



# TOUR UPDATE



The Newsletter of mikesworldtour

## Tour Highlight:

November 2022  
Berlin, Germany



## The Epicenter of 20th Century European Conflict

Contributed by Michael Davis



## A QUICK HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, & SOCIAL OVERVIEW

The German Empire ran from 1871 to 1918 first being led by Otto von Bismarck. Germany initially was a collection of many states and lacked a national identity. After being embarrassed by the loss in World War I there was a revolution leading to the Weimar Republic. Due to various economic and political problems related to the Great Depression and the reparations that Germany had to pay for the war, the Weimar Republic collapsed in 1933. At this point Germany becomes Nazi Germany with Hitler as its leader. At this time his Gestapo destroyed political opposition and persecuted the Jews. The Nazi rule ended after Germany lost World War II, and then Germany was split into West and East (Soviet State). West Germany became a NATO member and joined the EU while the East was a communist dictatorship. The two finally reunified in 1989 bringing the Germany that we have today.

# Berlin, Germany

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## Some quick tips for Berlin :

- Berlin is a massive city, so make sure to plan your sightseeing around what is close to each other
- Berlin is known for its nightlife, but you have to get places early for a chance to get in at all
  - Wearing black and not acting "American" also helps a lot

## FOOD & DRINK

### CURRYWURST



On this episode of trying glizzies from around the world we have currywurst! It is a beef hot dog (or bratwurst whatever floats your boat) topped with curry power and ketchup and mayo (I may have overloaded the sauces). It was absolutely delectable and totally hit. They have stands selling these all over Berlin, and I highly recommend trying it. Because the truth is when is it not a good day for a glizzy, that's right, it is always a good day for a glizzy (mic drop).

### KEBAP



I have had so much kebab this semester that I would almost consider myself to be a connoisseur of kebab at this point. Kebab or as they say kebab was invented in Berlin, so you knew that I had to try it here. It really did live up to the hype. The kebab here was superb and the sauces they used were the best I have had yet. Also, super underrated but the amount of meat they give you is almost double anywhere else I have been given in Europe for the same price. Must have!



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## EXPERIENCES

Berlin was split into East and West until 1989 due to the cold war, and there is so many WWII and Cold War monuments and statues to see that it can feel overwhelming. Also remember that since it was split they basically took two cities and made it one causing Berlin to be massive. Nevertheless, as long as you plan well you will be able to see all the major sights and still have plenty of time to enjoy the rest of the city.

### BERLINER DOM



The Berliner Dom is the home of the church in Berlin since the 1400s. The present church was built from 1894 to 1905 by Emperor William II. It is in the Renaissance, Baroque, and Revival styles. Besides a church, it is also a dynastic tomb for the House of Hohenzollern. It was damaged from Allied bombing during World War II, but the damage was restored in 2002. The name Dom comes from the parish church in Germany under the umbrella organization of the evangelical church. The word means collegiate church (think like the Duomo in Italy, now you get it yea). It was a Roman Catholic place of worship during the 15th century.

### BRANDENBURG GATE

Prussian King Frederick William II ordered the gate to be built after suppressing Dutch rebellion forces. It marks the road from Berlin to the town of Brandenburg. In 1806 when Napoleon invaded Berlin he took the statue above the gate. Hitler used the gate and the plaza often to hold Nazi rallies and parades often went through the gate. The allies targeted the gate a lot in their bombings of Berlin, but it survived the war. During the cold war the gate represented the border between East and West Berlin. As you can see this gate has really been through a lot, but today it represents the tumultuous history of Europe and is a sign of peace and unity today on the continent.



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## REICHSTAG



This building is home to the Bundestag which is the German lower house in parliament. It was home to the Imperial Diet from 1894 until it was burned down in 1933. In World War II during the Battle of Berlin, the Soviets severely damaged the building. It was not fixed again until German reunification on October 3, 1990, and was completed once again in 1999.

## MEMORIAL TO THE MURDERED JEWS OF EUROPE

After World War II and the Holocaust when trying to commemorate the Jewish lives lost, the only demands about the monument was that it was in the middle of the city and very large. This is the case with this memorial designed by Peter Eisenman and Buro Happold. The point is that it is a constant reminder of what happened, so that it never happens again. It was not built until 2003 and inaugurated in 2005. The blocks technically have no specific meaning, and the monument is meant for our own interpretation. Many think it is supposed to make you feel lost and trapped just as the Jews were during the Holocaust.





# Berlin, Germany

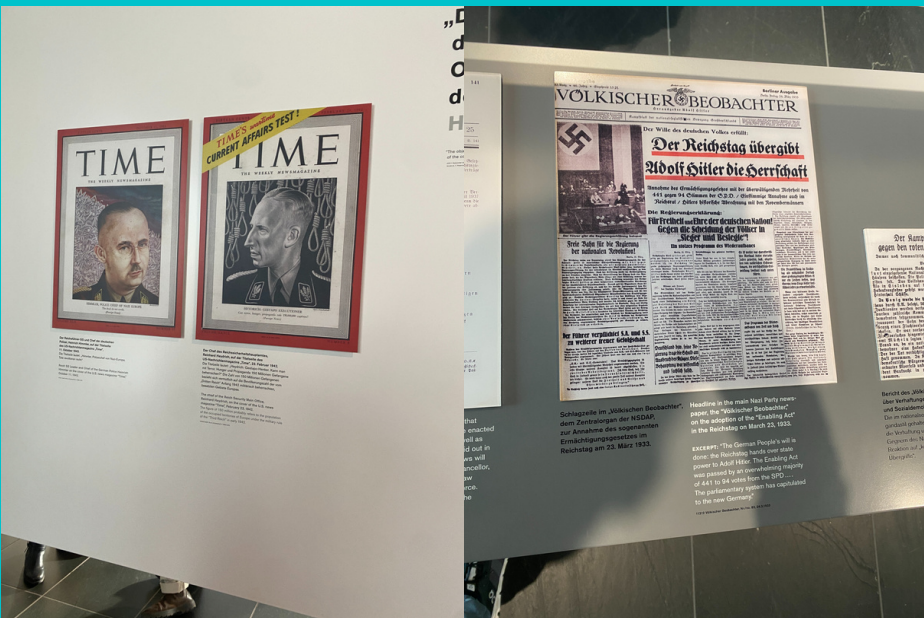
## CHECKPOINT CHARLIE



Checkpoint Charlie was the best-known crossing of the Berlin Wall during the cold war. During the cold war it was a symbol of the separation between East and West Berlin. During the Berlin Crisis in 1961, Soviet and American tanks faced each other here. During the Cold War, by 1961 20% of the entire East German population had already fled leading the wall being erected. The checkpoint was designed as a crossing for foreigners and members of the Allied forced. The name Charlie comes from the letter C in the NATO phonetic alphabet (they had a checkpoint Alpha and Bravo etc.) . The checkpoint was featured in many books and movies during its time, and there was a famous cafe called Cafe Adler that was situated right at the checkpoint.

## TOPOGRAPHY OF TERROR MUSEUM

If you are looking at a museum that gives a great overview and the precursors to the Holocaust and World War II this museum is definitely the one. It features thousands of primary source documents in telling the extremely sad story of how Hitler slowly alienated his enemies from society and then attacked them. It also provides great context to the trials after the war, and the punishments (or lack of punishments) given to Nazi co-conspirators. Also, the museum is free!





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## BERLIN WALL MEMORIAL



The Berlin Wall separated East and West Berlin during the Cold War due to the large number of East Germans using Berlin to escape the Soviet Rule. In 1990 when the wall was taken down, parts still remained up for historical remembrance. Today this part of the wall has become an art memorial with various political art statements being exemplified here. It is a really cool walk that blends together history and art.

## SACHSENHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP



About a 40 minute train ride from Berlin in Oranienburg is one of the largest concentration camps within the Nazi system during World War II. It was used from 1936 until 1945 and help Soviet Prisoners, Jews, Roma people, homosexuals, and other targeted people by Hitler and the Nazis. Joseph Stalin's son died here after his dad refused to make a deal for his release. It was mainly a labor camp but also had many sub-camps, a gas chamber, and a medical experimentation sight. Prisoners here were treated inhumanely, fed little, and openly killed in from of each other. The camp was severely overcrowded, and at time prisoners shared one bed between three people. The Soviets took control of the camp after the was, and initially only made it a memorial to dead Soviet prisoners, but after global pressure made it a memorial to murdered Jewish people as well.

*See You On the Next Stop on the Tour!*