

Hungary - OVERVIEW

Updated: March 14, 2014



Country Name Long Form: None





Government Type: Parliamentary Democracy

Languages Spoken: Hungarian

National Flag



Hungary is a Tier III Country. Significant security measures are necessary.

	Overall Assessment	Political Violence	Crime	Terrorism	Travel Safety
Hungary					
Key: (L) Low – (M) Medium – (H) High – (C)Critical					

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Political Violence is rated at LOW

Hungary enjoys a relatively stable security environment but saw an increase in violent political unrest between September 2006 and July 2009. Since August 2009, this violent political unrest has significantly subsided. Small, factional fringe element groups of neo-Nazis, skinheads, and other far-right wing extremists are present but rarely adversely impact foreigners. Their activities, particularly rallies and demonstrations, are strictly limited and monitored by police.

Large public demonstrations are known to take place in Hungary, especially the capital of Budapest; however these demonstrations are generally peaceful. There are some increased risks associated with far-right extremist groups protest actions.

TERRORISM

Terrorism is assessed as LOW

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A right-wing extremist group, the Hungarians' Arrows National Liberation Army, has claimed responsibility for firebombing homes of several Hungarian politicians and the home of the then-minister of the National Security Services. The majorities of its members have been arrested or are under house arrest. The government considers the Arrows an indigenous terrorist organization but lacks the ability to designate them as such under current Hungarian law.

There have been no acts of terrorism directed against American interests in Hungary.

RULE OF LAW / CORRUPTION

The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) for 2013 gave Hungary a score of 54, indicating that the country has moderate level of corruption. The CPI rates countries by the perceived levels of corruption in their public sector, with the least corrupt country receiving a maximum score of 100.

CRIME

Crime is assessed as MEDIUM

Street crimes, particularly pickpocketing, petty thefts from persons, thefts from unattended vehicles, and vandalism are the most frequently reported. Budapest's major train stations and the public transportation (tram, subway, and bus) systems are popular venues for such thefts. Residential crimes, also a significant issue, continue to be on the rise.

Elderly people are prime targets of burglars and robbers because they are the most vulnerable and usually live either alone or with a similarly elderly spouse. Most attacks against the elderly occur in the countryside or villages and small towns, but have become more frequent in larger cities as well.

KIDNAPPING

Kidnapping in Hungary is rated as low. When kidnappings occur in Hungary, they are primarily criminal in nature. Kidnappings are rare in the country and are unlikely to pose a serious security threat to travelers, particularly Westerners.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault cases are often unreported.

NATURAL DISASTERS

Flooding, most often due to heavy rains or melting snow, has occurred in recent years, especially in areas along the Danube and Tisza rivers. In 2013, there was heavy flooding in central Europe along the Danube, including in Hungary. While the most severe effects of the flooding were felt outside of Hungary, hundreds were evacuated from portions of the country and the government deployed thousands of emergency responders to engage in flood defense measures, especially in Budapest.

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Winters in Hungary can be severe due to heavy snowfall and cold temperatures. As a result, driving conditions are affected in the country and in some regions; roads are not passable in winter.

STANDING TRAVEL ADVICE

- There are reports of overcharging at some restaurants, clubs, and nightspots, especially in those areas of the city frequented by tourists are not uncommon.
- Stay in groups, travel in a caravan consisting of two or more vehicles, and stay on the main roads.
- Ensure that someone not traveling with you is aware of your itinerary.
- Avoid hotels that do not have adequate security.
- Intercity travel after dark anywhere in should be avoided.
- It is preferable to stay in the main tourist destinations.
- Pay close attention to your surroundings, especially when walking.
- Official taxis are a suitable means of travel in daylight hours in urban areas. It is highly recommended that taxis be arranged through your hotel, or program office. Negotiate the price in advance.
- Women should be especially careful when traveling alone and avoid staying out late without a trusted male escort.
- Make sensible security precautions to mitigate the risk of petty crime, particularly pick pocketing and bag snatching.
- Carry a photocopy of your passport when traveling to avoid losing it in a robbery.
- Do not resist if you are being robbed and avoid eye contact and to not make any sudden movements. Victims have been killed when they resisted attack or refused to give up their money or other valuables.
- Be aware of your surroundings at all times and keep a low profile.
- Never leave your food, drinks or belongings unattended.
- Carry bags close to your body and make sure the fasteners are secure.
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash or wearing expensive jewelry or valuables.
- Leave all important documents in a safe or safe deposit box at your hotel and only carry certified copies.
- Trust your instincts. If someone or something makes you uneasy, avoid the situation.

Important Contact Details

International Dialing Code: +36

International Dialing Prefix: 00

Victims of crime in should contact the following phone numbers for assistance

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POLICE: The local equivalent to the “911” emergency line in is: 107

FIRE DEPARTMENT: 105

AMBULANCE: 104

GENERAL EUROPEAN EMERGENCY NUMBER: 112

TOURISM CRIME HOTLINE: 438 8080

Note: Police, ambulance or fire department response may be unreliable in some parts of the country.

TRAVEL & ROAD SAFETY

- Hungary has a well-developed infrastructure, although facilities may be outdated or old-fashioned outside of major cities.
- Major roads are well maintained, but rural areas may feature poorly lit, narrow, or winding roads. Rail and bus transit networks are efficient and well maintained.
- Electricity, cell phone service, and internet are reliable across the country.

RECOMMENDED TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

- No ATM use after dark.
- No traveling alone after dark.

HEALTH

The standard of state-run medical facilities in Hungary’s main cities is usually acceptable. In rural and border regions, however facilities are often poorer, more limited and lacking adequate emergency services. Private medical facilities in Budapest are generally equipped to international standards, but treatment tends to be expensive and proof of insurance or another guarantee of payment is generally required before admitting patients.

- Although tap water is considered reasonably safe to drink, bottled water is readily available and recommended, especially for those visiting rural Hungary.
- Unpasteurized dairy products should be avoided if possible. Unpasteurized milk should be boiled before consumption, or powdered or tinned milk should be used as an alternative.

The following vaccinations are recommended or required if traveling to Hungary:

- Hepatitis A (recommended)
- Hepatitis B (recommended)
- Tick-borne encephalitis (recommended for those at high risk of suffering animal bites)
- Typhoid (recommended)

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It is also important to ensure that routine vaccinations are up-to-date for diseases including influenza, polio, measles, mumps, rubella, diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus.

SIGNIFICANT DISEASES –

- **Tick-borne encephalitis** – A viral infection of the central nervous system that is spread by Ixodes ticks. It is a risk for individuals visiting forested areas of the country between March and November. Most TBE cases are reported around Lake Balaton, in Zala, Somogy, Vas, and Nograd counties, and in rural areas along the River Danube.
- **West Nile Virus** – A mosquito-borne virus reported in small numbers each year in Hungary, mostly in August and September. Most cases occur in the south east of the country, although recently some have also been reported in north western Hungary.

HOSPITALS –

Buda Health Center

Nagy Jeno utca. 8
Budapest 1126
Tel: +36 1 489 5200
Fax: +36 1 489 5210

FirstMed Centers

Hattyuhaz
Hattyu utca 14, 5th em.
Budapest 1015
Tel: +36 1 224 9090
Fax: +36 1 224 9091

US EMBASSY – CONSULATE LOCATIONS

United States Embassy Hungary

Szabadsag ter 12
Budapest
Tel: +36 1 475 4400
Fax: +36 1 475 4764
Email: acs.budapest@state.gov
Website: <http://hungary.usembassy.gov/>

USF INTERNATIONAL HOTLINE

USF 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 813-317-5815

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AXA Assistance 24/7 EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE LINE: 1-877-577-9504 / +1-203-399-5130 (Call collect from abroad)

ASSIST ID #: GLMN 04983932. <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/resources/>

* Information derived from CIA World Fact Book, US Department of State, OSAC, and Travel Guard. This travel overview summarizes some of the most important concerns; however, it does not negate the need for detailed trip planning.