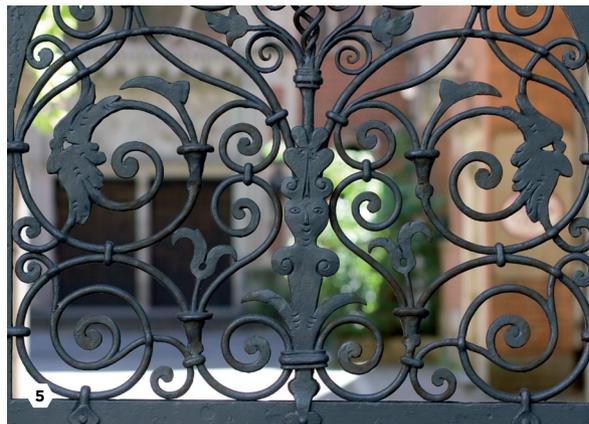
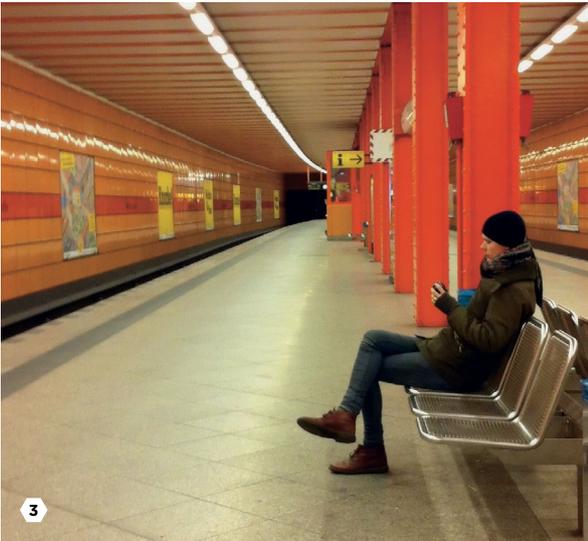




MY CITY*: BERLIN

SHARE THE SECRET SPACES OF GERMANY'S LARGEST CITY, THROUGH THE EYES OF BLOGGER SANDRA JUTO





- 1 Oderberger Strasse, the street in Prenzlauer Berg.
- 2 Café Slörm, Danziger Strasse, for a quick stop or long afternoon with friends.
- 3 For those in a hurry to get across the vast city, the Berlin U-Bahn serves more than a million people a day.
- 4 A street's as high as it is long in Berlin's Kreuzberg district, also known as 'X-Berg' to the locals.
- 5 Sandra discovers the artistry of the city on her camera walks.



SANDRA JUTO

Sandra is a freelance illustrator, graphic designer and artist originally from the north of Sweden. She loves to blog about her everyday life in Berlin, where she has lived for almost two years.

Most of us live in cities. Even if a tiny part of us yearns for the country, it's hard to deny the excitement of town. Every issue we ask one person – clearly in love with their city – to tell us what makes it so special. Through their eyes, we can take a fresh look at where we live too.

What drew you to Berlin?

Ten years ago I visited Berlin for the first time – it was instant love. Ever since, I've visited the city at least once a year and a few years ago I asked myself: "Why do I go back to Sweden, when it's here I want to be?" So I moved.

What keeps you in the city?

I love it here. It's huge and, since I love to walk, Berlin is perfect. I can start walking and after eight hours I still haven't reached the outskirts.

Which season makes your city feel most alive?

The summer; everyone talks about the Berlin summer. I see what they mean – people spend lots of time outdoors and look happier. Personally, I love it when the seasons change, when something new is coming.

What does it feel like in the autumn?

Berlin is amazing in the autumn. The colours, the smells, the fresh air, the still-pretty-warm sun. It's perfect to

have a beer outdoors on a lazy Sunday after visiting the different flea markets. Autumn is my favourite season and it was mostly in the autumn that I visited Berlin before moving here. My relationship with Berlin in the autumn is very special.

What time of day do you most enjoy?

The morning. I love to get up early and take a walk and look at people leaving clubs, people walking their dogs, people rushing to work and old people doing their grocery shopping.

Does your city have many parks to explore?

Berlin has parks everywhere. It's a very green city with so much space for trees on the broad, broad streets. The air feels much fresher than in most large cities, probably because the city is so spread out. »



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“Germans LOVE vivid colours, such as lime green, orange, PURPLE and turquoise – especially if they are combined”

1 The Lebanese restaurant, Babel, is down one of Sandra's favourite streets, the trendy Kastanienallee.

Where is your favourite green space?

Walking under the lime trees on Karl-Marx-Allee, sitting at Märchenbrunnen, looking at the beautiful sculptures is a favourite of mine. Every neighbourhood has several different parks and, in the summer, I love to buy takeaway food and sit down in the closest one and eat.

What is the light like?

The light in Berlin is for me quite exotic. Previously, I always lived on the coast, having been in two different towns in Sweden. There was always the Nordic light and a sea breeze. Berlin has a warmer light, which sometimes gives me the feeling of being in Greece or Italy. Being from Sweden I don't see the evenings as long and light, but I know people from the south do.

Where do you like to escape to?

I really like to go down to the river Spree to see and smell water. Growing up in a town that was built on different islands on the sea coast sometimes makes living in the middle of a country feel a little bit claustrophobic.

What's your best discovery?

I am surprised to find myself less stressed. The people here are way more relaxed than in Sweden.

What lifts your spirits?

To take my camera out for a walk – it makes me see my life in a better way and appreciate what I have.

Tell us about the colours of your city.

Berlin is a city of contrasts; the houses that haven't been fixed since before the war paired with new or renovated glass-façade buildings. I've noticed that Germans love vivid colours, such as lime green, orange, purple and turquoise – especially if they are combined. Berliners are certainly not afraid of painting a house bright yellow or even hot pink. It's a mix, which is sometimes hilariously ugly yet sometimes breathtakingly beautiful.

What would surprise a newcomer to your city?

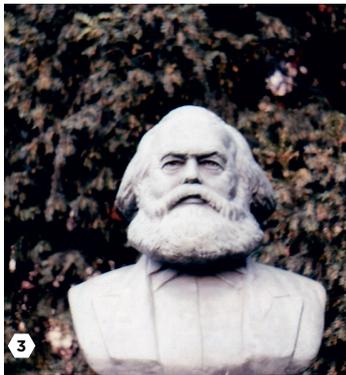
How big it is, the broad never-ending streets. I always tell people to bring their most comfortable shoes. The ones who ignore my tip always regret it.

What one thing would change about the city?

More equal economy for everyone. The mayor of Berlin once said: "Berlin is poor but sexy". I can assure you, there is nothing sexy about the people who are really poor here, it's just very sad.



2 In the spirit of the city, even the angels love to bare all, as seen on Schlossbrücke bridge. 3 Karl reigns over Strausberger Platz ready to be greeted by Sandra as she strolls to the top of Karl-Marx Allee.



What are your favourite places to gather with friends?

I love to go out for food with my friends. The restaurants I enjoy are: 'Babel' in Prenzlauer Berg for its great Lebanese food; 'Toca Rouge' in Mitte, for a delicious Chinese meal, I also love its cool setting; 'Kastanie' is perfect for basic German cuisine in Charlottenburg; and 'Cô Cô' is where we go in Mitte to have *banh mi* (Vietnamese baguettes).

What's the best time of day to eat out?

My favourite time is in the morning on a weekday. It's never crowded and the Berlin breakfast is amazing. The best I have found is the weekend brunch at 'Aunt Benny'.

Where do you like to go with friends?

Michelberger Hotel in Friedrichshain is a great place to meet friends. In the morning and during the day it's more of a café. But, in the evening, it transforms into a bar and the interior and atmosphere are just so good.

Where do you like to go alone?

I like to go out looking for new places on my camera walks, places where I can bring my husband as a surprise – our hobby is to visit new restaurants, bars and cafés.

Do you like people-watching?

I love it! Berliners have many different looks; people with funny haircuts, men in transparent tights, crazy pattern and colour combinations. There's so much to look at!



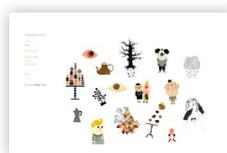
4 The charmingly titled Five Elephant café embraces laidback Berlin style. 5 Aunt Benny in Jessnerstrasse, Friedrichshain, is Sandra's top place for breakfast.

What games do you play as you go about your day?

Every time I pass by the statue of Karl Marx at the Karl-Marx-Allee, I say 'Hi Kalle!' to him. It's my favourite street in Berlin. It's so bizarre and beautiful.

Where would you like to live if you could not live here?

In a house on a cliff next to the sea in Italy, but only if NYC and Berlin were a few minutes walk away. 6



SANDRA JUTO'S quirky illustrations can be seen, admired and bought on her website, along with prints and handmade items including her much-loved Wrist Worms. www.sandrajuto.com.