

# Interesting facts about Berlin

Whether sightseeing or the alternative scene, galleries or gourmet restaurants, music or fashion – the German capital is never short of new experiences. The legendary nightlife, the attractive and unusual shopping opportunities but also its unique history attract more and more visitors from inside Germany and further afield. Last year almost 11 million people visited Berlin.

But what actually makes Berlin so attractive? Its diversity, opposites and the infinite opportunities that thrill visitors from all over the world.

## Did you know that...

- ... with an area of 892 square kilometres, Berlin is nine times bigger than Paris?
- ... Berlin's city limit is approximately 234 kilometres long? The length from East-West is 45 kilometres (as the crow flies) and from North-South 38 kilometres (as the crow flies).
- ... Berlin has the same geographic East-West width as London and the same geographic North-South length as Naples?
- ... the total length of the bus lines in the German capital is over 1,675 kilometres? The tram network covers more than 295 kilometres: add to this the S-Bahn network at 330 kilometres in length and the U-Bahn network at approximately 145 kilometres.
- ... with the new Berlin Hauptbahnhof (Central Station), the city has become a proper central rail hub for the first time in its history - and the largest in Europe?
- ... the first set of traffic lights in Europe was put into service in Potsdamer Platz in 1924? A replica of the lights can still be admired there today.
- ... to date six US presidents have made historic speeches here since the war? Who can forget John F. Kennedy's "Ich bin ein Berliner" (1963) and Ronald Reagan's emphatic "Mr Gorbachev - tear this wall down!" (1987)?
- ... visitors who wanted to travel from the west side of the city to the east when Berlin was still divided by the wall had to exchange a non-refundable minimum of DM25.00 into East German Marks, at a rate of 1:1? Money not spent could be deposited at the border (for any subsequent visits). Visas for tourists from West Germany used to cost five Marks, but were free for West Berliners.
- ... the East Side Gallery is the longest open air gallery in the world and also has the longest surviving stretch of the Berlin Wall at 1,316m? The section was painted by 118 artists from 21 countries with 101 works. Many of the artists returned to Berlin in 2009 to freshen up their works of art. The retouching work has now been completed and their artwork restored its former glory.
- ... Berlin formerly used to end at the Brandenburg Gate? This historic city limits can still be recognised in a number of places, from street names such as Wallstraße, Mauerstraße, Linienstraße or Palisadenstraße. The former city gates are mainly preserved in U-Bahn station names (Schlesisches / Kottbusser / Hallesches and Oranienburger Tor).
- ...the city had its highest number of inhabitants in 1942? At that time there were 4,478,102 people living in Berlin. Today there are 3.5 million inhabitants.

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- ... Berlin is the most multi-cultural city in Germany? Its c.3.5 million inhabitants include over **470,000** residents with foreign passports. Over 180 nations are long-term residents in the city.
- ... the city's public road network is **5,419 kilometres** long? At **13 kilometres**, the longest of these is the Adlergestell, running from Adlershof to Schmöckwitz, and the shortest is the Eiergasse in the Nikolai Quarter at just **16 metres**. The widest, at **85.2 metres**, is not Breite Straße (Wide Street) but the Straße des 17. Juni.
- ...there are over **180 kilometres** of navigable waterways within the Berlin city limits? Berlin can also be discovered by boat and experienced from a completely different perspective. The shortest ferry service in Berlin is between Rahnsdorf and Müggelheim, crossing the Müggelspree, which at that point is maybe *ten* metres wide. The F 24 ferry consists of a small rowboat which takes people across to the other bank on request during the warmer months of the year (the timetable is worked out on a very personal basis).
- ... Berlin has around **960** bridges, easily beating even Venice?
- ... the largest lake in the city is the Müggelsee with a total surface area of around **7.5 square kilometres**? The smallest is the Pechsee in the Grunewald which covers just **3,000 square metres**.
- ... Berlin's highest points - the Müggelberge and the Teufelsberg - are the same height, at **115 metres** above sea level?
- ... Berlin is Germany's greenest city? More than **30 percent** of the area consists of parks and woods, or rivers, lakes and waterways. The streets are lined with approx. **435,000 trees**, and within the city there are **950 "Kleingarten Kolonien"** (garden/allotment areas) containing almost 75,000 plots.
- ... the tallest tree in Berlin is a European larch which has stood in the Tegeler Forest for **205 years** and reaches a height of **43 metres**? It was reputedly planted by forester Friedrich August Ludwig from Burgsdorf, who bought the position of forest warden in Tegel near Berlin in **1777** and maintained the surrounding king's woods
- ... at **368 metres** the Berliner Fernsehturm (Television Tower) is the tallest building in Germany and one of the tallest constructions in Europe?
- ... the oldest public house in Berlin is almost **400 years** old and still running today? The "Zur letzten Instanz" is located in Waisenstraße and is visited today by numerous celebrities.
- ... with **four** universities, **four** art schools and **ten** technical colleges, and around **150,000** students, it is Germany's biggest university city? In addition there are around **130** non-university research facilities.
- ... the Quadriga on top of the Brandenburg Gate - Berlin's most famous landmark – was brought back to Berlin in **1814** after the European allies' victory over Napoleon? He had taken it to France in **1806** as a symbol of his victory. Since then it has also been called the "Retourkutsche" ("Tit-for-Tat") in common parlance. Contrary to some rumours, the Quadriga has always been positioned facing east - the way into the city in old Berlin.
- ... there are **nine** castles in Berlin? These include the Schloss Charlottenburg and the Köpenicker Schloss, as well as **six** former manors and mansions, which are also called "Schlösschen" (little castles) in common parlance. Only a few weeks ago the Schloss Schönhausen opened as a new Museum Castle.

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- ... the football fan mile in Berlin in 2010 with 1,8 millions of guests was the most popular FIFA Public Viewing worldwide? The Fan Festival Berlin is to be staged on Straße des 17. Juni between the Großer Stern and Yitzhak-Rabin-Straße. Berlin is also home to the oldest football club in Germany. "BFC Germania" was founded in 1888 and is still going strong today.
- ...athletes from 202 nations took part in the 2009 World Championships in Athletics? Their performances were amongst the best of the year – and in some cases the best ever recorded in the history of these events.
- ... many of the city's landmarks go back to the Prussian kings of the House of Hohenzoller, which was dominated by just a couple of first names in its last 300 years? These include for example Friedrichstadt and Friedrichstraße, Friedrichstadtpalast and Friedrichswerder, Friedrichshain, Friedrichsfelde, Friedrichshagen, Wilhelmstraße and Wilhelmshagen.
- ... as a result of its former division, Berlin has *two* zoos, the Tierpark in Friedrichsfelde, with its very attractive outdoor enclosures, and the Zoologische Garten near the station with the same name? This makes Berlin the city with the most zoo animals in the world. The Berlin Zoologische Garten is the oldest in Germany and the third oldest in Europe. It was founded over 150 years ago. The zoo's aquarium is the most species-rich in Europe and one of the largest in the world. The Friedrichsfelde Tierpark is one of the biggest zoos in Europe in terms of area. Including reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates, the total number of animals in the two facilities is around 24,600.
- ... even the cemeteries in Berlin are worth a visit - for the most part they are park-like refuges in the city? With over 115,000 interments, the Jewish cemetery in Berlin-Weißensee is the largest preserved cemetery in Europe. 'Musts' for any culture lover are the Dorotheenstadt and Friedrichswerder cemetery on Chausseestraße (those buried here include Brecht, Weigel, Fichte, Hegel and Schinkel) plus the cemeteries in front of the Halleschen Tor (Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, Heinrich von Stephan, Rachel Varnhagen von Ense and Kurt Mühlhaupt).
- ... the largest department store in continental Europe is Berlin's Kaufhaus des Westens- better known as the "KaDeWe"? KaDeWe's shop floor area is 60,000 square metres (equating to the Olympic stadium plus *four* football pitches), spread over *eight* floors. There are a total of 380,000 articles for sale. 64 escalators and 26 lifts convey an average of 80,000 visitors per day in comfort. The delicatessen section covers 7,000 square metres and offers around 34,000 different products, making it Europe's largest food department. In the bread, cheese and sausage sections there are 400 different types of bread, 1,300 types of cheese and a selection of 1,200 types of sausage, bacon and ham on offer. Visitors to the 33 cooking stations, gourmet stands and restaurants are pampered by some 500 employees every day - including 150 chefs and confectioners. KaDeWe celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2007.
- ... Berlin's weekly markets are a long-standing tradition? They are held in numerous squares and frequently in front of the town halls, usually on two days in the week. One of the nicest things to do is to wander through the market in Winterfeldplatz in Schöneberg on a Saturday. You can also visit the numerous second-hand bookstores and antique shops in the neighbouring streets.

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- ... not only does the city have numerous parks, there are also special attractions such as a Chinese, a Japanese and a Balinese garden? In the “Gärten der Welt” (“Gardens of the World”) in the Marzahn recreational park, you can also take part in a tea ceremony in an authentic setting.
- ... Berlin is one of the few cities that has 3 UNESCO World Heritage Sites? The famous Museum Island and the Prussian castles and gardens were joined in 2008 by the Berlin modernist housing estates. In 2006 the German capital was awarded the title “UNESCO City of Design”.
- ... Berlin is the only city in Europe with ‘more museums than rainy days’? The c. 180 museums and collections are renowned for the quality of their exhibits. In 2009 the city’s most significant displays drew in some 13,3 million visitors.
- ... besides the world-renowned collections, unusual museums such as the Sugar Museum or the Museum of Erotica offer a droll alternative?
- ... the Berlinale, Berlin’s most popular film festival, has now been held in the city for over 60 years? One of the top media events for the film industry, it attracts more the 4,000 journalists from over 80 countries every year. Winners take away from the festival, which takes place every February, gold and silver bears - the bear being Berlin’s heraldic animal.
- ... the Berliner Gemäldegalerie (Berlin Art Gallery), which opened in 1998, combines the great paintings from the Bodemuseum (formerly in the east side of the city) with those of the museum in Dahlem (in the former west side of the city), making it one of the most visited art museums in Europe, alongside the Hermitage in St Petersburg, the Prado in Madrid and the Louvre in Paris? With some 440 galleries, Berlin is the biggest location for classical, modern and contemporary art galleries in Europe! Over 6,000 artists provide creative inspiration in Berlin!
- ... the world’s largest universal museum lies in the heart of Berlin? Restoring and rearranging the Museum Island, with its five monumental buildings, is the Federal Republic’s most ambitious cultural project. A World Heritage Site since 1999, the Museum Island will be shining in its new splendour by 2015. Approximately 1.5 billion Euros are being invested in it. 2009 the Neues Museum opened. That’s where the renowned bust of Nefertiti is also on display.
- ... the Pergamonmuseum, with the 2000 year old Pergamon Altar (on the Museum Island), is the world’s premier archaeological museum and - with over 1.1 million visitors in 2009 - is the city’s most popular permanent collection?
- ... since it opened on September 9<sup>th</sup> 2001 the Jewish Museum has already fascinated 7,5 million people, 720,000 in 2011 alone. The museum was designed in the form of a burst Star of David, in accordance with plans by Daniel Libeskind. The building is one of the most significant examples of contemporary architecture and houses an exhibition of “Two Thousand Years of German/Jewish History”.
- ... Berlin is the only city in the world with three active opera houses, which can seat a total of 4,411 opera lovers? Berlin also has some 150 theatres and halls for every genre.
- ... no other German city can lay on such a rich diversity of culinary delights? Berlin has approximately 6,500 restaurants, 546 ice cream parlours and cafes, 2,800 sandwich bars, 225 bars, clubs and pubs and other gastronomic outlets offering food and drinks from all over the world. Berlin is the city that never sleeps. Unlike other cities, there is no ‘curfew’ in the city on the Spree, which means that in Berlin you can visit cafes, restaurants or bars around the clock.

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- ... Berlin has its own, genuine speciality beer? Berliner Weiße (Berlin White) is a fizzy, bitter beer made from wheat and fermented in the bottle. When served with a shot of raspberry or woodruff syrup it's called "Weiße mit Schuss" ("White with a Shot") and makes a wonderfully refreshing summer drink.
- ... Berlin's most famous recipes include "Eisbein mit Sauerkraut" (knuckle of pork with sauerkraut), "Erbsenpüree" (mushy peas), "gebratener Hering" (fried herring), "Havel-Zander" (Havel pike), "kalte Bouletten mit Senf" (cold meatballs with mustard), "eingelegte Eier und Gewürzgurken" (pickled eggs and gherkins) "grüne Erbsensuppe mit Schinken" (green pea soup with ham) or "gebratene Leber mit Apfelingeln" (fried liver with apple rings)?
- ... the centuries-old tradition of viticulture has been revived in Berlin in recent years? The most famous vineyard is in Kreuzberg, but wine is also produced in Wilmersdorf, Schöneberg, Mitte, Neukölln and Mahrzahn. The most northerly vineyard is in Humboldthain in the district of Gesundbrunnen. The only Berlin sparkling wine is pressed there.
- ... the most famous pastry in Berlin is a pancake stuffed with marmalade? Throughout Germany this is known as a 'Berliner' - only you will never find it called that in Berlin. Here it's just a pancake. And what the rest of Germany knows as a 'pancake' is called an'Eierkuchen' ('egg cake') in Berlin.
- ... the Berlin dialect was largely influenced by the Huguenots in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century? A few words of French origin are: "Budike" (pub or shop), "Boulette" (meatballs), "Roulade" (rolled meat slices) and "Destille" (pub). However other linguistic influences, e.g. Hebrew (via Yiddish) have left their audible mark in expressions like "Ganove" ("crook") or "Macke" ("quirk").