

Chapter 4

GELLÉRTHEGY (GELLÉRT HILL) AND TABÁN

4

Updated by
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 Sights
★★★★☆

 Restaurants
★★★★☆

 Hotels
★★★★☆

 Shopping
★★★★☆

 Nightlife
★★★★☆

NEIGHBORHOOD SNAPSHOT

TOP EXPERIENCES	VIEWFINDER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hike to the Citadella: Bask in the views of the city below—particularly breathtaking by night. ■ Soak in Gellért and Rudas baths: Take a soak in some of Budapest’s most famous (and attractive) thermal baths. ■ Stroll and snack along Bartók Béla út: Pop into the many bakeries, pizza parlors, and ice cream stores that line this boulevard. ■ Shop at Czakó Termelői Piac: Browse the weekend farmers’ market at one of the oldest surviving buildings in the area. ■ Sip coffee, beer, and wine: Discover one of Budapest’s great coffeehouses, Hadik Kávéház, or venture to popular bars like KEG sörműház and Palack borbár. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ You don’t have to climb all the way up to the Citadella for spectacular Gellért Hill views. Instead, make a beeline for the giant figure of the eponymous St. Gellért; it’s less than a 10-minute walk uphill from the eastern end of Elizabeth Bridge. Stand at the statue’s feet to enjoy views across the river to Pest, soundtracked by the tumbling waterfall just below.
<p>GETTING HERE</p>	<p>PLANNING YOUR TIME</p>
<p>The neighborhoods of Gellérthegy and Tabán cover the area south of the castle on the Buda side of the river. Tabán spreads south from Ybl Miklós Park to Szabadság híd (Liberty Bridge)—almost directly mirroring Belváros on the opposite side of the river—and includes the northern and eastern slopes of Gellért Hill. Meanwhile, Gellérthegy takes in the hill’s western and southern slopes (including the Citadella), and the mass of streets spanning out from here, including trendy Bartók Béla út.</p> <p>To get to Gellérthegy or southern Tabán from Pest, it’s a picturesque walk across Liberty Bridge, or a quick metro trip to Szent Gellért tér (Line 4). The north of Tabán is walkable from the Castle District to the north and Pest to the west (across Elizabeth Bridge). It doesn’t have a metro, but it is well served by trams and buses, including the 19 and 41 trams, which run alongside the river, and the 5 and 110 buses, which come over the river.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Both of these neighborhoods are quieter than many of the tourist hot spots, so visiting them at any time of day is fine. They are very safe, too. It’s worth bearing in mind that a few of the galleries and coffee shops don’t open on Sunday. Gellérthegy is particularly lovely to approach as the sun sets and then to observe the twinkling city below at night.

Gellérthegy (Gellert Hill), 761 feet high, is the most beautiful natural formation on the Buda bank. It takes its name from St. Gellért (Gerard) of Csanád, a Venetian bishop who came to Hungary in the 11th century and, legend has it, was rolled off the top of the hill in a cart by pagans.

The Citadella and various statues on its slopes have a fairy-tale loveliness, and the views from the top over the city are knockout. The walk up can be tough, but take solace from the cluster of hot springs at its foot; these soothe and cure bathers at the magnificent Rudas and Gellért Baths.

In recent years, Gellérthegy has also become a bit of a browsing and brunching destination, with Bartók Béla út boasting a selection of hip bars, shops, cafés, and galleries. Neighboring Tabán hasn’t had the same 21st century makeover, but is still a pleasant spot to wander around, with lovely views over the river, some good local pubs, and a museum or two. Its history is fascinating, too (although not, in the main, visible); there has been a settlement on the spot for centuries, including a Balkan community who thrived in its tiny, twisty streets. Most of the area was demolished around 100 years ago after becoming a bit too tumble-down, as the authorities saw it, but there are still some echoes of its past to be found among the green spaces and more modern architecture.

Sights

From the hill itself to the thermal waters that make the baths so tempting, natural wonders—with some human

improvements—take center stage in these neighborhoods.

Buda Arboretum

GARDEN | A beautiful botanical garden and park, created in the late 1800s and now part of a university campus, the Buda Arboretum is home to almost 2,000 species of trees, flowers, and plants. It’s a very pleasant spot for a stroll or a jog any time of year, but particularly in autumn or spring, when the colors are beautiful. Note that, while the Lower Garden is open every day, the Upper Garden is closed on weekends. ✉ *Hungarian University of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Villányi út 29-43, Gellérthegy* ☎ 1/305-7270 🌐 *budaiarboretum.unimatemate.hu* 📍 M4: *Móricz Zsigmond körtér*.

Budapest-Tabáni templom (Buda-pest-Tabán Church)

CHURCH | This church, whose steeple is a symbol of the old Tabán neighborhood, arose between 1728 and 1736 on the site of a Turkish mosque and was subsequently expanded several times, its present facade dating from 1880-81. Its form—mustard-colored stone with a rotund, green clock tower—could be described as restrained baroque, and it is dedicated to St. Catherine of Alexandria. It is often closed on weekdays but worth noting as a truly ancient place of worship if you pass by; there has been a religious

Gellérthegy (Gellért Hill) and Tabán



KEY

- 1 Sights
- 2 Restaurants
- 3 Quick Bites
- 4 Hotels

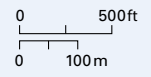


- Sights**
- 1 Buda Arboretum D7
 - 2 Budapest-Tabáni templom F3
 - 3 Citadella F5
 - 4 Filozófiai kertje D4
 - 5 Gellért Termálfürdő H6
 - 6 Memento Park A8
 - 7 Rudas Gyógyfürdő G4
 - 8 Semmelweis Orvostörténeti Múzeum E3
 - 9 Szabadság híd I6
 - 10 Szent Gellért-szobor F4
 - 11 Sziklatemplom H6

- Restaurants**
- 1 Bölcső Bar H8
 - 2 Búsuló Juhász D6
 - 3 Hadik Kávéház H8
 - 4 La Nube G9
 - 5 MITZI H7
 - 6 Mr. & Mrs. Columbo E3
 - 7 Rudas Bistro G4
 - 8 Tabáni Gösser Étterem E3
 - 9 Veganlove H7

- Quick Bites**
- 1 Asztalka Cukrászda F3
 - 2 Caphe by Hai Nam G8
 - 3 Grill Mánia H7
 - 4 Mikrokosmos H8
 - 5 Peknyhely Bartók H7
 - 6 PupiCake H8

- Hotels**
- 1 Hotel Charles B4
 - 2 Hotel Orion Várkert F3





Wander away from the major tourist attractions of the Citadel and the Liberty Statue and you'll find an intriguing cluster of statues at the Filozófiai kertje (Garden of Philosophy).

building on the site since the eleventh century. ☒ *District I, Attila utca 11, Tabán* 🌐 tabani.plebani.hu 🆓 Free ☹ Closed Wed. 🚶 M3: Ferenciek tere, then a 15-min walk across Erzsébet hid.

Citadella (Citadel)

MILITARY SIGHT | The sweeping views of Budapest from this fortress atop the hill were once valued by the Austrian army, which used it as a lookout after the 1848–49 Revolution. Some 60 cannons were housed in the citadel, and while never used on the city's resentful populace, they were briefly, ominously, pointed down towards the citizens below after the 1956 uprising. The building is closed, but you can walk around it (keep an eye out for bullet holes from the various battles it has witnessed) and the view from the hilltop still makes it a worthy visit, especially at night when the entire city and its bridges are illuminated. Avoid the tacky, overpriced tourists stalls.

Just below the southern edge of the Citadella and visible from many parts of the city, the 130-foot-high Szabadság szobor (Liberty Statue) was originally planned as a memorial to a son of Hungary's then-ruler, Miklós Horthy, whose warplane had crashed in 1942. However, by the time of its completion in 1947 (three years after Horthy was ousted), it had become a memorial to the Russian soldiers who fell in the 1944–45 siege of Budapest; and hence for decades it was associated chiefly with this.

A young girl, her hair and robe swirling in the wind, holds a palm branch high above her head. During much of the communist era, and for a couple of years after its close, she was further embellished with sculptures of giants slaying dragons, Red Army soldiers, and peasants rejoicing at the freedom that Soviet liberation promised (but failed) to bring to Hungary. Since 1992 her mood has lightened: in the Budapest city government's systematic purging of communist symbols,

the Red Combat infantrymen who had flanked the Liberty Statue for decades were hacked off and carted away. A few are now on display among the other evicted statues in Szobor Park in the city's 22nd district, and what remains memorializes those who fought for Hungary's freedom. ☒ *District XI, Citadella sétány, Gellérthegy* 🆓 Free 🚶 M4: Szent Gellért tér and a walk up the hill.

Filozófiai kertje (The Garden of Philosophers)

PUBLIC ART | Located on a quiet hilltop, a little farther back from the river, this peaceful, tucked-away, and little-visited modern monument is designed to show the similarities in thought between what the sculptor saw as the world's leading religions. Around a little pool, there are statues of Abraham, Jesus, Buddha, Laozi, and Akhenaten, with others (the most recognizable of which is probably Gandhi) looking on. Conceived by Hungarian sculptor Nándor Wagner, it has a double in Japan, and also offers panoramic views of the Danube and the city. ☒ *District I, off Orum utca, Tabán* 📍 Near the corner of Orum utca and Szirom utca 🆓 Free 🚶 M3: Ferenciek tere, then a 25-min walk across Erzsébet hid.

★ Gellért Termálfürdő (Gellért Thermal Baths)

HOT SPRING | At the foot of Gellért Hill, the gorgeous Gellért Baths has beauty and history in spades, with mineral-rich hot springs that have supplied curative baths for nearly 2,000 years. The entrance to the spa is on a side street to the right of the palatial (but now closed) Hotel Gellért. Budapest's baths, once segregated, are now primarily co-ed (with special hours for segregated bathing for some baths), and it's the same story here: men and women can now use all steam and sauna rooms as well as both the indoor pool and the outdoor wave pool—a Jazz Age classic that claims to be one of the first wave pools in the world—at the

same time. These baths are very popular so book ahead online, and remember to bring your own towel, slippers or flip-flops, and (if using the indoor pool) swimming cap, otherwise you will have to buy them in the shop. Come for the lovely tiles, architecture, and painted glass, stay for the range of massages and treatments (some of which require a doctor's prescription).

■ **TIP** → It's worth paying the extra 1,000 HUF for a cabin ticket; you'll get a private changing room with a safe for valuables. ☒ *District XI, Gellért tér 1, Gellérthegy* 📞 1/466-6166 🌐 www.gellertbath.hu 📞 9,400 HUF weekdays for daily ticket, 10,900 HUF Fri.–Sun. 🚶 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Memento Park

CITY PARK | After the collapse of the Iron Curtain, Hungarians were understandably keen to rid Budapest of the symbols of Soviet domination. The communist memorials—including huge statues of Lenin, Marx, and Hungarian puppet prime minister János Kádár—that once dotted Budapest's streets and squares have been moved to this open-air "Disneyland of Communism." Somewhat tacky but amusing souvenirs are for sale, and songs from the Hungarian and Russian workers' movements play on a tiny speaker system. To get there, take Metro 4 to Kelenföld vasútállomás (Kelenföld train depot) then, from the adjoining bus depot, catch the 101 or 150 bus in the direction of Budatétény vasútállomás (Campona). It's only two stops (10 minutes), but if in doubt, tell the driver that you want to get off at Memento Park. There is a guided tour in English at 11 am Friday through Sunday during peak season (7,200 HUF per person), or there are private guided tours available all year round (22,360 HUF). ☒ *District XXII, Balatoni út, corner of Szabadkai utca, Budapest* 📞 1/424-7500 🌐 www.mementopark.hu 📞 3,000 HUF.

★ Rudas Gyógyfürdő (Rudas Baths)

HOT SPRING | This bath on the riverbank boasts perhaps the most dramatically beautiful interior of all of Budapest's baths, with the original Turkish pool the star of the show. A high, domed roof admits pinpricks of bluish-green light into the dark, circular stone hall with its austere columns and arches. The central octagonal pool catches the light from the glass-tiled cupola and casts it around the surrounding six pools, capturing the feeling of an ancient Turkish hammam. The highly fluoridated waters here have been known for 1,000 years—and the baths themselves date back to the 16th century. The baths vary in temperature from 16 to 42 degrees Celsius, and you can also drink the water from three springs in the drinking hall (open Tuesday and Thursday only). The thermal part is open to men only on Monday and Wednesday, as well as the mornings of Thursday and Friday; to women only on Tuesday; and to both sexes on Thursday and Friday afternoons and all day weekends. Soak after-hours here on Friday and Saturday nights from 10 pm to 3 am. ☒ *District I, Döbrentei tér 9, Tabán* ☎ 20/321-4568 🌐 en.rudasturdo.hu 📞 8,600 HUF weekdays; 12,200 HUF weekends; 12,600 HUF night ticket 🚇 M3: *Ferenciek tere*, then a 10-min walk across *Erzsébet híd*.

Semmelweis Orvostörténeti Múzeum (Semmelweis Museum of Medical History)

HISTORY MUSEUM | This splendid baroque house was the birthplace of Ignác Semmelweis (1818–65), the Hungarian physician who proved the contagiousness of puerperal (childbed) fever, saving countless lives, and who became known—sadly, only after his death—as the “savior of mothers.” It's now a museum that traces the history of healing and medicine, which sounds a bit niche but is actually fairly fascinating (and a little gross at times, particularly the graphic wax anatomical models and the shrunken heads). Look out for the reconstructed,

19th-century “Holy Ghost Pharmacy,” with its charming glass cabinets full of apothecary jars. The main exhibition is up the stairs (there's no elevator) and has plenty of English-language information; the temporary exhibitions are downstairs (and accessible) but most of the information is in Hungarian. ☒ *District I, Apród utca 1–3, Tabán* ☎ 1/375-3533 🌐 www.semmelweismuseum.hu 📞 1,400 HUF ☺ *Closed Mon.* 🚇 M3: *Ferenciek tere*, then a 15-min walk across *Erzsébet híd*.

Szabadság híd (Liberty Bridge)

BRIDGE | It may play second fiddle to the Chain Bridge, but this pretty cantilevered river crossing is lit beautifully at night and makes for a pleasant stroll across the river during the day. It was designed for the Millennium World Exhibition in 1896 and rebuilt after being blown up in the Second World War. Keep an eye out for the interesting details, like the mythological birds perched atop it. ☒ *District XI, Szabadság híd, Gellérthegy* 🚇 Free 🚇 M4: *Szent Gellért tér*.

Szent Gellért-szobor (Szent Gellért monument)

MONUMENT | This giant, multilevel monument halfway up the hill adds to the general fairy-tale feel on the Buda side of the river. The figure is St. Gellért, Hungary's first missionary, whose preaching didn't sit very well with the locals. Legend has it he was thrown off the hill on this very spot in 1046. The monument is best viewed from the Pest side of the river, or you can walk up the hillside path from *Erzsébet híd* for a close-up view. ☒ *Szent Gellért rkp. 16, Tabán* 📞 Free.

Sziklatemplom (Cave Church)

CAVE | This atmospheric church built into a cave—one of several in the hill—lies just north of the Gellért Thermal Baths. Mass is still held here (the church is run by the Pauline monks) and worth attending if so inclined, but it is also worth a look for its novelty value. Note: it was rebuilt in faux-cave style in the '90s so it is not quite

Did You Know?

The opulent Gellért Baths were constructed between 1912-1918 by Russian prisoners of war to replace a hospital and medical bath that stood in its place since the 13th century.



Thermal Baths 101



Upon Arrival

The entrance procedure to *gyógyfürdők* (thermal baths) in Budapest can be baffling to visitors. Some baths post prices and treatments in English, but much of the information on the price list pertains to medical treatments offered at the spa for patients with prescriptions from their doctors, so it can be unclear what kind of ticket you need. Morning, afternoon, and evening tickets are usually available, as well as full-day tickets. It's worth purchasing a full-day ticket so you don't have to rush. Request treatments, choose a locker or cabin, then pay all at once at admission. You can avoid some of the ticketing confusion by booking in advance: many baths now offer online tickets, and the separate costs for treatments, cabins, and sessions are spelled out a little more clearly. Upon payment or presentation of your online ticket, you get a watch-shaped electronic bracelet that serves as a key to a locker or cabin where you can leave your belongings.

What to Bring

As a rule, bring slippers or shower shoes to all thermal baths and a towel to all but the big wellness hotels. Swimsuits are required in most thermal baths, and a bathing cap is required in swimming pools. The Rudas Baths provides an apron-like garment to wear instead of swimwear on single-sex days. While almost everything you need is available to rent or buy on-site, lines can be long, prices can be high, and dispensed towels can be scratchy. Bring a hat to wear on summer days.

■ **TIP** → Keep some small change with you to tip locker attendants on your way

out and in case you want a beverage in between soaks. Tip massage therapists before your treatment, not after.

FAQ

What do I do first? Shower before entering the water (or risk being ejected). Tie back long hair.

Should I wear my birthday suit? No, nudity is not allowed, as most baths went coed within the past decade. The one exception: Rudas bath on single-sex days. Speak with your massage therapist before your massage to share if you are comfortable with or without a bathing suit for the treatment. It's up to you.

Is there a soaking strategy? It's recommended to stay in a thermal bath for 20 minutes, then dip quickly into a cool pool or take a cold shower to cool down before the next round. Alternatively, just take a short rest on a recliner. Work your way up from medium-warm baths to hotter ones. If you feel dizzy, get out and cool down. Stay hydrated.

Inside voices only? Yes. Many locals come here to take the waters for medicinal and healing purposes, so you should keep the noise down inside the pools. Speaking is not forbidden, but unless you're in an outdoor area, keep conversation to a minimum.

Can I drink the water? If you'd like to taste the mineral-rich water you can do so at the drinking halls at the likes of Lukács Bath and Rudas Baths. Do not drink directly from the baths.

When to visit? Avoid the tourist rush and go as early as you can, even at 6 am, when most open; or linger on Friday or Saturday night at Rudas, which stays open past midnight.

Thermal Terms



Don't worry if your Hungarian isn't up to scratch. We've translated a few common terms you will see on signs in thermal spas and wellness hotels throughout Hungary, so you can tell a dry brush massage from a medical exam.

Caldarium. A hot-water tub or tiled room of 40°C–50°C (104°F–122°F).

Értékmegőrző. Safe-deposit box. (See *Páncélszekrény*.)

Gőzfürdő. Steam room.

Gyógyfürdő. Any thermal bath that has naturally occurring water above 30°C (86°F). Most thermal baths contain minerals, which are listed at the entrance to the bath.

Hőlégfürdő. Sauna.

Izapfürdő. Mud bath.

Kezelés. Treatment.

Kleopátra Fürdő. Cleopatra Bath. A bath of milk and essential oils, known to be a moisturizing skin treatment.

Kneipp cure. This body of treatments is based on the theories of Sebastian Kneipp, a German priest who believed in the importance of water and herbs in treating stress and exhaustion. Treatments are designed for the individual based on a medical exam and are offered at most wellness hotels. An average treatment uses alternating hot and cold stimuli to increase blood circulation, followed by wrapping the body in herb infusions.

Laconium. A dry sauna of 55°C (131°F).

Masszázs. Massage. In general, massages are performed with light aromatic oil. Some, such as Thai massage, are performed with no oil.

Medence. Pool or basin—generally a thermal pool rather than a swimming pool (see *Uszómedence*).

Nyirokcsomó kezelés. Lymph drainage. This treatment restores balance to the lymph system and rids the body of accumulated toxins.

Öltöző. Changing room.

Páncélszekrény. Literally “safe,” but in this context refers simply to a safe deposit box. (See also *Értékmegőrző*.)

Szakorvosi vizsgálatok. Medical examination, which is required for some treatments.

Száraz kefe masszáz. Dry brush massage. This massage is performed with a soft bristle brush. It helps exfoliate the skin and increase blood circulation.

Szekrény. Locker.

Thalasso. This general term refers to any treatment using seaweed or sea algae, known to help combat cellulite.

Uszoda. Swimming (pool) facility (with one or more pools).

Uszómedence. Swimming pool.

Víz alatti masszáz. Underwater massage. This massage is performed under jets of cold and warm water treating specific body parts.



Szent Gellért-szobor is a grand monument to Hungary's first missionary who met a less-than-grand end when thrown off the hill here.

as authentic as it could be. ☒ *District I, Sziklatemplom út, Tabán* ☎ 20/775-2472 🌐 www.sziklatemplom.hu 🆓 Free ☺ Closed Sun. (except for mass) 📄 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

🍴 Restaurants

Many of the best dining options in Gellérthegy can be found along (or just off) the eminently strollable Bartók Béla út, from charming bistros and authentic tapas bars to trendy ice cream shops and historic cafés. In Tabán, things are more spread out, though there's a cluster of good restaurants, pubs, and cafés just north of Elizabeth Bridge.

Bölcső Bar

\$\$ | **BURGER** | Sometimes you just need a good burger and a great beer, and Bölcső delivers. For that reason, and its proximity to the nearby university buildings, it can be busy with students in the evening, but for lunch it's a relaxed stop. **Known for:** homemade burgers; vast

selection of beers from local and Czech breweries; popular student hangout. ☎ *Average main: Ft4,000* ☒ *Zenta utca 3, Gellérthegy* ☎ 1/308-8210 🌐 www.facebook.com/bolcsobar ☺ Closed Mon. 📄 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Búsuló Juhász

\$\$\$\$ | **HUNGARIAN** | This is a special spot for high-end Hungarian cuisine, with huge windows to showcase the beautiful views of the trees and city unfolding below. From the outside, it looks a little uninspiring, but the inside is decidedly polished (despite the fake tree) and the food is superb: try the paprika veal stew or the slow-baked duck leg, followed by the “Somlóí” sponge cake. **Known for:** a beautiful outside terrace; lovely soups and refined dining; a little out of the way. ☎ *Average main: Ft8,000* ☒ *Kelenhegyi út 58, Gellérthegy* ☎ 1/209-1649 🌐 www.busulojuhasz.hu ☺ Closed Mon. 📄 M4: Móricz Zsigmond körtér; tram 17, 61.

Hadik Kávéház

\$\$ | **HUNGARIAN** | At the swankier end of the coffeehouse spectrum, Hadik is a looker, and knows it: all bare brick walls, beamed ceilings, grand chandeliers, church door-sized windows, and a mezzanine layer of seating. At least, that's what you'll see when you enter through the corner door: a spruced up grand café dating back more than a century. **Known for:** excellent coffee; Hungarian classics like chicken paprikash; choose between classic grand café and quirky ruin bar. ☎ *Average main: Ft4,500* ☒ *Bartók Béla út 36, Gellérthegy* ☎ 20/502-2597 🌐 www.hadik.hu 📄 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

La Nube

\$\$ | **TAPAS** | Tucked away just off Bartók Béla út on Ménesi út, this lovely little tapas bar is run by a Hungarian-Spanish couple. Diners can choose from an array of meat, fish, and vegetarian dishes, as well as several cured meat and cheese platters to share. **Known for:** cured meats and Spanish wines; tasty churros; beautiful decor. ☎ *Average main: Ft3,000* ☒ *Bartók Béla út 41, Gellérthegy* ☎ 20/439-5101 🌐 www.lanubecafe.com ☺ Closed Sun. No lunch 📄 M4: Móricz Zsigmond körtér.

MITZI

\$\$ | **INTERNATIONAL** | A short walk from the Gellért Baths, this self-proclaimed “dinky” coffeehouse is all stripped ceilings, huge plants, and globe lights, making a popular hangout with artsy locals and students. The regular lunch and dinner menu offers a good choice of soups, salads, and pastas—try the “extra Hungarian” *sztrapacska* (a kind of gnocchi with sheep's cheese)—and there are daily menus available, too. **Known for:** creative Hungarian specialties; delicious coffee and cocktails; indulgent breakfasts and brunches. ☎ *Average main: Ft4,000* ☒ *Bartók Béla út 1, Gellérthegy* ☎ 70/659-1161 🌐 www.facebook.com/mitzibudapest ☺ No lunch Mon. 📄 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Mr. & Mrs. Columbo

§ | **EASTERN EUROPEAN** | **FAMILY** | This warm-hearted pub (look out for the picture of the American detective, Columbo, on the sign) serves a good range of tasty Czech beers as well as ten types—count 'em—of a traditional potato pancake dish with different stuffings and toppings. Family- and dog-friendly, it's cozy rather than rowdy. **Known for:** Czech lagers; variety of potato pancakes; cozy interior. ☎ *Average main: Ft2,000* ☒ *Szarvas tér 1, Tabán* ☎ 20/999-0388 🌐 www.facebook.com/Columboetterem ☺ Closed Sun. and Mon. 📄 Tram 56.

Rudas Bistro

\$\$ | **HUNGARIAN** | Splendid food and picture-perfect views across the river are on offer at this gorgeously situated restaurant attached to the baths of the same name. You can make a day of it with a soak and a feast, or come to the restaurant on its own to enjoy the peerless panoramic vista from the fairy-lit terrace, often accompanied by music. **Known for:** weekday brunch package with a spa ticket; one of the loveliest terraces in Buda; delicious eggplant cream soup. ☎ *Average main: HUF4,750* ☒ *Rudas Gyógyfürdő, Döbrentei tér 9, Tabán* ☎ 30/016-0125 🌐 rudasbistro.hu 📄 M3: Ferenciek tere, then a 10-min walk across Erzsébet híd.

Tabáni Gösser Étterem

\$\$ | **HUNGARIAN** | Tasty, traditional Buda grub—from beef goulash to pork schnitzel, perch fillet to duck thigh—is the order of the day at this popular restaurant. Expect hearty portions, good prices, and quick service. **Known for:** big portions of tasty local specialties; simple and unfussy decor; local beers on tap. ☎ *Average main: Ft4,000* ☒ *Attila út 19, Tabán* ☎ 1/375-9482 🌐 tabanigosser.eatbu.com ☺ Closed Tues. 📄 Tram 56.

Veganlove

\$\$ | **VEGETARIAN** | **FAMILY** | With its focus on goulash and rich meats, Budapest hasn't always been the most welcoming



Memento Park offers a glimpse behind the Iron Curtain to the symbolic life of Cold War Hungary.

place for a vegan—but this gem is one of the places helping to change all that. A perfect, quick refueling restaurant with such good vegan and veggie burgers, hot dogs, and salads that even committed carnivores are tempted. **Known for:** a delicious broccoli burger (we aren't kidding); environmentally conscious; perfect for the vegan-curious. **📍 Average main:** Ft2,800 **📍 Bartók Béla út 9, Gellérthegy** www.veganlove.hu **📄 M4:** Szent Gellért tér.

☕ Coffee and Quick Bites

★ Asztalka Cukrászda

📍 | BAKERY | Half hidden behind the Budapest-Tabán Church (the entrance is on that side of the building, not on Döbren-tei utca itself), this excellent little cake shop is a popular option among locals for weddings and special events. Luckily, visitors can also get a taste of their freshly baked treats; simply head inside to order your coffees and cakes, then take them to the one of tables outside. **Known**

for: deliciously tart lemon bites; friendly staff (but limited English); church-side outdoor seating. **📍 Average main:** Ft900 **📍 Döbren-tei utca 15, Tabán** **↔ entrance on church side** **📞 20/581-3399** **🌐 www.asztalkacukraszda.hu** **🕒 Closed Mon. and Tues. No dinner.**

Caphe by Hai Nam

📍 | VIETNAMESE | Blending Vietnamese informality with professional service and simple, clean, and elegant Scandinavian style, this trendy café on Bartók Béla út offers both light and dark roasted specialty coffees, the must-try Vietnamese coffee, and specialty teas and smoothies. Before you sample the tasty pastries and cakes, be sure to start with a bánh mì sandwich (available in a variety of flavors and sizes, including a vegan version). **Known for:** excellent coffee; trendy spot; tasty bánh mì. **📍 Average main:** Ft1,600 **📍 Bartók Béla út 35, Gellérthegy** **📞 70/362-2081** **🌐 www.facebook.com/caphe.hainambudapest** **📄 M4:** Moricz Zsigmond Korter.

Grill Mánia

\$\$ | BARBECUE | This place may not look like much from the outside, particularly among the newer, trendier spots on Bartók Béla út, but it serves some of the most delicious authentic Balkan food in town. A Bulgarian known as Bární is the proprietor, living out his dream of showcasing the chargrilled flavors of his childhood. **Known for:** chargrilled meats and fresh salads; unpretentious vibe; excellent house spreads and dips. **📍 Average main:** Ft3,500 **📍 Bartók Béla út 6, Gellérthegy** **📞 1/209-9220** **🌐 grillmania.hu** **📄 M4:** Szent Gellért tér.

★ Mikrokosmos

📍 | ICE CREAM | Opened in summer 2023, this small Bartók Béla út gelato place has quickly gained a following for its array of innovative ice cream flavors, including fresh fig and walnut, gooseberry and elderflower, and white chocolate with saffron and lemon. There are also several dessert-inspired cones, including lemon pie and Sachertorte, along with one-flavor classics like pistachio, raspberry, and mango. **Known for:** delicious Nero Madagaszkar (dark chocolate) flavor; reasonable prices; generous scoops. **📍 Average main:** Ft600 **📍 Bartók Béla út 35, Gellérthegy** **🌐 www.instagram.com/mikrokosmos_35** **📄 M4:** Moricz Zsigmond körtér.

★ Pekmuhely Bartók

📍 | BAKERY | This little bakery serves some of the best bread in the city, as well as lip-smacking savory and sweet pastries. It's popular with locals, so don't be surprised to find queues outside at breakfast and lunchtime. **Known for:** delicious "cocoa snails"; limited seating (grab and go); good coffee. **📍 Average main:** Ft350 **📍 Bartók Béla út 15/b, Gellérthegy** **🌐 pekmuhely.hu** **🕒 Closed Sun.** **📄 M4:** Szent Gellért tér.

PupiCake

📍 | BAKERY | FAMILY | An extremely cute and colorful little café where the focus is on elegant, delicately constructed cakes,

along with other desserts, pies, puddings, and cookies. The sweet treats are baked daily by the owner and make for fun energy boosters for weary travelers. **Known for:** new cake offerings every day; impressive baking skills; vegan treats. **📍 Average main:** Ft1,700 **📍 Bartók Béla út 25, Gellérthegy** **📞 20/248-0230** **🌐 pupicake.hu** **📄 M4:** Szent Gellért tér.

🏨 Hotels

The hotels in this area are a little uninspiring, although there are bargains to be had considering that the location is still very central.

Hotel Charles

📍 | HOTEL | It won't win points for its looks (externally at least), but the staff are extremely friendly and helpful, the food in the restaurant is delicious, and the location is more convenient than it seems—just behind the hill, and close to the castle. **Pros:** surprisingly tasty food at the restaurant; spacious rooms each come with a kitchenette; low prices. **Cons:** rooms could do with sprucing up; rooms on the street side can be noisy; feels a little out of the way. **📍 Rooms from:** Ft25,000 **📍 Hegyalja út 23, Gellérthegy** **📞 1/212-9169** **🌐 www.charleshotel.hu** **🛏 60 rooms** **🕒 No Meals** **📄 Bus 8E, 110, 112.**

Hotel Orion Várkert

📍 | HOTEL | Location is this hotel's main strength, as it manages to be both quiet and extremely central, though the rooms are clean and comfortable (if a little soulless) and there's a decent breakfast restaurant, as well as an on-site gym with sauna. **Pros:** reasonably priced; great Buda location; comfortable and clean. **Cons:** fairly basic and business-like; lacks parking facilities; no lunch or dinner available on-site. **📍 Rooms from:** Ft35,000 **📍 Döbren-tei utca 13, Tabán** **📞 1/356-8583** **🌐 www.hotelorion.hu** **🛏 30 rooms** **🕒 No Meals** **📄 Tram 19, 41; bus 5, 16, 105.**

Nightlife

On this side of the river, the nightlife is more about relaxed sipping and chatting with locals than wild partying.

BARS AND PUBS

Bartók-reggel.délben.este

BARS | The name translates roughly to “morning, dusk, evening,” and this comfortable, slightly upscale gastropub is a welcoming spot at any of those times of day. The breakfasts and brunch, with live music, are lovely and worth booking in advance. And for evening imbibing, there’s a convivial atmosphere and a wide range of beers and other drinks. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 9, Budapest* ☎ 1/211–2019 🌐 www.facebook.com/bartokgastropub 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Béla

BARS | “Bár, étterem, lakás, arborétum” (“Bar, eatery, loft, arboretum”) is how Béla describes itself. This pleasingly eclectic bar serves great cocktails and good food, and has the feel of someone’s roomy loft apartment: check, check, check. However, a handful of plants hanging from the ceiling and one (admittedly cool) bird wall mural does not an arboretum make. Look out for secret swing concerts in the cellar. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 23, Budapest* ☎ 70/590–7974 🌐 www.belabudapest.com 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

KEG sörműház

BREW PUBS | **FAMILY** | Just a classic craft brewpub, run by friends, done right: a vast range of fresh beers, a cozy cellar location, and a relaxed atmosphere that entices people of all ages. There’s traditional food on offer too, along with sports and cultural events. ☎ *Orlay utca 1, Budapest* ☎ 1/616–8694 🌐 www.keg-sormuvhaz.hu 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Szatyor Bar and Gallery

BARS | Located next to lovely coffeehouse Hadik, Szatyor has a similarly airy, contemporary central European feel,

but with a bit more edge than its stately neighbor. There’s art everywhere—even painted on the ceiling—and a cultural ethos pervades, even extending to literary quotes about soup on the menu. An arty and delightful place for a drink or two. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 36, Budapest* ☎ 20/502–2597 🌐 www.facebook.com/szatyorbar 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

NIGHTCLUBS

★ A38

DANCE CLUB | Originally a Ukrainian stone-freighter, A38 is now a fantastic addition to the nightlife of Buda, permanently moored a 15-minute walk south of Liberty Bridge (just beyond Petőfi Bridge). It has a restaurant upstairs, an exhibition space, a bar, and a large dance floor downstairs. There’s a different band on hand every night, from jazz to Latin, retro to electronic. ☎ *District XI, Off Henryk Slawik rakpart, Budapest* ☎ 1/464–3940 *ticket office, 1/464–3946 restaurant* 🌐 www.a38.hu 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

WINE BARS

Palack borbár (*Palack Wine Bar*)

WINE BAR | If you want to try Hungarian wines in relaxed but knowledgeable company, this is your spot. There are also tastings, snacks, a snatched view of the Liberty Bridge, and a sign that rather encapsulates the ethos: Wine not? ☎ *Szent Gellért tér 3, Budapest* ☎ 30/997–1902 🌐 www.palackborbar.hu 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Performing Arts

B32 Galéria és Kultúrtér

PERFORMANCE VENUES | This nontraditional art gallery, home to some of Budapest’s leading creative figures, showcases everything from theater performances to film, a design market, and exhibitions. It’s a light, white space where there is always something interesting going on. Spot it via the large turquoise dot of its logo. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 32, Gellérthegy*

☎ 1/787–0039 🌐 www.b32kulturter.hu 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Fonó Budai Zeneház (*Fonó Buda Music House*)

MUSIC | Although it’s a bit of a trek from the city center to Fonó, on the outskirts of Buda, it is a great place to see live folk acts. The music house has its own bar, several performance stages, and even its own folk-music CD shop. Concerts and dance houses are held on a near-nightly basis, and tickets are bought when you enter the music house. ☎ *District XI, Sztregova utca 3, Budapest* ☎ 1/206–5300 🌐 www.fono.hu 📍 M4: Kelenföld vasútállomás.

TEMI Fővárosi Művelődési Háza (*Municipal Cultural House*)

PERFORMANCE VENUES | The center has been a major venue for folklore performances for more than 30 years. It hosts regular traditional folk concerts and dance performances from spring through fall. ☎ *District XI, Fehérvári út 47, Budapest* ☎ 1/203–3868 🌐 www.fmhnet.hu.

Shopping

BOOKS

Bartók Pagony

BOOKS | **FAMILY** | The Buda branch of this jolly mini-chain of bookstores was set up by three couples who wanted somewhere that sold both quality children’s books and well-made toys in the same place. Bartók Pagony delivers on its promise, and offers comfy armchairs and play areas, too. Kids will love the airships on the ceiling; adults will love the café. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 5, Gellérthegy* ☎ 30/889–6049 🌐 www.pagony.hu 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

CURIOSITIES

Bélyeg Shop

ANTIQUES & COLLECTIBLES | For those who like their souvenirs a little unusual, this traditional old stamp shop is a gem, clinging on to its patch on this increasingly

cool street. Old Hungarian stamps, coins, and medals are all on offer, including some very rare items. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 33, Gellérthegy* ☎ *The shop is in the yard, the gate code is 55* ☎ 1/365–8671 🌐 www.belyegshop.hu 📍 M4: Móricz Zsigmond körtér.

DESIGN

Palmetta Design

CRAFTS | The city base of this design studio, run by a couple in the town of Szentendre, showcases cool, modern Hungarian and European design and homewares, from lamps to cutlery, bowls to pans. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 30, Gellérthegy* ☎ 70/610–7330 🌐 palmettadesign.hu 📍 M4: Móricz Zsigmond körtér.

GALLERIES

Faur Zsófi Gallery

ART GALLERY | Showcasing a fantastic range of Hungarian artists, this sleek gallery aims to promote them internationally while also welcoming visitors to its HQ. Worth a browse if you want to take the temperature of the modern art scene in the country or pick up a one-of-a-kind souvenir. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 25, Gellérthegy* ☎ 1/209–3635 🌐 www.galeriafaur.hu 📍 M4: Szent Gellért tér.

Godot Galéria

ART GALLERY | A well-chosen selection of contemporary Hungarian artists’ work is shown here, in rotating exhibitions, with many pieces for sale. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 11–13, Gellérthegy* ☎ 70/381–6775 🌐 www.godot.hu.

Gross Arnold galéria es kávézó

ART GALLERY | Not merely a gallery but a gateway into the beautiful, delicate fairy-tale world of the Hungarian artist and etcher Arnold Gross, this attractive space—with furnishings designed by the artist’s son—is also a popular café. ☎ *Bartók Béla út 46, Gellérthegy* ☎ 70/338–7001 🌐 www.grossarnold.com 📍 M4: Móricz Zsigmond körtér.

GIFTS

★ **Prezent**

SOUVENIRS | A properly lovely little place on the edge of Tabán, an area not really known for its shopping, Prezent is everything a modern gift shop should be: interesting, sustainable, and with a focus on local producers. You'll find sweaters, chocolate, and soaps, as well as considerably-less-touristy-than-usual fridge magnets and postcards featuring sketches of the city. ✉ *Döbrensei utca 16, Tabán* 🌐 prezentbudapest.hu 🚊 *Tram 19, 41; bus 5, 16, 105.*