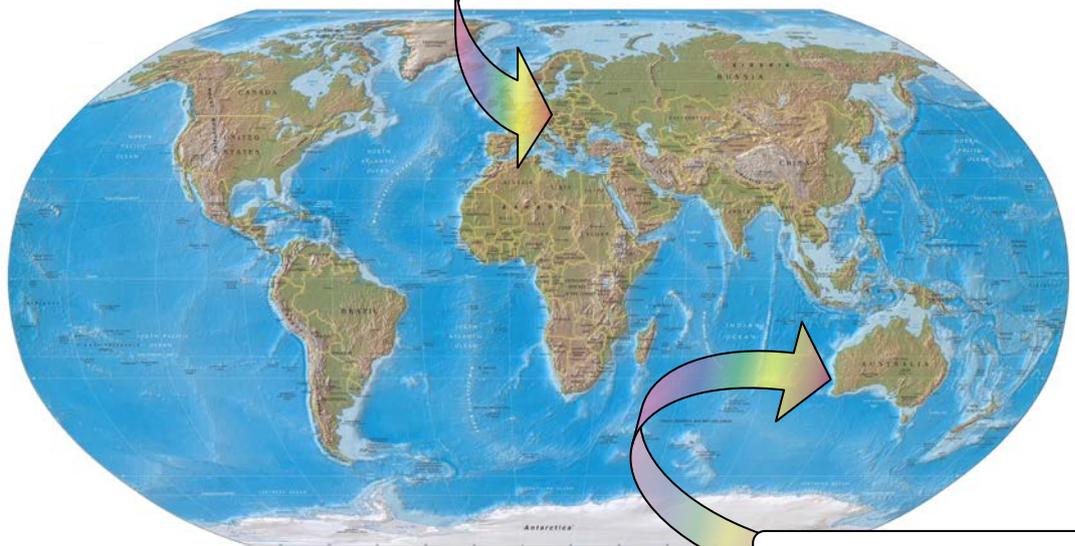


HUNGARY



We were there



Now we are here

FACTS:

- **Full name:** Republic of Hungary
- **Population:** 9.8 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Budapest
- **Area:** 93,030 sq km (35,919 sq miles)
- **Major language:** Hungarian
- **Major religion:** Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 68 years (men), 77 years (women) (UN)
- **Monetary unit:** Forint
- **Main exports:** Machinery and transport equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals
- **GNI per capita:** US \$10,030 (World Bank, 2006)
- **Internet domain:** .hu
- **International dialing code:** +36

Hungarian Community in WA

Australian Hungarian Association of WA Inc. 734 Beaufort St, Mt. Lawley WA 6050

Hungarian Protestant Church Community 31 Bagot Rd, Subiaco WA 6008
Ph: 9381 5494 or 9331 3137

Hungarian Community Hall/Dance Group "Keszkeno" 734 Beaufort St, Mt. Lawley WA 6050
ph: 9271 6816

Overview of cultural groups

The Magyar community is the biggest community among all Hungary ethnic groups, contributing to almost 95% of the ethnic population of Hungary. The other ethnic groups of Hungary include Romany, the Serbs, Slovenes, Slovaks, Gypsies, Greeks, Jews, Croats the Germans and many other smaller non-European communities.

Although, the origins of these ethnic communities are not in Hungary, yet they are mainly followers of Roman Catholicism, the principal religion of the country. Some of them are, however, followers of indigenous religions like Calvinism, Lutheranism, Jew, Baptist, Adventist, Pentecostal religion and Baptist Unitarian religion. The origins of these ethnic communities are not known, however, the Finno-Ugric theory of the late 19th century is largely cited to establish the roots of European ethnic communities in Hungary.

Language/dialects spoken

The official and common language is modern Hungarian spoken by all. Various dialects are used at home. Minorities are bilingual. Hungarian is a Uralic Language (more specifically an Ugric language) unrelated to most other languages in Europe. It is spoken in Hungary and by the Hungarian minorities in seven neighbouring countries. The Hungarian name for the language is *magyar*.

The dialects of Hungarian identified by Ethnologists are: Alföld, West Danube, Danube-Tisza, King's Pass Hungarian, Northeast Hungarian, Northwest Hungarian, Székely and West Hungarian. These dialects are, for the most part, mutually understood. The Hungarian Csángó dialect, which is not listed by Ethnologists, is spoken mostly in Bacău County, Romania. The Csángó minority group has been largely isolated from other Hungarians, and they therefore preserved a dialect closely resembling medieval Hungarian.

Dietary preferences

Hungarian food is often spicy. It frequently uses paprika, black pepper and onions. Potatoes are also commonly used in many dishes. Hungarians are passionate about their soups, desserts and stuffed pancakes, with fierce rivalries between regional variations of the same dish, e.g. the fish soups cooked differently on the banks of Hungary's two main rivers: the Danube (Duna) and the Tisza.

Hungarian cuisine is influenced both by the history of the Magyar people and by the environment found in the Carpathian basin when the Magyars settled in the late 8th century. The importance of livestock is apparent in the prominence of meat in Hungarian food. The nomadic lifestyle of the Magyars may be reflected in the many dishes cooked over the fire, from goulash in a *bogrács* (or cauldron) to *pogácsa* pastries. In the 15th century, garlic and onions were introduced to Hungarian cuisine. Elements of Turkish cuisine were adopted by Hungarians during the Ottoman era, mainly in the form of vegetable dishes, but the influence is not as pronounced as in the Balkans. Cakes and sweets in Hungary show a strong German/Austrian influence.

Two remarkable elements of Hungarian cuisine that are hardly noticed by locals, but usually conjure up much enthusiasm amongst foreigners, are different forms of *főzelék* as well as cold fruit soups.

Hungarian cuisine uses a large variety of cheeses, but the most common are *túró* (a fresh curd

cheese) and **trappista** - a traditional Hungarian semi-hard cow's-milk cheese.

Religion/spirituality/observances

The 2001 Hungarian Census showed religious adherency to be the following: Catholics 54.5%, Calvinist 15.9%, no religion 14.5%, refused to answer 10.1%, Lutheran 3% and other 2%.

According to the most recent Eurobarometer Poll 2005:

- 44% of Hungarian citizens responded that "they believe there is a God".
- 31% answered that "they believe there is some sort of spirit or life force".
- 19% answered that "they do not believe there is any sort of spirit, God, or life force".

Public Holidays:

Date	English Name	Local Name
January 1	New Year's Day	Újév
March 15	National Day - memorial day of the 1848 Revolution	Nemzeti ünnep
August 20	Saint Stephen Day	Szent István ünnepe
October 23	National Day - 1956 Revolution memorial day	Nemzeti ünnep
November 1	All Saints Day, Day of the dead	Mindenszentek, Halottak napja

Customs/traditions

In Hungary there are national customs which used to be very popular in the past, and some of them still exist like **Nativity plays** at Christmas or the **sprinkling** of the girls and **painting** at Easter.

Lucázás can also happen in villages. *Luca day* is 13th December. This is also called the day of the wicked because people thought that on this day witches are more active than usually, that's why women were forbidden to work on Luca day. A Luca chair was made by people so that they can be able to recognize witches. It had to be made of 13 different types of wood. Besides this there are many things which are in connection with Luca day like weather predictions or wedding prophecies. But the custom which can be seen nowadays too is that young men steal or change people's gates.

Our other custom was the so called **regölés**. Men would go from house to house and they would greet the people. This is one of the most archaic customs of the Hungarians. Sometimes men used bagpipes or sticks with chains or bells to make their performances more interesting – and loud. *Regölés* took place on 26th December, but it doesn't really exist any more.

Apart from these there are also different fruits and vegetables which have an important role in people's lives. For example, garlic dipped into honey, apple and nut meant health. To be rich people eat beans, peas, fish, pumpkins and poppy-seed cake. They make a lot of kinds of food for Christmas and all of the family members have to taste everything at least once.

Hungarians also have a tradition on the last day of the year. On 31st December they make a lot of noise to chase the bygone year away.

In February Hungarian people try to chase the winter away by wearing frightening costumes. This custom is the so called **Busójárás**. People think if they frighten the winter, the spring will come earlier.

Popular Hungarian traditional dances are:

Ugrós (Jumping dances): Old style dances dating back to the Middle Ages. Solo or couple dances accompanied by old style music, shepherd and other solo man's dances from Transylvania, and marching dances along with remnants of medieval weapon dances belong in this group.

Karizkázó: a circle dance performed by women only accompanied by singing of folksongs.

Csárdás: New style dances developed in the 18-19. centuries is the Hungarian name for the national dances, with Hungarian embroidered costumes and energetic music. From the men's intricate bootslapping dances to the ancient women's circle dances, Csárdás demonstrates the infectious exuberance of the Hungarian folk dancing still celebrated in the villages.

Verbunkos: a solo man's dance evolved from the recruiting performances of the Austro-Hungarian army.

Recreational activities

Hungarians are known for their prowess at water sports, mainly swimming, water polo (in which they have defeated the Soviet team in 1956) and canoeing (they have won multiple medals). This can be said to be surprising at first, due to Hungary being landlocked. On the other hand, the presence of two major rivers the Duna and the Tisza and a major lake Balaton give excellent opportunities to practice these sports. Some of the world's best sabre fencing athletes have historically hailed from Hungary.

One of the most famous Hungarians is the soccer player Ferenc Puskás (1927-2006). He scored 84 goals in 85 internationals for Hungary, and 511 goals in 533 matches in the Hungarian and Spanish leagues. Puskás played the 1954 World Cup final against West Germany. In 1958, after the Hungarian Revolution, he immigrated to Spain where he played in the legendary Real Madrid team.

Environment

Hungary is a landlocked state with many neighbours – Slovakia, Ukraine, Romania, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia and Austria. It is mostly flat, with low mountains in the north. Lake Balaton, a popular tourist centre, is the largest lake in central Europe.

The capital city, Budapest, which originally was two separate cities: Buda and Pest, straddles the River Danube. It is rich in history and culture and famed for its curative springs.

Hungary has some limited natural resources (bauxite, coal, and natural gas), as well as fertile soils and arable land. Hungarian wines are drunk throughout Europe. The country's main manufactured exports include machinery and transport equipment, foodstuffs and chemicals.

Temperatures in Hungary vary from (-28°C) to 22°C. Average yearly rainfall is about 64 centimeters. Distribution and frequency of rainfall are unpredictable. The western part of the country usually receives more rain than the eastern part, where severe droughts may occur in summertime. Weather conditions in the Great Plain can be especially harsh, with hot summers, cold winters, and scant rainfall.

Your Notes and Comments: