



# GET MOVING IN BERLIN

BERLIN IS EUROPE'S CAPITAL OF COOL. With underground clubs pulsing to the beats of top DJs, urban art splashed across the city's spaces and cosmopolitan streets filled with an endless stream of things to do, it's a place you go to just soak up the culture. But it's also a place where you can have fun and stay fit with endless surprising activities.

## **GET A WORKOUT ON MOUNTMITTE**

In Mitte there's a high ropes adventure park with a difference. The six courses at MountMitte take you across 90 obstacles that include suspended cars, wine barrels and surfboards. From the top you can enjoy views across landmarks such as the Berlin Wall Memorial and Fernsehturm TV tower before topping off the experience with a 13-metre skyfall jump. After a day of play on the ropes you can hit one of the 50 outdoor volleyball courts at the adjoining Beach Mitte or chill out in the beach bar.

*You don't generally think of Berlin as a fitness destination, but Germany's capital manages to combine activity and culture like few other cities. Travel writer **Emily McAullife** checks out some options.*

## **PADDLE THE CANALS AFTER DARK**

Along with incredible parks and lakes, Berlin has an extensive canal system which kayak tours take advantage of. One tour company, Kayak Berlin Tours, offers day tours of the east and west, but for something different, join their 90-minute night tour down the Landwehr canal through the Kreuzberg and Neukölln neighbourhoods. You'll get to paddle calm waters as the sun goes down and see how Berliners unwind as they flock to the banks of the canal with picnic rugs and drinks in hand. The waterways are yet to

attract much paddle craft, so you'll likely only share the canal with a few bobbing swans and the occasional small boat as it chugs past.

## **MINGLE WITH THE HIPSTERS IN MITTE**

For a 'burb rocking the funkier cafes and boutique shopping, take a wander through the sprawling neighbourhood of Mitte. In this area you'll find attractions like the Sunday Flohmarkt am Mauerpark, one of Berlin's biggest flea markets with cheap

## TRAVEL

clothes, jewellery and books, and the 1918-established Rausch Schokoladenhaus chocolate company, which has an onsite chocolate shop and café, as well as a chocolate restaurant serving cocoa-inspired delights like roast guinea fowl with fine milk chocolate and goat cheese salad with dark chocolate. The Mitte district includes the Hackescher Markt too, where designer stores sell the wares of some of Berlin's trendiest designers.

### WALK AND LEARN

One of the best ways to get oriented in a new city is to hit the streets with a local for an insider scoop. On a Sandemans free (i.e. tip-based) walking tour you'll get just that, with guides who ensure a snooze-free history lesson by nailing a balance between fact and humour. Over three hours the tour covers off major sites such as the Brandenburg Gate, the Holocaust Memorial, Checkpoint Charlie and Hitler's bunker, and the best thing is, you can show up and know the tour will run rail, hail or shine.

If you like how Sandemans roll you can then sign up for additional tours such as Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp Memorial, located just outside Berlin city, to learn about the core of the Nazi concentration camp system, or take the Alternative City Tour, where you can get up to speed on Berlin's street art and graffiti movement, Berlin's gentrification process and find out how the city's famous nightlife culture developed after the wall fell.

### EAT AND RIDE BY NIGHT

Fat Tire Tours offer a 4.5-hour evening food tour on two wheels so, you can safely devour a progressive three-course meal without feeling guilty about it. Cycle around the Prenzlauer Berg neighbourhood - one of Berlin's foodie hotspots - and check out the Berlin Wall Memorial on Bernauer Straße and Museum Island between stops at a locally owned Lebanese and German restaurants and a German café. The sites covered on the food tour differ from those visited on Fat Tire's other tours, so if cycling's your thing, you can sign up for a Gardens & Palaces of Potsdam tour or a Day City tour too.

### WALK THE EAST SIDE GALLERY

After the Berlin Wall fell, artists were determined to transform the piece of infrastructure that had divided their city for so long into a symbol of freedom by painting a stretch of the wall with over 100 murals. The gallery extends for more than a kilometre along the Spree River in Friedrichshain and showcases the work of artists from around the globe. Many of the works have political undertones or scenes



of unity, with perhaps the most famous piece of former head of the Soviet Union, Leonid Brezhnev locking lips with the leader of the German Democratic Republic, Erich Honecker, in a socialist fraternal kiss. The wall has experienced issues with decay and graffiti and there have been plans to dismantle sections to make way for new developments, but many of the murals have been retained and restored and the gallery remains a great place for a long afternoon stroll.

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### BROWSE THROUGH HISTORY

Berlin has more than 150 museums, meaning there's something to suit every taste. Big-hitters include the five museums of Museum Island, where you'll also find the world-famous Pergamon. Then there's the Jewish Museum and Checkpoint Charlie Museum for an insight into Germany's eventful past. But since Berlin is known to embrace the quirky, there are also plenty of offbeat collections to explore. Take a wander through the Berlin Museum of Medical History to see how medicine has evolved over the last 300 years, and learn how Germany's famous sausage is made in the Currywurst Museum. For something truly bizarre, head along to the Design Panoptikum, where a mish-mash of medical apparatus and eerie spare part figures adorn the floors. **EW**