

## Beautiful Budapest – 2020

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Cut in two by the Danube, with hills and valleys on one side, and plains on the other, connected with a series of graceful bridges spanning the river, Budapest offers a unique panorama. The cityscape extending on both banks of the river consists of works of architecture representing key periods of the history of the Hungarian capital.

Unified in 1872–73 of three settlements, Budapest evolved into a metropolis within fifty



years, while keeping the structural peculiarities of the erstwhile towns of Obuda, Buda and Pest: the characteristically Baroque façades of Buda Castle Quarter have retained a distinctly medieval atmosphere, while the Pest side has kept a large extent of its strikingly uniform historicist and art nouveau architecture - enriched with public buildings of outstanding importance - fitted into a city structure of grand boulevards and avenues, including Andrassy Avenue and its surroundings as a key feature.

The natural environment, which shows great variety in morphology (Gellert Hill and the Buda Hills, partly covered in forests, the wide River Danube with its islands, and the slightly undulating lowland of Pest) and the community living here represent a unique encounter and harmony between nature and the grandiose works of engineering (a series of bridges and embankments on both the Buda and Pest sides) and exquisite public buildings. The World Heritage site extending from Margaret Bridge to Liberty Bridge contains, on the Buda side, the building complex of the Buda Castle Quarter, including the civic district which has kept its medieval structure to date, Matthias Church and Fishermen's Bastion, as well as the Buda Castle. One of the most impressive buildings of the Pest side is the Historicist-neo-Gothic building of Parliament, designed by Imre Steindl. The neo-Renaissance seat of the Hungarian Academy of Science; the Gresham Palace, a masterpiece of Hungarian art nouveau; the Pest Vigado Concert Hall, a landmark of Hungarian Romantic architecture; and the Central Market Hall, one of the most beautiful works of historicist brick architecture in Hungary, are especially valuable.

The cityscape includes the bridges connecting Buda and Pest, four of which belong to the World Heritage site: Margaret Bridge, the Szechenyi Chain Bridge (the first stone bridge between Buda and Pest), Elisabeth Bridge and Liberty Bridge. The complex of the Castle Quarter, surrounded by the historic castle walls on the castle hill is made up by the erstwhile Royal Palace and the historic civic district that belongs to it. The

centrepiece of the Castle Quarter is the Church of Our Lady, more commonly known as Matthias Church, the coronation venue of several kings of Hungary, transformed in a neo-Gothic style towards the end of the 19th century according to the plans of Frigyes Schulek. Fishermen's Bastion, built in a neo-Romanesque style on the ruins of Buda Castle walls between 1895 and 1902, was also designed by him. The Buda Castle (formerly the Royal Palace of Buda) is one of the most important cultural centres of the country: its buildings house the Budapest History Museum, the National Szechenyi Library and the Hungarian National Gallery.

Andrassy Avenue and its surroundings (city quarters and public buildings within the Small Boulevard, plus the inner part of District VII, called Erzsebetvaros) is one of the most remarkable urban development complexes built in the second half of the 19th century, translating urban development principles into high technical and architectural standards using the most state-of-the-art engineering solutions of the time.

The construction of the nearly 2.5 km-long avenue was started in 1872 and it was inaugurated in 1885. The avenue represents the pinnacle of the era transforming Budapest into a metropolis, a gallery showcasing the architectural styles of the epoch, including such jewels as the Opera House designed by Miklós Ybl. The art nouveau building of Parizsi Nagy Aruhaz ("Paris Grand Store"), the neo-Renaissance Zeneakademia ("Academy of Music") and the buildings around Kodaly körönd ("Kodaly Circus") are also remarkable.



The Panoramic View of Budapest, Capital of Hungary, Europe