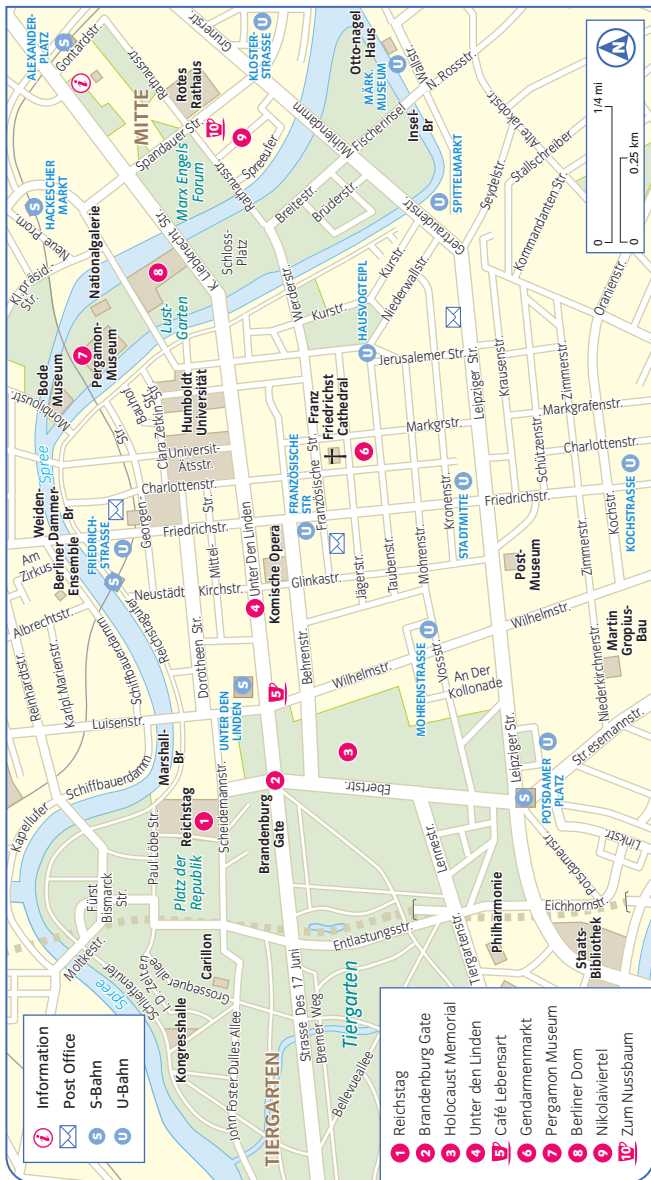


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The Best **Full-Day** **Tours**





The Best of Berlin in One Day



This whirlwind tour takes in Berlin's blockbusters from the Reichstag's crystalline bubble, rising high above the city, to a classic stroll down Unter den Linden boulevard. Then it's over to the Nikolaiviertel to tread the cobbles and see the sun plop daintily into the River Spree, rounding out with a cool Berliner Kindl in Zum Nussbaum. Wunderbar. **START: S-Bahn Unter den Linden.**

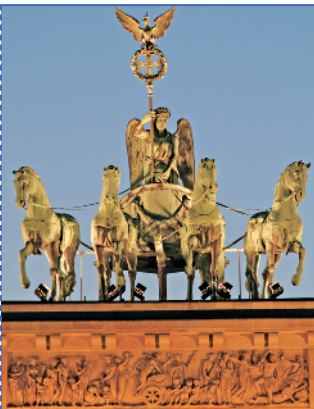
1 ★★★ Reichstag. Head to the Reichstag (Germany's Parliament) for a knockout view over the city as it wakes up. A lift rises to architect Norman Foster's striking glass cupola, which revamped Berlin's architectural landscape in 1999. There's nothing like the moment you step inside the kaleidoscopic shell, where a mirrored funnel creates an optical illusion; it's like being trapped inside a giant glass spider's web. The 360° panorama of Berlin from the platform is ideal for getting your bearings.

 **45 min.; best before 10am.** *Platz der Republik 1.*  **030-22-73-21-52.**

Admission free. Daily 8am–10pm.
S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.

2 ★★★ Brandenburg Gate. In 1987, Ronald Reagan stood at this spot and cried: "Mr Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr Gorbachev, tear down this wall!" And two years later,

A close-up view of Sir Norman Foster's glass cupola at Reichstag.



The Doric columns of the Brandenburg Gate soar above Platz des 18 März.

he did. Just a few paces from the Reichstag, the Doric columns of the Brandenburg Gate stop you dead in your tracks. Crane your neck to glimpse Victoria, goddess of victory, charging forth on her two-wheeled chariot, Quadriga. Conquering French Emperor Napoleon took a fancy to this feisty beauty in 1804 and whisked her off to the Louvre in Paris; she now stands triumphant above Pariser Platz (Paris Square). Nip back after dark to see the city lights soften the edges of this neo-classical landmark.  **20 min.** *Pariser Platz 1. S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.*

3 ★★ Holocaust Memorial. This life-sized jigsaw puzzle pieces together Berlin's troubled past. Peter Eisenman, born in New Jersey in 1932, completed the walkable monument to commemorate the murdered Jews of Europe in 2005.



A field of grey stelae at Peter Eisenman's labyrinthine Holocaust Memorial.

Enter the concrete labyrinth at any point and you soon feel lost: row upon row of wavy stelae (upright stone slabs) appear to ripple off to infinity. It is chilling yet quite beautiful in its austerity. Be sure to visit the **Ort der Information** (Information Center), particularly room 3 that reveals the identity of many Holocaust victims. 🕒 **30 min.** 📍 **Cora-Berliner-Strasse 1.** ☎️ **030-26-39-43-36.** www.holocaust-mahnmal.de. *Admission free; donations welcome. S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.*

4 ★★★ kids Unter den Linden. Watch daily life unfold as you saunter down this sublime boulevard. It's easy to fall for this grand avenue flanked by linden trees, which Germans nickname *Bäume der Liebe* (trees of love) because of their heart-shaped leaves. The clip-clop of horses' hooves recalls the days when it was a bridle path for Prussian kings. Look out for the marble façade of the Russian Embassy, the vine-clad courtyard of the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin (Berlin State Library), and Humboldt University, where Einstein taught. 🕒 **45 min.** *S-Bahn: Unter den Linden.*

5★ Café Lebensart. Pause at this gallery-style café near the Brandenburg Gate for moist poppy sponge and hot chocolate on the terrace. An airbrush painting of 1920s cabaret diva Valeska Gert graces the pepper-red walls. *Unter den Linden 69.* ☎️ **030-44-72-19-30.** \$.

6★★ Gendarmenmarkt. Take a right off Unter den Linden onto Berlin's grandest square and try to figure out what's unusual. Yep, you're seeing double. Gendarmenmarkt is dwarfed by the baroque Deutscher Dom and Französischer Dom, two churches that are the spitting image of each other. Both were built in 1705. At the center of the square, German poet Friedrich Schiller (1759–1805) rises proudly in front of the columned Konzerthaus. The square is fringed by cafés and glorious Art Nouveau townhouses (number 38 is a fine example). When the evening sun hits the cobbled streets it's as if they are, quite literally, paved with gold. 🕒 **45 min.** *Gendarmenmarkt. U-Bahn: Französische Strasse.*

Airbrush paintings grace the walls at Café Lebensart.



7 ★★★ Pergamon Museum.

This cavernous treasure-trove presents a romp through Ancient Greece, Rome, and Babylon. Though its scale is overwhelming, the star exhibits cluster in one area. You start in the Antiquities Collection, harboring the original-sized, reconstructed Pergamon Altar, which catapults you back to 160 BC Greece with its frieze of burly gods doing battle with the Titans. Steep marble steps lead to the Altar Court, where sacrificial rituals took place in the 2nd century BC. If you can tear yourself away from Athens, pop next door to Babylon to marvel at a gate fit for an Assyrian goddess—her name is Ishtar. A close-up of the glazed tiles reveals prancing unicorns and a mythical creature, the symbol of Babylonian god Marduk, with a snake's head, lion's legs, and scorpion's tail. Step back to appreciate the gate's magnitude. Time permitting, venture upstairs for some elaborate oriental carpets. ⌚ 1½ hr. **Am Kupfergraben 5.** ☎ 030-20-90-55-77. www.smb.spk-berlin.de. Admission 8€ adults, 4€ students, free for children under 16. Daily 10am–6pm, Thurs until 10pm. **U-Bahn:** Friedrichstrasse.

8 ★★★ **Berliner Dom.** This neo-Renaissance cathedral built in 1895 grabs your attention; its voluptuous cupolas contrast with the needle-thin Fernsehsturm (Television Tower) in the background. Its centerpiece is a 70m dome. Each of its intricate mosaics depicting Biblical scenes is inlaid with 500,000 stones in myriad colors. For a different perspective, climb 267 steps to the upper gallery. The view stretches across Museuminsel to the Reichstag and flame-red Rotes Rathaus (Red Town Hall). ⌚ 45 min. **Am Lustgarten 1.** ☎ 030-20-26-91-36. Admission 5€ adults, 3€ students, free for children under 16. Mon–Sat 9am–8pm, Sun 12pm–8pm. **U-Bahn:** Friedrichstrasse.

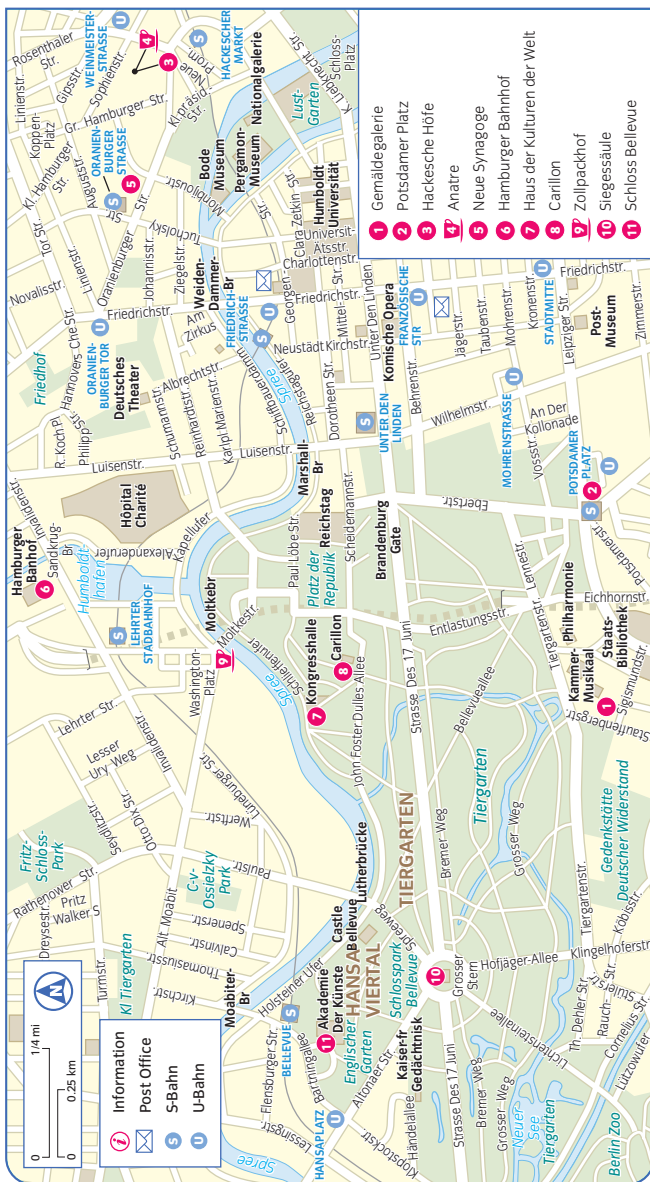


The Hohenzollern coat of arms in the crypt of the Berliner Dom.

9 ★★ **kids Nikolaiviertel.** Edging south, the laid-back Nikolaiviertel quarter is a great escape from the central bustle. Its cobbled lanes and hidden courtyards time-warp you back to the Middle Ages. Allow at least an hour to explore its cafés and boutiques. For unique teas, visit **Teeladen** (p 92); young kids won't want to miss the cuddly critters and dolls in **Die Puppenstube** (p 94). Note the enamel signs above many shops: a pipe for the tobacconist, a pretzel for the baker. Dominating the square is the twin-spired, 13th-century Nikolaikirche (p 157, bullet 2); come in late afternoon to see its bricks blush. ⌚ 1 hr. **U-Bahn:** Alexanderplatz.

10 ★★ **Zum Nussbaum.** Once the sun starts dropping, kick back with a beer on the terrace at one of Berlin's oldest watering holes. Right opposite Nikolaikirche, this bar oozes musty charm in rooms filled with the hum of chatter and whiffs of **Berliner Eisbein** (pork knuckles). **Am Nussbaum 3.** ☎ 030-242-30-95. \$.

The Best of Berlin in Two Days



On your second day, make a date with Rembrandt first thing, and then discover the heart of 21st-century Berlin in Potsdamer Platz. Squeeze in a boutique shop at Hackesche Höfe and a spin around the Scheunenviertel, pausing to ogle the simply Moorish Neue Synagogue. Detour for Warhol at Hamburger Bahnhof before a cruisy afternoon in Tiergarten, taking in landmarks such as Siegessäule and Schloss Bellevue that recall when Berlin was the epicenter of the Kingdom of Prussia (1701–1918). **START: S-Bahn Potsdamer Platz.**

1 ★★★ Gemäldegalerie.

Raphael, Caravaggio, Vermeer, Rubens, etc., the Old Masters come thick and fast at this vast repository of European art. Get here early and target the biggies, such as Jan Vermeer's emotive *The Glass of Wine* (1658) or Jan van Eyck's *Madonna in a Church* (1437–39). At the gallery's core is an octagonal room dedicated to the handsome brushwork of Dutch Golden Age master Rembrandt van Rijn (1606–69). Among his 16 paintings is *Susanna and the Elders* (1647), which took 10 years to complete. 🕒 1 hr. *Matthäikirchplatz 4/6.* ☎ 030-266-29-51. *Admission 8€ adults, 4€ students, free for children under 16. Tues–Sun 10am–6pm, Thurs until 10pm. S-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz.*

2 ★★ kids Potsdamer Platz.

Potsdamer Platz is Berlin's miniature Manhattan, the city's commercial hub with a round-the-clock buzz and futuristic skyscrapers. Pick your way through this crystal maze to spy the redbrick Kollhoff (boasting Europe's fastest elevator), the crescent-shaped Deutsche Bank building, and the spinning Mercedes-Benz sign. The biggest head-turner, though, is the 103m Sony Center (p 89), sheltering restaurants and a cinema beneath a tent-like glass roof. For a taste of how the square looked when divided (before 1989), check out the graffitied fragments of the Berlin Wall in front of the S-Bahn station. 🕒 1 hr. *S-Bahn: Potsdamer Platz.*



The high-rises looming above Potsdamer Platz reflect 21st-century Berlin.

3 ★★ Hackesche Höfe. A snippet of turn-of-the-century Berlin, these interlinked courtyards are ideal for strolling, boutique shopping, and people-watching. Art Nouveau-style Hof I is the most attractive, with ornamental mosaic walls and curvaceous windows. Roam the other courtyards to bag unique gifts from handmade soaps to original 1960s sunglasses. By night, the illuminated courtyards come alive in effervescent bars and theaters such as Chamäleon cabaret (p 135). 🕒 1 hr. *Hackesche Höfe.* www.hackesche-hoefe.com. *S-Bahn: Hackescher Markt.*

4 ★ Anatre. Grab an espresso and snack at this café, with a patio facing the prettiest courtyard in Hackesche Höfe. The ciabatta sandwiches and *antipasti* are delicious. *Hof I.* ☎ 030-28-38-99-15. \$.

5 ★★★ Neue Synagoge. This neo-Byzantine synagogue, originally built in 1866, was inspired by Andalusia's Alhambra Palace. Bombed in World War II, it emerged like a phoenix from the ashes in 1995. Its trio of bulbous domes feature intricate gold ribbing and appear to glow in the dusk light. The Star of David is a reminder that the now hip Scheunenviertel neighborhood was traditionally Berlin's Jewish quarter. Today it's on the up, with a growing crop of kooky bars and boutiques. ⌚ 20 min. *Oranienburger Strasse 28–30.* ☎ 030-88-02-84-51. *S-Bahn: Oranienburger Strasse.*

6 ★★ Hamburger Bahnhof. With its twin clock towers, graceful arches, and echoing halls, there's no hiding the fact that this gallery was once a train station. Hamburger Bahnhof now makes tracks with its peerless collection of contemporary art, including works by 20th-century Pop Art stars Andy Warhol and Roy

See the curvaceous domes of the Neue Synagoge blush at dusk.



Henry Moore's Big Butterfly sculpture in front of the Haus der Kulturen der Welt.

Lichtenstein. Keep an eye out for Warhol's silk-screen of smirking *Chairman Mao* (1975), Joseph Beuys' classic *Tram Stop* (1976), and Damien Hirst's pharmaceutical frenzy *The Void* (2,000), exhibiting hundreds of pills in kaleidoscopic shades of color. ⌚ 1 hr. *Invalidenstrasse 50–51.* ☎ 030-39-78-34-11. www.hamburgerbahnhof.de. Admission 5€ adults, free for children under 16. Tues–Fri 10am–6pm, Sat 11am–8pm, Sun 11am–6pm. *S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof.*

7 ★★ Haus der Kulturen der Welt. Whether or not you agree with locals that this contemporary arts center resembles a *schwangere Auster* (pregnant oyster), there's certainly something shell-like about it. It's best surveyed from the front, where the Spiegelteich pond mirrors the edifice; the rippled reflection gives you the sense of being underwater. Have your camera handy for the shimmering centerpiece—Brit Henry Moore's bronze sculpture, *Big Butterfly* (1984). ⌚ 30 min. *John-Foster-Dulles-Allee 10.* *S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof.*

8 ★★ kids Carillon. The oyster's lesser-known neighbor is this 42m carillon (free-standing bell tower) of smooth black granite, whose soaring lines force your gaze up. Containing 68 bells, the *glockenspiel* (a chiming

On the Buses

Save your spending money with a self-guided city tour on public double-decker bus route 100, running every seven minutes between Zoologischer Garten and Alexanderplatz. For the price of a single ticket (2.10€ adults, 1.40€ children under 13), you can take in many of Berlin's most iconic sights including Tiergarten's Siegessäule (p 13), Bundespräsidialamt (p 38), and Schloss Bellevue (p 13). Keep an eye out for landmarks such as the Reichstag (p 7), Brandenburg Gate (p 7), and Fernsehturm (p 49) as you trundle through Mitte district. Grab a seat at the front of the upper deck for the best views. For more ticket information on Berlin's buses, see p 168.

percussion instrument) is the world's fourth largest. Continue your stroll through the adjacent sculpture garden. This serene park is a great approach to the Reichstag (p 7, bullet 1), as the open surroundings amplify its dimensions. ⌚ 15 min.

Concerts May–Sep Sun 3pm.

☎ 030-851-28-28. **Free public access. S-Bahn: Hauptbahnhof.**

Victoria stands proud atop Siegessäule - Berliners call her Golden Else.



way. Its most eye-catching feature is the angelic Victoria, the same figure crowning the Brandenburg Gate (p 7), whose golden wings frame the sky and give the impression that she's about to take flight. Berliners nickname her Golden

Else because she shines

gold in the sunlight. The memorial commemorates victory in the 1864 Prussian–Danish war, with reliefs depicting scenes of this battle and two others: the 19th-century Franco-Prussian and Austro-Prussian wars. Puff up 285 steps to the plat-

form for far-reaching views over Berlin. ⌚ 30 min. **Grosser Stern 1.**

☎ 030-391-29-61. **Admission 2.20€ adults, 1.50€ students, free for children under 6. Apr–Oct Mon–Fri 9:30am–6:30pm, Sat–Sun 9:30am–7pm; Nov–Mar Mon–Fri 10am–5pm. S-Bahn: Bellevue.**

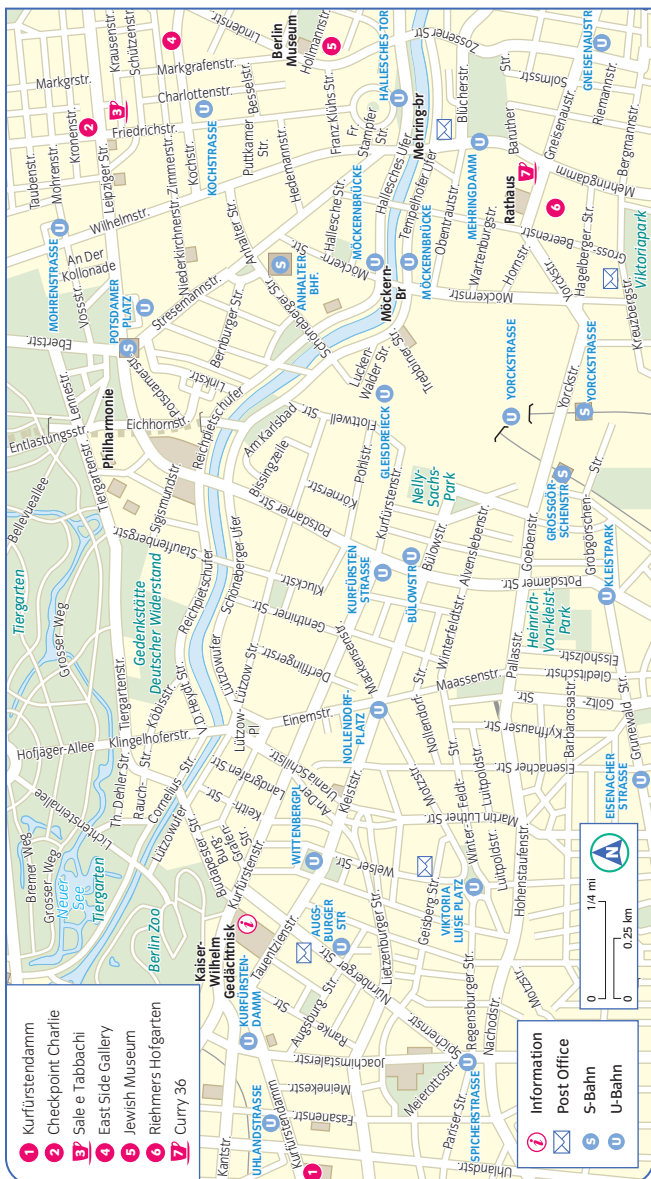
🍷 ★★ **Zollpackhof.** Cold beer, a chestnut-shaded garden, and some of the finest views of Haus der Kulturen der Welt this side of the Spree keep locals and tourists coming back to this beer garden. **Elizabeth-Abegg-Strasse 1.** ☎ 030-33-09-97-20. \$.

10 ★★★ **kids Siegessäule.** The Siegessäule (Victory Column) pops up like a gigantic telescope, and hits you in a wow-I'm-in-Berlin kind of

11 ★★ **kids Schloss Bellevue.**

Try a gentle amble to Schloss Bellevue. Manicured lawns guide the eye to this Prussian palace built in 1786, where the German and EU flags flutter. ⌚ 30 min. **Spreeweg. S-Bahn: Bellevue.**

The Best of Berlin in Three Days



For a more intimate look at the spirit underpinning Berlin, go west to Kurfürstendamm. Shop the boutiques before experiencing the edgy east: Checkpoint Charlie and the East Side Gallery deserve your undivided attention, as does the emotive Jewish Museum. Finish with spicy *Currywurst* (curried sausage) in Kreuzberg. **START: U-Bahn Kurfürstendamm.**

1 ★★ Kurfürstendamm.

Dubbed Ku'damm for short, Berlin's famous shopping street tests your retail stamina with 3½km of chic boutiques, high-street stores, and cafés. This boulevard has a split personality: head west towards well-heeled Charlottenburg for designer labels from Gucci to Louis Vuitton; east to Tauentzienstrasse for affordable fashion and department stores including **KaDeWe** (don't miss the 6th-floor food court; p 89). For quirkier designs, root around side streets such as Fasanenstrasse and Uhlandstrasse. Get here early, as crowds swell by midday. 🕒 1½ hr. **U-Bahn: Kurfürstendamm.**

2 ★★★ Checkpoint Charlie.

From 1961 until the fall of the Wall in 1989, Checkpoint Charlie was the Friedrichstrasse border crossing between East and West Berlin.

The soldier's post and replica hut at Checkpoint Charlie.



Symbol of a Cold War city divided, a replica hut and a soldier's post now mark the former U.S. army check-point. There's a sense of history at the open-air exhibition, which gives insightful background on the Wall and its impact. The adjacent Mauer-museum (p 52) tells Berliners' personal stories of separation and reunification. 🕒 1 hr. **Friedrichstrasse 43–45. U-Bahn: Kochstrasse.**

3★ Sale e Tabacchi. Fling open the door of this trattoria and you're met with the lively din of Italian chatter. Dark wood paneling and old-fashioned service create a charming setting for a cappuccino or light lunch. **Kochstrasse 18.** ☎️ 030-252-11-55. \$\$. 🕒

4 ★★★ East Side Gallery. The thing that amazes me when I see the Berlin Wall is that it's not that high: It didn't have to be. To call it a wall is a misnomer: In fact it comprised two walls and a corridor, or "death strip", where GDR (East German) guards patrolled. Where gray concrete and razor wire once bred fear, people now admire the world's largest open-air gallery. Stretching 1,300m shadowing the Spree, its colorful artworks range from politically provocative to fun; look for the crashed Communist-era Trabant car. Most visitors just take a few snapshots, but to appreciate the awful wonder of the Wall, I recommend you walk every last inch. 🕒 1 hr. **www.eastsidegallery.com. Admission free. S-Bahn: Ostbahnhof.**

Chip off the Old Bloc

From 1961 to 1989, the 155km Berlin Wall was a potent symbol of the Cold War, an impenetrable physical and psychological barrier between East and West Germany. On November 9, 1989, the Communist East German government announced the opening of the border to West Berlin. Thousands of jubilant Berliners flocked to the Wall and began chipping away at it with hammers, eager to keep a chunk of history; they were nicknamed *Mauerspechte* (wall woodpeckers). Today, wherever you go in Berlin you encounter souvenir shops where you can purchase your own bit of Wall to treasure or send home on a postcard for as little as 2€. If you've been wondering where the Wall went when it crumbled, now you know. Genuine? Maybe. Lucrative? Most definitely.

5 ★★★ Jewish Museum. This zinc-clad building, brainchild of Polish-American architect Daniel Libeskind, resembles a bolt of lightning. Zigzagging tunnels bring you to the Axis of Holocaust, where the spotlight is on individuals; particularly moving is the toy monkey of a boy whose parents were murdered at Auschwitz. It's hard, too, not to feel a lump in your throat when the iron door closes, trapping you inside the Holocaust Tower. Other poignant creations include Menashe Kadishman's *Shalechet* (Fallen Leaves), a triangular void filled with 10,000 screaming iron faces that clank as you cross them.

Menashe Kadishman's Shalechet (Fallen Leaves) at the Jewish Museum.

Upstairs traces German-Jewish life from the Middle Ages to the present.

🕒 1½ hr. *Lindenstrasse* 9–14. ☎ 030-259-93-300. www.juedisches-museum-berlin.de. Admission 5€ adults, 2.50€ students, free for children under 6. Mon 10am–10pm, Tues–Sun 10am–8pm. U-Bahn: Hallesches Tor.

6 ★★ Riehmers Hofgarten. Pass through a wrought-iron gate into this Art Nouveau courtyard, an oasis of calm in the heart of Kreuzberg. I love to amble through the chestnut-shaded square to gaze upon townhouses draped in vines, so perfect they resemble overgrown dolls houses. It's particularly magical as night falls, when lanterns caress the cobblestoned courtyard with subtle light. 🕒 30 min. *Yorkstrasse, Hagelberger, and Grossbeerstrasse*. U-Bahn: Mehringdamm.

7 kids ★★★ Curry 36. The humble *Currywurst* (curried sausage) is king at this sidewalk joint marked with a red sign. Chow down on your classic Berlin dish with fries or cabbage salad. Be prepared to queue with hungry locals. *Mehringdamm* 36. No phone. \$. ●

