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TOUR UPDATE



The Newsletter of mikesworldtour

Tour Highlight:

December 2022
Budapest, Hungary



George Ezra's City

Contributed by Michael Davis



A QUICK HISTORICAL, POLITICAL, & SOCIAL OVERVIEW

Hungary was merged with Austria to form one country from 1867 to 1918, and has had a multiparty system for a lot of its history. It was overtaken by Communists in 1948 and a Soviet style system was introduced into the country. In 1989 there was a radical political and economic change in the country that saw Communism leave and the constitution was revised with about 100 changes to it. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán promulgated the new constitution in 2012. A big change to the constitution was the ability of non-residents to achieve citizenship if they had ancestors and could master the language. Freedom House rates it at 69/100 as partially free due to Orbán consolidation of power since 2010 when he started ruling. Anti-LGBTQ policies and laws against opposition also contribute to the rating. The EIU rates it at 6.5/10 under the category of flawed democracy due to lack of political culture and liberties.

Budapest, Hungary

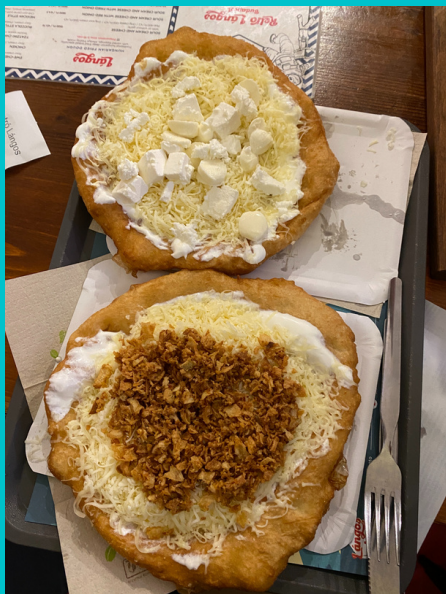


Some quick tips for Budapest :

- Hostels are cheap and really fun, highly recommend staying at one here (I stayed at Hive)
- Uber is not a thing here, and taxi sometimes rip you off so download Bolt to use for rides
- Bring flip flops & towel for the baths

FOOD

LANGOS



Small disclaimer that the day after I ate the Langos in Budapest I had horrible stomach pains, but it was absolutely worth it (probably should not have had two of these and ice cream). The langos here have a lot more toppings, but the idea of them are the same as Prague. Pictured here are a four cheese and a crispy onion langos. They also add sour cream to their langos in Budapest unlike in Prague which I liked better.

CHEESE PRETZELS CHICKEN & WAFFLE



On the street corners all over Budapest, they were selling cheese pretzels. I do not think pretzels are native to Budapest cuisine, but the pretzels here were so good and the perfect snack after a long day of walking. This one we got right by the Budapest Castle District and after hiking up a giant hill this was exactly what I needed. I opted to get the cheese pretzel (might be another contributor to my stomach issues) but it made it so so good.



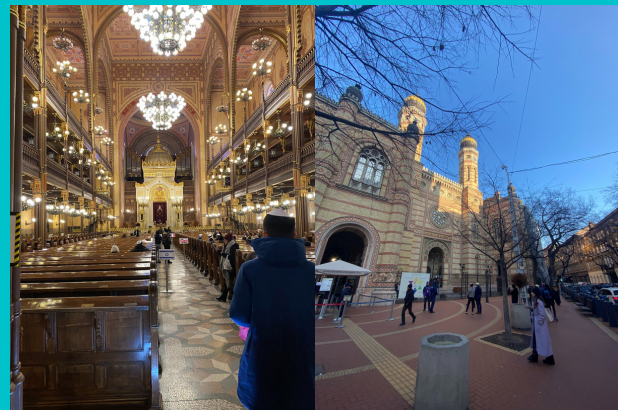
We found this restaurant called Tölcsibe Wesselényi right by our hostel selling chicken nuggets inside a waffle cone. I got the honey mustard flavored ones and this was one of my favorite meals throughout the whole semester. It was so delicious and came super fast. If you find yourself in Budapest, this place is a must try. There is not a lot of space inside, but we were able to find a table so try to plan accordingly with that.

Budapest, Hungary

EXPERIENCES

The main attraction in Budapest everyone wants to do is see the baths. This was honestly a lot more fun than I expected, so add it into your itinerary on your travel plan. Nightlife is big in Budapest, but make sure not to get so drunk you sleep in and miss the amazing sights to see during the day.

DOHÁNY STREET SYNAGOGUE



The largest synagogue in Europe also known as the great synagogue was built between 1854 to 1859. The architect Ludwig Förster based it off of North African designs used similarly in the Alhambra. He believed that Jewish architecture was not distinct so he based it off of other forms. The location here is important during the holocaust because it also marks one of the boundaries for the Budapest ghetto during the holocaust. Inside there is a museum about the holocaust in Budapest, graveyard, and memorial.

SHOES ON THE DANUBE BANK

In 2005 film director Can Togay created this memorial on east bank of the river with sculptor Gyula Pauer for the Jews killed in Budapest by the Arrow Cross Party during the WWII. During that time, the fascist militants ordered the Jews to take off their shoes and valuable items (which they later took and resold) and then shot them where their bodies would fall into the river. The monument represents the shoes the Jews left here before they were killed during the massacre. Over 20,000 Jews were murdered during this massacre that spanned between 1954 to 1955.



HUNGARIAN PARLIAMENT BUILDING



In the neo-gothic style and opened in 1902, the parliament building is the largest building in Hungary. Budapest used to be 3 cities (Buda, Pest, & Óbuda) and when they merged into one they made the parliament building for the nation. It took 100,000 people to construct and 40 million bricks as well as 88 pounds of gold. Today only a small part of the building is used by the government. When Hungary was under Communist rule a red star was placed on top.

Budapest, Hungary

ST. STEPHENS BASILICA



Named in honor of the first King of Hungary, Stephen, who ruled in Hungary from 975 to 1038. The church is currently the third largest church building in the entire country, and the right hand of Stephen is housed in the reliquary. It is the most important church in Hungary due to its historical significance, and is tied with the Parliament as the tallest building in the country. It took 54 years to construct the church and was planned by Miklós Ybl, but completed by Jozséf Kauser in 1905. The delay for the construction was due to the dome collapsing in 1868 which required the demolition of the entire church in order to rebuild it from the ground up. It is in the style of Neo-Classical and has two bell towers parallel on each side of the building. The bells were used for military purposes for World War II. Today the church is a major tourist attraction in the city.

FISHERMAN'S BASTION



The building of these walls in the 1700s were made in order to protect the Buda castle located directly by Fisherman's Bastion. In the middle ages the walls of the castle were protected by fisherman leading to the current name today. It is believed that they would find their fish near the Matthias church, and then would bring it to the fish markets. The seven stone towers represent the seven chieftains that founded Hungary in 895. The current structure was built between 1895 and 1902 in the Neo-Romanesque style under the architect Frigyes Schulek. Since 1987 this has been one of Budapest's world heritage sights.

MATTHIAS CHURCH



Built in 1015 in the Romanesque style this was the official church for the royalty living within Buda Castle. Two kings were crowned within the church including Franz Joseph I of Hungary and Charles IV of Hungary. In 1686 the church was damaged during the siege of Buda due to cannon fire. It has since been repaired, and during the Ottoman occupation of the city it was used as a mosque. A sculpture of the Virgin Mary appeared before the Muslim worshippers and when they found this it is believed that their rule collapsed that day. It is the seventh largest church in Hungary, and was the second largest in medieval Buda. It underwent a long restoration process during the 20th century.

Budapest, Hungary

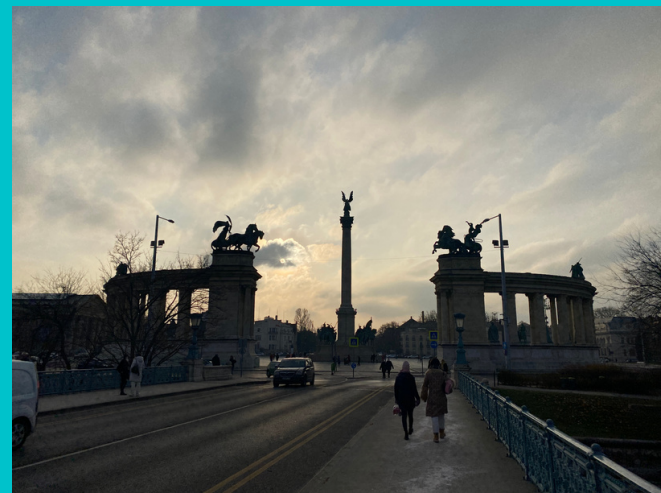
SZÉCHENYI THERMAL BATH



A large part of the culture in Hungary is the baths. These ones are very famous and draw tourists from around the world. On weekend nights they have bath parties with DJs and people drinking in the baths. They are open year round and supplied by two thermal hot springs that allow it to consistently be so hot. Remember to bring flip flops because they are required to go outside here. With entry is a free locker to store your items. Expect to see people doing literally everything here including playing chess and cards while in the baths. There is also a lap pool here to swim laps except you need a swim cap in order to swim inside the baths. Entrance is about \$20 and you can stay for as long as you want.

There are seven statues in the square representing the seven chieftains that founded Hungary. It is also famous for the memorial stone of heroes which is supposed to be a form of a tomb of the unknown soldier. It is at the end of the Andrássy street, and has been the host of major political events within Hungary over the course of its history. The Millennium Memorial is in the middle of the square and is the central feature of the square.

HEROES' SQUARE



RUIN BARS



Budapest has a big nightlife culture, and the ruin bars perfectly fit into this. With crazy decorations inside, this picture is from a ruin bar named Szimpla Kert which is the most famous one. The ruin bars are all in abandoned buildings and full of graffiti and artwork throughout. If you stay here late at night expect it to get very crowded and crazy with people flocking from all around the world to see the nightlife that these interesting ruin bars have to offer.

See You On the Next Stop on the Tour!