

**Newsletter # 04 TGAC**

**“THE STORY OF BERLIN” – the capital’s hands-on exhibition with an original nuclear shelter:**

THE STORY OF BERLIN is a multimedia exhibition that lets you experience every phase of the capital's development, from its trading center status in the year 1237 to the Fall of The Berlin Wall, using modern computer and animation techniques together with original models and lavishly reconstructed historic facsimiles. Visitors are made to pause, playfully learn the city's history, and cross the border from viewer to active participant. With the use of sound recordings, recognizable scents and tactile stimulus, all of the senses are taken into account. At the informative center of the exhibition are not important historic dates, famous Kaisers and presidents, but rather the life and times of everyday Berlin citizens and what it meant to live in that period. After viewing a short multimedia-show chronicling the formation of the city, THE STORY OF BERLIN visitors "step into" history themselves walking through more than 20 artistic designed theme rooms – from a typical Berlin courtyard over the birth of a metropolis and the time of National Socialism to the fall of the wall in 1989. Guided tours take the visitors to an original radiation-proof bunker underneath the Kurfuerstendamm street. This still functional ABC-construction was built federally-funded during in 1974 and had an overall capacity for sheltering 3.952 people. The bunker visualizes the constant state of dread that people – not only Berliners! – lived in during the Cold War period.

[http://www.story-of-berlin.de/index.php?page=en\\_aktuelles](http://www.story-of-berlin.de/index.php?page=en_aktuelles)

**The “Schwerin castle” – scenic set on a lake in Northern East Germany:** The city of Schwerin is the capital of Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania. The fairytale Schwerin castle with its illustrious golden towers and turrets stands as a unique landmark of the state capital on an island in the Schwerin lake. First reports of a fort on the location were made in the year 973. After being destroyed in 1160 the fort was rebuilt. From 1358 for centuries the Schwerin fort – and later the castle – was the home of the dukes and grand dukes of Mecklenburg and later Mecklenburg–Schwerin. Under Duke Johann Albrecht I. (1525–1576), the castle saw some important changes. The fort became a

castle, and the defensive functionality of the fortress was replaced with ornamentation and concessions to comfort. In 1563 the castle's chapel became the first new Protestant church of the state. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the rebuilding of the castle under Grand Duke Friedrich was inspired by French Renaissance castles. Since late 1990 the Schwerin castle serves as the seat of the state parliament. It is also home to the castle museum on 3 floors. In the summer months enjoy the wonderful view from the restored orangery across the blue expanse of Schwerin Lake and allow yourself to be pampered in Mediterranean flair under palm trees and orange trees in the orangery café.  
<http://www.schwerin.com/eng/ansicht/castle.php>

**With “Routes to Luther” to the roots of Reformation:** Martin Luther is certainly one of the most famous Germans and very well known not only among members of the Lutheran Church congregations. In the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Luther’s challenging theological ideas inspired the Protestant Reformation and changed the course of Western civilization. His translation of the Bible into the vernacular, making it more accessible to ordinary people, had a tremendous political impact on the church and on German culture. “Routes to Luther” takes you to the places where Martin Luther lived, to the time in which he lived, and to one of the most interesting cultural landscapes in German and European history. Eisenach, Erfurt, Schmalkalden, Torgau and the two Lutheran towns of Eisleben and Wittenberg are home to the most important Lutheran sites where you can experience the close connection between the life and influence of Luther and the backdrop against which they were set. The “Routes to Luther” will take you to Wartburg Castle and to Luther’s house in Eisenach, to the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt, to the houses in Eisleben where Luther was born and where he died, to Hartenfels Palace in Torgau and to the Luther House and Melanchthon’s house in Wittenberg. You can follow the footsteps of Martin Luther independently by yourself – The German American Connection offers an individual travel planning service. Or you can go with us on a customized and escorted group tour – with friends and family.

<http://www.routes-to-luther.com>

[http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/Martin\\_Luther.html](http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/Martin_Luther.html)

**The culinary specialties of Northern East Germany:** The German state Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania (*Mecklenburg–Vorpommern*) is situated in the country's northeastern corner, sharing its eastern border with Poland. It is Germany's least populated state, with only 80 inhabitants per square kilometer, as opposed to over 230 for the national average. The region is well-known for its pristine nature and serene water landscapes. The state's Baltic Sea (Ostsee) coast with its beautiful islands, beaches and resort towns and more than 2,000 inland lakes attract massive numbers of tourists – primarily other Germans seeking recreation and rest. Traditional dishes owe their distinct character to the state's landscape and its natural resources. The regional cuisine offers an astounding variety of fish and seafood dishes as well as hearty and nutritious cooking using local crops which grow plentifully in the fertile soil. The Baltic Sea's catch is diverse with over 100 fish species, including cod, the staple fish of the Baltic Sea, herring, flounder and many others. A wide variety of grains, potatoes, cabbage and root vegetables thrive on the region's fertile land. One popular traditional dish is a meat and vegetable one-pot dish which usually consists of cabbage, carrots, turnips, often peas and usually pork. This hearty dish provided perfect nourishment to hardworking farmworkers. Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania's young generation of chefs has successfully taken local cuisine into a more modern direction which makes it more compatible with today's lifestyle. People of Mecklenburg–Western Pomerania have a long tradition of celebrating seasonal local produce and fish: herring week, hornfish season, potato days, cabbage week etc..

<http://germanfoods.org/consumer/facts/mecklenburgpomerania.cfm>

**Getting around in Germany – Driving a car:** Germany has a great variety of “Scenic Routes” such as the “Avenues Route”, the “Castle Route” and the “Fairytale Route” as examples. Citizens of non-EU states with a valid driver's license may drive in Germany for the length of their stay up to six months. It is not usually necessary to carry an international driver's license, but recommended. The legal driving age in Germany is 18, though the age requirement for renting a car is often 21. Though speed limit signs aren't posted everywhere, that doesn't mean there aren't any. In cities and town, the speed limit is 50 km/h (31 mph), unless otherwise posted. On normal two-lane highways the limit is 100 km/h. Only freeways, or *Autobahnen*, have mostly a "suggested" speed of usually 130 km/h instead of a speed limit. Speeds of 160 to 200 km/h are common on some freeways. Be aware

that at some sections there are also speed limits for the *Autobahn* – watch out for the signs! Germany has relatively strict car-seat laws. Children shorter than 150 centimeters (59 inches) or under the age of 12 are required to have a car-seat when riding in the car. Seat-belts are mandatory for both children and adults. You can find more detailed information about German road regulations (general information, speed limits, right of way, parking, traffic signs, gas stations) and about car rental in Germany here on our webpage:

[http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/Individual\\_Traveler\\_Info.html](http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/Individual_Traveler_Info.html)

---

**More news & tips:**

**| *The German American Connection***  


<http://www.tgac-us.com>