SECRET PLACES IN BUDAPEST AND THE LAKE BALATON

International project

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HIDDEN PLACES IN BUDAPEST

In the following pages we are going to show you the interesting places in Budapest and in Hungary, which are normally not in a typical touristic guide. The Essay is created by Eleonora, Jorge, Tom and Handren. We are all Erasmus students from different countries of the EU (Spain, Italy, Netherlands and Germany), we are studying in Budapest at the Obuda Egyetem University. We are all have been here for one Semester and discovered all the hidden places and in the following pages we are going to share our experiences with you. The aim of our project was to explore Budapest as most as possible in our short time here.

HOUSE OF TERROR

*Place:* Budapest, Andrássy út 60, 1062 Hungary
*Price:* 2000 HUF full-price, 1000 HUF for persons under 26 years who live in the EU
*Opening hours:* Tuesday till Sunday from 10:00 AM – 06:00 PM
*Length of stay:* about 90 minutes

*About:* the “House Of Terror” is a memorial place. It is a museum about the fascism in the Second World War in Hungary and the socialism during and after the Second World War. The place is very friendly for big groups, because you have a lot of space there. When you go inside you see at first a wall with a lot of the victims of the Second World War. The museum is divided in three floors. In every floor it is not allowed to take pictures. In the second floor there is everything shown from the USSR. There are a lot pictures and products from the leaders in this time. Mostly from Stalin or Lenin. Also you can see a lot of videos of the
victims who went to the Gulags during Stalin’s control. In the first floor you can see everything from the fascism regime during the Second World War. This is one of the most frightening place in the museum. Because during the Second World War almost one million people died because of the fascist regime. Most of them where civilians. The basement of the museum was used as a torture prison for the caught persons during the Second World War and later from the USSR. All in all we can recommend this place for every person. It’s is very interesting to see all the old stuff and read about everything. The entrance is also really cheap and affordable for young people.

**SHOES ON THE DANUBE BANK**

**Place:** Budapest, Id. Antall József rkp., 1054  
**Price:** Free (public place)  
**Opening hours:** All day (public place)  
**Length of stay:** about 5 – 10 minutes

**About:** the “Shoes on the Danube Bank” is a memorial next to the Danube shore. You can walk there from the city centre or you also can take the tram line to get there. It is a memorial created by the Gyula Pauer and Can Togay for remembering and honouring the victims of the pogrom in Hungary during the Second World War. The memorial itself is located in the Pest side. The memorial gives remembrance to 3500 people, 800 of them yews who were shot at the Danube by the Arrow Cross terror.
MEMENTO PARK

Place: Budapest, Balatoni út - Szabadkai utca sarok, 1223
Price: 1500 HUF full-price, 1000 HUF for students
Opening hours: Monday till Sunday from 10:00 AM – 04:00 PM
Length of stay: about 90 minutes

About: The Memento Park is a big park on the south-west side of Budapest. It is located in the Buda side. There is every day a shuttle bus going from Deak Square to the park at 11 AM. But there also a lot of other possibilities to get to the park with the tram, metro and bus. It takes you about 30 to get there from the city centre of Budapest. The main point about the park are the statues that where build during the Soviet Union in Hungary any mainly Budapest. After the breakup of the Soviet Union a lot of statues in Hungary got destroyed. Mainly the ones that honoured the USSR and communist leaders and Heroes. For example Wladimir Iljitsch Lenin, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. You can take in the whole park as many pictures as you want. While it is forbidden to take pictures in the House of Terror, it is highly welcomed to take some memories in the Memento Park. The biggest statue in the park is the eight meters high bronze statue of Stalin.
**Name of the place:** Abandoned train station  
**Place:** The door to pass is next to bulcú utca.  
**Price:** Free  
**Opening hours:** It’s better go for daytime.  
**Length of stay:** About 90 min.

Why have I chosen this place? It is a place with a lot of history, unfortunately that history is sad but people need to know it.

About: There is an old hangar outside of Budapest, next to other new hangar. Inside we can see a lot of types of trains. These trains are of the nazi's time and communist time. At first it was going to be a warehouse to scrap the trains, but never got done and finally they were abandoned. All of these trains are in very bad conditions by the passage of time and because many of the wagons are made of wood, so our suggestion is restore trains and create a museum to the rest of the people can visit it, because it located in a private zone where it's forbidden to enter, but the door is open.

Before reaching the hangar there is a rail with wagons that were used by the Nazis to translate the Budapest jews to the Auschwitz Birkenau concentration camp. As you can see in the picture the wagons were to transport the farm animals like cows, pigs ... but during the Nazi extermination they were used to transport Jews.

Once we have arrived at the hangar we can see the communist trains and the locomotives to carry the wooden wagons.
These wagons built with metal were used during the communist dictatorship for medium and long distance transport. You can see seats, tables and some old tickets on the floor.

Today the hangar is in a very bad state and little by little the plants grow around the trains hiding them and damaging them. For what we propose to reform the hangar, remove the plants and make a museum in the same facilities.

Another idea, apart from the museum, would be to build a replica of an old train to make a short trip and feel the environment of those years. Because it is a shame that with the passage of time these historical jewels will deteriorate and eventually end up disappearing.
**Name of the place:** Lake of Balaton  
**Place:** Balaton, Hungary

Lake Balaton is a freshwater lake located in a western Hungary, and it is the biggest in the central Europe. As Hungary doesn’t have an outlet on the sea, the Balaton is also nicknamed the “sea of Hungary”.

Along the northern and southern coast of Balaton, there are some places. Siófok and Zamárdi are located along the south east coast. The first one is called by hungarians “the capital of Balaton” because it is the largest city and it is a touristic center with a long line of restaurants, bars, shops...but the most popular tourist destination is Tihany. It is located along the north east coast and it is an historical and beautiful place. Other places along the north west coast are Badacsony and Szigliget.
To reach the lake from Budapest, the train is cheaper than the bus. The price of the ticket is 3000 huf and the duration of the trip is about 2 hours, against the three hours by bus. The best arrival station is Balatonfüred, because it is the most connected with other lake locations.

The lake and the territory around it, is rich of animals and plants, as you can see from the picture.

Lake Balaton is a very tourist destination during all periods of the year. This is also favored by the climate around the lake that is similar to the Mediterranean one. The high season travels from July until the end of the August. During this season the most practiced activity is fishing, and there are more than 40 species of fishes that live there. The fishing, however, is not the only activity that can be practiced, but there are many ones such as cycling, swimming, sailing... About the cycling activity, the bike tours are famous as the Balaton is almost completely surrounded by bicycle paths, and because it’s possible to rent the bicycles at the various stations. The lake is also frequented during the winter when the visitators go fishing on ice or use the ice area of Lake to skate.
Name of the place: Labirinth
Place: Buda Castle Uri utca, 9
Price: Adult 2500/ Students 2000/ Child 600
Opening hours: Open every day 10:00-19:00
Length of stay: About 30 min.

Why have I chosen this place? It is a place that is hidden and not everyone knows where it is, also here you can see the history and stories of Buda Castle.

About: Half a million year ago the galleries was created by the erosion water, which were isolated from each other, have started to be linked with each other in the medieval ages, by the people living in the Castle Hill area. The cave which was made permeable this way has started to fulfil various roles after this, wine vaults, torturing chambers, prisons and hideaways during the war all harmonised perfectly next to each other.

King Matthias captured Dracula in Transylvania. He had him taken to Buda as a captive, where he was sentenced to ten years imprisonment in the Labyrinth’s prision, so it says in the notes of Bonfini, the biographer of the story of matthias. During Dracula’s imprisonment, his wife justina
Szilágyi who was an heir of the Hungarian Royal Family, committed suicide. His Castle in Havasalföld was robbed by the Turkish. Dracula’s reputation for cruelty was known all across Europe, even during his life time he was talked of as “Vlad the Impailer”. As the feared Vampire of Havasalföld with the broadcasting of Bram Stoker, he was later Known as the central figure as the vampire cult.

Once upon a time, the country’s largest and most famous masonry operated in the Buda Castle. They delivered across the whole country, and even over the borders. A number of expensive stones, including the tombstone of the polish King, were sculptured by the masters working here. The primary base of the decorative sculptures was red marble, which was delivered from nearby mines to be processed here.

There are a exhibition of the medieval stone work, a number of expensive stones were sculptured by the masters working here. The stonework of the labyrinth presents the rich architectural relics of the Buda Castle from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century.

The story of the Black Count dates back to the eighteenth century, when an impoverished Count with hedonistic tendencies, made an alliance with the robbers, who dwelled underground his place in the labyrinth. According to their deal, the robbers paid large amounts of money for their hideaway, which enabled the Count to lead a luxurious lifestyle. However this magnificence gained through sinful ways, cost the life of an innocent girl. Following the girl’s death, the Count has changed, and the worldly lifestyle in the palace has come to an end. According to the count to death, he has been haunting the labyrinth for 250 years and holds underground masked balls.
**Hospital in the Rock**

**Name of the place:** Hospital in the rock  
**Place:** Budapest, Lovas ut. 4/C, 1012 Hungary  
**Price:** normal tickets: 4000 huf for adult and 8000 huf for family; discounted tickets: 2000 huf for persons between 6-25 years and over 62 years; free entry for disabled person and 1 accompanist, for persons over 70 years and for teachers in public education.  
**Opening hours:** every day, from Monday to Sunday (from 10 AM to 7 PM)  
**Length of stay:** 1 hour including 9 minutes of introductory video.

The museum can only be visited with a guided tour (in Hungarian or English). The visit starts with the projection of a movie that through repertoire images, explains the history of the place. The tour is divided into two parts. The first one is about the reconstructed hospital, and the second one concerns the anti atomic bunker built during the Cold War.

**History**

The museum Hospital in the rock is a hospital created in the caverns under Buda Castle in 1930 in preparation for the second World War. The caves was a wine cellars until the outbreak of Word War 2 in 1939 when these became an hospital (definitely open in 1944) because the city’s bombed-out medical facilities were no longer able to provide proper treatment for the soldiers and civilians. The Hospital was operating until June 1945, then it was opened again, one day after the outbreak of the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 in order to treat civilians and soldiers as well. Between 1958-62, the Hospital was expanded and transformed into a nuclear bunker. The ‘secret’ classification was cleared in 2002 and the Museum opened its gates for civil visitors in 2008.

Today the museum is a great tourist attraction especially for history enthusiasts. Thanks to the evocative environment, you can live an hour in the past.
The museum, entirely recreated, is like a labyrinth with long and dark corridors, and rooms for example clinics rooms, operating rooms, guest rooms, kitchens, toilets, mortuary rooms, all in original environments. There are also medicines, health equipment, all enriched by wax statues representing the medical staff and patients. Rooms like wardrobes with anti-radiation suits and masks, ventilation systems and power generators are in the bunker of the museum. There is also an exhibition of photographs and documents of the time.

The first room after the entrance is the registration room as is usual in every hospital, after this the second room is the kitchen that was only used to reheat the food and not to cook it.
The most impressive room is the room of hospitality. Thanks to the wax statues depicting nurses and patients lying on the beds and on the floor, it is possible to "revive" the climate of the horrible war. The structure could contain up to 70 people, but during the war it was overwhelmed, hosting about 700 people, because the Rock Hospital became the only place in the bombed city where people could get a radiograph or operation. Every inch was occupied. In 1 bed were often arranged 3 people and the place for many patients was the floor. With so many patients and inadequate supplies, the infection was rampant, and each day a lot of people died, and the bodies were taken outside and buried. The bandages removed from the corpses were used to treat new patients. The situation was really terrifying.

The operating room is also impressive, thanks to the reconstruction of surgery with wax patterns. Even the red gauze and bandages in the basket next to the operating table are very realistic.
During the Cold War the hospital was transformed into a nuclear bunker, when the threat of nuclear war hung in Budapest. The structure should be able to provide shelter against the effects of an explosion of a nuclear weapon, in addition to the earthquake that could still hurt hospital.
VELI BEJ BATH

Name of the place: Veli Bej bath
Location of the place: 1023 Budapest Frankel Leó u. 35
Price pp: 2800 HUF
Opening hours: 06:00 – 12:00 and 15:00 – 21:00
Length of the stay: Around 2 hours.

The healing waters in this spa date back to Roman times. The Turkish bathhouse, which was originally called Veli Bej was built in the 16th century during the Turkish era in Budapest. The bath was one of the most beautiful baths of its time. The original stone building survived the varied history of the ensuing centuries. After the Turkish occupation the bath was renamed to Kayser Bad, Császár Baths in Hungarian and even later it was given to the Order of Hospitallers who used the bath for healing the sick people.

When you are going to this spa for the first time it can be kind of hard to find it. The spa is located on the other side of the swimming complex of Hotel Csaszar. When you enter the spa there is also a café next to the entrance to get a drink afterwards or before your visit. The rest of the facility offers a large scale of different baths. There is a large octagonal, hot-water thermal pool in original Turkish style. Around the bath there are four small thermal pools with different temperatures. When you leave the Turkish bath and you go upstairs there is a modern swimming pool and a Jacuzzi and a special bathtub for hydrotherapies. On the other side of the Turkish bath, which is located in the center, there a different stream baths and saunas, including an infra-sauna. There is also the option to take a massage when visiting the bath, but these are not included in the price.

The hot water which is feeding the thermal pools rise from the wells of the nearby Lukács Baths and from Margaret Island. The water in the spa is rich in calcium, magnesium, hydrogen-
carbonate, sulfate and sodium, with a significant content of fluoride ions. These are recommended to help cure degenerative illnesses of joints, chronic and semi-acute arthritis, spinal problems and post-injury healing.

THE ABANDONED FACTORY ON NÉPSZIGET

Name of the place: Népsziget
Location of the place: Népsziget Island, close 2nd last spot of M3, Újpest-Városkapu.
Price pp: -
Opening hours: There are no opening hours, but we highly suggest you only visit this place during daytime.
Length of the stay: About 1 hour.

The factory on Nepsziget is a completely abandoned factory on the middle of this island in the north regions of Budapest. Most of the island is unfortunately in a state of ongoing decay; the island is basically completely filled with weeds, ruins and trash. Once upon a time this island was a flourishing island with beautiful parkland, holiday houses and factories. Right now the factory left completely abandoned, but it is for sure worth it to pay a visit to the island to get a truly unique escape from the city despite its rust-covered industrial image. Népsziget means Mosquito island in Hungarian and was originally one of Budapest’s Danube islands which was connected to Újpest throught Zsilip street in the 1830s. Back in the day the only possibility to get on Népsziget island was by a ferryboat until the footbridge was build.
The factory in the middle of the island was originally a crane factory (Sources on the internet at least told me). Except of that there is no information about the factory or it’s original purpose to be found on the internet. The factory is hidden behind fences and a big gate, but I don’t believe it’s secured that good. The fences are completely ruined at some places and the gate was standing open when I visited the place. When you enter the place though the gate you instantly see the view of the factory as shown above. Because the place has been abandoned for such a long time no one can guaranty your safety when you’re going inside the building due to construction failure. If you want to play it safe you can walk all the way around the factory and see the beauty from the outside of the factory. The factory has two really big construction halls where (properly) the crane were build in, with (what I believe) offices next to them. Next to the main construction hall there is also another three floor building, but I am not sure which purpose this building had. This is because the rooms are divided pretty strange and there we’re also a lot of showers and big toilet rooms inside. On the picture on the right you can clearly see the two big factory halls and on the left side of them you can see the other building. The future of this place is uncertain and there are a lot of rumours that say it might be turned into a residential park or a yacht club, but there are no concrete plans or any specified ideas for the place yet. In our opinion it is totally worth it to pay a visit to this place especially because of the unique setting of the factory and the atmosphere around the factory. Nobody knows how long it will be possible to pay a visit to this place and the future remains unsure. So if you are interested in embarking on an urban adventure with some charming urban nostalgia, an excursion to Népsziget may be perfect for you but make sure you are back in the city before sundown.

**CONCLUSION**

As a conclusion we want to say that Budapest is a city with many tourist resources but needs more publicity and marketing to make itself known, and in addiction, it could create more tourist attractions, like the abandoned station, since Budapest has a lot of history. During carrying out of this project we have discovered places that we did not know about Budapest, and that we liked a lot.