

Castle District

CASTLE HILL | VÍZIVÁROS



Neighbourhood Top Five

- ❶ Comprehending Budapest's long and often convoluted story by visiting the revamped **Castle Museum** (p54) and then viewing many of the events captured forever by some of the nation's greatest artists at the **Hungarian National Gallery** (p52).
- ❷ Enjoying views of the Danube, Gellért Hill and Pest from the landmark **Fishermen's Bastion** (p56).
- ❸ Reliving the WWII siege of Budapest by descending into the **Hospital in the Rock** (p57) deep below Buda Castle.
- ❹ Savouring a *Dobos torta* (a multilayered chocolate-and-cream cake with a caramelised brown-sugar top) at the famous **Ruszwurm Cukrászda** (p62).
- ❺ Soaking the travel-weary blues away at the **Király Baths** (p63), another legacy of the Turkish occupation.

For more detail of this area, see Map p230 ➔

Explore: Castle District

Castle Hill (Várhegy), also called the Castle Quarter (Várnegyed), is a 1km-long limestone plateau towering above the Danube. The premier sight in the capital and high on Unesco's World Heritage list, it contains Budapest's most important medieval monuments and museums.

The walled area consists of two distinct parts: the Old Town to the north, where commoners lived in the Middle Ages (the present-day owners of the coveted burgher houses are anything but 'common'); and the Royal Palace, the original site of the castle built in the 13th century, now housing important sights, to the south.

There are many ways to reach Castle Hill, but the most fun is to board the **Sikló** (I Szent György tér; ☎7.30am-10pm; one way/return adult 1000/1700Ft, child 650/1100Ft), a funicular railway built in 1870 that ascends from Clark Ádám tér at the western end of Chain Bridge to Szent György tér near the Royal Palace.

Víziváros (Watertown) is the narrow area between the Danube and Castle Hill that widens as it approaches Óbuda to the north and Rózsadomb (Rose Hill) to the northwest, spreading as far west as Széll Kálmán tér, Buda's most important transport hub. In the Middle Ages those involved in trades, crafts and fishing lived here. Many of the district's churches were used as mosques under the Turks, who also built bathhouses here, including the Király Baths.

Local Life

- ➔ **Eating** Locals working on Castle Hill avoid the tourists by eating at the self-service Fortuna Önkiszolgáló (p59).
- ➔ **Sights** Be one of a crowd of maybe two and catch the low-key but ceremonial changing of the guard at Sándor Palace (p60) hourly between 9am and 6pm.
- ➔ **Entertainment** Try to catch something – anything – at the renovated Jenő Hubay Music Hall (p63).

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Bus** I Clark Ádám tér or V Deák Ferenc tér in Pest for 16 to I Dísz tér on Castle Hill; I Fő utca for 86 to Óbuda and south Buda.
- ➔ **Funicular** I Clark Ádám tér for Sikló to I Szent György tér on Castle Hill.
- ➔ **HÉV** Batthyány tér.
- ➔ **Metro** M2 Batthyány tér and Széll Kálmán tér.
- ➔ **Tram** II Vidra utca for 17 to Óbuda; I Batthyány tér for 19 to I Szent Gellért tér and south Buda; 4 and 6 to Pest (Big Ring Rd).

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

A real 'insider's' way to get to and from Castle Hill is from I Dózsa tér (bus 16 from Pest), where you'll find a **lift** (200Ft; ☎6am-7pm Mon, to 8.30pm Tue-Sat, 9am-6.30pm Sun) that will whisk you up to the Lion Court and National Széchenyi Library. Glass cases in the hallway where the lift starts and ends are filled with archaeological finds from the Royal Palace.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Csalogány 26 (p61)
- ➔ Atakám (p61)
- ➔ Déryné (p61)
- ➔ Horgásztanya Vendéglő (p61)
- ➔ Artigiana Gelati (p61)

For reviews, see p58 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Ruszwurm Cukrászda (p62)
- ➔ Oscar American Bar (p62)
- ➔ Lánchíd Söröző (p62)
- ➔ Score Club (p62)

For reviews, see p62 ➔

Best Places to Shop

- ➔ Mester Porta (p63)
- ➔ Bortársaság (p63)
- ➔ Herend Village Pottery (p63)

For reviews, see p63 ➔