

Margaret Island & Northern Pest

MARGARET ISLAND | ÚJLIPÓTVÁROS



Neighbourhood Top Five

- 1 Reliving Budapest's medieval past on Margaret Island by strolling from the ruins of the **Franciscan church and monastery** (p107), past the one-time **Dominican convent** (p107) where St Margaret is buried and on to the Romanesque **Premonstratensian Church** (p107).
- 2 Pampering yourself at the **Danubius Health Spa Margitsziget** (p107), one of the most modern spas in Budapest.
- 3 Paying homage to the heroic Raoul Wallenberg at his statue in **Szent István Park** (p108).
- 4 Exploring the length and breadth of Margaret Island on two or four wheels with a **rental bicycle** or **pedal coach** (p106).
- 5 Getting behind the wheel of one of the big locomotives at the **Hungarian Railway History Park** (p108).

For more detail of this area, see Map p248 →

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

The variety of moving conveyances available on Margaret Island knows no bounds. You can hire a bicycle from one of several stands, including **Bio Rent a Bike** (per hour/day 700/2000Ft; ☀9am-dusk) on the northern end of the athletic stadium as you walk from Margaret Bridge. Nearby is **Electric Car Rental** (minicar for 4 people per half/full hour 2900/4300Ft). **Bringóhíntó** (www.bringohinto.hu; pedal coach for 4 people per half/full hour 1980/2980Ft; ☀8am-dusk) rents out equipment from the refreshment stand near the Japanese Garden in the northern part of the island. There are horse-drawn carriages nearby too.

Best Places to Take the Plunge

- ➔ Danubius Health Spa Margitsziget (p107)
- ➔ Aquaworld (p108)
- ➔ Dagály (p107)

For reviews, see p107 ➔

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Firkász (p109)
- ➔ Pozsonyi Kiszvendéglő (p109)
- ➔ Café Panini (p110)

For reviews, see p109 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Holdudvar (p110)
- ➔ Amélie (p110)
- ➔ Dunapark (p110)

For reviews, see p110 ➔

Explore: Margaret Island & Northern Pest

Neither Buda nor Pest – though part of district XIII – 2.5km-long Margaret Island (Margit-sziget) in the middle of the Danube was always the domain of one religious order or another until the Turks arrived and turned what was then called the Island of Rabbits into – appropriately enough – a harem, from which all ‘infidels’ were barred. It’s been a public park open to everyone since the mid-19th century.

Margaret Island is not overly endowed with important sights and landmarks. But boasting a couple of large swimming complexes, a thermal spa, gardens and shaded walkways, the island is a lovely place to head on a hot afternoon. Cars are allowed on Margaret Island from Árpád Bridge only as far as the two big hotels at the northern end; the rest is reserved for pedestrians and cyclists.

Szent István körút, the northernmost stretch of the Big Ring Rd (Nagykörút) in Pest, runs in an easterly direction from Margaret bridge to Nyugati tér. The area north of Szent István körút is known as Újlipótváros (New Leopold Town) to distinguish it from Lipótváros (Leopold Town) to the south of the Big Ring Rd. It is a wonderful neighbourhood with tree-lined streets, antique shops, boutiques and a few cafes, and is best seen on foot.

Local Life

- ➔ **Sport** The Alfréd Hajós (p108) swimming complex is a good spot to catch the water polo league at the weekend.
- ➔ **Eating** Catering is limited on Margaret Island, so visit Gasztró Hús-Hentesáru (p80) opposite the tram stop (4 or 6) on the Buda side of Margaret Bridge to stock up on edibles.
- ➔ **Swimming** One of the best places to watch Hungarians at play is the Palatinus Strand (p108) on Margaret Island.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Tram** Both districts served by trams 4 and 6. Tram 2 to XIII Jászai Mari tér from the Inner Town.
- ➔ **Bus** 26 to cover the length of Margaret Island running between Nyugati train station and Árpád Bridge. Újlipótváros via buses 15 and 115.
- ➔ **Trolleybus** 75 and 76 excellent for Újlipótváros.
- ➔ **Metro** The eastern end of Újlipótváros best reached by metro (M3 Nyugati pályaudvar).