



Pilgrimage Tour



An invitation to discover the rich history and culture of Hungary, a land that combines the very essence and fragrance of East and West with the mythical River Danube, flowing across the country. Hungary offers a great variety of beautiful and fascinating attractions - quaint medieval towns and villages, Baroque and Renaissance palaces, fortresses perched on rocky crags, romantic castle ruins, healing spas, stunning churches, and protected natural landscapes of forests, lakes and wetlands, not forgetting their famous food and music. A land whose first Christian king, St. Stephen died without a heir and asked the Virgin Mary to take Hungary under her protection.

Below is a sample itinerary to visit this captivating country and the many wonderful vestiges of its Christian history





1st day: BUDAPEST, the "Pearl of the Danube"

Our visit to the twin cities of Buda and Pest includes views of the Parliament, the Gellért Hill, the Royal Palace and a visit to the 13th century Church of Matthias. The entire Castle Hill area is an UNESCO World Heritage Site. In the afternoon we drive to "green belt" of the Hungarian capital, to Máriaremete to visit the shrine of the Virgin Mary at a Servite chapel.

2nd day: MÁRIAPÓCS AND THE HUNGARIAN GREAT PLAINS "HORTOBÁGY" (Full day excursion)

Drive to Máriapócs, a popular place of pilgrimage. People come from far and wide to pray to the weeping Black Virgin. The town received a visit from Pope John-Paul II. in 1991. In the afternoon: visit to the Hortobágy National Park, a protected nature reserve. Meet the Hungarian "cowboys", the "csikós" and visit the interesting museum of the National Park.

3rd day: GÖDÖLLŐ - MÁRIABESNYŐ AND EGER (Full day excursion)

Drive to the Royal Castle in Gödöllő, linked to the memory of Emperor Franz- Joseph and Empress Elisabeth, better known as Sissy. Nearby is one of the country's most famous pilgrimage place: Máriabesnyő. During the construction of the baroque church, in 1758, the workers found a small ivory sculpture of the Virgin Mother and Child. Many wonders are credited to the statue since then. Continuation to Eger, a beautiful historical city, nestled in a hollow between mountains, center of a wine-growing region.

4th day: ESZTERGOM – VISEGRÁD – SZENTENDRE (Full day excursion)

The Danube Bend offers a treasury of history, culture and architecture. Esztergom, a former royal seat, is the queen of the Danube. The country's first capital in the 11th century, the town was - and still is - the nation's ecclesiastical center. Travel back to the 13th century as you climb high atop a hill in Visegrád to one of Central Europe's largest and best preserved Romanesque castle keeps. Your efforts will be rewarded with a breathtaking view. Stretching along the right bank of the river, Szentendre has a romantic appeal, indeed it is not surprising that late 19C artists sought inspiration and even settled here in an "artists' colony". Hungary's largest open-air folk museum, or skanzen, is also in Szentendre.

5th day: GYŐR – PANNONHALMA – VESZPRÉM

Departure for Győr, the city of three rivers. We will discover the old town center and its many historical buildings, the Catholic College, Cathedral and its rich museum. Drive to Pannonhalma Abbey. Founded in AD 996, it has the country's only intact medieval cloisters, Gothic vaulting in its Basilica, Renaissance carving and one of the world's largest Benedictine libraries. Pannonhalma's Benedictine high school is one of the most respected in the country. It is an UNESCO World Heritage site. Drive to Veszprém, the city with nearly 200 historic monuments where the Bishop of Veszprém crowned all the queens of Hungary. Overnight.

6th day: VESZPRÉM – HEREND - KESZTHELY – HÉVÍZ

Visit Veszprém's Roman relics, 13th century frescos and a well preserved Baroque castle district, Old Town, Episcopal Palace, Gizella Chapel and St. Michael's Cathedral, where we will attend mass. Drive to Herend whose porcelains have won awards at several World Fairs. One of Herend's most sought after patterns is named after Queen Victoria, whose favourite tea service was produced there. Visit to the factory and museum, then continue to Keszthely, another charming little town. There is a possibility to visit the Baroque Festetics Castle. Nowadays, the building is housing a music school today. You are in for a well-deserved treat today! Our next stop is Hévíz, one of the oldest and most famous spas of the country, featuring Europe's largest thermal lake with lovely water lilies. Hévíz is a perfect place to experience nature while enjoying fresh air and relaxation.

7th day: LAKE BALATON – TIHANY – PÉCS

Drive to Lake Balaton, the largest lake in Europe. Visit the nature conservation area in the Tihany Peninsula and the beautiful 11th-century Benedictine Abbey. We will cross the lake on a Ferry and drive to Pécs, the cultural Mecca of Southern Hungary. A city with Mediterranean ambience likes an Oriental perfume. This perfume undoubtedly charmed the Turks, who had taken the city in the 16th century and made it a centre of Turkish culture and education during their occupation. Founded by Romans, Hungary's first university was founded here in 1367. The Turks occupied the city for a century and a half, and afterward a mix of Kraut Germans, Serbs and Croats filtered in. This multicultural city earned the UNESCO Peace Prize in 1998 for the harmony that comes so naturally to it. Visit to the city and its St. Peter's Cathedral with the possibility to attend a mass. Overnight in Pécs.

8th day: PÉCS – BUDAPEST

In the morning we will continue our visit of Pécs: the Turkish mosque (now a catholic church) and some of the museums. In the afternoon drive to Budapest, overnight.

9th day: flight home or spend another day or two in this captivating city.

SERVICES:

- 6x overnight with half board in Novotel Budapest Centrum**** in Budapest
- 1x overnight with half board in Villa Medici**** in Veszprém
- 1x overnight with half board in Hotel Rogner & Spa Lotus Terme**** in Hévíz
- 1x overnight with half board in Hotel Palatinus*** in Pécs
- All tourist programs as mentioned in the above description
- 1x horse show with lunch
- Coach for the whole tour
- Guide for the whole tour

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