



Girlfriend Getaway Guide to Berlin: Dollar or Cents

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Thriving cafe culture

This November marks 21 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Emerged from the rubble is a chameleon-like, cosmopolitan, cultural, hip and happenin' capital city. Berlin embodies all the ingredients for one fantastic girlfriend getaway. If you're a penny pinching student or a trust fund baby packing a wallet full of titanium credit cards, Berlin offers incredible value and high style at any price point. Whether planning an escape with the girls on the cheap or looking to splurge in the lap of luxury, here are some top recommendations.

*First tip for both: Sleep on the plane because once you arrive, it's non-stop action 24/7.

Stylish Stay

Dollar:[Hotel Adlon Kempinski Berlin](#)

Across the street from the Brandenburg Gate, this legendary art nouveau beauty oozing tasteful opulence is truly a 5-star destination offering first-class amenities. Resplendent with spacious antique filled suites and stained-glass-domed lobby perfect for afternoon tea. Visit the Adlon Spa & Wellness facility with state of the art fitness center, indoor pool, Jacuzzi, sauna, a full roster of indulgent treatments. Treat yourself to any or all of three Michelin starred temples of haute cuisine. Prices start at about \$300 and include a lavish breakfast buffet.

**Dining In:**

Make dinner reservations at [Lorenz Adlon](#), the hotel's flag ship fine French restaurant and the girls will love you forever. You'll feast on sumptuous food superbly reinterpreted with Chef Thomas Neeser's imaginative playful touches. Your table is set with fine china and sparkling crystal. Stunning flower arrangements abound throughout the room. Warm hospitable service is provided by Maître de Boris Häbel and his team. Along with fine food, your dramatic view of the Brandenburg Gate provides a truly memorable evening.

Cents:[MitArt Hotel and Café](#)

This turn of the century stucco town house is Berlin's first green hotel. Reminiscent of a college dorm, your sparsely furnished cubby-hole room with bed, chair, small dresser, a couple of hangers on the wall and one painting -- sans closet, phone or even a clock, is impeccably clean. The hotel is bone quiet since it's set back in a fragrant courtyard graced with herbs, lemon bushes and fig trees. Conveniently located next to trendy Oranienburger St. that is jam-packed with tasty ethnic restaurants and galleries, you're close to some great attractions. Since room prices start at barely over \$100, you can go buy your own clock at a nearby flea market. Interesting note: In a past life. The hotel housed the GDR's National Military Printing Press, which produced propaganda materials.

Dining In:

The cafe on the ground floor offers a happy spot to start your day with polished oak floors, bright light streaming in from the oversized windows, and walls lined with colorful paintings. Get ready for a hearty organic breakfast of home-made breads and pastries, locally sourced meats and cheese, yoghurt and fresh fruit and juices. The owner, Frau Waszkowiak is extremely knowledgeable about the local art scene and will be happy to answer your

questions as she bustles around refilling the buffet.

Dining Out



Dollar:

Combining the best of many worlds, newbie [Dos Palillos](#) ('Two Sticks' as in chopsticks) is run by a Spanish head chef, Albert Raurich (former Chef de Cuisine at El Bulli). The restaurant was designed by two French brothers and serves incredible Asian tapas in a German city. Confused? You enter through an intimate dining room cocooned by theatrical gold shimmery drapes. Keep walking and grab a seat at the long wooden bar surrounding the open stainless-steel kitchen. You'll be entertained and possibly pick up a few culinary tricks as you watch the chefs doing their thing. The food is dramatic, delicious and unpretentiously elegant. Definitely worth the experience is the 16-course menu [Dos Palillos](#) (under \$100) that will delight you with creative tidbits beginning with a lush dish made from Japanese monkfish liver steamed in ponzu sauce all the way to the darling little mochi berry bites. Pair this with shot of vodka served in a hollowed out strawberry and you'll write home about your experience.

Insider tip: Lunch (Thursday to Saturday) offers a steal-of-a-deal: special 4-course menu for only 18 Euro

Cents



[Henne](#) (hen) is THE PLACE for finger-likkin'-good, milk-fried, free-range, organic chicken. This 102 year old institution oozes old world pub charm with tartan plaid table cloths, brass lamps, leather banquetts, and an abundance of animal horns adorning the walls. After you're seated by one of the friendly waitresses the conversation goes something like this: "Half or whole?" followed by "Potato or kraut salad?" Then sit back and wait for some of the tastiest fried chickie in town.

Tip: If the weather's nice try for a seat on the on the outdoor patio that used to provide a view of the Wall. Skip the mundane desserts and instead try one of their specialty liquors. The cinnamon one was tasty. Reservations are a must since the place is always packed.

Snack time

Dollar:



The legendary food hall at [KaDeWe](#), Berlin's biggest department store is the size of a football field so be sure and wear comfy shoes and come hungry. This is the perfect place to nosh-hop since there are about 30 different classy food stations (Paul Bocuse and Lenôtre both have food stalls here) where you can snack on an extraordinary selection of caviar, sushi, oysters, over 1300 types of cheese (many excellent raw milk cheese are available) charcuterie, topical fruits, exotic seafood, international tapas, etc. All this while sipping a glass of champagne or choose one of the 3,400 bottles of wine.
Tip: Head for the ladies room for one of the best views in Berlin.

Cents:



Currywurst is to Berliners as a hamburger is to Americans. This popular and long standing German fast-food creation consists of a sliced pork sausage covered in hot ketchup sprinkled with curry powder, served with fries and a chunk of soft white bread for sopping up the sauce. You'll find Currywurst street vendors anywhere crowds gather like most major sightseeing spots. This snack even has its own kitschy [museum](#) that serves samples at the end of the tour.

Best city tours

Dollar

Berlin is one of the biggest cities in the world and even if you're armed with a flotilla of maps and guide books and navigation devices, you can count on getting lost. So what's a geographically-challenged girl to do? Hire [GoArt! Tours](#). They will break it all down for you. Former art curator, Mariam Bers (who quickly becomes your new BFF) will take you on an exciting insider's tour of the most avant-garde boutiques, edgiest galleries, hidden studios and trendiest nabes where she'll introduce you to the hottest indie artists and designers in town. Go Art! Tours can be creatively customized for groups or individuals.



Mariam knows THE BEST avant-garde spots !

Two of her winners for you to check out on your own: [The Hoffman Collection](#), a private collection of inspiring contemporary art from around the world located in Ericka Hoffman's home, formerly a factory building, and Berlin's unique [Boros](#) collection, a fascinating compilation of modern sculptures and light installations housed underground in a converted Nazi bunker.

Cents

[Insider Tour Berlin](#) offers a multitude of walking tours providing dynamic historical narratives, ranging from "Third Reich Berlin: Hitler & WWII – The final days" to a more spirited tour, "The Original Berlin Pub Crawl" First time visitors can't go wrong with the four hour "Famous Insider Walk: Hidden Berlin & ALL Main Sites."

They are all led by a cadre of enthusiastic, knowledgeable guides at extremely reasonable rates.

World class entertainment

Dollar:

You can always count on an unforgettable evening of exquisite music at the [Berlin Philharmonic](#) especially if you have tickets when conductor Claudio Abbado makes a guest appearance. Recently he created a magical event including mezzo-soprano Christianne Stotijn, tenor Jonas Kaufmann and the Men's Radio Chorus performing works by Schubert Schoenberg and Brahms. Be sure and reserve tickets. Berliner's love their orchestra and the performances are often completely sold out.

Cents:



[CHAMALEON Theater](#), located in the colorful Hackesche Hoefe courtyard, offers amazing acrobatic/variety shows that rival the physicality of Cirque du Soleil. Doors open early so you may want to enjoy a tasty bite before the show (also very reasonably priced) in their historic Art Deco ballroom.

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