

Historic Mitte

GOVERNMENT QUARTER | PARISER PLATZ & UNTER DEN LINDEN | FRIEDRICHSTRASSE & CHECKPOINT CHARLIE | GENDARMENMARKT

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Brandenburger Tor (p80) Snapping a selfie with this famous landmark and symbol of German reunification.

2 Gendarmenmarkt (p83) Taking in the architectural symmetry of this gorgeous square before indulging in a gourmet

meal at one of the stellar restaurants in its vicinity.

3 Holocaust Memorial (p81) Absorbing the stillness and presence of uncounted souls at this haunting site before putting it all in perspective at the underground exhibit.

4 Reichstag (p78) Standing in awe of history at

Germany's government building, then pinpointing the sights while meandering up its landmark glass dome.

5 Topographie des Terrors (p8) Understanding the machinations of Nazi Germany at this haunting exhibit standing on the one-time site of the Gestapo and SS headquarters.



For more detail of this area see Map p296

Explore: Historic Mitte

With the mother lode of sights clustered within a walkable area, the most historic part of Berlin is naturally a prime port of call for most first-time visitors. Book ahead for access to the Reichstag dome, then snap a picture of the Brandenburger Tor and commune with lost souls at the Holocaust Memorial before dipping into Berlin's Prussian past on a stroll along the normally grand boulevard Unter den Linden. These days, though, expect to hopscotch around several major construction sites on account of a new U-bahn line, the renovation of the State Opera House and the rebuilding of the Berlin City Palace as a cultural centre called Humboldt Forum.

Unaffected by the temporary turmoil is Friedrichstrasse, which bisects Unter den Linden and runs north into the 'East End' theatre district and south to Checkpoint Charlie. Gendarmenmarkt, Berlin's most beautiful square, is just one block east and is surrounded by ritzy restaurants and fancy shops. Its Konzerthaus provides high-brow after-dark diversion, but aside from a few posh bars, this area is pretty devoid of nightlife action.

Local Life

➔ **Glamour shopping** Brand-name bunnies flock to Friedrichstrasse. Aside from boutiques, the Friedrichstadtpassagen (p88), led by the stunningly designed Galeries Lafayette, beckon with top-flight Berlin and international designers.

➔ **High-brow culture** Music and theatre fans are drawn to this part of town to take in concerts at the Konzerthaus Berlin (p92), theatre at the Gorki (p92), and opera at the Komische Oper (p92).

➔ **Power of words** What's better than a night off sitting in front of the TV? Browsing a bookstore, of course. Open until 11pm, Dussmann (p92), the self-titled 'cultural department store', is an eldorado for bookworms and also has a huge music selection.

Getting There & Away

➔ **Bus** Buses 100 and 200 run along most of Unter den Linden from Alexanderplatz.

➔ **S-Bahn** S1 and S2/25 stop at Brandenburger Tor and Friedrichstrasse.

➔ **U-Bahn** Stadtmitte (U2, U6), Französische Strasse (U6) and Hausvogteiplatz (U2) are all convenient for Gendarmenmarkt. For Unter den Linden, get off at Brandenburger Tor (U5), Friedrichstrasse (U6) or Französische Strasse (U6).

➔ **Tram** The M1 travels from Museumsinsel to Prenzlauer Berg via Friedrichstrasse.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

There is definitely a mystique of Checkpoint Charlie, so by all means drop by to take a look. However, in order to truly understand what it was like to cross between West and East Berlin, swing by the excellent – and free – exhibit in the **Tränenpalast** (p88), an actual border pavilion, a bit north on Friedrichstrasse.

Best Landmarks

- ➔ Brandenburger Tor (p80)
- ➔ Reichstag (p78)
- ➔ Holocaust Memorial (p81)
- ➔ Gendarmenmarkt (p83)

For reviews, see p84. ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Augustiner am Gendarmenmarkt (p90)
- ➔ Crackers (p91)
- ➔ Restaurant Tim Raue (p90)
- ➔ Ishin (p90)

For reviews, see p89. ➔

Best Places for Drinking

- ➔ Bar Tausend (p91)
- ➔ Berliner Republik (p91)
- ➔ Lost in Grub Street (p91)

For reviews, see p91. ➔