

## OPTIONAL TOURS - Friday, August 11

### Budapest, Hungary

Budapest, the capital of Hungary, is a vibrant metropolis with about 1.7 million inhabitants. From its founding in 896 A.D. the area was originally three cities separated by the Danube River; Pest to the west, Buda to the east, and Óbuda to the North. In 1873 A.D., these three cities united to create the Hungarian capital of Budapest.

During its history, Budapest has been captured by Tatars and Turks, was subsequently occupied by the multinational troops of the Holy Roman Empire, and later by Austrians, Germans and most recently the Russians from 1949-1991. During WWII, Budapest suffered almost as much damage as Warsaw.

Considered one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, Budapest also has 80 geothermal springs, the world's largest thermal water cave system, second largest synagogue, third largest Parliament building and the second oldest metro line in the world, the Millennium Underground Railway.

Your day in Budapest will include these fascinating sites located on the east bank (Buda) and the west bank (Pest).



#### **BUDA** **Castle Hill**

Home to Buda's 'old town', Castle Hill has been a cultural and strategic focal point of the city for centuries and has also been the site of more than 30 sieges. The inevitable damage resulted in several periods of reconstruction, often re-using stones from the rubble, and lending a fascinating mix of architectural styles. The showpieces are the spectacular Máttyás Church and the Buda Royal Palace to the south. In addition, the

views over Pest from the Fishermen's Bastion are breathtaking.

#### **Buda Royal Palace**

The enormous building at the southern end of Castle Hill is the royal palace which has gone through many changes since the 14th century. It was rebuilt 400 years later and required major reconstruction work after World War II and now houses the Budapest History Museum, the Hungarian National Gallery and the National Széchenyi Library.



#### **Fishermen's Bastion**

The Fishermen's Bastion (Halászbástya) is often the first stop for tourists visiting Budapest, the fairytale turrets offering an elevated vantage point from which to view the city. The minarets and walls look medieval, but they were actually built in 1902 by Frigyes Schulek to complement Máttyás Church.

#### **The Chain Bridge**

The Lánchíd, literally *Chain Bridge* was the first permanent link between Buda and Pest and is a fitting monument to István Széchenyi - known as the 'Greatest Hungarian'. The bridge has a British connection too: it was designed by William Tierney Clark and constructed by Adam Clark, after whom the roundabout on the Buda side is named. After its construction, Clark later settled in Budapest, and in fact saved the bridge from destruction twice in 1849 and 1857, as Austrian and later Hungarian army generals wanted to destroy it to prevent its use by the enemy.

### Gellért Hill

Visible from almost everywhere in Budapest, Gellért Hill (Gellért hegy), with the impressive Freedom Monument on its peak, is one of the city's most memorable landmarks. The 14-metre (130 foot) monument was originally commissioned by Miklós Horthy as a memorial to his son, who died in a wartime air accident. When the Russians arrived, they replaced the propeller that the figure was originally meant to hold aloft with a palm frond to symbolize the country's liberation from the Nazis. Just beyond the monument is the Citadella, a fortress constructed by the Habsburgs following the 1848-1849 war of independence. It now houses an open-air museum chronicling the history of the hill.



### PEST Parliament

The world's third largest parliament building is a postcard favorite, particularly when reflected in the River Danube below it. It is equally lavish on the inside, but tourists must be part of an organized sightseeing tour to enter. The highest of the 23 spires is 315 ft or 96m tall, in honor of the conquest of the later Kingdom of Hungary in 896 and the nation's millennium in 1896.



### Andrássy Avenue

This long straight, tree-lined road was named after the former prime minister who had done much to make Budapest a true metropolis. He was determined that Budapest should have an elegant thoroughfare to emulate Paris's Champs Élysées. Along the Avenue, you will find the beautiful **Hungarian State Opera House**, constructed in 1875



### Heroes' Square

The statues on Heroes' Square (Hősök tere) are very much a who's who of Hungarian history (with the notable exception of the unpopular Habsburg monarchy, whose statues were removed and replaced) and its scale and grandeur is an indication of the pride Hungarians have for their country.

### City Park

Budapest's second favorite park after Margitsziget, the City Park (Városliget) is situated behind and to the right of Heroes' Square as you approach from the centre of town. The City Park offers a host of attractions of its own, including the Budapest Zoo, the Petőfi Csarnok concert venue and the obligatory Széchenyi Thermal Baths.

### Schedule:

6:45 am	Depart hotel in Eisenstadt by bus
7:00 am	Travel to Budapest
10:00 am	3-hour tour of Budapest
1:00 pm	Lunch at Trofea Grill Restaurant
2:30 pm	Free time in Budapest
5:00 pm	Depart for Eisenstadt
8:30 pm	Arrive Eisenstadt

**Cost: \$135 per person;** trip includes transportation, guided city tour, and lunch

Minimum number required: 20 persons