

**Art Center Berlin Friedrichstrasse – A great forum for international contemporary art:** Within the last years, Berlin has become one of the most important cultural metropolises and is now the greatest gallery location in Europe. The art scene of the city is characterized by its great variety and its high dynamics. This makes Berlin one of the most interesting cities worldwide for contemporary art and new trends. Since its opening in June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2005 the Art Center has become part of Berlin's excellent reputation as a city for art and culture. Since that day, thousands of people have been visiting the Art Center and they have seen exhibitions of different genres, from sculpture, design, paintings, and photography on to installations, video art, sound art, interactive and kinetic art, and special exhibitions with reference to different themes. The display of Leonardo da Vinci's inventions attracted more than 50.000 visitors by itself. In the middle of the vibrant and remodeled Eastern part of Berlin – very close to where the Berlin Wall used to separate the city – the Art Center is a perfect addition to the prestigious Old and New National Art Galleries and to the numerous small and independent art galleries in Berlin. The current exhibitions cover a wide range of themes & techniques – from “Art from Madagascar”, “Contemporary Art from Korea”, “Golden Era – Chinese Contemporary Fine Art”, over “FriendsForever – Master Sculptors of Zimbabwe”, “Aboriginal Art – Australia” to “Home Solaris, Homo Lunar is u.a.” and “Encaustic” by the US-american artist Heidi Rufeh.

<http://www.art-center-berlin.de/indexen.html>

**German original Dark Beer – Brewed in the tradition of “Wippraer craft brewing”:** There is only one “Original Wippraer Bier” – traditionally brewed in the small town Wippra in the beautiful and romantic “Harz” region with its forests, hills, unique rock formations, sleepy villages, half-timbered houses – and local microbreweries. The “Harz”-breweries claim to use the purest water, a very important quality feature for an excellent beer. Wippra's beer brewing tradition goes back to 1480. The “Museums- & Traditionsbrauerei Wippra/Harz” is very passionate about using unique historic recipes and techniques. The best way to experience that first-hand would be a guided

brewery tour – or even much better, an exclusive hands-on brew seminar with the local brew master. This 8-hour event starts – like in real life – early in the morning, because the attendees will be part of the regular brewing process. But don't worry, a hearty breakfast "Fruehschoppen" style and a beer tasting lunch will strenghten you. You can learn about the secrets of brewing awarded German Dark Beer "Schwarzbier" from people who know their stuff. The brewery Wippra won the silver medal in the category 23 "German-style-Schwarzbier" at the World Beer Cup in Colorado in 2002! And here is a tip for passionate homebrewers who travel with sympathetic friends or significant others, who rather skip a brew seminar: The region surrounding Wippra offers so many fantastic places to visit & things to do, that everyone will enjoy her/his day: a hike through the Harz forest – home of numerous witch legends and fairytales, a trip to the Luther town Eisleben – the small old town, where Martin Luther was born and where he died, a visit of the UNESCO world heritage town Quedlinburg – the probably oldest half-timbered building in Germany can be find there between over 1000 well preserved half-timbered houses from seven centuries.

<http://www.wippraer-bier.de/> (only in German available)

[http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German\\_Beer\\_Crawl.php](http://www.thegermanamericanconnection.com/German_Beer_Crawl.php)

**Klostersommer – The summer of Brandenburg's Monasteries with its romantic cultural events:** The state Brandenburg embeds the city Berlin in East Germany. Its capital Potsdam has a very long history of being the residence of Prussian Kings and German Emperors. Every year "Brandenburg's Cultural Tours" present an impressive calendar of events: concerts, trips in the footsteps of local artists, art exhibitions, readings, architecture trips, culinary delights, historical tours and so on. The "Summer of Brandenburg's Monasteries" and the "Brandenburg Summer Concerts" are only two out of numerous series of events going on. Every weekend during the entire summer classic concerts are taking place all over Brandenburg – in village churches, monasteries, castles, parks, gardens, on open-air stages, in old city halls and other buildings of historic and architectural importance. The repertoire comprises opera, choirs, chamber music, orchestras of all sizes and also provides a stage for young international musicians and sinders. In June and Juli historic Brandenburg monasteries become natural enchanting romantic stages for traditional folk plays, modern improvisation theatre, musicals, readings – and not to forget the culinary delights of Brandenburg's soil, forest, rivers and lakes. Embracing the 2008 theme

“German castles, parks & gardens” the “Cultural Summer” program includes day trips and guided tours to ancient castles, glamorous manors, royal parks and romantic gardens. One of the most beautiful castles in Brandenburg is the “Rheinsberg” castle set on a lake, which was built in 1556. Crown prince Frederick (later Frederick the Great) purchased the castle in 1734 and presented it later to his brother Prince Heinrich, who lived there for 50 years. The yards, the garden, the park and the grottos transform a classic concert into an outstanding romantic summer night adventure.

[http://www.kulturreisen-brandenburg.de/viewer.html?object\\_id=](http://www.kulturreisen-brandenburg.de/viewer.html?object_id=)

**Germans celebrate Spring Flavors with Fresh Asparagus, Wild Garlic and young Strawberries:** After several months of winter time it is time to welcome spring in April and May by waking up the tastebuds with fresh, healthy recipes featuring typical spring season vegetables. White asparagus is probably the most popular spring vegetable, the dishes vary traditionally from region to region. Fresh German asparagus is only available between mid April and late June, therefore it's no surprise that the communities especially in areas where the asparagus grows are celebrating colorful spring festivities serving all kind of asparagus dishes and crowning the local beauty “Asparagus Queen 2008”. The “classic” dish is quite simple: steamed asparagus served with boiled potatoes, ham and parsley. Wild garlic (“Baerlauch”) is a zesty wild-growing herb which has gained great popularity among consumers in Germany. It can only be found and gathered in remote forest areas for a very short period of time before it starts blossoming. The leaves with its very intense garlic-like smell and taste are the basis for creamy soups, sauces or the very popular “wild garlic pesto”. The perfect finish for a spring dinner would be fresh tasty strawberries. Some farmers offer a “pick yourself service” for a very reasonable price. This way you can take advantage of a nice spring weekend day and go on a bicycle tour with family or friends. On your way back home just stop at a strawberry farm, for a snack & a basket to take home or to your vacation apartment. There you will enjoy the fruity dessert with a tasty cool German white wine – looking forward to more beautiful warm spring and summer days in Germany.

<http://www.germanfoods.org>

**Getting around in Germany – traveling by Train:** Getting around by train is not only a very exciting way of traveling through the beautiful landscapes of German regions, it is also quick, convenient, “green” and can be a distinct money saver if you plan your trip in advance. Germany has a very comprehensive and efficient railroad traffic network – long distance and locally. Especially the major cities such as Hamburg, Hanover, Berlin, Frankfurt, Munich, Cologne, Nuremberg, Leipzig, Dresden and Erfurt are well linked by fast train connections – the “ICE” (Inter City Express). Generally spoken tickets are cheaper the earlier you book them. Special discounts are mostly subject to availability. Especially on long distance journeys you can save a lot of money and take advantage of seasonal and regional discount programs, if you purchase your tickets in advance online at the Deutsche Bahn website [www.bahn.de](http://www.bahn.de). You just print them out as e-tickets. Read the terms & conditions carefully, that you know about refund policy and rules. Groups of six and more can save up to 70% depending on how early they book. If you want to be more flexible, you can always buy your ticket beforehand at the train station on the counter or at ticket vending machines (instructions also in english). Be always prepared to pay cash, not all stations accept credit cards. Or just stop by at an Internet Café or ask your hotel staff – and book online even only a few hours in advance. Children up to 14 years travel for free when accompanied by a parent or grandparent. Reserving a seat is a good idea if you are traveling at peak times (weekends, rush hour, or holidays) or if you have a lot of luggage with you. If you are seeking the ultimate “travel back in time” rail road experience, you should definitively plan a ride on one of the local traditional steam trains. The state Saxony has a long tradition of rail road traffic. No where else in Germany you will find as many steam trains as in Saxony. It is truly a fantastic adventure to cruise through the unique romantic Saxon countryside in those nostalgic trains!

<http://www.bahn.de/international/view/en/index.shtml>

<http://www.saxon-steam.com/>

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**More news & tips:**

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