



Museum Island, image © visitBerlin

48 hours in Berlin

With many of the city's famous Christmas markets starting this month, why not take a trip to Berlin, which boasts a collectors' paradise writes Nicholas Martin

With 600 galleries and 153 museums it is no surprise that Berlin is at the centre of Europe's cultural scene. The city's art scene received a considerable boost in 1995 when the Art Forum Berlin launched and the Berlin Biennale for contemporary artists, held every June, began in 1998.

Berlin's Museumsinsel, (Museum Island) is home to five world-class museums showcasing works from Ancient Egypt and Byzantium to treasures from Berlin.

Cultural exhibits include the breathtaking Pergamon Altar and the stunning Ishtar Gate. In 1999, the Museum Island complex

was given the prestigious title of UNESCO World Heritage site.

Apart from Museum Island, Berlin is home to a host of museums and galleries including the Gemäldegalerie (Painting Gallery), which focuses on Old Masters from the 13th to the 18th centuries, while the Neue Nationalgalerie (New National Gallery), built by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, specialises in 20th-century European painting.

If that's not enough, and you want to take a piece of Berlin's incredible cultural heritage home, then pop along to any one of the city's jaw-dropping flea markets, where you could very easily bag a bargain.



Saturday

1 THE ART AND FLEA MARKET ON FEHRBELLINER PLATZ

Start your weekend on the outskirts of Berlin's city ring, in the Wilmersdorf district, at the traditional flea market (trödelmarkt) on the Fehrbelliner Platz. It is known

throughout the city as the place where art lovers and flea market fans meet. It is open two days a week (depending on the season), taking place on the esplanade of the metro station Fehrbelliner Platz, which makes it easy to reach by public transport. While it mostly showcases art and antiques, clothing, furniture and other vintage items are also on offer. In addition to which, artists, gallery owners and art dealers show up at the flea market to sell their paintings. From fine art and portraits to crafts and smaller installations, it is possible to find pretty much everything.

Experienced buyers who have visited this flea market for years, know that haggling at the Fehrbelliner Platz market requires a bit of negotiating skills. Don't be afraid to walk away (or pretend to) to see how the merchant reacts. With enough negotiating skills and cheek it is really possible to find great deals.

Insider tip

Discover the dealer's "pain threshold" (*Schmerzgrenze* in German) and offer just under it.

Fact file

+49 30 24358510
www.fehrbi.info
Fehrbelliner Platz 1
10707 Berlin
Underground U Fehrbelliner Platz
Saturday and Sunday 10am-4pm

2 SUAREZSTRASSE, OR THE 'ANTIQUÉ MILE'

After the Fehrbelliner Platz, move west to the affluent area of Charlottenburg, which is home to an abundance of captivating antique stores on Suarezstrasse, the Berliner Antikstrasse or, in English, the "Antique Mile".

This mile-long flea market is brimming with art deco, furniture and paintings all available at unbeatable prices.

Boasting more than 30 stores showcasing a spectacular array of collectables, estate purchases, and vintage curiosities, it is loved by locals. However, it still remains a mystery to a huge portion of the city's tourists.

This street was named after the legal reformer Carl Gottlieb Suarez in 1897. Today, the road perfectly connects the past with the present. If you're looking for glassware try Schöne alte Gläser at number 58 for a beautiful selection from the 1750s to the 1960s. Antik-Center Suarezstrasse can be found at no. 48-49, where you will discover a large showroom adorned with vintage memorabilia, artwork, and cabinets full of delicate jewellery.

For European furniture and accessories from the 1950s onwards, visit Design54 at numbers 54-56.



Fact file

+49 30 706 05 335
www.suarezstrasse.com
14057 Berlin
Saturday 10am-4pm
Monday to Friday 2pm-7pm
Underground Sophie Charlotte-Platz

Insider tip

On the first Saturday in September, the Suarezstrasse organises a yearly festival attended by up to 30,000.



The market is close to many of the city's landmarks

3 STRASSE DES 17. JUNI

Overlooking many historic landmarks, the twice-weekly Strasse des 17. Juni flea market (named after the victims of the workers' uprising in East Berlin on that date in 1953) is recognised as the original Berliner flea market. Anyone looking for bargains should show up early (but, on the plus side, it opens at 10am). Look for all manner of collectables, antique jewellery and memorabilia.

Fact file

+49 30 26550096
www.berlinertroedelmarkt.com
Strasse des 17 Juni
10623 Berlin
Train S-Bahn S Tiergarten
Saturday and Sunday 10am-5pm

4 MAUER PARK

With more than a million visitors annually, the Mauerpark flea market ranks among the most popular destinations in Berlin. Once a week, come rain or shine, up to 30,000 visitors flock to the Mauerpark event. The market, which covers a total of eight hectares (with up to 500 stalls split



The market is home to 500 traders

Sunday

5 ARKONAPLATZ

The Sunday flea market on Arkonaplatz has established itself as one of the best flea markets in Berlin. And no wonder, because it has been around for more than a century.

In 1912 the illustrator and photographer Heinrich Zille depicted the market's hustle and bustle in one of his sketches.

Its real charm comes from its location, a wide square beneath chestnut trees surrounded by old buildings and dotted with several pleasant cafes for a ringside view of the action. It is also the place where hipsters mingle with old Berliners.

The market is small and therefore very accessible with a good mix of professional sellers and locals selling things they no longer need. The emphasis is firmly on traditional antiques and collectables (more so than the Mauerpark). Look for anything from furniture to clothes, creditable paintings, as well as vintage electronics.

Fact file

+49 30 7869764
www.troedelmarkt-arkonaplatz.de
Arkonaplatz 10435 Berlin
Underground Bernauer Strasse
Sunday 10am-4pm



The market opens one day a week

over 7,000 sqm), is located near the former Todesstreifen (*Death Strip*) at the border area between Wedding and Prenzlauer Berg. Because it is open to both private dealers and professional traders, it has a wide range of different goods, for all tastes and every possible budget.

But this is not the only reason why this flea market is such a hit in Berlin: the festive atmosphere has to be experienced. Numerous performing artists can be seen on the nearby open space. And, around 3pm, it hosts a karaoke, if you fancy a singsong.

Fact file

+49 030 29 77 24 86
www.flohmarktimmauerpark.de
Bernauer Straße 63
10435 Berlin
Tram Wolliner Stasse
Sunday 8am-6pm



The market, with its surrounding eateries, is good a way to end the weekend

6 BOXHAGENER PLATZ

Located in the heart of the vibrant student quarter around Simon-Dach-Strasse in Friedrichshain, the flea market on Boxhagener Platz, nicknamed “Boxi” by locals, is a wonderful place to stroll and rummage around.

Brought to life in the late 1990s, it lures the professionals and heavy hitters of the Berlin flea market scene. While big enough to offer good variety, it is small enough to be more intimate and less overwhelming than other markets, like Mauerpark or Strasse des 17. Juni.

Look for everything from books and furniture to household equipment, paintings and second-hand designer garments. One of the distinctive features of the market is its many books and record stalls.

Last, but not least, there are numerous restaurants and snacks in the immediate vicinity, and the meadow in the square’s centre is

a great place to chill out after shopping.

In fact, a visit to the flea market Boxhagener Platz can be nicely combined with a Sunday brunch in one of the surrounding cafes.

Nicholas Martin is the founder of fleamarketinsiders.com an online guide to the world’s best flea markets and brocantes.

Fact file

+49 1521 1342683
Boxhagener Platz 1
10245 Berlin
Underground U Frankfurter Tor
Sunday 10am-6pm

Q&A

We asked Dr Stefan Körner, a specialist with the Berlin auction house Grisebach, for his tips on visiting the city



Q What home-grown Berlin antiques should UK collectors look for?

A Berlin has an abundance of extraordinary works of art from the golden twenties, when the city was the hot spot for international art. Artists from all over Europe came here, and it was the place where Modernism, for which art Grisebach is a worldwide leader, came into its own. The spectrum ranges from graphic works by Max Liebermann to paintings by Max Beckmann. Other areas include applied arts by outstanding goldsmiths such as Emil Lettré, whose estate, including jewellery and silver from the twenties, has just been rediscovered.

Q How would you describe your collecting style?

A I prefer to collect a crossover that brings together various styles, epochs, cultures, and centuries. This way your imagination has no boundaries. Include, perhaps, a Baroque commode by Abraham Roentgen, alongside a linear artwork by George. Money should not be the determining factor, it should be one’s taste and the joy of beautiful things.

Q What areas are currently selling well at Grisebach?

A A few years ago, we rediscovered the art of the Dresden Romantic which was incredibly popular. Younger audiences, whose eye has been schooled by the contemporary, find the cloud studies of German artists from around 1800, particularly fascinating.

Q Where are your favourite antique hunting grounds in Berlin?

A A visit to the flea market on the Strasse des 17. Juni is absolutely a must. But get there early, very early.

Q What is the most memorable piece you have sold, why was it so memorable?

A For me, the most spectacular experience was recovering the last German collection of Old Masters in 2015. This treasure trove, with Brueghel, Ruisdael, van

Dyck, and many more, had been slumbering in an apartment in Berlin for 70 years before Grisebach discovered it. In two days, 3,000 objects went under the hammer totalling €12m (£10³/₄m) and ending up in new collections around the world. The catalogue for the collection went on to be an important archive available to scholars around the world.

Q What antiques do you collect, if any?

A I love historical objects in daily use that look like modern art, such as a Mingei hook for a Japanese tea ceremony that looks like a Henry Moore, or a forcola of a Venetian gondola that looks like a sculpture by Hans Hartung.

Q What insider tips can you reveal to collectors visiting Berlin?

A There are incredible design shops here that show the best of the best of the 19th and 20th centuries – from art nouveau to Bauhaus, and from Scandinavian, mid-century design to East German design. Look, in particular, for the shops around Savignyplatz in Charlottenburg.

Q What are your favourite antiques or non-antiques places in Berlin?

A The Museum Island is clearly a must, but the cemeteries in Berlin also recount the city’s history. In them, one can find the graves of not only famous artists and authors, but the architects and sculptors commissioned to design them. For example, the Dorotheenstadt Cemetery has the graves of Bertolt Brecht and his wife Helene Weigel, next door to the home they shared together which is now a museum.

Q Which places are a must?

A Berlin has a wide range of small museums in the city centre. But, off the beaten track, look out for Heinz Berggruen’s collection of Classical Modernism and the Scharf-Gerstenberg family’s collection of Surrealism in Charlottenburg, which is next door to the Charlottenburg Palace, the Prussian royal residence. Nowhere in the world can you wander between such diverse districts – from sophisticated Charlottenburg, to the wild nightlife of Schöneberg, through multicultural Kreuzberg and the club culture of Friedrichshain, to the new centre of the government district in Mitte, nothing is very far away.

Grisebach’s next sale, titled Preview in Berlin, is on November 28. For more details visit www.grisebach.com