

Berlin Sights -- A History Tour That Won't Be Forgotten

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While Berlin has beautiful sights such as churches and palaces like every other European capital, its violent history makes this place much different. Berlin is a city that has not forgotten, or hidden, its tumultuous past.

Brandenburg Gate

This historic city gate is a potent symbol of Berlin. The Brandenburg Gate, whose German name is *Brandenburger Tor*, was constructed in 1788, modeled on the gateway to Athens's Acropolis. As it was situated in the "no man's land" between the east and west Walls, it became the "face" of a divided Berlin. In 1989, it again became a powerful sight as the world watched the East and West tear down the [Berlin Wall](#).

Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church

Another strong reminder of [World War Two](#), the first thing a visitor will notice about this church is that its top spire has a large hole. It was blown off during an air raid and never reconstructed, as a showcase for the destructive nature of war. Two ultra-modern buildings now stand beside this beautiful old relic. It is an interesting juxtaposition (and photo opportunity!) of the old and new Berlin.

Reichstag

The Reichstag is the seat of the German Parliament, as well as an architectural beauty that draws

many tourists. It was heavily damaged after the Second World War and almost torn down! With its new glass dome, it is possible to climb to the top and get a bird-s eye view of the Brandenburg Gate, the Tiergarten and other famous Berlin sights.

Berlin Cathedral

The Berlin Cathedral was built for the Prussian Royal family. It was intended to be the Protestant version of the Roman Catholic St. Peter's Basilica. Also heavily damaged during the war, it was reconstructed to its present condition in the 1970s.

Checkpoint Charlie

It is one of history's great ironies that this former crossing point into the Communist East, once the site of enormous tension and danger, has now become a great tourist (and capitalist!) center. As you take your picture next to the "You are leaving the American sector" sign, take a few moments to reflect on those who weren't able to cross with the ease that we can today.

Charlottenburg Palace

The lovely [Charlottenburg Palace](#) and grounds is a welcome escape from the harshness of much of the [Cold War](#)-themed sights. The soft yellow baroque and rococo facade and the beautifully manicured park is a major Berlin sight. Take a tour of the interior, or wander around the palace's outdoors.

Gendarmenmarkt

This beautiful square is perhaps Berlin's most picturesque sight. The twin churches of Deutscher Dom and Französischer Dom flank the Konzerthaus in an elegant arrangement. The Gendarmenmarkt is particularly lovely at night time as the buildings are lit up in a soft, colored light.

Fernsehturm, Alexanderplatz

Better known to English speakers as "Berlin's TV Tower," this structure is the tallest in the city at 368 m (1,207 ft). Inside there is a viewing platform and rotating restaurant, the Telecafe.

Neue Synagoge

This gorgeous Moorish-style synagogue is another popular Berlin sight. It was almost destroyed during the anti-Semitic "Night of Broken Glass" in 1938, but today is the most important site of Judaism in Berlin.

Nikolaiviertel

Unlike most [German towns](#), Berlin has no true “Old Town” neighborhood, but Nikolaiviertel comes close. With its narrow, pedestrian-only streets, the top sights here are the eighteenth century Ephraimpalais and the 13th century Nikolaikirche.

Potsdamer Platz

This plaza is modern Berlin at its best. It was also a casualty of the divided city, as the Wall cut right through its center. Following [German Reunification](#), Potsdamer Platz was reinvented with its blend of restaurants, theaters and shopping.

Neptune Fountain

A welcome change of pace from the ever-bustling city, the Neptune Fountain is a perfect spot to stop. This beautifully-sculpted fountain provides relief and relaxation, especially on a hot summer day.

Would you like to know more about Berlin sights? Check out my new *cool* Web site dedicated to the German capital, [BerlinDude.com](#)! :-)