

50th Anniversary JFK “Ich bin ein Berliner” Speech

It's hard to believe its the 50th Anniversary of JFK's “Ich bin ein Berliner” speech. On June 26, 1963, U.S. president John F. Kennedy visited West Berlin for the 15th anniversary of the Berlin Airlift. He was the first American president to visit the city after the Berlin Wall was divided August 13, 1961.



Kennedy delivering his speech in Berlin (1963)

During President John F. Kennedy's speech in 1963 in front of the Schoeneberg Town Hall and thousands of onlookers, with one sentence, “Ich bin ein Berliner”, the president demonstrated his solidarity with Berlin. There was just one little hiccup or let's say gaffe.

The grammar was said to be incorrect and to German speakers JFK said in his speech “Ich bin ein Berliner” – “I am a doughnut,” instead of “Ich bin Berliner” – “I am a citizen of Berlin.”

Well, I must say JFK had guts to speak in German, even if only

a few words because German is a most difficult language to learn. Besides, what's wrong with being a Berliner—a jelly filled doughnut Anyway, I can think of worse foods to be such as a morel, monkish, truffle, celery root, or cottage cheese. These are some of my favorite foods, but are just plain ugly foods.

A jelly doughnut on the other has a nice round shape, soft light golden color, and is firm but not too hard to the touch. Sitting nobly in the bakery display case, the powdered sugar-coated donut entices us with its rich, simple, decadent, yet refined self. It tantalizes the senses as we gently nibble in the middle to reach the surprise. One bite of a Berliner onto the tongue's taste receptors reveals bitter, sour, salty and sweet tastes. It's so delicious that after the first bite you might even find yourself saying "Ich bin ein Berliner."



A real Berliner donut

By the way, the proper way for a resident of Berlin to say "I am a Berliner" is "Ich bin Berliner." What Kennedy wanted to express when he said "Ich bin ein Berliner", is that he was in spirit a Berliner. So technically, "Ich bin ein Berliner." is correct and a German mother tongue speaker would not have misunderstood JFK's context or intention of the phrase.

So when you're sitting on the sofa watching President Obama deliver his speech at Berlin's historic Brandenburg Gate, incidentally where both John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan gave

historic speeches, forget the grammatical issues and just go eat a jelly doughnut. Or is it a donut?

Top Five Berlin Street Foods



Currywurst stand, Berlin

I like street food, its down home, raw, real, and pretty good when your travel budget is limited. Whether its sold from a tiny restaurant, through a truck window, a portable stall, or from a stand, the finger-licking fast food hits the spot. So on a recent trip to Germany's capital city, I decided to hit the street and find the top five Berlin street foods.

Let's see what's cooking in Berlin's Imbissstaende (takeaway snack stands).

1. **Currywurst**—The snack food of choice for Berliners and Germans too is sausage pieces served with a spicy tomato sauce and them doused with curry. It's cheap on-the-go food that's so good there's even a museum devoted to the cult food called the Curry Wurst Museum. Order it with or without skin at one of my favorites stands such as [Curry 36](#) (Mehringdamm 36, 10961 Berlin) and [Konnopke's](#) (Prenzlauer Berg Schönhauser Allee 44 B).
2. **Doener**—Thanks to Turkish immigrants who from the

beginning of the 1960s first arrived in Berlin, the Doener kebab is another street food favorite. Imagine a warm sesame flat bread split and filled with beef or lamb slices from a rotating spit. Then top it off your way with a blend of cabbage, lettuce, onions, and a garlicky yogurt sauce. How much do Germans love their Doeners? Well, annual sales amount to 2.5 billion euros. To find a great Doener kebab, go to the Turkish area of Berlin such as one of [Imren Grill's](#) five locations (Boppstr. 10, Berlin-Kreuzberg).

3. **Falafel**—Originated in Egypt, the street food is perfect for vegetarians and hearty enough for carnivores. The round fried balls are a mixture of chick peas, broad beans, garlic, onions, and a mix of Middle Eastern herbs. Whether you eat them alone, wrapped in flat bread, or with a salad, head to [Mustafa's](#) (Mehringdamm 32, Berlin) or [Dada Falafel](#) (Linienstraße 132, Berlin-Mitte) for some of the the best in town.
4. **Hackepeter**—The name literally means chopped Peter as in a man, not the body part of a man. Berliners call it Hackepeter,



Hackepeter (Ground pork on roll with onions)

Southern Germans call it Mettbroetchen, non-Germans call it tartar. To all its chopped pork meat on a bread roll and yes, its raw! You can find it at nearly any butcher, whether stand-alone or in a grocery store, as well as

vendors selling sandwiches, and sometimes in bakeries too. Make sure you don't have an important date or business meeting after you eat one because Hackepeter is traditionally topped with pungent chopped onions.

5. **Rice noodle soup and spring rolls**—No one does street food better than the Thai or Vietnamese, so while in Berlin I was yearning for anything chopped, doused with secret sauces, and then fried or stirred over makeshift burners. Luckily, I discovered [Mammam](#), Gabriel-Max-Str. 2, 10245 Berlin-Friedrichshain. If you like Pho Ha Noi (vietnamese Rice noodle soup), Nem cuon Hanoi (spring rolls), Nom Xoai (mango salad) and other Thai/Vietnamese specialities, then this is the place to go. Flavor enhancers? No way, Mammam doesn't use any !!!

If you can't decide between my top five Berlin street foods, check out [Street Food Thursday](#) at Markthalleneun (Eisenbahnstrasse 42/43, 10997 Berlin). On Thursday from 5pm-10 pm, you'll find a cornucopia of street food delights and like me, will have to create a longer list of Top 5 Berlin Street Foods.