

UAS Pocket Guide

Freie Universität Berlin

General Information

Berlin is an amazing city with a diverse mix of culture, art, history and technology. It is the capital and the largest city of Germany and serves as home to world's renowned universities, museums, entertainment venues, and festivals. The city's deep history has influenced the shape of the city's buildings and architecture. You can find traces of each of the national governments that were based in Berlin, including the Kingdom of Prussia, the 1918 German Empire, the Weimar Republic, Nazi Germany, East Germany and now the reunified Germany, from the city's architecture.

Berlin is an environmentally friendly city where people choose to bike or take rapid transit from one part of the city to another, actively recycle their plastic bottles (0.25 euros for every plastic bottle recycled!), and have options to shop local, organic produce. The urban nature of the city blends in with the green forests and lakes spread out through the city. The nature of this city has attracted forward thinkers and entrepreneurs from around the world to create sustainable projects in the city.



Klunkerkranich, a rooftop café and bar in Neukölln. Source: Soohyun Kim

Travel

Entry requirements depend on your citizenship as well as your length of stay.

Living

Most students in Berlin live in shared flats, referred to as Wohngemeinschaft (WG) in German. Depending on how long your stay is, you could sublet a place or sign a contract. Costs vary from location to location, but they typically range from 300 Euros to 500 Euros per month.

Searching for a place could be a bit difficult if you don't speak German. Most of the housing search websites are only available in German. A tip would be to use Google Chrome browser to automatically translate the entire page from German to your home language. Some useful search engines to refer to are listed on this page (<http://www.fu-berlin.de/en/sites/uas/uas-pool/pocket-guides-for-exchange-students/FUB-accommodations-berlin.pdf>). I would recommend that you start searching well in advance so that you can find a place within your price range. If you're abroad, ask for their Skype information and arrange a call with your prepared questions to see the place. You can secure the place with a deposit that will be returned to you later if you make no damages.

If you want to stay close to the school, I would recommend Steglitz district area as it is safe and not too loud at night. If you would rather prefer to live close to the city centre, you could look for places around Schöneberg, Kreuzberg or Tempelhof. These districts are situated between the city centre and Freie Universität. Berlin is connected very well via public transportation, hence where you choose to live would depend on availability of places and what your priorities are.

Public Transport

Public transportation in Berlin, or in Germany as a whole, is excellent. With a valid ticket, ticket holders have access to all public transportation in Berlin: S-bahn, U-bahn, buses, trams, and ferries. Berlin is divided into three tariff zones: AB, BC and ABC. Tariff zone AB extends from the core of the city to the city's boundaries. A ticket to zone C additionally covers Berlin's surrounding area and Potsdam.

If you're living in Berlin for an extended period of time, public transportation is the easiest to get by from one corner of the neighbourhood to another. For 57 euros, you can purchase a discounted monthly ticket from any of the BVG (BVG is Berlin's public transport company: <http://www.bvg.de/en/>) offices. You need to bring your passport, an ID photo, and your student card to obtain this ticket.

I would recommend that you download a BVG app on your phone to check for real time departure and arrival times as well as find recommended routes for where you want to go.

Alternatives to taking public transportation system would be to invest on a bike. Bike lanes are widely available across the city and most locals use it to travel from one place to another.



The rooftop garden on Freie Universität's main building// Source: Soohyun Kim

Getting started at Freie Universität

Freie Universität Berlin is one of the most prominent universities in Germany. Its campus is spread out rather sparsely, depending on your choice of study.

For planning your stay and studies you should contact Katrin Risch (Katrin.risch@fu-berlin.de), who is the Program Manager of the UAS and will help you to get registered, to receive your user account (ZEDAT account) and library registration. In general, there are more courses offered during the autumn semester, which starts in October and goes on until March. You have to consider the general registration dates which apply to all students. You can find more information about the academic calendar on the website.

If you want to take courses at FU Berlin, you can check out the course catalog, which can be found here: <http://www.fu-berlin.de/vv/en/fb>. You will see all your registered courses on Blackboard, Freie Universität's e-learning system, and you can find all of the course materials and literature you will need here as well. You can log in with your ZEDAT-account (Campus-Wide Login) which also gives you access to all the PCs in the libraries, to install the VPN system on your laptop and to use the "eduroam" wifi on the campus.

Berlin Specialties

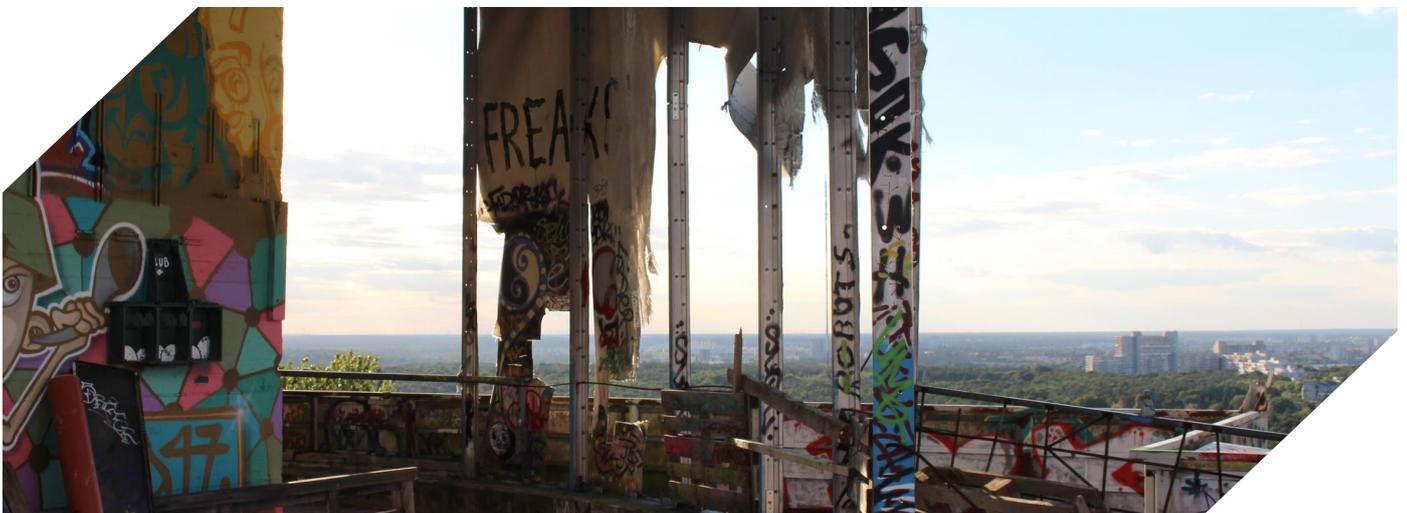
Berlin is a world of its own. It is a city that combines history with modernism. Perhaps the first thing you should do is to learn about the city's turbulent history and visit the world's renowned sites and museums. Some of these places include: Reichstag building, Brandenburg's Gate, Berlin Wall Memorial, the Jewish Holocaust Memorial, Tiergarten, and East Side Gallery. The city centre's main attractions are all accessible on foot or by bike. You could also get on hop on hop off tour buses, or if you want to save money you could take city bus 100 for a tour around the city's major sites.

However, the city being so big, there are plenty of other places you could visit and things to do during your stay in Berlin. For example, you could choose to shop in a huge shopping mall such as the Mall of Berlin or outside along Kurfürstendamm, or you could roam around vintage and hipster shopping districts in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg neighbourhood. If you are into music, you could search up events on Resident Advisor to check out music festivals and night out activities ranging from listening to funky jazz music in a chill bar to dancing along to hardcore techno music. If you are into history and culture, you could check out Berlin's various museums such as Topography of Terror, the DDR museum, and Pergamon museum on the museum island. However, if you are more into Graffiti and street art that shape Berlin's surroundings, you should consider taking a street art walking tour or underground bunker tour, or visit Teufelsberg, a former NSA station that is now covered with Graffiti. There are plenty of free walking tours offered around Berlin, just google "free walking tour Berlin".



The Reichstag building// Source: Soohyun Kim

No matter what your interests are, this city has so much to offer and you will find your stay enjoyable! However, don't forget to rewind every now and then with a cup of coffee (yes, Berlin even has good coffee) in a cute café or grab a bottle of beer with a couple of friends in a rooftop bar (may the weather be in your favour)!



Teufelsberg// Source: Soohyun Kim