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Save or Surge: Berlin

By GISELA WILLIAMS

On \$250 a Day

SLEEP The only thing the new Motel One (www.motel-one.de) chain has in common with an actual motel is its low price. In [Berlin](#), there are four locations, but the best-situated property is [Motel One Alexanderplatz](#) (Dircksenstrasse 36; 49-30-200-54-080), which is in the heart of Mitte's shopping area. The lobby is airy and friendly, with dark wood floors and turquoise Arne Jacobsen egg chairs. Motel One cuts costs by not offering room service, private phones or minibars, just a basic comfortable bed and small bathroom with shower and a flat-screen TV. But with singles starting at 69 euros, no one's complaining. Cost for a double room: from 84 euros.

EAT Brunch in Berlin is a ritual not to be missed, especially in the Prenzlauer Berg and Kreuzberg neighborhoods, where cafes compete over which can offer the best and cheapest spread. In Kreuzberg, try [Cafe Morgenland](#) (Skalitzerstrasse 35; 49-30-611-3291; www.cafemorgenland.eu), with its 9 euro breakfast buffet loaded with salads, flatbreads and homemade dips, multiple egg dishes and pastries. It's enough food to last the weekend. (Book at least a week ahead and try to beat the early afternoon crush.)

If you're still hungry at night, check out the tucked-away [Cookies Cream](#) (Behrenstrasse 55; 49-30-2749-2940; www.cookiescream.com). Follow an alleyway behind the Westin Grand hotel to a jumble of lights hanging over a door. The restaurant, which serves creative [vegetarian](#) cuisine like Parmesan dumplings with cilantro carrots and Amalfi lemon sauce, is above a nightclub called Cookies. A three-course meal will cost 28 euros, without drinks. After 8 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday (the only nights the nightclub is open), entrance to Cookies is free for diners, so the restaurant is packed with a hip crowd that heads downstairs after dinner. Cost: 9 euros for brunch, 28 for dinner, for a total of 37 euros.

SHOP If you're the kind of person who likes to buy local, then head to [Berlinomat](#) (Frankfurter Allee 89; 49-30-4208-1445; www.berlinomat.com), an eclectic boutique that showcases Berlin designers with items that range from key chains painted with a city skyline to baby onesies printed with Berlin's iconic TV Tower. Pick up four magnets (4 euros each) that feature photographs of local urban scenes. Cost: 16 euros.

PARTY In the summer, some of the coolest (literally) parties happen along the meandering Spree River. At night, coming across the [Club der Visionäre](#) (Am Flutgraben 1; 49-30-6951-

8942; www.clubdervisionaere.com), a riverside bar half-covered by foliage, is like finding some kind of magical pirate lair. The rickety wooden setup — outdoor deck, benches and old fish crates planted with flowers — is the site of a variety of late-night dance parties, the best of which starts on Sunday afternoon and goes to the wee hours of Monday. It's the Berlin version of [Ibiza](#) — but with only a 1 euro cover charge. Cost of beers and the cover: 6 euros.

SAVE Look no further than the excellent Admission Free Berlin Web site (www.berlin.admission-free.org) for daily listings of [music](#) and cultural events that don't cost a thing. Cost: Free.

TOTAL COST 143 euros, or about \$193.

On \$1,000 a Day

SLEEP When stars like [Tom Cruise](#) are looking for an intimate luxury hotel with impeccable service (and reliable protection from paparazzi), they stay at the [Regent](#) (Charlottenstrasse 49; 49-30-2033-8; www.regenthotels.com/berlin) on the Gendarmenmarkt. Despite its 195 rooms, it feels like a private club. And its Fischers Fritz, which specializes in seafood, is the only two-star Michelin restaurant in [Berlin](#). Cost for a deluxe room: from 295 euros.

EAT Since the chef Tim Raue left [Restaurant 44](#), his home at the Swissôtel, Berlin's food lovers had been awaiting his next move. The answer was revealed last spring: Mr. Raue and his wife, the sommelier Marie-Anne, were recruited by the Adlon Holding Group to open an Asian-inspired place with Michelin-star potential. The results were [Ma Tim Raue](#) and Uma (Behrenstrasse 72; 49-30-3011-1733-3; www.ma-restaurants.de), two jewel-box rooms. Ma is Mr. Raue's upscale creative showcase, and Uma is a more casual Japanese-inspired bistro. The move paid off. Five months after it opened, Ma Tim Raue won a Michelin star. Mr. Raue's six-course Aroma Revolution Menu, which might include Catalan sea cucumber with a cream of cèpes and a nut butter foam) is 128 euros a person. Lunch is the ideal time to try Berlin's other award-winning restaurants, including Fischers Fritz, which has a two-course lunch for 28 euros. Cost for lunch and dinner: 156 euros.

SHOP The shopping streets in and around Hackesche Höfe in the Mitte district are beginning to look a bit like SoHo in New York — lined with international boutiques like Hugo Boss and Max Mara. But some of the neighborhood's most exclusive shops are hidden in courtyards and behind graffiti-covered facades. Get your G.P.S. device out when trying to locate the über-chic subterranean fashion boutique [Apartment](#) (Memhardstrasse 8; 49-30-2804-2251; www.apartmentberlin.de), which is reached by descending a dark spiral staircase at the back of an unmarked and empty all-white storefront. The cavelike space is lined with avant-garde cultish fashion items. Cost of a Rick Owens leather visor: 110 euros.

PARTY Berlin's underground night life is starting to go above ground at sleek places like [Bar Tausend](#) (Schiffbauerdamm 11; 49-30-4171-5396; www.tausendberlin.com). The long, dark

rectangular space created by the Berlin-based designer Robert Neun is anchored on one wall by an enormous 3-D metallic eye, which reflects the entire room while emitting a golden glow. Admission is 10 euros, and a cocktail, concocted by the award-winning mixologist Mario Grünfelder, will run you about the same. Cost of admission and a drink: 20 euros.

SPLURGE It's worthwhile to hire a well-connected guide to show you around Berlin's dynamic contemporary art scene. GoArt! Tours (49-30-3087-3626; www.goart-berlin.de), founded by two former art curators, offers a variety of focused tours that open doors to private collections and galleries that are hidden behind auto parts shops. Cost of a two-hour tour: from 170 euros.

Total cost 751 euros, or about \$1,013 at \$1.35 to the euro.

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