- or to the popular Schleusen Krug on the Landwehrkanal. A real Berlin institution is Café Einstein, an exquisite coffee house with original 1920s flair- perfect for a relaxing brunch or an afternoon coffee break.

Wilmersdorf

This area caters to a young and affluent crowd. The cafés and restaurants around Ludwigkirchplatz heave with students during weekends. See and be seen in places like Café Solo or Manzinis, head to Jimmy's Diner for dinner and finish off the evening with a cocktail in the earthy Berlin Bar. If you're just looking for somewhere to relax during the day, try the glorious Café im Literaturhaus, a peaceful oasis just a stone's throw from Ku'damm.
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Nightlife Insights

Famous throughout the world as a Mecca for culture and entertainment, many people would claim that Berlin is itself little more than one big entertainment complex.
Yet, there are some special places in this entertainment nirvana, the best of which we shall list here.

Cinema

Berlin boasts over 100 cinemas, from ultra-modern multi-screen complexes to traditional film theaters such as the UFA Palast. A particularly atmospheric establishment is the Soviet-style International on Karl-Marx-Allee. For more obscure films try the Acud, where you won't be disturbed by hundreds of popcorn-junkies. And don't worry if your German isn't up to par, as places like the Odeon and Babylon Kino feature the latest flicks for English speakers, whereas the Cinéma Paris features movies for the French crowd.

Comedy

Well, if you can take some heavy satire, Berlin Mitte is the place to be. From the legendary Distel to the Chamäleon's late night shows in the Hackesches Hof Theater. Charlottenburg also has plenty to offer, with its traditional Wühlmäuse,Stachelschweine and the more comedy-oriented Bar jeder Vernunft.

Theater

Theater in Berlin can mean a lot of different things, such as controversial contemporary Anglo-American drama at theBaracke or a light comedy with mass appeal on Ku'damm(Komödie& Theater am Kurfürstendamm). While director Frank Castorf heckles the audience at the Volksbühne am Rosa Luxemburg Platz, veteran Claus Peymann reinterprets Brecht at the Berliner Ensemble. International avant-garde dance troupes step it up at the Hebbel Theater, acrobats and magicians put a spell on the Wintergarten, while the Grips-Theater interacts with its young audience. Anglophiles should check out the English Theater Berlin(not opera, but fringe theater).

Music

Berlin is also a great place for music lovers. Even though David Bowie and Iggy Pop are long gone, Marilyn Manson is still supposed to enjoy some absinth around the corner. Top addresses include Kreuzberg's Junction Bar or Bebop for jazz, the Sage Club for Afro-beats and hip-hop and the SO 36 for alternative/punk/rock. Big gigs take place at the Arena and Columbiahalle. Classical aficionados have to make the painful choice between three opera houses- or simply head straight to the Philharmonie to listen to the world-famous Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra.

Alternative Culture

All of the above too middle-of-the-road for you? Check out the innumerable centers of alternative culture that Berlin is famous for. The UFA-Fabrik, for example, is the place to be in summer, while the Kulturbrauerei is good for alternative theater, art and concerts. A kaleidoscope of modern Chinese art, salsa parties or readings by writers from developing countries are on the agenda at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt, while the Pfefferberg concentrates on the younger, hipper, multi-cultural clientele of reggae and rai concerts.

Clubs

It's getting late and you want to move your dancing feet? The clubs around Rosenthaler Platz have the remedy! Some are tucked away in backyards and have irregular opening hours, others are hard to find for lack of a name over the door, but all are open until dawn. The Sophienclub quenches the pop, soul and Latin thirst; for techno, head to Friedrichshain's Berghain or to Tresor‘s new location on Köpenicker Straße. Berlin counts numerous nightclubs. Further options include the Watergate Club or the Pulp Mansion.

Other Options

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Confused or undecided? The Potsdamer Platz offers- after shopping in the US-style Arkaden- many entertainment options, including a casino, a 3D IMAX Movie Theater, a musical theater, the Theater am Potsdamer Platz and a multi-screen cinema, the Cinemaxx. But if you're looking for something more typical, you'll always find plenty to do in the two streets that even Berliners love to confuse,Oranienstraße in Kreuzberg and Oranienburger Straße in Mitte, each with a mix of restaurants, shops, bars, cafés, movie theaters and music venues that will guarantee a great evening out.
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Things to Do Insights

Most cities only have one center, but Berlin has two. Although East and West Berlin have successfully interwoven to form a more-or-less homogeneous city, city planners are still trying to cope with the"problem" of two centers.

Brandenburg Gate

For those in Berlin for the first time, a stroll down Unter den Linden, Berlin's most prestigious boulevard, is a must. Begin at the Brandenburg Gate, situated on Pariser Platz, which was once the border of East and West Berlin. Today Brandenburg Gate is a symbol of German reunification. This broad, tree-lined avenue contains many of Berlin's historic landmarks, including the Max Liebermann Haus. Near the Reichstag, home of the German government, and the Brandenburg Gate, lies a huge field of concrete blocks. The Holocaust Memorial, formally known as the Monument to the Murdered Jews in Europe, provides information about the Jews who were under the wrath of Nazi forces. For an in-depth look into 2000 years of Jewish history, pay a visit to the Jewish Museum. Also, nearby on niederkirchnerstraße is the Topographie des Terrors, which features an exhibition recounting the history of Nazi crimes. Restaurants are mostly located inside the hotels in this area, yet plenty of food stands provide visitors with refreshments and snacks.

Friedrichstraße

Friedrichstraße was the focal point of Berlin's thriving nightlife during the"Golden Twenties," but now has become filled with ritzy shopping malls like Galeries Lafayette. Behind the Friedrichstadt-Passagen is Gendarmenmarkt, one of Berlin's most beautiful squares, featuring the graceful Deutscher Dom and Französischer Dom. Visit the popular Haus am Checkpoint Charlie to learn about the history of the Cold War. In addition, nearby is the site of the Berliner Mauer(Berlin Wall), the former symbol of a divided Europe that endured four decades of uncompromising and unrelenting politics of the Cold War era. Beginning at the former border-crossing on Friedrichstraße, the Tränenpalast(Palace of Tears) conjures up memories of tearful goodbyes as Berlin's divided families bode farewell after an all-too-brief visit. Along Ebertstraße, red stripes on the road mark the route of the Wall that many would prefer to forget. To see the longest and most famous stretch of Wall, you'll need to take the S-Bahn to Ostbahnhof. This 1.3-kilometer(3/4 mile) long stretch of Wall was painted by artists from all over the world in 1990 and has now been turned into an open-air exhibition known as the East Side Gallery.

Museumsinsel

The beautiful Schlossbrücke, which spans the River Spree, brings you toMuseumsinsel(Museum Island), the northern part of the island in which several renowned museums occupy. The Altes Museum, Alte Nationalgalerie, Pergamon Museum and Bodemuseum make up one of Europe's most impressive art collections. After years of reconstruction, the Neues Museum will reopen in 2009 to the public. Next, walk back towards the main street through the lovely Lustgarten, the former royal gardens once used by the Nazis and East Germans for military marches, you can't miss the enormous Berliner Dom which rears up on your left. Built in 1905 and modeled on St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome, Berliner Dom was destroyed during the war and then painstakingly rebuilt over the ensuing decades. Across the road from the cathedral, you can still see the gloomy Palast der Republik, the former East German parliamentary chamber. It is supposed to be deconstructed by February 2009. It was built on the site of the glorious 15th-century Berliner Schloß, the royal palace that was deemed unworthy of restoration and was demolished by East German authorities in the 1950s. The only remnant of the original palace is the triumphal arch-portal, which has been incorporated into the State Council Building on the south side of Schlossplatz.

Nikolaiviertel& Alexanderplatz

Near the State Council Building you will reach the Nikolaiviertel, the historic birthplace of the city. Within this square you can tour around the Red City Hall, Alexanderplatz, an important railway station, and the famous Fernsehturm(TV Tower). Tastefully revamped by East German authorities for Berlin's 750th anniversary celebrations in 1987, the centerpiece of this historic city quarter is the 13th-century Nikolai Church. Nearby you can also visit the Knoblauchhaus, an 18th century house, turned museum.

Kurfürstendamm

Starting from Berlin's oldest underground station at Wittenberg Platz, head down Tauentzienstraße, past the legendary KaDeWe department store until you reach Breitscheidplatz, dominated by the ruins of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church. You might enjoy a visit to Berlin Zoo, situated behind the Memorial Church. Continue down Joachimstaler Straße and take a right onto Ku'damm, the smart shopping boulevard that runs through the heart of the western center. If you're feeling hungry, turn right into Knesebeckstraße and follow the road until you hit Savignyplatz. The Dicke Wirtin offers typical Berlin cuisine, and Bohemian-types will like Zwiebelfisch café.

Whether you travel by land or sea, you will experience the city's historical significance while you venture through the modern landscape of Berlin. Guided and boat tours offers insider information, or you can always pick up a tour book, hop on a bus and see for yourself.

Guided Tours

Insiders Walking and Bike Tours Berlin(+49 30 692 3149/ http://www.insidertour.com/tours.php/) Unwrapping History(http://www.unwrapping-history.de/) Tour-the-East(+49 30 4703 4747/ http://www.tour-the-east.com/)

Bus Tours

Berlin City Tour(+49 30 68 30 26 41/ http://www.berlin-city-tour.de/) Berlin Sightseeing(+49 30 79 74 56 00/ http://www.berlin-stadtrundfahrt-

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web.de/) Oldtimer Berlin(+ 49 30 21 90 21 88/ http://www.oldtimer-berlin.com/) BBS(http://www.bbsberlin.de/sightseeing_english_berlin_hotel_incoming/index.htm/)

A cheap alternative to an organized tour is a trip on the no. 100 bus departing from the bus station at Zoologischer Garten. The bus passes many famous sights along the way, including the Memorial Church on Ku'damm, the Victory Column and Bellevue Palace in the Tiergarten, the Reichstag and Brandenburg Gate, the State Opera on Unter den Linden and the TV Tower at Alexanderplatz. Buses run every ten minutes.

Boat Tours

Reederei Winkler(+49 30 349 95 95/ http://www.reedereiwinkler.de/) Berliner Seegler-Verband(http://www.segeln-in-koepenick.de/) Berliner Wassertaxi(+49 30 65 88 02 03/ http://www.berlinerwassertaxi.de/)
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Travel Tips

Getting There

Air

Currently three major airports service Berlin: The northwestern Airport Berlin-Tegel(TXL)(+49 1805 00 0186/ http://www.berlin-airport.de/); the southeastern Airport Berlin-Schönefeld(+49 1805 00 0186/ http://www.berlin-airport.de/); and the central Airport Berlin-Tempelhof(+49 1805 00 0186/ http://www.berlin-airport.de/). The former Central Airport of the GDR(Schönefeld) is being expanded to become the Berlin Brandenburg International Airport. After it opens in 2011, the downtown airports in Tegel and Tempelhof will be closed.

Airport Berlin-Tegel

Air Berlin(+49 1805 737 800/ http://www.airberlin.com/) Air France(+49 1805 830 830/ http://www.airfrance.com/) Air Italy(+356 2364 5300/ http://www.airitaly.eu/) British Airways(+49 180 5 26 65 22/ http://www.ba.com/) Condor(+49 180 5 767 757/ http://www11.condor.com/) Continental Airlines(+49 180 3 21 26 10/ http://www.continental.com/) Delta Airlines(+49 180 333 7880/ http://www.delta.com/) Eurowings(http://www.eurowings.de/) Finnair(+49 180 3 34 66 24/ http://www.finnair.com/) Germania(+49 1805 737 100/ http://www.germania.aero/) Iberia(+49 1805 44 29 00/ http://www.iberia.com/de/) LTU International Airways(+49 30 4101 3601/ http://www.ltu.de/) Lufthansa(+49 180 3 80 38 03/ http://www.lufthansa.com/) SAS(+49 1805 117 002/ http://www.flysas.com/) Swiss International Air Lines(+49 30 4101 2764/ http://www.swiss.com/) TUIfly.com(+49 900 109 95 95/ http://www.tuifly.com/)

Airport Berlin-Schönefeld:

Aer Lingus(+49 89 552 533 53/ http://www.aerlingus.com/) Condor(+49 180 5 767 757/ http://www.condor.com)/ Easyjet(+49 900 1100 161/ http://www.easyjet.com/) Germanwings(+49 900 19 19 100/ http://www.germanwings.com/) Icelandair(+49 69 29 99 78/ http://www.icelandair.de/) LTU International Airways(+49 30 6091 3898/ http://www.ltu.de/) Norwegian(+47 815 21 815/ http://www.norwegian.no/) Ryanair(+49 900 116 0500/ http://www.ryanair.com/) Sky Airlines(+90 242 3108500/ http://www.skyairlines.net/) Transavia(+49 695 09 85 446/ http://www.transavia.com/)

Airport Berlin-Tempelhof

Brussels Airlines(+49 30 6951 3850/ http://www.brusselsairlines.com/) InterSky(+49 30 6951 2686/ http://www.intersky.biz/) LGW Luftfahrt-Gesellschaft Walter(+49 30 6951 2681/ http://www.lgw.de/)

From the Airport

Airport Berlin-Tegel

Public Transport: It's easy to find public transportation connections from Tegel to the heart of the city: The buses 109 or express X9 will take you to Zoologischer Garten. From here you can connect by bus, U-Bahn(subway) or S-Bahn(tram) to anywhere in the city. Tickets are valid for two hours for all public transport. Stops are located outside of the terminal. For visitors from Dresden, Leipzig, and Magdeburg, the airport offers a special shuttle service that will take you to your destination and back. However, you have to book in advance underhttp://www.berlin-airport.de/.

Taxi: Taxis can be found at ground level outside of Terminal A and Terminal C. Companies include: Taxi-Ruf Würfelfunk"0800-Cabcall" AG:+49 800 222 22 55 Quality Taxi:+49 800 26 300 00 Funk Taxi Berlin:+49 30 26 10 26 TaxiFunk Berlin GmbH:+49 30 44 33 22 Even though most taxi drivers speak English, it shouldn't be expected

Car Rental: The car rental counter is located near parking space P2. Avis(+49 30 4101-3148/ http://www.avis.de/) Budget(+49 30 4101-3364/http://www.budget.de/) Europcar(+49 30 418520/ http://www.europcar.de/) Hertz(+49 30 4704674/ http://www.hertz.de/) Nationalcar(+49 30 4101-3383/ http://www.nationalcar.de/) SIXT(+49 1805 252525/ http://www.sixt.de/)

Airport Berlin-Schönefeld

Public Transport: From the airport's train station(located 400 meters/0.2 miles north), you have easy access to the subway(S9) that will take you to many of the downtown locations, such as Ostkreuz, Ostbahnhof, Alexanderplatz, Hackescher Markt, Hauptbahnhof, and Zoologischer Garten. If you want to reach Schöneberg, Charlottenburg, or the Westkreuz, S45 will take you to these destinations. A wide range of buses depart from the airport(some of them even directly in front of the terminals): X7, 162, 163, 171, 734, 736, N60, N71

Taxi: Taxis are located either directly outside of the terminals or outside of the train station. For a list of companies and phone numbers, see above.

Train: At the train station, you have access to the Deutsche Bahn(DB), which will take you to other German cities. However the Intercity Express(ICE) does not service this station, only the slower, regional train. Trains serving this station are RE7, RB22, and RB14. To reach other major German or European cities by train, the nearest stop is Ostbahnhof.

Car Rental: Avis(+49 30 6091-5710/ http://www.avis.de/) Budget(+49 30 6091-5700/ http://www.budget.de/) Europcar(+49 30 6349160/ http://www.europcar.de/) Hertz(+49 30 6091-5730/ http://www.hertz.de/) E-Sixt(+49 1805 252525/ http://www.e-sixt.de/)

Airport Berlin-Tempelhof

Public Transport: Airport Berlin-Tempelhof is the most central airport of the city with easy access to the subway U6 at thePlatz der Luftbrücke. From there it will take you about 15 minutes to reach the city

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center at Friedrichstraße from where you have access to subway lines serving Zoologischer Garten, Alexanderplatz, Ostbahnhof, Ostkreuz, and Westkreuz. Various bus stops are located outside of the airport where you have access to the 104 and the 248.

Taxi: Taxis are located in front of the airport at thePlatz der Luftbrücke. For a list of companies, see above.

Car Rental: Avis(+49 30 6951 2444 or +49 30 6581 2340/ http://www.avis.de/) Europcar(+49 30 6904 700/ http://www.europcar.de/) Hertz(+49 30 6981 9892/ http://www.hertz.de/) SIXT(+49 1805 252525/ http://www.sixt.de/)

Since May 2006, the central stationBerlin Hauptbahnhof is located in Berlin Mitte. From there, travelers are able to reach their final destination in Berlin by using public transport for free if they have a valid Deutsche Bahn(DB) train ticket. Deutsche Bahn(http://www.bahn.de/) is Germany's national railway, offering a comprehensive service to German and other European destinations. Tickets are expensive if you pay full fare, but the DB does have a range of specials which make train travel more economical. Schedules can be found on their website. Special fares to watch out for include: Schönes Wochenende Ticket(Happy Week-end Ticket): EUR33/35. On Saturdays or Sundays, unlimited travel for up to five adults on any regional train in Germany. Brandenburg Ticket: EUR27/29. One day unlimited travel within Berlin and Brandenburg for up to five adults. Brandenburg-Berlin Guten Abend Ticket(Brandenburg-Berlin-Ticket Night): EUR21. It is valid from Monday to Sunday for one day of your choice from 9a until 3a of the following day.

Bus The Central Bus Station(Zentraler Omnibusbahnhof(ZOB)), from which all intercity services depart, is located in the west of city. From here you catch the U2 atMesse Nord/ICC(direction Vinetastraße/Pankow) to get to the city center. The following bus companies have regular departures from the ZOB to all major German& European cites: Berlinien Bus(+49 30 302 5361/ http:// www.berlinienbus.de/) Gullivers Reisen GmbH(+49 30 89 0660/ http://www.gullivers.de/)

Car Berlin can be accessed by the Autobahn, Straße des 17. Juni, Bismarckstraße, Tauentzienstraße, Potsdamer Straße and Brandenburgische Straße.

Getting Around

Public Transport Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe(http://www.bvg.de/) operates nine underground lines(U-Bahn), 28 tram lines(S-Bahn), 163 bus lines and six ferries. Single Tickets start at EUR2.10, Day Passes at EUR6.10 and 7-Day Cards at EUR25.40. See the website for details. For information on public transportation visit:(http://www.berliner-verkehr.de/traffic.htm/) Berlin Linien Bus(http://www.berlinlinienbus.de/)

Bike In comparison to other German cities, locals find the motorist/cyclist relationship in Berlin rather hostile. For some, however, Berlin is bicycle heaven- wide streets, reserved(and respected) bike lanes. Bicycle Station provides bike rentals and tours of Berlin. For more information visit: Pedal Power(http://pedalpower.de/).
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Fun Facts

Berlin State: Berlin **Country:** Germany

Berlin By The Numbers:

Population: 3.4 million(city), 4.9 million(metropolitan) Average Winter Temperature:-6° C/ 31° F Average Summer Temperature: 18° C/ 65° F Most Precipitation: 100 mm/ 4 in Annual amount of taxes to be paid to own a dog: EUR150.

Quick Facts:

Time Zone: GMT+1(GMT+2 daylight savings time); Central European Time(CET) Electricity: 230 volts AC, 50Hz, German 2-pin-plug Country Dialing Code:+49 Area Code: 30

Did You Know?

Musician David Bowie and Iggy Pop lived in Berlin during the 1970s. He once reportedly described they city as"the greatest cultural extravaganza that one could imagine."

Imported coffee was banned by Friedrich II in order to encourage sales of the local beverage: beer!

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