



Hello to Berlin
by
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Berlin is a sprawling place. Nine times the size of Paris, but with just around a third of the population, it's hard to know just where to start upon moving to such an imposing European capital.

Look a little closer, however, and you'll see that Berlin is actually quite divided. No, not by a wall, but rather divided into distinct little areas, with their own name and their own identity. Compared to other major cities where the character and feel of a place is generally quite consistent throughout, the different areas of Berlin have unique personalities, and communities within them. Those living in Mitte, for example, will often have quite different local cafes and bars to someone living in Neukölln. A brilliant start to begin to feel like a 'Berliner' is to integrate yourself into the community in your neighbourhood, and then use this as a foundation to spread your wings throughout the metropolis.

When I first moved here for my Year Abroad in Autumn 2018, I didn't know where to start. Sure there were countless blogs, tips, advice and magazine articles, but they were all dotted around the place and required hours devoted to searching and reading. This guide is therefore envisioned as an aide, a good starting point for anyone who is about to begin a life in Berlin, be that for a year, or the foreseeable future.

Such a mammoth task could not have been undertaken alone, and for each section there is a small written testimony from a year abroad student who has lived in that specific area of Berlin. The students have kindly given up some of their time to write a broad overview of their district, what they liked about it, and any recommendations that they have.

For each section, there is then a compiled a list of recommended spots in the given area, which are broadly arranged in the themes food and drink (which encompasses bars), shopping, culture, and open spaces (parks and pools). These are marked by a coloured border: food and drink is red, shopping black, culture blue, and open spaces green. This is to encourage a more easy use of this guide, allowing you to flick to the section you need with ease.

There is of course much more to Berlin than what I have recommended here, but if I was to write about every nook and cranny of the city, the result would be a tome, and years of my time.

Enjoy this guide as a pointer, to give some structure to your new city!

And remember, never cross when the Ampelmann is red.

Mitte

Mitte is home to many of Berlin's most iconic sites, such as Museum Island, the Reichstag, the Television tower and the Brandenburg Gate. The very same landmarks which make it a tourist paradise, also mean that many Berliners are keen to steer clear of the area, at least housing wise, opting for the more intimate boroughs mentioned in this guide. That said, there is still a noticeable student population in some parts of Mitte, as the nearby Humboldt University draws in thousands of students from across Europe, many who make reasonable student accommodation in Mitte their home. The iconic Brandenburg Gate, built towards the end of the 18th Century, once marked one of the city's exits, but has gradually moved towards the centre of the city. During the cold war it symbolised the division of Europe, and was the scene of President Reagan's iconic 'Mr Gorbachev tear down this wall' speech. In scenes broadcast across the world in 1989, the Brandenburg gate became a symbol of reunification and European peace, as cheering crowds chipped away at the hated wall in front of it that had kept them separated for so long. The square in which it stands, Pariser Platz, takes its name from the Prussian victory over Napoleon at Paris in 1814, and before the Second World War was considered the fanciest square in all of Berlin. It still retains somewhat of its former grandeur with the American and French Embassy along with one of the Academy of Arts, however this is somewhat mitigated by the appearance of a Starbucks, and other chain brands. Just yards away from the square is the tip of the Tiergarten, originally a hunting ground for the Prussian royal family, and today a vast green space, where demonstrations, sunbathers, yoga classes and teenagers jostle along side by side. Encased within its walls includes the awe inspiring monuments such as the Siegessäule and the Soviet War Memorial. The long boulevard Unter den Linden links the Brandenburg Gate to the heaving heart of East Berlin, Alexanderplatz. Once the most impressive street in Berlin, Unter den Linden still has yet to regain its hustle and bustle somewhat, although cafes have started to flank its sides, the construction of a new U Bahn line means that it is currently something of a building site. In contrast, Alexanderplatz has remained a firm favourite of Berliners, if not for its beauty but its practicality. A major retail and transport centre, it boasts the tallest building in Germany, the Berlin landmark the Fernsehturm, completed in 1965. Although there was discussion as to whether the building should be torn down after reunification, it still stands today as an icon of Berlin. A stones throw from Alexanderplatz is the Nikolai Viertel, the rebuilt historical heart of Berlin. Restored to commemorate the 750th anniversary of the city in 1987, the quaint streets and houses are in fact mostly all replicates. Another highlight of Mitte is of course the imposing Reichstag, built in 1894, now sporting an impressive dome designed by Sir Norman Foster. It was here that the new republic was declared on 2nd October 1990, and where the government relocated to from Bonn in the early 1990s. Today, you can visit the glass dome for a show stopping view of the city. Mitte truly has it all, from the old to the new it can all be found here in the centre of Berlin, and consequently its the place most beloved of tourists. This does mean that today the place is less populated by locals, although recently luxury flats have been springing up in central areas like around Friedrichstraße. As for so long the centre was divided by the wall, communities did not spring up in the same way that they did in further out boroughs like Prenzlauer Berg, Charlottenburg etc, but life is slowly moving back to the centre of the German capital.

Leon

I spent my year abroad living in a student apartment block just off Alexanderplatz, in the Mitte district of Berlin. Despite containing most of Berlin's most recognisable landmarks, Mitte is not held in particularly high regard amongst Berliners, being neither as exciting as Kreuzberg or Friedrichshain nor as pretty as Charlottenburg or Prenzlauer Berg. Unter den Linden, Alexanderplatz and the nearby Nikolaiviertel all attract a lot of tourists, and a lot of the shops and restaurants in the area are very much geared towards holidaymakers. This does mean that it can sometimes take a while to find affordable places to eat and drink, but a bit of exploring is usually well-rewarded. Along Torstraße, Mein Haus am See, Schmitz and the Gaststätte W. Prasník are all quite a bit cheaper than most other bars in the area, and Café Cinema near Hackescher Markt is a nice place to meet friends on weekday evenings.

The main tourist attractions are definitely worth seeing, especially the galleries on the Museumsinsel, but during the warmer months it's often nicer to avoid the crowds and take refuge in a park. Around the corner from Hackescher Markt, the James-Simon-Park runs alongside the Spree, but it's the smaller green spaces by Rosenthaler Platz and Kastanienallee that really come alive in the evenings.

I spent a lot of evenings exploring the cinemas around Berlin, and was really spoiled for choice in my neighbourhood. Babylon is a wonderfully preserved Weimar-era Kino with a really varied programme of independent and classic films, while the Kino International and the Filmtheater am Friedrichshain are great places to see more recent international releases. There are also some smaller repertory cinemas which are well worth a visit, such as Lichtblick and the Tilsiter Lichtspiele, but these require a bit of a trek over to Friedrichshain. I also enjoyed using the student ClassicCard to see operas and concerts at the Konzerthaus and the Staatsoper, but I found it much easier to get 10€ student tickets at the Deutsche Oper in Charlottenburg, which is only a short U Bahn ride away.

Living in Mitte was very convenient as far as transport was concerned. Three of Berlin's main transport hubs (Friedrichstraße, Alexanderplatz and Hauptbahnhof) are located within a very short distance from each other, which meant that I could usually reach most places in central Berlin in around half an hour. It was a great relief to be able to explore Berlin without having to worry too much about journey times, and living next to the Fernsehturm meant I could always navigate my way home when lost.



St Oberholz

Rosenthaler Str. 72A, 10119 Berlin, Germany

One of the most famous co-working spots in the city, if you don't fancy forking out for a 'ticket' that enables you to work at a specific desk for half a day, week or even a month, you can still grab a coffee and a spot in their downstairs cafe. The atmosphere is that of an office, and will ensure you get your assignment done, with countless plug sockets, wifi and light flowing in through their large windows.



Funk You

Rosenthaler Str. 23, 10119 Berlin, Germany

Another favourite if you have work to get done, Funk You is also well known for its delicious vegetarian and vegan food. Reasonable lunch prices given its location and atmosphere, this cafe is a favourite for workers in Mitte, and for good reason. The plants inside add a shot of colour during the dreary Berlin winter.



Cafe am Neuen See

Lichtensteinallee 2, 10787 Berlin, Germany

One of the loveliest spots in the city, Cafe am Neuen See is situated in the depths of the Tiergarten and is both a large beer garden and a nicer restaurant. Students tend to stick to the beer garden for obvious price reasons, but the setting is truly priceless. Located under large trees, the beer garden borders a small lake, one of the most idyllic spots within the city, where you can rent a small boat to take on the water, or else enjoy a Weißbier whilst perched on the edge.



Monsieur Vuong

Alte Schönbauser Str. 46, 10119 Berlin, Germany

For a slightly 'nice' meal out, be it for a date or with friends, Monsieur Vuong is ideal. Situated near the Babylon cinema (perfect for a pre Movie treat), this restaurant offers mains starting at around 7 euro. The Vietnamese food is freshly cooked, filling while also light.



Clärchens Ballhaus

Auguststraße 24, 10117 Berlin, Germany

A true institution, Clärchens is beloved by tourists and locals alike. Originally opened in 1913, it has withstood the carnage of two world wars to serve today as a restaurant, beer garden, and dancing hall. Sitting in the 1920s style hall, it is not uncommon to watch a dancing class taking place while tucking in to some authentic German cuisine. One to bring visitors to the city to, there is also a beautiful beer garden outside in the garden during the summer.



Weinerei

Veteranenstraße 17, 10119 Berlin, Germany

The Weinerei is a 'pay what you want' wine bar. This may sound disastrous due to its reliance on customer honesty, but it has, so far, proved a decisive hit. You rent a glass, and then help yourself to as many glasses of wine as you wish. At the end of the evening you decide how much you'd like to pay. At closing time, if there's any dessert left, they allow you to tuck in.



Mein Haus am See

Brunnenstraße 197-198, 10119 Berlin, Germany

Although people stop by to gaze at the retro cinema style advertisement, they get sucked in by the unique interior of Mein Haus am See. Various levels filled with sofas, armchairs and cushions make this bar a cosy smokey hangout, exceptionally popular with students. There's often a DJ getting the crowd started with some music, but more often than not people come here to catch up with friends, sinking into one of the sumptuous seats with a drink in hand.



b-flat-berlin

Dircksenstraße 40, 10178 Berlin, Germany

Opened in 1995, b-flat-berlin is one of the city's most iconic jazz clubs, and has hosted greats such as Harry Connick Jr. Although the concerts can often be a little on the expensive side (c.15 euro a head), if you come on a Wednesday evening there's a free jazz jam session which is always spectacular.



Dussmann das KulturKaufhaus
Friedrichstraße 90, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Its impossible not to find what you're after in Dussmann, whose many levels are devoted to books, music and boardgames galore. For German students its a dream come true, with language guides, grammar books and serious literature all under one roof. The tote bags you can buy when making a purchase are also super handy for every day use.



do you read me?!
Auguststraße 28, 10117 Berlin, Germany

This little bookshop on Auguststraße is a must for those interested in literature dealing with visual design, fashion and art etc. There's also a special focus on international magazines and coffee table books. The wide and varied selection includes many fashion magazines, and the customers are equally as stylish.



Heart of Gold Hostel
Johannisstraße 11, 10117 Berlin, Germany

For those who can't squeeze visitors into their room, or for newcomers to Berlin, Heart of Gold Hostel is the ideal refuge. Cheap and central, its ideal for those who have arrived and still need to find a room to rent, as its location means you can attend flat and room viewings throughout the city at the drop of a hat.



Maxim Gorki Theatre
Am Festungsgraben 2, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Taking its name from the Soviet writer, the theatre is housed in the oldest concert hall in Berlin. Despite the age of the building however, don't expect stuffy productions at this Berlin theatre. With an emphasis on plays concerned with social change, this theatre often stages the most exciting new productions in the city. Productions also often have English subtitles - not great for those trying to learn the language, so if you're trying to avoid this, go on the first performance!



Babylon

Rosa-Luxemburg-Straße 50, 10178 Berlin, Germany

Built in the late 1920s, the cinema is an architectural wonder in its own right. From its construction, it was initially used as a silent cinema, and today it is one of the chicest arthouse destinations in the city. As well as hosting events for the Berlinale (Berlin's very own film festival), it also holds many exciting events of its own, such as the Prenzlauer Berg Film Festival.



Alexanderplatz

Alexanderplatz, 10178 Berlin, Germany

The beating heart of East Berlin, 'Alex' to locals, is one of the most famous squares in the city, and a major transport hub. Perhaps a little lacking in the looks department compared to other elegant squares, Alex is nonetheless a key place in the lives of many Berliners, with many offices and retail spaces lining the square. Home to a sprawling Christmas market in the winter, its also the spot where Germany's iconic TV tower is grounded.



Alexa

Grunerstraße 20, 10179 Berlin, Germany

This huge mall next to Alexanderplatz has everything you could ever need. From a supermarket in the basement through to a gym at the top, a sprawling food court, bakeries and countless shops, if you need it, Alexa probably has it. Perhaps not the most aesthetic place to shop in the city, its undeniably useful when you're in a rush and need everything to be in one place.



Gendarmenmarkt

Gendarmenmarkt, 10117 Berlin, Germany

After the somewhat incoherent layout of Alex, Gendarmenmarkt is a treat for the eyes, and it is where the German and French Cathedrals, and the Concert hall can be found. The Gendarmenmarkt becomes most busy at Christmastime, when one of the most picturesque Weihnachtsmarkts sets up camp in the centre. With Glühwein galore and jazz music filling the square, its one of the most magical Christmas experiences Berlin has to offer.



Brandenburg Gate
Pariser Platz, 10117 Berlin, Germany

A symbol of Berlin, the Brandenburg Gate on Pariser Platz is a beloved national and international landmark. The last surviving Berlin city gate, it's a symbol of a city that has been to hell and back and is still standing. Today, it often serves as the backdrop to the countless demonstrations and protests that take place on Pariser Platz. The Akademie der Kunst just off the square is also an ideal place to work, with cheap coffee served in its large, bright and spacious cafe area.



Haus Schwarzenberg
Rosenthaler Str. 39, 10178 Berlin, Germany

You've no doubt seen it on countless Instagrams, but this passage is special not just for its art, but the organisation behind it. Run by a not for profit organisation (in contrast to the many brands housed in retail space around the area), the passage leads to a maze of courtyards where there's a cinema, bar and cafe.



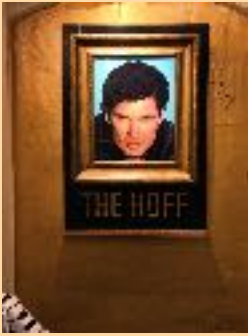
Humboldt University of Berlin
Unter den Linden 6, 10117 Berlin, Germany

The oldest of Berlin's four Universities, the Humboldt has an international reputation, and probably the most beautiful campus. The destination of many Erasmus students in Berlin, the Humboldt also offers a wide variety of language classes, from debating courses in German, to general A1 - C2 standard German instruction. These are also available to non students, at a slightly higher price, although still staggeringly reasonable compared to many language schools in Berlin.



PalaisPopulaire
Unter den Linden 5, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Housed in the building that Frederick II's daughters once called home, it's clear that this Deutsche Bank funded museum has cash to spare. Despite its historical pedigree however, this museum is seriously modern, with its own app and a vast minimalist exhibition space indoors. In addition to changing exhibitions, the museum also hosts multiple events and talks at reasonable prices.



David Hasselhoff Museum
Weinbergsweg 1A, 10119 Berlin, Germany

The basement of an unassuming hostel in Mitte has a secret. It's the site of a museum dedicated to the one and only David Hasselhoff, which can be accessed for free by way of the basement stairs. What started as a tongue-in-cheek way to commemorate a man Berlin harbours a strange obsession with, is now a fully blown mini museum. The American hunk himself gave it a visit, so ensure you do too.



KW Institute for Contemporary Art
Auguststraße 69, 10117 Berlin, Germany

Established in the 1990s in a derelict former factory, this contemporary art exhibition space has morphed into one of the most sophisticated addresses in the city. With ever-changing exhibitions and countless events, it's on any art-loving Berliner's radar.



Museum Island
Museum Island, Berlin, Germany

Comprised of five museums, this world culture heritage site packs a serious punch in terms of art. The Pergamon Museum, Bode Museum, Neues Museum, Alte Nationalgalerie, and Altes Museum, are amongst the most famous galleries in Germany. Of particular note is the bust of Nefertiti in the Neues Museum, but there's plenty more to explore here.



Tiergarten
Tiergarten, Berlin, Germany

Spanning 520 acres, the Tiergarten is a serious slice of green, and the former Elector's hunting ground, smack bang in the middle of the city. Beginning just yards from the Brandenburg Gate, it's the perfect place to wander and experience some peace and quiet. Popular with joggers, sunbathers and teenagers alike, Tiergarten is a firm favourite amongst locals.





Prenzlauer Berg

Compared to its counterparts such as Neukölln and Charlottenburg, Prenzlauer Berg has a relatively more recent history, only beginning to be built up in the middle of the 19th century. As in other boroughs, industry was the name of the game, and Prenzlauer Berg soon became one of the most important brewery areas in the city. The population grew dramatically towards the end of the 19th century, and although buildings were extended into four story apartment blocks, at the time of the end of the First World War there was a massive housing crisis again. Many housing blocks were built during the Weimar period in response to this, some of which, such as the GEHAG-Siedlung are today protected UNESCO heritage sites.

Prenzlauer Berg was also home to a thriving Jewish community, and still boasts the largest synagogue in Germany. Built in 1903, the Synagogue escaped destruction in the war and still stands in use today. The areas vibrant Jewish life is also reflected in the Jewish Cemetery, Schönhauser Allee, which after construction in 1827 is now the final resting place of over 22,000 Jewish German Berlin citizens, including among others the renowned artist Max Liebermann. Another famed creative, Kathe Kollwitz, lived and worked in Prenzlauer Berg, and was vehemently opposed to the encroaching National Socialist regime. The National Socialists made full use of the area's landmarks with many, such as the water tower at Rykestraße, used by the Nazis as temporary torture centres. After the defeat of Berlin, Prenzlauer Berg was located in the Soviet sector, and soon developed into a hotspot for the intellectual and creative elite of the GDR. Many families moved out of the area into GDR new builds, due to the poor condition of the apartment block buildings, and the area became more and more deserted. At the time of the fall of the wall, many buildings were unoccupied, and most had to be heated by coal with basic sanitary facilities. Although unattractive to the young families of the GDR, by the early 1990s scores of young people had squatted in the empty apartments, developing Prenzlauer Berg into something of a squatters paradise. Projects such as concerts, movie screenings, and numerous pop up galleries were the norm, with music from raves reverberating around the borough's streets.

However utopian, it was short lived, and clashes with Neo Nazi Skinheads along with a heavy police pressure meant that most of the squats had been cleared by the end of the twentieth century. Today, the borough is less known for its booming nightlife and rave scene, that has arguably moved to districts such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln, and rather more for its bars and cafes. The area's beautiful apartment buildings have been largely sanitised, often converted into luxury apartments, and are now among the city's prime real estate. Prenzlauer Berg is also known for being stroller central, and countless Berlin stand up comedians use the proliferation of young children in the neighbourhood as fodder for their stand up routines. There is definite truth in this stereotype, and these days it can be said that young families have definitely returned to Prenzlauer Berg. As a result, high end baby shops, numerous cafes, and strollers galore can be found lining the neighbourhood's leafy streets. These days you are more likely to happen upon an organic yoga store than a temporary makeshift art opening.

Connie

My name is Connie, and after a spate of hurried emails I ended up nabbing a room in a Prenzlauer Berg WG. Moving to the sprawling city that is Berlin can initially feel incredibly daunting, but what drew me to Prenzlauer Berg was the community feel within the area itself. There's a cliché that if you meet someone from Prenzlauer Berg, they won't fail to mention it, but Prenzlauer Berg residents have good reason behind the loyalty to their area. Firstly, it feels a very safe place, even at night its relatively busy meaning that you're never alone on its streets. Secondly, its a very family orientated Kiez, which may not sound like a students dream, but it does mean that there is definitely a more homely feel here compared to other areas. I managed to get a job in a cafe five minutes away from my flat, and talking to the regular customers and chatting with coworkers fosters a real sense of belonging to this area of the city. Cafe wise, there are countless to choose from, but my favourites would be La Tazza (fantastic for working in), Aromas Cafe (an authentic Kaffee und Kuchen place) and Cafe Morgenrot (a fantastic collective cafe just beside the well known language school GLS). In terms of transport, depending where you are in Prenzlauer Berg, it can be a little fiddly to get places. That said, there's a very good bus and tram network that goes pretty much throughout the district. For parks you have the famous Mauerpark, home to a flea market every Sunday in summer, and of course the beautiful Volkspark Friedrichshain (technically on the border with Friedrichshain, but we'll claim it as our own for this booklet). The proximity to Friedrichshain is incredibly useful, especially as Prenzlauer Berg nightlife isn't fantastic in terms of clubs, and the bars here can get very expensive for Berlin. I'd recommend meeting friends in Friedrichshain or Neukölln for more authentic, student friendly bars. One of the biggest highlights of Prenzlauer Berg is undoubtedly the beauty of the area. Old altbaus and wide leafy streets, there's nowhere nicer for a crisp winter morning stroll.



100 Brote

Hufelandstraße 2, 10407 Berlin, Germany

Located in the leafy Böttzowviertel Kiez in Prenzlauer Berg, 100 Brot is a neighbourhood favourite. As the name belies, this little cafe has a focus on bread, but they also do a mean coffee, and the large wooden indoor tables make this an ideal place if you have some work to power through. Opposite there's also a seriously good local bookstore.



Restaurant Schönbrunn

Am Schwanenteich in Volkspark Friedrichshain, 10249 Berlin, Germany

Schönbrunn, situated in the middle of beautiful Volkspark Friedrichshain, is a cafe doused in GDR chic. Ideal after a relaxed stroll through the park, Cafe Schönbrunn is renowned for its Austrian style breakfast. Recommended is an Eiskaffee on the spacious outdoor terrace, taking in the park's surroundings including the serene lake opposite.



Spreegold Store Sta 82

Stargarder Str. 82, 10457 Berlin, Germany

Although Spreegold offers all kinds of food at all hours of the day, what Spreegold does seriously well is their mouth watering brunches. Whether you sit outside and watch events on the Schönhauser Allee unfold, or just tuck in to their delicious poached eggs inside, Spreegold is a cafe you return to time and time again. A true favourite of Prenzlauer Berg residents.



Restaurant Pasternak

22-24, Knaackstraße, 10405 Berlin, Germany

Named after the Russian novelist Boris Pasternak, this restaurant on Knaackstraße serves hearty Russian Jewish food. Their dumplings are famed throughout Berlin, and as such the restaurant can fill up quickly, especially on weekends. Perhaps one to visit with the parents price wise, the cost is nevertheless decent for the amount of food and cosy atmosphere.



Zum Starken August

Schönhauser Allee 56, 10457 Berlin, Germany

Named after the strongman in a circus, the title hints to the eclectic nature of this bar. Zum Starken August is renowned for its arty burlesque and cabaret shows. With a cosy victorian - esque interior, the bar is certainly unique, and incredibly packed on nights when shows are put on - ensure you're early to bag a seat, never mind a table! On show nights, entry ranges from 1 to 10 euros, (you pay what you want), making it a treat for budget conscious citizens.



Prater Beer Garden Berlin

Kastanienallee 7-9, 10455 Berlin, Germany

For those seeking a more 'traditional' German drinking experience in opposition to the many hip bars that have sprung up around Prenzlauer Berg, the Prater Garden is the one for you. Bratwurst, pretzels and schnitzels are also on offer, to be enjoyed in the large beer garden which is open from May to September.



TOAST HAWAII

Danziger Str. 1, 10455 Berlin, Germany

Another circus inspired venue, Toast Hawaii is a mix between a club and a bar, and has both an inviting dance floor along with many quiet spaces to recline with a drink for a chat. It is the scene of many parties, such as launches, discos, birthdays and also hosts gigs. In short, if you want to see it, Toast Hawaii probably hosts it.



24Colours

Oderberger Str. 20, 10455 Berlin, Germany

Established in Berlin in 2009, 24 colours has spread around Germany and become a renowned German fashion label for young women. This store on the Oderbergerstraße is actually an outlet store, and considering that the clothes themselves are usually Topshop prices, you're sure to find a serious bargain here!



Pauls Boutique/ Berlin

Oderberger Str. 47, 10455 Berlin, Germany

A second hand shop with a focus on shoes, fashion lovers will be sure to find what they're looking for trainer wise in this shop on the Oderbergerstraße. The original shop, the brand has since branched out to other locations across the city. Due to the charm of the area we recommend this one, and encourage you to walk down the beautiful cafe lined Oderbergerstraße, where the whole of Berlin seems to decamp on a Sunday morning.



Vintage revivals

Schönhauser Allee 127, 10457 Berlin, Germany

For serious vintage lovers, a trip to Vintage Revivals on Schönhauser Allee is advised, where distinctive items from the 50s through to the 90s demand attention. Very reasonably priced, the shop is relatively new and has garnered praise from Berlin blogs due to its minimalist interior and fair pricing.



Bookstore to fluctuating globe

Kastanienallee 85, 10455 Berlin, Germany

This little bookshop situated on the bustling Kastanienallee near the GLS language school is a political dream. Specialising in political texts - there is a real focus on feminist literature here- the bookshop is an ideal place to while away the time, and a challenge to leave without at least one purchase.



Kulturbrauerei

Schönhauser Allee 56, 10455 Berlin, Germany

A former brewery, the Kulturbrauerei complex now has everything you can wish for within its (many) walls. Food markets, cinemas, restaurants, the Kulturbrauerei has it all. Of particular note is the museum, which has a permanent exhibition on every day life in East Germany, and often holds photography focused special exhibitions. Look out too for their Christmas markets, where there is a special focus on arts and crafts.



Kollwitzplatz

Kollwitzstraße, 10405 Berlin, Germany

One of the loveliest squares in Berlin, Kollwitz Platz takes its name from artist Käthe Kollwitz, who spent much of her life living and working in the area. Along with her husband, the doctor Karl Kollwitz, they shaped the life of the square in the early twentieth century, then a working class area of the city. Today the square is one of the most sought after in the city, with an eco market every Thursday with fresh local produce available.



Arnswalder Platz

Bötzow Straße, 10407 Berlin, Germany

Not as beautiful as Kollwitz Platz, Arnswalder Platz is nevertheless distinctive for its large fountain in the centre of the lawn. With a children's playground and large grassy areas, its also a favourite for families and teenagers to relax on. The square also hosts a farmers market every Saturday morning.



Volkspark Friedrichshain

10249 Berlin, Germany

The oldest park in Berlin with an official opening date of 1848, Volkspark Friedrichshain has not waned in popularity since. Situated right on the border between Prenzlauer Berg and Friedrichshain, the park draws in scores of visitors, yet due to its large size never seems too packed. Wander around the park taking in the Märchenbrunnen (fairytale fountain), before taking in a film screening at the outdoor cinema, operational in summer.



Mauerpark

Gleimstraße 55, 10457 Berlin, Germany

The park is an open space that used to compromise part of the former death strip before 1989. 800 metres of the wall still stand here, but its now been taken over by Berlin residents as a key leisure area, with cycling and jogging. Every Sunday there is a flea-market, and from 3pm every Sunday another Berlin institution takes place in the park - Bearpit Karaoke. Started in 2009, it allows any of the hundreds of people who show up to come and belt out a song in front of the audience.





Friedrichshain

Although once viewed as less gentrified than its now rather upmarket neighbour Prenzlauer Berg, in recent years gentrification in the Friedrichshain area has increased rapidly, and on a Saturday morning you are more likely to hear an Australian accent in one of the countless coffee shops neighbouring Boxhagener Platz than a German one. With rents shooting up, this area is now viewed as one of the most desirable areas for young professionals in Berlin, a far cry from its working class roots in the 19th century.

Although the iconic Volkspark Friedrichshain, which borders Prenzlauer Berg directly to the north, was built in 1840 to honour the hundredth anniversary of Frederick the Great's reign, the park was built by the unemployed, and has long been associated with the working class and revolution. At the time of the park's construction, the area lay outside the city walls, and it was only with the rapid industrialisation of the 19th century that the area developed rapidly. At the start of the 20th century, the largest employer in the district was the Knorr- Bremse factory, and the area retained its strong working class identity well into the 20s and 30s. During this time, it was known as a hot spot for the Social Democrats and Communists and was often the scene of violent clashes between them and the Nazis. It was in a Friedrichshain hospital that the Nazi martyr Horst Wessel died in 1930, and the district was subsequently named in his honour as 'Horst- Wessel Stadt'.

Friedrichshain was especially badly hit during Allied Bombing due to the aforementioned high concentration of industry, and subsequently in the Battle of Berlin due to its centrality. In the beautiful green Volkspark Friedrichshain, two World War 2 Flak towers were built for operation by members of the Luftwaffe in defence against raids. The remaining rubble is today all that is left, and the park no longer lies under a military shadow. After the war, Friedrichshain was divided from its neighbouring Kreuzberg by the Berlin wall built in 1961. Friedrichshain soon found itself the canvas onto which GDR delusions of grandeur were projected in the form of the monstrous Stallinallee built in the late 1940s and 1950s. The huge boulevard divides opinions but is undoubtedly impressive, and on a commonly cold crisp Berlin winter morning the similarity to Moscow is hard to miss. Due to De-Stalinisation, it acquired its current names of Karl Marx Allee and Frankfurter Allee. During the GDR Friedrichshain played an important role in the East German entertainment life, with Kosmos, the largest cinema in East Germany opening in 1962. Following the fall of the wall, Friedrichshain swiftly developed into a heaving cultural district, full of young people, artists, writers etc keen to make use of the low rents and even squatting in the many empty apartments left behind in un-sanitised apartment blocks. The squatting culture in the district experienced a violent turn in the early 1990s, when police forcefully evicted hundreds of squatters. Friedrichshain quickly became notorious for its nightlife, and today the infamous and arguably best techno club in the world, Berghain, can be found in a former power plant in the district. Although slower to gentrify than neighbouring Prenzlauer Berg, the change in Friedrichshain today is tangible, and there is a fight on to try to preserve some of the neighbourhood's creative capital and legacy. The opening of the East Side Mall in October 2018, opposite the traditional nightlife hub of Warschauer Straße and the RAW Gelände, was not met with much enthusiasm, and many people believe that the fight for the district's creative soul has been lost.

Maddie

Upon Graduation, I moved to Friedrichshain, an area where the artists and punks flooded to after the fall of the wall in 1989, squatting in the abandoned buildings and turning it into an artistic hub in the 1990s/2000s. Admittedly it's becoming increasingly gentrified, and all those rebel anarchists have grown up and had kids and turned into earth moms – but it's still not as yummy mummy as P-berg, and it's retained its artistic atmosphere and positive vibe. It is an area with so much soul, fun to visit and to live in. It offers countless bars and restaurants, and puts you in walking distance from all the best clubs yet is generally one of the safest neighbourhoods. There's also such a fascinating contrast between the charming, cosy streets around Boxi and the imposing GDR architecture along Karl-Marx-Allee, with its communist palaces.

Boxhagener Platz is the epicentre of 'mein Kiez'. Beautiful cobbled streets (nightmare to cycle on though), leafy trees, buzzy atmosphere, and comfy grass to lie on and read; it's idyllic on summer evenings. There's the wholesome farmer's market on Saturday mornings (delicious coffee, cakes, handmade oddities, house plants, soaps etc.) and the well-stocked flea-market on Sundays.

For bars, head to Simon-Dach-Straße, notably the bohemian haunt Dachkammer. Another favourite is Noble Rot Weinbar (be prepared to spend more than you intend, after the smooth-talking hungarian owner convinces you to buy a whole bottle). When it comes to food in Fhain you're spoiled for choice. It's also a vegan paradise. Theres Nyom Vietnamese (vegan options), Lisboa (not vegan but delicious Portuguese) and Yoyo Food World (vegan).

Cafe wise, Neumann's, Books & Bagels, Stillbruch Cafe, Bio en Bio, Simon's Cafe, Calm Coffee (great co-working space) are all safe bets for a decent coffee and place to work. For bookshops InterKontinental is a must visit, (Germany's first bookshop specialising in African literature).

Head to the Pablo Neruda Library on Frankfurter Allee when the cafe work sessions start to add up, bright and spacious and FREE, with deck chairs outside in their big library garden (you'll often see people sunbathing here).

Clothes: save it for the flea markets, but V for Vintage, Humana etc. for second hand.

It's hard to talk about Friedrichshain without mentioning Berghain – hate to admit it but it is undoubtedly the best techno club in Berlin/the world, although the stress of getting in is not so fun, and given the varied vibes of Fhain's many other clubs, it's not worth sweating over every weekend. I would also recommend ://about blank, especially during the daytime, as they have an amazing, expansive garden – their inside dance-floors are quite small, so less ideal for night-time, and if you're missing chart toppers and classics, hit up Süß War Gestern for an "ironic" boozy night.

Hire a bike in the evening and cycle across Oberbaumbrücke into Kreuzberg, as the lights ripple on the Spree and the silhouetted Fernsehturm whizzes past in the distance. Or grab a vegan Eis from Balaram in Boxhagener Platz before heading to Modersohnbrücke to watch the trains and the setting sun, taking in the harsh, industrial beauty of Friedrichshain. From here, you can also gaze at the iconic landmarks in the distance. This bridge is quite possibly my favourite place in the city!



Neumanns Café

Gabriel-Max-Straße 18, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Neumanns may be famous for its bread, but people stay for its coffee and minimalist interior which make it a freelancer's dream. It can seem half of Berlin works freelance, and Neumann's is a safe bet when you have a looming deadline, with a chic but fuss free interior and countless cups of good quality coffee.



Shakespeare and Sons

Warschauer Str. 74, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Part bookstore, part cafe, this melting pot serves the best books and the best bagels in town. Specialising in English language books, especially current releases, this bookshop is a useful place to visit when total immersion in German culture becomes a little overwhelming. The bright and spacious cafe seating area is also an excellent place to work, however there are laptop limited tables, so either come to catch up on some course reading, or be consigned to a bar along the window!



Silo Coffee

Gabriel-Max-Straße 4, 10245 Berlin, Germany

For some, Silo epitomises everything that is wrong with the gentrification of Friedrichshain, while for others its a groundbreaker in terms of Berlin's coffee scene. One thing for certain, it does a dead good brunch - but come early as it is usually jammed. The Australian owners are also serious about coffee, so if you're after a caffeine hit, look no further.



Nyom

Gabriel-Max-Straße 17, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Berlin is known for its selection of Vietnamese cuisine, especially due to the arrival of Vietnamese workers in the GDR, and this restaurant on Boxi is one of the best. Generous portion sizes, reasonable prices and a friendly atmosphere mean its beloved by Friedrichshain locals and further afield Berliners alike.



Balaram Eis

Gabriel-Max-Straße 17, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Balaram's main selling point is that all the ice creams are vegan, contributing to Berlin's reputation as one of the world's most vegan friendly cities. If you think that Vegan 'ice cream' is limited to sorbets, this Ice cream parlour on Boxi will shatter your illusions with a mouthwatering array of flavours which change often.



Café Dachkammer

Simon-Dach-Straße 39, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Set over two floors, part cafe, part bar, Dachkammer is definitely known mainly for its evening offerings. However don't expect bawdy tourists here on a bar crawl, Dachkammer has maintained a discreet, local atmosphere despite its proximity to the tourist hotspots around Warschauer Straße. A favourite among young Berliners, Dachkammer is one of the most beloved bars in the area.



Noble Rot Weinbar

Gärtnerstraße 6, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Berlin is not famous for its Wine bars, but this little spot just off Boxi is a perfect place for a date. With a cozy yet sophisticated atmosphere and an amazing array of wines, it'll impress any potential partner. The selling point of this joint is without a doubt the engaging owner, who will tell you about the wines (even to a complete non connoisseur like myself) and will let you try before you buy. Their speciality is German, Austrian and Hungarian wines.



Süß War Gestern

Wüblüchstraße 45, 10245 Berlin, Germany

A mix between a bar and a club, Süß war Gestern's notoriously high temperatures don't seem to put people off. Good for large groups due to a more relaxed door policy compared to its counterparts in the area, Süß war Gestern is a reliable bet for a fun night out with friends. The vintage interior contrasts with the music, and the drinks are reasonable.



Monster Ronson's Ichiban Karaoke

Warschauer Str. 34, 10243 Berlin, Germany

A night at Monster Ichiban's provides a welcome respite from the pounding techno surrounding Friedrichshain clubs have to offer. Here, classic and cheesy is the music on offer, with disco balls galore. If you're brave, take to the stage in front of the hundred strong audience to belt out a classic, or if you're new to the craft, you can rent one of the private karaoke boxes with a group of friends. Prices are staggeringly reasonable, and it also puts on a number of LGBTQ+ nights on a Tuesday.



Holzmarkt Pampa

Holzmarktstraße 25, 10243 Berlin, Germany

Holzmarkt is a relatively new addition to Berlin's (lively) drinking scene. Opened in 2017, this urban village has quickly become a staple place to grab a drink with friends, although be warned as this place gets packed on weekends. Nab a drink from one of the various vendors and then settle down on one of the many benches or a rock overlooking the Spree. There's often music and dancing here too.



Yaam

An der Schillingbrücke 3, 10243 Berlin, Germany

One of the best places to relax on a hot summers evening in Berlin, YAAM is part gallery, part beach bar, part music venue. The name is short for the Young and African Arts market, and is a beacon of African culture in Berlin, hosting Reggae concerts, and with a particular focus on Caribbean cuisine. Although the venue turns into a quasi club come evening, during the day there are table tennis tables, and a kids area, making it a venue all the family can enjoy.



RAW Gelände

Revaler Str. 99, 10245 Berlin, Germany

This sprawling, rundown area inside a former train repair station is one of Berlin's favourite hang out areas. There are numerous clubs, pubs, and a Sunday flea-market. Located near Warschauer Straße, its also easy to get to from any corner of the city. A highlight is the smallest disco in Berlin, located inside a telephone booth, it brings a new meaning to solo clubbing.



HUMANA Secondhand & Vintage Kaufhaus

Frankfurter Tor 3, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Although Humana shops are spread across the city of Berlin, the Humana at Frankfurter Tor is something of a temple. Set over five stories, this is essentially a department store devoted to vintage clothing. Right at the top are the hand picked vintage gems, but for real bargains at bargain basement prices you'll need to devote hours to rummaging through the other four floors in pursuit of the elusive goods.



V Vintage Fashion

Kopernikusstraße 18, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Regularly featuring in Berlin's 'Best Vintage' guides, V for Vintage is compact with a good selection of vintage clothing. Slightly on the pricier side compared to Humana, the price means that they've picked the good stuff to cut down your shopping time. Follow with a coffee at Neumann's just round the corner.



Pablo Neruda Library

Frankfurter Allee 14 A, 10247 Berlin, Germany

Spread over four stories, Pablo Neruda is a favourite for students who have simply got to get work done, and for whom the countless coffees in cafes while working is stacking up. The library offers countless workplaces with free wifi, so you can stay here all day to hammer out your project free of charge. It also occasionally hosts exhibitions and talks.



Tilsiter Lichtspiele

Richard-Sorge-Straße 25A, 10249 Berlin, Germany

This quaint cinema in Friedrichshain boasts a film heritage stretching all the way back to its opening in 1908. It's neighbouring bar is just as popular, and is served by its own microbrewery. A favourite due to its cozy atmosphere, the cinema has also earned its stripes due to a consistently high quality programme of Arthouse and documentary films. With a focus on German speaking cinema, this place is a must for anyone looking to improve their language skills.



Kino International

Karl-Marx-Allee 55, 10178 Berlin, Germany

Once host to the creme de la creme of the GDR film crowd, Kino International was the scene of many a premiere after its opening in 1963. It still pulls in the big guns today, as one of the main venues of the Berlin Film Festival, the Berlinale. Those who have not made the A list need not fear - the cinema is open for business as usual daily with a good selection of international films with German subtitles.



Karl-Marx-Allee

Karl-Marx-Allee, Berlin, Germany

The most striking architectural feature of Friedrichshain is without a doubt the colossal Karl Marx Allee, who's size and grandeur dwarfs the cosier streets surrounding it. Built in the middle of the twentieth century, the boulevard was initially named Stalinallee, changing rather quickly in 1961 to its present name with the period of de Stalinization. Intended to provide comfortable apartments for workers, the almost 2km long street was incredibly popular when it first opened.



Oberbaumbrücke

Oberbaumbrücke, Friedrichshain- Kreuzberg, Berlin, Germany

Technically the border between Kreuzberg and Friedrichshain, since reunification the bridge has cemented its status as a true Berlin landmark. As East German territory included the Spree at this point in the city, the border between East and West Germany was technically on the shores of Kreuzberg. Five years after the fall of the wall, the bridge was restored and reopened, and today is a crucial crossing between the two districts, and a lovely stroll on a



Boxhagener Platz

Grünberger Str. 75, 10245 Berlin, Germany

Boxhagener Platz or 'Boxi' as its affectionately known, is the beating heart of the area, with countless cafes, bars and little shops. During summer the small park in the middle of the square quickly fills up with strollers, teenagers with bottles from nearby Spätis, and buskers. There is also a flea-market here every Sunday, somewhat more local than Mauerpark, yet still with a dazzling array of wares. Follow up with a hot coffee in one of the many cafes lining the square.



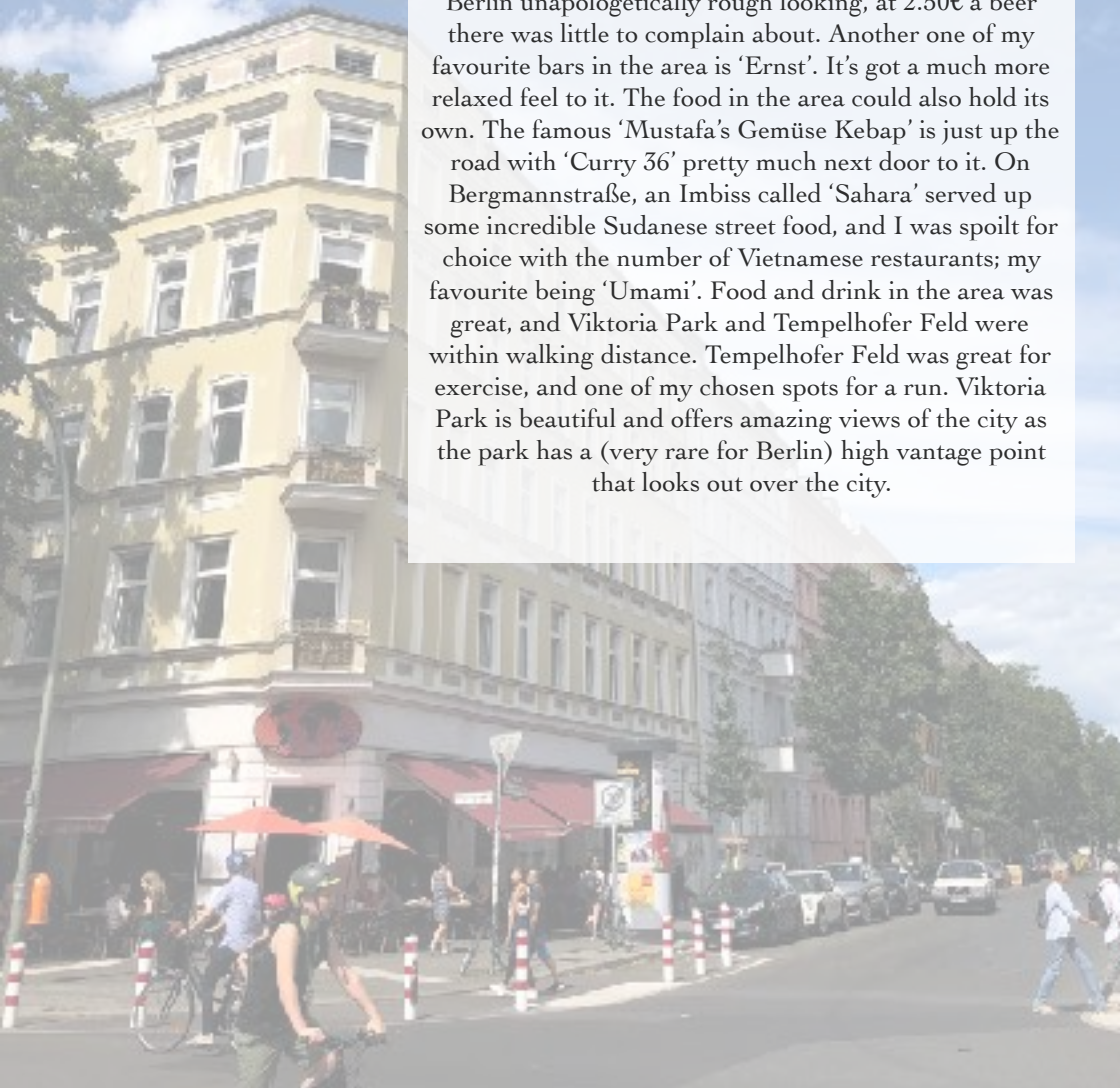
Kreuzberg

Kreuzberg gets its distinctive name from the monument built by the iconic Berlin architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel which stands in what is today the Viktoriapark. Built in 1821 to commemorate the Napoleonic wars, the cross is just one of many features in Kreuzberg that point to a proud Prussian military history. Many of the surrounding streets take their names from successful generals of this period such as Ludwig Yorck von Wartenburg (Yorckstraße) and Offiziere Leberecht von Blücher (Blücherstraße). Despite this military heritage, Kreuzberg is known more today for its vibrant counter culture history, which draws in hordes of tourists annually. After the war, Kreuzberg found itself in the American sector, and with the wall's construction it went from being centrally located with one of the highest population densities, to the very edge of West Berlin. Kreuzberg was the scene of the most tense crossing in the world, with the erection of the wall in 1961. The name Checkpoint Charlie has become synonymous for many of the terrifying standoff between two ideologies. While the crossing hit the headlines constantly in the 20th century, such as with the tragic, agonising death of young Peter Fechter in 1962, for the Kreuzbergers it became an everyday reality. It was also regarded as one of the most deprived areas of Berlin after the Second World war. Perhaps because of the low rents, it attracted countless artists and creatives who settled in Kreuzberg, establishing a thriving counter culture scene that still exists in part to this day.

At the time, Kreuzberg was divided into two postcodes, SO36 and SO31. SO36 was surrounded by three sides by the Berlin wall, and lends its name to the infamous club which opened in 1978. It was not uncommon to see music legends such as David Bowie and Iggy Pop visiting frequently in the late 70s, and it was considered a rival to New York's booming club scene especially with regards to New Wave music. Kreuzberg also lays claim to being one of the most multicultural areas in Germany, with the arrival of many guest works in the fifties and sixties, many of Turkish background. Today the area is known for its large percentage of immigrants, and its thriving Turkish community, whose influence can be seen, amongst other things, in the bustling Turkish market on the Maybachufer every Tuesday and Friday. Despite its geographical allusions to a proud Prussian military history, Kreuzberg is today known as something of a hotbed of anti authority. Every year on the national workers holiday of May 1st, there have been violent clashes with the police stretching back to a violent fight between police and squatters in 1980, in which nearly three hundred people were injured in the space of ten hours. Today, the public holiday has calmed down somewhat, and the violent is mitigated somewhat by music events and street festivals that pop up around the district on 'Mai Tag'. Another renowned Kreuzberg festival is the Carnival der Kulturen, which takes place every summer, and is a chance to celebrate the multicultural nature of the area through street parades, international food and craft stalls. Due to Kreuzberg's attractive alternative lifestyle, and its notoriety as a counter culture centre, Kreuzberg is today, after the fall of the wall, one of the most attractive places to live in Berlin. Many young international professionals have chosen to make Kreuzberg their home, which has consequently driven rent prices sky high in some areas, and led to a real discussion about the impact of gentrification in the area.

Joe

For the 10 months I spent in Berlin I was situated in Bergmannkiez in west Kreuzberg. It's a residential area but has lots going on around every corner. With the closest U-Bahn stop being Gneisenaustraße (U7), and with Mehringdamm (U6&7) just a ten-minute walk away, there was always something going on. Within a 15-20-minute walking radius there was loads to do. Great bars such as 'Clash' stand out. Loud and like so many places in Berlin unapologetically rough looking, at 2.50€ a beer there was little to complain about. Another one of my favourite bars in the area is 'Ernst'. It's got a much more relaxed feel to it. The food in the area could also hold its own. The famous 'Mustafa's Gemüse Kebap' is just up the road with 'Curry 36' pretty much next door to it. On Bergmannstraße, an Imbiss called 'Sahara' served up some incredible Sudanese street food, and I was spoilt for choice with the number of Vietnamese restaurants; my favourite being 'Umami'. Food and drink in the area was great, and Viktoria Park and Tempelhofer Feld were within walking distance. Tempelhofer Feld was great for exercise, and one of my chosen spots for a run. Viktoria Park is beautiful and offers amazing views of the city as the park has a (very rare for Berlin) high vantage point that looks out over the city.





Five Elephant Kreuzberg

Reichenberger Str. 101, 10999 Berlin, Germany

A restriction on laptops (they're confined to the back section), means that peace and relaxation are the order of the day in this Kreuzberg cafe. A focus on fair-trade makes the coffee taste that bit better, and on a sunny day their outdoor tables under large trees are one of the more picturesque spots to drink a coffee in Kreuzberg. Ideal for reading and relaxing, the cafe's somewhat hidden status does not prevent it from the hordes, so well regarded is the establishment.



Pavillon am Ufer

Paul-Lincke-Ufer 4, 10999 Berlin, Germany

A firm favourite of people watchers, the Pavillon am Ufer is situated on the picturesque Landwehr Canal, underneath large trees which provide welcome respite on sunny days. Waffles are the name of the game here, and along with a steaming hot coffee, it's a cosy place to observe the buzz of Kreuzberg from a calm perspective. Cheap and cheerful.



Curry 36

Mebringdamm 36, 10961 Berlin, Germany

A true classic, this Imbiss has been serving the Berlin staple the Currywurst since the 1980s. Cheap and filling, this is the ideal place to stop off for a late night (or very very early morning) bite to eat, and is a Berlin institution.



Hamy Cafe

Hasenbeide 10, 10967 Berlin, Germany

Fresh, filling and fast, Hamy Cafe is a favourite among those looking for something quick to satiate their hunger. With prices to make you smile, and delicious dishes, Hamy is a favourite of everyone, not just those on a budget.



Hallesches Haus

Tempelhofer Ufer 1, 10961 Berlin, Germany

A multitasking event space, cafe, shop and garden, there's something for everyone at Hallesches Haus. The shop is useful for present buying - reasonable prices but expensive looking packaging to those none the wiser. A former club, the cafe itself is light, bright and airy meaning its ideal for those with a mission for the day to get stuff done.



Zur Klappe

Yorckstraße 2, 10965 Berlin, Germany

Situated in an old West Berlin toilet famous as a cruising spot, Zur Klappe definitely wins points for originality. As expected, its not the most spacious of clubs on offer, and is known more for its unique setting than the nights on offer.



Das Hotel Bar

Mariannenstraße 26A, 10999 Berlin, Germany

Just like Zur Klappe, this bar is tiny, but it still rakes in the crowds. A favourite for a date night, which can't be said of some of the more raucous bars in the capital, Das Hotel is a favourite for its striped back decor and excellent drinks.



Clash

Im Mehringhof, Gneisenaustraße 2A, 10961 Berlin, Germany

The opposite of Das Hotel, Clash is loud, crowded and crazy. Dark and spacious, its a good place to start out the night with friends before migrating elsewhere. The music is true to its punk heritage, and the drinks are cheap.



Café Luzia

Oranienstraße 34, 10999 Berlin, Germany

A seat on their terrace is like gold dust on a Friday or Saturday evening, but it can be done if you come early enough. It's vintage decor and impressive cocktails at purse friendly prices make this a popular student hangout. It's location in the heart of Kreuzberg makes it ideal if you plan to go out after, but if not, there's occasionally music to get you dancing in the bar.



SO36

Oranienstraße 190, 10999 Berlin, Germany

The notorious SO36 is still a big player in the city's nightlife. Beginning as a solid metal venue, it migrated more towards new wave music in the late 70s. Unlike many of its rivals, SO36 is still standing as a venue space today. One of its recurring events is a roller disco, while there's often a night flea market that takes place amid DJ's spinning discs.



PICKNWEIGHT - VINTAGE KILO STORE (CONCEPT STORE)

Bergmannstraße 102, 10961 Berlin, Germany

One of the most impressive vintage shops in the city, this place tucked away in the Bergmannkiez is difficult to find as it is through an Innenhof, yet it's one of the city's best known secrets. Vintage fashion of every kind is on offer here, but be aware of the item, as pricing can be somewhat higher than expected.



Turkish Market

Maybachufer, 12047 Berlin, Germany

Every Tuesday and Fridays the shores of the Maybachufer are lined with stalls from the Turkish market advertising their wares. Think fresh fruit and veg, Turkish stew, baklava and much more. This is where Kreuzberg's vibrant Turkish community truly comes alive.



Sputnik Kino

Hasenbeide 54/56b, 10967 Berlin, Germany

Billed as Berlin's highest cinema, this little gem tucked away in the back courtyards of the Höfe am Südstern punches above its size in terms of cinema cred. Its hosting of the annual British Shorts film festival has firmly put it on the map. Other nights of the year, it hosts reliably good arthouse cinema.



Freiluftkino Kreuzberg im Kunstquartier Bethanien

Mariannenpl. 2, 10997 Berlin, Germany

One of the original Freiluftkinos, Freiluftkino Kreuzberg opened in 1994, and is situated in the grounds of the picturesque Kunstquartier Bethanien. Films of every kind, both German and international are screened here every summer. Keep on top of their programme, nab tickets, and settle down with a beer to enjoy what the outdoor cinema has to offer. A tip is to bring a blanket, as it can get surprisingly cold once the sun goes down.



Jewish Museum Berlin

Lindenstraße 9-14, 10969 Berlin, Germany

Opened in 2001 and one of the most visited sites in Berlin, the museum documents the history of the German Jewish community. In addition to the main Baroque building, two new parts were designed by famed Jewish architect Daniel Libeskind. One of the most poignant areas of the sobering museum is the line of Voids which run through the entire building, reflecting the unspeakable horrors of the Holocaust.



Berlinische Galerie

Alte Jakobstraße 124-128, 10969 Berlin, Germany

This museum of Modern art, photography, and sculpture is located just around the corner from the Jewish museum. Located in what was originally a glass museum, the Berlinische Galerie offers both permanent and temporary exhibitions. The permanent exhibition is a fantastic array of paintings dating back to 1870, and includes works by heavyweights such as Max Liebermann, Otto Dix, George Grosz and Hannah Höch.



Willy - Brandt - Haus

Wilhelmstraße 140, 10965 Berlin, Germany

The Willy Brandt Haus is the headquarters of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), named after the formidable former Chancellor of West Germany, Willy Brandt. The ground and first floors are usually utilised as an exhibition space, and for free of charge you have access visit as many of the exhibitions as you place. There is a special focus on photographic exhibitions here.



Martin - Gropius - Bau

Niederkirchnerstraße 7, 10965 Berlin, Germany

Almost directly on the border between Kreuzberg and Mitte (and therefore East and West Berlin), the gallery was built in the late 19th century by Martin Gropius, great Uncle of the famed Walter Gropius. Damaged during the war, it reopened in 1981 and is currently used as an exhibition space, and has exhibited artists such as Paul Klee and Ai Weiwei. One of the most highly regarded European exhibition venues, this fact is reflected slightly in the price.



Berlin Story Bunker

Schöneberger Str. 25A, 10965 Berlin, Germany

This museum is almost as striking for its location than its content. The museum calls an old bunker home, where during the wars thousands of Berliners sought refuge during air raids. Inside there is a history of Berlin, racing through some 800 years of the city's history. There is also an exhibition on Hitler, which for newbies to German history provides a solid overview to the Nazi's rise to power with an engaging



Bergmannkiez

Bergmannkiez, Kreuzberg, 10961 Berlin, Germany

Bergmannkiez is probably the most beautiful part of Kreuzberg, with imposing 19th century buildings lovingly restored and repainted, and large trees lining the cobbled streets. Reminiscent of Paris for some, the neighbourhood has undergone much change in the recent years, and is currently one of the most desirable addresses in the city. Teeming with cafes and restaurants, it's one of the best places to wander around for a bite to eat.



Admiralbrücke

Admiralbrücke, Admiralstraße, 10967 Berlin, Germany

Following the Parisian theme, the Admiralbrücke is one of the closest things Berlin has to the bridges and banks of the Seine, where the young french congregate with a bottle of wine. On a sunny evening the Admiralbrücke is packed with the spillover from nearby bars and restaurants, and there are often buskers and loud music until late.



Viktoriapark

Viktoriapark, 10965 Berlin, Germany

The hill and iron cross from where Kreuzberg derives its name are located within this hilly park. The monument came first, in 1821, and it was only followed by the park over 70 years later. Along with the monument, another famous feature of this park is the beautiful cascading waterfall. From the top of the hill, its possible to look directly down the waterfall, into the bustling city ahead.



Görlitzer Park

Görlitzer Str. 5, 10997 Berlin, Germany

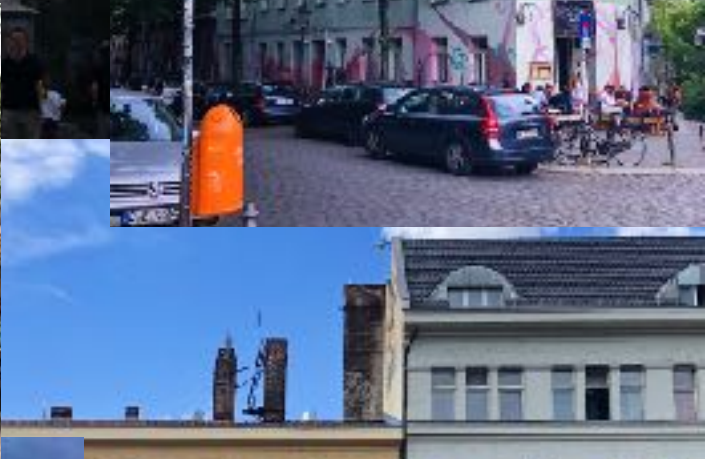
Gorli' to locals, is one of the most famous parks in the Kreuzberg area. It is notorious in Berlin as a drug dealing zone, yet on any sunny Sunday there are multiple young families and barbecuing friends present alongside said businesses. There are now controversial 'pink zones' in the park, where drug dealers are permitted to operate. Some argue that the previous zero tolerance policy had little effect, others criticise the move as an acceptance of defeat.



Park am Gleisdreieck

Möckernstraße 26, 10965 Berlin, Germany

A relatively new addition to the Berlin green spaces scene, Park am Gleisdreieck opened in 2013 to acclaim from residents and architects alike (its been the recipient of multiple design prizes). This modern park is a favourite of skaters, volleyball players and joggers, and is the scene of many family friendly picnics on the weekends. Regular running groups and yoga classes also meet in the park, which has retained a wholesome atmosphere.





Neukölln

One of the more surprising features of Neukölln, is the quaint village of Rixdorf nestled in its heart. An almost rural idyll within the concrete jungle that Berlin can seem, the square of Rixdorf attracts visitors from across the city. Indeed Neukölln's own history can be traced back to this village square. Established as a village, 'Richardsdorf' in 1360, was almost obliterated in the thirty years war before coming under the control of Berlin in 1709. Today a borough known for its high immigrant population, Neukölln has always been a borough built by newcomers to the city. In 1737, fleeing Moravian Protestants were granted permission to settle near the village, and built their own church and settlement nearby, which is today Richardstraße. Neukölln's Turkish history also stretches back centuries, with a Turkish Cemetery constructed just outside Rixdorf in 1863, for Turkish members of the Prussian Army. Rixdorf grew and grew as an independent town, but by the early twentieth century it had earned a somewhat negative reputation due to various entertainments on offer, and so in 1912 the local authorities renamed the area Neukölln, taking its name from a settlement just outside of Rixdorf, in an attempt to refashion the area in a somewhat more positive light. Neukölln built up a reputation as a communist stronghold throughout the Weimar era, which cemented its position in the Nazi Regime's eyes as 'Red Neukölln' during the thirties. One of the more bloody incidents during the Weimar period centred on Rixdorf, when communists stormed a pub frequented by SA members with provoked a violent shootout. After the war, Neukölln found itself in the American sector, but its proximity to the wall was marked by the border crossing at Sonnenallee, which had formerly connected Neukölln to East Berlin. In the Cold War era, the reputation that the authorities of 1912 had desperately tried to shake returned, and Neukölln was viewed by many as one of the most dangerous places in Germany. Neukölln also cemented its position as one of the most diverse neighbourhoods in Germany, and it is estimated that just under half of the residents have an immigrant background. It was a key destination for Turkish Gastarbeiter in the fifties, and subsequently for Germans resettling from the former Soviet Union in the 1990s. Like in neighbouring Kreuzberg, the arts scene flourished, and the track Neukölln (a deliberate misspelling) made its way onto Bowie's 1977 album 'Heroes'. The mid twentieth century also saw the building of the Gropiusstadt in south Neukölln, built according to plans by modernist visionary Walter Gropius. It was also the residence of Christiane F., of the notorious Wir Kinder von Bahnhof Zoo, and was perceived as a particularly problem area within Neukölln. With the closure of Tempelhof Airport, site of the Berlin Blockade in 1948, in 2008, the area started to become an attractive place to live. What was formerly under a noisy air path soon found itself becoming one of the hottest places to live for young workers moving to Berlin. This 'hipsterification' of the neighbourhood is most noticeable in the north, where Neukölln borders on Kreuzberg, and the area known as 'Kreuzkolln' has become a buzzword for all that is 'hip' in Berlin. As seen in other districts, gentrification is therefore one of the most pressing topics today in Neukölln, as a lot of original inhabitants are pushed further and further south as rent prices soar.

Adam

I'm Adam, studying French and German and during my year abroad I lived in Neukölln. If you're interested in living in an area with a huge variety of cultures and subcultures, Neukölln is definitely the place you can find that. There are three main streets that run through the area (Sonnenallee, Karl-Marx-Straße and Boddinstraße), all which offer a variety of bars, cafés, secondhand clothes shops, Spätis etc. As there is such a mish-mash of cultures, there is quite a variety of places to go. For food, there's Monella for pizza (vegan included), La Bolognina (for pasta), curry restaurants, the usual kebab shops as well as cafés like K-Fetisch and Mona Lisa. Neukölln tends not to be the prettiest, though the district definitely makes up for it in terms of the general shops and places to drink and stuff; places like Silverfuture (a gay bar) or Twinpigs, or even the English bookshop on Flughafenstraße if you need a little reminder of home. Also, take a wander around the canal area, there's lots of places that might interest you there, and it's not too far from the Turkish Market on the Maybachufer in Kreuzberg. For a taste of the Neukölln nightlife head to it's famous club Griessmühle on Sonnenallee. Definitely check this out, and if you're into the music scene, I 100% recommend the club's record shop Latitude.



21gramm

Hermannstraße 179, 12049 Berlin, Germany

Possibly one of the most beautiful cafes in the city, 21gramm is situated inside a former chapel. Combined with green plants, spacious rooms, and often with a midday DJ, 21gramm is not your typical former religious site. Prices are slightly higher than other places in the area, but for a treat, their brunch offerings are unrivalled.



Greens Cafe Berlin

Weserstr. 44, 12045 Berlin, Germany

As you may expect from the name, the interior of this lovely cafe is doused in houseplants. A relaxing bit of greenery in what can be seen as a gritty area, Greens Cafe offers a solid coffee, and also outdoor space for when the sun is shining.



Isla Coffee Berlin

Hermannstraße 37, 12049 Berlin, Germany

From the front Isla Coffee projects an image of sterile minimalist chic, yet its home to one of the cosiest courtyards in Berlin. Pick up a coffee at the bar before settling down amidst the greenery to crack on with some work or catch up with a friend. The cafe's focus on using leftovers has won it national acclaim, so you can enjoy your bread pudding in peace, knowing it was made sustainably.



Mmaah

Columbiadamm 160, 10965 Berlin, Germany

The food at Mmaah is delicious and the prices are very reasonable. At this location it's not a restaurant so much as an outdoor food truck with tables, Mmaah's success has seen it spread around the city fast. Meat or carbs doused in succulent sauces is its trademark, and one it gets right every time.



Monella Bar

Weichselstraße 17, 12045 Berlin, Germany

Perhaps a little on the pricier side, Monella sure serves up a smashing pizza and drinks. It's also situated in an area densely populated with bars, so is the perfect place to start a night of celebration.



La Bolognina

Donaustraße 107, 12043 Berlin, Germany

A little slice of Italy, La Bolognina focuses on fresh homemade dishes which never disappoint. The simple concoctions win praise time and time again, and the cozy atmosphere and friendly staff ensure every customer becomes a regular.



Trude Ruth and Goldammer

Flughafenstraße 58, 12055 Berlin, Germany

Dark, smokey and cheap is the name of the game at Trude, Ruth and Goldammer. Startlingly good prices make it a popular hangout for students, and the warm cosy atmosphere provides welcome refuge during the dark Berlin winters. Beer is the main focus in this traditional Kneipe, but some evenings there's also dancing - keep up to date with their programme for more information.



Klunkerkranch

Karl-Marx-Straße 66, 12045 Berlin, Germany

In recent years this rooftop bar has shot up in popularity, but the crowds are there for a reason and shouldn't scare you away. Perhaps one to avoid on sunny summer weekends when the queue snakes for seemingly hours, during autumn or spring, this bar boasts one of the best views in the city. Situated on top of a parking garage serving the mall downstairs, it's an unlikely location for such a sought after bar. Complete with a sandpit for those with children in tow!



Das Gift

Donaustraße 119, 12045 Berlin, Germany

Despite the name and the traditional German Kneipe atmosphere, Das Gift is actually Scottish owned and hosts many Brit friendly nights. There are regular English quiz nights, along with a smashing selection of Scottish whiskies and British craft beers. The bartenders are often British, and the clientele is certainly compromised of a lot of expats. Keep up to date with their evolving programme of events - theres always something going down in this little corner of Neukölln.



SilverFuture

Weberstr. 206, 12047 Berlin, Germany

A very popular LGBTQ+ bar, Silver Future attracts predominantly a young clientele, and has a focus on lesbian woman, however any member of the community is welcome, and feels welcome here. The multicoloured interior is striking, however what most people pick up on first is the amazing drink prices. The bar often hosts 'Love is in the air' nights, where people can come and send compliments via a post it note and a piece of string to other patrons of the bar.



Schankwirtschaft Laidak

Boddinstraße 42/43, 12055 Berlin, Germany

A favourite for informal meetings, (think book clubs, political action groups), theres something rather 19th century about the cosy sofas, book lined walls, and permanently smokey atmosphere. The cheap drinks make it a favourite of the many students who live in this area.



K-Fetisch

Wildenbruchstraße 86, 12045 Berlin, Germany

Part cafe, part bar, K fetisch does a good trade in both coffee and alcoholic beverages. Theres also, considerately, two separate spaces for smokers and non smokers, meaning if you don't want to sit in the fog that can envelop other Neukölln cafes, this place is probably your best bet. With a focus on left wing politics, its not unusual to be able to read alternative newspapers and magazines here, and occasionally there are events such as poetry readings, LGBTQ+ events etc.



Repeater

Pannierstraße 45, 12047 Berlin, Germany

Offering one of the best vintage selections in the city, Repeater is a must visit for anyone interested in vintage fashion. The shop does fashion by bulk, so expect multiple variations of similar items - for example anyone looking for a vintage leather coat, denim jacket or Levis will be spoiled for choice.



Sing Blackbird

Sanderstraße 11, 12047 Berlin, Germany

Sing Blackbird is a vintage shop with more of a focus on high end labels, but the prices are kept reasonable. Well curated, the choice isn't exhaustive, but what's there is carefully picked out. With an adjoining cafe, its a neighbourhood favourite, and a visit to the shop to eye up the fashion of customers is an experience in itself.



NK Kranoldplatz Flohmarkt

Kranoldpl., 12051 Berlin, Germany

A newcomer to the busy Berlin flea market scene, the NK Flohmarkt takes place every second Sunday at the Kranoldplatz. It draws much more of a young Berlin crowd than the other markets. Open June to October, this market was actually founded by a newcomer to Berlin, a British man named Harry Dukes, and the fact it only opened in 2019 means that it is far less crowded than its counterparts, yet still offers a great selection of food and stalls.



Richardplatz

Richardpl. 12055 Berlin, Germany

This charming square in Neukölln looks like its been taken straight out of a country postcard. This is where remnants of the village Rixdorf can be found, the original village settled by Bohemian refugees in the 18th century. It hosts one of the most atmospheric Christmas markets in the city, but is also a dream to wander around at any other time of the year as well.



Schillerkiez

Schillerkiez, Berlin, Germany

Just next to Tempelhofer Feld, this little Kiez is constantly being named one of the 'trendiest' places to live in the city. Have a wander around to judge that for yourself, and make sure you end up in Selig cafe, a light and airy space located in part of an old church.



Hufeisensiedlung

Hufeisensiedlung, 12559 Berlin, Germany

Literally 'horse shoe estate' in English, this housing estate was built in the late 1920s, and is currently a world heritage site due to its architectural value. There's a large garden with a small lake in the centre. Visually striking, the estate is worth a cycle out to admire.



Gropiusstadt

Gropiusstadt, 12555 Berlin, Germany

Built in the 1960s and 1970s, the Gropiusstadt was imagined by Walter Gropius, inspired by the Hufeisensiedlung, above. It didn't quite turn out how the architect envisioned it, however, and it soon became a hotspot for problems. One of the most famous residents of Gropiusstadt was Christiane F., the child protagonist from *Wir Kinder von Bahnhof Zoo*.



Körnerpark

Schierker Str. 8, 12051 Berlin, Germany

This beautiful small park is a local Berlin secret. It's a treat for the eyes, and is the polar opposite of Tempelhofer Feld, resembling a castle garden, ornate and well laid out. In the orangery there is a beautiful cafe with flowing steps down to the lawn, while in summer the park plays host to a series of outdoor concerts.



Tempelhofer Feld

Tempelhofer Damm, 12101 Berlin, Germany

Located on the site of the former Tempelhof airport, upon the airport's closure in 2008 this became the biggest park in Berlin. Jogging and cycling are particular favourites here, where you can cycle the old airport runways. On any summers day, the park is awash with picnickers, families, and always the occasional kid with a kite.



Hasenheide Park

Columbiaadam 160, 10965 Berlin, Germany

The birthplace of the modern german gymnastic movement, the Hasenheide is today still popular as a local jogging ground. A vast green space, it encompasses an open air cinema, a rose garden and a selection of playgrounds. Of particular interest is the Hasenschänke cafe in the centre, an authentic unpretentious Berlin cafe, where on sunny days a beer goes down a treat. Unfortunately the park is also somewhat known as a hot spot for drug dealing, despite



Comenius - Garten

Richardstraße 35, 12045 Berlin, Germany

Tucked away in Rixdorf, this quaint little garden comes as a surprise to those not in the know, a slice of green tranquility in an area not famed for its open spaces. A popular meeting point, the Comenius Garden is also a children's paradise, and is often overrun by toddlers. However, nestled amongst the different plants, young couples and elderly friends can be seen relaxing.



Sommerbad Neukölln

Columbiaadam 160, 10965 Berlin, Germany

The biggest attraction of this outdoor pool is no doubt the 83m slide, which delights both children and adults alike. That said, you can also earn your swimming stripes in this large pool, and on a sunny day theres a vast patch of grass to lay down on. Grab a bite to eat at Mmaah on your way out.





Schöneberg

The name of Schöneberg first appears on the scene with the gift of land from Dorf Schöneberg to the nunnery of Spandau by Markgraf Otto in 1264. The next event of note to take place in the area was the vicious burning of the settlement, including its village church in 1760 during the seven years war, before, in somewhat more happier times, Schöneberg became established as an independent city in 1899. From 1912, the area became known officially as Berlin Schöneberg, and its first Mayor, Rudolph Wilde drew up plans for the now iconic Schöneberg

Town Hall. During the golden twenties, Schöneberg became one of the most famous nightlife districts in the world, and specifically around Nollendorfpplatz there was a thriving LGBT+ community. It was one of the few places in the world where there was a specific infrastructure and a variety of offerings for members of the LGBT+ community. Christopher Isherwood himself lived just a stones throw from Nollendorfpplatz, which served as the inspiration for his cult book 'Goodbye to Berlin' (1939). The area was severely threatened by the rise of the Nazis in the 30s, with the closing down of many iconic LGBT+ bars and clubs among one of the first acts of the incoming Nazi government. Today, although the younger

LGBT+ community has moved elsewhere for its nightlife and hangouts, Schöneberg is still an important centre for the LGBT+ community, with the 'Lesbian Gay Streetfest' taking place there on one weekend every June. There are still multiple bars catering to the LGBT+ public around the square, and the Schwules Museum opened its doors in 1985, becoming the first museum in the world to be dedicated solely to gay history. It was in the ornate Kammergericht that the show trial for the members of the 20th July plot took place, and also in the now demolished Berlin Sportspalast in Schöneberg that Goebbels gave his infamous 'total war' speech. Following the German capitulation, the Allied Control Council for all of Germany took the Kammergericht as its headquarters, meaning that until the foundation of the two different states in 1949, it was the highest court in Germany. It was however Rathaus Schöneberg, completed just in time for the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, that was to play one of the starring roles in Germany's post war history. It was the seat of the senate of West Berlin, and proudly displayed the freedom clock, which had been erected due to donations from the civilian population of the USA. It was however not the clock,

but rather one of the USA's most famous sons, John F. Kennedy who really caused a splash at the town hall during his visit in 1963. In a city ravaged by war and freshly divided with an ugly scar, the former WW2 serviceman and now President of the USA proclaimed 'Ich bin ein Berliner' to the delight of the thousands of West Berliners gathered to meet him. After his untimely assassination later that same year, the Rudolph Wilde Platz was promptly renamed John F Kennedy Park, an indication of what the visit had meant in the hearts of so many west Berliners.



Tom

For the second half of my year abroad I found myself in Schöneberg, a part of Berlin that used to be one of the main districts for Berlin nightlife in the '20s, especially in the north around Nollendorf Platz. Nollendorfkiez still has a large and noticeable LGBT+ presence, with bars and clubs catered towards the community. Despite its reputation, compared to the Weimar times, the area is a lot quieter and more relaxed. There's great variation between quiet streets with really beautiful Altbau apartment buildings, and livelier streets with plenty of shops and bars (e.g. Akazienstr, Gorkitzstr & around Winterfeldplatz). There's also a beautiful park: Volkspark Schöneberg-Wilmersdorf. For daily needs, Hauptstr. offers a good range of supermarkets, döner shops (inc. a really good one called Rüyam Gemüse Kebab), some clothes shops and a gym.

I used to live in a place called Rote Insel which is further south-east. Its name stems from the fact it used to be where loads of SPD and left-wing politicians/ activists lived in the first half of the twentieth century. Ideally located for transport, you can catch city, regional and national trains to other cities from the Südkreuz Station, just south of Rote Insel. Beyond Südreuz there's also a massive Ikea shop which is very handy for newcomers looking to deck out their new apartment or WG. For travel around the city, there's the S Bahn along with several U Bahn lines in the area, most importantly the U7 which cuts directly through the Viertel making it quick and easy to get places. A historic place with a contemporary relevance is the Rathaus Schöneberg, site of JFK's famous speech, where you can find a busy flea-market every weekend.



DoubleEye

Akazienstraße 21, 10825 Berlin, Germany

An award winning cafe on Schöneberg's lively Akazienstraße, Double Eye is one of the go to cafes in the city for those who prize their quality coffee. However due to lack of seating space, (in summer they do put out some seats on the street outside), this is not one to visit to while away the hours 'working' on your laptop. Either get a takeaway Americano or sip your Espresso standing up whilst peeking at one of the many newspapers they often have on display.



JONES icecream

Goltzstraße 5, 10781 Berlin, Germany

They've already made a name for themselves with their trucks at the numerous food markets around Berlin, but this ice cream cafe in Schöneberg is a real treat. Their handmade ice cream is quite simply delicious, and you can enjoy it either in a tub to take home, or in a waffle or cone to devour on the premises. Crowned the best place in Berlin for ice cream by numerous blogs, Jones is definitely not one to miss, especially during the stifflingly hot Berlin summer.



Winterfeldt Schokoladen

Goltzstraße 25, 10781 Berlin, Germany

Located in an old pharmacists in Schöneberg, this is one of the most atmospheric chocolate shops and cafes in Berlin. Besides its serious selection of all kinds of chocolate treats which make ideal affordable presents, it's possible to enjoy a coffee within its wood panelled walls.



Café Einstein Stammhaus

Kurfürstenstraße 58, 10785 Berlin, Germany

This beautiful villa cafe has a past. Rumour has it that it was a gift from Goebbels to his then mistress, and subsequently an underground SS casino. The villa surprisingly survived sustained bombardment of the area, and it opened in 1978 as Café Einstein, a Viennese style coffee house. More on the expensive side, don't expect a student friendly supper here, it is nevertheless worth visiting for a reasonably priced coffee, and to gawp at its elegant interior and summer garden.



Gasthaus Gottlob

Akazienstraße 17, 10825 Berlin, Germany

Gasthaus Gottlob has retained a distinctly German feel about it, with its wooden interior and numerous newspapers at the guests disposal, Gottlob is an excellent place for a coffee and a break. The generous outdoor seating area also means it's one of the best places to watch the hustle and bustle of Schöneberg go by, and is one of the few cafes in Berlin where there's a real mix of clientele both young and old.



Rüyam Gemüse Kebab

Hauptstraße 133, 10827 Berlin, Germany

An open local secret, Rüyam Gemüse Kebab is your go to for mouthwatering kebabs, and their friendly staff and service (somewhat a rarity in Berlin) ensure the customers keep coming. Head here for sustenance before heading down the Hauptstraße to peek in at the building Bowie called home during his Berlin years.



Green Door Bar

Winterfeldtstraße 50, 10781 Berlin, Germany

The Green Door, despite its designation as a Speakeasy, does not hide itself away. Entry to this bar is only permitted to those who ring the door bell (no hammering on that beautiful entrance please), and once inside a wide variety of cocktails are available. Perhaps more of a date destination opposed to a regular drink with friends, there's a special atmosphere that sets it apart from Berlin's many bars, yet with drinks that (especially at Happy Hour), wont break the bank.



Inselnest

Leberstraße 23, 10829 Berlin, Germany

For an authentic German Kneipe, look no further than Inselnest, tucked away on Leberstraße. Smokey and dark, this Schöneberg pub serves drink after drink at rock bottom prices. The clientele are almost unfailingly German, tourists haven't cottoned on to this secret spot just yet.



Akazienbuchhandlung

Akazienstraße 26, 10825 Berlin, Germany

Founded in 1994, this independent bookshop is a treat for the eyes and the mind. Set over 80 square metres, the shop offers a wide variety of classic and contemporary German literature. It certainly lives up to its claim of being a self confessed literary institution, with friendly staff on standby to lend a helping hand. Grab a book from here, and read it in one of the many independent cafes lining the street.



Kleiner Laden Berlin

Goltzstraße 15, 10781 Berlin, Germany

This little vintage shop tucked away on Goltzstraße, is home to a surprising number of gems. Handpicked by the owner, it's an eclectic mix of items in the small shop. Reasonable prices and good quality pieces set it apart from other similar shops in the area.



LOVECO Vegan Fair Fashion

Eisenacher Str. 56 / 57, 10781 Berlin, Germany

For those more sustainably minded, LOVECO is an ethical paradise. It has much more to offer than it's cool sophisticated scandi-style interior - this is a brand that puts the heart first. A highlight is their vegan shoe range.



Garage

Abornstraße 2, 10787 Berlin, Germany

Being located slightly off the beaten track doesn't stop Garage from drawing in the crowds. Compared to shops such as Sing Blackbird, quantity rather than quality is the shops Modus Operandi, and hours can be spent here digging for a bargain. There's a focus on American vintage, and for those keen to grab a budget bargain, there's a happy hour every Wednesday between 11am and 1pm, when 30% is shaved off already low prices.



Rathaus Schöneberg

Am Rathaus 2, 10825 Berlin, Germany

Severely damaged in the Battle of Berlin, this early twentieth century town hall rose from the ashes to become the city hall of West Berlin and the site of JFK's famous speech. Today, there is a moving exhibition entitled 'Wir waren Nachbarn' (we were neighbours) with information about personal stories and biographies of Schöneberg - Tempelhof's Jewish residents under the Nazi regime. There is also a good flea market every Saturday and Sunday in the square in front.



David Bowie's Berlin

Hauptstraße 155, 10827 Berlin, Germany

A small plaque marks the house where David Bowie rented an apartment during his years in Berlin in the late 1970s, and it has now been joined by an impressive spray image of the late icon himself. He shared the apartment with Iggy Pop, in a move designed to drag him away from the heavy drug culture he had previously been involved with. It was here in Berlin that some of Bowie's most enduring music, such as 'Heroes', was created.



Urban Nation

Bülowstraße 7, 10785 Berlin, Germany

As the outside of the building makes clear, this is a museum dedicated to urban art, with a focus on street art in particular. An art project that finally opened a gallery space in 2017, the art in Urban Nation isn't confined to the inside exhibition space. Keep an eye out on the surrounding streets for beautiful artwork adorning the walls.



Berlin's Hidden Villas

Genthiner Str. 50, 10785

This hidden oasis of beauty is shielded by the mundanity of normal Genthinerstraße. However tucked away is a beautiful courtyard of buildings and well laid out ornate gardens. Worth a peek, to see how constructions of all kinds stand side by side in Berlin.



Spreewald Grundschule

Pallasstraße 15, 10781 Berlin, Germany

The unique design of Spreewald Grundschule draws interest from many visitors to Schöneberg. Designed by architect Hinrich Baller, the building has attracted praise and scorn in equal measure. The school is often in the headlines.



Schwules Museum Berlin

Lützowstraße 75, 10785 Berlin, Germany

Set on the border between Tiergarten (Mitte) and Schöneberg, this museum has developed into an important point on the tourist map. Opened in its first form in 1985, this museum has become a focal point for exhibitions on LGBT+ communities, and is also an important centre for researching the histories of the community. There's a focus here on the history of the Berlin LGBT+ community, but there are also diverse temporary exhibitions.



Stadtbad Schöneberg "Hans Rosenthal"

Hauptstraße 59, 10827 Berlin, Germany

Currently closed for renovations until estimated late 2019, Stadtbad Schöneberg is one of the most popular pools in Berlin. It boasts a 25 metre main pool equipped with a diving board, as well as a family area complete with outdoor pools. For those for whom 'wellness' is more the focus of their outing, they are sure to be pleased by the salt water pool and hot tubs. For those who want to relive childhood memories, a 53 metre is at their disposal.



Rudolph - Wilde Park

Kufsteiner Str., 10825 Berlin, Germany

This small park near the Rathaus takes its name from former Schöneberg mayor Rudolph Wilde and is a small green oasis, often overshadowed by the adjacent Volkspark Schöneberg - Wilmersdorf. The Carl Zuckermayer Bridge which crosses the park, is home to the most beautiful U Bahn station in the city, with a small lake to boot. Stop at station Rathaus Schöneberg on the U4 line to truly take it all in.



Charlottenburg

Once the preserve of the city's uber wealthy, Charlottenburg may seem a strange choice to include in a booklet advising students and young graduates where to first settle in Berlin. While it's true that you are far more likely to find elderly ladies in fur swanning around here than in any other part of Berlin, the fall of the wall has seen Charlottenburg slightly lose its glitzy appeal in some areas, as young couples have migrated inwards towards the centre, meaning that there are some surprisingly reasonable rooms and flats to be found for rent.

Charlottenburg centres around the majestic Charlottenburg Palace, first constructed at the end of the 17th century, before being expanded considerably in the ornate style that stands before us today. It was named Charlottenburg by Elector Frederick III of Brandenburg after his wife, Sophia Charlotte of Hanover, who passed away in 1705. Badly hit during the Second World War, many believed the palace would go the way of other destroyed Berlin palaces and be torn down, however on the contrary, it was painstakingly restored to its former glory and is today a key tourist attraction in the area. Mirroring the opulence of the palace, Charlottenburg attracted the wealthy bourgeoisie of the city in the mid 19th century, which saw sumptuous villas springing up in the area around the palace. Industrial heavyweights like Ernst Werner von Siemens were among the original exodus to affluent Charlottenburg. In the roaring twenties, Charlottenburg, and specifically the area around the Kurfürstendamm, the 3.5km pulsating commercial heart of the area, became known internationally for its cultural offerings. Cinemas and cabarets enticed, while a lively cafe culture flourished in cafes such as Cafe des Westens, Romanisches Cafe etc. Charlottenburg had been the home of one of the largest Jewish communities in the city, and as such, the violence of the National Socialist era saw countless Jewish residents forced out of their homes, their businesses destroyed. Today the ruined Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church stands as a reminder of the destruction of war. With the partition of Berlin, Charlottenburg lay in the British sector and soon became the thriving hub of West Berlin, as the historic middle was now cut off, in Soviet hands. Celebrations of capitalism, such as Berlin's first mall, the Europa Centre, started to pop up, and the Kurfürstendamm retained its status as the most renowned shopping street in the country. The Ku Damm also became a political stage for many of the key events in West German political history, as countless demonstrations pounded its pavements, while JFK drove down it on his iconic 1963 visit. It was also near the Ku Damm, that during a protest against the Shah of Iran in 1967, the unarmed student Benno Ohnesorg was shot dead by a policeman, fuelling the 1968 student movement. However Charlottenburg also had a seedier side, and those who have seen cult film 'Wir Kinder von Bahnhof Zoo', will know that the Zoo Bahnhof, just on the Ku Damm, was a gathering spot for drug addicts and sex workers, often among them very young boys. Fast food restaurants and cheap shops began to be increasingly spotted on the legendary shopping mile towards the end of the 20th century. Although some say Charlottenburg has lost out after reunification, as business and attention has shifted to other parts of Berlin such as Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg, there remain wealthy enclaves, visible in the high end designer shops that adorn part of the Ku Damm.

Fatima

Charlottenburg is a somewhat sleeper and bougier neighbourhood compared to edgy Friedrichshain and arty Kreuzberg, but its packed with its very own hidden arty spots, a rich cultural offering, sick retail spaces and some of the best Asian food Berlin has to offer.

Whilst Charlottenburg sports a slightly older crowd, it's still a super multicultural area of the city and this manifests in particular in some great East and Southeast Asian food spots. All along the Kantstrasse you'll find a host of Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese places and so on, my favourites being **Shiso Burger**, a fusion of Eastern and Western cuisine, and **Chi Bo Korean Chicken & Bowl**, serving the best Korean Fried Chicken and Bibimbap in the city and perfect for on the go. And if you're ever feeling like whipping up a Chow Mein for yourself, there's the biggest **Go Asia supermarket** with all the ingredients you'll ever need at the tail end of the same street. On the other hand, if Eastern European is more your style, there are some great places here too, my favourite being **Salhino Georgian Restaurant** which is family run and a great place for incredible homemade Georgian food.

For all your cultural desires, Charlottenburg has got you covered. Opposite Schloss Charlottenburg near Richard-Wagner Platz, you'll find a little cluster of museums including the **Museum Berggruen**, hosting one of the largest private collections of Pablo Picasso's work in the world, and the **Scharf-Gersternberg Collection**, an incredible space for surrealist art from the 19th century up to the modern day, with brilliantly curated special exhibitions on artists like Max Ernst and Giovanni Battista Piranesi. If those don't take your fancy (nor the Heimat Museum and **Villa Oppenheim** in the vicinity), scoot yourself to the other side of this very same district, and you'll find **Museum für Fotografie** at Zoologischer Garten, a must-see for photography enthusiasts. If the theatre scene is more your thing, the **Schaubühne am Lehninger Platz** is one of the most famous stages in Berlin, and is known for featuring avant-garde productions and modern interpretations of well-known works.

If you look up a map of Berlin, one of the first things you'll notice about Charlottenburg is that the world famous **Ku'damm** runs right through it. Think Oxford Street but slightly less hectic (although slightly is the operative word). Berlin's iconic department store **KaDeWe** (Kaufhaus des Westens) sits at the tail end of the street at **Wittenberg Platz**, opposite the iconic **Gedächtnis Kirche**, and running through to the very end of the street you'll find every thing from high street to high end. My actual favourite retail spot here though is definitely **Bikini Berlin**. An old school 70s concrete monstrosity from the outside, the inside has been converted into a retail space, featuring independent designers from the city and views of the Berlin Zoo enclosures from the comfy café spaces. Yes it's bougie af, but there's free WiFi which made this one of my favourite spots to go get work done, sitting alongside the baboon enclosure whilst doing my life admin.

Berlin might be one of the nightlife capitals of the world, but you'll find most of the best clubs and bars further East and a night out in Charlottenburg is a somewhat more expensive affair. That being said there are some great gems here to check out, including the **Monkey Bar**, which gives you incredible views of the city and **Zeitlos**, a cocktail bar with a very generous happy hour.

And for just sitting down and reading a book, the gardens at **Schloss Charlottenburg** are the perfect place to relax and enjoy the good weather. Lastly, I have to mention a slightly secret spot. The Technische Universität zu Berlin has a building at **Ernst-Reuter-Platz** with some of the best rooftop views of the city and you don't need a student pass to get in! If you can get away with looking like a student, just walk in with confidence, take the lift to the top floor (which is a cafeteria) and enjoy a 360 view of Berlin for free!



Schwarzes Cafe

Kantstraße 148, 10625 Berlin, Germany

Open everyday 24 hours except for Tuesday morning, its not just the opening hours that make this cafe tucked away near Savignyplatz noteworthy. Opened in 1978, it is one of the few relics of West Berlin's nightlife scene still standing. Legend has it that David Bowie and Iggy Pop were frequent patrons.



What do you fancy love?

68/69, Kneesebeckstraße, 10625 Berlin, Germany

A healthy smoothie and bagel joint just off the Ku Damm, this place is constantly heaving with young Berliners. Not what many people expect in the Ku Damm, who's swish cafes usually cater to an older clientele, students and young professionals alike congregate in What do you fancy love? The price isn't the cheapest, but for good vegan food and fresh pressed juices, many are willing to pay the extra euro (or four).



Literaturhaus

Fasanenstraße 25, 10719 Berlin, Germany

Located in a beautiful villa just off the Kurfürstendamm, the Literaturhaus boasts an elegant cafe alongside a stellar programme of events ranging from readings to workshops. Anything and everything literary is to be found in this beguiling townhouse in Charlottenburg. Tickets are usually around 4 euros for students. The house itself has been everything and anything, ranging from a military hospital to a brothel to a nightclub.



Shiso Burger

Kantstraße 51, 10625 Berlin, Germany

A burger joint, but not as you know it, Shiso Burger serves up Burgers with an asian twist. Delicious and light, the burgers have proved a hit throughout town. For those who aren't fans of meat, the restaurant also serves up mouthwatering veggie options.



Salhino Georgisches Restaurant
Waitzstraße 1, 10629 Berlin, Germany

Salhino in Charlottenburg is well known for its Georgian cuisine. For a hearty filling meal in the depths of the cold Berlin winter, there's nowhere better to go to fill up after a long walk in the cold. As there is also the option to go for a half or full portion, it won't break the bank.



Quasimodo
Kantstraße 12A, 10625 Berlin, Germany

In the basement of the Delphi Film Palast lies one of Berlin's most famous jazz clubs, Quasimodo. The music usually kicks off at around 10pm on weeknights, and there is a special focus on International acts here too. Prince once gave an unannounced hour long concert here in 1987. So pop in, who knows who might swing by?



KLO
Leibnizstraße 57, 10629 Berlin, Germany

This crazy curiosity is hands down one of the maddest places in Berlin. It's a toilet-themed bar, but the wackiness doesn't stop there. Once inside you might be squirted with water as you take your (loo shaped) seat in the eclectic space, before ordering a toilet theme drink from the bar. Definitely not one for the shy and retiring, KLO is an experience in its own right.



Zeitlos Berlin
Schlüterstraße 60, 10625 Berlin, Germany

For those in search of a slightly more traditional drinking experience, perhaps head to Zeitlos instead. Especially great for those of you on a budget, Zeitlos is also somewhat beach-themed, which can serve as a pick me up during the long Berlin nights. They serve delicious Flammkuchen alongside an excellent selection of drinks.



Bikinihaus

Budapester Str. 38-50, 10787 Berlin, Germany

Not just any old shopping centre, Bikinihaus is billed as Germany's first 'concept mall'. In short, this mall is home to a selection of constantly changing pop up shops, giving new designers a chance to flog their wares. Big light and spacious, its also an excellent place to get some work done in one of their cafes. From the large rooftop terrace, there are breathtaking views into Berlin Zoo.



Europa - Center

Tauentzienstraße 9-12, 10789 Berlin, Germany

Opened just after the Berlin wall, in 1965, this huge shopping mall served as a temple to consumerism. Its large Mercedes sign on the top quickly became an icon of west Berlin. Today, it's somewhat overshadowed by its sophisticated neighbour, Bikinihaus, but is still a reliable bet if you're looking for big brand purchases.



Heinrich-Schulz-Bibliothek

Otto-Subr-Allee 96, 10585 Berlin, Germany

This library has the claim to fame of being the first public library in Germany open to all where it was possible to rent books, going all the way back to 1898. Moving several times, the library established itself in its current setting in 1948. Today the library also hosts courses, talks as well as a large selection of DVDs and CDs.



Delphi Filmpalast

Kantstraße 12A, 10625 Berlin, Germany

Putting the Vue cinemas of the UK to shame, the Delphi was previously a dance hall before opening its doors to the cinema going public in 1949. With chandeliers decking out the interior, the sumptuous decor sets out to impress and succeeds. One of the most important art house cinemas, during the Berlinale there are often film screenings accompanied by talks put on here.



Käthe Kollwitz Museum

Fasanenstraße 24, 10719 Berlin, Germany

Situated in a beautiful townhouse off the Ku'damm, the museum's location is a far cry from the working class areas of Berlin where Käthe Kollwitz operated. Nevertheless the villa's large space gives a suitable backdrop to one of the largest collections of Käthe Kollwitz's work. The museum neighbours the Literaturhaus, so you can combine taking in an exhibition followed by a coffee on their sunny outdoor terrace.



Berggreun Museum

Schloßstraße 1, 14059 Berlin, Germany

This impressive museum is devoted to modern art, and boasts a collection with works by Matisse, Picasso, Klee etc. The museum is named after the art collector Heinz Berggreun, forced to flee by the Nazis due to his Jewish heritage. It is his private collection that forms the core of this museum.



Bröhan Museum

Schloßstraße 1a, 14059 Berlin, Germany

This museum is one of art and design, with a special focus on decorative arts in the period of Art Nouveau, Art Deco etc. Just across from Charlottenburg Palace, it's the perfect place to peep into after a walk in the palace grounds.



C / O Berlin

Hardenbergstraße 22-24, 10625 Berlin, Germany

Located in the America Haus in Charlottenburg, this photography museum has been serving up eye-opening exhibitions ever since its opening in 2000. For those interested in picking up the camera themselves, the cafe is specially designed as a space for fellow photographers to mingle and collaborate.



Museum of Photography

Jebensstraße 2, 10625 Berlin, Germany

Looking directly at the station from where the German Jewish photographer Helmut Newton fled the Nazis, the Museum of Photography today houses a permanent collection dedicated to the legendary photographer. It also holds a selection of changing exhibitions. There are often additional events, such as talks and lectures.



Charlottenburg Palace

Spandauer Damm 20-24, 14059 Berlin, Germany

Touched on in the introduction, Charlottenburg Palace really isn't one to miss. An ideal visit for when you have visitors in town, Charlottenburg impresses and reminds that there is more to Berlin than the gritty clubs around Warschauer Straße. Of particular note is the Porcelain cabinet, where white and blue porcelain adorn an entire room from ceiling to floor.



Deutsche Oper Berlin

Bismarckstraße 55, 10627 Berlin, Germany

The only opera house in West Berlin, the Deutsche Oper today offers a chance to experience the music within this iconic building erected in 1961. Using either your Classic Card (see general Berlin tips), or your student card in order to nab 25-30% off, real efforts are made in order to ensure that the tickets remain affordable, especially for young people.



Lietzensee

Wundtstraße 40, 14057 Berlin, Germany

This double lake and park was once a fishing spot for Benedictine monks. Although fishing and swimming no longer take place here, it nevertheless remains one of the most peaceful areas of Charlottenburg. On the other side of the lake, there's a beautiful fountain with a viewing point over the lake. The perfect spot to sit and read.



Wedding

For Berliners today the question rages as to whether or not Wedding 'kommt', whether its already here, or in fact whether its already over. So far, Wedding has arguably escaped the gentrification that has befallen other districts in Berlin, which is precisely the reason that its desirableness has become the en vogue conversation choice of many young Berliners considering a move enticed by its lower rates, green spaces, and cultural diversity. Although today Wedding is not renowned for the nightlife found in other boroughs, it was originally known in the 18th century as an entertainment district, where amongst other activities gambling and prostitution were rife. Taking its name from a nobleman Rudolphus de Weddinge, who had founding a small village called Wedding in 1200, it wasn't until the entertainment district 'colonie Wedding', that the area was really put on the map for many Berliners. The area soon lost its frivolous appeal with the influx of workers from the country in the late 19th century, many of whom settled in Wedding. Similarly to Friedrichshain, the area developed a strong communist identity, becoming known as Red Wedding. In the 1920s it was also notorious for the constant skirmishes between the militant Communists and Nazis. Many of its inhabitants lived in unsanitary conditions, with labourers crammed into tenement blocks. The serenity of the current Plötzensee lake in west Wedding gives no hint that it lies in the proximity of Plötzensee prison where during the war over 3000 people were executed by Nazi administered capital punishment, among them many involved in the July 20th plot. Following the War, Wedding lay within the French sector, and it was at Wedding's Bernauer Straße that one of the most famous sites of the wall ripped through the district. Those living to the south of Bernauer Straße were officially in Soviet Territory, and with the building of the wall in 1961, there are harrowing pictures of inhabitants of these buildings fleeing for their lives from their windows, before their buildings could be evacuated and their windows bricked out to the west forever. Where it had once enjoyed relatively close proximity to Mitte and Prenzlauer Berg, Wedding suddenly found itself right on the outskirts of West Berlin. Today the Anti Kriegs Museum, established in 1984 near one of the most dangerous borders in Europe, enlightens visitors as to the horrors of the past and action of pacifism today. Wedding experienced a slightly happier post war history in the form of its architectural gems, and many fine examples of Modernism call Wedding home, among them the Schiller Park which is a World Heritage Site. With the arrival of the guest workers in Germany, many settled in Wedding, with the area acquiring a Turkish identity. This multicultural identity is today reflected in the many shop signs visible in both Turkish and Arabic. More recent settlers in the area have included many Africans, who reside in the African Quarter. Although Wedding has not received the same attention that its counter part old West Berlin district Kreuzberg has, many argue that this allows Wedding to retain its authentic character. More and more students have moved into the area, and new art initiatives, markets and clubs have been established, but the area is still much more low key than the uber gentrified areas of Prenzlauer Berg etc.

Megan

I moved to Wedding from London for my year abroad. Away from the hype of Kreuzberg and Neukölln, Wedding has a thriving art scene. Kolonie Wedding covers over 30 different art collectives that are located in old shop stores. If you fancy free cinema, bi'bak offers weekly curated film programmes and Q&A sessions led by experts in the field. There are plenty of hidden gems for cafes, restaurants - for one of the best pizzas in Berlin, head to St Bess. For the evening, Wilmas offers an atmospheric smoky setting with good drinks and live music. 800a has free comedy shows - make sure to try out their Japanese inspired cocktails made by the trained cocktail chef. Be'kech, the first anti cafe in Berlin, also has a wide range of events. For a bit more authentic Berlin away from the gentrification and expats, often overlooked Wedding has plenty to offer.



Café Pförtner

Uferstraße 8, Uferstr 8 - 11, 13357 Berlin, Germany

No, the picture is not a mistake, part of Cafe Pförtner is indeed located in a vintage bus! Although people may come for the retro BVG bus, they stay for the hearty cuisine, which is Italian inspired, though do be aware that portions can err on the smaller side. The kitchen changes the options regularly, and so to keep up head over to their facebook page.



MARS | Küche & Bar

Gerichtstraße 35, Seiteneingang, 13347 Berlin, Germany

Operating in part of the Silent Green Kulturquartier (mentioned below), this cafe is architecturally draw dropping, with a beautiful colour scheme. Perhaps a little more upmarket than other cafes in the area, the lunch is nonetheless relatively reasonable, and it is definitely worth a peep in (perhaps for a coffee and a cake).



GÖTTLICH essen & trinken

Tegeler Str. 23, 13355 Berlin, Germany

Sprengekiez in Wedding is often named as one of the areas most at risk of gentrification. Perhaps Göttlich, opened in 2013 and with a love of high quality coffee, could be seen at first glance as a contributor towards this. That said, the cafe has proclaimed that it makes a conscious choice to keep down its prices, and this is reflected in the reasonable price list for the various caffeine options, and delicious baked goods they have on offer.



Falafel Dream 2010

Müllerstraße 14A, 13355 Berlin, Germany

For some of the best Falafel, and indeed the best lunch, in town, look no further than Falafel Dream 2010, housed in a bus just by the Müllerstraße. The falafel is delicious and there is a serious choice of fillings, putting other offerings around the city to shame. Get it to go, or on a nice day take a seat at one of their outdoor tables.



Eschenbräu

Triftstraße 67, 13555 Berlin, Germany

A proper local German beer garden, for Berliners who look down on what they see as the touristy charms of the Prater, Eschenbräu continues a long established German tradition. Here one can sample beer brewed in the brewery, and in summer, sip it under the trees in the impressive courtyard beer garden. Still a place worth visiting even in grim weather, as the large beer cellar can accommodate over a hundred people.



Schiller Library

Müllerstraße 149, 13555 Berlin, Germany

Opened in 2015, the Schiller library serves as an antidote to the small and smoky cafes of Berlin, so if you need to work and fancy a change, this is for you. There is a special focus here on literature and media for young adults (13 to 25), so for students and young adults in the area its a real draw. Comfy areas for reading combined with large, bright and airy workspaces make this library a winner.



Centre Français de Berlin

Müllerstraße 74, 13549 Berlin, Germany

As you may have guessed from the mini Eiffel tower outside, this is a building dedicated to everything and everything french. It organises exchanges between German and French schoolchildren, and has the aim of promoting cooperation and understanding between the two countries. It also hosts regular talks, ideal for those students studying French and German who want to keep up both languages.



Plötzensee Monument

Hüttigpfad 16, 13627 Berlin, Germany

The memorial centre is dedicated to the nearly 3000 people who met their fate at the hands of the Nazis here. The execution room itself retains its eerie darkness, and today serves as a place to reflect on the nightmares of the past. An accompanying room provides an exhibition on the Nazi Court system and 'justice' in the Nazi state. A sobering place, Plötzensee serves as a poignant and important reminder of the past, and those Germans who tried to change it.



panke.gallery

Hof V, Gerichtstraße 23, 13347 Berlin, Germany

A bar, a club, a bistro and a gallery, its all here on the banks of the Panke. A constantly changing exhibition space draws you back to this Wedding art hub time and time again. There are also often workshops, performances etc. A great place for artists looking for a space to exhibit or put on an event, their website encourages you to get in touch to use one of the spaces.



silent green Kulturquartier

Gerichtstraße 35, 13347 Berlin, Germany

A crematorium that is now an art space? Silent green Kulturquartier embodies the spirit of Wedding - reincarnation. The building is worth a look in itself, but the centre also hosts countless events, so keep an eye on their website.



Rose Garden in Humboldthain

Brunnenstraße, 15557 Berlin, Germany

Nestled within the vast Humboldthain park, the rose garden is surprisingly difficult to find, located behind a wooden door. Only available to enter in winter, this beautifully laid out garden is a feast for the eyes, and a favourite of old and young alike. Bring a book and spend the hours reading between the flowers.



Humboldthain Park

Brunnenstraße, 15557 Berlin, Germany

Conceived as a memorial garden to Alexander von Humboldt, work began on the 100th anniversary of Humboldt's death, and it was finally opened to the public in the late 19th century. During the war, a variety of bunkers and anti arterial guns were concentrated in the area, and as a result the damage to the park was considerable. Ever practical, the Berliners used the rubble piles to create a toboggan run and the now famous Humboldthöhe, which provides views of the city.



Panke

Wedding, Berlin, Germany

The Panke is a small tributary to Berlin's main river, the Spree, and in Wedding it takes on a picturesque almost canal like appearance. Some of the best walking and jogging routes can be found down by the Panke, where the hum of the city is lost in the overgrown greenery of the surroundings. Definitely not an area that would be overrun by tourists, the Panke is a place to go if true peace and quiet is what you're after.



Schiller Park

15549 Berlin, Germany

The name Schillerpark usually conjures up images of the 1920s area of Wedding, where Berlin's first ever housing project was conceived and constructed. An example of modernist architecture, it is currently under UNESCO protection. What many people don't think of, is the beautiful Schiller Park, a public path with a picturesque tree lined alley. Just minutes from the bustle of central Wedding, this park provides some much needed natural respite.



Volkspark Rehberge

Windbucker Str. 52A, 15551 Berlin, Germany

Volkspark Rehberge is a mammoth of a park located close to Plötzensee. Originally envisioned as containing a zoo, today Volkspark Rehberge covers 190 acres and is home to wild boar and deer. Popular with the sporting public, at any given time groups of runners can be seen making their way across the green grass, the park also boasts one of Berlin's largest outdoor cinemas, where 1,500 viewers can take in a film on balmy summers evenings.



Strandbad Plötzensee

Nordufer 26, 15551 Berlin, Germany

Wedding can lay claim to a proper lake within its territory - Plötzensee with its beautiful treelined shore and good water quality. Due to its location within the city, this Strandbad fills up quickly, especially at weekends. Access to the Strandbad (around 3.50 euros for students), ensures that the entire sandy beach, beach volley ball, table tennis, and the numerous food vans (ice cream, currywurst etc) are at your disposal.







Wannsee

Wannsee could accurately be described as the Rolls Royce of the Berlin lakes. Although the lake can be walked along at certain points, for swimming it is difficult to beat Strandbad Wannsee, where for over a century Berliners have flocked to sunbathe on its long beach and frolic in its waters. Covered beach chairs along the shoreline are reminiscent of the beaches further north in Warnemünde, and so to discover that this is but a short S Bahn ride from the centre of Berlin comes as a shock. Highly popular, Wannsee has space for up to 30,000 guests, however on hot summer days coming early is advised, as the entry queue can rival that of the more popular Berlin clubs, particularly on weekends. The beach also caters to the many nudists in Berlin, with a generous portion devoted to FKK bathing. Immortalised in the 1950s Schlager hit with the line 'und dann sind wir bald am Wannsee', Wannsee retains its popularity nearly seventy years later. With changing rooms, an Imbiss, ice cream parlour, boat rental, a day at Wannsee truly is a day at the beach, with prices starting at only 3.50 for students. For access to the Strandbad its important to note that the nearest S bahn station is in fact Nikolassee, not Wannsee. After disembarking, the entrance is a short 10 minute walk away.



Weißensee

For those searching for some aquatic respite closer to the centre, the lake Weißer See lies in the Weißensee district, just north of Prenzlauer Berg. Easily reachable by tram, the lake is a favourite for hot summer evenings, where time in the sun is precious, and the journey out to the more distant lakes is too much effort. Although the lake can be enjoyed from pretty much any angle, with hammocks, picnics and boomboxes galore present on the shores at weekend, to get the best out of the lake, Strandbad Weißensee is your best bet. A compact yet spacious space with food, drink, and changing facilities, the beach is a no frills relaxation space. Usually packed with young families and elderly couples, the area is a lot more down to earth than some of the uber hip spots in central Berlin, and has an unpretentious air around it. After some vigorous swimming in the lake's waters, a trip to the Milchhäusen Cafe on the opposite side of the lake is recommended. The cafe's aesthetic exterior strongly hearkens back to the GDR, but a coffee and a cake on the beautiful terrace overlooking the lake feels timeless.



Lake Grunewald

Not so renowned for its swimming as for its picturesque walk around the lake, Lake Grunewald differs somewhat from the sun drenched Strandbad's mentioned above.

Grunewald has a reputation as an oasis for the wealthy, with Romy Schneider and Walter Rathenau just two among the elite who called the villas of Grunewald home. The lake however, is open to all, and one can swim, jog, or walk your dog there absolutely free of charge. Its hard to believe that this oasis of calm within a vast forest is less than 10 minutes by bus from the bustling Kurfürstendamm. The lake became notorious as a playground of the student movement of 1968, with students swimming naked and engaging in all sorts of activities along its tree lined shores. Today the area is a lot more family friendly, and is also a hotspot for dog walking in Berlin, so whether you come with or without man's best friend, a relaxing visit is ensured to all. The lake also lays claim to the oldest standing castle in Berlin, Jagdschloss Grunewald, built in 1542 and now an art museum.



Müggelsee

While Wannsee has long attracted scores of West Berliners, the Müggelsee fulfilled the same function for the East Berliners. As Berlin's largest lake, whether it be for walking, swimming, hiking or sailing, the Müggelsee has long been a stalwart of the Berlin water-sport scene. For swimming, Strandbad Müggelsee is recommended, due to both its beautiful location and free entry price. Opening hot on the heels of Wannsee Strandbad, in 1912, the Müggelsee has served as an entry point to the lake for decades. Its buildings stem from the 1930s, and due to the 1970s renovation and sanitisation it retains a distinctly GDR air about it. Although somewhat more complicated to get to compared to its western counterpart, you have to hop on a tram from S Bahn Friedrichshagen, the Müggelsee is a natural playground that should be explored by every Berliner at some point.

Berlin Nightlife

No guide to Berlin would be complete without at least some mention of the assorted clubs which compromise its world class nightlife scene. Whatever kind of night out you're after, you'll find it all in the wild maze of Berlin's many clubs, pubs, bars, and raves. Here the term 'night out' is rather redundant, as at many of the clubs, revellers dance throughout the day, and the party only truly ends on a Monday morning, when countless club goers can be seen, slightly worse for wear, traipsing past early morning commuters on their way to work.

Berghain

You've heard the name. It's the club which has websites dedicated to advising you how to get in, and where every weekend broken hearted tourists (some who've come to Berlin specially for the occasion) are seen shuffling forlornly away having received a 'Heute leider nicht'. The current form of Berghain began in 2004, following the closing of its predecessor Ostgut. Taking its name from its location between Kreuzberg and Friedrichshain, Berghain is a way of life for many Berliners. Inside this former power station the party rages from Friday until Monday morning. With a garden, ice cream parlour and countless bars, many stay the full time, while others pop in and out once they've gained their stamp. Definitely not one to go to in big groups, for a solo clubbing experience Berghain is just about unbeatable in Berlin.

Griessmuehle

A comparatively recent institution, Griessmuehle set up camp in 2012, on Sonnenallee in Neukölln. Its location on the river means that in summer Griessmuehle is one of the most picturesque places to party, with a sprawling garden that leads down to the canal. It has an abandoned feel about it, less sophisticated than Berghain and less colourful than Sisyphos. A favourite amongst young Berliners, Griessmuehle allows small groups in, making it an ideal location for when you want techno but also reliable company. For those less fond of early morning dancing, the club also puts on numerous cinema screenings at civilised hours of the evening, along with the occasional flea-market.

Sisyphos

Located in Lichtenberg, heading to Sisyphos is a trek for many locals, but its one they're happy to make due to Sisyphos' unique nature. Like Berghain, it hosts a party Friday to Monday, but unlike Berghain, the vibe here is much more colourful and varied, with an equally varied interior. A small lake complete with bridge and sand, a pizza bar, countless dance floors, and a huge playground ensure this mini village can keep you occupied the whole weekend. The door policy is not as strict as Berghain, but it's still recommended to go in small groups or better still, get your stamp in the afternoon and return in the evening when the party's getting started.

SchwuZ

Often touted as the best gay club in Berlin, SchwuZ in Neukölln offers a specific LGBT+ night every Thursday, Friday and Saturday. The atmosphere is a lot more welcoming than can be experienced in other clubs in the city, and there is a greater variety of music, meaning theres often something for everyone here. Compared to the above clubs, SchwuZ's door policy is also more relaxed, and one of their specialities is their themed parties.

Kater Blau

Kater Blau is a club area of the Holzmarkt, with a completely different door policy. Famous for its position next to the Spree river, the club boasts its very own boat, an idyllic place to watch the sunrise from after a night of heavy dancing. Theres usually a long queue, and the door policy is strict, but once inside there's a wide range of people and dance-floors. The clubs expansive size means there are lots of places for just sitting and chatting with a drink when the dancing gets too much, and also means it has a less oppressive atmosphere than Berghain.

Favourite Spots outside the Districts

Below is a compiled list of favourite spots outside the centre of Berlin, which don't fall in to any of the areas mentioned in the main body of the book.

Sometimes a hop on an S Bahn or U Bahn into one of Berlin's more far reaching secret spots is what's needed to get a break from the hustle and bustle of the city.

Just be sure that you have the right ticket! Many of these addresses are in the C zone of the BVG, and for locals with an AB monthly ticket, you can run into trouble with the

Lubars



Nothing could be further from the grit and glamour of central Berlin than the quaint village of Lubars nestled in Reinickendorf just beyond the city's outskirts. Reachable from the city by public transport, Berlin's oldest villages offers a rural respite for those for whom the city has become too much. Also reachable on the famed Berlin Wall cycle, Lübars picture postcard charm attracts visitors year round.

The cobbled streets, village church, and beautiful old buildings are a treat for the eyes on a grey day in a Berlin winter. During the time of the wall, Lübars was something of a tourist attraction for West Berliners, for whom it was the only village of its kind, and school trips there were common. Today, Lübars still attracts those who stop off after a hike in the idyllic neighbouring countryside. After your visit, a stop off in the Gasthof Alter Dorfkrug is highly recommended.

Serving exceptional German cuisine, the restaurant is cloaked in tradition, and from their raised terrace, one has a view of the village as you tuck into your apple strudel.

Spandau Forest

To the northwest of the city lies the vast Spandau forest, a must visit if you really want to stretch your legs, be that by hiking or cycling. With over 1,300 hectares of green, Spandau forest is the ultimate antidote to those seeking an escape from city life. The forest has been under protection since the 70s, and as a result the wildlife and animals have thrived, and its not uncommon to see a deer galloping away when cycling through the forest's paths. It is also a favourite for bird watchers, due to its unusually high variety of birds, and it is currently an EU protected wildlife area.

For those for whom the prospect of becoming genuinely lost in the woods and perhaps wandering into a wild boar does not appeal, part of the Berlin Wall cycle cuts through the forest, meaning that there is always a clear path, and a good surface to ride bikes of any kind on. After getting the S Bahn to Rathaus Spandau, buses regularly take off from there to the forest, with the advised stop being the Oberjägerweg.



Max Lieberman Villa

Lying almost directly opposite Strandbad Wannsee, the Max Liebermann villa is a gem of a place that offers splendid views onto the lake. Built in 1909 for the German Jewish artist and co founder and head of the Berliner Secession, Max Liebermann, the villa was a source of key inspiration to the artist, with some 200 works believed to have been painted here. The villa was seized by the Nazis in 1940, who paid his widow a rock bottom price for it, and was subsequently used as a hospital then as the clubhouse for a diving club. It was only due to donations by private citizens amounting to millions of euros, that the villa was able to be restored and opened to the public as a museum in 2006. Today the beautiful house and gardens are open to all for a reasonable fee, and the upstairs of the villa houses originals by the artist himself, with a special focus on paintings created and related to the villa and its surroundings. A cafe with a generous terrace looking out onto the lake awaits you after your art viewing.



Villa area Lichterfelde West

South of the city, Lichterfelde West was built up towards the end of the 19th century by wealthy members of German society, and is one of the prime examples of a 'Villa Colony', a somewhat distinctly German district where the accommodation is compromised purely of mansions. Surviving relatively unscathed during the Second World War due to its predominantly residential nature, the villa colony is today an exclusive enclave where the wealthy take refuge from the city. It is however possible to wander the streets, and with architectural delights at every turn, this is a lesson in historic buildings as well as a breathtaking walk. On offer are Tudor style palaces, English country houses, Tuscan like villas, and even medieval style castles. Disembarking at S Bahn Lichterfelde, take half an hour to stroll along the leafy streets.

Botanical Gardens

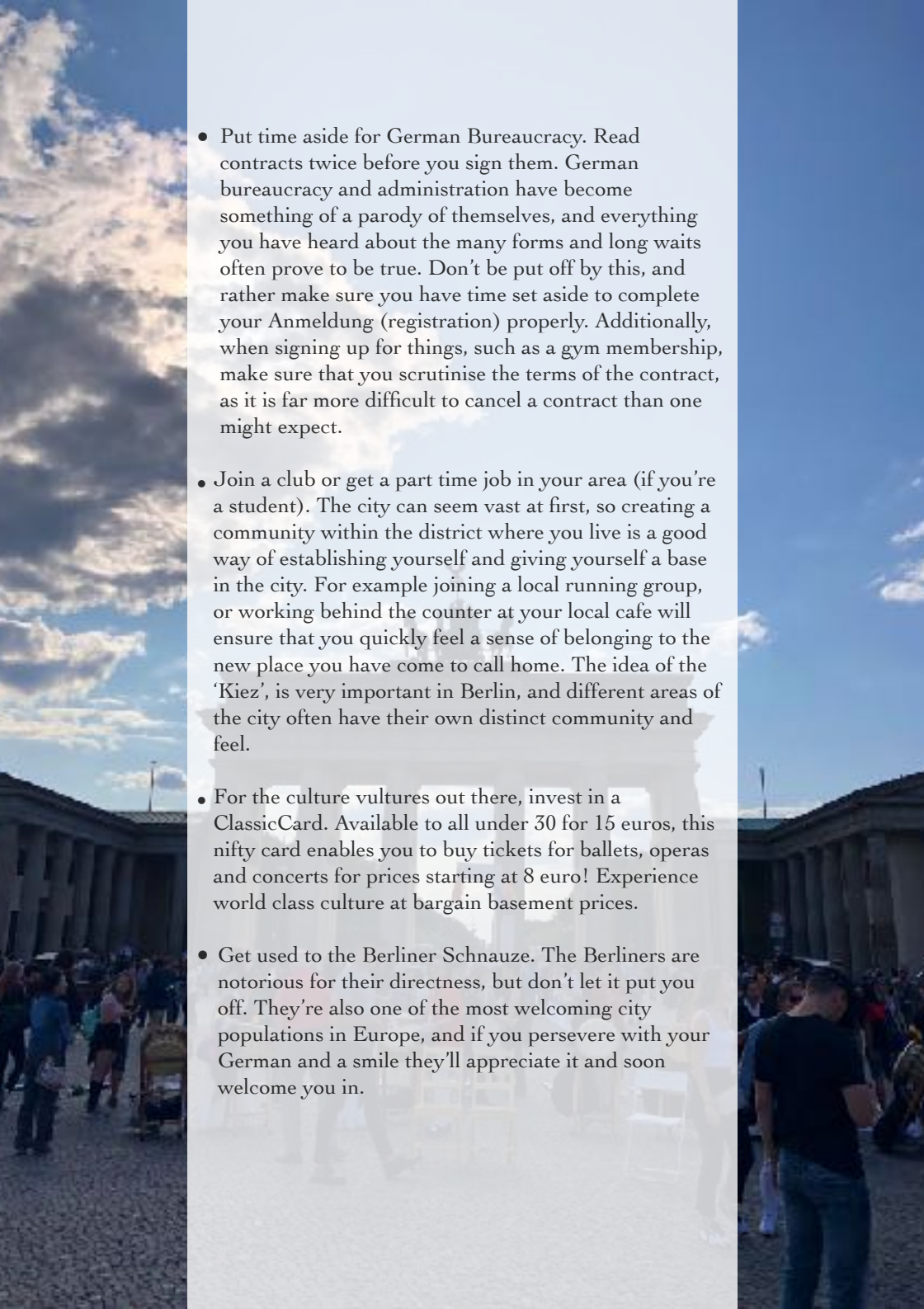
For an oasis of green within the city, not much further than Lichterfelde West, and in an equally swanky area of the city, lies the Botanical Gardens. Built around the turn of the century, the gardens offer over 43 hectares of calm and 22,000 plant species.

Part of the Freie Universität Berlin, it includes the Great Pavilion, a breathtaking example of early art nouveau which is home to a variety of tropical plants. For those wanting to escape the bitter Berlin winter, the temperature inside the Pavilion remains at 30 degrees, and a wander inside its mammoth glass walls provides a welcome respite when its biting cold outside. A short bus ride from U Bahn Rathaus Steglitz, for only three euros, students have access to the entirety of the grounds and the museum dedicated to botany.



Tips for Newcomers to Berlin

- One of the best and least expensive ways to live in Berlin is to live in a WG. This is essentially a shared flat, where you'll normally have your own room, and share a bathroom and kitchen with your flatmates. One of the great things about this is that it's an easy way to get to know people - if you get on with your flatmates they'll introduce you to their ready made circle of friends in the city.
- Use the website WG Gesucht to search for rooms in Berlin. Be prepared to send out a a ton of emails and only to hear back from a few. Make your own profile on WG Gesucht complete with a picture and a few facts about you - this will ensure you rope in more replies! Most WG Gesucht replies will invite you to an informal meeting, this is so the occupants of the current WG can see if you'd be a good match. Be friendly and open and perhaps bring a drink or chocolate to try and win your future flatmates over.
- Have a good think about which area of the city you'd like to live in. In London this is often defined by price, but in Berlin a lot of WG's/ small flats are similar prices regardless of the area, so do some research into what area you think would suit you best. If you have a job or internship in the city lined up, keep the location in mind. You don't want to have to do an hour commute every morning if you can avoid it.
- Buy a bike! Due to the division of the city, public transport links between East and West can still be a little ropery (although improvements are being made). In some cases, it can actually be quicker to cycle somewhere than to use the tram or U Bahn. Berlin is also one of the best cities to cycle in, with its wide streets and numerous cycle lanes, so its a definite must especially in the summer months. You can pick up good value bikes at flea-markets. Don't forget to make sure you have a bike ticket if you're taking it on the S or U Bahn!

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- Put time aside for German Bureaucracy. Read contracts twice before you sign them. German bureaucracy and administration have become something of a parody of themselves, and everything you have heard about the many forms and long waits often prove to be true. Don't be put off by this, and rather make sure you have time set aside to complete your Anmeldung (registration) properly. Additionally, when signing up for things, such as a gym membership, make sure that you scrutinise the terms of the contract, as it is far more difficult to cancel a contract than one might expect.
 - Join a club or get a part time job in your area (if you're a student). The city can seem vast at first, so creating a community within the district where you live is a good way of establishing yourself and giving yourself a base in the city. For example joining a local running group, or working behind the counter at your local cafe will ensure that you quickly feel a sense of belonging to the new place you have come to call home. The idea of the 'Kiez', is very important in Berlin, and different areas of the city often have their own distinct community and feel.
 - For the culture vultures out there, invest in a ClassicCard. Available to all under 30 for 15 euros, this nifty card enables you to buy tickets for ballets, operas and concerts for prices starting at 8 euro! Experience world class culture at bargain basement prices.
 - Get used to the Berliner Schnauze. The Berliners are notorious for their directness, but don't let it put you off. They're also one of the most welcoming city populations in Europe, and if you persevere with your German and a smile they'll appreciate it and soon welcome you in.

