

Gellért Hill & Tabán

Neighbourhood Top Five

1 Taking in the incomparable views of Castle Hill, the Danube and Pest from the **Liberty Monument** (p67).

2 Soaking in the Art Nouveau **Gellért Baths** (p66) – an experience that has been likened to taking a bath in a cathedral.


3 Reliving history at the **former Swedish Embassy** (p68) from where Raoul Wallenberg and others rescued thousands of Hungarian Jews from deportation and death.

4 Having the not-so-distant past surprise you by visiting **Memento Park** (p70), a ‘cemetery’ of

Communist monuments that has to be seen to be believed.

5 Making the short and easy journey to the **Palace of Wonders** (p70) in Nagytétény, one of the most popular attractions for kids in Budapest.



For more detail of this area, see Map p236 

Explore: Gellért Hill & Tabán

Gellért Hill (Gellért-hegy) is a 235m-high rocky hill southeast of Castle Hill. Crowned with a fortress (of sorts) and the spectacular Liberty Monument, it is Budapest's unofficial symbol. You can't beat the views of the Royal Palace or the Danube and its fine bridges from Gellért Hill, and Jubilee Park on the south side is an ideal spot for a picnic.

The Tabán, the leafy area between Gellért and Castle Hills, and stretching northwest towards Déli train station, is associated with the Serbs, who settled here after fleeing from the Ottoman Turks in the early 18th century. Plaques on I Döbrentei utca mark the water level of the Danube during devastating floods in 1775 and again in 1838 that hit the area particularly hard.

The Tabán later became known for its restaurants and wine gardens, but all that remains of them is a lovely little renovated building with a fountain designed by Miklós Ybl in 1878, known as the **Castle Garden Palace** (Várkert Palota; Map p236; ☎1-212 1936; | Ybl Miklós tér 9), which was once a pump house for Castle Hill. The steps and archways across the road are part of the renovated **Castle Bazaar** (Várbazár) pleasure park built in 1883.

Local Life

- ➔ **Views** If you walk west for a few minutes along Citadella sétány north of the Citadella itself, you'll come to a lookout with one of the best vantage points in Budapest.
- ➔ **Táncház** For some excellent *táncház* (folk music and dance) programs, head for the Municipal Cultural House (p71).
- ➔ **Architecture** Not just a great place to soak away your cares and aches, the Rudas Baths (p71) boasts some of the best Turkish architecture in Hungary.

Getting There & Away

- ➔ **Bus** XI Szent Gellért tér can be reached from V Ferenciek tere in Pest on bus 7, and from points in Óbuda or south Buda on bus 86. Bus 27 runs almost to the top of Gellért Hill from XI Mórícz Zsigmond körtér.
- ➔ **Metro** The new M4 metro line, with stations at XI Gellért tér and XI Mórícz Zsigmond körtér, now makes this neighbourhood even more accessible by public transport.
- ➔ **Tram** XI Szent Gellért tér is linked to Déli station by tram 18, and to I Batthyány tér by tram 19. Trams 47 and 49 cross over to Pest and follow the Little Ring Rd from the same place. Trams 18 and 47 run south along XI Fehérvári út – useful for several entertainment venues mentioned in this chapter.

Lonely Planet's Top Tip

A handful of thermal spas in this district make good use of the hot springs gushing from deep below, including the Gellért, the Rudas and (still holding our breath) the Rác, which closed for renovation in 2002 and is still awaiting resurrection. If you don't like getting wet or you don't have the time, do what locals do and try a 'drinking cure' by visiting the **Pump Room** (Ivócsarnok; Map p236; | Erzsébet hid; ☎11am-6pm Mon, Wed & Fri, 7am-2pm Tue & Thu), which is just below the western end of Elizabeth Bridge. A half-litre/litre of the hot, smelly water, which is meant to cure whatever ails you, is just 40/70Ft. Bring your own container.

Best Places to Eat

- ➔ Aranyaszarvas (p69)
- ➔ Hemingway (p69)
- ➔ Marcello (p69)

For reviews, see p69 ➔

Best Places to Drink

- ➔ Szatyor Bár és Galéria (p69)
- ➔ A38 (p69)
- ➔ Tranzit Art Café (p69)

For reviews, see p69 ➔

Best Places to Relax

- ➔ Gellért Baths (p66)
- ➔ Rudas Baths (p71)

For reviews, see p71 ➔