

<https://expat-press.com/first-time-visitors-in-budapest/>

When my slave-driving editors at Expat Press 'suggested' I do a piece on Where to Take First-Time Visitors to Budapest, I could have given them a good old American hug. My daughter and her family had just spent 10 days here. Serendipity. I wanted them all to get a real taste of Budapest, so I took them on my own personal tour of the city and its secrets, big and little.

Gellért Hill

As everyone knows, the best way to get to know a city is to walk it. I walked the family from their Rákóczi út Air BnB flat down to Astoria. We cut through from Museum krt to my beautiful little neighborhood park, Károlyi Kert and on into Egyetem Tér (University Square), renovated in 2010. A quick stop at Starbuck's for their morning caffeine jolt and we headed over to Vármű krt, crossed the Danube at Szabadság Híd and started up Gellért Hill. Everyone was thrilled with the cityscape they saw from the top of Gellért Hill and digital memory cards had their work cut out for them to store all the photos they took.

Váci utca

It's always a treat to stroll down Budapest's premier shopping and tourist pedestrian street. We came down the north side of Gellért Hill and crossed Erzsébet Bridge back across the Danube. We turned left onto Váci Utca, toward Vörösmarty Square, with the family checking out all the shops. Just before the square, we stopped in at Cyrano's restaurant for a late breakfast.

Vicky Barcelona Tapas Bar

Tuesday's Flamenco Night at the city's most happening venue was a special treat for adults and kids alike. Plus they got to experience Gozsdu Udvar, Budapest's special feature of six interconnecting courtyards, now filled with restaurants and pubs, Budapest's IN place to see and be seen. VB's manager, Daniel, made sure we sat right up front near the action.

Parliament Square

The next day we walked down to Blaha Lujza Tér and caught the 4/6 tram to Margit Bridge and checked out the views of Buda and the Danube. We then walked down to Parliament Square. We tried to sign up for a tour of Parliament, but the English-language tours were booked too far ahead. Best to book these tours online to ensure your reservation is confirmed.

Szabadság Ter (Freedom Square)

The family posed for a photo op at Imre Nagy's statue and then checked out the monuments at Freedom Square, including the lovely fountain at the southern end.

Montenegroi Gurman

We stopped for lunch at Montenegroi Gurman, near Erzsebet Ter, one of the best places for plieskavica in town.

Cat Cafe

We hopped behind the Basilica to the Cat Café, a fun venue not many tourists know about: a small café full of cats for people to stroke, play with, etc. The kids loved it. You used to be able to feed them cat treats, but, judging from the size of some of the feline inhabitants, could no longer do so.

Synagogue

A popular venue is the Jewish synagogue, the largest remaining one in Europe. We did the self-guided tour along with the outdoor cemetery and Holocaust Memorial in the rear garden, a large metallic tree with the names of Jews murdered during the Holocaust engraved on each of the metal leaves.

St. Stephen's Basilica

Just a short walk from Deák Ferenc Tér, the family took another self-guided tour inside Budapest's most famous church, viewing The Relic (mummified hand of St. Stephen) and climbing the three million steps to the top of the dome for another panoramic view of Budapest. I wisely waited outside on a comfy bench, watching the young female tourists in their short-shorts amble by.