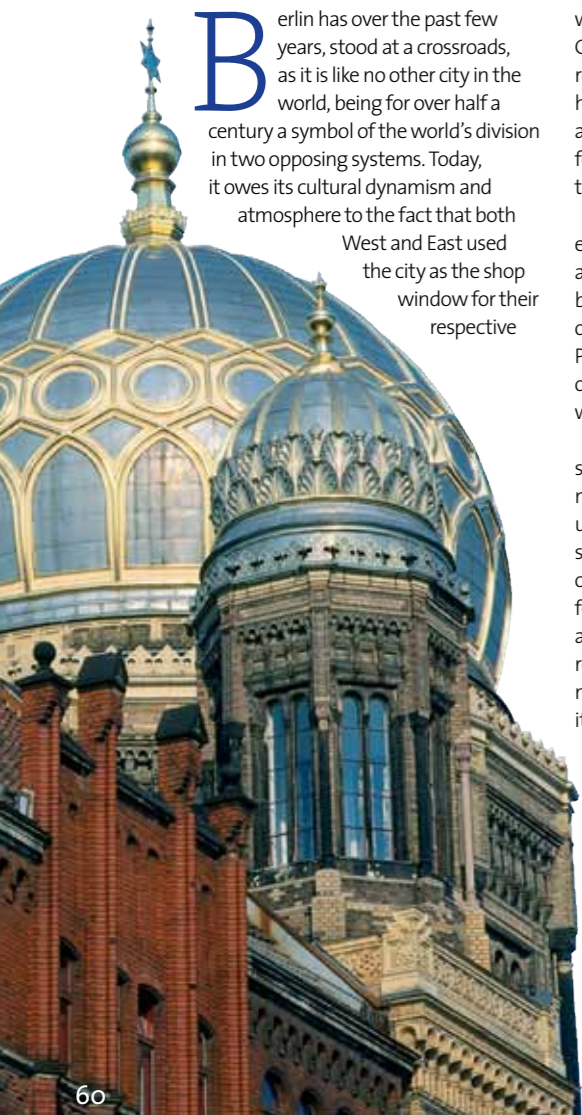




# BERLIN

FOUR DAYS FROM ONLY £379

- Return flights
- Three nights excellent quality, four-star centrally located hotel with breakfast
- Guided tour of Berlin - the world's newest capital and happening city
- Visit to Potsdam – Park and Palaces of Frederick the Great
- Escorted by our experienced tour manager



**B**erlin has over the past few years, stood at a crossroads, as it is like no other city in the world, being for over half a century a symbol of the world's division in two opposing systems. Today, it owes its cultural dynamism and atmosphere to the fact that both West and East used the city as the shop window for their respective

ways of life. Once again, as capital of the new Germany, it is in the world's spotlight. Since the reunification of the country, vast sums of money have been spent restoring Berlin to its former glory as indeed, the heart of the pre-war city was in the former Eastern sector; the cathedral, the University, the cafes of Unter den Linden, plus much more.

Whilst on this tour you cannot help but experience the feeling you are part of the history and spirit of change sweeping the former eastern bloc, with so many events very much within our own memories. The standoffs at Checkpoint Charlie, President Kennedy's 'Ich bin ein Berliner' speech, and of course many of us remember exactly where we were in 1989 when the Berlin Wall finally fell.

It is now over twenty years since the series of seismic events led to a re-drawing of the world map and a whole new generation is growing up for whom events such as this are history and something their parents talk about, fondly or otherwise. In fact there is a whole new nostalgia for the former east celebrated in satire and the arts, with even a cottage industry springing up, renovating the ubiquitous 'Trabant' cars which are now seen as extremely 'trendy'. Not unsurprisingly it is difficult on the main thoroughfares to tell exactly where the border lay, the almost eyesores of eastern bloc architecture having largely disappeared, but once in the quieter areas the differences are more apparent.

**DAY 1** You should arrive at the airport to take your flight to Berlin. On arrival a coach takes us to either the four-star hotel Mövenpick or Scandic. Both hotels enjoy an excellent central location in Potsdamer Platz, regarded as the best shopping area in Berlin. There are plenty of



restaurants, bars, and cafes within walking distance plus an underground railway station, enabling you to explore the city with ease.

**DAY 2** Much is changing in Berlin, and much has yet to change, which makes today such an interesting time to visit. There has been a settlement here since the Middle Ages, but as Germany has only existed as a great power since 1871, the city was only the capital from then until 1948 before recapturing its status in 1991. It is its recent history for which Berlin is best known today, so after breakfast we will have a guided tour of this fantastically interesting place. We will see the old heart of the city, Unter den Linden, the beautiful green area of the Tiergarten, the cathedral, the University once numbering Albert Einstein amongst its professors. You will also see the new seat of Government, the Reichstag, covered by an immense glass dome designed by Sir Norman Foster, and of course, the very symbols of Berlin, the Brandenburg Gate and what remains of the Berlin Wall, now ironically protected as an historic monument! Checkpoint Charlie, so very nearly the

flashpoint of an unthinkable Third World War, has been reinstated near the very moving museum dedicated to the history of the wall itself. After the tour you are free to explore Berlin's attractions as you wish.

It would be very wrong to think the city is all about war and politics, as it is one of the most vibrant cities you will ever visit, with an atmosphere and optimism to match. You can visit one of the parks to see Berliners at play: indeed over one third of the city is green. Or perhaps, go for a drink in one of Berlin's famous bars. Whilst the food is also excellent, Germany is still a beer drinker's paradise, possessing over five hundred breweries, and Berlin has its fair share so you should be able to find one to suit you.

**DAY 3** Just outside the city lies Potsdam and the Sanssouci Park housing the palaces of the most famous Prussian monarch, Frederick the Great,

including the famous Palace of Sanssouci. Trapped in a loveless marriage, and with little liking for Berlin, he wanted somewhere to live 'without care', hence the name 'sans souci' in French - the international language of the day. Frederick was also greatly inspired by the splendour of Versailles. This wonderful palace now rises from the park and crowns a series of ascending terraces affording a panoramic view of the spectacular 740 acre park below. It's an amazing 18th century creation marrying together landscape and architecture in a remarkable manner, and is the finest such example in Germany. The rooms, some created from coloured marble and decorated with

exotic woods, are sumptuously furnished with fine art, sculptures, exquisite furniture and porcelain. Throughout the grounds there are a series of pavilions, some wonderful creations fashioned from glass and wrought iron, interspaced by numerous fountains. You have the opportunity of a guided tour of one of the palaces and time to explore the park before returning to Berlin during the afternoon to sightsee as you wish.

**DAY 4** Today at the appropriate time a coach will return us to the airport for our return flight.

