

# BERLIN

## *A perfect combination of glamour and grit*

Berlin, the capital of Germany and one of the 16 states of Germany, is located in northeastern Germany, on the banks of rivers Spree and Havel. It is a big multicultural metropolis with vibrant culture, cutting-edge architecture, fabulous food, intense parties and tangible history.

After World War II, Germany and also the city Berlin were divided in two parts. East Berlin became the capital of East Germany while West Berlin became a *de facto* West German exclave, which was surrounded by the Berlin Wall (1961–1989). The Berlin Wall symbolised grey divider of humanity. In 1989, with the end of the Cold War and pressure from the East German population, the Berlin Wall fell on 9 November and was subsequently mostly demolished. Today Mühlenstrasse, paralleling the Spree, a 1.3km stretch became the East Side Gallery, the world's largest open-air mural collection. It preserves a large portion of the Wall. On 3 October 1990, the two parts of Germany were reunified as the Federal Republic of Germany, and Berlin again became the official German capital.



**Brandenburger Tor** - a symbol of division during the Cold War, the landmark Brandenburg Gate now epitomises German reunification.



The **Reichstag** is home to Germany's parliament, the Bundestag, is a must see place in Berlin. A free lift ride to its roof terrace offers spectacular views over the city and close-ups of the modern, Norman Foster–designed glass dome powering from the historic building. One can pick up a free audio guide and learn about surrounding sights, the building and the workings of the parliament while moseying up the dome's spiralling ramp. The glass aims to create a sense of political transparency.

Berlin has two commercial airports. Berlin Tegel Airport (TXL), which lies within the city limits, and Schönefeld Airport (SXF), which is situated just outside Berlin's south-eastern border in the state of Brandenburg.

**Higher Education:** The Berlin-Brandenburg capital region is one of the most prolific centres of higher education and research in Germany and Europe. There are the Humboldt University (founded in 1810), Free University of Berlin (FU) and Technische Universität Berlin (TU).



**Food :** Many local foods originated from north German culinary traditions. German bakeries offering a variety of breads and pastries are widespread. Typical Berliner fares include Currywurst, invented in 1949, Buletten (Frikadeller) and the Berliner pastry known in Berlin as *Pfannkuchen*. Turkish and Arab immigrants brought their culinary traditions to the city, such as the falafel and lahmacun, which have become common fast food staples. The modern version of the Döner kebab was invented in Berlin in 1971.