



# LGBTI\*

A diverse, cosmopolitan, and tolerant Berlin

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### **Berlin embodies the concept of diversity**

Berlin is one of the most exciting cities in Europe and the gay and lesbian scene is flourishing like never before. Over the course of the 20th century, Berlin developed into a centre for homosexual life and same-sex love. Berlin lives diversity in every respect and there is not just a single "gay district" in the city. Indeed, there is a lot for the LGTBI\* community to discover in many city neighbourhoods.

### **The LGBTI\* scene has flourished here for more than a century**

Since the 1920s, the scene has flourished in Berlin and the city has established itself, albeit with interruptions, as a gay capital. In 1897, Magnus Hirschfeld founded the Scientific-Humanitarian Committee in Berlin as the first gay and lesbian human rights organisation ever. In the 1920s, there was a rampant gay and lesbian nightlife scene across Berlin that attracted artists, actors, and creative minds from around the globe. After the destruction of the active gay and lesbian cultural scene by the Nazis, the homosexual scene remained underground until 1971, when Homosexual Action West Berlin was founded. The first gay pride parade (Christopher Street Day) in Berlin was held in 1979. Now, up to 750,000 people take to the streets of the city each year to mark CSD. The monthly magazines Siegessäule and Blu provide information about Berlin's LGBTI\* scene.

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### Berlin neighbourhoods flying the rainbow flag

The LGBTI\* scene is at home in Berlin's rainbow of diverse districts. You can clearly feel this in Kreuzberg 61, the western part of Kreuzberg around Mehringdamm. The centre of gay and lesbian life here is Café Sundström. Cafés such as the Drama and Sarotti-Höfe are also inviting places to while away the hours. The area around Hackescher Markt towards Rosenthaler Platz is also perfect for an extended shopping tour. Weinbergpark serves as the LGBTI\* heart of the district. There are also some contrasts to the chic atmosphere of Berlin-Mitte: Betty F\*\*\* is a tiny bar that is always bursting at the seams with friendly, outgoing people. The main center of the scene – now, as in the old days – is the traditionally gay district of Schöneberg. From Fuggerstrasse and Motzstrasse to Maassenstrasse and Nollendorfplatz, the wide variety of bars, clubs, restaurants, and shops make the Nollendorf district a "Gay Village." Over the years, some pubs and cafés, such as Café Berio, have emerged as true scene institutions.

### Gay Berlin is so much more than dancing or flirting

Berlin has a wide range of LGBTI\* bars. In addition to the clubs where you can party all night, there are also a variety of bars with gay and lesbian audiences. Heile Welt is an institution in Schöneberg. On weekends, many of Berlin's gay and lesbian residents visit this small bar, both as a starting point as well as for their last drink of the evening. Within just a short time, Bar Saint Jean has become one of the most popular meeting places for gay men in Mitte and the surrounding area. The French operators rely on elegant style and serve high-quality long drinks and cocktails. Große Freiheit 114 in Friedrichshain has also become an institution. It is the only gay bar with a darkroom. Those who want to party can do so almost everywhere in Berlin.

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One of the best known locations is Connection Club in Schöneberg. As in many LGBTI\* clubs, all are welcome here. Klub International in Mitte offers three dance floors, where drag queens often cut loose to create an exuberant atmosphere. The legendary KitKatClub is especially free-wheeling, where from Friday to Monday, a polysexual audience comes together for dancing, flirting, frolicking, and more.

### Creative and cosmopolitan: the LGBTI\* cultural scene

In the Schwulen Museum\* (Gay Museum), the history of the LGBTI\* community can be explored in an exhibition that extends over three floors. The museum includes a variety of showrooms, a library, and an archive, and also offers lectures. For those who like going to the movies, Kino International is the perfect destination. Every Monday at 10 p.m., MonGay shows films that are specially targeted to gay and lesbian film lovers. Frequently, these are current blockbuster movies, but sometimes there is also an old classic. The Berliner Kabarett Anstalt (BKA), is also worth a visit. Here, nearly every evening, artists present improvisation and cabaret as well as a variety of transvestite shows, such as Cherchez La Femme, with Joey Arias and Sherry Vine.

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### Women only

When it comes to the LGBTI\* scene, Berlin offers many popular hotspots. Some of these venues are exclusively for women only. Among these is Begine in Schöneberg. This cultural project is a venue for lesbians and feminists, and hosts alternative parties, concerts, and workshops on a regular basis. The Schokofabrik (chocolate factory) has a long feminist tradition in Berlin. As an association, it provides many consultation services as well as hosting political and cultural events. Sexklusivitäten, a salon for lesbians, bisexual women, and transgenders, held by and with sex expert Laura Mérrit, exists only in Berlin. Every Friday, this sex expert invites her audience to a discussion on a specific topic, such as sex and aging. For those who want to party, the famous L-Tunes party is the place to be. It takes place every four weeks, usually on the last Saturday of the month, in alternating venues.

### Berlin: the first cosmopolitan city with its own LGBTI\* collection

Berlin is a tolerant and open metropolis and one of the world's leading gay travel destinations. The hotel network pink pillow Berlin Collection is aimed specifically at queer tourists. This unique initiative from *visitBerlin* and more than 60 Berlin hotels identifies accommodation that is especially welcoming to members of the community.

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Find out more about this topic

**More information and tips on LGBTI\* in Berlin can be found here:**

<http://bit.ly/2HcPMGw>

## **Our tips:**

- › 40 years of CSD: Christopher Street Day 2018 → <http://bit.ly/2oShzo3>
- › Where the rainbow flag flies → <http://bit.ly/2H4DrnO>
- › Tips for gay and lesbian bars in Berlin → <http://bit.ly/2H4LO2G>
- › Where the LGBTI\* community parties → <http://bit.ly/2oQE4dg>
- › Tips for Berlin's lesbian scene → <http://bit.ly/2oQZZRD>
- › pink pillow Berlin Collection: LGBTI\*-friendly hotels → <http://bit.ly/2oQBgwG>
- › Queer cinema: MonGay at Kino International → <http://bit.ly/2H7p1n1>
- › LGBTI\* events → <http://bit.ly/2FWZo96>
- › LGBTQ meetups in Berlin → <http://bit.ly/2I2xLMx>



# Pictures

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