

spartacus®

# BERLIN

GAY GUIDE





# Vorwort

2014 is for several reasons a historically important year for Berlin and Germany. 100 years ago the 1st World War started and 25 years ago the Berliner Wall came down and East and west Germany were unified shortly after this. As a result of the reunification many laws were renewed or rewritten. Without the reunification homosexual sex would have remained a punishable act. The paragraph 175 was revoked in 1994. Homosexuality is as a result legal in Germany and has been so for over 20 years.

Our Berlin travel guide gained in popularity in the gay scene long before the abolishment of paragraph 175. The changes to the gay scene listed in our **Spartacus Berlin Gay Guide** offers our readers a better overview and reference points at a glance.

New in this issue is a list of the top 5 locations in the various gay hot spots of the city. In addition, we list an overview of the best times and hottest gay in-places to visit throughout the week in Berlin.

Have fun reading our guide and learn about the fascinating gay scene in Berlin and its history.

Your editorial team of the Spartacus Berlin Gay Guide

# **The gay capital city - capital of the gays**

**It is true - Berlin cannot open an airport on time, Berlin is poor (but sexy), Berlin S-Bahn railroads see all seasons as enemies, Berliners grumble about many tourists and the Swabians in the Prenzlauer Berg. However, Berlin also can be different. Berlin Gay Guide shows another side of Berlin, the creative Neukölln, the popular Friedrichshain, Kreuzberger party nights and Schöneberg - the gayest district in the whole of Germany. Berlin is young, Berlin is different, Berlin pulsates with life! We show how exciting Berlin is. A city which never sleeps..**

Berlin is the gayest of all German cities and internationally it is at the top of the list of important international gay cities. OK, Berlin has more rainy days than Sydney and less glamour than New York, but this city offers things that can only be found here: the longest open air gallery in the world, the largest department store in Europe and the highest building in Germany. Do you need more superlatives? Around 420 galleries for classic, modern and contemporary art make Berlin the largest collection of galleries in Europe and soon the renovated and restored Museums Island will be the largest museum complex in the world (expected completion 2015). The largest park ground, offering relaxation, is not in Munich but in Berlin at the Tempelhofer Park, the former airport grounds. Here one quickly forgets that Berlin is a metropole.

How many of the 11 million visitors per year to Berlin (increasing annual trend) are actually gay is unknown. It seems, however, at all the important gay events in the city (Teddy Award in February, the CSD Pride Parade in summer

or the Folsom Street Fair in autumn) the gay world is in Berlin with gay men from Trier, Trinidad or Australia: the gay world is our guest. This is not surprising as Berlin makes the gay heart beat faster. Not only the world's only gay museum, but another 180 exciting and bizarre museums. Berlin does not only have an endless selection of nightlife possibilities with its unique selection of pubs.

Berlin is most importantly a tolerant city in which gay men can be themselves. Berlin offers freedom. In Berlin one can breath freely - unless you happen to be in one of the pubs which doesn't take the new non-smoking law too seriously. There are several examples of these where „live and let live“ applies. Those who do not enjoy the thrills of Berlin - regardless of their special or fallacious nature or desire are beyond help.

This guide in no way represents everything which can be found and done in this city. After all it should be able to fit into your pocket! It is also possible that some of the information was totally up-to-date at the time of creating this guide has changed, then in Berlin change is guaranteed. This guide should awake your desire to visit this fantastic city and assist you with your discoveries.

## **FACTS & FIGURES**

### **Berlin is big:**

Covering an area of 892 km<sup>2</sup> / Nine times larger than Paris!

### **Berlin is international:**

3.5 million inhabitants, of which 494.000 have a foreign passport / 185 nationalities live here.

### **Berlin is mobile:**

5.419 km of city streets / 960 bridges (more than Venice!)

### **Berlin is green:**

44 % of the city is made up of parks, forrests, rivers, lakes and waterways / 440.000 streetside trees

**Berlin is high:**

368 m high TV tower - the highest construction in Germany and one of the tallest in Europe.

**Berlin is intelligent:**

4 universities, 4 art academies and 17 technical colleges and around 160.000 students - making Berlin one of Germany's largest university cities

**Berlin is attractive:**

9 palaces / 180 museums and private collections / 3 opera houses / 150 theatres and stages offering every possible genre

**Berlin is fit:**

1.900 sport clubs, including football with around 100.000 members, followed by gyms with around 80.000 members

**Berlin is delicious:**

6.500 restaurants / 546 ice cream parlours and cafés / 2.800 snack bars / 225 bars, pubs, clubs

**Berlin is popular:**

almost 25 million overnight guests / almost 11 million visitors / average stay 2,3 days

**Berlin is awake:**

number of hours when the city sleeps = 0

## **BERLIN - CITY OF GAY LIBERATION**

Berlin has developed within the last few years into the LGBTI-metropolis in Europe. Some scene experts deem that this even applies worldwide. This development is based on a great history. The gay scene was already flourishing here in the last century - as well as the modern gay emancipation movement, which has its roots in Berlin: where Magnus Hirschfeld and Karl-Heinrich Ulrichs called for same-sex marriage in the 19th century. From 2014 a street in the Schöneberg Homo-district was renamed Ulrich.

Even today this city combines two of the most important aspects of gay life in one place: firstly Berlin's gay scene is now considered to be the most exciting in the world. Here one gets the impression of a revival of the famous golden 70s in New York or San Francisco experience. Berghain Lab.oratory, Snax and Folsom, the Pride or the Teddy Award are just a few names and events in the global community which enjoy admiration. Not only from London, Madrid, Milan or Tel Aviv, also from the USA men stream almost every weekend to

Berlin, to enjoy the unique liberal scene here at least for a short period of time.

In addition in Berlin one is aware that political commitment is important: the freedom that we enjoy at present is fragile and must be fought for every day. It is ironic that the current young party-generation in Berlin is fighting for LGBTI-rights in an imaginative way. They meet in the party-political autonomous movement "Enough is enough", which emerged as a reaction against the Russian homo hatred. Within a very short time, in summer 2013 in Berlin the activists mobilised more than ten thousand people in a mass demonstration for homo-rights in Russia. Since then they keep on coming up with imaginative, sensational actions against homophobia in society, politics and the media.

In this combination of fun in gay life and commitment to LGBTI-rights Berlin can be seen as avant-garde and a model, showing how gay lifestyle can have a real future. For this reason I, as a gay man, am repeatedly reminded happy and proud I am to be a Berliner.



David Berger, Editor in Chief of the magazine: MÄNNER

# The (gay) history of Berlin: how it came about, how it is today and its three coming outs

It has probably less to do with the Berlin air and more to do with the local tolerance, which characterised this city since the resettlement policy of the Grand Elector after the thirty-year war. After the fall of the Berliner Wall the feeling of new freedom added to this along with the vast free spaces, especially in the eastern part of the city. It is however difficult to say whether there is more happening in the gay scene nowadays than during the frequently mentioned, so-called golden twenties.

## FIVE MOST FAMOUS QUOTATIONS REGARDING BERLIN

Five of numerous quotations regarding this fantastic city.

**“Everyone should be free to do as they please.”** Friedrich II, king of Prussia, 1740

**“People of the world - take a look at this city!”** Ernst Reuter, Lord Mayor, 1948

**“Ick bin ein Berliner!” (I am a Berliner!)** John F. Kennedy, US President, 1963

**„Mr. Gorbachev, open this gate! Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”** Ronald Reagan, US President, 1987

**“I am gay - and that is a good thing!”** Klaus Wowereit, Candidate for the position of Mayor of Berlin, 2001

Berlin's current mayor Klaus Wowereit, well known among the majority of Berliners for his open attitude as integration figure, is an example that these days gay men play a very different role in the community - at least this is the case in

Berlin. They use this image and promote the suspense of the city. Wowereit, affectionately known as Wowi, is a party fan and has written the greetings text for the Folsom Street fare and had to hear criticism from his political opposition parties for doing so. This is true tolerance in every day life of this city.

Let's go back a few years. Berlin as gay metropolis had its first coming-out at the end of the 19th century. In 1897 Magnus Hirschfeld set up the so-called scientific-humanitarian committee (WhK) and fought against discrimination of homosexuals. In 1919 he opened the Institute of Sexual Sciences. It became the centre for all research regarding sexual reform. In addition it was an information centre and sanctuary for people with sexual problems. It was also a source of information to interested laymen and further education for medical students.

In Berlin one not only took part in academic, theoretical discussions, but also in wild parties. At the beginning of the 20th century there were around 40 gay scene locations. The heart of this scene was located around the Nollendorfplatz. In the middle of the action André Gide, Francis Bacon or Christopher Isherwood, who lived for a while at Nollendorf Street 17, marked today with a commemorative plaque to the creator of "Cabaret".

The party life came to an abrupt end when the Nazis came to power. They murdered over ten thousand gay men in the concentration camps. The Institute for Sexual Sciences was plundered, the library and all documents from Hirschfeld were burnt, along with other publications which were not considered to represent the German spirit. The WhK was closed.



Scenes from "Not the homosexual is perverse but rather the situation in which he lives."

The second coming-out was marked with the emergence of Rosa von Praunheim's film "Not the homosexual is perverse but rather the situation in which he lives." The society's change in moral standards was reflected by the change made by homosexuals and their public appearance. Whereas the gay scene in the GDR developed within church groups and under local authorities, the gay scene in the rest of Germany developed a pleasure-orientated self-awareness, where political rights were also respected.

Due to the isolation of West Berlin things developed here differently than in the rest of the country: more liberal, faster and with more commitment. In 1975 the Rosa Winkel publishing house was established with the aim to provide the general public with information about gay politics, the gay scene and sciences. Two years later the café "Anderes Ufer" opened its doors. A sensation at the time as it was the first establishment for gays which was not hidden in a backyard or behind darkened windows with a peephole at the door. It had big, open windows where everything was in the open. In 1978 Europe's first gay bookshop "Prinz Eisenherz" opened. Thereafter there was an alternative to the porn shops for those wishing to purchase publications for the gay community. One year later the first Pride Parade (CDS) took place, although the first demonstration by gay men took place in the catholic city of Münster a few years prior to this. In 1981 our publishing house Bruno Gmünder Verlag was established. Two years later the first support office in Germany for AIDS patients, family and friends was created. At the same time the world's first gay museum opened its doors, and has its place in the museum world ever since then.



Eisenherz, the first gay bookshop in Europe

In the same year the sport association Vorspiel was created and fought against strong opposition: the Berlin Track & Field Federation refused recognition of this association as they considered the name Vorspiel (foreplay) offensive. "Sexual inclinations do not belong in an association name" was the attitude of the federation, who saw the sport and social life of the federation at risk. This dispute landed in court. The courts of Berlin ruled that the connection between foreplay and gay was a non-objective emotion which opposed the integration of all track and field associations. The association changed the name to "Vorplay - a sport association for gay men and lesbians" which was then accepted. Today the association has a membership of around 1000 men and women - Europe's largest

association of this type. Sport is not just physical exercise but plays an important role in acceptance. This was emphasised in 1996 when the mayor of the time Eberhard Diepgen became patron of the Euro Games.

New impulses were set in place with the unification of both German states. Techno music became the soundtrack in Berlin during its third coming-out. These droning sounds were played at illegal parties which took place in semi-deserted and completely rundown buildings in the eastern part of the city. Sex and music became united.

With the motto “porn for us from us”, the production company Cazzo created their first porn film “Berlin Techno Dreams”. After extensive casting in the local gay scene, it was filmed in the club Eimer in a run-down building in the district Mitte. Countless extras were engaged and almost everyone in the gay scene knew and recognised the extras. Porn became socially acceptable.



CSD at Brandenburger Tor

The Love Parade following grew and grew and Cazzo, with its productions with close connection to the local gay scene, in which one could discover more and more of the stars in the local gay bars and clubs, achieved a unique porn style for Berlin, something between American muscle beauties and east block cuties. Ever since then the production companies such as Wursthlm, Spritzz or Berlinstarfilm have emerged. The porn industry made this city their home base.

At the same time homosexuality became socially acceptable and enjoyed special protection: After the states Brandenburg and Thuringia, Berlin was the third federal state in Germany to implement equal rights for gays. In 1995 the new constitution in Berlin came into force - where no one can be discriminated against because of their (homo-) sexual orientation and the partnership law came

into effect. 2001 was a pink milestone: the first local politician came out and nevertheless (or perhaps due to this declaration) was voted mayor of Berlin. Klaus Wowereit (Social Democrat Party) was also President of the Federal Council of Berlin in the same year, reaching the fourth highest public office in the republic. This position had never been attained by an openly gay man in the past!

This short trip through the gay history of Berlin is probably sufficient information for you. If more information is required regarding the gay history a visit to the excellent "Schwules Museum" (gay museum) is a must! The museum has recently moved from Kreuzberg to Tiergarten and offers even more exhibition space and a cafe. On the page 18 in this guide you can find more information about the new gay museum. The Märkische Museum is a further source of information with many historical exhibits.

## **25 YEARS AGO - THE FALL OF BERLIN WALL**

The 9th of November 1989 is a historic date for Germany and especially Berlin. The fall of the Berlin Wall, constructed in 1961, marked the symbolic end of the GDR and ultimately led to the reunification of the two German states on the 3rd of October 1990. Strictly speaking there were two walls that formed the border between East and West. Between these walls was the so-called "death strip". The total length of the 3.60 m high wall, which enclosed Berlin (West), was 155 km. Over 5,000 people managed to flee to the west part of the city, but many attempts were not successful. 455 people died, trying to flee across the border.

The anniversary of this historic event will be accompanied by numerous events in Berlin, with the focus on the 9th of November. For more information on dates and topics, please visit the website:  
[www.berlin.de/mauer/index.en.html](http://www.berlin.de/mauer/index.en.html)

Throughout the year, special guided tours around the wall with a variety of subjects such as "the divided city of Berlin" or "contemporary witness tour - fall of the wall 9.11.1989". If you are not interested in a guided tour but interested in seeing the remains of the Berlin Wall itself, and you would like to explore it for yourselves, then rent a bike (for example from the company [www.fahrradstation.com](http://www.fahrradstation.com)), and explore the former death strip by bike. The

bike track along the wall is well signposted and offers a very good opportunity to combine history, nature and culture with each other.

There are many stations along the wall route, the history of the Berlin Wall comes alive. Checkpoint Charlie is only one of the many interesting hotspots for tourists. Don't miss a visit to the Wall Museum, running for more than 50 years and also houses many interesting insights to the wall and a large number of items, documenting the increasingly sophisticated escape attempts. The longest open-air gallery in the world is located in the Mühlenstrasse in Friedrichshain and is known as the East Side Gallery. It shows how cynical border fortifications can be transformed into works of art.

Also worth a visit is the Berlin wall memorial in the Bernauer Strasse, which even visited by Michelle Obama with their children in 2013. Here is an original piece of the Berlin Wall and the death strip. A documentation and provide useful information about the visitor center from the DDR-regime called "capitalist line of defense".

On the weekend of the 8th and 9th of November 2014 there will be the culmination of the events relating to the wall. A highlight will be a 12 km long light installation with thousands of illuminated balloons to be seen in 5 places in the city center. It is designed as a "symbol of hope for a world without walls".