
Budapest, Hungary

Overview

Introduction

Budapest, Hungary, may be the capital of the landlocked country, but it's far from dry. In fact, Budapest's most seductive element is water. It springs from underground wells, filling Ottoman, neoclassical and art-nouveau pools.

It flows through the city in the broad and meandering Danube River, dividing Buda and Pest in yin-yang fashion. It even provides welcome relief after a bowl of hot paprika-spiced goulash.

Few visitors can resist the Budapest baths, but the city's allure goes beyond its spa status. As a large urban center, Budapest manages to strike a nice balance between nature and development. Hills, islands and parks coexist with hotels, theaters, cafes, monuments and other buildings in an eclectic array of architectural styles.



Highlights

Sights—Budavari Palota (Buda Castle); Matyas Templom and Halaszbastya on Castle Hill; Parliament; Rudas and Kiraly Gyogyfurdo (Turkish baths); Hosok tere (Heroes Square); Szent Istvan Bazilika.

Museums—Magyar Nemzeti Muzeum for Hungarian history; Hungarian art at the Magyar Nemzeti Galeria; the Franz Liszt museum for a peek at the home of the country's most famous composer.

Memorable Meals—Fabulous service with the best strudels at Elso Pesti Reteshaz; traditional Hungarian coffee and pastries at Central Cafe and Restaurant, New York Café or Gerbeaud; fine dining at Costes, Hungary's first Michelin-starred restaurant; Hungarian food combined with a great wine list at Tigris Etterem, which is partially owned by winemakers.

Late Night—Enjoy a drink at Vian or Doblo; listen to live jazz at Fat Mo's Speakeasy and Music Club or folk at Fono Budai Zenehas; dance with the young crowd at Barba Negra Track.

Walks—Along the Danube embankment; around Castle Hill; up and down Andrassy ut and Vaci utca; along the *korut* (ring road); up Gellert Hill; around the lovely neighborhood surrounding the Hungarian National Museum; on Margit Island; in the Buda Hills; in Varosliget.

Especially for Kids—Fovarosi Allat es Novenykert, the zoo in Varosliget; Csodak Palotaja (the Palace of Wonders); a ride on the Children's Railway through the Buda Hills.

Geography

Orientation is slightly more complicated than dividing the city into Buda and Pest—but it's a good way to start. The Danube (Duna in Hungarian) flows through the middle of the city: Buda and Obuda are on the west side, Pest is on the east. Seven bridges, in addition to two railway bridges, span the divide.

Buda has hills. Castle Hill is home to some of the city's most visible landmarks, including Budavari Palota (Buda Castle). Szele Kalman ter, a square north of Castle Hill, is an important transportation hub. To the south of Castle Hill is Gellert Hill, which is topped by the Citadel and the Liberation Monument. North of Castle Hill is Rozsadomb (Hill of Roses), an upper-class neighborhood. Still farther north is Obuda, the oldest part of the city. The city's Turkish baths are located in Buda near the river.

By comparison, Pest is flat. The grand Parliament building dominates the Pest embankment and skyline. South of Parliament is the area

that is generally referred to as the city center. Deak ter is a square at the heart of the city—three metro lines cross there. The boulevard Andrássy út runs from Deak ter to Hősök tere (Heroes Square), which is at the edge of Városliget, the main city park.

Most of the attractions in Pest are contained within an area between the river and a ring road (actually, more like an arc), which changes its name every 10 blocks or so. In a north-to-south progression, it's called Szent István körút, Tereztér körút, Erzsébet körút, József körút and Ferenc körút.

Fortunately, there's another aid to orientation: All of Budapest is divided into 23 numbered districts. Districts 1-3, 11, 12 and 22 are on the Buda and Obuda side (Castle Hill is the first district). District 21 is on Csepel Island, and the remainder of the districts are on the Pest side. The city center is the fifth district, and districts 6-9 encircle it to the east and southeast. The number of the district is written after the street address.

Addresses will be easier to understand if you know a few Hungarian words—*út* means avenue, *utca* means street, *ter* (or *tere*) means square, *hid* means bridge, *koz* means alley and *körút* means ring road.

History

The history of Budapest has been marked by waves of conquerors and immigrants. Celtic remains have been found near Gellert Hill, but one of the first substantial settlements was Roman. The Romans conquered the area in 11 BC and established a city called Aquincum in present-day Obuda. The Huns began threatening the area around AD 250 and, led by Attila, finally gained control over present-day Hungary in 437.

The empire collapsed with Attila's death less than 20 years later. Successive ethnic groups migrated to the area over the next several hundred years, with the Magyars (ethnic Hungarians) gaining dominance.

The Mongols destroyed both Buda and Pest in 1241, but Buda rebounded and became an intellectual and artistic center during the Renaissance. In 1541, the Ottoman Turks sacked the city and went on to rule until they were replaced in 1686 by the Austrian Hapsburgs. The Hungarians revolted against Austria in 1848-49, and a compromise was reached in 1867, creating the dual monarchy of Austria-Hungary.

In 1873, Buda, Pest and Obuda were united into one city, Budapest, which became the capital of Hungary. The city underwent expansion and mass development through the end of the 19th century. During that period, the large boulevards were laid out and many of Budapest's landmark buildings were erected.

But then World War II wreaked devastation: Nazi troops occupied Budapest in the latter part of the war, and heavy fighting between the Germans and the Soviet army resulted in much destruction.

Fortunately, the city center and the bridges over the Danube were rebuilt. The Soviets gained control after the war, and a 1956 uprising was squelched with great force. In 1989, Hungary's borders were finally reopened—a contributing factor in the eventual fall of the Berlin Wall.

Despite a steady turnover of political leadership since then, Budapest has played an integral role in keeping Hungary's economic growth strong. Hungary joined the European Union in May 2004.

Budapest has undergone a tremendous amount of change, and it seems there is more to come. A boom in construction and renovation projects resulted in the renewal of several famous coffeehouses and hotels dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Budapest maintains modern goals in an area rich with history, making it a fascinating place to visit.

Port Information

Location

Budapest's port is the Port of Csepel. It is located southeast of downtown Budapest on the Danube River at Szabadkikoto ut 5-7, in the 21st district. It is a river port and the country's main commercial seaport, primarily handling international cargo. Phone 1-278-4001.

There are several river boat cruises available to tourists in Budapest, many of which depart from Nemzetkozi Hajoallomas-Belgrad quay or the Vigado Ter ship station on the Danube River in Budapest. Sample cruises include a one-day buffet lunch cruise with guide and an evening cruise with music and dancing. Fees vary depending on the cruise duration and type; however, you can expect to pay 4,500 HUF-5,000 HUF for a one- to two-and-a-half-hour boat trip. Passenger facilities at docking points are limited to restrooms, information and ticketing bureaus. Taxis are available from the docking points.

For a list of recommended boat tours, see http://www.budapest.com/things_to_do/sightseeing_tours/boat_tours_in_budapest.en.html.

Potpourri

The Hungarian language is spoken exclusively in Hungary (except for the Hungarian diaspora, which consists of about 5 million people) and has survived even though Hungarians have lived in Europe for more than 1,100 years. It is related to Finnish.

The entire city of Budapest is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The building that houses Budapest's Parliament is the second-largest parliament building in Europe after Romania's.

Budapest's metro is the oldest in Continental Europe. The *foldalatti* is still in use.

Quite a few movies have been filmed in Budapest, although the city often stands in for somewhere else. They include *The Matador*, *Underworld*, *I Spy*, *Munich*, *Spy Game* and *Evita*, as well as the TV show *The Borgias*.

The world's largest-known thermal cave system, comprising more than 170 caves, lies under Budapest. The Molnar Janos Cave in Buda, discovered only in 2008, even has an underground thermal lake.

Hotel Overview

Hotel rooms are not hard to come by, although it's advisable to make reservations in advance if you're looking for budget accommodations. There has been a building boom in upscale hotels, so there is plenty of space year-round, and great bargains can be found if you ask for them.

Budapest has several stylish boutique-hotels, as well as hip hostels. Most of the better hotels are in the city center, and their prices are usually quoted in euros in addition to forints. However, it's preferable to pay in Hungarian forints.

See & Do

Sightseeing

Budapest's geography will help you organize your sightseeing so you can use your time efficiently. Start in Buda at Castle Hill. It's a Hungarian acropolis, covered in attractions. Budavari Palota, on the hill's southern end, houses the National Gallery, the city's history museum and a contemporary-arts museum. On the northern end of Castle Hill are two easily recognizable sights: the beautiful spire and colorful roof of Matyas Templom and the cone-shaped towers and terrace of Halaszbastya (Fishermen's Bastion).

The Castle Hill quarter also boasts a high concentration of antiques stores, museums and upscale restaurants. You can take the Budavari funicular (Siklo) railway up from Clark Adam ter near the Chain Bridge. Horse-drawn carriages are an enjoyable way to see the neighborhood. You can usually find them just outside Matyas Templom.

Buda is also where you'll find wonderful bathhouses, a legacy of the Ottoman Turks who occupied the city for nearly 150 years. The Rudas Gyogyfurdo is considered to be the most beautiful Turkish bathing complex, but the Kiraly and Vila Bej baths are also extraordinary. Soaking in a warm pool beneath a sunlight-pierced dome has to be the most relaxing form of sightseeing.

On other days, see Pest. Gracing its embankment is the stately Parliament building, which houses the crown jewels and is open to guided

tours. Also in Pest, on opposite sides of the monumental square called Hosok tere, are the Museum of Fine Arts and the Palace of Art. Behind the square lies Varosliget, the city's main park, which is home to the zoo.

The Danube River and its bridges (most notably Szechenyi Lanchid, also known as the Chain Bridge) are attractions in their own right. Margitsziget, an island-park in the river, is one of the most beautiful open spaces in the city. The beauty of the Buda Hills is also easily accessible, thanks to a series of trains and lifts. The hillside nature preserve on Sas-Hegy is the best place to examine the wide-ranging local flora, but for a good panoramic view of the city, you can't beat Gellert Hill. And no visit to Budapest is complete without seeing and enjoying the Gellert Baths in Buda and the Szechenyi Baths in Pest.

Casinos

Casinos are a popular entertainment venue in Budapest, and most stay open 24 hours daily. To enter a casino, you must be at least 18 years of age and show a valid proof of ID or passport on entry. Dress code is smart casual.

Tropicana Casino

This centrally located casino offers various games of chance including Texas Hold 'em, roulette, blackjack and more. You must be 18 years old to play.

Daily 24 hours. Casual dress.

Vigado utca 2, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-266-2081
<http://www.lasvegascasino.hu/tropicana>

Las Vegas Casino

Just a few steps away from the Vaci utca shopping area is one of the city's most popular casinos, which was opened by Sylvester Stallone in 1992. It offers 109 slot machines, 27 live table games, three roulette machines and several restaurants. An ID or passport is required for entry. You must be 18 years old to play.

Daily 24 hours. Free entry.

Szechenyi Istvan Square 2, 5th (inside
the Sofitel Budapest Chain Bridge Hotel)
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-317-6022
<http://www.lasvegascasino.hu>

Historic Sites

Szent Istvan Bazilika

St. Stephen's Basilica is the largest church in the city. It contains the mummified right hand of St. Stephen, king and founder of the Hungarian state. The rooftop viewing platform (open April-October) offers one of the best panoramas in the city, and a renovation of the square in front has made it even more atmospheric.

Monday-Saturday 9 am-7 pm, Sunday 7:45 am-7 pm. 1,600 HUF admission to treasury; 600 HUF for entry to viewing platform.

Szent Istvan ter, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-338-2151
<http://bazilika.biz>

Szechenyi Lanchid

The Chain Bridge, which links the center of Buda to the center of Pest, was completed in 1849 and was the city's first permanent bridge across the Danube. A stroll across the bridge by day or night is an integral part of a visit to Budapest. During the summer months, the bridge is closed to traffic and reserved for pedestrians on most weekends.

Parliament

This striking, stately neo-Gothic building—built in 1902 and still the active seat of the Hungarian government—dominates the Pest embankment. Exhibits include coronation regalia and jewels. Groups can visit Parliament only on guided tours with advance booking. Tour entrance at corner of Alkotmany Street and Kossuth Square. Purchase tickets at the Museum of Ethnography (Kossuth Lajos ter 12, 5th).

April-October daily 8 am-6 pm, November-March daily 8 am-4 pm. 6,700 HUF adults.

Kossuth Lajos ter 1-3, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-441-4415

<http://www.parlament.hu>

Matyas Templom

Matthias Church's colorful, patterned roof and beautiful spire stand out on Castle Hill. The church was completely rebuilt over remains of a Gothic structure. Its painted interior is a wonderful example of Hungarian art nouveau. Noted for its good acoustics, the church holds an evening concert series May-September and occasional concerts during the rest of the year. Audio guides are available for rental.

Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm, Saturday 9 am-noon, Sunday 1-5 pm. Modest dress required, and cell phones must be turned off. 1,800 HUF adults.

2 Szentharomsag ter, 1st (Parish office:
Orszaghaz utca 14)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-489-0716

<http://www.matyas-templom.hu>

Magyar Allami Operahaz

The Hungarian State Opera House, built in 1884 to rival Vienna's, is a neo-Renaissance treasure. Whether you see a performance there or not, you'll enjoy a tour of the magnificent building.

Daily 10 am-5 pm. 2,490 HUF adults.

Andrassy ut 22, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-332-8197 for information, or 1-332-7914 for box office

<http://www.operavisit.hu>

Kiraly Gyogyfurdo

Parts of this Turkish bath date from 1565, making it one of the oldest existing buildings in the city. It retains its Ottoman ambience: Faint sunlight filters through the large dome through small holes and sparkles on the water in the central octagonal pool below. Three other pools have temperatures ranging from 79 F/26 C to 104 F/40 C.

Daily 9 am-9 pm. 2,800 HUF for an all-day ticket.

1138 Budapest, Nepfurdo utca 38.
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-202-3688

<http://www.kiralyfurdo.com>

Hosok tere

Heroes Square, constructed in 1896 to mark the 1,000th anniversary of the Magyars' arrival in the area, is the city's most imposing square. The Millennium Monument, in the center of the square, has statues of Hungarian leaders, kings and statesmen, with the Angel Gabriel atop the pillar bearing the nation's Holy Crown. In front is the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and flanking the monument are the Museum of Fine Arts and the Palace of Art.

Andrassy ut, 14th (at the entrance to
Varosliget)
Budapest, Hungary

Halaszbastya

The Fishermen's Bastion was built in 1905 on the site of the fish market and underwent a centennial facelift. It's a Castle Hill standout with its cone-shaped towers and dramatic evening lights. The terrace provides an exceptional view of the Pest embankment and Parliament.

Terrace open 24 hours daily; upper towers open mid-March to April 9 am-7 pm, May-October until 8 pm. 1,000 HUF adults.

Szentharomsag ter 5, 1st
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-458-3000

<http://www.fishermansbastion.com>

Dohany utcai Zsinagoga

This synagogue is reported to be the largest in Europe. Its Zsidó Múzeum (Jewish Museum) has a moving exhibit and memorial devoted to the Hungarian Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

Sunday-Thursday 10 am-6 pm (till 4 pm during the off-season), Friday 10 am-4 pm (till 2 pm during the off-season). Closed to visitors on Saturday. 4,000 HUF.

Dohany utca 2, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-413-5500

<http://www.zsidomuzeum.hu>

Citadella

An important part of the Budapest skyline, the Citadel complex includes a fortress with displays about the history of Budapest and multiple history-related exhibitions. Restaurants are also on-site. It's a climb, but worth it for the stunning views.

Gellérthegy, Citadella sétány 1, 1st
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-279-1963

<http://budapest.varosom.hu/latnivalok/tor-tenelmi-emlekeink/Citadella.html>

Budavari Palota

Gracing the southern part of Castle Hill and the city's western skyline is Buda Castle. Once a royal palace (the oldest part was built in the mid-13th century), it now houses the Hungarian National Gallery and the Budapest History Museum (<http://www.btm.hu>). If you don't have time to go inside, at least enjoy the views of the city. The most interesting way to get up the hill is to take the funicular from Lánchíd utca near the Chain Bridge, or take the 16 Bus route from above Széll Kálmán tér.

Szent György tér 2, 1st
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-487-8800

http://www.btm.hu/eng/?q=var_alap

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. Free for permanent exhibits.

Museums

For discounted (or even free) entry to museums, inquire at the local tourist office about purchasing a Budapest Card (<http://budapest-card.com>) or a Hungary Card (<http://www.hungarycard.hu>). The cards also provide discounts at hotels and restaurants and on transportation.

Vasarely Múzeum

This museum holds works by Victor Vasarely, the 20th-century Hungarian-born artist who has been called the father of op art. The museum is in a nice villa in the historic Óbuda neighborhood.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-5:45 pm. 600 HUF adults.

Szentlélek tér 6, 3rd
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-388-7551

<http://www.vasarely.hu>

Nepi Múzeum

One of the earliest specialized museums in Europe, this rich collection of Hungarian folk art and music has been the genesis for many accomplished composers such as Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály, who took inspiration from rural village folk life. The building was originally the Ministry of Justice, and it's an appropriately beautiful housing for a museum of Hungarian folk traditions; the statue aloft on the facade represents the spirit of the enlightenment. There are some excellent historical photos of village life, and the room with old clocks, sundials and other timekeeping devices is a pleasant way to spend some time.

The museum is closed for renovations until 2020.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 1,400 HUF adults.

Kossuth Lajos tér 12, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-473-2440

<http://www.nepi.hu>

Mucsarnok

The Palace of Art is the country's largest exhibition space, featuring temporary exhibitions of Hungarian and international artists. There's a strong emphasis on modern art, and the exhibits range from fine and applied art to photography and design.

Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm; Thursday noon-8 pm. 1,800 HUF adults.

Dozsa Gyorgy ut 37
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-460-7000

<http://www.mucsarnok.hu>

Magyar Terror Haza

Housed in the former headquarters of the Hungarian secret police and the Hungarian fascist Arrow Cross, this museum is not for the faint of heart. The collection focuses on the darkest periods in Hungary's history under Fascism and Communism and brings to light the crimes against humanity. The majority of exhibits portray events before and after the 1956 Hungarian Revolution through vivid multimedia installations, personal belongings of the victims, audio transcripts and the actual jail cells and torture devices, which are located in the basement. The brutal portrayal begins in the Atrium, which houses a Russian tank used during the 1956 revolution. A room with photos of the actual torturers—Hungarians who worked for the secret police—created a national controversy.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 3,000 HUF adults.

Andrassy ut 60, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-374-2600

<http://www.terrorhaza.hu>

Magyar Nemzeti Muzeum

The Hungarian National Museum chronicles the country's history. Highlights range from a Roman-era floor mosaic to a collection of communist posters.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 2,600 HUF adults.

Muzeum korut 14-16, 8th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-327-7700

<https://mnmm.hu/en>

Magyar Nemzeti Galeria

The National Gallery displays the finest collection of Hungarian art from the 13th century to the present. Especially worth seeing are the large, luminous canvases of Tivador Csontvary, a late-19th-century mystical painter. Other highlights include medieval sculptures, Gothic altarpieces and Hungarian impressionist paintings.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 2,200 HUF adults.

1014 Szent Gyorgy ter 2 (in Wings A, B,
C and D)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-201-9082

<http://www.mng.hu>

Magyar Fotografusok Haza a Mai Mano Hazban

Hungarians have always been strong in the photographic arts (photojournalist Robert Capa was Hungarian). The House of Hungarian Photography is in the restored home of Mai Mano, the court photographer to Hapsburg Emperor Franz Josef. The exhibits range from historic to modern, and they occasionally feature rising Hungarian talents.

Tuesday-Sunday noon-7 pm. 1,500 HUF adults.

Nagymezo utca 20, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-473-2666

<http://www.maimano.hu>

Ludwig Museum Budapest, Kortars Muveszeti Muzeum

This contemporary-arts museum has pop art, Hungarian art from the 1990s, and works from the 1980s by French, German and North American artists.

Permanent exhibition Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm, Temporary exhibitions Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-8 pm. General admission 2,400 HUF.

Komor Marcell ut 1, 9th (Palace of the
Arts)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-555-3444

<http://www.ludwigmuseum.hu>

Iparművészeti Múzeum

This was one of the first museums of decorative and applied arts in Europe. The building is spectacular, with multicolored ceramic roof tiles characteristic of architect Lechner Odon, a stark white interior and an atrium with a glass ceiling. The collection of 18th- and 19th-century furniture is impressive, as is the collection of wasp-waisted and corseted women's fashions. The museum is closed for renovations until 2022.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 3,000 HUF adults.

Ulloi ut 33-37, 9th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-456-5107
<http://www.imm.hu>

Holokauszt Emlékközpont

The Holocaust Memorial Center, located in the wonderfully renovated and expanded Páva utca Synagogue, is dedicated to studying and preserving the memory of the Holocaust. Besides housing an exhibit on the repression and terror of the Holocaust, the Center collects documents and artifacts for study and research.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm; ticket office closes at 5 pm. 1,400 HUF adults.

Páva utca 39, 9th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-455-3333
<http://www.hdke.hu>

Galleria Centralis

This tiny gallery, associated with the Soros-funded Open Society Archives, hosts excellent exhibitions with a historical slant: There have been shows on Samizdat, North Korea and retouched Communist propaganda. Whatever the current theme is, it's sure to be fascinating.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm.

Arany János utca 32, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-327-3250
<http://www.osaarchivum.org/galleria-centralis>

Franz Liszt Museum

The famed composer lived on the first floor of the Academy of Music during the last five years of his life; you can tour his recreated apartment and see his original instruments and compositions. Concerts take place every Saturday afternoon in the Chamber Hall.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 9 am-5 pm. 2,000 HUF adults.

Vörösmarty ut 35, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-413-0440
<http://lisztmuseum.hu>

Ferenc Hopp Museum of Asiatic Arts

This small but impressive collection of Asian art was assembled by György Rath, the first director of the Museum of Fine Arts. The objects are displayed in his home, and the chance to see the interior of the beautiful late-19th-century villa is an added treat. The pleasant garden is open in the summer months.

Tuesday--Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 1,200 HUF adults.

Andrássy ut 103, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-322-8476
<http://www.hoppmuseum.hu>

Budapest Torteneti Múzeum

The city's history museum is located in the medieval part (Wing E) of Buda Castle. The Gothic chapel is a highlight, and exhibits include Gothic sculpture, medieval armor and a historical chronology from the 1686 siege against the Turks to the 1989 fall of communism.

Castle Museum open daily Tuesday-Sunday. March-October 10 am-6 pm, November-February 10 am-4 pm. Hours and prices for the other museum sections may vary slightly. 2,400 HUF adults.

Szent György tér 2, 1st
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-487-8800
<http://www.btm.hu>

Nature

Sas-Hegy Nature Preserve

This 872-ft-/266-m-high hill is home to a wide variety of warm- and cold-climate plants. The best way to visit the preserve is on a guided tour.

March-October Tuesday and Friday-Sunday 10 am-6 pm. 1,500 HUF adults.

Tajek utca 26, 11th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 30-408-4370

<http://www.dunaipoly.hu/hu/helyek/vedett-teruletek/adonyi-termeszetvedelmi-terulet/budai-sas-hegy-tt>

Palvolgyi Cave

One of the most remarkable of the many caves in the Buda Hills—more than 15 mi/24 km of stalactites and cavernous rooms. You must go through them with one of the guided tours, which leave every hour. Tours are offered in Hungarian only, but true cave fans won't mind the language barrier.

Tuesday-Sunday 10 am-4 pm. 1,950 HUF adults.

Szepvolgyi ut 162, 2nd (take Bus 65 from Kolosy ter)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-325-9505

<http://www.dunaipoly.hu/hu/helyek/bemutatohelyek/pal-volgyi-barlang>

Parks & Gardens

Varosliget

Budapest's largest park has an amusement park, a zoo, the circus and the beautiful outdoor Szechenyi Baths. The park's Vajdahunyad Castle is a replica of a famous site, as are the attached buildings, one of which houses an agricultural museum. You can rent rowboats on the artificial lake (it becomes an ice rink in winter) near the castle.

Kos Karoly setany, 14th
Budapest, Hungary

<http://varosliget.info>

Millenaris Park

This attractive space near Szell Kalman ter used to be a factory. The buildings were razed and a public space created. It's full of families, especially during the frequent weekend free concerts and events. The park features a large pond, playgrounds for children, and several exhibition halls.

Kis Rokus utca 16-20, 2nd
Budapest, Hungary

Memento Park

A graveyard for public works of art made behind the Iron Curtain, nearly 50 massive iron and concrete statues depict Stalin, Lenin and Bela Kun, the first communist leader of Hungary. Worth noting is the 20-ft/6-m tall Liberation Army Soldier, carrying a hammer-and-sickle flag and a machine gun—its chilling presence stood atop Gellert Hill for nearly 40 years. The 30-minute drive from the city center is worth it.

Park open daily 10 am to dusk. 1,500 HUF adults.

Balatoni Road (at Szabadkai ut)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-424-7500

<http://www.mementopark.hu>

Margitsziget

This island in the Danube is one of the most beautiful open spaces in Budapest and a popular recreation spot. It has a large park, several pools, an outdoor theater, a few open-air bars and restaurants, and three spa hotels. The only cars allowed are those belonging to guests staying at hotels on the island. The island is connected to Buda and Pest by Margit Bridge in the south and Arpad Bridge in the north.

(Take Tram 4 or 6 and get off at the stop in the middle of Margit Bridge)
Budapest, Hungary

(Take Tram 4 or 6 and get off at the stop in the middle of Margit Bridge).

Buda Hills

The Buda Hills are filled with walking trails and forested areas. The most scenic options for getting up there are taking the chairlift (*libego*) from Zugligeti ut 97, 12th, Budapest to Janos Hill or the Children's Railway, which has various stops.

A round-trip train ticket costs 1,000 HUF adults.

Zoos & Wildlife

Fovaros Allat es Novenykert

This zoo and botanical garden is in Varosliget (the main city park). One of the highlights is the Elephant House, a domed palace covered with tiles made by the famous Zsolnay porcelain workshop.

Hours vary by season, generally daily 9 am-5 pm. 3,300 HUF adults.

Allatkerti korut 6-12, 14th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-273-4900
<http://www.zoobudapest.com>

Other Options

Csodak Palotaja

The Palace of Wonders is an interactive playhouse of practical science for kids—the first of its kind in central Europe. It's a great place to take the family on a rainy afternoon.

Daily 9 am-7 pm. 3,600 HUF adults.

Becsi ut 38-44
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-814-8050
<http://www.csopa.hu>

Recreation

There are plenty of places in Budapest to work out and get wet. In addition to the Turkish baths, the city has a number of swimming complexes.

The two most famous ones are the Gellert and Szechenyi Gyogyfurdo. At the Gellert, you can swim indoors beneath a stained-glass skylight or outdoors in a wave pool. At the palatial Szechenyi, you can swim laps in one pool, cool down in another, and then relax and play chess in a third—each pool has a different temperature. Spa facilities are available at both complexes.

The two main areas for outdoor recreation are Margit Island and Varosliget (the main city park). Margit Island is off-limits to cars, except for hotel guests, so it's a nice spot for walking, jogging, cycling and in-line skating. Bike lanes are increasingly being added to Budapest's busy streets.

There's also a tennis center and a swimming pool on the island. Varosliget is a particularly good spot for walking, jogging and cycling on Sunday, when cars are not allowed in the park. During November-March, there's ice skating on the park's artificially frozen lake. When there's snow, you can even ski down a run in the Buda Hills. Tennis and squash courts are readily available, but golfers will have to travel a good distance out of the city.

Bicycling

Yellow Zebra Bikes

One of Budapest's largest and most reliable bicycle rental companies, Yellow Zebra also offers bike tours, among many other services.

Lazar utca 16, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-269-3843
<http://www.yellowzebrabikes.com>

Golf

Magyar Golf Club - Kisoroszi

This 18-hole course is located on Szentendre Island, about 20 mi/35 km north of Budapest. Equipment can be rented. Advance reservations required.

March-October.

2024 Szentendre-sziget (Club House)
Kisoroszi, Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 0626-592-020
<https://www.facebook.com/magyargolfclub>

Ice Skating

Varosligeti Muejgpalya

In winter (November-March), you can skate on the frozen lake in the city's main park. Skate rentals are available, and a restaurant is on-site.

Monday-Friday 9 am-1 pm and 4-8 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-2 pm and 4-8 pm. 1,500 HUF Monday-Friday, 2,000 HUF Saturday and Sunday.

Olof Palme Setany 5, 14th (in Varosliget, near Hosok tere)
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-363-2673
<http://www.muejgpalya.hu>

Spas and Health Clubs

Szechenyi Gyogyfurdo

This incredible, not-to-be-missed bathing complex is located in a palatial neoclassical setting. It has several indoor pools and three outdoor pools. It includes a hot pool with chess boards, another with a spiral current that delights kids and adults alike, and a lap pool. It's one of Europe's largest spa facilities, complete with saunas, steam rooms and mud baths.

Daily 6 am-10 pm. Full-day pool ticket 5,700 HUF.

Allatkerti korut 11 in Varosliget, 14th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-363-3210
<http://www.szechenyifurdo.hu>

Lukacs Gyogyfurdo

This spa complex, built in 1894, has thermal baths and an outdoor pool. The plaques on the walls are from grateful bathers, cured of their medical complaints.

Daily 6 am-10 pm. Full-day tickets 3,900 HUF Monday-Friday, 4,100 HUF Saturday and Sunday.

Frankel Leo ut 25-29, 2nd
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-326-1695
<http://www.lukacsfurdo.hu>

Gellert Gyogyfurdo

The Gellert Hotel's incredible bathing complex is rich in art-nouveau and Hungarian Secession-style ornamentation. It's definitely a feast for the eyes, but the main emphasis is on the rest of the body: The complex includes thermal baths, saunas, massage, an indoor pool covered with a stained-glass skylight and outdoor pools, including a wave pool.

The thermal baths are open daily 6 am-8 pm. The outdoor pool is open seasonally 6 am-8 pm.

Szent Gellert ter 1
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-889-5500

<http://www.gellertbath.com/index.hu.php>

Danubius Premier Fitness Club

This chain has locations in several of the upscale hotels in Budapest, and it's a convenient location for a complete workout. The complex also has a spa, weight room, aerobics and yoga classes, pool, solarium, sauna and massages.

Monday-Friday 7 am-10 pm Saturday and Sunday 8 am-8 pm.

Tas Vezer utca 3-7, 11th (in the Danubius Hotel Flamenco)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-889-5761

<http://www.premierfitness.hu>

Swimming

The Turkish baths and the Gellert Hotel's indoor pool are good places for a relaxing dip but not for active swimming. The Rudas and Szechenyi complexes have rectangular pools more suitable for swimming laps, but they're often crowded.

Rudas Gyogyfurdo

In these 16th-century Turkish baths, some of the grandest in the city, a large dome, supported by eight columns, rises over an octagonal pool. There are five other thermal pools and a large indoor swimming pool, each with water at a different temperature.

Daily 6 am-10 pm. Monday-Friday 5,200 HUF, Saturday and Sunday 6,500 HUF.

Dobrentei ter 9, 1st
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-356-1322

<http://en.rudasfurdo.hu>

Palatinus

This large outdoor pool and recreational complex is popular with swimmers and sunbathers. It's probably your best bet for swimming laps.

Daily 8 am-8 pm. Monday-Friday 2,600 HUF adults, Saturday and Sunday 3,000 HUF adults.

On Margitsziget, 13th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-340-4500

<http://en.palatinusstrand.hu>

Tennis & Racquet Sports

Varosmajori Teniszakademia

The courts at this tennis school are covered in winter. Lessons are available, and a pro shop is on-site.

Monday-Friday 7 am-10 pm, Saturday and Sunday 7 am-8 pm. Reservations required.

Varosmajor utca 63-69, 12th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-202-5337

<http://teniszbudapest.hu>

Park Teniszkлуб

The 12 up-to-date outdoor courts (covered by bubbles in winter) offer year-round play. Instruction and supplies also available. The facilities also include a swimming pool, a fitness area, saunas and a restaurant.

Reservations required.

Bartok Bela ut 63-65, 11th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-279-0930 for reservations

<http://www.parktenisz.hu>

Nightlife

Budapest has an abundance of wonderful cafes that are also popular nightspots. One of the liveliest areas is the Theater District around Liszt Ferenc ter and Andrássy ut. Szentkirályi utca and Krúdy Gyula utca (near the Hungarian National Museum) and Ráday utca are other popular streets.

In the summer months, there are wonderfully atmospheric outdoor courtyard bars located in the 7th district. You'll also find quite a few bars and clubs near Váci utca (be aware, though, that some cafes and bars there charge a hefty service fee).

Large dance clubs are farther out from the city center, with a younger crowd often frequenting Barba Negra Track. The Capella Cafe is a popular gay-friendly bar and cabaret that also attracts a straight clientele.

Nightlife generally begins at cafes in the early evening—if you want a table, you should arrive by 9 pm (earlier in summer if you want to sit outside). By 10:30 pm Thursday-Saturday, the bars are usually packed. Dance clubs don't fill up until after midnight, and they stay open till dawn.

Bars, Taverns & Pubs

Walhalla Club

This Viking-themed restaurant and bar across from a synagogue has a full menu, pool tables, bowling alleys, dartboards and more than 80 types of wine. In the warmer months, tables are set up outside.

Daily 11 am-1 am.

Dohány utca 1/a, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-266-7966

<http://www.walhalla.hu>

Vian

This pleasant French-style cafe is often crowded in the evenings and is also a great place to stop for a sunny breakfast.

Daily 9 am-1 pm.

Liszt Ferenc ter 9, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-268-1154

<http://www.cafevian.com>

Szimpla Kert

Take one old Budapest building, add a bar and a bunch of people, and you get one of the best places to spend a late summer night. Impromptu films are screened. It also has a dance floor and Wi-Fi.

Daily noon-3 am. Cash only.

Kazinczy utca 14, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 20-261-8669

<http://www.szimpla.hu>

Kiado

Get a little retro at this homey place. Simple Hungarian food with outside seating in warm weather.

Monday-Friday 10 am-1 am, Saturday and Sunday 11 am-1 am. Cash only.

Jokai ter 3, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Ellato Kert

A favorite hang-out spot with expats and young Hungarians. Also has a kitchen that serves Mexican food.

Monday-Wednesday 5 pm-2 am, Thursday and Friday 5 pm-4 am, Saturday 6 pm-4 am, Sunday 6 pm-2 am. Cash only.

Kazinczy utca 48, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 20-527-3018

http://ruinpubs.com/index.php?id=romkocsmak_adatlap&kocsma=17

Eleszto

Located in a former glass-making factory, Eleszto specializes in Hungarian craft beers, with nearly 20 beers on tap.

Cash only.

Tuzolto utca 22, 9th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 30-970-3625

<http://www.elesztohoz.hu>

Egri Borozo

This popular cellar wine bar carries inexpensive wines from the northern Eger region. There's a terrace for warmer weather, too.

Monday-Friday noon-midnight, Saturday 2 pm-midnight. Cash only.

Bajcsy-Zsilinszky ut 72, 5th (near
Nyugati train station)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-302-1724

<http://www.egriborozo.hupont.hu>

Doblo

In a city full of wine bars, this charming corner shop and bar, located in the Old Jewish Quarter, stands out, with live music nightly. An array of Hungarian wines, Proseccos and Champagnes fill the menu, with a selection of cheese and charcuterie boards to fill one's stomach. Three-glass flights (with generous pours) begin at 4,500 HUF.

Daily from 2 pm.

1072 Budapest utca 20, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-398-8863

<http://www.budapestwine.com>

Columbus Pub

A table on the upper level of this moored boat (early reservations recommended) will give you the best Buda Castle vista in the city. The menu is outstanding and is served until midnight. There's jazz, too.

Monday-Friday 5 pm-midnight, Saturday and Sunday noon-midnight.

Vigado ter 4, 5th (Pest embankment,
across from the InterContinental Hotel,
south of the Chain Bridge)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-266-9013

<http://www.columbuspub.hu>

Captain Cook

This place is a perennial favorite for its central location, large terrace in summer and long opening hours. Australian beers on tap. The place for a relaxed drink.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-1:30 am, Sunday 2 pm-1:30 am.

Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 19/a, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-269-2357

<http://www.cookpub.hu>

Beckett's

This Irish pub has been popular for years with the local expat crowd for its draft Guinness and respectable kitchen. It usually airs sports events on TV.

Daily noon-1 am, until 2 am on weekends; food is served all day.

Liszt Ferenc Ter 11, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-311-1035

<http://www.becketts.hu>

Dance & Nightclubs

Liget Club

Budapest's biggest club is located in Nepliget Park. You'll find 17 bars, six dancefloors and a huge terrace open in summer. Cool and elegant dress code.

Friday-Saturday 9 pm-5 am.

Nepliget ut 2, 10th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 70-527-5272

<http://www.ligetclub.hu>

Instant

Instant sports a look that it dubs "the enchanted forest," but it's more like *Alice in Wonderland*—complete with flying rabbits, furniture on the ceiling and surreal art, all set in a huge dilapidated industrial complex. There are seven bars and dancefloors, two courtyards and 26 rooms.

Daily 4 pm-6 am.

Nagymezo utca 38, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-638-5040

<http://www.instant.co.hu>

Corvinteto

Located on the roof of a Socialist-era department store, Corvinteto encompasses several different bar areas and dance floors. But the best place to be is outside on the roof terrace, soaking in the expansive views with a drink in hand.

Wednesday-Saturday 10 pm-6 am. Some events start at 8 pm.

Blaha Lujza ter 1-2, 8th (entrance on
Somogyi Bela utca)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 20-244-7230

<http://corvinclub.hu>

Barba Negra Track

The outdoor dance club and concert venue is popular with a young, late-night crowd. The music is mainly alternative, including rock and punk, and local and international bands also perform.

Neumann Janos utca 2, 17th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 20-563-2254

<http://track.barbanegra.hu>

Live Music

New Orleans

This posh concert venue and restaurant features top international acts and the best of the region.

Tuesday-Saturday 6 pm-2 am. Cover generally 2,000 HUF-3,000 HUF.

Lovag utca 5, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-269-4951
<http://www.neworleans.hu>

Fono Budai Zeneház

It may be farther from the city center, but it's probably the best place to hear Hungarian folk music. There's also a steady lineup of performers from other parts of central Europe and points farther east, as well as plenty of jazz and occasional world music. The club has a bar and a record store on the premises, and it plays host to *tanchaz* (folk-dance nights) several times weekly, complete with instruction.

Visit the website for concert schedule. Monday-Friday noon-midnight, Saturday 6 pm-midnight. Cover charge varies.

Sztregova utca 3, 11th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-206-5300
<http://www.fono.hu>

Fat Mo's Speakeasy and Music Club

This small club offers live jazz and blues Sunday-Tuesday beginning at 9 pm, with DJs taking over the rest of the week. There is also a full restaurant.

Sunday-Thursday 5 pm-midnight, Friday and Saturday 5 pm-2 am. No cover. Most major credit cards.

Nyari Pal utca 11, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-266-8027
<http://www.fatmo.hu>

Alcatraz

This slickly designed music club and restaurant features a jailhouse theme and some very clever details. Live acts nightly, with an emphasis on blues and jazz.

Thursday-Saturday 6 pm-4 am. Cover charge varies, up to 2,000 HUF.

Nyar utca 1, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Akvarium Klub

Set underneath Erzsebet ter, this is perhaps one of the biggest music venues and meeting points in downtown Budapest. You'll find a wide range of concerts there, from big Hungarian bands to international acts.

Monday and Tuesday noon-1 am, Wednesday-Saturday noon-4:30 am.

Erzsebet ter 12, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 30-860-3368
<http://www.akvariumklub.hu>

A38

One of Budapest's most interesting cultural venues and nightclubs, the A38 was once a Ukrainian barge. Now reconstructed and anchored on the Danube, it hosts a variety of cultural activities, such as film screenings, book readings, food events, DJs and all sorts of concerts. There are restaurants, bars and great views everywhere.

Daily 11 am-11 pm. Cover charge varies.

Petofi Bridge, Buda side (Buda side)
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-464-3946
<http://www.a38.hu>

Performing Arts

Budapest's performing arts are dominated by music. Not only is the quality of performance excellent, but also many of the city's venues are architectural gems, and tickets for concerts are often inexpensive.

Most companies and theaters follow a September-June calendar. The warmer months are an occasion for open-air performances.

Dance

National Dance Theater

Dance performances are held year-round, in a theater in Buda Castle.

Szinhaz utca 1-3, 1st
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-201-4407
<http://www.nemzetitancszinhaz.hu>

Hungarian National Ballet

The national ballet company performs September-June at the historic Budapest Opera House.

Ticket office open Monday-Saturday 11 am-5 pm or until the beginning of the performance,
Sunday from 4 pm until the beginning of the performance.

Andrassy ut 22, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-814-7225 for the box office
<http://www.opera.hu/company-ballet>

Music

Hungarian State Folklore Ensemble

The Hungarian State Folklore Ensemble, considered one of the best in Hungary, annually gives around 100 costumed concerts and performances of Hungarian folk music and dance.

Budai Vigado, Corvin Ter. 8
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-317-1377
<http://www.hungariakoncert.hu>

Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra

This well-established ensemble has a rich history. It's generally regarded as the second best orchestra in Hungary. Most of its concerts take place at the Bela Bartok National Concert Hall in the Muveszetek Palotaja.

Komor Marcell utca 1, 9th (office
address)
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-411-6600
<http://www.filharmonikusok.hu>

Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra

This is Hungary's oldest orchestra. Most of its concerts take place in the State Opera House.

Ticket office daily 10 am-6 pm.

Hajos utca 8-10, 6th (office address)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-555-3300

<https://www.mupa.hu/en/program/classical-music-opera-theatre/budapest-philharmonic-orchestra-2007-01-22-19-30-bbnh>

Budapest Festival Orchestra

Though a newcomer by Hungarian standards (it was formed in 1983), this ensemble is regarded as the best orchestra in the country. It was founded by Zoltan Kocsis and Istvan Fischer, Hungary's two star conductors. When it's not touring, the orchestra performs in the Bela Bartok National Concert Hall in the Muveszetek Palotaja September-June.

Komor Marcell Utca 1
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-489-4332

<http://www.bfz.hu>

Opera

Magyar Allami Operahaz

The resident company of the State Opera performs September-June, with an occasional break in December. It also performs during the annual opera and ballet festival in August.

Andrassy ut 22, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-814-7100 for the box office

<http://www.opera.hu>

Theater

National Theatre

Located some distance from the city center, the National Theatre hosts mainly Hungarian-language plays and musicals with an occasional English-language event.

Bajor Gizi Park 1, 9th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-476-6800

<http://www.nemzetiszinhas.hu>

Ticket Brokers

Ticket Express

Ticket services available throughout the city and online.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm.

Dalszinhas utca 10, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 30-505-0666

<http://www.eventim.hu>

Argos Art

Tickets for operas, concerts and other performances, via phone or online.

Hajos utca 13-15, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-302-4290

<http://www.argosart.hu>

Venues

Trafo

The Trafo House of Contemporary Arts is regarded as the best place to go to see experimental dance, spoken word, music and theater. There's also a small club in the basement, and there are occasional art exhibitions.

Open daily 4-8 pm; until 10 pm on performance days.

Liliom utca 41, 9th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-215-1600

<http://www.trafo.hu>

SYMA Event and Congress Centre

This three-building complex hosts various music and dance troupes but also is used for consumer shows and expos.

Dozsa Gyorgy ut 1, 14th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-460-1100

<http://www.syma.hu>

Papp Laszlo Budapest Sport Arena

This horseshoe-shaped 12,500-seat sports facility hosts national and international sporting events, as well as major concerts. Musical legends such as Sting and Nicki Minaj are some of the musicians who have performed there. Family events include Disney on Ice shows.

Auto parking fee 1,500 HUF per event.

2 Stefania Ut, 14th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 422-2600

<http://www.budapestarena.hu>

Operettszinhaz

Originally built in 1894 and completely restored in 2001, the Budapest Operetta and Musical Theatre presents operettas, contemporary musicals and other productions based on literary and historical works.

Nagymezo Utca 17
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-312-4866

<http://www.operettszinhaz.hu>

Muveszetek Palotaja

The newest technology went into this Palace of the Arts, bringing Hungary a state-of-the-art concert and performance hall. A place to see top theater, ballet and classical music.

Daily 10 am-6 pm.

Komor Marcell utca 1, 9th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-555-3000

<http://www.mupa.hu>

Millenaris Park

The Millenaris Park exhibition and cultural center is located inside of a former electrical factory. With several exhibition halls, a park and theater space, the emphasis is on contemporary art, music and theater.

Park open daily 6 am-11 pm. No credit cards.

Kis Rokus utca 16-20, 2nd
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-336-4000

<http://www.millenaris.hu>

Margitszigeti Szinpad

This outdoor stage on Margit Island, hosts a wide array of performances, from operas to concerts and musicals.

1007 Budapest, Margitsziget
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-340-4196

<http://www.eng.szabadter.hu>

Liszt Ferenc Zeneművészeti Egyetem

Founded in 1875 by Franz Liszt, the Liszt Music Academy teaches about 900 students annually. Frequent concerts are held in the ornate, gold-gilded concert halls.

Monday-Friday 9 am-6 pm, Saturday 9 am-1 pm.

Liszt Ferenc ter 8, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-462-4600

<http://lfze.hu/en/home>

Budapest Babszínház

The Budapest Puppet Theatre puts on entertaining puppet shows for children of all ages.

Andrassy ut 69, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-321-5200

<https://budapestbabszinhaz.hu>

Spectator Sports

Hungarians are soccer fanatics. Soccer matches draw big crowds and enthusiastic fans—a bit too enthusiastic, some would argue. You should definitely give the color of your clothing careful thought before going to a match, and be aware that rowdiness and even hooliganism are occasionally part of the spectacle.

Auto Racing

Hungaroring Grand Prix

Formula 1 racing is popular and takes place at this race track near the town of Mogyorod (just east of Budapest). The Hungarian Grand Prix is held there in late summer.

Hungaroring utca 10
Budapest, Hungary

http://www.hungaroinfo.com/formel1/index_en.htm

Horse Racing

Kincsem Park

Hungary's premier race track offers a regular schedule of trot and gallop races, and they're happy to take your bets.

Albertirsai ut 2-4, 10th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-433-0520
<http://www.kincsempark.hu>

Soccer

Ujpest FC

One of the local football clubs, Ujpest fans gather at the team's home base to cheer their district's favorite soccer team. Club colors are purple and white.

Megyeri ut 13, 4th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-231-0088
<http://www.ujpestfc.hu>

Puskas Ferenc Stadium

The nation's largest soccer stadium, with a capacity of 67,000, hosts the Hungarian national team. It also hosts concerts and various other events.

Istvanmezei u. 3-5, 14th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 471-4242
<http://www.puskasferencstadion.com>

Ferencvaros

The favorite among several local teams, Ferencvaros, also called Fradi plays at the Groupama Arena. The team colors are green and white.

Ulloi ut 129
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-455-2300
<https://www.fradi.hu>

Other Options

Laszlo Papp Budapest Sports Arena

This indoor hall that can be configured for different sporting events, including track meets.

Stefania ut 2, Budapest
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-433-2600
<https://www.budapestarena.hu>

Shopping

Budapest offers many shopping options, from malls and boutiques to local arts-and-crafts shops. Vaci utca in the city center features higher-end Hungarian and international designers, while antiques shops are clustered around Vaci utca, Falk Miksa utca and the Castle Hill quarter. Other streets worth strolling are Kossuth Lajos utca, Rakoczi ut and the ring made by Karoly korut, Muzeum korut, Szent Istvan korut, Erzsébet korut and Terez korut. Andrassy ut is home to the most exclusive (and expensive) labels, and the city-created "Fashion Street" near

Deak ter also holds many luxury shops.

Or you could head to one of the shopping malls: Westend City Center, Mammut or Duna Plaza have lots of stores. Also worth visiting is the iron-strutted Central Market Hall for knickknacks or food, but most of all for the wonderful architecture.

Hungarian porcelain makes a nice (but fragile) souvenir. Herend is the most famous type of Hungarian porcelain, but don't overlook Zsolnay, Holoahaza and Alfoldi. Also look for Ajka crystal, which has caught on abroad, and Halas lace, another national specialty.

Some packaged and precooked food items also make excellent souvenirs. Of course, there's paprika from Kalocsa and Szeged, more varieties of salami than you can imagine, and tins of pate and caviar at bargain prices. Famous Hungarian wines include the dessert wine Tokaji Aszu, as well as red and white wines from the Szekszard, Balaton, Eger, Sopron and Villany regions. Unicum, a bitter herb liqueur in a characteristic dark green, spherical bottle, is called the national drink, although that honor should really go to *palinka*, the Hungarian fruit brandy. It can be made from plums, apricots or other fruits, and it is strong stuff.

Be aware that to take works of art or antiques out of Hungary, you will need to fill out special paperwork. Be sure to ask your dealer for these forms when making a purchase.

Shopping Hours: Stores are generally open Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm and Saturday 10 am-1 pm. Smaller shops sometimes have longer hours. Shopping malls stay open late and, along with a few other shops, are open on Sunday.

Antique Stores

Nagyhazi Gallery and Auction House

Budapest's largest antiques store features many paintings and works of art.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm.

Balaton utca 8, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-475-2090
<http://www.nagyhazi.hu>

Darius Antiques

This shop specializes in Biedermeier furniture, among others.

Monday-Friday 10 am-5:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-1 pm.

Falk Miksa utca 24-26, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-311-2603
<http://www.dariusantik.hu/antiques>

Bookstores

Libri Konyvpalota

This store has a large selection of books, including a pretty good, if pricey, English-language section. Internet access also available, and there is a coffee house on the second floor. There are other locations around the city.

Monday-Friday 10 am-7:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-3 pm.

Rakoczi ut 12, 7th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-267-4844
<http://www.libri.hu>

Irok Boltja

This store is the center of literary Budapest. The selection is mostly in Hungarian, but it's a good place to find English translations of some of the more interesting novels and literature of Hungary. Sip tea from the always-on urn while you browse.

Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 11 am-7 pm.

Andrassy ut 45, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-322-1645

<http://www.irokboltja.hu>

Bestsellers

This is the best bookstore in town for English-language books. Also offers German- and French-language books, and newspapers from France and Germany.

Monday-Friday 9 am-6:30 pm, Saturday 11 am-6 pm, Sunday noon-6 pm.

Oktober 6 utca 11, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-312-1295

<http://www.bestsellers.hu>

Atlantisz Book Island

A pretty good selection of English-language books at low prices.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-2 pm.

Anker Koz 1-3, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-267-6258

<http://www.atlantiszkiado.hu>

Alexandra Konyvaruhaz

A modern, multilevel book emporium that also sells DVDs. There are several locations.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm, Sunday 10 am-8 pm.

Nyugati ter 7, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-514-4324

<http://www.alexandra.hu>

Galleries

Vintage Gallery

This gallery shows modern and contemporary Hungarian artists, and also has a nice selection of art books.

Tuesday-Friday 2-6 pm.

Magyar utca 26, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-337-0584

<http://www.vintage.hu>

Kieselbach Gallery and Auction House

The Kieselbach is Hungary's premier place to buy art. It has more than 15,000 paintings in its archives, some of which are shown in the gallery. If your budget doesn't run to an original Csontvary, you can buy art books and postcards.

Szent Istvan korut 5, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-269-3148

<http://www.kieselbach.hu>

Markets

Szimpla Farmers Market

Szimpla is a happening bar by night, but on Sunday mornings it comes to life with local produce. Local farmers specializing in organic goods or gourmet ingredients fill up the bar, from artisanal cheeses to homemade jams, with a backdrop of live folk or jazz music.

Sunday 9 am-2 pm.

Kertesz utca 14, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 20-423-1296

<http://en.szimpla.hu/farmers-market>

Nagy Vasarcsarnok

The city's grand market hall was opened in 1897 and renovated in 1996. Definitely worth a visit for shopping and sightseeing. The first floor is a fresh produce market; the upper level has a snack bar with Hungarian specialties, as well as an array of Hungarian souvenirs. It's a good spot to pick up some paprika: In September and October the quantity and variety of the bountiful harvest is a sight to behold. Folk art, such as dolls, pottery and embroidered linens, is also available.

Monday 6 am-5 pm, Tuesday-Friday 6 am-6 pm, Saturday 6 am-3 pm.

Vamhaz korut 1-3, 9th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 366-3300

<http://www.piaconline.hu>

Ecseri Flea Market

Antiques, furniture, musical instruments and clothing—you can find anything and everything there. The collectors go early on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings, while Saturday is usually the best day for casual browsing.

Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm, Saturday 5 am-3 pm, Sunday 8 am-1 pm. Cash only.

Nagykorosi ut 156, 19th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 348-3200

<http://www.piaconline.hu>

Shopping Areas

Westend City Center

The city's largest mall, and arguably the most popular with its more than 400 shops, Westend features a multiplex cinema, supermarket, disco and rooftop garden.

Daily 8 am-11 pm.

Vaci ut 1-3, 6th (next to the Nyugati train station)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-238-7777

<http://www.westend.hu>

Mammut I and II

The 330-store mall has two parts, with a bridge connecting them. Inside, besides lots of shops and restaurants, are a multiplex cinema, health club and bowling alley.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-6 pm.

Lovohaz utca 2-6, 2nd
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-345-8333

<http://www.mammut.hu>

Duna Plaza

This shopping complex also has a multiplex cinema, ice-skating rink, bowling alley, gym and post office.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-9 pm, Sunday 10 am-7 pm.

Vaci ut 178, 13th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-465-1666
<http://www.dunaplaza.hu>

Specialty Stores

Zsolnay Markabolt

This is a good shop for Zsolnay porcelain.

Daily 10 am-10 pm.

Andrassy ut 39, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-318-7093
<http://www.zsolnay.hu>

Tisza Cipo

The Tisza shoe company was a communist standby that disappeared when the system changed. Now it's back, reinvented as a fashionably retro-style icon. Sneakers, bags and sweatshirts, all with the characteristic "T" symbol.

Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-4 pm.

Karoly korut 1, 7th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-266-3055
<http://www.tiszacipo.hu>

Rozsavolgyi

This shop has an abundant selection of classical music recordings and musical scores.

Monday-Friday 5-10 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-10 pm.

Szervita ter 5, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

MesterPorta Galeria

Mester Porta stocks authentic hand-produced folk arts and crafts from artists from throughout Hungary.

Tuesday-Saturday 10:30 am-6 pm.

Corvin ter 7, 1st
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 232-5614
<http://www.facebook.com/mesterporta.galeria>

Katti Zoob

This Hungarian designer combines a modern, sleek approach with traditional women's wear for a new and unusual look. She's making a name for herself outside Hungary, but this is the best place to see her designs.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm.

Szent Istvan korut 17, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-301-0260
<http://www.kattizoob.hu>

Herendi Porcelain

Several shops across Budapest sell this renowned porcelain collectible, including the Hadik Brand Shop at Szentharomsag utca 5 in the Castle District. Herendi Porcelain is also sold at the Belvedere Brand Shop at Andrassy ut 16, 6th.

Daily 10 am-7 pm. .

Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-225-1051

<http://www.herend.com>

Folkart Centrum

Go there for souvenir-style Hungarian folk art and handicrafts, including dolls, pottery and embroidered items.

Daily 10 am-7 pm.

Vaci utca 58, 5th

Budapest, Hungary

Bortarsasag

This store is one of a chain of wine shops. The wine selection isn't huge, but the vintages have been carefully selected—every wine in this store is a winner, and the knowledgeable staff make this the best place to buy wine. Located at the foot of the Castle district (near Szell Kalman ter).

Monday-Friday 10 am-7 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm.

Batthyany utca 59, 1st

Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-212-2569

<http://www.bortarsasag.hu>

Ajka Crystal

With four locations in Budapest, you are sure to find just what you want in lead-crystal wine goblets, vases, water pitchers and other pieces in striking jewel tones.

Monday-Friday 10 am-6 pm, Saturday 10 am-1 pm.

Jozsef Attila utca 7, 5th

Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-212-0505

<http://www.ajka-crystal.hu>

Itinerary

Day Trips

To the **Buda Hills**. Although these scenic, woodsy hills are technically inside the city limits, you'll need at least a half day to explore them. One possible route: From Varosmajor, take the Fogaskerekú Vasút (cogwheel train) up to Szechenyi-Hegy (*hegy* means hill). From Szechenyi-Hegy, catch the Gyermekvasút—the narrow-gauge Children's Railway is staffed by enthusiastic children (except the driver). Get off at Janos-Hegy, the highest point in Budapest—it's a spectacular vantage point. From there you can take the Libego (chairlift) down to Zugligeti út and return to Széll Kálmán tér via bus.

To **Szentendre**. Once a Serbian village, Szentendre became an artists' colony in the early 20th century. With its hilly, winding streets and brightly colored buildings, the village is charming. It's 11 mi/19 km north of Budapest on the beautiful Danube Bend. It's known as the City of Museums, although they are small collections.

Worth seeing is the Pozarevacka Serbian Orthodox Church and the Open Air Village Museum. To get to Szentendre from Budapest, you can take the HEV suburban railway from the Batthyány tér metro station (about 45 minutes). <http://www.hungary-tourist-guide.com/szentendre.html#mainattractions>.

To **Godollo**. The royal palace in Godollo, about 18 mi/30 km northeast of Budapest, was a royal residence for Austro-Hungarian emperors. It's also the largest baroque residence in Hungary. You can appreciate its grandeur by strolling the well-kept grounds. April-October daily 10 am-6 pm; November-March daily 10 am-4 pm (until 5 pm Saturday and Sunday). 2,600 HUF adults. Phone 36-28-410-124.

To get there from Budapest, start from Ors Vezér tére (the Pest terminus of the red metro line) and take the HEV suburban railway to Godollo (get off at the Szabadság tér stop). <http://www.kiralykastely.hu/index.php?mid=121>.

To **Visegrad**. Perched on a hill overlooking a bend of the Danube, the castle of Visegrad is an unforgettable stop. A royal castle from the 14th century, it was a favored residence of Hungary's great King Matthias Corvinus. In the summer, there are often mock-medieval games for children, and a dry bobsled run is a short walk away. Tuesday-Sunday 9 am-5 pm. Castle tower closed October-April. 1,700 HUF adults; 400 HUF additional fee for tower entrance. <http://www.visegradmuzeum.hu>.

Take the HEV to Nagymaros (45 minutes) and then the ferry across the river, or take the hydrofoil the whole way. It leaves from Vigadó tér in Pest and takes one hour. Phone 1-318-1223.

Local Tours

Giraffe Hop On Hop Off

The two-hour "hop on, hop off" city bus tour is available in 22 languages. Tours leave from Andrassy út 3.

English-language tours depart approximately every half-hour starting at 8:30 am and ending with the last tour at 5:30 pm (depending on the season). 6,000 HUF adults.

Andrassy út 2, 6th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-374-7050
<http://www.citytour.hu>

Beyond Budapest

This tour company focuses on introducing visitors (as well as Hungarians) to the 8th district and the old town of Pest in the 5th district. Once the city's most dangerous neighborhood, it is now an up-and-coming hip area full of bars and galleries. Call or e-mail to make a reservation.

Tours start at 3,500 HUF per person. .

Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 20-332-5489
<http://beyondbudapest.hu>

Absolute Walking Tours

Caves, wine, night strolls, communism: A variety of themed, personalized walking tours take in the city's main attractions. The standard tours are in English, with private tours in other languages available on request. Call to make a reservation or check the website for points and times of departure.

Fees vary.

Lazar utca 16, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-269-3843

<http://www.absolutetours.com>

Dining

Dining Overview

Hungarian cuisine encompasses a great variety, and is one of Europe's lesser-known cuisines (making its discovery all the more exciting). Hungarian food relies heavily on pork, but game meats such as venison and wild boar are also popular. Sour cream, paprika, cabbage, crackling and goose liver are also essential elements of many dishes.

In Budapest, you'll still find traditionally rich and heavy Hungarian dishes such as *gulyas* (a soup) and *porkolt* (a stew served over noodles or rice). You'll also find such standard dishes as roast goose or duck with cabbage, *paprikascsirke* (paprika chicken) and stuffed cabbage.

Hungary has many rivers, if no sea coast, and *ponty* (carp) is popular, as is traditional *halaszle* (fish soup). But there are also plenty of ethnic restaurants—Italian is especially popular.

Coffeehouses are an important part of Hungarian life, as are pastries such as *Eszterhazy torta* or *Dobos torta*. Coffee is espresso, served straight or with hot milk (*tejes kave*), or diluted with a little hot water (*hosszu kave*). In bakeries, you'll find the savory biscuits called *pogacs* that are a part of everyday Hungarian life, as well as bread and rolls baked fresh every day.

You should also sample Hungarian wine. Try the red and white wines from the Villany, Balaton and Szekszard regions, as well as rich reds from the Eger region. The local sparkling wine (*pezsgo*) is also very good. Of course, the most famous Hungarian wine is the golden Tokaj (particularly the Tokaji Aszu)—the 6-Puttonyos is the sweetest, and 1993 and 1999 are excellent years.

When dining out, be wary of restaurants that don't list prices on their foreign-language menu—some places can and will charge whatever they want. You should also remember to double-check the bill before you pay.

In restaurants, breakfast is generally served 10 am-noon, lunch noon-2 pm and dinner 7-10 or 11 pm, though most restaurants stay open throughout the day.

Expect to pay within these general guidelines for a single dinner without tax, tip or drinks: \$ = less than 2,000 HUF; \$\$ = 2,000 HUF-3,500 HUF; \$\$\$ = 3,501 HUF-5,000 HUF; \$\$\$\$ = more than 5,000 HUF.

Local & Regional

Tigris Etterem

Tigris serves excellent traditional Hungarian cuisine with a modern touch, along with the wines from the Gere Winery in Villany.

Monday-Saturday noon-midnight. Reservations recommended. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Merleg utca 10, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-317-3715

<http://www.tigrisrestaurant.hu>

New York Cafe

This turn-of-the-century cafe played host to Budapest's literati—in fact, some of the country's most influential writers used its upper floor offices to publish magazines. The multilevel, Renaissance-style space, filled with painted frescoes, bronze statuary and lots of marble, is a feast for all senses. Hungarian classics such as goulash, fishermen's soup and paprika chicken are on the menu, as is a delectable array of desserts, including Esterhazy cake.

Daily 8 am-midnight. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Erzsebet krt. 9-11, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-886-6167

<http://www.newyorkcafe.hu>

Menza

Trendy, retro-style Menza, with lots of outdoor seating in the warm months, has become a Budapest favorite. Try the three-course daily lunch specials or the daily specials scrawled on the chalkboard.

Daily 10 am-midnight. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Liszt Ferenc ter 2, 6th (on the corner of
Andrassy ut)

Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-413-1482

<http://www.menza.co.hu>

Klassz Bisztro

This pleasant, bistro-style eatery is one of the best places for tasting Hungarian wine. Its brief menu and wine list are a refreshing alternative to the often lengthy ones found elsewhere in Budapest.

Monday-Saturday 11:30 am-11 pm, Sunday 11:30 am-11 pm. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Andrassy ut 41, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-413-1545

<http://www.klasszetterem.hu>

Kehli Vendeglo

The menu descriptions—taken from one of Hungary's great writers, Gyula Krudy—are as good as the food. Try the *hortobagyi palacsinta* (meat-filled pancakes with a savory sauce).

Daily for lunch and dinner; bar open until midnight. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Mokus utca 22 Third
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 250-4241

<http://www.kehli.hu>

Karpatia

The food is old Hungarian with a Transylvanian twist, and the menu focuses on old-time recipes for lamb, veal, poultry and game. The spacious, elegant interior has high vaulted ceilings and traditional furnishings. There's an extensive wine list. Gypsy musicians and dancers complete the picture, and the summer garden is a delight.

Monday-Saturday 11 am-11 pm, Sunday 5-11 pm. \$\$\$.

Ferenciek tere 7-8, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-317-3596

<http://www.karpatia.hu>

Gundel

This popular restaurant serves traditional Hungarian dishes in either the dining room or on the terrace in summer. Try the grilled goose liver with a glass of Tokaji Aszu or a bowl of a truly refined *gulyas* soup. A less formal buffet-style Sunday brunch is recommended, and there are three-course lunch specials daily.

Monday-Thursday noon-11 pm, Friday and Saturday noon-midnight, Sunday 7-11 pm.
Reservations required. Men are required to wear jackets. \$\$\$\$.

Gundel Karoly utca 4, 14th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-889-8111

<http://www.gundel.hu>

Első Pesti Retesház

In the historic district, footsteps from the famous St. Stephen's Basilica, lies this gem whose hospitable staff is ready to welcome diners to experience a world of strudel. Elegantly furnished, there are delightful tables for two by the window nooks that serve as a great perch from which to watch the bustling pedestrians. The *hortobágyi husos retes* stuffed with spicy chicken served in a creamy paprika sauce is divine, but the classic cherry strudel is the house specialty. An excellent selection of starters, mains and desserts with an extensive wine list that includes Hungary's esteemed Tokaji Aszu dessert wine makes the pickings fierce.

Daily 9 am-11 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$\$.

22 Október 6 ut, 2nd
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-428-0134

<http://www.reteshaz.com>

Cafe Kor

Cafe Kor is a longtime favorite bistro, which serves consistently top-notch cuisine. The menu combines Hungarian with Continental, and a long list of daily specials rounds out the menu.

Monday-Saturday 10 am-10 pm. Reservations required. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. No credit cards.

Sas utca 17, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-311-0053

<https://www.facebook.com/cafekorrestaurant>

Borkonyha

An astounding wine list—more than 200 wines by the glass—is the hallmark of this Michelin-starred treat not far from St. Stephen's Basilica. The menu features modern interpretations of Hungarian classics such as veal with pearled barley and kale, or a horseradish cream-topped venison roast. Sit on the terrace when the weather's nice.

Monday-Saturday for lunch and dinner. \$\$\$\$.

Sas Utica 3, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-266-0835

<http://borkonyha.hu>

Bagolyvár

The hook is that the restaurant is staffed entirely by women—even the Hungarian recipes are gathered from grandmothers rather than famous chefs. It's a cozy, homey place with a tranquil terrace and shares a kitchen with the famous Gundel.

Daily noon-10 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Gundel Karoly utca 4, 14th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-889-8127

<http://www.bagolyvar.com>

21 Magyar Vendéglo

Located in the Castle District, this restaurant focuses on all things Hungarian—from the homemade fruit syrups and spirits to the modern Hungarian cuisine it serves.

Daily noon-midnight. Reservations required. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Fortuna 21, 1st
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-202-2113

<http://www.21restaurant.hu>

100 Eves Etterem

This restaurant, steeped in old Budapest tradition and atmosphere, specializes in re-creating old-fashioned Hungarian dishes. It has a wonderful selection of Hungarian wines, and musicians perform regularly.

Daily noon-midnight. \$\$\$.

Piarista utca 2, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-230-0329

<http://www.szazevesetterem.hu>

Cuisines

Asian

Salaam Bombay

Indian fusion cuisine in the heart of Budapest.

Daily noon-11 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$\$. No credit cards.

Merleg utca 6, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

French

Pavillon de Paris

This is a pleasant, affordable and consistently good French restaurant. Try the lamb with figs or the steak frites.

Monday-Saturday noon-11 pm. Reservations recommended, as seating is limited. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Fo utca 20, 1st (across the street from
the French Institute)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-225-0174

<http://www.pavillondeparis.hu>

Fusion

Restaurant Hemingway

This trendy but good restaurant and bar serves creative Hungarian-inspired international cuisine. Outdoor dining available in summer.

Monday-Saturday noon-midnight, Sunday noon-4 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Kosztolanyi Deszo ter 2, 11th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-381-0522

<http://www.hemingway-etterem.hu>

Bock Bisztro

This highly sought-after bistro from Jozsef Bock, one of Hungary's premier winemakers, features Mediterranean-influenced food and decor. The wine is excellent.

Daily noon-midnight. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Erzsebet korut 43-49 Seventh (attached
to the Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal, a
lavishly restored edifice)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-321-0340

<http://www.bockbisztro.hu>

Baraka

This restaurant's emphasis is on the best fresh foods and meats, highlighting Asian ingredients, fish and seafood. Vegetarian dishes available, too.

Daily for lunch and dinner. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$.

1051 Dorottya St., 6th (inside the Hotel
Andrassy)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-200-0817

<http://www.barakarestaurant.hu>

Greek

Dionysos Greek Restaurant

Besides a cozy and lively atmosphere, this restaurant has one of the best terraces in the city for a view of Gellert Hill. Sample an assortment of the Greek specialties with the warm and cold starters plate, or go for the grilled fish on skewers.

Daily noon-midnight. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Belgrad rakpart 16, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-318-1222

<http://www.dionysos.hu>

Italian

Marxim

This communist-themed restaurant serves patrons "Gulag" pizza and beer in wire-separated booths. Big tables and casual, party atmosphere.

Monday-Thursday noon-1 am, Friday and Saturday noon-2 pm and 6 pm-1 am. \$-\$\$\$. No credit cards.

Kis Rokus utca 23, 2nd
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-316-0231

<http://marximpub.hu>

Fausto's Osteria

This elegant restaurant is the little-sister restaurant to Fausto's. It attracts a business crowd for its lunch special. More than 70 different Italian and Hungarian wines.

Monday-Saturday noon-11 pm. Reservations required for dinner. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Dohany utca 5
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-269-6806

<http://fausto.hu/en/osteria-menu>

Fausto's

Upscale restaurant that serves Italian and international cuisine, including some more unusual dishes such as lasagna with deer ragout. The best (and most expensive) place for pasta in the city.

Monday-Friday noon-11 pm, Saturday 6-11 pm. Reservations recommended. \$\$\$-\$\$\$\$.

Dohany utca 3, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 30-589-1813

<http://www.fausto.hu>

Mediterranean

Ypsilon Cafe

A Mediterranean-inspired menu big on eggplant and feta with hints of Italy's famous spaghetti, this fusion restaurant blends Hungarian dishes, too. Located by two stadiums (the Papp Stadium Arena and Puskas Ferenc Arena), this renovated eatery provides an extensive cocktail menu with a good wine selection and even has an enclosed terrace for private dining.

Monday-Friday for breakfast, lunch and dinner; Saturday and Sunday for lunch and dinner (till 4 am Friday and Saturday). \$\$-\$\$\$.

1 Stefania ut, 14th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-468-3357

<http://www.ypsiloncafe.hu>

Dobrumba

This Mediterranean restaurant in the Jewish Quarter is a real crowd pleaser, offering tasty meze ranging from lamb burgers to Moroccan tagine and many vegetarian options. Try the golden beets marinated in cranberry juice as a starter.

Daily noon-midnight. \$\$.

Dob Utica 5, 7th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-194-0049
<http://www.dobrumba.hu>

Spanish

Vicky Barcelona

Decked out in a mix between classic Spanish and industrial chic, this tapas bar in the city center carries a range of Catalan and Spanish inspired bites with a gourmet twist. The elegant locale in the trendy Gozsdu Udvar is great for a glass of Spanish wine and some tasty snacks.

Monday-Wednesday 5 pm-3 am, Thursday-Sunday noon-3 am.

Dob utca 16, 7th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 30-465-9505
<http://www.facebook.com/vickybarcelonatapas>

Vegetarian

Napfenyes Etterem

Pizza, soups, salads and main dishes big on French, Italian and Hungarian cuisine are part of this eclectic vegetarian menu. Try these Hungarian cabbage rolls stuffed with jasmine rice, yogurt and spicy cabbage chunks.

Monday-Sunday noon-10:30 pm.

Ferenciek tere 2
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-313-5555
<http://www.napfenyesetterem.hu>

Cafes & Tearooms

Gerbeaud

This cafe was founded in 1848 and patronized by the social elite. Now it's a requisite tourist stop, which makes its prices somewhat higher than other cafes, but it is still a treat to visit.

Daily 9 am-9 pm. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Vorosmarty ter 7, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-429-9000
<http://www.gerbeaud.hu>

Central Cafe and Restaurant

First opened in 1887, the cafe has been restored to its former glory. It offers an expanded menu suitable for a light lunch or dinner. Try one of its homemade dill *pogacs*, a savory Hungarian biscuit.

Daily 8 am-midnight. \$\$-\$\$\$.

Karolyi Mihaly utca 9, 5th
Budapest, Hungary
Phone: 1-266-2110
<http://www.centraalkavehaz.hu>

Cafe Ruszwurm

This is one of the oldest *cukraszda* (pastry shops) in the city, founded in 1822. Two small rooms make for limited seating.

Daily 10 am-7 pm. \$. No credit cards.

Szentharomsag utca 7, 1st (near Matyas
Templom on Castle Hill)
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-375-5284

<http://www.ruszwurm.hu>

Cafe Muvesz

This is a nice spot for afternoon coffee and cake or an evening drink. Sit outside and watch the pedestrians on beautiful Andrassy ut. It's also the perfect place to go before or after an opera performance.

Monday-Saturday 8 am-8 pm, Sunday 9 am-9 pm. \$.

Andrassy ut 29, 6th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 343-3544

<http://www.muveszkavehaz.hu>

Cafe Europa

This cafe has a bustling and urban atmosphere, in contrast to the lingering pace of many cafes.

Daily 8:30 am-8 pm. \$. No credit cards.

Szent Istvan korut 7-9, 5th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-312-2362

<http://www.europakavehaz.hu>

Auguszt Cukraszda

Five generations of pastry chefs have manned the Auguszt shops, and the results are unsurprisingly delicious. Stop by for coffee and *svajci kifli*. There are three locations in Budapest: Auguszt Paviion, Barackfa utca 3, 12th; Auguszt Belvaros (downtown), Kossuth Lajos utca 14-16, 5th; and Auguszt Cukraszda, Feny utca 8, 2nd.

Shops generally open Monday-Saturday 10 am-6 pm. .

Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 316-3817

<http://www.augusztcukraszda.hu>

Angelika

A local haunt on the Buda side, this coffee house located in the back of an old Baroque church lives up to its namesake and serves heavenly desserts, snacks, and lunches, as well as signature coffees laden with plenty of whipped cream.

Daily April-October 9 am-noon; November-March 9 am-11 pm. \$-\$\$.

Batthyany ter 7, 1st
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 225-1653

<http://www.angelikacafe.hu>

Continental

Zeller Bistro

Set in a cozy candlelit cellar, Zeller offers a range of delicious dishes inspired by a mix of Hungarian and continental tastes with a modern interpretation.

Monday-Saturday noon-11 pm. Reservations highly recommended.

Izabella utca 36, 7th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 30-651-0880

<http://www.zellerbistro.hu>

Costes

Hungary's first Michelin-starred restaurant offers exceptional service, a minimalistic atmosphere, and a variety of tasting menus and wine pairing offers.

Wednesday-Sunday 6:30 pm-midnight. \$\$\$\$.

Raday utca 4, 9th
Budapest, Hungary

Phone: 1-219-0696

<http://www.costes.hu>

Security

Personal Safety

Budapest is comparable to other European capitals in terms of safety. Violent crime is rare, but commonsense precautions are advised. The U.S. Embassy in Budapest has an advisory listing safety and precautions, which is updated regularly. The most frequent crimes involving foreign visitors are pickpocketing in crowded areas such as the subway, in buses and in the city center, and car thefts. Always park your car in a safe place, such as a garage, and order a taxi by phone (or use the official taxi rank at the airport).

After dark, exercise caution when visiting poorly lit areas. Areas outside the city center, including Margit Island, have fewer people after dark and therefore pose a greater risk. A more common danger is getting ripped off: Keep an eye on your taxi meter and take a sharp look at your bill.

Take precautions in restaurants, check your bill carefully, and don't ever order anything that doesn't have a price listed.

Do not change money on the black market.

In case of a problem, dial 107 to contact the police; dial 105 for a fire. For any emergency, dial 112. Also note that a tourist hotline is available by calling 1-438-8080.

For the latest information, contact your country's travel-advisory agency.

Health

No vaccinations are required to enter the country. Tap water and food are safe to consume, and general sanitation is good. Most doctors, particularly younger ones, speak English. For a general emergency, dial 112. For an ambulance, call 104.

Medical advice and assistance for travelers is available from the FirstMed Centers in Budapest. 14 Hattyu ut, 1st. Phone 1-224-9090. <http://www.firstmedcenters.com>.

As in many countries in the area, one in 10 ticks in Hungary carries Lyme disease, so take precautions when hiking. Tuck your long trousers into socks, and use insect repellents.

For the latest information, contact your country's health-advisory agency.

Disabled Advisory

Although Budapest is becoming more accessible for the disabled, access to many buildings can be difficult. More museums have become accessible, and many buses can handle those with special needs. Some metro trains have lifts available.

The new trams are easily wheelchair accessible, but crossing busy streets in Budapest often requires taking stairs down an underpass to the other side. Most hotels offer at least one or two wheelchair-accessible rooms.

For up-to-date information on transportation services, contact the National Federation of Disabled Persons Associations (MEOSZ), San Marco utca 76, 3rd, Budapest. Phone 1-388-5529. <http://www.meosz.hu>.

Facts

Dos & Don'ts

Do try traditional Hungarian food such as beef stew (*marhaporkolt tarhonyava*), which is usually served in a spicy paprika sauce with noodles (*tarhonya*).

Don't let lack of language skills deter you from experiencing local specialties such as the open-air markets and the bath houses.

Do walk up Andrássy út from Deák tér to the city park, and walk along the ring road from Blaha Lujza tér to Margit Hid. It's a great way to see some of the city's best architecture and get a glimpse of real city life.

Do shop at flea markets for bargains on traditional folk crafts including fabrics, wooden articles and ceramics. The quality of the items sold there can be very good.

Don't skip the great view—it's a hike up to the top of Gellert Hill, but the panoramic views from the Citadel are wonderful.

Do learn a few phrases of Hungarian before visiting Budapest. Even though many people speak English and other languages in the city, it is always appreciated when foreigners know a few key phrases. "Good day" is *jó napot* and "thank you" is *köszönöm*.

Do use Budapest's metro system. Continental Europe's oldest subway still sparkles, is tidy and gets you from Point A to Point B efficiently and cheaply.

Don't order salad separately and then eat it first—traditional Hungarian dishes are accompanied by *saláta* or *csalamade* and are eaten in tandem with the main meal.

Geostats

Passport/Visa Requirements: Citizens of Canada and the U.S. need passports but not visas for stays less than 90 days. Reconfirm travel document requirements with your carrier before departure.

Population: 1,756,000.

Languages: Hungarian; German, English and Russian are also spoken, especially in tourist areas.

Predominant Religions: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Eastern Orthodox.

Time Zone: 1 hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (+1 GMT). Daylight Saving Time is observed from the end of March to the end of October.

Voltage Requirements: 220 volts. 50 Hz.

Telephone Codes: 36, country code; 1, Budapest city code; 06, cell phone and intercity phone; 20, 30, 70, cell phone codes (depending on carrier);

Money

Currency Exchange

The forint (HUF) is the official currency of Hungary.

The use of credit cards—including Visa, MasterCard, Diners Club and American Express—is commonplace.

ATMs are abundant in the city center. Withdrawing Hungarian forints from an ATM with an ATM card or credit card is convenient, and the exchange rates are decent and consistent. Exchange offices do not usually charge a commission, but their rates can vary.

You can also exchange currency at banks, such as Raiffeisen Bank, which is located at Akadémia utca 6 (phone 1-484-8484).

Do not change money on the black market—it's illegal and dangerous.

Taxes

A standard value-added tax of 27%, or a reduced rate of 5% or 18%, is included in the price of all goods, depending on the type of purchase.

With a little paperwork, non-EU citizens can obtain a tax refund for purchases of more than 54,001 HUF in a single store during a single day. To do this, you need to present several items to the VAT refund officer at the airport before departure to get a refund: the article you purchased, the receipt, a refund form (which must be picked up at the place of purchase), and your passport and ticket. Note that only unused articles are eligible for a refund. If everything is in order, the VAT refund officer will give you your refund. (For your own convenience, see the VAT officer before checking your bags and have your purchases in an easy-to-reach place.)

Private VAT refund services, located at the airport, will give you an immediate refund minus a fee, which is usually a percentage of the refund. You can also get cash refunds in forints (minus a service fee) before departing Hungary from the IBUSZ travel agencies at or at other border-crossing points. *Note:* Tax refunds can't be claimed on antiques or works of art. For more information contact Global Blue. Phone 1-411-0157. <http://www.global-blue.com>.

Tipping

A service fee is increasingly being added to restaurant bills, so watch your bill closely. Tip servers 10%-15%, and try to include the tip in the total amount when settling the tab—or else give it directly to the server rather than leaving the money on the table. Tip cab drivers about 10%.

Weather

Budapest's climate is temperate. However, there can be big temperature differences among the four seasons. Generally speaking, December-February are the coldest months (average temperature in January is 27 F/-3 C), and July and August are the hottest (average temperature in July is 85 F/30 C). Spring and fall are the ideal times to visit, with daily highs in the 60s F/15-20 C.

What to Wear

Hungary has a temperate climate with four distinct seasons. A warm coat is always advisable in winter, and a light coat is a good idea in summer.

Casual dress is acceptable in most situations, although upscale restaurants may require a coat and tie for men. Opera and theater visitors sometimes don evening wear, but semiformal dress is most common. Conservative suits are the business norm for men and women.

Communication

Telephone

Almost everyone in Hungary uses a cell phone. The three dominant companies are Telenor (prefix 620), T-Mobile (prefix 630) and Vodafone (prefix 670). Reception is excellent, even in the metro, and you can use your phone most anywhere.

Most public pay phones take phone cards that can be purchased at newsstands; however, there are very few public phones remaining. To place direct international calls from within Hungary, dial 00, followed by the country code, city code and local number. To call between cities, dial 6; wait for a second dial tone and enter the city code followed by the number. To charge long-distance calls to a credit card, you must go through an operator. For directory assistance in English, dial 198 (domestic) or 199 (international).

To call a local Budapest number from within the city, omit the 1 and dial the number direct.

To call a Hungarian cell phone number from a landline, dial the prefix followed by the number. To call two cell-phone numbers on the same network, dial the number directly without the prefix. To call two cell-phone numbers on different networks, dial the number excluding "6" (but enter the rest of the prefix plus the number).

Internet Access

Internet cafes abound in Budapest—you'll find the greatest density in the fifth and sixth districts, and each big shopping mall provides web access. Added services and rates are competitive across the city. Wireless internet access is also easy to find at many restaurants, cafes, hotels and public areas. A list of available Wi-Fi hot spots in Budapest can be found at <http://www.wificafespots.com/wifi/city/HU--Budapest>.

Vist@NetCafe

This convenient, popular internet cafe is located near the Nyugati train station. Daily 24 hours. 500 HUF for one hour. Vaci utca 6, 13th.Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-320-4332. <http://vistanetcafe.com/vistanetcafe-internet-cafe-budapest-en>.

Libri Konyvpalota

This chain of bookstores also has computers with internet connections. Monday-Friday 10 am-7:30 pm, Saturday 10 am-6 pm. Rakoczi ut 12, 7th.Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-267-4844. <http://www.libri.hu>.

Electric Cafe

Services are available for CDs and scanning. Daily 9 am-midnight. 300 HUF for one hour. 37 Dohany ut, 7th.Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-413-1803. <http://www.electriccafe.hu>.

Mail & Package Services

Mailing letters and packages from post offices in Budapest is safe and relatively speedy. Also, all post offices work with Visa and MasterCard credit cards and American Express traveler's checks to allow travelers to access cash from these banking establishments. Most post offices are open Monday-Friday 8 am-4 pm. Phone 1-421-7296. <http://www.posta.hu>.

Magyar Posta Zrt

There are two conveniently located branches of the Hungarian postal service that have extended service hours. Nyugati (Western) Train Station is open Monday-Friday 9 am-8 pm, Saturday 8 am-6 pm, Terez korut 51, 6th, Budapest. Kalman Boulevard 12-14 (9th) is open Monday-Friday 10 am-8 pm, Saturday and Sunday 10 am-2 pm. Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-421-7296. <http://www.posta.hu>.

Newspapers & Magazines

The Budapest Times (<http://www.budapesttimes.hu>) and the *Budapest Business Journal* (<http://www.bbj.hu>) are local English-language news sources that can be purchased at newsstands. Both offer detailed information on current news, activities and events in the city.

Funzine (<http://www.funzine.hu>) is a free English-language entertainment magazine available biweekly, and *Time Out Budapest* is available monthly. Online publication *Best of Budapest* (<http://www.bestofbudapest.com>) lists dining, accommodation, entertainment and local events.

Transportation

Budapest is a large but manageable city. We recommend taking the metro for longer distances and walking for shorter ones. We also recommend two tram routes: Tram 4 or 6 loops around much of the inner city and crosses Margit Bridge in the north and Petofi Bridge in the south. Tram 2 travels along the river on the Pest side, giving you good views of Buda. Take advantage of the various lifts to get up or down Buda's hills, such as the Budavari Siklo (funicular railway) at Castle Hill.

Air

All passenger planes land at Budapest Airport (BUD), known as the Liszt Ferenc International Airport, which is 10 mi/16 km east of the city center. All flights fly in and out of Terminal 2. Phone 1-296-7000. <http://www.bud.hu>.

Connecting Transportation

Best way:

If you're traveling alone, take the Airport Minibus (phone 1-550-0000), a shared-ride service that will deliver you anywhere in Budapest. For information and tickets, go to any of the Wi-Fi-accessible minibus shuttle offices located in the terminal (open daily 24 hours). A one-way ticket to the city center and hotels costs 3,900 HUF. The bus will depart when it has enough travelers headed in the same direction. <https://www.minibud.hu>.

If you're traveling with a group, a taxi may be more cost-efficient and convenient. A taxi ride into the city center costs approximately 7,200 HUF. https://www.bud.hu/en/passengers/transport/airport_transfer_and_other_services/taxi.

Other options:

A direct city bus service, Bus 200E, departs from Terminal 2 every eight to 20 minutes for the Kobanya Kispest metro station. From there, take the M3 blue line into the city. Total travel time is about 35 minutes. Tickets can be purchased at the airport's post office, from vending machines at the bus stop or from the bus driver, and cost 350 HUF (450 HUF if purchased from the bus driver). <http://www.bkk.hu>.

Several rental car companies have counters in the arrivals hall. They're generally open daily 8 am-9 pm.

Bus

Volanbusz

This company provides domestic and international bus service from five bus stations in the city. Buses for international and long-distance destinations leave from the Nepliget station; buses for Batorbagy, Erd, Szazhalombatta and the surrounding area leave from Etele ter; buses to the region east of the Danube bend leave from the Stadion station; buses to Dorog, Pilisvorosvar, and the surrounding area leave from Arpad Hid; and buses to the Zsambeki basin region leave from Szena ter. Ulloi ut 131, 9th.Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-382-0888. <http://www.volanbusz.hu>.

Car

Driving in Budapest is not recommended because of the heavy traffic. Cars are not allowed on Castle Hill or on Margit Island. Rental car agencies can be found in the city center, in large hotels and at the airport. The legal driving age is 17. For car rentals the minimum age is 21, and you must have held your driver's license for at least one year. An international driving permit is mandatory for driving in Hungary. Check with the American Automobile Association (<http://www.aaa.com>) on how you can obtain this.

The speed limit on highways is 80 mph/130 kph. In the city, the speed limit is generally 30 mph/50 kph. Wearing seat belts is obligatory. You must also keep your headlights turned on both day and night when driving outside of cities. Additionally, you cannot use a cell phone while driving. There are stiff fines for drinking and driving (approximately 100,000 HUF).

When traveling on the M1, M3, M5, M6 and M7 highways in Hungary, you will also need to purchase a toll voucher (E-vignette). For a standard automobile, an E-vignette is available for a period of seven days, one month or yearly. A weekly E-vignette costs 2,975 HUF-13,385 HUF, depending on the vehicle category. You can purchase an E-vignette at gas stations, larger post offices or from the Magyar Autoklub. The E-vignette works with a virtual e-ticket system. You pay for the E-vignette, supply your license plate number, and the toll is entered automatically into the road system as you travel. Make sure to keep your receipt as proof of purchase. <http://www.motorway.hu>.

For on-road vehicle assistance, dial 188.

Public Transportation

The public transport network consists of the metro (subway), trams, blue local buses, red electric trolley buses, suburban trains, ferries and the Fogakerekü Vasút (a cogwheel train). <http://www.bkv.hu>.

A single ticket allows you to take one ride on one line for an unlimited distance and will also allow you to transfer lines on the metro. If you are using a single ticket and switch from one form of transport to another, you'll have to validate a new ticket or pay a fine.

Tickets are checked by men and women with purple armbands who operate in stealthy fashion. They are usually on the lookout for tourists, so always make sure to have your ticket handy and validated: Insert it into the punch machine at the entrance to the metro, or on the tram or bus, when you get on.

It's cost-effective to buy books of tickets, day passes or multiple-day passes. You can purchase tickets from ticket machines, but safer are sales windows in metro stations. Single tickets are usually available at newsstands. If you buy a book of tickets, validate them one by one, but leave them in the book, or they won't be accepted.

Inquire at the local tourist office or ticket counter about purchasing a Budapest Card or a Hungary Card—both provide free or discounted local travel, as well as discounts at selected hotels, restaurants and many museums. You can also buy the Budapest Card online. <http://www.budapestinfo.hu>.

Trams

Unlike buses, trams don't have to compete much with traffic. They're also good for sightseeing. For example, the No. 4 or No. 6 route takes you around most of the inner city and across Margit Bridge, and the No. 2 route gives you a good view of the Danube and Castle Hill. Most routes operate daily from 4:30 am to around midnight. Budapest, Hungary.

Metro

This is the quickest way to cover a lot of ground in the city. There are four lines. Line M1 (the yellow line) is the oldest subway line on the continent. It runs from the city center (Vörösmarty tér) out beyond Varosliget (Mexikói út). Line M2 (the red line) runs east-west from the Széll Kálmán train station in Buda to the Keleti station in Pest and then farther east (Országház tér). Line M3 (the blue line) runs from northern Pest to southern Pest. Line 4 (the green line) runs from the Kelenföld Station in Buda to the Keleti Station. Lines 1, 2 and 3 cross at Deák Ferenc tér. Daily 4:30 am-11:30 pm. Budapest, Hungary.

Ship

Mahart Passnave

This company is the operator or ticket agent for various trips on the Danube, including sightseeing cruises within Budapest. There's daily hydrofoil service from the beginning of May to the beginning of October between Budapest and Vienna, Austria. (A stop to disembark or board in Bratislava, Slovakia, can be arranged in advance.) The trip takes about five hours from Budapest to Vienna and about four hours from Vienna to Budapest. It's best to reserve a seat. Mahart Passnave also offers hydrofoil service to Visegrad and Esztergom on the Danube Bend, as well as theme-based boat rides. Departures are from Mahart Passnave's terminal at Vigadó Ter. The International Dock, 3rd port, Belgrad quay, 5th. Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-484-4013. <http://www.mahartpassnave.hu>.

Taxi

Finding a taxi is generally not a problem. The easiest and cheapest way is to order one by phone—most companies have English-speaking operators. One good company is City Taxi (phone 1-211-1111; <http://www.citytaxi.hu>). You can also find taxis at designated taxi stands, or you can hail one on the street, but do not enter an unofficial or unmarked taxi.

FoTaxi

This company offers airport transportation with fixed prices that are conveniently listed on the Budapest airport's website. Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-222-2222. <http://fotaxi.hu>.

Train

Budapest has three main train stations. Each is connected to the metro system. Train service is run by the MAV-START Company. Kerepesi utca 3, Budapest. Phone 1-444-4499. <http://www.mav.hu>.

Keleti Palyaudvar (off Kerepesi utca, 8th) is the main train station. It serves international trains to and from western and eastern Europe, as well as domestic trains to and from the north/northeast part of the country.

Deli Palyaudvar (at Alkotás utca 1, 1st) serves trains to and from the south, including domestic trains between Budapest and Lake Balaton and Transdanubia.

Nyugati Palyaudvar (on Nyugati ter, 13th) serves domestic trains to and from northwest Hungary, as well as some trains to Romania and Slovakia.

HEV Railroad (Suburban Trains)

These fast trains travel on four commuter lines, but there are only a few stops in the city. Main stations for this service include those at Batthyány ter, Boráros ter, Kozvágóhid and Ors vezér ter. Connections to the HEV Railroad can be made via tram or metro lines. The most useful line for visitors runs from Batthyány ter (just across the Danube from Parliament) to Aquincum in Obuda and to Szentendre, a beautiful town north of Budapest. Ticket prices vary depending on destination. Tickets can be purchased in advance at the train station or while onboard from a conductor. Budapest, Hungary. <http://metros.hu/terkep/hevterkep.html>.

Gyermekvasút

The so-called Children's Railway (because kids are permitted to run the trains along with the engineers) runs between Szechenyi-Hegy and Huvosvolgy. The ride offers wonderful views, and children love the unique experience. Tuesday-Sunday year-round. 800 HUF one-way adults. Budapest, Hungary. http://www.gyermekvasut.hu/english/chrw_home.php.

Other

Buda and points west have some pretty steep hills. Fortunately, there are several ways to maneuver them easily. The Budavari Sikló funicular railway (daily 7:30 am-10 pm; 1,200 HUF one way) is a convenient way to ascend Castle Hill. The station is at Clark Adam ter near the Chain Bridge. https://www.bkv.hu/en/buda_castle_funicular_/.

The cogwheel-train line 60 runs from Varosmajor (near Széll Kalman ter) to the top of Szechenyi-Hegy. It's a good way to see a bit of the Buda Hills.

The Libego chairlift runs between Janos-Hegy and Zugligeti út. 1,000 HUF adults. Phone 1-258-4636. For its seasonal working hours, see <http://www.bkv.hu>.

For More Information

Tourist Offices

Vista Travel

One of the friendliest services in the city. It offers domestic travel bookings, extreme sports and adventure trips, cultural program information and more. Monday-Friday 9:30 am-6 pm and Saturday 10 am-2:30 pm. Andrássy út 1, 11th. Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-429-9999. <http://www.vista.hu>.

Tourinform

This is the main office of the national tourism information bureau, which provides free information about Budapest and Hungary in 17 languages. Monday-Saturday 7 am-7 pm. 2 Sütő út, 5th. Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-438-8080. <http://www.tourinform.hu>.

IBUSZ Offices Ltd.

Popular travel agency that can arrange accommodations, tours and transport in Budapest and throughout Hungary, as well. Monday-Friday 9 am-5 pm. Dayka G. utca 3, 11th (Rubin Business Center). Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-485-2750. <http://en.ibusz.hu>.

Budapest Tourism Office

The city tourist bureau has several offices, including one in Buda Castle and three in the airport. The Budapest Tourism Office also offers the Budapest Card, which allows you to travel without limits on public transport and also offers discounts on cultural sites, restaurants, car rental, tours and more. <http://www.budapest-card.com>. The downtown office is open daily 8 am-8 pm. The card costs 7,125 HUF for 24 hours; 21,735 HUF for 72 hours if purchased online. Each card is valid for one adult and one child younger than 7. Suto utca 2, 5th.Budapest, Hungary. Phone 1-438-8080. <http://www.budapestinfo.hu>.

Events

Calendar

Once you emerge from the warm mineral waters, you'll find many other enjoyable activities in Budapest. Annual festivals—particularly the big arts festivals in spring and fall—draw many visitors to the city.

Music in its various forms is one of the city's biggest attractions. From fall to summer, the State Opera, the Academy of Music and the Pesti Vigado all have active performance schedules. In summer, the outdoor stage on Margitsziget (Margaret Island) becomes the most popular venue.

Fall harvest festivals always remain a favorite as local farmers celebrate the summer's bounty through traditional dances and songs that are often showcased at the local markets. The smaller villages across Hungary have their own huge *bucsu*.

Dance is huge, too. The National Dance Theatre holds its annual Budapest Tanc Fesztival (<http://budapesttancfesztival.hu>) in April.

Arguably one of the largest music festivals in the world takes place on Obuda Island. More than 400,000 concertgoers attend this summer event known as the Sziget Festival in August.

<http://www.sziget.hu>.

For detailed information about upcoming events in the Budapest area, contact the Budapest Tourism Office. Phone 1-266-0479. <http://www.budapestinfo.hu>. Hungary's national tourist board also maintains a listing of annual events at <http://visit-hungary.com>.

To call any of the phone numbers listed in this calendar from outside Hungary, you must first dial your country's international access code, then Hungary's country code, 36, and the Budapest city code, 1, followed by the number.

Information in this calendar is subject to change and should be confirmed.

December 2019

25, 26 Dec—Christmas Holidays Public holidays.

January 2020

1 Jan—New Year's Day Public holiday.

October 2020

23 Oct—Republic Day Public holiday.