



THE KOLLEKTIV: BUDAPEST EXCURSION

JUNE, 2022

PROGRAM

Sunday, June 19: Welcome and Basics

As soon as we're all set (which means that we have bought our week ticket for public transportation), we do some simple exercises in order to learn the basics of the city's brilliant master plan – this, hopefully, makes it almost impossible to get lost.

Budapest toolkit 1: the Master Plan – or how not to get lost in a big city

- >Arrival in Budapest (late in the morning, early in the afternoon)
- >Purchase of week tickets (at the airport, eventually at the railway station)
- >Transfer by public transportation to the city, check-in in the hostel
- >Transfer to the Fisher's Bastion (Buda); view over Pest, explanation of the Master Plan
- >Transfer to Pest, drinks in the ruin bar
- >Collective dinner

Monday, June 20: Housing: the raw material of urban planning

A walking tour (alternated by short stretches on Metro 2). The tour begins at Örs Vezér tér and culminates in the inner city. Vezér tér is a typical peripheral transit hub with the first IKEA shop in Hungary; it is a lively chaotic mess and typically an area that planners tend to neglect. If, for convenience sake, we reduce the incredible variety of housing models to only five, we might end up with 1) the pre-Kakanian courtyard houses, 2) the palatial 'Kakanian' tenement blocks, 3) modernist housing complexes from the 1920s and 1930s, 4) socialist realist housing projects, 5) the industrialized, large-panel flats built between the 1960s and early 1990s. The tour is organized from the outside in, and as we approach the inner city, we also move back in time. We will only see three models: 5, 4, and 2. Working our way back to the city, we stop at Keleti Pályaudvar, or East station, the Arc de Triomphe of the railways and designed as a characteristically Hungarian stylistic answer to Nyugati Pályaudvar, or West station; the best kept building by Gustav Eiffel, it was seen by some as to 'interantional' in its architectural aspiration. From there we follow Rákóczi út, the central boulevard that cuts through the entire city and crosses the Danube at Erzsébet hid, visiting as many 'Kakanian' tenement blocks we can – visiting this type of building implies that we try to enter their 'udvar', or interior courtyard. After lunch in the city's poshest café (Café New York), take a look at an empty piece of land near Blaha Lujza tér. This is where the



the scene of the reburial ceremony of Imre Nagy, leader of the rebellion against Soviet-Russia in 1956. For this occasion, the building was clad in black and white cloth, a stage setting designed by László Rajk, an architect and graphic designer who did a lot of work for the underground press in communist Hungary. The reburial ceremony is often considered to be most decisive moment in the process that suddenly brought the Soviet Empire to its end. The Museum of Fine Arts is well worth a visit; after that, we take a look at the building designed for the labor union in the late 1930s, and extended by the Dutch architect Erick van Egeraat in early 2000s. It is master piece of modern architecture, built in an era when modernism was banned from Germany and the Soviet Union, two of its former power packs, and on the way back in many other countries – but not in Central Europe. After lunch at Liszt FÉrenc tér, where we take a look at another gem in the treasure trove of buildings for culture: the music academy, we continue along AndrÁssy út, the city’s poshest boulevard, to the Opera.

Budapest toolkit 3: the (not so) subtle art of representation

>09.30: Metro line 1 to Hősök tér

>09.45: Walk in the Városliget

>10.15: Visit to the Museum of Fine Arts

>11.45: Walk to the Labor Union Building and its extension

>12.15: Metro line 1 from Hősök tér to Oktogon

>12.30: Lunch

>13.45: Walk to the State Opera

>14.15: Guided tour?

>15.00: End

Wednesday, June 22: Re-enacting a glorious ('Kakanian') past?

At the end of the nineteenth century, Budapest celebrated 1000 years of Huns in Central Europe with a huge show in the city park. 100 years later, the city tried to commemorate this millennial show by transforming an area on the Danube, south of the historical city and next to a new bridge that marked southern end of the third of the big ring roads, the Hungária körút; the northern bridge had already been built a few decades earlier. At this site, the Müpa complex emerged; with its astonishing concert hall and the Ludwig museum, it is the city’s largest cultural facility. To the North of it, the new National Theater was built – we have seen the empty spot where its ‘Kakanian’ predecessor once stood, the bar in the foundations of a successor that was never built – and now we’ll see the building that ended many years of planning and planning disasters. Its post-modern fairytale design immediately made it super controversial. Some critics even said that it proves those right who think that ‘architecture should burn’. You will have to judge for yourself... This trip, however, begins at Nyugati Pályaudvar, the station built by Gustave Eiffel, which built on top of a predecessor that was partially in the way of the great ring road and had to be demolished to make space for the grand boulevard. When the new station

the National Theatre used to be. It was demolished in the late 1960s, allegedly because of the construction of a new metro line (M2). Its destruction caused kind of a national trauma, and only in the 1990s could a new National Theatre be inaugurated. We continue our walk to the Great Synagogue, an architectural gem. In 'Kakanian' times, 25% of the inhabitants of Budapest were Jewish – in 1944 and early 1945, after Hitler replaced his Hungarian allies by a more ruthless regime, most of them were deported to the extermination camps. The Great Synagogue survived the war intact and is undoubtedly one of the most fascinating buildings of Budapest. Having admired its lavish interior and daring construction, we walk to Károlyi-kert, an inner city oasis; on the way there we may see the remains of Pest's medieval wall. From there we work our way towards Déak tér, the central hub of the city's metro network. Here we get ourselves some drinks in the foundations of a New National Theater that was never built. After the Orbán's populists came to power, the modernist project was abandoned, and the basement transformed into a popular bar.

Budapest toolkit 2: five housing models

>09.30: M2 to Örs Vezér tér. Walk to model 5.

>10.00: Walk to model 4

>10.30: M2 to Keleti Pályaudvar

>10.45: Short visit of the station

>11.15: Walk north of the Rákóczi út: 'Kakanian' tenement blocks

>11.45: Lunch break at Café New York.

>12.30: Walk to the Great Synagogue via Blaha Lujza tér: ideologically motivated vandalism.

>13.30: Visit of the Great Synagogue.

>14.30: Walk via Károlyi-kert, Ferenciek tér, Fuga (the best shop for books on architecture), the District House, the Town Hall to Déak tér.

>15.30: Visit to the bar in the foundations of the New National Theater that was never built.

>16.00: End

Tuesday, June 21: Building Culture

Few cities are so packed with buildings for culture as Budapest. Our trip today begins at the Városliget, or city park, that goes back to the 18th century but got its present shape when it was redesigned to host the Millennium exhibition of 1896. This event was organized to celebrate the arrival of the Huns in 896; the park boasts a phantasy castle that was designed as a collage of all vernacular styles in Hungary, the famous Gundel Café, Széchenyi fürdő (probably the most famous Spa), and at Hősök tér the giant Museum of Fine Arts and the Palace of Art, a building for temporary exhibitions; both were designed by Albert Schickedanz who combined a career as an architect with that of a painter. In 1989, the Palace of Art was



was ready, the old one was torn down. From the station, we walk part of the great ring road towards the Danube. From there tramline 2 will be our companion for most of the day. Its scenic trajectory provides beautiful views on Buda, and links several of today's hotspots, including the Müpa and the new National Theater. Our first stop is the Houses of Parliament building. We will take a close look before continuing to the Gresham Palace, today a hyper expensive hotel, where we will see the work of Géza Maróti. Maróti decorated some of the most prestigious buildings in Budapest, among them the music school, and developed a style that he though was typically Hungarian. A Jew, he converted to Catholicism, a move meant to underline his ambition to belong to the Hungarians; in 'Kakavian' times, Hungarian nationalism was mostly of the inclusive type and welcoming everybody who liked to be part of it. After working in the United States for a while, Maróti returned to Hungary after the First World War that marked the end of the Dual Monarchy and stimulated a new, exclusivist type of nationalism. Now, Maróti's Jewish origin meant that he was treated as an outcast – he died with all his dreams of a universal Hungarian culture shattered... From the Gresham, we walk to Vörösmarty tér with the famous Gerbeaud coffeehouse. We take a look at Váci street, the city's busiest shopping street, and walk to the Vigadó, the concert hall on the Danube. Tram 2 takes us to Fővám tér, where we will take a look at the city's largest market hall. Cities have to feed themselves – and this is how it works. Market halls are the predecessors of today's supermarket, where farmers, fishers and hunters brought food directly to the clients. Its grandiose nineteenth-century construction and the colorful display of all kinds of foods explains why it has become a tourist magnet... From the market hall, we proceed to Bálna, the 'white whale' designed by Kas Oosterhuis. After a quick look we proceed to tram 2, and head towards the Müpa and the new National Theater.

Budapest toolkit 4: waterfront architecture

>09.30: Tram 4/6 to Eiffel station

>09.45: Visit to the station

>10.15: Walk toward the Danube

>10.45: Tram 2 to the Houses of Parliament

>11.15: Tram 2 to Gresham Palace

>11.30: Visit to the public parts of the Palace

>12.00: Walk to Vörösmarty tér, coffee and/or lunch break

>13.00: Walk to the Vigadó

>13.15: Tram 2 to Fővám tér

>13.30: Visit to the Market Hall

>14.00: Visit to the white whale

>14.15: Tram 2 to Müpa

>14.30: Visit to Müpa and the National Theater

>15.30: End

Thursday, June 23: History... A burden or a blessing?

Continuing the theme of the previous day, we now move to Buda. We begin by visiting a brown field project: the conversion of a formerly industrial area into a cultural hub: the Millenáris project. From there we climb the Buda hill and stroll around in this picturesque medieval city for while, admiring its color scheme, the beautified gothic church, as well as attempts to undo some of the essential ideas of the post-war reconstruction: a considerable reduction of the scale of some of the bigger buildings, so that they better fit in their historical surroundings. In 'Kakanian' times, some big complexes for the Ministries were needed; after the war, the Ministries moved to the area near the Houses of Parliament, so there was no need for them. Orbán, however, wants to reconstruct at least some of them to their former 'Kakanian' glory. He wants to do the same near the site of the royal palace, our next stop. Some of the buildings that did not survive the war are being reconstructed. His most ambitious project, however, is to claim the entire, gigantic palace for his administration – this would imply that all museums it now accommodates have to move. Plans have been made for a series of new museums in the city park, in the vicinity of the Museum of Fine Arts. Before this happens, we intend to visit the national gallery, and possibly the museum on the city's urban history.

Budapest toolkit 5: History – a blessing or a burden...

>09.30: M2 to Széll Kálmán tér

>10.00: Visit to Millenáris Park

>10.45: Walk to Buda

>11.15: Walking tour in Buda

>12.00: Lunch

>12.45: Visit to the Royal Palace

>14:00: End

Evening program

>19.30: Zeneakademia, Mendelsohn, Elias

Friday, June 24: It is up to you.

>19.00: Collective grand final dinner

Saturday, June 25: The great goodbye

