

FAVOURITE PLACES  
*to discover*

EDGAR RAI

# Berlin

## 24/7

CHEEKILY COSMOPOLITAN

KULTUR

GMEINER



»SO, you're in the city for the weekend, or a week, or maybe even here to stay? Great choice. Berlin has a lot to offer: a hands-on living history, a dynamic cultural landscape, diverse foods and fashion, a happening scene and never-ending parties. Within ten short years, the city has morphed from the country's ragamuffin into one of Europe's greatest tourist destinations. A bit of chaos is still part of the Berlin experience, and the Berliners take it either with a sense of humor, with coolness, or in stoic resignation. To guide you through this pell-mell city, this little book combines about 80 personal suggestions that will help design your visit while staying off the beaten tourist paths. Have fun!«

*Edgar Rai*

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**FAVOURITE PLACES**  
*and 11 extra tours*

**EDGAR RAI**

TRANSLATED BY B. SCHREYER DUARTE

# Berlin

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CHEEKILY COSMOPOLITAN

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Translated from the German original by Birgit Schreyer Duarte.

All photos in this book were taken by the author – with the following exceptions:  
page 49: Vabali Spa Berlin; page 100: Reinhard Friedrich (Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra); page 104: Sebastian Greuner; page 110: Verena Eidel; page 178: realities:united

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[www.gmeiner-verlag.de](http://www.gmeiner-verlag.de)

© 2015 – Gmeiner-Verlag GmbH  
Im Ehnried 5, 88605 Meßkirch  
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[info@gmeiner-verlag.de](mailto:info@gmeiner-verlag.de)  
All rights reserved  
1st edition 2015

Typesetting: Julia Franze  
Retouching and front cover: Alexander Somogyi  
using a photo by AKL/fotolia.com (Oberbaumbrücke and Berlin TV tower)  
Map design: Mirjam Hecht

ISBN 978-3-8392-4837-9

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# HELLO AND WELCOME!

## *Preface*

You're probably asking yourself right now if the Berlin guidebook you are holding in your hand is the right one for you. I will tell you: no matter whether you are visiting Berlin or you are a newly arrived Berliner looking for inspiring, exciting or unique places and open to embracing new possibilities, the answer is yes.

Should you be looking for an actual shopping guide for Berlin or a book specifically on the city's architecture or art history, the answer would be no. This little book is not a hospitality or history guide either. Instead, it wants to be a little bit of everything.

That's why *Berlin 24/7* is organized by the different times of the day and by neighbourhoods. So, depending on when you find yourself where in the city, you can check what recommendations this book has for you. For the morning, the book will offer mostly Café tips; during the day, parks, museums, stores and the occasional swimming pool will be on offer; in the evening, I like to propose restaurants, cinemas, theatres or a bridge for the sunset. Those who feel like going to a cocktail bar or a dance club afterwards shall be well served, too. And finally, you'll find some hotel recommendations for a good night's sleep.

For obvious reasons I largely left out any well-worn tourist destinations—I trust you already know that places like Brandenburger Tor, the Reichstag's dome or Checkpoint Charlie are some of the famous sites of the city. And furthermore, the book in your hands limits its focus to 66 plus 11 places. There's no way that everything we'd like to bring to our reader's attention would fit in here anyway. That's the reason why I only selected sites in the downtown core of the city. In the West, we're not going past the Waldbühne, in the East, we're done at Treptow. All the recommended places can be reached quickly and easily, given that many of you will likely only be in town for a few days. No one likes to travel for hours before getting anywhere. Only the proposed bike tour leads outside Berlin's city limits, but in that case the journey is the destination, isn't it?

In my selection of places I followed mainly two principles: my own personal taste and whatever I took away from the experiences of friends and acquaintances who have visited the city over many years. This book therefore contains a mixture of my own favourite places and what I assume might interest you as well.

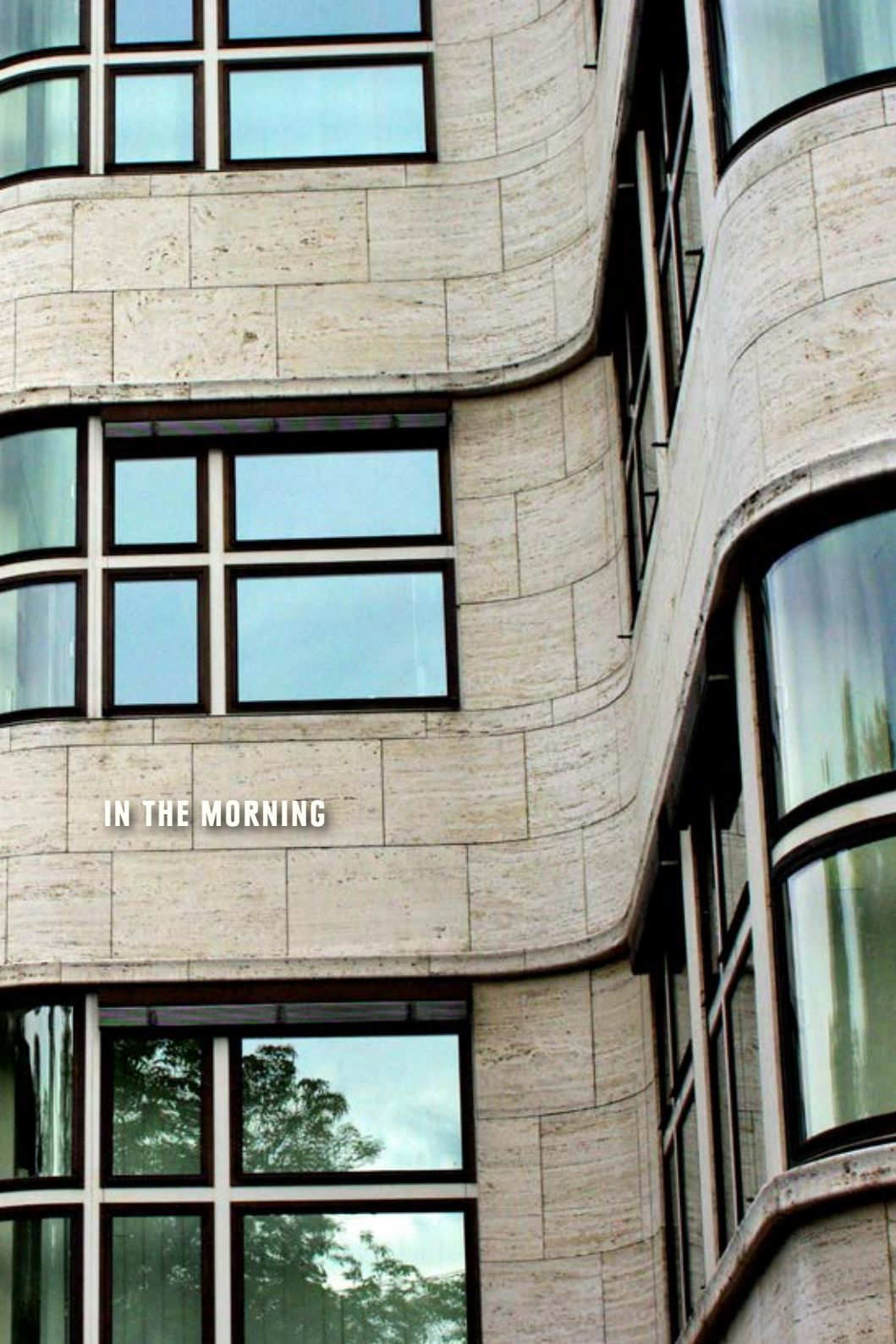
Another note: I am a Berliner. But not an “indigenous” one. Although I’ve lived in Berlin since 1988, and have since lived in half a dozen neighbourhoods, those who weren’t born in Berlin are not indigenous Berliners. So say the Berliners. A full-fledged Berliner will be very specific about that.

There are quite a few things they’re specific about, the Berliners. You’ll notice. For example they love to complain about the streams of tourists who flood “their” city. Secretly, of course, they are flattered that so many people come to see Berlin. Yup. That’s them. As a rule of thumb, keep in mind: don’t get upset. What you’ll find behind the infamous “Berliner Schnauze”—the Berliners’ typical “big mouth” or “tough talk”—is often a friendly, open fellow happy to help. “Nüscht für unjuut” (which roughly translates into “never mind” or “it’s all good”!). I hope you’ll have a great time.

Sincerely yours,

Edgar Rai.



A photograph of a modern building's curved facade. The building features large, multi-paned windows with dark frames, set against a light-colored, textured stone or concrete cladding. The windows reflect the sky and surrounding greenery. The text "IN THE MORNING" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font on the lower left side of the image.

**IN THE MORNING**



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# TIME OUT, TRIED-AND-TRUE

*Café A.Horn*


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In immediate proximity to the popular “Prinzenbad” (Prince’s Bath; officially: “Sommerbad Kreuzberg”, page 47), and beautifully located by the Landwehr canal, you’ll find the equally popular *Café A. Horn*. Knowledge of this place has long since ceased to be an insider tip—which shouldn’t keep you from visiting, however.

This family-run restaurant manages to achieve something that in Berlin a surprising number of places achieve: the perfect match of ambition and an easy-going flair. Generally, once someone has an idea, knows what they want, does a good job and on top of it all, keeps having fun with it—chances are, sooner or later this person will be “discovered”. At the risk of sounding political here, there is some comfort in knowing that, at a time when franchise bosses throw their nets across the whole globe and no matter where you are in the world you’ll find the same shops.

Back to the A.Horn Café: it prides itself on not being a fast food restaurant. The kitchen only offers homemade, local products; even bread and jam are made on site, the cereal is roasted in house and for lunch the menu is seasonal. Sounds ambitious and could easily come across as high-strung, but isn’t.

The truly excellent breakfast is available all day long; if you want to have lunch I can recommend the homemade pasta, and for dinner, the Mediterranean platter. You can even have a cocktail here, best to be had outside under the awning of course, or on the bench under the tree. If the weather isn’t cooperating, the interior offers cozy seating areas with a great view through a window-pane overlooking the integrated bicycle store next door, so that you can watch handy workers’ hands work while you’re sipping your coffee. At all times the rule applies: easy does it.

 Open Monday to Friday from 8am, Saturday and Sunday from 9am. Subway stop: Prinzenstraße (U1).



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## FOR POMP LOVERS

*Grosz*


2

*Grosz* at Kurfürstendamm opened in 2012 and has everything a café doesn't need. Lots and lots of it. A glamorous homage to a time that maybe never was. Or was it? You wouldn't be all that surprised to see Kurt Tucholsky or Otto Dix sitting at the table next to you.

The Cumberland-Haus, where the *Grosz* is located, opened shortly before World War I and was designed as an elegant "Boarding Palace". A total of 600 rooms were included in the apartment building. It featured a ballroom, a swimming pool, the *American Bar*, and so on. Compared to historical photographs of these locations, today's *Grosz* looks like it was cut out of a photo, colorized, polished, and inserted back in. This makes *Grosz* a lovingly "backwards" establishment that's meant to restore some of Kurfürstendamm's long-faded glamour. Creative mind and manager of the *Grosz* is Roland Mary, who is also the man behind the Borchardt Restaurant on Französische Straße, and therefore someone used to rubbing shoulders with the "elite".

But about the *Grosz*: the ceilings are said to be eight meters high. Which says it all, really. Marble and precious wood all around. And mirrors. And gold. Feels like you're on a film set for a period piece on the Kaiser era. The waitress, dressed in a white apron, arrives, takes your order and the illusion is perfect. From now on, you're part of the stage action. That's got to be worth almost five Euros for a cappuccino.

The *Grosz* is not only a coffee house but also a restaurant and bar, by the way, and the kitchen is open from 9am to 11pm, accordingly. I like it best here in the morning. If the weather is nice you can also take your meal in the dignified courtyard. So indulge! You won't find any more grandezza in Berlin than here.

 A little further up the Ku'damm there's the French Cultural Institute complete with a cinema and an exhibition hall. A good place to fuel up with some culture after all that pomp.



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