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Travel To Berlin: A Cultural Evolution

By Frank Johnson

It is difficult to think of a modern industrialized city that has been through quite as much upheaval

and stress in recent times as Berlin. The German capital has been undergoing a massive reunification effort and cultural explosion since 1989 that has held an awe-inspired and utterly captivated audience of visitors since then. No other city offers such an intimate understanding of the complexities and atrocities of world war than once-divided Berlin.

Despite the destruction of the Berlin Wall in 1989, East and West Berlin are still two very distinct regions. A stroll through Berlin's charming streets is the best way to experience the time warp from which many parts of the city are slowly emerging. Berlin Mitte is the central region, offering the most restaurants, shopping and attractions. Everywhere in Berlin, visitors are surprised by the expanse of green, beautiful spaces and parkland.

Society of Expression and Celebration

Berlin's Cold War generation has flowered from suppressed beginnings into a flourishing world of creative expression. A cutting-edge culture has boomed onto the international stage in the form of festivals and celebrations after 50 years of silence. As the summer season wanes, Berlin hosts the annual Art Forum Berlin in September and October, which showcases trendsetting and fresh contemporary art from all over the world, including Australia, Latin America and the USA. Attendees may also participate in seminars and workshops focused on the art of tomorrow. The Berlin International Film Festival (Berlinale), held in February, rivals its Italian and French competitors with acclaimed submissions and coveted awards. The most massively unifying and culturally eclectic celebration is Berlin's renowned Love Parade. Initiated with a mere 150 people in 1989 as a display of love, tolerance and an homage to electronic music, this gargantuan festival of DJs and dancers aboard competitive floats makes its journey down Berlin's Großen Stern to finally gather at the Victory Column where the party ensues into the night.

A History Not Forgotten

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Despite the exemplary movement forward by the citizens, including an affinity for nightlife, Berliners make a special point to capture and embrace their harsh (and ancient) history. The Jüdisches Museum is the largest Jewish history museum in Europe.; The museum not only covers the victimization of Jews in German history, but largely celebrates their contributions to German society, art, science and technology. The museum itself, designed by Daniel Libeskind, is a stunning example of modern minimalism. Also, be sure to visit the Checkpoint Charlie Museum, which documents the historical significance of the Checkpoint Tower that was used to patrol the "no man's land" of the Berlin Wall between the east and west. The museum also offers an interesting collection of stories from escapees and those who helped them across the border. For a more extensive history, visit the Berlin Historical Museum, which covers Berlin's modest beginnings as two farm towns straddling a river up to modern day with a special exhibit on 20th century portraits.

Traveling the Berlin of today is a journey through time unparalleled by any other European city. Witness the remarkable hardiness and overflowing spirit of a city that is growing, changing and unifying right before your very eyes!

For more information, visit

<http://www.cfares.com>

Car Hire In Berlin For World Cup 2006

By Mr Hanna

The World Cup in Germany this summer is set to be not only the biggest sporting event of the decade but also the biggest tourist draw in Europe this year. Berlin will be the centrepiece for this celebration of the beautiful game hosting the final and, as capital of Germany, the main host for the festivities.

Although the influx of tourists is set to be huge, Berlin is well geared up for the opening of the tournament. As one of Europe's most popular city break destinations and the host for major annual events such as the Love Parade, Berlin is well used to throwing a party. Accommodation however will be thin on the ground in Berlin and anyone looking for a late deal will be struggling to find anything within the parameters of Berlin itself but some of the major hotel booking (

<http://www.superbreak.com>

)
resellers may have some late availability on the outskirts of the city or surrounding towns.

For true football fans getting around Germany during the World Cup might be a troublesome affair. Although Germany has one of the most efficient public transport systems in the world, it is also the

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largest country in Europe and with the 12 host cities spread throughout the land mass, the transport system is set to be bursting at the seams. Renting a car might be the best option for those looking to explore further than Berlin or to use the capital as a base for following their teams' fortunes in the tournament. Most of the major car rental (

<http://www.easycar.com/asp/car-hire/location/Berlin.aspx/EN>

) firms have a presence in the city and

the road network in the city itself and throughout the host cities makes car hire in Berlin and for World cup 2006 a valid option.

Berlin has garnered a reputation as a cultural and party capital since reunification in 1990. A steady influx of short break tourists have ensured that the city has the facilities and tourist infrastructure that one would expect of a major European city and Berlin certainly does not disappoint. There are some interesting towns surrounding the capital and for those exploring the region by car the contrast between east and west although eroded over the last 16 years is still just visible.

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