

A visit to Budapest!

Many people who visit Central Europe like to visit Budapest. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The mighty river Danube flows majestically north to south right through its centre. The city is rightly known as 'The Queen of the Danube'. It is also known as the 'City of Spas', as there are a dozen thermal spa complexes served by over a hundred thermal springs. Budapest was created out of the unification of the historic towns of Buda, Pest and Óbuda (old Buda) in 1873. Today the city covers an area of 200 square miles. It is home to a population of 1.8m people. Buda and Óbuda occupy about a third of the area and are situated mainly in the hills to the west, with commercial Pest on the plains to the east. There are three islands in the middle of the river Danube. They are Margaret Island, which is the most famous, Óbuda Island, and Csepel Island.

So what to do in Budapest? One can visit Buda Castle. It is one of the most visited sites in the city. In fact it is a UNESCO world heritage location. Feeling romantic? You could hire a horse and carriage to take you around the castle area. Budapest also has a variety of museums to visit including the Budapest History Museum, the Aquincum Museum of Roman Ruins and the Hungarian National Museum. If you are into culture there are theatrical performances and classical concerts daily including the Danube Symphony Orchestra and the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble. The Hungarian National State Opera House is definitely worth seeing. Built in 1884 this magnificent building is one of the finest of its kind in Europe. The Hungarian Philharmonic Society holds weekly concerts here on Mondays. Whilst in Budapest you might hear the term 'Cultural Avenue' used. This area broadly runs from the castle to the City Park.

One of the most popular things to do in Budapest is to visit a thermal spa. Thousands of tourists visit these spas daily to relax and they are sometimes used for medical purposes. Indeed the springs' proven medical properties of the mineral water are internationally renowned. By far the best spa in Budapest has to be the Szechenyi Baths that are opposite the zoo in the park. They are one of the largest bathing complexes in all Europe and the only 'old' medicinal baths to be found on the Pest side of the city.

Category: Central Europe / Places to visit / Budapest

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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A visit to Budapest – 5th May 2011

Budapest has some wonderful parks to visit. Probably the best and certainly the largest is City Park (Városliget). It was among the first public parks in the world open to people for relaxation purposes. Another delightful place to visit in the summer is Margaret Island (Margitsziget). This is where you'll find all the locals at weekends. Whether you go there for relaxation or sport the island is a positive delight to see. On it you'll find joggers, people playing all sorts of sports and picnicking. Don't feel like walking? You could rent a 'bringo' cart, roller blades, bikes and electric cars. There are also some lovely walkways. For lovers - you can even get married on Margaret Island! There is also the Alfréd Hajós Swimming Pool. Alfréd Hajós, Hungary's first Olympic medallist designed the complex that opened in 1930. Naturally it is all very 30s!

Another favourite pastime is shopping! The main thoroughfare near the Danube is a positive delight to stroll down. There are also many shopping malls to stroll in including the WestEnd City Center, Mammut and the Pólus Centre. Shopping might make you hungry in Hungary! Try some real Hungarian goulash. Contrary to popular belief it's not a stew but an artistically prepared thick soup! Sour cream is often used to soften the flavour. Other delicacies to try include; fish soup, a good homemade pörkölt (stew), some excellent fresh-water fish: grilled pike-perch or trout with almonds, or goose liver. Naturally, one can try some fine Hungarian beers and wines.

Budapest offers many fine classic coffee houses with some delicious cakes to be tried. In fact, turn of the century Budapest was known as the 'City of 500 coffee houses'. Most have sadly disappeared. Cafés were an integral part of the social and cultural life at that time. Unfortunately during communism the communists thought them a hotbed of communication so in 1948 they closed every one of them. Today many coffee houses have been thankfully restored.

In the summer Budapest puts on a cracking fireworks display on the 20th of August every year and there is the annual Budapest Summer Festival. It gives visitors the chance to see some traditional Hungarian music - including the Hungarian instrument the cimbalom. In the winter experience Budapest Christmas market. Novel ways to see the city are by helicopter, by boat, or by sea kayak! All will prove an unforgettable experience seeing the Budapest hills, the hidden side of Budapest's bridges, listed buildings and its islands. Go on - enjoy Budapest.

EXERCISES

1. **Budapest:** Briefly, what three things do you know about Budapest. Go round the room swapping details.

2. **Geography: Hungary:** Where is Hungary? What is its capital? What countries surround it? Draw a map on the board then **look on Google maps** to help you.

3. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self-correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - you need to do some work!

4. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

5. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

6. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?

7. **Let's think!** Think of five things you know about Budapest. Then add five things you know about Hungary. Write them below. Explain to your partner why you chose these.

| Five things about Budapest | Five things about Hungary |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 | 1 |
| 2 | 2 |
| 3 | 3 |
| 4 | 4 |
| 5 | 5 |

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

8. **Let's think!** In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with **Budapest**. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

9. **Let's debate:** In pairs. Students A think Budapest is the best European City for tourists to visit. Students B think otherwise – choose an alternative city. Explain why.

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10. Let's roleplay 1: In pairs. You are in a pub in Budapest. One of you is a barman/barmaid. The other is a tourist just in off the street who wants a drink. The tourist orders one at the bar. Between you get talking. Find out what you can about each other. Then ask questions about where to go in Budapest. *5-minutes.*

11. Let's roleplay 2: Radio Budapest: *In pairs/groups.* You are in the *Radio Budapest* studio. One of you is the presenter; the other student(s) is/are one of the people below. Try to get a balanced interview.

| | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|--------------------|
| 1 | The Mayor of Budapest | 3 | Tourist |
| 2 | Taxi driver | 4 | River boat captain |

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

12. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) What is Budapest known as?
- 2) How many people live in Budapest?
- 3) Budapest was unified by which three towns?
- 4) Name the museums.
- 5) Where is Cultural Avenue?

Student B

- 1) What is one of the most popular things to do in Budapest?
- 2) What happens in the summer?
- 3) What are the novel ways to see the city?
- 4) Name the shopping centres.
- 5) What can you do on Margaret Island?

13. Budapest: In pairs, discuss the following about Budapest etc...

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| 1 | The nightlife | 6 | Working / Jobs in Budapest |
| 2 | Major events in Budapest | 7 | Its economy |
| 3 | Its centre | 8 | The tourists! |
| 4 | The airport | 9 | Shopping in Budapest |
| 5 | The Euro impact | 10 | Its pubs! |

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

14. Presentation: In pairs, groups or individually: Prepare in class or at home a two minute presentation on: **An aspect of Budapest.** Stand at the front of the class to give your presentation to the class. The class can vote on the best presentation. Class – After the presentations go through the good and weak points on each presentation. Learn from the results.

15. Let's write an e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **A visit to Budapest.** Your e-mail can be read out in class.

16. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

a) Budapest _____

b) Hungary _____

DISCUSSION

Note: A previous trip to Budapest will benefit students here.

For students who have NOT been to Budapest – IMAGINE a little!

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Is Budapest overrated? Why? Why not?
- 3) How would you get to Budapest?
- 4) How long *would/will* it take you to get to Budapest?
- 5) Have you ever been ripped off in Budapest? If yes, where? When?
- 6) What do you think of Hungarians?
- 7) Where is the best place to go shopping in Budapest?
- 8) What do you think of Budapest's trams and its underground system?
- 9) What do you think of Budapest airport?
- 10) Give three examples of how Budapest has changed over 25 years.

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you read?
- 2) What do you think of Budapest?
- 3) Is Budapest cheap?
- 4) Why do tourists go to Budapest?
- 5) Have you ever been ripped off in Budapest? How?
- 6) What do you think of Budapest taxis?
- 7) Are there too many tourists in Budapest?
- 8) Where's a good place to stay in Budapest?
- 9) Where's a good place to eat in Budapest?
- 10) Where's a good place to drink in Budapest?

SPEAKING

Let's discuss! Budapest

Allow 10-15 minutes – As a class / small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

| |
|--------------------------------|
| 20 places to visit in Budapest |
|--------------------------------|

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING:

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A visit to Budapest!

Many people who visit Central Europe like to visit Budapest. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The (1)_____ river Danube flows (2)_____ north to south right through its centre. The city is rightly known as 'The Queen of the Danube'. It is also known as the 'City of (3)_____', as there are a dozen (4)_____ spa complexes served by over a hundred thermal (5)_____. Budapest was created out of the (6)_____ of the historic towns of Buda, Pest and Óbuda (old Buda) in 1873. Today the city covers an area of 200 square miles. It is home to a population of 1.8m people. Buda and Óbuda occupy about a third of the (7)_____ and are situated mainly in the hills to the west, with commercial Pest on the plains to the east. There are three (8)_____ in the middle of the river Danube. They are Margaret Island, which is the most famous, Óbuda Island, and Csepel Island.

mighty

Spas

islands

majestically

springs

thermal

area

unification

So what to do in Budapest? One can visit Buda Castle. It is one of the most visited sites in the city. In fact it is a UNESCO world heritage location. Feeling (1)_____? You could (2)_____ a horse and (3)_____ to take you around the castle area. Budapest also has a variety of (4)_____ to visit including the Budapest History Museum, the Aquincum Museum of Roman Ruins and the Hungarian National Museum. If you are into (5)_____ there are theatrical performances and classical concerts daily including the Danube Symphony Orchestra and the Hungarian State Folk Ensemble. The Hungarian National State Opera House is definitely worth seeing. Built in 1884 this (6)_____ building is one of the finest of its kind in Europe. The Hungarian Philharmonic Society holds weekly concerts here on Mondays. Whilst in Budapest you might hear the term 'Cultural Avenue' used. This area (7)_____ runs from the (8)_____ to the City Park.

carriage

castle

hire

magnificent

culture

romantic

museums

broadly

GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

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SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

| | | | |
|----|---------------|----|-----------------|
| 1 | majestically | 11 | stroll |
| 2 | unification | 12 | artistically |
| 3 | commercial | 13 | sour |
| 4 | heritage | 14 | soften |
| 5 | theatrical | 15 | naturally |
| 6 | integral | 16 | thoroughfare |
| 7 | unfortunately | 17 | symphony |
| 8 | unforgettable | 18 | ensemble |
| 9 | kayak | 19 | broadly |
| 10 | helicopter | 20 | internationally |

LINKS

<http://www.budapestinfo.hu/en/>

http://www.budapestinfo.hu/en/things_to_see

<http://www.budapest-tourist-guide.com/why-visit-budapest.html>

<http://visitbudapest.travel/>

<http://www.thebackpacker.net/travel-guide/travel-stories/hungary/120/>

<http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Attractions-q274887-Activities-Budapest.html>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: A visit to Budapest! Many people who visit Central Europe like to visit Budapest. It is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. The **mighty** river Danube flows **majestically** north to south right through its centre. The city is rightly known as 'The Queen of the Danube'. It is also known as the 'City of **Spas**', as there are a dozen **thermal** spa complexes served by over a hundred thermal springs. Budapest was created out of the **unification** of the historic towns of Buda, Pest and Óbuda (old Buda) in 1873. Today the city covers an area of 200 square miles. It is home to a population of 1.8m people. Buda and Óbuda occupy about a third of the **area** and are situated mainly in the hills to the west, with commercial Pest on the plains to the east. There are three **islands** in the middle of the river Danube. They are Margaret Island, which is the most famous, Óbuda Island, and Csepel Island.

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