

BERLIN & BEYOND

BERLIN, DRESDEN & LEIPZIG

Brandenburg Gate, Berlin

OVERVIEW

Berlin is one of the most interesting and diverse of all the great capitals of Europe.

First documented in the 13th century, the city has been the capital of the Prussian Empire, the German Empire, the Weimar Republic and the Third Reich. Since 1989 the city has relished its role as the capital of a unified and re-energised Germany.

Berlin is home to internationally renowned museums of antiquities and fine arts and has ongoing significance as a centre of contemporary art and design. The city is also famous for its musical heritage, with outstanding ensembles like the Berlin Philharmonic and three major opera houses that add great lustre to the city's cultural landscape.

Through walking tours, background talks, guided visits, fine dining and evening performances, this 14-day immersive experience allows you to get an in-depth look at Berlin, as well as the nearby cities of Potsdam, Leipzig and Dresden.



TOUR LEADER

Thomas Abbott has lived in Germany since 1988 and specialises in the architecture of Berlin, the art of 18th-century Germany and the Bauhaus. Thomas will be accompanied by a trained tour manager for the duration of the tour.

TOUR DATES

May 6-19, 2024

TOUR PRICE

\$11,980 per person, twin share
\$2,790 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

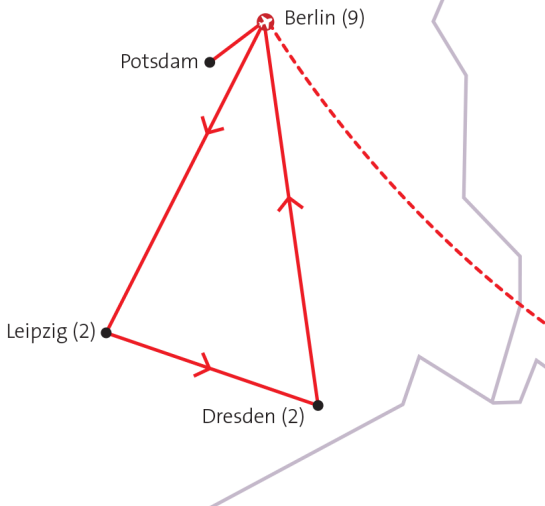
ITINERARY

Berlin (5 nights), Leipzig (2 nights),
Dresden (2 nights), Berlin (4 nights)

INCLUSIONS

13 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4 and 5-star hotels. All breakfasts, 2 lunches and 6 dinners. Best available tickets to **3** performances. Services of an expert Tour Leader and an experienced Tour Manager throughout. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.

GERMANY



TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Berlin's Complex History

Explore the city's infamous past and vibrant present with walking tours and site visits across East and West Berlin, once divided for more than a generation and now a thriving cultural capital.

Art & Music in Berlin

Discover why Berlin is known as the 'New York of Europe', with its vast range of museums and galleries housing both ancient and contemporary treasures, and enjoy three top performances in three premier venues.

Berlin's Museum Island

Spend two days admiring the remarkable and vast collections at Museum Island, a unique ensemble of five museums in the centre of Berlin on the River Spree, now listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Potsdam's Palaces

Enjoy a full day in the charming, baroque Potsdam, visiting Frederick the Great's Sanssouci Park, the former residence of the Prussian royals, and Cecilienhof Palace, set in the beautiful park of Neuer Garten.

Leipzig & Dresden

Travel through the scenic countryside to Renaissance Leipzig, which Goethe describes in Faust as "a little Paris", and visit the elegantly restored city of Dresden, "the Florence on the Elbe."

DETAILED ITINERARY

Start & Finish

The tour starts at 6.00pm on Monday 6 May, at the Adina Apartment Hotel Hackescher Markt, Berlin. The tour ends after breakfast on Sunday 19 May, at The Westin Grand Hotel, Berlin.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

Monday 6 May

Arrival

If you booked your air travel through Academy Travel, we will organise a transfer from Berlin airport to our hotel. Please note that rooms may not be available until early afternoon. In the evening meet tour leader Thomas Abbott at the hotel for drinks and a light dinner. Overnight Berlin (D)

Tuesday 7 May

Medieval to Prussian

After an introductory talk in the hotel, we travel by coach to Charlottenburg Palace. Built by Elector Friederich III in 1699 as a summer palace for his wife Sophie Charlotte, this regal estate, the largest palace in Berlin, is framed by a baroque-style garden and contains over 600 gems and treasures from the century-long supremacy of the Hohenzollern dynasty. After our tour we visit the nearby Käthe Kollwitz Museum which holds one of the largest collections of works by the artist. We enjoy lunch along Kurfürstendamm, before returning to our hotel with the evening at leisure. Overnight Berlin. (B, L)

Wednesday 8 May

The Prussian City | Berlin Philharmonic

After a talk, we begin our day at the recently reconstructed Humboldt Forum, located in exquisite Berlin Palace. The Forum incorporates two existing museums, the Ethnological Museum of Berlin and the Museum of Asian Art. Our next stop is Berlin's most famous landmark, the Brandenburg Gate. A symbol of Berlin and German division during the Cold War, it is now a national symbol of peace and unity. In the afternoon we visit the Gemäldegalerie. Assembled in the early 19th century, the gallery's collection represents all the major schools of European painting and includes masterpieces by Botticelli, Raphael, Caravaggio, Breughel, Vermeer and Rembrandt. This evening we make our way to the Philharmonie Berlin, home to the world-famous Berliner Philharmoniker. Chief Conductor Kirill Petrenko takes to the podium, presenting the six symphonic poems of Smetana's *Má vlast*. The best-known work from it is undoubtedly *The Moldau*, a folklore-based tone poem that portrays the river of the same name. Overnight Berlin (B)

Performance I

Venue: Berliner Philharmonie

Program: Smetana's cycle, *Má vlast*

Performers: Kirill Petrenko, Berliner Philharmoniker



Neues Museum



Kirill Petrenko



Museum Island

Thursday 9 May **Frederick the Great's City**

Today we spend the day in Potsdam. The Prussian kings left their royal imprint on Potsdam with lavish palaces, parks, and gardens, many of them with UNESCO World Heritage status. An undoubted highlight of the day is the visit to Frederick the Great's rococo summer palace, aptly called Sanssouci ('without worries' in French). We also visit Cecilienhof Palace, set in the beautiful park of Neuer Garten. The last palace built by the Hohenzoller family, Cecilienhof's rustic English Tudor design offers a contrast to Sanssouci. After an early dinner in Potsdam we return to Berlin. Overnight Berlin (B, D)

Friday 10 May **Museum Island**

This morning, we walk to Museum Island. On the site of one of Berlin's two original settlements, this unique complex of five state museums is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a must-visit in Berlin. Today we'll visit the Neues Museum, the home of the Egyptian Museum and the famous bust of Nefertiti. From mid-morning, explore Museum Island further at your own pace and discretion. We recommend the Altes National Galleries, whose highlights include recently restored paintings by Caspar David Friedrich. We then spend lunchtime in the nearby Hackesche Höfe, a district comprised of a series of interconnected courtyards bustling with restaurants, boutiques and galleries. In the afternoon we will enjoy a cruise on the River Spree, the vital artery of the city, taking in most of the major monuments and museums. In the evening we'll dine at a local restaurant. Overnight Berlin (B, D)

Saturday 11 May **Museum Island, Pt II | Leipzig Ballet**

This morning we'll return to Museum Island to visit the Bode Museum, home to the Sculpture Gallery and the Museum of Byzantine Art. Around midday we make our way to Leipzig, with the afternoon at leisure on arrival. This evening we enjoy a pre-ballet dinner together before making our way to the Oper Leipzig for one of the greatest masterpieces of classical ballet, *Giselle*. Ballet Director and Chief Choreographer Mario Schröder rediscovers the story of this peasant girl who dies of a broken heart in this first collaboration between the vocal ensemble Sjaella, the Leipzig Ballet and the Gewandhausorchester. Overnight Leipzig (B, D)

Performance II

Venue: Oper Leipzig

Program: Ballet, *Giselle*

Performers: Sjaella, Leipzig Ballet, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra

Sunday 12 May **Leipzig**

Leipzig is one of the great German cultural centres, with connections to Bach, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Martin Luther, Goethe, Schiller, and the Neue-Leipziger-Schule art movement. This morning we take a guided walking tour of Leipzig, followed by a visit to the Museum of Fine Arts. The original museum building was destroyed in an air raid in 1943, though many of



Frauenkirche



Zwinger Palace



Porcelain Collection

the paintings were saved. A new home for the collection opened in 2004, 61 years to the day after the original museum was destroyed. The afternoon is free to explore Leipzig. Overnight Leipzig (B)

Monday 13 May Dresden via Meissen

On the way to Dresden this morning we'll stop first at the 'Monument to the Battle of the Nations' – Europe's largest memorial, and the site of the 1813 defeat of Napoleon by a coalition of German forces. Then it's on to Meissen, on the banks of the Elbe not far from Dresden, to stroll the town and have lunch. We arrive in Dresden in the late afternoon and take an orientation walk through the old town. We view the Frauenkirche, an impressive Baroque church that was destroyed in World War II and beautifully restored and reopened in 2005. Overnight Dresden (B, L)

Tuesday 14 May Zwinger & Pillnitz Palaces

After a talk, we make our way to the Zwinger Palace, an excellent example of late Baroque architecture in Germany. Built between 1710 and 1728, the Zwinger was used for court festivities and tournaments. The palace contains Dresden's Old Masters Picture Gallery, with works by Raphael, Rubens and Canaletto. Later, we visit the extraordinary ensemble of architecture and landscape gardening that makes up Pillnitz Palace. Built by August the Strong as a 'Water Palace,' Pillnitz was the summer residence of many electors and kings of Saxony. We visit the internationally renowned Kunstgewerbemuseum (Museum of Decorative Art) the oldest of its kind in Germany, which houses a wide variety of craftwork, fashion and design from the early Middle Ages to the present day. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Dresden (B)

Wednesday 15 May Dresden to Berlin | The Marriage of Figaro

Today, we explore the delightful Porcelain Collection, and survey the impressive treasures inside the New Green Vaults and the Historic Green Vaults. After lunch, we return to Berlin with time to freshen up before our third and final performance at the Schiller Theater in West Berlin. Stage director, set designer and costume designer Kirill Serebrennikov brings us this new Mozart production with the mother of all musical comedies, *Le nozze di Figaro*, with Venetian bass-baritone Tommaso Barea in the title role. Overnight Berlin (B)

Performance III

Venue: Komische Oper Berlin, Schillertheater
Program: Opera, Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*
Performers: Hubert Zapiór (Count Almaviva), Nadja Mchantaf (Countess Almaviva), Tommaso Barea (Figaro), Penny Sofroniadou (Susanna), James Gaffigan (Conductor)

Thursday 16 May From Wilhelmstrasse to Bauhaus

We start our tour today with the Wilhelmstrasse, hub of the Nazi administration. We visit the moving Holocaust Memorial,

HOTELS

These 4 and 5-star hotels have been selected principally for their central location.

Berlin, Adina Apartment Hotel Hackescher Markt

(5 nights)

www.adinahotels.com

Leipzig, Steigenberger Handelshof

(2 nights)

www.steigenberger.com

Dresden, Steigenberger Hotel De Saxe

(2 nights)

www.steigenberger.com

Berlin, The Westin Grand Hotel

(4 nights)

www.marriott.de

WEATHER

May is a pleasant time to travel in Germany with spring temperatures ranging on average from the low 20s, dropping to 10 -12°C at night. However, you should pack for a few days which are cooler than this, as well as a few warmer ones. Rainfall is fairly evenly spread across the year, and it is reasonable to expect rain on at least a few days, though not enough to disrupt our program.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is physically demanding. To participate on this tour, you should be able to:

- keep up with the group at all times
- walk for 5-7 kilometres over the day at a moderate pace
- stand and slow walk for up to 90 minutes galleries and museums
- negotiate walking over uneven ground on dirt tracks
- walk up and down steps and slopes
- get on and off a coach with steps unassisted
- move your luggage unassisted



the site of the new Reich's Chancellery, Hitler's Bunker and the Luftwaffe Ministry building, the site of Gestapo Bunkers. Next it's on to the fascinating Topography of Terror memorial and Potsdamer Platz, to stroll around what is now the modern heart of unified Berlin. In the afternoon we'll focus on the newly restored New National Gallery, housing Berlin's 20th Century Art Collection. Our final stop will be the German Resistance Memorial Centre, created to commemorate those members of the German Army who tried to assassinate Hitler in 1944. Tonight, we dine in a local restaurant. Overnight Berlin (B, L, D)

Friday 17 May

The Synagogue and the Cold War

This morning we visit the 'New Synagogue', which was significantly damaged on Kristallnacht in 1938. The restored building reopened in 1995. We then stroll through the old Jewish district and the Jewish Museum of Berlin, designed by Daniel Libeskind and opened in 2001. After lunch, we investigate Berlin in the late 1940s and 1950s – the height of the Cold War. Our tour includes sections of the Berlin Wall, the former Stasi headquarters and Karl-Marx-Allee, a broad boulevard lined with impressive Socialist Realist buildings. Overnight Berlin (B)

Saturday 18 May

Contemporary Berlin

On our final day together we take a coach tour of the modern city, focussing on its recent architecture and art. We pause to survey the collection at the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for Contemporary Art, and following a lunch break, we visit Sammlung Boros, an extraordinary exhibition space in a converted WWII air raid bunker. Tonight we farewell Berlin with dinner atop the Reichstag Building. A symbol of the struggles and eventual triumph of the city, the Reichstag first opened in 1894, was destroyed by fire in 1933, and then became the first meeting place of a reunified Germany. The reconstruction of the building was completed in 1999 to a plan by British architect Sir Norman Foster. His plan included an extraordinary glass dome at the top of the building which we will ascend. Overnight Berlin (B, D)

Sunday 19 May

Departure

The tour ends after breakfast this morning. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Jamal Fairbrother** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

jamal@academytravel.com.au

 academytravel.com.au