

Bard ABROAD

Bard College Berlin
A LIBERAL ARTS UNIVERSITY

LOCATION GUIDE ACADEMIC YEAR, 2024-25 BERLIN, GERMANY

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BERLIN: AN INTRODUCTION

Overview of the City

Berlin's cosmopolitan atmosphere, complex history and cultural and intellectual riches make it one of the most intriguing cities anywhere in Europe and the world. Between Berlin's renowned museums, its historical legacy, cutting-edge architecture, trendy cafes and bars, political rallies, concerts, performances and art openings there always is something to do, no matter the time of day. Your liberal arts studies will come to life in Berlin!

Berlin has no undisputed center; rather the city consists of 23 districts, each with its own character and attractions. Though large, Berlin is very accessible; the city's dependable public transportation system will take you just about anywhere you need to go.

A Brief History

Berlin has long been an important German city. It was the capital of the Kingdom of Prussia (1701–1918), the German Empire (1871–1918), the Weimar Republic (1919–1933), the “Third Reich” (1933–1945), the German Democratic Republic (East Germany, 1949–1989) and, from 1990, the capital of the Federal Republic of Germany (*Bundesrepublik Deutschland*).

Present-day Berlin began as a collection of small fishing and farming villages located on both banks of the Spree River. Around the year 1200, two grandsons of Albert the Bear, Otto and Johann, founded the towns Berlin and Cölln, which would later unite into one city. In the 1400s Berlin became the residence of the Hohenzollern family, the dynasty that would rule Berlin until 1918. The Hohenzollern family ruled as electors of Brandenburg and later as kings, when in 1701, Elector Frederick III crowned himself as [Frederick I, King in Prussia](#), and made Berlin the capital of this new kingdom. Under Friedrich II (“the Great”), the city became a center of intellectual and cultural life. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Berlin's population and economy expanded rapidly. During this period, Berlin became a main transportation hub and industrial center of Europe. In 1870, Prussia and the alliance of German states defeated France in the [Franco-Prussian War](#). Berlin became capital of the newly founded [German Empire \(“Deutsches Reich”\)](#) in 1871 with Wilhelm I reluctantly agreeing to become emperor (“Kaiser”), and Bismarck serving as chancellor.

Under the German Empire, Berlin saw an unprecedented construction boom, which included the building of the “U-Bahn” (the subway, which you will get to know very well) and the “Reichstag” (Imperial Parliament). In 1914, the First World War broke out, leading to hunger and massive strikes in the capital. In 1918, at the end of the First World War, [Wilhelm II](#) (the last of the Hohenzollerns) abdicated and a new German republic was proclaimed in Berlin. During the “Weimar Republic,” despite severe economic instability,

Berlin experienced a creative renaissance and became renowned as a center of cultural transformation.

On July 30th, 1933, Adolf Hitler and the National Socialists came to power. On March 21, the first concentration camp in the Berlin area opened just outside the city for regime opponents. Nazi rule destroyed Berlin's Jewish community, which numbered 160,000 before the Nazis came to power. After the pogrom of Kristallnacht in 1938, thousands of the city's Jews were imprisoned; most of those arrested were taken to the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Of the 160,000 Jews living in Berlin in 1933, roughly 90,000 were able to emigrate before 1941, while more than 60,000 were murdered in National Socialist concentration camps in Poland and Eastern Europe by the end of the war. Large parts of Berlin were bombed during the 1943-1945 air raids. The Battle of Berlin, when the Red Army crossed the city boundaries for the first time on April 21, 1945, was the final phase of the war, which ended with Hitler's suicide on April 30, the surrender of the city on May 2 and the unconditional surrender of Germany on May 8, 1945.

After the war's end Berlin was reduced to rubble and only 2.8 million of the city's original population of 4.3 million remained in the city. The victors divided Berlin into four sectors, the sectors of the United States, the United Kingdom and France forming West Berlin, and the Soviet Sector forming East Berlin. Due to tensions, the Soviet Union cut off the western sectors from June 1948 to May 1949. The western Allies responded with the Berlin Airlift, supplying the entire city with food and fuel by air. In 1949, the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in West Germany, excluding the Allied zones in Berlin, and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) was founded in East Germany. West Berlin remained an occupied city until the construction of the Berlin Wall between East and West Berlin in 1961, built by the GDR to stem the flow of refugees to the Federal Republic of Germany. West Berlin now became a part of West Germany and East Berlin became a part of East Germany. On November 9, 1989, the wall came down, and East and West Germany were reunified in 1990. The government moved from Bonn to Berlin, with the first plenary session being held in the remodeled Reichstag in 1999.

Much has changed in Berlin since its founding, and the city continues to change to this day. Such a complex history is hard to take in all at once, but as you get to know Berlin and see buildings from all these eras still standing--sometimes next to one another--the history will feel very real.

Geography and Climate

Berlin is located in northeastern Germany, about 40 miles west of the Polish border. It is Germany's capital and largest city. Though surrounded by the state of Brandenburg, Berlin is actually its own state. The cityscape is highly eclectic, due to the key role it played in Germany's history in the 20th century. Modern architecture juxtaposes buildings from the communist era, Prussian architectural projects, National Socialist era buildings and buildings still looking a bit like rubble. Berlin is located in an area of mainly flat topography,

as it is part of the Northern European Plain, which stretches all the way from northern [France](#) to western [Russia](#). One of the highest elevations in Berlin, the Teufelsberg (Devil's Mountain), is actually man-made mound of rubble from WWII. Despite it being a major urban area, around one third of the city's area is composed of forests, parks, gardens, rivers and lakes. Sightings of fox, rabbit and hedgehog are not uncommon, even in the city center.

Berlin enjoys a continental climate: the winters are cold and the summers are hot. Berlin also enjoys its fair share of rain throughout the year. Streets get very icy in the winter, so bring shoes with traction. Early autumn flaunts bright foliage and sunshine, which can keep outdoor cafés open through to October. Predictably, December to February is the coldest period. When fierce winds blow in from [Russia](#), it gets mighty chilly. Pack accordingly!

Landmarks and Finding Your Way in Berlin

In Berlin there is no one city center. Berlin has many boroughs (Bezirke) and each borough is composed of several localities. Each borough has its own vibe and attractions and is easy to reach with public transportation.



Descriptions of Main Boroughs:

Charlottenburg, Wilmersdorf, Schöneberg: These three areas make up the former city center of West Berlin. Charlottenburg is home to Berlin's main commercial shopping strip, the Kurfürstendamm (Ku'damm). The famous KaDeWe (Department Store of the West), located in Schöneberg, is the largest department store on the continent and was a symbol of West Berlin's prosperity during the Cold War. Berlin's Zoo, aquarium, the "Gedächtniskirche" (one of the few remaining ruins of the WWII air raids), and the Schloss Charlottenburg are other highlights from these boroughs. The **Zoologischer Garten** U-Bahn/S-Bahn stop (Bahnhof Zoo) will put you in the middle of the action.

Mitte: Mitte contains some of Berlin's "must-see" attractions. Perhaps most famous is Unter den Linden, Berlin's showcase boulevard from the eighteenth century. Today, around the entrance of the boulevard, you will find embassies, glamorous hotels, the Reichstag (seat of

the federal parliament or “Bundestag”), the iconic Brandenburg Gate, the site of Hitler’s bunker, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. These are all easily accessed by the U-Bahn station **Friedrichstraße**. Further down the boulevard you will find Humboldt University, the Neue Wache (the Memorial to Victims of War and Tyranny), the State Opera, and the Old State Library among other landmarks. Close to Unter den Linden is the beautiful Gendarmenmarkt. Berlin’s finest Christmas market takes place here during the holiday season.

The Museumsinsel (museum Island), best accessed from S-Bahn station **Hackescher Markt**, is the location of Berlin’s best known museums: the Altes Museum, the Alte Nationalgalerie, the Neues Museum, the Bode-Museum, and the Pergamon-Museum. There is a nice flea market in the space in front of the museums on the weekends. Also, be sure to check out the nearby Berliner Dom, the Hohenzollern family’s church and symbol of power.

Also in Mitte is Alexanderplatz, a plaza designed by East German authorities as a model modern socialist capital city center. In the vicinity of Alexanderplatz is the hard to miss GDR-era Fernsehturm (TV-tower). If you are ever disoriented, look for the Fernsehturm and follow it like the northern star. Alexanderplatz is an icon of a bygone era and you will pass through often, as its S-/U-Bahn stop is one of Berlin’s main stations.

The last part of Mitte that must be mentioned is the trendy Oranienburger Strasse and surrounding streets. Located in the pre-war Jewish quarter, this part of town is bustling with shopping, restaurants, and nightlife. Though the legendary Kunsthaus Tacheles (a former anarchistic squat now housing alternative artists and ad hoc bars) is supposedly shutting down, there is still a lot worth checking out. When it comes to food, avoid the flashy restaurants (over-priced), and grab a fresh falafel at Dada Falafel instead at the **Oranienburger Tor** stop. Other things to see include, the Neue Synagoge, the "Missing House" memorial, and Monbijou park.

Tiergarten: The Tiergarten is the name of the large urban park equipped with monuments, beer gardens and waterways and located in the center of Berlin. However, Tiergarten is also a borough, containing destinations such as the Kulturforum (West Berlin's preeminent site of high culture, including the Philharmonie, Gemäldegalerie, Neue Staatsgalerie and others), Potsdamer Platz (divided by the wall and left desolate during the cold war,) and the Hamburger Bahnhof (a former train station turned major contemporary art museum).

Prenzlauer Berg: This former East Berlin area is one of Berlin’s most popular and prettiest neighborhoods. In the 1990s it was a center for Berlin’s bohemian youth. Though increasingly gentrified, it still maintains an alternative and lively feel. The area is largely residential and has some of Berlin’s nicest boutiques and cafes. The most popular area can be accessed by the U-Bahn stops north of Alexanderplatz: Schönhauser Alle, Eberswalder Straße, Senefelder Platz, and Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz. The Mauerpark, formerly the site of the Berlin Wall and deathstrip, today is a center of improvised nightlife, large flea markets

and crazy karaoke shows on the weekends. One of the many good places to eat in this area is at the pizzeria I Due Forni.

Friedrichshain: After the fall of the Berlin Wall, many squatters took over Friedrichshain's empty buildings, and though the police ended this trend in the 1990s, this legacy still contributes to the lively atmosphere of the borough today. It is the center of Berlin's renowned nightlife and techno scene. The cheap rent and alternative vibe makes this borough a magnet for students and artists. In addition to the countless cinemas, clubs, and GDR-era building, a main draw is the East Side Gallery: The longest remaining section of the Berlin Wall (more than 1 km) and a memorial for freedom. In 1990, 150 international artists painted on the east side of the wall, capturing the spirit of hope and change after the fall of the wall. The Schlesisches Tor, Warschauer Straße and Ostkreuz stations will bring you into the thick of the action.

Kreuzberg (X-berg): Kreuzberg is another very vibrant and youthful Berlin neighborhood. It is known for its large immigrant community. Formerly the legendary center of West Berlin's squatting, clubbing and arts scenes it is still a favorite neighborhood among students. Best place to eat: Maroush.

The best way to become oriented in Berlin is on the BVG's website:

<http://www.bvg.de/index.php/en/index.html>

Suggested Viewing & Reading

Before coming to Berlin you may want to watch one of the many films that take place in the city to familiarize yourself with its culture, history and the city itself.

Films:

- *One Two Three*
- *Berlin, Symphony of a Big City*
- *The Murderers Are among Us*
- [*The Marriage of Maria Braun*](#) (*Die Ehe der Maria Braun*), 1979
- [*Wings of Desire*](#) (*Der Himmel über Berlin*), 1987
- [*Run Lola Run*](#) (*Lola rennt*), 1998
- *Aimée & Jaguar*, 1999
- *Sonnenalle*, 1999
- [*Good Bye, Lenin!*](#), 2003
- *The Edukators*, 2004
- [*Downfall*](#) (*Der Untergang*), 2004
- [*The Lives of Others*](#) (*Das Leben der Anderen*), 2006
- *The Red Cockatoo*, 2006
- [*The Baader Meinhof Complex*](#), 2007

Books:

Germany is one of the world's largest markets of serious literature, and no other German city has inspired as many novels and stories as Berlin. Your Bard College Berlin professors will be happy to give you tips for heavier and lighter, longer and shorter works that have the city at their center. Try:

- Sven Regener *Berlin Blues* (Herr Lehmann)
- Vladimir Kaminer, *Russian Disco*
- Emine Sevgi Özdamar, *Mother Tongue*
- Erich Kästner *Fabian*
- Alfred Döblin *Berlin Alexanderplatz*
- Hans Fallada *Little Man, What Now?*
- Theodor Fontane *Effi Briest*
- Christopher Isherwood *Berlin Stories*
- Peter Schneider *The Wall Jumper*
- Joseph Roth *What I Saw: Reports from Berlin, 1920-1933*
- Irmgard Keun *The Artificial Silk Girl*
- Christa Wolf *The Divided Sky* (translated as *Divided Heaven*)

Helpful tip: The best online dictionary for your day-to-day concerns is:

<http://www.leo.org/>

TRAVELING TO GERMANY

Suggested Packing List

Berliners are quite trendy, and Europeans in general “dress up” in public. Wearing baggy clothes, t-shirts, sweatshirts, and loose jeans is more common among American college students than German students and other Europeans. However, it is most important that you bring clothes that you enjoy wearing. See *Appendix IX* for clothing size conversions.

Students living on campus are provided with linens, but are expected to bring their own towel.

As you choose clothing for your trip in Berlin we recommend you pack the following additional items:

- At least one pair of comfortable and waterproof walking shoes—you will walk a lot in Berlin
- Winter boots, preferably with gripping soles for icy sidewalks.
- Athletic/running shoes

- Slippers
- Shower shoes
- Light Waterproof jacket
- Winter Coat
- Sweaters, turtlenecks, fleeces, and other items that layer well
- Warm hat, scarf, and gloves
- Wool socks
- Long underwear (tops and bottoms)
- Umbrella
- Bathing suit
- Sunglasses
- Laundry bag
- Towel
- Backpack or reusable bags for groceries

Electricity and Electronic Equipment

Germany operates on the European voltage system (220v), not the 110v system used in North America. Most electrical appliances intended for travel have a voltage converter already built in. To determine if an appliance will work in Germany, find the device's voltage levels on its power adapter or near the power cord. If the device indicates a range between 110v and 220v, it should work in Germany with the use of a two-prong European plug adaptor.

Adapters can be purchased at electronic or travel stores in the U.S., and they are also readily available in Germany. If you purchase an adaptor in the US, make sure that it will fit any three-pronged plugs you are bringing with you, and that it will fit into a German electrical outlet (*eine Steckdose*) which has two round holes for a receptacle. Laptop computers, digital cameras, and iPods should work with the use of a plug adapter, but items such as hair dryers and curling irons are generally easier to purchase in Germany than to bring with you.

Electronic items you may consider bringing:

- Plug adaptor
- Voltage converter (if needed)
- MP3 player
- Digital camera
- Electric razor/beard trimmer
- Laptop computer

Personal Care and Medications

Almost all imaginable bath products and cosmetics are available in Berlin. Bring travel-size bottles of your essential bath products/toiletries and stock up on what you need after arrival.

These items are **not** readily available in Berlin:

- Cold medicine—brands and active ingredients are different in Germany so bring a supply of your favorite American brand if you rely on it for relief of common cold symptoms. Most German brands seem weaker to American travelers.

Important note:

- A drug approved by the FDA in the U.S. may not be approved in Germany. German law **prohibits the mailing or shipment of drugs**, including prescription medicines, to private persons in Germany from the U.S. or other foreign countries. ***Bring all the medication you need for your time in Berlin in their original packaging and with a copy of the doctor's prescription.***

Tip: Check with your doctor about the availability of your prescriptions in Germany.

THE ESSENTIALS OF DAILY LIFE IN BERLIN

Housing

Students participating in the Bard in Berlin Study Abroad Program are required to live in on campus housing for the duration of the program. There are four residential buildings, all are apartment style housing. The residential buildings have laundry and kitchen facilities.

All students live in *shared* double rooms with internet access and will be provided with linens and basic cookware, but must bring their own towels.

Program housing is only available during the program. Students who arrive prior to the program start date or remain in-country after the program end date are solely responsible for their own accommodations outside of the published start and end dates.

All program participants are enrolled in a full meal plan at Bard College Berlin. A full meal plan includes three meals a day on weekdays (Monday through Friday) when the College is open.

Recycling

Most households separate waste by paper (“Papier”), light packaging (“Der grüne Punkt,” “Gelber Sack”), glass (“Glas”), compost (“Biomüll”), and other trash (“Restmüll”). Bottles include a deposit charge (“Pfand”) of roughly 8 cents on glass bottles, 15 cents on hard plastic bottles and 25 cents on softer one-use plastic bottles. It is worth it to collect all your redeemable bottles and bring them to a supermarket to get your recycling money back. When at a café, “Biergarten” or outdoor market, a high pfand (1 euro) will be a part of the price of your beverage purchase. When you are finished with your beverage, return the empty bottle to the place of purchase for a refund, where possible.

LANGUAGE GUIDE - HOUSING

das Gebäude	building
die Tür	door
die Wohnung	apartment
das Zimmer	room
der Hof	courtyard
die Etage	floor (as in 1 st , 2 nd , 7 th)
der Fahrstuhl	elevator
die Treppe	stairs
der Schlüssel	key
das Türschloss	lock
der Nachbar / die Nachbarin	neighbor
der Mitbewohner / die Mitbewohnerin	roommate
die Miete	rent
der Vertrag	contract

Money & Banking

\$1 = 0.93 Euros (As of February 2024)

Exchange rates fluctuate slightly so you should periodically check exchange rates.

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

<http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/>

Debit cards and credit cards are accepted in some places but are not as widespread as in the US. Cash is still the currency of choice in Berlin, and cards are rarely used to pay for low cost items.

The easiest and cheapest way of obtaining Euros is usually to take your US bank debit card to an ATM in Berlin once you are here. Do not bring large amounts of US dollars. Make sure

your debit card has a Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus sign (which are the most widely accepted), and a four digit pin number. Inquire with your home bank about the fees they charge for withdrawing funds abroad (“foreign transaction fees” and “ATM fees”).

You will always want to have some cash on you, but carry it inconspicuously in a secure pocket, wallet, or bag. Many eateries don’t take credit cards, and you must pay to use public toilets.

Important: Before you leave the United States, notify the issuer of every debit and credit card you plan to use that you will be in Germany (**and any other countries you plan to visit after the program**). If you do not do this, **your bank may lock your account believing your cards have been compromised**. Make sure you understand the fees and regulations in your contract to avoid excessive fees.

Personal Budgeting

A budget of \$250 per month is a reliable estimate for personal expenses. On this budget students should be able to purchase personal care items, attend events, activities, and eat out occasionally. Dining out is often more affordable than in most US cities.

LANGUAGE GUIDE - MONEY

der Geldautomat	ATM machine
die Wechselstube	Bureaux de change
der Wechselkurs	exchange rate
das Bargeld	cash
das Münzgeld/ Kleingeld	change (coins)
der Geldschein	bill, banknote
das Bankkonto	bank account

Communications

Receiving Mail

Mail can be sent to Bard College Berlin’s main mailing address. Office staff will hold letters and packages and notify you of their arrival:

Your name
c/o Bard College Berlin
Platanenstrasse 24
13156 Berlin
Germany

You can go to a regular post office anywhere in the city to buy stamps and envelopes, and you can drop your letters in the yellow mailboxes there or anywhere else around the city.

Important: If you do have to mail a package* to Germany, please note that it is illegal to send any medications (including most over the counter drugs) and that a customs declaration needs to be affixed to *all* packages. (Packages without a declaration will be returned to sender.) **Avoid sending any electronic items or items newly purchased in the US**, since they are **subject to a customs duty (taxation)**. Certain foods will also not be allowed into the country, so be sure to research what can and cannot be shipped to Germany.

****For Summer students:** Since the summer program is only four weeks, the customs process for shipped packages may take as long as the program itself and students may not receive their package in time for departure.*

“Das Handy”: Cell phones

We suggest that you buy a German cell-phone or “Handy” that runs off of pre-paid cards after you arrive in Berlin. One good thing about cell-phone use in Germany is that **you are not charged for incoming calls**. If your friend back home has a good rate to call Germany, have him/her call you. This will be an affordable option.

Or

Before you leave, you can contact your cell phone provider in the US to find out if your phone will work in Germany. If you know that it will work, also find out how much you will have to pay to use it. If you have an unlocked, multiband phone (the frequency needed for Germany is either 900 or 1800; in the US it is generally 1900), we will help you buy a SIM-card from a German provider such as Vodafone or O2 on orientation day. Providers offer non-contract prepaid service that is easy to refill, but this will be a more costly option.

Or

Before you leave, you can also go to a site like *roamsimple.com*, buy a Germany SIM-card and rent or buy a GSM phone for about \$60; you will get a German phone number at which you can be called at no cost to you (the caller of course pays long distance charges); you can call the US for approximately \$0.29 a minute (check current rates).

Calling Germany from the United States

011 - US exit code; must be dialed first for all international calls made from the USA or Canada

49 - Country Code for Germany

Example: 011-49- 30 43733 0 (to call Bard College Berlin's main number)

Calling the United States from Germany

01-International Direct Dialing code

1- Country code for USA

Example: 00-1-845-758-7454 (to call David Shein)

Both Skype and Google voice offer good rates for calls from the US to Germany and vice versa. Placing international calls from Bard College Berlin by dialing directly is very expensive, and you will need to make arrangements to pay if you choose to make these calls. It is usually much cheaper to buy an international calling card in Berlin than to call the US or other countries directly.

Transportation

**Please note that within the Bard Abroad portal all visiting BCB students will be required to pay a fee to BCB for a pass that gives them unlimited public transportation in Berlin and Potsdam for the six-month period in which the semester falls.*

Commuting

Commuting is a normal part of urban life around the world. Even if you live in Berlin's center, getting to another destination takes time. There are many ways, however, of reaching your destination using public and private transportation. You will be happy to find that public transportation in Berlin is generally clean, punctual, and comprehensive in its hours of operation as well as routes covered.

The public transportation website, www.bvg.de, has complete listings and maps for all the lines in Berlin. It also has a handy "Journey Planner" function. You simply type in where you are departing from and where you wish to arrive and it provides the quickest routes, transfer information and an accurate trip duration estimate. You will come to love the Journey Planner. The Berlin Weekend and other group activities will help to familiarize you with the ins and outs of using Berlin's public transit system.

Important: The U-Bahn, S-Bahn, tram and rail operate on the honor system. Be sure to **have your transportation pass on you at all times**, so that you will not be caught on a Bahn without a ticket. Plain clothed transportation officers check for tickets at random, and if you are found without a ticket you will have to **pay a fine on the spot**. The bus operates slightly differently: you will have to show your "Monatskarte" (monthly pass) to the driver before boarding the bus every time.

For guests/forgot your pass/ticket at home: After 8 p.m. and on weekends a “Monatskarte” is good for two riders. If you forget your card during the day or have a visitor, simply purchase an “Einzelticket” (single ride). Single ride tickets are valid for two hours one way in the A and B zones. Don’t forget to punch in your “Einzelticket” at the validation machines. If traveling into the C zone, you will need to purchase a separate C-zone ticket.

Walking and Biking in Berlin

Because your daily commute will involve at least some walking (or biking for the well-prepared and more adventurous), please keep the following note about the weather in mind!

Weather conditions can change quickly in Berlin, and many sunny days end up warranting an umbrella. Bring more warm clothing (scarf, gloves, hat) than you think you will actually need when leaving the house in the winter. In the summer months, the warmest part of the day is not the morning. Mornings may be cold, and late afternoon can be quite hot. Dress in layers and plan accordingly when leaving home.

While walking, please remember that Germany is very strict about where and when to cross the street. Always cross at a crosswalk, and always wait until the “Ampel” (street light) turns green before crossing the street. You may only cross a crosswalk without a green light if it is “zebra striped.” Also, be aware of the bike lanes- though on the sidewalks they are for cyclists and not pedestrians.

There are strict rules for bicycles in Berlin. Street legal bikes must have working lights, reflectors, and brakes. If caught riding after dark without a light, you will receive a fine. When bringing a bike on public transportation, you must purchase a ticket for the bike, and bring it to the appropriate car (some cars do not allow bikes). You will also be fined for disobeying traffic rules on a bike. Bikes follow the same rules as cars in Germany. It is illegal to bike through a red light, it is illegal to bike down the wrong direction of a one-way street, and it is illegal to bike on the sidewalk unless it is marked as a bike path. A yellow triangle sign before an intersection means you have the right of way at the intersection. If you come to an intersection with no signage, the car on the right has the right of way - ALWAYS. You should know this for your own safety. All students should purchase *and wear* a bike helmet when riding in Berlin, or anywhere.

LANGUAGE GUIDE -TRANSPORTATION

BVG – BERLIN TRANSPORTATION

Fahrkarte/Monatskarte
pass. Keep your
and M

see your
euros



die Haltestelle



die U-Bahn (Untergrundbahn)

consists of
main means
Maintained and



die S-Bahn (Schnellbahn)

lines.
U-Bahn are part of a
have different
by *S-Bahn*



die Straßenbahn

found in
most tram



die Bahn

other German
be used on
your pass

DB Deutsche Bahn

IC Intercity Train

ICE Intercity Express train

Transportation card / monthly
pass on you at all times. The S, U,
operate on the “honors system”. An
undercover BVG agent can ask to
pass, and charge you a fine of 40
are found without one.

Stop (Bus, S/U Bahn, tram)

Underground rapid transit system,
10 lines. Along with S-Bahn, is the
of transportation in Berlin.
operated by BVG.

Rapid transit system, consists of 15
Although the S- and
unified fare system, they
operators. The S-Bahn is operated
Berlin GmbH.

Tram network/ street car. Mostly
former East Berlin. Buses replaced
lines in West Berlin.

Railway. Connects Berlin with
cities. Your transportation pass can
the Bahn within the Berlin zones
covers.

German Railway.



Bus

you enter
stop.

Bus. Show your pass to drivers as
the bus. Press button to signal your

Transportation Language Guide

der Verkehr –transportation	der Eingang- entrance	aussteigen- to get off
das Schiff- boat	das Fahrrad- bicylce	die Ankunft- arrival
der Zug- train	die Einzelfahrt- single ticket	warten- to wait
der Flug- flight	der Ausgang- exit	gültig- valid
der Flughafen- airport	die Ampel- street light	
einsteigen- to get on	der Sitzplatz- seat	

Food and Dining

Meal Service

All program participants are enrolled in a full meal plan at Bard College Berlin. A full meal plan includes three meals a day on weekdays (Monday through Friday) when the College is open. The meal service always includes a vegetarian option.

Students are also encouraged to take advantage of the excellent culinary scene in Berlin. Further, between Bard College Berlin and downtown Berlin is Pankow center, with a variety of restaurants and cafes. Students are also encouraged to shop locally and cook and share basic meals.

Grocery Shopping

German grocery stores only supply bags at an additional price. Plastic bags are frowned upon. When going grocery shopping, remember to bring your own bags or backpack to the store to carry out your purchases. Also keep in mind that you will either be walking or taking public transportation, so only buy what you can carry. Additionally, many German refrigerators and kitchens are smaller than what North Americans are used to. Make sure that you have enough space to store your food purchases. Don't forget- most grocery stores are closed on Sunday! Plan accordingly.

Dining in Berlin

Customer Service: Germany still has a reputation of having poor customer service. Of course there are always exceptions, but, when seated at a restaurant, keep in mind that service may run at a slower pace than what you are used to in the US. This provides time to relax and chat with your meal companion.

Water: Water is not complimentary in Germany. If you want water you will need to ask for it, and unless you specify “Leitungswasser” (tap water), you will be brought a bottle of mineral water and expected to pay for it. Servers may be confused or irritated if you ask for tap water.

Paying: Not all restaurants accept credit cards--make sure you have cash!

Tipping: Servers are paid by the hour, and a service charge is included in the price of a meal. Many Berliners simply round up to the nearest euro (for example if a meal costs 15.50 they will leave 16), but those who are very satisfied with the service often tip between 5-10%. If the service is down right horrible you do not need to tip at all. Do NOT leave your tip on the table; hand it directly to the server.

Affordable Options

Mensa: All of Berlin’s major universities have “Mensen,” or student cafeterias that are open to you. Mensa offerings are very affordable and include vegan, vegetarian and organic menu items. An average meal ranges from 2 to 6 euros (\$2.50 - \$7.00). Daily menus and locations can be found at the following site:

<http://www.studentenwerk-berlin.de/mensen/speiseplan/index.html>

Imbiss: Mobile or semi-permanent food stands are great for those on the run and wanting to save some money. Döner kebabs, "Curry-Wurst," French fries—they are everywhere! As with any street vendor, “Imbiss” food can run from yummy to yucky – ask around for the locals’ favorites!

Food markets are a good place to buy seasonal fruit and vegetables. The Turkish market in Kreuzberg is especially worth checking out. It's open every Tuesday and Friday afternoon.

Things to keep in mind when shopping in Berlin:

Almost all stores are closed on Sundays and holidays and may have shortened hours on Saturdays. Plan your Sunday meal ahead of time, because it will be difficult to buy last minute ingredients. Sunday afternoons are a great time to cook with friends.

A guest at the table

You may find that table manners are more standardized than in the US. Here are some cultural norms to keep in mind.

- Always wash your hands before eating (even if you don't think that your hands are dirty).
- Before eating, always wait until "Guten Appetit" has been said or until everyone is seated.
- Do not rest a used knife or fork directly on the tablecloth.
- The fork and knife lying in parallel on the right side of your plate indicates that you are done with your food.
- The fork and knife resting at an angle on your plate indicates that you are still working on your meal.
- Germans generally keep their hands on or above the table during meals, rather than resting them on their laps.
- Germans (especially of the older generation) consider food a great value and it is uncommon to throw food away. Try to take only as much as you think you can eat to avoid waste and unintended insults.
- The host gives the first toast.
- In Berlin, the most common toast with wine is "Zum Wohl!" (good health).
- The most common toast with beer is "Prost!" (good health).

Alcohol Use

The drinking age is 16 in Germany. For most students this means the first opportunity to legally purchase or order alcoholic beverages. We urge students to consider the negative effects of alcohol consumption when planning social events or trips to clubs. If you do drink (and we hope you won't) please consider the following guidelines to keep your drinking and behavior safer and culturally appropriate.

- Drink SLOWLY to allow your body to metabolize the alcohol. Getting sick is not cool.
- Be AWARE and know the cultural context in which you are drinking. German beer and other alcoholic beverages may be stronger than their American counterparts, so don't be caught off guard by the increased potency of "just a beer."
- If you drink, do so with family or friends and stay together. Solitary drinking is a symptom of a larger problem.
- If you drink, drink as part of a meal. Food slows down the absorption of alcohol into the blood stream.

- Be aware that most safety incidents (robberies, physical attacks, etc.) happen to students who are intoxicated.
- Any amount of drinking impacts our ability to use our better judgment in new situations. Consider the full range of potential outcomes before drinking in an unfamiliar setting or with strangers.

Incidents involving alcohol or drug consumption are among the leading causes of problems in study abroad. Don't let these incidents happen to you. Keep study abroad an educational and enjoyable experience, not an ugly one to regret. We care about your safety and well-being.

LANGUAGE GUIDE - FOOD AND DINING

das Gericht	dish
der Kohl	cabbage
die Zwiebel	onion
die Kartoffel	potato
die Gurke	cucumber
das Fleisch	meat
die Wurst	sausage
der Knödel	Boiled potato and bread dumpling
der Döner (Kebab)/ Schawarma	grilled meat snack in pita bread
das Gewürz	spice
scharf	spicy (hot)
Ich bin Vegetarier.	I am a vegetarian.
Ich esse vegetarisch.	
Ohne __, bitte	Without __, please
Ich hätte gern dieses (hier).	I would like that one.
Die Speisekarte, bitte.	The menu, please.
Die Rechnung, bitte.	The bill, please.

Health

Health issues are generally the same in Berlin as they are in the US. Adapting to a new climate, food, water, and way of life may affect one's health during the first few weeks, but should have no lasting effects.

Colds and sore throats are often symptoms of the stress of adjusting to a new climate. Staying warm, dry, well rested, and well hydrated is perhaps the best way to ward off these minor illnesses. Adjusting to a new climate, German culture and food, and a new linguistic environment may lead to feelings of lethargy

Students taking part in any study abroad program should consult the Center for Disease Control's travel pages for the country in question and ensure that all recommended inoculations/boosters are administered before travel:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

and exhaustion. These symptoms, also associated with culture shock, will subside as you establish your new routine.

Medications

Students are responsible for their own medications and prescriptions. ***German law prohibits the mailing or shipment of drugs, including prescription medicines, to private persons in Germany from the U.S. or other foreign countries.*** Therefore, you should bring a supply of prescription drugs that will suffice for your entire stay, or else you will need to meet with a doctor to procure a German prescription. Bring a copy of your prescription with you, as you may need to present it as you pass through customs. Also, be sure to keep any prescription medications in their original packaging.

Notes on German Pharmacies and Drugstores:

A **Drogerie**, despite its name, doesn't sell drugs or medicines. A German "drug store" sells beauty products and toiletries, but not medicines. Unless you are particularly attached to a specific brand, you should be able to fulfill your cosmetic and toiletry needs in German drugstores. Feminine products, contraception and other such items found at drugstores like CVS in the United States can be found in the Drogerie.

The **Apotheke** is the German equivalent of a pharmacy. In Germany there is much more of an emphasis on natural and herbal medicine. To buy common pain relievers you will need to go to the Apotheke, where medications, prescription or not, are located behind the counter or in the back room.

Health foods, vitamins, natural foods, organically-grown foods (*Biokost*), and herbal teas can be purchased at a **Reformhaus** or **Bioladen**.

LANGUAGE GUIDE - HEALTH

der Arzt	doctor
die Krankheit	sickness, illness
das Fieber	fever
die Kopfschmerzen	headache
die Erkältung	cold
die Grippe	flu
der Husten	cough
die Übelkeit	nausea
die Allergie	allergy
der Bauchschmerz	stomachache
der Zahnschmerz	toothache
die Spritze	shot

der Scheidenpilz	yeast infection
der Harninfekt	UTI
Schwangerschaftstest	pregnancy test
Kondom/das Praeservativ	Condom
die Pille/das Kontrazeptiv	Birth control
die Frauenarzt	gynaecologist
die Notaufnahme	Emergency Room
die Untersuchung	check-up
Hier tut es weh.	It hurts here.
der Termin	appointment

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

“Courtesy, modesty, good manners, conformity to definite ethical standards are universal, but what constitutes courtesy, modesty, good manners, and ethical standards is not universal. It is instructive to know that standards differ in the most unexpected ways. It is still more important to know how the individual reacts to these standards.”

- Franz Boas

Culture Shock

We have provided this section on cultural adjustment, sometimes referred to as “culture shock,” to help you prepare for the ups and downs that will accompany your time in Germany. Culture shock is a term used to describe the anxiety and feelings (of surprise, disorientation, confusion, etc.) felt when people must operate within an entirely different cultural or social environment. Culture shock is completely normal and is generally experienced by all sojourners, although different individuals experience different levels of severity.

Symptoms of culture shock include:

- Unwarranted criticism of the host culture and people
- Heightened irritability
- Constant complaints
- Fatigue; excess sleep
- Retreat to the indoors
- Utopian ideas concerning one's home culture
- Refusal to learn the language
- Preoccupation about being robbed or cheated
- Constant communication with friends and family at home
- Preoccupation with returning home

Do not fear that your entire experience in Germany will be spent in shock, but be prepared to undergo a fairly typical cultural adjustment cycle during your time abroad. In other words, expect some ups and downs. The following outlines a common cultural adjustment cycle, but everyone experiences a unique adjustment process.

Honeymoon Period or Initial Euphoria. Initially, you will probably be fascinated and excited by everything new. Students are at first elated to be in a new culture; after all, you have prepared for and anticipated this experience for several months or years. This stage can last from two weeks to two months, but it will inevitably end.

Irritability and Hostility. You may realize that there are many obstacles to living in Germany - housing, transportation, eating, language, and new friends all pose problems that you have never associated with these categories before. Human beings often become disoriented without their familiar cues for acceptable behavior, and some may even develop various physical ailments such as weight loss/gain or fatigue. Students in this period sometimes withdraw from German culture rather than immersing themselves in it, and they may become more judgmental of others than usual.

Initial Adjustment. As you begin to better interpret some of the cultural questions that have been so puzzling, a gradual adjustment takes place. Students may still have the urge to isolate themselves or cling to fellow North Americans, but things will seem less forbidding and more comfortable.

Adaptation. You will enter the adaptation period when you are able to handle any differences encountered with understanding, and when you are at ease with the college and your peers. Students in this stage find much to enjoy and relationships can begin to deepen and mature. There is a willingness to understand, to embrace, and to creatively interact with the new culture.

Return Anxiety. As students near the completion of their studies and face the prospect of returning home, anxieties sometimes surface. Most students realize how much they have changed since leaving home and wonder if it is possible to fit in with their home culture. They will once again be leaving friends and what has become a safe and familiar environment. These feelings may be compounded by changes that have occurred at home during their absence.

How can you cope with culture shock and the challenges of adjustment?

- Identify the symptoms of shock – this will prevent you from thinking that you are abnormal or that the discomfort is permanent.
- Use the coping mechanisms you have always used during times of stress—exercise, music, meditation, etc.
- Tackle major stressors head on – if your language skills are troubling you and preventing adjustment, work diligently towards improvement. Avoid the urge to

quit because this will only amplify your culture shock and any irritability or hostility toward the host culture.

- Observe how people in your new environment act in situations that are confusing to you. Try to understand what they believe and why they behave as they do. Avoid judging things as either right or wrong; regard them as being merely different. This will help you throughout the adjustment and adaptation periods.
- Set small goals and celebrate when they are achieved—completing a successful grocery shopping trip or participating in class are important achievements. When you are feeling frustrated, remind yourself of the small successes you have had and continue to work for them.
- Don't avoid things that make you feel uncomfortable. The more you face difficult situations, the easier it will be to adjust to them.
- Ask for help! Bard in Berlin program staff is always available to offer suggestions for coping with culture shock and adjustment.
- Create a wide support network as quickly as you can.

We hope that you will find this advice helpful during your time in Germany. Remember that you are not alone! All Bard in Berlin program staff and many of the professors at Bard College Berlin have lived and studied abroad at one time or another. We will always be happy to sit down and lend an ear should you have specific concerns about your adjustment to German culture.

Notes on German Culture

This section (as well as some others of this handbook) is full of generalizations and stereotypes of German culture. Culture is never singular but instead always multi-faceted; these generalizations are provided to help those who are just becoming acquainted with German culture to better understand it. We hope you find this information helpful, but please remember that it cannot be all-inclusive; there are no strict rules that govern all aspects of culture. As you learn more about German culture and acclimatize yourself to its peculiarities, you will likely develop your own personal set of notes that deviates from this starting list. You will also find that some Germans and others who you meet have specific ideas about American culture, which may or may not apply to you and which you may or may not agree with. Study abroad offers an excellent opportunity to engage in discussions about what defines a culture, and to debunk stereotypes about Americans.

Greetings

Relatives and friends kiss each other on the cheek as a greeting, but this is only a rule of thumb.

People older than you should always be addressed with the polite **Sie**, while other students, friends, can be called **Du**. Professors and members of the Bard College Berlin

administration should always be addressed with *Sie* and referred to by their last name and academic title. In general, it is a sign of respect to use formal language until you are invited to use less formal language with a person older than you.

In a German Home

Arrive on time as punctuality indicates proper planning and respect for your host's time. Avoid arriving early, and phone when running late. Shoes should be removed entering someone's home. You will sometimes be offered a pair of slippers, and coats and jackets should be left in the entryway closet.

Making Friends

Like all things, making friends is possible with a little bit of effort. Put yourself out there and find common interests with your classmates or people you meet during your internship. Keep in mind that the "rules of engagement" for interpersonal relationships vary from culture to culture and do not take things too personally if what works in America doesn't lead to the same reaction with someone from another country.

As in all friendships, you should avoid:

- Asserting that you will come in response to an invitation and then not showing up, or informally inviting somebody somewhere and then forgetting about it. Germans tend to take invitations and promises very literally. Think carefully when promising something.
- Returning borrowed items late. If a German friend lends you something (especially if unsolicited), this is a gesture of trust. Forgetting to bring the item back on time, losing the item, or not showing gratitude, signifies disrespect.

This isn't how we do it at home...

In your daily life you may occasionally find yourself in situations that could be unpleasant, annoying, or angering; but that are just reflections of the fact that things are different than what you are accustomed to. This section deals with some of the new things you may face upon arrival in Germany. Remember that discomfort is often the first stage of personal growth, and that you deliberately left the United States to experience another culture – *for better and for worse*.

Some Unexpected Differences

- Differences in the design and functioning of bathrooms, toilets, and showers.
- What we refer to as the "bathroom" or "restroom" is referred to as the "toilet" or "toiletten", bathroom refers to the place you bathe.
- You need to pay to use a public toilet, and may be expected to tip the toilet attendant in some places

- Germans may initially be perceived as cold, that is, not “warm and fuzzy” and doling out the hugs and kisses. This is a cultural and linguistic difference, and once you realize this, you will understand that people are just as friendly as in the US, but have other ways of expressing their interpersonal regard.
- It is difficult to find a good burrito, but the Doenner makes up for it.
- Almost everyone is on time all of the time, and at times “pünktlichkeit” will be expected of you too.
- Bureaucracy is everywhere, and everyone needs to deal with it at some point. Take a deep breath and remember that everything will work out in the end.
- The sidewalks are not salted or cleaned in the winter (pack good boots!).
- It can take a long time to be served at sit down restaurants in Germany. Your waiter probably hasn’t forgotten you. Be patient and everything will work out.
- Smoking is still widespread in Germany and is still legal in many public places.
- You are in a different country, so expecting people to behave like people from your home will only lead to frustration.

Being A Foreigner Abroad

Just as all of your interactions with non-Americans while studying in Berlin will teach you something of other cultures, others will be looking to you to learn more about America and Americans. While you are abroad you are a representative of the United States, your home institution, and your family. The distance from home will likely lead you to new perspectives on American life and your own life; this self-discovery is one of the most exciting aspects of study abroad.

You can expect that people you meet may wish to discuss American politics with you. You may also be asked to explain your opinions on American foreign policy in general and/or on more specific issues or pieces of legislation. You may also find that many Europeans are better informed about international affairs than average Americans and may expect you to have knowledge and opinions about world affairs. There are English language newspapers and news websites that can help you stay up to date on current events.

Maintaining an awareness of how German and American cultural norms may differ, and respecting the place you are in, will serve you well as you strive to find your own identity abroad. Keeping in touch with friends and family at home is also very important, yet should not replace the idea of being engaged in your life in Berlin. Facebook, Twitter, Skype, and texting all provide us with instant access to our friends and family, and allow us to share our emotions and activities in real time.

Students are encouraged to consider how their online presence and postings reflects upon themselves, and others on the program. Keeping in touch and sharing your photos and

experiences is appreciated by all those who care about you, but screen time should not inhibit your ability to be present in Berlin and to reflect before sharing it all with the world. That said, we do hope that you'll share some of your favorite photos and fun moments with us as we build awareness of Bard College Berlin!

We wish you an exciting, fun, rewarding, and amazing semester!

APPENDIX I. BERLIN'S "MUST DO" LIST

- o Get lost in the Museum Insel
- o Go to the top of the Reichstag
- o Walk through the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe
- o Take a boat tour along the Spree
- o Lounge at the Badeschiff in warm weather
- o Shop at the Turkish Markt
- o Eat a Doenner at Maroush in Kreuzberg
- o Visit the Judisches Museum
- o Give the electronic music scene a chance
- o Stroll through Tiergarten
- o Take a free walking tour to acquaint yourself with the city (touristy but you won't regret it!)
- o Visit the Eastside Gallery
- o See the bust of Nefertiti in the Neues Museum.

APPENDIX II. CLOTHING SIZE CONVERSION CHARTS

Women's Jeans

USA	-	2	4	6	8	10	12	14
Europe	30	34/36	36/38	38/40	40/42	42/44	44/46	48/50

Women's Clothing DAMENBEKLEIDUNG

USA	0-2	2-4	4-6	8-10	12-14	14-16	20	22
International	XXS	XS	S	M	L	XL	XXL	XXXL
Germany	30	32	34	36-38	40-42	42-44	48	50-52

Bra sizes BÜSTENHALTER (BH)

USA	Cup	AA	A	B	C	D	DD	DDD/ E	F
Euro		AA	A	B	C	D	E	F	-
USA	Band	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	48
Euro		70	75	80	85	90	-	-	-

Women's shoes DAMENSCHUHE

USA	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Europe	N/A	36	37	38	39	40	41	42

Men's suits and coats HERRENBKLEIDUNG

USA	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46-48
	S			M	L		XL	XL
Europe	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56-58

Men's shirts

USA	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	18
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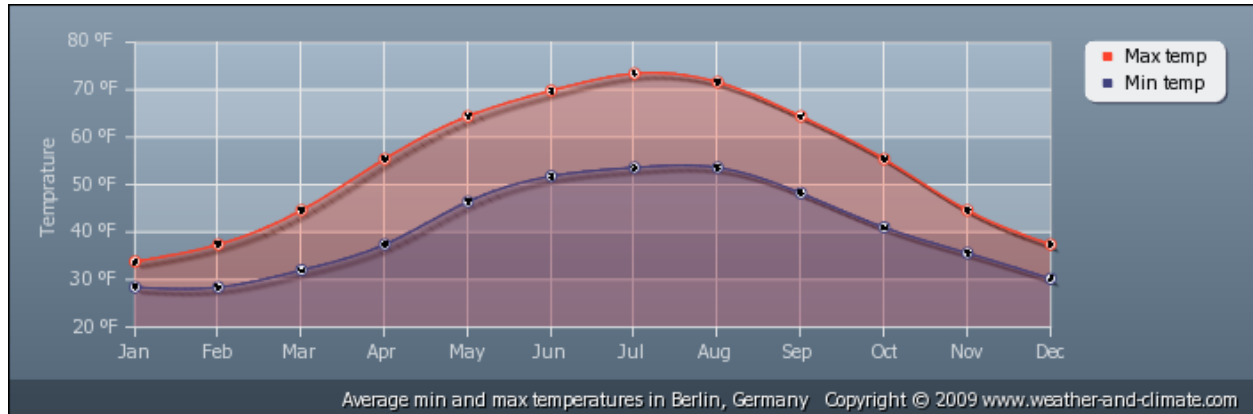
	S		M		L		XL	
Europe	36	37	38	39	41	42	43-44	45-46

Men's shoes HERRENSCHUHE

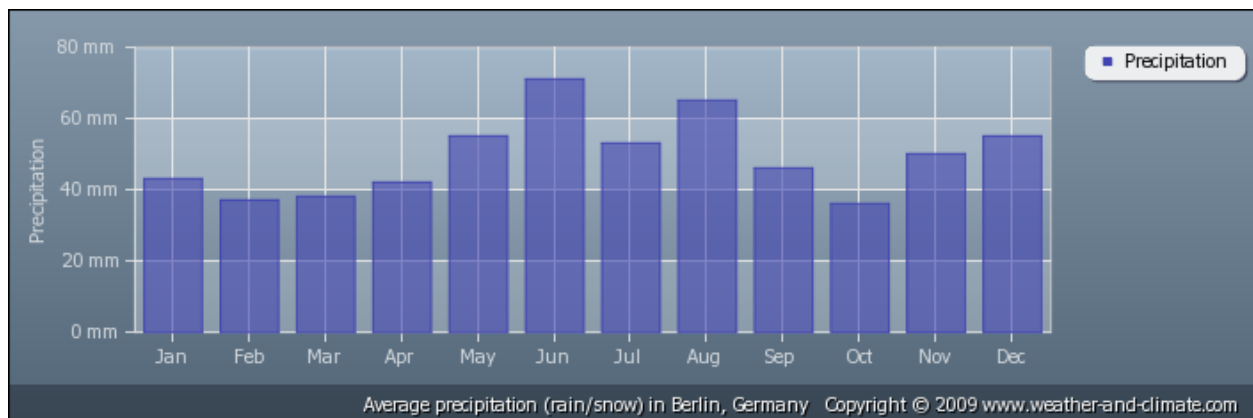
USA	6.5	7.5	8.5	9	10	11	12
Europe	39	40	41	42	43	44	46

APPENDIX III. Berlin CLIMATE CHARTS

Average Annual Hi/Low Temperature



Average Annual Rainfall



Berlin, Germany Weather Facts:

- The average warmest month is July.
- The average coolest month is January.
- June is the average wettest month.

Celsius to Fahrenheit conversions:

F	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100
~C	-6	-1	5	10	15	21	27	32	38