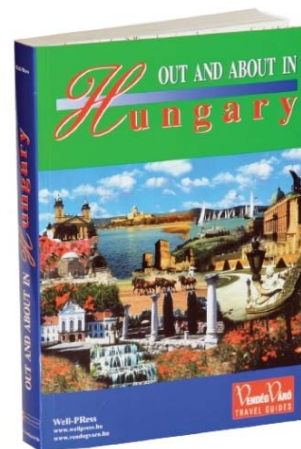


Out and About in Hungary

In seeking your destination you may instead find yourself on a voyage of discovery. Whilst a journey by definition has an aim, what you finally find may be something quite unexpected. During this particular Hungarian journey we intend to fire your imaginations before accompanying you on your chosen course.

The book you have in front of you has two basic aims: firstly to make your visit all the more enjoyable, and secondly to tempt you into some of Hungary's unknown and less-visited corners. Before diving straight into the regions it is probably a good idea first to consult the Encyclopedia, in the first chapter of the book, which we have called the Hungarian Treasury. It is here you will find the concepts and keywords which could prove useful during your stay. Some entries may stimulate an interest, which eventually takes you into regions you had not previously intended to visit. It is in the Treasury you will also find descriptions of typical Hungarian products, some of which you may have heard of before going to Hungary, as well as Hungary's World Heritage Sites and the National Parks. This being a travel guide endeavoring to go beyond the realms of geographical, historical and tourist interest, you will also be introduced to the arts, literature, music and folklore of the region. We haven't neglected science and technology either, devoting some of the introductory section to the great inventors and scientists who have done so much to help promote the image of Hungary abroad.

The second part of the book takes you through both the larger and more intimate landscapes of Hungary. Arranged in nine regions, the chapters cover both the provincial centers and the cultural backwaters. We start not in the provinces, but in and around the capital, Budapest (an area which also includes the Central Danubian Region, the Danube Bend and Csepel Island) before heading for the four regions making up Transdanubia. Following the landscapes of the southern and the northern parts of the Great Hungarian Plain, we stop off at Lake Tisza before completing our journey in Northern Hungary. We haven't overlooked the fact that there are also everyday practicalities accompanying journeys of this kind, consequently you will find addresses, telephone numbers, notes, lists of cultural and sporting events, tourist attractions and leisure activities once we have covered all the individual regions. During the course of the compilation of this book many specially selected people were employed all over the country in an effort to make sure that the information is both accurate and up-to-date. This is an important consideration bearing in mind how rapidly things are changing in Hungary at the moment. We also employed local people to write and edit the individual regional chapters in the belief that readers would get a more authentic and informed picture of each of the nine regions. It was by deciding only to include sites of genuine interest, and events which were of



more than merely local interest that we hoped to guarantee stylistic continuity throughout. At the same time, however, we didn't want our authors to feel that they were being restricted in any way. Ultimately it was the job of the editor to make the adjustments necessary to make the text read like a seamless whole. Although we live in an age of mass communications the contributors have written much which has been based on their personal knowledge and experience. At the same time, however, you will find that the authors have not denied the intrepid explorer the thrill of making their own personal discoveries.

The authors and photographers were also given the opportunity to give a special gloss to their regions in their choice of visual materials. There are many places where illustrations have been included to complement as well as enhance the text. There are also numbers of specially inserted texts giving information or quotations directly related to the area in question. The information which is least likely to change appears in the main text, whilst the data which is more liable to vary appears in the information sections. This distinction, however, does not detract from the importance of the material not included in the main text in any way. It simply means that the data in the information sections has a fresher feel to it, especially when accompanied some of the more lavishly illustrated advertisements. Those wishing to study an area in greater detail should either refer to the main text or the information sections. To help you find your way around there is a useful contents section as well as some further suggestions as to how you can get the most out of the book. The scale of the book, its contents, the manageable format, the maps and the visual materials mean that it is unlike any other Hungarian tourist guide currently available. We have deliberately refrained from lists of historical and art historical dates, and aimed instead at producing a readable and visually stimulating travelling companion. Indeed, we very much hope that our book will prove to be a much-loved friend during your travels around Hungary.

The first years of the new Millennium have seen the publication of the last in the series of Well-Press Publishing's county tourist guides, which have appeared on a regular basis since 1995. It was from the experience gained publishing these guides, and the huge amounts of information collected that we were able to produce the second edition of this book. We are very much hoping that this, the Hungarian, German, French and Russian versions find their way into every school, hotel and tourist office in the land. We wish you all the very best on your journeys and hope that you manage to find what you were looking for, whether you were alone or with others.

Erzsébet Körtvélyesi
Executive Editor

Katalin Pálffy
Chief Editor