



Build your future

# BUDAPEST PRACTICAL GUIDE

Prepare and enjoy your stay in Hungary



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# Welcome to ESSCA!

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On behalf of ESSCA, the International Relations Office would like to welcome you to the International Exchange Program. If you decide to join the program, you will become a part of our expanding student community. ESSCA welcomes more than 400 International students per year across our 4 campuses, from over 40 different countries – so you will have a truly international experience!

By studying at ESSCA you will become a part of one of the most prestigious post BAC business schools in the country which has been ranked in the top 2 “Grandes Écoles” by *L’Etudiant* magazine.

We have created this Practical Guide to help our International Students to get prepared for their exchange experience ahead with us.



Dr. Catherine Leblanc  
Dean of ESSCA Group

*Catherine Leblanc*

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# Getting to Budapest

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## By air

Budapest airport is a modern international hub to all major European and international airlines. From the airport the best way to get to the city is taking an Airport minibus, named “miniBUD”, which is easy to find upon arrival. A return ticket to the city center costs approximately €22 per person. If you would prefer to take a taxi, it is approximately €25 per cab for one way.

Airline companies travelling from major capitals in Europe to Budapest:

Low cost airline companies: [Easyjet](#), [Wizzair](#), other [cheap flights](#)

## By train

Budapest is linked with all major capitals in Europe. Most European cities are reachable within less than 24 hours by train. For example the [ÖBB](#) railjet network, from Austria, which is similar to the TGV network in France, connecting capitals and other major cities around Europe.

## By car

ESSCA Budapest can be reached via several motorways from any neighboring country ([Latitude: N 47.484961° and Longitude: W 19.061322°](#)). Due to changes in the regulation, all motorways and many other main roads are fee paying roads, you can check them and the prices [here](#). If you choose to come by car, please remember that there is a zero alcohol tolerance while driving. You should also be aware that the larger part of the capital is a fee paying parking zone.

## By coach

[Eurolines](#) and [Orangeways](#) offer good value round trip fares between Budapest and all major European capitals.

# Culture and Sports

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The two most well-known sites in Budapest are definitely the world-famous House of Parliament and the Castle District with the 14<sup>th</sup> century Buda Castle with both listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites. But walking along the banks of the Danube, you can't be mistaken as the whole area is packed with smaller or bigger sites to see, not to mention the breathtaking scenery.

The area we refer to as the “Castle District” is the Buda Castle and it's close proximity what is guarded by the castle wall from the side of the river. The historical importance and the quality of the architecture which made it a protected World Heritage site. There are plenty to see and experience, starting with the monumental view of the Castle itself. The Fishermen's Bastion, the Matthias Church and the Budapest Cog-wheel Railway, carrying a unique cross-century nobel atmosphere, are trademark sights of the whole district.

The city's rich architecture could be easily represented by the Parliament Building with it's mixed use of gothic and renaissance elements and how it nobly raises above the entire city. This mixed style and the atmosphere it creates is the essence of Budapest and that is what makes it so interesting for film produces. So don't be surprised if you see film production crews and equipments sometimes, they are not unusual here.



Besides the Buda Castle and the Parliament, there are several museums with temporary, permanent or recurring exhibitions, like the annual [Press Photo Exhibition](#) or the ARC poster exhibition which are the summon of the best Hungarian press photos and the best creative posters of the year respectively. The [Art Gallery](#) is a very common choice, but the Military Institute and Museum or the National Gallery, in the Castle District, are also worth a visit. [House of Terror](#), which shows the brutality of the socialist era in Hungary, and the [Holocaust Memorial Center](#) reminds the dark times of Hungary's modern time history, if you want to know a bit more about the history and culture of the country, you should definitely visit them!

Another thing Budapest is famous about are the bridges crossing over the Danube. The seven bridge all have different characteristic but together they all form the city view. There are some very famous sights which are connected by the bridges. For example the Gellert Hill with Hotel Gellert on the Buda side and the Big Market Hall on the Pest side are connected by Petöfi bridge. And there is the Gresham Palace and its fellow monument, The Tunnel on the Buda side which are connected by the Széchenyi bridge, probably the most famous of all.

Heroes Square and the City Park are also well known and liked places to visit, offering culture and leisure at the same time, with nice monuments, a boating lake (ice skating rink during winter), a huge park to hang out or do some sports, galleries, museums, clubs and bars and a concert hall in a very close proximity.

Hungary is famous for water sports, and there are many indoor and outdoor swimming pools and beaches (called Strand) in Budapest. Hungary's men's national waterpolo team won the Olympics three times in a row between 2000 and 2008, making it to a total of nine Olympic's Gold Medal, which is a World record. Swimming is also a very famous and productive sport with swimmers, like Krisztina Egerszegi, Katinka Hosszu, Daniel Gyurta and Laszlo Cseh in the World's elite. Hungary's first Olympic champion and the World's first modern Olympic swimming champion was the polyhistor [Alfred Hajos](#), who competed in the 1896 Athens Games. At that time swimming events were held in the Mediterranean Sea. The National Swimming Stadium on Margaret Island, Budapest is named after him.



Amongst the town's main attractions are the thermal baths, which are open all year round. Fancy swimming in an outdoor pool surrounded by snow with people playing chess in the hot water? Other attractions not to miss are the famous [thermal bath parties](#). Other popular sports in Budapest are horse riding, fitness, etc. Horse riding is a very traditional national sport in Hungary, has its roots from the nomadic ages of the seven tribes of the 'Magyars'. There are several horse riding events throughout the year, the two most well known however are the annual [Nemzeti Vágtá \(National Race\)](#) at Heroes Square, which is held on

the national holiday of the 20<sup>th</sup> of August; and New Year's Eve horse race at the Kincsem Park, both are well known touristic attractions. Kincsem Park is the biggest horse race court, named after the world recorder race horse, [Kincsem](#). She was one of the most successful race horse of all time, having won 54 races out of 54 starts.

Another water related activity which worth a try is the lake/ice skating-rink at Heroes Square. It has multiple uses, in summers it's a boating lake while in winters it's turned into a big ice skating-rink, very popular in Budapest.

The Skating Rink in winter



Szimpla

Also there is the beautiful, neo-Renaissance Opera House, designed by the world famous architect, [Miklos Ybl](#), and many theatres in Budapest. A ticket to the [State Opera](#) starts at €5. In cinemas films are usually shown in their original language with Hungarian subtitles. Over 40 films every night are shown in more than 20 cinemas, as well as theatrical plays in English. Additionally, there are excellent places to experience some of the best jazz music Budapest has to offer and several very good clubs. Why not try one of the famous [Ruin Bars](#) or [Szimpla](#), rated the best bar in all of Hungary and the 3<sup>rd</sup> best bar in the world, not to mention [A38](#), a ship bar and cultural venue, which has been rated as the World's best bar in 2011 by Lonely Planet. With thousands of international students coming to Budapest and another tens of thousands of Hungarians studying in the capital, it has a very vibrant and colorful life!

If you're not the mainstream tourist type, there are several alternative ways to explore this beautiful city, for instance the [free walking tours](#) or the [alternative walking tour](#), which shows around the non-mainstream sights of Budapest and gives a pinch of a deeper historical-cultural experience with a closer look on the life of the city.

Highly renowned international cultural institutes play an active part in the cultural life of Hungary's capital like the Institut Français, Goethe-Institut, Istituto Italiano, Instituto Cervantes and Russian Cultural Centre.



If you like skiing, although Hungary itself does not offer many exciting ski resorts, [the Austrian Alps](#), [Carpathian Mountains](#) and [Tatra Mountains](#) are less than a 3-hour-drive from Budapest and can be easily reached by train or bus at a reasonable price.

Last but not least, despite being located in the middle of the European continent, Hungary has its own 'seaside': the famous lake Balaton (Central Europe's largest lake ; 70 km long), situated 90 minutes from Budapest by car, train or bus. Lake Velence and Lake Neusiedl (Fertő tó) are also a nice places to visit, offering good beaches and cultural attractions.

Hungary also boasts very interesting cities and villages, national nature parks and very good wine areas like the famous [Tokaj](#), Eger, Sopron or Villány.

For more tourist information click [here](#).



## Administrative formalities

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### Visas and registration

Hungary became part of the Schengen zone at the end of 2007. Please note, however, that if you plan to stay longer than 90 days, you will not be under Schengen regulations but under Hungarian regulations instead. This may affect the type of visa you require. Please take this into account when applying for your visa as the ESSCA semesters are longer than 90 days!

### Studying in Hungary

EU citizens must register with the Immigration Office of Hungary, and provide details of their accommodation address in Budapest shortly after arrival.

Third-country citizens (neither Hungarians nor EU nationals) have to apply for a Hungarian Residence Permit. The process costs around €60 and the main required documents for the application are: an ESSCA Acceptance Letter, Health Insurance, certificate of a proper financial background for the duration of the programme and a signed contract about your accommodation in Hungary.

Third-country citizens who need a visa to visit Hungary can usually apply for the Hungarian Residence Permit at the Hungarian Consulate of their home country only. Those Third-country nationals who are allowed to visit Hungary without a visa can usually apply for the Hungarian Residence Permit either at the Hungarian Consulate of their country or at the Immigration Office of Hungary in Budapest, shortly after arrival.

For detailed information please contact the nearest Hungarian Consulate and/or visit the website of the [Immigration Office of Hungary](#). The official Hungarian name of this office is 'Bevándorlási és Állampolgársági Hivatal' and its address is 35-37, Szegedi út, district 13, Budapest, Hungary (Twin Office Center).

## Health Insurance

In general, it is highly recommended to get insurance before leaving your home country in order to be covered as soon as you leave. Insurance should cover sickness, hospital visits, accidents and civil responsibility. It is always useful to have a 'repatriation' clause for emergencies.

EU students and those non-EU students who are registered under the French Health system (Sécurité sociale française) require their EU health insurance card (E111 card) before leaving their home country. This card will need to be shown when going to visit a doctor or hospital.

## Doctors

Please ask ESSCA staff for a list of doctors who speak English, French or any other foreign languages.

# Accommodation

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ESSCA Budapest does not run a student residence in Hungary. We suggest that students should contact estate agencies in Budapest which offer all types of accommodation. Some of these apartments or houses are often situated in well-off districts and are usually very beautiful, but more expensive.

Some reliable apartment agent partners of ESSCA Budapest are:

<http://www.budapestlets.com/>

<http://www.ihomes.hu/>

<http://www.srs-budapest.hu/>

<http://huniversity.hu/>

In case you choose not to go with the listed partners, please be sure you've been provided with the general terms and conditions of service of the agency or agent. Usually apartment agents charge the owner of the apartment and not the tenant for agent fees, but sometimes they try to take advantage of the difference between practices which to foreigners used to. However the bigger players on the market can be trusted as they can't risk losing business as a result of bad reputation. Also as the city has a very vibrant international community, with lots of international university students and expatriots coming to the capital for work reasons, most of the agents speak have a good enough level of English, sometimes even other languages like Spanish, German, French or Russian.

## Orientation Week

If you haven't found your accommodation yet, we recommend that you stay at a youth hostel for the first few days in Budapest, please note that you should book the hostel in advance (eg. <http://www.marcopolohostel.com> or <http://www.citycentrapartments.hu>). It usually takes no more than a few days for a foreign student to find a place to stay, which is why we strongly recommend you to arrive one week before the semester starts in order to have sufficient time to find your accommodation and complete the administrative paperwork.

# Getting around in Budapest

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As in every metropolitan city, there is an extensive public transport network in Budapest. Service usually starts at around 4am and stops around 11pm, however in the less frequented areas this can vary. Buses, trams and metros can be very crowded as well during peak hours. There is a quite extended night bus service, providing transportation for the ones having a night out.

## Metro

There are four metro lines running across the city, with two big junctions downtown – Deak Ferenc square, where the first three lines are meeting, and Calvin square, where line 3 and line 4 are meeting. Metro is probably the fastest mean of transport in peak hours (around 7am – 10am and 4.30pm – 6.30pm).

## Buses

There are many bus lines running across the city, connecting the suburbs with the city center and providing transportation between the inner districts during the whole day. While it can be really fast and convenient, during peak hours and in the inner districts it also can be very slow and vulnerable to trafficjams.

## Trams

As it runs on a closed track and quite frequently, tram lines are fast and effective way of getting from one place to another in Budapest, especially line 4 and 6 which have a non-stop night service as well.

## Trolleybuses

You will find buses with pantographs on top, the trolleys. These “electric buses” are some kind of remainders of the once so productive and ingenious Hungarian industry. There are not many lines and they mostly go to the suburbs, but they can be a unique and fun mean of travel.

## HEV – suburban railway system

Another rather old type of transportation which has its roots from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Basically these are “metro trains” running on the surface and connecting some of the bigger agglomerate towns, providing fast and cheap transportation for tens of thousands of commuters on a daily basis.

## Night bus service

Night buses are running whole night in Budapest, connecting downtown with the important sites of the outskirts. Service is usually from 11.30pm to 3-4am in the morning, depending on the line. Usual frequency of the service is 30 minutes to one hour, also depending on the line. Please be advised that different rules and applies, for example usually you can only get on the bus at the front door and you have to show your ticket or pass to the conductor once you are on board! These lines are possibly much longer than daytime service, so it can take much longer if you are going a bit more out of the center.

## Season passes and ticket prices

Single tickets in Budapest are valid for one travel on any means of public transport (bus/tram/trolley/metro/HEV) and cost around €1.1 / 350 HUF, but buying from the driver – which you can do on buses and trolleys but not on the tram or the metro – is a bit more expensive (approx. €1.5). There are several types of tickets however, which can be confusing, so we recommend using a monthly pass for students.

The monthly pass for public transport costs approximately €15 for EU students and €35 for non-EU students. The pass allows you to travel as often as you want by tram/metro/bus in Budapest. A national or an international student card will need to be presented upon



purchase. Students should keep their student card on them when travelling in case a conductor asks to see it.

You can buy your tickets or monthly passes at every metro and suburban railway (HEV) stations and there are several ticket machines all around the city.

You can check the actual prices and the plans of every line on the service provider's (BKK) website [here](#).



## Travel around Hungary

The fastest mean of travel in Hungary is obviously by car, but if you don't have the chance or the money to bring yours or rent one, there are a few other options. Being a relatively small country with not too big distances, travelling by train and bus is quite easy and affordable. The national train network, MAV, offers regular scheduled trips to the countryside, but if you travel to smaller towns, you might have to change trains one or two times.

Coaches are another good way to travel if you're looking to go to closer places, like the mountains on the Buda side (Pilis Mountains, Buda Mountains, etc.). The biggest coach company is Volan, which provides coach service all across the country for a fair price.

## Food

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This is always an important subject! The only problem you may face is that there is usually too much food on your plate in Hungary. Hungarians tend to have a solid breakfast, a very quick lunch and a substantial dinner. You will find everything from vegetarian to Hungarian, Central European, Asian, American dishes, etc. Budapest has a lot of colourful markets where you can buy every type of food you want at very reasonable prices. Hungary's agriculture is known for the outstanding quality of its products.

There are many exciting smaller eat-out places, like Padhtai, Burrito, Bors Gasztrobar or numerous Turkish gyros places where you can grab a quick lunch or dinner or just hang out with friends for a snack or dessert. Also there are many good places to have lunch around the Essca campus in Budapest, Rádai street is one of the busiest restaurant streets in Budapest, being very close to even three universities.

# Money - Budget - Bank

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The Hungarian currency is called the Forint (HUF or Ft), which has been linked to the Euro (€) since 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2000.



€1 = HUF 314 on 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2016

Be advised that the exchange rate of the Forint has been changing quite hectically over the past four or five years, so you have to check it before you leave, to make sure being up to date. Also you are strongly advised to buy Forints when you arrive in Hungary and not in your home country (most countries don't have a market for them and the rate will be lower).

**Cash:** ATM machines are common in Budapest and in larger Hungarian towns. It is, however, preferable to check with your home bank how much they will charge you if you take cash from an ATM prior to departure (it will probably be around €2-3 each time). If their rates seem too expensive, traveller's cheques might be an alternative.

If you choose to open a bank account in Hungary - which is not absolutely necessary - you will need a Residence Permit or a valid passport, depending on the chosen bank. But be aware that, due to recent regulations, cash withdrawal is free only for a limited two times and up to around €480 per month.

## Budget (approx.)

For accommodation allow €300 - 320 / person / month

For food and other expenses allow €10-20 / day

Without travel expenses to and from Hungary and insurance, a reasonable total monthly budget would be about €700

Don't forget to join our social networks to meet the other students you will be studying with:





# A Few Figures

**10** campuses: Angers, Paris, Aix-en-Provence, Bordeaux, Cholet, Lyon, Nantes, Toulouse, Budapest and Shanghai

**186** partner universities in **49** countries worldwide

**3,000** students and corporate auditors

**240** collaborators, **103** permanent teachers

**370** lecturers teachers and international experts

**2,500** partner companies

**12,700** alumni all over the world



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## BUDAPEST

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