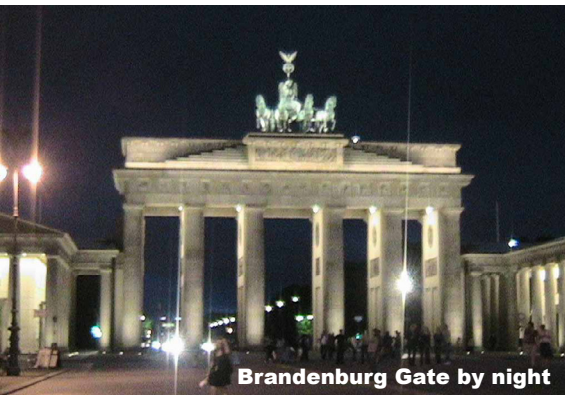
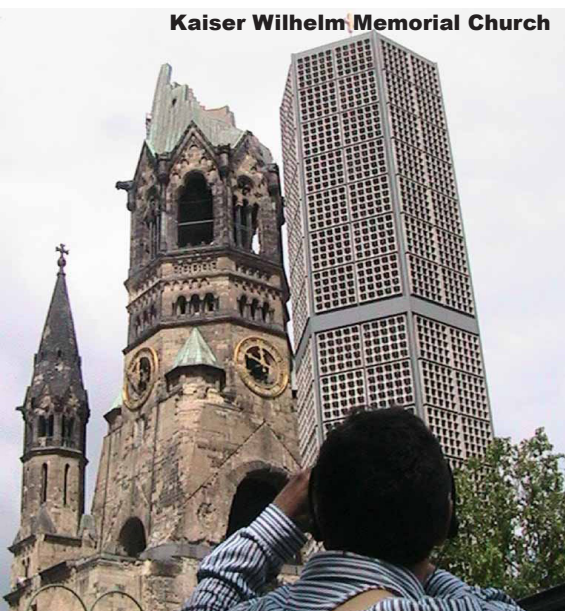


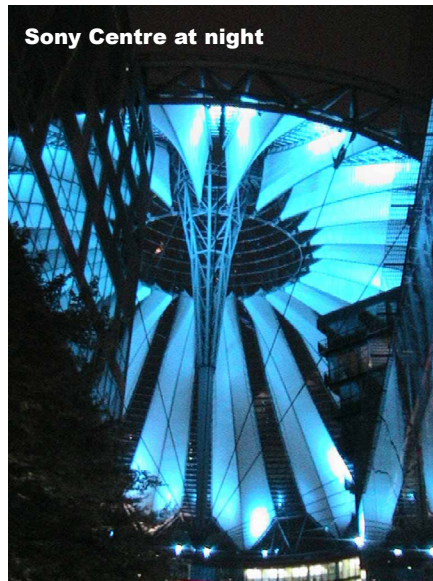
BEAUTIFUL BERLIN AND DRESDEN



Brandenburg Gate by night



Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church



Sony Centre at night



Concert hall



Checkpoint Charlie



River Spree

The German cities of Berlin and Dresden are popular with tourists. Berlin, the national capital with a population of nearly four million, is a museum-lover's wonderland requiring several days to visit. On the other hand, Dresden, capital of the German state of Saxony, is a charming cultural diversion which, at a pinch, could be sampled in as little as a day while travelling by train between Berlin and Prague.

In 1989 Berlin changed completely when its iconic wall came down, ending nearly three decades of separation between East and West. Fittingly, a 300-metre stretch of the Berlin

Wall, the longest-surviving section, has come to serve as an outdoor art gallery. Checkpoint Charlie, the famous crossing point between East and West Berlin, is now a major tourist attraction even though the hut used by the eastern border guards was moved to a museum back in 1990. A private museum at Checkpoint Charlie now chronicles the many escapes from East to West with displays of memorabilia. The nearby Brandenburg Gate, a peace arch completed in 1791 and modelled on the entrance to the Acropolis, once lay in no-man's land during the period when Berlin was divided.

Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, one of Berlin's other major landmarks, was deliberately left in

ruins after being struck in an air raid in 1943. Interestingly, a cross of nails donated by Coventry, England, itself once ravaged by World War II firebombing, is displayed inside the church. The first of Berlin's many museums was constructed on an island in the River Spree in the 1830s. Today Berlin's Museum Island contains a plethora of major museums, including the Pergamon Museum with its major Oriental antiquities and, of course, the world-famous bust of Nefertiti. In fact, Berlin boasts a staggering 170 museums. In addition to the cluster on Museum Island, many museums are concentrated in the Kulturforum area and in the leafy suburb of Dahlem. The best vista over Berlin can be obtained by ascending to the 207-metre level of the Fernsehturm, Berlin's TV tower, which is located in Alexanderplatz.

With a current population of half a million, Dresden was once considered to be the Florence of the Elbe. The

Nefertiti bust in Pergamon Museum



Dresdner Zwinger



Dresden Kunstskammer

Green Vault displays additional treasures nearby.

Dresden's modernistic, glass-walled Volkswagen Transparent Factory is worth a visit too. Fascinating and reasonably-priced tours allow viewing of the plant's city-centre assembly line, to which all parts are delivered via underground cargo trams.

Round trip non-stop airfare from Cairo to Berlin on Egypt Air begins from approximately EGP 2,740. Reservations to Dresden's Historic Green Vault can be made online at www.skd.museum/en/homepage/index.html or by phone at +49-351-4919-2285.



Angel sculpture on Frauenkirche

this completely reconstructed Baroque structure holds various museums containing porcelains, paintings and an armoury. Not far away is Frauenkirche. At the time of its completion in 1743, this was the largest Protestant church in Germany. Its smouldering structure was one of the last to collapse, two days after the firebombing of 1945. While the remains of the church were then preserved for nearly half a century as a peace memorial, a newly-built Frauenkirche was finally opened again in 2005. The cross of nails on the church's high altar was donated by Dresden's sister city, Coventry.

The highlight of any trip to Dresden is a visit to the Green Vault treasures in the royal palace. Augustus the Strong began the Historic Green Vault collection, perhaps the most impressive treasury in Europe, in the early eighteenth century. The precious and priceless knick-knacks in this museum were meant to impress, and the various rooms full of objects (of amber, ivory, silver, bronze and jewels) still do that today. Visits to the Historic Green Vault are timed, and advance reservations are highly recommended. The New

city blossomed in the early eighteenth century under Augustus the Strong. Allied firebombing destroyed three-quarters of the historic city's centre in 1945, when 25,000 people perished. However, much rebuilding has been accomplished in recent decades.

Dresden is conveniently situated less than two and a half hours from both Berlin and Prague, and it is easy to navigate the city on local trams and buses. The Augustus Bridge joins the old and new parts of the city. Adjacent is the Bruhlische Terrasse, which was designed with defence in mind but which was later turned into a lovely riverside promenade. The Zwinger Palace complex is near the Augustus Bridge in central Dresden. Nowadays



Berlin TV tower

ABOUT TED COOKSON: Egypt's most widely-travelled travel agent, Ted has been to every country in the world. He has also visited 316 of the 321 destinations on the list of the Travellers' Century Club (visit www.eptours.com and refer to World Travel Club). A travel agent in Cairo since 1986, Ted manages Egypt Panorama Tours, a full-service travel agency, at 4 Road 79 (between Roads 9 and 10, near the El Maadi metro station) in Maadi. Contact Egypt Panorama Tours (open Saturday-Thursday 9am-5 pm) at: Tel. 2359-0200, 2358-5880, 2359-1301. Fax 2359-1199. E-mail: ept@link.net. Web site: www.eptours.com. The password for residents is eptcool. Both text and PDF versions of all of Ted's travel articles published since 2002 are archived online at www.eptours.com under 'Ted's International Travel Articles.' Many of the archived articles also contain video clips.