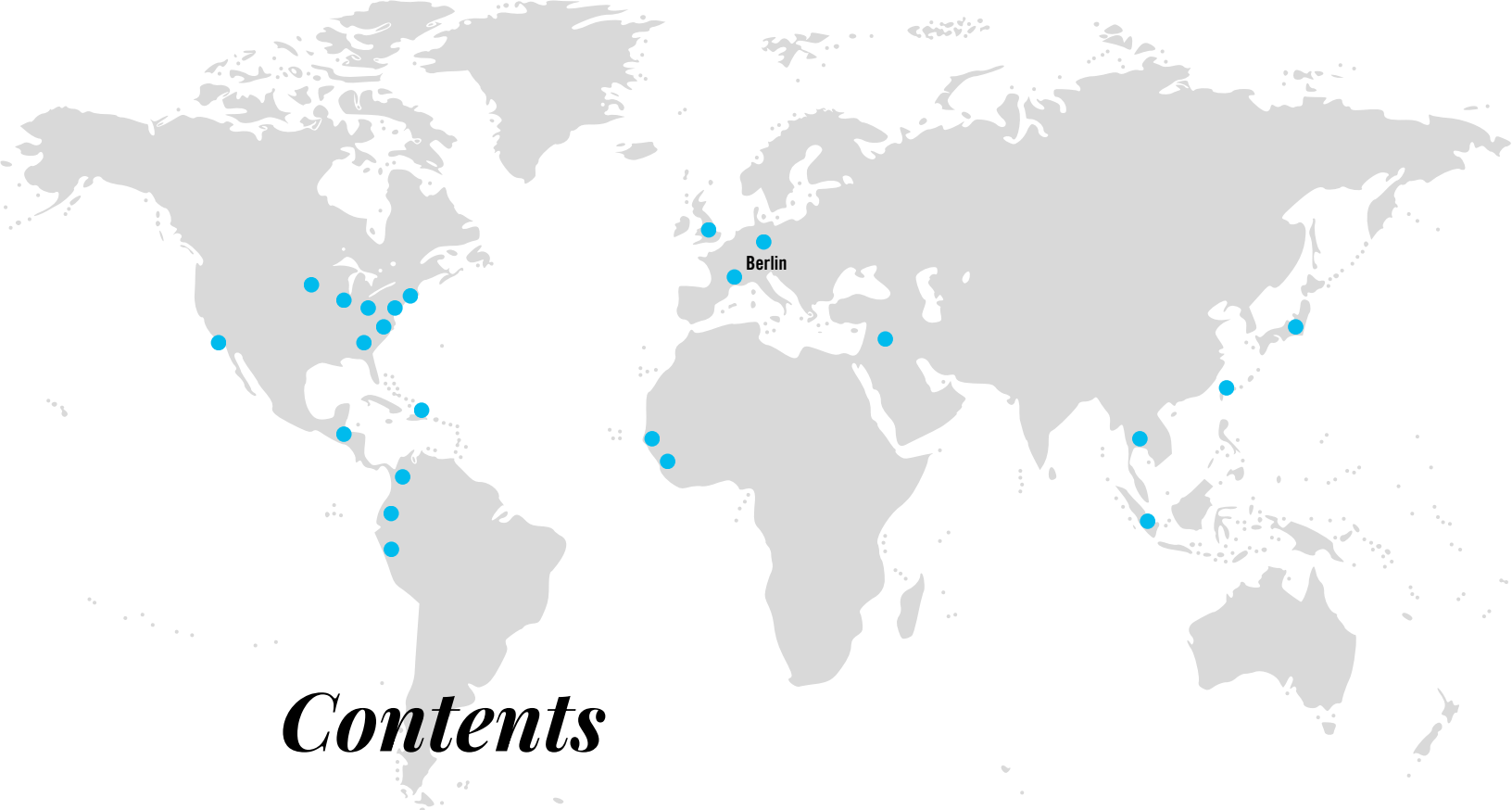




# *Berlin*

ENVISION HANDBOOK





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# *Introduction*

## **ABOUT THE SITE**

Envision Berlin began in 2021 as a new extension of Alliance Missions, which has been in northeast Germany for over 25 years. Envision Berlin identifies and develops missional leaders through short-term mission opportunities and innovative ministry strategies, engaging in generative culture care through the primary strategies of:

- deeper life, presence-based community
- multi-media publishing
- development and platforming of artists and creatives
- facilitation of training and education

Berlin is an intriguing mix of old and new, the capital of a land with a 2,000-year history. People come here from all over the world for many reasons, including its openness to diversity, to study, and for artistic and business opportunities. Although roughly four million people live inside the city limits, it feels like a big city and a cluster of small neighborhoods at the same time.

Less than 2 percent of Berliners go to church on a Sunday morning, and NE Germany has the highest concentration of self-described atheists in the world. The destruction of WWII followed by a communist government resulted in the elimination of almost all religion in this region. Some fill this spiritual hole with humanistic moralism, others by collecting pieces from multiple religions. There is a strong sense of morality that most people agree upon, such as responsibility to help the poor and sick and to care for the environment.

Envision Berlin invites you to help share the love of Christ in NE Germany while growing deeper in your own faith.



# *Ministry*

Envision Berlin exists to display the Kingdom of God in Berlin and beyond. We do this primarily through growing deeper in our own relationships with Christ and others, through partnerships with other Alliance Missions workers in Germany, and through strategic partnerships with other like-minded ministries. Relationship and prayer initiatives are prioritized. During your time in Berlin, you will likely participate in a variety of ministries that often combine creative and traditional approaches. A few examples: assist in German, Arabic, or Spanish churches, take part in prayer walks in key neighborhoods, help with art gallery events, and learn about the history of the Church in Germany and what relevance that has to you today. Specific activities and goals for teams and individuals vary and are made in consultation between Envision Berlin, its partners, team leaders, and/or individuals in intern and resident programs.

Individuals and groups have unique gifts and abilities both in their home contexts and internationally. Envision Berlin challenges participants to see missions and faith through new lenses and frames, enabling them to more effectively and passionately go to their own Judea, Samaria, and ends of the earth.





# *General Information*

Berlin was founded almost 800 years ago! Known for exceptional openness to world cultures and avant-garde ideas, this city is a jumble of unique people from almost 200 nations. Even a small church gathering will likely have half a dozen nationalities represented. There are dozens of museums, many colleges, numerous stages and galleries, and restaurants of every kind. Many startups and tech companies also call Berlin home.

Get ready for a good sampling of Berlin food and culture! Riding in trams and subways, ordering schrippe (bread rolls) and pastries from local bakeries, meeting in cafés, ordering currywurst, visiting art galleries, and hanging out in city parks are just some of the activities you might do while here.

Envision Berlin wants your involvement here to be both a short- and long-term blessing for you and those you meet.

## **HOUSING AND FOOD**

Larger teams should plan on staying in a hostel or hotel accommodations arranged by the Envision staff. Smaller teams or individuals sometimes stay in Envision Berlin site members' homes, depending on logistics.

At Envision Berlin we prefer that all our interns and residents have the opportunity to live in community. The exact living situation (mix and number of persons and size of home) may differ, but our strong preference is to build living communities with either A) same-sex singles or B) mixed singles with a family.

For teams, most meals will be shared communally with site leaders and participants. This includes opportunities to eat local food. For longer-term participants, except for team dinners, individuals will be responsible for their own meals.

Guidance will be provided about where to get toiletries and personal items during your stay when needed, especially when you come for an extended length of time. Don't feel the need to bring everything but the kitchen sink! Berlin has most of what you need—it's just a matter of knowing where to find it.

## AIRPORT AND ARRIVAL INFORMATION

The team leader must inform Envision Berlin of the specific flight and travel itinerary six weeks before the trip begins, including which terminal will be used. Trip days will be made in coordination with Envision Berlin staff before booking flights. A mid-morning to early afternoon landing is ideal for managing jet lag and getting off to a good start. Please do not book return flights that leave before 9:00 a.m. Berlin time.

Based on current flight information, a member of the Envision Berlin team will meet you in person after you exit baggage claims at the airport. Packing a day's clothing and daily medications in your carry-on is helpful in case your luggage doesn't arrive when you do.

Passports should be valid for the length of stay plus three months.

There are currently no governmental forms to fill out when coming from the U.S., but check with your airline or travel agent for possible changes. It is expected that, as of 2025, international travelers will be required to submit a European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) registration—a short online application for seven euros (less than \$10), which requires a valid passport, credit or debit card, and email address—that should take less than 10 minutes to fill out. This is not a visa, it's a pre-screening.

Wherever you first land in Europe, you will go through Passport Control and Customs, where you will be required to show your passport and possibly paperwork confirming "Reason for Travel." The two most common answers will be "vacation" or "internship." If you land in any country outside the European Union (e.g. United Kingdom) you will likely go through a second passport control once inside the EU.

Follow signage from the plane to possible Passport Control and then to baggage claim in the Berlin Airport. Collect your baggage and exit through the glass doors. Look for us immediately after you exit the restricted area.

**IMPORTANT:** Do not leave the Arrivals (Ankunft) area until someone from Envision meets you in person, since this is our meeting point with each other. It might take some time, but we will find each other, especially when you stay in one place!

**ALSO IMPORTANT:** You will likely ride public transportation (this can include subways, trams, busses, stairs, elevators, and walking) to get to and from your lodging. Knowing this, if you are traveling with a team, only pack what you yourself can carry. If you're staying longer (e.g. intern or resident), please talk to Envision Berlin ahead of time about transporting luggage. An American quarter should fit in the luggage cart coin slot if you need a cart inside the Berlin airport.

## VISAS

For stays longer than 90 days, the Envision staff will assist in the process of obtaining the required extended visa.

## MONEY

As a member of the European Union, Germany uses the euro for currency. For personal funds, you can usually use your United States bank ATM or credit card to withdraw euros from a cash machine while you are here. Usually, the fee for withdrawing cash is significantly lower than exchanging dollars for euros at the airport or other cash exchange businesses. Before leaving the U.S., let your bank know you will be traveling so your card doesn't get blocked. Otherwise, you might order euros from your local bank by making a request a couple of weeks ahead of your departure. If that is your preference, we suggest requesting smaller bills (20s and 10s, not all 50s or 100s).

Depending on what and where you shop and eat in Berlin, you might not be able to pay with large bills or a credit card. Visa and Master Card are often accepted, but not always. Discover and American Express are rarely accepted.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Free internet access is available at Sprig (Envision Berlin's creative/office space) and almost all hotels and hostels. Internet is also available in many cafes, some restaurants, and even on some public transportation. Cell phones with international calling plans can be helpful; arranging the details with your cell phone provider before leaving the U.S. will help you get the right plan for you. Team leaders will be provided with a hotspot. For interns and residents, talk with site staff ahead of arrival about cell phone options.

### Mail:

Envision Berlin  
(Recipient's Name)  
Parkstrasse 11  
13086 Berlin  
Germany



**Note:** Mail often takes two to three weeks to arrive in Germany from the U.S., and it may take longer. If sending packages, please be aware that some items, like electronics and higher valued items, may mean that a package will be held at the Customs Office and a—sometimes surprisingly high—tax may be charged before it will be released to the recipient. That list is too long to include here, so please do your own research. Not all packages get stopped and held at the Postal Customs Office. For example, packages with inexpensive items like stuffed animals and packaged food with a total value under \$30 will probably be delivered without any hold-ups. However, we cannot guarantee that a package won't be held.

In Germany, there are two plug types used that look similar to each other: C and F. Plug C has two round pins and plug F has two round pins plus two earth clips on the sides. Germany operates on a 230V supply voltage and 50Hz. American appliances usually operate on 110 volts. If your item is equipped to handle 220V, you might only need a simple EU plug adapter to plug it in. If your item uses only 110V, you will either need to bring a transformer with you or leave it at home and plan to buy a similar item in Germany. Not all appliances work well with transformers and adaptors—for example, hair dryers—so leaving those items at home is often best. Many cell phones and computers can work in both countries; just check your own make and models to be sure.

## ACCESSIBILITY, HEALTH, AND VACCINATIONS

If you have limited or impaired mobility, Berlin is still mostly accessible if we know your needs in advance. Daily activities often involve three to five miles of walking and multiple flights of stairs, so please let Envision Berlin know about different mobility needs well before arrival so planning can include longer transportation times (etc.) as needed. Trams and trains (etc.) are mostly accessible, but there may be longer wait times to catch the desired train, depending on the mobility device that you use. Berlin sidewalks are mostly scooter and wheelchair friendly. Some of the streets do not have cement pavement, instead they consist of brick or cobblestone. This may make the ride a little bumpy. Berlin is also often accessible for those who are seeing impaired. There are sounds with the crossing lights and guide grooves next to public transportation stops.

Berlin, like most big cities, is very noisy, which may be a challenge if you have a sensory impairment. Unless you have health restrictions, we highly recommend adding daily walks starting a month or more before your trip to prepare well. Your feet will thank you!

The CDC recommends being current on all standard vaccinations.







# *Suggested Packing List*

- Activity-appropriate clothing (service projects, gallery shows, etc.)
- Comfortable walking shoes already broken in
- Rain gear (umbrella or raincoat)
- Seasonal clothing—jackets, scarves, etc.
- Toiletries
- Medications/prescriptions (check that they're allowed; if not, a doctor's note might work)
- Pain and cold medicine, etc.
- Hand sanitizer
- Passport + 1 extra photocopy of your passport kept apart from original
- Camera (phone is fine)
- Money for souvenirs if desired
- Water bottle (might carry it around all day)
- Bible
- European plug adapter (if needed)
- German phrasebook or language app
- Sygic App (offline map of Berlin/Brandenburg)
- Fully closable bag (for carrying around the city, like a backpack)

Note: Particularly in tourist areas, pocket theft is not uncommon. Fully closable bags help deter theft.

If you are looking to bring small treats for Envision Berlin, some ideas are Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, Fruit Roll-Ups, Twizzlers, or anything spicy, like taco seasoning.

In Europe, business casual or even jeans and a nice shirt are more common than athleisure and sweatpants. Short and/or tight clothing can distract from the message you want to share and can be less comfortable for extensive walking. Avoid clothing that is distinctly patriotic, religious, or militaristic in nature. Some state churches require covered shoulders and clothing past the knees for both men and women before they may enter the building.

Although Berlin is far north, the climate is somewhat moderate. It rarely gets extremely hot or cold compared to many parts of the U.S., but because we use mostly public transportation, we are often out in the elements and directly affected by the weather. Expect rain during your visit! In the summer, it can reach the 80s during the day with the nights becoming cool. Most buildings do not have air conditioning. The temperature can change quickly, so it is helpful to dress in layers. Winters are somewhat moderate with lows often below freezing, but it rarely drops below 0°F. Snow is unusual, but cold, damp air is common, so the real feel from fall to spring is often cooler than the actual temperature. Vitamin D supplements are also helpful to take in the dark winter months.

Interns and Residents: Since you'll be in Berlin for an extended period of time, you might want to bring some mementos from home like a favorite pillow, pictures, and/or books.

# Schedule

## TEAMS

Note: Each team's actual schedule is developed in tandem with Envision staff, partners, and team leaders, so final schedules will likely vary from this.

<b>Every Day</b>	Morning and evening group prayer
<b>Day 1</b>	a.m.: Check in to accommodations p.m.: Photo scavenger hunt at Alexander Platz and team introduction dinner
<b>Day 2</b>	a.m.: Missions through learning: Berlin orientation p.m.: Berlin city tour
<b>Day 3</b>	a.m.: Missions through learning: Immersive language learning experience followed by ordering lunch in German p.m.: Missions through learning: What is prayer walking? Missions through prayer: Prayer walking
<b>Day 4</b>	a.m.: Visit and/or help at a local church p.m.: Lunch and local flea market, Bernauer Strasse outdoor Berlin Wall Museum
<b>Day 5</b>	Sabbath: A day for relaxing and/or doing something to recharge
<b>Day 6</b>	a.m.: Missions through learning: Gospel in context p.m.: Otto Weidt Brush Museum (similar to Corrie ten Boom's watch shop story)
<b>Day 7</b>	a.m.: Missions through serving: Help a local ministry with painting, cleaning, etc. p.m.: Missions through serving: An opening or closing gallery show event
<b>Day 8</b>	a.m.: Missions through serving: Finish painting or sorting project, etc. p.m.: Coffee and cake with other local Alliance workers
<b>Day 9</b>	a.m.: Overview of Alliance Missions and next steps p.m.: Debrief "signature event" including an open-air street art museum and Kite Hill, followed by a site-wide dinner at Sprig
<b>Day 10</b>	a.m.: Flight back to the U.S.



## INTERN/RESIDENT/TREK

Your weekly schedules will be worked out with staff but will include activities like weekly site rhythms, ministry assignment work, studies, language and culture learning, and Sabbath rest.

### Intern Template

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Matins/Work	Meetings	Matins/Work/ Prayer Meeting	Time Off	Matins/Work	Time Off	Church Assignment
Afternoon 1	Ministry Assignment	Meetings	Time Off	Time Off	Meeting	Ministry Assignment	Time Off
Afternoon 2	Ministry Assignment	Meetings	Ministry Assignment	Time Off	Ministry Assignment	Time Off	Time Off
Evening	Time Off	Time Off	Ministry Assignment	Time Off	Time Off	Ministry Assignment	Time Off

### Resident/Trek Template

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Morning	Matins/Study	Meetings	Matins/ Prayer Meeting	Time Off	Matins/Study	Study	Time Off
Afternoon 1	Study	Meetings	Study	Study	Study	Study	Time Off
Afternoon 2	Time Off	Meetings	Ministry Assignment	Ministry Assignment	Time Off	Ministry Assignment	Time Off
Evening	Ministry Assignment	Time Off	Time Off	Church	Ministry Assignment	Time Off	Time Off



# *Cultural Sensitivity and Awareness*

We want to promote a healthy exchange between people of different cultures. Deciding to be a learner instead of a critic opens many doors, both in your heart and in the hearts of those who will be here after you go home. Since knowledge of some cultural generalizations can help people better understand and show respect across cultures, here are some tips to help you make the most of your time here and to build bridges between ongoing Berlin ministries, the gospel, and locals. Although there are exceptions to all generalizations, these tips can help teams and interns avoid some of the most common cultural faux pas made by visitors.

Young people are taught to discuss and question as part of their normal education because respectful disagreement is valued. These skills, combined with classic German directness, can lead to engaging conversations, especially in regards to current events and culture, which many Germans are very well informed about. It's better to acknowledge not knowing something than to attempt to bluff your way through any topic. Be aware that violence in movies and television is quite restricted in Germany, whereas nudity, especially in entertainment, is often considered acceptable. Many people follow the age restrictions for viewing shows or playing video games, especially ratings based on violence.

While this area of the world has a rich heritage and contributes to current trends and world affairs, Germany still lives in the shadow of WWII. Please respectfully refrain from any Nazi-related talk. The best practice is to only speak about this dark period of history when on a tour at a relevant site or when only Alliance Missions staff are present. Everybody takes this era seriously, and casual conversations about it can easily turn to shaming present-day Germans.



Most Germans are quieter and more reserved in public than most Americans are. Shouting across a tram or talking loudly on the phone in a bus are examples of what not to do. Most people don't automatically make small talk or smile at strangers. This is not rudeness; it's a show of respect for each other's privacy in this bustling city. In fact, smiling at strangers on the street can leave the Berliner frustrated that he/she doesn't remember you because you must clearly remember him/her! Smiles or casual conversation without an introduction are not nearly as common as in much of the U.S. Saying "hallo" or "guten tag" when entering a small store or office is polite. So is saying "tchuess" or "ciao" when leaving. When meeting someone new, a handshake is often the friendliest greeting. If meeting a man and woman at the same time, shake hands with the woman first. Hugs are common in some church settings, but not always and rarely on the first visit. If invited to a meal, chocolates or flowers to give the host or hostess upon arrival are appreciated.

When in doubt about what to do, look for cultural clues and/or just ask. Everyone makes social blunders in their own culture too. So, relax. Blunders will happen in Germany! Learning *please*, *thank you*, and *excuse me* in German is a thoughtful way to show respect and can smooth over many missteps: please: bitte; thank you: danke; and excuse me: schuldigung/sorry: shool-dee-goong.

Bonus: *Bitte* can also mean *here you go* and *you're welcome*.

The Envision Berlin team looks forward to serving together with you in Germany!







## *Contact Info*



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