

BUDGET TRAVELLER'S  
GERMAN WANDERLUST

48 HOURS IN

# Leipzig & Colditz



Must See



Bars & Cafes



Nightlife



Festivals & Events



Shopping

## Youth HotSpots in Germany

Share the moment.

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The travel destination

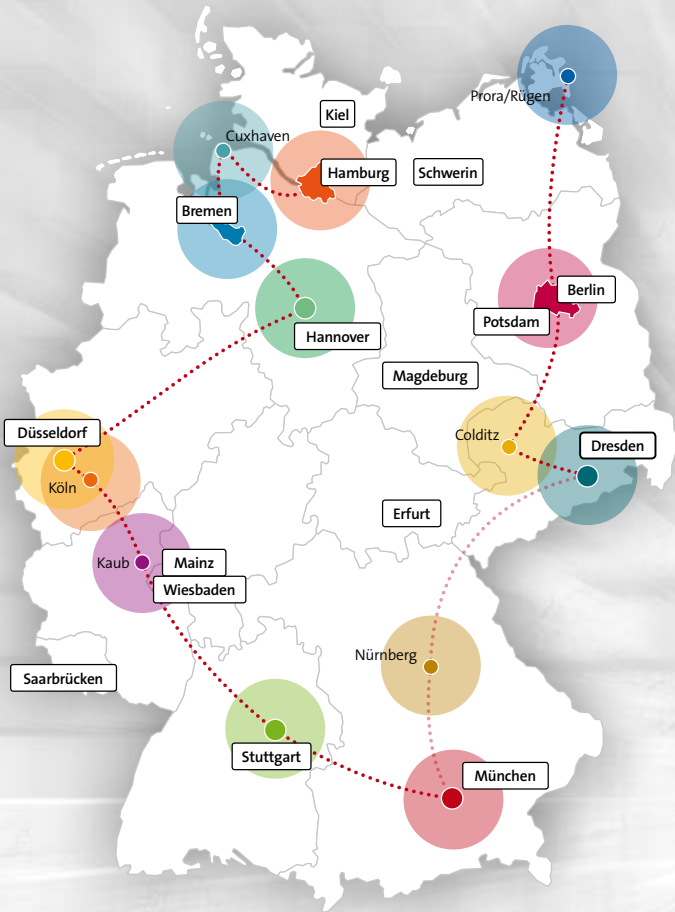
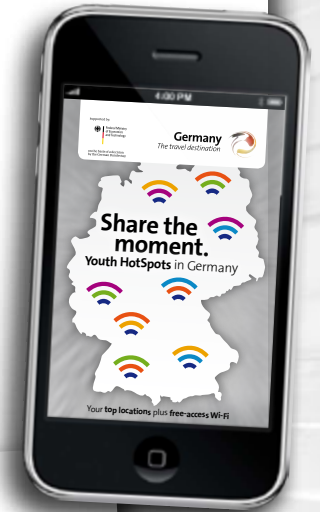


[www.germany.travel](http://www.germany.travel)

# Youth HotSpots in Germany share the moment.

**BUDGETTRAVELLER'S 48 HOUR GUIDE TO GERMANY** is a personal snapshot of some of the coolest youth hotspots [www.germany.travel/youth](http://www.germany.travel/youth) in 12 of Germany's leading cities and towns. The guide comes complete with my itinerary plus the cost associated with each activity so that you can pick and choose activities that are best suited to your interests and budget. Each itinerary was created to allow travellers the freedom to explore each place in a relaxed manner and without blowing your budget. I welcome your feedback – Share your thoughts on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram using the hashtag **#youthhotspotsgermany**.

**Get the Youth HotSpots App!**  
Your top locations plus free-access Wi-Fi  
for when you're on the move. For **iOS** and **Android**



## BudgetTraveller's biography



Kash Bhattacharya has been travelling on a budget for the last 4 years, blogging about his adventures at [BudgetTraveller.org](http://BudgetTraveller.org). He has been featured in the New York Times, Guardian, Vanity Fair and National Geographic. In July 2013, he's launching a guide to Luxury Hostels in Europe and also helped develop award-winning campaigns like **#BlogVille** for the Emilia Romagna Tourism Board, **#Blogmanay** for Unique Events and Event Scotland and **FilmTraveller\_CoteD'Azur** – a blog about film tourism in Cote D'Azur for the Cote D'Azur tourism board. You can also follow Kash on Twitter and Facebook.



Share the experience  
[youth-hostels.de](http://youth-hostels.de)



The German Wanderlust is part of the campaign 'Youth HotSpots in Germany – Share the moment.' launched by the GNTB at the 2013 ITB travel fair in Berlin to promote its year of youth tourism. For the project the GNTB has teamed up with the German Youth Hostel Association (DJH) [www.youth-hostels.de](http://www.youth-hostels.de) and transport partner Deutsche Bahn [www.bahn.com](http://www.bahn.com).

The Youth HotSpots, such as bars, cafés, must-sees and events, featured on the interactive map at [www.germany.travel/youth](http://www.germany.travel/youth) provided orientation points for Kash. Kash stayed overnight in DJH youth hostels and was travelling by train with Deutsche Bahn.



BUDGET TRAVELLER'S GERMAN WANDERLUST  
48 HOURS IN **Leipzig & Colditz**

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Total cost of trip 16





## *Good to know*

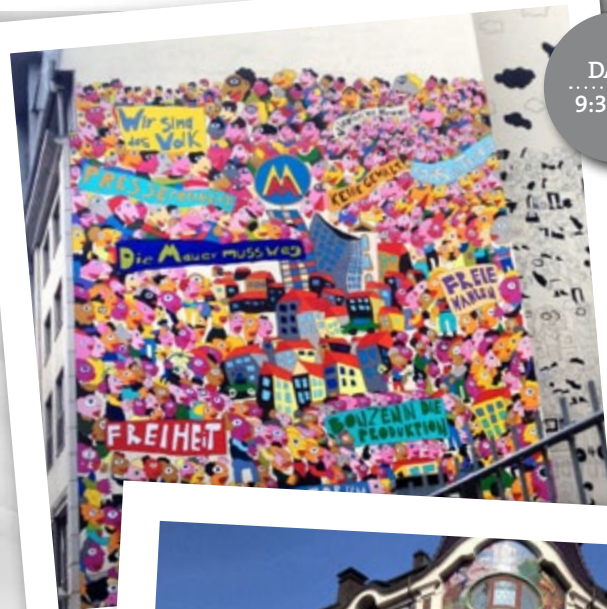
While my trip has been sponsored, the views and thoughts represented in this article are my own.



## *48 hours in Leipzig and Colditz*

I had the pleasure of spending 48 hours in Leipzig, the city of music and of heroes which included a short detour to the former POW camp in Colditz as part of my German Wanderlust tour. Here is the account of my trip.





DAY 1  
9:30 AM

1

**Top Tip** One of the best free things to do in Leipzig is just drift and enjoy the city's rich architectural heritage. There is a whole range of architectural styles to soak in, spanning from Historical to Art Nouveau to Post Modernist. This rich heritage dates back to the country's Gründerzeit period in the 19th century when Leipzig was enjoying the fruits of the post industrialization boom in Germany and Austria.

## Arrive at Leipzig Hauptbahnhof

DAY 1  
10 AM

2

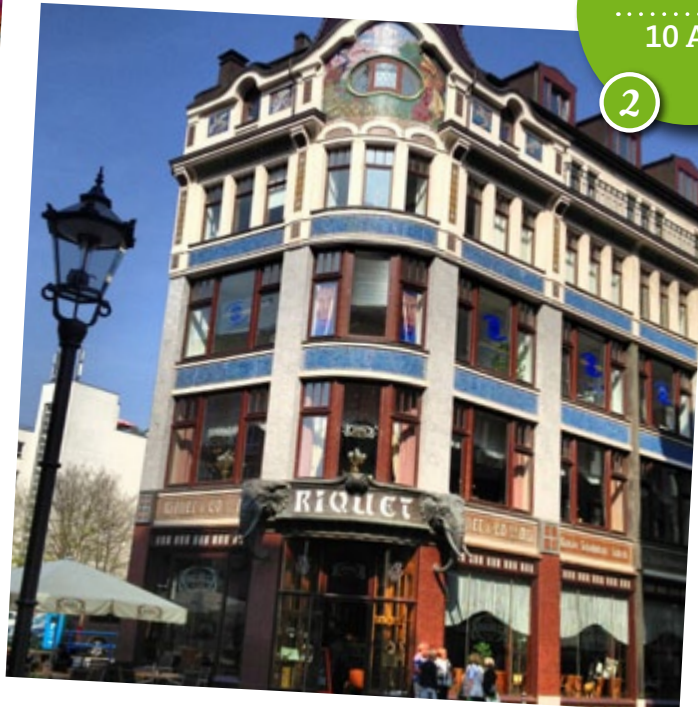
Emerging from the glorious passenger terminal of Leipzig's railway station (one of the largest in Europe) the first sensible thing I do is ditch the guidebook and wonder aimlessly around the Old Town.

First thing I notice walking out of the Hauptbahnhof is this huge colourful mural with cartoon like Muppets on one of the buildings. Love the character and colours of this work of art. However the identity of the artist is a mystery to me and the locals.

## Café Riquet

The beautiful art-nouveau building of Café Riquet (Schuhmachergäßchen 1) is one stunning example. It's beautiful art-nouveau façade with it's two elephants could have been one of the reasons why Goethe decided to call Leipzig 'Little Paris'.

This is also a good place to try the 'Leipziger Lerche', a local pastry specialty.



Bars & Cafés: Café Riquet



DAY 1  
11 AM

3

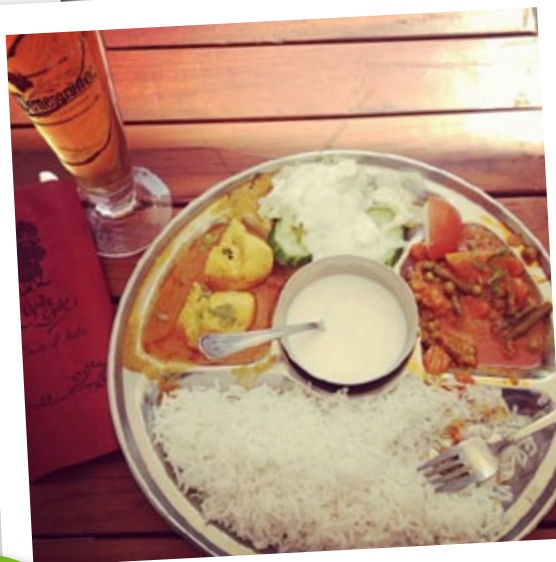


Shopping:  
*Mädler Passage*

**Top Tip** Walk through any open doorway you find in the Altstadt and walk right into this hidden world of Leipzig's stunning courtyards and indoor passages like the Mädler Passage which are tucked among old and new houses behind the street facades.

## Mädler Passage

My next stop is the most famous shopping passage of the city – the Mädler Passage where luxury fashion outlets dominate and reminds me of the Corso Vittorio Emmanuele in Milan. What is more impressive here is the beautiful art-nouveau entrance guarded by bronze sculptures which represent scenes from Goethe's Faust. Built by a certain Anton Mädler who owned a suitcase factory in 1912, during the Leipzig trade fairs, wine and china were presented and sold here. Nowadays the main draw for tourists coming here is the historic tavern, 'Auerbachs Keller' that Goethe frequented. The murals of Faustus you can find here were supposedly the inspiration for his epic Faust masterpiece.



DAY 1  
1 PM

4



Bars & Cafés: *India Gate*

**Cost** €7.90  
(with beer)

## India Gate – Is this the best Indian in Leipzig?

Described by Lonely Planet as the best Indian in Leipzig, I was naturally curious about India Gate (Nikolaistraße 10). This is the student thali. Thali for those for you are not in the know is a kind of tapas style selection of dishes which usually include rice, two curries-mixture of vegetarian and non vegetarian dishes accompanied by salad and yoghurt based raita. At €5.90 you can't complain in terms of value but if this the best Indian in town, I worry. It's not bad and it's not very good too. Again, having grown up in Kolkata my expectations of Indian food are quite high so judge for yourself...



## Nikolaikirche

Few churches I have visited have a more glorious history than Nikolaikirche (Nikolaikirchhof 3). A certain **Johann Sebastian Bach** was the organist of the choir here between 1723 to 1750. In 1989 the church played a prominent role in the end of the communist regime. Every Monday since 1982, the church holds a 'peace prayers' service, an event that continues to the present day. From 1989 onwards the church became the focal point of non-violent demonstration against the GDR regime. Then came the red letter day of 9th October 1989 when 600 members of the SED came to break up the demonstrations. However a miracle happened and the SED members instead joined the prayers of those inside. Within weeks the non-violent movement caused the collapse of the SED party and the end of their dictatorship. The **Berlin** wall fell on 10th November 1989, bringing an end to three decades of division.



DAY 1  
.....  
2 PM

5

 *Must Sees: Nikolaikirche*



DAY 1  
.....  
2:30 PM

6

 *Must Sees:  
Statue of Goethe*

## Hallo Goethe!

Just a short walk from Nikolaikirche I spot another famous past resident of Leipzig – a statue of Goethe who studied in Leipzig between the years of 1765 – 68. In the background, the ornate former trading house you see is the Alte Börse.

YOU ARE LEAVING  
THE AMERICAN SECTOR

DAY 1  
2:40 PM

7

### *Zeitgeschichtliches Forum*

Fact: The actual sign from Checkpoint Charlie is not in **Berlin** but in Leipzig at the informative Zeitgeschichtliches Forum (Forum of contemporary history, Grimmaische Strasse 6).

The forum charts the history of GDR from division in 1961 to the fall of the wall in 1989 right through to the post reunification blues. It's a fascinating insight into what life was like behind the wall. Highlights here include series of short films capturing key moments like the faces of Berliners in shock & tears as the wall went up in '61 and also the euphoric mood of the city after the wall came down. Cracking place. Best of all, it's **free to enter**.

ЖАЕТЕ ИЗ  
ОГО СЕКТОРА  
БОРТЕЗ

DU SECTEUR AMÉRICAIN

SIE VERLASSEN DEN AMERIKANISCHEN SEKTOR



## *Bach Memorial, St. Thomas Church*

I am soaked in sunset in front of the glorious St. Thomas Church (where a certain Johann Sebastian Bach was the cantor). Between observing the coming and goings of locals I am enjoying the craft of a lone street blues musician, strumming away on his guitar. Strange to think that just 24 years ago, under the GDR regime, this would not have been possible.

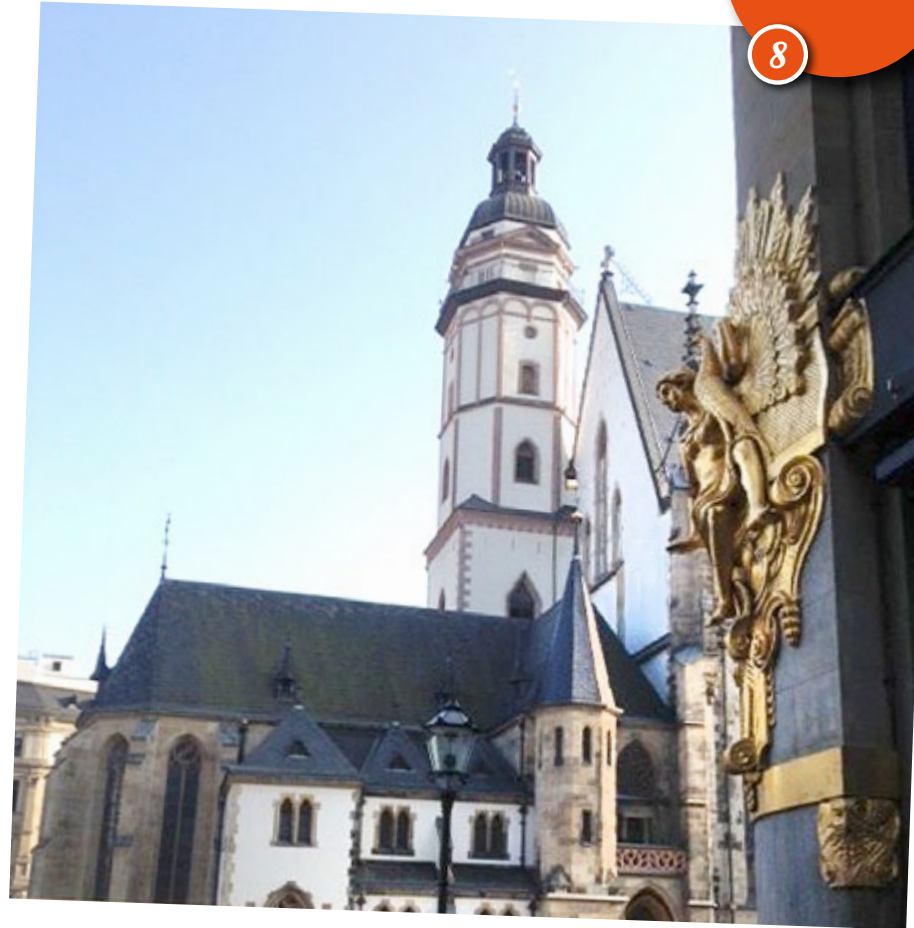
Music has been the lifeline and savior of this city in many ways.

Right from the days of Bach and Mendelssohn till that momentous day of 10th June 1989 when one of the most epic, seismic moments in the city's history took place right in front of where I was sitting at the Bach Memorial.

As I mentioned before, there was already an active non-violent movement taking place against the ruling communist regime of the GDR. Performing music without permission was a punishable offence in the GDR. To protest against the freedom of expressing their art, opposition groups in Leipzig organized a street music festival. As expected, the festival was banned by the authorities. However, much to the delight of locals, musicians from all over the GDR defied the ban and turned up in numbers in Leipzig in front of St. Thomas's Church on the morning of 10th June, 1989. By 12 o'clock the local police had gathered in numbers to breakup the concert. Using excessive brutal force they forced the musicians onto trucks. However that did not stop the festival from continuing. It inspired more people to take their place, spontaneous solidarity actions taking place right till the evening. Small but significant moments like these all contributed to the gradual demise of the GDR regime.

DAY 1  
.....  
5 PM

8



*Must See: St. Thomas Church*

DAY 1  
.....  
7 PM

9



Bars & Cafés: *Café Madrid*

## *Tapas and football at Café Madrid*

I round off the day at Café Madrid (Klostergasse 3 – 5), a tapas bar just a stone's throw away from St. Thomas's Church. I popped into watch the Champions League semi-final match between Real Madrid and Borussia Dortmund. The free wifi was another major reason for entering. If you are visiting and looking for a nice place to watch the football, I recommend this place. The food is also very good. I ordered a 0.5l of Paulaner Pils (€3.90) with some Olives, Green and Black (€2.90), followed by some Patatas Bravas with Salsa (€3.90) and Cordero al estilo Andaluz: Andalusian style lamb (€4). Café Madrid is not the cheapest place to eat in town but the nice ambience, friendly staff and also free wifi made it perfect for me.

**Cost** €14.70



## Coffee and Danish pastry at Lukas Bakery

Day 2. It's a crisp, beautiful spring morning in Leipzig. I savour the nice weather with the company of a filter coffee and Danish pastry at the local Lukas bakery (Grimmaische Strasse 29).

DAY 2  
9:30 AM

10



**Cost** €2



*Bars & Cafés: Lukas Bakery*



DAY 2  
10 AM

11



**Must See:**  
*St. Thomas Church*

## In the footsteps of Bach – St. Thomas Church

For music lovers, one of the highlights of a visit to Leipzig is the chance to retrace the footsteps of **Bach's life** in the city. He spent 27 years of his incredibly productive musical career in Leipzig. A key part of his life in Leipzig was spent at my next destination, the stunning St. Thomas Church (Thomaskirchhof 18), just a few minutes walk from the Lukas Bakery.

I walk into the church to hear the Bach organ playing.

I listen to the organ, eyes closed. Listening to the organ gives you some idea of what it might have been like to hear the great composer play when he was the cantor of the church between 1723 – 1750.

Numerous works of his were premiered here like St Matthew's passion. Visitors can visit his grave here by the altar. On 6pm Friday, 3pm on Saturday and some evenings – special concerts are held (€3) where you can hear his works and hear the 100 strong 'Thomanerchor' – the famous boys choir that Bach once led, perform his cantatas.

DAY 2  
11:30 AM

12

## Bach Museum

My 'Bach-in-Leipzig' odyssey continues at the Bach Museum (Thomaskirchhof 15 – 16) opposite St. Thomas Church. The museum charts the history of his life and what Leipzig was like in his time. You can see original Bach manuscripts, listen to his works & see films about the great composer here. It's a very cool and interactive museum. Plus you get to see an organ console (in picture) which Bach played in 1743.

Entrance fee is pricey at €8 (reduced for students €6) but free for children under 16 and free, if you are lucky to visit the city on the 1st Tuesday of the month.



**Must Sees:**  
**Bach Museum**

DAY 2  
1 PM

13

## Head off to the Südmeile district

I head south of the city centre down Karl-Liebnecht-Strasse, the main artery of the Südmeile neighbourhood which offers visitors a mixture of culture and cuisine.

Walking down Karl-Liebnecht-Strasse I spot another cool mural with the same cartoon like muppets, similar to the one I discovered near Leipzig Hauptbahnhof. I ask around and finally discover the artist's identity: the mural is the work of local street artist, Michael Fischer-Art.



### Cupcake tip

**Mintastique – No cupcakes were harmed during my visit.**

I sadly didn't get the chance to try them as I was almost diabetic with amount of Kaffee und Kuchen consumed travelling around Germany for a month. However, if you are visiting Leipzig do pop into the popular 'mama made' Mintastique ( Zentrum Süd, Strasse des 17. Juni 11, 04107 ) where you can savour the best cupcakes in town. Pricey at around the €4 mark but if they taste as good as they look...





 Bars & Cafés: *Maitre*

DAY 2  
2:30 PM  
15

## Best patisserie in Leipzig? Head to Maitre

For the best patisserie in town I head further down the road to Maitre on 62 Karl-Liebnecht Strasse. Here you can buy the best french baguettes in town, satisfy your sweet tooth with their excellent meringues, bonbons, cakes or chocolate (wrapper designed by local illustrator Phillip Janta) Coffee is excellent. Cakes are inexpensive too.

**Cost** Cappuchino and cake: €4.50

## Lunch at La Strada: Best pizza in town

I'm having lunch at La Strada (Karl-Liebnecht-Strasse 56A) where you can sample the best pizza in Leipzig. At €6 it is cheap, plus it's huge – you could easily enjoy this with a few friends.

**Cost** €6

 Bars & Cafés: *La Strada*

DAY 2  
1:30 PM  
14



**Cost** of beer: €2.50

DAY 2  
4 PM  
16



 Must See: *Moritzbastei*

## Moritzbastei

Moritzbastei (Universitätsstrasse 9) on the citycentre University campus is a-bit-of-everything kind of place situated in an old castle where you can laze, drink beer in the sun, in the evenings dance as much or as little as you like to music ranging from blues to samba or dark wave, go to concerts or watch live football & films (in German only) for free.

I enjoy a beer and soak in the sunshine. I'd come here everyday if I lived in Leipzig.



DAY 2  
5 PM

17

## *Spend the night in a former POW camp: Colditz Castle*

I round off my 48 hour trip with a visit to Colditz where I spend the night in a former renaissance palace turned WW2 Prisoner of War camp which now has been partly converted into a youth hostel.

From the Leipzig Hauptbahnhof I jump on the bus no 690. It is a scenic 1 hour 22 minute ride and costs me just €6.

When I arrive, it's a beautiful evening. The renaissance palace Schloss Colditz is a picture of idyllic bliss in evening sunshine. It's hard to close my eyes and imagine what life might have been like for the Allied officers who were imprisoned here from 1939 – 45 when the fortress functioned as a high security prisoner of war camp. There are a few visible signs from their time spent here but these are brought to life thanks to the passion of local guide – Steffi Schubert who regales visitors with stories of numerous infamous escape attempts which gave Colditz the tag of the 'Escape Academy.'

These range from the famous great escape tunnel that the French built (which you can see as part of the tour) to the 'Colditz Cock' – a glider that the British prisoners built to launch from the chapel roof of the Castle. There's also a museum you can visit which details life of prisoners in Colditz and their stories of escape plus you can view some of the tools used in the escape attempts – from Douglas of Midlothian soup tins to knives...

### **Note**

Steffi Schubert's tour costs €15, lasts 2 hours and worth every penny.

The castle has had many reincarnations – From a royal palace to a mental asylum to a hospital to a POW camp and now... a youth hostel. Visitors can extend their visit and stay over in the recently built Jugendherberge Colditz (formerly the mental asylum unit) from €32 night full board or €22 room only in a 6 bed ensuite dorm. The hostel is clean, comfortable and the meals are excellent. Hostel staff are very helpful and friendly. Only drawback is the lack of a common room to meet other guests but otherwise, a great hostel with a unique history.



## *Where to stay in Leipzig*

If budget permits, there is the option to stay in the centrally located Say Cheese Hostel & Hotel (Kleine Fleischergasse 8). Location is excellent in the centre of town, rooms are spacious, beds are comfy with reading light and socket, staff are friendly and knowledgeable. Room in a 8 bed dorm is €11 and a double is just €54. Continental breakfast is an additional €5 per person, per night.



*Say Cheese Hostel & Hotel*



## Leipzig – Getting there and away



**Train:** From Leipzig Deutsche Bahn network offers frequent services to **Munich** (from €29, five hours), **Dresden** (from €19, 1¼ hours), **Berlin** (from €19, 1¼ hours) and **Hamburg** (from €29, three hours). Check the Deutsche Bahn website: [www.bahn.com](http://www.bahn.com)

**Air:** Leipzig-Halle airport is served by a bunch of domestic and international carriers ranging from Lufthansa, Germanwings, Air Berlin, Condor and Cirrus. Lowcost airline, RyanAir flies into nearby Altenburg airport from London-Stansted. Hourly train from Altenburg's citycentre gets you into Leipzig for just €6.50. Bus from the airport to Altenburg costs €3.50.

Thank you to the German National Tourist Board, their partners for the 'Youth Hotspots' campaign – Jugendherberge: The **German Youth Hostel Association** and Deutsche Bahn for sponsoring my 'German Wanderlust' tour.

I'm touring Germany as part of an effort to highlight and discover the country's emerging 'Youth Hotspots.'

Find out more about these hotspots at [www.germany.travel/youth](http://www.germany.travel/youth), feel free to add your own and also do download their free youth hotspots app that is now available on the Apple Store & Android Store.

### Total cost of trip

One night at Jugendherberge Leipzig	€22.00
One night (full board) at Jugendherberge Schloss Colditz	€32.00
Lunch at India Gate	€7.90
Tapas at Café Madrid	€14.90
Coffee and pastry at Lukas Bakery	€2.00
Bach Museum	€8.00
Pizza at La Strada	€6.00
Coffee and cake at Maitre	€5.00
Beer at Moritzbastei	€2.50
Tour of Colditz	€15.00
Return bus ticket, Leipzig to Colditz	€12.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>€127.30</b>

» *Visit Leipzig online*