



## Berlin at Christmas

Art, architecture & music in the German capital

**20–27 December 2025 (ML 864)**

8 days • £4,910

Lecturer: Tom Abbott

Numerous excellent collections of fine and decorative arts and first-rate architecture.

Elegant 5-star hotel next to the Brandenburg Gate.

Includes tickets to two performances, to be confirmed in June 2025.

Berlin possesses some of the finest art galleries and museums in the world and offers the highest standards of music and opera performance. It is endowed with a range of historic architecture and is also the site of Europe's greatest concentration of first-rate contemporary architecture. Once again a national capital, it is also one of the most exciting cities on the Continent, recent and rapid changes pushing through a transformation without peacetime parallel.

One of the grandest capitals in Europe for the first forty years of the last century, it then suffered appallingly from aerial bombardment and Soviet artillery. For the next forty years it was cruelly divided into two parts and became the focus of Cold War antagonism, a bizarre confrontation between an enclave of western libertarianism and hard-line Communism.

Since the Wall was breached in 1989 the city has been transformed beyond recognition. From being a largely charmless urban expanse still bearing the scars of war, it has become a vibrant, liveable city, the very model of a modern major metropolis. The two halves have been knitted together and cleaning and repair have revealed the patrimony of historic architecture to be among the finest in Central Europe.

The art collections, formerly split, dispersed and often housed in temporary premises, are now coming together in magnificently restored or newly-built galleries. Berlin possesses international art and antiquities of the highest importance, as well as incomparable collections of German art. The number and variety of museums and the quality of their holdings make Berlin among the world's most desired destinations for art lovers.

With three major opera houses and several orchestras, Berlin is a city where truly outstanding performances can be virtually guaranteed. Tickets to two performances are included in the price.



*Berlin, Staatsoper, copper engraving c. 1750.*

### Itinerary

**Day 1.** Fly at c. 11.15am from London City to Berlin (British Airways). Visit the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, the symbolic centre of West Berlin, before continuing to the hotel.

**Day 2.** A morning walk passes some fine 18th-century buildings including the arsenal, opera house, royal palaces and cathedrals, en route to the 'Museums Island', a group of major museum buildings. Visit the Alte Nationalgalerie which superbly displays European painting of the 19th century including the finest collection of German Romantics.

**Day 3.** Take a coach to Kreuzberg, passing Cold War related landmarks such as the Oberbaumbrücke and Karl-Marx Allee. Visit the Jewish Museum in the celebrated and expressive building by Daniel Libeskind.

**Day 4.** Potsdamer Platz, for 50 years an even greater expanse of wasteland, became in the 1990s Europe's greatest building project with an array of international architects participating. Visit the Gemäldegalerie, one of Europe's major collections of Old Masters.

**Day 5, Christmas Eve.** A morning walk includes Unter den Linden, Peter Eisenmann's controversial Holocaust Memorial and

the unmistakable symbol of the city, the Brandenburg Gate. End at the Reichstag, a ponderous 1880s structure scarred by the vicissitudes of the 20th century, the shell now brilliantly rehabilitated by Norman Foster and topped by the famous glass dome. Lunch is at the rooftop restaurant.

**Day 6, Christmas Day.** Return to Museums Island to visit the Neues Museum, the stunning new home to the Egyptian Museum (among others), restored and recreated by British architect David Chipperfield. Visit also the Bode Museum, home to a splendid, comprehensive collection of European sculpture, including works by Riemenschneider, as well as Byzantine art.

**Day 7.** Drive to Schloss Charlottenburg, the earliest major building in Berlin, an outstanding summer palace built with a Baroque core and Rococo wings, fine interiors, paintings by Watteau, extensive gardens, pavilions and a mausoleum.

**Day 8.** Fly from Berlin Brandenburg, arriving at London City just after midday.

### Lecturer

**Tom Abbott.** Specialist in architectural history from the Baroque to the 20th century with a wide knowledge of the performing arts. He

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graduated in Psychology and Art History from Carleton College, Minnesota and studied at the Louvre School of Art History in Paris. Since 1987 he has lived in Berlin and has organised and led many academic tours in Germany. Tom has a particular interest in the German and American architectural and artistic modern including the Bauhaus and Expressionism.

### Practicalities

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**Prices, per person. Two sharing:** £4,910 or £4,590 without flights. **Single occupancy:** £5,780 or £5,460 without flights.

**Included:** air travel (economy class) on scheduled British Airways flights; private coach for the excursions and airport transfers; hotel accommodation as described below; breakfasts, 2 lunches and 4 dinners with wine; all admission charges; all tips for waiters, drivers; all taxes; the services of the lecturer and tour manager.

**Music:** tickets to 2 performances are included in the price of the tour. *Programmes are confirmed in the summer.*

**Accommodation. The Adlon Kempinski** ([kempinski.com/hotel-adlon](http://kempinski.com/hotel-adlon)): an elegant and comfortable 5-star hotel situated on Unter den Linden. Rooms are of a generous size.

**How strenuous?** There is quite a lot of walking and standing around in art galleries. Average distance by coach per day: 12 miles.

**Group size:** between 10 and 22 participants.