



Stairway to hell

... Keeping with the underworld theme is the restaurant Nocti Vagus. Located in the Backfabrik (Baking Factory) a short walk from Alexanderplatz, this cavernous locale has fast become one of Berlin's most famous restaurants, if not for its location and food then for its darkness. Guests order in the lobby bar, most selecting the Surprise Menu, and are then led downstairs and into the hands of a blind waiter. The waiter helps you into your seat and you sit in the dark using your hands to explore the table and then your food.

The concept of Nocti Vagus is to allow your other senses to come alive; eating in the dark, you become aware that we eat primarily with our eyes. Without the aid of vision, when a plate arrives, the first sensation is smell.

It is possible that during wartime air raids people ate dinner in exactly the same way. Their meals in the darkness were often interrupted by the wail of sirens, the sounds of bombs, and the screams of frightened civilians as they rushed to the nearest bunker, and often to a bunker that still stands today. No other city in the world reveals 20th-century history quite like Berlin, and all the remnants remain to warn, remind and educate...."

Eating

A three-course dinner at the Nocti Vagus, Saarbrucker Str 36-38 (30 7474 9123; www.noctivagus.de) costs around £35.

by Campbell Jefferys
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