

One City – Many Worlds

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In 1237, when the Brandenburg margraves concluded the founding treaty for the city, Berlin lay in the wild east. Just like the Wild West in America was colonized, Berlin first had to be brought into the fold of Western civilization. Around 400 years earlier, Charlemagne had taken a first step when he “beat the Saxons so hard on the head that they got flat feet” – as countless generations of school pupils were later to learn as a consecutive clause. What lay behind this were the centuries when the political power centers gradually shifted from Rome via the Rhineland towards the east.

Berlin is Founded

On October 28th, 1237, a treaty was signed between the margraves of Brandenburg and the Bishop, the dean of the cathedral and the cathedral chapter of Brandenburg. This put an end to the fight they had been waging for years about the right to levy tithes in a large part of the diocese. On February 28th, 1238, the agreement was conclusively ratified by three arbitrators empowered by the Pope, and certified by their seals and the seals of the treaty partners. The second document, three copies of which also survived the centuries, confirmed that “in the year of the Lord 1244, on January 26th” the margraves renounced claim to the right of spoils (a claim of succession to the property of deceased clerics). As was usual at the time for legal deeds like this, there were also

three witnesses of appropriate standing, but from different places of residence.

Although the two merchant settlements Cölln and Berlin were separated by the River Spree and although they had separate administrations with their own town halls, they created a union for trading and defense. In time, Berlin came to be adopted as the name for this double settlement. In the Middle Ages, as a center of trade and transshipment on an important east-west trade route, the city experienced an economic upturn. In 1415, this led to a link-up with the important north German trading union, the Hanseatic League. But Berlin's development into an independent, self-administered city brought it into opposition with the notions of power held by the new feudal lords, the Hohenzollerns and prince electors of Mark Brandenburg. They wanted to make Berlin into a royal residence for their estates, but at times they ran into strong opposition from Berlin's citizens. In 1443, the construction of the royal palace commenced on Spree-Insel, originally Cölln, and in 1447/8, the quarrels between the feudal rulers and the citizens culminated in a open rebellion by the “indignant Berliners”.

The Reformation in Berlin

During the 16th century, the teachings of the reformer Martin Luther came to be accepted in Berlin. Prince

Berlin

Elector Joachim II successfully prevented Berlin from being torn and troubled by religious strife. He declared himself decisively for the Reformation, so that it was introduced as the new church order in Mark Brandenburg in 1539. Berlin developed into a new center of Protestantism.

The “War of 30 Years” Ravages Berlin

The Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) swept over Berlin with all its dreadful consequences. The city was devastated several times by imperial or Swedish troops and even by the “soldateska of the Prince Elector”. Both friends and foes laid waste to the land to such an extent that nobody wanted to live there any more. The effects of the war and epidemics caused Berlin's population to drop from 12,000 to 6,000.

The Era of the Great Elector

Reconstruction began under Frederick William, the Great Elector. To compensate for the huge loss of population he took in religious refugees from many parts of Europe: Jews expelled from Vienna in 1671 and persecuted Huguenots from France in 1685. The Great Elector granted tax concessions to the French immigrants; in the Edict of Potsdam, which he signed in October 1685, he also guaranteed them their own administration, their own schools and freedom to practice their religion. The Huguenots were mainly administrators, tradesmen and artisans, and brought new manufacturing works to Berlin. You can still see the traditions of the French Huguenot immigrants in Berlin

today. There is still a French church community; the French Cathedral, whose dome was destroyed in the Second World War and restored in 1983, is one of the landmarks of the city.



Gendarmenmarkt: links Schauspielhaus, rechts Französischer Dom

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There are also lots of linguistic reminders in Berlin's local dialect (for instance, the meat patty usually called “Frikadelle” is known here by the French word “Boulette”). On the “Day of the Refugees” the Huguenots today still commemorate this great prince and his tolerant reign at the statue of the Great Elector on horseback in front of Charlottenburg Palace.

Berlin becomes Prussia's Capital

In the year 1701, the ruling Elector in Königsberg crowned himself as Frederick I, King of Prussia. Under his rule the royal residence Berlin became the most important city in the new kingdom. In 1709, Cölln and Berlin, with some suburban settlements, were combined into an even bigger city. During the reign of Frederick II, who transformed Prussia into a major power, Berlin became a center of science, culture and enlightenment. This king, who went down in history as Frederick the Great, attracted philosophers, artists and scholars to his court

to the western sectors of the four-power city of Berlin. In 1961 alone, 200,000 people went to the west; 152,000 of them via Berlin. They were mainly technicians and skilled workers. In the night of August 12th/13th, 1961, the GDR closed the border, which had still been open at that point.

A fortification made of barbed wire, concrete slabs and stones was erected around the western sectors of Berlin. Eastern "People's Police" and Socialist Unity Party combat groups guarded this border in the days that followed until the Wall itself was finally built. Families were forcibly separated by this, merely because they lived in different sectors. Overnight, workers could no longer get to their workplaces in the western sector. Within a very short time, the links joining the two parts of the city were severed; the GDR walled itself in. Although they risked their lives trying to cross the Wall from east to west, people continually tried to escape. These dramatic attempts often ended brutally with shots by GDR border troops. In the following years, until the fall of the Wall, 152 refugees and people trying to help with escapes lost their lives in Berlin alone.

Berlin after the Building of the Wall

Especially after the building of the Wall, the city was trapped in the middle of disparate viewpoints of east and west. Visits by heads of government of the western powers turned into impressive demonstrations by the Berliners for the

western alliance. To allow separated families and friends to visit each other, the Berlin Senate signed an agreement with the GDR government for frontier-crossing permits. From December 1963, this made it possible for West Berliners to visit the eastern part of the city on Christian holidays. In these agreements both sides left aside questions of legal status and irreconcilable questions so as not to destroy the chance to relieve human suffering.

Politics of Detente and the Four-Power Agreement

At the end of the 1960s, the international political climate became more settled. The power spheres of both blocs had become entrenched during the postwar years. The precondition for the politics of detente was the mutual recognition of existing relationships. For the Federal Republic of Germany, which was willing to go along with the Western allies in respect of the politics of detente, this meant making concessions on the question of the realities established after the Second World War. The social-democratic government of the time under Chancellor Willy Brandt concluded the "Moscow Treaty" with the Soviet Union on August 12th, 1970. This acknowledged the postwar borders as inviolable and as reality in the sense of non-aggression. But the Federal Republic specifically mentioned the reunification of Germany as a long-term aim. In return for this acknowledgment of realities the Federal Republic could expect the Soviet Union to make some concessions on the Berlin question.

With the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin signed on September 3rd, 1971, the four powers, regardless of their different legal positions, instituted practical regulations that secured and improved access to Berlin, strengthened the city's bonds with West Germany and made Berliners' lives and communication with their surroundings easier. The treaty left untouched the four-power status for the whole of Berlin, and the original legal principles were also retained in full in the areas in which new regulations had come into effect. The position of the three western powers in the western sectors was confirmed and strengthened.

The Fall of the Wall

Berlin was a city with different social systems. East Berlin was the capital of the GDR and West Berlin the guarantor of Europe's freedom. Each of the two halves of the city developed separately.

The politics of Michael Gorbachev – glasnost and perestroika (the openness and reconstruction of democratic structures) – brought the chance of uniting Germany once again.

By the end of 1988 at the latest, it had become impossible to ignore the demands for freedom of speech in the GDR. There was some relaxation in the cultural arena – for the first time artists from the GDR came to West Berlin for the 38th Berlin Festival – but the basic political contradictions were still there. While Soviet politicians were advocating more openness and liberality, West

German politicians remained more reserved and appeared surprised when, on his visit to Berlin on June 12th, 1987, US President Reagan demanded in a speech in front of the Brandenburg Gate that President Gorbachev pull down the Wall.



Checkpoint Charlie today

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In the summer of 1989, a mass exodus started from the GDR. Via the West German embassies in Budapest, Warsaw and Prague, people came to the Federal Republic in special trains. Continuing the peaceful revolution, in September 1989 the Monday demonstrations began in Leipzig with the slogan "We are the people". On November 4th, the biggest demonstration was held in Berlin between Alexanderplatz and Marx-Engels-Platz. Between 500,000 and 800,000 people demonstrated for freedom and democracy, for "socialism with a human face". Meanwhile the politicians were making their first attempts at reform. Party boss Erich Honecker was replaced by Egon Krenz. On November 9th, 1989, Günter Schabowski announced rather casually at a press conference that the government had decided to allow East Germans the freedom to travel. This led spontaneously to the opening of the Wall that same night.

That night huge crowds of East Berliners flooded into West Berlin. Complete strangers threw their arms around each other; the euphoria was unimaginable. But nobody was more surprised than the political leadership in West Berlin and the Federal Republic. The Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was on a state visit to Warsaw. The next morning, he broke off the visit and rushed to Berlin to stand with other politicians on the balcony of Schöneberg Town Hall – the same balcony where John F. Kennedy announced he was a Berliner – and sing the German national anthem: "Unity and justice and freedom are the basis of happiness".



30th anniversary of the Peaceful Revolution
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eines Fotos von Harf Zimmermann und eines
historischen Fotos der dpa

Hans Modrow became the new prime minister of the GDR, politicians and civil rights activists sat together at the Round Table, and on March 18th, 1990, the first elections after the fall of the Wall were held in the GDR.

In February 1990, after a meeting with Michael Gorbachev, Helmut Kohl announced that it was "the sole right of the German people to decide whether they wanted to live together in a single state".

The "Two-plus-Four Talks" (involving the foreign ministers of East Germany, West Germany and the Allies) prepared the unification process. October 3rd was declared the day of German unity. On December 2nd, 1990, the first elections for the whole of Germany were held.

The city started to fuse together. Within a very short time, there were no traces left of the initial euphoria. The structural reforms, the dismantling of factories in the GDR and their incorporation into the western economic system led to high unemployment. Dissatisfaction grew.

But 30 years after the fall of the Wall, we can see clearly that this historical fluke, the establishment of a reunited Germany 45 years after the end of the Second World War, really is and remains a historical stroke of luck.

One City – Many Worlds

This luck had to be painstakingly woven together in the jungle of the double city of Berlin that had grown up over the years. Streets that had been divided by the Wall were opened again, train lines were brought together, telephone cables patched up, the water and electricity supply linked together.

In the years since reunification, Potsdamer Platz, which had become a dreary wasteland, was rebuilt with a massive investment program and has become a new urban center of the 21st century. Friedrichstraße has developed into a shopping precinct comparable to Kurfürstendamm, and a government quarter has

emerged that has transformed the area between the Reichstag and Schlossplatz into Berlin's "living room" once again. Between the Hackesche Höfe and the New Synagogue a quarter has grown up, an area full of Jewish symbolism and meaning, that is unparalleled in postwar Germany. The golden dome of the New Synagogue is now one of the city's landmarks again.

In the metropolis on the Spree once enclosed by the wall, in the legendary RIAS radio program from "the city at the front", "The Islander", they used to say that the island of Berlin might become a mainland once again. On Berlin's 750th birthday in 1987, people said: "One city, two worlds". Today you could say "one city, many worlds" – from the local neighborhood in Neukölln to the shopping precincts at Potsdamer Platz, from the industrial locations in Siemensstadt to the Turkish bazaars in Kreuzberg, from the patterns of Jewish life in Mitte to the flair of a metropolitan city around Gendarmenmarkt, from the museum metropolis between Museum Island, Charlottenburg Palace, Cultural Forum and all the new galleries right up to the government quarter with its old and new embassies.

On June 20th, 1991, the German Bundestag reached a decision to relocate its Parliament and seat of government from Bonn to Berlin, and the center of political decision-making shifted accordingly. Berlin has officially served as capital since the "Federalism Reform" in 2006 when it was established in Article 22 of the constitution.



Reichstag

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In the meantime, a continuous stream of organizations, associations and institutions are resettling their headquarters here or at least setting up a Berlin branch.

135 million tourists per year are good indications that Berlin is developing nicely as a multi-cultural metropolis. Certainly Berlin's positive transformation into a financial, academic and trade fair center has contributed to its success in the area of tourism. Last but not least, Berlin's blossoming art scene, new media and music industry are a few added bonus incentives for people all over the world to come visit, or even to live and work here.

In 2012, the city celebrated "Berlin turning 775". Twice before in 1937 and 1987, the city had honored its local history for the third time. Four years after the National Socialists seized power in 1933, they bastardized the city's 700th anniversary for propaganda purposes. Those festivities lasted a full week. It took place mainly outdoors and was focused primarily on the Berliners themselves. 50 years later in 1987, the media would feast on this nationally covered spectacle and hone

in on the varied vantage points of East and West Germany to compare their versions of history. As was the case in 1987, the latest celebration lasted all year round and featured different events, presentations and exhibitions. The topics ranged from "The Medieval City" to "The City of Variety". Several extraordinary excavation sites from the last few years were open to visitors last autumn before being overbuilt with new streets, squares and buildings. With noticeable temporary markings, the original medieval merchant's quarters of Cölln and Berlin became a joint district. These recreations of medieval places gave us a glimpse of the city's roots.

Nowadays, people from all over the world shape the face of this open-minded metropolis and they play a decisive role in adding to Berlin's appeal simply through their diversity. An estimated 3.5 million Berliners hail from over 190 countries worldwide. The "economic miracle" during the 50's attracted guest workers – Turks being the majority – but also from the Mediterranean region. The division of Germany led to widely varying developments for labor migration in East- and West Germany. In the GDR, two-thirds of the so-called "contracted workers" originated from Vietnam. While the German industries in the east and the west were actively recruiting workers from abroad, a new front of economic and political refugees started trickling in; primarily seeking a brighter future in the west.

"Nobody becomes Prussian except through dire need...", proclaimed a pamphlet from the 18th century. What the religious refugees from France (Huguenots) and Bohemian Protestants experienced is comparable to the refugee situation of our day. Berlin will be faced with huge challenges for years to come. They don't need to spend two thirds of state revenue, as Frederick William once did for integration measures. It's clear that integration is an ongoing process that requires the support of many institutions and individuals. Even a flourishing metropolis like Berlin must confront these challenges head-on or deal with decades of negative repercussions.

In the years of the economic miracle, Germany had recruitment agreements with several European, African and Asian countries. Upon reunification, 220,000 Jewish quota refugees came to Germany from former Soviet satellites, of which 30,000 landed in Berlin. Two examples that illustrate how roughly one million of Berlin's 3.5 million populace boast a migrant background. There's no denying, the road ahead will bear many obstacles. Examples throughout history have shown that we can manage for the good of all. Berlin has always been an open and tolerant city, so why can't she stay that way.

Exploring



How to get along

There are lots of different ways to get to know Berlin. If you are in Berlin for a few days, you soon realize there's more to see than Kurfürstendamm, the Hackesche Höfe, the Reichstag and the Brandenburg Gate. But of course you also have to see the regular tourist sights, especially if this is your first visit. At the end of the chapter, in the address section, there is a list of many sights, parks and memorial centers, as well as a list of tourist services and other important addresses.

Almost every district has its own flavor, and it's possible to examine Berlin through a very specific lens; such as history, architecture or literature – or simply indulge in the nightlife. Discover Berlin's unique

atmosphere on different routes and from various perspectives: **by bus, by boat, by foot, or by bicycle.**

You could also simply rent a car, but that is somehow uncool in such a beautiful city. If you choose an electric car and call it 'car-sharing', it might be acceptable, even if it has nothing to do with the virtue of sharing. Various companies are currently fighting for this new market. The big ones at the moment are Drive-Now (BMW), car2go (Daimler) and We Share (VW).

Things start to get interesting when you network the existing possibilities to get to use the U-Bahn, S-Bahn, bus and tram. This is exactly what the BVG, our public transport service

Exploring

provider, is doing with the new App **Jelbi**. It lets you combine the different modes of transportation and book them altogether: bicycles, rental cars, taxis, electric scooters etc. from various private vendors and of course the BVG's yellow buses and subways.

Berlin by Bus

Standard sightseeing tours start from Kudamm or Alexanderplatz. You'll see the famous tourist spots like the Brandenburg Gate, the Reichstag and Charlottenburg Palace; during the ride the guide (or the headset) will fill you in with some information on the past and future of the city. You may choose the red buses for **Top Tour Sightseeing**, or try the yellow city-circle-buses of **BEX** which offer the information in individual, smaller bites. Every 10

minutes, this tour with audio guides in 20 languages goes to 30 different stops where you can stay as long as you want (**hop-on-hop-off**), e.g., Alexanderplatz, Brandenburg Gate, KaDeWe, Potsdamer Platz, Jewish Museum. The Best of Berlin Tour costs 22 €. You can also combine the bus tour with a tour by boat.

For those who have already visited Berlin and would like to get to know some places better, we recommend a tour with the **Videobus** by Zeitreisen. General tours or theme tours (e.g., Emperors' era, the 20's, National Socialism, Berlin as a film city) are complemented by sound and video excerpts. The **Musictours Berlin** shows the city's history of music: not just international stars like Iggy Pop, David Bowie or U2, who lived in Berlin and produced music records

Berlin from above

In the meantime, there are numerous panoramic view locations which promise a great view of Berlin and this is why it has become an indispensable part of the sightseeing program. For further information on prices and times, check the address section.

260 Grad
a new view from the top of the new East Side Mall

BallonGarten and Hi-Flyer
go up 150 m with restrained balloon

Berlin Cathedral
Dome of the Berlin Cathedral, with 270 steps

Grunewald Tower
at Wannsee lake, in the

Grunewald forest, only for those who can climb the stairs

Klunkerkranich
Party and urban gardening above the rooftops of Neukölln

Monkey Bar
panoramic views of the zoo animals and of Breitscheidplatz with its Memorial Church

Motel One Terrasse
take the elevator to your right to

the 10th floor, step out onto the terrace and get a beautiful view of Breitscheidplatz and City West

Bell Tower Olympic Stadium
in a glass elevator all the way up, to be combined with the exhibit

Panoramapunkt
Europe's fastest lift, at Potsdamer Platz

Park Inn Roof Terrace
just walk into the hotel at Alexanderplatz

Puro Sky Lounge
panorama view and lounge in the Europa-Center

Reichstag Dome
a glance at government quarter and parliamentarians

Siegessäule
climb the Victory Column for an epic 360° view of Berlin

Solar
sky bar on the 17th floor of 70's building in Kreuzberg

Teufelsberg
enjoy the sunset on a hill made of world war II rubble

TV Tower
at 368 meters, it's the tallest building Berlin has to offer

Viktoriapark
way up on the "Kreuzberg", a real cool place not only for New Years

Weekend
club and roofed terrace in Haus des Reisens, Alexanderplatz