

Berlin Museums -- Life In A Divided City And Ancient Art

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Berlin's Museum Island is home to some of the best collections of classical and medieval art. Berlin's other museums show life in a divided city.

Museum Island

Pergamon Museum

The Pergamon Museum (Bodestraße 1-3) has one of the most impressive collections of ancient art in the world. Step back in time as you pass through Babylon's Ishtar Gate. Worship the gods as you take in the massive Altar of Zeus. Imagine yourself browsing for goods in the ancient Greek city of Miletus as you view its Market Gate.

Bode Museum

The lovely baroque Bode Museum (Bodestraße 1-3) is instantly recognizable with its signature domed roof. It houses a large assortment of medieval and Byzantine art.

The Bode actually has the largest collection of Byzantine art outside of Istanbul, the former capital of the Byzantine Empire. Be sure to check out the extremely unique coin display, the Numismatic Collection. It contains hundreds of thousands of pieces from the ancient Greeks and Romans through the Middle Ages and from the Islamic world.

Altes Museum

The Altes, or Old, Museum (Bodestraße 1-3) is the home of the antique collection of Berlin's museums. But before you pass it by to head to a modern art gallery, remember the museum's unofficial motto: "All art has been contemporary."

Alte Nationalgalerie

The Old National Gallery (Bodestraße 1-3) is the Berlin museum for art lovers. The French Impressionists are represented with works from Manet and Monet. And there's plenty of authentic German art on display with Karl Friedrich Schinkel, Karl Blechen and Max Liebermann. The architecture is a true highlight of this museum with a facade based on Rome's Pantheon.

Neues Museum

From the old to the new, the New Museum (Bodestraße 1-3) was built in 1843. Despite its name, the New Museum is home to a large Egyptian collection such as the colonnaded Egyptian courtyard, brightly decorated with hieroglyphics.

Other Berlin Museums

Mauermuseum at Checkpoint Charlie

This Berlin museum (Friedrichstraße 43-44) is a one-of-a-kind. Located on the site of the old crossing point between East and West Berlin, Checkpoint Charlie, a large chunk of the old [Berlin Wall](#) stands beside the museum entrance. Inside you will see pictures of escape attempts over the Wall and hear the amazing stories and struggles of these Berliners. The Mauermuseum is a testament to life in a divided city.

Topography of Terror

The Topography of Terror (Stresemannstraße 111) is an outdoor museum built on pieces of the remaining Berlin Wall. It is a sad reminder of this city's brutal recent history. Parts of this memorial are dedicated to the Nazi reign of terror and their persecution of the Jews.

East Side Gallery

Another open-air museum, the East Side Gallery (Mühlenstraße) is one of the longest remaining portions of the Wall. This old hated symbol of Berlin has been transformed by modern artists into an expression of freedom and justice with their large mural paintings.

Berlin Wall Memorial

For those interested in a more authentic Wall experience, the Berlin Wall Memorial (Bernauer Straße) is a must that is often sadly overlooked by tourists. A viewing tower lets you see the Wall in all its ugly glory: the austere and hopelessly high walls and the no-man's land of barbed wire that separates the two sides. It is a chilling monument of the old divided Berlin.

Note: The above is just the high-level overview. So I encourage you to check out the list of [my Top 20 Berlin Museums and Galleries](#) at BerlinDude.com!