

# Hidden treasures of BUDAPEST

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## HIDDEN TREASURES OF BUDAPEST

Get off the beaten track and away from the typical tourist attractions to explore the lesser-known parts of town, uncovering hidden treasures that only long-time residents know about.

Hidden gardens, the imprint of many hundreds of years and an unadulterated Pest feeling await if you leave the road less travelled. Find the locals' favourite secret spots for a rendezvous in the romantic Palotanegyed (Palace Quarter). Or head to the city's constantly bustling, multicultural quarter, whose terraces and street food courtyards have everything you need to let you switch off the noise of the world with a spritzer in your hand. Gather experiences: miniature sculptures, a rock hospital, a pinball museum, monuments from Turkish times, a market featuring traditional Hungarian food and a breathtaking panorama all await you.

Get to know this multifaceted and modern city that is still faithful to its traditions and history. You have the map in your hand: now just follow the path and go with the flow.





## ACTIVITIES & ENTERTAINMENT

### 1. PINBALL MUSEUM

Budapest has its own pinball museum where you can play with all 130 machines, the oldest of which was made in 1871. The machines are grouped chronologically and by manufacturer. You can start in the inner room, with the pinball's ancestor (which mostly resembles a wooden board) from 1871, a few wooden specialities from 1932, and the first Hungarian pinball machine from 1947, with flippers on the sides. At this point, you learn that flipper and pinball are not the same. Pinball originally referred to a ball rolling on a vertical playing area, with pins making its movement more difficult. What we call flipper today came into being with the introduction of flippers, the plastic bats to control the ball, around 1940. This transformed the original game, based on pure luck, into arcade entertainment.



Seen



**Address:** 1137 Budapest, Radnóti Miklós Street 18 **Website:** flippermuzeum.hu

### 2. JÁNOS MOLNÁR CAVE

The János Molnár Cave is a thermoclastic, water-filled system located in the Rózsadomb district of Buda. The deepest parts descend to 100 metres, while the total length of the explored sections is currently 5.5 kilometres.

**Address:** 1023 Budapest, Frankel Leó Road 48 **Website:** mjcave.hu

### 3. A38 SHIP

A venerable venue with five separate areas, a fabulous view, an excellent sound system, a colourful local crowd and a wonderfully rich concert schedule, with many performances filmed live. The A38 has become a cultural entertainment centre with an international agenda, restaurant, bar, concert hall, open-air terraces and lounge – all aboard one of the most fascinating venues in Budapest, a flagship of the city's nightlife, a must-see spectacle on the Danube and one of Europe's coolest clubs.

**Address:** 1117 Budapest, Petőfi Bridge, Buda side **Website:** a38.hu

### 4. SUP ON THE DANUBE

SUP, stand up paddle, is enjoying a wave of popularity in Hungary, on rivers and at Lake Balaton. Here in Budapest, you can go on an organised SUP tour in the morning or at sunset, and even try yoga on a SUP board.



**Address:** 1039 Budapest, Kossuth Lajos Embankment 81 **Website:** suphungary.com

### 5. ZUGLIGET CHAIRLIFT

The Zugliget Chairlift (Libegő) is a fun, alternative mode of transport in the Buda hills. Transporting passengers between Zugliget and the road leading up to the Erzsébet Lookout Tower, the Chairlift takes you calmly up the side of János Hill in about 15 minutes – while providing panoramic views of the Buda surroundings.

**Address:** 1121 Budapest, Zugligeti Road 97 **Website:** bkv.hu

### 6. CHILDREN'S RAILWAY

The Children's Railway is one of Budapest's most unique attractions. Like many other heritage railways, it has ticket offices, diesel locomotives, signals, switches and a timetable. Unlike other such railways, however, this one is run by children. The line stretches through the Buda hills from Széchenyi-hegy to Hűvösvölgy, crossing the Cogwheel Railway and serving Normafa, as well as the highest point of Budapest, Jánoshegy.

**Address:** 1026 Budapest, Hűvösvölgyi Road 205 **Website:** gyermekvasut.hu

### 7. ECSERI MARKET

Budapest's largest treasure trove of vintage, retro, used and second-hand artefacts, Ecseri stretches over a large space in south Pest. Vendors specialise in specific fields – paintings, furniture, books, clothes – but the pleasure for the visitor is in browsing the wealth of goods here, themselves a reflection of local social history.

**Address:** 1194 Budapest, Nagykőrösi Road 156 **Website:** ecseri.hu



## RELIGIOUS SIGHTS

### 8. FRANKEL LEO SYNAGOGUE

This Neolog synagogue occupies a place in the mainstream of the local Jewish community. Congregation and prayers follow similar lines to Conservative/Masorti ones but are not egalitarian. Men and women sit separately, without a mechitzah partition, and the service is Nusach Ashkenaz. The synagogue was built in 1888. In the 1920s, an apartment building was built around it to protect it and to serve as a community resource. During World War II, the synagogue was used as a stable and its residents were killed or deported. Today, the Jewish community owns only one apartment and non-Jews live in the rest of the building. A memorial in the courtyard names the Jewish families deported from the house in 1944.

**Address:** 1023 Budapest, Frankel Leó Road 49 **Website:** frankel.hu

### 9. TOMB OF GÜL BABA

The Tomb of Gül Baba is surrounded by beautiful gardens, recently renovated and reopened. The landmark honours Gül Baba, an Ottoman-era poet and philosopher who died shortly after the Turkish conquest of Buda. From his statue, a panoramic view stretches all the way to the Danube. The walkways up to the site, near the Buda foot of Margaret Bridge, have also been revamped.



**Address:** 1023 Budapest, Mecset Street 14 **Website:** gulbabaalapitvany.hu

### 10. CAVE CHURCH (SZIKLATEMPLOM)

This church testifies to a religion's capacity to be set in stone. It is carved into the southern slope of Gellért Hill's rocky bluff, across from Liberty Bridge and next to the famous Gellért Hotel and baths. The Cave Church has been a holy grotto since 1926 and demonstrates its faith in a different way than other churches do, through more grandiose means.

**Address:** 1118 Budapest, Szent Gellért Embankment 1 **Website:** sziklategomplom.hu



## STREETS & SQUARES

### 11. GÜL BABA STREET

This picturesque street in Buda is unique. No other street is as romantic so close to the city centre. The best way to experience it is along Mecset utca ('Mosque Street') to Türbe tér ('Tomb Square', after the Turkish term), where you can explore a 16th-century Turkish mausoleum and surrounding rose garden, an ideal spot for a romantic rendezvous. The view is marvellous, but the real excitement lies in the discovery of this steep medieval street. Since there are no food or drink outlets on Gül Baba, pack your own provisions. The proximity of Margaret Island is also inviting: if time allows, it's perfect for another walk.

**Address:** 1023 Budapest, Gül Baba Street

### 12. CLARK ÁDÁM SQUARE

Named after the Scottish engineer who not only completed the Chain Bridge but also created the Tunnel on the opposite side of this roundabout, Clark Ádám tér is considered the very centre of Budapest. All distances from the city, in fact, are measured from here, hence the Zero Kilometre Stone, another major feature here – at the foot of the Funicular that whisks passengers up to Buda Castle in a matter of minutes.

**Address:** 1011 Budapest, Clark Ádám Square

### 13. PALACE QUARTER

Tucked behind the National Museum, the Palace Quarter is the elegant gateway to the multicoloured District VIII. Here, noblemen had their pied-à-terre in the capital, building ornate villas so they could stay in the capital on business before returning to their estates in the countryside. Today these are prime apartments or, in certain cases, boutique hotels. One, the former home of the Wenckheim dynasty, houses the Ervin Szabó Library.

**Address:** 1088 Budapest

### 14. NAGYMEZŐ UTCA

The hub of the city's theatre district, Nagymező utca is referred to as Budapest's Broadway, the footprints of the nation's most famous actors spreading across one side of the pavement. Among the revered institutions here, the Operetta Theatre is dedicated to this light, humorous form of opera; the building is the gorgeous creation of Viennese architects Fellner and Helmer, from 1894.

**Address:** 1065 Budapest, Nagymező Street

### 15. FIREWALL ART AROUND THE CITY

Budapest is a city filled with beautiful, dilapidated buildings whose firewalls often disappear whenever they are pulled down. Thanks to local and international artists and collectives, who have jumped at the chance to decorate them, these urban canvases now display colourful murals and artistic graffiti.

**Website:** szinesvaros.hu, neopaint.hu



## PARKS & GARDENS

### 16. FÜVÉSZKERT

A true gem in Budapest, the botanical garden of Eötvös University, Fűvészkert, lies hidden in the heart of District VIII. Cactus shows, orchid days and botanical clubs take place in this magnificent garden, where you find huge water lilies capable of bearing the weight of an adult woman. The story of Fűvészkert harks back to the 1700s – in its heyday, it was home to more than 12,000 plant species. The garden was also an important location in the famous Hungarian novel, 'Paul Street Boys' by Ferenc Molnár.

**Address:** 1083 Budapest, Illés Street 25 **Website:** fuveszkert.org

### 17. KÁROLYI-KERT

Károlyi-kert is the oldest garden in Budapest. Originally, it belonged to the Károlyi family, but nowadays it's a public garden, fenced-in and designed in the French style. It is known for its beautiful plants and flowers, romantic pathways and relaxed atmosphere. It's an ideal place to relax after work and you can also grab a drink just around the corner.

**Address:** 1053 Budapest, Károlyi-kert

### 18. PHILOSOPHERS' GARDEN

Hidden in the green area on Gellért Hill above Elizabeth Bridge, the Philosophers' Garden features a group of statues depicting famous thinkers and religious figures. Jesus Christ, Buddha and Gandhi meet here for a "Better Understanding of Each Other", as can be read around the base.



**Address:** 1016 Budapest, Philosophers' Garden

### 19. JAPANESE GARDEN

Revamped and reopened in 2020, this exotic attraction in Zugló was first landscaped nearly a century ago, so authentically that it earned praise from the Japanese emperor's son visiting when on his honeymoon here in 1931. There's a Japanese teahouse where ceremonies take place and a pretty lake, the domain of mandarin ducks happy to swim around it.

**Address:** 1149 Budapest, Kövér Lajos Street 1 **Website:** vmszki.hu

## CULINARY AND DRINKING CULTURE

### 20. DOWNTOWN MARKET (HOLD STREET MARKET HALL)

The Downtown Market is a colourful gastro spot that brings a traditional countryside market atmosphere right into the heart of the city. The modern market hall – built based on the plans of renowned Habsburg-era architect Győző Czigler – is divided into two large farmers' markets where, as well as fresh fruit and vegetables, but also grey-cattle beef, mangalica pork and street food supply worth visiting here.

**Address:** 1054 Budapest, Hold Street 13 **Website:** belvarospiac.hu

### 21. KARAVÁN STREET FOOD

Karaván is located next to Budapest's most famous ruin bar, Szimpla, and provides another reason to explore Kazinczy utca, a key street in the nightlife quarter. It's technically an alfresco food court housing numerous food trucks and booths serving mouth-watering delicacies to be enjoyed standing up or sitting on one of the benches at the back. Choices include the cheese-haven Paneer, the juicy burgers of Zing, vegan alternative Las Vegan's and international cuisine such as Vespa Rossa's Italian or MexKitchen.



**Address:** 1075 Budapest, Kazinczy Street 18 **Facebook:** facebook.com/streetfoodkaravan

### 22. UNICUM MUSEUM

At the factory where Hungary's famed dark aperitif is concocted, visitors can discover the history of this iconic drink. Details of its secret recipe will not be revealed, of course, but it's fascinating to peruse the thousands of bottles, admire the imaginative advertising campaigns and enjoy a quick sample at the end of the tour.

**Address:** 1095 Budapest, Dandár Street 1 **Website:** unicumhaz.hu

### 23. PÁLINKA MUSEUM SHOP BAR

Hungary's revered grappa, pálinka, has a special place in the nation's gastronomy and culture. But few Hungarians understand its special qualities and particular values. The founders of the recently opened Pálinka Museum Shop Bar in Budapest's party quarter are aiming to change people's perceptions and allow tourists to experience the nation's elixir in select surroundings.



**Address:** 1061 Budapest, Király Street 20 **Website:** palinkaexperience.com



## CULTURE

### 24. HOSPITAL IN THE ROCK (SZIKLAKÓRHÁZ)

Actually used as hospital during World War II and the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, this cave beneath Buda Castle was then transformed into a nuclear bunker during the Cold War. A series of wax figures and original furniture and equipment provide visitors with an accurate portrayal of how this fascinating attraction looked in times of conflict.

**Address:** 1012 Budapest, Lovas Road 4/c **Website:** sziklakorhaz.eu

### 25. THE HIDDEN MINI STATUES OF BUDAPEST

Mihály Kolodko's miniature sculpture pieces are always a hit whenever they pop up in Budapest – Instagram is full of posts by delighted visitors who discover these unique installations during their time in the Hungarian capital.

**Website:** kolodkoart.com **Facebook:** facebook.com/misha.kolodko

### 26. BÉLA LUGOSI BUST AT VAJDAHUNYAD CASTLE

In 2003, German artist Hartmut Zech created a bust of legendary Hungarian film star Béla Lugosi. In July that year, when he and some friends took a trip to Budapest, he brought it along in the hope of finding a home for the sculpture. In City Park, he noticed an empty alcove in a corner of Vajdahunyad Castle, and later that night, with help from his friends, installed the statue on a ledge about ten feet up the façade.

**Address:** 1146 Budapest, Vajdahunyad Promenade

### 27. KISCELLI MUSEUM

One of Budapest's real hidden gems, the Kiscelli Museum up in Óbuda fills a beautiful Baroque former monastery with all kinds of fascinating treasure. For those interested in urban history, the collection of charming old shop signs alone should provide reason enough to visit. Alongside is a reconstruction, with some original features, of the Golden Lion Pharmacy, dating back to 1794.

**Address:** 1037 Budapest, Kiscelli Street 108 **Website:** kiscellimuzeum.hu

### 28. KOLODKO BREWERY STATUETTES

Unveiled in 2020 at the venerable Dreher Brewery in Kőbánya, two statuettes created by sculptor Mihajlo Kolodko depict the history and tradition of this institution. Standing proudly outside the factory he founded back in 1854, the figure of Antal Dreher Sr shows him in a smart waistcoat, cane in hand. Nearby, two sturdy dry horses are pulling a beer cart, Kolodko capturing a familiar scene from a century and a half ago.

**Address:** 1106 Budapest, Dreher Antal Street 3

### 29. STATUE OF ANONYMOUS

In the courtyard of Vajdahunyad Castle in the City Park, this strange hooded character sits with a long pen in his hand. The figure, though indeed anonymous, is thought to be an unknown chronicler from the court of King Béla III in the 12th century. Legend has it that aspiring writers only need touch the end of the pen to gain inspiration.

**Address:** 1146 Budapest, Városliget

### 30. METROPOLITAN ERVIN SZABÓ LIBRARY

Located near Kálvin tér in the Palace Quarter, the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library, originally constructed as the Wenckheim Palace in 1889, stands as a distinguished center of knowledge and inspiration. This Neo-Baroque masterpiece with its grand historical halls and cozy reading nooks offer a welcoming space for students, academics, and visitors seeking a peaceful retreat.

**Address:** 1088 Budapest, Szabó Ervin Square 1 **Website:** fszek.hu/en