Budapest City Guide

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The Royal Palace in Szent György tér is one of the most emblematic architectural masterpieces of the cityscape, and the building easiest to recognize from the Pest side of the Danube. **The Castle** was home to the kings of Hungary from the 13th century. Medieval walls and a few buildings have survived from that period, but the district underwent a major transformation according to designs by Miklós Ybl and Alajos Hauszmann in the 19th century. The rooms and halls of the Royal Palace were not reconstructed, and the building today functions as a complex, modern cultural institution. It is home to the Hungarian National Gallery, the National Széchényi Library and the Budapest History Museum. The annual Buda Castle Wine Festival is also held here, in addition to several other events of culture and gastronomy.

Getting to Buda Castle: The easiest way to reach Castle Hill from Pest is to take bus 16 from Deák Ferenc tér to Dísz tér, more or less the central point between the Old Town and the Royal Palace.
Fishermen’s Bastion
1014 Budapest, Szentháromság tér 5.
+36 1 458 3000

Hours of operation: Monday - Sunday 7:30 am to 10 pm
http://www.fishermansbastion.com/
info@fishermansbastion.com

Fishermen’s Bastion (Halászbástya) in the castle district is one of the best known landmarks of Budapest. Thanks to the unparalleled panorama from its neo-Roman lookout terraces, it is one of the most notable tourist attractions. Its main facade, which is parallel to the River Danube, is about 140-meters-long, which enables visitors to enjoy the breathtaking view while taking a short stroll. Its cone-topped stone towers symbolize the 7 Magyar chieftains who once led the invasion of the Carpathian Basin and decided to settle down here. The name of the building dates back to the Middle Ages, when this section of the castle wall was defended by the fishers’ guild. Since 1987, Fishermen’s Bastion has been one of Budapest’s World Heritage sites.

Getting to Fishermen’s Bastion: Take the Funicular from Chain Bridge, or take bus 16 from Széll Kálmán tér or one of the many paths leading up to Castle Hill.

Insider Tip: There is a fee to enter the lookout at the top level of Fishermen’s Bastion, however you can enter the lower level lookout for free and the view is equally beautiful.
Parliament
1055 Budapest, Kossuth Lajos tér 1-3.
+36 1 441 4415
Hours of operation: Monday–Sunday: 8:00 am 6:00 pm
http://latogatokozpont.parlament.hu/en/home
idegenforgalom@parlament.hu

The landmark building of the Parliament building might be familiar even if you’ve never set foot in Budapest. This architectural masterpiece in Kossuth Square was designed by Imre Steindl in splendid neo-Gothic style. Today, it is the largest building in Hungary and the second largest parliament building in Europe. The idea of a new parliament building popped up after the unification of Óbuda, Buda and Pest in 1873; it finished and inaugurated in 1896, on the 1000th anniversary of the founding of Hungary. Thanks to the use of the finest materials, the entire building is a piece of art. The Parliament is home to the Holy Crown, the royal sceptre, and the globus cruciger of the first kings of Hungary. The Parliament is open to visits, for which tickets must be purchased at the on-site Visitor Centre - you can find more information about it here.

Insider Tip: The best way to take the tour is to buy your ticket in advance (online at www.jegymester.hu/parlament), as lines tend to be long and slow-moving and there are only a limited number of tickets available. For more information and to book a group tour, visit the Parliament’s website at www.parlament.hu. Also, if you hold a European Union passport, don’t forget to take it with you, as you get a discount from the entrance fee.
St. Stephen’s Basilica (Szent István-bazilika) is the largest church of Budapest. The building was finished in Neo-classicist style in 1905, following 54 years of planning. Similarly to the Parliament, it is 96 meters high, which makes it the highest building of Budapest. Its capacity is 8,000 persons. The interior is characterized by rich ornamentation; the huge windows radiate dignity. This place of Catholic worship was named after St. Stephen, the first Christian king of Hungary, whose mumified body is buried in the undercroft. His intactely preserved right hand, the Holy Dexter, is kept as a relic in the Basilica’s chapel. The Basilica is also a significant musical venue, where various concerts are held. If you are not moved by classical music, you should still visit the dome for a marvelous view of the city.

Getting to St. Stephen’s Basilica: Take the subway (M3) to Arany János utca

Insider Tips: For beautiful, panoramic views of Budapest walk up the stairs (364 steps) or take the elevators up to the dome’s observation deck (open April 1st through Oct 31st). There’s no cost to enter the church, but there is a nominal fee of HUF 500 to go up to the observation deck. The Basilica has two bell towers and Hungary’s largest bell, weighing 9.5 tons, which is located in the south tower.
Heroes’ Square
1146 Budapest, Hősök tere

One of the landmarks of Budapest and the „foyer” of Városliget, the Heroes’ Square (Hősök tere) is found at the end of Andrássy út. The square was built for the millennial celebrations of 1896, to commemorate the first 1000 years of the Hungarian state. The two colonnades displaying 14 emblematic historical figures of Hungary form a semi-circle around an column, which is surrounded by the seven Magyar chieftains and topped by archangel Gabriel.

The Heroes’ Square is the most distinctive and most spacious square of Budapest. The Museum of Fine Arts and the Kunsthalle stand on its opposite sides. The square often gives place to large-scale public events and celebrations, while it is also an important tourist attraction. The Nemzeti Vágta (National Gallop) has also been held here since 2008.

Insider Tip: If you have the time, it’s worthwhile to visit Heroes’ Square at least twice: both during the day and at night. Combine it with a stroll along Andrássy Avenue or a visit to City Park.

Getting to Heroes’ Square: Take the Millennium Underground (M1) to Hősök tere
The three major sections of the Budapest History Museum (Budapesti Történeti Múzeum) are found in different locations in the capital. The collections - Roman Antiquities, archaeology (Aquincum Museum), Medieval (Castle Museum) and Modern Age, local history and fine art (Kiscelli Museum) were almost simultaneously created, but developed independent of each other. The centre of the Budapest History Museum is found in Building E of the Buda Castle, also known as the Castle Museum (Vármúzeum). If you wish to know more about the turbulent history of Budapest, visit the museum in Szent György tér, where you’ll also find reconstructed parts of the Medieval royal palace and a few gothic sculptures.
The Hungarian National Gallery (Magyar Nemzeti Galéria) is the largest public collection documenting and presenting the rise and development of the fine arts in Hungary. It has operated as an independent institution since 1957. The HNG moved to its present location, the former Royal Palace in the Buda Castle, in 1975.

Its permanent exhibitions are: medieval and renaissance stone carvings, panel paintings and wooden sculptures from the gothic period, 19th century paintings and sculptures, the art of Mihály Munkácsy and László Paál, 20th century art before and after 1945. If you only have time for one museum, the National Gallery is the ideal choice in an ideal location.

Getting to the National Gallery: The museum is located within the Royal Palace, in wings ‘A’, ‘B’, ‘C’ and ‘D’. Take the Funicular from Chain Bridge, the public bus (no. 16) serving Castle Hill from Széll Kálmán tér (formerly Moszkva tér) or one of the many paths leading up to Castle Hill.

Insider Tip: If you visit the Hungarian National Gallery on Thursday or Saturday then your ticket will include a free ‘Highlights of Hungarian Art’ guided tour in English, offered by the gallery. Tours start at 2 pm every Thursday and at 10 am every Saturday.
Hungarian Natural History Museum
1083 Budapest, Ludovika tér 2-6.
+36 1 210 1085
Hours of operation: Tuesday closed, Monday – Friday: 10:00 am to 18:00 pm
http://www.nhmus.hu/en/english_home
mtminfo@mttm.hu

The Hungarian Natural History Museum (Magyar Természettudományi Múzeum) is located in Józsefváros, in the historic building of the old Ludovika Military Academy. Its permanent and temporary exhibitions occupy 5000 m2. Here, you can meet the one-time dinasours of Hungary and their reconstructions, learn about the natural world of the Carpathian Basin and its minerals with the help of interactive demonstrations of the preparation processes and museum education programmes. This is only the surface: the institution is an important research centre. It has a collection of over 10 million items.

Getting to the Hungarian Natural History Museum: If you’re going to use public transport take the M3 (blue metro) and get off at Klinikák or Nagyvárad tér stations.
Rudas Bath is the only thermal bath of Budapest that has been in business since 1520. Since its original opening, it has naturally undergone several transformations and renovations, still, it remains the eldest traditional bath of the capital. The saunas, steam rooms, the sunbathing terrace and jacuzzi on the panoramic roof, and the nighttime opening hours and parties that attract young people, all add to the prestige and popularity of Rudas. The Rudas is found a few steps in front of the rocks of Gellért-hegy, near the Hungária, Attila and Juventus springs. The Turkish bath was built at the time of the Turkish occupation of Hungary in the 16th century, while the spa was added at the end of the 19th century. Rudas Bath lays great emphasis on traditions, so the Turkish Bath has been open only to men since 1936; women, however, are not completely banned from this historical venue thanks to the „ladies’ only” day on Tuesdays and the mixed use days on Saturday and Sunday. There are nighttime baths on Fridays and Saturdays.

Getting to Rudas Baths: Take streetcars 18 or 19 to Döbrentei tér.

New: The Rudas Restaurant & Bar, featuring a Turkish-Hungarian fusion kitchen, is now open. Rudas Restaurant & Bar is located in a new wing of the historic thermal bath, which opened its doors in September 2014. In addition, Rudas has a brand new wellness area with four new pools (including a 42°C/114°F thermal pool and a 11°C/52°F plunge pool), and a rooftop terrace with a rooftop pool.
Széchenyi Bath
1146 Budapest, Állatkerti körút 11.
+36 1 363 3210
Hours of operation: Monday – Sunday: 6:00 am to 10:00 pm
http://www.szechenyibath.hu/

Széchenyi Thermal Bath is one of the largest spa complexes in Europe. Its outdoor pool with the steam rising from its surface on winter nights and the complacent elderly men playing chess in the water is a world famous symbol of Budapest. The bath in Városliget was built in neo-Baroque style at the beginning of the 20th century.

The Széchenyi is the most popular bath among locals thanks to its size and wide range of services. Numerous indoor and outdoor pools, a thermal and wellness department (steam room, sauna etc.), medical care, therapies, fitness and miscellaneous services guarantee the perfect visit. The open-air pool is open in the winter as well, so you can enjoy its hot water even if it’s -10°C outside. The bath is increasingly popular among foreigners as well - a visit here is a solid point on your Budapest schedule both in summer and winter.

Getting to Széchenyi Thermal Bath: Széchenyi Spa Baths is close to the city centre of Budapest: by M1 metro (underground) you can easily get to the world famous bath complex in 15 minutes from the heart of the city, i.e. from the transit hub square called Deak Square (Deák tér), where all Budapest metro lines meet. Széchenyi Baths is in the City Park, a 5 minute walk from Heroes’ Square.

Insider tip: Want to have fun with your friends under the starry sky in a warm water pool? At SPArty Budapest the only thing you have to do is chilling and having fun. It’s the best chance to make unforgettable moments in Budapest. -> https://spartybooking.com/
Kőleves Garden and Restaurant
1075 Budapest, Kazinczy utca 37-41.
+36 20 213 5999
Hours of operation: Monday – Sunday: 9:00 am to 12:00 pm
http://www.kolevesvendeglo.hu/en
reservation@koleves.com, info@koleves.com

Kőleves, situated on the ruin pub-heavy Kazinczy Street, looks and tastes like a dime-a-dozen restaurant, but right behind mediocrity there’s a true downtown treasure, a chilled open-air nook called Kőleves Garden. During the warmer months, university students and romancing couples frequent this silent shelter, where you can sit down on one of the colorful chairs or the swings swaying at the counter, though the tiny pebbles covering the ground might sneak into your slippers.

The restaurant itself housed in the building of an old kosher meat plant, where in addition to a seasonally changing menu, they also offer meat and vegetarian lunch menus on weekdays for a really affordable price, complete with a jug of syrup. Kőleves also has an additional, unique venue, which is none other than the Barkas parking on Kazinczy Street, which anyone can reserve for a romantic dinner. The upper floors of the building give place to rooms and exhibition spaces for rent.

Getting to Kőleves Garden and Restaurant: Bus number 200E commutes between Terminal 2 and the Kőbánya-Kispest Metro terminal (Metro line M3). From the Kőbánya-Kispest metro terminal you can take the M3 Metro (blue line) towards Újpest Központ to reach Deák Ferenc tér. Arriving to Deák Ferenc tér and coming up from the Metro, you’ll need to find Király street. Turn in to Király street and walk straight forward till you reach Kazinczy street, than you turn right and find number 41 Kazinczy.

Insider tip: They organize exhibitions, at the moment photos which were taken from a kite. Kőleves has an open garden summer time - Kőleves Garden.
A new tapas bar, Vicky Barcelona on Dob Street, peps up Gozsdu Courtyard with authentic flair. The bar has a proper Spanish atmosphere, and the fact that the employees are either native Spanish speakers or speak the language fluently just adds to the Mediterranean feel. Besides the authentic food, there are also fine cocktails and wines, and instead of commercial broadcasting, they play Spanish music, which will definitely put you in the mood for a fiesta.

Getting to Vicky Barcelona: Situated in Budapest, Gozsdu Courtyard provides accommodation 300 metres from Dohany Street Synagogue and 600 metres from State Opera House.

Insider tip: Favorite hangouts to check out include the lively Kolor, the very popular Spiler bistropub, the trendy wine bar DiVino, the Jewish-Italian restaurant Yiddishe Mamma Mia, and the French-style Café Vian. All offer indoor and outdoor dining. The Italian pasta bar 2Spaghi, Gozsdu Sky Terrace, Blue Bird Café, Hummus Market and the craft beer pub Léhűtő are also worth a visit.
The legendary **Szimpla Kert** is the most complex and best-known ruin pub in Budapest. The sprawling club located on chaotic Kazinczy Street offers a variety of programs every day of the week: concerts, parties, activities for the elderly, exhibitions, a farmers’ market, and numerous cultural events are all held in the same spot. The place is mostly occupied by foreigners, but there is no lack of Hungarian guests either, thanks to a wide variety of cool concerts. Furthermore, on Sundays we can also pop in for breakfast, while on any other days of the week we can devour delicious lunch menus as well. This is a popular, homey place for friendly get-togethers, and it sports peculiar interior-design solutions, a mix of styles, and the eclectic vibe of urban life. A must-see!

**Getting to Szimpla kert:** Take M3 metro to Deak Square (Deák tér) and than 900 m walk to Kazinczy street.

**Insider tip:** The 10 year old pub is a great place to discover alternate usages of a large variety of random objects, from an old radio to half a bathtub. Getting lost in the maze of dimly lit rooms is definitely a memorable experience, even during the less crowded day period.