



PRUSSIA & THE RISE OF GERMANY BERLIN & POTSDAM

MONDAY 6 – SATURDAY 11 DECEMBER 2021 (6 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£2335

- **Comprehensive introduction to Berlin, one of Europe's most remarkable cities, dressed in its Christmas livery**
- **See the city's major historic sites & the city's finest museums**
- **Special access to the Reichstag to include dinner in its rooftop restaurant**
- **We visit Potsdam to explore the royal parks & Frederick the Great's fabled Sans Souci**
- **Very comfortable 5* hotel just off Unter den Linden**



Berlin, Museum Island

OVERVIEW

Prussia - How many reactions can a name conjure up in the Anglo-Saxon imagination? In this case, surely some of the most frequent include Frederick the Great in his role both as military genius and as patron of the arts; Bismarck and the creation of a German Empire; the family links between the Prussian and British royal families; the militaristic traditions which propelled Germany into two World Wars and their horrific consequences?

While these themes will form *part* of the historic framework for our visit to Berlin, in contrast to these often tragic events there is a parallel and happier story, above all the reunification of the two Germanys after the collapse of Communism and the fall of the Berlin Wall. Indeed, it is Berlin, more than any other city, which has demonstrated Germany's resilience, its acknowledgement of its past and its faith in the future, expressed through a commitment to the human spirit in all its forms. Thus, the great cultural traditions of German music, literature and the visual arts will be with us at all times.

Our visit will weave these complex strands via a series of guided walks around Berlin's historic centre. Since reunification, enormous investment has poured into the restoration of the historic core and the creation of a new government district from where the reunited Germany is administered. For culturally biased travellers these projects may be dwarfed by the reorganisation of many of the city's Museums and Galleries onto the 'Museum Island', a testament to Germany's belief in visual culture as a transformational experience.

The Altes Museum has unrivalled holdings of antiquities and the Neues Museum, remodelled in stunning fashion by David Chipperfield – the room with Nefertiti's bust is alone worth a detour – adds a memorable dimension as all of mankind's history is brought to life. While the main Pergamon Museum was closed for restoration, much of it has now reopened and we will be able to see their 'Panorama' display of selected sculptures from the ancient site. For lovers of paintings there is the magnificent Gemäldegalerie with Germany's most comprehensive display of Old Masters. We also visit Potsdam to discover Frederick the Great's fabled Sans Souci set within a wonderful park.

Berlin's commitment to musical life is well known. We have left most evenings free so that participants can take advantage of any performances which might be available with further information available when your booking is confirmed. The wonderful architecture of Germany's capital is also the perfect backdrop to traditional German Christmas markets. In short, jolly street markets, festive decorations, culture and music in abundance await us.

Our hotel will be the very comfortable 5* Hotel Regent, a short walk from the famous Unter den Linden and most of the sights we shall visit, and very close to two of the city's opera houses. It has an excellent restaurant and there are many other good restaurants nearby.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Monday 6 December – We fly from Heathrow to **Berlin Brandenburg**, arriving early evening. We drive into the city to check into our hotel, the **5* Hotel Regent**. Later that evening we have our first group dinner - water, wine and coffee are included with all group lunches and dinners.

Day 2: Tuesday 7 December – Leaving the hotel we begin our exploration of the city, partly on foot, partly by coach. Iconic monuments such as the **Brandenburg Gate**, the remarkable **Museum Island**, the city's **World War II** monuments, the **Holocaust Memorial**, the **Berlin Wall** and the amazing transformation of the city since reunification will all be encountered. Lunch is included today, and the evening will be free.

Day 3: Wednesday 8 December – The world-renowned **Museum Island** (*Museuminsel*) hosts five of the city's most important museums and over the next few days we shall visit almost all of them. We begin with the **Altes Museum** which has an amazing collection of Greek and Roman antiquities. We continue to the **Panorama** of selected pieces from the **Pergamon Museum** after which there will be some free time for lunch, not included today. In the afternoon we concentrate on the **Neues Museum**, commissioned to take the overflow from the Altes Museum, visited earlier in the morning, and though very badly damaged in World War II it has been magnificently restored by British architect, David Chipperfield. The contents range from pre-history to ancient Egypt and beyond, the highlight being the wondrous bust of Nefertiti. The evening will be free.

Day 4: Thursday 9 December – This morning we travel by coach to the city's **Kulturforum** and Berlin's finest picture gallery, the **Gemäldegalerie** where we spend the morning looking at a stunning array of masterpieces. All the major European schools are represented with particularly good paintings by Raphael, Caravaggio, Rubens, Rembrandt and Vermeer. Our visit will be broken by coffee and lunch, not included, in its excellent restaurant. In the years before reunification, **Charlottenburg** was one of the four districts in Berlin's western sector, in fact it was THE district, full of elegant shops and expensive housing. Our focus this afternoon will be **Schloss Charlottenburg**, a fine palace built in the 1690s by Frederick, Elector of Brandenburg as a summer residence for his wife, Sophie Charlotte (the same man who modestly upgraded himself as King Frederick I of Prussia). The original baroque **Schloss** was extended several times and of particular interest to us will be the **New Wing**, created for Frederick the Great, which houses one of the finest collections of French eighteenth century paintings outside France. We return to the city centre and the evening will be free.

Day 5: Friday 10 December – We return to the Museum Island, this time to see the **Alte Nationalgalerie** with its unrivalled collection of German Romantic painting and a superb group of French Impressionists. We end our formal visit late morning after which you will have the afternoon free for private explorations. We meet again in the early evening when we walk to the **Reichstag**, a remarkable fusion where the historic skeleton of Prussia's Parliament, destroyed in World War II, has been refashioned by Richard Rogers to hold the new German parliament. It is an astonishing achievement, and our day will end with dinner in its splendid rooftop glass-walled restaurant after which we return to our hotel on foot.

Day 6: Saturday 11 December – We leave our hotel and travel by coach to **Potsdam**, long the summer retreat of the Prussian royal family. The town is encircled by a wonderful park full of palaces, garden follies and the like including **Sanssouci**, the exquisite retreat built by Frederick the Great. We have our final group lunch in central Potsdam, after which we continue to the airport for the return flight to Heathrow.

Music & Opera: We have left most evenings free so that participants can take advantage of any performances available. Links to book tickets for the two main opera houses and the Philharmonie complex of concert halls will be sent with your tour confirmation. Please note that regrettably we are unable to book tickets on your behalf.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2335 **Without Flights** £2170 **Deposit** £350 **Single Supplement** £375 (Double Room for Sole Use)

Hotels 5 nights with breakfast at the 5* Hotel Regent, Berlin

Flights British Airways

Outward: **BA986** Departs London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1555** arrive Berlin Brandenburg **1850**

Return: **BA995** Departs Berlin Brandenburg **1735** arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 5) **1835**

Price includes 2 dinners & 2 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, City Tax, entry fees & gratuities, services of Tom Duncan & our local tour manager/guide

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 3 dinners & 3 lunches



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