

INFORMATION



- Length approx. 8.5km
- Industrial heritage sights 17
- Duration around 3 hours (1 hour of cycling)
- Starting point Platz der Luftbrücke
- Public transportation links
U-Bahn U6 Platz der Luftbrücke
- Neukölln outdoor pool
www.berlinerbaeder.de/baeder/sommerbad-neukoelln

Route mostly road-free, making it suitable for inexperienced and less confident cyclists.

Digital route planner: GPX Track and additional information (German only):
Komoot
www.industriekultur.berlin

Any comments or suggestions about this bike route can be sent to: kontakt@industriekultur.berlin

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December 2024



Industrial Heritage in Berlin

BIKE ROUTES

Route 7 PILOTS AND SKYLARKS



Airlift memorial

Enemies become friends
Platz der Luftbrücke | 12101 Berlin

Forecourt with eagle's head

Grandstanding by the Nazi regime
Orville's (Former officers' mess)
Platz der Luftbrücke 4 | 12101 Berlin
www.orvilles.de

CHECK-IN visitor center

Information center for Tempelhof Airport
Platz der Luftbrücke 5 | 12101 Berlin
www.thf-berlin.de/en/your-visit/visitor-center

Mail and freight yard no. 2

A pioneering separation of functions

Rail and road tunnel

Integration into transport network | forced labor

Columbia concentration camp

The only SS concentration camp in Berlin

'No longer visible' memorial

Nazi terror memorial site

Berlin's original airport

Europe's aviation hub
Tempelgarten
www.tempelhofertfeld.de/en/service-infos/food-drinks

Balloon hall

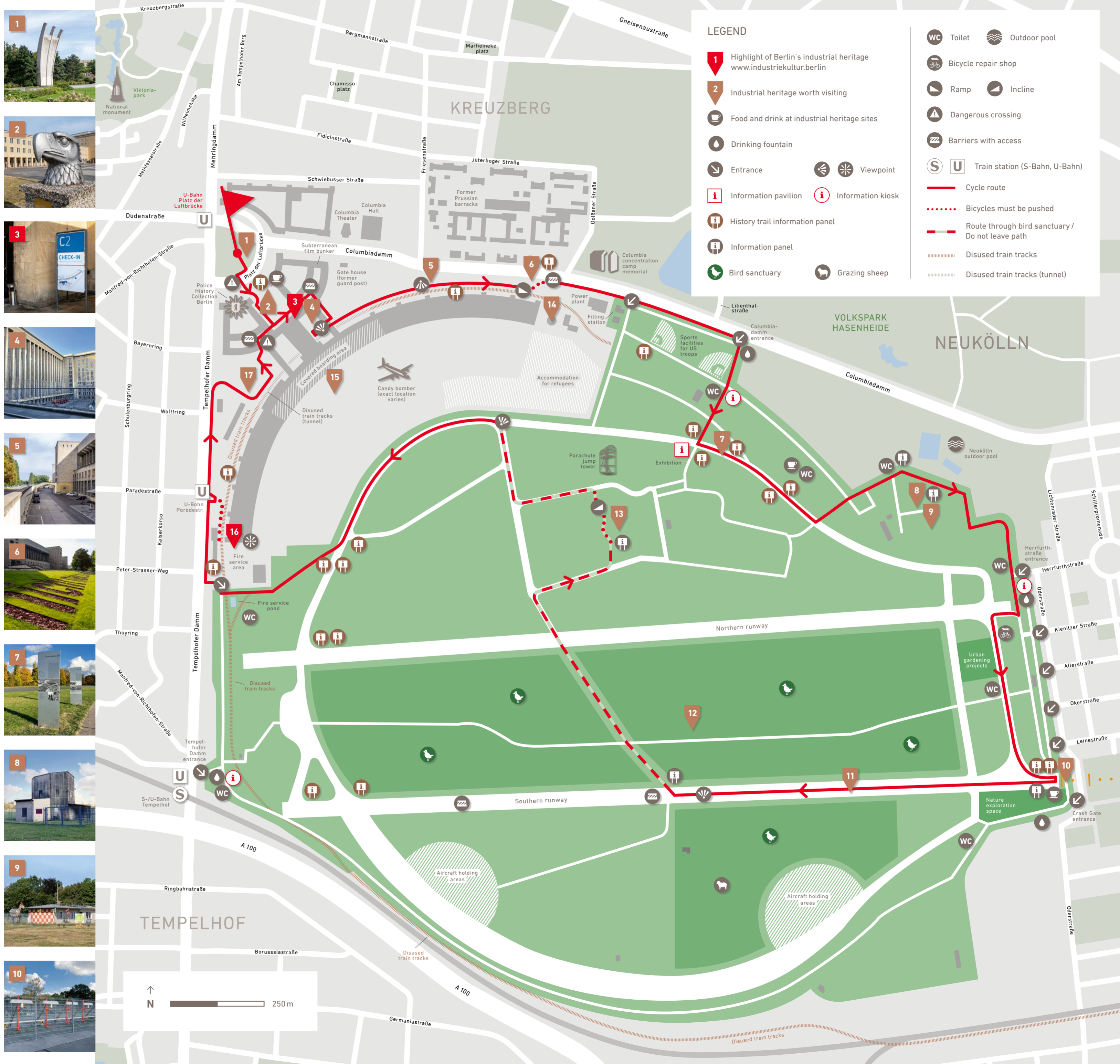
Ascent for science

Weather station / Community house

From aviation weather service to a home for civic engagement
https://haus104.de

Lighting the approach

Orientation for safe landings
Blaue Stunde
www.tempelhofertfeld.de/en/service-infos/food-drinks



Route 7 PILOTS AND SKYLARKS

11 Southern runway
Landing strip for candy bombers and civil aviation

12 DVOR radio beacon
An invisible beacon for airplanes

13 Fire service training plane
Emergency training

14 US army radar tower
Monitoring the airspace

15 Hangars with covered apron
Ambitious roof design and listed ground markings

16 THF TOWER with roof terrace
A venue with spectacular views
Tempelhofer Damm 45 | 12101 Berlin
www.thf-berlin.de/en/your-visit/thf-tower

17 West Berlin's central airport / General Aviation Terminal (GAT)
Civil aviation at last

PICTURE CREDITS
Title image Thomas Kierok | 1 Airlift memorial bzi, Foto: Max Braun | 2 Forecourt with eagle's head bzi, photo: Max Braun | 3 CHECK-IN visitor center bzi, photo: Max Braun | 4 Mail and freight yard no. 2 bzi, photo: Lena Kögler | 5 Rail and road tunnel bzi, photo: Max Braun | 6 Columbia concentration camp/No longer visible' memorial bzi, photo: Max Braun | 7 Berlin's original airport bzi, photo: Lena Kögler | 8 Balloon hall bzi, photo: Lena Kögler | 9 Weather station/Community house bzi, photo: Max Braun | 10 Lighting the approach bzi, photo: Lena Kögler | 11 Southern runway bzi, photo: Max Braun | 12 DVOR radio beacon bzi, photo: Max Braun | 13 Fire service training plane bzi, photo: Max Braun | 14 US army radar tower Andreas FranzXaver Süß | 15 Hangars with covered apron Pim Menkeweld via Unsplash | 16 THF THF TOWER with roof terrace bzi, photo: Max Braun | 17 West Berlin's central airport / General Aviation Terminal (GAT) Axel von Blomberg

Route 7

PILOTS AND SKYLARKS



BIKE ROUTE PILOTS AND SKYLARKS

Tempelhofer Feld had been a military parade ground and training area since the end of the 18th century. By the late 19th century it was also being used for test flights. Gas balloons, Count von Zeppelin's airship, and the Wright brothers' engine-powered aircraft have all floated above the field, thrilling the city's inhabitants who flocked in droves to see them. The site became a popular destination at weekends.

The first airport for civil aviation opened in 1923. It soon proved too small, however, and kept having to be extended as passenger numbers rose. Construction of Tempelhof Airport in its current form began under the Nazi regime. Designed by Ernst Sagebiel, the international airport was part of the project to transform Berlin into Hitler's 'World Capital Germania'. The airport is positioned along an axis that aligns with the national monument on Kreuzberg hill.

The site consists of an oval airfield and a monumental building complex, which is made up of a succession of symmetrically arranged components. A forecourt, flanked by offices, leads to the main terminal building with the reception hall and check-in area. This is framed by the hangars, separated by stair towers. The whole structure forms a 1,230-meter arc, with the roofed boarding gate at its center. The entire building contains around 7,300 rooms, giving it the dimensions of a small town.

Construction came to a virtual halt during the Second World War. Between 1939 and 1945, aircraft manufacturers used the site to build fighter planes, while the building remained unfinished. Civil aviation continued to use the original terminal built in 1923.

When the US allied forces used Tempelhof as an airbase after the war it marked the beginning of regular flights from the now almost completed building. During the Berlin Airlift in the Cold War period, the airport became known as the gateway to the free world. It was gradually opened for civil aviation.

From the 1950s, stars jetted in to bring some sorely missed glamour back to West Berlin. The entire airport was heritage-listed in 1995 and finally ceased operations in 2008. Today, Tempelhof is a striking landmark that has come to symbolize the highs and lows of Berlin's history.

Since 2010, Tempelhofer Feld has been open to the public. The vast expanse of the site offers plenty of room to exercise or just relax. It is a magnet both for local people and international visitors and has once again become a popular spot for days out. But Tempelhofer Feld is also an important habitat for plants and rare animals within the metropolitan area of Berlin. Skylarks, for example, build their nests in the meadows between the runways.

In 2014, the people of Berlin rejected development plans in a referendum. The unique qualities of Tempelhofer Feld inspire a lot of civic engagement. Current uses and future plans are managed on a cooperative basis.

Information trail on the history of Tempelhofer Feld

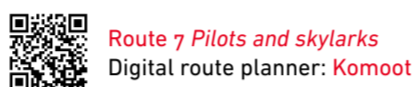
The information trail consists of 27 panels (at 20 stops) that tell the story of Tempelhofer Feld and Tempelhof Airport. The locations of these panels, which feature both pictures and text, are marked on the cycle route map on the back of this flyer.
<https://bfgg.de/informationspfad-zur-geschichte-des-tempelhofer-feldes>

INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN BERLIN BIKE ROUTES

Berlin is a gigantic open-air museum of industrial heritage. Our five bike routes invite you to discover a new side of the city. Each route traces a different chapter of the city's history:

- Route 1: Bright Lights and Cold Beer
- Route 2: Manufacturing and Munitions
- Route 3: Water and Power
- Route 4: Innovation and Elegance
- Route 5: Railroads and Runways
- Route 6: Nature and Infrastructure
- Route 7: Pilots and Skylarks
- Route 8: Canal and Industry

The routes are each 20–25 km long. There is a lot to see, so plan a whole day for them. All the routes run through diverse urban environments and stick to relaxing waterfront paths, quiet side streets, and official bike lanes. If you feel like taking a break, there are many restaurants and cafés with a special industrial flair.



GPX Track and additional information (German only): www.industriekultur.berlin

HIGHLIGHTS OF INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE IN BERLIN

Our 18 highlights are representative of Berlin's industrial development. They testify to the city's exceptional rise as an 'electropolis', to hard times and many fresh starts. Beginning with the Industrial Revolution in Prussia, they illustrate Berlin's transformation into the most modern metropolis on the Continent. Traces of the First and Second World Wars can still be seen in many places. Some of the sites also bear witness to changes entailed by the building and fall of the Berlin Wall. The highlights include museums, historical locations, and even actively operating businesses. Some are open every day, others only by appointment.
www.industriekultur.berlin/en/

The network of Berlin's industrial heritage highlights is part of the European Route of Industrial Heritage. www.erih.net



1 Airlift memorial | 1951

Enemies become friends

Few historical events are linked as closely with Tempelhof Airport as the Berlin Airlift from 1948 to 1949. In June 1948, Soviet troops blockaded the access routes to West Berlin. The US military led efforts to deliver supplies by air instead, with transport planes carrying food, medicines, and fuel landing every two minutes. The American aircraft also dropped sweets for children and became known as 'raisin bombers' or 'candy bombers'. The monument commemorates the victims of the blockade, and is referred to by Berliners as the 'hunger rake'. Its three prongs symbolize the three air corridors between West Germany and West Berlin.

2 Forecourt with eagle's head | 1936

Grandstanding by the Nazi regime

The forecourt is lined by administrative buildings that flank the monumental reception hall. During the Nazi era, its roof featured a six-meter tall sculpture of an eagle perched on a globe with a giant swastika. After the war, the US allied forces initially removed only the swastika. But in 1962, the entire sculpture was dismantled by US troops and later scrapped. Just the head remains and has been located on the forecourt since 1985.

3 CHECK-IN visitor center | 2020

Information center for Tempelhof Airport

The visitor center contains an exhibition about the history of the airport and is the starting point for tours of the building. It also hosts information events and high-caliber conferences.

TIP
Tickets for tours of the building; drinks and snacks available.
www.thf-berlin.de/en/your-visit/visitor-center

4 Mail and freight yard no. 2 | 1936

A pioneering separation of functions

The two symmetrical freight yards are located on the third basement level, at the deepest point of the airport. Here you can see how the building has been integrated into the natural slope of the terrain. This is the only place from where all of its eleven stories can be seen. Having separate traffic flows for passengers, baggage, freight, and mail was highly innovative at the time and became the model for airport design around the world.

Film bunker | 1938

Subterranean structures

The airport is also impressive below ground. However, despite rumors to the contrary, there are not vast numbers of basement stories. The only subterranean bunker was built in 1938 near Columbiadamm. Lufthansa used it as its photo archive. Aerial photographs were made of highly flammable material and needed to be stored safely. But in 1945, the film bunker caught fire and the archive was completely destroyed

5 Rail and road tunnel | 1936

Integration into transport network | forced labor

The tunnel was the first section to be constructed, in 1936. The rail tracks were lower than the site and ran from Columbiadamm to Hermannstrasse station. This link was used to transport materials for the construction of the airport. From 1944, the subterranean tunnels, together with the hangars, were used to build war planes. Forced laborers endured abject conditions while they assembled, for example, the Ju 87 dive bomber. They were housed in several camps that were set up around the airport site.

TIPS

- Nazi Forced Labor Documentation Center www.ns-zwangsarbeit.de/en
- Website and app on the subject of forced labor www.berliner-geschichtswerkstatt.de/english

Columbiadamm takes its name from *Miss Columbia*, which in 1927 became the first passenger plane to fly from New York to Berlin.

6 Columbia concentration camp | 1935–1936

The only SS concentration camp in Berlin

'No longer visible' memorial | 2024

Nazi terror memorial site

Starting in 1933, the Gestapo, the Nazi's secret police, used a military jail at the Prussian barracks on Columbiadamm to incarcerate political opponents. In 1935, it became integrated into the network of SS concentration camps. Until its closure, 8,000 prisoners were held in the 156 cells, often only for a few days. People were tortured and murdered. In 1936, the Ministry of Aviation ordered the concentration camp to be closed to make room for the construction of the new airport. The inmates were

taken to Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Since 2024, a memorial site for the concentration camp has been marked with the inscription 'no longer visible', complementing the monument erected on the opposite side of the road in 1994, which symbolizes a prison building.

TIP

Information about the memorial:
https://kurzlinks.de/thf_denkmal_kz

Heat and power plants, waterworks, fire service and filling station

From autonomous energy supply to carbon-neutral model project

To make the airport independent of the municipal infrastructure, facilities to supply heat, power, and water were put in place from 1938. The site also had its own filling station and fire service.

- Heating plant | 1937
- Subterranean waterworks | 1938
- Columbiadamm heat and power plant | 1955
- Filling station | 1950s
- Fire service | 1950s

Tempelhof Airport's complex heat, power, and water supply systems are now obsolete. Plans are in place to transform the airport into a carbon-neutral model project as part of the Technical Infrastructure 2030 project.

Leisure facilities for the US forces after 1945

American lifestyle in the heart of Berlin

After the end of the Second World War, US troops used the airport as barracks. The buildings and airfield began to fill with social and cultural amenities. At the edge of the airfield there was a softball field and a baseball pitch, a cinema (now the Columbia Theater), and a sports hall (now the Columbiadamm). The airport building, meanwhile, contained a restaurant, ice cream parlor, and snack bar, as well as a library, hairdresser, and post office, chapel, disco, and gym. There was even a basketball hall.

7 Berlin's original airport | 1923

Europe's aviation hub

The airport on Tempelhofer Feld was opened in 1923 and quickly developed into an aviation hub boasting the largest passenger volume in Europe. The terminal building on Columbiadamm was extended several times. At the start of the 1930s, planning began for a new airport building further to the west, on Tempelhofer Damm. Between 1939 and 1945, the old terminal building, now in the middle of the new airport's taxiway, was primarily used for military purposes. The building was badly damaged during the war and demolished afterwards.

8 Balloon hall | 1965

Ascent for science

From 1965 to 1993, the Meteorological Institute of the Free University of Berlin and the German National Meteorological Service launched weather balloons from here. They were fitted with small instruments that measured the temperature, humidity, pressure and the wind at different altitudes. The highest balloon reached about 62km, a world record and an important breakthrough in the exploration of the stratosphere.

9 Weather station | 1939–1984

Community house | 2017

From aviation weather service to a home for civic engagement

Detailed information about weather conditions remain as crucial as ever for aviation safety. After 1945, the US Air Force converted the 1939 building into a weather station. Since 2017, it has been open to the public and available for use by the community, with activities coordinated by the Haus 104 Tempelhofer Feld association.
More information at: <https://haus104.de>

Community garden: Allmende-Kontor | 2011

Communal public garden

More than 500 volunteer gardeners have been running the community garden known as Allmende-Kontor on a non-commercial basis since 2011. Located on Tempelhofer Feld, it is open to everyone. The German word *allmende* means 'common land'. The garden shows how important gardening and access to nature are and serves as a meeting place and model project for people from around the world.

10 Lighting the approach | 1962

Orientation for safe landings

The idea of approach lighting comes from seafaring, where harbor entrances were marked with beacons. Tempelhof Airport had an electric approach lighting system installed during the Berlin Airlift in 1948. The system was updated in 1962, guiding pilots safely towards the runways from far beyond the airfield.

11 Southern runway | after 1945

Landing strip for candy bombers and civil aviation

In the 1930s, grass strips were regarded as ideal runways. The propeller-driven planes rolled out of the hangars onto a broad path that surrounded the airfield. Then they taxied to one of originally three semicircular concrete holding areas, where they would warm up their engines before speeding up into the oncoming wind for take-off. Properly surfaced runways were only installed once the US forces took over.

12 Nature conservation

Biotope with skylarks

With flights now a distant memory, biotopes containing rare flora and fauna have thrived between the runways. One of the meadows is fenced off all year round to protect the skylarks, while others are off-limits during their breeding season. These rare birds hide their nests in hollows that are dug into the grass.

Important notice: You must not enter areas that are fenced off or cordoned off with tape.

More information at: www.tempelhoferfeld.de/en/nature-environment

12 DVOR radio beacon | late 1950s

An invisible beacon for airplanes

A DVOR radio beacon emits one main signal that radiates equally in every direction. It also sends a signal that rotates around the transmitting station. By triangulating the two signals, pilots are able to navigate their landing safely and precisely.

13 Fire service training plane | 1988

Emergency training

From 1985 to 1991, Tempelhof Airways, a US airline based in Berlin, was using Nord 262 aircraft built by French manufacturer Nord Aviation. One of these short-haul feeder planes crash-landed in 1987. Although the damage was not severe, the aircraft became prone to breakdowns and was decommissioned in 1988. From then on, the fire service used it as a training plane to practice the rapid evacuation of passengers in an emergency.

14 US army radar tower | 1982

Monitoring the airspace

The tall, slender appearance of the radar tower, built in 1982, stands in stark contrast to the monumental style of the airport buildings. Adolf Behrens designed this radar tower for the US army. The top of the tower rests on four pillars, like a bowl. Although the pillars will sway in strong winds, the top of the tower, with the circular platform and dome, doesn't move even an inch. The dome itself contains highly sensitive radar equipment. During the Cold War, the Air Force monitored the airspace behind the Iron Curtain from here. Since 1993, the German Air Force has been using the radar installations to monitor Germany's airspace. The tower's special design ensures that the radar still works perfectly to this day.

15 Hangars with covered apron | 1936

Ambitious roof design and listed ground markings

The contrast between monumentalism and modernity is characteristic of the airport's architecture. All exteriors facing the city have natural stone cladding. Aiside, the modern steel construction of the hangar arch is clearly visible.

The airport gate in the middle of the building and the adjoining hangars on either side of it are covered by a self-supporting cantilever construction that is 40 meters wide – a pioneering feat of technical engineering. The plan had been to build stands for 80,000 spectators on the roof, to enable them to watch aerial displays by the Nazi Luftwaffe. But the stairwells in many of the 13 stair towers remained unfinished. Today, refugees are housed in hangars 1 to 3. Events such as the VELOBerlin bicycle festival are held in the other hangars and on the apron.

The concrete apron also has a number of heritage-listed markings, dating from different times of the airport's operational period, when they were used to guide aircraft, helicopters, ground vehicles and pedestrians.

16 THF TOWER with roof terrace | 2023

A venue with spectacular views

The former air traffic control tower, now the THF Tower, has been open to the public since 2023, having been sensitively restored and made fully accessible. THF was the airport code for Tempelhof. An exhibition showcases its eventful history. The roof terrace offers space for events, live music and yoga.

TIP

Tickets for exhibitions and roof terrace
www.thf-berlin.de/en/your-visit/thf-tower

17 West Berlin's central airport

1951–1962
General Aviation Terminal (GAT)
1994–2008
Civil aviation at last

Civilian flights were gradually resumed in 1949, after the end of the Berlin Airlift, when the US allied forces handed over part of the airport to the Berlin Senate. Officially, civil aviation began in 1951, operated exclusively by the airlines of the Allies, namely Pan American, Air France and British European Airways. Initially, the US Air Force did not hand over the monumental reception hall, so departures and arrivals for West Berlin were located in this side wing. The temporary entrance bore the inscription 'Zentralflughafen' (central airport). In 1962, operations shifted to the main reception hall. The letters were moved to the top of the main terminal entrance, where they remain to this day. The General Aviation Terminal (GAT) for private jets opened in 1994.

TIP

The reception hall from 1962 is part of the guided tour 'Mythos Berlin'.
www.thf-berlin.de/en/your-visit/guided-tours

PICTURE CREDITS

Title image Thomas Kierak | 2 Forecourt with eagle's head Archiv Tempelhof Projekt GmbH | 5 Rail and road tunnel Tempelhof Projekt GmbH, photo: Claudius Pflug | 7 Berlin's original airport Archiv Tempelhof Projekt GmbH and Flughafen Berlin Brandenburg | 8 Balloon hall Archiv Institut für Meteorologie der FU Berlin | 14 US army radar tower Luftwaffe der Bundeswehr | 16 THF TOWER with roof terrace Tempelhof Projekt GmbH, photo: Claudius Pflug | 17 West Berlin's central airport / General Aviation Terminal (GAT) Harry Croner, © Stiftung Stadtmuseum Berlin and bzi, photo: Max Braun and Tempelhof Projekt GmbH, photo: Christoph Petras | 1 Nature conservation Wikimedia Commons CC BY-SA 3.0/Fraiback | Not numbered Tempelhof Projekt GmbH/Nürnberg Luftbild, photo: Hajo Dietz