



BERLIN
20 YEARS ON

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Download five Guardian Berlin Wall films from iTunes to take with you to the city to use as audio-visual guides on your iPod or mp3 player.

Visit sections of the wall with this map to hear the story from construction to fall, and find out how the city has coped with unification 20 years on.

Eyewitnesses describe what it was like to wake up to a divided city, with the wall slicing through their lives, cutting them off from family and friends. Despite the barricades, some were determined to escape. One east Berliner explains how he helped 29 people to get to the west by building a tunnel under the wall. Another describes what it was like to open her

Stasi file and discover the plans had been made for her life. Many put their lives at risk trying to oppose the regime. Plus Guardian journalists talk about their initial hopes for the GDR which promised an alternative to compromised social democracy, and then the reality of the detective story reporting involved in their work during this time.

Maps and video podtours

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Construction and escapes
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- 4. Checkpoint Charlie**
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20 years after the fall of the wall

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1. Bernauer Strasse



Bernauer Strasse is Berlin's main wall memorial site and a street which epitomises the wall's impact on people's lives and the cityscape. The apartment blocks were situated in the east, but the street was in the west, prompting scores to jump through windows, helped by west Berliners. The street was also the place of secret tunnels that were dug during the years of the wall.

Directions

U-bahn to Bernauer station. Walk down the street to Bernauer Strasse 111.

What to see

The documentation centre (open 10am-5pm) has testimonials, films and a viewing platform over a reconstructed stretch of the wall. You can also head up the hill to the entrance and exit points of tunnel 29 (starting at the corner of Bernauer Strasse and Brunnen Strasse, emerging in the cellar of No 7 Schönholzer Strasse).

Eating

There aren't many cafes or restaurants immediately by the documentation Centre, but head up the hill to Oderberger Strasse, for an array of cafes and restaurants. On Sundays the Mauerpark flea-market is full of cheap nibbles and lunches.

Our film

Berlin residents woke up to a divided city - an iron curtain between east and west. We hear how the wall sliced this street in two, dividing families and friends and how, despite the death strip and barricades, some were determined to escape.

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2. Brandenburg Gate



The Brandenburg gate has been caught up in politics from well before the Berlin Wall. After the second world war, the heavily damaged structure was rebuilt in a cooperative agreement between east and west. During the years of the Berlin wall it was isolated, trapped in the centre of the death strip.

Directions

S-bahn to Unter den Linden.

What to see

There's very little evidence of the wall at the Brandenburg Gate apart from a cobbled line in the road marking where it ran. But there is a lot to see including the renovated Reichstag building with its Norman Foster glass dome, a symbol of transparency. Over the road a line of white crosses commemorate those who lost their lives at the wall. On the other side lies the Holocaust memorial.

Eating

Overlooking the gate is the Tucher restaurant (Pariser Platz 6a) for solid German fare. If you fancy coffee and the newspapers head up Unter den Linden to Cafe Einstein (Unter den Linden 42) on the right-hand side, or to spot celebs and politicians, try the Borchardt restaurant on Französische Strasse.

Our film

East and west Berliners recall living in the shadow of the wall and how this shaped their daily lives. West Berliners describe the fears of living in an island in the eastern bloc, while those in the east found that although their movements were restricted that some facilities improved such as childcare and health provisions.

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3. Potsdamer Platz



Potsdamer Platz is now a busy commercial intersection, but in its heyday in the 1920s and 30s it was the transport hub of the entire continent, the home of the world's biggest and most luxurious department stores the Wertheim and the heart of Berlin's night life. The area was devastated during the second world war, and then left desolate during the Cold war when the wall bisected it.

Directions

U-bahn station Potsdamer Platz.

What to see

On the square itself sit a few sections of wall for your Berlin holiday snaps. Walk down Stresseman Strasse and on the corner with Niederkirchner Strasse, a much longer section of wall exists. There's also the topography of terror exhibition in the former SS headquarters and the Martin Gropius building which hosts good art exhibitions.

Eating

Avoid this area for eating if you can; however, if you need to imbibe, head down to the basement of the Arkaden shopping centre for cheap eats or go more upmarket at the German-Austrian Lutter Wegner restaurant (Alte Potsdamer str 5, 10785).

Our film

Resistance could put your life at risk. Members of the opposition tell their terrifying stories. Roland Jahn tells how he was forcibly removed from his home land while theatre director Freya Klier tells how the Stasi used poisonous gas to kill her and her husband.

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4. Checkpoint Charlie



Checkpoint Charlie is now one of Berlin's most popular tourist destinations, but during the cold war it was the US army check point for use only by allied forces, diplomats and foreigners making it a central point of confrontation between the west and communist east. It was here in October 1961, that American and Soviet tanks directly faced each other in a border stand-off.

Directions

U-bahn to Kochstrasse or Stadtmittel.

What to see

The Checkpoint Charlie museum is the city's most popular wall attraction. The small white US Army guardhouse in the middle of Friedrichstrasse was rebuilt in 2001; drama students will pose for photos for €1. Two blocks down on Zimmer Strasse - once the death strip - you'll find a memorial to Peter Fechter, an 18-year-old apprentice bricklayer who bled to death after being shot in the stomach trying to escape.

Eating

Italian restaurant Sale e tabacchi (Kochstrasse 18 10969) is good for lunch or dinner, in the same elegant building as the leftwing newspaper, Taz.

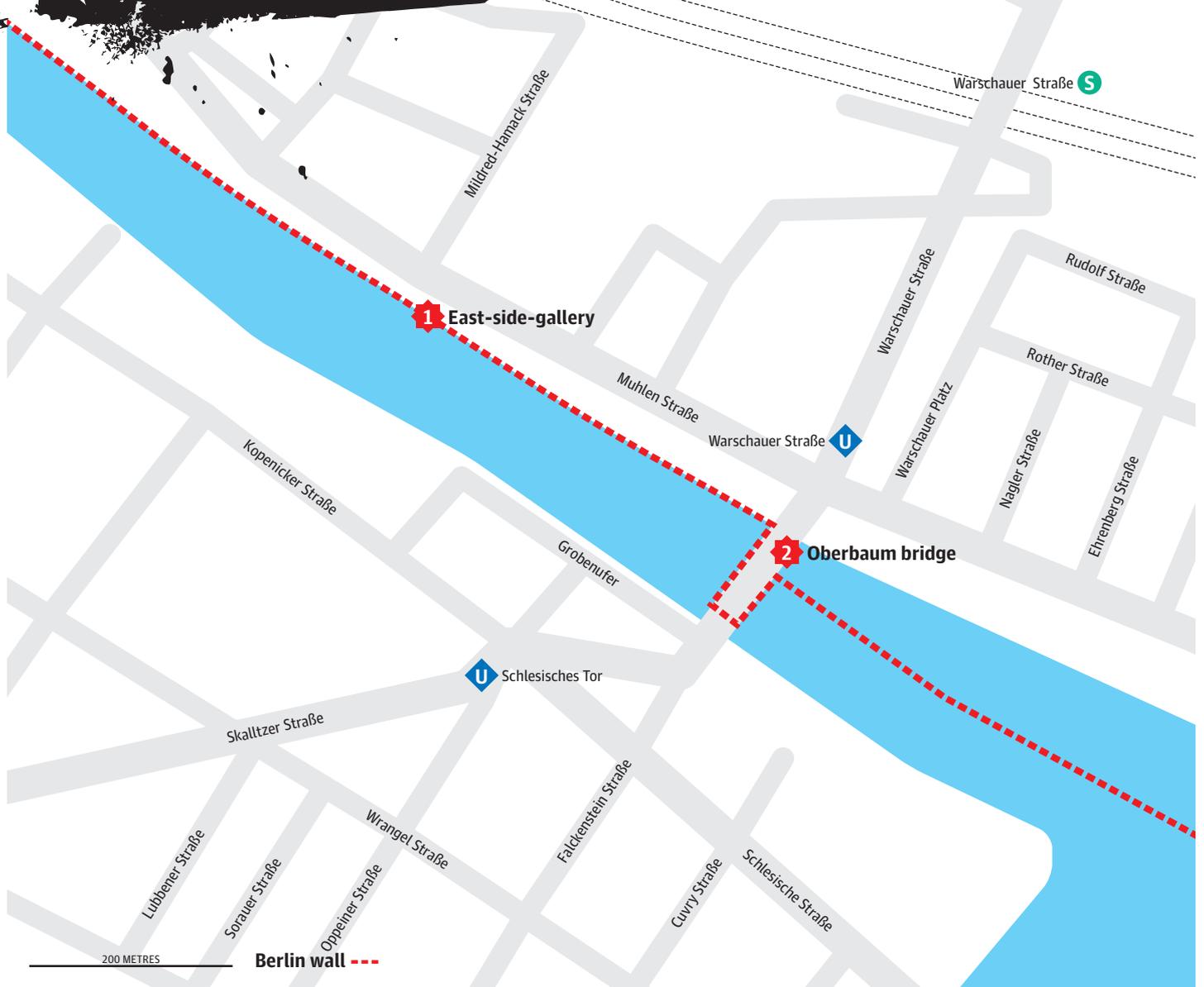
Our film

November 1989. The barrier between two ideologies was brought crashing down as the wall was finally breached. We hear about the famous press conferences where which accidentally triggered the fall of the wall, and the experiences of those in the east who saw the glittering west for possibly the first time ever.

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5. East Side Gallery



The East Side Gallery is the name for the longest remaining section of the original wall. After the GDR collapsed, the 1.3 km section was painted by over a hundred artists from all over the world. It is now restored, and is being repainted by some of the original artists.

S-Bahn station Ostbahnhof, and U-bahn station Warschauer strasse.

The East Side Gallery is the section of wall which runs along the north side of the river Spree by the Oberbaum bridge. It claims to be the world's largest outdoor gallery with 106 paintings originally designed as a freedom memorial and intended to prevent the wall from being destroyed. The paintings are now spectacular since their renovation and one of the most rewarding sections of the wall to visit.

Either head towards nearby Friedrichshain or cross the river to Kreuzberg and Oranienburger Strasse, both of which are packed with cool cafes and bars.

Twenty years on from the fall of the wall, how united is the city? Residents from east and west describe the initial difficulties of integration, and of the so-called "wall in the head" which continued to divide the city years later.

Directions

What to see

Eating

Our film