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Entertainment

For a city of its size, Budapest has a huge choice of things to do and places to go after dark – from opera and folk dancing to jazz and meat-market clubs. It's almost never difficult getting tickets or getting in; the hard part is deciding what to do.

What's On

Your best sources of information for what's on in the city are the weekly freebie **PestiEst** (www.est.hu in Hungarian), published every Thursday and available from bars, cinemas and fast-food joints, and the more thorough weekly – with everything from clubs and films to art exhibits and classical music – **Pesti Műsor** (Budapest Program; www.pestimusor.hu in Hungarian), also called PM Program Magazin, available from newsstands every Thursday for 149Ft. The English-language weekly *Budapest Sun* also lists events and concerts in its useful Style supplement.

Other freebies include the vastly inferior (though English- and German-language) *Programme in Hungary/in Ungarn* and its scaled-down monthly version for the capital, *Budapest Panorama*. The free *Koncert Kalendárium*, published monthly (bimonthly in summer), has more serious offerings: concerts, opera, dance etc. A welcome arrival is *Mr Gordonsky's Budapest City Spy Map*, a hip little publication with all sorts of insider's tips. It's available free at pubs and bars.

Internet Resources

The best overall website for happenings in Budapest is **BT0** (www.budapestinfo.hu), though you might also try **Visitors' Guide Budapest** (www.visitorsguide.hu). Budapest Week (www.budapestweek.com) has events, music and movie listings. **Budapest Sun Online** (www.budapestsun.com) is similar but also has local news, interviews and features. A positive favourite and useful in all respects is **Pestiside** (www.pestiside.hu), subtitled 'The Daily Dish of Cosmopolitan Budapest'. It's an acerbic and often very funny take on the capital and includes lots of listings and reviews of what's on.

Tickets & Reservations

The most important and/or useful booking agencies in Budapest include those listed below. You can book almost everything online through www.jegymester.hu or www.kulturinfo.hu.

The **Central Ticket Office** (Map p224; Központi Jegyiroda; ☎ 267 9737, 267 1267; VI Andrásy út 15; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 M1 Opera) is the busiest theatrical ticket agency, with tickets to plays and other events at theatres around Budapest. Visit the **Symphony Ticket Office** (Map p222; Szmifonikus Jegyiroda; ☎ 302 3841; VI Nagymező utca 19; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 M1 Opera) for tickets to the philharmonic and other classical-music concerts.

Ticket Express (Map p224; ☎ information 312 0000, reservations 06 30 303 0999; www.tex.hu; VI Andrásy út 18; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 M1 Opera) is the largest ticket-office network in the city with eight outlets, including a **Józsefváros branch** (Map p222; ☎ 334 0369; MCD Zeneáruház, VIII József körút 50; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri; 🚶 4 or 6).

Nightlife Strips & Neighbourhoods

There are no concentrated nightlife areas on the Buda side, unless you count sedate (some might say comatose) Castle Hill or the rather dispersed **II Moszkva tér** (Map pp218-19; 🚶 M2 Moszkva tér). The Pest side, on the other hand, has all sorts of strips – from the ultratouristed **V Duna korzó** (Map p224; 🚶 2 or 2/a), along the river, with pricey (and very ordinary) eateries and watering holes, to leafy **VI Andrásy út** (Map p224; 🚶 M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc utca) – always a sophisticated choice for a night out. But the two main areas are über-trendy

VI Liszt Ferenc tér (Map p222; 🚶 M1 Oktogon), where you'll have to duel to the death for a spot under the plane trees, and **IX Ráday utca** (Map p224; 🚶 M3 Kálvin tér), a rather subdued (some might say dull) semipedestrianised street in Józsefváros full of pubs and bars.

DRINKING

BARS

Budapest (and particularly Pest) is loaded with pubs and bars and there are enough to satisfy every taste. For popular outdoor venues in season, beyond the pubs and bars with terraces along VI Liszt Ferenc tér and up and down IX Ráday utca, see the boxed text, p129.

Buda

ERZSÉBET HÍD ESZPRESSZÓ Map p220

☎ 214 2785; I Döbrentei tér 1; ☎ 10am-10pm; 🚶 19 or 🚶 86

If you're in the mood for a relaxing drink in simple surrounds, the 'Elizabeth Bridge Espresso Bar' is a wonderful old dive with a large terrace and views of the bridge. Most people call it Platán in honour of the big plane tree sheltering the outdoor tables.

KISRABLÓ Map pp228-9

☎ 209 1588; XI Zenta utca 3; ☎ 11am-2am Mon-Sat, noon-2am Sun; 🚶 18, 19, 47 or 49

This pub is close to the university and to many of the hostels mentioned in this guide and is thus very popular with students. But don't be misled; it's an attractive and well-run place.

LÁNC HÍD SÖRÖZŐ Map p220

☎ 214 3144; I Fő utca 4; ☎ 10am-midnight; 🚶 86 The 'Chain Bridge Pub', at the southern end of Fő utca, has a wonderful retro Magyar feel to it, with old movie posters and advertisements on the walls and red-checked cloths on the tables. Friendly service too.

OSCAR AMERICAN BAR Map pp218-19

☎ 212 8017; I Ostrom utca 14; ☎ 5pm-2am Mon-Thu, 5pm-4am Fri & Sat year-round, 5pm-2am Sun

Nov-May only; 🚶 M2 Moszkva tér

The décor is cinema-inspired – film memorabilia on the wood-panelled walls, leather directors' chairs – and the beautiful crowd often act like they're on camera. Not to worry – the potent cocktails (some

150, in fact) go down a treat. There's music most nights.

POCO LOCO Map pp218-19

☎ 326 1357; II Harcsa utca 1; ☎ 11am-midnight; 🚶 17

At the corner of Harcsa utca and Frankel Leó út on the way to Óbuda, this one-time seamy place has cleaned up its act; however, it still remains interesting. There's live music some nights.

Pest

ACTION BAR Map p224

☎ 266 9148; V Magyar utca 42; ☎ 9pm-4am; 🚶 M3 Kálvin tér

The name of this gay bar says it all. Take the usual precautions and have a ball. Strippers and dancers make appearances every night from about midnight.

BECKETTS Map p222

☎ 311 1033; V Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 72; ☎ 10am-1am Sun-Thu, 10am-3am Fri & Sat; 🚶 M3 Nyugati pályaudvar

Of the capital's ubiquitous 'Irish' pubs, this is the best (and largest) of the lot, with all-day breakfast (1600Ft) as well as sandwiches (850Ft to 1700Ft) and salads (1200Ft to 1300Ft). The new cocktail bar in the rear is an additional plus.

CAFÉ EKLEKTIKA Map p224

☎ 266 1226; V Semmelweis utca 21; ☎ noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 5pm-midnight Sat & Sun; 🚶 47 or 49

While there are no specifically lesbian bars in Budapest, Café Eklektika – love the name and the concept – comes the closest and attracts a very mixed crowd. Lots of canned jazz and the like.

CHA CHA CHA Map p224

☎ 215 0545; ☎ 8am-3am Mon-Thu, 10am-4am Fri & Sat Sep-May, 9am-11pm Jun-Aug; 🚶 M3 Kálvin tér

In the underpass/subway at the Kálvin tér metro, this is a campy/groovy café-bar

with distressed-looking furniture, a very unusual – and we're talking *Star Wars* here – crowd, and bopping from the end of the week. It's a great place to meet people, and it probably gets busier here in the wee hours than the entire station does during the day.

CHAMPS SPORT BAR Map p224

☎ 413 1655; VII Dohány utca 20; 🕒 noon-midnight Sun-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat; 🚇 M2 Astoria
Owned by five Olympic medallists (swimmer, runners, pentathlete), Champs is the place for sports fans and the vicarious, with two huge screens and 35 TVs. There's a wide choice of low-fat 'fitness meals' along with the less healthy favourites of armchair athletes.

COXX PUB Map p222

☎ 344 4884; VII Dohány utca 38; 🕒 9pm-4am Sun-Thu, 9pm-5am Fri & Sat; 🚇 7 or 7/a
This gay cellar bar with the in-your-face name has a DJ and small dance floor, but it's more of a pub than a club. There's a gallery and Internet café (🕒 noon-4am Mon-Fri, 9pm-4am Sat & Sun) at street level just to let you know this place has a serious side too.

DARSHAN UDVAR Map p222

☎ 266 5541; VIII Krúdy utca 7; 🕒 11am-1am Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am Sat & Sun; 🚇 4 or 6
This cavernous complex of two bars, a restaurant and a courtyard-terrace vegetarian café with décor that combines Euro-techno with Eastern flair is a great escape from the bars of VI Liszt Ferenc tér and IX Ráday utca. In fact, Krúdy utca may be poised to take over as Budapest's next after-hours strip. There are pizzas (880Ft to 1500Ft) and pasta dishes (550Ft to 1050Ft) as well as more substantial mains (1290Ft to 2500Ft) to accompany the liquid offerings.

FEHÉR GYÜRŰ Map p222

☎ 312 1863; V Balassi Bálint utca 27; 🕒 1pm-midnight Mon-Thu, 1pm-1am Fri & Sat, 5pm-midnight Sun
The 'White Ring' has always been a firm favourite and it's still not clear why. Perhaps it's because it is opposite the 'White House' (p82) and it's always fun to spot MPs. More likely it's because there are so few pubs in this area.

TOP FIVE DRINKING SPOTS

- Café Ponyvaragény (p127)
- Gerlőczy Kávéház (p127)
- Két Szerecsen (p128)
- Darshan Udvar (left)
- Oscar American Bar (p123)

JANIS PUB Map p224

☎ 266 2619; V Királyi Pál utca 8; 🕒 4pm-2am Mon-Thu, 4pm-3am Fri & Sat; 🚇 M3 Kálvin tér
Close to the university, this ever-popular pub is a shrine to the late, great Janis 'Pearl' Joplin and usually a stop for a quick one or two on the way to somewhere else. But some linger here for the choice of five imported beers on draught and the darts.

KULTIPLIX Map pp218-19

☎ 219 0706; IX Kinizsi utca 28; 🕒 10am-5am; 🚇 M3 Ferenc körút;
This huge complex has something for everyone – performance space, cinema, grill restaurant, great DJs, theme parties – and a simple inside/outside bar, where you can enjoy an unreconstructed drink.

MYSTERY BAR Map p222

☎ 312 1436; V Nagysándor József utca 3; 🕒 4pm-4am Mon-Fri, 6pm-4am Sat & Sun; 🚇 M3 Arany János utca
This miniscule gay neighbourhood bar with draped muslin and Greek statuary also moonlights as an Internet café (p189) and is just the ticket for boys who want to log on and get off.

PARIS TEXAS Map pp218-19

☎ 218 0570; IX Ráday utca 22; 🕒 10am-1am Sun & Mon, 10am-3am Tue-Sat; 🚇 M3 Kálvin tér
A coffee-house feel, with old sepia-tinted photos on the walls and pool tables. Nurse a cocktail from the huge list and order a pizza from Pink Cadillac (p117) next door.

PICASSO POINT Map p222

☎ 312 1727; VI Hajós utca 31; 🕒 noon-midnight Mon-Wed, noon-2am Thu & Fri, 4pm-2am Sat; 🚇 M3 Arany János utca
A stalwart of the Budapest entertainment scene, Picasso Point is a laid-back place for a drink and good for meeting people. Great décor.

PÓTKULCS Map p222

☎ 269 1050; VI Csengery utca 65/b; 🕒 5pm-1.30am Sun-Wed, 5pm-2.30am Thu-Sat; 🚇 M3 Nyugati pályaudvar
The 'Spare Key' is a wonderful little drinking venue, with a varied menu of live music from 9.30pm most nights and *táncház* (p131) at 8pm every Tuesday. The small central courtyard is a wonderful place to chill out in summer.

SZIMPLA Map p222

☎ 321 9119, 321 5880; VII Kertész utca 48; 🕒 10am-2am Sep-May, noon-midnight Jun-Oct; 🚇 4 or 6
This is a distressed-looking, very unflashy three-floor venue – the name says it all – and it's just a hop, skip and a tumble from the stilettos south of Liszt Ferenc tér. There's live music three nights a week.

TRADITIONAL CAFÉS

Old-style cafés, some of which date back as much as a century and a half, abound in Budapest and some of them are classic examples of their type. They were the centre of social life and in them alliances were formed and momentous events plotted. For more, see boxed text, p126. The majority are in Pest, but Buda can lay claim to several good examples.

Buda

ANGELIKA Map p220

☎ 212 3784; I Batthyány tér 7; cakes 310Ft; 🕒 9am-2am; 🚇 M2 Batthyány tér
Angelika is a charming café attached to an 18th-century church, with a lovely terrace overlooking the Danube. The food (salads from 490Ft to 1490Ft, sandwiches from 750Ft to 850Ft) is just so-so; come here for the cakes and the views.

AUGUSZT Map pp218-19

☎ 356 8931, 316 3817; II Fény utca 8, 1st fl; cakes 150-350Ft; 🕒 10am-6pm Tue-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat; 🚇 M2 Moszkva tér
Tucked away on the 1st floor of a building behind the Fény utca market and Mammut shopping mall, this is the original Auguszt café (there are imitators) and only sells its own shop-made cakes, pastries and biscuits.

DAUBNER CUKRÁSZDA Map pp226-7

☎ 335 2253; II Szépvölgyi út 50; cakes 150-400Ft; 🕒 9am-7pm; 🚇 86
A bit far-flung, tis true, and you can only nibble on the hoof here; there are no seats. But it gets rave reviews from locals and expats alike and has won the Best of Budapest award for best cake shop.

RUSZWURM Map p220

☎ 375 5284; I Szentháromság utca 7; cakes 190-440Ft; 🕒 9am-8pm; 🚇 16 or Várbusz
This is the perfect place for coffee and cakes in the Castle District, though it can get pretty crowded and it's almost always impossible to get a seat.

Pest

CENTRÁL KÁVÉHÁZ Map p224

☎ 266 4572, 266 2110; V Károlyi Mihály utca 9; cakes 290-350Ft; 🕒 8am-midnight; 🚇 M3 Ferencciek tere
This grande dame, which reopened a few years ago after extensive renovations, is still jostling to reclaim her title as the place to sit and look intellectual in Pest. It serves meals (mains 1990Ft to 3590Ft) as well as lighter fare such as sandwiches (750Ft to 1190Ft), omelettes (890Ft to 990Ft) and, of course, cakes and pastries.

FRÖHLICH Map p224

☎ 267 2851; VII Dob utca 22; cakes 350-500Ft; 🕒 9am-8pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-6pm Fri, 10am-6pm Sun; trolleybus 74
This ancient cake shop and café in the former ghetto makes and sells old Jewish favourites such as *flódni*, a three-layer cake with apple, walnut and poppy-seed fillings, and *kindli*, cookies with nuts or poppy seeds.

GERBEAUD Map p224

☎ 429 9020; V Vörösmarty tér 7-8; cakes 580-850Ft; 🕒 9am-9pm; 🚇 M1 Vörösmarty tér
This is the most famous of the famous cafés in Budapest – bar none. Founded in 1858, it has been a fashionable meeting place for the city's elite on the northern side of Pest's busiest square since 1870. A visit is mandatory. It also does continental breakfast (2880Ft) and sandwiches (1300Ft to 2500Ft).

MY CAFÉ, MY CASTLE

Café life has a longer (and arguably more colourful) history in Budapest than in any other city in Europe. The Turks introduced coffee to Hungary in the early 16th century, and the coffee house was an essential part of the social scene here long before it had even made an appearance in Vienna or Paris. In the final decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Budapest had some 600 cafés.

Budapest cafés were a lot more than just places to drink coffee that was 'black like the devil, hot like hell and sweet like a kiss' as they used to say. In them, momentous events were plotted or took place, great alliances formed and rivalries spawned, *chefs d'œuvre* written or sketched. To the English aphorism about the sanctity of one's house, the great writer Dezső Kosztolányi had a reply in his essay *Budapest, City of Cafés: 'Az én kávéházam, az én váram'* (My café is my castle).

The Budapest café of the 19th century embodied the progressive liberal ideal that people of all races and classes could mingle under one roof, and acted as an incubator for Magyar culture. Combining the neighbourliness of a local pub, the bonhomie of a gentlemen's club and the intellectual activity of an open university, coffee houses were places to relax, gamble, work, network, do business and debate.

Or start revolutions... On the morning of 15 March 1848, the future novelist Mór Jókai stood on a table on the Pilvax Café in the Inner Town to proclaim the demands of the Hungarian nation. The so-called Youth of March then took over a printing shop two streets away to print copies of their *Twelve Points* (p43) and marched to the National Museum. The rest, as they say, is history.

Different cafés catered to different groups. Actors preferred the Pannónia and businessmen the Orczy while cartoonists frequented the Lánchíd and stockbrokers the Lloyd. But the two most important in terms of the city's cultural life were the Japán and the New York.

The Café Japán at VI Andrásy út 45 – now, fittingly, Írók Boltja (the Writers' Bookshop; p150) – was a favourite haunt of artists and architects and attracted the likes of Koszta Tivadar Csonváry, József Rippl-Rónai, Pál Merse Szinyei and Ödön Lechner. The New York Café, which opened in 1894 at VII Erzsébet körút 9-11 and quickly became the city's most celebrated literary café, hosted virtually every Hungarian writer of note at one time or another – from Kosztolányi and Endre Ady to Gyula Krúdy and Ferenc Molnár. Molnár, playwright-in-residence at the Comedy Theatre, famously threw the key to the New York into the Danube the night the café opened so that it would never close. And that's just what it did, remaining open round the clock 365 days a year for decades.

But all good things must come to an end, and the depression of the 1930s, WWII and the dreary days of communism conspired against grand old cafés in favour of the cheap (and seldom cheerful) *eszpresszó*. By 1989 and the return of the Republic of Hungary only about a dozen remained and since then even the New York, where the influential literary magazine *2000* was edited right up into the 1990s, has been turned into a swanky five-star hotel.

Nowadays you're more likely to find young Budapesters drinking a beer or a glass of wine at one of the new modern cafés. It's true – the café is very much alive in Budapest. It's just reinvented itself, that's all.

HAUER CUKRÁSZDA Map pp218-19

☎ 323 1476; VIII Rákóczi út 47-49; cakes 150-350Ft; ☎ 9am-10pm; 🚗 M2 Blaha Lujza tér
This Art Deco (but frayed) café is often overlooked in favour of its sexier cousins, and is a real find for that. The cakes may not be Gerbeaud-quality, but it feels local and real.

LUKÁCS Map p222

☎ 302 8747; VI Andrásy út 70; cakes 200-500Ft; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 M1 Vörösmarty utca
This café is dressed up in the finest of divine decadence – all mirrors and gold and soft piano music (on weekday evenings) with a nonsmoking section too. The selection of cakes is small but good; try the creamy *Lukács szelet* (Lukács slice).

MŰVÉSZ Map p222

☎ 352 1337; VI Andrásy út 29; cakes 280-480Ft; ☎ 9am-11.45pm; 🚗 M1 Opera
Almost opposite the State Opera House, the 'Artist' is a more interesting place to people-watch than most cafés (especially from the terrace), though its cakes are not what they used to be, with the exception of the *almás torta* (apple cake). It's been here since 1898.

SZALAI Map p222

☎ 269 3210; V Balassi Bálint utca 7; cakes 150-320Ft; ☎ 9am-7pm Wed-Mon; 🚗 2 or 2/a
This humble little cake shop in the Northern Inner Town and just north of Parliament probably has the best cherry strudel in the capital (though its cream cakes go down a treat as well).

MODERN CAFÉS

A new breed of café – all polished chrome, halogen lighting and straight lines – now co-exists with the more traditional cafés. There are a few of these in Buda but the lion's share is in Pest, especially in VI Liszt Ferenc tér. There are also a few on IX Ráday utca and in V Szent István tér behind the Basilica of St Stephen. Almost all do food, some complete meals, as well as serve hot and cold drinks.

Buda

CAFÉ MIRÓ Map p220

☎ 201 5573; I Úri utca 30; ☎ 9am-midnight; 🚗 16 or Várbusz

A personal favourite in the Castle District; Miró has Med-coloured walls and furniture, snacks, cakes (300Ft to 470Ft) and main courses (1790Ft to 2890Ft) and local artwork and photography on the walls. It's open on two sides. There's also a Pest branch called *Miró Grande* (Map p222; ☎ 321 8666; VI Liszt Ferenc tér 9; ☎ 10am-2am; 🚗 M1 Oktogon).

CAFÉ PONYVARAGÉNY Map pp228-9

☎ 209 5255; XI Bercsényi utca 5; ☎ 10am-midnight Mon-Sat, 2pm-midnight Sunday; 🚗 18, 19, 47 or 49
The 'Pulp Fiction' is a great new place that's supposed to be a local secret but – alas – is no longer. The old books and fringed lampshades are a nice touch and the coffee (230Ft to 645Ft) is some of the best in town.

Pest

BALLET CIPŐ Map p222

☎ 269 3114; VI Hajós utca 14; ☎ 8am-1am Mon-Fri, 10am-midnight Sat & Sun; 🚗 M1 Opera
The pretty little 'Ballet Slipper' in the theatre district and just behind the opera house is a delightful place to stop for a rest and refreshment or to have a light meal (dishes 800Ft to 1500Ft).

BIRDLAND Map p222

☎ 413 7983; VI Liszt Ferenc tér 7; ☎ 9am-1am; 🚗 M1 Opera

This new venue at the southern end of Liszt Ferenc tér is surprisingly bereft of jazz despite its name. It is, however, the ideal spot to catch strains from musicians practising music at the academy just opposite. The food (starters 950Ft to 1750Ft, mains 1450Ft to 2750Ft) gets good reports.

CAFÉ CSIGA Map pp218-19

☎ 210 0885; VIII Vásár utca 2; ☎ 11am-1pm Mon-Sat Oct-May, 6am-1am Mon-Sat Jun-Sep; 🚗 4 or 6
This very popular, eclectically decorated café-cum-bar just opposite the Rákóczi tér market attracts a mixed, arty crowd.

CAFÉ VIAN Map p222

☎ 268 1154; VI Liszt Ferenc tér 9; ☎ 9am-1am; 🚗 M1 Oktogon

This comfortable café – all done up in warm peach tones and serving breakfast all day – remains the anchor tenant on the sunny side of 'the tér' and the court of Pest's arty aristocracy.

CASTRO BISZTRÓ Map pp228-9

☎ 215 0814; IX Ráday utca 35; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Thu, 9am-1am Fri, 2pm-1am Sat, 2pm-midnight Sun; 🚗 15

This eclectic place has a mixed clientele, Serbian dishes and chilli (990Ft to 1780Ft) on its menu and a few terminals for logging on to the Internet (100Ft for 10 minutes). It's one of the few places on the strip that is crowded all year.

GERLÓCZY KÁVÉHÁZ Map p224

☎ 235 0953; V Gerlóczy utca 1; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Fri, 8am-11pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 47 or 49

This wonderful retro-style café looks out onto one of Pest's most attractive little squares and serves excellent snacks and light meals (690Ft to 1790Ft), including a cheese plate sent over from the excellent Nagy Tamás (p93) cheese shop around the corner.

THIS IMAGE
NOT AVAILABLE
IN PICK & MIX

INCOGNITO CAFÉ Map p222

☎ 342 1471; VI Liszt Ferenc tér 3; ☎ noon-midnight
 Mon-Wed, noon-2am Thu-Sat, 2pm-midnight Sun
 The 'Unknown' is hardly that. It was the first
 café to open on what everyone now calls
 'the tér', way back in 1994, and it's still low-
 key and going strong.

KÉT SZERECSEN Map p222

☎ 343 1984; VI Nagymező utca 14; ☎ 8am-1am
 Sun-Thu, 9am-1am Fri & Sat
 Not on the square but close enough, the
 very relaxed 'Two Moors' serves both main
 meals (starters from 690Ft to 1100Ft, mains
 1250Ft to 3190Ft) and decent breakfasts
 (590Ft to 680Ft till 11am) as well as coffee.

NEGRO Map p224

☎ 302 0136; V Szent István tér 11; ☎ 8am-
 midnight Sun, 8am-1am Mon-Wed, 8am-3am Thu &
 Fri, 8am-4am Sat; ☎ M3 Arany János utca
 This stylish café just behind the basilica
 (views!) attracts Budapest's über-trendy
 crowd, dressed to the nines (or did we see
 10s too?) and sipping the latest concoction.
 Breakfasts are a snip at 320Ft to 910Ft.

TEAHOUSES

Teahouses serving every imaginable type of
 tea and tisane have become very trendy in
 Budapest in recent years and they're often
 quite stylish places.

Buda**DEMMER'S TEAHÁZ** Map pp218-19

☎ 345 4150; II Lövház utca 12; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm;
 ☎ M2 Moszkva tér
 This cosy little teahouse next to the Mam-
 mut shopping mall is the place to come in
 Buda if you're serious about your cuppa
 cha (180Ft to 400Ft). There's also a Pest
 branch (Map p222; ☎ 302 5674; VI Pod-
 maniczky utca 14; ☎ 11am-9pm Mon-Sat,
 1-9pm Sun; ☎ M3 Nyugati pályaudvar).

Pest**1000 TEA** Map p224

☎ 337 8217; V Váci utca 65; ☎ noon-9pm Mon-
 Sat; ☎ 15
 In a small courtyard off lower Váci utca, this
 is the place if you want to sip a soothing
 blend made by tea-serious staff and lounge

on pillows in a Japanese-style tearoom. You
 can also sit and sip on the tea chests in the
 courtyard. There's a shop here too.

MOZAIK TEAHÁZ Map p224

☎ 266 7001; VI Király utca 18; ☎ 10am-10.30pm
 Mon-Fri, 1-10.30pm Sat & Sun Oct-May, 11am-
 10.30pm Mon-Fri, 4-10.30pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep;
 ☎ 4 or 6
 An eclectic – note the mosaic of a satyr
 outside – rarity among Budapest teahouses:
 non-New Age music played and smoking
 permitted.

TEAHÁZ A VÖRÖS OROSLÁNHOZ

Map p222

☎ 269 0579; VI Jókai tér 8; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-
 Fri, 3-11pm Sat, 5-11pm Sun; ☎ M1 Oktogon
 This serene place with quite a mouthful of
 a name (it just means 'Teahouse at the Sign
 of the Red Lion') just north of Liszt Ferenc
 tér is quite serious about its teas (480Ft
 to 630Ft). There's also a Ráday utca branch
 (Map p224; ☎ 215 2101; IX Ráday utca 9;
 ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Sat, 3pm-11pm Sun).

CLUBBING

Like everywhere else, clubs in Budapest do
 not really get off the ground until well after
 Cinderella's coach has turned into a pump-
 kin – or even later. Budapest's hottest DJs
 include Palotai, Naga and Yonderboy.

ANGEL Map p222

☎ 351 6490; VII Kazinczy utca 2; ☎ 10pm-5am
 Fri-Sun; ☎ M2 Astoria
 Angel, also known by its Hungarian name,
 Angyal, is Budapest's flagship gay club
 even since its big move in 2005 after some-
 thing like a decade. It welcomes girls on Fri-
 day and Sunday but boyz only on Saturday.

BANK DANCE HALL Map p222

☎ 06 20 344 4888; VI Teréz körút 55; ☎ 10pm-
 4am Sun-Thu, 10pm-5am Fri & Sat; ☎ M3 Nyugati
 pályaudvar
 In the southern wing of Nyugati train station
 next to McDonald's, this positively enor-
 mous disco has rhythm and blues on the 1st
 floor, house and trance on the 2nd, Dance
 on the 3rd and funk-house (a Hungarian
 thing) on the 4th. Lots of young suburban
 types reeking of cologne and on the prowl.

THE HEAT IS ON

During Budapest's (usually) very long and very hot summer, what are called *kertek*, literally 'gardens' but in Budapest any outdoor spot that has been converted into an entertainment zone (including courtyards and any available stretch along the river), have been emptying out even the most popular indoor bars and clubs since 1999. The venues (and their locations) can change from year to year and a definitive list is usually not available until about May; the best single source of information is the Pestsides website (www.pestsides.hu). Some of the places listed under Bars (p123) and under Clubbing (opposite) have their own outside equivalent, and there are 'gardens' that only blossom in summer. Some of the more popular ones in recent years include those listed below.

Café del Rio (Map pp228-9; ☎ 06 30 297 2158; www.rio.hu in Hungarian; XI Goldman György tér 1; ☎ 2pm-4.30am; ☎ 4 or 6) On the northern side of Petőfi Bridge on the Buda side, Rio is stylish but not up itself, with a pseudo tropical/carnival theme.

Cha Cha Cha Terasz (Map pp218-19; ☎ 215 0545; www.chachacha.hu in Hungarian; XIII Margit-sziget; ☎ 4pm-4am; ☎ 26, ☎ 4 or 6) In the stadium at the southern tip of Margaret Island, Cha Cha Cha Terasz is an attitude-free venue with great music and dance space.

Holdudvar (Map p224; ☎ 485 5270; VIII Múzeum körút 6-8; ☎ M2 Astoria; ☎ 8am-4am) This large courtyard on the grounds of the ELTE, the city's largest university, has a predictably split personality: earnest and coffee-drinking, wild and out of control.

Mokka Cuka (Map pp226-7; ☎ 453 2120; www.mokkacuka.hu; III Óbuda Hajógyári-sziget; ☎ 2pm-4am; HÉV Filatorigát) On the island that attracts the capital's beautiful people, Mokka Cuka is a leading outdoor underground venue showcasing great indie DJs.

Szimpla Kert (Map p222; ☎ 06 20 248 1968, 321 5880; www.szimpla.hu; VII Kazinczy 14; ☎ noon-midnight; trolleybus 74) One of the capital's first 'gardens', Szimpla is just that – a simple, low-key affair that keeps itself to itself.

Szóda Udvar (Map p87; ☎ 461 0007; V József nádor tér 1; ☎ M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér; ☎ 2pm-4am) This rather well-heeled venue – a former bank headquarters – pulls in a rather subdued crowd that lets loose on the basement dance floor in the wee hours.

Zöld Pardon (Map pp228-9; www.zp.hu in Hungarian; XI Goldman György tér; ☎ 9am-6am; ☎ 4 or 6) What bills itself as the 'world's longest summer festival' is a rocker's paradise just opposite the Café del Rio.

CLUB BOHEMIAN ALIBI Map pp228-9

☎ 06 20 314 1959; IX Üllői út 45-47; ☎ 4pm-4am
 Sun-Thu, 9pm-4am Fri & Sat; ☎ M3 Ferenc körút
 This gay club attracts ladies and gentlemen
 and anything in between. It's the preferred
 watering hole of Budapest's burgeoning TV
 population, so if you're into cross-dressing
 or cross-dressers, this is the place.

CLUB VITTULA Map p222

☎ 06 20 527 7069; VII Kertész utca 4; ☎ 6pm-
 dawn Sep-Jun; ☎ M2 Blaha Lujza tér, ☎ 4 or 6
 Probably the best place to get drunk and
 dance in Budapest at the moment, with
 cutting-edge DJs and cheap Slovakian
 blond (beer that is). Need we say more?

KAMÉLEON Map pp218-19

☎ 345 8547; Mammut II, 4th fl, II Lövház utca
 2-6; ☎ 5pm-midnight Sun-Thu, 5pm-3am Fri & Sat;
 ☎ M3 Moszkva tér
 This throbbing club in the newer wing of
 Buda's massive Mammut shopping mall is

a true 'chameleon', with a different party in
 the swing every night of the week – from
 La Noche Cubana on Friday to live bands
 on Monday.

KÖZGÁZ PINCE KLUB Map pp218-19

☎ 215 4359, 218 6855; IX Fővám tér 8; ☎ 9pm-
 5am Tue-Sat; ☎ 47 or 49
 With few frills and cheap covers at the
 Economics University, this is the pick-up
 venue of choice for many a student and
 there's plenty of dance room. Beware: the
 bouncers bite, and avoid Wednesday unless
 you like karaoke.

PIAF Map p222

☎ 312 3823; VI Nagymező utca 25; ☎ 7pm-6am;
 ☎ M3 Arany János utca, trolleybus 70 or 78
 Pif is the place to go when everything else
 slows down. There's dancing and action
 well into the new day. Most of the action –
 and characters – are in the smoky cavern
 below.

SARK CAFÉ

Map p222
☎ 06 30 282 9625; VII Klauzál tér 14; ☎ 10am-3am Sun-Thu, 10am-5am Fri & Sat; ☎ 4 or 6
This popular alternative music pub and club on three floors has a big cellar with a dance floor where bands occasionally perform. It's all a bit student-clubbish, though.

SÜSS FÉL NAP

Map p222
☎ 374 3329; V Honvéd utca 40; ☎ 5pm-5am; ☎ 4 or 6
Attracting a student crowd, this cellar club hosts lots of student bands and visiting talent. It's a lot of fun and less expensive than many of the other clubs. It's one of the few places in town offering a two-for-one happy hour (5pm to 8pm).

TRAFÓ BÁR TANGÓ

Map pp228-9
☎ 456 2049; IX Liliom utca 41; ☎ 6pm-4am; ☎ M3 Ferenc körút
In the basement of the Trafó House of Contemporary Arts (p134), what's also called Tütü Tangó is one place that attracts arty (ie less booze, more smoke) types and their hangers-on.

UPSIDE DOWN

Map p222
☎ 06 20 982 2884; V Podmaniczky tér 1; ☎ 8pm-4am or 5am; ☎ M3 Arany János utca
Below a coffee shop of the same name on the southern side of Podmaniczky tér, this is one of the hottest new gay clubs in town.

WEST BALKAN CLUB BAR

Map pp218-19
☎ 371 1807; VIII Kisfaludy utca 36; ☎ noon-dawn; ☎ M3 Ferenc körút
This place without a sign has something for everyone – from live music and/or DJ to bars in the garden and films on the big screen. Bit alternative.

MUSIC CLASSICAL

The *Koncert Kalendárium* (p122) highlights all concerts in Budapest monthly, and most nights you'll have several to choose from. As well as the city's main concert halls listed below, many museums and other venues feature chamber music including the Old Music Academy, where the Franz Liszt Memorial Museum (p71) is housed; Béla Bartók

GAY & LESBIAN VENUES

What a difference a decade and a half makes! With only a couple of sleazy – actually scary – dives full of Romanian and Transylvanian hustlers a mere 15 years ago, Budapest now counts upwards of 20 gay venues and can lay claim to being Central Europe's gayest city. For useful websites, organisations and other information, see p188.

Budapest's flagship gay club is **Angel** (p128) but you'll probably do better starting the evening off at **Mystery Bar** (p124) or **CoXx Pub** (p124). There's a lot to say for **Club Bohemian Alibi** (p129) – though we can't think of anything just now – and if you're feeling frisky head for **Action Bar** (p123). Another great club is **Upside Down** (left).

Choices are more limited for girlz but there's always **Café Eklektika** (p123) and **Angel** (above) on Friday and Sunday nights if they don't mind a mixed scene. Lesbian parties are held on the first Friday of the month at **Jailhouse** (p132) and on the last Saturday of the month at a bar called **Candy** (Map p224; ☎ 789 2130; V Kossuth Lajos utca 17; ☎ M2 Astoria).

Memorial House (p61); the Military History Museum (p56); the Mücsarnok (p72); the Kiscelli Museum (p60); and the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (p66).

Organ recitals are best heard in the city's churches, including Matthias Church (p55), St Anne's Church (p58), the Basilica of St Stephen (p64) and the Inner Town Parish Church (p64).

BUDAPEST CONGRESS CENTRE

Map pp218-19
Budapesti Kongresszusi Központ; ☎ information 372 5700, tickets 372 5429; www.bcc.hu; XII Jagelló út 1-3; ☎ 8 or 112

This modern conference centre in Buda moonlights as a concert hall and has recently undergone a major renovation – supposedly to improve its poor acoustics. Big-ticket galas and opening nights are frequently held here.

DUNA PALOTA

Map p224
Danube Palace; ☎ 235 5500, 317 2790; V Zrínyi utca 5; ☎ 15

This elaborate 'palace' diagonally opposite the main Central European University building hosts light classical music and touristy musical revues in summer. Its biggest drawcard is its folk-dance performances (p135).

FERENC LISZT ACADEMY OF MUSIC

Map p222
Liszt Zeneakadémia; ☎ 342 0179; www.zeneakademia.hu; VI Liszt Ferenc tér 8; ☎ ticket office 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 2-8pm Sat & Sun; ☎ M1 Oktogon
A block southeast of Oktogon, what's usually just called the 'music academy' was built in 1907. It attracts students from all over the world and is one of the top venues for concerts. The interior, with large and small concert halls richly embellished with Zsolnay porcelain and frescoes, is worth a look even if you're not attending a performance.

ÓBUDA SOCIETY

Map pp226-7
Óbudai Társaskör; ☎ 250 0288; www.obudaitarsasok.hu; III Kis Korona utca 7; HÉV Timár utca, ☎ 86
This very intimate venue surrounded by appalling Óbuda housing estates takes its music very seriously and hosts recitals and some chamber orchestras.

PALACE OF ARTS

Map pp228-9
Művészetek Palotája; ☎ information 555 3000, tickets 555 3301; www.mupa.hu; IX Komor Marcell utca; ☎ ticket office 1-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-3pm Sun; ☎ 2 or 2/a
The main concert halls in this palatial new arts centre by the Danube and just opposite the National Theatre are the 1700-seat **National Concert Hall** (Nemzeti Hangversenyterem) and the smaller **Festival Theatre** (Fesztivál Színház), accommodating up to 450 people. Both are purported to have the best acoustics in Budapest.

PESTI VIGADÓ

Map p224
V Vigadó tér 2; ☎ 318 9903, 318 9167; V Vigadó tér 2; ☎ M1 Vörösmarty tér, ☎ 2 or 2/a
This Romantic-style hall built in 1865 and facing the Danube to the west of Vörösmarty tér is a popular venue for concerts, dance performances and other cultural events. It was badly damaged during WWII and, though the original style of the exterior was retained, the interior is all new and has been recently renovated.

FOLK & TRADITIONAL

Authentic *táncház*, literally 'dance house' but really folk-music workshops, are held at various locations throughout the week, but less often in summer. Times and venues change frequently; consult one of the publications

mentioned on p122 or check out the website of the Dance House Guild (www.tanchaz.hu). The best local *klezmer* (p19) is the Budapest Klezmer Band. See the band's website (www.budapestklezmer.hu) for concert dates and venues.

Two cultural houses in Buda have frequent folk programmes. The **Folklor Centrum** in the **Municipal Cultural House** (Fővárosi Művelődési Háza; Map pp228-9; ☎ 203 3868; XI Fehérvári út 47; ☎ 41 or 47), presents folk music every Friday at 7.30pm and a children's dance house hosted by the incomparable **Muzsikás** (p19) every Tuesday from 5pm to 6.30pm. The **Marczibányi tér Cultural Centre** (Marczibányi téri Művelődési Központ; Map pp218-19; ☎ 212 0803, 212 2820; II Marczibányi tér 5/a; ☎ 4, 6 or 49) has Hungarian, Moldavian and Slovakian dance and music every Wednesday starting from 8pm. Certain bars, including **Pótkulcs** (p125) also have dance house one or two nights a week.

ALMÁSSY TÉR RECREATION CENTRE

Map pp218-19
Almássy téri Szabadidő Központ; ☎ 352 1572; VII Almássy tér 6; trolleybus 74
This venue west of Keleti train station has just about anything that's in and/or interesting, from rock and blues to jazz, but especially folk music. There's Hungarian dance house every second Saturday at 7.30pm.

ARANYTÍZ CULTURAL CENTRE

Map p224
Aranytíz Művelődési Központ; ☎ 354 3400, 311 2248; V Arany János utca 10; ☎ 15
With programmes from 5pm on Saturday and frequently running to well after 2am, this gleaming new cultural centre in the Northern Inner Town hosts the incomparable **Kalamajka Táncház**.

FONÓ BUDA MUSIC HOUSE

Map pp228-9
Fonó Budai Zeneház; ☎ 206 5300; www.fono.hu; XI Sztregova utca 3; ☎ 41 or 47
Fonó Buda has regular programmes at 8pm on Wednesday and the second Friday of each month as well as concerts by big-name bands throughout each month; it's one of the best venues in town for this sort of thing. Consult the website for more details.

JAZZ & BLUES

COLUMBUS JAZZKLUB

Map p224
☎ 266 9013; www.majazz.hu; V Pesti Alsó rakpart;
🕒 noon-midnight; 🚗 2 or 2/a
On a boat moored in the Danube just north of V Vigadó tér opposite the Budapest Inter-Continental Hotel, this club has transformed itself from being 'just another Irish pub' to a jazz club of note, with big-name local and international bands.

COTTON CLUB

Map p222
☎ 354 0886; www.cottonclub.hu; VI Jókai utca 26;
🕒 noon-midnight Mon-Sat; 🚗 4 or 6
This centrally located restaurant and nightclub with the predictable gangster-and-moll décor (complete with cigar room) has live jazz – let's say jazz lite – nightly at 7.30pm or 8pm, with additional concerts at 10.30pm on Friday and Saturday. Starters are 1590Ft to 1990Ft and mains 1790Ft to 3890Ft; three-course set menus come in at 5260Ft and 7360Ft.

FAT MO'S MUSIC CLUB

Map p224
☎ 267 3199; V Nyáry Pál utca 11; 🕒 noon-2am Mon & Tue, noon-3am Wed, noon-4am Thu & Fri, 6pm-4am Sat, 6pm-2am Sun; 🚗 M3 Ferenciek tere, 🚗 15
With a speakeasy Prohibition theme and enough beer and booze to fill Bonnie and Clyde (with bullets, that is), FM's has live jazz (and sometimes country) from 9pm or 9.30pm daily. DJs take over at midnight Thursday to Saturday.

JAZZ GARDEN

Map p224
☎ 266 7364; V Veres Pálné utca 44/a; 🕒 6pm-1am Sun-Thu, 6pm-2am Fri & Sat; 🚗 47 or 49
This is a sophisticated venue with traditional, vocal and Latin jazz and odd décor – a faux cellar 'garden' with street lamps and a night 'sky' bedecked with blinking stars. Book a table (starters 1420Ft to 2250Ft, mains 2250Ft to 3490Ft) in the dining room; music starts here at 9.30pm.

SATCHMO

Map p222
☎ 302 2654; V Nádor utca 29; 🕒 11.30am-1am;
🚗 M2 Kossuth Lajos tér
As its subtitle 'Amerikai Kreol Jazztaurant' would suggest, this club-restaurant with big windows just round the corner from Szabadság tér serves up 'American' Creole cuisine (lots of spices, shellfish and 'black-

ened' things for 1400Ft to 2900Ft) and live jazz music courtesy of Mr Louis Armstrong from Thursday to Saturday nights.

ROCK & POP

A38 HAJÓ

Map pp228-9
☎ 464 3940; www.a38.hu; XI Műgyetem rakpart;
🕒 4pm-midnight Tue-Sat, 4pm-midnight Sun & Mon; 🚗 4 or 6
Moored on the Buda side just south of Petőfi Bridge, the 'A38 Ship' is a decommissioned Ukrainian stone hauler from 1968 that has been reinvented as a party venue. It's so cool it's hot in summer and the hold, well, rocks throughout the year.

GÖDÖR KLUB

Map p224
☎ 06 20 943 5464; Erzsébet tér; 🕒 9am-late;
🚗 M 1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér
This new arrival in the old bus bays below Elizabeth Sq in central Pest is a real mixed bag, offering everything from folk and jazz but especially rock.

JAILHOUSE

Map pp228-9
☎ 06 30 989 4905, 218 1368; IX Tűzoltó utca 22;
🕒 10pm-5am Fri & Sat; 🚗 M3 Ferenc körút
This tiny venue with a friendly atmosphere has underground DJs and live music. It's an excellent place to part ways from the usual choice of venues. It hosts a lesbian night on the first Friday of the month.

LASER THEATRE

Map pp228-9
Lézer Színház; ☎ 263 0871, 281 2211; www.lezer.szhaz.hu; X Népliget; adult/student 2090/1590Ft;
🕒 performances 7.30pm Mon-Sat; 🚗 M3 Népliget
At the Planetarium in Népliget, the Laser Theatre has a mixed bag of video (some 3D) concerts with laser and canned music featuring the likes of Madonna, Pink Floyd, Queen, Mike Oldfield, Vangelis and Enigma, and performances by Carmina Burana. Very low tech and old hat but fun in a retro kind of way.

M4 MUSIC CLUB

Map p222
☎ 322 0006; VII Dohány utca 22; 🕒 6pm-5am;
🚗 M2 Astoria
A particularly smoky place named after the illusory fourth metro line that still refuses to get dug or built or started, M4 has both live music (pop, rock, soul, funk) and DJs.

ROCK & POP MEGAVENUES

Budapest counts a trio of venues for big-name local and international acts, all of them in Pest and within walking distance of one another.

Budapest Sportaréna (Map pp218-19; ☎ 422 2600; www.budapestarena.hu; XIV Stefánia út 2; 🚗 M2 Stadionok) Near Keleti train station, this new arena named after the Hungarian pugilist László Papp is where the likes of Phil Collins, Duran Duran, Simply Red and Jo Cocke warble.

Kisstadion (Map pp218-19; ☎ 471 4306, 251 1222; XIV Szabó József utca 1; 🚗 7, trolleybus 72 or 75) This venue is smaller than the nearby Budapest Sportaréna and thus something of an elephants' graveyard (think, Rod Stewart) for international acts.

Petőfi Csarnok (Map pp218-19; ☎ 363 3730, 251 7266; www.petoficsarnok.hu; XIV Zichy Mihály út 14; 🕒 ticket office 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 M1 Széchenyi fürdő, trolleybus 72 or 74) The city's main youth centre, the PC is in City Park and the place for smaller rock concerts (Jamiroqui, Yngwie Malmsteen etc).

TÚZRAKTÁR

Map pp228-9
☎ 06 70 523 1593; http://tuzraktar.hu; IX Tűzoltó utca 54-56; 🕒 5pm-3am; 🚗 3 Klinikák
The 'Fire Warehouse', an abandoned factory building, and its big courtyard plays host to all sorts of cultural and party events.

WIGWAM ROCK & BLUES CLUB

Map pp228-9
☎ 208 5569; XI Fehérvári utca 202; 🕒 8pm-5am;
🚗 41 or 47
This place with the wacky name (did the Sioux do Elvis before his time?) is one of the best of its kind in Hungary and hosts some big-name Hungarian rock and blues bands on Friday and Saturday nights.

OPERA

BUDAPEST OPERETTA

Map p222
Budapesti Operettszínház; ☎ 472 2030, 312 4866; www.operettszinhaz.hu; VI Nagymező utca 17;
🕒 ticket office 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 1-7pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 M1 Opera
This theatre presents operettas, which are always a riot, especially campy ones like the *Queen of the Csárdás* by Imre Kálmán, with their OTT staging and costumes.

ERKEL THEATRE

Map pp218-19
Erkel Színház; ☎ 333 0540; VIII Köztársaság tér 30;
🕒 ticket office 11am-7pm Tue-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat, 10am-1pm & 4-7pm Sun; 🚗 M2 Keleti pályaudvar, 🚗 7 or 7/a
Budapest's modern (and ugly) second opera house is southwest of Keleti train station. Tickets are sold just inside the main door.

HUNGARIAN STATE OPERA HOUSE

Map p222
Magyar Állami Operaház; ☎ information 353 0170, tickets 332 7914; www.opera.hu; VI Andrásy út 22;
🕒 ticket office 11am-7pm Mon-Sat, 4-7pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 M1 Opera
The gorgeous neo-Renaissance opera house should be visited at least once – to admire the incredibly rich decoration inside as much as to view a performance and hear the perfect acoustics. Visits are guided.

CINEMAS

Some 26 *mozi* (movie houses) show English-language films with Hungarian subtitles. Consult the listings in the *Budapest Sun* newspaper, *PestiEst* or *Pesti Műsor* (p122).

Be aware that many foreign films are dubbed into Hungarian, so try asking the ticket seller if the film retains the original soundtrack and has Hungarian subtitles (*feliratos*) or is dubbed (*szinkronizált* or *magyarul beszélő*). The latter is often abbreviated as 'mb' in listings.

CORVIN FILM PALACE

Map pp218-19
Corvin Filmpalota; ☎ 459 5050; VIII Corvin köz 1;
🚗 M3 Ferenc körút
This place saw a lot of action during the 1956 Uprising and led a revolution of a different sort four decades later – the introduction of state-of-the-art sound systems and comfortable seating. It has now been fantastically renovated and is worth a visit. Note the two wonderful reliefs outside and the monument to the 'Pesti srácok', the heroic 'kids from Pest' who fought and died here in '56.

MŰVÉSZ

Map p222
☎ 332 6726; VI Teréz körút 30; 🚗 M1 Oktogon, 🚗 4 or 6
The 'Artist' shows, appropriately enough, artsy and cult films, but not exclusively so.

THIS IMAGE
NOT AVAILABLE
IN PICK & MIX

ÖRÖKMOZGÓ FILM MUSEUM Map p222

Örökmozgó Filmmúzeum; ☎ 342 2167; VII Erzsébet körút 39; 🕒 4 or 6

Part of the Hungarian Film Institute, this cinema (whose mouthful of a name vaguely translates as 'moving picture') shows an excellent assortment of foreign classic films in their original languages.

SZINDBÁD Map p222

☎ 349 2773; XIII Szent István körút 16; 🕒 4 or 6
This place, named after the seminal (and eponymous) 1971 film by director Zoltán Huszárik and based on the novel by Gyula Krúdy (p23), shows good Hungarian and foreign films with subtitles. Very occasionally the show is on a video projector, which makes for a less-than-pleasurable night out at the movies.

URÁNIA NATIONAL CINEMA Map p222

Uránia Nemzeti Filmszínház; ☎ 486 3413; VIII Rákóczi út 21; 🕒 7 or 7/a
This all-Art Deco/neo-Moorish extravaganza is another tarted-up film palace. It has an excellent café on the 1st floor, which is an attraction in itself.

THEATRE

COMEDY THEATRE Map p222

Vígyszínház; ☎ information 329 2340, tickets 329 3920; XIII Szent István körút 14; 🎟 ticket office
10am-6pm Mon-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri; 🕒 4 or 6
The attractive little theatre roughly in the middle of the Szent István körút section of the Big Ring Road is the venue for comedies and musicals. When it was built in

1896, the new theatre's location was criticised for being too far out of the city.

INTERNATIONAL BUDA STAGE

Map p216
IBS; ☎ 391 2525; www.ibs-b.hu; II Tároगतó út 2-4; 🕒 56, 🕒 29

This theatre is a more recent arrival and further afield at the foot of the Buda Hills, with occasional performances – often comedies – in English.

JÓZSEF KATONA THEATRE Map p224

Katona József Színház; ☎ 318 3725; www.szinhaz.hu/katona; V Petöfi Sándor utca 6; 🎟 ticket office
10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 2-7pm Sat & Sun; 🚶 M3 Ferenciek tere

The József Katona Theatre is the best known in Hungary and is a public theatre supported mainly by the city of Budapest. Its studio theatre, Kamra, has among the best troupes in the country.

MERLIN THEATRE Map p224

☎ 318 9338, 266 4632; www.merlinszinhaz.hu; V Gerlóczy utca 4; 🚶 M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér, 🕒 47 or 49

This theatre in the heart of Pest stages numerous plays in English, often performed by the theatre's own Atlantis Company or the local Madhouse troupe. It's usually pretty serious stuff, with little scenery and few props.

NATIONAL THEATRE Map pp228-9

Nemzeti Színház; ☎ information 476 6800, reservations 476 6868; www.nemzetiszinhasz.hu; IX Bajor Gizi park 1; 🎟 ticket office 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 2-6pm Sat & Sun; 🕒 2 or 2/a

This rather eclectic venue is the place to go if you want to brave a play in Hungarian or just check out the bizarre and very controversial architecture (see p70).

DANCE

CLASSICAL & MODERN

Budapest's two so-so ballet companies – the Hungarian National and the Hungarian Festival Ballet troupes – perform at the Opera House, the Erkel Theatre (p133) and the National Dance Theatre (opposite).

CENTRAL EUROPE DANCE THEATRE

Map pp218-19
Közép-Európa Táncszínház; ☎ 342 7163, 06 30 526 1024; www.cedt.hu; VII Bethlen Gábor tér 3; trolleybus 74 or 78

This pan-European theatre has some fine contemporary dance performances; enter from VII István út.

MU SZÍNHÁZ Map pp228-9

☎ 466 4627, 209 4014; www.mu.hu in Hungarian; XI Kőrösy József utca 17; 🕒 4

Virtually everyone involved in the Hungarian dance scene got their start at this place in the business in south Buda, where the cutting edge of modern dance can still be enjoyed.

TRAFÓ HOUSE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS Map pp228-9

Trafó Kortárs Művészetek Háza; ☎ information 456 2045, tickets 215 1600; www.trafo.hu; IX Liliom utca 41; 🚶 M3 Ferenc körút

The best stage on which to see modern dance is Trafó, which presents the cream of the crop, including a good pull of international acts.

FOLK

The 30 dancers of the **Hungarian State Folk Ensemble** (Magyar Állami Népi Együttes) perform at the **Buda Concert Hall** (Budai Vigadó; Map p220; ☎ 201 3766; I Corvin tér 8; 🕒 86, 🕒 19) in Buda on Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday from May to mid-October and on Saturday and/or Sunday only during the rest of the year. In addition the **Rajkó Folk Ensemble** (Rajkó Népi Együttes) stages folk-dance performances at the Budapest Puppet Theatre (p73) on Saturday and the Duna Folk Ensemble (Duna Népi Együttes) dances at the Duna Palota (p130) just off Roosevelt tér in Pest on Monday and Wednesday. The 1½-hour programmes by these groups begin at 8pm, and tickets cost from 4600/4200Ft per adult/student. Contact **Hungaria Koncert** (☎ 317 2754, 201 5928; www.ticket.info.hu) for information and bookings for any of the above groups.

Many people attend *táncház* evenings (p131) to learn the folk dances that go with the music, and you can become part of the programme as well instead of merely watching others perform.

NATIONAL DANCE THEATRE Map p220
Nemzeti Táncszínház; ☎ information 201 4407, tickets 375 8649; www.nemzetitancszinhasz.hu; I Színház utca 1-3; 🎟 ticket office 1-6pm; 🚶 16 or Várbusz
The National Dance Theatre on Castle Hill hosts at some point every troupe in the city, including the two ballet companies and the Horvéd Ensemble – one of the city's best folk troupes and now experimenting with modern choreography as well.

ACTIVITIES

HEALTH & FITNESS

Thermal Baths

Budapest lies on the geological fault separating the Buda Hills from the Great Plain; more than 30,000 cu metres of warm to scalding – 21°C to 76°C – mineral water gush forth daily from some 120 thermal springs. As a result, the city is a major spa centre and 'taking the waters' at one of the many *gyógyfürdő* (thermal baths) or spa swimming pools is a real Budapest experience. Some baths date from Turkish times, others are Art Nouveau wonders, and still others are spic-and-span modern establishments.

At thermal baths, depending on the number of patrons, you will sometimes be given a number and will have to wait until it is called or appears on the electronic board. All baths and pools have cabins or lockers. Find one, get changed in it (or beside it) and call the attendant. He or she will lock the door with your clothes inside, write the time on a chalkboard on the door and hand you a numbered tag to tie on your costume. Note: In order to prevent theft lest you lose or misplace the tag, the number is not the same as the one on the locker, so commit the locker number to memory.

Though some of the local spas and baths look a little rough around the edges, they are clean and the water is changed regularly. You might consider taking along a pair of plastic sandals or flip-flops, however. Most bathhouses now require you to wear a bathing suit and no longer distribute those strange drawstring loincloths. Most of them hire out swimming costumes (around 800Ft) if you don't have your own.

Generally, entry to those baths without a deposit or voucher system (such as the Gellért, Lukács and Széchenyi Baths) allows you

to stay for two hours on weekdays and 1½ hours at weekends, though this rule is not always enforced. Most of the baths offer a full range of serious medical treatments plus services such as massage (1900/2700Ft for 15/30 minutes) and pedicure (2000Ft). Specify what you want when buying your ticket.

Please note that some baths become gay venues on male-only days – especially the Király. Not much actually goes on except for some intensive cruising, but those not into it may feel uncomfortable.

An excellent source of information is the Budapest Spas and Hot Springs website: www.spasbudapest.com.

GELLÉRT Map pp228-9

Gellért Gyógyfürdő; ☎ 466 6166; XI Kelenhegyi út; admission 1600Ft; 🕒 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-2pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; 🚗 18, 19, 47 or 49

Soaking in this Art Nouveau palace, open to both men and women in separate sections, has been likened to taking a bath in a cathedral. The pools maintain a constant temperature of 44°C, and the water, high in calcium, magnesium and hydrogen carbonate, is good for pains in the joints, arthritis and blood circulation. The entrance fee is actually a kind of deposit; you get back 700/400/200Ft if you leave within two/three/four hours before 3pm and 500/200Ft if you exit within two/three hours after 3pm.

KIRÁLY Map pp218-19

Király Gyógyfürdő; ☎ 202 3688, 201 4392; II Fő utca 84; admission 1100Ft; 🕒 men 9am-8pm Tue, Thu & Sat, women 7am-6pm Mon, Wed & Fri; 🚗 60 or 86

The four pools here, with water temperatures of between 26°C and 40°C, are genuine Turkish baths erected in 1570 and have a wonderful skylit central dome.

LUKÁCS Map pp218-19

Lukács Gyógyfürdő; ☎ 326 1695; II Frankel Leó út 25-27; admission deposit locker/cabin 1500/1700Ft; 🕒 6am-7pm daily May-Sep, 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; 🚗 17, 🚗 60 or 86

Housed in a sprawling, 19th-century complex, the Lukács Baths are popular with older, very keen spa aficionados and include everything from thermal and mud baths (temperatures 22°C to 40°C) to a swimming pool. The thermal baths are open to men on Tuesday, Thursday

and Saturday and women on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. You get back 500/300/100Ft in you leave two/three/four hours after you enter.

RUDAS Map pp224

Rudas Gyógyfürdő; ☎ 356 1322, 356 1010; I Döbrentei tér 9; admission deposit with cabin 2000Ft; 🕒 men 6am-8pm Mon-Thu, 6am-5pm Fri & Sun, mixed 10pm-4am Fri & Sat, 8am-5pm Sun; 🚗 18 or 19, 🚗 7 or 86

These recently renovated baths are the most Turkish of all in Budapest, built in 1566, with an octagonal pool, domed cupola with coloured glass and massive columns. It's a real zoo on mixed Friday and Saturday nights, when bathing costumes are compulsory. On men's days only you get back 700/400Ft if you leave two/three hours after you enter.

SZÉCHENYI Map pp218-19

Széchenyi Gyógyfürdő; ☎ 363 3210; XIV Állatkerti út 11; admission deposit before/after 3pm 2300/1400Ft; 🕒 6am-7pm; 🚗 M1 Széchenyi fürdő

The Széchenyi baths complex in the northern end of City Park is unusual for three reasons: its immense size (a dozen thermal baths and three swimming pools); its bright, clean look; and its water temperatures (up to 38°C), which really are what the wall plaques say they are. It is open to both men and women at all times and you get back 800/500/200Ft on your deposit if you leave within two/three/four hours before 3pm and 600/300Ft if you exit within two/three hours after 3pm.

THERMAL BATH Map pp226-7

☎ 889 4737; XIII Margit-sziget; admission weekday/weekend 5200/6300Ft; 🕒 6.30am-9.30pm; 🚗 26

This bath is a modern-style thermal spa in the Danubius Grand Hotel Margitsziget (p158) on leafy Margaret Island. The baths are open to men and women in separate sections.

Swimming

Hungarians are keen swimmers and Budapest boasts dozens of *uszoda* (pools), both indoor and outdoor. They're always excellent places to get in a few laps (if indoor), cool off on a hot summer's day (if outdoor) or watch all the posers strut their stuff (both).

The system inside is similar to that at the baths (see p135) except that instead of a cabin or cubicle, there are sometimes just lockers. Many pools require the use of a bathing cap, so bring your own or wear the plastic one provided or sold for a nominal fee. Most pools hire bathing suits and towels.

Following are the best outdoor and indoor pools in the city. Some are attached to thermal baths reviewed previously; others are part of hotel wellness centres.

ALFRÉD HAJÓS Map pp218-19

☎ 450 4214, 340 4946; XIII Margit-sziget; adult/child 900/550Ft; 🕒 outdoor pools 6am-7pm daily May-Sep, indoor pools 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; 🚗 4 or 6, 🚗 26

The one indoor and three outdoor pools here form the National Sports Pool, where Olympic swimming and water-polo teams train.

BÉLA KOMJÁDI Map pp218-19

☎ 212 2750; II Árpád fejedelem útja 8; adult/child 900/550Ft; 🕒 6am-7pm; 🚗 17, 🚗 60 or 86

This pool is used by very serious swimmers and fitness freaks so don't come here for fun and games.

CSILLAGHEGY Map pp226-7

☎ 250 1533; III Pusztakúti út 3; adult/child 1000/800Ft; 🕒 9am-7pm daily mid-May-Sep, 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 7am-5pm Sat, 7am-6pm Sun Sep-mid-May; HÉV Csillaghegy

This popular swimming complex north of Óbuda is the oldest open-air bathing area in Budapest. There are three pools in a 90-hectare terraced park; in winter they are covered by a heated canvas tent.

DAGÁLY Map pp226-7

☎ 452 4500; XIII Népfürdő utca 36; adult deposit with/without cabin 1800/1500Ft, child deposit 1300Ft; 🕒 outdoor pools 6am-7pm daily May-Sep, indoor pools 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; 🚗 M3 Árpád híd, 🚗 1

This huge complex has a total of 10 pools, with plenty of grass and shade. If you leave the complex two/three hours after entering you get 500/300Ft back.

GELLÉRT Map pp228-9

☎ 466 6166; XI Kelenhegyi út; deposit to swimming pool & thermal baths with locker/cabin 2500/3000Ft,

after 5pm daily May-Sep, after 5pm Mon-Fri & after 2pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr 2400/2800Ft; 🕒 6am-7pm daily May-Sep, 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; 🚗 18, 19, 47 or 49

The indoor pools at the Gellért Baths are the most beautiful in Budapest. The outdoor pools (open May to September) have a wave machine and landscaped gardens.

HÉLIA Map pp218-19

☎ 889 5800; XIII Kárpát utca 62-64; admission before/after 3pm Mon-Fri 3500/4500Ft, Sat & Sun 4900Ft; 🕒 7am-10pm; 🚗 M3 Dózsa György út, trolleybus 79

This ultramodern swimming and spa centre in the four-star Danubius Hévia Hotel boasts three pools, sauna and steam room.

LUKÁCS Map pp218-19

☎ 326 1695; II Frankel Leó út 25-27; deposit locker/cabin 1500/1700Ft; 🕒 6am-7pm daily May-Sep, 6am-7pm Mon-Fri, 6am-5pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; 🚗 17, 🚗 60 or 86

Use of the three swimming pools at the Lukács Baths is included in the general admission and the hours are the same.

PALATINUS Map pp226-7

☎ 340 4505; XIII Margit-sziget; adult/child locker 1500/1300Ft, admission with cabin 1900Ft; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-7pm Sat & Sun May & Jun, 9am-7pm daily Jul & Aug; 🚗 26

The largest series of pools in the capital, the 'Palatinus Beach' complex on Margaret Island has a total of 11 pools (two or three with thermal water), wave machines, water slides etc.

RÓMAIFÜRDŐ Map pp226-7

☎ 388 9740; III Rozgonyi Piroška utca 2; adult/child locker 1200/1000Ft, admission with cabin 1600Ft; 🕒 9am-7pm May-Aug; HÉV Rómaifürdő, 🚗 34

The outdoor cold-water thermal pools here are in a leafy area of Óbuda just north of Aquincum.

RUDAS Map pp224

☎ 356 1322, 356 1010; I Döbrentei tér 9; admission with locker/cabin 1000/1200Ft; 🕒 6am-6pm Mon-Fri, 6am-1pm Sat & Sun; 🚗 18 or 19, 🚗 7 or 86

The indoor pools at the Rudas Baths close to the river were built by the Turks in 1566 and retain a strong Turkish atmosphere.

SZÉCHENYI

Map pp218-19
☎ 363 3210; XIV Allatkerti út 11; deposit before/after 3pm 2300/1400Ft; ☎ 6am-7pm; M1 Széchenyi fürdő

Use of the three enormous thermal swimming pools at the Széchenyi Baths is included in the general admission fee.

Gyms & Fitness Clubs

A daily ticket into the **thermal bath and pools** (p136) at the Danubius Grand Hotel Margitsziget includes use of the fitness room and machines. Independent gyms and fitness clubs worth a bend and a stretch include **Astoria Fitness Centre** (Map p222; ☎ 343 1140; V Dohány utca 32; adult/student day ticket 1100/900Ft; ☎ 6.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-6pm Sat; M2 Astoria), with a nearby **branch** (Map p224; ☎ 317 0452; V Károly körút 4; ☎ 6.30am-11pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat & Sun; M2 Astoria); **Arnold Gym** (Map p80; ☎ 250 4259; III Szépvölgyi út 15; two visits 2000Ft; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat & Sun; HÉV Szépvölgyi út, ☎ 86); and **A&TSA Fitness Club** (Map p220; ☎ 488 7220; I Pálya utca 9; to 4pm/full day 1400/1900Ft; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat & Sun; ☎ 105).

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Cycling

Parts of Budapest, including City and Népliget Parks, Margaret Island and the Buda Hills, are excellent places for cycling. At present dedicated bike lanes in the city total about 140km, including the path along Andrassy út, but that is expected to double in the next decade.

For information and advice on cycling, contact the very helpful **Hungarian Cyclists' Club** (MK; ☎ 206 6223, 06 30 922 9052; www.kerosz.hu) or the **Hungarian Bicycle Touring Association** (MKTSSZ; Map p222; ☎ 311 2467; mktssz@dpg.hu; VI Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 31, 2nd fl; M3 Arany János utca). See p52 for information about joining a city tour by bike.

Frigoria publishes a number of helpful guides and maps, including one called *Kerékpárral Budapest környékén* (By Bike around Budapest; 2200Ft) that takes in the surrounding areas and describes 30 different routes. The tourist offices distribute the free, but less ambitious, *Budapest & Surroundings Bicycle*

Route Map, with 20 recommended tours that range in length from 24km to 177km.

Bicycles can be transported on the HÉV, all Mahart boats and the Cog and Children's Railways but not on the metro, buses or trams.

There are a couple of places to rent bicycles on Margaret Island (p63) but these are just for twirling round the island. Bikes to hire for touring further afield include the long-established and very reliable **Yellow Zebra Bikes** (Map p224; ☎ 266 8777, 06 30 211 8861; www.yellowzebrabikes.com; V Sütő utca 2; 1hr/half-day/full day hire 500/2000/3000Ft; M1 M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér; ☎ 10am-6pm Nov-Mar, 9am-8pm Apr-Oct), with an **Opera House branch** (Map p222; ☎ 269 3843; VI Lázár utca 16; ☎ 10am-5pm Nov-Mar, 9.30am-7.30pm Apr-Oct; M1 M1 Opera); **Budapest Bike** (Map p222; ☎ 06 30 944 5533; www.budapestbike.hu; VII Wesselényi utca 18; 2hr/half-day/full day hire 600/1500/3000Ft; ☎ 9am-midnight; ☎ 4 or 6, trolleybus 74), with a **Chain Bridge branch** (Map p224; ☎ 06 30 944 5533; V Lánchíd; ☎ 9am-midnight May-Sep; ☎ 2 or 2a) open only in summer; and **Bike Base** (Map p222; ☎ 269 5983, 06 70 625 8501; www.bikebase.hu; VI Podmaniczky utca 19; 1-/2-/3-day hire €8/12/16; ☎ 9am-7pm; M3 M3 Nyugati pályaudvar).

Boating

The best place for canoeing and kayaking in Budapest is on the Danube at Romai-part; take the HÉV suburban line to Rómaifürdő and walk east towards the river. Two reliable places to rent kayaks and/or canoes are **Óbuda Sport Club** (ÓSE; Map pp226-7; ☎ 240 3353; III Rozgonyi Piroska utca 28; canoes per day 1400Ft; ☎ 8am-6pm) and the **KSH boat club** (Map pp226-7; ☎ 368 8967; III Királyok útja 31; 1-/2-person kayak per day 1300/1500Ft, 3-/4-person canoe per day 1800/1900Ft; ☎ 8am-6pm mid-Apr-mid-Oct).

Caving

Budapest has several caves, two of which can be visited on walk-through guided tours in Hungarian. Most of the hostels offer 4½-hour caving excursions for 2500Ft to **Mátyáshegy Cave** (Mátyáshegyi-barlang; Map pp226-7), a cave opposite the Pálvölgy, usually commencing at 4pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

PÁLVÖLGY CAVE

Map pp226-7
Pálvölgyi-barlang; ☎ 325 9505; II Szépvölgyi út 162; adult/child 750/450Ft; ☎ hourly tours 10am-4pm Tue-Sun; ☎ 65 from Kolosy tér in Óbuda
The second-largest cavern in Hungary, 'Paul Valley' Cave is noted for both its stalactites and its bats. The 500m route involves climbing some 400 steps and a ladder so it may not be suitable for children or the elderly.

SZEMLÓHEGY CAVE

Map pp226-7
Szemplóhegyi-barlang; ☎ 325 6001; II Pusztaszeri út 35; adult/child 650/400Ft; ☎ 10am-4pm Wed-Mon; ☎ 29 from III Kolosy tér
This is Budapest's most beautiful cave, with stalactites, stalagmites and weird grape-like formations. It's about 1km southeast of Pálvölgy Cave.

Horse Riding

The nonprofit **Hungarian Equestrian Tourism Association** (MLTSZ; Map p224; ☎ 456 0444; www.equi.hu; IX Ráday utca 8) can provide you with a list of recommended riding schools that are within striking distance of Budapest. **Pegazus Tours** (Map p224; ☎ 317 1644; www.pegazus.hu; V Ferenciek tere 5) organises riding programmes as does the highly respected **Favorit Lovarda** (☎ 257 1065, 06 30 966 9992; XVI Mókus utca 23; HÉV Szabadságtelep) in the northeastern Csömör district.

PETNEHÁZY LOVASCENTRUM

☎ 397 5048, 06 20 588 3571; petnehazy@net.hu; II Feketefej utca 2-4; ☎ 9am-4pm Sat & Sun; ☎ 63 from Hűvösvölgyi út

One of the closest places to the city is this long-established riding centre at Adyliget near Hűvösvölgy, west of Budapest. By the time you read this it may have resumed lessons, paddock practice and trail riding, which were put on hold while Hungary introduced a new system of rating riding schools. In the meantime there are pony rides (1500Ft per quarter-hour) for the kiddies and carriage rides (15,000Ft per half-hour for 8 people).

Skating

Bringóhintő (p63) on Margaret Island rents out inline skates for 880/1480Ft per half/full hour.

GÖRZENÁL ROLLER-SKATING PARK

Map pp226-7
Görzenál Görkocsolya Park; ☎ 250 4800; III Árpád fejedelem útja 125; admission weekdays/weekends 400/600Ft; ☎ 9am-7.30pm; HÉV Timár utca
This outdoor roller-skating rink and karting track across from the Danube in Óbuda rents skates (500Ft) as well as protective equipment such as gloves, shin and elbow guards (100Ft per set).

CITY PARK ICE-SKATING RINK

Map pp218-19
Városligeti Műjégyháza; ☎ 364 0013; XIV Olof Palme sétány 5; admission weekdays/weekends 360/720Ft; ☎ 9am-1pm & 4-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm & 4-8pm Sat & Sun
In winter this huge outdoor skating rink operates on the western edge of the lake in City Park. If you want to avoid the seasonal crowds, visit on weekday mornings.

Tennis & Squash

There are some three dozen tennis clubs in Budapest usually charging between 2700Ft and 4500Ft per hour for use of their courts (clay and/or green set). Among the best are the **Városmajor Tennis Academy** (Map p216; ☎ 202 5337; XII Városmajor utca 63-69; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 7am-7pm Sat & Sun; ☎ 28); **Szépvölgyi Tennis Centre** (Szépvölgyi Teniszcentrum; Map pp226-7; ☎ 388 1591; III Virág Benedek utca 39-41; ☎ 7am-10pm; ☎ 65 from Kolosy tér in Óbuda); and **Pasarét Sport Centre** (Pasaréti Sportcentrum; Map p216; ☎ 212 52 46; II Pasaréti út 11-13; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-9pm Sat & Sun; ☎ 5).

For squash, book a court at any of the following: **A&TSA Fitness Club** (opposite) for 2400Ft to 4000Ft per hour; **Arnold Gym** (opposite) for 1950Ft to 2950Ft; or **Top Squash** (Map pp218-19; ☎ 345 8193; II Lövőház utca 2-6; court rental 2300-4500Ft; ☎ 7am-11pm Mon-Fri, 8am-9pm Sat & Sun; M2 Moszkva tér, ☎ 4 or 6) on the 4th floor of the Mammút I shopping mall.

WATCHING SPORT

Hungarians love attending sporting matches as well as watching them on TV. The most popular spectator sports are football and water polo, though horse racing and motor racing also have their fans.

For its size and population, Hungary has done extremely well in the Olympics. It finished 13th overall at both the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens and the ones in Sydney in 2000, with exactly the same number of medals: 17 (eight gold, six silver and three bronze). At the 1996 games in Atlanta, it placed 12th with 21 medals and at Barcelona in 1992 the ranking was eighth with 30 medals.

Football

Hungary's descent from being on top of the heap of European football to a *béka segge alatt* – literally, 'under the arse of the frog' as the Hungarians describe something really far down – remains one of life's great mysteries. Hungary's defeat of the England team both at Wembley (6–3) in 1953 and at home (7–1) the following year, are still talked about as if the winning goals were scored yesterday.

There are four premier league football teams in Budapest out of a total 12 playing nationwide, including Kispest-Honvéd, which plays at the city's **József Bozsik Stadium** (☎ 282 9791, 282 9789; XIX Új temető út 1-3; 🚶 36), southeast of the centre, accommodating 15,000 spectators; MTK at **Hungária Stadium** (Map pp218–19; ☎ 219 0300; VIII Salgótarjáni utca 12-14; 🚶 1 or 1/a), to the east of Kerepes Cemetery, for 8000 people; and UTE at **UTE Stadium** (☎ 369 7333; IV Megyeri út 13; 🚶 47 or 96), in Újpest, with room for 15,000 fans.

But no club dominates Hungarian football like Ferencváros (FTC), which is the country's loudest and brashiest team, and its only hope. You either love the Fradi boys in their green and white or you hate them. You can watch them play at the **FTC Stadium** (Map pp228–9; ☎ 215 1013; IX Könyves Kálmán körút 26; 🚶 M3 Népliget), near Népliget Park, with space for 18,000. The daily *Nemzeti Sport* (National Sport; 99Ft), available from newsstands everywhere, has the game schedules.

Horse Racing

The descendants of the nomadic Magyars are keen on horse racing. **Kincsem Park** (Map p216; ☎ 433 0522; www.kincsempark.com; X Albertirsai út 2; 🚶 M2 Pillangó utca), which was recently renovated, is the place to go for both *ügető* (trotting) and *galopp* (flat racing). Schedules can change but in general three trotting meetings of 10 to 11 races take place each week, usually at 3pm on Saturday and Sunday and at 4pm or 5pm on Wednesday year-round. Flat racing usually takes place from 2pm on Thursday and Sunday between May and early November.

Motor Racing

Reintroduced in 1986 following a hiatus of half a century, the **Formula 1 Hungarian Grand Prix** (☎ 28-444 444; www.hungaroring.hu) is part of the World Championship Series that takes place at the Hungaroring at Mogyoród, 24km northeast of Budapest, in August. Practice is on the Friday, the qualifying warm-up on Saturday and the race begins after morning practice at 2pm on Sunday. The only seats with views of the starting grid are Super Gold ones and cost €400 for the weekend; cheaper are Gold (€300 to €320), which are near the pit lane, and Silver (€225 to €250) tickets. Standing room costs €110 for the weekend, €100 for Sunday.

Water Polo

The **Hungarian Water Polo Association** (MVLSZ; ☎ 412 0041; www.waterpolo.hu in Hungarian) is based at the Alfréd Hajós National Sports Pool (p137) on Margaret Island and matches take place here and at two other pools – the Béla Komjádi (p137) in Buda and the **BVSC** (Map pp218–19; ☎ 251 3888; XIV Szőnyi út 2; trolleybus 74 or 74/a) in Pest from September to May. If you want to see a match or watch the lads in training in summer, call the MVLSZ for times and dates or get someone to check schedules for you in *Nemzeti Sport* newspaper.

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