



TOP 13 THINGS TO DO IN BUDAPEST

Budapest, Hungary's capital, is bisected by the River Danube. Its 19th-century Chain Bridge connects the hilly Buda district with flat Pest. A funicular runs up Castle Hill to Buda's Old Town, where the Budapest History Museum traces city life from Roman times onward. Trinity Square is home to 13th-century Matthias Church and the turrets of the Fishermen's Bastion, which offer sweeping views. The city has many museums, three opera houses, and thermal baths. Buda Castle, the Danube River embankments and the whole of Andrassy Avenue have been recognized as an UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hungary has an estimated 1,300 thermal springs, a third of which are used as spas across the country. Budapest is one of the most stunning cities in Europe. The combination of beautiful Budapest architecture, the spectacular views from Fisherman's Bastion and the Buda side, and the stunning River Danube makes it a fantastic place to explore.

Budapest was voted as the second most beautiful city in the world by readers of the prestigious Condé Nast Traveler travel magazine. Only Florence preceded the Hungarian capital city on the 28th annual reader vote of Condé Nast Traveler, in which more than 128,000 had voted for their vote.

Elegant like Paris, cosmopolitan and alternative like Berlin, and a favourite amongst solo travellers – Budapest, the pearl of the Danube, is a magical city that should be at the top of every travel bucket list.

Here is a list of our **top 13 things to do in Budapest**. Forget the usual tourist traps and overpriced attractions. Head off the beaten path and discover Budapest's true personality and charm. Whether it's for a weekend away or a longer visit, you won't be stuck for things to do after reading this list!



1. VISIT THE TERROR HAZ (HOUSE OF TERROR)



The **House of Terror** is as spine-tingling as the name suggests, but it is worth visiting when you're in Budapest. It was formerly a political prison which has now been converted into a museum. Learn more about the fascist and communist regimes of 20th-century Hungary, and pay your respects to the fallen. The museum is also a memorial to the victims of these regimes.

With regard to communism and fascism, the exhibition contains material on the nation's relationships to Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. It also contains exhibits related to Hungarian organisations such as the fascist Arrow Cross Party and the communist ÁVH (which was similar to the Soviet Union KGB secret police). Part of the exhibition takes visitors to the basement, where they can see examples of the cells that the ÁVH used to break the will of their prisoners.

Much of the information and the exhibits are in Hungarian, although each room has an extensive information sheet in both English and Hungarian. Audio guides in English, German, Spanish, Russian and Italian are also available.

2. SPEND A COUPLE OF HOURS RELAXING AT THE SPA



Budapestians are huge fans of thermal spas. It's quite normal for locals to spend a couple of hours a week relaxing in a spa. The Romans first colonized Budapest because of its proximity to **natural thermal springs**, and the city has kept its reputation of being the "City of Spas" ever since. Visiting a spa is perhaps one of the most relaxing things to do in Budapest! You'll find many of them scattered around the city but *Széchenyi*, *Rudas* and *Gellert* are by far the most popular.

The largest medicinal bath in Europe, Széchenyi conveys amazing architecture and boasts the coolest outdoor swimming pool ever (besides its hot thermal pools), with an endearing charm beyond comparison. It is famous for its smaller pools, and it's located in the middle of the City Park.

3. LEARN HOW TO HUNGARIAN FOLK DANCE



Right foot, left foot...and twirl! Two-step into traditional Moldovan culture by learning the Csángó East Hungarian folk dance. **Dance amongst locals** at the Csángó Festival which takes place every year during the Carnival season (between Epiphany and Ash Wednesday). Let loose and enjoy this fun activity in Budapest.



4. PARTY IN THE SKY AT CORVINTETŐ



Climb up the Corvin shopping centre, and enjoy a drink on the **magnificent terrace** that overlooks the city. The rooftop location hosts **legendary parties** and boasts an unparalleled view of the city. If you're looking to spend an evening in Budapest doing something a bit more low-key, they also host cinema nights.



5. GO FOR A STROLL ALONG THE RIVER



The city comes alive at night, especially along the river. After dinner, use the river as your guide and head towards the beautifully lit building of the Parliament. It's the perfect way to spend a romantic evening in Budapest. The river was once seen as the separation of two places, Buda and Pest, but now it is the glue that holds Budapest together. If you don't fancy walking, you can rent a boat and cruise down the river in style.

6. SPEND THE DAY EXPLORING BUDA CASTLE



The palatial Buda Castle is a sprawling royal complex made for the Hungarian Kings of Budapest. It's one of the best things to do in Budapest on a budget because the courtyards are **free to visit at any time**, and the gates are never closed. Not even at night. If you want to see the castle from afar, it looks much better when viewed from the Pest side of the city – especially after dark when the whole castle is lit up.

Buda Castle (Hungarian: Budavári Palota, German: Burgpalast) is the historical castle and palace complex of the Hungarian Kings in Budapest. It was first completed in 1265, although the massive Baroque palace today occupying most of the site was built between 1749 and 1769. The complex in the past was referred to as either the Royal Palace (Hungarian: Királyi-palota) or the Royal Castle (Hungarian: Királyi Vár, German: Königliche Burg). The castle now houses the Hungarian National Gallery and the Budapest Historical Museum.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buda_Castle



7. STOP BY THE FISHERMAN'S BASTION



While you're visiting the Buda Castle (tip #7), head up to the Fisherman's Bastion inside the castle grounds. The **unique panorama and exquisite views of the city** below will make the walk up worth it – we promise!

The Halászbástya or Fisherman's Bastion is one of the best known monuments in Budapest, located near the Buda Castle, in the 1st district of Budapest. It is one of the most important tourist attractions due to the unique panorama of Budapest from the Neo-Romanesque lookout terraces. The Fishermen's Bastion's main façade, parallel to the Danube, is approximately 140 meters long, of which the southern aisle is about 40 meters long, the north is 65 meters long, and the ornate central parapet is 35 meters long. Its seven high-pitched stone towers symbolize the seven chieftains of the Hungarians who founded Hungary in 895.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fisherman%27s_Bastion

8. CHECK OUT THE HUNGARIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM



The Hungarian National Museum of history, art, and archaeology is worth spending a few hours in, if you have the time. The building contains an impressive sweeping staircase and is **architecturally stunning**. Once you've absorbed everything there is to see inside, head outside to the gardens to find the statue of Garibaldi.

The Hungarian National Museum (Hungarian: Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum) was founded in 1802 and is the national museum for the history, art, and archaeology of Hungary, including areas not within Hungary's modern borders, such as Transylvania; it is not to be confused with the collection of international art in the Hungarian National Gallery. The museum is in Budapest VIII in a Neoclassical building, purpose-built during 1837–47 by the architect Mihály Pollack.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hungarian_National_Museum

9. SEE THE STATUES IN MEMENTO PARK



Just outside of the city is Memento Park, considered an open-air museum because of the statues and works of art in its grounds. This is an ideal thing to do in Budapest when the sun is behaving itself, as the open-air gardens are a beautiful spot for enjoying a walk. The statues are from Hungary's communist era, and are a complete contrast to the surrounding gardens. See if you can spot the statues of Lenin, Marx, and Engels while you're there.

Dedicated to monumental statues and sculpted plaques from Hungary's Communist period (1949–1989). There are statues of Lenin, Marx, and Engels, as well as several Hungarian Communist leaders. The park was designed by Hungarian architect Ákos Eleőd, who won the competition announced by the Budapest General Assembly (Fővárosi Közgyűlés) in 1991. On public transport diagrams and other documents the park is usually shown as Memorial Park.

A quote by the architect on the project: "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.

Website: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Memento_Park

10. HOP ON A TRAM AND GO BACK AND FORTH ALONG THE DANUBE



Hopping on a tram is a wonderfully **peaceful way to travel through the city of Budapest**, at your own pace. Hop off whenever you see a sight or neighbourhood you want to explore, and then continue on your way! It's one of the best things to do in Budapest if you don't already have a plan in mind. Just see where the tram takes you!



11. GRAB A TRAIN OUT OF BUDAPEST AND SPEND A DAY IN SZENTENDRE



Want to escape all the noise and commotion of the city? Grab a train out of Budapest and spend a day in the charming village of Szentendre. A **truly magical day-trip from Budapest** – It's known for its baroque architecture, churches, colorful houses and narrow, cobbled streets.



12. STROLL DOWN ANDRASSY UT.



Known as the Champs-Élysées of Budapest, this beautiful avenue is full of **retro cafés, high-end boutiques and fabulous restaurants**. Take your time strolling down Andrássy Ut, taking in the enormous villas and chic townhouses as you go. Whilst most of us won't be able to afford a house on this road, there are plenty of beautiful places to stop for a bite to eat without taking out an eye-watering mortgage.

13. SPEND AN EVENING AT SZIMPLA



Szimpla is an old factory that has been converted into a huge pub (the third **most beautiful pub in the world** according to Lonely Planet). Its trendy décor of mismatched items makes this place an utterly unique place in Budapest. Colourful lamps swing from the ceiling, brass bath tubs line the walls waiting for people to climb inside, and a disused Trabant car is parked in the garden, with a table and chairs inside. If you're a lover of **alternative nightlife**, you'll love this place.

Website: <https://szimpla.eu/>