After dark in Budapest

Night time suits Hungary’s capital, with restaurants, bars and entertainment venues galore. Find equal pleasure inside a grand relic of imperial times, or a ‘ruin pub’ housed in a semi-derelict building.

**Múzeum** HUNGARIAN £££
(muzeumkavehaz.hu; VIII Múzeum körút 12)
This café-restaurant is the place to come if you like to dine in old-world style with a piano tinkling in the background. It’s still going strong after 130 years in the same location. The goose-liver parfait is brilliant. There’s also a good selection of Hungarian wines.

**Street Food Karaván**
FAST FOOD £
(VII Kazinczy utca 18)
Located next to Budapest’s most famous ruin pub, Szimpla Kert, this outdoor food court offers a variety of snacks from gourmet burgers to sausage dishes. There’s even a vegan-friendly truck and a bar. In winter it’s covered, and if you’re lucky the heaters will also work. Ideal for a bite before hitting the ruin bars or for a post-party snack.

**Sushi Sei**
JAPANESE ££
(I Krisztina tér 3)
This stylish restaurant is one of the best spots in Budapest for authentic Japanese cuisine. Apart from beautifully presented nigiri, sushi and tempura sets, you can feast on cold soba noodles, yakitori, tonkatsu and grilled fish.

**DRINKING**

**Boutiq’ Bar**
(boutiqbar.hu; V Paulay Ede utca 5)
A low-lit speakeasy serving expertly mixed cocktails using fresh juices and an educated selection of craft spirits. For something Hungarian, try a creation that includes Unicum like Die Kaiser, or plum pálinka (fruit brandy) such as Positive Drinking. The gin-based Budapest BBQ is something else.

**Grill Déryné**
(budapestwine.com; VII Dob utca 20)
Brick-lined and candlelit, Doblo is where to go to taste Hungarian wines, with scores available by the 150ml glass. There’s food too, such as meat and cheese platters.

**Corvin Club & Roof Terrace**
(corvinteto.hu; VIII Blaha Lujza tér 1)
On top of the former Corvin department store, this excellent club, with stunning views from its open-air dance floor, holds a variety of nights from techno to rooftop cinema.

**DiVino Borbár**
divinoborbá.hu; V Szent István tér 3)
Central and always busy, DiVino is Budapest’s most popular wine bar, as the crowds spilling out onto the square in front of the Basilica of St Stephen show. Choose from more than 140 wines produced by 36 winemakers under the age of 35, but beware: those glasses go down quickly.

**Don’t miss**

**Veli Bej Baths** are one of the oldest and most beautiful Ottoman-era baths in Budapest, with five thermal pools of varying temperatures – the central pool lies under a beautiful cupola. The water is high in sodium, potassium and calcium and good for the joints. There’s also a cluster of saunas and steam rooms with massages available. They’re open until 9pm (csaszarhotel.hu/veli-bej-spa-budapest).

**Fűge Udvar**
(00 36 20-200 2000; VII Klauzál utca 19)
This enormous ruin pub has a large covered courtyard with a big (and eponymous) fig tree in its centre. There are lots of side rooms and great street art to mull over.

**Fisherman’s Bastion on Castle Hill**

**EATING**

**Baraka**
(FUSION £££
(barakarestaurant.hu; II Kacsa utca 22)
This family-run restaurant has earned fans with its excellent name and a cosy location in the back and a less-expensive söröző (brasserie). The mostly meaty dishes – such as veal stew with paprika sauce – are expertly prepared and the Hungarian wine list is solid. This is one place to hear authentic csárdás (Gypsy-style folk music), played from 6pm to 11pm.

**Mandragóra**
HUNGARIAN ££
(II Kacsa utca 22)
With a hint of black magic in its name and a cosy location in the basement of a residential block, this family-run restaurant has earned fans with its excellent takes on Hungarian classics. Feast on slow-cooked duck with red cabbage and delicious pearl-barley risotto.

**Kárpatia**
HUNGARIAN £
(karpatia.hu; V Ferenciek tere 7-8)
A palace of fin-de-siècle design dating from 1877, the ‘Carpathia’ serves almost-modern Hungarian and Transylvanian specialties in both a palatial restaurant in the back and a less-expensive söröző (brasserie). The mostly meaty dishes – such as veal stew with paprika sauce – are expertly prepared and the Hungarian wine list is solid. This is one place to hear authentic csárdás (Gypsy-style folk music), played from 6pm to 11pm.

**Doblo**
(budapestwine.com; VII Dob utca 20)
Brick-lined and candlelit, Doblo is where to go to taste Hungarian wines, with scores available by the 150ml glass. There’s food too, such as meat and cheese platters.
**Neighbourhood walk**

**Andrássy út & Heroes’ Square**

- **Start:** Hungarian State Opera House
- **End:** City Park
- **Length:** 1.5 miles

This easy walk follows attractive Andrássy út, Budapest’s wide boulevard built in time for the 1896 millennium celebrations, to Heroes’ sq (Hősök ter). It’s ideal for an evening stroll.

Andrássy út splits from Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út about 200m north of Diák Ferenc tér. A little further along is the Hungarian State Opera House, façade (though currently being renovated) is among the most beautiful in Budapest. In the niche at the carriageway entrance is a statue of Ferenc Erkel, father of Hungarian opera, with composer Ferenc Liszt in the one at the right. At first-floor level are statues of the muses of opera, while Tchaikovsky, Verdi and Mozart are among those honoured at the second-floor level.

Opposite the Opera House Dresdener Palais was designed by Art Nouveau master builder Ödön Lechner in 1908. It once housed the Hungarian State Ballet Institute, but has stood empty since the late 1990s. For something even more magical, walk down Dádbíró út to the New Theatre, a Secessionist gem (1909) embellished with monkey faces, gilding and geometric designs that look like an early version of Art Deco.

The old-world cafés Móvész Kávéházi is one block up at No 29 Andrássy út, this is a great place for people-watching, coffee and cake. The next cross street is Nagymező utca, the Boulevard of Budapest, with a number of theatres on the Buda side. Andrássy út at No 7, known for its campy performances, and the restored Palácio. Next to the latter is the Status of Céza Hof (1926–2003), the stand-up comedian whose career took him from working-class underling to star of the stage. Two blocks up, Andrássy út meets the Big Ring at Oktogon, a busy intersection. Look out for the building at Tárcsai körút 19, an exact replica of Florence’s Palazzo Strozzi. Two blocks beyond, the former secret police building is now home to the House of Terror, a high-tech museum that showcases the horrors of both the fascist and the longer-lasting communist regimes. A plaque reads in part: ‘We cannot forget the horror of terror, and the victims will always be remembered.’

Along the next two blocks you’ll pass some very grand buildings at No 69 is the Old Kunsthalle – Academy of Fine Arts, somewhat resembling Palazzo Bevilacqua in Venice, housing the Hungarian University of Fine Arts, founded in 1871, and also the Budapest Puppet Theatre in the basement. The following block on the right was the former HQ of MÁV, the national railway. The next square is the beautiful Kudaló köröm, with four neo-Renaissance town houses. The last stretch of Andrássy út and the surrounding neighbourhoods are packed with stunning old mansions that are among the most desirable addresses in the city; Andrássy út ends at Heroes’ Square, just west of Városliget (City Park). The square is defined by the Millennium Monument (Szentgyörgy-emlékmű). Beneath the tall column with its statue of Archangel Gabriel is an empty coffeina representing the unknown insurgents of the 1956 Uprising. To the north of the monument is the Museum of Fine Arts and its rich collection of old masters. The building was commissioned for the parliament for the 1896 millennium celebration of the Hungarian tribes arriving in present-day Hungary. To the south is the ornate Palace of Art, which also opened in 1896.
AFTER DARK IN BUDAPEST

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Sleeping

Bed & Beers Inn
Best for proximity to beer (bedandbeers.hu)
Above a cellar bar, this colourful three-bedroom apartment has a compact double and two larger rooms with bunk beds.

Bohem Art Hotel
Best for vibrant decoration (bohemarthotel.hu)
Each room is individually decorated with giant artworks and prints, bold colours and ultramodern furnishings.

Buddha Bar Hotel
Best for antique touches (buddhabarhotelbudapest.com)
This glamorous hotel is in neobaroque Klotild Palace, which retains some of its period features like the original staircase.

Groove
Best for backpackers (thegroove.insta-hostel.com)
There’s a real sense of traveller camaraderie at this friendly hostel inside a beautiful Art Nouveau building.

Katona Apartments
Best for self-catering (katonaapartments.hu)
These are simply furnished and cleverly arranged apartments in a quiet old block, right in the heart of Belváros.

Lánchíd 19
Best for panoramic views (lanchid19hotel.hu)
These rooms have floor-to-ceiling windows. To the front is the Danube and to the back Buda Castle – stunning.

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