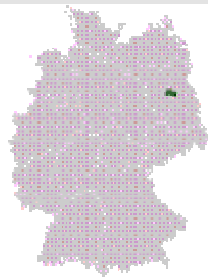


Berlin

State of Berlin



Location in Germany



Flag



Coat of arms



Basic Information

Area:	891.75 km ²
	5,370 km ² Metro Area
Population :	3,396,990 11/2005
	4,262,480 Metro Area
Density:	3,809/km ² State
Elevation:	34 - 115 m

<u>Coordinates:</u>	52°31′N 13°24′E
<u>Postal code:</u>	10001-14199
<u>Area code:</u>	+49/30
<u>Licence plate code :</u>	B
<u>Time zone :</u>	UTC+1 /Summer UTC+2
<u>Website :</u>	www.berlin.de
Politics	
<u>Governing Mayor:</u>	Klaus Wowereit SPD
<u>Governing Parties:</u>	SPD / Linkspartei
<u>State Election:</u>	17 September 2006
<u>Subdivisions:</u>	12 Bezirke

Berlin is the [capital city](#) and a single [state](#) of the [Federal Republic of Germany](#). It is the country's largest city in area and population, and the second [most populous](#) city in the [European Union](#).

Berlin is one of the most influential centers in European [politics](#) and [culture](#). The city serves as an important junction of national and continental transportation. Berlin is a major [tourist](#) and [shopping](#) destination and is well known for its diverse range of convention venues and [media](#) outlets. It is home to some of the most prominent [universities](#), [research](#) faculties, [theatres](#), and [museums](#) in Europe.

The rapidly changing metropolis at present enjoys an international reputation for its [festivals](#), vibrant [nightlife](#), contemporary [architecture](#), and [avant-garde](#) arts. Being home to people from over 180 nations, Berlin is a magnet for individuals who are attracted by its liberal [lifestyle](#), eclectic [urbanity](#), and artistic [freedom](#). The city is famous and infamous for its political legacy during the [20th century](#).

Since its founding in the [13th century](#), Berlin has been the capital of the [Margraviate of Brandenburg](#) (until [1701](#)), the [Kingdom of Prussia](#) ([1701](#) – [1871](#)), the [German Empire](#) ([1871](#) – [1919](#)), the [Weimar Republic](#) ([1919](#) – [1933](#)), the [Third Reich](#) ([1933](#) – [1945](#)), the [German Democratic Republic](#) ([East Berlin: 1949](#) – [1990](#)) and the Federal Republic of Germany (since [German reunification](#) in 1990).

Geography



River [Spree](#) in summer

Berlin is located in eastern Germany, about 70 kilometers (40 miles) west of the border with [Poland](#). Berlin's [landscape](#) was shaped by [ice sheets](#) during the last [ice age](#). The city center lies along the river [Spree](#) in the Berlin-Warsaw *Urstromtal* (ancient river valley), formed by water flowing from melting ice sheets at the end of the last Ice Age. The *Urstromtal* lies between the low plateaus of the Barnim, to the north, and the Teltow, to the south. In Berlin's westernmost borough, [Spandau](#), the Spree meets the river [Havel](#), which flows from north to south through western Berlin. The course of the Havel is much like a chain of lakes. The largest lakes along the Havel are the Tegeler See and [Großer Wannsee](#). A series of lakes also feeds into the upper Spree, which flows through eastern Berlin's largest lake, [Großer Müggelsee](#).

Substantial parts of present-day Berlin extend onto the low plateaus that line the Spree Valley. Large parts of the boroughs [Reinickendorf](#) and [Pankow](#) lie on the Barnim, while most of the boroughs [Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf](#), [Steglitz-Zehlendorf](#), [Tempelhof-Schöneberg](#), and [Neukölln](#) are on the Teltow. The borough of Spandau lies partly within the Berlin *Urstromtal* and partly on the Nauen Plain, which stretches to the west of Berlin. The highest elevations in Berlin are the Teufelsberg in the borough of Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf and the Müggelberge in the borough of [Treptow-Köpenick](#). Both hills have an elevation of about 115 meters (377 feet). The Teufelsberg is in fact an artificial pile of rubble from the ruins of [World War II](#).

Climate

The city has a moderate climate. The mean annual temperature for Berlin-Dahlem is 9.4°C (48.9°F) and its mean annual precipitation totals 578 millimeters (22.8 inches). The warmest months are June, July, and August, with mean temperatures of 16.7 to 17.9°C (62.1 to 64.2°F). The coldest are December, January, and February, with mean temperatures of -0.4 to 1.2°C (31.3 to 34.2°F).

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Mean daily maximum	2.9	4.2	8.5	13.2	18.9	21.6	23.7	23.6	18.8	13.4	7.1	4.4

temperature (°C)													
Mean daily minimum temperature (°C)	-1.9	-1.5	-1.3	4.2	9.0	12.3	14.3	14.1	10.6	6.4	2.2	-0.4	
Mean total rainfall (mm)	42.3	33.3	40.5	37.1	53.8	68.7	55.5	58.2	45.1	37.3	43.6	55.3	
Mean number of rain days	10.0	8.0	9.1	7.8	8.9	9.8	8.4	7.9	7.8	7.6	9.6	11.4	

History



[Statue of Frederick the Great](#)

The first written mention of the city of Cölln dates to [1237](#), and that of Berlin dates to [1244](#). Both documents are exhibited in the museum of the *Dom* (Cathedral) of [Brandenburg an der Havel](#). From the beginning, the two cities formed an economic and social unit. In [1307](#), the two cities were united politically. Over time, the twin cities came to be known simply as Berlin, the larger of the pair. The name Berlin probably stems from the Slavic root *berl* (swamp, marshy ground). In [1415](#) [Frederick I](#) became the [elector](#) of the Margraviate of [Brandenburg](#), which he ruled until [1440](#). Subsequent members of the [Hohenzollern](#) family ruled until [1918](#) in Berlin, first as electors of Brandenburg, then as kings of [Prussia](#), and finally as German emperors. The inhabitants of Berlin did not always welcome these changes. In [1448](#) they rebelled in the “Berlin Indignation” against the construction of a new royal palace by Elector [Frederick II Irontooth](#). This protest was not successful, however, and the citizenry lost many of its

political and economic privileges. In [1451](#) Berlin became the royal residence of the Brandenburg electors, and Berlin had to give up its status as a free [Hanseatic](#) city. In [1539](#) the electors and the city officially became [Protestant](#).

17–19th century

The [Thirty Years' War](#) between [1618](#) and [1648](#) had devastating consequences for Berlin. A third of the houses were damaged, and the city lost half of its population. [Frederick William](#), known as the “Great Elector”, succeeded his father as ruler in 1640. He initiated a policy of promoting [immigration](#) and religious tolerance. Over the following decades, Berlin expanded greatly in area and population with the founding of the new suburbs of Friedrichswerder, Dorotheenstadt, and Friedrichstadt, today the site of many government offices. In 1671, fifty Jewish families from Austria were given a home in Berlin. With the Edict of Potsdam in [1685](#), Frederick William invited the French [Huguenots](#) to Brandenburg. More than 15,000 Huguenots came, of whom 6,000 settled in Berlin. Around [1700](#), approximately twenty percent of Berlin's residents were French, and their cultural influence was great. Many other immigrants came from [Bohemia](#), [Poland](#), and [Salzburg](#). With coronation of Frederick I in [1701](#) as king of [Prussia](#)

, Berlin became the capital of Prussia. On [1 January 1710](#), the cities of Berlin, Cölln, Friedrichswerder, Dorotheenstadt, and Friedrichstadt were united as the “Royal Capital and Residence of Berlin.” The [Industrial Revolution](#) transformed Berlin during the 19th century; the city's economy and population expanded dramatically, and it became the main rail hub and economic center of Germany. Additional suburbs soon developed and increased the area and population of Berlin. In [1861](#), outlying suburbs including [Wedding](#), [Moabit](#), and several others were incorporated into Berlin. In [1871](#), Berlin became capital of the newly founded German Empire.

20th century

At the end of [World War I](#) in [1918](#), the [Weimar Republic](#) was proclaimed in Berlin. In [1920](#), the Greater Berlin Act united dozens of suburban cities, villages, and estates around Berlin into a greatly expanded city. After this expansion, Berlin had a population of around 4 million. [1920s Berlin](#) was a very exciting and interesting city.



[Red Army](#) soldiers raising the Soviet flag on the roof of the [Reichstag](#)

After the [National Socialists](#) (Nazis) were elected in [1933](#), Berlin became the capital of the [Third Reich](#). The Nazis used the [1936 Summer Olympic Games](#) in Berlin for propaganda purposes. There were also plans to rebuild Berlin as “[Germania, Capital of the World](#).” However, these plans were put aside because of [World War II](#). Nazi rule destroyed Berlin's Jewish community, which numbered 160,000 before the Nazi seizure of power. After the brutal pogrom of [Kristallnacht](#) in 1938, thousands of the city's Jews were imprisoned in the concentration camp at nearby [Sachsenhausen](#). The last Jews in Berlin (except for a few married to non-Jews) were marched to the Grunewald railway station over several weeks in early 1943 and shipped in cattle cars to death camps such as [Auschwitz](#). During the war, large parts of Berlin were destroyed by bombs and street combat. After the occupation of the city by the [Red Army](#) and the German surrender in [1945](#), Berlin was divided into four sectors, analogous to the occupation zones into which Germany was divided. The sectors of the Western Allies (the [United States](#), [United Kingdom](#), and [France](#)) formed [West Berlin](#), while the sector of the [Soviet Union](#) formed [East Berlin](#).



The [Berlin Wall](#) in 1986, brightly painted on the western side. Those trying to cross the so-called death strip on the eastern side could be shot.

For Berlin as a whole, all four allies retained shared oversight. However, the growing political differences between the Western Allies and the Soviet Union led the Soviet Union, which controlled the territory surrounding Berlin, to impose the [Berlin Blockade](#), an economic blockade of West Berlin from 1948 to 1949. The Allies successfully overcame this blockade through the [Berlin Airlift](#). In 1949 the democratic Federal Republic of Germany was founded in [West Germany](#), while the Marxist-Leninist German Democratic Republic (GDR) was proclaimed in [East Germany](#). The founding of the two German states increased [Cold War](#) tensions. West Berlin was surrounded by the territory of the GDR. Due to Berlin's isolation and vulnerability, the Federal Republic established its provisional capital in [Bonn](#). The GDR, however, proclaimed East Berlin, which included most of the historic center, as its capital. The east-west conflict culminated in the construction of the [Berlin Wall](#) between East and West Berlin and other barriers around West Berlin by the GDR on [13 August 1961](#). West Berlin was now de facto a part of the Federal Republic of Germany, although with a unique legal status, while East Berlin was de facto a part of the GDR.

The eastern and western sectors of Berlin were now completely separated. It was possible for Westerners to pass from one to the other only through strictly controlled checkpoints.

For most Easterners, travel to West Berlin or West Germany was no longer possible. In [1971](#), the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin was signed. While the Soviet Union applied the oversight of the four powers only to West Berlin, the Western Allies emphasized in a [1975](#) note to the [United Nations](#) their position that four-power oversight applied to Berlin as a whole.

The [Reichstag](#) is the site of the German parliament

In [1989](#) pressure from the East German population brought a transition to democracy in the GDR, and Easterners gained free access across the Berlin Wall, which was quickly demolished. In [1990](#) the two parts of Germany were reunified as the Federal Republic of Germany and Berlin became the German capital according to the unification treaty. In [1991](#), the [Bundestag](#) (the lower house of the German parliament) decided, after a controversial public discussion, that the city should again be the seat of the German national government. Most branches of the German government relocated from Bonn to Berlin during the subsequent years. On [1 September 1999](#) the German parliament and government began their work in Berlin.

Politics

The capital



The [Bundeskanzleramt](#) is the seat of the German chancellor

Berlin is the national capital of the Federal Republic of Germany. It is the seat of the German President using the [Schloss Bellevue](#) for his official residence. Since German reunification on [3 October 1990](#) it has been one of the three [city states](#), together with [Hamburg](#) and [Bremen](#), among the present sixteen [states of Germany](#). The Bundesrat ("federal council") is the representation of the Federal States (*Bundesländer*) of Germany and has its seat at the former Prussian Herrenhaus (House of Lords). Though most of the ministries are seated in Berlin, some of them and also minor departments are seated in Bonn, the former capital of western Germany.

The state

The city and state [parliament](#) is the House of Representatives (*Abgeordnetenhaus*) with 141 seats. Berlin's executive body is the [Senate](#) of Berlin (*Senat von Berlin*). The Senate of Berlin consists of the Governing Mayor (*Regierender Bürgermeister*) and up to eight senators holding ministerial portfolios, one of them holding the official title "Mayor" (*Bürgermeister*) as deputy to the Governing Mayor. Each of the senators needs the confidence of the Abgeordnetenhaus and each of them can be voted out of office by the house, as it happened in 2001, where the CDU senators were defeated by [votes of no confidence](#).

The Governing Mayor is both lord mayor of the city (*Oberbürgermeister der Stadt*) and prime minister of the federal state (*Ministerpräsident des Bundeslandes*) at the same time. The office of Berlin's governing mayor is in the [Rotes Rathaus](#) (Red City Hall). Presently (April 2006), this office is held by [Klaus Wowereit](#) of the [Social Democratic Party](#) (SPD). The city's government is based on a coalition between the SPD and [Die Linke.PDS](#), a party formed by a merger of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor to the former East German communist party, who renamed itself in 2005 for cooperation with the [Labor and Social Justice Party](#).

Boroughs, localities



[Prenzlauer Berg](#) is part of the [Pankow](#) borough

Berlin is subdivided into 12 [boroughs](#) (*Bezirke* in German, also sometimes called [districts](#) in English). Each borough is subdivided into a number of [localities](#) (*Ortsteil* in German, also sometimes called sub districts or [neighborhoods](#) in English), which represent the traditional [urbanized](#) areas that inhabitants identify with. Some of these have been rearranged several times over the years. At present the city of Berlin consists of 96 such localities. The localities often consist of a number of city neighborhoods (usually called [Kiez](#) in German) representing small residential areas.



Berlin boroughs

Each borough is governed by a borough council (*Bezirksamt*) consisting of ten councilors (*Stadträte*) and a borough mayor (*Bezirksbürgermeister*). The borough council is elected by the borough assembly (*Bezirksverordnetenversammlung*). The boroughs of Berlin are not independent municipalities. The power of borough governments is limited and subordinate to the Senate of Berlin. The borough mayors form the Council of Mayors (*Rat der Bürgermeister*), led by the city's governing mayor (*Regierender Bürgermeister*), which advises the Senate.

The localities have no government bodies of their own, even though most of the localities have historic roots in older municipalities that predate the formation of Greater Berlin on [1 October 1920](#). The subsequent position of locality representative (*Ortsvorsteher*) was discontinued in favor of borough mayors.

Demography, religion

Berlin has 3,396,990 inhabitants (as of November 2005) in an area of 891.75 square kilometers (344.31 [mi²](#)). Thus, the population density of the region amounts to 3,809 inhabitants per square kilometer (9,857/square mile). Berlin residents' average age is 41.7 years (as of 2004). A total of 453,977 residents are of foreign origins from 185 nations (as of November [2005](#)). Among them, approximately 38,522 citizens come from the nearest neighboring country, [Poland](#), and 117,624 are from [Turkey](#)— Berlin has the largest Turkish population of any city in Europe outside of Turkey. Berlin is the sixth-largest [urban area in the European Union](#), and approximately the 80th-largest urban area in the world.

In 2005, around 25% of the population were Protestants, 10% were Catholics, 6% were Muslims, 0.4% were Jews, and more than 50% have no registered religion.

Economic history



[Sony Center](#) and newly built corporate offices

Berlin was founded at a point where trade routes crossed the River Spree and quickly became a commercial center. During the early modern period, the city prospered from its role as Prussian capital by manufacturing luxury goods for the Prussian court and supplies for the Prussian military.

During the mid-1800s, the [Industrial Revolution](#) transformed the city's economy. Berlin became Germany's main rail hub and a center of rail locomotive manufacturing. The city became a leader in the manufacture of other kinds of machinery as well, and developed an important chemical manufacturing sector. Toward the end of the 19th century, Berlin became a world leader in the then cutting-edge sector of electrical equipment manufacturing. As the de facto center of the German [Zollverein](#), or Customs Union, and later the seat of imperial Germany's central bank, Berlin became Germany's banking and financial center as well.

Berlin suffered from both the German inflation of the 1920s and the [Great Depression](#) of the 1930s. The city's economy revived as a center of armaments production under the Nazis, but it lost a pool of entrepreneurial talent when the Nazis forced Jewish businessmen to sell their holdings and ultimately massacred most who did not flee Germany. World War II severely damaged Berlin's industrial infrastructure, and Soviet expropriation of machinery and other capital equipment as "[reparations](#)" further damaged Berlin's industrial base. Soviet restrictions on transport impeded communication with West Germany and ended hopes that Berlin would resume a role as Germany's financial center; most banks established headquarters in [Frankfurt](#). In East Berlin, central planners rebuilt a manufacturing sector, but one that was not competitive internationally or responsive to market demand. West Berlin's economy grew increasingly dependent on state subsidies and on its role as an educational and research center.

Berlin's and Germany's unification brought the collapse of many of East Berlin's producers, which could not compete with market-disciplined Western competitors. Massive unemployment was only partly compensated by the growth of jobs in the construction and infrastructural sectors involved in rebuilding and upgrading East Berlin's infrastructure. The arrival of the federal government in 1999 brought some economic stimulus to Berlin. Berlin's service sectors have also benefited from improved transportation and communications links to the surrounding region. The service sectors have become the city's economic mainstay.

Economic trends



The Treptowers and the Molecule Men

Berlin's economy has shrunk over the past decade. The gross state product totaled €77.9 billion in 2004. This compares with €77.4 billion in 1995. Correcting for the effects of inflation, however, this represents an 11% reduction in the size of Berlin's economy over 9 years.

In terms of composition, Berlin's gross state product in 2004 was dominated by the service sectors, which made up 76.9% of the economy. The largest service sectors were real estate (29.2%) and government services (28.3%). Goods-producing sectors accounted for 16.2% of the economy, with manufacturing alone accounting for 10.5% and construction for 2.9%. Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries made up 0.1% of the economy. Imputed banking fees made up 3.0% of the city's economy. Net government transfers and subsidies accounted for the remainder (9.7%) of Berlin's gross state product.

Before the reunification of Germany and the two Berlins in 1990, West Berlin received substantial subsidies from the West German state to compensate for its geographic isolation from West Germany. Many of those subsidies were phased out after 1990. The reduced financial support for the city and its gradual economic decline have produced fiscal difficulties for Berlin's city government and forced it to cut funding for various programs.

Education

Berlin is perhaps Germany's most important center of higher education and research, with four universities, numerous professional, technical and private colleges, and a large number of research institutes.

Universities, research



[Humboldt Universität](#)

Around 150,000 students attend the universities and professional/technical colleges. The three largest universities alone account for around 110,000 students. These are the [Freie Universität Berlin](#) with 40,840 students, the [Humboldt Universität zu Berlin](#) with 36,423 students, and the [Technische Universität Berlin](#) with 31,547 students. In addition to these

universities, there is a wide range of professional and technical colleges training students in a wide range of disciplines, from business and management to the arts. Berlin also has a large concentration of research institutions independent of, or only loosely connected to its universities. Together with its universities, these research institutions make Berlin one of the most important centers for research in Europe.

Culture



Ishtar Gate at [Pergamon Museum](#)

Berlin is noted for its numerous cultural institutions, some of which enjoy international reputation. In addition, cultural diversity and tolerance remain from the time when West Berlin took pride in its role as a "free city" with the motto "something for everyone."

Berlin has a rich [art](#) scene, and it is home to hundreds of [art galleries](#). The city is host to the Art Forum annual international art fair. Many young Germans and international artists continue to settle in the city, and Berlin has established itself as an important center of [youth](#) and [pop culture](#) in Europe.

Signs of this expanding role were the 2003 announcement that the annual Popkomm, Europe's largest [music industry convention](#), would move to Berlin after 15 years in [Cologne](#). Shortly thereafter, [German MTV](#) also decided to move its headquarters and main studios from Munich to Berlin. [Universal Music](#) opened its European headquarters on the banks of the River [Spree](#) in an area known as the [mediaspree](#). Since 2006 Berlin is listed as a [UNESCO](#) - City of Design.

Nightlife, festivals



[May Day](#) protests

Berlin offers one of the most diverse and vibrant nightlife scenes in Europe. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 many buildings in the former city center of East Berlin (today the district [Mitte](#)) were renovated. Many had not been rebuilt since World War II. Illegally occupied by young people, they became a fertile ground for all sorts of [underground](#) and [counter-culture](#) gatherings. It was also home to many [nightclubs](#), including Tacheles, [techno](#) clubs *Tresor*, *WMF*, *Ufo* and *E-Werk*. Berlin's annual Karneval der Kulturen, a multi-ethnic street parade, and [Christopher Street Day](#) celebrations, Central Europe's largest gay-lesbian pride event, are openly supported by the city's government. [\[2\]](#) [\[3\]](#). Berlin is also well-known for the [techno](#) carnival [Love Parade](#).

Museums, galleries



[Alte Nationalgalerie](#)

Berlin has a very large number of museums. The comprehensive ensemble on the [Museum Island](#) is a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) and is situated in the northern part of the Spree Island between the Spree and the Kupfergraben. As early as 1841 it was designated a “district dedicated to art and antiquities” by a royal decree. Subsequently, several museum buildings were constructed there. These were the Altes Museum (Old Museum) in the Lustgarten, and the Neues Museum (New Museum), Alte Nationalgalerie (Old National Gallery), [Pergamon Museum](#), and Bode Museum at the far northern end of the island. While these buildings once housed distinct collections, the names of the buildings no longer necessarily correspond to the names of the collections they house.

For example, the Altes Museum and the Pergamon Museum together house the Collection of Classical Antiquities, [\[4\]](#) a collection of ancient art and artifacts. The Pergamon Museum also houses the world-renowned Museum of the Ancient Near East [\[5\]](#) and the Museum of Islamic Art [\[6\]](#).

The Museum for Pre-and Early History remains at the Charlottenburg Palace until the Neues Museum is renovated. In the case of the Alte Nationalgalerie, [\[7\]](#) its collection of 19th-century painting and sculpture carries the same name as the building that houses it. However, the Bode Museum, which underwent extensive renovation during the early

2000s, will house the Sculpture Collection and Museum of Byzantine Art [8] and the Numismatic Collection [9] when it reopens in 2006.



[Holocaust Memorial](#)

Outside of the Museum Island, there is a wide variety of museums. The [Gemäldegalerie](#)[10] (Painting Gallery) focuses on the paintings of the "old masters" from the 13th to the 18th centuries, while the Neue Nationalgalerie [11] (New National Gallery, built by [Ludwig Mies van der Rohe](#)) specializes in 20th-century European painting. The Bauhaus Archive [12] is an architecture museum. The [Jewish Museum Berlin](#) [13] has a standing exhibition on 2,000 years of German-Jewish history. In Dahlem, there are several museums of world art and culture, such as the Museum of Indian Art [14], the Museum of East Asian Art [15], the Ethnological Museum [16], the Museum of European Cultures [17], as well as the Allied Museum [18] (a museum of the Cold War), the Brücke Museum [19] (an art museum). In Lichtenberg, on the grounds of the former East German Ministry for State Security (*Stasi*), stands the Stasi Museum [20] ([German language](#)). The Wall Museum, also known as Museum at Checkpoint Charlie [21], displays moments from the history of the divided Berlin. Other museums or galleries include:

- [Vitra Design Museum](#) [22]
- [Berlin Underground Society](#), offering tours and of Berlin's subterranean structures [23]
- [Berlin Wall Documentation Center](#) [24]
- [Gay Museum \(Schwules Museum\)](#) [25]
- [German Film Museum](#) [26]
- [German Museum of Technology](#) in [Kreuzberg](#), located at the site of an old freight rail yard [27]

- [Hamburger Bahnhof: Museum of the Present](#), with exhibits of contemporary art [28]
- [Museum of Natural History](#) [29]
- [Museum of Mail and Telecommunication](#) [30]
- [Prussian Palaces and Gardens in Berlin](#) [31]
- [Subway/Underground Museum](#) [32]
- [The Berggruen Collection \(Picasso and his times\)](#) [33]

Theatres, opera houses, music

Theatres in Berlin include the [Schaubühne \[34\]](#), [Volksbühne \[35\]](#), [Deutsches Theater \[36\]](#), [Berliner Ensemble \[37\]](#), Theater des Westens [\[38\]](#), Theater am Potsdamer Platz [\[39\]](#), and Maxim Gorki Theater [\[40\]](#). Opera houses include the [Deutsche Oper](#), [Staatsoper Unter den Linden](#), [Komische Oper](#). The [Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra](#) is one of the pre-eminent orchestras in the world with its current principal conductor [Sir Simon Rattle](#).

Zoos, botanical gardens, parks



Greenhouse at the Botanical garden

[Zoologischer Garten Berlin](#), Berlin's oldest [zoo](#), founded in [1844](#); features the most diverse range of species in the world. Tierpark Friedrichsfelde, another zoo, founded in Friedrichsfelde (part of [Lichtenberg](#)) in [1955](#) in the manor of Schloss Friedrichsfelde, is the largest zoo in Europe by area.

Berlin's [botanical gardens](#) include the Botanic Museum Berlin, the largest botanical garden in Europe.

[Tiergarten](#) is Berlin's largest [park](#) and was designed by P. J. Lenné. Another park named [Viktoriapark](#) contains a hilltop in [Kreuzberg](#), which provides a terrestrial viewpoint over many of the southern regions of Berlin. The Volkspark [Friedrichshain](#) is the oldest park in the city opened in 1848. The artificial mountains were added after World War II and are made of rubble from the ruins of the city.

Architecture



Weltzeituhr

Even though Berlin does have a number of impressive buildings from earlier centuries, the city's appearance today is mainly shaped by the key role it played in Germany's history in the [20th century](#). Each of the national governments based in Berlin—the 1871 [German Empire](#), the [Weimar Republic](#), [Nazi Germany](#), [East Germany](#), and now the reunified [Germany](#)—initiated ambitious [construction](#) programs, each with its own distinctive character. Berlin was devastated by bombing raids during [World War II](#), and many of the old buildings that escaped the bombs were eradicated in the 1950s and 1960s in both West and East. Much of this destruction was caused by overambitious [architecture](#) programs, especially to build new residential or business quarters and main roads. It would not be an exaggeration to say that no other city in the world offers Berlin's unusual mix of architecture, especially 20th-century architecture. The city's tense and unique recent history has left it with a distinctive array of sights.

Not much is left of the [Berlin Wall](#). The [East Side Gallery](#) in [Friedrichshain](#) near the *Oberbaumbrücke* ("Upper Turnpike Bridge") over the [Spree](#) preserves a portion of the Wall. Architectural styles still sometimes reveal whether one is in the former eastern or western part of the city. In the eastern part, many [Plattenbauten](#) can be found, reminders of [Eastern Bloc](#) ambitions to create complete residential areas with fixed ratios of shops, [kindergartens](#) and [schools](#). Another difference between former east and west is in the design of little red and green men on pedestrian crossing lights ([Ampelmännchen](#) in German); the eastern versions received an opt-out during the standardization of road traffic signs after re-unification, and have survived to become a popular icon in tourist products. They are however starting to appear in western Berlin too.

Historical sights



The [Brandenburg Gate](#)

The [Brandenburg Gate](#) and [Unter den Linden](#) are symbols of Berlin, [Prussia](#), and now [Germany](#). The Brandenburg Gate also appears on German [Euro](#) coins. The [Reichstag building](#) is the old and new seat of the German parliament, renovated by [Sir Norman Foster](#). It features a famous glass dome in which you can walk around and watch the parliamentarians from above. [Gendarmenmarkt](#), a [renaissance](#) square in Berlin, is surrounded by two similar designed cathedrals and the concert hall. The [Berliner Dom](#), an historic protestant [cathedral](#), is located in Berlin as well. A large crypt houses the

remains of the [Prussian](#) royal family. The [Cathedral of St. Hedwig](#) in Berlin is named after the Roman Catholic (St.-Hedwigs-Kathedrale). The [Nikolaiviertel](#) with its church is an historical city core founded in the 13th century which can be found close to Alexanderplatz like the [Neptunbrunnen](#), a famous fountain featuring a mythological scenery. [Schloss](#)

[Bellevue](#)

, is now the residence of the German President. [Schloss Charlottenburg](#) is the largest surviving historical palace in Berlin.

Famous sights



The [Reichstag](#) glass dome

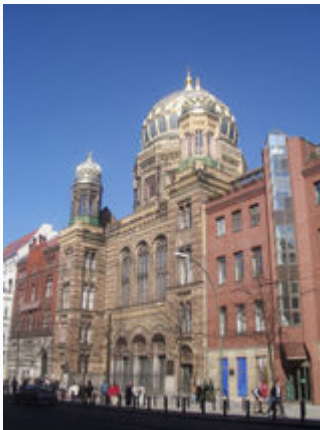
- The [Fernsehturm](#) (TV tower), the highest building in the city at 368 m, and the second largest structure in the [EU](#). The Fernsehturm is easily visible throughout most of the central districts of Berlin, and boasts one of the fastest lifts in Europe, at 45 metres per minute.
- [Alexanderplatz](#) is featuring the Weltzeituhr and is a former [East Berlin](#)'s shopping area. It was home to the Centrum-Warenhaus, which once was the [GDR's](#) department store.
- [East Side Gallery](#) a memorial for freedom based on the last parts of the [Berlin Wall](#)
- [Rotes Rathaus](#) (Red City Hall), historic town hall with its distinctive red-brick architecture
- [Checkpoint Charlie](#), remains the site and a [museum](#) about one of the crossing points (albeit restricted to non-Germans and Allied forces) in the [Berlin Wall](#). The museum, which is a private venture, exhibits a comprehensive array of material about people who devised ingenious plans to flee the East.
- [Rathaus Schöneberg](#), where [John F. Kennedy](#) made his famous "[Ich bin ein Berliner!](#)" speech.
- [Potsdamer Platz](#), an entire quarter built from scratch after 1995. The historic Potsdamer Platz was not rebuilt as it was divided by the Wall. A must-see for fans of modern [city planning](#). Just to the West of Potsdamer Platz is the Kulturforum, which houses the [Gemäldegalerie](#), and is flanked by the [Neue Nationalgalerie](#) and the [Philharmonie](#).

- [Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe](#), a [Holocaust](#) memorial.
- [Haus der Kulturen der Welt](#) is presenting various exhibitions dealing with intercultural issues and stages also world music and conferences.

Panorama sites

- [Siegessäule](#) —(Victory Column) monument to Prussia's victories at the Großer Stern situated in the [Tiergarten](#) Park where it was relocated in 1938–39 from its previous position in front of the [Reichstag](#).
- [Berliner Funkturm](#)— the only observation tower in the world which stands on insulators. Its open-air observation deck is popular for photography.
- [Berlin Television Tower](#) —368-m (1,207 ft) high television tower, built in 1969 close to [Alexanderplatz](#). The entire city can be viewed from its 204-m (669 ft) high observation platform.
- [Französischer Dom](#) —located on [Gendarmenmarkt](#) in the very heart of the city, the platform of the cathedral offers unique views.
- [Bierpinsel](#)—literally "Beer Brush". 1970s style tower in the Berlin Borough of [Steglitz](#) with a café and bar at the top giving views over south-western Berlin.
- Restaurant of the [Forum Hotel Berlin](#)
- [Berliner Dom](#) —[Protestant cathedral](#) situated next to the [Lustgarten](#), with a circular observation platform around the dome.
- [Bell tower at the Olympic Stadium](#) —part of the Reichssportfeld complex, the tower offers a view of the [Olympic Stadium](#) and also of the Waldbühne, an open-air stage.

High streets, boulevards



[New Synagogue](#)

- [Unter den Linden](#) is the grand boulevard that heads east from the Brandenburg Gate. Many Classical buildings line the street. Part of [Humboldt University](#) is located there.

- [Friedrichstraße](#), Berlin's legendary street of the "Golden Twenties" which combines the tradition of the last century with modern architecture of today's Berlin.
- Hackescher Markt, the home to fashionable culture, with countless clothing shops, clubs, bars, and galleries. This includes the [New Synagogue](#) area in Oranienburger Straße (built in the 1860s in Moorish style), and the Hackesche Höfe, a conglomeration of buildings around several courtyards, reconstructed after 1996. This area was a center of [Jewish](#) culture up until the 1930s.
- [Kurfürstendamm](#) (Ku'damm), with the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche ([Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church](#)), which is situated right at the top end of Kurfürstendamm, on Breitscheidplatz (underground station Kurfürstendamm). The church was bombed out in World War II and its ruins have been preserved in their damaged state. Near by is the [Ka-De-We](#) one of the largest luxury department stores in Europe.
- The [Straße des 17. Juni](#) connects the Brandenburg Gate in the East and Ernst-Reuter-Platz in the West, commemorating the uprisings in [East Berlin](#) of [17 June 1953](#). It features the [Siegessäule](#), which used to be the center stage for the [Love Parade](#).
- The [Karl-Marx-Allee](#) (formerly Stalinallee), a boulevard lined by monumental landmark buildings designed in the Socialist Classicism of the [Stalin](#) era. It is located in [Friedrichshain](#) and [Mitte](#).

Infrastructure



[Berlin Hauptbahnhof](#) under construction

As Germany's largest city, and one of the largest cities in Europe, Berlin developed a complex transportation and energy-supply infrastructure before World War II. After the war, West Berlin was cut off from the surrounding territory and had to develop independent infrastructures. Meanwhile, the government of East Germany built rail lines and highways that allowed traffic between East Berlin and the western part of East Germany to bypass West Berlin. The political reunification of East and West Berlin has led to the reintegration of Berlin's transportation and energy-supply with the infrastructures of the surrounding region.

Public transport, rail lines

Public transport within Berlin is provided by the [S-Bahn](#)—operated by S-Bahn Berlin GmbH—and by the [U-Bahn](#), [Straßenbahn](#), [Bus](#), and ferries—operated by the [Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe](#), or BVG. The S-Bahn is a mostly aboveground urban railway system. The U-Bahn is the city's mainly underground metro or subway system. The Straßenbahn is a tram (trolley) system that operates mainly in eastern Berlin. Buses provide extensive service linking outlying districts with the city center and the U-Bahn and S-Bahn. Almost all means of public transport—U- & S- Bahn, trams, buses and most ferries—can be accessed with the same ticket. Public transportation in Berlin works on a sort of honor system: There is no need to show or scan one's ticket in order to get on a bus, tram, or train. However, plain clothed transit authorities frequently conduct random checks in which they board a vehicle and demand that everyone onboard show their ticket. Anyone who does not produce a valid ticket is given a stiff fine.

The inner city is crossed from east to west by the elevated main line (*Stadtbahn*), which carries S-Bahn trains as well as regional and long-distance trains. This main line passes through most of the city's long-distance and regional train stations, including [Berlin-Charlottenburg](#), [Berlin Zoologischer Garten](#) (Zoo), [Berlin Hauptbahnhof](#), [Friedrichstraße](#), [Alexanderplatz](#), and [Berlin Ostbahnhof](#). Along the north-south axis, the U-Bahn 9 line carries the largest passenger volume, supplemented by the north-south line of the S-Bahn. The north-south and east-west lines of the S-Bahn cross at Friedrichstraße.



[S-Bahn](#)

The last key component of Berlin's rail network is the S-Bahn ring (*Ringbahn*) that forms a circle around the inner city and crosses the main line at Westkreuz (“west crossing”) and Ostkreuz (“east crossing”). A number of regional and regional express lines connect Berlin with the surrounding region. The city is also served by the freight rail yard at Seddin, south of Potsdam. There are useful online resources for getting around Berlin using public transport, such as the [route planner](#) or a map of the current [public transport network](#). Long-distance rail lines connect Berlin with all of the major cities of Germany and with many cities in neighboring European countries. Regional rail lines provide access to the surrounding region of Brandenburg and eastern Germany.

Motorways, canals, ports

Berlin's inner city is partly surrounded by a [motorway](#) (Autobahn), the A 100, that forms a half circle to the west of the center. There are plans to extend this motorway to form a full circle around the inner city. The A 10 motorway which forms a full circle around the exterior of Berlin is known and signposted as the Berliner Ring. From the A 100, within the city, the following motorways extend outwards to the A 10 and beyond:

- A 111 to the northwest (toward [Hamburg](#) and [Rostock](#))
- A 113 to the southeast (toward [Dresden](#) and [Cottbus](#)). This motorway currently begins in the south-eastern part of Berlin. By 2007, the connection to the A 100, currently under construction, should be complete.
- A 115 to the southwest (toward [Hanover](#) and [Leipzig](#)). The segment of this motorway inside the A 10 is still commonly known as the Avus.
- A 114 runs from [Pankow](#) to and beyond the A 10 toward [Szczecin](#) in Poland.

Berlin is linked to the [Baltic Sea](#), the [North Sea](#), and the River [Rhine](#) by an extensive network of rivers and canals. The Elbe-Havel Kanal links the River Havel, flowing from Berlin, both with the River [Elbe](#)—which flows into the North Sea at Hamburg—and with the [Mittellandkanal](#), which stretches across Germany to a network of canals that provide a link to the River Rhine. The Oder-Spree Kanal links Berlin's River Spree with the [Oder River](#), which flows into the Baltic Sea near [Szczecin](#).

The most important canals with Berlin run roughly east to west between the Rivers Spree and Havel. The canal system to the north of the Spree begins with the Berlin-Spandauer Schifffahrtskanal, which runs from the Spree near Hauptbahnhof to the edge of Charlottenburg, where it connects with the Westhafenkanal, which re-enters the Spree farther west in Charlottenburg, and with the Hohenzollernkanal, which runs to the River Havel above Spandau. The main canal to the south of the Spree is the Teltowkanal, which runs from an arm of the upper Spree south of Köpenick through the southern part of Berlin to an arm of the Havel just east of Potsdam. A shorter canal, the Landwehrkanal, parallels the Spree just to the south of the river. It begins at the Spree between Treptow and Kreuzberg and rejoins the Spree in Charlottenburg. The Neuköllner Schifffahrtskanal connects the Landwehrkanal with the Teltowkanal; while the Britzer Zweigkanal connects the Teltowkanal with the Spree at Baumschulenweg.

Berlin's largest port is the Westhafen (“west port”), in Moabit (Mitte), with an area of 173,000 m² (42.75 [acres](#)). It lies at the intersection of the Berlin-Spandauer Schifffahrtskanal, the Westhafenkanal, and the Hohenzollernkanal. It handles the shipping of grain and pieced and heavy goods. The Südhafen (“south port”), which actually lies along the Havel in Spandau, in far western Berlin, covers an area of about 103,000 m² (25.5 acres) and also handles the shipping of pieced and heavy goods. The Osthafen (“east port”), with an area of 57,500 m² (14.2 acres), lies along the Spree in Friedrichshain. The Hafen Neukölln, with only 19,000 m² (4.7 acres), is located along the Neuköllner Schifffahrtskanal in Neukölln. It handles the shipping of building materials.

Airports



[Berlin-Schönefeld International Airport](#) is a Low-Cost-Hub

Berlin has three commercial airports—[Tegel International Airport](#) (TXL), [Tempelhof International Airport](#) (THF), and [Schönefeld International Airport](#) (SXF). Schönefeld lies just outside Berlin's south-eastern border in the state of Brandenburg, while the other two airports lie within the city. Tempelhof handles only short-distance and commuter flights, and there are plans to close the airport and transfer its traffic to Berlin's other two airports. There are longer-term plans to close Tegel as well. Schönefeld is currently undergoing expansion. Berlin's airport authority aims to transfer all of Berlin's air traffic sometime after 2010 to a greatly expanded airport at Schönefeld, to be renamed [Berlin Brandenburg International Airport](#). For more information on Berlin's airports, see the website of [Berlin Airports](#).