

Hungary is in Central Europe, between Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine and Slovakia. Its territory is ninety-three thousand square kilometres. The population of Hungary is about 10 million. There are nineteen counties in Hungary. Hungary is divided into three large areas. Dunántúl (Transdanubia), Tiszántúl (beyond the Tisza) and Duna-Tisza köze (between the Duna and the Tisza). Other big areas of Hungary are Nagyalföld (The Great Plain), Kisalföld (The Small Plain) and Northern Hungary. In Northern Hungary, there are many mountains, and the highest point in Hungary (Kékestető) is also there. There are many hills in Transdanubia. The soil in Hungary is good. Many years ago Hungary was mainly an agricultural country but agriculture is still very important. The two biggest rivers in Hungary are the Danube and the Tisza but there are many other smaller rivers. Lake Balaton is a big and famous lake in Hungary; it is the largest lake in Central Europe. Many tourists come to see it, swim in it and have a holiday near it.

Hungary is a parliamentary constitutional republic. The ruling party is Fidesz now, the prime minister is Viktor Orbán. Hungary is a member of the European Union, NATO and the Schengen Area. The official language is Hungarian, but some other languages are also spoken by minorities. Formerly Hungary was a communist country but it became a democracy and a capitalist country in 1989. Members of Parliament are elected every four years so one party's rule lasts four years unless they can win again. Hungary used to be much bigger but after the First World War its territory was greatly reduced.

Hungary has given many famous scientists to the world, such as Neumann János, Teller Ede, Szentgyörgyi Albert and Gábor Dénes.

Hungary is a land of thermal water. There are many thermal spas and they have been very famous for many centuries. Even the Romans loved them.

Some famous places in Hungary:

Hortobágy: It is on the Great Plain. The shadoofs (gémeskút), the Hungarian cowboys (csikós) with their whips, and the sunsets are famous on Hortobágy. Tourists also love the Kilenlyukú Híd (Nine-holed Bridge).

Pécs: It is very beautiful and has a famous mosque. The nightlife is good, too. Villány is near Pécs and it has the best red wine in Hungary.

Siófok: It is next to Balaton, the biggest lake in Hungary. It is "Partytown" in summer. There are beautiful women, sunshine and good clubs.

Esztergom: It has a beautiful Basilica. This is one of the oldest towns in the country and it is full of Hungarian history.

Aggtelek: It has the largest cave system in Central Europe. It looks like an enchanted forest or a fairy queen's palace.

The Eszterháza Palace in Fertőd is a magnificent building and many tourists visit it.

Another wonderful palace is the Royal Palace in Gödöllő, not far from Budapest.

These are just a few of the many beautiful places in Hungary.

The capital of Hungary is Budapest.

Budapest is one of the most charming cities in the world. The Danube flows through it and there are beautiful hills on the Buda side.

Budapest has a rich cultural life. It has many fine museums, theatres, cinemas, a beautiful opera house, and many cultural events, like concerts, festivals and others.

There are a lot of interesting sights and places to visit in Budapest.

One of the most beautiful places in Budapest is Buda Castle. It is even more beautiful at night, when the lights are on. It has more than 200 rooms. There is an amazing view of the Danube from the castle. Buda Castle is in the Castle District. There are other beautiful buildings in the Castle District, like Mathias Church, Fisherman's Bastion and the Széchenyi National Library.

The Parliament building is very big and beautiful. Some people say it is too big for a small country like Hungary but it is very famous and the tourists love it.

The National Museum is very famous because on March 15<sup>th</sup> (March the fifteenth) 1848 Petőfi gave a speech on its steps and this started the 1849 War of Independence.

Heroes' Square is also very popular. It is always full of tourists taking photographs. Heroes Square is next to the City Park, and Vajdahunyad Castle. They are also very famous. The City Park is full of sights itself, like Széchenyi bath (the biggest medicinal bath in Europe), the Zoo, the City Park Lake, the Grand Circus and many others.

The Danube is very beautiful. The sunset is spectacular from Freedom Bridge. People love it. The most beautiful island in the Danube is Margaret Island. It is very famous and there are many interesting sights on it. A lot of tourists visit it every year.

Budapest has some very nice spas. They can cure some medical problems, too. There is a lot of good thermal water under Budapest.

St. Stephens's Basilica in Budapest is also very big and beautiful. It is famous abroad, too. Important people have their wedding there.

Every August an island (Óbudai sziget) in the Danube goes crazy. Europe's largest music festival, the Sziget festival is held there. People from all over Europe go there, there are so many foreign tourists that local people can hardly buy tickets.

The Ecseri flea market in Budapest has all kinds of interesting things. You can find unbelievable things there. It is famous all over Hungary.

Gellért Hill is a nice hill in the middle of Budapest. The Citadel is a beautiful building on Gellért Hill.

On 15<sup>th</sup> March (the fifteenth of March) we commemorate the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence of eighteen-forty-eight and forty-nine.

20<sup>th</sup> August (the twentieth of August) is the day of Stephen the First. On this day, we commemorate the founding of our state almost a thousand years ago. This is also the day of new bread.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> October (the twenty-third of October) we celebrate the declaration of the Hungarian Republic and commemorate the revolution of nineteen-fifty-six.

At Christmas, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. On 24<sup>th</sup> December (the 24<sup>th</sup> of December) (On Christmas Eve) parents give Christmas presents to their children.

25<sup>th</sup> December (the 25<sup>th</sup> of December) is Christmas Day and 26<sup>th</sup> December (the 26<sup>th</sup> of December) is Boxing Day. Christmas is a public holiday, people don't work at Xmas.

Easter is also a Christian festival (ünne). At Easter, boys sprinkle the girls with perfume or water (mainly in the country) in Hungary. Girls paint eggs and give them to the boys. In modern times girls give money to boys who sprinkle them with perfume.

Different nationalities live in Hungary: Hungarians, Roma people, Germans, Slovaks, Romanians and Croats.

According to the 2011 census, 83.7 per cent of the people are Hungarians, 3.1 per cent are Roma people, 1.3 per cent are Germans, 0.3 per cent are Slovaks, 0.3 per cent are Romanians

and 0.2 per cent are Croats but 14.7 per cent of the total population did not declare their ethnicity.

A lot of Hungarian people live in other countries. This is because after the First World War, large areas of Hungary with a lot of Hungarian people were taken from Hungary. These areas were attached to other countries, like Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania and Serbia. So now many Hungarian people live in these countries. But a lot of Hungarian people live in the USA, Canada, England, Germany and some other rich countries because they went to live and work there in search of a better life.