

Southern Transdanubia



With its mild climate, gently undulating hills, minimal industry and rural ambience, Southern Transdanubia is a region of calm, a place to enjoy life at a slow, almost Mediterranean, pace. Aside from a few centres, it's only marginally touched by tourism, and could be just the answer for those looking to get off the beaten track in a country that's been crisscrossed by travellers since time immemorial.

The region is thickly settled with villages, and agriculture is still the mainstay of most people's lives: fruit orchards dot the landscape in the north, almond trees surround Pécs in its heart and vineyards stretch for miles around Szekszárd and Villány-Siklós in its easterly reaches. Late summer/early autumn, when harvesting is in full swing, is a gorgeous time of year in these parts.

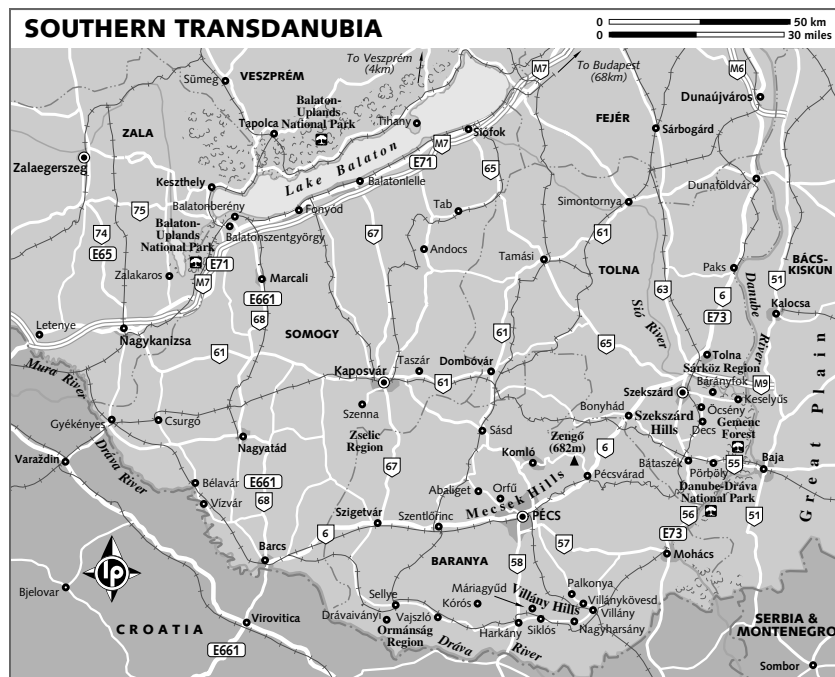
Easily the highlight of the region – and arguably all of provincial Hungary – is Pécs, Southern Transdanubia's capital city. Art museums and theatres abound, and history is also alive and well within its borders. Both the Romans and Turks thought much of the place, leaving their mark for all to gape at; more Roman tombs than you can shake an archaeologist's shovel at have been uncovered near (or under) the city's Basilica, and a handful of Turkish monuments have survived in a country where almost all were put to the torch.

While Pécs steals the limelight, a number of other towns are worth visiting. Imposing castles dominate Siklós and Szigetvár, and in Harkány you can take advantage of curative thermal waters (which we know is a hard task). And any excursion to the south would be incomplete without a glass of some of the country's best wines from Szekszárd and Villány.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Wandering the picturesque streets from one impressive sight to the next in **Pécs** (p294)
- Sampling and – of course – buying the big, bold reds of **Villány** (p292) and **Szekszárd** (p280)
- Exploring the rural **Ormánság region** (p293), Southern Transdanubia's quiet 'back corner'
- Riding the **narrow-gauge train** (p284) through the Gemenc Forest in the Sárköz region
- Taking a dip in the cure-all **thermal baths** (p291) at Harkány, especially in winter





History

Southern Transdanubia was settled by the Celts and then by the Romans, who established important towns at Alisca (Szekszárd) and Sophianae (Pécs) and introduced grape-growing. The north-south trade route passed through here and many of the settlements prospered during the Middle Ages.

As the focal point of the Turkish occupation, Southern Transdanubia was very hard hit. The battle that led to the Ottoman Turks domination of Hungary for more than a century and a half was fought at Mohács on 29 August 1526, and one of the most heroic stands taken by the Hungarians against the invaders took place in the quiet town of Szigetvár some 40 years later.

Late in the 17th century, the abandoned towns of Southern Transdanubia were resettled by immigrant Swabian Germans and Southern Slavs, and at the end of WWII ethnic Hungarians came from Slovakia and Bukovina in Romania as did Saxon Germans.

SZEKSZÁRD

☎ 74 / pop 36,200

The more-than-attractive town of Szekszárd lies south of the Sió River, which links Lake Balaton with the Danube River, among seven of the Szekszárd Hills. It is the capital of Tolna County and the centre of the Sárköz folk region, but more than anything else Szekszárd is the gateway to Southern Transdanubia. In fact, you can see the Sárköz region start in the town's main square (Garay tér), where the Great Plain, having crossed the Danube, rises slowly, transforming into the Szekszárd Hills.

History

Szekszárd was a Celtic and later a Roman settlement called Alisca. The sixth Hungarian king, Béla I, conferred royal status on the town and founded an important Benedictine abbey here in 1061.

The Turkish occupation decimated Szekszárd; however, the area was repopulated late in the 17th century by Swabian Germans, and the cultivation of wheat and viticulture in the 18th century revitalised the economy.

Orientation

The bus and train stations are opposite one another on Pollack Mihály utca. From here, follow pedestrian Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca west through the park to the town centre. Garay tér ascends to the old castle district, today's Béla tér. Munkácsy Mihály utca runs southwest from Béla tér to Kálvária utca and Calvary Hill.

Information

Main post office (Széchenyi utca 11-13)

OTP bank (Szent István tér 5-7) With ATM.

Tourinform (☎ 511 263; szekszard@tourinform.hu; Garay tér 18; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug; 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-May) The straight-faced but helpful staff have loads of information on the town and Tolna County.

Sights

All museums and exhibitions cost 200/100Ft per adult/child and are free on Saturdays.

You can get a good idea of Szekszárd by following Kálvária utca from just south of the catholic church and up the grassy steps to **Kálvária-hegy** (Calvary Hill; 205m). The hill's name recalls the Crucifixion, and there is an 18th-century chapel erected here by grief-stricken parents who lost their child (still remembered thanks to a famous poem by Mihály Babits, a native son of Szekszárd). The Danube and the Great Plain are visible to the east, the Sárköz region beyond the hills to the south and the Szekszárd Hills to the west; on a clear day, you can just see Hungary's sole nuclear power station at Paks, 30km to the north.

The little village – the so-called Upper Town (Felsőváros) – in the valley to the northwest is full of vineyards and private cellars. Walk along Bartina utca, which becomes Remete utca, to **Remete Chapel** (Remete kápolna; 1778), an important pilgrimage site; return via Bocskai utca to the north of Szekszárd Stream.

NOTABLE BUILDINGS

The neoclassical **county hall** (vármegyeháza; ☎ 419 667; Béla tér 1; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 9am-3pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar), designed by Mihály Pollack in 1828, sits on the site of Béla's abbey and an earlier Christian chapel; you can see the excavated foundations in the central courtyard. On the upper floor of the building, there is the **Franz Liszt Exhibition** and across the

hall the **Eszter Mattioni Gallery**, whose works in striking mosaics of marble, glass and mother-of-pearl invoke peasant themes with a twist. The square's yellow baroque **Inner City Catholic Church** (Belvárosi templom; 1805), is the largest single-nave church in Hungary. Franz Liszt performed several times at the pink neo-Gothic **August House** (Széchenyi utca 36-40); today it houses a music school.

MUSEUMS

Szekszárd produced two of Hungary's most celebrated poets: Mihály Babits (1883–1941) and the lesser-known János Garay (1812–53). The **Mihály Babits' Birthplace** (szülőháza; ☎ 312 154; Babits Mihály utca 13; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 9am-3pm Tue-Sat Oct-Mar) has been turned into a memorial museum. Although the poet's avant-garde, deeply philosophical verse may be obscure, even in Hungarian, it's a good place to see how a middle-class family lived in 19th-century provincial Hungary.

The **Mór Wosinszky Museum** (☎ 316 222; Szent István tér 26; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Oct-Mar) was purpose-built in 1895. It is now named after a local priest and archaeologist who discovered the remains of a Neo-lithic culture in the town of Lengyel to the northwest. The finds, objects left by various peoples who passed through the Danube Basin ahead of the Magyars, are among the best anywhere (don't miss the fine Celtic and Avar jewellery), as is the large folk collection of Serbian, Swabian and Sárköz artefacts. Three period rooms – that of a well-to-do Sárköz farming family, another from the estate of the aristocratic Apponyi family of Lengyel and a poor gooseherd's hut – illustrate very clearly the different economic brackets that existed side by side in the region a century ago.

The Middle Eastern flourishes of the **House of Arts** (Művészeti Háza; ☎ 511 247; Szent István tér 28; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Fri), behind the museum, reveal its former life as a synagogue. It is now used as a gallery and concert hall. Four of its original iron pillars have been placed outside and enclosed in an arch, suggesting the tablets of the 10 Commandments. A short distance south of the museum is a striking 'tree of life' monument to 'Szekszárd's heroes and victims of WWII'.

Activities

Try the covered **thermal baths** and **outdoor pools** (☎ 412 035; Toldi utca 6; adult/child 500/250Ft;

For information about hunting, contact the **Hungarian National Hunting Protection Association** (OMVV; ☎ 1-355 6180; www.vadaszativdegylet.hu; II Medve utca 34-40) in Budapest.

Sights & Activities

The main entrance is at the **Gemenc Excursion Centre** (☎ 74-312 552; ☞ 9.30am-5pm year-round) in Báránfyok, about halfway down Keselyűsi út between Szekszárd and the forest. It offers activities such as coach rides for 1300Ft and can supply you with a map of walking and cycling trails through the forest. (Keselyűsi út was once the longest stretch of covered highway in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when in the late 19th century mulberry trees were planted along it to feed the worms at the silk factory in Szekszárd.)

Near the centre is a wooden hall, built without nails for Archduke Franz Ferdinand to keep his hunting trophies. It now houses the **Forest Museum** (adult/child 600/300Ft; ☞ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun mid-Mar–Oct). The hall was exhibited at the 1896 Millenary Exhibition in Budapest and is now in its fourth location, most recently reassembled from Szent István tér in Szekszárd by Polish labourers who – this is not a Polish joke – used nails.

LIVING TRADITIONS

The isolation of areas like the Sárköz region and the Ormánság region south of Szigetvár – places ‘somewhere behind the back of God’, as the Hungarians call them – helped preserve folk customs and crafts found nowhere else in Hungary.

In the Sárköz, lookout for local pottery decorated with birds, the distinctive black-and-red striped woven fabric so common that it was once used as mosquito netting in this bug-infested region, and the unique *írókázás vezékek* (inscribed pots), usually made as wedding gifts.

In the Ormánság, shepherds are famous for the everyday items they carve from horn or wood, including crooks, pocket mirror frames and shaving kits. The oaken trousseau chests, decorated with geometrical shapes and made to hold the distinctive Ormánság bridal brocaded skirts and ‘butterfly’ head-dresses, are unique and superior to the *tulipán ládák* (tulip chests) found in prosperous peasant houses elsewhere in Hungary.

NARROW-GAUGE TRAIN

A **narrow-gauge train**, which once carried wood out of the Gemenc Forest, is a fun – but difficult – way to go. The train runs from Báránfyok to Pörboly (one way/return adult 650/950Ft, child 450/700Ft, two hours), some 30km to the south, once a day at 3.35pm from May to October. Two other trains – at 10.40am and 1.35pm – go only as far as the Gemenc-Dunapart (adult/child 750/550Ft, 11km), where you’ll need to change trains for Pörboly.

From Pörboly, a train leaves at 8.30am to Báránfyok (one way/return adult 650/950Ft, child 450/700Ft, two hours). Two other trains leave at 10am and 1.15pm, but they go only as far as the Gemenc Delta (one way/return adult 450/750Ft, child 550/350Ft, 1¼ hours, 19km).

The abridged trip in itself is worthwhile, weaving and looping around the Danube’s remaining bends, but it’s a good idea to double-check the times with Tourinform in Szekszárd, or with the train station at **Pörboly** (☎ 74-491 483; www.gemenctrt.hu; Bajai út 100) before you set out. You wouldn’t want to be marooned in the Gemenc with a lot of hunters running wild.

Sleeping & Eating

It’s possible to stay at the excursion centre in **wooden bungalows** (☎ 74-410 151; 2/3 people 8000/9000Ft), which have all the amenities of a hotel. The **Trófea** (☎ 74-712 552; mains from 1000Ft) is a *csárda* (Hungarian-style restaurant), near the entrance to the centre and opens daily till 10pm. See p283 for information on buses from Szekszárd to the centre.

Sárköz Region

The folkloric region of Sárköz, consisting of five towns southeast of Szekszárd between Rte 56 and the Danube, is the centre of folk weaving in Hungary. **Öcsény** is the largest town, but for the visitor the most interesting is **Decs**, with its high-walled cottages, late Gothic Calvinist church and folk houses.

The Sárköz became a very rich area after flooding was brought under control in the mid-19th century. In a bid to protect their wealth and land, most families had only one child. And, judging from the displays at the **Regional Museum** (Tájház; Kossuth utca 34-36; adult/child 150/75Ft; ☞ 9am-1pm Tue-Sun), located in a peasant house in Decs, these families spent a lot

of their money on lavish interior decoration and some of the most ornate (and Balkan-looking) embroidered folk clothing in Hungary. The house was built in 1836 from earth and woven twigs, so that when the floods came only the mud had to be replaced; check out the ingenious porcelain ‘stove with eyes’ (concave circles radiate more heat).

MOHÁCS

☎ 69 / pop 19,200

Mohács is a sleepy little port on the Danube that comes to life during the annual **Busójárás festival**, a pre-Lent free-for-all late in February or March when ‘devils’ come out to play. The town is also a convenient gateway to Croatia and the beaches of the Adriatic, with the border crossing at Udvar some 12km to the south.

The defeat of the Hungarian army by the Turks here on 29 August 1526 was a watershed in the nation’s history. With it came partition and foreign domination that would last almost five centuries. It is not an exaggeration to say that the effects of the battle at Mohács can still be felt in Hungary today.

Orientation

The centre of Mohács is located on the west bank of the Danube; residential New Mohács, or Újmohács, is on the opposite side of the river. Szabadság utca, the main street, runs west from the Danube, beginning and ending with large war memorials now in decay.

The bus station is on Rákóczi utca, only a few minutes’ walk south of leafy Deák tér. The port’s train station is situated approximately 1.5km north of the city centre, near the Strandfürdő, at the far end of Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca.

Information

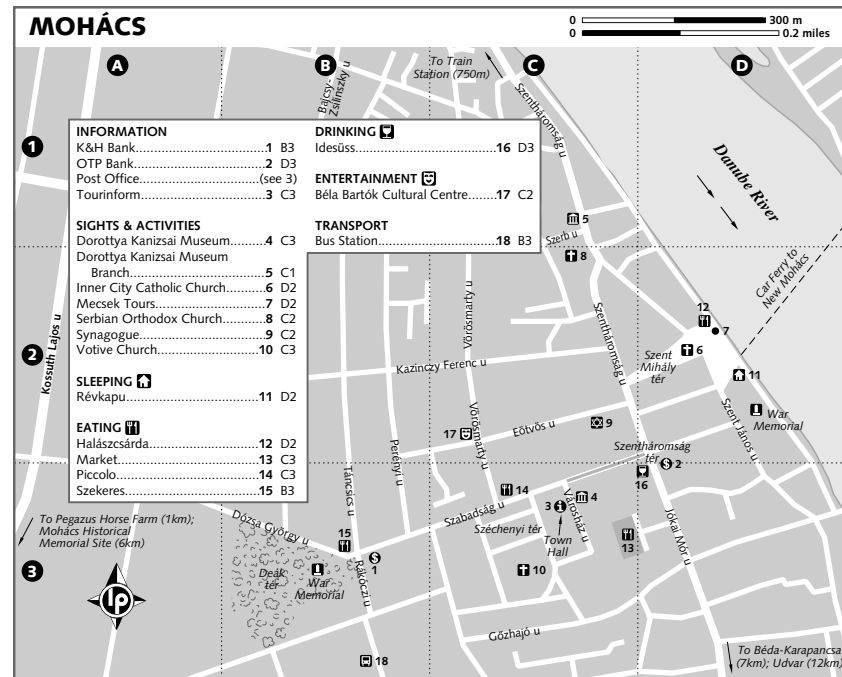
K&H bank (Szabadság utca 23) With ATM.

OTP bank (Jókai Mór utca 1) Also with ATM.

Post office (Széchenyi tér 2) In the southern wing of the Town Hall.

Tourinform (☎ 505 515; mohacs@tourinform.hu; Széchenyi tér 1; ☞ 7.30am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9am-noon Sat mid-Jun–mid-Sep; 7.30am-4pm Mon-Thu, 7.30am-1pm Fri mid-Sep–mid-Jun) Housed in the Moorish Town Hall.

www.mohacs.hu In Hungarian, with a small amount of information in English.



Sights

MOHÁCS HISTORICAL MEMORIAL SITE

This historical **Memorial Site** (Mohácsi Történelmi Emlékhely; ☎ 382 130; adult/child 550/350Ft; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun May-Sep, 10am-4pm Wed-Sun Apr & Oct), west of Rte 56 at Sátorhely (literally 'encampment') about 6km southwest of Mohács, was opened in 1976 to mark the 450th anniversary of the battle. It's a fitting memorial to the dead: over 100 carved wooden markers in the shape of bows, arrows, lances and heads lean this way and that over a common grave that was only discovered in the early 1970s. Above the entrance, a carved sign poignantly announces: 'Here began the deterioration of a strong Hungary.' Explanations of the battle are in Hungarian, but free audio guides in English and German are available.

DOROTTYA KANIZSAI MUSEUM

This **museum** (☎ 311 536; Városház utca 1; adult/child 250/120Ft; 🕒 10am-4pm Tue-Sat Apr-Oct), named after the heroic noblewoman from Siklós who presided over the burial of the dead after the battle at Mohács, has two branches, both open the same hours.

The smaller branch at Szerb utca 2 (ask for the key at the museum's other branch), near the Serbian Orthodox church, is devoted entirely to the 1526 battle. It's a well-balanced exhibit, with both the Turks and the Hungarians getting the chance to tell their side of the story. The museum's main branch, near the town hall, has a large collection of costumes worn by the Sokác, Slovenes, Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Swabians who repopulated this devastated area in the 17th century. The distinctive (and, to some, ugly) grey-black pottery of Mohács and the various devil's- or ram's-head masks worn at the Busójárás festival are also on display.

OTHER SIGHTS

The city's other sights amount to a handful of houses of worship. The Byzantine-style **Votive Church** (Fogadalmi templom; Széchenyi tér) was erected in 1926 for the 400th anniversary of the battle and looks not unlike a mosque. It has some contemporary frescoes of the event and inspired modern stained-glass windows in its large dome.

The pulpit in the baroque **Inner City Catholic Church** (1776), on Szent Mihály tér near

the Csele hotel, is interesting. From here it's a short walk north to the **Serbian Orthodox church** (Szentháromság utca 33), which was built in 1732 and until WWI served a very large local congregation of Serbs. The church's icons and ceiling frescoes date from the 18th century.

In the courtyard of the old **synagogue** (Eötvös utca 1), a large monument featuring stars of David, menorahs, tablets and inscriptions in Hungarian and Hebrew honours the Jewish victims of fascism.

Activities

The **Béda-Karapancsa**, a 100-sq-km woodland some 7km southeast of Mohács, is where locals head to fish, hike and bike. Like the Gemenc Forest, it's part of the Danube-Dráva National Park. Purchase a good map of the area, such as Béda-Karapancsai tájegység (Béda-Karapancsa Region; 800Ft), from Tourinform; unfortunately there is nowhere in town to hire bicycles.

You can rent horses at the **Pegazus Horse Farm** (☎ 301 244; Eszéki út 2), south of the city centre on the road to the Mohács battle site. If you're into **wine**, pick up a copy of the Mohács-Bóly White Wine Route leaflet from Tourinform. It pinpoints about a dozen villages in the area where you can sample the local drop.

Sleeping

Accommodation is almost nonexistent in Mohács. **Révkapu** (☎ 311 129; mvgv@dravanet.hu; Szent János utca 1; s/d 5000/6000Ft; 📍), next to the ferry, with clean, spacious and modern rooms, is about your only choice. The restaurant (mains 1000Ft) is simple, but its terrace is perfect for watching all the ferry comings and goings.

Eating

Halászcserda (☎ 322 542; Szent Mihály tér 5; mains 1500Ft) Easily the best place in town to dine. It has a beautiful terrace overlooking the Danube and a dozen different fish dishes on the menu; the only drawback is the resident band churning out tacky folk music.

Piccolo (☎ 322 097; Szabadság utca 24; pizzas under 800Ft) In a small courtyard, this is an upbeat, friendly and popular pizzeria.

Szekeres (Dózsa György utca 2; ice cream 100Ft; 🕒 9am-6pm) No self-respecting town would do without a quality ice-cream and cake

shop, and Mohács is no exception. Szekeres fits the bill here, with delectable cakes and rich ice cream.

Fresh produce, food stalls and tacky knick-knacks are all available at the town's market, just west of Jókai Mór utca.

Drinking & Entertainment

Idesüss (Jókai Mór utca 2) The makeshift pavilion of Idesüss is as good a place as any to enjoy a *korsó* (pint) or two during the evening.

Béla Bartók Cultural Centre (☎ 510 357; Vörösmarty utca 3), north of Széchenyi tér, has staff who can fill you in on what's happening in Mohács.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Bus services from Mohács aren't as frequent as other towns, but to Pécs (544Ft, 1¼ hours, 44km) and Baja (605Ft, one hour, 47km) they leave almost hourly. Other destinations include Budapest (2410Ft, four hours, 200km, six daily), Villány (423Ft, one hour, 30km, three daily), Siklós (544Ft; 1½ hours, 44km, three daily), Harkány (846Ft, 1½ hours, 66km, five daily), Kalocsa (544Ft, one hour, 43km, one daily Monday to Saturday), Szeged (1930Ft, 3¼ hours, 152km, seven daily) and Szekszárd (605Ft, one hour, 49km, five daily).

TRAIN

Mohács is linked by rail with Villány (264Ft, 25 minutes, 24km) and Pécs (544Ft, 1¼ hours, 60km) and there are up to seven trains a day to these places. To get anywhere else, the bus is the best – indeed, often the only – option.

Getting Around

Buses for any of the following towns will let you off at the Mohács battle site: Nagynyárád, Majs, Lippó, Bezedek and Magyarybóly (133Ft). A year-round car ferry (130/660Ft per person/car) links Szent Mihály tér with residential New Mohács – and the start of the Great Plain – across the Danube to the east.

SIKLÓS

☎ 72 / pop 10,300

Protected from the north, east and west by the Villány Hills, Siklós, Hungary's southernmost town, has been making wine

(mostly whites) since the Romans settled here at a place they called Seres. These days the town itself doesn't have much aside from its hilltop castle, but it's certainly worth dropping in on your journey between the spa at Harkány and the wine cellars of Villány.

Orientation

The town centre of Siklós runs from the bus station (Szent István tér) along Felszabadulás utca to Kossuth tér. Siklós Castle stands watch over the town from the hill to the west. The main train station is northeast of Kossuth tér at the end of Táncsics Mihály utca. The town's other train station, Siklósi-szőlők, northwest of the centre on the road to Máriagyűd, is more convenient to the bus station.

Information

OTP bank (Felszabadulás utca 60-62)

Post office (Flórián tér 1)

Tett-Hely (Kossuth tér 3; per hr 100Ft; 🕒 2-5pm Mon-Fri) Internet access is available here.

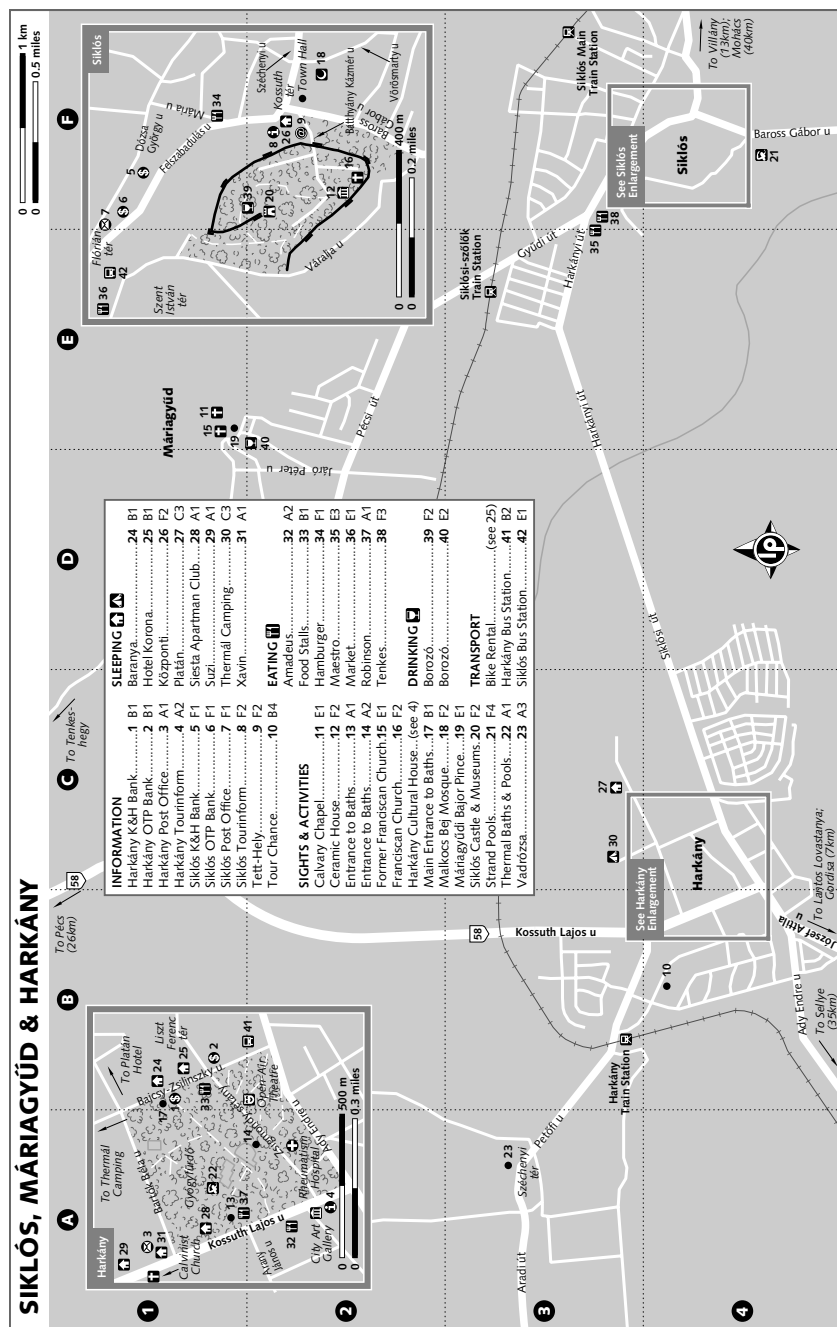
Tourinform (☎ 579 090; siklos@tourinform.hu; Felszabadulás utca 3; 🕒 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) It has information on wine makers in the area, and plans are afoot to offer wine tours.

Sights

SIKLÓS CASTLE

Though the original foundations of **Siklós Castle** (Vár körút; adult/child 660/330Ft; 🕒 9am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 9am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) date from the mid-13th century, what you see when you look up from the town is an 18th-century baroque palace, girdled by 15th-century walls and bastions. The castle has changed hands many times since it was built by the Siklósi family and, until very recently, it was the longest continuously inhabited castle in the country. Its most famous occupant was the reformer Count Kázmér Batthyány (1807–54), among the first of the nobility to free his serfs. He joined the independence struggle of 1848 and was made prime minister of Hungary's new parliamentary government.

Walk to the castle either from Kossuth tér via Batthyány Kázmér utca, or up Váralja utca from Szent István tér, near the bus station. The drawbridge leads to the entrance at the **barbican**, which is topped with loopholes and a circular lookout.



You can also explore the castle and enjoy some fine views of the Villány Hills from along the promenade, linking the four mostly derelict towers.

The castle's main attraction, the **Castle Museum** (Vármúzeum), is in the south wing. To the right as you enter the main door is an unusual exhibit devoted to the manufacture and changing styles of gloves, fans and umbrellas since the Middle Ages. The exhibit's emphasis is very much on the Hamerli and Hunor factories at Pécs, which produced some of Europe's finest kid gloves in the 19th century. The **cellar** contains barely recognisable stone fragments from Roman, Gothic and Renaissance times. Most of the 1st floor is now a modern art gallery, and don't miss the wonderful **Sigismund Hall** (Zsigmond-terem) with its Renaissance fireplace and star-vaulted, enclosed balcony.

To the right of the museum entrance, two doors lead to the dark and spooky **cells** – a real dungeon if ever there was one. The walls here are several metres thick, and up to five grilles on the window slits discouraged any would-be escapers. Woodcuts on the walls of the upper dungeon explain how various torture devices were used. After this, the Gothic **chapel** (☎ 579 353; admission free; appointment needed) is a vision of heaven itself, with its brilliant arched windows behind the altar, web vaulting on the ceiling and 15th-century frescoed niches.

Other Sights & Activities

The 15th-century Gothic **Franciscan church** on Vajda János tér is south of the castle but still within its walls; its cloister is now the **Ceramic House** (Kerámia Alkotóház; Vajda János tér 4; admission 100Ft; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-Apr-Sep).

If you walk down Batthyány Kázmér utca past the little statue of the heroic Dorottya Kanizsai, you'll come to the 16th-century **Malkocs Beg Mosque** (Malkocs bej dzsámija; ☎ 579 279; Vörösmarty utca 14; adult/child 200/100Ft; ☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep; ☎ appointment needed Oct-Mar). Now beautifully restored, the mosque houses temporary exhibits.

If the sticky summer days become too much, join the locals at the **Strand Pools** (☎ 579 840; Baross Gábor utca; adult/child 500/350Ft; ☎ 10am-7pm Sun-Thu, 10am-8pm Fri & Sat Jun-Aug) south of the centre.

Sleeping & Eating

Accommodation and eating options are slim on the ground; Tourinform has a small list of private rooms in town.

Központi (☎ 352 513; www.kozponti.hu; Kossuth tér 5; s/d from 6800/8800Ft, ☎ ☎) Finally, after years of renovation, Központi is open for business, and Siklós is once again the proud owner of a hotel. Its rooms are in tip-top shape but lack warmth. There's a sauna, Jacuzzi and fitness room for guest use, and a restaurant (mains 1000-1500Ft) with an exclusively Hungarian menu.

Hamburger (Felszabadulás utca 22; ☎ 9am-6pm) Despite its savoury name, this cake shop is still going strong, with its delicious selection of sweet things.

The **market**, with everything from knock-off jeans and trainers to *čevapčići* (spicy meatballs) is just west of the bus station.

For something close to the bus station and Siklósi-szőlők train station, try either of the following:

Tenkes (☎ 352 900; Felszabadulás utca 65/a; mains 900-1500Ft) Pleasant restaurant that specialises in fish.

Maestro (☎ 579 206; Felszabadulás utca 69; pizzas & pasta from 500Ft) A more basic eatery, serving mainly Italian fast food.

Drinking

You should really save the wine tasting for Villány and the cellars at Villánykövesd, but if you want to sample a glass here, try the little *borozó* (wine bar) in the castle courtyard. It also serves snacks.

Getting There & Away

Generally you won't wait more than 30 minutes for buses to Pécs (363Ft, 45 minutes, 29km) or Harkány (133Ft, 10 minutes, 8km); hourly buses leave for Máriagyűd and Villány (182Ft, 20 minutes, 14km). For Mohács (544Ft, 1½ hours, 44km), count on between five and 10 buses a day. Other destinations include Szigetvár (907Ft, 2¼ hours, 71km, one to three daily) and Sellye (544Ft, 1¼ hours, 40km, Monday to Friday three daily, Saturday and Sunday two daily).

Up to seven trains a day connect Siklós with Villány (182Ft, 21 minutes, 19km; change here for Mohács or Pécs), Máriagyűd (100Ft, four minutes, 2km), Harkány (100Ft, 10 minutes, 7km) and Sellye (346Ft, 1¼ hours, 39km). All trains heading east or west pass through both of Siklós' stations.

AROUND SIKLÓS

Máriagyűd

☎ 72

The former **Franciscan church** (☎ 579 000; Vujicsics Tihamér utca 66; admission free; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Sat, 7.30am-7pm Sun mid-Apr-mid-Oct, 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 7am-3pm Sun mid-Oct-mid-Apr) at the top of this small village to the northwest of Siklós has been a place of pilgrimage for 800 years. You can make your own way to it from Siklós by walking for about 3km along Gyűdi út and Pécs út before turning north on Járó Péter utca when the church's two towers come into view (or hopping on a Máriagyűd- or Harkány-bound bus).

Máriagyűd was on the old trade route between Pécs and Eszék (now Osijek in Croatia) and a church has stood here since the mid-12th century. Today's church is a large 18th-century affair with modern frescoes on the ceiling, baroque painted altars, some beautifully carved pews and the main object of devotion, Mary and the Christ Child in gold and silver over the main altar. The most interesting time to visit is on Sunday or on a *búcsú* (a patron's festival – the Virgin Mary has lots of them) when merchants set up their stalls beside the church (see boxed text, below).

Mass is conducted in Hungarian at the Calvary Chapel, but at the outdoor altar on the hill above it, just as many people attend

German-language services, often with accompanying oompah band music.

Máriagyűdi Bajor Pince (☎ 351 143; Tenkes utca 14; ☎ noon-3.30pm), in an old cellar in the square just below the church, is a good place to sample some of Siklós' white wines. If it's closed and your thirst is getting the better of you, the simple *borozó*, just to the south, should suffice. From here, you can start a 6km hike up and around the 408m-high Tenkes-hegy (Mt Tenkes).

Harkány

☎ 72 / pop 3300

There is no denying that Harkány is a spa town; literally everything centres on the 62°C spring (which has the richest sulphuric content in Hungary and accounts for the occasionally strong whiff of 'rotten eggs') that bubbles up from the ground. Of course, all that means crowds (well over 100,000 Hungarian, German, Croatian and Serbian visitors in the high season: June to September), *lángos* (deep-fried dough with toppings) and *gyros* (meat skewers) stalls in spades. But you might like it. People come to Harkány to socialise, and the town is on the western edge of the Villány-Siklós region, so there is plenty of wine about.

It's a wonder however that no statue stands in honour of János Pogány, a poor

peasant from Máriagyűd who cured himself of swollen joints by soaking in a hot spring he had discovered here. The Batthyány family recognised the potential almost immediately, erecting bathing huts in 1824 near the source of the spring, and since then the town has never looked back.

ORIENTATION

Harkány is essentially the Gyógyfürdő, a 12-hectare green square filled with pools, fountains and walkways, and bordered by hotels and holiday homes of every description. The four streets defining the thermal complex are Bartók Béla utca to the north, Ady Endre utca to the south, Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca (with most of the hotels) to the east, and Kossuth Lajos utca, with several restaurants, to the west.

The bus station (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca) is at the southeast corner of the park. The train station is to the northwest on Petőfi utca, which branches off from Kossuth Lajos utca.

INFORMATION

Harkány Cultural House (Harkányi Művelődési Ház; ☎ 480 459; Kossuth Lajos utca 2/a; ☎ 9.45am-5.45pm Mon-Thu, 10am-2pm Fri; Internet access per hr 200Ft)

K&H bank (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca) Has a bureau de change at the main entrance to the spa.

OTP bank (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca)

Post office (Kossuth Lajos utca 57)

Tourinform (☎ 479 624; harkany@tourinform.hu; Kossuth Lajos utca 2/a; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri mid-Sep-mid-Jun) Has an office at the Harkány Cultural House.

www.harkany.hu Information about the spa in Hungarian and German.

ACTIVITIES

Thermal Spa

The main entrance to Harkány's **thermal baths** (Gyógyfürdő; ☎ 480 251; day ticket adult/child from 1790/1090Ft, week ticket 10,740/6540Ft; ☎ 9am-6pm year-round) and **outside pools** (adult/child 550/400Ft; ☎ 9am-10pm mid-Jun-Aug, 9am-6pm Sun-Thu, 9am-8pm Fri & Sat Sep-mid-Jun), which are meant to cure just about every ailment under the sun, is on Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca. The services here range from drinking cures and mud massages to an enticing 'wine foam bath', but it's just as enjoyable to swim in the 38°C outdoor pool, especially in cool weather.

Other Activities

You can ride horses (3500Ft per hr) or hire a coach (6000Ft per hr) at **Vadrózsa** (☎ 479 141; Széchenyi tér 30/c) northwest of the centre, off Petőfi utca, and at **Lantos Lovastanya** (☎ 480 077) near the village of Gordisa, 7km south of Harkány. **Bike rental** (400/1600Ft per hour/day) is available from the Korona Hotel during summer, and **cruises** (adult/child 1200/900Ft) on the Dráva River running along the border to Croatia can be organised through Tourinform or **Tour Chance** (☎ 480 272; www.tourchance.hu; Táncsics Mihály utca 54/a).

SLEEPING

Even though Harkány has an incredible array of hotels and *pensions* to suit all budgets, it pays to book over holiday periods as places can fill up quickly.

Budget

Tourinform has a comprehensive list of private rooms and apartments from 3000Ft and will make bookings.

Thermál Camping (☎ 480 117; Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 6; camp sites per person/tent 700/700Ft, bungalows for up to 4 people 8000Ft, pension d 3500Ft, hotel d 5000Ft; ☎ mid-Mar-mid-Oct) This lush, green camping ground is an easy walk to the pools and a jack-of-all-trades, with tent sites, bungalows, *pension* rooms with kitchens and standard hotel rooms.

Midrange

Suzi (☎ 70-205 53 56; www.harkanyapartment.hu; Kossuth Lajos utca 55/20; d €25-27, tr €32-35; ☎) This newly built apartment complex has stylish and immaculate rooms, with wood floors and warm, bright colours. A fully equipped kitchen comes with each apartment.

Xavin (☎ 479 399; www.xavin.hu; Kossuth Lajos utca 43; s/d 8200/12,200Ft; ☎) Away from most of the hustle and bustle, this three-star hotel has cosy, open rooms and its own indoor pool with stress-relieving sauna.

Hotel Korona (☎ 580 830; www.hotels.hu/korona; Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 3; r 10,000-14,000Ft; ☎) There may have been a name change but this hotel housed in an Art-Deco sanatorium once used by Communist Party honchos is still one of the best options in town. It has a certain charm and lovely grounds, but most clientele aren't the sprightliest.

Baranya (☎ 480 160; www.hotelbaranya.hu; Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 5; s/d 5300/8100Ft; ☎) Spreading

FAREWELL TO ALL THAT

The word *búcsú* (church patronal festival) derives from the ancient Turkish for 'absolution', or 'the forgiveness of sins'. From medieval times it has taken on the additional meaning of 'pilgrimage' in Hungarian.

Búcsúk were usually linked with an icon or statue in a particular church, such as the Black Madonnas at Andocs, north of Kaposvár, and Máriapócs (p361), near Nyírbátor in the Northeast. They could also honour the name of a church's patron saint. People would march, often for days, to the holy place carrying banners and singing. Local people would accommodate and feed the pilgrims for little, or nothing. Often the faithful would spend the night in the church itself, believing that the absolution – or the cure – was more likely to occur in sleep.

Over the centuries *búcsúk* took on a more secular tone. Merchants would set up their stalls around the church, selling not only relics and religious articles but clothing, food and drinks as well. Showmen, buskers and musicians entertained the crowds and, in some places, there was even a 'bride market' with hopeful young women appearing with their full dowries. While the old and infirm congregated in the church to touch and venerate the holy picture or statue, the young remained outside for the entertainment.

As it happens, *búcsú* has yet another meaning in Hungarian: 'farewell'. Thus the Budapesti Búcsú (Budapest Goodbye) every June marking the departure of the last Soviet soldier from Hungarian soil in 1991 has a double meaning: it is both a raging party paying homage to hedonism and a 'goodbye' to the last of the much-despised occupiers.

itself across three buildings – each with its own distinct character – is Baranya. A solid bet, with homely rooms directly opposite the baths' main entrance.

Siesta Apartman Club (☎ 480 611; siesta.hotel@hshc-szallodalanc.hu; Kossuth Lajos utca 17; s 5000-6800Ft, d 6700-8900Ft; (P)) Siesta is more than handy to the spa's Kossuth Lajos entrance, and while the place has seen better days, its rooms are close to spotless and still in good condition.

Platán (☎ 480 507; www.hotelplatan.hu; Bartók Béla utca 15; s/d from €20/29; (P)) This is a quiet, 60-room hotel in two former trade union holiday houses to the east of town. Rates depend on the season, the building and whether the room has a balcony.

EATING

Most visitors eat at their hotel's or *pension*'s restaurant, of which there are more than enough. Unfortunately the quality is not always up to scratch but you're certainly not going to starve.

Xavin (☎ 479 399; Kossuth Lajos utca 43; mains 1200-2000Ft) The well-established restaurant of the Xavin hotel, it has silver service and an extensive wine list.

Robinson (☎ 580 090; Kossuth Lajos utca 7; mains 1000-1500Ft) For a decent sit-down meal, try this place, with its Caribbean-themed décor and mixed menu of Hungarian dishes and Italian cuisine.

Amadeus (Kossuth Lajos utca 12; ice cream from 90Ft; ☎ 9am-7pm) For something sweet on a hot day, head to Amadeus, an ice-cream and cake store near Tourinform.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Bus

While buses depart once or twice an hour for Siklós (133Ft, 10 minutes, 8km) and Pécs (484Ft, one hour, 37km), other destinations are not so well served. There is only one bus a day to Baja (1450Ft, 2½ hours, 116km), Sellye (423Ft, one hour, 34km, weekdays), Szekszárd (1150Ft, 2½ hours, 95km) and Mohács (846Ft, 1½ hours, 69km).

In summer, buses to Stuttgart via Munich leave Harkány on Thursday at 1.30pm and Sunday at 2.30pm. They arrive in the German city at 6.30am on Friday and 7.30am on Monday, respectively. Buses also go to Frankfurt via Pécs and Nuremberg at 1.30pm on Sunday, arriving there at 8am on

Monday. There are also services to Munich and Stuttgart at 1.30pm on Thursday and 2.30pm on Sunday.

Train

By rail from Harkány, you can reach Sellye (346Ft, 1¼ hours, 32km, up to four times daily) to the west. There are also up to six trains daily to Siklós (100Ft, 10 minutes, 7km) and Villány (264Ft, 32 minutes, 26km) to the east. Change at Villány for Mohács or Pécs.

VILLÁNY

☎ 72 / pop 2750

Some 13km northeast of Siklós and dominated by Szársomlyó-hegy (422m) to the west, Villány is a village of vineyards; in fact it's one of Hungary's principal producers of wine. And by the looks of the buildings in the village centre, it's surviving very nicely on plonk, thank you very much.

Villány also has its place in the annals of Hungarian history. In 1687 it was the site of what is known as the 'second battle of Mohács', a ferocious confrontation in which the Turks got their comeuppance: they were driven southward by the Hungarians and slaughtered in the Dráva marshes. Serbs and Swabians moved in after the Turkish occupation and viticulture resumed.

Orientation

Villány is essentially just one main street, Baross Gábor utca. The bus stops in the centre of the village, near the ABC supermarket and the Town Hall. The train station is about 1200m to the north on Ady Endre fasor, en route to Villánykövesd.

Information

OTP bank (Baross Gábor utca 27) With ATM.

Post office (Vörösmarty utca 2) Next to the Oportó restaurant in the centre.

Villány-Siklós Wine Route Association (☎ 492 181; www.borut.hu; Deák Ferenc utca 22; ☎ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri) Just north of the bus station, it produces the handy *Villány-Siklós Wine-Route* booklet covering places to buy and sample local wines in the region. It also organises wine tours.

Sights & Activities

The **Wine Museum** (Bormúzeum; ☎ 492 130; Bem József utca 8; admission free, wine tastings for groups only;

☎ 9am-5pm Tue-Sun), housed in a 200-year-old tithé cellar, has a collection of 19th-century wine-producing equipment, such as barrels and hand corks. Downstairs in the cellars, Villány's celebrated wines age in enormous casks, and vintage bottles dating from 1895 to 1971 are kept in safes. There's a small shop at the entrance selling Villány and Siklós wines, some of them vintage and among the best labels available in Hungary.

You can sample wines in many of the family **cellars** that line Baross Gábor utca, including Pólya at No 58, Szende at No 87 and Fritsch at No 97. They're normally open 9am to 6pm daily; expect to pay around 1100/2200Ft to sample four/eight wines. The best time to visit is during the September harvest, when the town is a hive of activity. Human chains pass buckets of grapes from trucks to big machines that chew off the vines, reduce the fruit to a soggy mass and pump the must – the unfermented grape juice – into enormous casks.

Sleeping & Eating

There are plenty of signs advertising private rooms in Villány.

Gere (☎ 492 195; www.gere.hu; Diófás tér 4; s/d 8000/10,600Ft; (P)) You shouldn't miss the chance to stay at this eight-room *pension*, near the main road. Rooms are big and cosy, there's a peaceful garden to laze around in, and its fine restaurant serves some of the best wine in these parts.

Kövári (☎ 492 117; Rákóczi utca 25; s/d 3000/6000Ft; (P)) This small *pension* is more like Grandma's big, rambling house in the countryside, with oil heating-stoves and old, mismatched furniture, where guests are assured of a warm, hearty welcome. Everything is spotlessly clean and there's a huge garden out back.

Cabernet (☎ 493 200; www.hotelcabernet.hu; Petőfi utca 29; s/d from 9000/11,000Ft; (P)) Cabernet, in Villánykövesd, is worth considering if you really want to stay in the centre of the wine area. It has 25 rooms, a restaurant and does wine tasting.

Oportó (Baross Gábor utca 33; mains 1500Ft) Oportó is the town's large, central restaurant, with a vine-covered terrace. A huge choice of wines accompanies its selective Hungarian menu.

Fülemile Csárda (☎ 492 939; Ady Endre fasor; mains 1200-2000Ft) This lovely old farm house,

WINE TOWNS APLENTY

Villány may win the prize for most wine cellars per square kilometre, but it by no means has a monopoly in the region. Harkány and Siklós have their fair share, but both towns lack atmosphere; if you're heading east from either town, you'd be better off stopping in at the cellars of **Nagyotótfalu**, **Kisharsány** or **Nagyharsány**, around 7km east of Siklós.

Arguably the best place for tastings is in the cellars cut into the loess soil at **Villánykövesd**, about 3.5km northwest of Villány along the road to Pécs. Cellars line the main street (Petőfi út) and the narrow lane (Pincesor) above it. Along Petőfi út, try the deep Polgár cellar at No 51 or Baschta at No 63. On Pincesor, No 14-15 is the cellar of master vintner Imre Tiffán, while Schwarzwalter is at No 16 and Blum at No 24. The cellars keep odd hours, so it's a hit-or-miss proposition.

Another 5km further on from Villánykövesd is the tiny village of **Palkonya** with its two cellars and rural vibe.

a couple of hundred metres past the train station, is a good place to stop for a bite on your way to/from Villánykövesd.

Júlia (☎ 702 610; Baross Gábor utca 73b; mains 1000-2000Ft) An intimate little restaurant that serves excellent veal *pörkölt* (stew), has wine tasting and plans to open rooms for accommodation on the top floor.

Getting There & Away

There are only two buses a day to Pécs, and seven to Siklós, Harkány and the villages in between. Villánykövesd can be reached five times daily on weekdays but only twice daily on Saturday. Trains run east to Mohács (264Ft, 25 minutes, 24km), west to Siklós (182Ft, 21 minutes, 19km) and Harkány (264Ft, 32 minutes, 26km), north to Pécs (346Ft, 45 minutes, 36km) and south to Sarajevo.

ORMÁNSÁG REGION

About 30km west of Harkány, this plain was prone to flooding by the Dráva River for centuries. That and the area's isolation are reflected in its unusual architecture, folk ways and distinct dialect. Couples usually

centuries later that the Turks took the city with virtually no resistance in 1543. The Turks moved the local populace outside the walls and turned Pécs into their own administrative and cultural centre. When they were expelled almost 150 years later, Pécs was virtually abandoned, but still standing were monumental souvenirs that now count as the most important Turkish structures in the nation.

The resumption of wine production by German and Bohemian immigrants, and the discovery of coal in the 18th century, spurred Pécs' development. The manufacture of luxury goods (gloves, Zsolnay porcelain, Pannonvin sparkling wine, Angster organs) and the exploitation of nearby uranium mines came later.

Orientation

The oval-shaped inner town, virtually all of it now pedestrian-only, has as its heart Széchenyi tér, where a dozen streets converge. One of these is Király utca, a promenade of restored shops, pubs and restaurants to the east. To the northwest lies Pécs' other important square, Dóm tér. Here you'll find the cathedral, several early Christian chapels and Káptalan utca, the 'street of museums'. Pécs' train station is in Indóház tér, south of the inner town along Jókai Mór utca. The bus station is near the big market on Zólyom utca. From the bus station walk north along Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca and Irgalmasok utcája to the centre.

Information

BOOKSHOPS

Corvina Art Bookshop (☎ 310 427; Széchenyi tér 7-8) Housed in the House of Artists (Művészetek Háza); has an excellent selection of English-language books.

INTERNET ACCESS & RESOURCES

Tourinform (☎ 511 232; Széchenyi tér 9; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat May & Oct, 8am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) Has free Internet access.
www.pecs.hu/ For information in English and German.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Bus & Train stations (☎ per hr 150Ft; 8am-6pm)
Tourinform (☎ 511 232; Széchenyi tér 9; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat May & Oct, 8am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr; per hr 100Ft)

MEDICAL SERVICES

Regional Hospital (☎ 533 133; Rákóczi út 2)

MONEY

M&M Exchange (Király utca 16; ☎ 8.30am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8.30am-1pm Sat) Offers a decent rate.

OTP bank (Rákóczi út) Has one of many ATMs scattered throughout the centre.

POST

Main post office (Jókai Mór utca 10) South of Széchenyi tér, it's in a beautiful Art-Nouveau building dating from 1904 (note the angels in relief writing, mailing and delivering the post).

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourinform (☎ 511 232; baranya-m@tourinform.hu; Széchenyi tér 9; ☎ 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat & Sun Jun-Sep, 8am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat May & Oct, 8am-4pm Mon-Fri Nov-Apr) Knowledgeable staff and has copious amounts of information on Pécs and for the Baranya County.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

Ibusz (☎ 211 011; Király utca 11)

Mecsek Tours (☎ 513 370; Széchenyi tér 1)

Sights

SZÉCHENYI TÉR

This lovely square of mostly baroque buildings framed by the Mecsek Hills is where you should start any walking tour of Pécs. Dominating the square – indeed, the very symbol of the city – is the former Pasha Gazi Kassim Mosque. Today it's the Inner Town Parish Church (Belvárosi plébánia templom), more commonly known as the **Mosque Church** (☎ 321 976; admission free; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 11.30am-4pm Sun mid-Apr–mid-Oct, 10am-noon Mon-Sat, 11.30am-2pm Sun mid-Oct–mid-Apr). It is the largest building still standing in Hungary from the time of the Turkish occupation.

DISCOUNT CARDS

If you plan to visit as many sights as possible while in town, consider purchasing the **Pécs Ticket** (adult/child 1700/850Ft), which covers entrance to all such establishments except (and there is always an exception) the early Christian tomb and the Roman tomb sites. Tickets are available direct from the various sights.

The square mosque with its green copper dome was built with the stones of the ruined medieval church of St Bertalan in the mid-16th century; after the expulsion of the Turks, the Catholic Church repossessed it. The northern semicircular part was added in the 20th century. The Islamic elements on the south side are easy to spot: windows with distinctive Turkish ogee arches; the prayer niche (mihrab) carved into the interior southeast wall; faded verses from the Koran to the southwest; lovely geometric frescoes on the corners. The mosque's minaret was pulled down in 1753 and replaced with a tower.

The **Janus Pannonius Archaeology Museum** (Janus Pannonius Régészeti Múzeum; ☎ 312 719; Széchenyi tér 12; adult/child 200/100Ft; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-2pm Tue-Sat Nov-Mar), behind the Mosque Church in the 17th-century home of a janissary commander, traces the history of Baranya County up to the time of Árpád. It also contains many examples of Roman stonework from Pannonia, a model of St Bertalan's Church and medieval porcelain.

The **Trinity Column** in the lower part of Széchenyi tér is the third one to grace the spot and dates from 1908. The porcelain **Zsolnay Fountain**, with a lustrous glaze and pagan bull's head, to the southeast in front of the rather gloomy **Church of the Good Samaritan**, was donated to the city by the Zsolnay factory in 1892.

KOSSUTH TÉR

This square southeast of Széchenyi tér has two important buildings: the Eclectic **town hall** (1891) to the north and the **synagogue** (adult/child 300/200Ft; ☎ 10am-5pm Sun-Thu May-Oct) to the east. The synagogue was built in the Romantic style in 1869, and a fact sheet, available in 11 languages, explains the history of the building and the city's Jewish population. Shortly after the fascist Hungarian government established a ghetto in Pécs in May 1944, most of the city's 3000 Jews were deported to the Nazi death camps; only 150 Jews now live in the city.

AROUND DÓM TÉR

The foundations of the four-towered **Basilica of St Peter** (☎ 513 030; Dóm tér; adult/child 1000/500Ft; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun Apr-Oct; 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 1-4pm Sun Nov-Mar) – or simply

székesegyház (cathedral) – date from the 11th century and the side chapels are from the 1300s. But most of what you see today of the neo-Romanesque structure is the result of renovations carried out in 1881. Guided tours are conducted in Hungarian and German and cost 2000Ft.

The basilica is very ornate inside; the elevated central altar is a copy of a medieval one. The most interesting parts of the basilica are the four chapels under the towers and the crypt, the oldest part of the structure. The **Chapel of Mary** on the northwest side and the **Chapel of the Sacred Heart** to the northeast contain works by the 19th-century painters Bertalan Székely and Károly Lotz. The **Mór Chapel** to the southeast has more works by Székely as well as magnificent pews. The **Corpus Christi Chapel** on the southwest side (enter from the outside) boasts a 16th-century red marble tabernacle, one of the best examples of Renaissance stonework in the country.

The **Bishop's Palace** (Püspöki palota; 1770) to the southwest is only open to groups (and even then, rarely), but have a look at the curious **statue of Franz Liszt** (Imre Varga; 1983), peering over from a balcony. On the southern side of the baroque **Ecclesiastical Archives** (Egyházi levéltár) is the entrance to the **Jug Mausoleum** (Korsós sírkamra; adult/child 300/150Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun), a 4th-century Roman tomb whose name comes from a painting of a large drinking vessel with vines found here. The **early Christian tomb chapel** (Ókeresztény sírkápolna; ☎ 312 719; Szent István tér 12; adult/child 350/200Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar), across Janus Pannonius utca, dates from about AD 350 and has frescoes of Adam and Eve, and Daniel in the lion's den. Two **Roman tomb sites** (Apáca utca 8 & 14; adult/child 350/200Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) containing 110 graves, are a little further south. The entire area, which so far consists of 16 burial chambers and several hundred graves, is now a designated Unesco site.

The **Csontváry Museum** (☎ 310 544; Janus Pannonius utca 11; adult/child 600/300Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) exhibits the major works of Tivadar Kosztka Csontváry (1853–1919), a unique symbolist painter whose tragic life is sometimes compared with that of Vincent van Gogh, who was born in the same year. Many of

Csontváry's oversized canvases are masterpieces, especially *Storm on the Great Hortobágy* (1903), *Solitary Cedar* (1907) and *Baalbeck* (1906), an artistic search for a larger identity through religious and historical themes.

To the west and north of Dóm tér is a long stretch of the **old city wall** that enclosed an area far too large to defend properly. The circular **barbican** (Esze Tamás utca 2), the only stone bastion to survive in Pécs, dates from the late 15th century and was restored in the 1970s.

KÁPTALAN UTCA

Káptalan utca, running east from Dóm tér to Hunyadi János út, contains a plethora of museums, all of them in listed buildings.

The **Ferenc Martyn Museum** (☎ 324 822; Káptalan utca 6; adult/child 400/200Ft; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct) displays works by the Pécs-born painter and sculptor (1899–1986) and sponsors special exhibits of local interest.

The entry fee to the museum includes entry to the **Endre Nemes Museum** (☎ 310 172; Káptalan utca 5; ☎ 10am-2pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct), which is devoted to paintings by the surrealist Endre Nemes (1908–85). In a separate pavilion behind it is Erzsébet Schaar's Utca (also included in the Martyn Museum ticket), a complete artistic environment in which the sculptor set her whole life in stone.

The **Modern Hungarian Art Gallery** (Modern Magyar Képtár; ☎ 324 822; Káptalan utca 4; adult/child 400/200Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) is the best place to get an overview of art in Hungary between 1850 and today. For art up to 1950 pay special attention to the works of Simon Hollósy, József Rippl-Rónai and Ödön Márffy. For more abstract and constructionist art, watch out for the names András Mengyár, Tamás Hencze, Béla Uitz and Gábor Dienes. The **Péter Székely Gallery** behind the museum has large stone and wood sculptures.

The two most interesting museums are at the eastern end of the street: the **Vasarely Museum** (☎ 324 822; adult/child 600/300Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) at No 3 and the **Zsolnay Porcelain Museum** (☎ 507 604; adult/child 700/350Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) at No 2. Victor Vasarely was the father of Op Art and, although some of the works on exhibit by him and his disciples are dated, most are

evocative, very tactile and just plain fun. The Zsolnay porcelain factory was established in Pécs in 1853 and was at the forefront of art and design in Europe for more than half a century. Many of its majolica tiles were used to decorate buildings throughout the country and contributed to establishing a new pan-Hungarian style of architecture. Zsolnay's darkest period came when the postwar communist government turned it into a plant for making ceramic electrical insulators. It's producing art again (in very limited quantities), but contemporary Zsolnay can't hold a candle to the chinoiserie pieces from the late 19th century and the later Art-Nouveau and Art-Deco designs done in the lustrous eosin glaze. The museum, housed in a residence dating from the Middle Ages, was the home of the Zsolnay family and contains many of their furnishings and personal effects. Also in the museum is an exhibition of sculptures by Amerigo Tot (1909–84).

OTHER SIGHTS

Southwest of the inner town and opposite the Pátia hotel is the **Pasha Hassan Jakovali Mosque** (Jakováli Hasszán Pasa dzsámija; ☎ 313 853; Rákóczi út 2; adult/child 240/100Ft; ☎ 10am-1pm & 2-6pm Thu-Tue Apr-Sep), wedged between a trade school and a hospital. The 16th-century mosque – complete with minaret – is the most intact of any Turkish structure in Hungary and contains a small museum of Ottoman *objets d'art*. The **Ethnography Museum** (Néprajzi Múzeum; ☎ 315 629; Rákóczi út 15; adult/child 300/150Ft; ☎ 10am-6pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar) to the southeast, showcases ethnic Hungarian, German and South Slav folk art in the region.

One of Pécs' most enjoyable pedestrian streets, Ferencsek utcája, runs east from Rákóczi út to Széchenyi tér, where Király utca also becomes pedestrian. You'll pass the ruins of the 16th-century **Pasha Memi Baths** (Memi pasa fürdője; Ferencsek utcája 35), three beautiful old churches and, on Király utca, the neo-rococo **Pécs National Theatre**. Just past the theatre you'll run into the **Marcipán Museum** (☎ 225 453; Király utca 36; adult/child 300/200Ft; ☎ 11am-8pm), where you can make your own delectable delight or buy one from the museum shop. After passing the **Church of St Stephen** (Szent István-templom; Király utca 44/a), turn south (right), where you'll find the excellent

City History Museum (Várostarténeti Múzeum; ☎ 310 165; Felsőmalom utca 9; adult/child 300/150Ft; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sat May-Oct, 10am-2pm Tue-Sat Nov-Apr).

The suburb of Budaiváros to the north-east of the town centre is where most Hungarians settled after the Turks banned them from living within the city walls. The centre of this community was the **All Saints' Church** (Mindenszentek temploma; ☎ 324 937; Tettey utca 14; admission free). Originally built in the 12th century, it was reconstructed in Gothic style 200 years later. All Saints was the only Christian church allowed in Pécs during the occupation and was shared by three sects – who fought bitterly for every square centimetre. Apparently it was the Muslim Turks who had to keep the peace among the Christians.

To the northeast up on a hill is **Havi-hegy Chapel** (☎ 314 715; Havihegyi utca 7; admission free), built in 1691 by the faithful after the town was spared the plague. The church is an important city landmark, and offers wonderful views of the inner town and the narrow streets and old houses of the Tettey Valley.

To get a taste of the Mecsek Hills, walk northeast from the centre of Pécs to Tettey and the **Garden of Ruins** (Romkert), what's left of a bishop's summer residence built early in the 16th century and later used by Turkish dervishes as a monastery. To the northwest, up Fenyves sor and past the **zoo** (állatkert; ☎ 312 788; adult/child/student 600/450/500Ft; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Oct), a winding road leads to **Misina Peak** (535m) and a **TV tower** (☎ 336 900; adult/student/child 450/350/300Ft; ☎ 9am-9pm Sun-Thu, 9am-11pm Fri & Sat Jun-Aug; 9am-6pm Sep-May), an impressive 194m structure with a viewing platform and café-bar. But these are just the foothills: from here, trails lead to the lovely towns of **Orfű** and **Abaliget**, on a plateau 15km and 20km to the northwest, respectively; and to Southern Transdanubia's highest peak, **Zengő-hegy** (682m).

The Sunday flea market (Vásár tér), about 3km southwest of the inner town on Megyeri út, attracts people from the countryside, especially on the first Sunday of the month.

Activities

The closest swimming complex to the centre is **Hullám** (☎ 512 935; Szendrey Júlia utca 7; adult/child 700/350Ft; ☎ indoor pool 6am-10pm, outdoor pool 9am-7pm in summer).

Festivals & Events

Among the big annual events in this party town are **International Culture Week** (www.icwip.hu) in late July that focuses on theatrical performances; **Pécs Days** in late September, a 10-day festival of dance and music with a couple of alcohol-related events; and the **European Wine Song Festival** (www.winesongfestival.hu) also in late September, and Europe's only festival exclusively for male singers.

Sleeping BUDGET

Both Mecsek Tours and Ibusz can arrange private rooms (from 2500Ft per person) and while Tourinform has a list of such places, it will only book hotels. Many of Pécs' *pensions* are sprinkled in the surrounding hills and rather difficult to get to without your own transport.

Centrum (☎ 311 707; www.hotels.hu/centrum_kis hotel; Szepessy Ignác utca 4; s/d 4500/5600Ft) Centrum believes in old-fashion hospitality – homely, welcoming and slightly left of centre. Rooms are a collection of mismatching furniture but its central position is unbeatable.

Laterum (☎ 252 113; www.laterum.hu; Hajnóczy utca 37-39; s/d 5200/8400Ft; ☎) The institutional air of this large hotel, 3km west of town, is offset by exceptionally large and clean rooms, reasonable prices, and a bar and restaurant on site.

Fónix (☎ 311 682; www.fonixhotel.hu; Hunyadi János út 2; s/d 5990/9990Ft; ☎) Fónix appears to be a hotel too large for the land it's built on; not an inch is left over for an outdoor area. Some rooms are not even big enough to swing a cat in, while others sport balconies. It is however only a stone's throw from the Mosque Church.

In July and August many of the city's colleges (1600Ft to 2000Ft per person) open up their doors to travellers, including central **Pollack Mihály College** (☎ 315 846; Jókai utca 8) and **János College** (☎ 251 234; Szántó Kovács János utca 1/c) further to the west; both have dormitories with two to five beds. Tourinform has a list of more places if you require.

MIDRANGE

Lenau Haus (☎ 332 515; lenauhaus@mail.datanet.hu; Munkácsy Mihály utca 8; s/d 6800/8800Ft; ☎) Rooms on the top floor of the house where the composer Nikolaus Lenau resided are among the best options in Pécs.

Expect to find large rooms with spotless en suite bathrooms.

Diana (☎ 328 594; www.hoteldiana.hu; Tímár 4/a; s/d 7000/10,000Ft; (P)) With eight excellent hotel-style rooms, this *penzion* has plenty of home comforts and a warm welcome. A great choice just south of the synagogue.

Abraham (☎ 510 422; Munkácsy Mihály utca 8; s/d 7500/10,500Ft; (P)) This excellent little *penzion*, with sparkling blue rooms, a well-tended, peaceful garden and friendly welcome, has a distinct Mediterranean feel. Note that it is a religious establishment, so raucous behaviour isn't welcome.

Toboz (☎ 510 555; www.tobozpanzio.hu; Fenyves sor 5; s/d 8600/11,600Ft; (P)) Just south of the zoo on a tree-lined street high above the city, Toboz has a retreat feel and old, uncomfortable rooms.

Palatinus (☎ 889 400; palatinus.reservation@danubi usgroup.hu; Király utca 5; s €58-86, d €66-94; (P)) Palatinus is Pécs' old-world hotel. Its reception is quite exceptional, featuring plenty of marble and Moorish flourishes, but unfortunately the rooms leave a little to be desired. All in all, though, it's a grand old dame.

Hunyor (☎ 512 640; postmaster@pteahunyor.axel ero.net; Jurisics Miklós utca 16; s/d 9200/12,400Ft; (P)) Hunyor is in the Mecsek foothills and a bit out of the way, but it has excellent views of the city and a laid-back air. There's a pleasant restaurant attached, so it's not far to wander for a meal.

Fenyves Panoráma (☎ 315 996; www.hotelfenyves .hu; Szőlő utca 64; s/d 8900/11,100Ft; (P)) Fenyves is another hotel in the foothills to the north, with a balcony looking down onto the city below. Its rooms are big but bland.

Eating

RESTAURANTS

Tex-Mex Café (☎ 215 427; Teréz utca 10; mains 1000-1500Ft) For a welcome change of pace from Hungarian music and cuisine, duck into this colourful cellar restaurant, serving tacos, enchiladas and a shot of tequila to wash it all down with.

Aranykaca (☎ 518 860; Teréz utca 4; mains 2000Ft) This eatery may have dropped its pretentiousness a couple of notches, but it still takes pride in its silver service and sports a menu with the likes of duck liver with caviar, and pheasant roast accompanied by green salad.

Dóm (☎ 210 088; Király utca 3; mains 1000-1500Ft, steaks 3000Ft) This loft restaurant has wonder-

ful *fin-de-siècle* paintings and stained-glass windows, not to mention steaks.

Az Elefánthoz (☎ 216 055; Jókai tér 6; mains 1500Ft) With its enormous terrace and quality Italian cuisine, Elefánthoz is a sure bet for first-rate food in the centre of town.

Aranyfolyó (☎ 212 269; Váradi Antal utca 9; mains 1000Ft) The two Chinese dragons guarding the door of this restaurant are a dead giveaway to the cuisine on offer, which includes all the standards from the land many miles to the east.

Cellárium (☎ 314 453; Hunyadi János út 2; mains 1000-1500Ft) Just below the Főnix hotel, this is a more than reliable choice for a meal close to the centre.

CAFÉS

There's an ongoing debate in Pécs over which *cukrászda* (cake shop) serves better cakes and ice cream: the **Mecsek** (☎ 315 444; Széchenyi tér 16), near the old Nádor hotel, or the **Virág** (☎ 313 793; Irgalmasok utcája). The best bet is to try them both.

Cutty Sark Teaház (☎ 513 082; Káptalan utca 6; tea from 100Ft; ☎ 10am-10pm) For a quality cuppa and a sandwich (hopefully cucumber), drop into this little 'slice of England' tucked away among the museums along Káptalan utca.

QUICK EATS

Oázis (Király utca 17; kebabs & dishes 500-800Ft) A cheap little kebab house serving a mix of Turkish and Middle Eastern dishes. This is a great spot for a meal on the run.

Árkád Shopping Centre (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 11/1; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-6pm Sun) This big, bold and new shopping centre has a food court, which is a safe bet for quick food.

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

Áfium (☎ 511 434; Irgalmasok utca 2; mains 1000-1500Ft) With Croatia and Serbia so close, it's a wonder that more restaurants don't concentrate, as Áfium does, on cuisine from south of the border. But no matter, this restaurant will fulfil most diners searching for such tastes. The food is better than average and the atmosphere decidedly relaxed, while the décor could easily double as the set for Steptoe & Son. If you've eaten elsewhere, Áfium is just as good for a quiet drink.

SELF-CATERING

Pécs' fruit and vegetable market (Zólyom utca) is near the bus station, and a 24-hour **Tesco** (Makay István út) is to the west.

Drinking

Dante Café (☎ 210 361; Janus Pannonius 11) Occupying the ground floor of the Csontváry Museum, this is a good place to meet local students, and has a huge garden and occasionally live music.

Káptalani (Janus Pannonius utca) A lovely little *borozó*, with outdoor seating near the cathedral. Káptalani is also a great spot to try the local wine – white Cirfandli, a speciality of the Mecsek Hills.

While visiting the cathedral or the museums along Káptalan utca, stop in for a drink or a coffee at the **Kioszk** in the little park between Káptalan utca and Janus Pannonius utca. It's probably the only chance you'll ever have to drink in what was once a baptistry.

Pubs and bars line the entire length of Király utca, so you should have no problem finding one that suits. Reliable choices include the **Royal Café** at No 1 and **Arizona Ranch** at No 29.

Entertainment

MUSIC & THEATRE

Pécs is a city of culture. The list of theatres and concert venues is extensive for a place of its size, and most times of the year you can find something going on. For tickets and information visit the **Pécs Cultural Centre** (☎ 336 622; Széchenyi tér 1), or pick up the bi-weekly freebie Pécsi Est.

House of Artists (☎ 522 834; Széchenyi tér 7-8; ☎ noon-5pm Mon-Fri) It advertises its many cultural programmes outside, including classical music concerts.

Lenau Haus (☎ 332 515; Munkácsy Mihály utca 8; s/d 6800/8800Ft; (P)) This one-time residence of composer Nikolaus Lenau hosts classical concerts throughout the year.

Pécs National Theatre (www.pnsz.hu; ☎ 512 660; Király utca) Pécs is also renowned for its opera company and the Sophianae Ballet, which perform here. If you're told that tickets are sold out, try for a cancellation at the box office an hour before the performance. Advance tickets can be purchased from the theatre office (☎ 512 675; Perczel Mór 17; ☎ 10am-7pm Tue-Fri, 1hr before performances Sat & Sun).

Other venues:

Chamber Theatre Next door to the National Theatre.

Croatian Theatre (☎ 210 197; Anna utca 17)

Bóbbita Puppet Theatre (☎ 210 301; Mária utca 18) Somewhere John Malkovich would be proud to perform.

CLUBS & DISCOS

Pécs, a big university town, has a good nightlife. Some of the city's most popular discos and music clubs:

Club 5 (☎ 212 621; Irgalmasok utca 24) This basement bar transforms itself into a small club on Saturday and Sunday, and invites punters in with funky sounds and late-nite drinks.

CRN (☎ 30-650 7021; Czindery utca 6) A big club, popular with the 'In' crowd.

Rák (☎ 502 557; Ipar utca 7) Beyond the fruit and vegetable market, this is the place to go for rock and heavy beats.

Shopping

Pécs has been renowned for its leatherwork since Turkish times and you can pick up a few bargains in several shops around the city; try one called **Blázek** (Teréz utca 1), which deals mainly in handbags and wallets. **Zsolnay** (☎ 507 609; Jókai tér 2) porcelain also has an outlet just north of here.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Departures are frequent (once an hour) to Siklós (363Ft, 45 minutes, 29km), Mohács (544Ft, 1¼ hours, 44km), Harkány (484Ft, one hour, 37km), Kaposvár (786Ft, 1½ hours, 65km), Szigetvár (423Ft, 50 minutes, 35km) and Szekszárd (786Ft, 1½ hours, 62km). There are four buses a day to Abaliget (241Ft, one hour, 20km) and three to Orfű (302Ft, 40 minutes, 22km) in the Mecsek Hills throughout the year, but far more in summer.

You can also reach the following:

Destination	Price	Duration	Km	Frequency
Budapest	2540Ft	4½hr	208	5 daily
Győr	2660Ft	4½hr	217	2 daily
Kecskemét	2780Ft	4¼hr	226	2 daily
Sellye	725Ft	1½hr	57	2 daily
Siófok	1690Ft	3hr	133	3 daily
Szeged	2410Ft	4¼hr	196	8 daily
Székesfehérvár	1930Ft	3hr	157	3 daily
Veszprém	2300Ft	4¼hr	181	2 daily
Villány	423Ft	1¼hr	34	1-2 daily

TRAIN

Up to nine direct trains a day connect Pécs with Budapest (2360Ft, 2½ to four hours, 228km). You can reach Nagykanizsa (1624Ft, three hours) and other points northwest via a rather circuitous but scenic 148km journey along the Dráva River. From Nagykanizsa, up to eight trains a day continue on to Szombathely (2510Ft, four to 5½ hours, 250km). One early morning express (5.21am) follows this route from Pécs all the way to Szombathely. Three daily trains run from Pécs (4.58am, 2.45pm and 8.42pm) to Osijek (Hungarian: Eszék), the last of which continues onto Sarajevo.

The **MÁV office** (Jókai Mór utca 4; ☎ 9am-3.30pm Mon & Fri, 9am-4.30pm Tue-Thu) has more information on train arrivals and departures.

Getting Around

To get to the Hunyor hotel, take bus 32 from the train station, or from opposite the Mosque Church. Buses 34 and 35 run direct to the Fenyves hotels from the train station, with bus 35 continuing onto the TV tower. For the Laterum hotel, take bus 4 from the train station or the market near the bus station to the end of the line at Uránváros. Buses 3 and 50 from the train station are good for the flea market on Vásár tér.

You can order a local taxi by calling ☎ 333 333.

MECSEK HILLS

The Mecsek Hills, a string of hills and valleys dotted with villages and the occasional lake to the north of Pécs, is the city's playground. There's good hiking to be had here, but before setting out on any big excursions, pick up a copy of Cartographia's 1:40,000 *A Mecsek* map (No 15; 800Ft).

For transport information, see Pécs Getting There and Away.

Orfű

☎ 72 / pop 700

The most accessible of the Mecsek Hills resorts and the one with the most recreational facilities is Orfű – a series of settlements on four artificial lakes, where you can swim, row, canoe and fish. There's a riding school at the **Tekeresi Lovaspanzió** (Tekeres Horse Pension; ☎ 06 30 227 1401; Petőfi utca 3) at Tekeres to the northwest. From Széchenyi tér you can walk south along tony Lake Orfű to the

Mill Museum (Malommúzeum; ☎ 498 440; adult/child 300/200Ft; ☎ 10am-5pm May-Sep), a series of old pump houses.

SLEEPING & EATING

Tekeresi Lovaspanzió (☎ 06 30 227 1401; fleisch mane@freemail.hu; Petőfi utca 3; r 600Ft, apt 11,000Ft; P) At the horse-riding centre of the same name, this is a kid-friendly and welcoming place; you will of course have to put up with the whiff of horse every now and then. It has well-kept rooms and apartments, which feel more like home than anything else.

Panoráma Camping (☎ 378 501; www.panorama-camping.hu; Dollár utca 1; camp sites per adult/child/tent €2.50-3/1.50-1.70/2.50-5.50, bungalows €21.50-28; ☎ May-mid-Sep; P) Above the large public beach in the lake's southwestern corner, this place has dinghies, sailboards and bicycles for rent. The campground itself is green and secluded, and the staff is exceptionally friendly.

Also worth noting:

Atrium (☎ 498 288; www.hotels.hu/atrimpanzio; Széchenyi tér 17; r from 10,200Ft; P) It has a kid's playground and front garden. There is a good restaurant and the rooms are spotless.

Molnár Pension (☎ 378 563; Széchenyi tér 18/a; s/d from 4500/9000Ft; P) A small pension five minutes' walk to the lake, with homely rooms.

Muskátli (Széchenyi tér; mains 1000Ft) A pleasant little restaurant near Molnár Pension.

Abaliget

☎ 72 / pop 660

Abaliget, about 3km north of Orfű and accessible by bus or on foot via a trail up and over the hill behind Panoráma Camping, is quieter but not as attractive. Aside from a relaxed air, the town's main attraction is the **Abaliget Cave** (☎ 498 766; adult/child 750/550Ft; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep, 10am-3pm Oct-Mar), which, at 1.3km, is the longest cave open to the public in Southern Transdanubia. However, only 450m of the caves can be visited.

There are some private rooms and *pensions* along Kossuth Lajos utca, the main street, or try **Barlang Camping** (☎ 515 700; camp sites per adult/child/tent 800/400/1000Ft, pension r 5400Ft, bungalows 6600Ft; P) on the town's tony lake. The camping ground is OK, but the *pension* rooms will only do at a pinch.

The last bus for Pécs leaves at 8.18pm daily from outside the caves.

KAPOSVÁR

☎ 82 / pop 68,700

Considering the ugly suburbs encapsulating Kaposvár, it comes as a pleasant surprise to find the city's main street so full of charm, with pastel coloured two-storey houses and buckets of cultural heritage. The city is associated with three famous Hungarian painters – the postimpressionists József Rippl-Rónai and János Vaszary, as well as Aurél Bernáth – and the Gergely Csiky theatre is among the best in provincial Hungary. It's also the capital of Somogy County, which is usually associated with the Balaton and rightly so; it controls the entire money-spinning southern shore of the lake from Siófok to Balatonberény, some 55km to the north.

Orientation

The train and bus stations are a block apart on Budai Nagy Antal utca, south of the city centre. From here, walk up Teleki utca to Kossuth tér and Fő utca, a lovely pedestrian street where most of the action is.

Information

Main post office (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 15) West of Széchenyi tér.

OTP bank (Széchenyi tér 2) Has several ATMs.

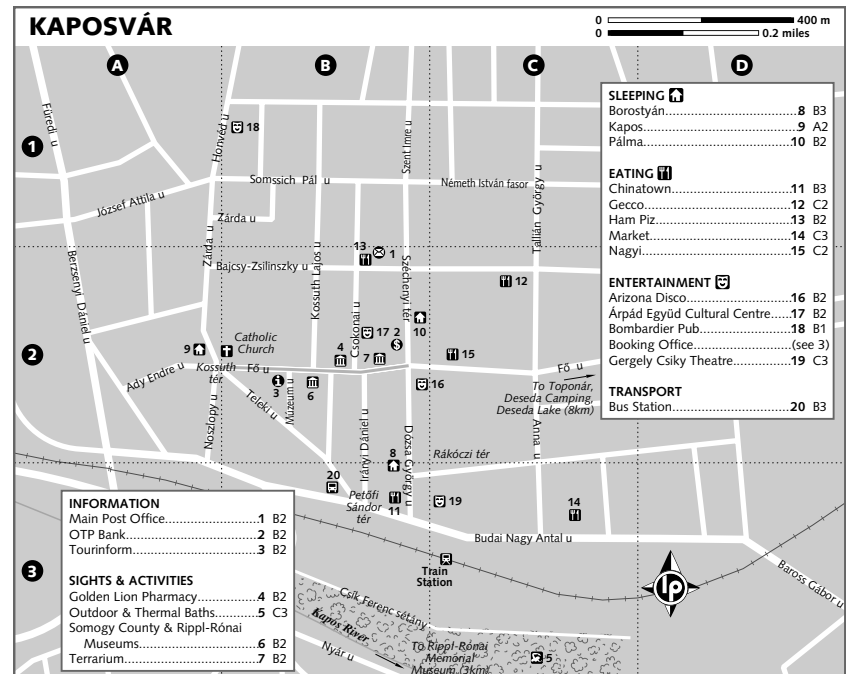
Tourinform (☎ 512 921; kaposvar@tourinform.hu; Fő utca 8; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat, 9am-2pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat mid-Sep-mid-Jun) Has Internet access free of charge.

www.kaposvar.hu Check for online information on the town.

Sights

In among the pretty, pastel-coloured buildings lining Fő utca is the former county hall (1820) at No 10, which now houses two museums: the **Somogy County & Rippl-Rónai Museums** (☎ 314 114; adult/child 600/300Ft; ☎ 10am-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Oct, 10am-3pm Tue-Sun Nov-Mar). Inside the Somogy County Museum, you'll find a large ethnographical collection and a gallery of contemporary art on the ground floor. There is a grand collection of paintings on the 1st floor, which include works by Vaszary, Bernáth and Béla Kádár.

The folk collection is noteworthy for its wood and horn carvings (at which the



swineherds of Somogy County excelled); examples of famous *kétfestő* (indigo-dyed cotton fabrics); an exhibition on the county's infamous outlaws (including the paprika-tempered 'Horseshoe Steve'); and costumes of the Croatian minority, who dressed and decorated their houses in white fabric during mourning periods as the Chinese do. The top floor is full of paintings by Ödön Rippl-Rónai, the brother of Kaposvár's most celebrated – and arguably Hungary's best – painter, József Rippl-Rónai (1861–1927).

József Rippl-Rónai was born at Fő 19, above the lovely **Golden Lion Pharmacy** (Aran-yoroszlán Patika; admission free; ☎ 7.30am–6pm Mon–Fri), built in 1774 and now a museum. Most of his work is exhibited in the **Rippl-Rónai Memorial Museum** (Rippl-Rónai Emlékmúzeum; ☎ 422 144; Róma-hegy 88; adult/child 400/200Ft; ☎ 10am–6pm Tue–Sun Apr–Oct, 10am–4pm Nov–Mar), a graceful 19th-century villa about 3km southeast of the city centre.

Built in 1911, the cream and lemon-coloured Secessionist **Gergely Csiky Theatre** (Rákóczi tér 2), with its hundreds of arched windows, is worth a look even if you are not attending a performance.

If you can handle it, step down into the **Terrarium** (☎ 424 460; Fő utca 31; adult/child 600/400Ft; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 9am–noon Sat, 2–5pm Sun) in a humid cellar. Cobras, caymans, boas and a python as thick as a stevedore's forearm are all there to greet you.

Activities

The Zselic region (Zselicség) south of Kaposvár, some 9000 hectares of which is under a nature-conservation order, is webbed with trails for easy **hikes** through villages, forests and low hills. Get a copy of Cartographia's 1:60,000 *A Zselic* map (No 17; 800Ft) before you go.

The artificial Deseda Lake at Toponár, 8km northeast of the city, offers **cyding**, **swimming**, other **water sports** and **tennis**. Closer to the centre are the **outdoor pools** (☎ 321 044; Csik Ferenc sétány; admission 220Ft; ☎ 9am–7pm Tue–Sun mid-May–Aug) and its accompanying **thermal baths** (adult/child 300/170Ft Mon–Fri, 490/220Ft Sat & Sun; ☎ 9am–7pm Tue–Sun year-round).

Festivals & Events

Kaposvár's big event is the **Painters Mood Festival** at the end of May, which features plenty of artistic endeavours in the fields of dance and music.

Sleeping

Tourinform has information on private rooms (from 3000Ft), but it won't help you with making bookings.

Borostyán (☎ 512 475; Rákóczi tér 3; s/d from 7900/8900Ft; ☎) An upmarket six-room Art-Nouveau extravaganza, this is one of provincial Hungary's most interesting caravanserais. Rooms are more than spacious and tastefully decorated, and bathrooms come with tubs.

Pálma (☎ 420 227; Széchenyi tér 6; r 6800Ft; ☎) Considering its location so close to the centre, Pálma is a surprisingly quiet and peaceful *pension*, with big rooms filled with comfy, if mismatched, furniture. Breakfast can be taken on the covered terrace towards the rear.

Kapos (☎ 316 022; www.kaposhotel.hu; Kossuth tér; s/d from 5900/8000Ft; ☎) Kapos was once probably the town's luxury establishment, but these days it's a fairly unattractive block with little character. It is, however, very central and the staff is happy to see you.

Deseda Camping (☎ 312 020; ☎ mid-Jun–late Aug) Deseda is the closest campsite to the city. It's located in Toponár and is very handy for the water pleasures of Deseda Lake. Note there are no bungalows.

Eating

Chinatown (☎ 424 828; Budai Nagy Antal utca 9; mains 700–1200Ft, lunch menus 500–700Ft) Chinatown still sports its 1998 'scroll of appreciation' from the US Army Europe National Support Element Operation Joint Guard (a mouthful in itself). The cuisine is arguably the most authentic Chinese-American outside the capital and its lunch menu a bargain.

Borostyán (☎ 512 475; Rákóczi tér 3; mains 1000–1800Ft; ☎ until 11pm Mon–Sat) In the hotel of the same name, this colourful restaurant/café has art work gracing the walls, a quiet courtyard and top-rate Hungarian cuisine.

Gecco (☎ 312 993; Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 54; mains 1500–2000Ft) A Mexican eatery in provincial Hungary! Wonders will never cease. The food may not satisfy a spice-lover's palate, but you can't expect too much so far from North America.

Nagyi (☎ 315 433; Fő utca 35; lunch meals 500Ft; ☎ 7am–8pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat) Nagyi is like a black hole for downtown workers; it seems impossible for most to wander past without being sucked in by its cheap, quick and

good lunch meals. You'll probably find the gravity pull too much to resist as well.

Ham Piz (Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 13; burgers & pizzas from 350Ft) Next to the main post office, this place attracts groups of gabbling students and those looking for a cheap bite to eat, with quick service and filling fast food.

The fruit and vegetable **market** is east of Rákóczi tér.

Entertainment

Árpád Együd Cultural Centre (☎ 512 228; Csokonai utca 1) Has information on cultural events in Kaposvár, as does the free biweekly magazine *Kapo Est*.

Gergely Csiky Theatre (☎ 528 458; Rákóczi tér 2) At the forefront of Hungarian artistic innovation in the 1970s, the theatre is a masterpiece of Art-Nouveau (or Secessionist) architecture and is now in need of repair. Its plays have a great reputation around the country. The **booking office** (☎ 511 208; Fő utca 8; ☎ 8.30am–12.30pm & 1–5pm Mon–Fri, 8.30am–noon Sat) is at Tourinform.

Kaposvár is known for its choral groups, and concerts are given in venues around the city, including the Catholic church on Kossuth tér.

Kaposvár has two clubs competing for custom; at present, **Arizona Disco** (☎ 411 443; Fő utca 14), in the heart of town, is pipping **Bombardier Pub** (☎ 423 721; Honvéd utca 8) at the popularity post.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Twelve daily buses go to Pécs (786Ft, 1½ hours, 65km). Other destinations include Hévíz (1150Ft, 2½ hours, 95km, two daily), Nagykanizsa (968Ft, 1½ hours, 77km, two daily), Szekszárd (1210Ft, 2½ hours, 99km, one daily), Szigetvár (544Ft, 1½ hours, 40km, two daily), Szombathely (2300Ft, 3½ hours, 188km, three daily) and Zalaegerszeg (1570Ft, 2½ hours, 128km, four daily).

TRAIN

You can reach Kaposvár by train from both the eastern (Siófok) and western (Fonyód) ends of Lake Balaton's southern shore. Another line links Kaposvár with Budapest (2030Ft, 3½ hours, 195km; via Dombóvár) to the northeast up to twice a day and, to the west, with Gyékényes (658Ft, 1½ hours, 70km, two daily).

Getting Around

Buses 8 and 18 terminate near the lake and the campsite in Toponár. For the Rippl-Rónai Memorial Museum in Róma-hegy, take bus 15.

Local taxis are available by calling ☎ 555 555.

SZIGETVÁR

☎ 73 / pop 11,350

Szigetvár, a quiet town 33km west of Pécs and 40km south of Kaposvár, is home to the remains of one of Hungary's most celebrated castles and a handful of Turkish-era monuments. Also close by is the Park of Turkish–Hungarian Friendship, which has helped to cement the friendly ties between the two former enemies.

The town began life as a Celtic settlement before the Romans moved in and renamed it Limosa. After the Magyar conquest its strategic importance was recognised and in 1420 a fortress was built on a small island – Szigetvár means 'island castle' – in the marshy areas of the Almás. But Szigetvár would be indistinguishable today from other Southern Transdanubian towns had the events of September 1566 not taken place (see boxed text, p307).

Orientation

The bus and train stations are close to one another, a short distance south of the town centre at the end of Rákóczi utca. To reach the centre follow this road north into lovely Zrínyi tér. Vár utca on the northern side of the square leads to the castle.

Information

Main post office (József Attila utca 27–31)

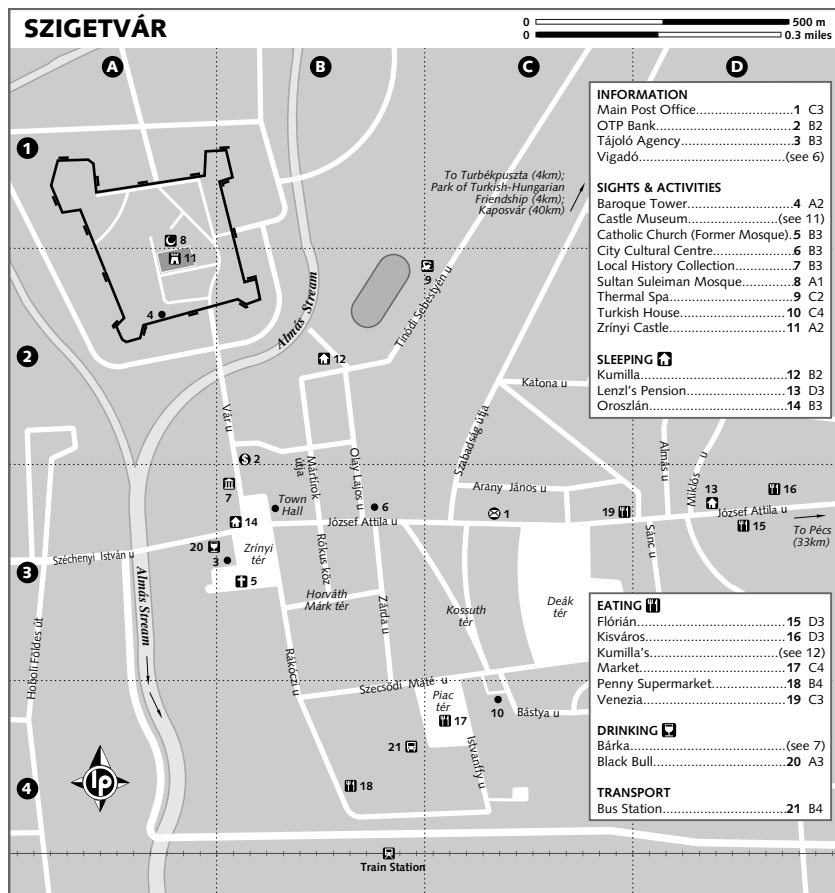
OTP bank (Vár utca 4) On the way to the castle, with an ATM.

Tájéko Agency (☎ 312 654; Zrínyi tér 3; ☎ 9am–4pm Mon–Thu, 9am–3pm Fri) Can supply you with a small amount of information on the town.

Vigadó (József Attila utca; per hr 200Ft; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon, Tue & Fri, 9am–3pm Wed & Thu) Internet access is available here.

Zrínyi Castle

Our hero Miklós Zrínyi would probably not recognise the four-cornered **castle** (Vár utca; adult/child 400/250Ft; ☎ 9am–5pm Tue–Sun May–Sep, 9am–3pm Tue–Sun Apr & Oct) he so valiantly fought to save more than 400 years ago.



The Turks strengthened the bastions and added buildings; the Hungarians rebuilt much of the castle again in the 18th century. Today there are only a few elements of historical interest left: walls from 3m to 6m thick linked by the four bastions; the **Baroque Tower** crowning the southern wall; the 16th-century **Sultan Suleiman Mosque** (Szulejmán pasa dzsámija), with its truncated minaret; and a summer mansion built by Count Andrassy in 1930, which now houses the **Castle Museum**.

Naturally, the museum's exhibits focus on the siege and its key players: Zrínyi's praises are sung throughout; there's a detailed account of how Suleiman built a bridge over the Dráva River in 16 days to

attack Szigetvár; and miniatures of Hungarian soldiers being captured, chopped up and burned are still quite horrifying. Sebastyén Tinódi, the beloved 16th-century poet and wandering minstrel who was born in Szigetvár, also rates an altar of worship. The mosque next door, completed in the year of the siege, contains an art gallery; the arches, prayer niches and Arabic inscriptions on the walls are worth a look. There's also a small *büfé* (snack bar) north of the mosque.

OTHER SIGHTS

The tiny **Local History Collection** (Helytörténeti Gyűjtemény; Vár utca 1; adult/child 200/100Ft; ☎ 9am-4pm Tue-Sat) is a hotchpotch of folk carvings,

embroidery and valuables from local churches, but it also displays a great collection of 18th- and 19th-century shop signs as well as locks and keys from the castle.

The ogee (called 'donkey's back' arches in Hungarian) windows and hexagonal roof of the baroque **Catholic church** (Zrínyi tér 9; admission free) are the only exterior signs that this was once the Pasha Ali Mosque, built in 1589. The altarpiece of the Crucifixion and the ceiling frescoes depicting the deaths of Zrínyi and Suleiman were painted by István Dorffmeister in 1789.

Not far from the bus station, the 16th-century **Turkish House** (Török-ház; Bánya utca 3; adult/child 200/100Ft; ☎ 10am-noon & 1-3pm Tue-Sun Jun-Sep) was a caravanserai during the occupation and contains an exhibit of Turkish miniatures.

The Catholic church at Turbékpuszta, about 4km northeast of Szigetvár, was originally built as a **tomb for Suleiman**. But according to local tradition, only the sultan's heart lies within; his son and successor, Selim II, had the body exhumed and returned to Turkey.

Some 4km north of Szigetvár on Rte 67 to Kaposvár, a Turkish-era battlefield has been turned into the **Park of Turkish-Hungarian Friendship** (Török-Magyar barátság parkja; ☎ dawn-dusk), with interesting stone memorials in the shape of domes and turbans, and statues commemorating both Suleiman and Zrínyi.

You can't miss the flamboyant **City Cultural Centre** (Városi Művelődési Ház; József Attila utca),

which was designed – surprise, surprise – by maverick architect Imre Makovecz (using his own 'organic' style).

Activities

Szigetvár's **thermal spa** (☎ 312 840; Tinódi Sebastyén utca 23) was closed for renovation at the time of research but expect it to be open between the hours of 9am and 5pm or 7pm daily.

Sleeping

The Tájéko Agency may be able to help you find a private room.

Kumilla (☎ 514 015; szik.kft@axelero.hu; Olay Lajos utca 6; s/d from 5200/7000Ft; (P)) Kumilla is starting to look a little run-down but with its peaceful location backing onto a small stream, views of the castle, welcoming staff and cosy rooms, it's still the best option in Szigetvár.

Lenz's Pension (☎ 413 045; lenzls@dravanet.hu; József Attila utca 63; s/d from 4000/4500Ft; (P)) This very friendly *pension* has small but attractive rooms (some of which come with a balcony), free parking and a restaurant on the ground floor.

Oroszlán (☎ 310 116; mexbor@axelero.hu; Zrínyi tér 2; s/d 7300/9600Ft; (P)) With its purely functional rooms and drab décor, Oroszlán is a last resort if the above options are full.

Eating & Drinking

Flórián (☎ 311 939; József Attila utca 58; mains 1000Ft) This simple restaurant has a rather appealing garden at the rear, away from the busy

BIG SALLY OF SZIGETVÁR

For more than a month at Szigetvár in late 1566, Captain Miklós Zrínyi and the 2500 Hungarian and Croatian soldiers under his command held out against Turkish forces numbering up to 80,000. The leader of the Turks was Sultan Suleiman I, who was making his seventh attempt to march on Vienna and was determined to take what he derisively called 'this molehill'. When the defenders' water and food supplies were exhausted – and reinforcements from Győr under Habsburg Emperor Maximilian II were refused – Zrínyi could see no other solution but a suicidal sally. As the moated castle went up in flames, the opponents fought hand to hand, and most of the soldiers on the Hungarian side, including Zrínyi himself, were killed. An estimated one-quarter of the Turkish forces died in the siege; Suleiman died of a heart attack and his corpse was propped up on a chair during the fighting to inspire his troops and avoid a power struggle until his son could take command.

More than any other heroes in Hungarian history, Zrínyi and his soldiers are remembered for their self-sacrifice in the cause of the nation and for saving Vienna – and thereby Europe – from Turkish domination. *Peril at Sziget*, a 17th-century epic poem by Zrínyi's great-grandson and namesake, Miklós Zrínyi (1620–64), immortalises the siege and is still widely read in Hungary.

main road, and has made room for a few vegetarian dishes on its meat-heavy menu.

Kumilla's (☎ 514 015; Olay Lajos utca 6; mains 800-1500Ft) In the hotel of the same name, this quiet and pleasant restaurant serves solid Hungarian fare and a large terrace.

Venezia (József Attila utca 41; pizzas from 500Ft) Venezia's outdoor tables may face busy József Attila utca but it's still the best spot in town for pizzas.

Kisváros (☎ 312 514; József Attila utca 81; mains 800Ft) Directly opposite Flórián, this basic restaurant serving Hungarian food is quite dingy indoors; its outdoor seating area out the back is a far better option.

Szigetvár's market, near the bus and train stations, is the usual motley assortment of tacky goods, food stalls and fresh fruit and vegetables.

Szigetvár is not known for its nightlife, but there are a couple of places for a quiet drink during the evening. **Black Bull** (Széchenyi utca 2) serves average pizza but it's a popular place for a beer, while **Bárka** (Vár utca 1), a small coffee shop/bar in the Local History Collection, is a more sedate option.

Getting There & Away

BUS

Nine daily buses depart for Pécs (423Ft, 50 minutes, 35km), and two run to Kaposvár (544Ft, 1¼ hours, 40km). There are also buses to Hévíz (1930Ft, 3½ hours, 154km, one daily), Nagykanizsa (1330Ft, 2½ hours, 107km, four daily), Sellye (423Ft, 50 minutes, 31km, one daily) and Siklós (907Ft, two hours, 72km, three daily).

TRAIN

Szigetvár is on the train line linking Pécs (346Ft, 45 minutes, 34km) and Nagykanizsa (1212Ft, two hours, 114km). The 84km stretch from Barcs to Nagykanizsa follows the course of the Dráva River and is very scenic, especially around Vízvár and Bélavár. If you're trying to leave Hungary from here, get off at Murakeresztúr (two stops before Nagykanizsa), through which trains pass en route to Zagreb and Ljubljana.

NAGYKANIZSA

☎ 93 / pop 52,100

Nagykanizsa is not especially noted for its sights; the town is almost totally focused on drilling for oil, making light bulbs and

furniture, and brewing beer. But if you think of it as a convenient stepping stone, you'll (quite literally) be on the right track. From Nagykanizsa you can easily reach Western Transdanubia, both the northern and southern shores of Lake Balaton, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and the beaches of the Adriatic.

Orientation

The train station (Ady Endre utca) is south of the city centre. To reach the centre walk north along this road for about 1200m, and you'll be on Fő út, the main street. The bus station is in the centre to the west of Erzsébet tér.

Information

Main post office (Ady Endre utca 10)

OTP bank (15 Deák Ferenc tér)

OTP bank (6 Ady Endre utca)

Tourinform (☎ 313 285; nagykanizsa@tourinform.hu; Csengery út 1-3; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat) Is helpful, well-informed and has Internet access free of charge.

Sights

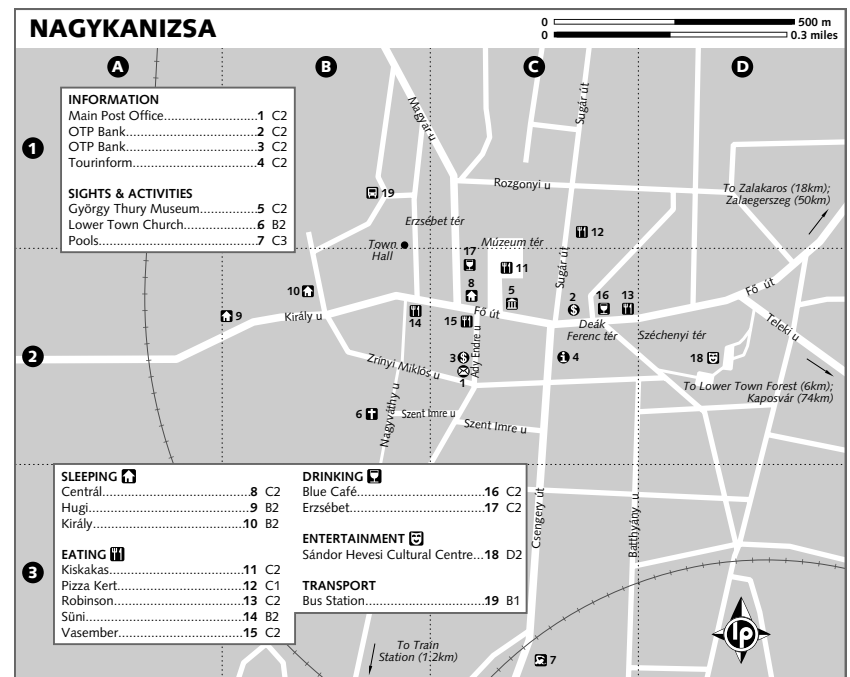
The **György Thury Museum** (☎ 317 233; Fő út 5) was in the process of refurbishment when we called, but expect to find exhibitions on folk art from the area and displays on the daily life of peasant workers during the first decades of last century. Check with Tourinform for prices and opening times.

The Franciscan **Lower Town Church** (Alsóvárosi templom; cnr Szent Imre utca & Nagyváthy utca; admission free), begun in 1702 but not completed for 100 years, has ornate stucco work and a rococo pulpit. You can't miss the holy-water font, carved from the burial stone of the Turkish general Pasha Mustafa.

Activities

The so-called Lower Town Forest (Alsóvárosi erdő), 6km east of the town centre, has a large rowing lake with **boats** available in summer.

There are **outdoor pools** (adult/child 340/170Ft; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm mid-Jun-early-Sep) and an **indoor pool** (adult/child 340/170Ft; ☎ 11am-7pm Mon, 6am-8pm Tue-Thu, 6am-7pm Fri, 9am-6pm Sat & Sun year-round) at Csengery út 49. But if you want to take the (thermal) waters, you'll have to go to the spa at **Zalakaros**, 18km to the northeast near the Little Balaton (Kis-Balaton). The Zalakaros



spring, which gushes out of the ground at an incredible 92°C, was discovered by workers drilling for oil in the early 1960s.

Sleeping

Hugi (☎ 336 100; Király utca 7; s/d 5000/7500Ft; P) Within walking distance of the centre is this solid *penzion*, with secure parking, large rooms and surprisingly little road noise considering its location.

Király (☎ 325 480; Király utca 29; s/d 5400/8200Ft) This is a pleasant *penzion* on the 1st floor of a small shopping and office complex, with nine large, bright modern rooms.

Centrál (☎ 314 000; hotelcentral@chello.hu; Erzsébet tér 23; s/d 11,000/13,000Ft; P) Central, a hotel built in 1912, tries to corner the business market, making it overpriced for what is on offer. The rooms, however, are modern and quite comfortable.

Eating & Drinking

Vasember (☎ 314 555; Erzsébet tér 1; mains 1000Ft) With consistently good Hungarian cuisine, this cellar restaurant in the 'Iron Man House' is the town's best restaurant.

Kiskakas (☎ 321 600; Múzeum tér 6; mains 1000-2000Ft) Tucked away in a quiet courtyard/parking lot is Kiskakas, an upmarket spot with a Hungarian menu and covered outdoor seating area.

Süni (Erzsébet tér 2; ice cream from 90Ft) Süni is one of the better ice cream shops in the centre, with an extensive array of the creamy stuff.

Robinson (Deák Ferenc tér 9; pizzas from 800Ft) A rather dark but fashionable pizzeria popular with Nagykanizsa's young bloods and open till late.

Pizza Kert (Sugár út 5; pizzas 800Ft) With its large terrace facing a peaceful park, Pizza Kert serves big pizzas in a relaxed atmosphere.

The local Kanizsai beer flows as freely throughout the year as it does at the Kanizsai Days Festival at the beginning of October, and there are a lot of decent pubs and bars, including **Blue Café** (Deák Ferenc tér 13; ☎ 11am-10pm Sun-Thu, 11-2am Fri & Sat), with its retro glass-brick bar and neon lighting; and **Erzsébet** (Erzsébet tér 21; ☎ 9am-midnight Mon-Sun), a more refined café/bar, with street-side seating suitable for coffee during the day and drinks at night.

Entertainment

Sándor Hevesi Cultural Centre (☎ 311468; Széchenyi tér 5-9) The centre can tell you what's on in Nagykanizsa; information on the town is also listed in the free biweekly *Zalai Est*.

Getting There & Away

There's a bus running every 30 minutes to the Zalakaros spa (241Ft, 25 minutes, 18km) and also hourly ones to Zalaegerszeg (665Ft, 1¼ hours, 51km). Other services include Keszthely (725Ft, 1½ hours, 59km, six daily), Kaposvár (1330Ft, 2½ hours, 107km, four daily), Pécs (1820Ft, three hours, 142km, five daily) and Szombathely (1330Ft, 2½ hours, 107km, six daily).

From Nagykanizsa, up to eight daily trains go north to Szombathely (1212Ft, 2¼ hours,

102km) and one heads south to Zagreb. Trains run direct to Déli, Kelenföld and Keleti stations in Budapest (2360Ft, four hours, 221Ft) and the southern shore resorts, but if you're headed for the western or northern sides (such as Keszthely or Balatonfüred), you must change at Balatonszentgyörgy.

Getting Around

Nagykanizsa is an easy city to get around on foot, but you may prefer to wait and ride. From the train station, bus 18 goes to the bus station and city centre. Bus 17/b terminates its service close to the rowing lake in the Lower Town Forest, or you can take the Budapest-bound local train and get off at the first stop (Nagyrécsce).