



## **Berlin Marathon Trip Notes** **September 23-28, 2011**

This was overreaching for me - for a few reasons. Tom and I left early in the month to France for the Medoc Marathon, followed by a week in Beynac overlooking the Dordogne River, followed by a week in Nice on the Riviera and then I flew onto Berlin for the September 25<sup>th</sup> marathon and a few extra days. It would have been plenty enough just to keep up with four separate itineraries, two rental properties and two marathons had I not fallen quite ill while in Beynac. (More on that later but ultimately giving me almost two weeks of not eating, a major weight drop, and many body parts breaking from the stress.) Medoc and then Dordogne with Nice are covered under separate trip reports.

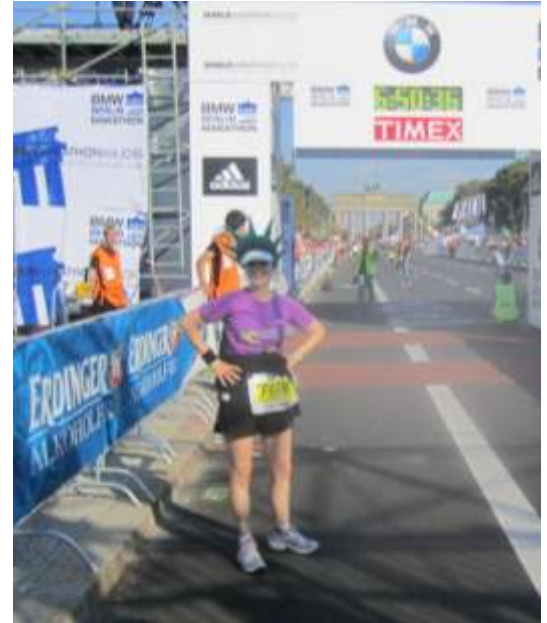
Medoc had been just too tempting since we were nearby but also because of the party atmosphere associated with that marathon. Tom had always intended to visit the Dordogne region outside of Bordeaux and we'd had our heart set on returning to Nice on the Cote de Azure ever since our last trip to Monaco and Cap D'Ail. With being on the continent anyway, Berlin called as the last the Five Majors and if I was ever going to do it, there wasn't much room for waiting.

### ***Marathon upsides:***

- **Marathon Tours** offers a guided tour which I recommend but in this case I had to give up the first night, a cocktail party, a city highlights bus tour and trip to the expo. They are not amendable to adjustments or I'd have been with them for the Medoc marathon tour. (It seems the majority of their participants offer up that Marathon Tours needs some competition.)
- **Pasta dinner** arranged by Marathon Tours at the Concorde Hotel was very elegant and well done. Too bad I couldn't eat more than a spoonful.
- **Hotel Concorde** was in an interesting part of town full of excellent shopping and restaurants and a very high rated hotel for the money. It reminded me of Star Hotels Metropole in Rome and of the excellent quality one finds in Switzerland.
- **Berlin** is famous for being a fast course and one of the Five Majors. (See below for description.) I'd never been to Berlin as it was a difficult travel situation when we lived in Europe in the 70s and Tom hadn't been especially fond of his earlier trip there. It's a city worth visiting but I didn't find it to be among any of my favorites. Once is enough and my five nights was sufficient. Not much is left standing from before WWII and their new architecture is beyond my comprehension or appreciation. It's sterile and as though they try too hard.
- **Start line** is a huge parade type grounds quite close to the finish allowing for lots of space, lining up in corals and tents for later. Picture compliments of BBC. I was in the last coral and we started at 9:20am.



- **Finish line** is not only at the Brandenburg Gate area but on the edge of Tiergarten so going home, though quite a long walk taking me about 1 ¼ hour because of touring around, could be quite pleasant through fountains and parks.
- **Course** is interesting and takes in a lot of the best sights offered in Berlin. The finish line is just a couple hundred meters beyond the Brandenburg gate where many of us stopped for photos and looked around despite the finish line being in sight. I'd visited it the day before and then visited it again after the marathon.
- **Photos and videos** – Berlin was high tech enough! Their notice: “21 cameras have recorded your BMW BERLIN MARATHON 2011 at the toughest parts of your race. This includes the 25km, 30km, 35km, 40km points and the finish locations. This unique experience can be seen via the results of the Marathon. Your race can be shared via Facebook and Twitter with friends and family.
- **Bands!** There were many and the majority of them were drummers which I found absolutely perfect. I wish more marathons would encourage drumming. There were regular drums and Taiko drummers.
- **Wrist bands:** Though I didn't see them, I wasn't at the expo either. The following day I stumbled upon the 'adidas' store and there was a line a mile long waiting to get their wrist bands embossed with a finish time.



Berlin has their 'bears' and now a world traveling bear for every country. The marathon didn't sport so many costumes but enough. Note that everywhere runners hate standing in the porta potty line.





Maybe my favorite t-shirt saying of all time: "I'm here because I'm not all there." I was with this American for awhile and he didn't seem terribly insane . . . . Yes, there were some costumes and a memorable medal. NO other perks however.

### **Downsides:**

- **Hotels** are quite a distance away. We could have taken public transportation however. After the finish I chose to walk the 3-4 kilometers home but must have taken a circuitous way as it took me 1 ¾ hour. A nice walk in part through the Tiergarten (their Central Park.)
- **T-shirt** was only available for purchase and it seemed that most did purchase the Finisher Shirt at the finish line. My kind girlfriend leaders from Marathon Tours blessed me with shopping the Expo and acquiring me a t-shirt. I did find the next day that many were available at the local 'adidas' store but I'd have been beside myself without one and am so glad they helped me out. I know – whatever am I going to do with another t-shirt?
- **Start line** maybe had porta-potties in another area but we stood almost 45 minutes in line, and then with the coral waiting time even with a private bus taking us to the start we had about 1 ¼ hours of standing.
- **Chip turn in** was very inconvenient (out of the way and easy to forget) as for me to expect it's a large source of income for those who forget. There was also no one to help remove the chip like we're used to.
- **Finish line** is supposed to close firmly at 6:15. It didn't but the sag wagon did follow those of us at that pace and we were directed onto the sidewalk when traffic resumed. My finish time was 6:26.



A good thing about being out on the course for so long is that you get a lot of pictures taken. There were many more and the marathon has videos at a number of locations too. The fellow in red was doing his second marathon and his first was at Lausanne on Lake Geneva where I'd been researching and wanting to go. He lives there. Since his camera battery ran low and I took his finishing pictures and he has my business card surely I'll hear from him! He was what kept me going when I'd intended to quit at around 30 kilometers. His many languages made the last quarter of the event particularly interesting as he picked up a lot of folks and could translate what the sag bus was telling us. (The purple shirt is from Medoc and gave me lots of attention; comments and the request for a picture from another wearing the same shirt.)

I'm almost surprised that I look halfway alive as I wasn't feeling at all well for most of this marathon.

**World Marathon Majors** - Founded 2006 - Official website [www.worldmarathonmajors.com](http://www.worldmarathonmajors.com)

The World Marathon Majors is a championship-style competition that started in 2006. It comprises five annual races for the cities of Berlin, Boston, Chicago, London, and New York City. Two other races are also included in the series: the IAAF World Championships Marathon (in odd-numbered years) and the Olympic Games Marathon (in years evenly divisible by four). Each WMM series spans two calendar years; the second year of a series overlaps with the first year of the next. Athletes who compete in the marathons receive points for finishing in any of the top five places (1st 25; 2nd 15; 3rd 10; 4th 5 and 5th 1). Their four highest ranks over the two-year period will be counted; if an athlete scores points in more than this number, the athlete's four best races will be scored. To be eligible for the jackpot, an athlete must compete in at least one qualifying race in each calendar year of the series. At the end of each WMM series the leading man and woman each win \$500,000.

Henry Rueden was at Berlin (I'd last seen him in Montana's marathon) and told me about the following but most who know me would know that I'll probably NOT indulge. WMM Five Star Finisher: Four years after the inauguration of the World Marathon Majors, it is time to honor every successful runner who completes all of our races in Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago and New York. From autumn 2010, you can get your individual WMM-Certificate. Once you have completed all five World Marathon Majors races, starting with the year 2006, you are able to buy your own personalized certificate with your finishing times from Boston, London, Berlin, Chicago and New York. To have completed all World Marathon Majors races is not only a special accomplishment for the elite runners, but also for every runner all over the world. The World Marathon Majors wants to acknowledge your performance in each of the five races by giving you the possibility to get your own, personalized certificate signed by the five race directors. Additionally, all names of those who have completed the World Marathon Majors circuit and who have ordered the World Marathon Majors certificate will be shown in the "Hall of WMM Finishers" at the World Marathon Majors website.

### **Big news! "Kenya's Makau shatters world marathon record in Berlin"**

*This year we had two record holders (Haile and Paula) that everyone was watching but neither won. Here's from the French papers: Kenyan runner Patrick Makau shattered the world men's marathon record by 21 seconds at Sunday's race in Berlin, clocking two hours three minutes 38 seconds. Former record holder, Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie, did not finish the run due to injury. Kenyan Patrick Makau shattered the world men's marathon record by 21 seconds on Sunday when he clocked two hours three minutes 38 seconds over the fast, flat Berlin course on a warm, sunny morning.*

*Makau ran alone for the final 12 kms to break the previous mark of 2:03:59 set by Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie on the same course three years ago. It was the fifth time the men's world record has fallen on the 42.195-km race through the heart of the German capital. The 26-old-Kenyan won the Berlin race last year and finished third in London this year after falling 22 kms into the race. A former half-marathoner, who has broken the 60-minute barrier mark a record eight times, his previous best marathon mark was 2:04:48 in Rotterdam last year. "What I can say is that we have started a new generation in marathon running," Makau told reporters. "This is the greatest day of my running life.*

*When I woke up today my body didn't feel very good but at 25 kms I felt I could break the world record." Makau's team mate Florence Kiplagat, the world half-marathon champion, won the women's race in 2:19:44 in her first completed marathon. Kiplagat and world record holder Paula Radcliffe, running her first marathon since finishing fourth in New York two years ago, took the early lead followed by Germany's twice Berlin champion Irina Mikitenko. At 17 kms, Kiplagat began to stride away from the Briton and at the halfway stage held a 19-second lead. Mikitenko overhauled Radcliffe to finish second in 2:22:18 with Radcliffe third in 2:23:46, comfortably inside the British qualifying time for next year's London Olympics. Kiplagat, who failed to finish her only previous marathon in Boston this year, said she had not been bothered by the 22 degrees Celsius heat. "I would be delighted if I could run in the Olympic marathon," she said. Radcliffe, whose training has been hampered by back and thyroid problems, said 2011 had been a tough year. "At least I have the Olympic qualifying time, I now have to build on that for London," she said. Gebrselassie, who has won the Berlin marathon four times, headed the leading group until just before the 27-km mark when he pulled up in obvious pain. He bent over double but then stepped back on to the road within a minute but was unable to finish the race. Pacemaker Stephen Kwelio decided not to drop out of the men's race and was rewarded with second place ahead of Kenyan compatriots Edwin Kimaiyo and Felix Limo.*

### **Health issues**

From Judy: Jesus, (pardon the religious reference, especially considering the Jewish soup on German menu...sheesh...) now the eye...you are sure as hell (woops, more religious references) falling apart. Bacteria or virus in the eye...I'll go look it up under medical cures for Americans abroad. Isn't there an over the counter sterile cleaning solution for the eyes...Bausch and Lomb (I know this bc I was in Rochester, home of Bausch and Lomb). Ok going to check out handy dandy internet med cures. Be right back.

To Judy: Thanks for idea of chicken soup. I totally believe in chicken soup for colds or flu – scientists think it might be due to the bones being cooked in the broth. But I didn't think of it for upset stomach. I will seek it out. Can you see me checking the menu, in German, for Jewish chicken soup?

Question: One eye is swollen and red and continually films up with a milky white substance. Started the morning of the marathon. I can clear it out with a corner of a tissue but films right back up. Might you know if this can heal on its own, or if there's something simple I can do on my own? A pain in the tush to find a German doctor. I'm feeling like a whiner.

What I didn't fully tell her: Almost two weeks prior while in Beynac there was some bad food and my stomach never recovered keeping me from eating more than a couple bites at a time. Maybe from that episode started many body parts failing. Good thing I had an extra five pounds as it's surely gone. The morning of the marathon I had to keep laying down and was very close to not even going but decided I'd at least start and quit early. It was only when I met a young fellow at about the 30 kilometer mark that I got entertained enough to keep moving though at only a walking pace.

This all necessitated medical care in due course and it brought back memories of living in Vietnam in the 70s when I got some bug that hung around for much of the year and only got cured by a little Chinese doctor found off the back street alleys by my housekeeper. A wee bit of white powder and a diet of plain rice and I got cured finally but not until dropping to about 95 pounds.

**Socialist medicine?** There's something to be said for semi-socialist medical care. The pharmacist sold me a little tube of some yellow stuff for 8 Euros and said it might work but if no results by afternoon to return and she'd take me upstairs to the doctor's office who would write an antibiotic prescription. This reminds me of being in China and learning that they believe in medical care for the masses and one of their examples was that they could immunize an entire village for the cost of a kidney transplant. So it's clear what they do. This however is not our democratic way of doing things and wow, at what cost!

### **Berlin tourist**

I wasn't all that hot on Berlin, and I wasn't all that hot health-wise either. Well, there was plenty of time that I was very hot with the sweats and the chills. So since Berlin is well noted, and since I'm not promoting Berlin, here are just a few of my tourist pictures.



These are from their Embassy Row that Berliners are very proud of . . . .





New and weird with a bit of old buildings mixed in – that was the story of Berlin. I actually found more old and European looking buildings on the old East Berlin side. Checkpoint Charlie gave me a museum, some pieces of the wall, and a section of Berlin left in its 'old' state.



Notice the rivers? I would have liked to take the 3 ½ hour historical bridges tour but couldn't find it offered in English.



The Brandenburg Gate area was totally closed down on Saturday. There was a 30,000 strong skating marathon Saturday afternoon and much of the city closed down for the two days with over 40,000 for the Berlin marathon. The Gate area included the wax museum, a Holocaust museum, a Kennedy museum and the American Embassy.



The last picture is the Parliament dome and its filled with people walking the interior admiring the panorama views.



I was once keeping a list of the Olympic sites I visited. This lake and cultural hall was at the finish line and at the edge of the Tiergarten. The palace was on my walking route a couple times and where the Pope had stayed the couple days prior. The huge tall golden winged goddess was my “guiding light” for my walks.



If you like this last picture which is a fountain surrounded by ugly buildings you must be a Berliner.

In Berlin’s defense, I have probably always had trouble forgiving the German’s but in fairness it needs said that there are plenty of Holocaust memorials so they aren’t sweeping their past errors under the rug like the Americans swept the Indians out.

### **Potsdam and Sans Souci**

I did like Potsdam a lot. I did like the Frederick the Great summer villa a lot. There is an underlying logic to this – Frederick wasn’t very German and he had everything made in French style.

From Wikipedia.com

*Sanssouci is the name of the former summer palace of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia, in Potsdam, near Berlin. It is often counted among the German rivals of Versailles. While Sanssouci is in the more intimate Rococo style and is far smaller than its French Baroque counterpart, it too is notable for the numerous temples and follies in the park.*



*The palace was designed by Georg Wenzeslaus von Knobelsdorff between 1745 and 1747 to fulfill King Frederick's need for a private residence where he could relax away from the pomp and ceremony of the Berlin court. The palace's name emphasizes a French phrase (sans souci), which translates as "without concerns", meaning "without worries" or "carefree", symbolizing that the palace was a place for relaxation rather than a seat of power. The palace is little more than a large single-storey villa—more like the Château de Marly than Versailles. Containing just ten principal rooms, it was built on the brow of a terraced hill at the centre of the park. The influence of King Frederick's personal taste in the design and decoration of the palace was so great that its style is characterized as "Frederician Rococo", and his feelings for the palace were so strong that he conceived it as "a place that would die with him". Because of a disagreement about the site of the palace in the park, Knobelsdorff was fired in 1746. Jan Bouman, a Dutch architect, finished the project.*

*During the 19th century, the palace became a residence of Frederick William IV. He employed the architect Ludwig Persius to restore and enlarge the palace, while Ferdinand von Arnim was charged with improving the grounds and thus the view from the palace. The town of Potsdam, with its palaces, was a favorite place of residence for the German imperial family until the fall of the Hohenzollern dynasty in 1918.*



After World War II, the palace became a tourist attraction in East Germany. It was fully maintained with due respect to its historical importance, and was open to the public. Following German reunification in 1990, the final wish of Frederick came to pass: his body was finally returned to his beloved palace and buried in a new tomb overlooking the gardens he had created. Sanssouci and its extensive gardens became a World Heritage Site in 1990 under the protection of UNESCO in 1995, the Foundation for Prussian Palaces and Gardens in Berlin-Brandenburg was established to care for Sanssouci and the other former imperial palaces in and around Berlin. These palaces are now visited by more than two million people a year from all over the world.

The location and layout of Sanssouci above a vineyard reflected the pre-Romantic ideal of harmony between man and nature, in a landscape ordered by human touch. Winemaking, however, was to take second place to the design of the palace and pleasure gardens. The hill on which Frederick created his terrace vineyard was to become the focal point of his demesne, crowned by the new, but small, palace—"mein Weinberghäuschen" ("my little vineyard house"), as Frederick called it. With its extensive views of the countryside in the midst of nature, Frederick wanted to reside there sans souci ("without a care") and to follow his personal and artistic interests. Hence, the palace was intended for the use of Frederick and his private guests—with balanced suites "pour les étrangers" and "pour le roy"— only during the summer months, from the end of April to the beginning of October.



It was a rainy day but the old streets of Potsdam looked good. They have their own Brandenburg Gate, a windmill outside the palace with costumed guards and flute players set in this multi acreage.



Photos were prohibited inside the palace so I bought a book. Much of the interior are originals and the art work contains big names like Reubens and Van Dyke.



Frederick was finally returned to be buried at Sans Souci as he'd wished and here's his simple burial plot next to a row of his dogs. He ruled for something like 42 years. Though he married his wife never lived with him and he had no heirs. I hope he had someone -- I only found a small reference to one Count who was the only continual summer resident.





The layers leading up to the palace are vineyards and fig trees. In the lower middle you'll see glass doors intended to keep the fig trees warm in the winter. Frederick liked fresh fruit.



The Dutch had once been lured to Potsdam with free housing and their own village. They were good craftsmen that Frederick needed. They didn't stay for long but fortunately the blocks of their housing from 1700s remain.

We saw the estate where Truman, Stalin and others met for the Potsdam agreement but it is now a hotel and not open to public tours. The homes in the area were some of the best I saw other than in Embassy row area. We were told that the Russians took them over during WWII and trashed them but many are now restored. Fortunately some WWII commanders were art students and thus Potsdam and Sans Souci were never bombed.

### ***Misc maybe non-related to Berlin?***

The porta-potty jig or how Irish dancing got started. <http://videos2view.net/irish-dance.htm> This is a bit different from one I saw before.

If you're tired of running and want to take up bicycling, here's a kid traveling by bicycle from Edinburgh to the Isle of Skye (off the coast of Scotland). We traveled Edinburgh and region in the 70s as tourists and then I did in the 90s for business (aquaculture) but I liked my method of getting from one place to the other much better: helicopter.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch\\_popup?v=Cj6ho1-G6tw&vq=medium](http://www.youtube.com/watch_popup?v=Cj6ho1-G6tw&vq=medium)

### ***Misc and marathon related***

**Yolanda** along with Larry made the Guinness Book of World Records this last year by doing 107 marathons in the year. She was working on a marathon a day and yet has been losing far too much weight, and also suffering the heat of southern California. I have always maintained that it takes a smarter person to DNS (Do Nothing Stupid) and Yolanda is obviously being very smart. She's already our hero and we don't need her to do anything that would harm her health. Here's her missive of October 2<sup>nd</sup>: *Thanks for the friendship and support! I could not have gotten to day 92 without you. I'm HAPPY to say that my journey to "Greatest Mileage Run Daily in a Year" has come to an end. Yesterday at Chino Hills Marathon I dropped at mile 16. Heat exhaustion got the best of me. The race director gave me credit for a half (13 miles)...I rested up for a few hours and my son saw me and started screaming at me saying you look like you're about to*

die! Mom why are you doing this to yourself? I lost 3 more pounds...this is funny...my scale said "ERR"!!! I still had 13 miles to walk before midnight...At 7pm I went to Santana Park and my Garmin died...went back home to get my new Garmin 405 that I hate and don't know how to use...it was not on the charger...my husband had it! I called and texted him but no answer... he comes home at 9:10pm...I only had 2 hours and 50 minutes to finish 13 miles...I'm weak and have no energy...After 3 miles I said this is insane and I'm not enjoying myself. I made a wise decision to end the journey. Yippee! I got my "happy" back...I love marathoning but not like that!

Good girl Yolanda. You're our hero! And a comment to your comment: I loved every Garmin until the 405 and I never could make it work sufficiently nor could my young tech friends.

**Congratulations Judy** – finished her 50-states while at Bristol NH on October 1<sup>st</sup>. Here's her report as only Judy can tell: *Hey do you remember the commercial that had the guy saying... "I CAN'T BELIEVE I ATE THE WHOLE THING!" Do you remember that? Maybe it was an antacid commercial, not sure...anyway...I can't believe I finished the whole thing...the 50 states, I mean. Hard to believe...guess it takes a while to sink in. Is that how you who have finished felt? It was a great day...it rained the entire race, BUT I HONESTLY PREFER THIS OVER EXTREME HEAT! Beautiful, but EXTREMELY HILLY course which I had been warned about. I had my own little parade for about 20 miles...me followed by 2 sag wagons...they were great...SO FRIENDLY AND ENCOURAGING WITH LOTS OF "YOU'RE GONNA MAKE IT." And around miles 11-15, I saw all "the usual suspects" as we passed each other on different sides of the road GOING DIFFERENT DIRECTIONS (yours truly behind by several miles). Steve, Frank, Larry, Jim, Henry and other gang members kept coming across to hug and encourage me. My very alert and humorous mother-in-law has described this as "your 15 minutes of fame, Judy." No matter, I loved and enjoyed all the kindness and I knew I also had my own little "bread eating rat pack of runner buds" (that would be you guys in case you didn't recognize yourselves) back home rooting for me. And toward the end of my run, I was really SURPRISED as Larry came driving up the course to find me (4 1/2 miles from the finish) to deposit (well dump out) Jim Simpson to escort me to the finish line IN THE RAIN...cue the violins here, while we all sing "THAT'S WHAT FRIENDS ARE FOR." Jim walked me in while the rest of the appropriately named MANIACS sped away to Portland, Maine. I drove a few blocks up the street and carbo-loaded at Dunkin Donuts...great day. Thanks for all your good wishes and prayers. They worked. Judy*

**What's next on my agenda?** Tom and I are off, after only a very few days home in NJ, to Venice for a private tour of villas and palazzos. And before the month is out I will go to Dublin with Marathon Tours and then onto Galway, Bunratty and Shannon. November takes me to Richmond and Tulsa marathons, and December to Memphis marathon before Tom and I go to Budapest in mid-December. For the holidays little Marie comes to visit again and stays through New Year's. January is the Disney marathon with the Goofy Challenge (can I still manage it? It was 2007 last time.) From Disney I'll go to Winter Park then direct onto Baton Rouge for that marathon. I'll all open to more ideas – please!



## **Top Ten Sites** from <http://www.visitberlin.de/en/feature/berlins-top-10-sights>

I think I got 9 of them and drove through the 10<sup>th</sup>.

Number 1: Pariser Platz - Here lies the undisputed emblem of Berlin: the Brandenburg Gate. Constructed between 1788-1791 by Carl Gotthard Langhans, this monument was simply one of the many city gates surrounding the formerly small city of Berlin. A pleasant square designed next to the gate was named Pariser Platz, which is still home to many important buildings today such as the Hotel Adlon, the Academy of the Arts, and the British and U.S. Embassies. Just south of Pariser Platz one can find the Holocaust Memorial.

Number 2: Reichstag, Federal Chancellery, and the Victory Column - After the Federal Government's move from Bonn to Berlin, the Reichstag building from 1894 was awoken after decades of inactivity on the border of the Berlin Wall: the building was completely modernized and adjusted to the needs of the reunified republic. From the new glass dome, visitors can appreciate a 360° view of the bustling city. Many new buildings were constructed near the Reichstag in the 1990s, for example the Band des Bundes with the Federal Chancellery. Berlin's new Central Train Station (Hauptbahnhof), opened in 2006, is also in close proximity to the Reichstag. From its construction in 1871 until 1938, the Victory Column was located directly in front of the Reichstag, however it was moved to its current location at Grosser Stern by the Nazis for reasons of prestige.

Number 3: Unter den Linden and Museum Island - Already in the 19th century, the central boulevard Unter den Linden (Under the Linden Trees) was Berlin's most splendid promenade and parade street. Even today the avenue has not lost any of its old charm. The boulevard is home to the main building of Berlin's Humboldt University, the German Historical Museum, the Berlin Cathedral, the Berlin State Opera, and it even traverses Museum Island. These museums host some of the most important exhibits in Germany. The museums were and continue to be under renovation so that they can soon be able to offer the same range of cultural exhibits as they did before the Second World War. The Berlin City Palace also used to stand on Museum Island across from the Old Museum. It was torn down during the GDR years and replaced by the Palace of the Republic. The Palace of the Republic has been torn down in recent years and will soon be replaced by a museum commemorating the Berlin City Palace.

Number 4: Ku'damm and City-West - The Bahnhof Zoo train station is not only surrounded by the center of West Berlin, but also Berlin's most important shopping district. The Kurfürstendamm (or Ku'damm) stretches from the ruins of the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church at Breitscheidtplatz to Berlin's high-class residential district of Halensee. This street was formerly the horse riding path of the Prince Elector (Kurfürst) of Brandenburg to his hunting palace; today the street is Berlin's most expensive street, where many high-end brands have placed their flagship stores. Germany's most luxurious and largest shopping mecca, KaDeWe, can be found on Tauentzienstrasse, an extension street of Ku'damm – and don't forget the high point of Berlin for younger visitors: the Berlin Zoo.

Number 5: Friedrichstraße and Gendarmenmarkt - West Berlin's Ku'damm can only be rivaled by East Berlin's Friedrichstrasse. Exclusive stores, hotels, and cafes can be found on one of the most well-known streets in the city. In the past twenty years, Friedrichstrasse has successfully reignited the flame of its former beauty. During the GDR years, the Friedrichstrasse train station and Checkpoint Charlie (located on Friedrichstrasse a few kilometers south) served as the connection hubs for travelers between East and West Berlin. Instead of luxury shopping and street cafes, Friedrichstrasse was a dire place of customs clearance, visas, and compulsory exchange. In close proximity to Friedrichstrasse is the Gendarmenmarkt, a place considered by many to be Berlin's most beautiful square, with the Berlin Concert House, the German Cathedral, and the French Cathedral.

Number 6: Charlottenburg Palace and Park - Somewhat outside of the city center, the pompous Charlottenburg Palace receives many visitors each year. It was built in 1700 by the Prussian King Friedrich III for his beloved wife Sophie Charlotte and was placed on the grounds of a picturesque park directly on the Spree river. The city district Charlottenburg around the palace is one of Berlin's most desired residential areas. After visitors enjoy a

pleasant stroll through the park, they can enjoy the cultural aspects of the location at six museums located directly across from the park on Schlossstrasse.

Number 7: the Fernsehturm and Alexanderplatz - Alexanderplatz was more than simply the center of former East Berlin, it was also architecturally the center of the entire GDR. For this reason the socialist design of Alexanderplatz remains fascinating today: wide streets spread out from the square (such as Karl-Marx-Allee with its architecturally exaggerated Stalinist buildings). “Alex“ is also surrounded by some of the tallest buildings in the city, including the largest structure in Berlin: the Fernsehturm (TV Tower). Also nearby is the Red City Hall (the headquarters of Berlin's city government) and the Nikolai Quarter, which was reconstructed in the 1980s according to the historical layout. As a striking contrast to the socialist design, Alexanderplatz is also bordered by the oldest churches in the city: the Church of St. Nicholas built in 1230 and St. Mary's Church, built in 1294.

Number 8: Oranienburger Strasse - The city district between Hackescher Markt and the New Synagogue was the home to Berlin's Jewish population until the Holocaust. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, Oranienburger Strasse has become a particular attraction for art, culture, and nightlife. Countless restaurants, bars, and galleries can be found here and on side streets. The Hackescher Markt S-bahn train station located at the south end of Oranienburger Strasse is a hotspot for Berlin's nightlife – the city doesn't sleep here. The area around Oranienburger Strasse can certainly be characterized as the vibrant center of Berlin's midnight hours.

Number 9: Potsdamer Platz - Potsdamer Platz and the adjacent Leipziger Platz were the commercial hubs of Berlin before the Second World War. Two main train stations, countless stores and warehouses, theaters, and cinemas transformed this area into the heart of the city – in order to control this heavy flow of pedestrian, carriage, streetcar, and automobile traffic, Europe's first traffic light was installed here. Between the end of World War Two and the reunification of Germany, Potsdamer Platz offered another picture entirely: the Berlin Wall cut straight through Potsdamer Platz and was bordered by no-man's-land and the so-called “death zone.“ After 1989 efforts were made to breathe new life into this former heart of the city. Sony and Daimler Benz developed this area with three skyscrapers, countless stores, and many premiere cinemas. Potsdamer Platz is especially known today as the location of the Berlin's stars – not only during film festivals

Number 10: Olympia Stadium - West of the high-end suburb, Westend, there was sufficient undeveloped land for the Nazis to realize their megalomaniacal architectural concepts for the 1936 Olympic Games. In dimensions unimaginable at that time, the Olympia Stadium was constructed here in the 1930s – today the stadium is not only home to Berlin's soccer team, Hertha BSC, but also hosts rock concerts and athletic championships. Directly next to the Olympia premises is Berlin's legendary Forest Theater (Waldbühne), an open air stage that excites Berliners with concerts by famous rock bands and pop artists.



## ***Itinerary***

### **Fri Sep 23 – Diana**

2:20pm Depart Nice NCE Terminal 1 via Air Berlin #8751  
4:00pm Arrive Duesseldorf for plane change  
4:45pm Depart Duesseldorf via Air Berlin#6446  
5:55pm Arrive Berlin Tegel TXL

Transport? From web: Kurfürstendamm Subway Station is 3-minute walk from the hotel. Also bus direct from Tegel Airport. From concierge: [At Tegel Airport take bus 109 and get off at "U Kurfuerstendamm". We are close by at Augsburger Str. 41/Joachimstaler Str.](#)

Hotel Hotel Concorde Berlin by Marathontours.com  
Augsburger Str. 41, Charlottenburg, 10789 Berlin  
(330 ft from the Kurfürstendamm Boulevard)  
Tele: +49 (0) 30 800 999 0 - Free WiFi from room and lobby

### **Sat 9/24**

Expo? Jacqui or Kelly of Marathon Tours will pick up my bib when they go on Friday.  
Expo outside of town at the old airport location.

City tour Book on Friday night's arrival – requested of concierge on 9/04

### **Sun 9/25**

9:00am Marathon – start about 1 mile from hotel  
[www.bmw-berlin-marathon.com/en/](http://www.bmw-berlin-marathon.com/en/)

38<sup>th</sup> annual marathon with field limited to 40,000.

Course: The race starts at the "Kleiner Stern" on both lanes of the boulevard "Strasse des 17 Juni," around the Tiergarten area, passing by the Reichstag before looping through the old East Berlin and continuing through various neighborhoods, running along a section of the Kurfurstendamm, past Potsdamer Platz, along the Unter den Linden before running through the Brandenburg and finishing on the boulevard "Strasse des 17 Juni in front of the Soviet monument. The course is completely flat and fast.

### **Mon and Tues?**

Book tours – see walking tours and day trips below

### **Wed Sep 28 - Diana**

9:35am Depart Berlin TXL via CO#97  
12:40pm Arrive Newark EWR

Tom to pick up

## **Info from Marathon Tours**

### **Additional Berlin Information**

Those who choose to sightsee by day will discover that many of Berlin's landmarks come with their very own observation decks, such as the Reichstag (the German Parliament Building), the Europa Center on the Zoologischer Garten, the Kollhoff Tower on the Potsdamer Platz, the Siegessäule (Victory Column) in the Tiergarten area, and the Fernsehturm on the Alexanderplatz, the latter of which is a television tower and the tallest structure in the city, boasting a revolving restaurant.

Another sight to behold is the magnificent Schloss Charlottenburg, the city's largest and most impressive palace, famed for its elaborate rococo and baroque late-17th century architecture.

***Unter den Linden Where Old and New collide: Whether now or at the time of the Hohenzollern dynasty, Unter den Linden is and was undeniably the main artery of the bustling cosmopolitan city of Berlin. The boulevard is around 60 metres wide and attracts many tourists and locals who enjoy taking a stroll at all times of the day or night. If you are looking for a way to relax those legs, book a sightseeing tour down the River Spree!***

***The Brandenburg Gate: Brandenburg Gate is the only surviving and most impressive gate from a series of gates that constituted the wall encircling Berlin in the 18th century. Commissioned by Friedrich Wilhelm II to represent peace, the gate was ironically embedded in the Berlin Wall and firmly locked for the duration of Communist rule. The gate now symbolizes reunification and stands majestically in the centre of Berlin, physically joining the two sides of the city. These are the arches you will pass under within yards of the marathon finish!***

***The Reichstag: The Reichstag building in Berlin is the meeting place of the German Bundestag (parliament). Berlin's Reichstag is built in neo-renaissance style and located in the district of Tiergarten (Berlin Mitte). The Reichstag was severely damaged by a fire in 1933 as well as during World War II, but was largely reconstructed in the 60's and has been the seat of German parliament since 1999. The Reichstag dome was added later on and has become an important place to visit in Berlin. Visitors can enter the Reichstag through the west portal. Works of Art from renowned 20th century artists are exhibited in and around the German Reichstag. Two lifts take you to the roof terrace with its impressive dome and restaurant "Käfer". The German Reichstag attracts approximately 8,000 visitors a day. During your free time you can return and take the lifts to the roof terrace. Note: If you would like to go to the top of the Reichstag Building, we recommend making reservations for lunch or dinner at the restaurant: Dachgarten Restaurant. The restaurant a bit pricier, but this will let you bypass the lines to the roof and save you a lot of time viewing from the top. You can contact the restaurant for reservations and details on the side door entrance for all restaurant guests!***

***Kurfürstendamm: The legendary Kurfürstendamm Boulevard, Berlin's most elegant street and Germany's most visited street, is lined with luxury shops, restaurants and cafes. Shoppers can enjoy visiting top names such as Chanel, Gucci, Louis Vuitton, and Yves Saint Laurent, while theaters and concert halls including the Philharmonie and the Theater am Kurfuerstendamm are very close to the hotel.***

***KaDeWe:*** Located in the heart of Berlin, KaDeWe is the largest department store in continental Europe attracting up to 50,000 visitors a day. Spread over seven floors, the store offers a huge range of merchandise, and two floors dedicated to gastronomy. The 6<sup>th</sup> delicatessen is famous for its variety of food and drinks.

***Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church: The neo-Romanesque Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church was constructed between 1891 and 1895 at the behest of Kaiser Wilhelm II in honor of his grandfather.***

***Potsdamer Platz:*** An important traffic intersection, a place to see in the heart of Berlin. Thanks to its excellent location, Hotel Concorde Berlin is the ideal starting point to explore the bustling Potsdamer Platz. Art, entertainment and shopping, combined with a touch of Berlin's city history, attract more than 100,000 visitors a day to this pulsing heart of



Berlin. Potsdamer Platz was moreover the historic venue of a giant rock concert in celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

The **Berlin Musical Instrument Museum** (German: Musikinstrumenten-Museum Berlin) is located at the Kulturforum on Tiergartenstraße. The museum contains a collection of over 3,500 musical instruments from the 16th century onward and is one of the largest and most representative musical instrument collections in Germany.

*The Berlin Zoo: **The Berlin Zoo is one of the two zoological gardens in Berlin. This zoo is the oldest and richest in species around the world***

*The Museum Island Berlin: **The Museum Island is an ambitious project, planning to join 600,000 years of mankind history in a unique museum complex by 2015, and housing some of Berlin's best museums: the Pergamon Museum, Altes Museum, the Nationalgalerie and the Bodemuseum. The Berliner Dom, church of the Hohenzollern family, is here as well and houses the remains of 90 family members in its vault.***

### RESTAURANT RECOMMENDATIONS

Guests at the Hotel Concorde Berlin can enjoy traditional French cuisine with modern accents in the Le Faubourg brasserie-style restaurant. The Saint Germain restaurant is open for a sumptuous buffet breakfast, while the comfortable Lutèce Bar is ideal for lingering over a drink

Leibniz Klause, Leibnizstrasse 57\*, 10629 Berlin – Charlottenburg, <http://www.leibniz-klause.de>  
Berlin specialities.

Via Condotti, Fasanenstrasse 73\*, 10719 Berlin, <http://www.viacondotti-berlin.de>  
Italian. Lively Restaurant.

Austeria, Kurfürstendamm 184\*, 10707 Berlin, [www.austeria-brasserie.de](http://www.austeria-brasserie.de)  
Brasserie ambiance. Fish and seafood.

Kori & Fay, Kurfürstendamm 65\*, 10707 Berlin, <http://www.koriandfay.de/>  
Modern Thai. Urban chic.

DI, Kurfürstendamm 200\*, 10719 Berlin, <http://www.di-restaurant.de/>  
Super chic design. Classic, japanese cuisine.

Keno, Olivaer Platz 15\*, 10707 Berlin, <http://www.restaurant-keno.de/index.html>  
modern German (homepage not yet updated. The restaurant was renovated recently)

#### **Upmarket restaurants:**

La Forchetta, Königsallee 5b, 14193 Berlin, <http://www.la-forchetta-berlin.de/>  
*A trendy Italian restaurant*

Brenner, Regensburger Strasse 7\*10777 Berlin – Schöneberg  
<http://www.restaurant-brenner.de/>  
Modern German/Austrian/Italian cuisine. Cosy restaurant. Excellent wine recommendations.





From: Hank Younglove [mailto:hank@marathontours.com] on March 15, 2011

When we spoke last week you asked about sightseeing in Berlin, as well as how to get from the airport to the hotel.

The least expensive way to get to the hotel is to use the shuttle bus, there are several a day direct, and several where you would have to connect. The site is [www.vbbonline.de](http://www.vbbonline.de). The rate is about three euros. The easiest way is, of course by cab which should be between thirty and forty euros.

For sightseeing, the company with the best reviews and number of tours is [www.insidertour.com](http://www.insidertour.com). They have a good number of tours which would fit in your schedule. The concierge at the hotel will be glad to arrange the reservations for you.

The Famous Insider Walk: Hidden Berlin & ALL Main Sites  
Third Reich Berlin: Hitler & WWII – The final days  
Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp: Memorial Tour  
Cold War Berlin: Soviet secrets, CIA spies & more  
Day Trip: Berlin to Dresden: Saxon Kings, WWII destruction and more  
Insider's Potsdam: Kaisers to Komissars – Prussia's wonderland!  
Insider's Berlin by Bike: See more, great guides, great fun!  
The Original Berlin Pub Crawl: An Insider's night out to Berlin's bar and club scene  
Jewish Berlin: Destruction & Rebirth

Please let me know if you have any questions, at any time! Many thanks, Hank Younglove, Marathon Tours & Travel, C-5 Shipway Place, Boston, MA 02129 617-242-7845, 800-444-4097

From [www.marathontours.com](http://www.marathontours.com)

In 1990, the Berlin Marathon hosted over 25,000 runners who for the first time ran through Brandenburg Gate and into East Berlin. Runners were crying while they stopped to kiss the ground. It was an emotional run for all. Since then, runners have continued to flock to Berlin each year to experience one of the best organized marathons in the world. They will fill the coveted starting spots soon. .

The event closes entries about mid-July with 40,000 runners. Marathon Tours has a block of guaranteed entries. The course is flat and fast and set another world record when Haile Gebresalassie ran 2:03:59. The course also produced the first sub 2:20 marathon by a women, Naoko Takahashi, in 2001. Definitely a PR course.

The Hotel Concorde Berlin, is a four star hotel in the center of the city and about one mile from the start and finish line. Boasting some of the largest rooms in Berlin, this sleek state-of-the-art property will serve as our host property.

### 2011 Hotel Package Rates

- Four nights accommodations at the Hotel Concorde Berlin Sept. 22-26 (ok to move 1 day later)
- Full breakfast each day
- Cocktail reception
- All hotel taxes
- Half-day city sightseeing on Friday (agreed to miss – try for Saturday but on own dollar)
- Pre-race dinner Saturday evening
- Hosted by Marathon Tours staff
- Guaranteed race entry (additional fee) \$125 paid on 2/07/11

<b>Hotel</b>	<b>4 Nights DBL</b>	<b>4 Nights SGL</b>	<b>Extra nt DBL</b>	<b>Extra nt SGL</b>
--------------	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------

Hotel Concorde Berlin \$ 762

\$ 1299

\$135

\$ 269

Requested one additional night so will have 5 nights and departure on Wednesday 9/28/11

From [www.marathonguide.com](http://www.marathonguide.com)

Average Ratings: Course - ★★★★★ Organization - ★★★★★ Fans - ★★★★★

---

★★★★☆ **Great race, but could be better** (about: 2010)

**Course: 4 Organization: 3 Fans: 4**

Y. O. from NY, USA (10/12/10)

11-50 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

Pros:

- Expo was huge and in a great festive mood.
- Although it was rainy, the spectators were nice and supportive.
- Totally flat course - good for PB (if the course is not overcrowded).
- Passing through the Brandenburg Gate was great!

Cons:

- Bib pick-up area was crowded with few volunteers.
- The start area was chaotic, to say the least.
- The course was overcrowded especially for first 5 miles.

I am glad to have run this marathon, but I don't think I am going to run it again....

---

★★★★★ **Best marathon I've run!** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 4 Fans: 5**

C. S. from Germany (10/6/10)

6-10 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

This race was a lot of fun. Flat course and great sites throughout the course. Finishing under the Brandenburg Gate was really cool! There were people from all over the world cheering along the entire course. The expo was huge and well organized, although they DEFINITELY need to better mark where you are supposed to park for the expo. We asked 3 different workers there and got 3 different answers (none of which were right). I can't wait to run this again next year!!

---

★★★★★ **Berlin: The Real World Major Marathon for a PB!** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

J. L. from London, United Kingdom (9/29/10)

2 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

How to describe the 37th Real Berlin Marathon?

Vital Expo: Where to pick up your bib other than the old East Berlin Tempelhof Airport? You're assured to step back in time as soon as you walk in and enjoy the experience. However, the pasta bowls could be slightly bigger and served with drinks and fruit too.

The Race: No wonder why it is the world's fastest marathon. Great, flat course for a PB, with fantastic atmosphere amongst runners and amazing supporters along the route, despite the rain this year. (How different from the heatwave in 2009.) Every station (located at about every 3K) was very well supplied with water, energy drinks, banana and apples with volunteers cheering you on with kind words and constantly smiling at runners. How refreshing!

Watch out for the finish! This is the best bit!! Running up the "Unter den Linden" to the finish can be demoralizing when you see the Brandenburg Gate in the far distance, but BE STRONG and don't let that sight spoil the end of your race (less than 2K to go!). The crowd will carry you to the finishing line, not to forget Berlino Bear too.

The organization from the time you arrive to leave your bag to the time you collect it is SECOND TO NONE. You'll find your medal, goody bag, finisher's picture stands, non-alcoholic beers, showers, massages, etc., etc., within 5 or 10 minutes of finishing your marathon.

BERLIN MARATHON!!! WHAT AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE!!! - HIGHLY RECOMMENDED TO NOVICES AND EXPERIENCED RUNNERS.

---

★★★★★ **Fantastic destination race!** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 4 Fans: 5**

T. R. from Columbus, OH (9/29/10)

11-50 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

I've had a few days to think about the race now and I can say that I had a great time at a great event! This was marathon #20 for me and the backdrop of this one was fantastic!

The expo: It wasn't as big as I thought it would be and that's not a bad thing! Getting there was an easy train ride (a little more signage would have been appreciated, though). Plenty of stuff to buy and the Berlin Adidas gear was pretty plentiful. I would recommend reserving your shirt when you register, though (it's not required).

The race: I was lucky enough to get a decent starting corral (my time was on the slow end of the corral so I started with faster people!). It was pretty crowded throughout the day but only in a few spots did I think about it and feel cramped. The course is as flat as they say and I don't remember any elevation changes at all (some subtle ones I guess). There is plenty of stuff to see and even if you usually wear headphones, I wouldn't bother. The crowd support and views are more than enough to keep you occupied as you're running through the city. We ran in the rain all day and I think that really impacted the crowd as there definitely weren't as many spectators as you'd find in Boston or London (NY and Chicago too, I'd guess). You could definitely hear them, though! Running under Brandenburg Gate to the finish definitely rivals the left on Boylston in Boston and is the perfect way to finish this race! Great planning!! My only criticism really (and this is minor) would be to have a few more aid stations. The first one was at 5K, which is the latest I'd seen the first stop at any larger race I'd done. Again, no biggie but my preference would have been a bit sooner!

Other: We stayed in the Potsdamer Platz area and I'd recommend it. It's about a half-mile (or almost 1K) from the start/finish and extremely convenient for accessing everything. We did our final easy workouts in Tiergarten as well and it was perfect! Expect to spend a bit more on accommodations if you stay there but if you choose other places, both the S and U train stops are nearby!

All in all a great race and city. I'd recommend anyone doing an international race to add this one. I'd say it's a little better than London and almost as good as Boston (all three races are fantastic, by the way!).

Run Big!

---

★★★★★ **Berlin Marathon, what a great experience** (about: 2010)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

G. M. from Milan, Italy (9/29/10)

4-5 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

Despite being a rainy day, the 2010 edition has been a great success. The organization is humongous; they deal with these 33,000 people and manage to provide all of them with an excellent service (pre- and post-race). The course is fast, with just minimal up/downhills due to road facilities. There are so many people that the race is a continuous stream of runners, groups formed just around 35-37K.

My only concern is the corral start: anybody can declare he's going to finish in 2:30 and therefore enter corral B. In any case, no one checks whether runners enter their correct sector... that's why you find people from the very beginning of the race running at 5 minutes/K despite starting 10 meters behind top runners. That's annoying.

Anyway, organizers have done a great job with food and drinks (every 2-3K) even though water supplies rely on plastic cups, not the best idea for drinking while running.

Spectators are really warm, there are a lot of people all along the route, and you'll never run without being cheered.

In a nutshell, Berlin is worth every penny of the 80-euro entering fee... no question.

---

★★★★★ **Extraordinary marathon** (about: 2009)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

Miguel Paramo Calderon from Mexico City (4/26/10)

4-5 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

This is one of the best marathons I've ever done. My only disappointment was the warm weather from mile 14 to the finish line. I expected a high temperature, but the humidity was a little high. Nevertheless, I really enjoyed the course and the magnificent view it offered. I definitely recommend this flat and fast race; you'll have fun and you'll be encouraged to get your personal best.

---

★★★★★ **Great overall experience; could still be better...** (about: 2009)



**Course: 5 Organization: 4 Fans: 5**

Mattias Murhagen from New York (12/23/09)

2 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

I love Berlin. It's a fantastic city with great people and a really interesting history. Choosing the Berlin Marathon was a pretty easy decision.

Pre-Race (1) registration, expo and stuff:

Registration and information was easy and good. In fact, I think I got perhaps a bit too much information. I wish they had been a bit more clear in separating what was essential information and information that is simply "useful." One thing I missed was printing out some piece of information before number pickup at the expo, meaning I had to wait in a really long line (faster than expected) before getting to the other long lines....

The expo also had the mandatory pasta "party," which was ok, but more importantly they also had a health exam free! Awesome! Americans, hear this as your senate gets ready to vote on health care: It was cheaper for me to fly to Berlin and run the marathon and get a free echocardiogram than paying for it in New York!!! Oh, and I got my cholesterol and blood pressure values taken too!

The shirt you could opt to order beforehand. If you don't, you risk not getting one in your size.

Great expo in general with lots of vendors and other stuff.... and beer... delicious beer....

The race is located in the middle of Berlin and is relatively easy to get to. I ended up walking a fair distance though to get to the bag-drop so make sure you're clear on how to get there in case you mind walking before the race.

Pre-Race (2), bag-drop, etc.:

The bag drop was well organized in a typically efficient German fashion. We also received stuff to keep us warm as the morning was quite cool. Very good. Two pre-race items they could improve however:

1) Potties. Unfortunately not enough of them I think. We usually see long lines, but I thought they seemed a bit too long at this one. Also, when I finally got to one, it was out of paper. Sure, it's impossible to guess which ones will get the most use, but you'd think that toilet paper is so cheap compared to everything else that you could just get a lot of paper to be safe.

2) Getting into the designated start area (corral). I thought it was easy enough to find where the corral was, but not how to get into it in a proper way. Where I got in there were a bunch of people trying to get through a tiny opening in a fence. Very crowded and very irritating.

Start and race:

The start took awhile. I really think they should consider staggered starts to spread out the field a bit more. I spent a good 45 minutes to an hour trying to get past people a lot slower than me. I was aiming for 3:30 or better, and it was quite frustrating to be a good 15-30 seconds per mile slower than expected for such a long time. Fixing the start would help this a lot.

Someone mentioned having water stations on both sides of the road. I think this is a VERY bad idea. At one point they had a station on the left side where the road narrowed - same problem as having a station on both sides. It slows down every person who doesn't want water and may be carrying his or her own bottles. So not only did I have to slalom between slower runners in general, but also play "dodge-ball" at a bunch of water stations. Very annoying. I think it's better to spread them out instead, and at wide sections of the course.

I should mention that the weather was great for running in the morning, but warmed up significantly during the race. And the course is flat. Period. Just flat.

The course was fantastic. Berlin is so interesting to see, and it was really great. The crowd surprised me. It was awesome. Lots of people in lots of places. Lots of cheering and happiness. The end stretch was lined with people, which was really nice. Major thumbs up to the people of Berlin!!!

Finish and post-race:

I got quite annoyed at the finish because there was no water to be found anywhere close to where you stopped running. They could also have put a couple of water showers since it was really warm by the time I finished (3:44).

However, the non-alcoholic beer made me VERY happy!!! One of the best beers I've ever had (though I was dehydrated at the time). Also easy to get your bag back and get pictures taken. Also a nice little booklet is sent out to you after the race along with official certificate.

Conclusion: A great race with a fantastic audience in a great city. It's a great opportunity to set a personal best time as it's virtually

ruler-flat. The organization could be a bit better, and if they just do that it'll turn a great marathon into a perfect one. Recommended!

---

★★★★★ **First-Class Book, Too** (about: 2009)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 5**

*James Murphy* from Chicago, IL (11/23/09)

11-50 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

I want to update my comments on the 2009 Berlin Marathon, which I made shortly after the race, which I summarized as "First Class Event." I just received in the mail the souvenir book, which presumably is sent to all participants (I don't recall paying extra for it, and did not expect it.) I have received nice, magazine-quality souvenir results books from Chicago and Boston, but the book I just received from Berlin is really outstanding. First of all, it is a hardback book, not a magazine. It is the size of a magazine, and filled with beautiful color photos of all the events of the weekend, from the roller blade marathon the day before, to the expo, to the kids' race, to the pre-race run (breakfast at the Olympic Stadium), and, of course, to the marathon. It is extraordinarily well done and quite the keepsake. However, unlike other results books I have gotten from other races, this one does NOT list every runner's result. They do have several pages listing the times of those who have run at least 10 Berlin marathons, and of course, the top elite finishers.

---

★★★★★ **One of the world's great marathons** (about: 2008)

**Course: 5 Organization: 5 Fans: 4**

*James Skinner* from Gloucestershire, England (10/6/09)

6-10 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

Berlin offers a fantastic marathon: A flat, fast course that takes in some of the main city landmarks and provides the ideal environment in which to run well.

The crowds and organization are second to none. You can tell that this is a well established event that means something to the people of Berlin. The pre-race expo is excellent, with plenty of merchandise on offer, something that disappoints at some other events.

Everyone always says that Berlin offers a great chance for a PB, and whilst this is true to a point (flat course/fast), it really depends on your grouping at the start and how congested things get during the race. Several times, the course narrowed as you entered a new street, and this had the effect of bunching and slowing everyone down. I know this has been mentioned in previous posts.

The highlight of the race is running underneath the Brandenburg Gate, through the middle arch, and along to the finish line. At this point, the crowds are several-people deep and the atmosphere is electric.

Overall, no serious marathon runner would leave Berlin off of his or her CV/resume.

---

★★★★★ **Great marathon, but can still improve** (about: 2009)

**Course: 5 Organization: 4 Fans: 5**

*R. H.* from Houston, TX (10/5/09)

11-50 previous marathons | 1 Berlin Marathon

Course: No complaints here. The start and finish and every kilometer in between was flat, scenic, and historic. Crossing over the site of the Berlin Wall four times throughout the course was very memorable.

Organization: The expo was great; they should definitely keep it at Tempelhof in the future. There were tons of booths to peruse, and if you wanted decent pasta, lunch was available too. The start line area was great and well organized, especially the large patch of grass in front of the Reichstag that was the perfect place to relax before the race.

The main area for improvement that I would comment on deals with the water tables. For a field of 40,000 runners, they really need to have water on both sides of the street. Only some of the stations were set-up like this, but on the ones that weren't, it was chaos as everyone was crowded onto one side trying to get a drink. Secondly, the water cups should be paper and not plastic. I am one of those people that like to run through a water stop, so I usually take a paper cup and fold it so I can drink on the run. It's impossible to do this with a plastic cup and you end up spilling half the water if you try to drink and run at the same time. Please, please, please use paper cups next year!

My final comment on organization deals with the finishing area. Please have water available immediately. It felt like I had to walk forever before I finally came across some water.

Spectators: Far and away the best spectators I've seen at any European marathon that I've done. They were loud, supportive, and energetic. The bands were great as well. Crowd support was tremendous.

Overall a great race that is definitely worth the trip. Highly recommended!

## Tourist

Berlin's history is dark, not only as Hitler's nerve center of Nazi horror, but also as the battleground of the Cold War. But with its field of new skyscrapers, hip clubs, and fashion boutiques, postmillennium Berlin has recast itself as the Continent's capital of cool.

However, make no mistake, Berlin is not exactly escaping the past, as the opening of the Jüdisches Museum Berlin (Jewish Museum), a paean to German Jewry, testifies. Instead, Berlin is reconciling itself to its notorious history and moving with confidence into its future. As one hip young Berliner, Joachim Stressmann, told us: "We don't know where we're going, but we know where we've been, and no one wants to go back there."

The reunited city of Berlin is once again the capital of Germany. Berlin was almost bombed out of existence during World War II, its streets reduced to piles of rubble, its parks to muddy swampland. But the optimistic spirit and strength of will of the remarkable Berliners enabled them to survive not only the wartime destruction of their city, but also its postwar division, symbolized by the Berlin Wall.

Today, structures of steel and glass tower over streets where before only piles of rubble lay, and parks and gardens are again lush. Nonetheless, even in the daily whirl of working, shopping, and dining along the Ku'Damm, Berliners encounter reminders of less happy days: At the end of the street stands the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, with only the shell of the old neo-Romanesque bell tower remaining. In striking contrast is the new church, constructed west of the old tower in 1961 and nicknamed "lipstick and powder box" by Berliners because of its futuristic design.

Before the war, the section of the city that became East Berlin was the cultural and political heart of Germany, where the best museums, finest churches, and most important boulevards lay. The walled-in East Berliners turned to restoring their museums, theaters, and landmarks (especially in the Berlin-Mitte section), while West Berliners built entirely new museums and cultural centers. This contrast between the two parts of the city is still evident, though east and west are coming together more and more within the immense, fascinating whole that is Berlin.

Ich bin ein Berliner -- But What Is a Berliner? -- John F. Kennedy's historic speech on a visit to Berlin in June of 1963 became a famous utterance and made him the most popular American ever to visit the city.

But the question might be asked, "Just what is a Berliner?"

No one could ever accuse the Germans of being too lighthearted or frivolous. Indeed, they rank as among the most reserved in Europe. They take pleasure in neatness, in precision, in the established order of things, and even their language has changed little over the centuries. Instead of creating new words for new concepts or objects for example, the Germans are more apt to string together words they already know.

There's little doubt that Berliners are Germans through and through, and are even Prussian on top of that, but they are also known for their dry wit and humor. They have what's called Schnauze, a Texas-like attitude that says everything in Berlin is bigger and better -- a trait they share with the Bavarians. According to one joke, a Bavarian boasted that Bavaria was better than Berlin because it had the Alps. He then smugly asked a Berliner whether Berlin had any mountains that compared.

"No" answered the Berliner calmly, looking his rival squarely in the eyes. "But if we did, you can be sure they'd be higher than yours."



With a population of almost 3.5 million people, Berlin is the most densely populated city in Germany. It also has the largest non-German population of any German city, with foreign nationals making up more than 10% of the total residents. One of the first and biggest tides of immigration brought the Huguenots in the 17th century. With them came their language; and food still evident in Berlin today -- a Boulette, for example, is a meatball that can be traced to the Huguenots and is today considered a Berlin specialty.

In more recent times, newcomers to Berlin have included large numbers of Turkish, Yugoslavian, Greek, and Polish immigrants. Turks are the largest minority in Berlin, numbering more than 120,000. They live mainly in the precincts of Kreuzberg, Neukolln, and Wedding. Although problems occasionally arise because of differences in cultural backgrounds, Berlin on the whole enjoys a greater harmony than elsewhere in Germany. Decades of isolation have helped forge a sense of community spirit. Years of living with the Wall during the Cold War have bred tolerance and determination.

As for the Berliner wit, it's most evident in a penchant to nickname everything in sight. The Kongresshalle, for example, built as the American contribution in a 1957 architectural competition, is irreverently called the "pregnant oyster," while the new church next to the Gedächtniskirche is known as the "lipstick and powder puff," and a large global fountain in front of the Europa Center is the "wet dumpling."