

Treasures of

BUDAPEST





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SPICE OF EUROPE

BUDAPEST – FULL OF LIFE

FOR CULTURE, ATMOSPHERE AND ARCHITECTURE, BUDAPEST IS ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CITIES. FULL OF LIFE YET STILL AUTHENTIC, THIS IS A METROPOLIS THAT'S BOTH HISTORIC AND MODERN, WITH EVERYTHING YOU MIGHT NEED IN A EUROPEAN CAPITAL, STIMULATING, LIBERATING AND LIVELY.



Buda Castle Quarter

Budapest has a wonderful built and natural environment, with **UNESCO World Heritage** sites such as the **Banks of the Danube**, the **Buda Castle Quarter** and **Andrássy Avenue**. The city is famed for its photogenic urban scenery, Hollywood and Bollywood films shot along the Danube and amid the elegant facades.



A capital of 1.7 million citizens, Budapest somehow manages to retain a wealth of hidden treasures. There is no other capital in the European Union where authentic medieval Turkish baths are still in everyday use.

A diverse and vibrant gastronomy, underscored by a rich culinary heritage, can be sampled at Michelin-starred restaurants, family-run eateries and street-food outlets. Creative vegetarian and vegan options are commonplace, with fresh, local seasonal produce available at many market halls.

The inventiveness of Hungarian chefs and the unforgettable flavours of Hungary's ever-evolving cuisine should delight and captivate any guest, whether in a contemporary bistro or a historic coffeehouse.



Chain Bridge



St. Stephen's Basilica



Budapest's cultural life is colourful and vivid, showcasing world-famous orchestras in ornate concert halls, exciting exhibitions and outstanding festivals.



HISTORY SET IN STONE

BUDAPEST'S ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS

BRIGHTLY TILED ROOFS, ART-NOUVEAU FAÇADES AND NEO-GOTHIC LANDMARKS – BUDAPEST'S FAIRY-TALE CITYSCAPE LEAVES VISITORS IN AWE. THESE ARCHITECTURAL WONDERS ILLUSTRATE 2,000 YEARS OF HISTORY.

Parliament

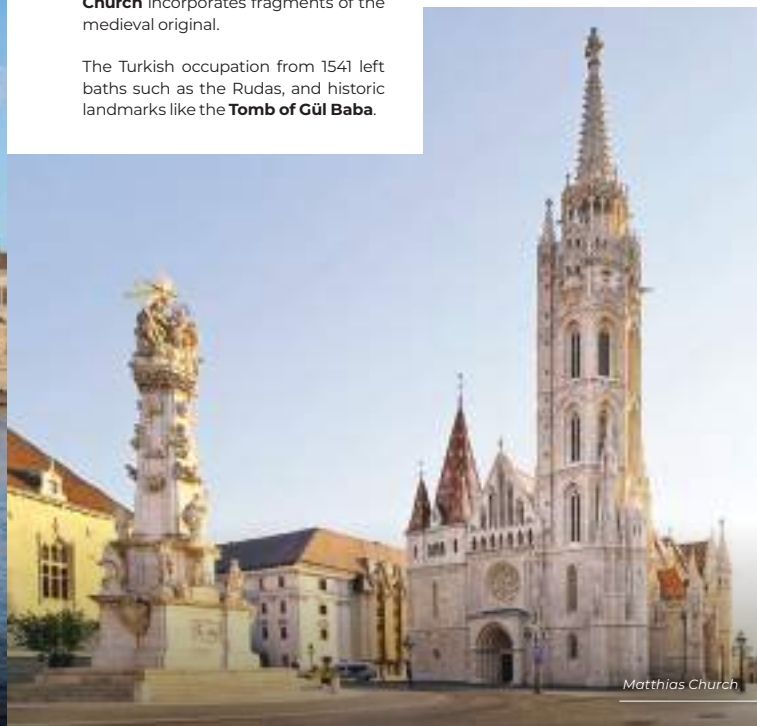
Evidence of civilisation before the Magyar conquest of the 890s is scant. Ruins of this former Roman outpost are most visible at **Aquincum**, today's Óbuda.

The first prominent era of Hungarian architecture came under King Matthias in the 1400s, when Buda embraced the Renaissance. Today's **Matthias Church** incorporates fragments of the medieval original.

The Turkish occupation from 1541 left baths such as the Rudas, and historic landmarks like the **Tomb of Gül Baba**.



A kilometre from the Roman finds at the Aquincum Museum, the Hercules Villa contains the mosaic floor of a once sumptuous residence.



Matthias Church

Habsburg rule saw churches such as **St Anne's** on Batthyány Square built in Baroque splendour. Classicist grandeur then came to the fore as a municipal identity was forged in the 1800s. Stately institutions like the **National Museum** arose in Pest, linked to Buda by the Classicist **Chain Bridge**, the first permanent span over the Danube.



*The **Hotel Gellért** was planned during the era of Art Nouveau but only completed after World War I.*

József Hild and Miklós Ybl devised the neo-Classical **St. Stephen's Basilica**, Ybl also creating the ornate **Opera House**. A neo-Gothic **Parliament** dominated the Pest riverbank, conceived by Imre Steindl, who went blind before its completion.

Ödön Lechner topped his buildings, including the **Museum of Applied Arts** on Üllői Road, with bright Zsolnay tiles.



Hotel Gellért



Chain Bridge



PAVEMENTS, STREETS AND SQUARES

SEE BUDAPEST'S SIGHTS ON FOOT

FOR A MAJOR EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF NEARLY TWO MILLION PEOPLE, BUDAPEST IS EASY TO NAVIGATE AND A PLEASURE TO WALK AROUND. WITH MANY DOWNTOWN SQUARES RECENTLY RENOVATED SO THAT THEY ARE PEDESTRIAN- AND CYCLE-FRIENDLY, THE CITY CENTRE COMPRISES A CLUTCH OF CONVIVIAL PUBLIC SPACES, SO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER THEY ARE ALMOST INTERCONNECTED.



Budapest Zoo

To stroll from the focal point of **Deák Ferenc Square**, where three of the four metro lines converge, to the showcase **Erzsébet Square** and **Vörösmarty Square** takes a few minutes at most.

From these three hubs, landmarks such as the **Great Synagogue**, **Parliament**, **St. Stephen's Basilica**, the **Opera House**, the **Great Market Hall** and the **Chain Bridge** are all an easy walk away.



Budapest is well signposted, with street names also giving the house numbers in that particular block.



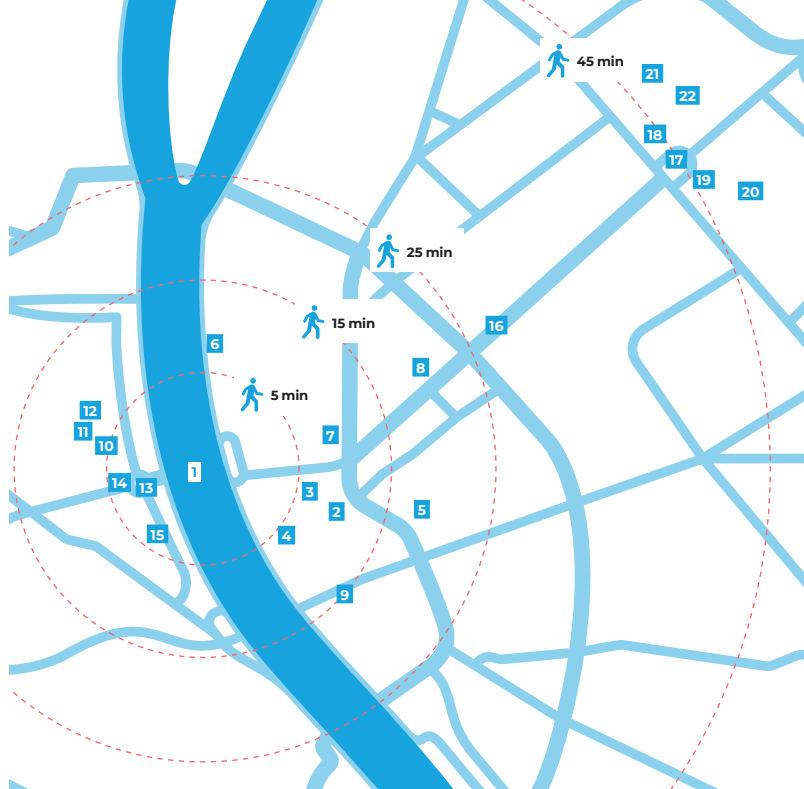
St. Stephen's Basilica

Crossing over the Danube to the historic sights of **Buda**, the **Castle**, **Matthias Church** and the **Fisherman's Bastion**, is swift and picturesque. Served by public transport – the little bus 16 from Deák Ferenc Square or the vintage-style **funicular** from Clark Ádám Square – Castle Hill can be scaled by a series of paths and steps alongside the **Tunnel** or by the public lift at **Várkert Bazár**.

North from Deák Ferenc Square, you can stroll up elegant **Andrássy Avenue** keeping the column of the Archangel Gabriel ahead: **Heroes' Square**. Either side stands the stately **Museum of Fine Arts** and the **Hall of Arts**, while behind stretches **City Park** featuring **Budapest Zoo** and the **Széchenyi Baths**.

When walking around town, don't forget to look up to spy stunning architectural detail.

Dohány Street Synagogue



- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------|-----|------------------------------|
| 1. | Chain Bridge | 12. | Fisherman's Bastion |
| 2. | Deák Ferenc Square | 13. | Funicular, Clark Ádám Square |
| 3. | Erzsébet Square | 14. | Tunnel |
| 4. | Vörösmarty Square | 15. | Várkert Bazár |
| 5. | Great Synagogue | 16. | Andrássy Avenue |
| 6. | Parliament | 17. | Heroes' Square |
| 7. | St. Stephen's Basilica | 18. | Museum of Fine Arts |
| 8. | Opera House | 19. | Hall of Arts |
| 9. | Great Market Hall | 20. | City Park |
| 10. | Buda Castle | 21. | Budapest Zoo |
| 11. | Matthias Church | 22. | Széchenyi Baths |



THE MODERN METROPOLIS FROM BAUHAUS TO BÁLNA BUDAPEST

WHILE BEST KNOWN FOR ITS BELLE-ÉPOQUE BUILDINGS, BUDAPEST ALSO FEATURES LATER ARCHITECTURAL STYLES THAT SHOWCASE THIS MODERN METROPOLIS.



National Theatre



Bálina (Whale)



Other Bauhaus examples in residential districts Pásárét and Újlipótváros include the Jézus Szíve Parish Church, thought too modern for its time in 1933 but lauded today.



Gellért Square, metro line 4

Budapest's first Bauhaus design school was set up in 1928, training local architects who quickly got to work converting a former transformer station on **Kazinczy Street**, today the **Museum of Electrical Engineering**.

In the city centre, integral to **Erzsébet Square** is a former Bauhaus-style bus station, since refashioned to house a popular bar. Multifunctional architecture underscores the most recent creations. By the Danube, **Bálina Budapest** blends history and modernity. Comprising two parallel century-old red brick warehouses joined by a whale-shaped glass shell, this riverfront complex hides shops and bars in its belly, while stylish pubs offer waterfront views. Its creator, Kas Oosterhuis, also designed Dubai Sports City.

Towards Rákóczi Bridge, the **Millennial Cultural Centre** is a complex of arts venues. The **Palace of Arts (Müpa)** comprises the **Bartók Concert Hall**, the **Ludwig Museum** of contemporary art and the **National Theatre**.



Versatile yet graceful, the millennial arts complex functions as a cultural citadel suited to today's needs.

Below ground at nearby **Gellért Square** is perhaps the most stunning example of the stations conceived for the **metro line 4**, Tamás Komoróczy's mosaic interior decorating the deepest of the ten stops unveiled in 2014.



HEALING WATERS, HEALTHY STAYS

SPA CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

THE CURATIVE POWERS OF THESE WATERS WERE WELL KNOWN TO THE ROMANS AND OTTOMANS. TODAY, HUNGARY IS A CENTRE FOR HEALTH, MEDICAL AND SPA TOURISM.

Gellért Thermal Bath

No other capital in the world has as many hot springs as Budapest, spanning temperatures from lukewarm to 77 °C. Visiting the city is not complete without a plunge into pools of healing waters at one of its splendid thermal baths, surrounded by architectural finery.

The Turks created Budapest's baths in the late 1500s. Around them, beautiful spas were mainly created in the 19th century and renovated in recent years, safeguarding their tradition.

Most have an outdoor element too. One of the world's first wave pools was opened at the stylish **Hotel Gellért** in 1927 and is still in operation today. Within, its Art Nouveau baths feature turquoise Zsolnay porcelain tiling and stained glass. The spa is currently undergoing renovations and is expected to reopen in 2028.



The history of spa culture in Hungary dates back 2,000 years to the Romans.



Rudas Bath



Veli Bej Baths

The **Lukács Baths** are a medicinal haven, whose grounds contain memorial plaques offering thanks to the institution for its miraculous healing.

After a thorough renovation, the 16th-century **Veli Bej Baths** evoke their Turkish heritage. The revamping of the **Rudas Baths**, built nearly five centuries ago, has also preserved their Ottoman provenance while providing fine views from a hot tub on the rooftop.

Amid the greenery of City Park, the palatial **Széchenyi Baths** show the finery of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. A total of 21 pools, three of them open-air, await.



The Széchenyi Baths are where older regulars play chess in the water, an iconic image of the city.



Lukács Baths



Széchenyi Baths



THE CITY'S FIRSTS

THE BIGGEST AND SMALLEST IN BUDAPEST

BUDAPEST'S COLOURFUL ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN ELEMENTS FEATURE THE BIGGEST AND BEST IN MANY CATEGORIES OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT. SOME ARE FAMILIAR LANDMARKS, WITH A FEW HIDDEN GEMS ALONG THE WAY.



Heroes' Square

While the **Chain Bridge** is the oldest of its kind in the city and **Parliament** the third-biggest national assembly building in the world, the **Great Synagogue** is the second-largest in the world.

Budapest has the world's northernmost Islamic pilgrimage destination in the **Gül Baba türbéje**, the tomb of a Turkish poet who was part of the Ottoman army that conquered Hungary in the 1540s.

The oldest building in town is the **Red Hedgehog House** in the Castle District. Built around 1260, it served as the only tavern in the castle and was also the venue for Buda's first theatrical performance.



The ornate Széchenyi Baths are the largest of their kind in Europe.



The Royal Palace is the most prominent element in Budapest's skyline. Pay it a visit or marvel at it from afar, especially when lit up at night.

Budapest's longest thoroughfare is **Üllői Road**, which stretches for 15 kilometres. The longest bridge over the Danube in Budapest is **Árpád Bridge**, at 981 metres.

Budapest is home to what was the first metro line in continental Europe, and only the second anywhere in the world, after London. The millennium underground runs under Andrassy Avenue, taking passengers from downtown **Vörösmarty Square** to **Heroes' Square**, a defining expanse flanked by the Museum of Fine Arts and the Hall of Arts.



Gül Baba türbéje



CULTURE THROUGH THE CENTURIES

CITY OF LISZT AND OPERA



WITH A GILDED OPERA HOUSE AND THE ERKEL THEATRE, A MAJOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS CENTRE, A PRESTIGIOUS MUSIC ACADEMY, SYMPHONY ORCHESTRAS AND A NEW NATIONAL DANCE THEATRE, BUDAPEST ALWAYS OFFERS A HIGH-QUALITY PERFORMANCE TO ENJOY, OFTEN IN A CONCERT HALL WHOSE ARCHITECTURE MERITS ADMIRATION IN ITS OWN RIGHT.



Top companies include Recirquel, an award-winning fusion of dance, contemporary circus and acrobatic movement.

Liszt Academy of Music



The **Budapest Spring Festival** showcases culture of all kinds at locations as diverse as the **Trafó House of Contemporary Arts** in a converted transformer station and the **Liszt Academy of Music**, an Art Nouveau masterpiece dating back to 1907.

Budapest has had a national theatre since 1837. In 2002, a contemporary venue was opened in what would become a major cultural complex, overlooking the Danube in south Pest. Alongside, **Műpa** (Művészetek Palotája, 'Palace of Arts') consists of the **Bartók National Concert Hall**, the **Festival Theatre** and the **Ludwig Museum**. With unparalleled acoustics, the Bartók welcomes the most prestigious orchestras in the world.

The **Festival Theatre** is favoured by contemporary dance companies, who also appear at the new **National Dance Theatre**, unveiled in the Millenáris Park.



Opera House



The Hungarian National Ballet performs mainly at the Erkel Theatre. Founded as the People's Opera in 1911, this institution has the largest concert hall in the country and has been attached to the Opera House since 1951.



FROM THE STONE AGE TO THE AVANT-GARDE

GRAND MASTERS AND MODERN HISTORY

BUDAPEST IS A CITY OF FASCINATING EXHIBITIONS, FROM CLASSICAL RELICS TO RENAISSANCE ART AND THE AVANT-GARDE, AND COVERING HISTORY FROM THE STONE AGE TO COMMUNISM AND BEYOND.



National Museum

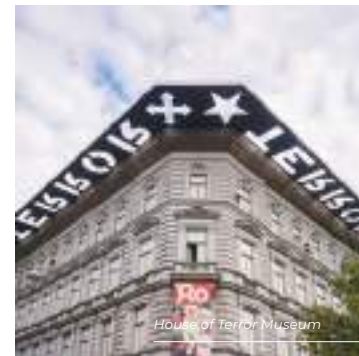
In the scenic settings of the **Castle District** and **Heroes' Square**, the **Hungarian National Gallery** and **Museum of Fine Arts** together house Hungary's biggest art collection. Up in the **Royal Palace**, the National Gallery holds works dating from 1800 to the present day, both Hungarian – such as Munkácsy and Csontváry – and international, including Cézanne and Monet. On Heroes' Square, you will also find the Hall of Arts, with exhibitions of contemporary Hungarian art.



Renovated and reopened in 2019, the Museum of Fine Arts showcases Old Masters – Titian and Goya – as well as Hungarian art up to the 1800s, and Classical Antiquities.



Items include Houdini's original handcuffs and lock keys, and the posters that promoted his appearances. Your visit culminates in a live magic show.



House of Terror Museum

The neo-Classical **National Museum** covers Hungarian history from the stone-carved tools of the Paleolithic era to the elaborate medieval coronation mantle, right up to the development of urban Budapest.

Hungary's more recent history is the subject of the **House of Terror Museum**, filling the former headquarters of the Communist Secret Police, outlining the atrocities committed here and commemorating the victims. Out in distant District XXII, the outdoor **Memento Park** is the final resting place of the giant statues that once dominated Soviet-era Budapest.

On Dísz Square in the Castle District, an enchanting exhibition honours the great Hungarian illusionist, **Harry Houdini**.



DIVINE DOMESTIC DISHES

HEAVENLY HUNGARIAN CUISINE FROM STARTERS TO DESSERT



SPICY, MEATY, HEARTY, COLOURFUL AND DELICIOUS – HUNGARIAN CUISINE IS HEAVENLY, FROM STARTERS AND SOUP SPECIALITIES TO SAVOURY MAINS AND DECADENT DESSERTS.

Jókai bean soup



The most iconic cakes are the classic Dobos and Esterházy, while Hungary also invented the walnut-apricot zserbó slice.



Túrógombóc

Starters include the noteworthy **goose liver** – Hungary is its second-biggest producer and many restaurants feature it on the menu. Of the numerous soups, stand-outs are **goulash** with beef cubes and vegetables, a **fish variety** with carp, catfish or pike-perch, **Újházi chicken**, **bean** and a **cold-fruit type** popular in summer.

For mains, Hungary is proud of its **stews**, made from slow-cooked beef, or **chicken** spiced with **paprika**, as the signature dish csirkepaprikás. **Stuffed cabbage**, cabbage rolls filled with minced pork, features in the colder months, while lecsó, **Hungarian ratatouille**, is prepared in late summer. Traditional thick pottages can be concocted from lentils, peas or squash, served with an egg or sliced sausage.

Also look out for Hungarian specialities such as **grey-cattle beef** and **mangalica pork**, an indigenous breed that has been successfully revived in recent times. Accompanying vegetables are fresh, seasonal and often organic.

Hungary excels at desserts. Hearty **Gundel pancakes** are filled with a walnut/rum mixture smothered in dark-chocolate sauce, **Somlói sponge cake** is vanilla-flavoured with chocolate sauce, rum and raisins, while **túrógombóc** is sweet cottage-cheese dumplings with a sweet sour-cream sauce.



Pig-slaughtering is a ritual gathering resulting in tasty sausages, bacon, crackling and brawn.



Stuffed Peppers



UNDERScoreD BY QUALITY

FROM FINE DINING TO STELLAR STREET FOOD

RUNNING THE GASTRONOMIC GAMUT FROM AN INCREASING NUMBER OF MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANTS TO TOP-QUALITY STREET-FOOD KIOSKS, THE CULINARY SCENE IN BUDAPEST IS LEADING THE WAY IN CENTRAL EUROPE.



While the trend for burgers has swept through Europe, here in Hungary other street food remains popular, most notably „lángos”, fried dough covered in sour cream and garlic, with a host of other toppings if required.

Gaining considerable travel attention over recent years, Hungary's culinary scene continues to thrive, now boasting ten restaurants with Michelin stars.

In November 2022, the first Michelin Guide to Hungary was published that rated restaurants not only in Budapest but across the whole country. As a result, ten Hungarian restaurants can claim to have a Michelin star, and two of them even have two stars. The **Stand** in Budapest and the **Platán Gourmet** in Tata, which is close to the capital, were given two stars, while one star was awarded to **Rumour**, **Babel**, **Borkonyha Wine-kitchen**, **Costes**, **Essência** and **Salt** which are all in Budapest. The restaurants **42** in Esztergom and **Pajta** in Óriszentpéter were also awarded one star. Four Hungarian restaurants were awarded the Green Star, which was introduced in 2020 by MICHELIN to recognise restaurants' efforts towards sustainability.

The Michelin Plate award follows the same five criteria used to identify starred and **Bib Gourmand** restaurants. Recognised as establishments “simply serving good food”, many restaurants start off by entering the guide with a Michelin Plate and are then awarded Michelin star status in following years.

Today, there are 68 restaurants across the country that hold a Michelin Plate.



There are many delicious desserts and hand-held sweet treats, including pancakes in a variety of flavours and a Hungarian favourite, „kürtőskalács”, otherwise known as chimney cake.



Lángos



BUDAPEST'S MARVELLOUS MARKETS

SHOPPING FOR SUCCESS – WHERE STAR CHEFS SOURCE THEIR STOCK



Great Market Hall

FROM EARLY MORNING, MARKETS AROUND BUDAPEST SERVE SHOPPERS LOOKING FOR FRESH VEGETABLES AND DELECTABLE CUTS OF MEAT FOR THE FAMILY MEAL. CHEFS, TOO, SOURCE THEIR PRIME PRODUCE HERE FOR RESTAURANT KITCHENS. CHEESES, HONEY AND JAMS COME DIRECTLY FROM THE PRODUCERS, WITH SEASONAL AND OFTEN NATURALLY ORGANIC FRUIT.



Markets allow shoppers to source cheeses, meats, fruit and vegetables directly from producers. This is the best guarantee that what you're buying is locally grown and supports family farms.



Great Market Hall

The choice of locals and tourists is the **Great Market Hall**, where two floors of stalls fill a historic space revamped a century after its original opening. This is the place to find souvenirs such as paprika, spices and honey.

Renovated recently, the market hall on **Klauszál Square** in the Jewish Quarter comprises sun-flooded spaces for fresh fruit and vegetables, dairy and meat products, with busy eateries at gallery level.

Over in Buda, **Czakó Piacz** is set in an old peasant house, where honeys, jams and cheeses attract regular weekend custom. Beside the Mammut mall, **Fény Street Market** specialises in organic and seasonal goods such as forest mushrooms. Customers here are usually happy to pay a little more.

Further up in Óbuda, the **Római riverside market** in the Nánási Courtyard serves as a community resource, and children are free to use the park and playground there.



Standing by the Danube, the Great Market Hall was built in 1897, when a canal allowed traders to transport goods by water.



IN VINO VERITAS

SAVOUR FINE WINE IN BUDAPEST

BUDAPEST'S DEVELOPMENT AS A CONTEMPORARY METROPOLIS HAS RISEN IN PARALLEL WITH HUNGARY'S WINE INDUSTRY, WITH PRODUCERS IN THE KEY REGIONS OF TOKAJ, BALATON, VILLÁNY OR EGER CULTIVATING REDS AND WHITES OF EXCEPTIONAL QUALITY.



The city was once surrounded by **vineyards**, the hills of Buda given over to grapes just as in Roman times nearly 2,000 years ago. Different soils elsewhere in Hungary then proved more beneficial to cultivation but Budapest's taste for wine remained, in restaurants and in bars designated for this specific drink.

Today, **wine bars** are trendy yet traditional, fashionable yet informal, affordable yet discerning. Relaxing in both style and décor, they attract young couples, business travellers and curious visitors, offering **local delicacies** – such as cheeses, sausage, ham, fine spreads and tasty bread – to accompany crisp whites from Balaton or full-bodied reds from Villány.

Appealing to expert and casual drinkers alike, bars provide salient details on the wines they offer, their provenance and characteristics, inviting producers to present their latest label.



Just as top hotels and restaurants are of genuine global standard, so wine bars have followed suit. Budapest is also well known for its history of traditional sparkling wine production. Taste the bubbles made in the area around the capital!



Evenings themed around a region, wine style or grape type are especially popular.

September's **Budapest Wine Festival** in the sublime setting of Buda Castle is the main showcase for the industry but all summer across town you'll see locals sipping **spritzers**, Hungary's main seasonal tippie known here as *fröccs*, with varying measures of wine and soda water.





BUDAPEST COMES ALIVE BUDAPEST AFTER DARK



EVERY NIGHT OF THE WEEK, WHETHER IT'S ABOARD A FORMER CARGO SHIP IN THE DANUBE OR AT AN ANIMATED FOLK CLUB, THERE'S LIVE MUSIC TO ENJOY IN BUDAPEST. LOCATIONS RUN FROM A MAIN SQUARE IN THE CITY CENTRE TO DISTANT SOUTH BUDA.

The most unique live venue is also the most diverse. The **A38**, a former cargo ship moored by Petöfi Bridge, hosts music of all genres, including rock, indie and electronica, performed on stages inside and out.

The most prominent venue in town is the **Akvárium Klub** on the focal point of Erzsébet Square, comprising three indoor halls and a convivial terrace.

Nearby is the party vortex, where the famed **ruin bars** are found on Akácfa, Kazinczy, Dob and Király Streets. Between Dob and Király, the long courtyard of **Gozsdu Udvar** is lined with party spots.

Down in south Buda, the **Fonó Budai Zeneház** is focused on live folk music from Hungary and the region. Here, *táncház* ('Dance House') nights are a long-revived tradition, as participatory events in which beginners are taught the steps before the show.

The **Budapest Jazz Club** fills an old cinema in the up-and-coming district of Újlipótváros, while the **Opus Jazz Club** is where the likes of Keith Tippett and Django Bates have graced the rare Fazioli piano.



The biggest international acts coming to town usually play the Papp László Budapest Sportaréna or, in summer, outdoor Budapest Park.



A Budapest speciality, ruin bars are set in abandoned or near-empty buildings, filled with random furniture and funky urban art. DJ decks provide entertainment, and sometimes film or video screenings.



ROOFTOP RECREATION

PANORAMIC FUN IN BUDAPEST

BUDAPEST IS BEST VIEWED FROM ABOVE, ITS MARVELLOUS CITYSCAPE BROUGHT TO LIFE WITH A BIRD'S EYE VIEW. FORTUNATELY, THIS IS NOT ONLY EXCLUSIVE TO THOSE PAYING TOP-DOLLAR FOR PANORAMIC HOTEL SUITES: ANYONE CAN TAKE IN THE VISTA OVER COCKTAILS, AROUND A SKATING RINK OR WHILE PRACTISING YOGA.



Yoga sessions are run across Budapest in Hungarian and English, but one in particular takes place atop a downtown hotel. Relax, stretch and take in the view as you recharge in expert hands.

Budapest's rooftop bars not only provide jaw-dropping views of the city and its splendid landmarks but many operate year-round. In summer, a DJ might be spinning, a spectacular sunset providing the backdrop to the party atmosphere. One contemporary destination, an urban boutique hotel opened in 2020 behind the Opera House, also features a pool alongside its sleek cocktail bar.

Some **rooftop bars** go to town in winter, installing cosy igloos with themed furnishings and warming, season-specific drinks. Mulled wine is a particular local favourite.

Winter also sees rooftops transformed into **skating rinks**, with drinks served by the side, and romantic music playing as the lights of Budapest twinkle in the distance.

Some **hotel restaurants** also take advantage of panoramic locations, offering brunch with a view and dinners at sunset.



Some high-end hotels place their spa areas in panoramic vantage points, allowing guests and non-residents to soak in luxury and take in the wonderful views.





LOCAL HISTORY WRIT LARGE AND SMALL

CUBES, QUEENS AND COLUMBO – URBAN ART IN BUDAPEST



FROM MASSIVE MURALS TO POP-UP SCULPTURES AND RANDOM CHARACTERS – BUDAPEST IS BRIMMING WITH URBAN ART. STRIKING PAINTINGS BRIGHTEN THE CITY AND OLD FIREWALLS SERVE AS HUGE CANVASSES, WHILE STRANGE FIGURES APPEAR AS IF FROM NOWHERE.

Okudart painting

Near the Synagogue on **Rumbach Sebestyén Street**, a lavish portrait of **Empress Elisabeth** welcomes you to the district named after this revered Habsburg royal. Erzsébetváros, 'Elizabeth Town', is today filled with street art related to Hungarian history.



A painting of a Rubik's Cube reflects on the clever code created by its inventor, Hungarian Ernő Rubik.

Here, a vast mural celebrates the famous victory by Hungary's football team over England in 1953, the action depicted by a newspaper report of the day.

Turning into **Wesselényi Street**, a replica of Time magazine from 1956, naming a Hungarian Freedom Fighter as its 'Man of the Year', honours the young heroes of the anti-Soviet uprising.

Elsewhere, street art takes the form of sculpture. Statuettes by Ukrainian artist **Mihajlo Kolodko** combine urban history with popular culture. On **Széll Kálmán Square**, his Mekk Elek shows the revered children's character, a clumsy goat, looking for a place to nail his ungainly street sign. Foreign visitors will recognise TV detective Columbo on **Falk Miksa Street**, joined by a gun-toting meerkat outlined in chalk, as if at a crime scene.



*Kolodko also revels in the mythology of District VII with his depiction of a diver finding the key to the New York Café and of the pianist who composed evergreen hit *Gloomy Sunday*.*

Kolodko Statue



BUDAPEST IS CHILD'S PLAY!

FUN FOR ALL THE FAMILY

BUDAPEST IS NOT ONLY CHILD-FRIENDLY BUT FAMILY-FOCUSED. THERE'S ALWAYS SOMETHING TO KEEP THE LITTLE ONES ACTIVE AND ENTERTAINED, INDOORS AND OUT, ALL YEAR ROUND.



Bear Farm, Veresegyház

Budapest Zoo often welcomes new-borns to join the mammals, birds, insects and reptiles who reside in their various zones here. Also alongside, **Budapest Circus** is proudly traditional, with clowns, acrobats, magicians, jugglers and trapeze artists performing in the ring.

Just outside Budapest, **Budakeszi Wildlife Park** and **Bear Farm** in **Veresegyház** allow visitors to see animals in their natural habitats, providing an exciting as well as educational day out.

János Hill is perfect for a family picnic, best accessed by the **Children's Railway**, staffed by kids and driven by grown-ups. In winter, you can bring sledges and build a snowman on the slopes.



Entering the Tropicarium is like diving to the bottom of the ocean, thanks to its walk-through aquarium. Learn about all six species of sharks and the stingrays as they swim above your head.

The **Csopa Science Centre**, aka the **Palace of Wonders**, is a huge playhouse where more than 100 games and displays teach science in an entertaining, interactive way. Nobody minds if the kids touch the exhibits here. In fact, that's the whole point. Information is also given in English.



The Szentendre Skanzen is an open-air museum an hour from Budapest, where kids can try handicrafts, learn about past ways of life and marvel at the wildlife in the mini-zoo.



Szentendre Skanzen



PARK LIFE AND NATURE WALKS

BUDAPEST'S GREAT GREEN OUTDOORS

FOR A BUSTLING METROPOLIS OF NEARLY TWO MILLION PEOPLE, BUDAPEST LUXURIATES IN GREAT SWATHES OF GREEN SPACE, PARKS, BOTANICAL GARDENS AND UNDISTURBED WOODS THAT MAKE THE CITY SO ATTRACTIVE.



Margaret Island

Budapest's most popular green getaway is the **City Park**, with sports courts and outdoor gyms. There's still plenty of room for a stroll or a bike ride.

The **Royal Gardens** at the **Várkert Bazár** offer further relaxation, with Danube views to boot. **Margaret Island** appeals to cyclists and joggers, but is perhaps best visited for a peaceful stroll around its **Japanese Garden** and medieval ruins.

Urban green spaces include the grassy expanse of central **Szabadság Square** in the shadow of the grandiose Exchange Palace, and the recently unveiled gardens surrounding the stately **National Museum**.



Várkert Bazár



Buda Arboretum is a former vineyard, established on the lower slopes of Gellért Hill as formal gardens in 1876. Here, future landscape gardeners and winemakers can practise their crafts as visitors take in the abundant greenery.

Erzsébet lookout



City Park



Beyond Városliget in Zugló, the Japanese Garden has recently reopened to the public. A teahouse, lake and mandarin ducks all feature, as well as traditional ornamentation.

Further afield, sloping **Normafa** is the gateway to the Buda Hills, a far-reaching expanse of unspoilt nature, much of it protected, some of it within the **Duna-Ipoly National Park** of hiking trails, stables and observation points.

Within the city, the **Füvészkert botanical garden** is home to some 8,000 varieties of plant life, some dating back to the age of the dinosaurs.



WHERE HISTORY AND COFFEE MIX

A CENTURY OF COFFEEHOUSE CULTURE



THE CAFÉS OF BUDAPEST TELL THE STORY OF A BOOMING TWIN IMPERIAL CAPITAL IN WHICH HUNGARIAN CULTURE COULD FLOURISH IN THESE ORNATE LITERARY HAUNTS.

New York Café



Plaques and statues delineate history in most cities, marking cultural shifts and seminal events. Budapest has many too – but the visitor can discover more about the capital just by sitting over a cup of coffee.

As Pest developed as an urban hub, men-folk gathered at the **coffeehouse**. Here, with Hungarian the common language, writers and artists would convene for hours. The coffeehouse became a forum, where ideas could be exchanged, most notably at the **Pilvax**, where Sándor Petőfi and his peers plotted the uprising against their Habsburg masters in 1848. The city gained theatres, a daily press and book publishers, and these actors, journalists and writers met over coffee.

The grandest of them all was the **New York Café**, opened in 1894. Embellished with a fountain, Venetian chandeliers and ceiling frescos, it took coffeehouse elegance to a new level. Legend has it that one writer said he would throw the keys into the Danube so that it would never close.

A century or so later, trendy **new-wave cafés** serve specialty coffees in up-and-coming districts such as **Újlipótváros**, with lactose-free varieties and tasty pastries.



Editorial meetings for the seminal Nyugat magazine took place at Centrál, which opened in 1887.



Central Café



DESIGNED BY HUNGARIANS, WORN BY CELEBS

BUDAPEST, FASHION CAPITAL OF CENTRAL EUROPE

BUDAPEST IS HOME TO INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED FASHION DESIGNERS, AWARD-WINNING COLLECTIONS AND WORLD-FAMOUS SUPERMODELS. EVERY APRIL AND OCTOBER, BUDAPEST CENTRAL EUROPEAN FASHION WEEK ALLOWS TOP REGIONAL COUTURIERS TO SHOWCASE THEIR SEASONAL COLLECTIONS.



A showcase boulevard and World Heritage site in its own right, **Andrássy Avenue** is lined with luxury stores. Budapest also has a **Fashion Street**, alongside five-star hotels, where big-name brands reside. Ateliers, studios and outlets of domestic designers also dot the downtown area.

Staged at a prestigious venue such as the **Várkert Bazár** or **Palazzo Dorottya**, the biannual extravaganza of **Budapest Central European Fashion Week** follows the big five – New York, Paris, London, Milan and Berlin – and attracts the world's top critics and commentators. Budapest is not only aiming to bracket itself alongside the Big Five but a top Hungarian designer such as **Sandra Sandor** also regularly shows in New York and London. Her pieces for her own label **Nanushka**, whose concept store occupies a prime spot in the city centre, have been worn by celebrities such as **Gigi Hadid** and **Gwen Stefani**.

Visitors can peruse the ateliers of up-and-coming designers based in apartment workshops, who are happy to show people round and offer a sneak peek into the creative process.



Hungary has its own successful models too, including Barbara Palvin, Enikő Mihalik and Vanessa Axente.



Illustrious French fashion school, Mod'Art International, has operated in Budapest since 2006.



...AND ACTION!

BUDAPEST ON FILM

PHOTOGENIC BUDAPEST HAS A TRADITION IN FILM STRETCHING BACK OVER A CENTURY. IT WAS HERE THAT THE LUMIÈRE BROTHERS PRESENTED THEIR FIRST MOVING PICTURES – AND WHERE SO MANY MAJOR HOLLYWOOD MOVIES ARE SHOT TODAY.



The 20th century had hardly begun when the Lumière brothers showed their first moving pictures at Budapest's **Grand Hotel Royal**, where the city's first cinema opened.

A domestic film industry quickly developed, with producers, directors and actors convening at the **New York Café**. Many took their talent abroad, most notably Sir Alexander Korda and Michael Curtiz.



*The gripping scenes of war-time drama **Casablanca** had a tragic aspect in real life, as the key Hungarians involved, including director Michael Curtiz, lost family and loved ones back in Europe.*

The director of a string of stand-out films, Curtiz was responsible for **Casablanca**, which starred his compatriots Peter Lorre and S. Z. Sakall. Korda became a key figure in the British film industry and was later knighted. Tours are given of his studios in Etyek, near Budapest.

Budapest's stately cityscape has since been used as the backdrop for classic historical dramas and spy films, representing Paris, Moscow and Buenos Aires, among others. **Evita**, **Spy Drama**, **I Spy** and **Red Sparrow** were all filmed here, with Will Smith, Bruce Willis and Angelina Jolie among the stars to appear. Expert crews and favourable tax breaks also attract major productions to Budapest.



*The Budapest-based **National Film Institute Hungary** provides budding film crews and technicians with expert training.*



CITY OF FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

A FESTIVAL FOR EVERY OCCASION



WHETHER THE FOCUS IS ROCK MUSIC OR FILM, FINE ART OR FASHION, WINE OR GASTRONOMY, BUDAPEST HAS A FESTIVAL FOR EVERY OCCASION.

Sziget Festival



Sziget Festival

First staged in 1981, the **Bartók Spring** is a fortnight or more of mainly highbrow culture, with classical music of the very best quality brought to the fore. Dance, theatre and the fine arts also feature.

August's **Sziget Festival**, inaugurated in 1993, also uses multiple stages but all takes place on an island ('Sziget') north of Budapest. Rock, pop, world and electronic music hog the limelight but you'll also find film, theatre, circus and children's activities.



Live music and superior snacks at the Budapest Wine Festival accompany the best reds and whites of the year, set against the historic surroundings of Buda Castle.

CAFe Budapest, an acronym for Contemporary Arts Festival, brightens the calendar in October. Also incorporating combining **Art Market Budapest** and the **Budapest Ritmo** world-music festival, this fortnight-plus cultural extravaganza is strong on visual arts, contemporary circus, dance and non-mainstream sounds.

Culinary festivals run the gamut of Hungarian specialities, from mangalica pork to craft beer. For fine dining, May's four-day **Gourmet Festival** is the most prestigious showcase, along with September's **Budapest Wine Festival**.



Venues for the Bartók Spring range from the venerable – including Pesti Vigadó and House of Music Hungary – to the vibrant, such as the Akvárium Klub.



Budapest Wine Festival



FROM THE FIRST OLYMPICS TO WORLD AQUATICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

BUDAPEST TO STAGE MAJOR SPORTS FINALS



AS THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORT IN 2019, BUDAPEST HAS SEEN IMPRESSIVE NEW STADIUMS BUILT AND MANY REVAMPED. AS A CONSEQUENCE, THE CITY HAS BEEN AWARDED HOSTING RIGHTS FOR PRESTIGIOUS INTERNATIONAL FINALS AND TOURNAMENTS.



Danube Arena



Alfréd Hajós was not only an Olympic champion swimmer, winning Hungary's first gold at the inaugural Games of 1896, but a stadium architect, designing the original baths that hosted the FINA championships in 2017.

Budapest has long excelled in sports and stadium design as host of the **FINA World Aquatics Championships** in 2017 and 2022 and the **World Athletics Championships** in 2023.

The elegant **Alfréd Hajós National Swimming Arena** on Margaret Island dates back to 1930 and has recently hosted two European Aquatics Championships as well as the FINA finals. For 2017, the sleek, contemporary **Danube Arena** was also built around the **Dagály Baths**, a classic complex opened in 1948.

The former **Népsz stadion**, opened in 1953, was rebuilt in 2018-19 and named after Hungary's greatest football star, who graced the original stadium.



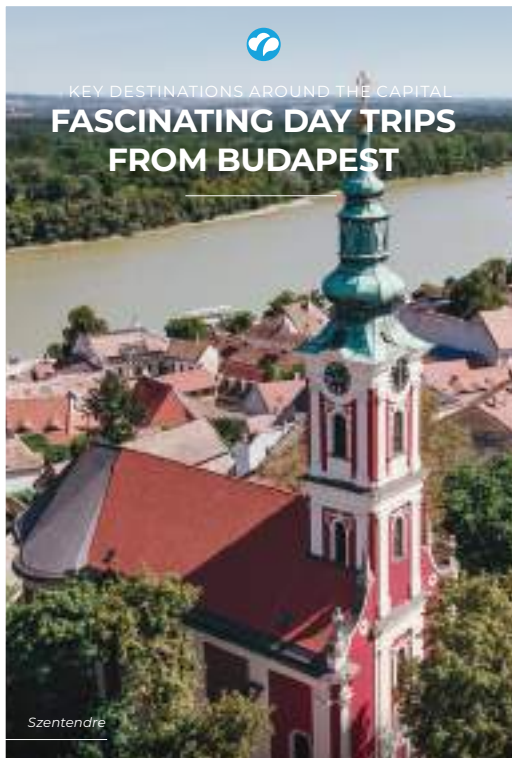
Puskás Arena



Before World War I, the city was favourite to host the Olympics of 1920 and a national stadium was planned. This later became the iconic Népsz stadion.



KEY DESTINATIONS AROUND THE CAPITAL FASCINATING DAY TRIPS FROM BUDAPEST



Szentendre

YOU ONLY NEED TO TRAVEL NORTH UP THE DANUBE BEND FOR AN HOUR OR SO TO DISCOVER MEDIEVAL CASTLES, A MAGNIFICENT BASILICA AND COLOURFUL GALLERIES. TO THE EAST AND WEST, GÖDÖLLŐ IS A ROYAL RETREAT, ETEK A WINEMAKING IDYLL.



Esztergom



The journey up the Danube Bend, best taken by boat or even hydrofoil, offers spectacular views as the river sweeps south through rolling greenery.

Within easy reach of Budapest by HÉV electric train or scheduled boat, **Szentendre** is the most popular day trip from the city, its winding cobbled streets offset by Serbian churches filled with glittering icons. This is also a city of artists, whose galleries and museums hold fascinating collections and host frequent exhibitions.

Visegrád had its heyday in the Middle Ages. It was here that King Matthias Corvinus had his **Renaissance summer palace**, its atmospheric remains dotting the panoramic landscape. Further up, the **Upper and Lower Citadel** also date back to early medieval times.

Hungary's largest religious building is the **Basilica** in **Esztergom**, which dominates the skyline from its vantage point overlooking the Danube.

A different HÉV line runs east to **Gödöllő**. Here, the ornate **Gödöllő Palace** was the summer residence of Emperor Franz Joseph and his wife Elisabeth, revered as the Hungarian-speaking Sisi.

Rustic **Etyek** is renowned for its traditions in winemaking. Wines are best sampled at the **picnics** that take place here each season.



Gödöllő



Gödöllő has its own botanical gardens, with protected species among the 500 plant varieties ranged around a pretty pond.



HIDDEN RETREATS NEAR BUDAPEST OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

BUDAPEST IS SURROUNDED BY NATURAL ATTRACTIONS IDEAL FOR HIKING, CYCLING AND OUTDOOR RECREATION. MOST ARE BEST SUITED TO DAY TRIPS, WITH ACCOMMODATION OPTIONS ALSO AVAILABLE.



Danube Bend

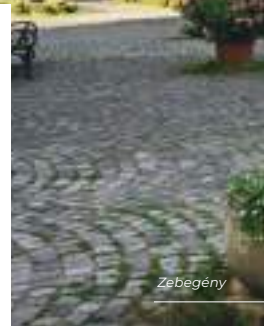
Kisoroszi is a lovely waterside retreat at the northern tip of unspoilt Szentendre Island. It offers horse riding, golf and a beach popular with campers, canoeists and families.

Set against the **Börzsöny hills**, **Zebegény** is perfect hiking country, with spectacular views of the Danube Bend just before it snakes round before plunging south past Vác.

Királyrét is best known for the narrow-gauge forest railway that runs up from Kismaros. Cyclists can stop off along the way and explore the great outdoors. Away from the rail tracks, fishing and family picnics bring many here from the capital.



Zebegény is set on the main train line between Budapest and Bratislava, with the second-longest rail bridge in Hungary.



Zebegény



Anyone thinking of visiting Dobogókő can check a webcam set up to check the weather conditions.

One of the earliest destinations for organised hiking tours, **Nagy-Hideg-hegy** is the third highest peak in the **Börzsöny hills**. Hungary's first ski lift was built here, and the slopes have attracted hikers and skiers in serious numbers ever since.

The first place in Hungary to open a forest retreat, **Dobogókő**, 'Beating Stone', has been attracting hikers since the 1890s. Known as the heart chakra of the Earth, it is the perfect place for rejuvenation, with wonderful views from the many hiking trails over the Danube Bend, the Börzsöny hills and the heights of Pilis. One landmark is lofty **Prédikálószték**, with its own observation tower.





GREAT GIFTS AND PERFECT PRESENTS

AUTHENTIC HUNGARIAN SOUVENIRS

NO TRIP TO BUDAPEST IS COMPLETE WITHOUT PACKING A FEW SPECIAL GIFTS FOR YOUR JOURNEY HOME. CERTAIN TRADITIONAL PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN DEFINED AS HUNGARIKUMS: HIGH QUALITY AND SPECIFIC TO HUNGARY, THEY ARE THE PERFECTLY AUTHENTIC SOUVENIR.



*The twists of history saw **Unicum** being smuggled out of Hungary, and the secret recipe with it, before its successful revival in the 1990s.*

Many visitors like something to sip and savour as a memory of their trip.

Tokaji Aszú naturally sweet wine and **Bikavér** (meaning Bull's Blood) **red wine** also provide a classic taste of Hungary, their flavours unique and unmistakable.

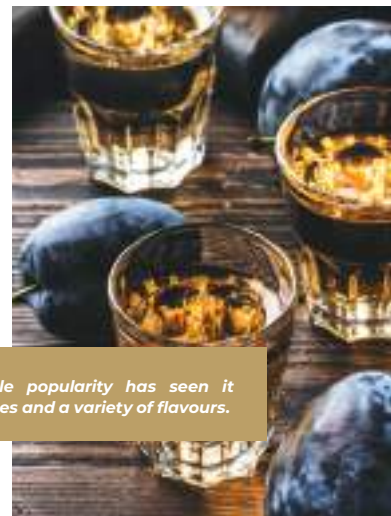
Look out, too, for distinctive round bottles of **Unicum**, whose history is obscure as this dark *digéstit* itself. Dating back to 1790 when it was served to the emperor by a Dr Zwack, this herbal liqueur has been produced by the same family ever since.

Spicy Hungarian **salami** and **paprika**, either loose or in powdered form, are available from any market, and easy to transport.

For something that will last longer than dinner, decorative **Hungarian embroidery** adorns all sorts of traditional textiles, including clothes, pillowcases and tablecloths, as well as elegant **porcelain**.



Pálinka's newly fashionable popularity has seen it produced in sleek, thin bottles and a variety of flavours.





HOW TO GET INTO AND AROUND BUDAPEST

BUDAPEST TRANSPORT TIPS

VISITORS TO BUDAPEST CAN LOOK FORWARD TO SWIFT, EASY TRANSFERS FROM THE AIRPORT AND AN EFFICIENT NETWORK OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT ONCE THEY ARRIVE IN TOWN. TAXIS ARE PLENTIFUL, AND THE CITY CENTRE ENJOYABLY WALKABLE.



From the **airport**, there are several options to get into town. Outside the arrivals terminal, a licensed **taxi service** is run from a kiosk, where you can order a cab for a price estimate based on your destination.

Near the taxi stand are two bus stops. One is for **route 200E** to the nearest metro station on blue line M3 that runs to Deák Ferenc tér, the other for the **100E** direct to the same main central hub. They require different tickets, sold from machines by the stop, with English-language menus and card payments.

Budapest has **excellent and extensive public transport** consisting of a metro network, trams, buses and trolleybuses – and even boats. **Tickets and passes** are available from machines at stations and stops, and from service centres at transport hubs.

The **Budapest Card** allows unlimited use of public transport for periods ranging from 24 to 120 hours, as well as free or discounted admission to sights, spas and events, and cheaper rates in shops and restaurants. With the Budapest Card, you can experience the historic baths, enjoy Hungarian cuisine and take advantage of more than 100 services and attractions, free or at discounted rates.

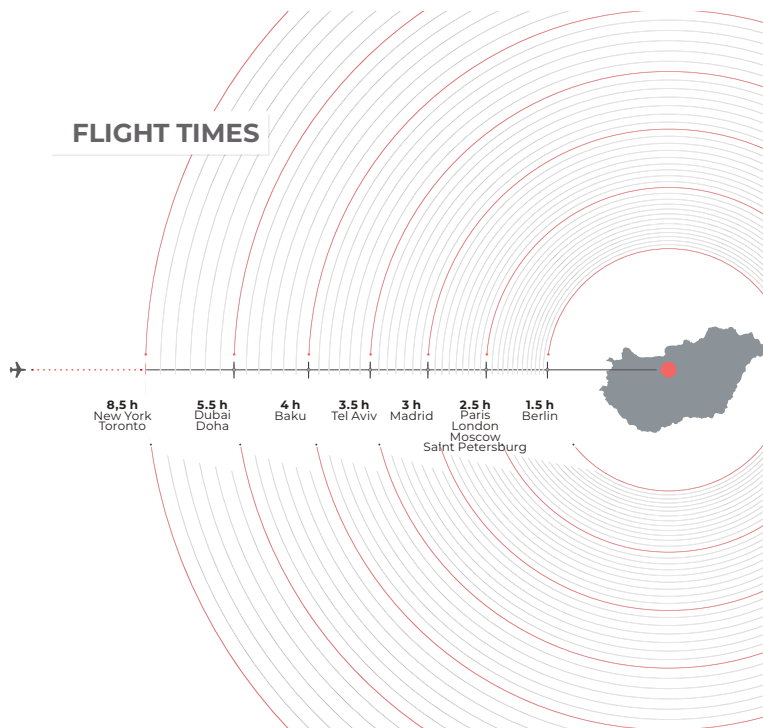


Another transport option from the airport is the minibus point-to-point service, dropping passengers off at or picking them up from a specified destination.



Hungary's location in the heart of Europe makes it easily accessible. Budapest airport is 20 km south-east of the capital, served by the frequent 100E bus that runs directly into the city centre. Regular international train and bus services offer a scenic and environmentally friendly alternative to plane travel. Each major rail and bus terminus in Budapest has its own metro station.

In the east of Hungary, the country's second-largest city, Debrecen, also accommodates direct flights from major cities such as Barcelona, London, Milan, Tel Aviv, Moscow and Paris.



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