

From Wikitravel

Central Hungary : Budapest

Budapest is a huge city with several district articles containing sightseeing, restaurant, nightlife and accommodation listings — have a look at each of them.

Budapest (http://www.budapestinfo.hu/home_en.html) (Hungarian pronunciation approximates to "boo-dah-pesht") is the capital city of Hungary. With a unique, youthful atmosphere, a world-class classical music scene as well as a pulsating night life increasingly appreciated among European youth and, last but not least, an exceptionally rich offering of natural thermal baths, Budapest is one of Europe's most delightful and enjoyable cities. Due to its scenic setting and its architecture it is nicknamed "Paris of the East".

In 1987 Budapest was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List for the cultural and architectural significance of the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrásy Avenue.

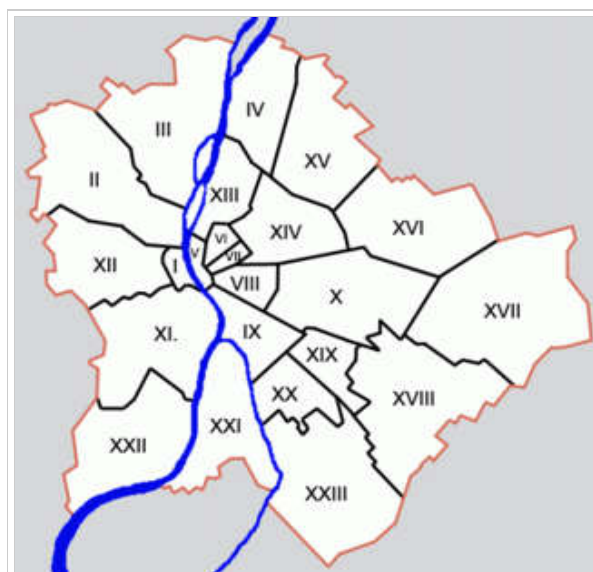


NOTE: As of March 2015, the majority of businesses are closed on Sundays. The exception is Hungarian-owned sole-proprietor stores. Many of the major exhibits are closed on Mondays. When booking your trip, plan accordingly.

Districts and quarters

Modern Budapest is the result of a historic amalgamation of the separate cities of Buda and Pest (as well as the smaller and more distant Óbuda), and it is still typical to refer a restaurant on the "Buda side" or "living in Pest". Administratively, the city is also divided into 23 numbered districts.

- **Buda** - Districts I-III, XI-XII, XXII. Covers the area west of the Danube including Castle Hill, the Buda Hills, and Óbuda to the north.
- **Pest** - Districts IV-IX. Covers the area east of the Danube.



Districts of Budapest

Understand

Budapest is the economic, historic, and cultural capital of Hungary, with approximately 2 million inhabitants and approximately 2.7 million visitors per year. Hungarians are proud of what their beautiful capital has to offer and of its contributions to European culture. They also take pride in their unique language which is very different from all other European languages.

While Buda has been the capital of Hungary - or that of the Osman-occupied territory - for the better part of a millennium, it has become a grand cosmopolitan city during the country's fast industrialisation in the late nineteenth century. The population of 2.1 million in 1989 decreased formally due to suburbanization.

History

The first settlement on the territory of Budapest is accounted to Celtic tribes. During the first century AD, the Roman fortification on the territory of present-day Óbuda (now part of Budapest) gradually developed into the town of **Aquincum** which became the capital city of the province of Lower Pannonia in AD 106. In



Budapest's Chain Bridge and Castle Hill

the beginning Aquincum was only a Roman military settlement and then it gradually turned into a civil settlement. It was the main centre of the Pannonian Region, becoming the most important commercial point. Nowadays the area that was covered by Aquincum corresponds to the Óbuda district within Budapest. Aquincum is the main and the well conserved Roman archaeological site in Hungary. It was turned into a museum with inside and open-air sections. The Roman Ruins in Aquincum have been dated around the II and III century (a.d.). The archaeologists during the excavation works brought back to light a lot of objects and monuments. In the past the city had paved streets and lavish houses with fountains, courtyards and pavements in mosaic. At the north-west of the ruins is the civil amphitheatre in which are still visible the cells in which the lions were kept during the gladiators' fights. The capacity of this structure was about 16,000 people. The Romans even founded a fortress known as **Contra Aquincum** on the other side of the river which is assumed to have developed into the later town of Pest. This was part of the Limes, marking the eastern border of the empire, and was gradually given up by Rome during the early fourth century, becoming part of the Hun empire for a few decades. (Modern historical research does not associate the Huns with Hungarians, albeit even the name of the latter expresses this once popular idea.)



The Hungarian national parliament. In the front the River Danube

Once the horse-riding Magyar (Hungarian) tribes arrived in the Carpathian Basin in 896AD, Óbuda served as the seat of the Magyar high-chieftain (or prince) Árpád. After a century marked by frequent raids on Christian western Europe, (prince) Álmos realised that converting to Christianity is the key to survival in Europe. The Christian **Kingdom of Hungary** was founded by the crowning of his son, **Szt. István** (Saint Stephan) on 1 January 1001 (or possibly Christmas day of 1000). As visitors will quickly realise, Saint Stephan became an omnipresent national symbol, as did the artefact known as **Saint Stephen's Crown** (the Holy Crown of Hungary) which was regarded as a legal entity *de jure* equivalent to the country itself during medieval times. It is still unclear whether the millennium-old crown used in this function for many centuries and shown in the Parliament today, was already used by St. Stephen.

In the following centuries Buda emerged as the most important royal seat. In 1241/42 the Mongol Empire conquered the territory along with large parts of Europe - this short but devastating conquest of the country is still remembered as **Tatárjárás** - the name reflecting the erroneous confusion of Mongols and Tatars at the time. Medieval Hungary reached its zenith under **King Matthias** (Matthias Corvinus), the vividly remembered renaissance ruler whose patronage of arts and sciences made Hungary, a notable power at the time, the first European country which adopted the renaissance from Italy. However, after residing in Buda for decades, he moved his seat to Vienna in 1485 for the last five years of his life after defeating the Habsburg Holy Roman Emperor Frederick III.

In 1541, Buda and Pest fell to the **Ottoman Empire**. The **Habsburg Empire**, centred in Austria, conquered the country on its way to becoming a major European power in 1686. Marks of these two cultures are still part of everyday life in Budapest.

The Turks, under their occupation, constructed many thermal baths and some of them are still in function nowadays (Rudas and Király). The citizens of Budapest customarily frequent these baths to this day.

After the Anti-Habsburg revolution in 1848–49 (defeated through the decisive help of the Russian Czar) the 1867 **Compromise** (Kiegyezés) with a weakened Vienna made Buda the capital of a near-autonomous Hungary, a large, multi-ethnic Kingdom comprising half of the newly created Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary. In this peculiar double-state the Monarch was emperor and king, respectively, of these two rather autonomous realms. The following half century marked by peaceful development counts among the most successful times in the history of the country as well as its capital. With the 1873 **unification of Buda, Pest, and Óbuda**, the city of Budapest was officially created. The two parts of the city were already connected by the first permanent bridge across the Danube since 1849 when was inaugurated the magnificent Chain Bridge. It saw a leap in terms of industrialisation, urbanisation, and the development of a capitalistic society as well as population. It even aimed at rivalling with Vienna - the **Millennium** in 1896, marking a thousand year of Hungary, offered the perfect excuse for large-scale projects such as the Parliament, Vajdahunyad Castle, or the Grand Boulevard (Nagykörút) - Budapest transformed to a world city during these decades, enriched by Austrian, Jewish, Slovakian, Serbian, Croatian Roma and other cultural influence. This age is remembered as the 'Monarchia' (or as 'K. u. K.' - abbreviation for Imperial-Royal - in Austria, and other parts of the Empire) and

associated with the rule of **Franz Joseph I.** (I. Ferenc József) who died in 1916 after 68 years on the throne.

Neither the Habsburg empire nor Hungary survived World War I in their previous form - leaving Budapest as the capital of a now formally independent Hungary which lost two thirds of its territories and most of its ethnicities, as well as a few million Hungarian speakers, to neighbouring countries. The city's population reached one million around 1930. During the interwar years under the rule of regent Miklós Horthy, a former Admiral of the Austro-Hungarian fleet, Hungary became an ally of Germany. Near the end of World War II, nazi Germany occupied Hungary after it attempted to negotiate separate peace with the Allies, and eventually installed a bloody dictatorship putting the hitherto fairly unimportant nazi Nyilaskeresztes (Arrowcross) party in charge. While practically all of 400,000 Jews on the countryside were murdered by German nazis and their Hungarian nyilas sympathizers, roughly 60% of Budapest's Jewish community was saved during the **Holocaust**. People we keep in our memory for helping the local Jewish community include **Raoul Wallenberg**, the famous Swedish diplomat, who organised the distribution of Swedish passports by his Embassy to as many Jews as possible, and the Italian **Giorgio Perlasca**, who - pretending to be a Spanish diplomat - rescued many thousand Jews. Air raids and a terrible three-month siege towards the end of World War II resulted in the death of over 38,000 civilians and destruction of much of the once lively city.

After the war, Budapest slowly recovered and became a showcase for the more pragmatic policies of Hungary's hard-line Communist government under the dictatorial rule of Mátyás Rákosi. The city was, however, also the main site of the **1956 uprising** which was successful in installing a reform-oriented (albeit communist) government of **Imre Nagy**. This was swept away before long, as the Soviet leader Khrushchev felt Hungary slipping from Moscow's rule. The Soviets installed János Kádár as the leader of the communist state who, after over thirty years of controversial rule, was elected out of leadership 1988 by the central committee due to health issues. Kádár died of 1989.

One of the most dramatic historical events of the country was the October 23, 1956 uprising. This uprising lasted until November 11 of the same year. During the revolution, more than 2000 Hungarians lost their lives. A monument erected in 2006 commemorates this tragic event. The monument is in Iron and wood, and is found at the edge of City park. It symbolizes the Hungarian forces that eradicated the communist dictatorship.

Since the peaceful 1989 'system change' (**Rendszerváltás**) which was achieved as a compromise between reformist party forces and the opposition (notably including a younger self of the current PM, Viktor Orbán), Budapest transformed in appearance and atmosphere, a process further accelerated by the country's long-awaited joining to the European Union in 2004.

Cost of living

Visitors will notice that (except for touristy attractions and restaurants), many items cost less in Hungary than in Western Europe. Hungarian salaries are lower also, to the extent that when compared to income, the relative cost of living is actually quite high. Unemployment is also high, and many people are employed in low-paying jobs, so a higher proportion of the population has difficulty making ends meet. Even university-educated middle class citizens with "good" jobs generally have less disposable income for luxuries and conveniences than their counterparts in Western Europe.

For Hungarians who can afford it, and for visitors who earn their money in wealthier countries, Budapest offers everything that other modern cities can offer in terms of accommodations, entertainment, shopping, and culture. Tourist attractions, restaurants, and accommodations generally charge prices on par or slightly below similar places in Western Europe (since visitors can afford to pay and prices seem reasonable by their standards).

Official Tourism Information

- **Tourism Office of Budapest** (<http://www.budapestinfo.hu>), 1115 Budapest, Bartók Béla út 105-113, ☎ +36 1 438-8080. You can get some very good and free brochures. amongst it: map of Budapest, a map of Hungary with all the youth hostels and prices, a very complete brochure about the northern part of Hungary (available in many languages).
- **Tourism Info Centre** 1051 Budapest, Sütő utca 2 (Deák Ferenc tér)

Get in

By plane

Most travellers will arrive via **Budapest Franz Liszt International Airport** (<http://www.bud.hu/>) (IATA: **BUD**), (*Budapest Liszt Ferenc Nemzetközi Repülőtér*). It is also possible to fly to airports in Debrecen, Sármellék, Győr-Pér and Pécs-Pogány. Liszt Ferenc airport, also commonly referred to by the old name *Ferihegy*, is Hungary's largest airport and it is located about 16km (10 miles) southeast of the city centre. It is a small airport by international standards, easy to navigate, and well connected to the city by public transit. Tickets will direct visitors to either terminal "2A" (gates 20-30, Schengen-area destinations) or "2B" (gates 11-19, non-Schengen-area destinations), but the airport is now only one terminal and 2A and 2B simply refer to two halves of the same building. The signs point to separate security entrances for 2A or 2B but both lead to the same post-security area, so in practice, travellers can easily use either entrance, especially if line-ups are longer at one than the other. Behind security, there are typical airport shops and services, including duty-free stores operated by Travel Value (<http://www.travel-value.de/TV/BUD-E>), luxury brand shops, fast-food stops, restaurants, and cafes.



Budapest Opera



Ferihegy International Airport

Connections

Budapest is well connected to cities throughout Europe, mainly through low-cost airlines like Ryanair and Wizzair. The number of direct long-haul flights is increasing as tourism in Budapest becomes increasingly popular.

Short Haul Low Cost Connections

(accurate as of August 2015)

- Aer Lingus (<http://www.aerlingus.ie>) - Ireland (Dublin)
- EasyJet (<http://www.easyjet.com>) - France (Paris Charles de Gaulles), Germany (Berlin Schoenefeld), Great Britain (London Gatwick) and Switzerland (Basel, Geneva)
- Germanwings (<http://www.germanwings.com>) - Germany (Cologne/Bahn, Dusseldorf, Hamburg, Stuttgart)
- Jet2 (<http://www.jet2.com>) - Great Britain (East Midlands, Leeds Bradford, Manchester), Scotland (Edinburgh)
- Norwegian Air Shuttle (<http://www.norwegian.no/>) - Denmark (Copenhagen), Finland (Helsinki), Great Britain (London Gatwick), Norway (Oslo) and Sweden (Stockholm Arlanda)
- Ryanair (<http://www.ryanair.com>) - Belgium (Brussels), Denmark (Billund), Finland (Tampere), France (Paris Beauvais), Great Britain (Bristol, London Stansted, Manchester), Greece (Athens), Ireland (Dublin), Israel (Eilat), Italy (Milan Bergamo, Pisa, Rome Ciampino, Venice Treviso), Spain (Barcelona)
- Transavia (<http://www.transavia.com>) - France (Paris), Netherlands (Rotterdam/The Hague)
- [<http://www.vueling.com> Vueling - Italy (Rome), Spain (Barcelona)
- WizzAir (<http://www.wizzair.com>) - Belgium (Brussels Charleroi), Bulgaria (Bourgas), Cyprus (Lamaca), Egypt (Hurgada), Georgia (Kutaisi), Germany (Dortmund, Frankfurt Hahn), Great Britain (Birmingham, London Luton), Greece (Corfu, Crete Heraklion, Rhodes, Thessaloniki, Zakyntos), Israel (Tel Aviv), Italy (Alghero, Bari, Bologna, Catania, Milan Malpensa, Naples, Rome Fiumicino), Netherlands (Eindhoven, Maastricht), Malta (Malta), Poland (Warsaw Chopin), Russia (Moscow Vnukovo), Scotland (Glasgow), Spain (Alicante, Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Palma de Mallorca, Tenerife), Sweden (Gottenburg Landvetter, Malmo, Stockholm Skavsta), Turkey (Istanbul), Ukraine (Kyiv Zhulyany) and United Arab Emirates (Dubai)

Long-haul Connections

- Air Transat (<http://www.airtransat.com>) - Canada (Toronto-via-Montreal, Montreal)
- Sky Greece (<http://www.skygreece.com>)- Canada (Toronto)

[list needs expansion]

To/From the airport

Public transport. The main public transit connection from the airport to the city is to take bus 200E from the airport to metro M3 (blue line)*Köbánya-Kispest'* (~25 minutes) and then to continue within the metro system (~20-30 minutes to city centre). (See *Get Around* (http://wikitravel.org/en/Budapest#Get_around) for ticket information.) The route is

well marked with signs and the bus runs frequently. The bus stops almost right next to the metro stop, but be prepared to carry luggage up or down some stairs.

It is also possible to take the 200E bus to the local Ferihegy train station and continue on the MAV network to Nyugati station in Budapest or other rail destinations.

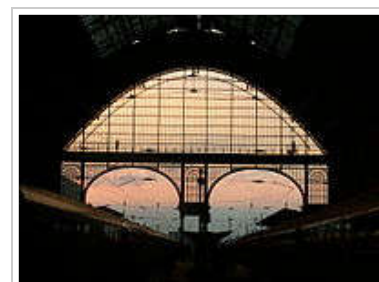
Taxi. The only contracted taxi operator from Liszt Ferenc airport is **Főtaxi** [1] (<http://www.fotaxi.hu>). Depending on your destination, the cost for a trip to Budapest will range from 5,000 to 10,000 HUF. (Taxis now universally cost 450 HUF base price and 280 HUF for every kilometer. The inner city is around 20 kilometers from Terminal 2.)

Official shuttle AirportShuttle.Hu (<http://www.airportshuttle.hu/en/>) is the official airport shuttle partner. It is a shared mini-van that collects passengers going in the same direction and provides door to door service. Tickets start at 3200 HUF with discounts for round trips or multiple passengers.

Private shuttle . e.g. [2] (<http://www.airporttransferbudapest.com>) or similar.

By train

Trains connect Budapest with almost all countries in central and eastern Europe. The main railway stations (*pályaudvar*) are **Keleti pályaudvar** (Eastern Railway Station), **Déli pályaudvar** (Southern Railway Station) and **Nyugati pályaudvar** (Western Railway Station). All are well connected to the metro system. Most international trains arrive at Keleti, but check your particular itinerary.



Keleti pályaudvar (East main railway station)

- Berlin: 11³/₄h, direct trains daily, or an overnight option.
- Munich: 7¹/₂h, four daytime *Railjet* trains and one night train *Kálmán Imre*. Cheaper if bought online [3] (<http://www.bahn.de>), at least 3 days in advance.
- Vienna: 2.5-3h. High-speed services every two hours. Train connects Budapest Keleti to several main stations in Vienna. Tickets are cheaper if booked in advance. Expect to pay around CHF21.54 (€20)-30. Slow/regional train options also possible.
- Prague: 7h, direct trains almost every two hours and night train *Metropol*. Online tickets (<https://www.cd.cz/>) are cheaper than normal tickets (the price begins at CHF20.46 (€19)), but you should buy them at least 3 days in advance. If e-tickets are sold out or you have to buy a ticket immediately before departure, buy a (domestic) ticket Prague-Kúty Gr. (the CZ/SK border point) and international tickets Kúty Gr.-Štúrovo and Štúrovo-Budapest. This combination costs about 65% of the direct ticket.
- Bratislava: 2³/₄h, six EC trains a day.
- Warsaw: 10¹/₂, one direct day train, one direct night train, and three daytime trains that require a transfer. Starting around CHF31.23 (€29).
- Bucharest: 16h, two night trains *Dacia* and *Ister* and one daytime direct train *Traianus*. *Ister* tickets starting at CHF31.23 (€29) can be booked online (<http://elvira.mav-start.hu>). Normal tickets cost about CHF53.84 (50 euro) or more.
- Ljubljana: 9-10h, *Rippl-Rónai* via Zagreb or change at Maribor with IC *Citadella*.
- Zagreb: 6-7h, two daytime trains a day, *Agram* and *Rippl-Rónai*. Different seasonal trains to various sea resorts. Return ticket valid 1 month costs about CHF32.31 (€30) and it's even cheaper than one-way ticket. There is a seasonal sleeper train twice a week to Split.
- Belgrade: 8h, one daytime train *Avala* and one night train *Beograd*. From CHF16.15 (15 EUR) one way.
- Sarajevo: Only possible via Zagreb with 12 hours waiting at Zagreb Glavni Kolodvor.
- Sofia: 18¹/₄h, *Balkan Express* with a through couchette car via Belgrade. Direct ticket is expensive, the better solution is to buy a ticket Sofia-Belgrade (see Belgrade#By train) and then Belgrade-Budapest ticket at Belgrade station. The through car waits 2.5h in Belgrade and even if *Balkan Express* is delayed (a quite common situation), you have a time until the through car is shifted to the train to Budapest. *Balkan Express* leaves Sofia at noon and arrives to Belgrade at evening, so you can travel to Belgrade in a sitting car, and buy a cheaper couchette reservation only from Belgrade to Budapest.
- Kiev and Moscow: 25h/39h, fast train *Tisza*, a typical Russian long-distance train going over 2 nights. International ticket is much more expensive than domestic Russian and especially Ukrainian domestic ticket. If you are on a tight budget, use another train from Kiev (departing on 18:52 or 20:06) to Chop (arriving on 10:04 or 10:52) near UA/HU border. In Chop, buy a ticket for the local train to Záhony (HU) and in Záhony buy a ticket for the IC to Budapest (arriving on 18:37). You have more than 3 hours in Chop and 1 hour in Záhony to

buy your tickets - and there are later trains from Záhony to Budapest too. The overall trip is even shorter than that on the direct train and you'll pay less than a half of the official international fare. Beware that Ukraine uses Eastern European Time, which is one hour ahead of Central European Time. Local residents of Chop and Zakarpathya Oblast use CET among themselves, they call it 'local time'.

- Zürich one direct daytime railjet and direct night train *Wiener Walzer*. Return fare CHF84.00 (EUR 78).

By bus

Hungary's national bus network is operated by **Volán Association** [4] (<http://www.volan.hu/>). If you arrive to Budapest from another Hungarian city, bus is often the best option. International bus routes are operated by **Eurolines** +36-1 318-2122 [5] (<http://www.volanbusz.hu/en/#indexmainpage>). Most connections run two or three times a week; connections to/from Austria and Slovakia run daily. **Orangeways** [6] (<http://www.orangeways.com/en>) 36-30 830-9696, offers cheap tickets to and from Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Germany, Netherlands, Poland and Slovakia. **Eurobusways** [7] (<http://www.eurobusways.com/>) do shared or private transfers from door to door from Budapest to many destinations including Slovakia, Croatia, Poland, Austria, Slovenia, Romania

Budapest's long distance bus stations are located outside the city centre, but are very well connected to the rest of the city. The main stations are:

- **Népliget Bus station** (*Népliget autóbuszállomás*, metro 3, *Népliget station*). Buses from abroad and most of Western Hungarian destinations arrive and depart here. It is a fairly modern station with reliable facilities. Do not forget to check-in if you travel abroad.
- **Stadion Bus Station** (*Stadion autóbuszállomás*, formerly known as *Népstadion autóbuszállomás*, metro 2 *Puskás Ferenc Stadion station*). This is the biggest hub for Eastern Hungarian destinations, quite modern but somewhat dirty station built underground.
- **Árpád Bridge Bus Station** (*Árpád híd autóbuszállomás*, metro 3 *Árpád híd station*). This is a smaller station for some Northern destinations and suburban traffic; use it to and from Szentendre, Esztergom or Visegrád.
- **Etele tér Bus Station** (*Etele téri autóbuszállomás*, bus 7E, 173E). This is a newly built station next to Kelenföld Railway Station, at the terminus of metro line 4. Useful for getting to Statue Park and some suburban destinations.

Driving

Major motorways connect Budapest to other cities and neighbouring countries and driving is often the fastest way to reach long distance destinations. For those who have flexible schedules and are comfortable travelling with strangers, ridesharing is often the cheapest and fastest way to make a trip.

By boat

Mahart Passnave (<http://www.mahartpassnave.hu/en/timetable/international-hydrofoil-lines/budapest-vienna-hydrofoil-line/>) operates a hydrofoil boat service on the Danube to and from Vienna May to September. Tickets start at CHF106.61 (99) one way or 125 return.

By Bicycle

Eurovelo 6 (<http://www.eurovelo6.org/>) links to Vienna and Belgrade following the Danube. The road is flat and separated from cars. Surfaces vary, including many unpaved sections.

Get around

Orientation and Bridges

The river Danube splits the city approximately in half, with the west side called Buda and the east called Pest. North/south orientation can be referred to relative to the city's bridges:

- **Árpád Bridge** (*Árpád híd*), A modern bridge linking to Northern Margaret Island. The longest bridge in Budapest at 973 meters. It was inaugurated in 1950 where already the Romans erected a bridge to connect Aquincum with another settlement on the Pest side.
- **Margaret Bridge** (*Margit híd*), Easily identified thanks to its distinctive shape: it makes an approximately 35 degree turn half way across, at the southern tip of Margaret Island. Trams 4 and 6 cross the Danube here. This bridge was built in 1901 and then destroyed during the war by an explosion. It was rebuilt in 1948. It is located at the north of the city center.
- **Chain Bridge** (*Széchenyi lánc híd*), Completed in 1849, the oldest, arguably most beautiful and certainly the most photographed of Budapest's bridges, floodlit at night. It was the first permanent bridge across the Danube. At the time of its construction it was the second-largest suspension bridge throughout the world. Four stone lions taken their place at the edge of the bridge in 1852. They fortunately survived from the air raids of the World War II.
- **Elisabeth Bridge** (*Erzsébet híd*), Completed in 1903. Its original chain structure was destroyed in World War II, and was eventually substituted by a modern cable bridge opened in 1964. This bridge in liberty style was dedicated to the murdered Queen in 1898. It is the third newest bridge of the city.
- **Liberty Bridge** (*Szabadság híd*), Elegant but simple, opened in 1896; it connects the Gellért Baths (Gellért fürdő) in Buda with the Great Market Hall (Nagyvásárcsarnok) in Pest. Recently renovated. This bridge was rebuilt in Art nouveau style in the occasion of the Hungarian millenary festivities of 1989.
- **Petőfi Bridge** (*Petőfi híd*), For a long time the southernmost bridge, it links the inner ring road (Nagykörút) of Pest with Buda. It was built during the 30s, destroyed by an explosion in the World War II and then rebuilt in 1952.
- **Rákóczi Bridge** (*Rákóczi híd*), The newest bridge in Budapest, with modern architecture and a spectacular lighting system where mirrors reflect the beam of the upward facing floodlights. Built very next to a railway bridge on its southern side. Originally called Lágymányosi Bridge, it was built between 1992 and 1995, initially destined to smoothen the augmented traffic flow during the 1996 expo that finally never took place in Budapest. It is the second newest bridge of Budapest as of 2013.



The Chain Bridge and a view of Pest



Szabadság híd (Liberty bridge)

On foot

Most of Budapest's highlights are within easy walking distance of each other and the city centre. All major areas have sidewalks and crosswalks for pedestrians. Drivers generally obey traffic signals, and similar to other major European cities, pedestrians should firmly indicate their intention to cross at a crosswalk. Many sidewalks and paths tend to be mixed-use - for both pedestrians and cyclist.

Public transport

Budapest's extensive public transit system is generally convenient and easy to use. Tourists can navigate most central areas by metro, but a few major destinations, particularly on the Buda side, are served by busses or trams. Unfortunately, compared to similarly-sized cities in Western Europe, Budapest's public transit infrastructure is generally more worn-down, more outdated, dirtier, less reliable, and less comfortable. Ticketing systems are not automated, many vehicles are insufficiently or not at all heated/air conditioned, and mechanical problems are frequent. Nonetheless, for getting from A to B, public transit is still a good option, and many routes frequented by tourists (e.g. the bus to the airport) are more modern and clean.



NOTE: Remember to **validate your ticket!** This means that after purchasing a ticket (or pass, etc.) from a vendor, the traveller needs to get it punched or stamped before boarding the metro or once on-board the bus/tram. Look for a mechanical box about the size of a toaster and insert your ticket.

An unvalidated ticket is...invalid! because it could otherwise be used multiple times. So forgetting to punch your ticket is the same as travelling with no ticket at all. Ticket inspectors are frequent and fines can be heavy.

Tickets and passes

Some useful options for public transport include:

- **Single ticket** (*vonaljegy* or *jegy*): Valid for one journey within the city limits. Transfers not allowed on buses and trams. One transfer between metro lines is allowed. HUF350. HUF450 if purchased from the driver (available on almost every bus, tram, and trolley bus lines).
- **Transfer ticket** (*átszállójegy*): Valid for one journey within the city limits. One transfer allowed, up to 60 minutes per ride and 90 minutes total (120 if the second ride is on the subway or during night). You get two pieces, one to validate on the first ride and the other on the second. Valid only when you have both pieces with you! HUF530.
- **Short section metro ticket** (*metrószakaszjegy*): Valid for up to three stops and 30 minutes on the subway. Change of metro line allowed. Not valid anywhere else. HUF300.
- **Block of 10 single tickets** (*gyűjtőjegy*): Ten single tickets. HUF3000
- **24-hour travelcard** (*24 órás jegy*): Valid for 24 hours after purchase. Valid also on MÁV trains and suburban yellow Volán buses. HUF1,650.
- **24-hour group travelcard** (*csoporthoz 24 órás jegy*): For a maximum of 5 people travelling together. Valid for 24 hours after purchase. HUF3,300.
- **72-hour travelcard** (*72 órás jegy*): Valid for 72 hours after purchase. HUF4,150.
- **7-day travelcard** (*hetijegy*, lit. week ticket): Valid from 00:00 of the indicated starting day until 02:00 on the following seventh day (start+7). HUF4,950.
- **14-day pass** (*kétheti Budapest-bérlet*, lit. two-week Budapest pass): Valid from 00:00 on the indicated starting day until 02:00 on the following fourteenth day (start+14), with a photo. Valid also on MÁV trains and suburban yellow Volán buses. HUF7,000.
- **Monthly pass** (*havi Budapest-bérlet*): Valid from 00:00 of the indicated starting day until 02:00 of the same day of the following month, with a photo. Valid also on MÁV trains and suburban yellow Volán buses. HUF10,500.
- **Monthly pass for students** (*havi BP-bérlet felsőoktatásban tanulóknak*): Valid from 00:00 of the indicated starting day until 02:00 of the same day of the following month, with a photo. Requires student ID from a European country or ISIC. HUF3,450. If staying for more than two days, this is cheaper than a 72-hour pass.
- **Budapest card** (*Budapest kártya*): Travelcard that also offers discounts at museums and restaurants. 24-hour card HUF4,500, 48-hour card HUF7,500, 72-hour card HUF8,900.



Single ticket, valid for one journey

The public transport fleet

Metro

The **underground network** consists of four lines (Metro 4 opened March 2014), connecting several centrally located sights, railway and autobus stations with suburbs. The lines cross only at **Deák tér station** in central Pest with the exception of line 4. Many stations have been recently renovated and usually have small shops, bakeries and various other businesses.

The historic **Metro 1** or **Millennium Subway** (yellow line), connects the Városliget (City park) with touristy Vörösmarty Tér in Pest center, passing the Opera and Heroes' square, as it mostly follows the majestic boulevard Andrásy út. Notably, the line was the first underground on continental Europe (preceded by London) constructed as part of the Millennium celebrations in 1896. Although the stylish vehicles are not original, the renovated, tile covered stations retain a historical atmosphere. **Metro 2** (red line) connects Déli pályaudvar (Southern Railway Station, in Buda) with Eastern Pest, passing Széll Kálmán Tér (former Moszkva tér, Buda's top transport hub), Kossuth tér (the Parliament) and Keleti Pályaudvar (Keleti Railway Station). **Metro 3** (blue line) can assist you in reaching the Airport as you can change to Bus 200 at Kőbánya-Kispest terminus. A notable station is the historic Nyugati Pályaudvar (Western Railway Station). **Metro 4** (green line) connects Keleti railway station in Pest with Kelenföld railway station in Buda. Important stops include Gellért tér for the famous Gellért Baths and Fővám tér for the Central Market Hall.



Blaha Lujza square metro 2 station with the new Alstom carriage in service from 2012

Tram Budapest's 25 tram lines offer a slower but more scenic way of getting around. Line 6 runs 24 hours a day. Trams

generally run along either side of the Danube, and along the three ring roads.

Bus

The dense bus network connects the suburban zones with several metro and train stations and the city center.

- Numbers with an added 'E' (for example 7E or 200E) indicate express services that don't stop at all stops.
- Numbers with an added 'A' have shorter routes than their regular counterparts (for example bus 30 has a longer itinerary than 30A).
- Numbers between 900 and 999 denote night services.
- Numbers between 300 and 899 denote mid-range suburban services provided by Volán company, BKV tickets and most tourist passes are not valid on them.

Trolley-bus Budapest's 13 trolley-bus lines run in Northeast and Central Pest. Some of them pass through the City Park (Városliget) and cross Andrásy avenue (Andrásy út), giving you beautiful views while using this eco-friendly mode of transport. Line 70 connecting Kossuth square (Parliament) to City Park (Városliget) also passes through the lively Nagymező utca, Budapest's "Broadway". The reason why the numbering starts with 70 is a historical one: The first trolley line started on Dec. 21, 1949, the 70th birthday of the Soviet dictator Stalin.

Suburban rail Green suburban railway lines (called **HÉV**) connect central Budapest with several suburbs. Note that your tickets and travel passes are valid only within the city boundaries, otherwise you should purchase a supplementary ticket (kiegészítő jegy) at a ticket office.

- Line **Batthyány tér–Szentendre** goes upriver to the nearby baroque town of Szentendre. (The same train takes you to Sziget Fesztivál [8] (http://www.sziget.hu/festival_english) in August.) It connects at Batthyány tér with metro 2, at Margit híd (Margaret bridge) with tram 4/6.
- Line **Örs vezér tere–Gödöllő** takes you to the beautiful royal castle of Gödöllő from Metro 2 terminal station Örs Vezér Tér .

Other

Some more exotic means of public transport may help you to escape from the hustle and bustle to the lush green hills surrounding Budapest.

- **Cogwheel railway** (Fogaskerekű vasút) is a tram-like railway with historic charm, running from Városmajor terminus (two stops from Széll Kálmán tér metro 2 station by tram 59 or 61) climbing Széchenyi hill (Széchenyi hegy), Buda's popular picnic, excursion and sledding place. Tickets and passes are valid.
- **Boat.** Budapest currently (starting with July 2012) has three regular boat services, running hourly between around 6AM and 8PM, from Kópaszi-gát (South Buda) or Haller utca (South-Central Pest) to Rómaifürdő (North Buda) or Árpád út (North Pest), making 8-10 intermediate stops. Tickets cost 400 HUF - ordinary tickets are NOT valid. Passes are valid only on weekdays.
- **Buda Castle funicular** (Budavári sikló). This handsome, short funicular line takes you from Chain Bridge (Lánchíd) Buda end to Buda Castle offering a breath-taking scenario as it emerges from street level. Originally built in 1870, it was completely destroyed in the War, only to be reconstructed in 1986. As it is considered a tourist sight, tickets and passes are not valid.
- **Széchenyi Hill Children's Railways** (Széchenyi-hegyi Gyermeekvasút) it's a narrow gauge line, operated partly by children. The 11.2km long line is running on the Buda Hill's, giving a beautiful look at the nature around Budapest. You can reach the endstation "Széchenyi hegy" by the Cogwheel railway or the other one "Hüvösvölgy" by taking the tram number 61 from "Széll Kálmán tér". Before using it, you should take a look at it's home page for the timetable at [9] (<http://www.gyermeekvasut.hu/timetable.php>). Regular tickets and passes are NOT valid.



In 2006 the world's longest trams started their service on lines 4 and 6



Blue urban bus in Buda



Tram 60 (aka cogwheel railway) at Városmajor terminus

- **Zugliget Chair-lift** (Zugligeti Libegő) It's a chair lift, taking you from "Zugliget" to "János hegy". You will have a nice view while traveling. Tickets and passes are not valid. [10] (<http://www.libego.hu>)

Night services

Budapest is covered by 34 night bus lines. Numbers are triple-digit, starting with '9', their time tables are marked with an owl. Buses run every 15-60 minutes from around 11PM until 4AM. The main linking points of the night bus network are Széll Kálmán square (former Moszkva tér) tér in Buda and Astoria (junction of Kossuth Lajos utca–Károly körút) in Pest. Daytime tickets and passes are valid. On line map and schedule are available on BKK's home page [11] (<http://www.bkk.hu/en/main-page/news/>). Most useful night buses are:

- **923** – Running along the Nagykörút, Pest's inner ring road, basically as tram 4 and 6 do during the day.
- **907** – Substitutes daylight bus 7.
- **914, 950** – In the city center substitute metro 3.

By car

Apart from the summer holiday, Budapest has heavy traffic, especially in the morning, and in the late afternoon. If you don't want to spend your visit to Budapest in a traffic jam, leave your car in the hotel's garage, and use the public transport. Driving across the centre requires some local know-how to be efficient. For example you cannot turn left in most of the crossings of the great boulevard (Nagykörút) or on the main avenues like Andrásy út, Váci út, Üllői út or Rákóczi út.

By taxi

When you get to the airport be aware of taxi touts waiting in the arrivals hall. They will usually overcharge you. So unless you enjoy bargaining with taxi drivers the best thing you can do when arriving to Budapest is to exit the arrivals hall and look for the taxi booth directly outside. (Főtaxi currently has the airport contract.) Tell the English-speaking dispatcher where you need to go and receive a voucher with the destination address, and number of the taxi line. The driver will ask to see this and then return it. There are no fixed priced airport transfers, every trip is priced by the distance of the destination.

In normal traffic conditions, you can get around in the central areas in 10-25 minutes by car. Taxi rides cost a 450 HUF base price and 280 HUF for every kilometer. Time-based fare unit 70 HUF per minute.

Budapest's taxi drivers are not always prepared for English speaking clients, but it does not necessarily mean that they intend to overcharge their foreign guests – you can call one of the major taxi companies with English speaking switchboards to avoid problems. Most companies' websites now have pages in English.

Do not accept offers from taxi drivers waiting in the airport terminals or railway stations. Use your common sense, sit only in taxis carrying logos of bigger companies.

Many taxis parked in the downtown areas do not belong to radio taxi companies and charge much more than the usual HUF 280 per km. Ask about their price in advance or call any of the taxi companies below. If you are forced to take a taxi from the street, try to pick one with the meter in a place where the driver can't fiddle with it while driving. (While the fare per kilometer stays the same, it may sometimes be possible to "bump" the price by adding extra basic fees.) Asking the approximate price in advance may be a good idea in such cases. Note that calling your own taxi is usually cheaper than having one booked for you in a hotel. Tell the driver in time if you need a receipt. A new ruling requires all taxis to have a universal yellow colour, but this is not obligatory until September 1st 2014. You can book taxi in advance:

- **6x6 Taxi**, [12] (<http://www.6x6taxi.hu>) +36-1 266-6666.
- **Budapest Taxi**, [13] (<http://www.budapesttaxi.hu>) +36-1 433-3333.
- **Budataxi**, [14] (<http://www.budataxi.hu/>) +36-1 233-3333.
- **City Taxi**, [15] (<http://www.citytaxi.hu/index.php?l=en>) +36-1 211-1111.
- **Főtaxi**, [16] (<http://www.fotaxi.hu/>) +36-1 222-2222.
- **Mobil Taxi**, [17] (<http://www.mobiltaxi.hu>) +36-1 333-1757.
- **Radio Taxi**, [18] (<http://www.radiotaxi.hu>) +36-1 777-7777.
- **Taxi 2000**, [19] (<http://www.taxi2000.hu/>) +36-1 200-0000.

- **Taxi Plus**, [20] (<http://www.taxiplus.hu>) +36-1 888-8000.
- **Tele 5 Taxi**, [21] (<http://www.tele5taxi.hu>) +36-1 555-5555.

By bicycle

For those comfortable with urban cycling, bicycle is a relatively cheap and convenient way to get around. Bike paths range in style from car-free dedicated bicycle paths to on-street bicycle painted bicycle lanes to normal traffic routes painted with "bicycle route" markers. Cycling on non-marked paths is generally possible for confident cyclists except on busy major thoroughfares. On some major routes, the right-most lane is reserved for busses, taxis, and cyclists only. Some intersections have bicycle traffic lights. Often one-way streets allow cycling in both directions. Signs are marked "kivéve", meaning "one way street, except for bicycles". Many pathways (whether marked or unmarked) are mixed use for both pedestrians and cyclists and (slow speed) cycling on the sidewalk is generally tolerated when necessary. Cyclists should ring their bell in advance if approaching pedestrians who are walking on a marked bicycle path.

Bikes can only be taken on the HÉV (suburban train), the Fogaskerekű (the mountain cog railway starting at Városmajor), and on (most) long distance trains. A supplementary bicycle ticket is usually required.

Visitors wishing to cycle can join an organized bike tour, rent a bicycle from a shop, or use the "Bubi" public transport bicycle service. See "do" for information about renting a bicycle. Longer-term visitors may wish to purchase a bicycle. Basic functional used bicycles start around 20000 HUF.

By scooter

Although not as fancy as in Rome or Paris, scooters are becoming more common in the streets of Budapest. Inside the city scooters can be driven on the tram and bus ways, often buzzing in between traffic. Although most car drivers are quite used to the scooters around them, some can still be slight irresponsible. Ignore their pushiness and drive conservative and you should not experience any problems. The best roads are the main ring roads as these have plenty of space and good asphalt. The smaller in between roads and roads in hilly Buda can be of lesser quality with some unexpected potholes or tough to see speed bumps.

A limited number of companies offer scooter rental and scooter tours inside the city center. Expect to pay around HUF 6000 for a day. Some companies that offer scooter rental are:

- **Retro Robogó** [22] (<http://www.retro-robogo.hu/>), +36-70 432-0444. Rent a scooter starting at 3,600 HUF per day (week rental).

In Hungary scooters with an engine up to 50cc can be driven without license plate and only a regular car drivers license. However these 50cc scooters cannot be driven with a passenger. Helmets are compulsory. For scooters and motorcycles with an engine size above 50cc a license plate and motorcycle drivers license is required. If you are experienced with driving a scooter, it is a great way to experience the city



Budapest as seen from the Gellért Hill. Left: the Buda Castle, middle: the Széchenyi Chain Bridge, right: the Hungarian Parliament Building.

See

Historic buildings

- **Parliament** (*Országház*), Kossuth Lajos tér, [23] (<http://latogatokozpont.parlament.hu/en>). The Hungarian

National Parliament building is the largest in Europe, designed by architect Imre Steindl for the 1896 millennial celebrations, and built 1880-1902. It is based on England's Parliament building, and supposedly is one meter wider and longer than that august building, just a little bit of architectural conceit. The building is so immense, the weak alluvial soil along the Danube had to be reinforced with a 7-foot-deep concrete foundation. Not surprising, as the building is 300 yards long and 140 yards wide, with 691 rooms and 12.5 miles of corridors. The lacy white Gothic froth covering the building is actually educational: 88 statues representing Hungarian rulers, princes and military commanders. These statues are small and cannot be readily distinguished from the ground, but they are there. ^{edit} Under the Parliament's cupola the **Hungarian crown jewels** are exhibited. After World War II, the medieval crown (last used in 1916) was taken out of the country by escaping Hungarian fascists, ending up in the United States. President Carter returned the crown to the Hungarian state in 1978, accompanied by a large American delegation. It was exhibited in the National Museum until 2000 when it was moved to its present location. The only way inside the building is with an organized tour. The tour lasts about 30 minutes. Tours only run on specific times during the day, and you have to get your ticket in advance for a timed slot. The House of Parliament's Visitor Center is directly north of the Parliament building itself and is an underground office reached by stairs. Come back at the specified time on your ticket, and a guide will appear (not in a uniform). Then you can go through security screening before starting. There is a bar/cafe just inside the main doors which is open to the public during the tour times. Tickets can be purchased in advance online (official tickets sold through Jegymester). [24] (<https://www.jegymester.hu/eng/Production/480000/Parliament-visit>). You can also wait in line and purchase tickets for the guided tour inside the Visitor Center. Multiple guided tours in English, Spanish, German, Italian, Hungarian, Russian, Hebrew, and French are held throughout the day. Visits to the House of Parliament are restricted during weeks in which the National Assembly holds its plenary sittings.



Parliament

- **The Royal Palace** (*Királyi palota*). The most popular attraction on the hill. Entrance to the area is free, while some museums and attractions have paid admission. Can be reached on foot (sloped paths and/or a long series of steps), by tourist funicular, or by public transit bus. On foot, walk to the base of the castle on the Buda side and look for the white stairs next to the palace garden park. In the park there is also a small elevator and then a small escalator that will get you part way up. By funicular, cross the chain bridge and then proceed to the base of the station. Tickets cost 1100 HUF for adults for a short ride, and the view is not particularly impressive, so this is a better option for those with limited mobility than those looking for a fun experience. By public transit bus, take bus number 16. The first known buildings here where the Royal Palace stands today, were built by Charles Robert's eldest son, Stephan Duke of Anjou (1308-1342). It was later remodeled, but the reign of King Matthias brought about the golden age of Buda (1458-1490). Legend has it that when a Turkish ambassador came to Buda, he saw all the wealth and grandeur, forgot his greeting speech and all he could say was „The emperor sends his respects.” After several remodelings, the unique building we see today is the recreation of Alajos Hauszmann and Miklós Ybl's 1896 millennial designs. During its history the Royal Palace was destroyed and rebuilt at least 6 times. It hosted rulings but also invaders such as the Turks. Today the Palace is converted into some museums. It hosts the National Gallery. Sections of the Royal Palace include:



The Parliament Building

- **Lions' Courtyard** The courtyard got its name from the four stone lions that guard its gate. The two formidable lions at the gate try to deter one from entering, while the two on the inside roar furiously at those who dare walk past the gates. They were created by sculptor János Fadrusz in 1902. As we walk past the gate lighter stripes in the grey cube veneer show the excavated, the re-buried remains of the medieval palace walls. The 4300 m² courtyard is bordered by the building complex containing the Hungarian National Museum, the Budapest Museum of History and the National Széchenyi Library. [25] (<http://lovelybudapest.com/en/about-budapest/budapest-attractions.html>)
- **Hunyadi Garden** The Hunyadi Garden was a market place during the reign of Sigismund of Luxemburg. The group of bronze statues known as the Mátyás Fountain is the work of Alajos Stróbl from 1904. The work features Matthias Corvinus in the company of his henchman, his hunter, his Italian chronicler and his hunting dogs. On the left side is Szép Ilonka, a young woman from a humble background, who knowing nothing about Matthias's status falls in love with the king during a hunt. The busy fountain is a popular rest stop for tourists. This is Budapest's answer to the Trevi Fountain in Rome: visitors wishing to return to the city toss shiny coins into the fountain, of which thousands shimmer under the water.
- **Savoyai Terrace** One of the most representative areas of the Buda Castle, the Savoyai Terrace boasts the

best view of the city. Standing on this spacious square we can see the graceful Danube dividing the two sides of the city, the limestone walls of the Parliament, the Gellért Hill, our capital's bridges, the Monument of Liberty, and on a clear day you can see the sites of Pest. The Terrace is in front of the Hungarian National Museum and on it you will find the neo-baroque bronze statue of Austrian Prince Eugene of Savoy military strategist made by the sculptor József Róna which has been there since the beginning of the 1900s. Eugene of Savoy is an important figure in Hungarian History because he was the general who irrevocably freed Hungary from the Turkish occupation. The first palace, in Gothic style, built and added onto over 300 years, was destroyed by the Christian army that liberated Buda from the Turkish occupation in 1686. In 1715 work started on a completely new, smaller Baroque palace, but over the years more and more space was added to the palace until it reached its current length (304 meters). The palace, in neo-Baroque style, had many added wings (which now house the **National Gallery**, among other treasures--see below). Reconstruction after the various indignities suffered during rebellions of the nineteenth century finished in 1904. This reconstruction, by Miklós Ybl and Alajos Hauszmann, was undone by German troops holding out at the end of WWII. The roof fell in entirely and most of the furniture was destroyed. A Baroque façade which had never existed before and a real dome (there had previously been a faux dome with attic space beneath) were added to the building. Today the building houses three large museums (see below) and the **National Széchényi Library** [26] (http://www.oszk.hu/index_en.htm). The statue of **Hussar general András Hadik**, a favorite of Empress Maria Theresia is well known to local students. The statue, designed by György Vastagh Jr. was presented to the public in 1937. The general is on horseback; take a close look at the horse's testicles. They are shiny yellow, unlike the patina on the rest of the statue. Engineering students have for years polished the horse testicles on the morning of difficult exams, supposedly for luck. **Mary Magdalene Tower** (Mária Magdolna torony), on the corner of Országház utca and Kapisztrán tér is the part of a 13th-century Franciscan church used by Hungarian speakers. Under Turkish rule, this was the only church allowed to remain Christian: all others were converted into mosques. The chancel was destroyed in World War II and has not been rebuilt except for one stone window, as a memento. ***Vienna Gate** (Bécsi Kapu) at the northern end of Castle Hill. This was the market for non-Jewish merchants in the Middle Ages, and is where all four streets that run the length of the hill converge. The Vienna Gate inspired a typical Hungarian parental retort for children who talk back, they will be scolded with "Your mouth is as big as the Vienna Gate!" The gate is not really large or extraordinary, but you can climb over it anyway.

- **The Fisherman's Bastion** and lookout terrace (*Halászbástya*). For impressive views across the Danube to Pest. This neo-Gothic construction was built in 1905 by the architect Frigyes Schulek. It is composed by seven towers that are symbolizing the seven magyar clans' leaders that came in the Carpathian Basin at the end of the IX century. It was built between 1890-1905, and is named after both the medieval fishmarket once nearby and the Guild of Fishermen who defended this section of the wall during past wars. The story is that different trades were responsible for defending different parts of the castle walls and that this section of the defenses was raised by the fishermen's guild. In fact, the structure is a late 19th century fantasy built to add class to the area. That this is an invention does not detract at all from the attractiveness of the structure, nor from the impressive views of the river and Pest on the opposite side. The mounted statue between the bastion and the church is King Stephan (Istvan in Hungarian) the first king of Hungary (crowned about 1000.) He was declared a saint for his efforts in bringing Christianity to Hungary. He carries the apostolic cross with two crossbars – a symbol granted him by the Pope. In tourist season there is an admission charge of about CHF0.96 (\$1) to climb on the bastion. In the daytime around the year, the bastion is the place most overcrowded by tourists in the Castle Hill, mainly brought in here by buses. The **sculpture of a Turul bird** just outside the cable car station is not, as you might think, an eagle, but the mythical turul bird (which is believed to be a kind of falcon). This bird is a part of the story of how the Magyars settled the Hungarian homeland. This bird appeared in a dream to the wife of the Magyar leader Ügyek and told her that she would be the founding mother of a new nation.
- **Vajdahunyad Castle** (*Vajdahunyad vára*). While loosely modelled after a Transylvanian fortress of the same name, the building is not really a castle at all: it's a full-scale model built for Hungary's 1896 millennial celebrations. The structure has three distinct wings, one Gothic, one Romanesque and one Baroque, making it quite a bizarre sight when seen from a distance. But sneak up closer and its magic will be revealed: thanks to the moat, the trees and the carefully laid footpaths, you can usually only see one section at a time. The attention to detail (all copied from real sites around the country) has been painstaking, so it's like seeing three extraordinarily pretty castles rolled into one. The structure was originally supposed to be only a temporary one, but Budapest's people liked it so much that it was rebuilt to last. Located on an island in the middle of the park's lake.
- **State Opera House**, Andrassy ut 22. Built between 1875-1884 by the premier Hungarian architect of the day, Miklós Ybl, who also worked on nearby St Stephen's Cathedral. edit

- **The Central Market Hall**^[27] (<http://lovelybudapest.com/en/about-budapest/budapest-attractions/the-central-market-hall.html>) - this market is one of the most visited tourist attractions. It is placed in the city center just at the end of Váci Utca (do not confuse it with Váci ut which is a completely different street!). It is the largest and oldest covered market of the city. This is the right place to buy an Hungarian souvenir or to eat traditional food. Closed on Sundays.

Museums and Galleries

- **National Gallery** (*Nemzeti Galéria*) ^[28] (<http://www.mng.hu>). An art gallery inside the Royal Palace. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10AM-6PM. Tickets for the permanent collection are 1400 HUF for general admission, or 700 HUF for EU travellers under 26 or over 62. Photographs only allowed with the purchase of a photo/video permit (500 HUF). Audioguides and guided tours available with fees. Ticket price includes admission to the dome of the gallery (weather permitting, and limited capacity) and the views from the dome balconies are very good. The gallery itself contains four floors of exhibitions including sculpture, renaissance and baroque paintings by Hungarians and other European artists, and modern/contemporary Hungarian painting and art installations. One section also displays selected works from the Museum of Fine Arts (Szépművészeti Múzeum) in Heroes' Square, as the Museum of Fine Arts is closed for several years for renovations. The National Gallery is smaller than other major European art collections, and could be seen very quickly in 1-2 hours, or more thoroughly in a half or whole day. There are several tourist-oriented cafes onsite and nearby for drinks, sandwiches, or ice cream.
- **House of Terror** (*Terror Háza*), Andrásy út 60 (*corner of Csengery Street, a few hundred metres from Oktogon*), ^[29] (<http://www.terrorhaza.hu/index2.html>). Tue-Sun, 10-18. The building in the block of "Andrásy út 60." was used both by Nazis and the communist-led Political Police/State Security Police as headquarters. In the basement a labyrinth of prisons was created. Many people were jailed and starved or beaten to death here. 2002, the "house of fear" was converted into a stylish but depressing museum about Nazi and communist terror which helps visitors to understand Hungary's 20th century. You will find background information sheet (English and Hungarian) for each room in the museum. 1800 ft.. ^{edit}
- **Hall of Art (Múcsarnok)** ^[30] (<http://www.mucsarnok.hu>). An "art hall" showcasing exhibitions of modern art by Hungarian and international artists. If you're nearby it's always worth taking a look to see what's happening today. Open 10AM to 6PM daily except Monday, admission varies from exhibition to exhibition.
- **Ethnographic Museum** (*Néprajzi Múzeum*), Kossuth Lajos tér 12 (*across from Parliament*), ^[31] (<http://www.neprajz.hu/>). Tue-Sun, 10-18. Sometimes said to resemble the Reichstag (parliament) building in Berlin, the white neo-Renaissance façade complements the Gothic-style Parliament building just across the square. Do not miss the richly decorated interior, including the ceiling frescoes by Károly Lotz (who also frescoed the State Opera's ceiling). The building was originally used to house the Supreme Court and chief public prosecutor's office, explaining some of the motifs used in the frescoes. 1000 ft.. ^{edit}
- **Memento Park**, at the corner of Balatoni út and Szabadkai utca (*From "Ujbuda Kozpont" – corner of Fehervari ut – Bocskai ut (Allee Shopping Mall) with bus No.150 to Memento Park stop.*), ☎ #36 (1) 424 7500, ^[32] (<http://www.szoborpark.hu/>). Open daily from 10 AM till sunset. The open-air museum is located in South Buda. Driving takes 20 minutes, taking public transport 50 minutes to reach the spot. Main part of Memento Park is the typically Central European, yet universally unique collection of former public statues, which used to be stationed in the city's public domains in accordance with the guidelines and the requests of the Socialist culture-politics and ideological system. In addition there is an exhibition of the 1956 revolution and 1989-90 political changes, a film showing about the political secret service. According to Ákos Eleőd, the architect: "This park is about dictatorship. And at the same time, because it can be talked about, described, built, this park is about democracy. After all, only democracy is able to give the opportunity to let us think freely about dictatorship." Possible souvenirs are t-shirts which poke fun at communism, German Trabant car models, CDs of



Opera house (foyer)



Hungarian National Gallery



Memento Park

Hungarian communist fight songs, reproduction Hungarian Communist Party membership booklets and postcards. To attend the guided tour, or get a booklet in English is well-recommended. ^{edit}

Smaller museums include:

- **The Hopp Museum of East Asian Art** [33] (<http://www.hoppmuseum.com>). Collection of 20,000 pieces from China, Japan, India, Nepal, Tibet and Mongolia. Nearby is another similar collection, namely **Gyorgy Museum**.
- **Ernst Museum** [34] (<http://www.ernstmuseum.hu>). Contemporary Hungarian art.
- **Museum of Applied Arts** [35] (<http://www.imm.hu>).
- **Natural History Museum** [36] (<http://www.nhmus.hu>) Mainly minerals at display.
- **Ludwig Museum of Modern Art** [37] (<http://www.ludwigmuseum.hu>).
- **Holocaust Memorial Centre** [38] (<http://www.hdke.hu>).
- **Museum of Transport**.
- **Bible Museum**
- **The Historical Museum of Budapest** [39] (<http://www.btm.hu>). Exhibition of medieval Budapest and history of the Royal Palace.
- **The Music Museum**. Includes a collection of musical instruments and the Bartok archive.
- **The Military Museum** [40] (<http://www.militaria.hu>). Uniforms, weapons, maps and other Hungary-related military objects from 11th century until nowadays.
- **Marzipan Museum**.
- **Pharmacy Museum**. Collection of pharmaceutical objects from the Renaissance and Baroque eras.
- **Museum of Medieval Judaism**. Presents the medieval Jewish objects of Buda.
- **Hungarian Agricultural Museum**. Housed in Vajdahunyad Castle's baroque wing, this is the only part open to the public and it now houses the exhibits on breathtaking topics like cattle breeding and fishing. But at 50 ft a throw for students it's worth seeing just for the architecture. 50 ft. ^{edit}
- **Museum of Victor Vasarely** at Szentlélek tér. -- Take *HÉV* from *Batthyány tér* and get off at *Árpád-híd* stop. The museum entrance is just next to the square where many buses stop. The museum contains the work of Vasarely, a figure of 'op art'. The works are excellent and are fun to watch.
- **Museum of Aquincum** [41] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=6) - The remains of Aquincum the former capitol of Pannonia Inferior, built by the Romans.
- **Tomb of Gül Baba and Rosegarden** [42] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=27) - Built around 1548 by the turkish occupants of the city. It is the northernmost place of muslim pilgrimage. The beautiful view and the peacefulness of the place makes a visit worth.
- **Béla Bartók Memorial House** [43] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=9) - The final home of one of the greatest Hungarian composers. Located at a very beautiful place and has a big garden.
- **Foundry Museum** [44] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=67) - A foundry from the 18th century in the very heart of the city, preserved as a museum.
- **Semmelweis Medical History Museum** [45] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=66) - The most important museum and archives on the history of medicine in Hungary
- **Museum Kiscell** [46] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=3) - A beautiful complex of baroque style buildings originally built for Trinitarian monks. The museum exhibits fine arts and items of modern history.
- **Museum of Óbuda** [47] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=63) - A museum of the local history in the Zichy Castle.
- **Zelnik Istvan Southeast Asian Goldmuseum** (*Aranymúzeum*) [48] (<http://www.thegoldmuseum.eu>) has the leading collection in Europe of southeast asian gold artifacts from the 1st millenia BC
- **Olof palme ház** is an elegant building in North italian renaissance style was erected in 1884 by the architect Pfaff Ferenc. The central wall of the building is finely decorated with some portraits of the most important italian renaissance artists: Michelangelo, Raffaello and Leonardo da Vinci.
- **Aquincum** [49] (<http://www.aquincum.hu>) was a city in the Roman times, its remains are turned into a great open-air museum. It's situated in the *Óbuda* district of northern **Buda**. There are some ruins of thermal baths, made by stones and decorated with mosaics and paintings. Visiting these places was social events for Romans. Don't miss the Aquincum museum in which it is possible to admire many finds, paintings, reconstruction of houses and a reproduction of the hydraulic system of the time. Aquincum is the biggest and the most important roman ruin in Hungary.
- **Gül Baba Türbéje** [50] (http://www.museum.hu/museum/index_en.php?ID=27) is the shrine where *Gül Baba* (literally Rose Father, from whom the *Rózsadomb* (Rose Hill) was named) lies. Offers a nice view and the little



Soviet Soldier in Statue Park

street which leads down the hill from there contains more houses that won the "House of the Year" award.

- **Kassák Museum** at the Zichy Castle shows works of the modern Hungarian artists as well as modern Hungarian art.
- **Kiscelli Museum** [51] (http://www.btmfk.iif.hu/index_en.html) - The Budapest Picture Gallery.
- **Kodály Museum**.
- **Liszt Museum**. Home of Ferenc Liszt, most famous Hungarian composer. Collection of his personal objects and instruments can be visited.
- **Bartók's House**.
- **The Music Museum**. Includes a collection of musical instruments and the Bartok archive.
- **Fashion Museum**.
- **MEO Budapest's art fair**.
- **House of the Future** [52] (<http://jovo-haza.hu/>).

Parks

Margaret Island (*Margitsziget*) and its large parks (see Buda) are a very pleasant place to relax and wander. Perfect for a sunny afternoon. The island can be reach by both side (Buda and Pest) by the Margaret Bridge that has a curious shape because it is connecting with the island with a 30° angle.

City Park

Churches and Places of Worship

- **St. Stephen (István) Cathedral** (*the Basilica*), Szent István tér. Though often called "the Basilica" for short due to its clerical rank as a basilica minor, it actually is shaped like a Greek cross, with two steeples and a dome on top. Designed by Miklós Ybl and József Hild, and built 1851-1905, it is as high as the Parliament building -- it's the highest church in Budapest. Walking in the main entrance, after climbing a series of stairs, the viewer is first greeted with a relief of St Stephen, then a mosaic of Christ's resurrection. There are many notable mosaics in this church, especially those within the dome designed by Károly Lotz, best known for his ceiling frescoes in the State Opera and Ethnographic Museum. While designed here, the mosaics were made in Venice. The foremost Hungarian artists of the day designed the artworks within St Stephen's, among them Bertalan Székely, Gyula Benczúr and two men also known for their work in the Opera, Mór Than and Alajos Stróbl. Here Stróbl contributed the central statue of St Stephen on the main altar. In the left hand chapel is the "Chapel of the sacred right hand" this is pretty surreal as St Stephen's surviving hand in a glass box, lovely. For a fee, you can also climb to the very top of the Basilica to get a wonderful view of the city. edit
- **Matthias Church** (*Mátyás templom*, aka Church of Our Lady). Dominant neogothic church crowning Budapest's cityscape - nowadays is under reconstruction. The church praises a wonderful and unusual roof made of coloured shingles and elegant pinnacles. The interior worth a visit because of the frescoes and the artistic glass walls.
- **Matthias Church** (*Mátyás templom*). The rococo spire of this church is one of the easily seen landmarks of the var. Originally the Buda German community's parish church, its official name is the "Church of the Blessed Virgin". The popular Hungarian king, Mátyás, held both of his weddings here, and so it is known as the Matthias Church. Today an eclectic mix of styles, the church was started in the thirteenth century. The main apse, which ends in a seven-sided polygon, is in French style and is the earliest extant section. The central section was built about 100 years later. During the Turkish occupation of Budapest, all the furnishings were removed and the painted walls whitewashed to cover art unacceptable to the Islamic eye. Once returned to the Catholic community, it was Baroquified (i.e. covered with Baroque ornamentation that obscured the original style like many other Central European churches were), and the rose window was bricked up. In the last century, between 1873 and 1896, Frigyes Schulek began a major renovation and restoration of the Matthias Church. The **interior** is sumptuously decorated in a style which is on the one hand art deco and yet evokes the medieval predecessors of this structure. As you enter the church turn to the right and proceed down the right hand aisle to the front of the church. For a small fee you can visit the underground treasury which includes a replica of the Crown of St. Stephen -- the real crown (a 12th century



Mátyás-templom (Matthias Church)

object even though Stephen was a 10th century king) is on display in the parliament building. Also take a look at the opulent chapel at the rear of the church (around the corner to the left of the entrance. Be aware that this is a functioning church and you may find that at times it is closed to visitors for church activities or concerts. To the left of the neighboring Hilton Hotel is what looks like the **wall of a medieval church** with a monument set into it. In fact it is a copy of a monument located in Belsen, Germany (near Dresden). The copy was erected by the Hilton Company. It portrays King Mátyás (15th century), the most beloved of Hungarian Kings. In front of the Matthias Church is a **tall column decorated with many statues** – this is a “plague monument” erected by thankful survivors.

- **Great Synagogue and the Jewish Museum**, Dohány ut. 2-8, [53] (www.jewish.hu). This synagogue is unique both because of its size, and its two onion-shaped domes, which are forty-three meters high. Onion domes are typically found on Catholic churches, and Hungary is a very Catholic country. Perhaps Ludwig Förster, the architect, meant for it to blend in a bit. Those interested in Jewish history or culture may be interested in a guided or self-guided tour of the old Jewish Quarter of Budapest is the neighborhood bordered by Károly Boulevard, Erzsébet Boulevard, Király Street and Rákóczi Road. Main sites include Wallenberg Park, The Tree of Life, The Temple of Heroes, the Rumbach Synagogue, the Carl Lutz Memorial, and the Kazinczy Street Synagogue ^{edit}
- **Rock Church** (*Sziklatemplom*) at the southeastern edge of Gellért Hill. The church was created from a natural cave system, following the Lourdes cave as sample in 1926. To reach the church, go to Gellért tér, turn towards Gellért Hill and look for the big white cross or the statue of King Saint Stephen - you can find the church below the cross and next to the statue.



Great Synagogue



Tree of Life (Holocaust memorial)

Statues and Monuments

- **Heroes' Square** (*Hősök tere*) - with the Millennium Monument in the middle and two museums on the two sides:
- **Chain Bridge** (*Széchenyi Lánchíd*). Lánchíd (pronounced “laance heed”) means **chain bridge** and the suspension structure of the bridge is made of chains whose links are huge dog-bone shaped metal bars linked by pins at their ends. Make sure you stop by after dark to take a picture as the bridge is beautifully light up.
- **Little Princess statue**, (*on bank of Danube, somewhere near Vigado ter*). A bronze statue created by László Morton, a child sitting on the fence of the tram. ^{edit}
- **Shoes on the Danube memorial**, (*Danube bank, between Kossuth tér and Széchenyi tér (former Roosevelt tér)*). The shoes are placed there in memory of the Jews who were shot into the Danube during World War II. ^{edit}



Statues in Heroes Square



Shoes on the Danube memorial

Look-outs and viewpoints

- **Citadella**, the former fortress on top of **Gellérthegy**, offers a superb panorama over Central Budapest including bank of the Danube River, Buda Castle and Pest city. To get good views up and down the Danube, take the steps going down in front of the Liberty Statue in front of the Citadella. There are several outposts offering good photo opportunities. The Citadella is served by local bus 27 from either Sándor utca (*reached by bus 8, 112, 239 from Corvin Negyed (former Ferenciek tere) or Astoria Metro stations*) or Móricz Zsigmond körtér (*reached by tram 6 from Corvin Negyed (former Ferenciek tere) Metro station or tram 47, 49 from Kálvin tér Metro station*). The bus stop is called Búsuló Juhász (Citadella), **but the Citadella is 600 m away on foot along Szirtes utca**.
- **Elizabeth Lookout** (*Erzsébet kilátó*) is Budapest's highest peak with its 527 meters. One possible 'vehicle' to reach it is the chair lift [54] (http://www.libego.hu/index_eng.htm) (*Libegő*), starting out from the terminal of bus

291. Open hours of the Chair-lift: between 15th of May and 15th of September: 9AM-5PM, between 15th of September and 15th of May: 9:30AM-4PM. A single ticket costs HUF 750 and a return ticket HUF 1300.

Other

In the City Park, the **Budapest Zoo** is one of the oldest in the world. It offers more than 800 animals to be seen in a historic atmosphere.

The **Cogwheel tram** (*Fogaskerekű*) and **Children's Railway** (*Gyermekvasút*) in the Buda Hills are a great escape from the city. The cogwheel tram, which is officially tram no. 60, leaves from Városmajor, accessible by tram 59 or 61 from Széll Kálmán tér. It climbs through the wooded Buda Hills and at the top, if you feel like doing it, take the Children's Railway through the hills to Hűvösvölgy and take tram 61 back down to Széll Kálmán tér. **The cogwheel tram accepts local travelcards, but the Gyermekvasút does not, and fares can be found here** [55] (<http://www.gyermekvasut.hu/english/page.php?7>). Also if you have an old map, you'll find Pioneers' Railway (Úttörővasút) instead of Children's Railway in it, which is the former name of the railway from the Soviet era.

Do

Walking Tours

Plenty of companies offer paid or free/tips-only walking tours.

- **United Europe Free Walking Tours**, Meet at Vorosmarty Ter, [56] (<http://www.unitedeuropefreetours.com/index.php/hungary/budapest>). daily tours with various start times. free/pay-what-you-want/guides work for tips only. edit
- **Free Budapest Tours**, Meet at Deak Ferenc Ter, [57] (<http://www.freebudapesttours.hu/budapest-free-tour>). Daily tours. Check online for details. edit



Heroes' Square

Bicycle Rentals

Bubi is Budapest's recently-launched public bicycle system. Similarly to the systems in other major European cities, users purchase an access ticket and can pick-up a bicycle at one of many stations located throughout the city. Once the user has an access ticket, bicycles can be taken for free for up to 30 minutes at a time. (After that, the bicycle must be returned and re-withdrawn, or surcharges will be applied.) Access tickets start at 500 HUF for a 24 hour period. Tickets can be purchased online or at central customer service points. Bicycle stations are located throughout the central part of the city. See *their website* [58] (<http://molbubi.bkk.hu/>) for more details in English or Hungarian.

Bicycle rentals are available from local shops. Expect to pay around HUF 2000-3000 per day. Some bike rental companies include:

- **Budapest Bike**, ☎ +36-30 944-5533.. Rent a bike starting at 2,000 HUF for 6 hours.. edit
- **Yellow Zebra Bike**, ☎ +36-1 266-8777. Rent a bike starting at 1,500 HUF for 1-5 hours.. edit
- **Bikebase**, ☎ +36-1 269-5983. Bike rentals available for 2,000 HUF for 24 hours. Possible to rent higher-end bikes or touring bikes at daily or longer term rates. edit
- **TreeHugger Dans** [59] (<http://www.treehugger.hu/>) - Used english bookstore, bicycle rental and coffee shop. Smoke free and the staff is very friendly even if the book prices are extortionate. A good place to pick up a local city map with fresh recommendations.

Bicycle Tours

- **Baja Bikes**, ☎ [35]+34-646252199. CHF26.92 (25 euro). edit

Skating

In the winter, the lake in City Park is transformed into a large **ice-skating rink**. www.mujegpalya.hu (<http://www.mujegpalya.hu>)

- **WestEnd.** There is a rink on the top of WestEnd mall. It is smaller, but it usually less crowded than the rink at City Park. Usually operates from October or November until March.

Dance

- **FONÓ Music House** XI. district, Sztregova u. 3. Tel.: 206-5300, 203-1752. Fax: 463-0479 (*Take tram no. 18, 41 or 47 southward from Móricz Zsigmond körtér and get off at Kalotaszeg utca stop. Walk backwards 2 minutes and take the first street on the right.*) They offer concerts, folkdance performances as well dance houses called *tánc ház* in Hungarian. Every Wednesday evening they have Hungarian dance club which is a perfect place to see how young Hungarians revitalize traditional culture.

Boating

Don't miss a **boat trip** on River Danube. You can enjoy both riverbanks and the bridges at the very same time. It is especially spectacular at night. Tourist Boats leave from *Vigadó tér*. Round trip in about 1 hour. There are a few different lines, most are the same. Dinner cruises are available as well.

The BKV (Budapest Public Transport) now operates a passenger service up and down the Danube. Schedule and stop can be found here [60] (<http://www.bkv.hu/en/boat>) Regular BKV metro tickets (350ft or 450fr on the boat) Transit Passes can be used as well (except on weekends). Take in the sights like Castle Hill, Parliament and the Bridges for the price of a bus ticket.

- City Park's lake offers **boating** in the summer. There're also open-air tables for **ping-pong** nearby.
- **City Park's lake**, Olof Palme sétány 5.. M-F 9-13, 16-20; Sa-Su 10-14, 16-20. Rink entrance: M-F morning 600ft, Fri evening-Sun. Skate rental available (look for Roces sign further from the Heroes Square); deposit 15.000ft or a photo document; rental hour is 600ft.. edit

Concerts, Shows, and Performances

- The **Capital Circus of Budapest** in City Park (Fővárosi Nagycirkusz) offers tigers-and-acrobats style performances featuring international artists. Information and tickets (<http://www.fnc.hu/eng/>)
- **Hungarian State Opera House, Magyar Állami Operaház** [61] (<http://www.opera.hu/>), 1061 Andrásy út 22, metro 1 station Opera, tickets HUF 300-10,900. One of Europe's architecturally most breathtaking opera house's company performs traditional opera and ballet. The quality of its huge repertoire is not always up to international standards, but if you don't expect too much, you will spend a decent night here. Cheaper tickets offering reduced visibility are a good deal if you don't want to pay HUF 2500 for the official guided tour [62] (<http://www.operavisit.hu/english/index.html>) to the building. The company also performs at **Theatre Thália**, (*Thália Színház* 1065 Nagymező u. 22-24, metro 1, tram 4, tram 6 station/stop Oktogon, tickets HUF 2900-4900), [63] (<http://www.thalia.hu/>), while **Theatre Erkel**, the Opera's chamber theater is closed due to reconstruction. Actually the guided tours - every 3PM and 4PM - are more expensive (1000ft) than a ticket to the opera (from 700ft). Buy the second cheapest to be able to see the stage as well. But even if tickets are expensive you will enjoy the performance even if you're not an opera buff. You can get cheaper tickets during the summer when there often are opera festivals. Most operas are in Italian, but at the State Opera they subtitle the entire performance in Hungarian. The hall is beautiful and in its original state. On the balcony surrounding the hall they have put the name of every classic opera performed there into the wood. It has to be seen to be fully appreciated. For a real treat, purchase seats in the *kabin* or box seats ranging upwards of 5000 to 8000ft. Appropriate dress - suits or sport coats for men, dress or skirt/blouse for women (although tuxedos to backpacker wear is seen during the week).
- **Palace of Arts, Művészetek Palotája** [64] (<http://www.mupa.hu/>), 1095 Komor Marcell utca 1, tram 2 stop Millenniumi Kulturális Központ, tickets HUF 700-9,800, standing tickets for students are available for HUF 200 one hour before every show, (be sure that your student card is valid, otherwise you won't get in). This modern, power plant-looking building hides an excellent modern art museum, a festival theatre and the marvellous **Béla Bartók National Concert Hall** (*Bartók Béla Nemzeti Hangversenyterem*), which offer great concerts from classical, jazz and world music to Hungarian and international pop, special children programmes and the best opera performances in Central Europe. The annual Wagner festival in June is a must. Spectacles are held all

around the year. Book your tickets at the Palace of the Arts home page without additional booking fee.



Művészetek Palotája (Palace of Arts)

- **Theatre Madách**, *Madách Színház* [65] (http://www.madachszinhas.hu/flash_eng.php), 1073 Erzsébet körút 29-33, metro 2 station Blaha Lujza tér, tram 4, tram 6 stop Wesselényi utca, tickets HUF 500-8900. If you want to see the Hungarian version of blockbuster musicals like *The Phantom of the Opera* or *Producers*, this is your place. Madách is widely popular among musical fans, and some of their recent shows have been critically acclaimed, so book well in advance.
- **Budapest Operetta Theatre**, *Budapesti Operett Színház* [66] (<http://www.operettszinhas.hu/>), 1065 Nagymező utca 19, metro 1, tram 4, tram 6 station/stop Oktogon, tickets HUF 950-15000. Grandmothers' eternal favourite, the Operetta Theatre performs old-fashioned operettas for the nostalgic hearted and tries to be Madách's main rival in musicals.
- **Trafó House of Contemporary Arts**, *Trafó Kortárs Művészetek Háza* [67] (<http://www.trafo.hu/>), 1094 Liliom utca 41, metro 3 station Ferenc körút, tram 4, tram 6 stop Üllői út, tickets HUF 1000-2500, 25% discount for student card holders. In a renovated transformer building, Budapest's most important contemporary cultural center presents Hungarian and international experimental dance, theatre and music performances. A disco hall in the cellar and a lively bar upstairs also serve your entertainment.
- **Millenáris** [68] (<http://programok.jovohaza.com/Engine.aspx>), 1024 Fény utca 20-22, metro 2 station Széll Kálmán tér, tram 4, tram 6 stop Széna tér, tickets HUF 1000-6000. This huge cultural center has been built around former factory buildings. The complex includes a park, a small artificial lake, cafés, an interactive museum called Csodák Palotája (Palace of Miracles) and a theatre which hosts music, theatre and sometimes great contemporary opera performances. You could book your ticket at their home page, which is available in Hungarian and English
- **Merlin International Theatre**, *Merlin Nemzetközi Színház* [69] (<http://www.szinhas.hu/index.php?id=793>), 1052 Gerlóczy utca 4, metro 1/2/3 station Deák tér, tickets HUF 600-2000. Merlin, within stone-throwing distance of Váci street, Budapest touristy and commercial heart, is a hub for some Hungarian alternative companies and also for performances in English.
- **National Dance Theatre**, *Nemzeti Táncszínház* [70] (<http://www.nemzetitanacszinhas.hu>), 1014 Budapest, Színház utca 1-3, bus 10, bus 16, stop Dísz tér, tickets HUF 1100-3500. The main dance theatre of Hungary hosts a wide range of local and international performances. Although not always revolutionary modern, it's always worth to check the program.
- **Experidance Company** [71] (<http://www.experidance.hu>). This popular company performs Hungarian popular dances in modern conception.
- **MU Theatre**, *MU Színház* [72] (<http://www.mu.hu/>), 1117 Kőrösy J. utca 17, tram 4 stop Fehérvári út, tickets HUF 1500, for student card holders HUF 1000. MU, one of the well-known Budapest dance theatres hosts contemporary dance performances.
- **Central European Dance Theater**, *Közép-Európa Táncszínház* [73] (<http://www.szinhas.hu/ket/>), 1071 Bethlen Gábor tér 3, metro 2 station Keleti Pályaudvar, tickets HUF 1200, for senior citizen HUF 700, for student card holders HUF 800. CEDT's company performs renowned contemporary dance theatre.
- **Theatre Szkéné**, *Szkéné Színház*, 1111 Műegyetem rakpart 3., Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME)'s theatre hall, bus 7, bus 73, stop Szent Gellért tér – during the construction of metro 4 station in Szent Gellért tér use temporary stairs next to the river for reaching the building, [74] (<http://www.szkene.hu/>). Szkéné hosts, among others, **Béla Pintér and Company** [75] (<http://www.pbest.hu/>) (*Pintér Béla és Társulata*, tickets HUF 1500), many alternative theater goers' favourite. Their 2006 autumn premier, "Korcsula" (Korčula – the name refers to a Croatian island), a Central European black comedy, is subtitled in English. Book your ticket by email.
- **Danube Palace**, 1051 Zrínyi u. 5 (5 minutes walk from Deák Ferenc tér), [76] (<http://www.ticket.info.hu/index.php?module=staticpage&id=29&lang=1>). Folklore performances every day at 20:00. Serves as a venue for the **Danube Symphony Orchestra**, the **Danube Folk Ensemble** and the **Rajko Gypsy Orchestra** and Folk

Ensemble (http://www.hungarianfolk.eu/static_new/folklore.html). 3,600-6,400 HUF, discounts available for students. edit

- **Budai Vigado (Hungarian Heritage House)** (<http://www.heritagehouse.hu/>) The HHH is the historical building also known as the "Vigadó" (Entertainment Hall) of Buda. The building is located in Fő utca (High Street), between Batthyány tér (Batthyány Square) and Clark Ádám tér (Adam Clark Circus). The building was designed in Eclectic style by Aladár Árkay and Mór Kallina. It was constructed between 1898-1900. The relative simplicity of the façade is contrasted by the rich Art Nouveau ornamentation in the interior. The building was designed to serve the multiple cultural needs of the contemporary middle-class citizens of Buda. It was a cultural complex comprised of a theater, a library, a café and a restaurant. The most impressive parts of the interior are the hall with its columns and wide marble staircase, the ornamented lounge, and the adjacent auditorium. Features performances by the **Hungarian State Folk Ensemble** (<http://www.ticket.info.hu/en/program/folklore-performances/hungarian-state-folk-ensemble>).
- **Saint Stephen's Basilica** Home to organ concerts by the famous organ player Miklós Teleki (<http://www.ticket.info.hu/en/program/orgona-concert/performers>) accompanied by flutist, Eleonora Krusic (<http://www.ticket.info.hu/en/program/orgona-concert/eleonora-krusic>) and opera singer Kolos Kováts (<http://www.ticket.info.hu/en/program/orgona-concert/kolos-kovats>).

Festivals

Budapest offers a multitude of fairs and festivals. A few of them are:

March

- **Budapest Spring Festival** [77] (<http://www.btf.hu/>) A dazzling variety of cultural events mainly revolving around classical music and performing arts - including folklore.

August

- **Jewish Summer Festival** [78] (<http://zsidonyarifesztival.hu/?lang=en>) Another array of cultural and music events, with a Jewish touch.
- **Sziget Festival** on Óbudai Sziget (Óbuda Island) [79] (http://sziget.hu/festival_english) An institution attracting rock fans, world music hippies and the usual festival crowd every year in August. It has become one of the best-known festivals in Europe, offering a multitude of cultural, culinary and musical events. Day tickets cost CHF48.46 (€45) and festival passes, including camping privileges cost CHF215.38 (€200) if purchased before a certain date (in April or May) and CHF247.69 (€230) thereafter. Festival passes without camping privileges cost CHF32.31 (€30) less. Sleeping in a tent under the open sky instead of a hotel room gives the complete festival feeling. (Safe boxes are available for valuable personal belongings).

December

- **Budapest Christmas Market** The main Christmas market is located on the Pest side, in Vörösmarty Square and near the Chain Bridge, Váci Utca (one of the main pedestrian streets in Center) and the metro stop Vörösmarty tér. The market stalls are filled with beautiful ceramics, jewelry, cards, wood crafts, fuzzy warm hats & slippers, candy, sweets, leather goods, ornaments, etc. In the center of the main market are a variety of food and wine vendors. Open early December - end of December (specific dates change, check with the tourist board)

Cinema

In spite of increasing funding difficulties, quality cinema has remained alive in Budapest. For contemporary non-mainstream European and Hungarian titles turn to Budapest's excellent art house movie chain, **Art mozi** [80] (<http://www.artmozi.hu/includehtm.php?htm=pestimozik>), most of their branches are provided with a café or pub and offer pleasant atmosphere to spend your evening. A few selected cinemas of this chain:

- **Uránia National Movie Theatre** [81] (<http://www.uranianf.hu/>), (*Uránia Nemzeti Filmszínház*, Rákóczi út 21, metro 2 station Blaha Lujza tér, tickets HUF 890-990). Combines mainstream European artistic movies with new



Uránia National Movie Theatre

Hungarian films, the latter ones sporadically subtitled in English.

- **Cinema Puskin** (*Puskin Mozi*, Kossuth Lajos utca 18, metro 2 station Astoria, metro 3 station Ferenciek tere, tickets HUF 800-1050). “Pushkin” is the most mainstream among the art house movie theatres in Budapest, an elegant, decorated multiplex offering quality, but generally easy-to-watch Hungarian and foreign films. Its café is recommended.
- **Cinema Művész** (*Művész Mozi*, 1063 Teréz körút 30, metro 1, tram 4, tram 6 station/stop Oktogon, tickets HUF 920-1050) is probably the most popular “Art Mozi” theatre in Budapest. Many Hungarian movies are on show with English subtitles; ask for them at the desk.
- **Movie Museum Örökmozgó** (*Örökmozgó Filmmúzeum*, 1073 Erzsébet krt. 39, tram 4, tram 6, stop Király utca). “Perpetual motion” (that’s what the name means) is your best choice if you’re in mood to see a movie from the times when Leonardo DiCaprio was a child. Most of the oldies speak their original language and are subtitled in Hungarian.

Mainstream cinemas mainly show subtitled (or dubbed) Hollywood films and Hungarian romantic movies. After the shopping center revolution in the late 90s, more than two thirds of the city’s cinema screens are run by international chains and franchises. Two examples are:

- **Corvin** [82] (<http://www.corvin.hu/>) (Corvin köz 1., metro 3 station Ferenc körút, tram 4, tram 6 stop Üllői út). One of the oldest, although completely modernised cinema in the city--gives multiplex feeling for those tired of malls. On Corvin's wall memorial tablets and reliefs are reminiscent of the 1956 revolution’s heavy fightings around the building; the memorial itself is worth a visit. Tickets HUF 1150, before 16.00 HUF 950, on Wednesday HUF 750.
- Most centrally located mall cinemas are **Palace Westend** (mainstream) [83] (<http://www.westend.hu/>) in Pest (in Westend City Center, Váci út 1-3, metro 3, tram 4, tram 6 station/stop Nyugati pályaudvar) and **Palace Mammút** [84] (<http://www.mammut.hu/>) in Buda (in Mammút Center, Lövház utca 2-6, , metro 2 station Széll Kálmán tér, tram 4, tram 6 stop Széna tér); **Palace MOM PARK** in Buda, which is the "ORIGINAL LANGUAGE MOVIE" in Budapest, so you can watch all the foreign movies here with subtitles too. Check Palace’s web site [85] (<http://www.palacecinemas.hu/>) for programme and booking. Tickets cost HUF 1250, for student card holders HUF 990, on cheap days HUF 800.

Thermal baths

Context

Budapest is famous for its thermal baths, where tourists and locals go to swim, relax, and soak in hot or cold mineral waters. Thermal baths differ from normal baths or swimming pools because their hot water is drawn up from deep under the earth's surface where temperatures are higher. The thermal hot water saves on heating bills and also has different mineral contents compared to normal tap water. Soaking in certain types of mineral water is considered to have health benefits for some types of health problems, so it's not uncommon for Hungarians or visitors to come to the baths for therapeutic reasons, sometimes even prescribed by a doctor. Thermal bathing is more popular in Hungary than in other destinations for several reasons. First, because of Budapest's geography, thermal waters run closer to the surface here than in other places. Secondly, thermal bathing was (and is) popular among many Turkish cultures, and Hungary was occupied by the Turkish people of the Ottoman Empire for many years. In Budapest, some thermal baths are large, historic complexes visited as a cultural as well as a bathing experience. Other thermal baths are operated more as spa hotels, with thermal water but in a modern, spa-like atmosphere.

Etiquette and customs

At most baths, especially those frequented by tourists, people wear typical swimming attire and all public access is mixed-gender. (Certain days, hours, or sections at some baths may designated women-only or men-only, and often during these times, people bathe nude or nearly-nude.) All baths have changing areas and showers designated women-only or men-only. Transgender/non-binary gender identities are not widely recognized in Hungary, so the closest option to gender-neutral changing is to rent a private cabin within either the women's or men's section.

What to bring

Swimsuit (unless otherwise stated) and admission money are essential. A towel should be brought or rented onsite. Shower shoes or sandals are recommended as floors are not modern and not especially clean. Some may wish to bring swimming goggles, a water bottle, a bathrobe (in the winter), or a bathing cap. For some facilities or certain sections, a bathing cap might be mandatory. For those who plan to swim or lounge outdoors, small beach items like sunglasses, sunscreen, reading material, etc. may be a good idea. Hair dryers are generally available on-site. Bathers may wish to bring showering items (e.g. shampoo) and a change of clothes. Most facilities use a wristband electronic locking system for lockers and cabins, so bringing a padlock is not required. It's possible for a busy venue may run out of locks. As much as possible, valuables should be left at home, and safety boxes may be available depending.

Tickets and prices

Access to the baths is often available with many different types of tickets. Expect to pay something in the realm of 4000-5000 HUF for the major tourist baths. A general ticket usually includes all-day access to the main areas of the baths and a small private locker for storage of clothes and personal effects. Discounted tickets are usually available for young people, students, and seniors. Cheaper tickets are sometimes available for shorter bathing periods (e.g. 2 hour or 4 hour vs. all day), weekdays (vs. weekends), or off-peak hours (e.g. early morning, late afternoon, evening). Advance booking is generally not required, as prices are the same and it's typical for there to be no line up or a short one (e.g. 10-20 minutes' wait).

Spa services, rentals, upgrades, and amenities

Some baths offer additional services such as specialized water massages, typical spa massages (e.g. relaxation or Swedish massage), manicures/pedicures, etc. Prices vary. Most baths offer rentals or purchases of various items like towels, robes, swim caps, swimsuits, etc. Most spas offer or require the rental of a private cabin rather than a locker. A private cabin is a small booth where bathers can change clothes, and then lock and leave their valuables and personal effects. A private cabin can generally be shared by several people using the same locker area (i.e. women-only/men-only). Depending on the size of the bath, most facilities offer small cafes for sandwiches, drinks, and snacks. Water fountains and washrooms are also available.

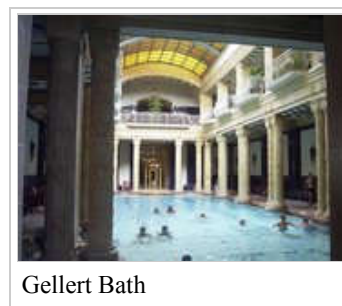
Children

Children (e.g. under 14) are either not recommended or not allowed at the thermal baths. Verify in advance.

Traditional public baths

- **Gellért Baths**, Buda, Kelenhegyi utca 4 (*Gellért Hotel at the base of Gellért Hill*), ☎ (36-1) 466-6166, [86] (<http://www.gellertbath.com/>). Generally 6AM-8PM. . One of the oldest, most famous, and most beautiful baths in Budapest.. edit

- *Prices*: Adult bath tickets starting from 4900HUF. Massages starting from about 3000 HUF.
- *Changing*: Individual lockers, single-person cabins, and family cabins are available.
- *Facilities*: Indoor area includes a normal swimming pool, soaking pools (36°C and 38°C), dry sauna, steam room, and a cold tub. Outdoors there is a swimming pool and a warm (not hot) soaking tub. Outdoor facilities are closed in the winter.
- *Tips*': Swim cap mandatory and available for purchase. Typical bathing attire in the common areas. Bathing attire or nude/semi-nude typical in gender-separated areas. If renting a towel, be sure to carefully observe instructions (i.e. keep receipt) to get your deposit back.



Gellert Bath

- **Széchenyi Spa**, Pest, Állatkerti krt. 11 (*metro: Széchenyi fürdő*), [87] (<http://www.spasbudapest.com/furdo.php?id=14>). Indoor part daily from 6AM to 7PM; outdoor daily 6AM-10PM in winter. One of the largest, oldest, and most popular baths for tourists in Budapest. Beautiful architecture.. edit

- *Prices*: Entrance fees starting from 4200 HUF. Massages from 3500 HUF.
- *Facilities*: Two hot soaking pools (30 degrees C and 38 degrees C) and one swimming pool (26-28 degrees C) are open outdoors year round. Indoors, there are a variety of hot and cold pools, and a dry sauna.

- *Tips*: Famous photos of Széchenyi show bathers playing chess in the water. Bring your own set if you want to play, as rentals are not available.
- **Rudas Spa**, Döbrentei tér 9. (*Buda side of the Elizabeth Bridge*), ☎ +36-1-3561322, [88] (<http://www.rudasbaths.com/>). 6AM to 8PM depending on the day. A beautiful Turkish style bath built in the 1500s.. edit
 - *Prices*: Adult tickets starting at 1500 HUF. Massages from 3000 HUF.
 - *Facilities*: Main bathing facilities are all in one central room. The main pool is 36 degrees celcius, and it is surrounded by smaller pools at 16, 28, 30, 33, 36, and 40 degrees. Steam room and dry sauna. Relaxation room for resting.
 - *Tips*: Weekdays are exclusively gender-segregated, while weekends are mixed gender, so plan your visit accordingly. On weekdays, bathing attire is permitted but nude or semi-nude is the norm.
- **Király Baths**, Buda, Fő utca 84 (*metro: Batthyány tér*), [89] (<http://en.kiralyfurdo.hu/>). 9AM-9PM daily. Turkish style bath originally built in the 1500s.. edit
 - *Prices*: Entrance fees starting from 2300 HUF. Massages from 3100 HUF.
 - *Facilities*: Four thermal baths at 26, 32, 36, and 40 degrees celcius.



Inside Szechenyi bath

Modern baths

- **Danubius Grand Hotel/Thermal Hotel Margitsziget**, (*northern end of the Margaret Island (Margitsziget)*), ☎ +36(1)889-4700 (resind@margitsziget.danubiushotels.com, fax: +36(1)889-4939), [90] (<http://www.danubiushotels.com/en/budapest-hotels/danubius-grand-hotel-margitsziget-budapest/wellness-fitness>). until 9:30PM. . High-level and modern baths and spa also offers a great choice of medical treatment. Admission fee (5,700 HUF weekdays, 7,000 HUF weekends) doesn't limit your time inside, and gives access to all spa facilities including a great gym (remember to bring your fitness suit). Solarium and medical treatments should be paid separately, remember before entering the changing rooms (1,300 HUF for 10 minutes). edit
 - *What's inside?*: Two body-temperature soaking pools and a cold-water corridor with stones on the floor; one swimming pool; separate steam baths; common sauna. There's a drinking fountain with mineral water extremely rich in minerals--find on a way from baths to the gym.
 - *Changing*: Towels are handed at reception--without fee or deposit. Also, there seems to be bathrobes available for rent--ask at the reception. For changing clothes, only lockers are available, without attendant--you have a key. There's no cabins (as families typically live in the same hotel). Every shower cabin have a curtain, and there's some liquid soap available.
 - *Visitors mix*: Almost no locals; in New Year season (and 1-9 of May?) about 80% are Russians who are also residents of the hotel.
- **Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal Spa**, Erzsébet körút 43-49, ☎ +36(1)479-4000 (royalres@corinthia.hu, fax: +36(1)479-4333), [91] (http://www.corinthiahotels.com/hotel_spa.asp?h=5&l=1). A symbol of history, culture, architecture and the tradition of hospitality opens its doors in all its original splendour. The Royal Spa has been beautifully restored to its original splendour and now offers the latest state-of-the-art spa facilities and treatments. The Royal Spa is one of the most expensive in Budapest costing 10,000 HUF for a day pass. It is a spectacle of opulence and luxury in the amazing art deco setting. Included in the price is bath robe, towels, lockers, hydromassage, fruit juices and water. Although expensive it is a truly unforgettable experience . edit

Others

- **The Palatinus Outdoor Baths**, on the Margaret Island (Margitsziget), have three pools filled with therapeutic water--and a total of 11 pools (totaling 17.5 acres). In front of the baths is a beautiful rose garden, and nearby, an open-air stage where opera and ballet performances are held, plus an open-air cinema used during the summer.
- **Dagály** is a large complex of baths and pools located just north of Árpád Híd Metro station on the Pest side and directly on the Danube. There is an outdoor 50m lap pool open year round and a covered-in-winter 25m lap pool. There are 2 large outdoor hot baths. One heated to 33C and the other to 36C. In summer, several huge pools are also available and plenty of open grass and trees for sunbathing or shade. The architecture is classic

Bank of England"), offers an extensive graduate program in a wide variety of courses in political, economic and environmental fields.

- **Eötvös Loránd University** [95] (http://www.elte.hu/en/index_noflash.html). The flagship university in Hungary, founded in 1635, offering bachelor, master and PhD level degrees in certain fields in English.
- **Liszt Ferenc Academy of Music** [96] (<http://www.lfze.hu/hp/english/index.html>). World-renowned music academy in the heart of the city.
- **Corvinus University of Budapest** [97] (<http://uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=p1000290>), formerly the University of Economical Sciences, colloquially known as 'Közgáz': Offers Bachelor and Master courses in many languages.
- **Budapest University of Technology and Economics** [98] (<http://www.tanok.bme.hu/>), B.Sc. and M.Sc. level engineering courses available for foreigners in English, French and German language at the International Education Center of the university.
- **Semmelweis University** [99] (<http://www.semmelweis-univ.hu/>) the flagship institution in medical education and research, offering courses in English and German. International students make up 24 percent of the total student population.
- **International Business School** (Nemzetközi Üzleti Főiskola, IBS-NÜF) [100] (<http://www.ibs-b.hu/>) An institute of higher education offering numerous undergrad and some postgraduate programs, mostly providing Oxford Brookes University and Hungarian Degrees in English and/or Hungarian languages.
- **Debrecen Language School** [101] (<http://www.nyariegyetem.hu/>) offers Hungarian language classes year round at all levels in Budapest, Debrecen and Sopron.

Work

- Teaching English is a popular profession for travellers and people moving to Budapest.

Generally speaking, finding a full-time job is fairly difficult unless you speak Hungarian. You should also be prepared that Western standards at job interviews regarding personal life and diversity issues do not always apply. Do not be surprised if you are asked about your smoking habits. Also, companies are not always prepared to fully understand and accept people from diverse backgrounds. You should be prepared that most places won't hire you until you speak at least a little Hungarian. Restaurants with a specific country's cuisine (such as Italian restaurants and pizzerias) tend to hire people from that country for making the food more authentic.

Buy

Currency

Hungary's national currency is the Hungarian Forint, or HUF. Coins are available in 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, and 200 denominations, and banknotes in 500, 1000, 2000, 5000, 10000, and 20000 denominations. Depending on market values, CHF1.08 (1 euro) exchanges for approximately 300 HUF. Typical vendors accept only local currency, although euros may be accepted at major attractions or very touristy places. (Sometimes the exchange rate is fair and sometimes quite bad.) HUF can be obtained by exchanging money at a vendor, exchanging money at a bank, or withdrawing money from a local bank machine. Bank machines generally give 20000 HUF notes but will also give smaller bills if withdrawing irregular sums of money (e.g. 39000 HUF vs. 40000). Currency exchange businesses range from simple, cost-efficient services that charge a small fee to highly inflated tourist rip-offs to outright theft or scamming.

Tourist shopping and souvenirs

Váci utca is the main area for tourists, and features the normal array of overpriced cafes, souvenir shops, and popular fashion brands. Beyond normal tourist souvenirs, popular Hungarian-specific items are linens, lace, blouses, and other imitation folk items. Paprika peppers and spices, honey, and Hungarian liquor are popular food items. The **Great Market Hall** (*Nagy Vásárcsarnok*) at *Fővám tér* is an atmospheric historic market hall selling mainly tourist souvenirs.

General Fashion



Paprika and more, Great Market Hall

Popular global chain stores like H&M, Abercrombie & Fitch, Intimissimi, etc, can be found along Váci Utca, in major tourist squares, and in the major shopping malls like WestEnd. Prices are comparable to Western Europe even though many other items in Hungary are cheaper.

High End Fashion

Andrassy Utca is Budapest's main street for high end brand name fashion shops like Gucci, Prada, and Coach.



A Chocolate shop in Budapest

Used Clothing

Second-hand clothing shopping is typical for many Hungarians in the working and middle classes, since wages are substantially lower than in Western Europe but brand name shopping mall clothing is the same price. Second hand shops can be found throughout the city, often advertising themselves as selling "Angol" (English) wares or displaying a British flag. These shops purchase bulk used clothing in Western Europe and sell it in Hungary, since used clothes from other places are thought to be more lightly used or more fashionable styles than local ones.



Shop on a restored building at Andrassy Utca

Local artists and designers

Budapest has many small shops selling locally designed and locally made clothing, jewelry, and household items. It takes time to find your favourite gems, but try wandering near Astoria. Prices are generally consistent with Western Europe.

- **Paloma Budapest**, Kossuth Lajos utca 14-16 (*near Astoria*), [102] (<https://www.facebook.com/PalomaBudapest>). A mixed-use space of designers, pop-up shops, and concept art. Unique pieces at affordable prices, often staffed by the artists themselves. The space itself is the beautiful (and slightly sad) courtyard of a semi-restored historic residential building from the late 1800s.. edit

Music

- **FONÓ Music House** XI. district, Sztregova u. 3. Tel.: 206-5300, 203-1752. Fax: 463-0479 (*Take tram no. 18, 41 or 47 southward from Móricz Zsigmond körtér and get off at Kalotaszeg utca stop. Walk backwards 2 minutes and take the first street on the right.*) Fonó provides a high quality selection of Hungarian folk, etno and world music.

Eat

Individual listings can be found in Budapest's district articles See **Buda** and **Pest**

Hungarian food deserves to be (and often is) mentioned among the country's main sites. As in other cultures, the Hungarian approach to food combines pride in their own traditions with a readiness to accept outside influences. The result is a vibrant restaurant scene where an Asian-Hungarian fusion restaurant may well be of genuine interest. Luckily, prices are significantly below western Europe's with around CHF4.31 (4) for a budget lunch, and around 8-14 for a nice evening meal in a mid-range restaurant, depending on place and appetite. Above CHF21.54 (20 EUR) per person is definitely considered expensive, but there are enough lavish places above this price range for those looking for something special.

Local specialities often revolve around meat (pork, beef, veal, or poultry), often involve liberal use of paprika, however not necessary of the hot kind. Note that - due to a historical translation error - "goulash soup" is indeed a soup, not the "goulash" that visitors may be familiar with from home which is known as "pörkölt".

Major specialities include (google image search can aid your imagination):

- **gulyás(leves)** usually translated as 'goulash soup' - a filling meat soup (usually beef) with potatoes and paprika,

among other ingredients. Served as main dish or as a (heavy) starter. The name refers to the Hungarian version of a cowboy taking care of a 'gulya' (cattleherd).

- **paprikás** veal or chicken cooked in delicious creamy paprika sauce (not spicy)
- **pörkölt** a stew with of sautéed onions and - paprika. Similar to what is served as 'goulash' abroad.
- **halászlé** - fishermen's soup served differently depending on region
- **töltött káposzta** - stuffed cabbage, the cooked cabbage leaves are filled with meat and in a paprika sauce, served with sour cream (similar to crème fraîche or crème acidulée)
- **Balaton pike-perch** (fogas)
- **gyümölcsleves** - fruit soup - cold, creamy and sweet, consumed as a starter.

From the desserts, you may not want to miss

- **Somlói galuska**, a poem on biscuit dough, cream and chocolate sauce, invented by Károly Gollerits at Gundel
- **Gundel palacsinta** - Gundel pancake (crepe) - with a filling prepared with rum, raisin, walnuts, and lemon zest, served with a chocolate sauce, and the careful reader may guess its birthplace.
- **Kürtőskalács**, (chimney cake) a delicious sweet dough pastry which is cooked on a chimney shaped spit and coated in butter and sugar to form a crispy crust. After the cakes are cooked they can be rolled in a variety of toppings such as cinnamon sugar or chocolate.
- There is also a great variety of wonderful pastries/cakes (**Torta**), some of which you will recognize if you are familiar with Viennese pastries. You may want to try **Dobos torta** (Dobos cake, named after József Dobos), and **Rigó Jancsi** a light chocolate-cream cake.

Coffeehouses

Coffeehouses (*kávéház*) are a traditional Budapest institution, somewhat resembling Viennese lifestyle. A visit to one should be on every traveller's agenda, these are places which are great for spending some time enjoying a cup of coffee and a delicious cake. Some of them (especially in the higher price range) offer meals as well.

Restaurants

Hungarian cuisine and restaurant experiences are happily remembered by visitors, even if the Hungarian diet may seem rather meat-based to many western visitors. The city has large variety of great places to eat at prices quite reasonable for western-Europeans. Like in some other cities, a number of restaurants see tourists as scapegoats. It is a good idea to avoid restaurants in the heart of the most touristic areas like Váci utca, especially if all customers seem foreigners - here you'll more likely than not be served mediocre food with a high bill padded with number of bizarre charges. In some restaurants anything you don't explicitly ask for, but appears on your table, is likely to be charged for. Don't take restaurant tips from suspicious individuals on the streets, ask your local friends instead, and check online reviews first.

A wide variety of decent food for not reasonable prices can be found at the lively Raday utca, venue of a number of cultural events, near Kálvin tér. But simply strolling the more central areas - e.g. near the Great Ringroad (Nagykörút), or the Pozsonyi út - will be enough to bump into nice places to test local cooking skill (though not necessarily with a menu available in English). Top-notch quality food (1st category restaurants) charge a wide range of prices (from starters around 1000 HUF, main courses around 3,000-10,000 HUF, and menus from 5,000 HUF). Perhaps the most reputed among top restaurants is the **Gundel** [103] (<http://www.gundel.hu/site/index.php?page=en>) near Városliget - check the prices before you decide to go, but it offers a good value Sunday brunch for some 5000 HUF.

Walking along the Danube on the Pest side, you see a lot of **restaurant and bar boats**. Most of them serve traditional Hungarian and international dishes, some of them are function more as bars. Thanks to the beautiful panorama across the Danube and the castle, these places provide an unforgettable experience.

Grocery shopping

Needless to say, if you want to take home some Hungarian paprika, Pick szalámi, or Tokalyi wine, grocery shops are naturally cheaper than specialised souvenir kiosks. In the central areas, you will find smaller grocery shops such as the Hungarian chains GRoby, CBA, (sometimes Rotschild's) as well as the usual European suspects Spar, Kaiser's, Plus, and Tesco Express.

Further from the centre, you can find foreign-owned hypermarkets like Auchan, Tesco and Cora with the usual range of goods.

Drink

Individual listings can be found in Budapest's district articles See **Buda** and **Pest**

Budapest offers plenty of places to drink, from cool and ultra-hip to rowdy and down-market. If you are in the mood for a particularly Hungarian experience, visit a so-called borozó (wine pub). These offer cheap yet tasty Hungarian wine on tap at outright hilariously low prices if you manage to find one outside the tourist circuit.

Hungary is famous for its wines produced at Balaton area and Eger. Among red wines the best are Kékfrankos, Egri Bikavér „Bulls Blood” and white wines the Szürkebarát and Chardonnay are popular. You should try not to miss out on the Hungarian spirit, **palinka**, made from fruits such as, plum, apricot, cherry or williams pears.

Unique Hungarian soft drinks to try are *Traubi Szoda* (a white grape soda) and *Márka* (a sour cherry soda).

Sleep

Individual listings can be found in Budapest's district articles See **Buda** and **Pest**

The most expensive digs are on or near Castle Hill, dozens of reliable backpacker hostels are mostly across the river in Pest. However, Buda has better air quality due to the closeness of the hills and the forests lying to the west from the city.

Contact

Dialing

Calling outside Budapest press city code (Budapest is 36-1) or mobile (06 -30/ 70 /20) Calling international press 00 + country code + area code + local number (Hungary country code is 36).

Mobile phones and internet

Mobile phones from other countries will generally work in Hungary, but roaming fees can be high. Check with your phone provider for more information.

WiFi is widely available. Many restaurants and shops offer free wifi to their patrons, and wifi is sometimes available in public squares or parks.

Hostels and hotels generally have free wifi, or they may charge a fee.

Temporary mobile phone or data services can be purchased from major Hungarian carriers like Vodafone. You will need to first buy a sim card (something like 1000-3000 HUF) and then choose a pre-paid top-up style plan. For example, a typical plan might require you to pay a 2000 HUF top-up, and with this top-up you will receive 500 MB or 1 GB of data for the next 30 days. Calling and texting might cost a per-use rate (e.g. 50 HUF/minute or 30 HUF/message) and this will be deducted from your original top-up balance.

Stay Healthy

Hungary has typical summer temperatures around 35-40 degrees celcius, so plan your clothing and hydration accordingly.

Tap water throughout Budapest is safe to drink, so carry a bottle you can refill. Public fountains are often available throughout the city. Some look like regular drinking fountains. Others are decorative fountains (e.g. statue of a lion with water coming from it's mouth) but are also safe to drink from. It can be hard to tell which fountains are for drinking, but it's likely okay if there's either a steady stream of flowing water (versus water bubbling up from a spout), a button that makes the water flow, and/or if you can walk right up to the stream of water (versus if there's a guard rail

or fence). If in doubt, ask someone.

Routine medical care, emergency medical care, and dental care in Hungary vary widely in terms of quality. Budapest is a popular destination for medical tourism, where uninsured foreigners come to get a root canal from a well trained dentist for lower prices than in their home country. Clinics that cater to tourists, expats, and wealthy Hungarians generally offer similar standards of care to other Western European countries. For planned procedures, visitors should conduct some basic research in advance (e.g. professional-looking website, client reviews, knowledgeable telephone staff). For emergencies, visitors should seek appropriate medical attention and would also be well advised to enlist the help of a Hungarian speaking friend or even hostel/hotel staff. Where possible, insured travellers should also consult their insurer for local contacts or recommended facilities. Foreigners may be treated differently than locals (maybe better, maybe worse) and it is common place for doctors to discretely collect extra fees from those who expect proper care.

Stay safe

Budapest is generally very safe for tourists. The main concerns for visitors are pickpocketing/minor theft and scams/rip-offs. Violent crime is low and unlikely to affect tourists. Most areas of interest to tourists are safe for wandering about day or night. Take normal precautions when walking alone or in isolated places. Some areas outside the centre might be more risky for walking alone or at night. Ask a local or your hostel/hotel staff if planning an unusual route and you're concerned.

Visitors should be aware of their belongings, especially in busy areas frequented by tourists (e.g. Vaci Utca, monuments and attractions, public transportation, queues and crowds). Basic precautions should prevent most problems. Keep money and valuables somewhere you can see and feel them (e.g. in a small shoulder bag you can keep your hand on in crowded areas, rather than in a backpocket or in a backpack). When possible, avoid carrying your passport or excess cash. Avoid people who are giving you unwanted attention.

Tourist scams range in seriousness from overpricing normal goods to outright theft and blackmail.

Restaurants and bars

In general, large restaurants and cafes in heavily touristed areas offer mediocre food for high prices. Usually heading a little bit off the main street and choosing somewhere where locals seem to be eating will allow you to find something that is a better quality and value. For example, on Vaci Utca a .5L beer might cost around 1000 HUF when elsewhere it would cost 300. Restaurants are required to post their menu outside, so have a quick look at the prices before you sit down.

Taxis

Always use regulated taxis with proper signs and license numbers. When possible, use a phone to call a cab or go to a taxi stand rather than hailing one off the street. When possible, ask a local what an approximate fare to your destination might cost. In the taxi, either make sure that the meter is running, or agree on a fixed price before departure.

Főtaxi is the official airport taxi partner airport and they have a stand outside the terminal building. Taxis from other companies can pick-up passengers who call them directly.

Sex workers

Sex work is illegal in Hungary, but sex workers may be discretely offering their services in areas frequented by tourists (e.g. Vaci street). Some may be involved in scams, theft or blackmail (e.g. forcing you to pay a large bar tab).

Important phone numbers

Police 107 Fire:105 Ambulance: 104 Central Emergency: 112

Cope

Embassies

-  **Australia**,  +36 1 457 9777. [edit](#)
-  **Belgium**, Toldy Ferenc utca 13, 1015 Budapest,  +36 1 457 9960, [104] (<http://www.diplomatie.be/budapest/>). M-F 9AM - 4PM. [edit](#)
-  **Brazil**, Szabadság tér 7, Tower Platina I, VI. floor (Bank Center), 1054 Budapest,  +36 1 351-0060, [105] (<http://budapeste.itamaraty.gov.br>). [edit](#)
-  **Bulgaria**, Andrassy 60, Budapest. [edit](#)
-  **Canada**, [106] (<http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/hungary-hongrie/>). [edit](#)
-  **China**, Városligeti fasor 20-22,  +36 1 413-2401, 413-2419 (fax: +36 1 322-9067), [107] (<http://www.chinaembassy.hu>). [edit](#)
-  **Croatia**, Munkácsy Mihály u. 15, 1063 Budapest,  +36 1 354 1315 (*vrhbp@mvp.hr*), [108] (<http://hu.mvp.hr/>). M-F 9AM-5PM. [edit](#)
-  **Egypt**, 1125 Budapest, Istenhegyi UT 7/B,  +36 1 2252150 (*egyptembassybudapest@yahoo.com*), [109] (http://www.mfa.gov.eg/english/embassies/Egyptian_Embassy_budapest/Pages/default.aspx). Monday to Friday 9:00 AM - 15:00 PM. [edit](#)
-  **Finland**, [110] (<http://www.finland.hu>). [edit](#)
-  **France**. [edit](#)
-  **Germany**. [edit](#)
-  **Greece**, Szegfu u.3, Budapest, 1063,  +36 1 413 2621 (*gremb.bud@mfa.gr*; *greekem@t-online.hu*, fax: 36 1 342 1934), [111] (<http://www.mfa.gr/budapest>). M-F: 09:00 - 16:00. [edit](#)
-  **Grenada (Honorary Consulate)**, Palatinus u. 1, 1025 Budapest,  (+36) 1 326-4932 (*grenada@fotex.net*, fax: (+36) 1 326-4936). [edit](#)
-  **Israel**, [112] (<http://budapest.mfa.gov.il/mfm/web/main/missionhome.asp?LanguageID=0&Question2=&MissionID=39&MissionID=>). [edit](#)
-  **Italy**, [113] (<http://www.ambbudapest.esteri.it>). [edit](#)
-  **Macedonia**, Andrassy ut 130 1, em 1-2,  +36 1 336 0510, [114] (<http://www.missions.gov.mk/budapest>). [edit](#)
-  **Norway**, [115] (<http://www.norvegia.hu/>). [edit](#)
-  **Poland**, 1068 Budapest, Városligeti fasor 16,  +361 4138200, [116] (www.budapeszt.polemb.net). Polish embassy [edit](#)
-  **Romania**, [117] (<http://budapesta.mae.ro/>). [edit](#)
-  **Spain**, [118] (<http://www.exteriores.gob.es/embajadas/budapest/es/Paginas/inicio.aspx>). [edit](#)
-  **Sweden**, [119] (<http://www.swedenabroad.com/budapest>). [edit](#)
-  **Turkey**, (*1062 Budapest Andrassy ut 123 / Hungary*),  +36-1 478 91 00, [120] (<http://budapest.emb.mfa.gov.tr/>). [edit](#)
-  **United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**,  +36 1 266 2888, [121] (<http://ukinhungary.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/our-embassy/contact-us/>). [edit](#)

- United States of America**, Szabadság tér 12, ☎ +36 1 475-4400 (*After hours emergencies +36 1 475-4703/4924, acs.budapest@state.gov, fax: +36 1 475-4764*), [122] (<http://hungary.usembassy.gov/>). ^{edit}
- Venezuela**, Szegfű utca 6, ☎ +36 1 326-0460 (*embajada.venezuela.hungria@gmail.com, fax: +36 1 326-0450*). ^{edit}

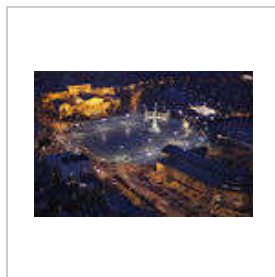
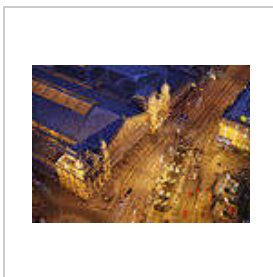
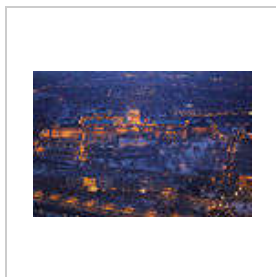
Get out

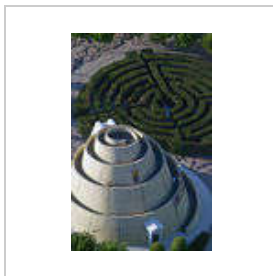
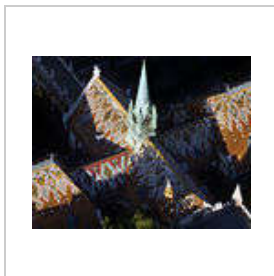
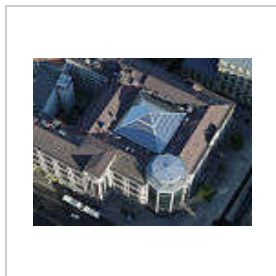
- Balaton** - Lake Balaton is a 200km lake about an hour west of Budapest. Hungarians love their "inland sea", and it is a popular summer destinations for Hungarians and (mostly European) foreigners to go swimming, camping, cycling, or partying. Towns around the lake are all well served by direct trains from Budapest. There is a youth hostel in Revfülop.
- Eger** - small and charming town
- Esztergom** - Site of the biggest basilica (church) in Central Europe.
- Gödöllő** (30km east) - A town full of parks, and home to Grassalkovich Kastély (Grassalkovich Palace), formerly a Royal Palace. This palace was the occasional residence of Sisi, Habsbourg Empress Elizabeth. The great royal park became special with its old trees which could see Sisi in the 18. century. (Reach from Budapest by MÁV suburban rail – Keleti pályaudvar;[123] (<http://www.mav.hu/en>) or HÉV ("local/suburban trains" supported by BKV [124] (http://www.bkv.hu/en/suburban_railway_schedules)) from Örs vezér tere to Gödöllő (to Csömör is wrong direction)
- Szentendre** (19km north) - Home of the Hungarian Open-Air Museum, a huge site with many ancient buildings brought from all parts of the country, including barns, outbuildings, and even churches. HÉV ("local/suburban trains" supported by BKV [125] (http://www.bkv.hu/en/suburban_railway_schedules)) runs from Batthyány tér to Szentendre
- Vác** - (32km north) Baroque style main square, Cathedral, Triumphal Arch, mummies of the Dominican church (Memento Mori). Reach from Budapest by MÁV suburban rail – Nyugati pályaudvar;[126] (<http://www.mav.hu/en>)
- Visegrád** - Famous for its former royal palace partially rebuilt in Renaissance style, medieval residential tower, and impressive citadel. Suburban bus service by Volánbusz [127] (<http://www.volanbusz.hu/en/domestictravel/interurban>)



Royal Palace of Gödöllő

Gallery





*This is a **usable** article. It has information for getting in as well as some complete entries for restaurants and hotels. An adventurous person could use this article, but please plunge forward and help it grow!*

Categories: Has custom banner | Huge city articles | Articles with warnings | Usable articles

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