

# Daily Life

Groceries, furniture, biking, and other essentials for everyday living in Berlin.

- [Doing Groceries in Berlin](#)
- [Furniture and Appliances Guide](#)
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# Doing Groceries in Berlin

## Executive Summary

Germany's grocery landscape is very different from the Philippines. Stores close on Sundays (by law), you need to bring your own bags, produce often needs to be weighed by you, and bottles carry refundable deposits (Pfand). The good news: groceries are affordable if you shop at discounters (Aldi, Lidl), and Berlin has a solid network of Asian supermarkets where you can find most Filipino staples. This guide covers everything you need to know.

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## 1. German Supermarket Tiers

German supermarkets fall into clear tiers. Understanding them is the first step to shopping smart.

### **Budget** Discounters

These are your go-to for everyday groceries. A full weekly basket costs 20-30% less than at full-service supermarkets.

Chain	What to Expect	Key Notes
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<b>Aldi</b>	Bare-bones layout, limited selection, excellent prices. Two separate companies: Aldi Nord (Berlin) and Aldi Sud (southern Germany).	Slightly cheaper than Lidl on average. In-store bakery. Store brand products regularly match or beat premium brands in blind tests.
<b>Lidl</b>	Similar to Aldi but with broader selection and better fresh produce sections. Single national chain.	Best bakery section among discounters. Weekly rotating non-food specials (Mondays and Thursdays) can be great deals.
<b>Penny</b>	Owned by REWE Group. Budget-friendly but quality can be inconsistent.	More locations in inner-city Berlin than Aldi/Lidl. Good for quick stops. Slightly more expensive than Aldi/Lidl.
<b>Netto</b>	Similar tier to Penny. Found in many neighborhoods.	Two different Netto chains exist (Marken-Discount vs. Stavenhagen). The red-yellow Netto Marken-Discount is more common in Berlin.

## Mid-Range Full-Service Supermarkets

Chain	What to Expect	Key Notes
<b>REWE</b>	Wide selection including international products. Good for specialty items you can't find at discounters.	Best for international ingredients among mainstream chains. Has a loyalty program (REWE Punkte). Online ordering and delivery available.
<b>Edeka</b>	Cooperative structure means each store varies. Generally premium quality and the most expensive mainstream chain.	Best fresh produce and deli counters. "Gut & Gunstig" is their budget store brand. Individual stores may carry regional specialties.
<b>Kaufland</b>	Hypermarket model -- huge stores with everything. Prices between discounters and Edeka/REWE.	Often open until 10 PM (later than most). Good for one-stop shopping including household items. Accepts the widest variety of Pfand bottles.

## Premium Organic & Specialty

Chain	What to Expect	Key Notes
<b>Bio Company</b>	Berlin-based organic supermarket chain. Everything is organic (Bio).	30-50% more expensive than discounters. Good quality but not necessary for daily shopping.
<b>Alnatura</b>	National organic chain with wide selection of organic products.	Also sells at dm (drugstore) at lower prices for some items.
<b>denn's Biomarkt</b>	Another organic chain. Several locations at Berlin train stations (open Sundays).	Useful on Sundays when located at train stations.

**Strategy for Filipinos:** Do your weekly bulk shopping at **Aldi or Lidl** for staples (rice, oil, eggs, vegetables, bread, milk, pasta). Go to **REWE or Edeka** only for specific items you can't find at discounters. Visit **Asian supermarkets** monthly for Filipino-specific ingredients (see Section 2).

## 2. Where to Find Filipino & Asian Ingredients in Berlin

Berlin has a robust network of Asian supermarkets. While there is no dedicated large-scale Filipino supermarket in central Berlin, several Asian stores carry Filipino products (Mama Sita's sauces, coconut cream, calamansi, ube, fish sauce, shrimp paste, etc.). The **go asia** chain is particularly well-stocked.

### Major Asian Supermarkets in Berlin

#### go asia Supermarkt (Multiple Locations) **Filipino Items**

The largest Asian supermarket chain in Berlin with 6+ locations. Carries Southeast Asian products including Filipino brands. Known for stocking ube (purple yam), coconut products, fish sauce, and Mama Sita's mixes.

- **Moabit:** Turmstrasse 29, 10551 -- Mon-Sat 9-21:00
- **Charlottenburg:** Kantstrasse 101, 10627 -- Mon-Sat 9-21:00
- **Schoneberg:** Hauptstrasse 132, 10827 -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00
- **Tempelhof:** Tempelhofer Damm 120, 12099 -- Mon-Sat 9:30-20:00
- **Alexanderplatz:** Alexanderpl. 8, 10178 -- Mon-Sat 9-22:00
- **Friedrichshain:** Frankfurter Allee 89, 10247 -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00
- **Potsdamer Platz (Station):** Bahnhof Potsdamer Platz -- **Open Sundays 8-20:00**
- **Kurfurstendamm:** im UG GALERIA, Kurfurstendamm 231 -- Mon-Sat 10-20:00 (10% off first Saturday monthly)

#### Asia Market Lee GmbH

Dircksenstrasse 101-103, 10179 Mitte (under the S-Bahn arches) -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00

Highly rated (4.5/5, 1765+ reviews). Stocks Indian, Korean, Southeast Asian products including frozen items and Asian sauces. Good variety of spices.

#### VINH-LOI Asien Supermarkt (2 Locations)

- **Wedding:** Mullerstrasse 141, 13353 -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00
- **Schoneberg:** Ansbacher Str. 16, 10787 -- Mon-Sat 9-19:00

Vietnamese-owned but carries pan-Asian products. Good for fresh vegetables, frozen seafood, sauces, and prepared foods.

## Asia Mekong Supermarket

Henriette-Herz-Platz 1 & Wichertstrasse 72 -- Opens 10:00

Well-stocked pan-Asian store. Multiple locations.

## Hoa Mai Asia-Supermarket

Frankfurter Allee 104, 10247 Friedrichshain -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00

Good for spices, condiments, fresh vegetables, herbs, and sushi-making supplies.

## Timi Asia Supermarket

Kieler Str. 4, 12163 Steglitz -- Mon-Sat 9-20:00

Known for fresh herbs, rare Asian vegetables, and homemade kimchi.

# Filipino-Specific Online Stores (Ship to Berlin)

## Filipino Asian Store **Filipino Focus**

Physical store in Basdorf (near Bernau, ~40 min from central Berlin) -- Mon-Fri 9-18:00, Sat 9-18:00

1,500+ items with emphasis on Philippine products. Online store with free shipping on orders over 100 EUR. Same-day dispatch available.

[filipinoasianstore.de](http://filipinoasianstore.de)

## Nica's Pinoy Store **Filipino Focus**

Schillerstr. 24, 68753 Waghausel (ships Germany-wide)

Filipino-owned. Carries Filipino desserts, fruits/vegetables, ready meals, fish/meat, beverages, spices, canned goods, rice, sauces, snacks, and frozen products. Free shipping on orders over 65 EUR. Chilled items ship Mon-Wed only (+3 EUR thermal packaging).

[nिकास-pinoy-store.de](https://nिकास-pinoy-store.de)

## Pinoy Food Store **Filipino Focus**

Siegtalstrasse 206, 57080 Siegen (ships Germany-wide via DHL)

1,000+ Asian products, 90% Filipino. Includes an "Ube Corner" specialty section. Ships nationwide Mon-Sat. Loyalty points program.

[pinoyfood.de](https://pinoyfood.de)

### **Filipino Ingredients Cheat Sheet -- Where to Find Them:**

- **Rice (jasmine, sticky):** Any Asian supermarket (much cheaper than REWE/Edeka). Also available at Aldi/Lidl (basic long-grain).
- **Fish sauce (patis), soy sauce, vinegar:** go asia, Vinh-Loi, Asia Market Lee, or any Asian store.
- **Coconut milk/cream:** Aldi and Lidl carry canned coconut milk. Asian stores have wider selection (Gata brand etc.).
- **Calamansi:** Frozen at go asia or Filipino online stores.
- **Ube (purple yam):** go asia carries frozen ube and ube extract/powder. Online Filipino stores for more variety.
- **Mama Sita's mixes:** Filipino online stores, occasionally at go asia.
- **Bagoong (shrimp paste):** Asian supermarkets (look in the Filipino/SEA section) or online stores.
- **Lumpia wrappers (spring roll):** Any Asian supermarket (frozen section).
- **Pancit noodles:** go asia, Asian stores (look for bihon, canton, sotanghon).
- **Banana ketchup, Jufran:** Filipino online stores. Occasionally at larger go asia locations.
- **Dried fish (tuyo, dilis):** Filipino online stores are most reliable.

## 3. Sunday & Holiday Shopping

**Important:** Almost all supermarkets in Germany are **closed on Sundays and public holidays** by law (Ladenschlussgesetz). This is one of the biggest culture shocks for Filipinos. Plan your shopping for Saturday at the latest!

## What IS Open on Sundays

# Supermarkets at Train Stations

An exception in the law allows shops at major train stations to open on Sundays. These are your best bet for a proper grocery run:

Store	Location	Sunday Hours
REWE	Hauptbahnhof, Europaplatz 1, Moabit	8-22:00
REWE	Ostbahnhof, Am Ostbahnhof 9, Friedrichshain	6-24:00
Edeka	Friedrichstrasse Station, Friedrichstr. 142, Mitte	8-22:00
Edeka	Sudkreuz Station, Hildegard-Knef-Platz 1, Schoneberg	8-22:00
Edeka	Lichtenberg Station, Weitlingstr. 22	9-22:00
Penny	Ostbahnhof, Am Ostbahnhof 9, Friedrichshain	7-23:00
HIT am Zoo	Kantstrasse 7, Charlottenburg	8-22:00
go asia	Potsdamer Platz Station	8-20:00
denn's Biomarkt	Hauptbahnhof, Bahnhof Zoo, Gesundbrunnen, Ostkreuz	7/8-22:00
REWE	BER Airport Terminal 1	Open 24/7

**Warning:** Sunday grocery stores at train stations are **extremely busy**. There are often queues outside. Go early in the morning for the best experience.

## Other Sunday Options

- **Spatis (Spatkauf/Spatverkauf):** Corner convenience stores unique to Berlin. Most are open on Sundays (technically in a gray legal area). They sell basics: drinks, snacks, bread, cigarettes, some frozen meals. Prices are higher than supermarkets. Hours vary, most open by 10:00.
- **Gas stations (Tankstellen):** Shell, Aral, and others sell basic groceries, bread, milk, and snacks. Open 24/7 but expensive.
- **Bakeries (Backereien):** Open on Sundays. Good for fresh bread, rolls (Brotchen), pastries, and sometimes sandwiches.
- **Restaurants and cafes:** All open on Sundays.
- **Some Asian stores:** A few small Asian markets operate on Sundays (e.g., Asia Markt at Osloer Strasse, 11:00-21:00 Sundays; Nguyen Asian Market near Spittelmarkt).

**Pro tip:** Do a big grocery shop on **Saturday**. Keep your pantry stocked with rice, canned goods, and frozen items so you're never caught off-guard on a Sunday. Also note: grocery delivery services (REWE, Flink) generally do NOT deliver on Sundays.

# 4. Money-Saving Tips

## Store Strategy

- **Shop discounters for staples:** Aldi and Lidl for rice, eggs, milk, butter, pasta, bread, vegetables, cooking oil, canned goods. You save 20-30% compared to REWE/Edeka.
- **Buy store brands (Eigenmarke):** German store brands are excellent quality. Key ones:
  - "Ja!" (REWE) -- cheapest tier
  - "Gut & Günstig" (Edeka) -- cheapest tier
  - "Milbona" (Lidl dairy), "Milsani" (Aldi dairy)
  - These regularly match or outperform premium brands in independent tests
- **Use drugstores for non-food:** dm and Rossmann sell toiletries, cleaning supplies, and baby products 8-12% cheaper than supermarkets.
- **Check bottom shelves:** Supermarkets place budget items low and premium brands at eye level.
- **Compare by price per kg/100g:** German law requires stores to display the per-unit price on the shelf label. Use this, not the package price.
- **Shop before closing:** Produce, meat, and dairy counters often mark down items near closing time.

## Apps & Digital Tools

App	What It Does	Cost
<b>Too Good To Go</b>	Buy "surprise bags" of surplus food from bakeries, supermarkets, and restaurants at 1/3 the price. Very popular in Berlin.	Free app; bags typically 3-5 EUR
<b>Markt guru</b>	Browse and compare weekly flyers (Prospekte) from all supermarkets. Set alerts for specific products.	Free
<b>KaufDA</b>	Similar to Markt guru -- digital weekly flyers and store finder.	Free
<b>Smhaggle</b>	Cashback app -- scan receipts to get money back on specific products.	Free
<b>Payback</b>	Loyalty points card accepted at REWE, dm, and many others. Accumulate points for discounts.	Free card/app
<b>DeutschlandCard</b>	Loyalty card for Netto, Esso, and other partners.	Free
<b>Lidl Plus</b>	Lidl's own app with weekly coupons and digital receipts.	Free

# Other Tips

- **Weekly specials (Angebote):** Every supermarket has weekly specials displayed in paper flyers (available at the entrance) and in their apps. Aldi and Lidl rotate non-food specials Mon/Thu.
- **Seasonal produce:** Buy fruits and vegetables in season -- they're significantly cheaper and better quality. Asparagus (Spargel) in spring, berries in summer, root vegetables in winter.
- **Visit weekly markets (Wochenmarkt):** Berlin has many weekly farmers' markets. Produce can be cheaper (especially at closing time) and is fresher than supermarkets. Try the Turkish Market at Maybachufer (Tue/Fri) for affordable produce.
- **Bulk rice at Asian stores:** Buy 5-10kg bags of jasmine rice at go asia or similar -- much cheaper per kg than the small 500g packets at Aldi/Lidl.
- **Collect Pfand:** Always return your bottles! 25 cents per bottle adds up. Some people collect extra bottles from parks/events for additional income.

## 5. Key Differences from Philippine Grocery Shopping

Coming from the Philippines, here are the things that will surprise you most:

### Bags Bring Your Own

There are **no free plastic bags**. You must bring reusable bags (Stoffbeutel/Jutebeutel) or buy bags at the checkout (0.10-0.50 EUR each). Paper bags are sometimes available. Keep bags in your backpack so you're never caught without one.

### Pfand Bottle Deposits

**Most bottles and cans have a deposit (Pfand):**

- Single-use plastic bottles & cans: **0.25 EUR**
- Reusable glass/PET bottles: **0.08-0.15 EUR**
- Beer crates: **1.50 EUR**

Return at any supermarket's Leergutautomat (reverse vending machine). You get a receipt (Bon) to redeem at checkout. Bottles must be uncrushed with readable barcodes. No Pfand on wine, spirits, milk, or juice cartons.

## Weighing Produce Scales

At some stores (especially Edeka, sometimes REWE), you must **weigh your own produce** at a scale in the produce section, select the item number on the screen, and print a price sticker to attach to the bag. At discounters (Aldi, Lidl), this is handled at the checkout.

## Checkout Speed Pack Fast!

German checkout cashiers scan items **extremely fast**. There's no bagging area -- items go into a small space and you're expected to pack quickly or move to a separate counter to bag. This is the #1 source of stress for newcomers. Have your bags ready and open.

## Cart Deposit Coin for Cart

Shopping carts require a **0.50 EUR or 1.00 EUR coin** as a deposit (insert into the chain lock). You get it back when you return the cart. Keep a coin ready or buy a plastic chip (Einkaufswagenchip) for this purpose.

## Sunday Everything Closed

Unlike the 24/7 Philippine sari-sari stores and malls open daily, **almost all shops close on Sundays**. See Section 3 for exceptions. Even on weekdays, most supermarkets close by 20:00-22:00 (not midnight).

## Payment Cash is Still Common

Germany is more cash-dependent than the Philippines' GCash/Maya culture. While card payments (EC-Karte/Girocard) are accepted everywhere, some smaller shops and weekly markets are **cash only**. Aldi and Lidl accept cards and contactless. Credit cards (Visa/Mastercard) are accepted at most supermarkets now but not universally.

## Recycling Waste Sorting

Germany has a strict 5-bin recycling system. Your building will have separate bins for: paper (blue), packaging/plastic (yellow), organic waste (brown), glass (sorted by color at street containers), and residual waste (black/grey). Incorrect sorting can result in complaints from neighbors or landlord.

### Things you'll miss and where to find substitutes:

- **Sari-sari convenience:** Spatis are Berlin's version -- small, informal, open late.

- **Wet markets:** Weekly farmers' markets (Wochenmarkt) are the closest equivalent, but much more organized. Meat/fish comes pre-packaged at supermarkets; you won't find live fish or custom-cut meat at a counter in the Philippine style.
- **Tingi (single-serving sachets):** Not common in Germany. Everything comes in full-size packaging.
- **Palengke-style bargaining:** Prices are fixed. No negotiation at any store.
- **Delivery from sari-sari:** Use Flink or REWE delivery instead (see Section 6).

## 6. Online Grocery Delivery Options

Service	Type	Delivery Time	Delivery Fee	Notes
<b>REWE Delivery</b>	Full supermarket	Next-day / scheduled slots	Varies (free slots available but rare)	Full REWE selection. Order online, choose delivery window. Best for large weekly shops. Not available on Sundays.
<b>Flink</b>	Quick commerce	Minutes (10-30 min)	~1.80 EUR (higher for small orders)	Now partnered with REWE. 2,600+ products. Great for forgotten items. Operates from dark stores across Berlin.
<b>Picnic</b>	Scheduled delivery	Next-day, fixed time slots	Free (min order applies)	Milk-run model (like a delivery route). Very reliable. Competitive prices. Highly rated (4.0/5 on Trustpilot).
<b>Knuspr</b>	Same-day/next-day	Same-day possible	Varies	Czech-origin service. Good selection including fresh items. Available in Berlin.
<b>Amazon Fresh</b>	Full grocery + Amazon	2-hour windows	Free with Prime (min order)	Requires Amazon Prime. Good selection but not the cheapest.
<b>Getir</b>	Quick commerce	Minutes	~1.80 EUR (min order 10 EUR)	Good for quick top-ups. Daily promotions.

**For Filipino ingredients online:** Use the dedicated Filipino online stores ([filipinoasianstore.de](http://filipinoasianstore.de), [nिकास-pinoy-store.de](http://nिकास-pinoy-store.de), [pinoyfood.de](http://pinoyfood.de)) for items you can't find locally. Stock up monthly to meet free shipping thresholds.

## 7. Monthly Grocery Budget

Household	Budget Range (EUR/month)	Strategy
Single person (frugal)	150-200 EUR	Discounters only (Aldi/Lidl), store brands, meal planning, seasonal produce
Single person (comfortable)	200-300 EUR	Mix of discounters and REWE/Edeka, some organic, eating out occasionally
Couple	300-450 EUR	Shared cooking, bulk buying, discounters for staples
Family of four (budget)	400-550 EUR	Disciplined discount shopping, meal planning, seasonal produce, minimal eating out
Family of four (comfortable)	550-750 EUR	Mix of stores, some organic, occasional specialty items, eating out

**Filipino cooking note:** Budget an extra **30-50 EUR/month** for Asian/Filipino specialty ingredients (rice in bulk, fish sauce, coconut milk, calamansi, etc.) on top of the regular grocery budget. Buying rice (jasmine, 10kg bags) at Asian stores costs around 15-20 EUR and lasts a family about a month.

## What Costs More vs. Less Than the Philippines

Cheaper in Germany	More Expensive in Germany
Bread (excellent quality, from 0.69 EUR/loaf at discounters)	Rice (2-3x more than PH prices)
Dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt, butter)	Tropical fruits (mangoes, papayas -- seasonal and expensive)
Pork and chicken (often cheaper per kg)	Fish and seafood (much more expensive)
Potatoes, carrots, onions (very cheap)	Filipino specialty items (imported = premium prices)
Pasta, flour, eggs	Eating out / takeout (10-15 EUR per meal minimum)

## 8. Research Journey

### Search Queries & Sources Consulted

- **Search:** "Berlin supermarket guide expats comparison" -- housinganywhere.com, liveingermany.de

- **Search:** "cheapest supermarkets Berlin Aldi Lidl Penny" -- Reddit r/germany, iamexpat.de, tripadvisor.com, welcome-center-germany.com
- **Search:** "Asian grocery store Berlin Filipino ingredients" -- Yelp (top 10 Filipino stores Berlin), berlin10.com, filipinoasianstore.de, nicas-pinoy-store.de, pinoyfood.de
- **Search:** "Filipino store Berlin Asian supermarket" -- planforgermany.com, pinoyfood.de
- **Search:** "grocery shopping tips Berlin expat save money" -- thelocal.de (10 ways to save), instagram expat guides
- **Search:** "Berlin supermarket Sunday closed where to buy food" -- berlin.de, allaboutberlin.com, theberlinlife.com, helloberlin.in, berlinwalk.com
- **Search:** "Pfand bottle deposit Germany expat guide" -- settle-in-berlin.com, liveingermany.de, simplegermany.com
- **Search:** "grocery delivery Berlin Flink Knuspr Picnic 2025 2026" -- expatrio.com, reddit, globalfoodhub.com
- **Search:** "Too Good To Go Germany supermarket apps save money" -- thelocal.de, reddit
- **Search:** "monthly grocery budget Germany family" -- welcome-center-germany.com, housinganywhere.com
- **Search:** "Filipino expat Berlin grocery shopping experience" -- pinayingermany.wordpress.com, Philippine Embassy Berlin Facebook
- **Search:** "Berlin grocery weighing produce self-service scale" -- Reddit r/germany (multiple threads on self-checkout and produce weighing)

12 searches across 3 SearXNG nodes (bitmagnet-lax, bitmagnet-nl, bitmagnet-de). 11 pages fetched and analyzed via WebFetch. Key sources: housinganywhere.com, liveingermany.de, berlin10.com, allaboutberlin.com, helloberlin.in, thelocal.de, settle-in-berlin.com, expatrio.com, filipinoasianstore.de, pinoyfood.de, nicas-pinoy-store.de.

# Furniture and Appliances Guide

## Overview

One of the biggest surprises for Filipinos moving to Germany: **most apartments come completely empty**. No kitchen, no lights, sometimes not even curtains. You will need to furnish and equip your apartment from scratch. The good news is Berlin has an amazing second-hand culture that can save you thousands of euros.

## What German Apartments Usually DON'T Include

- **Kitchen** — Yes, really. Most unfurnished apartments have NO kitchen at all. No cabinets, no countertop, no sink, no stove. You either buy/bring one or negotiate with the previous tenant to buy theirs (Ablöse).
- **Light fixtures** — Often just bare wires hanging from the ceiling
- **Curtains/blinds** — Usually not included

**What IS typically included:** Bathroom fixtures (toilet, sink, bathtub/shower), heating radiators, sometimes flooring.

## Second-Hand Platforms (Best Value)

Platform	Best For	Tips
<a href="#">Kleinanzeigen</a>	Everything — furniture, appliances, kitchens	Filter by "zu verschenken" (giving away for free). Negotiate prices. Many people sell entire kitchens for €200-500 when moving out.

Platform	Best For	Tips
Facebook Marketplace	Furniture, decor, appliances	Join "Free Your Stuff Berlin" and expat furniture groups
<a href="https://www.ebay.de">eBay.de</a>	Appliances, electronics	Auction format can give great deals

## Second-Hand Stores in Berlin

- **BSR NochMall** (formerly Stilbruch) — Berlin's waste management company runs a second-hand store. Furniture, appliances, household items at very low prices. Havensteinstraße 40, Reinickendorf.
- **Humana** (multiple locations) — Primarily clothing but some locations have furniture and household items
- **Oxfam** — Charity shops with household items and kitchenware
- **Sozialkaufhaus** — Social department stores with discounted used furniture. Several locations (e.g., Möbel in Neukölln).
- **IKEA Fundgrube** — The "As-Is" section at IKEA stores sells returned and display items at 50-70% off

## Sperrmüll: Free Furniture on the Street

Berlin has a culture of leaving unwanted furniture on the street for others to take. This is called **Sperrmüll** (bulky waste). You will regularly see:

- Shelves, tables, chairs on sidewalks
- Sometimes perfectly good sofas and bed frames
- Often with a "Zu verschenken" (for free) sign

### Tips:

- Best finds are on the 1st and 15th of the month (when people move)
- Check for bedbugs (Bettwanzen) before taking upholstered furniture — this is a real risk in Berlin
- Solid wood furniture is safe to take; mattresses are NOT recommended

## Budget New Furniture

Store	Price Level	Best For
<a href="#">IKEA</a>	€-€€	Everything. 4 locations in Berlin. Delivery ~€39-69. Tip: Check the "Fundgrube" (As-Is) section first.
<a href="#">POCO</a>	€	Very cheap basics — bed frames, mattresses, shelves. Quality is basic but functional.
<a href="#">Roller</a>	€	Similar to POCO, budget furniture and ready-made kitchens
<a href="#">Höffner</a>	€€-€€€	Mid-range, good for kitchens and living room furniture
<a href="#">home24</a>	€€	Online-first, free delivery and returns, modern designs

# Kitchen: Your Biggest Expense

A new fitted kitchen (Einbauküche) costs €2,000-8,000+. Ways to save:

- **Buy from the previous tenant (Ablöse)** — If the apartment has a kitchen, negotiate with the person moving out. Common practice, saves both parties money. Typical: €500-2,000.
- **IKEA METHOD kitchens** — Most affordable new option (~€1,500-3,000 with appliances). Can assemble yourself or hire someone via TaskRabbit (~€200-400).
- **POCO/Roller ready-made kitchens** — Küchenzeile (kitchenette) from €300-800, basic but functional
- **Kleinanzeigen** — Search "Küche" + your Bezirk (district). People often sell entire kitchens for €200-800 before moving out.

## Appliances

### Must-Buy Appliances

- **Washing machine** (Waschmaschine) — €250-600 new. Look for A-rated energy efficiency. Used from €50-150 on Kleinanzeigen.
- **Refrigerator** (Kühlschrank) — €200-500 new. Often included if you buy an existing kitchen.
- **Stove/Oven** (Herd) — €200-500 new. Usually part of the kitchen.

### Where to Buy Appliances

- [MediaMarkt](#) / [Saturn](#) — Largest electronics retailers. Watch for sales.
- [AO.de](#) — Online appliance specialist, good prices, free delivery and old appliance removal
- **Kleinanzeigen** — Used appliances. Always test before buying.
- **Refurbished** — Check [Back Market](#) for refurbished electronics at 20-40% off

## Flea Markets for Home Goods

- **Mauerpark** (Sundays 10-18h) — Vintage, kitchenware, decorative items. Fun to browse but prices can be inflated for tourists.
- **Boxhagener Platz** (Sundays 10-18h) — Books, furniture, design items. More local, better prices than Mauerpark.
- **Nowkoelln Flowmarkt** (Maybachufer) — Curated, hipster-friendly. Good for unique home decor.
- **Berliner Trödelmarkt** (Straße des 17. Juni, Saturdays & Sundays) — Large, touristy but has good antique furniture finds.

## Typical Costs: Furnishing from Scratch

Item	Budget Option	Mid-Range
Kitchen (complete)	€300-800 (used/POCO)	€1,500-3,000 (IKEA)
Bed frame + mattress	€100-200 (IKEA/used)	€400-800
Sofa	€50-200 (used/IKEA)	€400-800
Washing machine	€50-150 (used)	€300-500
Dining table + chairs	€30-100 (used)	€150-400
Lights/lamps	€20-50 (IKEA)	€50-150
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€550-1,500</b>	<b>€2,800-5,650</b>

**Pro tip:** Join the Filipino in Berlin Facebook group and post what you need. Outgoing expats often sell everything at once for great prices when leaving Germany.

# Biking in Berlin

## Executive Summary

Berlin is one of Europe's most bike-friendly cities: flat terrain, over 1,000 km of bike lanes, and roughly as many bicycles as people in Germany (~82 million bikes for ~84 million residents). As a new expat, you have five main paths to getting on two wheels:

- **Bike subscriptions** (Swapfiets, Dance/Brompton) — all-inclusive monthly fee, ideal for newcomers not ready to commit to ownership.
- **Employer bike leasing** (JobRad, BusinessBike) — save up to 40% via salary conversion and tax benefits; ask your employer.
- **On-demand sharing** (Nextbike, Lime, Tier/Dott, Voi, Bolt, Donkey Republic) — pay-per-ride via app, best for occasional use.
- **Buying** (new or second-hand) — cheapest long-term; used city bikes start around EUR 50-150.
- **Jelbi app** — BVG's multi-modal app that connects all sharing services in one place.

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## 1. Bike Subscription Services

Subscription services give you a dedicated bike for a monthly fee. All maintenance, repairs, and theft protection are included. No upfront purchase cost. Cancel with one month's notice. This is the

best option if you are new to Berlin and want to try cycling without a big investment.

# Swapfiets Most Popular

The world's first bike-as-a-service company, recognizable by the **blue front tire**. Available across 70+ European cities including Berlin. Recently acquired Dance (May 2026), making it Europe's largest e-bike subscription provider.

## Pricing (Berlin, June 2026)

Model	Monthly Fee	Type	Details
Deluxe 7	<b>EUR 15.90</b>	City bike	7 gears, ideal for daily commuting
Power 1	<b>EUR 54.90</b>	E-bike	Single-speed, 120 km battery range
Power 7	<b>EUR 64.90</b>	E-bike	7 gears, 150 km battery range

### Subscription terms:

- **Monthly (Flex):** One-time joining fee (EUR ~19.50), cancel anytime with 1 month notice
- **6-month:** No joining fee, cancel after 6 months
- **12-month:** Lowest monthly rate, cancel after 12 months

**Sign-up:** Online at [swapfiets.de](https://swapfiets.de) or visit a Berlin store. Free home delivery or in-store pickup. Need a valid payment method (credit card or SEPA).

## Pros

- All repairs free; if not fixed in 10 minutes, they swap the bike
- Theft protection included (EUR 60 deductible if double-locked)
- Built-in double lock — no need to buy a separate lock
- Distinctive blue tire deters theft
- Student discounts available
- Flexible cancellation
- Good Trustpilot rating (4.6/5 from 2,600+ reviews)

## Cons

- Bikes feel heavy for experienced cyclists
- No step-through frame for Deluxe 7
- Basket only mounts on front (EUR 4/month extra)

- Long-term cost exceeds buying your own bike
- Chat support can be slow
- Back tire flap is flimsy

**Expat Tip** Swapfiets is ideal for your first months in Berlin. At EUR 15.90/month (~EUR 0.53/day), you can test if cycling works for your commute before investing in ownership. Multiple reviewers who used Swapfiets for 6–12 months eventually bought their own bike once they felt confident navigating Berlin traffic.

## Dance Acquired by Swapfiets May 2026

Premium e-bike and e-moped subscription, Berlin-based. Acquired by Swapfiets in May 2026; existing subscriptions continue but new pricing may change.

### Pricing (pre-acquisition)

Vehicle	Monthly Fee	Notes
Dance One (e-bike)	<b>EUR 69+</b>	Step-through also available
Dance Moped	<b>EUR 89-119</b>	Requires valid German driving license

Free delivery, app-based management, all maintenance included. Available in Berlin, Hamburg, Munich. Trustpilot: 4.0/5 from 600+ reviews.

**Note on Acquisition** Since Swapfiets acquired Dance, it is worth checking both websites for the latest combined offering. Dance subscribers may be migrated to Swapfiets plans.

## Brompton Folding Bike

If you commute by train + bike (common in Berlin), a folding bike subscription may be perfect. Brompton's iconic folding bikes are available on subscription in Berlin.

Plan	Monthly Fee	Commitment
Brompton subscription	<b>from EUR 41-59</b>	12-month minimum

Includes repair service, maintenance, and theft protection. Ideal for mixed S-Bahn/U-Bahn + cycling commutes. Folds in under 20 seconds, fits under a desk.

# 2. Bike Leasing Through Your Employer

**Why This Matters for Expats** If you are employed in Germany (including on a Blue Card), you may be eligible for tax-advantaged bike leasing. This is one of the cheapest ways to get a high-quality bike or e-bike. Ask your HR department if they offer a company bike program (Dienstrad / Jobrad).

## How It Works

1. **Employer sets up a framework agreement** with a leasing provider (JobRad, BusinessBike, Lease a Bike, Bikeleasing, Eurorad)
2. **You choose a bike** from any participating retailer — any type: city bike, e-bike, cargo bike, road bike (up to ~EUR 10,000+ depending on provider)
3. **Monthly payments are deducted from your gross salary** (salary conversion / Gehaltsumwandlung), reducing your taxable income
4. **Contract runs 36 months** (standard)
5. **At the end**, you can buy the bike at residual value (~18% of list price via JobRad) or return it

## Tax Benefit: The 0.25% Rule

When provided via salary conversion, the taxable benefit-in-kind is only **0.25% of the bike's gross list price per month** (rounded down to nearest EUR 100). This is far lower than the 1% rule for company cars.

**Example Calculation** A EUR 2,500 e-bike: taxable monthly benefit =  $0.25\% \times \text{EUR } 2,500 = \text{EUR } 6.25/\text{month}$ . Your actual lease payment (~EUR 70/month) comes from gross salary, saving you income tax and social security contributions on that amount. Total savings: **up to 40% vs. buying outright**.

If your employer provides the bike as a **salary supplement** (on top of your salary, not as salary conversion), the private use is **completely tax-free** for you.

## Major Leasing Providers

Provider	Notes
JobRad	Market leader, ~500,000 leased bikes in Germany. Available to employees and self-employed. Purchase option at 18% residual value.

<b>BusinessBike</b>	Popular with larger companies, includes insurance and mobility guarantee.
<b>Lease a Bike</b>	Comprehensive packages including annual inspections.
<b>Bikeleasing Service</b>	Full-service including wear-and-tear repair budget.
<b>Eurorad</b>	Focus on e-bikes, includes insurance package.

## What Is Eligible?

- Standard bicycles (city, racing, mountain, gravel)
- E-bikes / pedelecs (motor assist up to 25 km/h, 250W) — treated as regular bikes
- Cargo bikes
- **NOT eligible:** S-Pedelecs (up to 45 km/h) — classified as motor vehicles

**For Expats / Blue Card Holders** You are eligible for bike leasing as long as you have a German employment contract. If your employer does not yet offer it, you can suggest they set it up — it costs employers nothing (or very little) and is a popular employee benefit. Bring it up during your next team meeting or salary review.

## 3. On-Demand Bike & Scooter Rentals

For occasional rides, use app-based bike and scooter sharing. Find a vehicle nearby, unlock with your phone, ride, and park in the service area. No commitment, pay per ride.

### Regular Bikes

## Nextbike **Cheapest <30 min**

**Pricing:** EUR 1 per 15 minutes. Daily max EUR 15.

**Day pass:** EUR 3 (first 30 min free, then EUR 1 per 30 min, max EUR 15/day)

**App:** [Nextbike](#) (iOS/Android)

**Bikes:** 3-gear city bikes, docking station-based (flexible zones +EUR 0.50). Up to 4 bikes per account.

**Coverage:** Wide across Berlin; available in hundreds of cities across Europe with same account.

# Donkey Republic **Best for 15 min-4 hours**

**Pricing:** EUR 1.80 (15 min) / EUR 2.30 (30 min). Per-minute cost decreases with longer rentals.

**App:** Donkey Republic (iOS/Android)

**Unique:** Only bike share with a built-in phone holder. Up to 5 bikes per account. Flexible drop-off zones.

**Discount code:** `5B81D5` for a free 15-minute ride.

## Call a Bike (Deutsche Bahn)

**Pricing:** EUR 1 unlock + EUR 1 per 15 min. Daily max EUR 9.

**App:** Call a Bike (iOS/Android)

**Bikes:** 7-gear bikes (more gears than competitors). Return required at S-Bahn stations. Available in 50+ German cities.

**Best for:** Rides over 2 hours (cheapest 7-gear option). Penalty EUR 1-25 if returned outside stations.

## E-Bikes & E-Scooters

Provider	Unlock Fee	Per Minute	Day Pass	Standout Feature
<b>Tier / Dott</b> (e-bike)	EUR 1	EUR 0.25	EUR 7.99 (100 min + unlocks)	Phone holder + wireless charging; front basket
<b>Lime</b> (e-bike)	EUR 1	EUR 0.27	—	Also accessible via Uber app; front basket
<b>Voi</b> (e-bike)	EUR 1	EUR 0.24	EUR 8.00 (100 min + unlocks)	Cheapest per-minute rate
<b>Bolt</b> (e-bike + scooter)	EUR 1	~EUR 0.25	—	Also does ride-hailing and food delivery

## Discount Codes (as of early 2026)

- Tier: `APH3ZBB` — 50% off next five rides
- Lime: `R24FEDZ` — EUR 3 ride credit
- Voi: Referral from existing user — EUR 5 credit

# Jelbi: All-in-One Mobility App

**Pro Tip for Newcomers** Download **Jelbi** (by BVG, Berlin's public transport operator). One app, one registration — access to all sharing services: bikes, e-bikes, e-scooters, e-mopeds, car sharing, and taxis. Over 60,000 vehicles across Berlin. It also integrates BVG public transport route planning. This is the single most useful transport app in Berlin.

## Quick Decision Guide

Trip Duration	Best Option	Approx. Cost
Under 15 minutes	Nextbike	EUR 1
15 min - 4 hours	Donkey Republic	EUR 1.80-6
Full day (manual bike)	Call a Bike	EUR 9 max
Full day (e-bike)	Tier day pass	EUR 7.99
Daily commuter	Swapfiets subscription	EUR 15.90/month
E-bike commuter	Swapfiets Power or leasing	EUR 55-65/month

## 4. Buying a Bike

### New Bikes

For new bikes, visit independent bike shops for personalized service (they will fit the bike to you). Major options:

Shop Type	Examples	Price Range	Notes
Independent shops	Little John Bikes (Prenzlauer Berg, English-friendly), Rad-Spannerei, Bikedudes	EUR 300-3,000+	Best for advice and fitting
Large retailers	Decathlon, Stadler, Radhaus	EUR 200-5,000+	Wider selection, less personal service
Online	bike-discount.de, Canyon, Rose	EUR 300-10,000+	Often cheaper; no test ride

Used bike shops	bikePARK (from EUR 39), Urby Bike (Mitte), Radwelt Berlin	EUR 39-1,500	Refurbished with warranty
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**Price Strategy** Browse models at Decathlon to identify what specs you want, then search for the same or similar model used on Kleinanzeigen. A EUR 500 new city bike can often be found used for EUR 150-250.

## Second-Hand Bikes

### Online Platforms

- [Kleinanzeigen](#) (formerly eBay Kleinanzeigen) — Largest selection. Filter by "Privater Nutzer" (private seller) to reduce stolen bike risk.
- **Facebook Marketplace** — Smaller selection. Higher stolen bike risk. Join "Sell Your Bike Berlin" group (30,000+ members).
- [Bikeflip](#) — Curated used bike marketplace.
- [gebrauchtesfahrrad.de](#) — Verified used bikes.

### In-Person Markets (April-October)

Market	Locations	Frequency
<b>Berliner Fahrradmarkt (BFM)</b>	Friedrichshain, Steglitz, Kreuzkolln, Moabit, Neukolln, Prenzlauer Berg	Monthly at 6 locations
<b>Fietsenboerse</b>	Winterfeldtplatz (Schoneberg)	Monthly, March-October

Sellers at these markets must sign a contract and provide ID, significantly reducing stolen bike risk. The Berliner Fahrradmarkt has 600+ bikes per event.

## Avoiding Stolen Bikes

### Critical: Verify Before You Buy

1. Ask for a **Kaufvertrag** (purchase contract) — legitimate sellers will sign one with ID
2. Check the **frame number (Rahmennummer)** against theft databases:
  - [rahmennummern-check.de](#)
  - [bikefinder.de](#)
  - [fahrradnummer.de](#)
3. Meet at the seller's verified address (not a random street corner)
4. Be suspicious of very low prices, no receipt, or refusal to show ID

## What to Inspect When Buying Used

- **Frame:** Cracks, rust, alignment, correct size for your height
- **Tires & rims:** Tread wear, wheel trueness, spoke tension
- **Brakes:** Pad material, lever responsiveness, cable condition
- **Drivetrain:** Gear shifting smoothness, chain wear, cable tension
- **Lights & reflectors:** Must be StVZO-compliant (see rules section)
- **Test ride:** Listen for unusual noises, test all gears and brakes

## Other Ways to Get a Bike

- **Bikesurf Berlin:** Pay-what-you-can bike borrowing
- **fLotte Berlin:** Free cargo bike lending (community project)
- **Toll office auctions:** Recovered/abandoned bikes auctioned by the city

# 5. Essential Cycling Rules in Berlin

**Coming from the Philippines?** Germany's cycling rules are strict and enforced. Fines are real (EUR 5-180), and police do ticket cyclists. Unlike in Manila where traffic rules for cyclists are loosely enforced, Berlin takes cycling infrastructure and compliance seriously.

## Key Traffic Rules

Rule	Details	Fine
Ride on the right side of the road	Germany is right-hand traffic. Stay on the right side of the lane.	—
Use mandatory bike lanes	Blue circular signs with a bike symbol = <b>mandatory</b> . You must use these lanes.	EUR 20
No riding on sidewalks	Adults may never ride on sidewalks unless marked "Fahrrad frei." Children under 8 <i>must</i> use sidewalks; ages 8-10 may choose.	EUR 25-55
Stop at red lights	Use bike-specific traffic lights where available. Running a red light is a serious offense.	EUR 60-180
Signal before turning	Extend your arm to indicate turns. Look over your shoulder before changing lanes.	EUR 10-35
Ride single file	Two abreast only if traffic is not obstructed.	EUR 20
No phone use	Holding a smartphone while cycling is prohibited.	EUR 55

Both hands on handlebars	Keep both hands on the bars at all times.	EUR 5
Overtake from the left	Always pass other cyclists and vehicles on the left side.	—

## Alcohol Limits

BAC Level	Consequence
Below 0.3 per mille	Legal
0.3-1.59 per mille	Fines possible if riding is visibly impaired; potential driver's license suspension (yes, for cycling!)
1.6 per mille or above	<b>Criminal offense:</b> fine equal to ~1 month net salary, 2 Flensburg points, mandatory psychological evaluation (MPU), possible driver's license revocation

**Yes, You Can Lose Your Car License for Drunk Cycling** This catches many expats off guard. Getting caught cycling above 1.6 per mille can result in losing your car driving license AND being required to pass an expensive MPU (Medizinisch-Psychologische Untersuchung, ~EUR 500+) to get it back.

## Required Equipment

Equipment	Requirement	Fine if Missing
Front light	White, StVZO-compliant, steady (not blinking)	EUR 20-35
Rear light	Red, StVZO-compliant, steady	EUR 20-35
Front reflector	White	EUR 20
Rear reflector	Red, large "Z" type	EUR 20
Pedal reflectors	Yellow, on both pedals	EUR 20
Wheel reflectors	Yellow spoke reflectors OR reflective tire sidewalls	EUR 20
Bell	Audible bell, easily reachable	EUR 15
Brakes	Two independent brakes (front + rear)	EUR 10

**Blinking lights are NOT legal as primary lights in Germany.** You need a steady (non-blinking) StVZO-approved light. Many cheap bike lights from Amazon are not StVZO-compliant. Look for the wavy "K" mark on the light. Dynamo-powered lights are always compliant.

# Helmet Rules

- **Regular bikes and pedelecs (up to 25 km/h):** No helmet legally required, BUT strongly recommended
- **S-Pedelecs (up to 45 km/h):** Helmet mandatory
- **E-bikes with throttle (no pedaling):** Helmet mandatory

## E-Bike Categories

Type	Speed	License	Insurance	Bike Lanes	Helmet
<b>Pedelec</b> (most common)	≤25 km/h assist	None	None required	Yes	Not required
<b>S-Pedelec</b>	≤45 km/h	Class AM	Required + plate	No (road only)	Required
<b>E-bike (throttle, no pedal)</b>	≤25 km/h	Mofa certificate	Required	Limited	Required

## Dangerous Situations to Watch For

- **Right-turning vehicles:** The #1 cause of serious cyclist injuries. Always assume drivers do not see you at intersections.
- **Door zone (Dooring):** Keep 1 meter distance from parked cars. Doors can open suddenly into your path.
- **Tram tracks:** Cross at a sharp angle to avoid getting your wheel caught. Very common in Berlin (Mitte, Prenzlauer Berg, Friedrichshain).
- **Cobblestones:** Many Berlin streets have rough cobblestones (Kopfsteinpflaster). Reduce speed and grip firmly.

## 6. Practical Tips

### Theft Prevention

Berlin has a significant bike theft problem — over 271,500 bikes stolen in Germany in 2019 alone, with Berlin being one of the highest-risk cities.

1. **Use a quality lock:** Budget approximately 20% of your bike's value for the lock. Use a D-lock/U-lock or heavy-duty chain. *Never* use cable locks or cheap combination locks alone.
2. **Lock to a fixed object:** Lock frame AND wheel to an immovable post or bike rack. Quick-release wheels should be locked separately or replaced with locking skewers.

3. **Bring it inside at night:** Never leave a bike locked outside overnight if you can avoid it. Train stations and street poles are high-theft zones.
4. **Register with police:** Berlin police offer free bike labeling and registration at events around the city. This helps recovery if stolen. Record your frame number (Rahmennummer).
5. **Get insurance:**
  - **Hausratversicherung** (household contents insurance) — may cover bike theft from your apartment/cellar. Check your policy.
  - **Fahrradversicherung** (dedicated bike insurance) — covers theft anywhere, vandalism, parts theft. Required for newer/expensive bikes. Example providers: Hepster, ADFC-Versicherung, Bikmo.
6. **Make your bike identifiable:** Custom stickers, unique paint, or unusual accessories deter theft and aid recovery.
7. **Use a beater for daily commuting:** Keep an inexpensive bike for daily use; save the nice bike for weekend rides.

### If Your Bike Is Stolen

1. Report to Berlin police online at [internetwache-polizei-berlin.de](https://internetwache-polizei-berlin.de) within 24 hours
2. Notify your insurer immediately
3. Check the police recovered bicycles list at [berlin.de/polizei](https://berlin.de/polizei)
4. Post on social media and local groups (Facebook "Fahrrad gestohlen Berlin")

## Winter Cycling (November–March)

Berlin winters are cold (often -5 to 5 degrees C) with occasional ice and snow. Many Berliners cycle year-round. Here is what you need:

- **Clothing layers:**
  - Merino wool base layer (regulates temperature, wicks moisture)
  - Windproof jacket (not necessarily waterproof — rain is less common than cold wind)
  - Warm gloves (cycling-specific with grip)
  - Balaclava or neck gaiter for face protection
  - Overshoes or warm waterproof shoes
- **Bike setup:**
  - Lower tire pressure for better traction on wet/icy surfaces
  - Consider wider or knobby tires for winter months
  - Ensure lights work well (days are very short, dark by 4 PM)
  - Clean and lubricate chain more frequently (salt and grit accelerate wear)
- **Riding technique:**
  - Reduce speed on wet leaves, ice, and tram tracks
  - Brake earlier and more gently
  - Avoid sudden turns on icy patches
  - Use main roads that are more likely to be salted/cleared
- **E-bike note:** Cold weather reduces battery range by 20–30%. Store the battery indoors overnight. Swapfiets offers winter-specific tires on their e-bikes.

**Filipino Expat Survival Tip** Coming from a tropical climate, your first Berlin winter on a bike will be a shock. Start with short rides. The hardest part is the first 5 minutes until your body warms up. Once you are moving, you will heat up quickly. Over-dressing leads to sweating which makes you colder. A good windproof layer matters more than a thick layer.

## Bike Maintenance

- **Professional repair shops (Fahrradwerkstatt):** Every neighborhood has several. Check Google reviews. Basic tune-up: EUR 30-60.
- **Self-service workshops (free/low-cost):**
  - ADFC bicycle workshop (Kreuzberg)
  - Berliner Fahrradmarkt repair station
  - Regenbogenfabrik (Kreuzberg)
  - FUrads (FU Berlin campus)
- **Public bike pumps:** Map at [pumpsofberlin.com](http://pumpsofberlin.com)
- **ADFC (Allgemeiner Deutscher Fahrrad-Club):** Germany's main cycling advocacy org with 200,000+ members. Offers workshops, legal advice, insurance, and cycling maps. Worth joining (EUR ~56/year).

## Useful Apps

App	Purpose
Jelbi	All-in-one: public transport + all sharing services
Komoot	Cycling route planning with turn-by-turn navigation; Berlin region free
Google Maps	Bike routing (select cycling mode); shows bike lanes and elevation
BVG Fahrinfo	Public transport schedules (for mixed bike + train commutes)
Nextbike / Lime / Tier / Voi / Bolt	Individual sharing service apps
Swapfiets	Manage subscription, book repairs

# 7. Cost Comparison

## Monthly Cost Overview

Option	Monthly Cost	Upfront Cost	Includes	Best For
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Swapfiets Deluxe 7	EUR 15.90	EUR 0-19.50	Repairs, lock, theft protection	New expats, <1 year
Swapfiets Power 1 (e-bike)	EUR 54.90	EUR 0-19.50	Repairs, lock, battery, theft protection	E-bike without commitment
Dance e-bike	EUR 69+	EUR 29	Repairs, delivery, app management	Premium e-bike experience
Brompton folding	EUR 41-59	EUR 0	Repairs, theft protection	Train + bike commuters
Bike leasing (EUR 2,500 bike)	~EUR 50-70 (gross)	EUR 0	Insurance, inspections, purchase option	Employed expats, 3+ years
Own used city bike	~EUR 5-10 (maintenance)	EUR 50-300	Nothing — you handle everything	Budget-conscious, long-term
Own new city bike	~EUR 5-10 (maintenance)	EUR 300-800	Warranty (usually 2 years)	Long-term residents
On-demand sharing (daily)	EUR 30-150+	EUR 0	Everything per ride	Occasional/tourist use only

## Break-Even Analysis: Subscription vs. Buying

Scenario	Swapfiets Cost	Buy Used Cost	Break-Even
Basic city bike (EUR 150 used + EUR 50 lock)	EUR 15.90/month	EUR 200 + EUR 10/month maintenance	~34 months (~3 years)
Good city bike (EUR 400 new + EUR 80 lock)	EUR 15.90/month	EUR 480 + EUR 10/month maintenance	~81 months (~7 years)
E-bike (EUR 2,000 new)	EUR 54.90/month	EUR 2,000 + EUR 20/month maintenance	~57 months (~5 years)

### Recommendation for Filipino Expats New to Berlin

- Month 1-3:** Use on-demand sharing (Nextbike, Tier) to learn the city and routes
- Month 3-12:** Get a Swapfiets subscription to commit to daily cycling without risk
- After 1 year:** Buy a used bike (EUR 100-300) from the Berliner Fahrradmarkt. Ask your employer about bike leasing if you want an e-bike.

This staged approach minimizes risk and cost while you settle in.

## 8. Sources

1. [Swapfiets Berlin](#) — Official pricing and plans
2. [Nomad and In Love: Berlin Bike Sharing Comparison](#) (updated March 2026)
3. [Nomad and In Love: Swapfiets Review](#) (10+ months usage)
4. [ENGWE: Swapfiets Berlin Review](#)
5. [NAVIT: Company Bike and Bike Leasing in Germany Explained](#)
6. [NAVIT: Fahrrad Abo Vergleich 2026](#) (subscription provider comparison)
7. [Rotwild: Everything About Bike Leasing](#)
8. [Simple Germany: Cycling Rules](#) (updated March 2025)
9. [Live in Germany: Cycling Rules & Regulations 2026](#)
10. [All About Berlin: How to Buy and Ride a Bicycle](#) (updated May 2026)
11. [Recyclies: Complete Guide to Buying a Used Bike in Berlin](#)
12. [Formatera: 7 Tips to Avoid Bike Theft in Germany](#) (October 2025)
13. [visitBerlin: 15 Tips for Safe Cycling](#)
14. [Berlin.de: Bike Sharing Overview](#)
15. [Trustpilot: Swapfiets Deutschland Reviews](#) (4.6/5, 2,600+ reviews)
16. [Trustpilot: Dance Reviews](#) (4.0/5, 600+ reviews)
17. [Jelbi: Berlin's Multi-Modal Mobility App](#)
18. [Circuly: Leading Bike Subscription Companies 2025](#)
19. [Trending Topics: Swapfiets Acquires Dance](#) (May 2026)
20. [Berliner Fahrradmarkt](#) (used bike markets)
21. [Fietsenboerse: Second Hand Bikes Berlin](#)
22. [Reddit r/berlin: Nextbike quality discussion](#) (June 2025)
23. [Reddit r/berlinsocialclub: Swapfiets experience thread](#)
24. [Reddit r/berlin: Winter cycling tips](#)
25. [German Road Safety Council: Cycling in Germany \(PDF\)](#)

## Research Journey

**Date:** June 6, 2026 • **Searches conducted:** 10+ via SearXNG (bitmagnet-de, bitmagnet-nl, bitmagnet-lax) • **Pages fetched and analyzed:** 14

### Search queries executed:

- `Swapfiets Berlin bike subscription review 2025 2026` (bitmagnet-de) — 14 results
- `bike leasing Germany Jobrad BusinessBike employer` (bitmagnet-de) — 10 results

- [Berlin bike sharing Nextbike Lime Tier scooter](#) (bitmagnet-nl) — 10 results
- [buying second hand bicycle Berlin](#) (bitmagnet-de) — 14 results
- [Berlin cycling rules traffic laws beginners expat](#) (bitmagnet-de) — 10 results
- [bike rental subscription Berlin comparison](#) (bitmagnet-nl) — limited results
- [Berlin bike theft prevention register bicycle police tips](#) (bitmagnet-de) — 10 results
- [Dance ebike subscription Berlin pricing 2025 2026](#) (bitmagnet-nl) — 10 results
- [winter cycling Berlin tips cold weather](#) (bitmagnet-de) — 10 results
- [Jelbi Berlin app bike scooter multimodal transport](#) (bitmagnet-de) — 8 results
- [Berlin new bike shop buy bicycle price range 2025 2026](#) (bitmagnet-de) — 8 results

### Key sources deep-fetched:

- [swapfiets.de/en-DE/berlin](https://swapfiets.de/en-DE/berlin) — official pricing
- [nomadandinlove.com](https://nomadandinlove.com) — comprehensive Berlin bike sharing comparison + Swapfiets review
- [navit.com](https://navit.com) — bike leasing explained + subscription comparison
- [simplegermany.com](https://simplegermany.com) — cycling rules
- [liveingermany.de](https://liveingermany.de) — cycling regulations and fines
- [allaboutberlin.com](https://allaboutberlin.com) — comprehensive Berlin cycling guide
- [recyclies.com](https://recyclies.com) — used bike buying guide
- [rotwild.com](https://rotwild.com) — bike leasing process details
- [formatera.com](https://formatera.com) — theft prevention tips
- [visitberlin.de](https://visitberlin.de) — 15 safe cycling tips
- [engwe.com](https://engwe.com) — Swapfiets review with ownership comparison
- [dance.co/blog](https://dance.co/blog) — Dance acquisition status
- [berlin.de/en/getting-around/bikesharing](https://berlin.de/en/getting-around/bikesharing) — official provider list
- [jelbi.de](https://jelbi.de) — multi-modal app information

### Decision points:

- Two SearXNG servers (bitmagnet-lax for cycling rules, bitmagnet-nl for comparison) returned empty results — retried on bitmagnet-de successfully
- Dance pricing was hard to pin down since the Swapfiets acquisition (May 2026) is changing their offering — used pre-acquisition pricing with a note about the merger
- Reddit threads provided valuable real-user perspectives on Swapfiets (heavy bikes), Nextbike (declining quality), and winter cycling (balaclava recommendation)