



The Hungarian National Parliament Building

FESTIVE BUDAPEST DELUXE

- 7 Nights Half Board • Elegant 4* Spa Hotel • Guided Tour Of The Hungarian Parliament
- Guided Visit To St Mátyás Church • Buda & Pest Orientation Tour • Private Danube Mini Cruise
- Hungarian Music & Folklore Show • Budapest Christmas Markets • Optional Hungarian Horsemanship Show
- Optional Guided Tour Of Gödöllő Palace • Complimentary Spa Facilities

A TALE OF THREE CITIES

Once one of the twin capitals of the mighty Austro-Hungarian Empire, Budapest abounds with impressive architecture. Remarkably it is an amalgam of three formerly independent cities, each dating from a different period, and each retaining a distinctive historical character. Óbuda, or 'Old Buda', was an ancient pre-Roman settlement that was developed by the Romans into a provincial capital known as Aquincum (the remains of the amphitheatre and other buildings can still be visited). Buda was then built as a fortified citadel in the Middle Ages in reaction to a devastating invasion by Mongol tribes. Pest meanwhile, having been largely destroyed in drastic flooding in 1838, has largely a 19th-century feel to it, and is characterized by grandiose buildings and expansive avenues. The three cities were unified as Budapest, the second most significant city within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, in 1873.



Széchenyi Chain Bridge & Buda Castle



St Máttyás Church & St István's Monument



St Máttyás Church Interior

THE FESTIVE BUDAPEST DELUXE ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly from the UK to Budapest and transfer to the 4-star Danubius Margitsziget Health Spa Resort for a 7-night stay. Welcome meeting and buffet dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Day 2: A full day exploration of both Buda and Pest taking in a guided tour of the opulently decorated coronation church of St Mátyás, a visit to the delightful Fisherman's Bastion viewing terrace to enjoy awe-inspiring vistas over Pest and the River Danube, and a fascinating tour of the world's third largest parliament building, revealing many fascinating facts concerning the history of Hungary. A two-course restaurant lunch with drinks is included during the tour and the day concludes with a buffet dinner in the hotel restaurant.

Day 3: A lazy start to the day is followed by a mid-morning private guided mini cruise on the Danube. Embarking from a pier close to the hotel on Margaret Island we shall cruise to the furthest extremities of the city before returning to Margaret Island for an afternoon at leisure. Both Buda and Pest present extremely well from the river with many of their most emblematic buildings clearly visible. Most spectacular of all on the Pest side is the Hungarian parliament building, overlooked from Buda Hill by its fascinating and harmonious ensemble of historic buildings. On the river itself it is the Széchenyi Chain Bridge that above all else catches the eye, leading from the impressively laid out Széchenyi Square in Pest to a tunnel that was carved beneath Buda Hill at the same time as the bridge's construction. Beyond that lie the dramatic hilltop statues of Gellert Hill and the Art Nouveau gem of the Gellert Hotel & Spa. The afternoon offers an excellent opportunity to unwind in the spa prior to dining in the hotel restaurant and heading to the Neo Baroque 19th-century Duna Palota Concert Hall for an evening performance of Hungarian music and dance.

Day 4: Sunday in Budapest. A day for relaxing Hungarian style in possibly the city's best location for doing so. Not only are the hotel's wonderful spa facilities on hand but a number of them are free to hotel guests (the super-warm thermal pool, the vast indoor swimming pool, and the alluring sauna). For an entirely novel experience why not try relaxing in the hotel's atmospheric salt cave? Reasonably priced massages and many other treatments are also available. Another option would be to join many of the locals and stroll the pathways of the delightful mature parklands that surround the hotel. By way of a special Sunday evening meal we shall be dining this evening in the neighbouring Grand Hotel Margitsziget to an accompaniment of traditional Hungarian music.

Day 5: Monday sees us back in full action mode with a day largely allocated to exploring the city's two most interesting Christmas markets, both located in areas of significant touristic interest. The first of these takes place in Vörösmarty Square, in the heart of historic Pest. Váci Street, the city's most elegant downtown shopping street, leads off this square, and the internationally renowned Gerbaud Pâtisserie sits on the square itself. Our second Christmas market stop of the day finds us in Saint István's Square, before the highly impressive Saint István's Basilica. For those that wish there is the option to attend a late afternoon organ recital at the basilica (at extra cost). This will be followed by dinner at the hotel.



Day 6: An option to escape into the Hungarian countryside is offered today on an exciting excursion that combines startling Hungarian horsemanship with a guided tour of the Hungarian home of the much-loved Austro-Hungarian Empress 'Sissy'. Magyar horsemanship above all else was what won the Hungarians an empire and the riders at the Lázár Equestrian Park are all jaw-droppingly talented and at one with their rides. A thoroughly entertaining show precedes a traditional lunch accompanied by folk music before our tour moves on to the delightful country home of Empress Sissy, Gödöllő Palace, where her life story and the Hungarian people's deep attachment to her are both described. Dinner this evening is once again at the hotel, but is followed on this occasion by a private concert of Hungarian Christmas Carols sung by a children's choir.

Day 7: Sadly our last full day in Hungary. Today has largely been left free for people to explore anything that has not been taken in by the tour that they would nonetheless like to experience. Prior to dinner we shall gather for a farewell drink before heading back once again to the neighbouring Grand Hotel Margitsziget for a final buffet with live music.

Day 8: Transfers to Budapest airport and flights home to blighty.



Vörösmarty Square Christmas Market



St István's Square Christmas Market

RELAXING AT THE DANUBIUS HEALTH SPA RESORT MARGITSZIGET

The hotel base for our holiday is the highly relaxing Danubius Health Spa Resort Margitsziget on Margaret Island. Margaret Island sits scenically in the centre of the Danube only a short taxi ride from the historic heart of Budapest. For centuries, in the absence of a bridge connecting it to either bank of the river, it served as a place of religious retreat, having been settled by the Knights of St. John in the 12th century. In the 13th century a canonised daughter of King Bela IV of Hungary opted to live out her life in a Dominican Convent on the island, which was subsequently named after her. In modern times it has served as an attractive haven of tranquillity close to the centre of Budapest, and has been the city's most expansive and beautiful public park since 1908. Home to festivals and public performances during the summer, it contains the city's largest open air swimming complex, houses many sports facilities, and is a mecca for local runners and fitness fanatics.

The Danubius Health Spa Resort sits at the northern tip of the island, close to Arpad Bridge, and nestles close to its sister hotel, The Grand Hotel Margitsziget, with which it shares some facilities.

Its 267 comfortably appointed air-conditioned bedrooms all offer the following facilities: a balcony, a bath/shower, television (cable & pay-per-view), safe deposit box, mini bar, hair dryer, coffee and tea making facilities, a bathrobe, and free wifi.

We shall be dining at both the hotel's own Platán restaurant and at the Széchenyi restaurant in the neighbouring Grand Hotel. The hotel also has a bar and coffee shop, and we shall additionally be benefiting from a private lounge on some evenings.

The hotel's extensive spa facilities include a large indoor pool (27-28°C), a vast thermal bath (36-38°C), a sauna, a steam cabin, an aroma cabin, and a salt cave (constructed from Dead Sea salt). A wide range of health and beauty treatments are also available.



The Danubius Health Spa Resort Salt Cave



The Heated Indoor Pool 27-28°C



The Thermal Pool 36-38°C



Gödöllő Palace

INCLUSIONS

Holiday duration: 7 nights

Board basis: half board with drinks (1 glass of wine, 1 mineral water & 1 coffee)

Flights available from: Gatwick & Manchester (regional flights may be available at a supplement)

Included excursions: full day Buda & Pest (including lunch), a Danube mini cruise, a folklore show at the Danube Palace Theatre, a day exploring the Budapest Christmas markets

Included spa facilities: daily entrance to the Danubius Health Spa (including complimentary use of the swimming pool, thermal pool, sauna, steam chamber & aroma chamber)

Additional inclusions: transfers airport/hotel/airport, a short private Christmas carol concert by a children's choir

OPTIONAL HOLIDAY INSURANCE

Age at date of travel	7 nights	Optional excess waiver
18 – 65 years	£28.95	£6.58
66 – 74 years	£43.95	£6.58
75 – 79 years	£57.95	£6.58
80 years and over	£68.95	£6.58

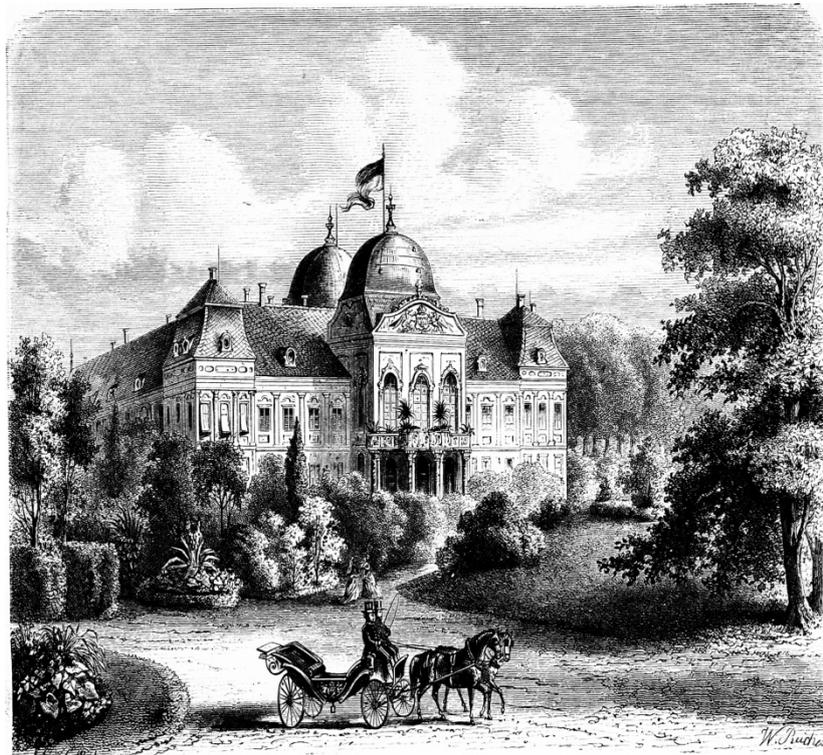
(Premiums valid until 31 October 2018)

HOW TO BOOK The deposit plus the insurance premium if applicable should be sent, together with a completed booking form, to Personal Touch Holidays, Anvil House, West Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9HW. E-mail. office@personaltouchholidays.com Tel. 01403 786200.



N.B. The air holiday packages shown are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organisers Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL5961. Our ABTA membership number is V9038.

Please see our booking conditions for more information.



Schloß Gödöllő in Ungarn.