

iPod Traveller

"The Best in European Travel"



▲View from Castle Hill of Chain Bridge over the Danube and St Stephen's Basilica

Best of Budapest

Overview

The Beautiful and bustling city of Budapest is situated in the Centre of Europe on the famous Danube River. Hungary's capital is a cultural delight for those looking for a city break with a difference.

Budapest can pretty much be divided into two cities, Buda and Pest, cut down the middle by the Danube. The leafy hills of Buda to the West are home to more tranquil older parts of the city including the Eponymous Castle from where you can get a fantastic view of the Hungarian Parliament adjacent.

On the Eastern side Buda, discover a fast-paced city bustling with life and rich in contemporary Hungarian culture. Here you will find the famous State Opera House and many of the city's sought after thermal baths, including the Széchenyi Baths near Hero's Square.

5 top things to see and do in Budapest

Széchenyi Baths One of the largest thermal baths in the world, Széchenyi Baths comprises nine indoor and outdoor pools. Each pool is unique - outside there are three large pools including an unheated Olympic sized pool, and two naturally heated baths. Inside you will find a complex of smaller pools in which you dip at your own risk - each pool combines different natural minerals to leave your body and soul feeling, well... different! Entrance is inexpensive and you will be required to leave a small deposit. Locals can have their entrance prescribed for them by their local GP!

Castle Hill Stroll along the famous Chain Bridge to Buda and you will be at the foot of Castle Hill, upon which you can explore the Castle District, a majestic wonderfully preserved UNESCO World Heritage Site. A funicular railway will spare you the climb to the top. Discover a village of historical wonders including the Royal Palace, National Gallery, Sándor Palace and the Military History Museum. For a leisurely stroll around the district you may want to head North-Westwards until you reach Moszkva Ter.

State Opera House Situated on one of the city's most attractive boulevards, Andrásy út, the Hungarian State Opera House is well worth a visit, even if Opera isn't your thing. The building dates back to Budapest's heyday in the late 19th Century.

Tickets for shows are a bargain, starting at just €10 / £7.50 / \$15, but if you don't find time to see a performance, guided tours are held in English at 15:00 every day.

Statue Park Situated some way from the centre, Statue Park is well worth going the extra mile for. Rather than destroying the city's imposing communist statues when the reign of communism finally ended in 1989, someone had the bright idea of moving them to a park on the outskirts of town for visitors to see and residents to forget.

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House of Terror One of Budapest's newest museums, the House of Terror forms an important museum and place of remembrance in the dreaded headquarters of ÁVH Secret Police. The Museum is a powerful and moving educational insight into Hungary's fascist and Stalinist regimes.

Getting there

One of the good things to come from years of communism is the foundations of an excellent rail network, even if it is a little dated. Hungary is connected to all of Central, Eastern and much of Western Europe via direct rail links from one the city's three railway stations.

Budapest has recently become one of the hottest weekend break destinations for many in Western Europe, with the likes of Ryanair Wizzair and SkyEurope all descending on Budapest's Ferihegy Airport, recently acquired by airport giant BAA.

Rail

There are three main line railway stations in Budapest, linking many parts of Eastern Europe. Direct rail links include many of the Former Yugoslav Republics, including Serbia & Montenegro, Macedonia and Bosnia-Hertzegovinia. You can also take trains to Romania, Croatia, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Austria, with indirect links to the rest of Europe.

Bus

Not the fastest mode of transport in this part of the world. If you do prefer long and slow bus journeys then it may be helpful to know that Eurolines coaches arrive and depart from Népliget bus station in Pest.

Air

Since joining the EU in 2004 Hungarians have enjoyed low-cost air travel from Budapest to almost every major city in Europe. Competition on popular routes, especially London-Budapest have meant a drop in air fares, with return tickets from just £30 including tax. One down side is that the city's only airport is a nightmare to reach - requiring a long rickety bus journey followed by an equally long metro journey.

Visitor Links

Budapest Tourist Board

<http://english.budapest.hu>

Budapest Public Transport & Maps

<http://www.metros.hu>

Hungarian State Opera House

<http://www.opera.hu>

Statue Park

<http://www.szoborpark.hu/en>

House of Terror & other museums

<http://www.museum.hu>



▲ Locals playing chess at the Széchenyi Baths

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347-427-9323

Send an SMS:

text the word 'travel' &
then your message to
+44 7766 40 41 42

Admiring the architecture

For those interested in late 19th Century and early 20th Century architecture, Budapest is a delightful city to admire.

There are many excellent examples of Budapest's golden age literally everywhere, including Drechsler House (Andrássy út 25), Egyetemi Könyvtár (University Library) built in 1873 and Tarkarekpenztar a palace near Ferenciek Ter completed in 1911.

Many splendid examples of this era can be found around Andrássy út, not forgetting the State Opera House, completed in 1884.