

Team Hungary's Big ol' Pack-O-Fun

(And Important Information)

I. Travel Information

Public Transportation in Budapest

Budapest has an excellent system of public transportation. Before embarking on your public transport adventures, be sure to purchase an orange ticket and make sure that you validate it once you get on your mode of transport. Look for the orange or red validation boxes. Don't try to get by without a ticket - it can result in a mongo fine of Ft. 1,600 or you might even be confronted by the huge security guys which will cause more trauma than the 140 forint drain on your pocket book. Keep your ticket until you are out of the metro station or off the bus, tram, trolley, cog railroad, funicular, or ski lift (really). You use the same type of ticket for all modes of transportation. However if you change lines or systems, you must validate a new ticket. One last tidbit: only show your ticket to ticket inspectors who are wearing the red BKV armband. So unless you see the armband, don't give anything to anyone no matter what they say.

You can buy tickets from a teller or an automatic machine. Buying tickets from the teller are the best way, because many times the automatic ticket machines are out of order, and you don't find out until your money is in the machine and your left without a ticket.

If you live in Budapest, or are in the city often—ask your fellow alum or your school how to get a monthly pass for all public transport.

Cost of tickets: Single journey= Ft 145; Book of 10=Ft 1,250; Book of 20=Ft 2,450; 1-day unlimited travel pass=Ft 1150; 3-day unlimited travel pass=Ft 2,300; 7-day unlimited travel pass=Ft 2,700; 2-week pass=Ft 3500 1-month/30 day pass=Ft 5400.

It is customary to give up your seat to older people, pregnant women, people with small children, or alumni if present. If you're too tired to comply with this custom, then fake sleep until your stop comes or else it might encourage the "rude American" stereotype.

Travelling farther afield

Travel Agencies:

Vista Travel one heck of a busy place. Yet sometimes the unfriendliness and lack of customer care is worth it to find a cheap air ticket. *Take the metro to Deák tér (on the corner of Bajcsy Zsilinszky and Paulay E streets). Andrásy Út 1.* Phone: 06/1/269-6032 or 06/1/269-6033; Email: airtickets@vista.hu; Website: www.vista.hu

Travel Unlimited has been a favorite with friendly and helpful service. Also offers inexpensive air tickets. *Red metro to Astoria and it's on the second floor of the West Business Center. Rákóczi utca 1-3.* Phone: 06/1/266-8919; Email: travelunlimited@pronet.hu; Website: www.travelunlimited.hu

Aeroviva, a travel agency that also has a super friendly English speaking staff. Besides the fact that they have complimentary chocolate bars at their front desk, they are efficient and could become the new first choice. *From Deák tér go to Károly körút and it will be on the left a couple blocks down. Károly körút 11.* Phone: 06/1/486-8686; Email: aeroviva@aeroviva.com; Website: www.aeroviva.com

Tidbit: All three of these travel agencies usually find tickets at good rates. It is hard to say which travel agency is the cheapest because it depends on when and where you are traveling. **Planes are often booked up several months in a advance**, so when you're planning to go home, think ahead. Airline reservations in Hungary work differently. Making reservations, is free. You can make multiple reservations and you don't have to choose which one you want to use or pay for it until 2 weeks before your flight, so **MAKE YOUR RESERVATION ASAP** (If you want to go home for Christmas, make your reservations in September, and if you need a flight home for the summer, reserve it in February).

Getting To and From the Airport:

Hungary's only real airport is in Budapest. It is named Ferihegy. There are two parts to the airport; Ferihegy 1 and Ferihegy 2. Ferihegy 1 is mostly freight and one discount airline. Almost all flights (this means you) will go to Ferihegy 2. At Ferihegy 2, there are two terminals; Terminal A and Terminal B. Terminal A is only Malev (the Hungarian national airline), so you will probably com into Ferihegy 2B.

Information - Arrivals: 06/1/296-8000; Departures: 06/1/296-7000

Airport Minibus - is probably the most convenient way to and from the airport if you are alone and have lots of heavy luggage. Just call and make a reservation at least 24 hours before your flight and they will come and pick you up at your location anywhere in Budapest. Ft 2,100 per person for one way & Ft 3,500 for a round-trip. Phone: 06/1/296-8555 or 06/1/296-6283

Taxi - If you have more than one person, think about a taxi. The price stays the same for up to 4 passengers. At least one taxi company has a flat rate of 3000ft to the airport. If you have large luggage, be sure to tell the taxi dispatcher when you call for the taxi.

Public Transportation - Going to the airport, take the Reptér bus from Köbánya-Kispest stop at the end of the blue metro. This bus will take you directly to the airport. If you are coming from the airport, the bus is located between the exits for Terminal A and Terminal B of the airport exit on the bottom level.

Train tickets:

The Hungarian train company is called MÁV. You can purchase tickets at offices in all three main train stations: Keleti Pu., Nyugati Pu., and Déli Pu. There are separate counters for domestic and int'l tickets so be sure to go to the right one. There is an awesome ticketing center where you can buy any train ticket. Go to Oktagon and start walking down *Andrássy Út* going away from Hero's square. It is about 2 short blocks on the left. Your school might give you a special train pass. It will get you 50% off domestic train tickets. Most everybody should be able to get this pass, so ask your school about it. It may cost around Ft 350-500, so if your school won't buy it for you, ask if you can pay, because it will more than pay for itself.

Going by bus:

Volánbusz-There are three major Volánbusz stations: one at Nepliget, one at Népstadion, and one at Árpád híd. Volánbusz is THE way to travel to other countries if you want to be really cheap, really uncomfortable, and really traumatized for life. It's not as fast as the train and your teacher discount card doesn't work on the bus.

Traveling to Prague:

Put your hand on your heart in honor of past teachers who have ingeniously figured out how to go to Prague for around \$50. It is called the *Bratislava Hop*. First, buy a round trip ticket to Bratislava. When the train makes it's 15 minute stop in Bratislava, jump off the train, madly run to the ticket counter and buy a one-way ticket to Prague. When you get to Prague buy a one-way ticket back to Bratislava (your round-trip from Budapest will get you the rest of the way home). This could potentially become a traumatic experience if you aren't quick in Bratislava - so make sure an alum preps you for this experience. OR - you could just pay the full \$70 price and avoid all the excitement. If you plan to stay with an ESI Czexican, make sure to call in advance. They'd love to have you. There is also plenty of cheap housing in Prague that you can get without reservations at travel agencies in the train station. These are reliable agencies and prices can be as low as fifteen dollars a day.

II. What to do in the big city

Libraries

The British Council Library - Venczúr utca 26. Budapest (*just off Kodály körönd on the yellow metro*). This is a great place to get books, but you have to pay Ft 2,500 for a library card. Hours are Monday-Friday: 9-8:00 p.m., Saturday: 9-1:00 p.m. Email: information@britishcouncil.hu; Website: www.britishcouncil.hu

Performing Arts

Hungary is a wonderful country of music and dance, and it's very affordable. You can get a schedule of all monthly cultural events from the information center at Deák tér. The opera house is beautiful and a night on the town can soothe your bleary winter soul. Check out www.budapestinfo.hu for schedule of performances.

Possible places to go:

- *Opera House* - VI, *Andrássy Út* 22. Yellow metro - Opera. Phone: 06/1/331-2550
- *Erkel Theatre* - VIII, *Köztársaság tér* 30. Take Bus 7. Phone: 06/1/333-0108
- *Academy of Music* - VI, *Liszt Ferenc tér* 8. Take 4,6 Tram. Phone: 06/1/341-4788

Museums

- *Hero's Square/Palace of Art/Museum of Fine Art* - XIV, City Park. *Hősök tere* on the yellow metro. The two museums flank either side of the square.
- *National Museum* - VIII, *Múzeum krt.* 14-16. *Kálvin tér* on the blue metro.
- *National Gallery* - I., *Disz tér* 17. Take the castle bus. The museum is in the palace.
- *Museum of Modern Art* - Right next to the National Gallery.
- *Budapest History Museum* - on the other side of the National Gallery
- *Széchenyi National Library* - across the courtyard from the National Gallery
- *Museum of Natural History* - Between *Klinikak* and *Nagyvarad tér* on the blue metro.
- *Museum of Applied Art* - at *Férenc Kt.* on the blue metro (look for the green and yellow roof)
- *The Jewish Museum and Synagogue* - VII, *Dohány u.*2. Phone: 06/1/342-8949. Call to find out when it is open.
- *The House of Terror* - *Andrássy Út* 60. Phone: 06/1/374-2600. This newly opened museum exposes the cruelty of the Nazi and Communist regimes during their power in Hungary's history.

Publications

Newsweek, USA Today, Time and other favorites.

The Budapest Sun - costs 390 forint. But inside is a complete listing of all the movies shown in English in the whole city. Or for free, read www.budapestsun.com

Restaurants

Mexican:

Iguana's - Great southwest atmosphere. If you face away from the door and don't look outside you can almost imagine that you are back in the motherland. Quality of food ranges with the weather, but the lively place is worth it (so are the waiters). Prices range from 900-2900 forints. *Blue metro to Arany Janos. Or Red metro to Kossuth Lajos. Zoltan utca 16.*

American:

TGIFridays- Located in Westend City Center. This is the place to go for American service with a smile. They even make sure your drink is refilled and with ICE! They pay attention to you a lot more than the typical Hungarian restaurant. Average encounter with the waiter is 5.2 x per hour. *Located at Nyugati off the blue metro.*

Hard Rock Café — This restaurant has been described in guidebooks simply as "Whoa mother, hard to find!". New ESI'ers who find this restaurant before November usually get the "I Did It—I Found Hard Rock Café" Award at the Thanksgiving Retreat along with a gift certificate for a free Hard Rock Oreo Shake and Mud Pie. To obtain the prize you must bring a Hard Rock Café Budapest napkin to the retreat along with a receipt of purchased food. The receipt with the earliest date on it wins the prize.

Pizza:

Marcello's - Real sauce (NOT available in Hungary) and good pizza. It's between Moric Zsigmond and the Gellert hotel. *Coming from Gellert on the 47/49 tram; get off one stop past the hotel then continue walking in the same direction. It will be on the left, in the basement next to the Humanic shoe store. Bárok Béla út. 40.*

Don Pepe Restaurant and Pizzeria- Lots of really good Italian selections and many different varieties of Pizza. *Blue metro to Nyugati. Nzugati tér 8.*

Don Francesco Pizzeria- Be sure to drop in down the street and say hello to Annye and Janna after stuffing yourself full. Pizza is excellent. Fruit soup is to die for. *Right next to the girl's flat. Mészáros u. 12.*

Laguna Étterem & Pizzéria — Kispest's Yo Buddy! Pizza Place They serve a wide variety of pizzas on the cheap. An excellent value for your hard-earned forint. *XIX. Üllői út. 250.*

San Marzano — A chain of delicious pizza places with good atmosphere. You can find them at: *Batthyány Tér, on Andrásy Út near Oktogon, and near the American Embassy.*

Marxim — This place is not for the faint of heart. It's a communist themed pizza place, complete with barbed wire and "arresting" graffiti. Try the "Pre-election Promise" pizza - it comes with anything you want. *II. Kisrókus u. 23. It's on the right side of the Millennium park behind Mammut mall. Look for the red star.*

Hungarian:

Fatal's - hearty yet touristy Hungarian food. It's mighty good food served on mighty big plates. *Blue metro to Ferenciek ter. II. Vaci utca 67.*

Szent Jupat - ESI's legendary John Hutton's favorite haunt. This is definitely a male heaven. More meat and potatoes than you could ever want. Grown men have been known to cry when their big wooden platters are placed in front of them. *Red metro to Moszkva ter. II. Dékán u.3.*

Remiz - great gourmet Hungarian food. Prices are higher so it makes a great place for a special occasion although they have no problem with you just ordering coffee and cake. *Red metro to Moszkva, then 22 bus to the Szep Ilona stop. Budakeszi út 5.*

Wagaboond Restaurant - Provides the best somloi galuska dessert ever tasted, as well as candlelight and piano music. Oh la la...how romantic. *VII. Akácfa u. 24.*

Karmen - A new restaurant that wants to be fancy, but hasn't been around long enough to charge appropriate high prices. They serve traditional Hungarian fare with a gourmet twist. *Blue metro to Nyugati, then walk south along the 4,6 tram two blocks, turn left, and it's one block down on the left*

Arabian, Syrian:

Al-Amir - A popular favorite of past and present ESI-ers. Their hummus and baba gannudj is really appetizing and served with fresh pitas. *VII. Király u.17. Just off Deák Tér.*

Pita House - Great fresh-baked pitas and hummus. *Moskva Tér, next to McDonald's*

Vegetarian:

Falafel - Good salad bar where you can fill your pita or bowl to the brim with fresh normal vegetables, great dressings and fresh falafels. *Yellow metro to Oktogon or 4,6 tram. Paulay Ede út. 53*

Specialties:

Nagyi Palacsinta - A fun 24 hour crepe place. You have the place to yourself Sat. and Sun. mornings. There's also a place to sit up in a ladder/observation booth. *Red metro to Moszkva tér and walk towards the Shell gas station. It's on the right. There's also another location at Batthyány tér off the red metro.*

Buddah - Thai sandwiches. Popular with the after-church crowd. *Blue metro to Nyugati, then walk south along the 4,6 tram three blocks, on the right.*

Cafés(coffeehouses)/Cukraszdas(sweetshops)

Rádaly Utca - This is really a street, not a café. But it's a street with many many cafés and restaurants. *Rádaly Utca runs south from the Calvin Tér metro stop.*

We especially recommend:

- **Paris Texas** - enormous desserts and delicious pizzas from Pink Cadillac next door
- **Shiraz** - get a hookah and watch the hourly belly dancing
- **Vörös Orászy** - It's a teahouse. One of the few smoke-free places in Budapest. Drink, sit, and read.

Liszt Ferenc Tér - This is another place with lots of restaurants and cafés. It's a lovely square full of trees near the Music Academy. When it's warm out, all the attractive people in the city make their way here. *Since you're attractive, go with them to Oktogon and walk one block towards Deak Ferenc Tér on Andrassy Út.*

Check out:

- **Café Incognito** - enjoy some of the best hot chocolate while listening to acid jazz),
- **Café Vian** - modern and hip with changing displays of art
- **Mozaik** - pricey and funky, delicious and spunky.

Vista Café/Restaurant - One of the only places in Budapest that serves breakfast, which is delicious. You can also order American coffee. The café and restaurant caters to tourists, so the prices are affordable. Monday-Friday: 8-11:00 p.m., Saturday-Sunday: 10:00-11:00 p.m. *Off Deák Tér. Walk down Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út and turn right on Paulay Ede. Street number 7. It will be on your right.*

Café Ponyvaregeny - Old world style coffeehouse atmosphere. Great place to go for a good heart to heart with a friend. Mahogany tables and chairs - candles on the tables

and in the winter they light up the fireplace. Go early or you'll die of smoke inhalation. *Directions are the same as Marcello's except you walk to the left of the shoe store and continue down the side street where it's on your right.*

Demmers Teahouse - Another favorite that has the most delectable tea in Europe served up real nice-like. *4,6 tram or blue metro to Nyugati pu. Walk toward Oktagon and take a right on Podmaniczky út. 14. Walk a little ways down and it will be on the right.*

Soho Coffee-This coffeehouse provides a taste of home with its unique to Hungary menu of macchiatos, lattes, and mochas. Provides a relaxing atmosphere and is a great place to go if you want to escape the feeling of living in a foreign country. It also has Internet connection, English books and magazines, and flavored syrups for your coffee. It is located on the Buda side. *Take the red metro to Battány tér. Walk down F_ utca, and the coffeehouse is on the right (next to the French Institute). F_ utca 25.*

Coquans Coffee - Wooooooo Baby!!! They have awesome, NORMAL American coffee which will soothe your culture shocked soul. Don't go alone your first time - you'll need someone to debrief the experience with. *Go to the back of Mammut Mall at Moszkva tér where there is a big open market. It's up on the 3rd floor in the left hand corner.*

Király Cukraszda - Quaint coffeehouse and sweetshop. You must be brave and walk up the narrow staircase to the left of the small counter window filled with sweets to find a place to sit. *Deak Ferenc Tér metro stop. Walk down Király utca about 5 minutes and it will be on your right.*

Other Ideas for *Fun* in Budapest

- Hike to János Hegy and ride on the Pioneer railroad or take the chair lift to the top.
- Take the #56 tram from Moskva Tér 2 stops for the cogwheel railroad.
- Go to Danielle and Stacy's flat for a dance party.
- Take a day trip to a nearby town: Szentendre, Visegrád, Vác, Gödöllő, Esztergom, etc.
- Go to the flea market at Eszteri Út. Take the #154 or #156? Bus from Boráros Tér near the Duna.
- Read in the Gellért Park or on Margit Sziget on rainy and cold days.
- Tesco Tag—talk to Neal for details in how to play.
- Go to galleries, museums and used bookstores along Museum Krt.
- TP a Commie Condo with Crepto—talk to Judi where the best places are to go.
- Meditate on God in one of the many Catholic and Reformed Churches.
- In the winter, ice-skate at Hero's Square—cheap!
- Streak across the Chain Bridge.
- Take pictures at outdoor markets.
- Indulge in a Dr. Pepper to comfort Culture Shock—this fine beverage has recently been spotted in Tesco.
- Have a Chinese Market shop-off.
- Rent canoes on the Danube (off the HÉV).
- Have coffee with any (or all) of the four Lovely Csepel Ladies.
- When you discover your own great escapes, fill in the other teachers.

III. What to do when you can't take it any more

Relax at a local bathhouse for a swim (with or without your suit). Ask an alum about precautions and just how to do this. Relax.....enjoy yourself after that hard week of teaching!

Gellert Baths-swim suits are not required (and actually, unless you pay to use the swimming pool too, you're not allowed to wear one). Treat yourself to a massage. *Kelenhegyi utca 4-6. Take the 47 tram to Gellert hotel.* There are both baths and swimming pools at this famous resort. We suggest renting a changing room for privacy and storage of belongings. Prepare for rudeness.

Széchenyi Baths- *Allatkerti Krt—right in the City Park. Take the Yellow Metro #1 to the Szechenyi stop, come out and you can't miss it.* Beautiful, outdoor thermal pool you can swim in all year round. Cheaper than Gellert.

Marriott Hotel Lobby—Past EST-ers have spent many hours being lobby rats here. (Don't take your Plus or Interspar bags in there—they'll know you're a local!). Great place to pick up a free Budapest Sun if it's the end of the month and you're short on change. If there aren't any in the lobby, go up the elevator to the third floor and there will be some at the door. You'll get your fill of screaming American tourists there too. Whoopi Goldberg and Hootie and the Blow Fish (remember him?) have been spotted here! There is an all-you-can-eat Dessert Bar for around 1800 HUF. Desserts are out of this world, but come with an appetite and your pocketbook! Free refills on American coffee, for those who like to drink the stuff.

English Video Store- There are two of these, one in Buda (*Hajnóczy József u. 11 District 12*) and one in Pest (*Zichy Jenő u. 44, between Octogon and Nyugati—walk south, dog leg to the left and follow the footprints on the sidewalk*). If you're an out-of-towner who wants to rent a video for longer use with a class, let them know how long you'll need it and they'll probably let you have it for that long, for no extra charge (isn't that cool!).

Go check out a Jazz Club. They're listed in the Budapest Sun/Week each week with scheduled performers and so on. Maybe -

- **The Long Jazz Club** on *Dohany utca 22-24*
- **Felső Jazz Club** at *Baross utca 30*
- **Old Man** on *Dohany between Deak Ferenc Ter and Blaha*.

Go to **Szentendre** for a day trip! It's a stereotypical cobblestoned European town. Buy a ticket at the Batthyány HÉV/Metro stop and take the HÉV to the end of the line! For a scenic ride home take a boat cruise down the Danube back into Budapest for just 600 ft! To get to Szentendre from Vác, take the ferry across the river and hop on the bus on the other side. Buy a ticket to Szentendre and take the bus to the last stop, which happens to be where the HÉV also ends. It's cheap and you can get some great shopping out of it!

Visit an out-of-towner. I can't stress this enough!!! You'll brighten their week and you'll feel encouraged and renewed. Leaving your city or town for a couple of days can be just the cure you need.

IV. Practical Info for First Time Visitors to Hungary

(Note: this information is by no means all-inclusive. People and situations here are constantly changing and there are exceptions to almost everything).

Important stuff to know and do to be safe

The American Embassy: Open Monday through Friday, 1:00 p.m.-4:30 p.m. *Szabadsag Tér 12, Budapest (just look for Old Glory) Arany Janos stop on the blue metro or Kossuth Lajos on the red metro.* Phone: 06/1/475-4636, Website: www.usis.hu

On your person:

Carry these numbers and things around in case you get arrested-no kidding, it almost happened to an ESI-er once.

1. A photocopy of the photo page of your passport.
2. The telephone numbers of the American Embassy.
3. The telephone number of your CA and CD (ask them for their business card).
4. The telephone number of your school and the home phone number of a teacher at your school or another Hungarian friend who can help you if you get in a bind.
5. Your telephone number and your PRINTED address in Hungary. It's helpful to give this to taxi drivers when they can't understand your Hungarian, and to keep from being ripped off when they hear your American accent.
6. Your permanent address and telephone number in the US or Canada.
7. Your residency permit.

This list is playing it on the safe side, but you know what they say. You can put most of these numbers on a single small card. It may also be a good idea to carry a little card in your wallet with the numbers of all ESI-ers. It has come in handy on more than one occasion. Remember to carry this information even if you're just running or walking somewhere. Keep in mind that you're in a country where most of you don't speak the language and that makes you more vulnerable. Also try to keep extra forints for a cab (try to NEVER have less than 1,000 HUF on you) and coins telephone calls. **NEVER, NEVER, NEVER change money on the street or in train stations. It's illegal and you'll probably get ripped off. AND, if someone asks to see your money to check if it's correct—DON'T SHOW IT TO THEM! There are scams going on. If they're REALLY insistent, YOU find a police officer to supervise.**

Pickpocketing is rampant. It's not uncommon to have money taken right out of your front pocket or out of your purse or backpack - these people are professionals! The best solution is to carry a pouch with your valuables in it around your neck or waist under your shirt, or to use a zippered inside pocket. If you carry a purse, be sure to keep your hand ON your purse when you are in stores, on the street, or on public transportation. When traveling, be sure to have no valuables in your backpack because it is so easy for pickpocketers to just unzip a pocket and take whatever! Watch each others' bags when traveling. Good rule of thumb: if you'd cry if it were stolen, then don't put it in your bag.

Women (in general) should not walk alone at night and should avoid public transportation alone at night. DO NOT make direct eye contact with men - it is seen as an invitation or as a challenge. Also, it is better to take a taxi than to take unnecessary risks. This may differ according to what city you are in - just don't be stupid! It is worth the extra money for a taxi in exchange for your safety.

Anyone of color. The same rules for women may apply to you since Skinheads are growing in number in the city. These Neo-Nazis are Europe's more dangerous version of the KKK and can be recognized by their shaved heads, leather jackets, and black combat boots (with white laces). Their hatred is aimed towards Asians, blacks, Gypsies and Jews. If you're Caucasian, you don't need to be afraid of them - just cautious. If you're within earshot of the group, it might be wise to refrain from speaking English.

Cultural differences

- If you're invited to a Hungarian's flat for dinner, it's a common practice to bring flowers (an odd number) and/or a bottle of wine (unless you know for a fact that the host doesn't drink - then you should bring Coke). Be prepared to stay for several hours and eat lots of food - Hungarians don't believe in short visits- so don't plan anything after your visit which would cause you to have to leave early. This could cause confusion or hurt feelings. Also, take your shoes off at the front door - so remember to wear your best socks when you visit nationals. You'll very likely be offered some type of alcohol. Unless you have strong convictions about this, it's best to take some, even if you only sip it - refusing is a great insult to most Hungarians. Whatever you do, don't drain your glass - it will quickly be refilled.
- Hungarians are generally much quieter than Americans. When in public, try to keep your volume down. Americans are easy enough to spot already, you don't want to attract pickpockets or reinforce the stereotype that all Americans are loud and rowdy.
- Staring is socially acceptable in Hungary, so be prepared to be stared at! Feel free to stare back if it's someone of the same sex, but don't stare at someone of the opposite sex, it may be interpreted as an invitation.
- Hungarians have a different standard of hygiene from most Americans - they don't shower as often and many women don't shave their legs or underarms. Remember that this is just culturally different and not wrong!!!
- Don't be surprised to see people of the same sex holding hands or cuddling, this is a sign of deep friendship, nothing else. Homosexuality is still taboo in Hungary. Also, don't be surprised to see people displaying gross affection with their boy/girlfriend. Try not to stare TOO blatantly!

Eating, drinking and restaurant rules

- Tap water is often impossible to get at restaurants. Some waiters will refuse to give it to you, but some will, it just depends. If you ask for water, you'll get mineral water or carbonated water. If you're desperate, ask for "csap viz" (pronounced chawp veez). This will be "safe to drink" tap water.
- Tap water in your flat/house will be fine to drink. With little kids, you might want to buy a water filter because there can be high amounts of lead.
- It can be rather difficult to eat healthy in Hungary, the land of fat. If you're looking for salads, realize that they are very different from American salads. They usually consist of some combination of cold corn, peas, onions, cucumbers, and cabbage with mayo squeezed over them. In season, tomato (paradicsom) and cucumber (uborka) salads are yummy.
- Customer satisfaction is not a high priority in the minds of waiters and service persons in Eastern Europe. When you're in a restaurant, you must get the waiter's attention if you want anything after he brings your meal, he usually won't check on you again, but will still expect to be tipped (10% is customary). **Don't leave the tip on the table, give it directly to the waiter when you pay.** You may have to tell him what you ordered (it is good to remember the price of your food). He'll write it down on a card and add it up there and you pay him (or another person whose job it is to carry the money). If you don't have correct change, say how much you want to pay (including the tip). If you say "thank you" when you pay, he'll keep the change. You can sit there all night if you want, they aren't worried about table turnover. You'll learn to enjoy lingering over you meal - learn to be patient.
- If there's a basket of bread on your table, be warned that you'll often pay for each piece you eat - ignorance is no excuse when the waiter tries to collect for it, unfortunately.
- Caffeine-free Coke is available in Hungary. If you want something without caffeine, your best bets are Fanta, mineral water, Sprite, or apple juice ("alma lé). You can also buy decaffeinated coffee at the grocery (it will say "kaffeinmentes")

Shopping

If you want to buy fruit and vegetables at an outdoor booth or market (the best place to look), remember that the prices shown are usually per kilo and not per item ("db" stands for "darab", which means "per item"). Also, at most places, you have to point at what you want and the owner will get it for you. If you pick it up yourself, you run the risk of

getting yelled at (they don't want you picking out the best). But don't let this intimidate you too much, the locals get reprimanded for the same thing.

Using the phones and calling cards

Telephones can be a major source of stress in Hungary - don't be surprised if you can't find a phone that works, if you're cut off in the middle of your conversation, or if you're connected with a wrong number even though you dialed the right one! Just a few years ago, Hungary was the second worst phone system in all of Europe (but they have worked to improve it). Get a phone card AND have coins with you so that you can use the phones around (some take only cards, some take only coins).

Phone numbers may seem a bit confusing. But there is method to the madness. Phone numbers are composed of three parts. There's a country code, a city code, and the phone number. Hungary's country code is 36 if you're calling from outside Hungary, or 06 (+36 on a mobile phone) if you're calling from within Hungary. The country code may seem like a new thing, but though you may not know it, you've been using one in the US for a long time; the US's country code is 1. So every time you dial long distance in the US, you use the country code too. The city code is like a US area code. Budapest's city code is 1; all other cities use a 2-digit city code. Phone numbers in Budapest are 7 digits. All other cities use 6-digit numbers. If you are calling a number within your city code, you only need the phone number. If you are calling a number outside your city code, you will need to use the country code AND the city code with the number. Since mobile phones (don't call them cell phones, no one will know what you're talking about) work anywhere and everywhere in the country, they have their own city code. T-Mobile (formerly Westel) is 30, Pannon is 20, and Vodafone is 70. So to call to or from mobile phones, you will always need to use the country code and city code for all phone numbers. Some examples: Calling Angela's place in Gödöllő from Budapest, you'd dial 06 28 432 418. To call Janna and Annye's place from a land line in Budapest you'd dial 202 1905. To call Judi's mobile from anywhere, dial 06 30 263 9225. Got it? Good.

To dial The Good Ol' U S of A - dial "001" plus the number. You can directly dial from most phones, but it's pricey. It's best to get a calling card for calling the USA **talk to an alumni (Janna) for details.*

Miscellaneous

Homeless: You'll see a lot of beggars in the city, especially in the metro. Many of them are professionals who exploit their children to gain peoples' sympathy. If you want to help someone, a safe bet is to give money to old men and women or to buy flowers from them - they are truly needy as inflation continues to skyrocket and their pensions often aren't enough to live off of.

Bathrooms are marked "WC" (water closet) and most have a porter who collects forints

before letting you in or out. Many places don't have toilet paper, so it's not a bad idea to carry a little with you in your pocket (very important when traveling on trains!). McDonald's and Burger King are the best places to go for a clean, free bathroom. Remember - "Ferfi" means "men", and "Női" means women.

Pornography: Like most big cities, Budapest has its share of pornography. All magazine and newspaper stands have pornography visibly showing -- a good idea is to train your eyes to avoid these stands altogether. Don't fool yourself and pretend you're only looking for Newsweek. Curiosity can quickly become an unhealthy addiction.

Gypsies are a common sight in Budapest and other cities as well - these are enthusiastic and colorful people who are unfortunately discriminated against all over Europe. You'll see some selling things in the metro, begging, drunk, and sometimes stealing. The Gypsy situation is a complex ethnic problem - try not to form a hard-set opinion based on one encounter or on what the Hungarians may tell you.

Dogs: You'll see dogs everywhere. Some of them are very big and very mean—and usually have muzzles on (they are required by law). Some dogs are so independent that they ride transportation by themselves. But do not worry, you do not need give up your seat for an old dog. A note of trivia: 1 in 5 Americans has a dog; 1 in 2 Hungarians has one.

For photocopies, go to *Copy General*, open 24 hours. There are several locations in Budapest - ask a city alum for the one nearest you. For free copies, make one of your students write it on the board for everyone else to copy on their own paper.

V. Outside of Town

You may ask an alumni for more details about any of these places and how to get there. You can also pick up information at your local **TourInform Office**.

Gödöllő: After Angela's & Tracy's pads, the most popular attraction in Gödöllő is the summer palace of the beloved Erzsébet Kiralyné (Queen Elizabeth). It is also the home of the Hungarian Agriculture University. Another great thing about Gödöllő is the FRESH AIR. There are many parks in town, plus tons of hiking and biking trails on the edge of town and beyond which makes it a wonderful place to visit if you are missing the sky. After you have worked up an appetite, satisfy your hunger at the Pizza Max Cafe for a fun and modern dining experience. They have everything from bruschetta to chicken caesar salads to 4 cheese pizzas (thin or thick crust!).

Sárospatak: Who says you need roller coasters to have fun? Go visit Lois in 'Patak. Sárospatak is adventure central. It will appeal to the more outdoorsey type with hiking, canoeing, kayaking, etc., as well as to the quieter type with an old castle and lots of refreshing nature. After a day of fun, dine at the elegant traditional Hungarian Restaurant, the *Vár Étterem* (the Castle Restaurant) which has been named one of the best restaurants of the region. Not only do they have delectable cuisines but it also offers a splendid view of the River Bodrog and the famous *Rákóczi Vár* (Rakoczi Castle) which is fabulous at night. There are also many wine cellars that highlight the delicious Tokaji wine that is produced in this region of Hungary. Don't forget to ask for the unique Aszú Wine while you're there (made from a special berry only made in this region). But be on the lookout. . .something out of the ordinary usually happens proving that "Life is Never Boring in Sárospatak!"

Szeged: Szeged is known 'round the ESI world as the sunshine capital of Hungary. Relax with an ice cream cone from one of the many fine *czukrázdas* in town and enjoy the lovely gardens in *Széchenyi tér*. Szeged also offers the largest bowling alley in Hungary (to my knowledge). The bowling shoes are Converse Chuck Taylors - wear your own and save on the rental. Have a craving for food in the middle of the night? The *Boci* is open 24 hours for your dining pleasure. The toasted sandwiches are highly recommended by past Szegedian ESI'ers. Look enough like a college student and they may give you a discount.

Vác: Located a short train ride north of the big city is the quiet town of *Vác*. Trains run frequently from Nyugati. In Vác you can enjoy the *Barlang Bar*, a bomb shelter turned pizza restaurant. The ham and eggs pizza has been a top seller. Other dining options include *Momo's*. Rumor has it that the waiter staff is really cute. After dinner, you may wish to enjoy a stroll along the banks of the Danube. If the river really grabs your interest, you can even take a boat ride back to Budapest.

Eger—most famous for its Bull's Blood wine. This town is awesome. It's got a big castle and a Turkish minaret. Sample some of the delicious local vintages in the "Valley of Beautiful Women". Check out a tour book for more details. It's a definite must see!!

Bugacpuszta—in the south of Hungary and has traditional Horse Shows which are amazing to watch. Ladies Beware--You may be whipped and kissed by one of the horsemen!
Website: www.welcome.to/bugacpuszta.

Aggtelek National Park—The Baradia Cave is located here which is the most significant and studied cave not only in Hungary but in the region. If you go be sure to bring your passport because there is one tour which takes you underground into Slovakia. Website: www.anp.hu

Viségrad, Esztergom, Pecs, Hollókő—other cities that you must visit!

VI. Recommended Websites on Hungary

hwww.teamhungary.net - Your web site.

www.volny.cz/esi-lessons - A must see!! A web page put together by a former ESI teacher in Czech. Lots of information is about Czech but there are many things similar to Hungary. There are also lots of lesson plan ideas and information on ministries.

www.hungaryemb.org - The Hungarian Embassy's website.

www.hungary.org - Provides links to other Hungarian sites.

www.budapest.com - Tourist information.

www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/europe/hungary - A travel guide.

www.fsz.bme.hu/hungary/homepage.html - General information about Hungary and has links to other sites.

www.budapestsun.com - One of the English newspapers in Budapest.