

# Directory

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## ACCOMMODATION

Except during the peak summer season (ie July and most of August) in Budapest, most of Lake Balaton, the Danube Bend and the Mátra Hills, you should have no problem finding accommodation to fit your budget in Hungary. Camp sites are plentiful, university and college dormitories open their doors to guests during summer and other holiday periods (some do so the entire year), the number of hostels and decent hotels is on the increase, and family-run *pensions* are everywhere. Although they are decreasing in number, private rooms are another option in many towns, particularly near tourist centres.

In this book, budget accommodation – camp sites, hostels, *pensions* and cheap hotels – is anything under 7500Ft a night in the

provinces and under 13,500Ft in Budapest; midrange (usually *pensions* and hotels) is between 7500Ft and 15,500Ft in the counties and 13,500Ft to 30,000Ft in the capital; and top end is anything over 15,500Ft outside Budapest and over 30,000Ft in Budapest. Prices in this book are full price in high season (except for Budapest, where price ranges cover all seasons) and include bathroom. Exceptions are noted in specific listings.

The price quoted should be the price you pay, but it's not as cut and dried as that. Tourist offices and travel agencies usually charge a small fee for booking a private room or other accommodation, and there's usually a surcharge on the first night if you stay for less than three nights. Tourist tax (see the boxed text, opposite) is often not quoted in the advertised price. Some top-end hotels in Budapest do not include the 15% Value Added Tax (VAT) in their rack rates; make sure you read the fine print. As a general rule, hotels and *pensions* include breakfast in their rates, but it's best to check before signing in. It can almost always be added for anything between 800Ft and 2000Ft, however.

Parking is rarely a problem in Hungary's provinces, but in Budapest it's another matter altogether. For this reason we have only included the parking symbol (P) in the Budapest chapter.

With the Hungarian economy in trouble at the time of writing, it is unclear whether accommodation prices will rise or fall in the coming years. It is, however, certain that room rates will remain more expensive over the summer months compared to the winter period (aside from Christmas and New Year).

### BOOK YOUR STAY ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/hotels). You'll find the true, insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

## TOURIST TAX

Most cities and towns levy a local tourist tax on accommodation of between 300Ft and 400Ft per night for persons aged between 18 and 70 (those outside this range are usually exempt). Some hotels and *pensions* advertise their prices exclusive of the tax, so don't be surprised when it comes time to pay that a little extra has been added on. Where possible, we've included the tax in Sleeping prices quoted in this book.

## Camping

The handy *Hungary Camping Map* published by the Hungarian National Tourist Office (HNTO; p380) lists some 425 camp sites of various sizes across the country, and these are the cheapest places to stay. Small, private camp sites accommodating as few as a dozen tents are usually preferable to the large and very noisy 'official' sites. Prices for two adults plus tent start from as low as 1800Ft off the beaten track in Western Transdanubia and rise to five times that amount on Lake Balaton in the height of summer.

Most camp sites open from April or May to September or October, and sometimes rent bungalows (*üdölőházak* or *faházak*) from 1500Ft to 15,000Ft, depending on their facilities. In midsummer the bungalows may all be booked, so it pays to check with the local Tourinform office before making the trip. A Camping Card International will sometimes get you a discount of up to 10%. Camping 'wild' is prohibited in Hungary.

For more information, contact the **Hungarian Camping & Caravanning Club** (MCCC; Map p84; ☎ 1-267 5255; mccc@mccc.hu; VIII Maria utca 34, 2nd fl) in Budapest. A useful website is [www.camping.hu](http://www.camping.hu).

## Farmhouses

'Village tourism', which means staying at a farmhouse, can be even cheaper than a private room in a town or city, but most of the places are truly remote and you'll usually need your own transport. For information contact Tourinform, the **National Federation of Rural & Agrotourism** (FATOSZ; Map p84; ☎ 1-352 9804; [www.faluturizmus.eu](http://www.faluturizmus.eu), in Hungarian; VII Király utca 93) or the **Centre of Rural Tourism** (Map pp80-1; ☎ 1-321 2426; [www.falutur.hu](http://www.falutur.hu); VII Dohány utca 86) in Budapest.

## Hostels

The youth hostel (*ifjúsági szállók*) scene in Budapest has exploded in the last couple of years, leaving backpackers with a massive array of options. However, in the rest of Hungary quality hostels are a rare breed. Generally, the only official year-round hostels are in Budapest. The **Hungarian Youth Hostel Association** (MISZSZ; [www.miszsz.hu](http://www.miszsz.hu)) lists a number of places across the country associated with Hostelling International (HI), but unfortunately the HI card (or equivalent) doesn't get you far, as not all HI-associated hostels provide discounts to HI card-holders. Useful websites with online booking include [www.youthhostels.hu](http://www.youthhostels.hu) and [www.hihostels.hu](http://www.hihostels.hu).

Dormitory beds in a hostel cost between 3000Ft and 6000Ft per person and doubles 6000Ft to 15,500Ft in Budapest; the prices drop considerably in the countryside. A HI card is not required, although holders will sometimes get 10% off the price or not be required to pay the tourist tax. There's no age limit at hostels, which usually remain open all day. Hostels almost always have cooking and laundry facilities, as well as free or very cheap internet access.

## Hotels

Hotels, called *szállók* or *szállodák*, run the gamut from luxurious five-star palaces to the run-down old socialist-era hovels that still survive in some towns.

A cheap hotel will often be more expensive than a private room, but it may be the answer if you're only staying one night or if you arrive too late to get a private room through an agency. Two-star hotels usually have rooms with a private bathroom; it's always down the hall in a one-star place. Three- and four-star hotels – many of which are new or newly renovated old villas – can be excellent value compared with those in other European countries.

For the big splurge, or if you're romantically inclined, check out Hungary's network of castle hotels (*kastély szállók*) or mansion hotels (*kúria szállók*).

## Pensions

Privately run *pensions* (*panziók*), which have formed the biggest growth area in the Hungarian hospitality trade over the past decade, are really just little hotels of up to a dozen or so rooms, charging from an average