



Beer even at 2 am – the “Späti”

Seydi Dogmus owns the “Koffeintankstelle” in Oderberger Str. 30, Berlin-Prenzlauer Berg

We are open from 8 in the morning until midnight in the winter. In summer it tends to be longer, more open-ended. At the present time we offer around 70 different types of beer. Apart from the standard beers that you can get anywhere, we offer for example handcrafted beers from a Munich brewery called Crew Republic; they make some really weird and wonderful varieties of beer that are very expensive but still sell well because beer is enjoying increasingly high status. What I mean to say is that it isn't just alcohol to guzzle – beer is now something people want to really enjoy and savour. Obviously we are busiest on very warm days, especially on Sundays in the summer. When the sun shines people like to be outside and the Mauerpark is packed. Lots of people also like to visit the flea market, and there are loads of tourists in the city.

Edna Niclas works the early shift at the Spätkauf in Choriner Str. 11, Berlin-Mitte

Most of my customers are people who live nearby, neighbours, friends, acquaintances – people who quickly get to know each other and then like to come here every day to grab a sandwich and have a quick coffee outside the shop. The customers chat to each other and share views and opinions. I believe that's really the main purpose of the shop. People come and look at what's going on; they may even find a job as a result or make new friends.

I work the early shift. Things are rather different in the evening, of course, though it already kicks off in the afternoon, with people then adding cake to their cups of coffee – our cake is homemade by the local chimney sweep. The biggest seller in the evening is bottled beer and what we call Grilletta buns: a burger, pickled gherkin and cheese on top. The customers seem to love it.

Thomas Pohle often enjoys a coffee at the Spätkauf at LausitzerPlatz 11, Berlin-Kreuzberg

For me, the Späts are a place where I can slow down for a while. I can buy everything I need there, and can relax a bit. I enjoy drinking a coffee here, or something cool in the summer. I come here during the day when I have time to kill between other appointments. Cigarettes and coffee are the things I buy here most. I very rarely use the Späts as a supermarket. Sometimes, when I'm looking after my daughter's dog and suddenly need dog food in the evening, I buy it at the Späti. A Späti is simply a fixture in the local neighbourhood.