

The Concierge

TIPS FOR TOURING HERE AND ABROAD



ESCAPE TUNNEL



UNDERNEATH BERLIN WALL OPENS TO PUBLIC

By Kirsten Grieshaber
ASSOCIATED PRESS

BERLIN — An escape tunnel underneath the Berlin Wall opened to the public Nov. 7 for the first time amid celebrations of the 30-year anniversary of the opening of communist East Germany's border.

The tunnel at Bernauer Strasse, near the city's main Wall memorial, was opened by Mayor Michael Mueller. He thanked those who started digging the 100-yard tunnel in late 1970, nine years after East Germany sealed its border.

"It's great to see that the battle for freedom was also taken underground," Mueller said before he took a tour of the new exhibit.

"One can authentically experience . . . the courage of the women and men who tried to take people to freedom and resisted the East German regime," he added.

The tunnel was built by a group of people who had escaped earlier to West Berlin. They wanted to help friends and family to flee to the West but, days before it was finished, somebody informed East German officials about it.

East German authorities then found the tunnel by using ultrasound tracking and partially destroyed it.

Built in 1961, the Wall stood at the front line of the Cold War. It cut off East Germans from the supposed ideological contamination of the West and stemmed the tide of people fleeing the country.

In the 28 years that the Wall divided the city, more than 70 tunnels were built underneath the 97.2-mile barrier and around 300 people managed to escape through them, according to the Berlin Underworlds Association, which conducts tours of the city's historic bunkers and tunnels.

Most tunnels were dug from the West to the East. Bernauer Strasse in the city's Mitte neighborhood was one of the most popular spots for tunnel diggers because of the high amount of clay in the soil — seven tunnels were built underneath the wall on a 350-yard stretch here.

Not all tunnel projects were successful. Some collapsed before they could be used, while others were discovered by East Germany's secret police, the Stasi.

The newly opened tunnel at Bernauer Strasse can be reached through an access tunnel built by the Underworlds Association.

Through two windows, 24.6 feet under the ground, visitors can peek into the dimly lit 1970 tunnel but not get inside.

The original tunnel is so narrow that the men who built it could only crawl through it. It led from the basement of a corner building on the western side of the Wall to another building on the eastern side.

Ulrich Pfeifer, a civil engineer and one of the builders of the tunnel, made calculations and created maps for the project.

Pfeifer fled to West Berlin through the sewerage system just a few weeks after the Wall was erected in August 1961. "As a Berliner this wall was inconceivable," the 84-year-old said. "It was tearing apart families, it was separating all of us."

He said his motivation to dig escape tunnels was "the conviction of my girlfriend, who got seven years in prison."

"She was 22 years old and was sentenced for nothing other than an escape attempt," he said, still angry with the East German regime 30 years after its collapse.

Trying to flee East Germany was dangerous. Researchers estimate that 140 people died trying to cross the Wall by flying over it, escaping through the sewerage system, or jumping from buildings adjacent to the border.

It is not clear how many people died trying to escape specifically through the tunnels.

PHOTOS BY MARKUS SCHREIBER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

HERE

CHRISTMAS STROLL ON NANTUCKET

Kickoff the holidays on Nantucket at the 46th annual Christmas Stroll (Dec. 6-9). Hundreds of decorated 7-foot trees will line the downtown cobblestone streets where costumed carolers will sing familiar holiday tunes, and brilliantly decorated boutique shops will offer refreshments. On Saturday, the Town Crier will lead everyone to the wharf to meet Santa, who arrives via Coast Guard cutter. Visitors can also enjoy craft shows, performances, tours, and special exhibitions, including more than 80 uniquely decorated Christmas trees at the Nantucket Whaling Museum (christmasstroll.com). Looking for a place to stay? Open through December, the White Elephant is offering a Nantucket Christmas Stroll package. It includes two passes to the Festival of Wreathes and Nantucket Historical Association Holiday Houses, two festive scarves, in-room mistletoe, local mulled spice wine, and daily breakfast for two. Rates from \$2,230 for two nights. Booking code: STROLL. 800-445-6574, www.whiteelephantnantucket.com

HOLIDAY EVENTS FOR CHILDREN (OF ALL AGES)

Perched high on the bluffs in Watch Hill, R.I., the iconic Ocean House ups the holiday spirit ante with a series of kid-centric events. Featuring a Charlie Brown theme throughout its public spaces, the Relais & Châteaux property is hosting festive teas with Disney characters, brunches and dinners with Santa, holiday movie nights, ginger-



bread house workshops, cookie and cupcake decorating classes, and more. Grown-up kids can enjoy more adult offerings, including a Veuve Clicquot Champagne flight tasting, cocktails and canapes program, yule log and ornament making workshops, and "Havana Nights," a Caribbean-themed New Year's Eve gala. In all, more than 40 celebratory events will take place at the hotel and its sister property, the nearby Weekapaug Inn. December rates from \$500. 888-853-2919, oceanhouseevents.com



THERE

DIVE RESORT DEBUTS IN PALM SPRINGS

Looking for a chic adults-only getaway this winter? Palm Springs, Calif.'s newly launched petit boutique resort, Dive, aims to re-create the stylish elegance of the 1960s French Riviera beach culture while offering the ultimate in 21st-century comforts to its guests. Los Angeles-based designers and artists collaborated to evoke a home away from home vibe at this intimate property, with nine spacious and airy guest rooms and two suites featuring original murals, rainfall showers, and premium linens. Guests can also enjoy the historic, restored swimming pool, 12-person hot tub, and cozy garden for an evolving range of food and drink experiences. Rates from \$300. 760-323-2231, www.dive-palmsprings.com/

FESTIVITIES AND FLIGHTS TO NASSAU

Trade in your boots and parkas for flip-flops and shorts over the winter holidays this year at the family-friendly Grand Hyatt Baha Mar. In addition

to beautifully landscaped pools, a Jack Nicklaus Signature designed golf course, the Children's Explorer Club, and numerous bars, restaurants, and nightlife offerings, guests can enjoy a bevy of holiday-themed activities such as nightly costumed skating performances, breakfast with Santa, ornament making classes, and festive rum flight tastings. Speaking of flights, Delta Air Lines is making travel easier by expanding its route between Boston and Nassau from Saturday-only to daily, starting Dec. 21 through April 30. Resort rates from \$270. 242-788-8000, bahamar.com/

JORDAN SMALL GROUP TOUR DEBUTS

Lovers of antiquities and the natural world — as well as film buffs — might enjoy Odysseys Unlimited's newest offering, the 11-day Treasures of Jordan, Antiquities & Natural Wonders. Why film buffs, you ask? Well, in addition to visiting treasures from times biblical to Byzantine, Roman to recent, the tour includes sites highlighted in the iconic films "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade" and "Lawrence of Arabia," such as the Treasury building in Petra and the dramatic sandstone formations and pink sands of the Wadi Rum desert. (In the desert, the tour spends one night in individual luxury geodesic tents with panoramic views of the lunar-like landscape.) Launches March 2, with eight additional trips through Nov. 2, 2020; limited to 12 to 24 guests. Departures available from Boston and New York. Prices from \$3,297 (\$2,695 air and land inclusive plus \$602 airline taxes and fees). 888-370-6765, odysseys-unlimited.com/tours/africa-the-middle-east/treasures-of-jordan/

EVERYWHERE



SHERPA STYLE

Stay stylish when traveling with the cozy new Sherpa Half-Zip Hoodie by Alo. Features ribbed hem and cuffs, and kangaroo pocket. Available in four colors: black, white, camel, and gray. Also new, the Duality Sherpa Jacket offers color-combo or solid color choices in a reversible design. Made with color-blocked sherpa and sleek woven fabric so you can switch up your look and stay warm while on the road. Includes full-length zipper, hood, zip pockets. Available in four color combinations and solid black. \$138-\$248. www.aloyoga.com/collections/jackets-story

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