



What's Past Is Passed

Get a historical tour on a run through Berlin

IN BERLIN, A CITY WHERE LAYERS of history weave a thread through some of the seminal moments of the 20th century, a run can be an eye-opening window into the past. Indeed, to sprint through the heart of the German capital is to pass some of most iconic landmarks of recent memory on a well-marked plain.

A 3.7-mile run beginning and ending at the city's architectural chef-d'oeuvre, the Brandenburg Gate, passes monuments that aim to memorialize Berlin's checkered past. By heading off on Ebertstrasse, with the lush expanse of the Tiergarten (which you later will duck into) on your right, you come to arguably the most somber of such commemorations: Peter Eisenman's haunting Holocaust Memorial.

Take the first left onto Hannah-Arendt-Strasse, where you'll notice the memorial's most striking feature: 2,711 concrete slabs that cover an area roughly the size of four football fields. Pause a moment and then continue through the second intersection to Wilhelmstrasse, where you'll make a left, darting past the asymmetrical new-look British Embassy before making a right onto Unter den Linden.

Jogging down the wide, gravel-covered median of Unter den Linden, you'll pass sidewalk bistros and, after making a right onto Friedrichstrasse, Volkswagen's expansive, multileveled Automobil Forum — part showroom, part museum. Badly damaged during WWII, Friedrichstrasse was once the hub of East Berlin. Follow it for several blocks, and after 10 intersections, make a right onto Zimmerstrasse.

Galloping along the left shoulder, you'll notice the inlaid brick trail with bronze plaques reading "Die Berliner Mauer." This is where the Berlin Wall once stood, and where, a block away, on Niederkirchnerstrasse, a 660-foot stretch remains.

By making a right onto Stresemannstrasse, you'll be gazing at Berlin's future, encapsulated in the resurgence of Potsdamer Platz. Make a left onto Potsdamer Strasse, taking in the striking skeletal façades, and then a right onto Ben-Gurion-Strasse to enter the Tiergarten and what was once West Berlin, where you'll soon cross the Strasse des 17. Juni and get a glimpse of the Soviet War Memorial, the final resting place for 2,500 World War II soldiers.

Continue on to the Platz der Republik, where Sir Norman Foster's glass cupola dramatically tops the 1894 neo-Renaissance Reichstag, a stone's throw from the Brandenburg Gate. This once-forbidding Cold War boundary will welcome you with open arms — an added triumph to your final stretch.

— Farhad Heydari

Getting There: Continental offers daily nonstop service to Berlin from its hub in New York/Newark.