

BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK

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“IN TOUCH”: THE BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK 2026 PROGRAMME IS ONLINE

November 1–10, 2026 / Annual theme “In Touch” / Festival Centre at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt for the first time

From November 1 to 10, 2026, Berlin will once again become the hub of the international science community. The Berlin Science Week programme is now online, featuring around 300 events at more than 120 locations—ranging from the Festival Centre at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt to the central district library in Spandau. Under the annual theme “In Touch,” the festival highlights the personal side of science: how research touches our lives and connects people with one another. www.berlinscienceweek.com

- **Around 300 events at over 120 locations across Berlin, supported by more than 230 partner organizations**
- **Festival Centre at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt for the first time (November 6–8): around 100 events and 25 exhibitors – free admission with a free 3-Day Festival Centre Pass**
- **City-wide programme from November 1 to 10 featuring around 200 events**
- **Annual theme “In Touch”: How does science touch our lives—and how does it connect us?**
- **Dedicated Family Friendly Programme at the Festival Centre for the first time**
- **Programme and 3-Day Festival Centre Pass available at berlinscienceweek.com**

A Festival for the Whole City

Berlin Science Week is the city’s annual science and culture festival. For ten days, universities, research centers, museums, libraries, and cultural venues open their doors, making groundbreaking research from Berlin-based institutions and national and international partners accessible to the public. In 2026, more than 230 organizations are participating—around two-thirds of them from Berlin—demonstrating the festival’s deep roots in the city and Berlin’s status as a major hub for science.

Following the themes of the past two years — “Common Ground” and “Beyond Now”—this year’s focus shifts back to the individual. Under the theme “In Touch,” the festival asks: What does science mean to me personally? How does it shape my everyday life and my existence? The programme highlights the people behind the research: their motivations, their stories, and their moments of both wonder and failure.

Dr. Christian Rauch, Director of Berlin Science Week: *“Science is something profoundly human. Driven by curiosity, creativity, and passion, the work of researchers shapes how we all think, feel, and act—from AI models that solve in seconds problems that baffled mathematicians for decades, to research on neurotransmitters that has made depression treatable today, to climate models that reveal which decisions matter right now.”*

As in previous years, Berlin Science Week opens on November 1 with a gala event at festival partner Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, with invited guests from the top ranks of Berlin’s scientific, political, and civic life.

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From November 6 to 8, the programme converges at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt (HKW), which serves as the Festival Centre for Berlin Science Week for the first time. Around 100 events and 25 exhibitors will gather under one roof for three days, featuring live talks, workshops, film screenings, performances, and exhibition booths. Admission is free; visitors simply need to obtain a complimentary 3-Day Festival Centre Pass via the website. Around 7,000 visitors are expected.

Concurrently, the Citywide programme runs from November 1 to 10, featuring approximately 200 events across more than 120 locations. Accessibility is a core value here: not only is the Festival Centre open to the public free of charge, but three-quarters of all events in the Citywide Programme are free, and 90 percent are wheelchair-accessible.

A new addition to the Citywide Programme is "**Wissen zwischen Büchern** (Knowledge Among Books), a project organized by con gressa in collaboration with Berlin Science Week and the Association of Public Libraries of Berlin. From November 1 to 10, 14 Berlin research partners will present their work—ranging from a solar system quiz to discussions on age-friendly cities—at 33 local libraries stretching from Spandau to Marzahn; all events are free and require no registration.

As the exclusive highlight for its international audience of experts, the Falling Walls Science Summit brings together decision-makers from research, politics, business, and civil society, along with emerging scientific talent from around the world, from November 6 to 9, to jointly break through boundaries in science. Over four days, scientists — from Nobel laureates to early-career researchers — will present their most groundbreaking discoveries of the year to a global audience.

PROMINENT SPEAKERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Berlin Science Week 2026 brings some of the most influential voices from science, media, and the arts to Berlin. **Brian Schmidt**, the 2011 Nobel Laureate in Physics—whose discovery of the accelerating expansion of the universe challenged fundamental assumptions about space and time—will join particle physicist **Harry Cliff** (CERN and Cambridge)—one of Europe's most sought-after science communicators—at the Festival Centre (HKW) for a conversation on the frontiers of physics. Bioengineer **Molly Stevens** (Imperial College London and Oxford), one of the world's most highly cited materials scientists, will deliver the Queen's Lecture, demonstrating how materials research enables earlier disease detection and bodily healing. Zimbabwean British bio designer **Natsai Audrey Chieza** (Faber Futures) will explore the promise and limitations of biomimicry at the intersection of biology, design, and fashion.

Additionally, Harvard political scientist **Daniel Ziblatt**—co-author of the bestseller *How Democracies Die* and one of the world's most cited scholars on democracy—will analyze the implications of the US midterm election results for both the United States and Europe. Architect **Vladan Đokić**, Rector of the University of Belgrade, will speak from the perspective of a country where academic freedom has recently come under intense political pressure, asking how universities can endure when democracy is under threat. Award-winning BBC journalist **Claudia Hammond** hosts a live recording of the World Service podcast "The Evidence", focusing on hormones and their impact on our lives.

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Richard Hemmer and **Daniel Meßner** bring **Geschichten aus der Geschichte** —one of the most popular German-language podcasts—to the main stage. **Raúl Krauthausen**, Germany's best-known inclusion activist, author, and TV presenter, advocates for science that incorporates inclusion from the very outset. Researcher and artist **Tiara Roxanne** works at the intersection of artificial intelligence and Indigenous knowledge, exploring what happens when military AI targets civilians—and how the boundary between military and civilian technology is shifting.

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

From the question of who owns outer space and new insights into CO₂ storage presented in a 360° full dome format, to a science drag show and recent breakthroughs from leading international researchers—this selection showcases the breadth of the programme.

AT THE FESTIVAL CENTRE: HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT

6 November: Fertile Void, a HKW event series, looks at how the promises and narratives of quantum science and technology inscribe themselves in rituals, cosmologies, sensory practices, and materials. The opening evening features an immersive sonic essay by Nicole L'Huillier on primordial sound waves and cosmic matter, along with a performance by Amanda Piña on lithium mining in the Atacama Desert.

7 November: Queens of Science – A Science Theatre Drag Show: four drag queens who are also researchers turn the evening into a dazzling spectacle blending comedy, choreography, and research, all inspired by the energy of a late-night talk show.

7 and 8 November: Inspiration Stage: Research in Twelve Minutes—32 young researchers from around the globe present cutting-edge science here: bold ideas, early hypotheses, and new approaches—ranging from extracting drinking water from the air and exploring what motivates people to take action, to the risks involved when AI becomes the interface for our knowledge.

CITYWIDE PROGRAMME

November 1: Ceremonial opening of Berlin Science Week with leading figures from Berlin's scientific, political, and civic life. (Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, closed event)

2 November: Can a process that has stored CO₂ as limestone in the ocean for millions of years also work at a vineyard? Three researchers and a winemaker demonstrate—for the first time in a 360° full-dome format—how the GFZ project **RESET** is seeking ways to permanently store millions of tons of CO₂ and thereby remove it from the atmosphere (Zeiss-Großplanetarium).

2 November: What happens to Berlin when nature takes over? To launch the **Wissen zwischen Büchern** (Knowledge Among Books) initiative and the **Science for Fiction** series, **Bernhard Kegel** will read from his novel **Gras**; additionally, Senator for Science **Dr. Ina Czyborra** will speak about the new library project, and choreographer **Irina Demina** will discuss the act of reading as movement (Pablo Neruda Central District Library).

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3 November: Can a single drop of blood change a baby's life? Since the introduction of newborn screening, the life paths of over 14,000 children in Germany have been decisively altered. Experts and affected families will discuss how genomic testing might transform the early detection of rare diseases in the future, in an event titled **Genomics at the Cradle? Newborn Screening in Transition** (DRK Kliniken Berlin Westend).

5 November: Tens of thousands of new satellites are currently transforming our orbit. International experts from France, Germany, and beyond will discuss the question of who actually owns space and how to ensure its sustainable use—in a panel titled **A New Horizon: Large Satellite Constellations and the Sustainable Use of Space** (French Embassy).

6 to 9 November: The Falling Walls Science Summit brings together top figures from research and politics, including Federal Research Minister **Dorothee Bär**, astrophysicist **Thomas Zurbuchen**, Nobel laureate **Sir Konstantin Novoselov**, CERN Director-General **Mark Thomson**, and **Maria Leptin**, President of the European Research Council, to discuss the future of science and its role in driving positive global change.

NEW: DEDICATED PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES AT THE FESTIVAL CENTRE

For the first time, Berlin Science Week is hosting a dedicated programme for children and families at the Festival Centre. Over two mornings at the HKW, there will be hands-on activities, readings, quizzes, and live shows—designed for children aged four and up.

Kicking things off on Saturday is TV presenter **Clarissa Corrêa da Silva** (“Die Sendung mit der Maus”): she explains the connection between genes, curls, and freckles, and then puts families' knowledge to the test in a quiz (Sat, Nov 7: 10:30 AM reading, 12:30 PM quiz; ages 8+). At the same time, a **workshop on light** shows even the youngest participants that daylight has superpowers—featuring experiments and art projects centered on light and color, done together with parents (Sat, Nov 7: 10:30 AM; ages 4+).

On Sunday, the whole hall joins the countdown: 3 – 2 – 1 – Lift-off. In the German Aerospace Center's (DLR) **DLR_Raumfahrt_Show**, giant fog rings float over the audience's heads, children experiment on stage with a thermal imaging camera, and everyone trains together like astronauts. The central question: Will we soon be living on Mars? (Sun, Nov 8: 10:00 AM and 12:15 PM; ages 9+).

Dreams of space travel are also the focus of **When Ela Conquered Space**: Ela wants to become an astronaut—but only eleven percent of all people who have flown into space to date are women, and Ela is a wheelchair user. Must she give up her dream? **Raúl Krauthausen** and **Adina Hermann** will read from their children's book and sign copies afterwards (Sun, Nov 8: 10:30–11:30 AM; ages 9+).

The full programme for Berlin Science Week 2026 and the free 3-Day Festival Centre Pass are available at berlinscienceweek.com.

A press tour on November 6 will take place at the Haus der Kulturen der Welt. Registration required at press@berlinscienceweek.com.

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About BERLIN SCIENCE WEEK:

Every year from 1 – 10 November, Berlin Science Week transforms Berlin into a festival of scientific ideas and celebrates groundbreaking research and inventions by Berlin's scientific institutions and their international partners. With this festival, we transcend disciplinary boundaries and connect science and culture with an inquisitive audience. Together, we create a vibrant platform for science and society that invites people to explore how cutting-edge research shapes our world. The festival is hosted by the Falling Walls Foundation gGmbH and organized with the support of the Berlin Senate Department for Higher Education and Research, Health and Long-Term Care. More: berlinscienceweek.com

About FALLING WALLS FOUNDATION:

The Falling Walls Foundation gGmbH is a Berlin-based non-profit organisation dedicated to strengthening science communication and public engagement with research. Its initiatives bring together international experts to develop breakthrough solutions for global challenges. In addition to the Falling Walls Science Summit, the Foundation runs the Berlin Science Week and programmes such as Falling Walls Lab, Falling Walls Engage, Falling Walls Venture and Female Science Talents. Since 2020, the Foundation has also hosted the Creative Bureaucracy Festival, an international platform for innovation in the public sector. The Foundation is supported by the German Federal Ministry of Research, Technology and Space, the Berlin Senate, the Hannover Re Foundation, the Museum für Naturkunde Berlin, PD – Public Sector Advisory, Volkswagen Foundation, and more than 100 additional international philanthropies, academic institutions, companies and NGOs. Learn more: falling-walls.com/foundation/about.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS AND PARTNERS

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Media Partners are **Der Tagesspiegel**, **ZEIT Verlagsgruppe**, **radioeins**, **Yorck Kinogruppe**, **Tip Berlin** and **The Berliner**.