

The background of the entire cover is a leopard print pattern. The spots are irregular in shape and color, ranging from bright red to a vibrant yellow, set against a plain white background. The pattern is dense and covers the entire surface.

BERLIN STREET STYLE

A GUIDE TO URBAN CHIC



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WITH

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PART 1

What
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THE “NEW” BERLIN WOMAN

Most Berlin women are immigrants, from other areas of Germany or from other countries entirely; I am as well. I moved from Los Angeles to the young German capital. Berlin style benefits from the fact that so many influences come together there. The new Berlin woman plucks up the best pieces for herself from international fashion events and, with these finds, creates the unforced, urban-chic style that is typical in this city.

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That Certain Something

Describing Berlin style is not a simple matter. It is an eclectic look characterized by creativity and individuality. But there are a few common threads that pull together this coveted approach to fashion. For example, women spotted throughout the city rarely flaunt luxury labels; rather, the luxury is in the materials. There are also a few key essentials, which are easily spotted on every sidewalk in every area of town, and which will be covered more in the pages to follow. For instance, in this land of long and cold winters, tights advance upward on the list of must-haves for the Berlin woman, and the ability to wear them well is a trademark of a true Berliner. Below are a few traits of today's stylish Berlin woman:

She loves the unfinished—

Look around: Something is always being built somewhere in Berlin. This “raw state” is reflected in the fashion preferences of the locals. The Berlin woman has a good eye for fine materials, but her look should never be too perfect and slick. Think of exposed seams on cashmere or silk clothes, of bleached or even holey jeans, and well-worn sturdy boots—these are details that the Berlin woman appreciates.

She avoids huge logos—

Nothing against well-known luxury brands, but in Berlin no one is impressed with gold belt buckles or windswept logo scarves. It is embarrassing to show off wealth in such an obvious way. Why? In contrast to Frankfurt or London, Berlin is not a financial city, but rather a creative city. Artists—such as painters, musicians, designers—sometimes have money, and sometimes do not. But in any case, they value creativity and quality over pretentious names.

She is naturally beautiful—

The Berlin woman is no tart. She doesn't smear a thick layer of makeup onto her face, or own a push-up bra or blond Rapunzel-inspired hair extensions. The Berlin woman barely needs make-up because her skin always has a rosy shimmer thanks to well-chosen cosmetic products and a healthy glow from riding her bike. And her hair? Rather than labor-intensive blow-drying and styling, she lets it air dry, of course!

She loves blogs—

The Berlin woman primarily works in a creative occupation and will quite happily draw inspiration from blogs during her breaks, if she is not actually blogging herself. Of course, fashion is not the only enthralling subject. She is also interested in all of the related disciplines: beauty, art, design, interiors, photography, and everything that has to do with DIY!

Her motto: Support your local merchant—

These days, it is almost exclusively the big chains that can still afford the rent in the city center, so it is all the more important to support the small, independent boutiques and local designers. The Berlin woman knows which labels are sold where, ideally knows the owners personally, and pays a visit to her favorite stores regularly.

Her favorite hobby is treasure hunting—

Vintage shop. Designer sale. Flea market. These are the words that make the Berlin woman's heart beat faster, because they offer the chance to snap up a bargain or uncover a stylish treasure. Often at the top of the most-wanted list: antique earrings or an unusual clutch. Accessories like these lend more personality to an outfit—and personality is the most essential accessory in Berlin.

Favorite Outfits

When window shopping in the city center, the Berlin woman has countless places to discover a new look for a party in Kreuzberg or a gallery opening in Neukölln—two of Berlin’s hippest areas. She also likes to purchase trends online or at her favorite boutique. Nevertheless, a Berlin woman’s closet is never bursting at the seams, but rather holds the basic pieces from which she can create at least a few outfits with ease. These are my favorite combinations!



1. *Boyfriend jeans & a slouchy white T-shirt* in a cotton-linen blend, with a white oversize jacket and black spiky slingback pumps.
2. *Norwegian pullover & leather leggings, and spiky pumps à la Louboutin*—instead of blue jeans and flat, lace-up shoes. Leather is so beautifully *rrrrr!*
3. *Trench coat, shirtdress & natural-colored, beige sandals with a cork heel*—rather than a trench coat with jeans. This feminine combination works fantastically during the Berlin summers!
4. *Army jacket & pumps in neon yellow, hot pink, or a leopard print*—instead of jeans with a blazer and ballerina flats. Berlin is no city for the typical office look.
5. *Silk evening dress & a soft black leather jacket*—instead of a bolero jacket and Pashmina scarf. Sorry, but that look is just too preppy!
6. *Smoking jacket & skinny jeans, with a white silk blouse & sparkly gold sandals*—instead of a black jacket with matching pants. The Berlin woman does not like to be too matchy-matchy.
7. *Men's shirt & jean shorts & a colored belt*—instead of little summer dresses and sandals. This is much better suited for riding a bike and hanging out in the park.
8. *Yoga pants, kitten heels & a trench coat*—instead of yoga pants, Ugg boots, and a parka. Making exercise a little bit chic does no harm. Who knows who you might meet while grabbing a coffee afterward?
9. *Sweatshirt over a blouse & a miniskirt, along with the*

very latest Nike sneakers—instead of a blouse, miniskirt, and high heels. The Berlin woman does not wish to dress in the stereotypically sexy way.

Unforced Chic

What exactly constitutes the Berlin style? It is of the utmost importance to the Berlin woman that she appears nonchalant. Need concrete examples? Here you go.

* The Berlin woman loves *elfin maxi dresses*, but in the case of accessories, the Hells Angels' style applies. So, she adds a black biker jacket, sparkly jewelry, and sturdy boots to complete her outfit.

* The Berlin woman loves *knitwear of all types*, be it the larger meshes or those little fleecy angora pullovers, so soft that they appear to be straight from a laundry detergent advertisement. For contrast, complete the outfit with extra-distressed jeans.

* Break taboos and stereotypes and make *surprising combinations*: Jogging pants (in cashmere!) and high heels, eco-pullovers with leather pants, an army parka over a party dress, a bomber jacket with a flowery Turkish scarf, or a Bavarian Trachtenjanker (military jacket) rather than a blazer—nothing is impossible.

* The Berlin woman is especially proud when she *knits her own hat*, scarf, or pullover. But those who have not mastered the knitting needles can purchase a homespun-style cap that appears as though it was knitted by hand.

* *Rolled-up* sleeves and pants legs—a blazer or denim shirt looks so much more casual that way, and a boyfriend's pullover won't look too long in the arms. In the summer, simple rolled pants cuffs will highlight both delicate sandal straps (note: the ankle is the low neckline of the Berlin woman) and high-top sneakers.

* Berlin is not a city of splashy colors. The Berlin woman will happily dress from *head to toe in black*—blue is considered colorful. Tip: Instead of only black, don muted colors (greige, taupe, mauve) in varying shades.

* The Berlin woman will gleefully swipe a shirt from a boyfriend or husband for herself, particularly a *white men's shirt* or a checked flannel shirt. Tip: Tuck the front part of the shirt into your jeans so that the waistband and, as the case may be,

the belt are visible.

* The Berlin woman also loves men's or *unisex clothing and accessories*. I know couples who share parkas as well as Ray-Ban sunglasses. A men's gray sweatshirt looks super with skimpy jean shorts and sandals. Why does the look work? It takes the walk of shame look into polite company. Very sexy.

THE GOLDEN RULE

“When too perfect, *lieber Gott böse* [God becomes evil]” was the motto of the video artist Nam June Paik. The motto has a 1:1 correlation to Berlin street style. The run in your stockings reveals red nail polish on your toes, your eyeliner is ever-so-slightly smudged, and your shoes could do with a shine? You've got it right!

* The Berlin woman keeps an eye out for unique clothes, jewelry, and accessories during her *travels*. I always bring handmade leather sandals back from my yearly vacation to Stromboli. Scarves from Vietnam, bracelets from Bali, clothes from Mexico—complement your closet with a little wanderlust.

* *Shop off the beaten track*: I will happily shop at ballet stores like Pro Danse (MITTE Alte Schönhauser Strasse 16, prodanse-shop.de) or Tanzmode Berlin (PRENZLAUER BERG Knaackstrasse 49, tanzmode-berlin.de) for strappy pumps and evening tops. Likewise, a visit to an equestrian or hunting goods shop can be worthwhile—there are often well-cut jackets and robust pullovers.

* The Berlin woman loves *patina*. This is particularly true for accessories. A Louis Vuitton bag need not be brand-new, for heaven's sake; boots can also appear as though they have just been danced in for a few days at a festival.

* The favorite hairstyle of the Berlin woman: *the bun*, also called the *chignon*. The key to this look is unwashed hair; otherwise the hairstyle will not hold. Gather the hair up from the back, twist it around, and fix it in place with a clip or transparent Blax hair elastic. It must be a little wispy.

Trend No-Gos

The Berlin woman has seen it all: red mohawks, pierced *and* tattooed faces, women in tuxedos, and men in hot pants. Even though the city is known for its tolerance, there are style taboos. Most of all, the goal is not to appear too dressed up and posh.



Purely functional clothing

In my eyes, there is no greater lapse in fashion than items without beauty that are simply focused on comfort or performance (e.g. brightly colored all-weather jackets, trekking sandals with Velcro fasteners, and pants that, thanks to a zipper, can be transformed into shorts).

Panty lines

Having the shape of your underwear visible through clothing (a.k.a. panty lines) is a no-go throughout the entire world. For those who do not like thongs, there is seamless underwear made of microfiber that is invisible under clothing.

Bra straps and push-up bras

One should never see a bra, regardless of what color it is. You do not need a push-up bra; Berlin is not a bosom city.

Too much bling

You have earrings, a necklace, a watch, and a bracelet—if you jingle while walking, you are over-decorated. It's better to only wear one piece of jewelry. If you are wearing an extraordinary ring, forego the watch, and decide between gold or silver.

Grandma's brooch

Vintage is adored in Berlin and if a piece inspires a good story that starts with “this comes from my great-aunt ... ” that's OK. But Grandma's garnet brooch on a coat lapel or a pullover can look frumpy.

Pearls

Elsewhere, the supposed high-society women will happily wear a pearl necklace with a rose-colored polo shirt. “Pearl girls” are not at all hip in Berlin.

Piercings

As I see it, apart from the ears, there is no other place on the body that should be pierced with metal. A bolt through the mouth simply looks ghastly.

Too much skin

Showing too much skin can even be a faux pas when wearing a bathing suit. Think of a sunny day in the park or on the lake. Marching off to a refreshment kiosk in only a bikini and ordering an ice cream or hot dog is not done in the city or on the beach. I take a full-length tunic by Diane von Furstenberg along on vacation. By the way: In Berlin parks, while it not unusual to see people sunning themselves in the nude, it is not encouraged by law or by popular opinion.

Belts with designer logos

Showing off with expensive luxury brands can make one cringe in Berlin—nobody will find you particularly interesting just because you have a gold *H* below your belly.

Fakes

Phony handbags can be seen in growing numbers late in the summer when vacationers return from Turkey or Thailand. “Luis Vuitton” roller suitcases, “Bretling” watches, or “Channel” handbags ... those who rely on such accompaniments and display them publicly have neither an inkling of fashion nor of quality.

Pashmina shawls with fringes

I love India and the fine cashmere scarves that can be bought there. However, the viscose scarves with long fringe from the department store are a cheap imitation and are not anywhere near as elegant as the original.

Cowboy boots

Even if the Berlin woman loves heeled accessories, in cowboy boots one is very quickly considered a poser. Such gaudy boots do not fit in Berlin—particularly if they’re made of white python leather.

DON'T FORGET

The most important thing above all is that you feel comfortable.