



BERLIN AND BEYOND

BERLIN, DRESDEN & LEIPZIG

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 and guided visits, 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 was born in the US but has lived in Germany since 1988. He holds a degree in art history and has led many cultural tours throughout Germany, specialising in the architecture of Berlin, the art of 18th-century Germany and the Bauhaus. He has led a number of tours for Academy Travel and works for leading cultural travel companies in the UK and Europe. His knowledge, experience and enthusiasm contribute in equal measure to his popularity as a tour leader.

Essential information

Tour dates: May 1-14, 2023

Price per person: \$9,920

Supplement for sole use of double room: \$2,560

Maximum number in group: 16

Start: 6.00pm, Monday May 1, the bar at The Adina Apartments Hackescher Markt, Berlin

Finish: 9.00am, Sunday May 14, Berlin Airport

Fitness level

★★ Good overall fitness required

Itinerary

Berlin (5 nights)

Leipzig (2 nights)

Dresden (2 nights)

Berlin (4 nights)

Further information and bookings

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GERMANY



Highlights

Art in Berlin

Berlin has a reputation for being the ‘New York of Europe’, offering a range of museums and galleries with treasures both ancient and contemporary. We spend two days admiring the remarkable and vast collections at Museum Island.

East and West Berlin

We explore this fascinating city with walks through the historic neighbourhoods of both East and West Berlin, including the Brandenburg Gate, where east met west during the Cold War.

Potsdam

Spend a full day in charming, baroque Potsdam. Though severely damaged by bombing during World War II, much of the city has been restored.

Leipzig and Dresden

Travel through the scenic countryside to Renaissance Leipzig, which Goethe describes in *Faust* as “a little Paris.” We’ll also visit the elegantly restored city of Dresden, “the Florence on the Elbe.”

Reichstag

The symbol of Berlin’s mash-up of old and new, the Reichstag building anchors central Berlin with a Sir Norman Foster-designed glass dome atop of the 116-year old structure.

Detailed itinerary

Included meals are shown with the letters B, L and D.

Monday 1 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 bar for drinks and a light dinner. Overnight Berlin. (D)

Tuesday 2 May – Medieval to Prussian/Performance

After a talk, we travel by coach to the Berggruen Museum to admire its exceptional collection of modern art, including works by Matisse, Klee and Giacometti. We pause for our welcome lunch at a fine local restaurant before continuing to Charlottenburg, for a guided tour of the richly decorated interior of the 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. In the late afternoon we cruise by ferry on the River Spree back to Berlin. Tonight, we attend a concert at Berlin’s famous concert hall, the Philharmonie (performance details TBA) NOTE: Dates for performances may vary depending on availability. Overnight Berlin. (B, L)

Wednesday 3 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)

Thursday 4 May – The Prussian City/Performance

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 walk to the recently reopened opera house Staatsoper Unter den Linden for a

performance (details TBA). Overnight Berlin (B)

Friday 5 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. Mid-morning, we visit what is perhaps Berlin's most renowned institution, the Pergamon Museum. The museum is currently under partial renovation so the hall containing the Pergamon Altar is closed. We'll see the impressive Near Eastern antiquities and Islamic art, much of it collected by the German Kaisers from their close contact with countries such as Turkey, Iraq and Iran in the early 20th century. We spend lunchtime in the nearby Hackesche Höfe, a district comprised of a series of interconnected courtyards bustling with restaurants, boutiques and galleries. In the evening we'll dine at a local restaurant.

Overnight Berlin (B, D)

Saturday 6 May – Museum Island, part 2

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 head to Leipzig. This evening we dine at the historic restaurant Auerbachs Keller, mentioned in Goethe's play *Faust*.

Overnight Leipzig (B, D)

Sunday 7 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 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; however, we recommend you visit the Grassi Museum, to see the impressive collection charting over 2,500 years of decorative arts. Overnight Leipzig (B)

Monday 8 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 9 May – Zwinger Palace/Performance

After a talk, we make our way on foot 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. We also explore the delightful Porcelain Collection, and survey the impressive treasures inside the New Green Vaults and the Historic Green Vaults. This evening we walk to a nearby venue for a concert. Overnight Dresden (B)

Wednesday 10 May – Pillnitz Palace

Today we return to Berlin, stopping along the way to view 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. In the evening, we gather for dinner at a local restaurant. Overnight Berlin (B, D)

Thursday 11 May – From Wilhelmstrasse to Bauhaus

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

Hotels

These four and five-star hotels have been selected principally for their central location.

Adina Apartments Hackescher Markt, Berlin (5 nights)

Steigenberger Handelshof, Leipzig (2 nights)

Steigenberger Handelshof, Dresden (2 nights)

The Westin Grand Hotel, Berlin (4 nights)

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. Pack for a few days that may be both cooler and warmer than this, though. 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 for this tour

GRADE TWO ★★

This Grade Two 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

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. Overnight Berlin (B)

Friday 12 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 13 May – Contemporary Berlin

On our final day of the tour we take a coach tour of the modern city, focussing on its recent architecture. We pause to survey the collection at the Hamburger Bahnhof Museum for Contemporary Art. Our time in Berlin culminates with a farewell lunch at restaurant Kafer at the Reichstag. 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, offering 360° views. Overnight Berlin (B, L)

Sunday 14 May – Departure

The tour ends after breakfast. Departing group members transfer to Berlin airport for outgoing flights. (B)

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