

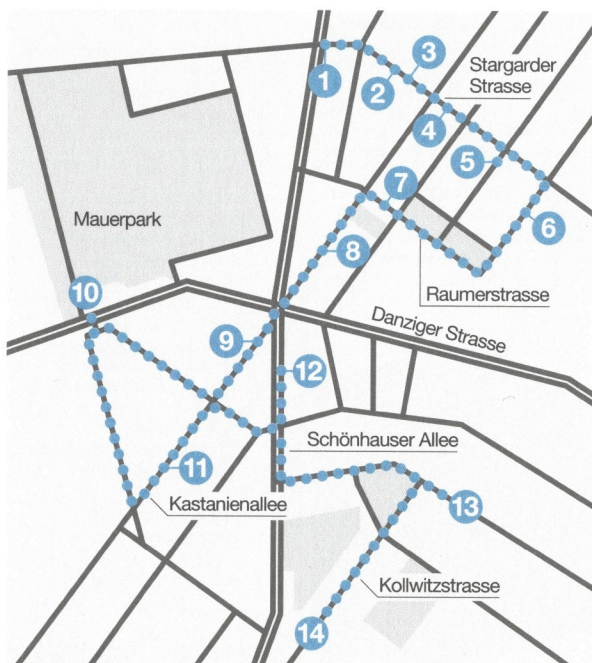
## NEIGHBOURHOOD 05

Prenzlauer Berg  
*Echoes of the GDR*

Prenzlauer Berg lies northeast of Mitte, in what was once the GDR. The neighbourhood is named after the hill that rises beyond Prenzlauer Gate, a remnant of the 14th-century city wall. In the middle ages it was home to windmills and vineyards but by 1800, wineries had been replaced with breweries, helping Berlin become Europe's largest beer producer by the century's end. Countless biergärten popped up around Prenzlauer Berg; Prater on Kastanienallee is one of the last to survive.

After the Second World War, Prenzlauer Berg was in the Soviet sector and breweries and other businesses were taken over by the state. Rather than rescue the neighbourhood's dilapidated 19th-century properties, many buildings here were abandoned and the GDR built new apartment blocks outside for Prenzlauer Berg's residents. The population had shrunk by a third by 1988 but those that stayed were often artists, intellectuals and punks, who turned the area into a counter-cultural stronghold.

It wasn't until after the fall of the Wall in 1989 that Prenzlauer Berg's untouched beauty came into its own. Unlike much of West Germany, it had survived the war largely unscathed and had not been rebuilt. Its historic buildings were renovated and today it's one of Berlin's most beautiful and popular neighbourhoods, perfect for a leisurely weekend stroll.

Eastern promise  
*Prenzlauer Berg walk*

Hop off the train at Schönhauser Allee and begin your journey with a coffee at **1 Spreegold**, a café on the corner of Schönhauser Allee and Stargarder Strasse. Next proceed east along Stargarder Strasse and enjoy the sight of the characteristic Gründerzeit mansions that survived the wars and have been painted in pastel colours, giving this part of Berlin a bright and vibrant look (the most beautiful examples can be found along the tree-lined Kastanienallee but we'll get there later).

On your right you'll come across **2 Liv**, a shop that exclusively sells enamel pottery; just across the road there's Niko Robert's **3 Hokey Pokey**. It's rumoured this spot



serves the best ice cream in town; we recommend its eponymous house speciality flavoured with vanilla and caramel crispies. Cone in hand, continue southeast to the **4 Signore Batistin** deli with its collection of Italian wine, antipasti, homemade bread and pesto. Once you've picked up a few Mediterranean goodies, head to Schliemannstrasse and turn right to find Sabine Geiger's **5 Present & Paper**. Here you'll find everything from Write Sketch notebooks to Ocelot chocolate, Hay accessories and Caran d'Ache pens.

Return to the main road and take the next right to pick out a new pair of sunglasses from **6 Lunettes Selection**. Now swing around Helmholtzplatz until you reach Raumerstrasse. On the right hand side you'll see the



historic coffee roaster and bakery

**7 Pakolat**. After enjoying one of their 30 seasonal cakes, hang a left as you reach Pappelallee. You'll soon come across **8 No Wodka**, a gallery and concept shop where Aleksandra Kozłowska showcases art and design from her Polish motherland. Next up is the ultimate German experience: ordering a Prater Pils at the city's oldest beer garden, **9 Prater Garten**. Wooden tables and benches, hearty snacks and litres of beer are served in this biergarten, which dates from the 19th century, when Prenzlauer Berg was the heart of the city's beer industry.

After a pilsner or two, saunter over to the famous Mauerpark via Oderberger Strasse. Every Sunday the park is packed with food trucks, buskers and a flea market (see page 61). If you're not in the mood for a rummage, join the crowd in the stone amphitheatre for **10 Bearpit Karaoke**. Following a few renditions of "We Are the Champions" and "Satisfaction" – all rewarded with thunderous applause – you might yearn for more polished performances.



We recommend taking in a film at the **11 Lichtblick-kino** on Kastanienallee, which you can reach by walking along Schwedter Strasse and turning left.

Next on the list is the towering redbrick **12 Kulturbrauerei**, reached by turning right on Oderberger Strasse and left on Schönhauser Allee. This old brewery, designed by Franz Heinrich Schwechten in 1878, was turned into an arts complex in the 1970s. It's home to the Museum in der Kulturbrauerei, whose exhibition *Alltag in der DDR (Everyday life in the GDR)* is worth a visit to see what life was like here before the fall of the Wall. For more history, stop by independent bookshop **13 Georg Büchner Buchladen** on Wörther Strasse, left off Schönhauser Allee. To end the evening amble over to **14 Scotch & Sofa**, a 1950s-style bar that pours punchy cocktails. To reach it, backtrack slightly to turn left down Kollwitzstrasse and continue straight for five minutes or so. From here it's just a short stroll along Metzger Strasse to the train station at Senefelderplatz.

## Getting there

Schönhauser Allee is a good starting point because it is a hub for S-Bahn, U-Bahn, tram and bus connections.

You can get here with the S8, S9, S41, S85 trains, the U2 Line, the M1 tram or N2 bus – or, if you want to arrive like a Berliner, just jump on your bike.

## Address book

- 01 Spreegold**  
82 Stargarder Strasse  
spreegold.com
- 02 Liv**  
9 Stargarder Strasse  
+49 (0)30 3462 7305  
emaille24.de
- 03 Hokey Pokey**  
73 Stargarder Strasse  
+49 (0)30 8010 3080
- 04 Signore Batistin**  
16 Stargarder Strasse  
+49 (0)30 4473 1492  
signore-batistin.de
- 05 Present & Paper**  
25A Schliemannstrasse  
presentandpaper.com
- 06 Lunettes Selection**  
18 Dunckerstrasse  
+49 (0)30 4471 8050  
lunettes-selection.de
- 07 Pakolat**  
40 Raumerstrasse  
+49 (0)30 4479 3883  
kaffee-pakolat.de
- 08 No Wodka**  
10 Pappelallee  
+49 (0)30 4862 3086  
nowodka.com
- 09 Prater Garten**  
7-9 Kastanienallee  
+49 (0)30 448 5688  
pratergarten.de
- 10 Bearpit Karaoke**  
Mauerpark  
bearpitkaraoke.com
- 11 Lichtblick-kino**  
77 Kastanienallee  
+49 (0)30 4405 8179  
lichtblick-kino.org
- 12 Kulturbrauerei**  
36 Schönhauser Allee  
+49 (0)30 4435 2614  
kulturbrauerei.de
- 13 Georg Büchner Buchladen**  
16 Wörther Strasse  
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- 14 Scotch & Sofa**  
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