

CURIOUS CITIES... BUDAPEST

Unique locations, hidden corners and unusual objects as recommended by...



MAJESTIC PARLIAMENT

The Hungarian Parliament (Országház) is undoubtedly one of the finest legislative buildings in Europe. Set majestically on the Danube riverbank, it is home to the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, long a symbol of the independent Hungarian state.



OLDEST RAILWAY

Just beneath the surface of Andrassy út runs the world's second oldest underground railway after London. Inaugurated in 1896 to carry visitors out to the city's Millennium Exhibition in City Park, the historic railway known as the M1 is still running today.

“Budapest’s history has been a roller coaster ride from its Roman beginnings, through Ottomans and Habsburgs, Nazis and Communists, to the present day.”



PHARMACY MUSEUM

One of Budapest's more unusual museums is the Golden Eagle Pharmacy Museum (Arany Sas Patikamúzeum) on Castle Hill. This Egyptian mummy's head would once have been ground down and sold as a spurious 'cure all' medicine.

PARISIAN ARCADE

The Parisian Arcade (Párizsi udvar) on Ferenciek tere is a fine example of Eclectic architecture popular in the late 19th century and drawing on a multitude of earlier styles. Originally part of a bank building, the arcade has recently been restored.



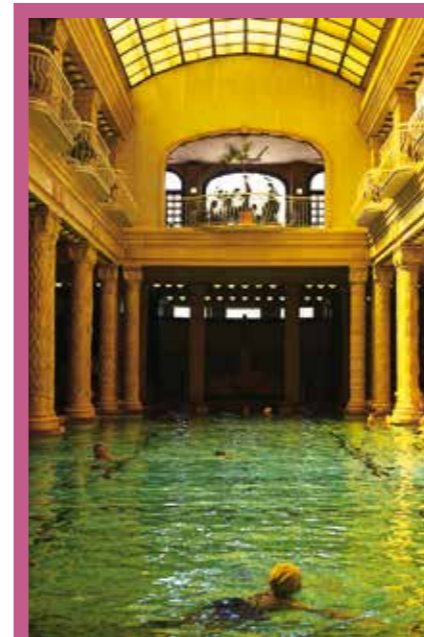
NATIONAL HERO

On March 15th 1848, Hungarians rose up against their Habsburg overlords. Although the insurrection was ultimately suppressed, it spawned several national heroes, including poet Sándor Petőfi around whose statue annual celebrations still occur.



TERROR HOUSE

In among the grand mansions lining Andrassy út is the House of Terror Museum (Terror Háza Múzeum). It catalogues the worst excesses of the Fascist and Communist regimes and includes a chilling elevator ride down into the basement prison.



THERMAL BATHS

Budapest is built over a labyrinth of thermal springs. They attracted prehistoric man and the Romans, soothed the Ottomans, who built the first bath houses, and now provide locals and visitors alike with a unique way to relax in the heart of the city.



RUIN PUBS

For a novel night out, why not visit a Ruin Pub? Szimpla kert on Kazinczy utca is the best known of these makeshift bars installed by the city's young entrepreneurs in abandoned buildings they can't possibly afford to restore.



“Straddling the mighty Danube, Buda on the west bank and Pest on the East, the Hungarian capital is one of Europe’s most attractive cities.”

CHILDREN'S RAILWAY

One of the more charming survivals from Communist times in Budapest is the Children's Railway (Gyermekvasút). Winding through the Buda Hills and still staffed by youngsters, it was designed to imbue them with a strong work ethic.



TOPPLED STATUES

Communism in Hungary was defeated in 1989 and with it came the removal of Communist street propaganda, including statues of Soviet 'greats', workers' heroes and soldiers. Today these are displayed in the suburban Memento Park (Szoborpark).

WONDERFUL TILES

The Applied Arts Museum (Iparművészeti Múzeum) on Üllői út is one of several Budapest buildings with wonderfully exotic tiled roofs. They represent a late 19th-century 'national' style pioneered by architect Ödon Lechner to reflect Hungary's eastern origins.



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