



OSAC Country Security Report Hungary

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This report is intended to supplement the U.S. Department of State Hungary Travel Advisory and [Hungary International Travel Information Page](#).

Embassy & Consulate Contact Information

U.S. Embassy Budapest

Szabadság tér 12, H-1054 Budapest

Phone: + (36-1) 475-4400 Emergencies: + 36-30-941-4295 or +36-1-475-4444.

Hours: 0800 – 1700, Monday – Friday.

OSAC Country Chapter(s)

The Budapest Country Chapter meets four times a year and has approximately 30 members.

Contact [OSAC's Europe team](#) with any questions.

Hungary Travel Advisory

The current U.S. Department of State [Travel Advisory](#) at the date of this report's publication assesses that travelers should exercise normal precautions in Hungary.

Review OSAC's report, [Understanding the Consular Travel Advisory System](#).

Crime

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Budapest as being a **LOW**-threat location for crime directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Crime "C" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary.

The crime emergency line in Hungary is **112**. Review the U.S. Department of State's Crime Victims Assistance [brochure](#).

Crime: General Threat

Although Hungary is generally a safe place to visit, you should use caution and stay alert. Be especially careful in crowded tourist areas, train stations, buses, trams, and metros.

Hungary's overall crime rate experienced a 31% increase nationwide in 2024 compared to 2023, marking the highest crime rates since 2018, according to the [Central Statistical Office \(KSH\)](#). However, the crime rate still represents a 50% fall from 2010. A rise in attempted homicide, domestic violence, and sexual exploitation reported to the police led to the increase in the overall number of criminal cases. Battery, sexual assault, and actual homicide rates fell. A large percentage of homicides are the result of domestic violence. Consequently, the successful investigation rate is high, since police often have prior knowledge of the suspects.

According to the Budapest Times, overall crime increased in Budapest by 28%. However, homicide and domestic burglary rates fell. Street crime (e.g., pickpocketing, petty theft, theft from unattended vehicles, vandalism) is the most frequently reported type of crime. Budapest's major train stations, public transportation systems, and most tourist-frequented areas are popular locations of such thefts.

Per Hungarian law, non-violent property crime with damages less than HUF 50,000 (approximately U.S. \$186) does not appear in the crime statistics, as law enforcement considers those minor offenses. Crimes committed against U.S. nationals are generally crimes of opportunity, not crimes specifically targeting U.S. nationals. Passports, cash, and credit cards are favorite targets of thieves.

Reports of overcharging at some restaurants, clubs, and nightspots, especially in those areas of the city tourists frequent, remains a concern. The consumption (or honeypot) scam is one in which criminals grossly overcharge victims (typically men) for drinks. Historically, police have shut down clubs for this activity. Victims of crime should call police immediately. Before entering clubs, always ask about prices.

Passports, cash, and credit cards are favorite targets of thieves. The Embassy regularly receives reports of pickpocketing on the trains between Budapest and Vienna, so please be especially mindful of your belongings when traveling this route.

There have been incidents, although rare, where U.S. citizens were unknowingly drugged. Do not accept food or drink from anyone but a server. Additionally, the Embassy has received reports of racially motivated assaults. Please report all crimes to the local police.

Be aware of your surroundings and do not walk alone at night. Stay alert in crowded locations frequented by tourists. Keep your belongings secure and be vigilant when visiting banks or ATMs.

Crime: Areas of Concern

Currently there are no areas in Hungary that are designated as high crime areas or that are off limits to U.S. Embassy personnel.

Review OSAC's reports, [All That You Should Leave Behind](#), [Hotels: The Inns and Outs](#), [Considerations for Hotel Security](#), [Taking Credit](#), and [Our Two Cents: Petty Crime Basics and How to Minimize the Risk](#).

Kidnapping Threat

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Kidnapping "K" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary.

Review OSAC's reports, [Kidnapping: The Basics](#) and [Active Shooter and Kidnapping Response Tips](#).

Terrorism

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Budapest as being a **LOW**-threat location for terrorism directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Terrorism "T" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary. Terrorist groups and those inspired by such organizations are intent on attacking U.S. citizens abroad, including in Europe. Hungary has not been a target country for terrorism. Hungarian authorities continue to exercise countermeasures, led by the Counter-Terrorism Center, to prevent attacks from occurring in the country. However, all European countries remain potentially vulnerable to attacks from transnational terrorist organizations.

Political Violence and Civil Unrest

The U.S. Department of State has assessed Budapest as being a **LOW**-threat location for political violence directed at or affecting official U.S. government interests.

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Civil Unrest "U" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary. Civil unrest can develop quickly without prior notice, often interrupting logistics and services. Avoid demonstration activity, as even those planned to remain peaceful have the potential to turn violent.

Elections/Political Stability

The constitution and law provide citizens with the ability to choose their government in periodic elections held by secret ballot and based on universal suffrage.

Hungary is a multiparty parliamentary democracy. The president appoints a prime minister from the majority party or coalition in parliament following national elections every four years. In parliamentary elections in 2022, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe election observation mission found that the elections "were well administered...but marred by the absence of a level playing field." Specifically, it highlighted an electoral cycle characterized by "a lack of transparency and insufficient oversight of campaign finances" that "benefited the

governing coalition,” and noted, “the bias and lack of balance in monitored news coverage...limited the voters’ opportunity to make an informed choice.”

The next national elections are scheduled for April 2026.

Protests & Demonstrations

Political gatherings and protests occur frequently in Hungary, mostly in Budapest. They may take place in response to political or economic issues, on politically significant holidays, and during international events. On multiple occasions in 2023, police fired tear gas to disperse crowds in front of the prime minister’s office, which the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union argued was unjustified, claiming video recordings showed police used tear gas on peaceful protesters without warning and did so disproportionately. Authorities denied the allegations, and government officials commended the police response to the demonstrators.

Several protests for and against the current government took place in 2025. In June, 15,000 people gathered in Budapest to protest the current government. On a national holiday on October 23, separate rallies were held by pro- and anti-government groups at two different locations in Budapest. Demonstrations have largely been peaceful but are expected to increase in frequency as the next national election draws closer. Enroll in the US Department of State’s [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\) notifications](#) to receive real time information on protest activity.

Review OSAC’s report, [Surviving a Protest](#).

Anti-U.S./Anti-Western Sentiment

There is no inherent anti-U.S. sentiment among the Hungarian population. However, anti-U.S. and anti-Western sentiment can present itself in all environments. Stay aware of your surroundings and use increased caution when sharing your nationality abroad.

Law Enforcement

The emergency line in Hungary is **112**. This number reaches police and emergency medical services. The Hungarian police also operate a number specifically for foreign tourists, commonly referred to as the “Tourist Police,” to help English speakers report crime. The office at Vigado utca 4 is available at +36-1-438-8080.

The National Police, under the direction of the interior minister, is responsible for maintaining order nationwide. The Counterterrorism Center (TEK) is responsible for protecting the president and the prime minister and for preventing, uncovering, and detecting terrorist acts; it is directly subordinate to the interior minister. TEK, founded in 2010, remains independent from the National Police, and has primary jurisdiction for nationwide SWAT operations. The Hungarian Defense Forces are subordinate to the Defense Ministry and are responsible for external security as well as aspects of domestic security and disaster response. The National Bureau of

Investigation investigates major criminal cases as part of the Interior Ministry's Riot Police (*Készenléti Rendőrség*).

Since 2015, under a declared state of emergency prompted by mass migration, defense forces may assist law enforcement forces in border protection and handling mass migration situations. It authorizes police to automatically remove third-country nationals for unlawfully entering or staying in Hungary. The state of emergency has been renewed every six months since its enactment and is still in effect at the time of this publication. Civilian authorities maintain effective control over the security forces. There have been no reports that members of the security forces committed abuses.

Police Response

Hungarian police response is adequate. According to most recent available reporting, police responded to 112 calls in an average of 12 minutes. Rural areas may be further away from established police presence and therefore experience longer wait times.

Transportation Security

Road Safety

Highways and urban roads are generally in good condition. Areas under construction do not always have adequate markings or blockades, and train crossings are not always well-marked. Rural roads are often narrow and poorly lit. Pedestrians, tractors, and farm animals often share the use of rural roads.

Hungary has zero tolerance for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Prison sentences for DUI violations or accidents caused by impaired drivers are severe. Police often conduct routine roadside checks to administer breath-analysis tests and check documents. Use of hand-held cell phones while driving is illegal. Car seats are mandatory for infants, and children under 12 may not sit in the front seat. Seat belt use is mandatory.

You can drive in Hungary with a valid U.S. driver's license for one year if you have a certified Hungarian translation of the license. After one year of residence, you must obtain a Hungarian driver's license. International driver's permits (IDP) issued by the American Automobile Association (AAA) are acceptable when used with a valid state driver's license. You must pay a toll to use Hungary's highways. Payments must be made either at a gas station or [online](#).

Hungarian police issue traffic violations in the form of a postal check that reflects the amount of the fine. You may pay the fines at any Hungarian post office. Police will confiscate the passport of a person who chooses to contest the fine and issue the person an "invitation letter" to appear at the police station to resolve the dispute. Police will return the passport after resolution and/or payment of the fine.

Review OSAC's reports, [Road Safety Abroad](#), [Driving Overseas: Best Practices](#), and [Evasive Driving Techniques](#); and read the U.S. Department of State's [webpage on driving and road safety abroad](#).

Public Transportation Safety

Budapest has a robust, reliable, and safe public transportation system including buses, trams, streetcars, subways, and intercity trains. Public transportation outside of Budapest is not as dependable. There are regular reports of non-confrontational theft and pickpocketing on public transport, particularly when crowded. Although Hungary is generally a safe place to visit, be especially careful in train stations and crowded tourist areas, and on crowded buses, trams, and metros. To avoid being subject to on-the-spot fines in public transportation, you must follow rules for purchasing and properly validating your ticket.

Hungary's train service is generally reliable. The Embassy regularly receives reports of pocket picking on the trains between Budapest and Vienna. Taxis in Budapest are plentiful and generally inexpensive. All taxis are yellow, marked accordingly, and should have meters. Insist on using a meter and avoid entering into agreements with taxi drivers to an unmetered fare. Ride share services such as Uber and Bolt (also a taxi service) are available and safe to use.

Aviation Concerns

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has assessed the Government of Hungary's Civil Aviation Authority as compliant with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) aviation safety standards for oversight of Hungary's air carrier operations.

Review OSAC's Report, [Security in Transit: Airplanes, Public Transport, and Overnights](#)

Maritime Security

Hungary is a landlocked country. The Danube River and Lake Balaton are popular with pleasure craft and transport vessels. Flooding season brings greater chances for maritime insecurity, as rivers rise quickly and bridges are generally not built high above the regular water levels.

Travelers with Special Considerations

For [specific traveler concerns](#) in Hungary, review the local laws and circumstances on the Department of State's Country Information Page.

- [Women Travelers](#)
- [Gay and Lesbian Travelers](#)
- [Accessibility Needs](#)
- [Studying Abroad](#)
- [Faith-Based Travel](#)

Rule of Law, Arbitrary Detention, Official Harassment, Corruption, & Transparency

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Risk of Wrongful Detention “D” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary.

The constitution prohibits arbitrary arrest and detention and provides for the right of any person to challenge the lawfulness of their arrest or detention in court. The government generally observes these requirements.

The European Commission and NGOs contend officials and those with close government connections often engaged in corrupt practices with impunity and the government does not implement or apply these laws effectively.

Health Concerns

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Health “H” Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary. Review the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) country-specific [Travel Health Notices](#) for current health issues that impact traveler health, like disease outbreaks, special events or gatherings, and natural disasters.

Emergency health services are available by calling **112**. Ambulance services and health facilities are widely available, but training and availability of emergency responders and state-of-the-art medical equipment may be below U.S. standards.

Doctors and hospitals may require payment in cash at the time of service and usually cannot bill your insurer directly, even if you have coverage overseas. Some private clinics and hospitals may require advance payment or proof of adequate insurance before admitting a patient. Be prepared to pay bills first and claim reimbursement from your insurer later. Travelers should make efforts to obtain complete information on billing, pricing, and proposed medical procedures before agreeing to any medical care. Patients bear all costs for transferring to or between hospitals.

Adequate health facilities are available in the capital and other major cities, but health care in rural areas may be below U.S. standards. Medical staff may speak little or no English. Generally, in public hospitals only minimal staff is available overnight in non-emergency wards. Psychological and psychiatric services are limited, even in the larger cities, with hospital-based care only available through government institutions.

Find contact information for available medical services and available air ambulance services on the U.S. Embassy website. The U.S. Department of State strongly recommends purchasing international health insurance before traveling internationally. Review the U.S. Department of State’s [webpage](#) on health insurance overseas.

See OSAC's [Guide to U.S. Government-Assisted Evacuations](#); review OSAC's reports, [The Healthy Way](#), [Shaken: The Don'ts of Alcohol Abroad](#), [Health 101: How to Prepare for Travel](#), and [Fire Safety Abroad](#); and visit the U.S. Department of State's webpage on [Your Health Abroad](#) for more information.

Vaccinations

The CDC recommends travelers to Hungary are up to date on routine vaccinations and consider vaccination for hepatitis A and B as well as measles.

Review the CDC [Travelers' Health](#) site for country-specific vaccine recommendations.

Issues Traveling with Medications

Always carry your prescription medication in original packaging, along with your doctor's prescription. Check with the [government of Hungary](#) to ensure the medication is legal in Hungary.

Prescription and over-the-counter medicines are widely available at pharmacies. The U.S. Department of State strongly recommends purchasing international health insurance before traveling internationally. Review the State Departments [webpage](#) on insurance overseas.

Review OSAC's report, [Traveling with Medication](#).

Water Quality

Tap water is drinkable. Bottled water and beverages are generally safe, although you should be aware that many restaurants and hotels serve tap water unless bottled water is specifically requested. Be aware that ice for drinks may be made using tap water.

Air and water pollution are some of Hungary's most serious environmental problems. Water quality in the Hungarian part of the Danube has improved but is still plagued by pollutants from industry and large-scale agriculture.

Review OSAC's report, [I'm Drinking What in My Water?](#)

Natural Disasters

The U.S. Department of State has not included a Natural Disaster "N" Indicator on the Travel Advisory for Hungary.

Review OSAC's report, [Earthquake Preparedness Toolkit](#) and [Landslides: What Are They and How to Prepare](#)

Cybersecurity

According to the Global Organized Crime Index, cybercrime is a growing criminal market in Hungary, though there is no indication that major criminal groups are involved. Malicious software infection and ransomware attacks being the most common forms of cybercrime.

Review OSAC's reports, [Cybersecurity Basics](#), [Best Practices for Maximizing Security on Public Wi-Fi](#), [Traveling Abroad with Mobile Devices](#), and [Guide for Overseas Satellite Phone Usage](#).

Counterintelligence

There are no counterintelligence concerns unique to private-sector operations in Hungary.

Import/Export Restrictions

There are no restrictions on imported or exported personal-use items, including satellite phones, in Hungary.

A country-specific listing of items/goods prohibited from being exported to the country or that are otherwise restricted is available from the U.S. International Trade Agency [website](#).

Additional resources and reports can be found in the [OSAC Traveler Toolkit](#).