

# The Black Swan: Budapest's speakeasy

Is there anything more intriguing than an unmarked door on a lonely city street? One can't help but wonder what lies hidden behind lock and key. What secret world sits just beyond the doorstep — and who might be watching, waiting for us to venture inside? In a city like Budapest, where oddities and history come together to capture our curiosity, the streets are lined with alluring shops and bars nestled within war-torn and time-marked facades. But more than most, this unmarked door embodies the spirit of this city. If you find yourself wandering through the popular 7<sup>th</sup> district, take a turn down Klauzál street, and look carefully — three pale swans are your only guides to Black Swan, one of the best cocktail bars in Budapest.



Caption: The mysterious, unmarked entrance to the Black Swan, Budapest best speakeasy

## [Step back in time for a night to remember](#)

Klauzál is your typical street in Budapest's so-called 'party district'. It feels grimy and lived-in, like it could use a good scrubbing. So why a lush cocktail bar would choose this street as its home is a bit surprising — but it's precisely the location that makes it so intriguing. Imagine the speakeasies of the 1920s, those secret, illegal bars set up in dark basements or abandoned shops and warehouses. The goal was to be hidden in plain sight, to blend in with

its surroundings. No matter how luxurious the décor inside, the outside always remained dull and inconspicuous to avoid unwanted attention. In its unassuming location on an unassuming street, the Black Swan is a true speakeasy for the modern age.

Turn the door handle with care — don't wake the authorities with your racket! Step through the plush red velvet curtains and take your seat at a candle-lit table. Darkness surrounds. Suddenly it's 1920 and you're feeling like the bee's knees. *"Gimme a whiskey, ginger ale on the side, and don't be stingy, baby."* But these aren't your average cocktails, doll — every drink on the menu is a work of art, complete with its own backstory.



Caption: A luxurious table awaits you in the Black Swan, Budapest best speakeasy

Order a refreshing glass of Eureka to transform into the famous Hungarian inventors of old. Or take a courageous sip of the bold Chin Chin and you'll find yourself shouting 'Vive la revolution'. Whichever drink you choose, the exciting ingredients and gorgeous presentation will have you feeling like a rebel, ready to break all the rules and status-quo.

### [Own the night at The Black Swan](#)

If your night calls for a clandestine meeting with a love interest or, perhaps, the rival Mafia boss, head to one of the corner tables in the back room. No one will hear your whispers over candlelight, or spy how many cocktails you've consumed. But if you're more in the mood for meeting with your fellow rebels, then park yourself at one of the many stools before the massive bar. Washed in the golden light that illuminates shelves upon shelves of fancy spirits, you'll feel glamorous and alluring, like a gangster or flapper of the Roaring 20s.



Caption: Bask in the golden light of the 1920s-inspired bar of Budapest's speakeasy

Black Swan is a truly luxurious, time-travelling cocktail experience for the adventurous. Fair warning though for those with poor eyesight or shallow wallets — reading the menu isn't easy by candlelight and the fabulous monthly specials are 3000 Hungarian Ft or just under \$10. But if you're looking for a unique evening in Budapest, you can't beat a night in this fabulous speakeasy. With a full menu of cocktails, spirits and exciting dishes fit for a mafioso, the Black Swan is Budapest's leading cocktail bar for a reason, and it's set to make a name for itself worldwide. So, let's pass through that door, and set the night on fire.

[Reserve your velvet seat](#) today on Klauzál utca 32.

Ready to explore more of Budapest? Check our lists for the **best cocktail bars**, **ruin pubs** or **wine-tasting experiences** in Budapest.



Caption: Enjoy a unique night out in the Black Swan, Budapest's speakeasy

**Meta data:** Step through the mysterious entrance of the Black Swan, Budapest best speakeasy and cocktail bar for a night to remember.

# Taking time to remember: Budapest's Holocaust Memorial Center

Throughout its long and storied history, Budapest has faced wave after wave of great adversity. These streets have seen it all – from the wrath of medieval invaders, and the oppressive rule of the Hapsburgs, to the crushing, iron fist of the Soviets. And out of all those who have suffered, time after time, none have felt the sting of persecution quite as strongly as the Jewish community. In the dark period of the Holocaust, the Jewish population was decimated, and its culture driven to near extinction — 100,000 were killed in Budapest alone. As you explore the city, take a moment to learn more about this harrowing and vitally important period of history with a visit to Budapest's [Holocaust Memorial Center](#).

## Feel what they felt

As we stroll through the 7<sup>th</sup> district, along the outskirts of the 1944 Jewish Ghetto, we spot the jagged, uneven walls of the museum bursting from the cobblestone streets. Expertly designed by Hungary's famous architect, Frank Owen Gehry, these jarring, asymmetrical walls of cold, pale stone represent the turmoil of the Holocaust. Standing beneath them evokes the strong feelings of bewilderment and dread that the Jewish population must have felt at the start of the war.

We pass through the towering archway in stunned, solemn silence. Once inside, we come face to face with the victims – thousands of names forever entombed in glass on the Memorial Wall. Above, lush green gardens leap from pillar to pillar, hovering over us like a tempting piece of heaven we'll never reach. This dichotomy of height, color and material is powerful. The Center's interior designer, István Mányi wanted to evoke silence from visitors. "These symbols of architecture suggest that everything here is beyond the normality, as the Holocaust itself is unexplainable within human history."

## Learn their names

The Holocaust Memorial Center opened to the public in 2005, on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. Since then, it has actively worked to name and remember the 600,000 Hungarians who lost their lives in the Holocaust. Standing at 8 meters high, the **Memorial Wall** lists the known names in striking simplicity. Moreover, empty spaces are left in the list for the remaining unnamed victims – unknown but never forgotten. The sight of those empty nametags is heart-breaking and powerfully symbolic.

## Hear their stories

Crossing the courtyard, we find a leaning glass wall reminiscent of a fallen tree. Beneath it, a staircase into the ground. We follow it into history — into the **Exhibition Hall**. The permanent exhibition hall follows the tragic timeline of the Jewish and Roma Holocaust.

Interactive displays and touch screens tell the real-life stories of the survivors, from the brutality of the Hungarian Arrow Cross in Budapest to the horrors of the concentration camps.

### [Walk in their shoes](#)

From the exhibition hall, we ascend the stairs and enter the Synagogue. Built in 1924, the **Páva Street Synagogue** was once the second most popular place of worship aside from the [Dohany Street Synagogue](#). During the Holocaust, it was turned into an internment camp before falling into disarray. Today it has been renovated according to pictures from the 1930s. Architect Lipót Baumhorn's iconic, eclectic design has been beautifully restored – the Jewish colors of blue, gold and white dazzle on the walls and ceiling. Stand where a once thriving Jewish community celebrated life before the Holocaust.

The Jewish community of Budapest has existed since the 12<sup>th</sup> century, and despite the horror and oppression of the past, they continue to triumph over adversity. Today, they make up the largest Jewish community in Central Europe and the [Old Jewish Quarter](#) of the 7<sup>th</sup> district remains the center of art and culture in all of Budapest. As you spend time exploring the city, take a moment to visit the Holocaust Memorial Center to remember the history that made Budapest what it is today.

[Learn more](#) at 39 Páva St, Budapest

**Meta tag:** Explore the Holocaust Memorial Center in Budapest to immerse yourself in the tragic history of the Hungarian Jewish community. We walk you through the main sights and learnings from the interactive museum and fascinating synagogue.



# Windows to the past: Discovering the history of Budapest

Budapest has a vast and varied history. Much like the famously unique Hungarian language, the history of this city stands out from our European neighbors and is closely tied with our culture. Wherever you go, you're sure to encounter a piece of the past – whether it's an unassuming statue or a scarred, battle-worn building. So, let's take a stroll through our streets and find the best places to discover the history of Budapest.

## **Ruins that tell a story: Ancient history**

### **Do as the Romans do**

In 89 A.D., the Romans came to Budapest. Aquincum, as it was then known, was a thriving trading and military base in the Pannonian region. As trade boomed, the residents built luxurious public baths upon the thermal pools of Budapest and towering amphitheaters like those of Rome. However, the Empire was never able to take the lands east of the Danube and when Rome fell, Pannonia was conquered by the Huns.

Today many of the remnants of Roman life have been lost to time, but you can still find ruins in [Aquincum](#) in Óbuda, the oldest part of Budapest.

### **Land of the Magyars**

A common misconception is that Hungarians are descended from the Huns. In fact, Hungary is Magyarország, Land of the Magyars. Around 895 AD, the proud Magyar clans came down from the Ural Mountains and settled in the Carpathian Basin of modern-day Hungary. **Buda Hill** on the shores of the Danube became a key strategic and trading base, thus forming the foundations of Budapest. The Seven Chieftains of the Magyars are famous in Hungarian culture. You can stand face to face with these mighty warriors in [Heroes' Square](#).

For centuries, Hungary was ruled by the sons of the chieftains. But history took a surprising turn in 1000 AD, when Christianity drove Stephen I of the Arpad dynasty to reject his pagan ancestry and unite the lands under Christ. Canonized for his devotion to the Church, he became King Saint Stephen I of Hungary. As you explore Budapest, you'll see Stephen everywhere – guarding the banks of the Danube at **Gellert Hill** and watching over the city from the stunning [St. Stephen's Basilica](#) (the tallest building in the city).

### **East meets West**

Jumping forward to the 1500s, Stephen's proudly Christian Hungary fell under the rule of the Muslim Ottomans and their leader, Suleiman the Magnificent. For years, the Hungarians fought against the occupation, but it wasn't until 1699 that the forces of Europe finally banded together to drive the Ottomans from Budapest and Hungary as a whole. But the Ottomans left their mark on the city and on its culture. Next time you take a relaxing dip in [Kiraly](#) or [Rudas thermal baths](#), notice the Turkish architecture of the dome overhead.

## The Golden Age: Austro-Hungarian Empire

Throughout the history of Budapest, its citizens have endured many conquests. In driving out the Ottoman invaders, Hungarians fell under the rule of the [Habsburgs](#), during which their language and way of life was oppressed. In 1848, Lajos Kossuth and Lajos Batthyány lead a revolution to free their culture and people. Although the movement was brutally repressed, it continues to inspire the generations of today. You can visit the [Kossuth Memorial](#) behind Parliament to learn more.

The revolution did, however, lead to greater autonomy, forming the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The era that followed was one of great prosperity, eventually leading to the merging of Buda, Óbuda and Pest into the Budapest we know today.

The majesty of the Habsburg Empire lives on in many iconic Budapest landmarks. Take some time to stare at beautiful [Parliament](#), grand [Buda Castle](#) and the glorious [Hungarian State Opera House](#).

## The fight for freedom

### WWII and the Holocaust

In March 1944, Nazi Germany invaded Hungary. For some time, the 200,000 Jewish people who lived in Budapest managed to avoid persecution – until October, when the puppet government under the Arrow Cross Party began mass deportation to concentration camps.

The remaining Jewish population in Budapest was forced into a Jewish Ghetto, formed within the old Jewish Quarter of the 7<sup>th</sup> district. By 1945, 20,000 had been taken from the ghetto, shot at the banks of the Danube and thrown into the river. Hundreds of thousands more lost their lives in Auschwitz and other concentration camps in Europe.

When walking from Parliament to the Chain Bridge, take a moment to solemnly observe the [Shoes on the Danube](#), a monument to the victims of the Arrow Cross.

And while you explore Budapest, specifically the Old Jewish Quarter, look out for the [‘Stumbling Stones’](#)— small brass stones embedded into cobblestone streets that commemorate the victims of the Holocaust. It’s also worth spending a day at the incredible [Terror House](#) museum, the former headquarters of the Arrow Cross, as well as the [Dóhany Street Synagogue Holocaust Museum](#).

### Soviet occupation

In 1945, the Siege of Budapest ended Nazi occupation, taking with it 38,000 civilian lives. So began the Soviet occupation of Hungary. For more than four decades, the Soviets ruled over Budapest, sending thousands to the gulags and work camps. By 1956, the Hungarians had had enough. Thousands of students revolted on October 23, sparking a nationwide revolution. The Soviets responded by sending in a devastating army of tanks. By November 10, the revolution had been brutally crushed and at least 300,000 had been killed in Budapest alone.

Today you can still see the **bullet holes in the Ministry of Agriculture** behind Parliament, as well as on other buildings dotted around the city. While you're there, drop in the [1956 In Memorial Exhibition](#) a few feet away.

Like the rest of Europe, Budapest had to wait until 1989 to send the Soviets packing. After that, Soviet statues and monuments were torn down and destroyed – but a few survived. Look up from any high-rise and you're sure to see [Liberty Statue](#), standing proudly for all those who sacrificed their lives for independence and freedom. Visit [Memento Park](#) on the outskirts of the city to see a bust of Lenin, the boots of Stalin and the colossal Liberation Army Soldier.

Budapest of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is dotted with windows to our long and storied past. As you explore this beautiful city, look up and keep an eye out — the history of Budapest is all around, just waiting to be noticed.

**Meta tag:** History of Budapest: Discover the rich and varied history of one of the most fascinating cities in Europe as you explore famous historical landmarks.

## 5 curiosities in Budapest

Looking to explore the strange or unexplained places of Budapest? If you've visited before or have already spent a couple days seeing the main sights, it's time to get weird. From spooky caves to oddball statues, Budapest is a city made for the curious. Rich in history and culture, and just different enough to stand out from the more touristy European cities, it's managed to preserve its more unusual attractions. So, when you're ready, let's take a brave step off the beaten path and sneak a peek at the top 5 curiosities in Budapest.

### 1. See the mummified hand of Saint Stephen

Relics, the preserved mortal remains of the saintly and devout, have long captured our curiosity. In centuries past, a relic could attract the faithful from across the world, inspiring great pilgrimages and tales of miracles. The Holy Right Hand of Hungary, however, is unique in that it's not just a relic of saint – but of a king.

Adorned in gold and gems, it is said to have belonged to [Stephen I](#), the first king of Hungary who unified the state under Catholicism in 1000 AD. As part of the canonization process in 1083, Stephen's body was exhumed, and his right hand was said to have looked as supple and fresh as they day he died — 45 years earlier. The hand was promptly cut off and preserved. Over the years, it travelled around Central Europe for safekeeping during the [Ottoman invasion](#) and the great wars, before finally returning home to Hungary in 1945.



Today the Holy Right (Szent Jobb in Hungarian) can be found in the Szent Jobb Chapel in [St. Stephen's Basilica](#). The tightly clenched fist rests as noble as ever on a bed of velvet, encased in neo-gothic glass. Entrance to the basilica is free, but if you drop a 200 ft coin in the box to the right of the hand, a spotlight will help you get a better view.

If you happen to be in town on August 20<sup>th</sup>, [Saint Stephen's Day](#), don't miss the Holy Right processions that celebrate Hungary's first king and the foundation of the country. You can spot the relic leading the parade from the Basilica through the streets of Budapest.

See the Holy Right at Szent Istvan ter 1, Budapest 1051 Hungary

## 2. Explore the mausoleums of Fiumei Road Graveyard

Ivy-covered gravestones, decaying statues and twisted trees. In the [Fiumei Road Graveyard](#), shadows grow long beneath giant mausoleums and dance in the candlelight along extravagant arcades. If you have some time to steal away from sightseeing in the city center, take a moment to haunt the oldest cemetery in Budapest and one of the most unique in Europe.

[Image of cemetery arcades]

Hidden away in the backstreets of [Keleti pályaudvar](#) (Eastern train station), Kerepesi Cemetery, as it is better known by locals, has been well preserved in the hands of time and remains an important part of Hungarian culture. Founded in 1847, it has become the final resting place for the great revolutionaries, statesmen and artists who built the Hungary we know today.

The cemetery grounds are huge, but you won't regret spending a day visiting its three famous mausoleums. Surrounded by gardens and flowering trees, each one is grander the last, and the painted domes inside are a wonder to behold.

See the tombs of:

- [Lajos Batthyány](#), Hungary's first prime minister who was tragically executed in the 1849 revolution against the Austrian empire
- [Ferenc Deák](#), the Sage of the Country, whose wise negotiations led to the formation of the Austro-Hungarian empire as a dual monarchy, giving Hungarians greater autonomy.
- [Lajos Kossuth](#), the inspirational reformer and leader of the 1849 revolution for independence from Austrian oppression.

**Tip:** Take an evening stroll through the cemetery on the night of November 2<sup>nd</sup>, [All Soul's Day](#). Hundreds of candles will be lit, and gravestones decorated in remembrance of lost loved ones. It's a beautiful sight and a true cultural experience – but be sure to be quiet and respectful throughout your visit on this solemn national holiday.

Visit the cemetery at Fiumei út 16-18., Budapest 1086 Hungary

### 3. Find the mini statues of Budapest

A tiny tank, a cute deep-sea diver and a little lunar rover... if you know where you look, you just might spot one of [Mihály Kolodko's](#) miniature bronze statues. Known as Budapest's very own [Banksy](#), Kolodko isn't your average sculptor. This guerrilla artist leaves his statues dotted around Budapest – without city permission.

Each piece is created in secret, and their locations are only revealed after they have been hidden among the city's famous landmarks. While the majority are light-hearted and based on nostalgic cartoons or Hungarian cultural icons, Kolodko's work [doesn't shy away from controversy](#) and at times can verge on satire.

If you keep an eye out, you're sure to stumble across the **murdered squirrel** by the Colombo statue or the **Rubix's cube** opposite Parliament while you're sightseeing. There are over 20 statues to be found and Kolodko is continuing to create more. To catch them all, follow this [map](#) to find his most famous statues.

You can also follow the brilliant [Statues of Budapest](#) Instagram page to learn more about Kolodko's work and explore the vibrant history of Budapest through the many fascinating and unusual sculptures that call Budapest home.

### 4. Live the hermit's life at St. Ivan's Cave

Crossing [Liberty Bridge](#) from Pest, a peculiar medieval scene unfolds on the banks of the Danube. Camouflaged in the grey stone of lonesome [Gellért Hill](#), sharp coiled steeples leap from the riverbank and stand to attention like sentinels, drawing our eye to the delicately carved windows of a Romanesque cloister below. Watch closely, and you just might spy the soft movement of shadow behind a window here and there – a passing glimpse of the eternal guardians of Budapest's curious "[Cave Church](#)."

It's a startling and unexpected scene in what's normally a loud and crowded area of the city. Silent, grey and still like an old-fashioned photograph, the cloister is all that's left of Budapest's only monastery. In the 1930s, the towers were built to house the humble monks of the [Order of St. Paul](#). As followers of Saint Paul, 'The original hermit', they had come to care for St. Ivan's Cave. Legends state that Ivan the hermit made his home in the cave centuries ago, to treat the sick from the miraculous healing thermal springs of Gellért Hill.

While the monastery is no longer used, the Cave Church still holds mass every week and welcomes visitors to explore this incredible historical site. From the bridge, cross the street and find the little trail leading up the hill, just opposite [Hotel Gellért](#) and [Baths](#). At the top, you'll come face to face with Ivan himself – his statue, at entrance of the cave. Inside, you can explore the church so expertly by the Pauline monks and its treasures, such as a replica of Poland's [Black Madonna](#).

## 5. Wander the dark passages of the Budapest Labyrinth

Grab the hand of a trusted friend and enter the pitch-black maze. Darkness surrounds. The only sound is that of water dripping from the cave walls. Each step takes you further into the abyss, and to find your narrow path, you must bravely outstretch your hand – and prepare to meet who, or what, might be standing in your way.

The Budapest Castle Labyrinth, now called [Panoptikum](#) (waxworks), lies in the depths of the cave system that snakes within [Castle Hill](#). The 1000m long tunnels have been used as dungeons, a 16<sup>th</sup> century Turkish harem, war bunkers. Today, they're home to the oddest assortment of exhibitions you'll find anywhere, let alone Budapest.

After crossing through the Maze of Darkness, you'll follow the tale of The Masked Ball of the Black Count, in which creepy, dusty mannequins dressed in 18<sup>th</sup> century attire 'act out' the opera. Moody opera music follows your every step, giving the place a surreal ambience.

Explore further, and you'll pass frightening holograms in the old dungeons. A heavy, dried-ice fog later reveals 'Dracula's Dungeon' and his coffin, where legend says [Vlad Tepes](#) — aka Vlad the Impaler and the original Dracula—was imprisoned by [King Matthias I](#) for 14 years. Whether or not the history is true, it certainly makes for one of the strangest experiences in Budapest.

Visiting the labyrinth costs about 6 euros/person and should only take 30 mins if you go quickly. Enter the Panoptikum, if you dare, at Uri utca 9, Budapest 1014 Hungary.

Budapest is a gem of a city and that itself makes it a sight to behold. But if you're ready to tread away from the tourist areas, you'll find a wealth of treasures. Whether it's oddities, the unexplained or the dark and macabre that you're after, there are plenty of curiosities to see and explore in Budapest.

**Metadata:** Explore the top 5 curiosities in Budapest, from ancient relics and odd statues to mysterious caves.

# Top 3 walks in Budapest

Like many European cities, Budapest is best explored on foot. Wandering through these captivating city streets is the only way to truly understand what makes Budapest tick. It gives you the time and opportunity to stop, look up and stare at beautiful facades and incredible pieces of history. More than any other city, Budapest stands out for its wonderfully 'gritty' appeal — war-scarred and soot-covered buildings, artisan cafes and shops, and odd statues that spark our curiosity. It is not too modern or renovated for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, giving it that perfect vibe of old merging with the new. So, whether you're looking to explore the main tourist sights, or simply see Budapest like a local, let's head off down the best walks in Budapest.

## 1. From Liberty Bridge to Margaret Bridge and back

You simply can't begin to explore Budapest without first seeing the Danube riverbanks. The river is the true heart and soul of the city, and a walk along its banks offers a window into Hungarian history and a chance to really take in the main sights.

Start at the lively **Fővám tér** on Pest. From the tram stop, head toward the river, walking past the **Great Market Hall** – be sure to drop in for a quick bite to eat, like a cheesy Langós, fresh pastry or spicy Hungarian salami. Then, take a moment to admire the emerald awnings of the majestic **Liberty Bridge (Szabadság híd)** – a favorite bridge among locals. From here, take in the gorgeous view of the art deco **Hotel Gellert**, Lady Liberty atop green **Gellért Hill** and the mystical cloister guarding Budapest's cave church.

### See the main sights of the Pest riverbank

Staying on Pest, start to stroll along the Danube Promenade. Your breezy, tree-lined path will open up to the stunning **Vigádo Concert Hall**, and you'll definitely want to take a quick peek inside. Continuing on, you'll start to get a great view of **Buda Castle** on its hill, the tower of **St. Matthias Church** and the ivory curves of **Fisherman's Bastion**.

Just ahead you'll find the famous **Chain Bridge (Szechenyi Lanchid)** and its mighty lions. As you approach, you won't be able to miss the impressive **Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace** to your right – so aptly named as it does indeed look like a palace. Feel free to take a closer look at the intricate details of the façade. Crossing the busy roundabout on Szecheny Isvan tér can be tricky, so do look out for cars!

Before you know it, you'll come across the somber scene of the **Shoes on the Danube Bank** sculpture, a heart-breaking memorial to the Budapest victims of the Holocaust. Take a moment to learn about this. Finally, you'll soon find yourself staring up at the copper dome and alabaster columns of the **Hungarian Houses of Parliament**. Spend some time walking around Parliament square to fully appreciate

the building and the statues that surround it, such as the proud bronze lions and the Kossuth Lajos monument.

Once you've had your fill of Parliament (trust us, you could spend hours there), continue on and head up the steps to Margaret Bridge (**Margit híd**). Walking along this golden bridge to Buda presents one of the best views of the city – Parliament to the left, the wide-open river before you, and Castle Hill to the right. As you continue on, you'll find **Margaret Island (Margit Sziget)** to your right – feel free to stroll on in and take a break under the cool trees of this popular picnic spot.

### **See the top sights of the Buda riverbank**

Take the stairs on your left to get off the bridge and back on the Danube Promenade. Facing south, start walking along Buda, heading back to Liberty Bridge. You'll be tempted to stop more than a few times to take some snaps of Parliament, now on the other side of the river — especially once you reach **Batthyány tér** that lies just opposite it.

As you approach the Chain Bridge, you'll get a great view of Buda Castle above and a chance to explore the neo-classical **Várkert Bazar**. Unless you're wanting to take the **funicular up to Castle Hill**, continue on until you reach Gellert Hill and the other side of Liberty bridge.

### **Reward yourself after a long walk**

You now have your choice of what to do next. Take a quick hike up to Saint Gellert statue to get a great view of Pest, walk all the way up to the **Citadel**, or walk a bit further along the river to see the famous **Rudas Baths**, one of the oldest Turkish baths in the city. We recommend stopping here to soothe your sore feet in the healing thermal waters after your long walk!

Ready to head home? Cross Liberty Bridge and hop on the tram home! Or, if you fancy a cool drink, don't miss the riverside pubs at **Bálna**, the whale-shaped building just past Market Hall.

## 2. [To Heroes Square along Andrássy út](#)

One of the best ways to explore the city center is to walk along **Andrássy út** (avenue). Dating back to 1872, this boulevard is one of the most spectacular in all of Europe – as evidence by its status as a World Heritage Site. Long and wide, it's lined with trees and some of the best neo-renaissance architecture you'll ever see.

Start at the leafy-green **Erzsébet Tér** near the **Budapest Eye**, and make your way through the crowds to the main street, **Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út**. Head left down Bajcsy-Zsilinszky then turn right at the large intersection with Andrássy. Aside from being beautiful, Andrássy is a major shopping street – you'll pass impressive high-end shoe and clothing stores like Gucci, Louis Vuitton and Burberry, all nestled in gorgeous marbled buildings.

### Discover neoclassical treasures

The first main point of interest will be the **Hungarian State Opera House**. Don't miss this chance to explore one of the most beautiful neoclassical buildings in Europe – rivalling even those of Vienna. You can also stop to admire the now abandoned **Drechsler Palace** across the street, the old ballet institute that's sure to capture your imagination.

If you need a coffee to keep you going, take a pit stop at one of the many cozy art cafes, such as **Callas Cafe & Restaurant** or **Művész Kávéház**, built in 1898. The best by far however, is the elegantly ornate **Café Parisi** on the second floor of Párisi Nagy Áruház.

### Dive into Hungarian history

It won't be long until you cross the chaotic intersection of **Oktagon**. If you need food, you'll have your choice of restaurants here! And when you're ready to keep going, continue straight on up Andrassy until you reach the ominous black façade of the **Terror House**. Be sure to stop in this innovative museum to learn about Hungary's history in WWII and Soviet occupation.

Continuing on, you'll pass by regal facades, some abandoned and some renewed – and some that now act as embassies – before the sky-high **Millennium Memorial of Heroes Square** comes into view. Explore the square to see the icons of Hungarian history, such as the **Seven Chieftains of the Magyars** (the ancient tribes who settled Hungary) and the **Museum of Fine Arts**.

### Relax in the shade of City Park

From here, you can simply turn back around and head back to **Deák Tér**, but we recommend spending some time wandering around **Városliget** (City Park) just behind Heroes Square to relax.

## 3. Through the artsy streets of the 7th district

Looking for a more relaxing walk in the city? If you're not interested in checking off your 'must-see' list today, it's time to spend a lazy day in the artsy 7<sup>th</sup> district. As the old Jewish Quarter (and Jewish ghetto during WWII), this district has long been the center of culture in Budapest.

Start at the iconic and hard-to-miss **Dohány Street Synagogue**. Take a tour inside or visit the Holocaust museum and memorial. When you're ready to continue, head down **Wesselenyi utca** to see old gravestones and the silver **Tree of Life** dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. As you walk, you'll start to pass cafes and restaurants, like **Kék Rózsa Étterem** and **Gettó Gulyás**.

Take a right down **Kazinczy utca** to see the main party street of Budapest. **Szimpla Kert**, the most famous ruin pub, is a great place to stop for a daytime drink – and on Sundays, it turns into a local marketplace. **Bórs Gastro Bar** is another great lunch place if you want a quick sandwich to power you up.



Retracing our steps, turn around to take Kazinczy up to **Dob utca**. This part of Kazinczy twists and curves to reveal more cafes and bars. Don't miss stopping in **Kazinczy Street Synagogue** – the sapphire interior is jaw-dropping. When you reach Dob, turn left and walk down to the **Carl Lutz Memorial**, a fascinating homage to the Swiss diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Holocaust.

Next, turn right down **Rumbach Sebestyén utca**. This little, unassuming street is one of the most captivating. See the awesome **Rubik's Cube mural** and the **Rumbach Street Synagogue**, then spend some time browsing at **Printa Design**, a popular artisan shop, or **Ludovika**, a vintage treasure trove.

At **Király utca**, turn right to visit souvenir shops, exciting dive bars and stare at more incredible murals. Be sure to stop in **Gozsdu Udvar**, a magical hall of pubs and restaurants. On the weekend, it transforms into a wonderful marketplace full of vintage and handmade souvenirs you'll love.

At this point, you're free to walk up the entirety of Király — a long walk, but it's worth it to see murals like **Time Magazine's Man of the Year**, a stunning memorial to the 1956 Hungarian revolution against the Soviets. Whether you choose to continue on or head back to Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út, you'll have achieved an authentic experience exploring the cultural center of Budapest.

No matter your destination or interests, exploring Budapest on foot is the best way to see the city. Spending a day on of these enthralling city walks is sure to make your time in Budapest all the more special.

**Meta data:**

Choose one of the top 3 walks in Budapest to explore the city like a local and see the all of the top sights.

# Witnesses to history: Hotels in Budapest

Hotels are more than they seem. They are not just rooms to stay in while on holiday or a pretty sight to behold from afar. They are lasting monuments to culture, and a testament to the people's perseverance through adversity. The hotels on our list stand out for their role in the history of Budapest — some still bear the scars of war and revolution. But whether you're a history buff or an amateur explorer, the historical hotels of Budapest have something for everyone. Dine like royalty in Austro-Hungarian masterpieces or relax with a good book in a room frequented by the great poets of Hungary. You'll find your own journey through time in our top picks for hotels with history in Budapest.

## [Corinthia Hotel](#)

Built in 1896 at the dawn of the millennium, the Grand Hotel Royal, as the Corinthia was then known, represented the height of human ingenuity. It served as host to the 1896 Millennium Exhibition, opening its doors to the great Hungarians of the time in celebration of the founding of Hungary. The Lumiere brothers presented their 'moving picture' to Hungarians for the first time beneath the hotel's classical pillars and from then on, the cinema became a permanent fixture. And speaking of films, you might recognize the Hotel's façade — the Corinthia was the inspiration behind Wes Anderson's Budapest Hotel.

[Book now](#) to watch history unfold around you.

## [Hotel Gellért \(and Spa\)](#)

Cross the Liberty Bridge from Pest to Buda at sunset to fully appreciate this Hotel Gellért standing proud at the banks of the Danube river. But it's more than a pretty face — you might find yourself staying in a room named after Otto Habsburg, Andrew Lloyd-Webber or Richard Nixon. The rich, famous and powerful have all stayed here — and bathed in the [thermal baths](#). Allied bombing during WWII severely damaged the building, but you can still see much of the original design, including a stunning Art Nouveau stained glass window on the stairs in the lobby.

[Book now](#) to explore history along the Danube.

## [New York Palace Hotel Budapest](#)

Hidden away in Budapest's wild [7<sup>th</sup> district](#) is the **New York Palace Hotel**, a sparkling jewel on an otherwise grimy street. While the hotel is lovely, it's the café downstairs you'll want to check out — step into its doors and suddenly you're in bustling 19<sup>th</sup> century, mixing with the great artists, writers and philosophers of Hungary's past. [Géza Gárdonyi](#), [Frigyes Karinthy](#), and [Gyula Krúdy](#), the Greats of Hungarian writers, turned the café into their personal hangout.

[Book now](#) to join the Nyugati Crew.

### Parisi Udvar Hotel

Inspired by the famous [Passage des Panoramas](#) in Paris, **Parisi Udvar** is perhaps the most elegant historical hotel on our list. Built in 1819, it used to be the most luxurious, high-end shopping center in Budapest, sporting architectural styles Hungary's history – Moorish, Habsburg and Art Nouveau. Unlike some of the other historical hotels in Budapest, the Parisi survived WWII untouched but suffered damage during the 1956 revolution.

[Book now](#) to tour an extravagant moment in time.

### Hotel Astoria

In the golden age of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the **Danubius Hotel Astoria** became the haunt of the free-thinking artists and poets of Budapest. [Sándor Petőfi](#) wrote his epic poems in a charming, secluded suite, and left his revolutionary spirit to the halls – in 1918, the first Hungarian government was formed in the hotel after the fall of the Empire in WWI. It wasn't long though, until the hotel faced dark times, when it became the Gestapo headquarters. [Adolf Eichmann](#) was even a guest. You can find [countless stories](#) of locals encountering Nazi SS officers in the hotel lobby, signaling that Hungary had fallen under occupation. Read more about Nazi occupation and the Holocaust.

[Book now](#) to explore Hungary's dark past.

Looking to stay somewhere more sophisticated with a little less drama? Check out our top picks for Luxury Hotels.

**Meta tag:** Hotels with history: Spend a night soaking in the history of Budapest while staying in rooms that have witness, revolution, war and renewal.