Greetings from Duke in Berlin!

Our fall semester is fast coming to a close. Soon our seven students will be on their way back home – or, as in the case of three of them, exploring a few more places throughout Europe. But before then, Emma Rose Shore (Class of 2022), Kamdyn Atkinson, and Jonny Chang (both Class of 2024) will take you on culinary and non-culinary walks through Berlin in this newsletter.

And just in time for the holiday season, Berlin’s many Christmas markets are popping up all over the city, serving Glühwein and a plethora of sweets. Lina and the students dove into their own merry happiness and baked Weihnachtsplätzchen (Christmas cookies) at Lina’s home. Enjoy those smiling faces and the cheerfulness and joy they exude – we are so glad we got to share their semester abroad with these students!

For more photos from Duke in Berlin you can check out our Instagram site 📽️ dukeinberlin.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen
Tin Wegel (Resident Director)
Lina-Sofie Raith (Program Assistant)
Almost four months ago, a significant portion of Duke’s junior class, in the highest quantities since COVID, ventured abroad. The weekend that usually entailed a trip to North Carolina, now entailed flights across the world. On August 24th I left the country with angst, excitement, and relatively few expectations. I’d heard a few things about Berlin: great things about the diversity, nightlife, and youth culture, along with some bad things mainly pertaining to the weather. However, I knew my time in Berlin would encompass much more than the little I’d heard. Thus, I couldn’t really know what to expect. Berlin was and is a discovery for me. And only mere months later, I would go so far as to say that this is the perfect city for that - the perfect place to discover.

Berlin is a city diverse in every dimension. Home to a population of countless cultures and backgrounds, with sections providing “big city”, “suburban”, and “country” surroundings, and blocks packed with buildings spanning centuries of art and architecture. I often feel dwarfed by the sheer number of possibilities in a given day. Even when limiting myself to only a single part of the town, there are still so many options. A day in the middle of the city, for instance, could entail visiting the beautiful museums of Museumsinsel, shopping, and a film at Hackescher Markt or a stroll through the nature of Tiergarten. On any given Sunday, despite shops and businesses being closed, there remains an interesting selection of flea markets throughout the city. And the nighttime warrants entirely different considerations, as the city is home to some of the most famous nightclubs in the world (I’m sure many can recall completing the “Berghain Quiz” at some point).

Seeing everything there is to see in Berlin is, in my opinion, impossible – at least in my somewhat brief stay here. However, there is so much to gain in the attempt. Exploring the countless museums, cafes, movie theaters, parks, flea markets, vintage thrift shops, and monuments has been a tremendous growth experience for me. I’ve observed art and architecture superior to any I’d seen before. I’ve interacted with cultures, lifestyles, and
identities that are unfortunately rare in the cities I’ve called home. And I’ve observed monuments commemorating the victims of treacherous eras of the past – which has been, for me, an important reminder to never forget the pains of the past, an especially relevant reminder when considering our modern politics that risk reintroducing them.

The variety packed into the city truly makes it feel like a place anyone can call home. A place where anyone can find community, if they’re willing to look hard enough. A city with every “vibe” possible and something new to discover every single day. And not only discoveries of a new restaurant, shopping district, or flea markets, but also discoveries within oneself – gained through new encounters and escapades. While there are certainly countries with better weather, cities with more forgiving bus schedules, and languages easier than German, I’d argue there may be no other city offering as many distinct experiences as Berlin. Making the city of Berlin, itself, an experience I’d recommend to any with the opportunity.”

________________

Not All Those Who Wander Are Lost
by Jonny Chang

„Over the past few months of living in Berlin, I’ve been able to explore the city in many ways, but one of my favorite activities has been to simply wander, aimlessly and without a destination. What I find so special about Berlin is how different every neighborhood is. Each seems to have its own history, culture, and story.

Whenever I have an afternoon or evening free, I like to pick a random part of Berlin that I don’t frequent, take the public transportation to get there, and just start walking. Whether it’s a historic building covered with bullet holes left behind from World War II, one of the many extraordinary and enormous pieces of street art, or a graveyard of famous German composers, writers, and poets, there’s always something interesting around every street corner. Although Berlin is the most populous city in Germany, there are also numerous green spaces scattered around the city in the form of parks, gardens, and forests. I love to explore these areas as they are always filled with statues, art, historic monuments, and much more. Perhaps my favorite find out of all was the Märchenbrunnen, a beautiful fountain in the park Volkspark Friedrichshain decorated with sculptures of famous characters from the fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm. Getting lost has never been so fun and interesting as it has been in a place like this.

With the diversity of culture and history throughout the city also comes another benefit: in Berlin, you can truly be whoever you want to be, and nobody will bat an eye. Regardless of what you wear or how you act, you won’t feel judged or unwelcome here. Where else in the world is it normal to roller skate on an airport runway, visit an underground art installation full of moving, mechanical monsters, or even go clubbing on a Wednesday afternoon? Some of my favorite and most distinct memories here have been interacting with Berliners from all walks of life. I will always remember their stories – a barber who emigrated from Hong Kong, traveled
throughout Europe, and landed in Berlin to pursue his passion of being a DJ; a young entrepreneur who turns his most outlandish ideas into reality, having started his first company at 17; and a Syrian refugee who plays the accordion, entertaining thousands of S-Bahn commuters every day with the most difficult and elegant songs by Brahms and Mozart.

No matter who you are or what you are interested in, there will be a place for you in Berlin. Although I’m disappointed to have to leave the city soon, I am incredibly grateful for all the memories I’ve made, the experiences I’ve gone through, and the lessons I’ve learned in Berlin.”

A Vegan Guide to Berlin
by Emma Rose Shore

„Berlin is an absolute mecca for plant-based food. With over 100 purely vegan restaurants, I have been spoiled for choice. While I haven’t made it all 100, I have definitely done some exploring and wanted to share my tips for any fellow herbivores or veg-curious individuals.

To start off, you absolutely do not need to go to a vegan restaurant to get a good plant-based meal in Berlin. Every restaurant I have been to has had a dedicated option that is actually good (and not just a salad). Being used to being the problem friend when going out with a group, it has been a big relief to just be able to walk in anywhere and find something yummy. In addition, the student mensa nearby the DiB building has extremely cheap and healthy options! You can also easily find veganized versions of the iconic Berlin foods – Curry 36 has a great currywurst and you can’t walk down a street without seeing vegan Döner.

Supermarkets

Every supermarket in Berlin seems to have a dedicated vegan section with yogurt, falafel, seitan, etc., but there are a few that definitely stick out as particularly vegan-friendly. Bio Company and Alnatura are the two large organic, health-focused supermarkets. Both have extremely good to-go meals and all of the typical products you would want as a vegan. If I were to compare to US brands, I would say Bio Company is similar to Whole Foods while Alnatura is a bit more like Sprouts. While there, you should definitely check out the cheese section – they have gorgeous plant-based bries and feta that look and taste way better than anything I’ve had back home.
I also highly recommend at least one trip to Veganz, Germany’s first vegan-only supermarket. They have all sorts of specialty products and carry some American brands that you can’t find elsewhere in Berlin. There are two locations, in Kreuzberg and Friedrichshain.

Cafés

**Café NeunDrei (Mitte)**  
My favorite Café in Berlin – the mushroom bagel is fantastic and they also have really gorgeous latte art. A very relaxed vibe where you can work all day.

**Goodies (Several Locations)**  
My go-to pick up a bowl for later place. They have a lot of really great healthy bowl options, but my favorite is the pumpkin and vegan feta bowl. Not entirely vegan, but 90% and clear labelling. Plus they are one of the few places to get kombucha!

**Plant Base (Prenzlauer Berg)**  
If it wasn’t so far away, I’d be here all the time. If you are an ethical vegan, you’ll love this place. Adorable décor, friendly staff, great food. Definitely try the tofu scramble! The best I’ve ever had.

** Mana (Moabit or Schöneberg)**  
The first place I tried in Berlin, and I’ve been back several times. They have a rotating seasonal menu and lots of larger entrée options for a filling lunch.

**Daluma (Several Locations)**  
About half of the options are vegan, but the food is so good I couldn’t not include Daluma. I always end up coming here after yoga when I’m feeling motivated to eat healthy. The food is all organic and the jackfruit curry is genuinely to die for. There are several locations around the city but my favorite is in Charlottenburg.

**Madia (Potsdam)**  
If you’re visiting Potsdam, then I highly recommend Madia. Their breakfast options are wonderful and they don’t skimp out on the serving sizes. It’s also a short walk from the beautiful Dutch quarter.

Dinner

**Emma Pea (Friedrichshain)**  
Situated in the RAW Compound, this soul-food restaurant is the definition of vegan comfort food. I am not normally a fan of that sort of thing, but Emma Pea manages to make mac n’ cheese, quesadillas, and burgers delicious without being greasy or heavy in your stomach. Also, even if you don’t go to Emma Pea, the RAW compound is amazing. There are vegan food trucks right nearby and great concert halls/club venues.
Dervish (Friedrichshain)
I’m willing to bet you haven’t tried vegan Uzbek food – but now you can! Cool little 100% plant-based restaurant where you can sit on the floor and try something new. Dervish tea? Amazing.

Tiger Club Sushi (Steglitz)
There are so many great Asian fusion vegan restaurants in Berlin, but I’m including this one since it’s so close to the DiB building. Small but yummy! Very friendly atmosphere.

Beyond Ramen (Mitte)
About five different types of ramen, as well as Spaghetti-Eis for dessert. The place is very cozy and it’s a great option for something warm on a cold day.

Nori (Potsdam)
All-vegan sushi spot in Potsdam with tons of unique options. The dumpling appetizer is also amazing!

Feel Seoul Good (Prenzlauer Berg)
This Korean restaurant has an overwhelming amount of delicious options and tons of room for a big group. The kimchi stew is bomb.

The Future is Up to You (South of Mauerpark)
Really unique Asian-fusion place with interesting ingredients. I had a dish with five different kinds of mushrooms I had never heard of. Definitely not boring, and the place itself is really pretty. Word of warning – bring cash unless you have a German bank card.

Markthalle Neun (Wrangelkiez in Kreuzberg)
This market hall is home to a Thursday night event where food vendors come from all over town to sell street food. I found vegan empanadas, crêpes, and some stuffed tofu – all fantastic. Great place to take a group since there are options for everyone and anyone.

Sweets

Brammibal’s Donuts (Several Locations)
You have to visit Brammibal’s. You, like the rest of us, will become obsessed. They have classic as well as monthly flavors and they are all stunningly good.

Round and Edgy (Mitte)
Homemade-style vegan cookies? Yes. Warm cookies on a cold day = the key to happiness.