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Chapter 1 | Geography



The landscape near Lake Balaton.
Wikimedia / Almog

Introduction

Hungary is a landlocked country in Central Europe about the size of Indiana. It shares a border with seven countries: Slovakia to the north, Ukraine to the northeast, Romania to the east, Austria to the west, Slovenia to the southwest, and Serbia and Croatia to the south.¹ Hungary lies in the drainage basin of the Danube River, which enters Hungary in the north and flows southward, dividing the country into nearly two equal parts and bisecting the capital, Budapest. Most of the country consists of plains and mountains of medium height. The highest point is located in the Matra Mountains, northeast of Budapest. The majority of the country's 9.6 million people live in Budapest and its surrounding suburbs and towns.^{2, 3, 4}

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
- 2 Worldometer, "Hungary: Live," 5 February 2020, <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/hungary-population/>
- 3 George Barany et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary#ref34826>
- 4 Stephen R. Burant, ed., *Hungary: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989), <http://countrystudies.us/hungary/42.htm>

Geographic Divisions and Topographic Features

Hungary's three major geographic regions are the Hungarian Plains, the North Hungarian Mountains, and Transdanubia.⁵

The Hungarian Plains

Most of Hungary is made up of large lowland expanses, with nearly 85% of the country lying below 200 m (656 ft). The Little Hungarian Plain (Little Alföld) in the northwest is bounded by the easternmost extension of the sub-Alps along the border with Austria and the Danube in the north. A low mountain system that extends across the country from southwest to northeast separates the Little Hungarian Plain from the Great Hungarian Plain (Great Alföld). The Great Plain, known for paprika production, stretches east of the Danube and covers a little over 50% of the country's land area.^{6,7}

North Hungarian Mountains

Along the Slovakian border in the north, the land rises into hills and low mountains. Hungary's highest peak, located in the Matra Range of Haves County, is Mount Kékes, which rises to 1,014 m (3,327 ft). In the same range lies Hidas-berc, the second-highest peak, a volcanic mountain reaching an elevation of 970 m (3,185 ft). The range also contains Galya-tető, the third-highest peak, reaching 964 m (3,163 ft) above sea level.⁸

Transdanubia

Transdanubia (Dunántúl) lies west of the Danube River and consists of hills and highlands. Large parts of Transdanubia are forested, but there are also fertile agricultural lands and a few mining operations in this part of the country. Transdanubia is divided into three regions: central, western, and southern.⁹

Central Transdanubia lies west of the Danube, between the border with Slovakia in the north and Lake Balaton in the south. With a population of over 1 million people, this region is known for its historic towns, medieval castles, and vineyards.^{10, 11, 12} West Transdanubia, with its capital at Győr, is a developed, industrialized area bordering Slovakia, Austria, Slovenia, and Croatia. The main manufacturing industries here are machinery and equipment, automobiles, and electronics.¹³ Southern Transdanubia lies between the Danube in the west, Lake Balaton in the north, and the border with Croatia in the south. This region, with its center in Pécs, is underdeveloped and its population is declining and aging.¹⁴

5 Benjamin Elisha Sawe, "Highest Mountains in Hungary," World Atlas, 25 April 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/highest-mountains-in-hungary.html>

6 World Atlas, "Hungary Geography," n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/geography/hungarygeography.htm>

7 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>

8 Benjamin Elisha Sawe, "Highest Mountains in Hungary," World Atlas, 25 April 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/highest-mountains-in-hungary.html>

9 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Transdanubia," 24 August 2014, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Transdanubia>

10 Interreg Europe, "Introducing Central Transdanubia (Hungary)," 21 April 2017, <https://www.interregeurope.eu/ruralsmes/news/news-article/937/introducing-central-transdanubia-hungary/>

11 European Commission, "Central Transdanubia," 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/base-profile/central-transdanubia>

12 Enterprise Europe Network, "Central Transdanubia Region," Chamber of Commerce and Industries Fejér County, n.d., <https://fmkik.hu/en/central-transdanubian-region>

13 European Commission, "West Transdanubia," 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/base-profile/west-transdanubia>

14 European Commission, "South Transdanubia," 2019, <https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/regional-innovation-monitor/base-profile/south-transdanubia-0>

Climate

Hungary has a moderately dry climate with a strong continental influence. The mean annual temperature is about 10°C (50°F). The central and eastern areas of the Great Alfold are the driest parts of the country, and the southwestern uplands are the wettest.¹⁵

The winter months can be very cold, with temperatures below zero and strong, cold northeastern winds called *bora* in the mountainous regions. From December to February, the skies are commonly gray and the air is misty and foggy. January is the coldest month, with temperatures ranging from -4 to 0°C (24 to 32°F). Snowfall and snowstorms are frequent. The lowland regions average 40 days of snow and the mountainous regions average up to 120 days of snow.¹⁶ The lowest recorded temperature in winter is -34 °C (-29 °F).^{17, 18}

In July and August temperatures average 28–30°C (82–86°F), but sometimes they can be even higher. Heavy thunderstorms may occur at the end of the day. Warm air from southern Europe can raise the temperature to 35°C (95°F) for a few days, usually in July and August, but these heatwaves may occur as early as June and as late as September. The highest recorded temperature in the summer is 43°C (109°F). Annual precipitation averages 500–600 mm (20–24 in), with ranges of 300–1,200 mm (12–47 in).^{19, 20, 21}

Bodies of Water

Ten major rivers enter Hungary from the north, east, and west and drain southward. With 1,600 km (995 mi) of navigable waterways, the Danube and Tisza are used as international waterways while the Drava is used for domestic transport. Since more than half of Hungary lies below river flood levels, flooding is a serious concern. Fast-rising, ice-jammed floods are especially dangerous.^{22, 23}

Danube

The Danube (Duna) is Hungary's longest river.²⁴ It traverses 417 km (260 mi) of the country's plains, forming the border with Slovakia in the northwest and then flowing southward before it enters Serbia and Croatia. The Danube—and its two tributaries the Raba and Drava—rises in the Alps and becomes a lowland river in Hungary.²⁵ ²⁶ About one-third of the total length of the Danube lies in Hungary. As one of the 11 Danube riparian states, Hungary became a signatory to the Danube River Protection Convention in 1994.²⁷

15 George Barany et al., "Hungary: Climate," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/Drainage-and-soils#ref34829>

16 Weather Online, "Hungary," n.d., <https://www.weatheronline.co.uk/reports/climate/Hungary.htm>

17 George Barany et al., "Hungary: Climate," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/Drainage-and-soils#ref34829>

18 Climate to Travel, "Hungary," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/hungary>

19 George Barany et al., "Hungary: Climate," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/Drainage-and-soils#ref34829>

20 Climate to Travel, "Hungary," n.d., <https://www.climatestotravel.com/climate/hungary>

21 International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, "Drava Basin," n.d., <https://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/drava-basin>

22 International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, "Hungary," n.d., <https://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/hungary>

23 World Atlas, "Major Rivers of Hungary," n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/major-rivers-of-hungary.html>

24 Budapest River Cruise, "Fun Facts about the River Danube," n.d., <https://budapestrivercruise.com/fun-facts-about-the-river-danube>

25 George Barany et al., "Hungary: Drainage and Soils," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/Drainage-and-soils>

26 Cruising the Danube, "Duna River, Hungary," n.d., <http://www.cruising-the-danube.com/River/dunahung.html>

27 International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, "Danube River Protection Convention," n.d., <https://www.icpdr.org/main/icpdr/danube-river-protection-convention>

Tisza

The Tisza (Tisa) is one of Central Europe's most important rivers and the longest tributary of the Danube.²⁸ The river rises in the Carpathian Mountains on the Ukrainian-Romanian border and enters Hungary from the northeast. Where the Slovak, Ukrainian, and Hungarian frontiers converge, the river cuts southward and flows across the Great Alföld until it reaches Serbia and converges with the Danube. The Tisza experiences three annual floods. One of these floods destroyed the Hungarian city of Szeged in the spring of 1879. Eventually, dikes and flood-control levees were built to protect settlements along the river. The Tisza is navigable for riverboats for about 320 km (200 mi) all the way to Szolnok, at the heart of the Great Alföld.^{29, 30}

The Tisza River entered the global spotlight in 2000, when two dams broke and released wastewater containing up to 120 tons of cyanide and heavy metals into the Lăpuș River in Romania, then traveled downstream into the Somes and Tisza rivers in Hungary before entering the Danube.^{31, 32} Then, in 2004, a pipeline at a gold mine broke and polluted sludge streamed toward the Tisza.³³ The Tiszalok Dam on the river's upper course forms the largest reservoir in Hungary and provides hydroelectric power and irrigation to the Hajduság and Hortobágy plains.³⁴

Drava

The Drava is the fourth-largest tributary of the Danube. The Drava forms the border between Croatia and Hungary before heading back into Croatia to meet the Danube. Like most lowland rivers in Europe, the lower Drava has been considerably regulated with embankments and channels to direct its flow. The natural habitats along the middle and lower parts of the river host unique varieties of flora and fauna, such as rare black storks, and white-tailed eagles. Efforts have been made to establish an International Biosphere Reserve along the Drava involving the four countries that share the river basin: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary.³⁵

In 2011, Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia, and Slovenia signed a declaration establishing a trans-boundary UNESCO Biosphere Reserve to protect their shared nature and wildlife along the Danube, Drava and Mura rivers. The Mura is the chief tributary of the Drava.³⁶

Lake Balaton

Lake Balaton is the largest lake in Central Europe. Also known as “the Hungarian Sea,” it is located in western Hungary in the middle of Transdanubia, about 80 km (50 mi) southwest of Budapest. It is shared by three counties. The lake covers an area of 598 sq km (231 sq mi) and extends for nearly 80 km (50 mi) along the southern foothills of the Bakony Mountains.³⁷

28 International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, “Tisza Basin,” n.d., <https://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/tisza-basin>

29 World Atlas, “Major Rivers of Hungary,” n.d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/major-rivers-of-hungary.html>

30 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Tisza River,” 12 May 2014, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tisza-River>

31 International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, “Tisza Basin,” n.d., <https://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/tisza-basin>

32 Carl Kovac, “Cyanide Spill Threatens Health in Hungary,” National Center for Biotechnology Information, 26 February 2000, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1117597/>

33 NATO, “Making the Tisza River Basin a Safer Place,” 6 August 2014, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/news_111856.htm

34 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Tisza River,” 12 May 2014, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Tisza-River>

35 International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River, “Drava Basin,” n.d., <https://www.icpdr.org/main/danube-basin/drava-basin>

36 Danube Explore and Share, “The Drava River,” n.d., <http://danube.panda.org/wwf/web/search/details.jsp?pid=125>

37 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Lake Balaton,” 23 January 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Balaton>

The entire contents of the shallow lake—12 m in depth—are replenished about every two years. The Zala River provides the largest inflow of water into the lake. The climate around the lake is warm and sunny from May to October. In winter the lake is covered with a thick sheet of ice.³⁸ The lake is a popular vacation destination; the north shore is home to several resorts and adventure parks. It is surrounded by ancient fortresses and volcanic hills and features many springs, underwater caves, vineyards, and medieval towns, and monasteries.^{39, 40, 41}

Lake Velence

Lake Velence is the second-largest natural lake located entirely in Hungary, covering 27 sq km (10 sq mi). The lake is located at the foot of the Velence Mountains near Budapest and is known as a natural reserve for bird species. The lake's sunny climate and shallow waters, which reach the depth of 1.6 m (5.2 ft) make it one of Europe's warmest lakes. The lake's average high temperature of 28°C (82°F) and high mineral content make it a popular tourist destination.⁴²

Lake Tisza

Lake Tisza is a reservoir on the Tisza River that covers 127 sq km (50 sq mi). The lake was formed by the Tisza dam, which was built in 1973. The lake's maximum depth is 17 m (55 ft). It is a popular tourist destination.⁴³

Lake Feher

Lake Feher, which means “white” in Hungarian, is located north of Szeged and covers an area of 14 sq km (5.4 sq mi). The lake is a part of the Kiskunsag National Park and is located entirely inside Hungary.⁴⁴

Lake Fertő

Lake Fertő is the largest saltwater lake in Europe and is shared by Hungary and Austria. Only a quarter of the lake is located inside Hungary. The shallow lake, 1.8 m (6 ft) in depth, serves as an important resting place for migratory birds.⁴⁵

38 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Lake Balaton,” 23 January 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Lake-Balaton>

39 Culture Trip, “Top 10 Things to See and Do on Lake Balaton, Hungary,” n.d., <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/the-top-10-things-to-do-and-see-on-lake-balaton/>

40 Paul Bray, “A Guide to Exploring Lake Balaton and the Hungarian Lake District,” *Telegraph*, 22 November 2018, <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/discover-hungary/lake-balaton-guide/>

41 Lonely Planet, “Lake Balaton & Southern Transdanubia,” n.d., <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/hungary/lake-balaton-southern-transdanubia>

42 Daily News, “Five of the Most Important Lakes in Hungary,” 20 November 2016, <https://dailynewshungary.com/five-important-lakes-hungary/>

43 Daily News, “Five of the Most Important Lakes in Hungary,” 20 November 2016, <https://dailynewshungary.com/five-important-lakes-hungary/>

44 Daily News, “Five of the Most Important Lakes in Hungary,” 20 November 2016, <https://dailynewshungary.com/five-important-lakes-hungary/>

45 Daily News, “Five of the Most Important Lakes in Hungary,” 20 November 2016, <https://dailynewshungary.com/five-important-lakes-hungary/>

Major Cities⁴⁶

City	Population
Budapest	1,741,041
Debrecen	204,124
Miskolc	172,637
Szeged	164,883
Pécs	156,649

Budapest

Budapest is the capital of Hungary and home to about 20% of the country's population. The city lies at the center of the Carpathian Basin, along the Danube River, where the hills of western Hungary meet the Great Hungarian Plains. Budapest consists of two parts: Buda covers the hills of the western side of the Danube and the larger Pest spreads along the flat eastern side of the river. The two parts of the city are connected by eight bridges, the oldest and best-known of which is the Széchenyi Chain Bridge built in 1849.^{47, 48}

Budapest is the political, administrative, industrial, and commercial center of Hungary. While the city's roots date back to the Roman Empire, the area has been continuously settled since the Stone Age. Modern Budapest emerged from the 19th-century Austro-Hungarian Empire. "Buda-Pest" was created in 1872 when Pest, Buda, and Óbuda were united into a single municipality. During the 1990s Budapest underwent a dramatic change as it transitioned from an Eastern Bloc capital to an open, vibrant city. The breathtaking architecture, cultural landmarks and museums, thermal spas, and restaurants make it a popular tourist destination today.^{49, 50, 51} Budapest and the banks of the Danube were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.⁵²

Budapest is home to Hungary's largest commercial airport. The Budapest Ferenc Liszt International Airport is located 16 km (10 mi) from the city center. Csepel Free Port, downstream from the city center, handles international freight cargo on the Danube and can handle container traffic.^{53, 54}

Debrecen

Debrecen is Hungary's second-largest city and the regional capital of the Northern Great Plain. The city is situated near Romania and Ukraine in the Nyírség region. The city has a history as a religious, political, and cultural center and was known as one of the richest and most important Hungarian cities in the Middle Ages. In the 16th century, Debrecen became a major spiritual center of the Protestant Reformation that swept through Central Europe. After the new faith was established in the city, it became a center of Calvinist scholarship and was called Calvinist

46 World Population Review, "Population of Cities in Hungary," December 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/hungary-population/cities/>

47 László Péter, "Budapest," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Budapest>

48 Europe Tours, "Budapest: A Quick History," 19 February 2016, <https://free-budapest-tours.com/budapest-a-quick-history/>

49 László Péter, "Budapest," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Budapest>

50 Tas Tobias, "18 Compelling Reasons to Visit Budapest," Off Beat Budapest, 17 November 2019, <https://www.offbeatbudapest.com/budapest-city-guide/budapest-attractions-highlights/>

51 Europe Tours, "Budapest: A Quick History," 19 February 2016, <https://free-budapest-tours.com/budapest-a-quick-history/>

52 UNESCO, "Budapest, Including the Banks of the Danube, the Buda Castle Quarter and Andrassy Avenue," n.d., <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/400/>

53 László Péter, "Budapest," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 18 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Budapest>

54 Visit Budapest, "Budapest Airport," n.d., <http://visitbudapest.travel/budapest-info/budapest-airport/>

Rome. In the 18th century, Debrecen was the largest city in Hungary. It served as the capital of Hungary between 1848 and 1849, and again at the end of World War II, from 1944 to 1945.^{55, 56, 57, 58}

Debrecen is one of the most developed cities in the country and an agricultural center. The city's modern transport network system, which includes an airport, railway stations, and a road network, supports trade and industrial development in pharmaceuticals and furniture. Local craftsmanship includes pottery, footwear, and handmade coats. The city is home to Debrecen University, several museums, an art center, and a theater.^{59, 60, 61}

Miskolc

Miskolc is the third-most populous city in Hungary and the economic, educational, and scientific center of northern Hungary. The city functions as the seat of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county.⁶² The economy of Miskolc has undergone major changes since the end of the communist era. It has shifted from focusing on steelmaking and chemical manufacturing to electronics, engineering, automobiles, and food processing. The University of Miskolc was established in 1735 as the world's first higher education institution that taught mining and metallurgy. Miskolc's rails and roads connect the city with Budapest, Slovakia, Romania, and Ukraine.^{63, 64} Miskolc is home to the largest mineralogical collection in the country. The 16 m (52 ft) high iconostasis of the Greek Orthodox Church is the largest in Central Europe.⁶⁵

Szeged

Szeged, located near the southern border and the center of the Southern Great Plains, is the fourth-largest city in Hungary.⁶⁶ Szeged is also the largest town in southeastern Hungary and is situated at the confluence of the Tisza and Maros rivers, a few miles from the intersection of Hungary, Romania, and Serbia.^{67, 68}

The earliest signs of human activity in the region date back around 24,000 years. The first time that the name of the town appeared in a written source was in 1183 when King Bela III granted passage to three ships carrying salt to the church at Nyitra. Between the 10th and 15th centuries, Szeged was a military stronghold and trade center. In 1879, the city was destroyed by flooding. The city was rebuilt and the main boulevard features the names of Rome, Brussels, Berlin, Paris, London, Moscow, and Vienna, recalling the donations made by the peoples of those cities.⁶⁹

Szeged is now a college town, home to the University of Szeged, which dates back to 1581 and is considered one of the most prestigious universities in the country. The city is a top producer of smoked paprika and

55 World Atlas, "Biggest Cities in Hungary," n. d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-cities-in-hungary.html>

56 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Debrecen," 28 May 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Debrecen>

57 Lonely Planet, "Debrecen Is the Doorstep of the Great Plain," n.d., <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/hungary/northeastern-hungary/debrecen>

58 In Your Pocket, "The Calvinist Rome: The Protestant Reformation in Debrecen," 2 April 2019, https://www.inyourpocket.com/Debrecen/the-calvinist-rome-the-protestant-reformation-in_75609f

59 World Atlas, "Biggest Cities in Hungary," n. d., <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/biggest-cities-in-hungary.html>

60 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Debrecen," 28 May 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Debrecen>

61 Budapest.com, "Debrecen," n.d., <https://www.budapest.com/hungary/cities/debrecen/history.en.html>

62 Budapest.com, "Miskolc," n.d., <https://www.budapest.com/hungary/cities/miskolc.en.html>

63 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Miskolc," 10 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Miskolc>

64 University of Miskolc, "History of the University," n.d., <http://www.uni-miskolc.hu/en>

65 European Best Destinations, "Tourism in Miskolc," n.d., <https://www.europeanbestdestinations.com/destinations/miskolc/>

66 World Population Review, "Population of Cities in Hungary (2019)," 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/hungary-population/cities/>

67 Budapest.com, "Szeged," n.d., <https://www.budapest.com/hungary/cities/szeged.en.html>

68 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Szeged," 24 May 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Szeged>

69 Budapest.com, "Szeged: History," n.d., <https://www.budapest.com/hungary/cities/szeged/history.en.html>

has a rich culinary culture.^{70, 71} Szeged Airport is a small domestic airport that offers charter flight services to the region.⁷²

Pécs

Pécs is Hungary's fifth-largest city and has two millennia of history. It lies 220 km (135 miles) south-southwest of Budapest. The name Pécs first appeared in the late 11th century. The city's cathedral—a symbol of Hungarian history—was founded in 1009 on the site of an old Roman church. Pécs is an old trade and handicraft city, famous for its Zsolnay ceramic ware (*majolica*). The intricate Zsolnay Fountain, a tribute to ceramics designer Vilmos Zsolnay, was built in 1930.^{73, 74}

The earliest university in Hungary, the University of Pécs, was founded in 1367, abolished by the Turks, and reopened in 1922. In the 18th century, migrant German miners came to work the Pécs-Komló coalfield and remained as a German minority in Pécs. The mines were closed at the turn of the 21st century.⁷⁵

Pécs is rich in Turkish architecture. The most iconic building in the city center is the Gazi Qasim Pasha Mosque, which has been used for Christian worship since 1868.^{76, 77}

The Sopianae Early Christian Mausoleum, dating back to the fourth century, was designated a World Heritage Site in 2000.⁷⁸ In 2010 Pécs was chosen along with Istanbul and Essen in Germany to be European Capitals of Culture.⁷⁹

Environmental Concerns

Hungary's main environmental threats include air, water, and soil pollution. Acid rain, contaminated run-off, soil erosion, and desertification are some of the consequences of the country's industrial and agricultural practices, and lack of an effective waste management system.^{80, 81}

The main contributors to Hungary's air pollution are car emissions and electric power plants, which emit sulfur dioxide into the air by burning high-sulfur coals, diesel, and other sulfur-containing fuels. These types of emissions rise into the atmosphere and form acid rain. Pesticides used in agriculture contribute to run-off and soil pollution. The combination of air and soil pollution then contributes to the high levels of water pollution. Lake Balaton, which is indirectly drained by the Danube River, is highly polluted with contaminated soil runoff and polluted water that

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- 70 World Population Review, "Population of Cities in Hungary (2019)," 2019, <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/hungary-population/cities/>
- 71 University of Szeged, "Awards, Ranking," 2019, <https://u-szeged.hu/about-us/facts-and-figures2/awards-rankings/awards-rankings>
- 72 Skyscanner, "Szeged Airport: Cheap Flights, Tickets and Travel Deals," 2019, <https://www.skyscanner.com/airports/qzd/szeged-airport.html>
- 73 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Pécs," 20 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pecs>
- 74 Orfhlaith Kearney, "Top 10 Things to See and Do in Pecs, Hungary," Culture Trip, 17 February 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/top-10-things-to-see-and-do-in-pecs-hungary/>
- 75 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Pécs," 20 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pecs>
- 76 Visit Budapest, "Pécs & Villány," 2019, <http://visitbudapest.travel/activities/hungary-countryside/pecs-villany/>
- 77 Orfhlaith Kearney, "Top 10 Things to See and Do in Pecs, Hungary," Culture Trip, 17 February 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/top-10-things-to-see-and-do-in-pecs-hungary/>
- 78 UNESCO, "Early Christian Necropolis of Pécs (Sopiana)," 2000, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/853/>
- 79 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Pécs," 20 June 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Pecs>
- 80 UNDP, "Hungary: Lake Balaton Integrated Vulnerability Assessment, Early Warning, and Adaptation Strategies," 2008, <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/hungary>
- 81 Jacqueline Ornelas, "Hungary, the Environment and the Role of ICS," 2014, https://www.ics.uci.edu/~wmt/courses/ICS5_W13/Hungary.html

arrive from surrounding regions. Because Hungary is landlocked, the health of the water supply in lakes and rivers is a serious concern.^{82, 83}

Hungary has made progress in cutting emissions, but it needs to upgrade its efforts to replace fossil fuels with renewable energy sources and improve energy efficiency.⁸⁴ In 2018 Hungary was one of six European countries that received a final warning to improve air quality from the European Commission. The European court of justice can impose multimillion-euro fines if countries do not address the problem promptly.⁸⁵

Natural Hazards

Floods pose great risks to Hungary. About one quarter of the country is exposed to floods. Flood protection has been successful in the past, but the Tisza Basin is showing signs of increased risks. It is highly probable that more and more extreme floods will occur, although the time of occurrence cannot be determined.⁸⁶ In June 2019, thunderstorms and record rainfall caused flash floods in central Hungary.⁸⁷

Drought is another cause for concern, since it is a recurring natural phenomenon in Hungary and other countries in the Carpathian Basin. Severe drought events have been recorded for centuries, especially in the Great Hungarian Plain, and droughts are expected to increase in intensity and frequency. In 2019 meteorologists forecasted a record drought in Hungary that would negatively affect agricultural output.^{88, 89}

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- 82 Jacqueline Ornelas, "Hungary, the Environment and the Role of ICS," 2014, https://www.ics.uci.edu/~wmt/courses/ICS5_W13/Hungary.html
- 83 Stephen McGrath, "Dirty Danube: Looming Pollution Threats to the World's Most International River," *Guardian*, 13 November 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/2016/nov/13/danube-looming-pollution-threats-worlds-most-international-river-microplastics-fertiliser>
- 84 OECD, "Hungary has Made Progress on Greening Its Economy and Now Needs to Raise Its Ambitions," 2018, <http://www.oecd.org/environment/hungary-has-made-progress-on-greening-its-economy-and-now-needs-to-raise-its-ambitions.htm>
- 85 Damian Carrington, "UK Taken to Europe's Highest Court over Air Pollution," *Guardian*, 17 May 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/17/uk-taken-to-europes-highest-court-over-air-pollution>
- 86 Climate Change Post, "Hungary," 2012, <https://www.climatechange.org/hungary/river-floods/>
- 87 Floodlist, "Hungary—Rescues and Evacuations after Record Rain and Flash Floods," 21 June 2019, <http://floodlist.com/europe/hungary-floods-june-2019>
- 88 UNDP, "Hungary: Lake Balaton Integrated Vulnerability Assessment, Early Warning, and Adaptation Strategies," 2008, <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/explore/hungary>
- 89 Budapest Business Journal, "Drought Predicated for This Year," 2 April 2019, https://bbj.hu/energy-environment/drought-predicted-for-this-year_163715

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 1 | Geography, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The Danube flows through Hungary's eastern plains and forms Hungary's border with Romania. True False
2. Budapest, the capital, is composed of two cities, Buda and Pest. True False
3. Most of Hungary's land area is covered by low-lying plains. True False
4. Tisza is Hungary's highest peak, reaching an elevation of 2,750 m (9,022 ft). True False
5. The "Hungarian Sea" is a large saline lake surrounded by salt flats and marches in northern Hungary. True False

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 1 | Geography, Assessment Answers

1. False:
The Danube River divides Hungary into two parts. The river forms the border with Slovakia in the northwest and then flows southward before entering Serbia and Croatia.
2. True:
“Buda-Pest” was created in 1872 when Pest, Buda, and Óbuda were united into a single municipality. Buda covers the hills of the western side of the Danube, while the larger Pest spreads along the flat eastern side of the river.
3. True:
Nearly 85% of Hungary lies below 200 m (656 ft). The Great Hungarian Plain stretches east of the Danube and the Little Hungarian Plain is in the northwest.
4. False:
The Tisza is one of Central Europe’s important rivers. It enters Hungary from the northeast, then flows south into Serbia. The highest peak in Hungary rises to only 1,014 m (3,327 ft).
5. False:
The “Hungarian Sea” is another name for Lake Balaton, which is the largest fresh-water lake in Central Europe. The lake is located in western Hungary and is a popular holiday destination.

Chapter 2 | History



The Buda Castle in Budapest.
Flick / Pedro Szekely

Introduction

First established as a Christian kingdom in the 11th century, Hungary spent centuries combating invading forces seeking to establish their rule and religion within its borders. Eventually, the Ottomans succeeded, causing Hungary to fragment and lose its identity. After nearly 200 years, the Austrian Hapsburgs intervened and expelled the Ottomans. Hungary became part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire until the empire's collapse after World War I. Hungary fell under communist rule after World War II and was a Soviet satellite during the Cold War. Over the next decades, despite Soviet influence, Hungary began slowly liberalizing its economy and opening toward the West. In 1989, the communist regime fell and Hungary's government and society became fully reoriented toward the West. Today, Hungary is moving toward authoritarianism, with its leadership accused of consolidating power, undermining civil society, and fomenting tense relations with the rest of Europe.^{1, 2, 3}

- 1 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
- 2 Derek Mix, "Hungary Overview and Background Information," Congressional Research Service, 15 May 2015, https://lapa.princeton.edu/sites/default/files/CRS_Hungary_051515.pdf#page=2&zoom=160,-140,750
- 3 Michael Getler, "'Goulash Communism' Savored," *Washington Post*, 14 November 1977, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1977/09/14/goulash-communism-savored/1ef90e72-7e76-417b-82a1-884a8a2b18ec/>

Important Elements of History

King Stephen I and the House of Árpád (1000–1526)

The kingdom and nation of Hungary was born in the year 1000 CE on Christmas Day, when Stephen, the great-grandson of the great Magyar chief Árpád, was anointed king of Hungary with a crown sent from Rome by Pope Sylvester II. King Stephen I adopted Catholicism and established the framework for the Hungarian state based on German models. He suppressed several revolts by pagan nobles and abolished pagan customs, but his reign was mostly peaceful. In 1083, he was canonized as Saint Stephen.^{4, 5} During its 300-year reign, the House of Árpád looked westward, toward the Christianized nations of Europe. The Árpád dynasty ended in 1301 with the death of King Andrew III. A few years later, a ruler from the House of Anjou ascended to the throne and his son Louis I the Great expanded the kingdom into Poland, ushering in the first golden age of Hungary.⁶

Ottoman Period (1526–1699)

In 1526, the Ottoman Turks defeated the armies of the Kingdom of Hungary at the Battle of Mohács in today's southern Hungary, bringing on the demise of King Louis II, who drowned after falling into a creek from his horse. A struggle for the Hungarian throne ensued between the ruler of Transylvania and the Austrian Hapsburgs. A war between the two kings ended with the withdrawal of the ruler of Transylvania from Hungary. In 1541, the Ottomans gained control of Buda and incorporated the central part of the Kingdom of Hungary into the Ottoman Empire. Northern and western Hungary remained under the control of the Austrian Hapsburgs, and parts of eastern Hungary and Transylvania became a semi-independent Ottoman vassal state, which later became the Principality of Transylvania in 1570.^{7, 8, 9}

Hapsburg Rule (1701–1848)

The Hapsburgs' authoritarian reign over Hungary provoked a rebellion led by Ferenc Rákóczi II, Prince of Transylvania, in 1703 against Emperor Leopold I. In 1711 the Hapsburgs signed the Treaty of Szatmárwith, which stabilized relations between Hungary and Austria. During the next 130 years, Hungary was ruled by a succession of autocratic Hapsburg emperors.^{10, 11, 12}

The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1848–1918)

As revolutions swept through Europe in 1848, a popular upheaval caused the breakdown of the central authority in Vienna. On 15 March of that same year, young intellectuals in Pest led a bloodless revolution against the Hapsburg monarchy. Tensions between Vienna and Budapest grew steadily and in September of that year the

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- 4 Franciscan Media, "Saint Stephen of Hungary," n.d., <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-stephen-of-hungary/>
- 5 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Stephen I," 1 December 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Stephen-I-king-of-Hungary>
- 6 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>
- 7 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>
- 8 Orange Files, "Ottoman Hungary (1541-1699)," n.d., <https://theorangefiles.hu/ottoman-hungary/>
- 9 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>
- 10 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>
- 11 George Barany et al., "Hungary: Habsburg Rule 1699–1918," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/Habsburg-rule-1699-1918>
- 12 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Ferenc Rákóczi, II," 4 April 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferenc-Rakoczi-II>

imperial government sent Croatian politician and soldier Count Jelačić to crush the Hungarian revolt.^{13, 14} The 1848 war of independence against the Hapsburgs eventually resulted in the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in 1867, with two capitals and parliaments, in Vienna and Budapest. The following half-century was another golden age for Hungary.^{15, 16, 17}

World War I (1914–1918)

On 28 July 1914, one month after the assassination of the heir to the Austrian throne Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife by a Serbian nationalist in Sarajevo, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy declared war on Serbia and World War I broke out. By the end of the war, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was defeated and Hungary entered a period of instability and uncertainty; a Hungarian republic was proclaimed, communists temporarily took over under Bela Kun, and the National Assembly re-established the Kingdom of Hungary for a short period.^{18, 19, 20}

In June 1920, the Trianon Peace Treaty was signed, reducing Hungary's territory by more than two-thirds and leaving about 3 million native Hungarians in Slovakia, Romania, Croatia, and Ukraine. Following the treaties signed in 1938 and 1940 during the First and Second Vienna Awards, Hungary regained some of the territories it lost, but the Trianon frontiers were reinstated after World War II.²¹ The Treaty of Trianon remains a traumatic historical event and is a recurring grievance in current politics. Ethnic Hungarians in surrounding countries maintain strong cultural ties with Hungary.^{22, 23}

World War II

At the outbreak of World War II, Hungary allied itself with Nazi Germany. In November 1940, Hungary joined the Berlin Pact of Germany, Japan, and Italy and acknowledged the new German-led order in Europe. By signing the pact, Hungary declared its support for Germany's invasion of Russia and began enacting anti-Jewish laws. A month later, Hungary signed the "Treaty of Eternal Friendship" with Yugoslavia, but after Hitler asked Hungary for help with invading and occupying Yugoslavia, the prime minister found himself trapped between the warring sides and committed suicide in April 1941. Later that year, Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union and entered World War II as Germany's ally against the United States and Britain. Hungarian troops joined the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia; during an anti-partisan campaign in early 1942, Hungary participated in the killing of up to 40,000 civilians, mostly Serbs and Jews. Hungary also annexed parts of Vojvodina, the formerly Hungarian territory of northern Yugoslavia. In retaliation, Yugoslav partisans killed around 40,000 ethnic Hungarians in 1944 and 1945.^{24, 25}

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- 13 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Josip, Count Jelačić," 12 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Josip-Count-Jelacic>
- 14 George Barany et al., "Hungary: Habsburg Rule 1699–1918," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/Habsburg-rule-1699-1918>
- 15 We Love Budapest, "Brief History of Hungary," 14 February 2011, <https://welovebudapest.com/en/2011/02/14/brief-history-of-hungary/>
- 16 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>
- 17 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>
- 18 BBC News, "Hungary Profile—Timeline," 5 March 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17383522>
- 19 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>
- 20 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>
- 21 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>
- 22 Kafka Desk, "Hungary: Why Is the Trianon Treaty so Controversial?" 5 December 2018, <https://kafkadesk.org/2018/12/05/hungary-why-is-the-trianon-treaty-so-controversial/>
- 23 Government of Canada, "Hungary," n.d., https://www.international.gc.ca/cil-cai/country_insights-apercus_pays/ci-ic_hu.aspx?lang=eng
- 24 Global Security, "1939–1945—Hungary in World War II," n.d., <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/europe/hu-history-25.htm>
- 25 Rita Palfi, "How World War II Shaped Modern Hungary," Euronews, 5 May 2015, <https://www.euronews.com/2015/05/05/how-world-war-ii-shaped-modern-hungary>

In 1943, a Hungarian army supporting Germany's war against the Soviet Union was annihilated by the Soviet Red Army on the Don River. In 1944, German forces occupied Hungary after Hitler discovered that Hungary was engaged in armistice negotiations with the United States and the United Kingdom. By 1945, Hungary had lost nearly one million soldiers and civilians in the war. In April of that year the Soviet army liberated the country.^{26, 27, 28}

Post-World War II

In 1946 Hungary became a republic and a year later signed the Paris Peace Treaty, which restored the borders that were defined in the controversial Trianon Peace Treaty. Two years later, in 1948, the Communist and the Social Democratic parties united to create the Hungarian Working People Party and adopted a new constitution.^{29, 30, 31}

The Communist Era

In 1956, Prime Minister Imre Nagy announced Hungary's secession from the Warsaw Pact and Hungarians embarked on a revolution to free Hungary from Moscow's control. János Kádár, the General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party, called in Soviet troops to quash the revolution.³² The Soviet crackdown claimed more than 2,500 lives. The prime minister and his companions were arrested, flown to a secret location in Romania, sentenced to death, and executed in 1958. Over the next few years, the Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers Party fully reinstated Hungary in the Soviet orbit. In 1968, as a member of the Warsaw Pact, Hungary participated in the bloody Soviet suppression of the Prague Spring revolt in Czechoslovakia.^{33, 34, 35}

Hungary took its first steps toward democracy in 1988 when the communist party abolished travel restrictions. In 1989, the Opposition Round Table was formed, communist leader János Kádár died, and the remains of executed Prime Minister Imre Nagy and his four codefendants were exhumed from the New Public Cemetery in Rakoskeresztur and re-buried in a ceremony that was aired on TV and radio. Viktor Orban, a representative of the New Generation political movement, addressed the crowd. Three weeks after the reburial, the Hungarian Supreme Court formally annulled the sentences of Nagy and his codefendants. In the autumn of 1989, as communist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe were collapsing one after the other, the Hungarian government opened its western borders to refugees from East Germany and a new republic was proclaimed.^{36, 37, 38} In 1990 Soviet

26 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>

27 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>

28 Rita Palfi, "How World War II Shaped Modern Hungary," Euronews, 5 May 2015, <https://www.euronews.com/2015/05/05/how-world-war-ii-shaped-modern-hungary>

29 We Love Budapest, "Brief History of Hungary," 14 February 2011, <https://welovebudapest.com/en/2011/02/14/brief-history-of-hungary/>

30 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>

31 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>

32 Malcolm Byrne ed., "The 1956 Hungarian Revolution: A History in Documents," National Security Archive, 4 November 2002, <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB76/>

33 We Love Budapest, "Brief History of Hungary," 14 February 2011, <https://welovebudapest.com/en/2011/02/14/brief-history-of-hungary/>

34 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>

35 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>

36 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>

37 George Barany et al., "Hungary: History," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary/History>

38 Zoltán Kovács, "Imre Nagy Reburied, Viktor Orban's Political Career Launched 25 Years Ago Today," Budapest Beacon, 16 June 2014, <https://budapestbeacon.com/imre-nagy-reburied-viktor-orbans-political-career-launched-25-years-ago-today/>

troops left Hungary and the first free multiparty parliamentary elections took place. Communist Hungary ceased to exist.^{39, 40, 41}

Post-Communist Hungary and the Rise of the Right

Hungary joined NATO in 1999 and the European Union in 2004. In 2008, Hungary was hit by the global financial crisis. Following a rescue package of over USD 22 billion from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the European Union, and the World Bank, the government announced public spending cuts, tax hikes, and wage freezes. In 2009, the far-right Jobbik party won three seats in elections for the European Parliament, gaining almost 15% of the vote. In 2010, the conservative nationalist party Fidesz, led by Viktor Orban, won a landslide victory, gaining a two-thirds majority in parliament. Jobbik entered parliament for the first time after winning 47 of the 199 seats.⁴²

In 2011, only one year after the Fidesz victory, parliament approved a controversial new constitution, a new election law that favored Fidesz, and a banking reform that granted the government more control over monetary policy. In response to the banking reform, the European Union and the IMF ended financial negotiations and expressed an overall concern about Hungary's democracy. Hungary sank into an economic crisis; Hungary's credit rating was lowered junk status, the state-owned airline went bankrupt, and the European Union suspended aid payments because of Hungary's budget deficit.^{43, 44} That same year, the constitutional court challenged an electoral law amendment, claiming the law restricted voting rights. Parliament subsequently approved another constitutional amendment that curbed the power of the constitutional court⁴⁵

Recent Events

In 2014, Fidesz won a second landslide victory in parliamentary elections. In 2018, Prime Minister Viktor Orban won a third consecutive term and Fidesz achieved a two-thirds parliamentary majority. Following Orban's victory, parliament approved constitutional amendments that criminalized services, advice, and support to migrants and asylum seekers; another law gave police more discretion to ban or disband demonstrations.⁴⁶

In 2019, Orban—who had been shunned by previous U.S. administrations for his erosion of democracy in Hungary—visited the White House and received praise from President Donald Trump.^{47, 48} In February 2020, hundreds of Hungarians and other European neo-Nazis gathered in Budapest to commemorate a failed attempt by Nazi forces to break a Soviet siege of Budapest at the end of World War II. The growing popularity of the far-right in Hungary has stirred fears that its message is slowly entering the mainstream.⁴⁹ Widespread concern

39 We Love Budapest, "Brief History of Hungary," 14 February 2011, <https://welovebudapest.com/en/2011/02/14/brief-history-of-hungary/>

40 Visegrad Group, "Brief History of Hungary," n.d., <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/basic-facts-about/hungary/brief-history-of-hungary>

41 Zoltán Kovács, "Imre Nagy Reburied, Viktor Orban's Political Career Launched 25 Years Ago Today," Budapest Beacon, 16 June 2014, <https://budapestbeacon.com/imre-nagy-reburied-viktor-orbans-political-career-launched-25-years-ago-today/>

42 BBC News, "Hungary Profile—Timeline," 5 March 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17383522>

43 BBC News, "Hungary Profile—Timeline," 5 March 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17383522>

44 Business Today, "S&P Downgrades Hungary Credit Rating To Junk," 22 December 2011, <https://www.businesstoday.in/current/world/sandp-downgrades-hungarys-credit-rating-to-junk/story/21130.html>

45 BBC News, "Hungary Profile—Timeline," 5 March 2018, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-17383522>

46 Human Rights Watch, "Hungary—Event of 2018—Part of the Eu Chapter," World Report 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/hungary>

47 BBC News, "Trump Praises 'Respected' Hungary PM Orbán," 13 May 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-48260165>

48 Weekend Edition Sunday, "Victor Orban Visits the White House," NPR, 12 May 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/05/12/722550947/viktor-orban-visits-the-white-house>

49 Michael Colborne, "Neo-Nazis from across Europe Rally in Budapest," Al Jazeera, 8 February 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/02/neo-nazis-europe-rally-budapest-200207083707437.html>

about Orban’s populist, anti-immigration, and anti-academic policies; sustained attacks on the independence of the judiciary; and erosion of the rule of law, freedom of the press, and minority rights is growing in Europe and the United States.^{50, 51, 52}

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- 50 Marton Dunai, “Hungary’s Ruling Fidesz Could Quit European Conservative Bloc: Orban,” Reuters, 22 November 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-orban-europe/hungarys-ruling-fidesz-could-quit-european-conservative-bloc-orban-idUSKBN1XW0VW>
- 51 Franklin Foer, “Viktor Orbán’s War on Intellect,” *Atlantic*, June 2019, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2019/06/george-soros-viktor-orban-ceu/588070/>
- 52 Timothy Garton Ash, “Europe Must Stop This Disgrace: Viktor Orbán is Dismantling Democracy,” *Guardian*, 20 June 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/jun/20/viktor-orban-democracy-hungary-eu-funding>

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 2 | History, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Saint Stephen was the first king of Hungary. True False
2. The Trianon Peace Treaty resulted in the establishment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. True False
3. The Ottomans ruled parts of Hungary for over a century. True False
4. In 1956, Hungary seceded from the Soviet Bloc and joined the nonaligned movement formed by Yugoslavia's president Tito. True False
5. The conservative, right-wing Fidesz party has dominated Hungary's politics since 2010. True False

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 2 | History, Assessment Answers

1. True:
The nation of Hungary was born on Christmas Day in 1000 CE, when Stephen I was anointed king. Stephen adopted Catholicism and established the Hungarian state. In 1083 he was canonized as Saint Stephen.
2. False:
The Trianon Peace Treaty, which was signed after World War I, greatly reduced Hungary's territory and left millions of Hungarians in surrounding countries. It is considered a traumatic historical event and is a recurring grievance in contemporary Hungarian politics.
3. True:
In 1526, the Ottoman Turks defeated the Hungary and divided the country into three parts, with the largest under direct Ottoman control. In 1699 the Ottomans were expelled from Hungary with the help of the Hapsburg emperor.
4. False:
In 1956, Soviet tanks rolled into Budapest to crush an anti-Soviet uprising. Thousands were killed during the invasion and nearly a quarter-million Hungarians fled the country.
5. True:
Fidesz has dominated Hungarian politics on the national and local levels since its landslide victory in the 2010 national elections. Fidesz has retained its two-thirds supermajority in parliament in two subsequent elections.

Chapter 3 | Economy



The Great Market Hall in Budapest.
DLIFLC

Introduction

Following the fall of communism, Hungary embarked on a series of economic reforms as it shifted from central planning to a market-driven economy and reoriented itself toward trade with the West. The economic policies and reforms that were subsequently enacted played a role in Hungary's accession to the European Union. Hungary has one of the fastest-growing economies in the EU and one of the most developed financial systems in the region. The country's infrastructure and legal and regulatory framework have created a favorable environment for sustainable growth. In 2019 Hungary's gross domestic product (GDP) growth was 5%. Nevertheless, Hungary is considered one of the most corrupt countries in the European Union, ranked 70th out of 180 countries in a 2019 global corruption index. In recent years, the government has retreated from economic reforms in favor of policies that bolster national industries and government-linked businesses.^{1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6}

- 1 Trading Economic, "Hungary GDP Annual Growth Rate," 2019, <https://tradingeconomics.com/hungary/gdp-growth-annual>
- 2 Kovács Zoltán, "Hungary is the Third Most Corrupt Member of the EU - How?" Index, 29 January 2019, https://index.hu/english/2019/01/29/transparency_international_corruption_perception_index_hungary_2018/
- 3 Transparency International, "Corruption Perception Index 2019—Hungary," 2019, <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2019>
- 4 M. Apelblat, "Transparency International Clashes with Hungary on Corruption Index," *Brussels Times*, 28 January 2020, <https://www.brusselstimes.com/all-news/eu-affairs/92292/transparency-international-clashes-with-hungary-on-corruption-index/>
- 5 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary: Economy," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
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Agriculture

Hungary's natural features—fertile plains, temperate climate favorable to many plant species, and plentiful water for irrigation—provide good conditions for agriculture. Arable land and permanent crops cover 5 million hectares (12.4 million acres), which represent 80% of the agricultural area, while less than 1.5 million hectares (3.7 million acres) are permanent grassland. Major crops are maize (corn), wheat, sunflower seeds, barley, sugar beets, medicinal and aromatic plants, potatoes, rapeseed, oilseeds, and various common fruits. Animal husbandry includes pigs, poultry, cattle, and sheep. Agricultural exports account for 8% of total exports. More than 93% of agricultural imports come from EU member states. Since 1990, farmland has been privatized and today private farms are common.^{7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12}

Although agriculture's share in the economy has decreased, it still remains significant. The sector employs just under 5% of the labor force and accounts for 3.55% of GDP. Hungary exports to more than 100 countries and the agriculture and food industry sectors play an important role in generating export revenues.^{13, 14, 15} Hungary is an opponent of agricultural biotechnology and in 2005 adopted a law that bans cultivation of genetically engineered crops; despite this ban, imports are allowed.^{16, 17, 18}

Industry

Since 2010, numerous industries such as automotive, telecommunications, computer technology, food processing, mining, and construction have become Hungary's main industries, contributing more than 30% to GDP and employing about 30% of the labor force. The medical device manufacturing industry employs more than 48,000 people and contributes 4.9% to exports.^{19, 20, 21}

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- 7 Crop Trust, "Hungary," 2020, <https://www.croptrust.org/country/hungary/>
- 8 Global Economy, "Hungary: GDP Share of Agriculture," World Bank, 2018, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Hungary/Share_of_agriculture/
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- 14 Crop Trust, "Hungary," 2020, <https://www.croptrust.org/country/hungary/>
- 15 Global Economy, "Hungary: GDP Share of Agriculture," World Bank, 2018, https://www.theglobaleconomy.com/Hungary/Share_of_agriculture/
- 16 Export.gov, "Hungary Agricultural Sector," 6 August 2019, <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Hungary-Agricultural-Sectors>
- 17 GMO Free Europe, "Hungary—Updates and Overviews," June 2014, <https://www.gmo-free-regions.org/gmo-free-regions/hungary.html>
- 18 Genetic Literacy Project, "Where Are GMO Crops and Animals Approved and Banned?" n.d., <https://gmo.geneticliteracyproject.org/FAQ/where-are-gmos-grown-and-banned/>
- 19 Steven Béla Várdy et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>
- 20 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary: Economy," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
- 21 Export.gov, "Hungary—Medical Technologies," 6 August 2019, <https://www.export.gov/article?id=Hungary-Best-Prospects-Medical>

Energy

Currently, most of Hungary's oil is imported from Russia. In 2009 Hungary signed a deal with Russia to build parts of the South Stream pipeline, but the projected was halted in 2015. Despite the temporary closure of the pipeline in early 2019, Russian oil is likely to remain dominant until Budapest's new energy strategy, based on nuclear and renewable energy, is implemented.^{22, 23}

Hungary is an oil and gas producing country; its first oil well was discovered in 1937. Production of gas and oil peaked in the mid-1980s and declined steadily afterward.²⁴ In 2019, Hungarian-US companies Horizon Energy and TDE Services made the largest oil discovery in 30 years near the Drava River in southwestern Hungary. The amount of crude oil that is extractable is expected to allow the production of 11,000 barrels per day, with 6,000 barrels per day already being extracted in the area.^{25, 26}

MOL Hungarian Oil and Gas is Hungary's biggest oil and gas company. The company produces crude oil, petroleum products, lubricants, and natural gas. MOL owns and operates refineries, oil and gas pipelines, service stations, and natural gas storage facilities inside and outside of Hungary. At the end of 2019, MOL bought Chevron's stake in a giant oilfield in Azerbaijan. The deal included an 8.9% stake in the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline that transports crude oil to the Mediterranean Sea.^{27, 28}

The rising prices on emissions trading systems in the European Union are pushing the government to consider phasing out coal and shifting to clean renewable energy by 2030. Hungary's renewable energy goal is to transition 20% of its total energy consumption by 2030, lower than the EU target of 32%. Mátra, a large power plant in Hungary, is responsible for 14% of Hungary's carbon dioxide emissions.^{29, 30}

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- 22 Steven Béla Várdy et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>
- 23 Jo Harper, "Hungary's Unexpected Oil Bonanza," *Deutsche Welle*, 26 July 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/hungarys-unexpected-oil-bonanza/a-49756708>
- 24 Sage Journals, "Oil and Gas Exploration and Production in Hungary," 1 December 1995, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/014459879501300605?journalCode=eaa>
- 25 Budapest Business Journal, "Largest Oil Field of Last 30 Years Found in Hungary," 13 June 2019, https://bbj.hu/energy-environment/largest-oil-field-of-last-30-years-found-in-hungary_167010
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- 29 Climate Home News, "Hungary Wants End to Coal Power by 2010," 20 November 2018, <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2018/11/20/hungary-wants-end-coal-power-2030/>
- 30 Patrick Kingsland, "Inside Hungary's (unlikely) Coal Phase-Out," *Power Technology*, 8 April 2019, <https://www.power-technology.com/features/hungarys-coal-phase-out/>

Natural Resources

Coal once satisfied more than half of Hungary's energy requirements, but today represents less than one-fifth of energy production and only 16% of domestic energy consumption. Manganese is mined in the Bakony Mountains, north of Lake Balaton. There are untapped copper and zinc deposits in the north. The copper deposits also contain gold, indicating the potential presence of significant undiscovered gold reserves. Other mineral resources include lead, mercury, perlite, uranium, diatomite, molybdenum, bentonite, kaolin, dolomite, and zeolite. 31, 32, 33, 34 All raw mineral deposits in Hungary are considered state property.³⁵

Trade

During the last decade, Germany has become Hungary's most important trading partner, followed by Austria, Poland, China, Italy, Slovakia, Russia, and Romania. In 2019, trade between Hungary and Germany reached nearly USD 60 billion. Trade with EU countries composes nearly 80% of all imports and exports.^{36, 37, 38}

Hungary is the world's 35th largest export economy. Its total exported goods represented 40% of its overall GDP for 2018, giving it a positive trade surplus throughout 2019. Hungary also provided USD 29 billion worth of export-related services, for another 9.4% of GDP.^{39, 40} Hungary exports machinery such as computers, transport equipment, and vehicles; it also exports pharmaceuticals, optical and medical equipment, agricultural products, organic chemicals, furniture, textiles, iron and steel, and wine. Imports include machinery, equipment, fuels, and electricity.^{41, 42, 43}

Hungary is a member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).⁴⁴

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- 31 Climate Home News, "Hungary Wants End to Coal Power by 2010," 20 November 2018, <https://www.climatechangenews.com/2018/11/20/hungary-wants-end-coal-power-2030/>
- 32 Patrick Kingsland, "Inside Hungary's (unlikely) Coal Phase-Out," Power Technology, 8 April 2019, <https://www.power-technology.com/features/hungarys-coal-phase-out/>
- 33 Steven Béla Várdy et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>
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- 37 Trading Economics, "Hungary Exports," February 2020, <https://tradingeconomics.com/hungary/exports>
- 38 Zoltán Kovács, "PM Orbán in Berlin: Germany-Hungary Trade Volume Broke Records Every Year," About Hungary, 11 February 2020, <http://abouthungary.hu/blog/pm-orban-in-berlin-germany-hungary-trade-volume-broke-records-every-year/>
- 39 Daniel Workman, "Hungary's Top 10 Exports," World's Top Exports, 1 June 2019, <http://www.worldstopexports.com/hungarys-top-10-exports/>
- 40 OEC, "Hungary," 2017, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/hun/>
- 41 Trading Economics, "Hungary Exports," February 2020, <https://tradingeconomics.com/hungary/exports>
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Services

The services sector contributes nearly 65% to GDP and employs almost two-thirds of the labor force. In addition to tourism, the information and communication technology sector is ever-expanding, accounting for 10% of GDP. Budapest is becoming a center for software development, gaining international attention in fields like navigation systems, virus protection, and online security. Hardware production is centered in western Hungary. The country also hosts some 80 information technology service centers employing approximately 40,000 workers.^{45, 46, 47, 48}

Tourism

Tourism in Hungary is booming. Over 21 million tourists visit the country each year, double the European Union average and 1.5 times the population. Tourism accounted for 10.7% of Hungary's GDP in 2019; the government aims to increase that share to 16% by 2022. In 2019, Budapest was voted the best destination to visit in Europe and its Christmas market as the most beautiful in Europe. Tourists come to Hungary not only to visit tourist sites and attractions but also to do holiday shopping and enjoy the local cuisine.^{49, 50, 51}

Hungary has 10 large national parks and many nature reserves that attract domestic and foreign visitors. Aggtelek National Park, located in northern Hungary, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and features the largest stalactite cave in Europe. Hortobágy National Park in eastern Hungary, another World Heritage Site, is known for the shepherding culture that evolved in the area. Kiskunság National Park in the Danube-Tisza confluence is a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.^{52, 53}

Banking and Finance

Banking

The Hungarian banking sector consists of some 60 institutions. Among them are 26 commercial banks, 13 credit or saving cooperatives, 9 foreign bank branches, 5 mortgage banks, 4 building societies, and 3 specialized banks. The banking sector has 2,235 branches and employs around 40,000 people, amounting to 0.9% of the country's total workforce.⁵⁴

Since the turn of the millennium, the banking system had been gradually privatized. In 2019, nearly 50% of the banking sector's shares was held by domestic entities, with almost two-thirds in the hands of the state. There are 10.5 million bank accounts, 9.1 million payment cards, and over 5,000 ATMs in the country. The number of payment accounts accessible by internet or mobile banking services is growing. The National Bank of Hungary

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- 45 Steven Béla Várdy et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>
- 46 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary: Economy," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
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- 49 Zoltán Kovács, "2019 Year in Review: Hungary's Tourism Industry Had a Booming Year," *About Hungary*, 30 December 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/blog/2019-year-in-review-hungarys-tourism-industry-had-a-booming-year/>
- 50 About Hungary, "Hungary's Tourism Sector Is 'Enjoying a Golden Age' Says Official," 29 October 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungarys-tourism-sector-is-enjoying-a-golden-age-says-official/>
- 51 OECD, "OECD Better Life Index—Hungary," 2016, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/hungary/>
- 52 Ieva Matiejunaite, "The Most Beautiful Parks in Hungary," *Culture Trip*, 9 February 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/the-most-beautiful-national-parks-in-hungarythe-most-beautiful-national-parks-in-hungary/>
- 53 Oishimaya Sen Nag, "The 10 National Parks of Hungary," *World Atlas*, 12 March 2018, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-ten-national-parks-of-hungary.html>
- 54 Hungarian Banking Association, "Hungary's Banking Sector: Facts and Figures," September 2019, <https://www.ebf.eu/hungary/>

has a domestic instant payments system that allows account holders to make near-instantaneous anytime payments between Hungarian payment accounts, similar to the payment system in the United States.⁵⁵

The Hungarian currency is the forint (HUF). The National Bank has the sole authority to issue currency and coins. In February 2020, USD 1 equaled HUF 310.318.^{56, 57, 58}

Finance

Hungary is an attractive market for foreign investment (FDI) because of its geographic location; sound infrastructure; and a highly skilled, educated, and affordable professional labor force. Hungary maintains a higher per capita stock of FDI compared to other central and eastern European countries. In 2018, FDI reached USD 6.3 billion. In 2019, Hungary adopted a new law that screens investments in defense, cryptography, utilities, finance, electronic communications, and public communications. Most FDI supports manufacturing such as the equipment, electronic, automotive, and chemical industries. Significant investors are Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland, the United States, France, and South Korea. Hungary has won 62 major international projects, including an electric vehicle project with South Korea and Japan.⁵⁹

Standard of Living

Hungary is the second-poorest country in the European Union. In 2018, the purchasing power of Hungary's population was below the EU average, only above Croatia and Bulgaria. In 2017 Hungary ranked only above Bulgaria and on par with Croatia. Purchasing power is a preferred indicator for measuring the standard of living in a country. Observers believe that income levels are so low in Hungary that they affect the level of nourishment of the general population.^{60, 61, 62} Yet in a global context, Hungary ranks 43 out of 189 countries on the human development index, putting it in the very high human development range.⁶³

Life expectancy at birth is 76.7 years, four years lower than the OECD average of 80 years. The life expectancy for women is 80.6 years; for men, it is 73 years. Hungary's maternal mortality rate stands at 17 deaths per 100,000 live births; the infant mortality rate is 4.7 deaths per 1,000 live births. The adolescent birth rate is 24 births per 1,000 females ages 15–19.^{64, 65} Hungarians are less satisfied with their lives compared to other people in the 36 OECD countries. On a scale of 0–10, Hungarians ranked their satisfaction at 5.6 on average, which is lower than the OECD average of 6.5.⁶⁶

55 Hungarian Banking Association, "Hungary's Banking Sector: Facts and Figures," September 2019, <https://www.ebf.eu/hungary/>

56 Steven Béla Várdy et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>

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58 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, "Forint," 23 September 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/forint>

59 Santander, "Hungary: Foreign Investment," 2020, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/establish-overseas/hungary/foreign-investment>

60 Anna Wynn, "Living Standards Only Worse in Two Other EU Countries than in Hungary," Daily News Hungary, 23 June 2019, <https://dailynewshungary.com/living-standards-only-worse-in-two-other-eu-countries-than-in-hungary/>

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62 Ábrahám Vass, "Hungary's Standard of Living is Still Well below the EU Average," Hungary Today, 17 December 2018, <https://hungarytoday.hu/hungarys-standard-of-living-is-still-well-below-the-eu-average/>

63 UNDP, "2019 Human Development Index Ranking," 2019, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/2019-human-development-index-ranking>

64 UNDP, "Human Development Index Report 2019—Hungary," 2019, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/all/themes/hdr_theme/country-notes/HUN.pdf

65 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary," *World Factbook*, 4 January 2020, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>

66 OECD, "OECD Better Life Index—Hungary," 2016, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/countries/hungary/>

Employment

Hungary's economy is close to full employment. In 2019 there was a record low unemployment rate of 3.4%. The employment rate is at its highest point since Hungary transitioned to democracy in the early 1990s. However, there are still about half a million people who need employment and the government is planning to create more jobs to include these people in the workforce. Private sector employment is also growing. The unemployment rate in the 15–24 age group stands at 10.3%, accounting for more than 20% of all unemployed in the country. The unemployment rate among other age groups hovers around 2.5%. Economists predict that the number of unemployed will remain unchanged in the near future. The slow progress of the education system and the lack of a skilled labor force in certain industries and some geographical areas may slow progress.^{67, 68}

During the communist era, Hungary's labor unions were known for corruption and submission to government directives. After 1989, the unions attempted to adapt to the conditions of a market economy. The country's largest union is the Hungarian Trade Union Confederation, with some 250,000 active members and 100,000 retirees. Overall, less than 10% of the country's workforce is unionized.^{69, 70}

The Orban government's policies of low labor costs and curtailed worker rights, designed to attract more multinational corporations, are helping make unions relevant again. In 2019, workers at several auto industry plants held strikes and won higher wages. That same year, union-led street protests erupted over a reform to the labor code that allowed employers to require hundreds of hours of overtime from workers, without adequate compensation.^{71, 72, 73}

Outlook

Hungary's economic activity is expected to slow down in 2020 but it will still outperform its EU colleagues.⁷⁴ During the last several years, the Hungarian economy has experienced a strong recovery driven by high employment that boosted wages, record-high consumer confidence and demand, increased EU funding, and higher EU demand for Hungarian exports. The main recipients of FDI in western and central Hungary have grown faster than the rest of the country—however, rural poverty is still widespread. GDP growth is expected to reach 3.3% in 2020 and 3.1% in 2021. Unemployment is expected to drop to 3.1% and inflation to rise up to 3% in 2020, after experiencing a small spike in 2019.^{75, 76, 77}

67 Hungary Today, "Finance Ministry: Record High Employment Rate Registered in Hungary," 27 September 2019, <https://hungarytoday.hu/record-employment-rate-hungary/>

68 ING, "Hungary Virtually at Full Employment," 27 September 2019, <https://think.ing.com/snaps/hungary-labour-still-in-demand/>

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70 Worker-Participation.eu, "Hungary: Trade Unions," 2020, <https://www.worker-participation.eu/National-Industrial-Relations/Countries/Hungary/Trade-Unions>

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76 Budapest Business Journal, "OECD Raises Hungary GDP Forecasts," 21 November 2019, <https://bbj.hu/economy/oecd-raises-hungary-gdp-forecasts-174503>

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Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 3 | Economy, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Hungary is one of the poorest countries in the European Union. True False
2. Hungary has no oil and natural gas reserves. True False
3. Hungary has banned the cultivation of genetically engineered crops. True False
4. Tourism is one of Hungary's strongest economic sectors. True False
5. Hungary's economy is close to full employment. True False

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 3 | Economy, Assessment Answers

1. True:
In 2018, the purchasing power of Hungary's population was below the EU average, only above Croatia and Bulgaria.
2. False:
Hungary is an oil and gas producing country. In 2019, Hungarian-US companies Horizon Energy and TDE Services made the largest oil discovery in 30 years.
3. True:
Hungary is an opponent of agricultural biotechnology in the European Union and in 2005 adopted a law that banned the cultivation of genetically engineered crops.
4. True:
Tourism accounted for 10.7% of Hungary's GDP in 2019. Over 21 million tourists visit Hungary each year, double the EU average.
5. True:
In 2019, Hungary registered a record low unemployment rate, with 3.4% total unemployed job seekers.

Chapter 4 | Society



A parade of children in traditional clothing.
Flickr / Andrew Moore

Introduction

Hungarians, also called Magyars, are an ethnic group native to Hungary that shares a common ancestry, culture, and language. The majority of Hungary's population are ethnic Hungarians who are native Hungarian speakers.¹ Although Hungary has no official religion, Prime Minister Orbán has represented the government as being distinctively Christian.² Nevertheless, the constitution provides for freedom of conscience and religion, including the freedom to choose or change religion, and the freedom to practice religion in public. It also prohibits speech that violates the dignity of any religious community.³ The latest rise in hateful rhetoric and attacks on religious minorities are causes for concern.^{4, 5, 6, 7} The largest minority group in Hungary are the Roma. Mostly

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- 2 Julian Coman, "The Pastor Versus the Populist: Hungary's New Faith Faultline," *Guardian*, 29 December 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/dec/29/pastor-v-populist-viktor-orban-hungary-faith-faultline>
- 3 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "Hungary: International Religious Freedom Report for 2018," 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/HUNGARY-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>
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- 5 Erika Schlager, "Minority Faiths under the Hungarian Religion Law," CSCE, 16 July 2019, <https://www.csce.gov/international-impact/minority-faiths-under-hungarian-religion-law>
- 6 Jon Henley, "Antisemitism Rising Sharply Across Europe, Latest Figures Show," *Guardian*, 15 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/15/antisemitism-rising-sharply-across-europe-latest-figures-show>
- 7 Harriet Sherwood, "Hungary Tells UK Jewish Group to 'Mind Its Own Business' over Antisemitism," *Guardian*, 13 February 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/13/hungary-tells-uk-jewish-group-to-mind-its-own-business-over-antisemitism>

impoverished and subjected to discrimination, the Roma have become a target of radical nationalist fervor in recent years.^{8, 9}

Hungarian society is experiencing an alarming rate of depopulation. In 2017, the fertility rate was among the lowest in the world—ranking 204 out of 224 countries. Current trends show that Hungary’s population is expected to drop from 9.7 million to 8.3 million by 2050.^{10, 11}

Ethnic Groups and Languages

Hungarians

Hungarians are the largest ethnic group in Hungary, composing 85.6% of the population.¹² The origins of the Hungarian ethnic group, the Magyars, is still debated. Most experts agree that the Magyar tribes originated between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains and migrated to the areas around the Don River between the fourth and sixth centuries CE. Some theories trace the Hungarian lineage to the Finno-Ugric people of northeast Europe, North Asia, and the Carpathian Basin.^{13, 14, 15, 16}

Hungarian, the official language of Hungary, also called Magyar, is a member of the Finno-Ugric group of the Uralic language family, making Finnish and Estonian its closest relatives, rather than the Indo-European languages spoken by Hungary’s neighbors.^{17, 18} First records of the Hungarian language date back to the ninth and 10th centuries. The written Hungarian language began developing in the 16th century. The language has 14 vowels and 44 letters, some of which have two or three parts. The vocabulary includes Finno-Ugric words along with loan words from the Bulgar, Slavic, and Turkish languages.¹⁹ Hungarian is also spoken by ethnic Hungarians in neighboring countries. Hungarian is the mother tongue of 98.9% of Hungarians.^{20, 21}

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- 8 Reuters, “Tension Flares between Roma, Extremists in Hungary,” 21 May 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-extremists-idUSKCN1SR2DQ>
- 9 Barbara Cernusakova, “The Roma People’s Hungarian Hell,” Politico, 25 January 2017, <https://www.politico.eu/article/the-roma-peoples-hungarian-hell/>
- 10 Central Intelligence Agency, “Country Comparison—Total Fertility Rate,” *World Factbook*, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2127rank.html>
- 11 Austin Doehler, “The ‘Strategic’ Reason for Hungary’s Free Fertility Plan,” Balkan Insight, 17 February 2020, <https://balkaninsight.com/2020/02/17/the-strategic-reason-for-hungarys-free-fertility-plan/>
- 12 Central Intelligence Agency, “Hungary,” *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
- 13 Benjamin Elisha Sawe, “Ethnic Groups of Hungary,” World Atlas, 25 April 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-of-hungary.html>
- 14 Stephen R. Burant, ed., *Hungary: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989), <http://countrystudies.us/hungary/48.htm>
- 15 Folklore, “Finno-Ugrians, Who Are They?” n.d., <http://www.folklore.ee/ugri/fu/whougri.html>
- 16 Fenno-Ugria, “Finno-Ugric Peoples,” n.d., <https://eng.fennougria.ee/rahvad/>
- 17 *Encyclopædia Britannica*, “Hungarian Language,” 1 November 2013, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Hungarian-language>
- 18 Alex Mackintosh, “13 Fascinating Facts about the Hungarian Language,” Culture Trip, 12 June 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/13-fascinating-facts-about-the-hungarian-language/>
- 19 Fenno-Ugria, “Ungarlased,” n.d., <https://eng.fennougria.ee/rahvad/ungarlased/>
- 20 Alex Mackintosh, “13 Fascinating Facts about the Hungarian Language,” Culture Trip, 12 June 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/13-fascinating-facts-about-the-hungarian-language/>
- 21 Central Intelligence Agency, “Hungary,” *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>

Roma

The Roma population is usually understated in official statistics and may represent 5–10% of Hungary’s overall population rather than the official 3.2%.²² According to the European Roma Rights Center, approximately 750,000 Roma live in Hungary, amounting to 7.5 % of the population.²³

The Roma people (pejoratively called gypsies or *cigány* in Hungarian) are a traditionally nomadic group that faces discrimination across Europe. They are believed to have come from Punjab and Rajasthan in India and have been living in Eastern Europe since the 14th century. In the mid-1700s, Emperor Joseph II of Austria banned the use of the Romani language and traditional dress to assimilate the Roma into Hungarian culture. Today, more than 20% of Hungarian Roma speak Hungarian as a second language.^{24, 25, 26}

Roma in Hungary experience neglect, discrimination, violence, and oppression. About 60% of Roma families live in poverty-stricken rural communities or ghettos, sometimes with as many as 20 family members in one tiny shack. Most Hungarian Roma have extremely limited job opportunities and their average life expectancy is 10–12 years lower than the non-Roma population. In the last decade, the Roma have become targets for hate speech and violent attacks. In 2014, the far-right party Jobbik, which is openly anti-Roma, received 20% of the vote during the parliamentary elections.^{27, 28, 29, 30}

Germans

Ethnic Germans account for 1.9% of Hungary’s population.³¹ Germans are called Germanic Hungarians or Danube Swabians. After World War II, thousands of Germans in Hungary were deported; only those who accepted Hungarian nationality were allowed to stay.³² Based on the 1987 Agreement on the Support of German Minority and the German Language in Hungary, Germany can support the ethnic German community in Hungary. Ethnic Germans have educational institutions, cultural groups, orchestras and dance groups, museums, and professional associations.³³

Other ethnic minorities include Slovaks, Romanians, and Croats. Other languages spoken in Hungary include English, Russian, Romanian, and French.³⁴

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- 22 Central Intelligence Agency, “Hungary,” *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
- 23 European Roma Rights Centre, “10 Facts about Hungarian Roma,” 20 October 2015, <http://www.errc.org/press-releases/10-facts-about-hungarian-roma>
- 24 Benjamin Elisha Sawe, “Ethnic Groups of Hungary,” *World Atlas*, 25 April 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-of-hungary.html>
- 25 European Roma Rights Centre, “10 Facts about Hungarian Roma,” 20 October 2015, <http://www.errc.org/press-releases/10-facts-about-hungarian-roma>
- 26 Yaron Matras, *The Romani Gypsies* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 2015), 186.
- 27 Helen Pidd, “Poor, Abused and Second-Class: The Roma Living in Fear in Hungarian Village,” *Guardian*, 27 January 2012, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/jan/27/hungary-roma-living-in-fear>
- 28 Minority Rights, “Hungary Roma,” January 2018, <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/roma-8/>
- 29 European Roma Rights Centre, “10 Facts about Hungarian Roma,” 20 October 2015, <http://www.errc.org/press-releases/10-facts-about-hungarian-roma>
- 30 Bernard Rorke, “Hungary: A Short History of Segregation,” European Roma Rights Centre, 16 July 2015, <http://www.errc.org/news/hungary-a-short-history-of-segregation>
- 31 Central Intelligence Agency, “Hungary,” *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>
- 32 Benjamin Elisha Sawe, “Ethnic Groups of Hungary,” *World Atlas*, 25 April 2017, <https://www.worldatlas.com/articles/ethnic-groups-of-hungary.html>
- 33 Human Rights (emberijogok), “Ethnic Germans in Hungary,” n.d., <https://emberijogok.kormany.hu/ethnic-germans-in-hungary>
- 34 Central Intelligence Agency, “Hungary,” *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>

Religion

The majority of Hungarians became Christian in the 11th century when Hungary's first king, Saint Stephen I, adopted Christianity and stamped out paganism.^{35, 36} Hungary remained predominantly Catholic until after the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, when Lutheranism and Calvinism became the religions of almost the entire population. In the second half of the 16th century, the Catholic Hapsburg Kings and the Jesuits led a counterreformation campaign that was more successful among the aristocracy than the peasantry.³⁷

A survey conducted in 2015–16 found that while about 78% of Hungarians identify as Roman Catholic, a large majority acknowledges that their religious identity is a matter of national culture or family tradition; only one in 10 Catholics reported that they attend weekly mass.³⁸ However, while many Hungarian do not practice religious observance or belong to a specific church, they celebrate baptisms, weddings, some religious holidays, and funerals in church as part of their cultural heritage.³⁹

The Hungarian Reformed Church is the second-largest church in the country. Eastern parts of Hungary still have some Protestant communities, although their numbers have diminished significantly over the centuries.^{40, 41, 42} The Great Protestant Church in Debrecen, also known as the Great Reformed Church, is the largest Protestant church building in Hungary.^{43, 44}

The constitution acknowledges the role of Christianity in Hungary and recognizes the autonomy of religious communities and the value of religious diversity. It also guarantees the separation of church and state. However, some of the religious freedoms guaranteed by the constitution were weakened after the adoption of a new law on churches in 2011. About 300 religious communities lost their status as “incorporated churches” and received a new status of a “religious organizations.” A 2019 amendment to the religious law did not resolve the discriminatory elements since parliament decides which religious organizations are recognized, making their status inherently political.^{45, 46}

Lutheranism was introduced by Saxon settlers in the early 16th century and is Hungary's third-largest historical religion. Although the Lutheran Church is a small minority today, it is influential in Hungarian politics.⁴⁷

35 Chad Pecknold, “The King Who Stamped Out Paganism in Hungary,” *Catholic Herald*, 12 August 2010, <https://catholicherald.co.uk/news/2010/08/12/the-king-who-stamped-out-paganism-in-hungary/>

36 Catholic News Agency, “St. Stephen of Hungary,” n.d., <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/saint/st-stephen-of-hungary-565>

37 George Barany et al., “Hungary—History,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>

38 Geraldine Fagan, “Political Christianity in Orbán's Hungary,” *Budapest Beacon*, 3 April 2018, <https://budapestbeacon.com/political-christianity-in-orbans-hungary/>

39 Countries and Their Cultures, “Hungary—Religious Beliefs,” n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/Ge-It/Hungary.html>

40 Travelohungary, “Debrecen—The Calvinist Rome,” n.d., <http://www.travelohungary.com/places-to-visit/debrecen-the-calvinist-rome/#.XhdbjvylaUk>

41 World Council of Churches, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary,” n.d., <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/lutheran-church-in-hungary>

42 George Barany et al., “Hungary—Religion,” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary>

43 Péter Licskay, “Hungary Has Some of the Most Beautiful Churches, You Should Check Them Out!” *Daily News Hungary*, 28 November 2018, <https://dailynewshungary.com/hungary-has-some-of-the-most-beautiful-churches-you-should-check-them-out/>

44 Europe Between East and West, “Minimalism on a Massive Scale—The Great Reformed Church of Debrecen,” 22 August 2019, <https://europebetweeneastandwest.wordpress.com/tag/rakoczi-bell-great-reformed-church-debrecen/>

45 Freedom House, “Freedom in the World 2019—Hungary,” 2019, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2019/hungary>

46 ARDA, “Hungary,” 2015, http://www.thearda.com/internationalData/countries/Country_106_2.asp

47 World Council of Churches, “Evangelical Lutheran Church in Hungary,” n.d., <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/lutheran-church-in-hungary>

Jews have lived in Hungary since the time of the Roman Empire. Before World War II, there were nearly 825,000 Jews in Hungary. Today Jews constitute a small fraction of the population; most live in Budapest.^{48, 49} There are 16 functional synagogues in Budapest. The synagogue on Dohány Street, which was built in 1859, is the largest in Europe.⁵⁰

Islam had a pronounced presence in Hungary during the Ottoman era of 1541–1699 and its influence can be detected in the language, architecture, and food traditions of Hungary. The Muslim community expanded during the migrant crisis of 2015 and reached nearly 40,000, but most of the Muslim migrants who entered Hungary at the peak of the crisis continued on to Western Europe.^{51, 52, 53}

Mormon missionaries have been allowed to proselytize since 1986. The Hungarian parliament officially recognized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in 2012.^{54, 55}

Public schools are required to teach religion- or ethics-based classes, and students can choose whether to take these classes in a public school or at the incorporated church of their choice. Private schools are not required to teach religion. “Incorporated churches” and other religious organizations have the right to open their own schools under certain requirements and receive subsidies from the government.⁵⁶

Cuisine

Peppers were introduced to Hungary in the 16th century, a culinary milestone that ties into the current status of paprika as the national spice and symbol of Hungarian cuisine. Paprika is a powder made from a variety of peppers that are harvested, sorted, toasted, and blended to create different flavors.⁵⁷ It is an essential ingredient in the best-known Hungarian dishes, such as goulash (*gulyás*), *pörkölt*, chicken *paprikás*, *halászlé* (fisherman’s soup), and *lecsó* (vegetable stew with sour cream and bread). Paprika often gives food a brilliant orange-red color, a peppery flavor, and a unique aroma characteristic of Hungarian cuisine. Most commercial paprika comes from southern Hungary, particularly from the towns of Szeged and Kalocsa, and features varying coarseness, sweetness, and heat.^{58, 59, 60}

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- 48 Jewish Virtual Library, “Hungary Virtual Jewish Library Tour,” n.d., <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/hungary-virtual-jewish-history-tour>
- 49 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “Hungary: International Religious Freedom Report for 2018,” 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/HUNGARY-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>
- 50 Tas Tobias, “The 8 Most Remarkable Synagogues & Cemeteries in Budapest,” Off Beat, 7 October 2019, <https://www.offbeatbudapest.com/budapest-city-guide/jewish-budapest/synagogues-cemeteries/>
- 51 Orange Files, “Ottoman Hungary (1541–1699),” n.d., <https://theorangefiles.hu/ottoman-hungary/>
- 52 Iszlám, “Budapest Mosque: A Mosque in Budapest, in the Heart of Hungary,” n.d., <http://iszlám.com/english/item/2290-budapest-mosque-a-mosque-in-budapest-in-the-heart-of-hungary>
- 53 Reuters, “Hungarians Take Walking Tour to Overcome Fears of Muslims,” 6 November 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-hungary-muslims/hungarians-take-walking-tour-to-overcome-fears-of-muslims-idUSKBN1D61PL>
- 54 Sara Anderson, “Hungary Now Recognizes LDS Church,” Daily Universe, 4 March 2012, <https://universe.byu.edu/2012/03/04/hungary-now-recognizes-lds-church/>
- 55 Joseph Walker, “LDS Church among 18 Churches Added to Hungarian Recognition List,” Desert News, 27 February 2012, <https://www.deseret.com/2012/2/28/20396234/lds-church-among-18-churches-added-to-hungarian-recognition-list#the-parliament-building-lit-in-colors-of-the-national-flag-appears-in-budapest-22-october-2006>
- 56 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, “Hungary: International Religious Freedom Report for 2018,” 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/HUNGARY-2018-INTERNATIONAL-RELIGIOUS-FREEDOM-REPORT.pdf>
- 57 Emily Han, “What’s the Difference? Paprika,” Kitchn, 30 October 2008, <https://www.thekitchn.com/whats-the-difference-hot-sweet-68134>
- 58 Carolyn Bánfalvi, “Hungarian Paprika: The Essential Red Spice,” Taste Hungary, n.d., <https://tastehungary.com/journal/hungarian-paprika-the-essential-red-spice/>
- 59 Linda Garrison, “Kalocsa, Hungary—Paprika Capital of the World,” Trip Savvy, 6 July 2019, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/kalocsa-hungary-paprika-capital-of-world-4069808>
- 60 Kitti Erdő-Bonyár, “10 Iconic Hungarian Food and Drinks You Must Try in Budapest,” Daily News Hungary, 11 December 2017, <https://dailynewshungary.com/10-iconic-hungarian-food-and-drinks-you-must-try-in-budapest/>

Hungary's national dish, goulash (*gulyás*) is an everyday dish served in virtually every restaurant. Real *gulyás* is not a stew but a hearty soup cooked with onions, meat, potatoes, and pinched pasta (*csipetke*). It is seasoned with salt, black pepper, and paprika. The word *gulyás* means cowboy, referring to the herdsmen who stewed their meat until the fluids evaporated and dried in the sun. *Pörkölt* is Hungary's national stew, which most non-Hungarians think of as goulash. The stew is made from meat such as beef, lamb, pork, or chicken, and simmered in a red sauce with onions, garlic, and paprika. Traditionally, meat stews are served with small dumplings (*nokedli*), boiled potatoes, or pasta.^{61, 62}

Chicken paprikás is a classic Hungarian dish, named for the large amount of paprika that goes into the sauce. This dish is usually eaten with *galuska* (dumplings), and a fresh cucumber salad in a sweet-and-sour dressing.⁶³

Krumpli is a popular creamy layered potato dish. Delis offer a variety of sausages (*kolbász*) made with tomato, garlic, boar, apple, and herbs and served with local bread. Layered cakes, sweet soft cheesecakes, crepes, and trifles are available everywhere.⁶⁴

Hungary's favorite street food, *lángos*, is a sweet deep-fried dough that looks like pizza and is served with sour cream, minced garlic sauce, and cheese toppings. In recent years, new toppings like chicken, Bolognese sauce, braised meat stew, ratatouille, and hazelnut chocolate spread and whipped cream have been introduced. Eating *lángos* is a messy affair since it is eaten with the hands. *Lángos* is venerated in Hungary and can be found in every market and festival, especially in summer and Christmas markets. Fresh corn boiled on the cob is another popular street food.^{65, 66}

Hungary has unique local grape varieties and wine quality is improving. The most famous Hungarian grape variety is the sweet *tokaj*, which is cultivated in the northeast. A glass of sweet tokaj is usually served with local sweet treats.⁶⁷ Unicum, the Hungarian national drink, has a bitter and herbal flavor and is enjoyed as a digestif and aperitif. This iconic liqueur is made from a blend of over 40 herbs and spices according to a recipe that has been passed down the generations since its creation in 1790.^{68, 69} Pálinka, Hungarian brandy, comes in more than 100 varieties, including apricot, plum, and cherry. Many Hungarians still enjoy a shot of pálinka before or after meals.⁷⁰

61 Carolyn Bánfalvi, "Gulyás: The Ultimate Hungarian Soup," Taste Hungary, n.d., <https://tastehungary.com/journal/hungarian-gulyas-goulash-recipe/>

62 Taste Atlas, "Pörkölt," n.d., <https://www.tasteatlas.com/porkolt>

63 Carolyn Bánfalvi, "Paprikás Csirke (Paprika Chicken) Recipe," Taste Hungary, n.d., <https://tastehungary.com/journal/paprikas-csirke-paprika-chicken/>

64 Kwintessential, "A Guide to Hungary—Etiquette, Customs, Clothing and More..." n.d., <https://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/guide-to-hungary-etiquette-customs-culture-business>

65 Kata Fári, "What is Lángos, Hungary's Favourite Street Food Treat?" We Love Budapest, 25 July 2018, <https://welovebudapest.com/en/2018/07/25/what-is-langos-hungarys-favourite-street-food-treat/>

66 Lester Kramer, "Lángos: Hungary's Deep-Fried Treat," Taste Hungary, n.d., <https://tastehungary.com/journal/langos-hungarys-deep-fried-treat/>

67 Kwintessential, "A Guide to Hungary—Etiquette, Customs, Clothing and More..." n.d., <https://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/guide-to-hungary-etiquette-customs-culture-business>

68 Alex Mackintosh, "A Brief History of Unicum, Hungary's National Drink," Culture Trip, 9 March 2017, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/a-brief-history-of-unicum-hungarys-national-drink/>

69 Carolyn Bánfalvi, "Unicum: Hungarian History in a Glass," Taste Hungary, n.d., <https://tastehungary.com/journal/unicum-hungarian-history-in-a-glass/>

70 Roberta Gyori, "Pálinka, the Hungarian Brandy," Visit Budapest, 20 March 2010, <http://visitbudapest.travel/articles/hungarian-brandy/>

Traditional Dress

The traditional folk dress of Hungary has renaissance and baroque features and some Turkish influence from the Ottoman period. There are regional differences in the traditional dress, with each region offering a unique style. Hungarians wore simple clothing with few decorations and colors until the 20th century, when they became more affluent. Today, Hungarian traditional dress is worn primarily during national holidays.^{71, 72} In rural areas, women may sometimes wear *babushkas* (scarves) on their heads, and men may wear hats with floppy brims.⁷³

The folk dress traditions of the Great Plain continue among the Matyo people, who live in northeastern Hungary and in the city of Kalocsa in south-central Hungary, east of the Danube. The men's costumes consist of white linen shirts decorated with colorful embroidery; trousers called *gatyá*; vests; outerwear such as cloaks, fur coats, or waistcoats; brimmed hats; and high-heeled leather boots, sometimes with spurs. Women wear baroque-style costumes that include very wide bright blue, red, or green pleated skirts with petticoats; waist-length shirts that are richly decorated with black, dark-blue, red, lilac, green, and yellow embroidery; aprons adorned with floral patterns and edged with white lace; shoes or boots; and headdresses.^{74, 75, 76}

In Transdanubia, east of the Danube, the traditional dress was influenced by neighboring Croatia, Slovenia, and Serbia, and women's folk costumes vary greatly by region. The women's headdresses from this region are particularly diverse and intricate.^{77, 78}

Gender Issues

The social system in Hungary has been traditionally patriarchal and patterns of conduct and the division of labor remain largely unchanged, especially in the rural areas. Men still represent their families in legal and financial matters and their status affects the entire family. In rural areas, men are involved in more physically demanding jobs that often send them far from home, and still feel self-conscious about carrying out tasks traditionally performed by women, such as cooking and laundry. Women are responsible for household chores, such as child-rearing, cooking, gardening, laundry, and cleaning. Outside the home women care for the ill, cook for the needy, and hold vigils for the deceased.⁷⁹

The constitution guarantees women's right to equality with men. However, Hungary ranked only above Greece on the Gender Equality Index of 2019. Hungary ranks last among European Union countries on the power index that

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- 71 Kerry Kubilius, "Hungarian Folk Costumes for Men and Women," Trip Savvy, 6 July 2019, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/hungarian-folk-costumes-1501601>
- 72 National Clothing, "Traditional Costume of Hungary. Mix Of Renaissance and Baroque Creates Unique Folk Outfit," 30 June 2016, <http://nationalclothing.org/europe/49-hungary/115-traditional-costume-of-hungary-mix-of-renaissance-and-baroque-creates-unique-folk-outfit.html>
- 73 Countries and Their Cultures, "Hungary," n.d., <https://www.everyculture.com/wc/Germany-to-Jamaica/Hungarians.html>
- 74 Kerry Kubilius, "Hungarian Folk Costumes for Men and Women," Trip Savvy, 6 July 2019, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/hungarian-folk-costumes-1501601>
- 75 Linda Garrison, "Kalocsa, Hungary—Paprika Capital of the World," Trip Savvy, 6 July 2019, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/kalocsa-hungary-paprika-capital-of-world-4069808>
- 76 Hungarian Folk, "Matyo Hungarian Folk Dresses," n.d., <http://hungarianfolk.com/portfolio/matyo-folk-dresses>
- 77 Kerry Kubilius, "Hungarian Folk Costumes for Men and Women," Trip Savvy, 6 July 2019, <https://www.tripsavvy.com/hungarian-folk-costumes-1501601>
- 78 National Clothing, "Traditional Costume of Hungary. Mix Of Renaissance and Baroque Creates Unique Folk Outfit," 30 June 2016, <http://nationalclothing.org/europe/49-hungary/115-traditional-costume-of-hungary-mix-of-renaissance-and-baroque-creates-unique-folk-outfit.html>
- 79 Smithsonian Folklife Festival, "Hungarian Heritage: Family and Kinship Gender Roles," 2013, <https://festival.si.edu/2013/hungarian-heritage/gender-roles/smithsonian>

measures gender equality in decision-making positions across the political, economic, and social spheres.^{80, 81, 82} Hungary's scores are lower than the overall European Union scores in all domains.⁸³

Women make up only 10% of parliament and were absent from the cabinet until 2018, when Andrea Bártfai-Mager became Minister without a Portfolio for the Management of State Assets. Roma women and girls are subjected to more discrimination than non-Roma in every aspect of their lives.^{84, 85, 86}

According to a UN study of gender discrimination in Hungary, conservative family values dominate the education system and school books contain gender stereotypes that depict women almost exclusively as wives and mothers, and in some cases demean mothers as less intelligent than fathers.⁸⁷ Many Hungarians are extremely dismissive of LGBT people. The government and a majority of Hungarians oppose same-sex marriage.⁸⁸

The legal age for getting married in Hungary is 18 years. Hungarian law defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Government monetary policies encourage middle-class couples to have children in order to reverse the high population decline. Critics claim that the new family policies reinforce the outdated and sexist views of women's role in society as only mothers and caregivers.⁸⁹

Arts

Music

Hungarians enjoy symphonies, chamber orchestras, and choirs. Budapest has a variety of concert halls for classical music performances.⁹⁰ Hungary has made many outstanding contributions to the world of classical music. Franz Liszt (1811–86) was a renowned piano virtuoso and composer who wrote more than 700 compositions during his lifetime. In his later years, he established the Royal National Hungarian Academy of Music in Budapest. In 2011, Budapest's international airport was renamed after him.⁹¹ Béla Bartók (1881–1945) was a composer, pianist, ethnomusicologist, and teacher. Bartók incorporated into his original music melodies and rhythms of Hungarian peasant music and is known for the Hungarian flavor of his major musical works.⁹² Kodály Zoltán (1882–1967) was a prominent composer, folk music authority, and educator who contributed to the spread of music education in Hungary.⁹³

80 Balázs Pivarnyik, "Family and Gender in Orbán's Hungary," Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 4 July 2018, <https://www.boell.de/en/2018/07/04/family-and-gender-viktor-orbans-hungary>

81 European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index 2019, Work-Life Balance," 11 October 2019, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-work-life-balance>

82 Balázs Pivarnyik, "Hungary Ranks among the Worst in EU in Gender Equality," Budapest Beacon, 16 October 2017, <https://budapestbeacon.com/hungary-ranks-among-worst-eu-gender-equality/>

83 European Institute for Gender Equality, "Gender Equality Index 2019: Hungary," 7 October 2019, <https://eige.europa.eu/publications/gender-equality-index-2019-hungary>

84 Balázs Pivarnyik, "Family and Gender in Orbán's Hungary," Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 4 July 2018, <https://www.boell.de/en/2018/07/04/family-and-gender-viktor-orbans-hungary>

85 U.N. Human Right Office of the High Commissioner, "Hungary: Gender Discrimination Concealed Under Conservative Family Values," 27 May 2016, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20028&LangID=E>

86 Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, U.S. Department of State, "2018 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Hungary," 2018, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/HUNGARY-2018-HUMAN-RIGHTS-REPORT.pdf>

87 U.N. Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "Hungary: Gender Discrimination Concealed under Conservative Family Values," 27 May 2016, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=20028&LangID=E>

88 Laszlo Arato, "Homophobia Is on the Rise in Hungary," European Data Journalism Network, 30 October 2019, <https://www.europeandatajournalism.eu/eng/News/Data-news/Homophobia-is-on-the-rise-in-Hungary>

89 Balázs Pivarnyik, "Family and Gender in Orbán's Hungary," Heinrich Boll Stiftung, 4 July 2018, <https://www.boell.de/en/2018/07/04/family-and-gender-viktor-orbans-hungary>

90 Frommer's, "The Performing Arts in Budapest," n.d., <https://www.frommers.com/destinations/budapest/nightlife/the-performing-arts>

91 Biography, "Franz Liszt," 30 July 2019, <https://www.biography.com/musician/franz-liszt>

92 Halsey Stevens, "Béla Bartók," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 27 November 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bela-Bartok>

93 Kathleen Kuiper, "Zoltán Kodály," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 12 December 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Zoltan-Kodaly>

Theater

Theater and performing arts are highly valued in Hungary. The roots of performing arts date back to the 11th century and feature dramatic folk traditions as well as semi-liturgical dramas and puppet shows. Budapest and other major cities have numerous theaters and a lively theater season between September and June. The Hungarian Theatre Museum and Institute was founded in Budapest in 1952.^{94, 95} In late 2019, the conservative-nationalist government passed a law that increased its control over the country's theaters, triggering protests from actors and audiences who feared that artistic freedom was under threat.⁹⁶

Ehrich Weisz, better known as the famous magician Harry Houdini, was born in Budapest in 1874. He was the son of a rabbi who immigrated to the United States in 1876.^{97, 98}

Film

In the last 15 years, government tax incentives have brought many international filmmakers to Hungary, especially to Budapest and its uniquely beautiful locations.⁹⁹ In 2018 alone, filmmakers spent USD 380 million on film productions in Hungary, mostly on foreign productions.¹⁰⁰

Hungarian cinema has attained international acclaim. *Mephisto*, directed by István Szabó, and *Son of Saul*, directed by László Nemes, won the best foreign film Academy Awards in 1982 and 2016 respectively. Seven other Hungarian films have received Oscar nominations since 1968. Hungarian cinematographers, animators, and film directors have also made names for themselves in Hollywood. Hungarians embrace successful American film personalities with Hungarian roots, such as actors Adrien Brody and Rachel Weisz; Adolph Zukor, who founded Paramount Pictures; and Michael Curtiz, who directed the film *Casablanca*.^{101, 102, 103, 104} Hungary also hosts numerous film festivals, in Budapest as well as in Miskolc and Szeged.^{105, 106}

Literature

Hungary has a unique linguistic and cultural heritage, with many Hungarian writers achieving international renown. Imre Kertész won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2002. His most famous work is *Fateless*, a semiautobiographical story about the experience of a 14-year-old Hungarian Jew in the concentration camps. László Krasznahorkai gained fame when he won the Man Booker International prize in 2015. He is known for his collaborations with the Hungarian filmmaker Béla Tarr, who made a seven-hour film based on Krasznahorkai's novel *Sátántangó*. Péter Nádas is best known for his novel *Parallel Stories*, which begins with the fall of the Berlin wall and then returns to

94 Union Internationale de la Marionette, "Hungary," *World Encyclopedia of Puppetry Arts*, n.d., <https://wepa.unima.org/en/hungary/>

95 Visit Budapest, "Budapest Theaters & Concert Halls," n.d., <http://visitbudapest.travel/arts-entertainment/theatres-concert-halls/>

96 Felix Schlagwein, "Hungary Passes Law Tightening Grip on Country's Theaters," *Deutsche Welle*, 12 December 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/hungary-passes-law-tightening-grip-on-countrys-theaters/a-51642455>

97 The Great Harry Houdini, "Houdini—His Life and his Art," n.d., <https://www.thegreatharryhoudini.com/>

98 Biography, "Harry Houdini Biography," 22 October 2019, <https://www.biography.com/performer/harry-houdini>

99 Alia Akkam, "Why This City Is the Hollywood of Europe," *Architectural Digest*, 6 December 2017, <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/budapest-hungary-film-industry>

100 About Hungary, "349 Million Euros Spent on Hungarian Film Industry in 2018," 12 March 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/349-million-euros-spent-on-hungarian-film-industry-in-2018/>

101 Hun Education, "Oscar Winning Hungarians and Hungarian Films," n.d., <https://www.huneducation.com/blog/oscar-winning-hungarians-and-hungarian-films/>

102 Progressive Productions, "Shooting in Hungary: Film Industry in Budapest," 22 January 2020, <https://progressiveproductions.eu/insights/hungary/budapest-film-industry-director-producer-opinions>

103 IMDb, "Mephisto (1981) Awards," n.d., https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082736/awards?ref_tt_awd

104 IMDb, "Son of Saul (2015) Awards," n.d., https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3808342/awards?ref_tt_awd

105 Festival Focus, "Film Festivals in Hungary," n.d., <https://www.festivalfocus.org/breakdown/156/hungary/>

106 Cinefest, "Cinefest Miskolc," 2020, <https://www.cinefest.hu/?lang=en>

the darkest episodes of European history. Other well-known Hungarian writers are George Konrád, Sándor Márai, and Péter Esterházy.¹⁰⁷

Folk Music and Dance

The folk music of Hungary is an important expression of national identity. It has many styles, sounds, and instruments, and is sometimes used to accompany traditional dances. The recent interest in folk music and the proliferation of dance halls (*táncházak*) in some urban areas are helping to ensure the survival of this traditional art form.¹⁰⁸

Traditional dance includes round dances (*karikázó*), jumping dances (*ugrós*), men's dances (*legényes*), slow and fast couples' dances (*csárdás*), and stick dances (*botoló*), which imitate war dances. Solo and couples' dances are typically freeform and unique to Hungary.¹⁰⁹

Folk Arts and Crafts

Artists involved in folk arts and crafts are highly respected. In the 19th century, the intricate wood decorations used on bed frames, gates, and storage chests became symbols of national unity. Folk arts and crafts are reflected in a variety of objects and are still used and passed down by people committed to preserving the knowledge and skills necessary to continue the traditions. Some traditional art forms practiced in Hungary are intricate embroidery; hat making; horn carving; horsehair weaving; hand-painted jewelry made with shells, horns, glass, and seeds; leather works that include footwear, harnesses, whips, and saddles; textile weaving and wicker baskets; musical instruments and furniture making; copper cookware and repair; and blue-printing on white cotton.¹¹⁰

Sports and Recreation

After merging with the Austrian Hapsburg monarchy in the late 1800s, many professional sporting clubs were established in Budapest and sport became a way to distinguish Hungarian national identity. Hungary lost its bid to host the 1936 Olympic Games, but the Hungarian athletes distinguished themselves by winning a large number of medals. Today, Hungary is the world's ninth-most decorated Olympic nation. Since the first Olympic Games in 1896, Hungary has won 176 gold, 149 silver, and 173 bronze medals in the summer and winter games, for a total of 498 medals. Hungary plans to bid to host the 2032 summer games. Olympian athletes are treated as heroes and enjoy considerable financial backing and prestige.^{111, 112}

Soccer is especially popular in Hungary, as are water polo, fencing, swimming, table tennis, track and field, rowing, weightlifting, and team handball. Tennis and golf are gaining in popularity, especially among the upper-middle class.¹¹³

107 Thomas Storey, "The Outsider Within: 10 Great Hungarian Writers," 25 October 2016, <https://theculturetrip.com/europe/hungary/articles/the-outsider-within-the-ten-best-hungarian-writers/>

108 Frommer's, "The Performing Arts in Budapest," n.d., <https://www.frommers.com/destinations/budapest/nightlife/the-performing-arts>

109 Smithsonian Folklore Festival, "Hungary Heritage: Music and Dance," n.d., <https://festival.si.edu/2013/hungarian-heritage/music-and-dance/smithsonian>

110 Smithsonian Folklore Festival, "Hungary Heritage: Folk Arts and Crafts in Hungary," n.d., <https://festival.si.edu/2013/hungarian-heritage/folk-arts-and-crafts-hungary/smithsonian>

111 Attila Szalay-Berzeviczy, "Hungary and the Olympics," Discover CEE, 23 May 2019, <http://www.discover-cee.com/hungary-and-the-olympics/>

112 Olympian Database, "Hungary at the Olympics—Fact and Information," 2019, <http://www.olympiandatabase.com/index.php?id=13503&L=1>

113 George Barany et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary#ref34826>

Thermal baths are very popular in Hungary. In Budapest alone, there are 21 thermal baths, bathhouses, and spas, all supplied by 118 thermal springs. In some spas, people play chess while sitting in the thermal water.^{114, 115}

Hungary has 10 national parks, 9 nature parks, 22 forestry areas, and many biking and hiking trails. The National Blue Trail is the first long-distance hiking trail in Europe. Lake Balaton offers a variety of water-related activities and attractions including boat trips, sailing, angling, water parks, and skating in the winter. Adventure parks that feature summer bobsled tracks, chairlift routes, Segway rides, zipline courses, ice rinks, and ski slopes attract many vacationers and tourists. Other water sport activities, like canoeing, jet surfing, water skiing, and wakeboarding, are also available.¹¹⁶

114 Nathan Kay, "10 of the Best Spas and Bathhouses in Budapest," CNN, 14 June 2018, <https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/budapest-spas-bathhouses/index.html>

115 Budapest.com, "Budapest Health Spas," n.d., https://www.budapest.com/recreation_wellness/budapest_thermal_baths.en.html

116 Wow Hungary, "Active Recreation," n.d., <https://wowhungary.com/en/experiences/active-recreation-22>

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 4 | Society, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Hungary is a world-class Olympian nation. True False
2. Same-sex marriage is legal in Hungary. True False
3. Goulash is a thick meat stew served during the winter months in Hungary. True False
4. The Roma minority suffers from neglect and discrimination in Hungary. True False
5. Pálinka is the pen name of a beloved author of Hungarian children's books. True False

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 4 | Society, Assessment Answers

1. True:
Hungary is the world's ninth-most decorated Olympic nation. Since the first Olympic Games in 1896, Hungary has won 498 medals, including 176 gold medals. Hungary plans to bid to host the 2032 summer games.
2. False:
Hungarian law defines marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Many Hungarians are extremely dismissive of the LGBT community and oppose same-sex marriage.
3. False:
Contrary to popular belief outside Hungary, *gulyás* is not a stew but a hearty soup cooked with onions, meat, potatoes, and pinched pasta with salt, black pepper, and paprika.
4. True:
About 60% of Roma families live in poverty-stricken rural communities or ghettos. Their average life expectancy is 10–12 years lower than the non-Roma population. The Roma have become targets of right-wing hate speech and violent attacks.
5. False:
Pálinka is a Hungarian brandy; it comes in more than 100 varying strengths and flavors including apricot, plum, and cherry. It is considered rude to refuse a glass of *pálinka* when offered.

Chapter 5 | Security



Mounted police patrol a border barrier.
Wikimedia / Bőr Benedek

Introduction

Hungary's standing as an ally of the United States and a member of the European Union is deteriorating in part because of Prime Minister Victor Orban's authoritarian policies and corrosive relationships with neighboring nations. Orban has been vocal about his plans to transform Hungary into a one-party state and usher in what he calls "illiberal democracy," with Russia and China as his model. Orban stokes nostalgia for former Hungarian territories and exploits nationalist sentiments among Hungarian citizens and ethnic Hungarians living abroad. Within Hungary, Orban's ruling Fidesz party is beginning to lose some popular support, although it remains popular and firmly in control.^{1,2,3}

- 1 Helle C. Dale, "Hungary Is Key to Shoring Up NATO Alliance," Heritage, 19 April 2019, <https://www.heritage.org/europe/commentary/hungary-key-shoring-nato-alliance>
- 2 James Kirchick, "Is Hungary Becoming a Rogue State in the Center of Europe?" Brookings, 7 January 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/01/07/is-hungary-becoming-a-rogue-state-in-the-center-of-europe/>
- 3 Human Rights First, "Hungary's False Sense of Security," June 2018, <https://www.humanrightsfirst.org/sites/default/files/Hungary-False-Sense-Security-final.pdf>

U.S.-Hungary Relations

The United States established diplomatic relations with Hungary in 1921 after the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After the fall of communism in 1989, the United States helped Hungary establish a democratic political system and free-market economy. Today, the United States works with Hungary to achieve shared international objectives in security, law enforcement, economic growth, and energy. The United States is a top foreign investor in Hungary, and Hungary donates substantially to American research groups, lobbyists, scholarship funds, and various foundations.^{4, 5}

The Obama administration condemned the Orban government's crackdown on civil society. During the 2016 American presidential elections, Orban was the only European head of state to publicly endorse Donald Trump. The Trump administration has been more conciliatory toward Hungary, showing reluctance to criticize Orban's anti-liberal policies. Despite warming relations, concern remains about the growing Chinese and Russian influence over Hungary. In May 2019, Orban met with President Trump in Washington DC, the first such visit by a Hungarian prime minister since 2005.^{6, 7, 8}

Relations with Neighbors

Hungary's relations with its neighbors have often been volatile. Bitterness over the loss of territory at the Treaty of Trianon after World War I persists and occasionally manifests as minor diplomatic incidents. However, Hungary and its neighbors have made efforts to improve relations.^{9, 10, 11}

Austria

Austria is one of Hungary's major economic trade partners and Hungary's third-largest foreign employer and investor. Bilateral trade totaled USD 10.33 billion in 2017.^{12, 13} In 2019, the two countries celebrated the 30th anniversary of the dismantling of the Iron Curtain.^{14, 15} The Austrian and Hungarian governments have found common ground on matters such as migration, security, border protection, and climate protection. Austria opposes Hungary's plan to expand its nuclear energy production. While Hungary relies heavily on nuclear energy,

4 Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, "U.S. Relations with Hungary," U.S. Department of State, 4 November 2019, <https://www.state.gov/u-s-relations-with-hungary/>

5 Patrick Kingsley, "Hungary's Leader Was Shunned by Obama, but Has a Friend in Trump," *New York Times*, 15 August 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/15/world/europe/hungary-us-orban-trump.html>

6 Patrick Kingsley, "Hungary's Leader Was Shunned by Obama, but Has a Friend in Trump," *New York Times*, 15 August 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/15/world/europe/hungary-us-orban-trump.html>

7 Patricia Zengerle, "Republicans, Democrats Concerned about Hungary's Orban Ahead of U.S. Visit," Reuters, 10 May 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-hungary-trump/republicans-democrats-concerned-about-hungarys-orban-ahead-of-us-visit-idUSKCN1SG2DP>

8 Daniel Lippman, "'America First' Meets 'Hungary First,' But White House Wary of Love Fest," Politico, 15 May 2019, <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/05/12/hungary-trump-viktor-orban-1317657>

9 Central Intelligence Agency, "Hungary," *World Factbook*, 5 December 2019, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/hu.html>

10 George Barany et al., "Hungary," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15 October 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Hungary#ref34826>

11 Stephen R. Burant, ed., *Hungary: A Country Study* (Washington: GPO for the Library of Congress, 1989), <http://countrystudies.us/hungary/42.htm>

12 About Hungary, "President Áder: Economic Relations between Hungary and Austria Have Intensified Dynamically over the Past Seven Years," 21 February 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/president-ader-economic-relations-between-hungary-and-austria-have-intensified-dynamically-over-the-past-seven-years/>

13 OEC, "Hungary," 2017, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/hun/#Imports>

14 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Government of Hungary, "Austria is One of Hungary's Most Important Allies," 1 March 2018, <https://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade/news/austria-is-one-of-hungary-s-most-important-allies>

15 About Hungary, "Hungary and Austria Mark 30th Anniversary of Iron Curtain Opening," 28 June 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-and-austria-mark-30th-anniversary-of-iron-curtain-opening/>

Austria opposes nuclear energy projects and is determined to remain nuclear-free.¹⁶

In 2015, relations deteriorated when Austria's left-wing government criticized Orban. Bilateral relations have improved since the electoral victory of Austrian right-wing parties in 2018. Austria's new chancellor, Sebastian Kurz, showed support for Hungary's policies on illegal immigration and praised Orban for sealing the Hungarian-Serbian border and blocking asylum seekers from entering Hungary. Orban has been critical of Austria's plan to cut child benefits for Eastern Europeans who work in Austria.^{17, 18, 19, 20, 21}

Croatia

*Relations between Hungary and Croatia have been rocky in recent years. Diplomacy stalled after Hungary closed the border to refugees from Croatia in 2015.*²² After the 2016 election victory of a center-right party in Croatia, relations improved and the two governments found common ground over the refugee crisis and foreign policy goals.^{23, 24} In 2019, the two sides signed a defense cooperation pact.^{25, 26}

The two countries cooperate in energy, transportation, and border security. Hungary is one of the most significant investors in Croatia, who is the second most important country for Hungarian investments. Bilateral trade amounts to slightly over USD 1.7 billion a year.²⁷ In 2019, a Croatian court found the chief executive of a Hungarian energy company guilty of bribing Croatia's former prime minister USD 8.9 million to obtain a majority stake in a Croatian energy company.^{28, 29}

Both countries advocate for the Three Seas Initiative, also known as Adriatic-Baltic Vertical, a geopolitical alliance of 12 NATO and EU former-communist member states.^{30, 31}

Romania

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- 16 AP News, "Austria against Use of EU Funding to Support Nuclear Energy," 16 January 2020, <https://apnews.com/a98c935aa8740859a962ce35f6ccfc17>
- 17 Cas Mudde, "The New Austrian Government Will Brand Itself as Moderate—but Don't Believe It," *Guardian*, 2 October 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/oct/02/the-new-austrian-government-will-brand-itself-as-moderate-but-dont-believe-it>
- 18 Hungary Journal, "Orban to Strache: Hungary, Austria Must Cooperate to Guarantee Each Other's Security," 30 January 2018, <https://thehungaryjournal.com/2018/01/30/orban-to-strache-hungary-austria-must-cooperate-to-guarantee-each-others-security/>
- 19 Ferenc Sullivan, "Hungary Seeks to Open New Chapter in Relations with Austria as Countries' Leaders Meet in Budapest," *Hungary Today*, 26 July 2016, <https://hungarytoday.hu/hungary-seeks-open-new-chapter-relations-austria-countries-leaders-meet-budapest-18644/>
- 20 Euractive, "Orban's Vienna Visit Highlights Austria-Hungary Comradeship," 30 January 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/future-eu/news/orbans-vienna-visit-highlights-austria-hungary-comradeship/>
- 21 Hungary Journal, "Orban: Austria Natural Partner of V4," 16 January 2020, <https://thehungaryjournal.com/2020/01/16/orban-austria-natural-partner-of-v4/>
- 22 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Hungarian-Croatian Bilateral Relations to Be Improved," Government of Hungary, 9 July 2015, <https://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade/news/hungarian-croatian-bilateral-relations-to-be-improved>
- 23 Sven Milekic, "Croatia Acts to Heal Breach with Hungary," *Balkan Insight*, 3 February 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/02/03/new-government-to-improve-troubled-croatia-hungary-relations-02-02-2016/>
- 24 Sven Milekic, "HDZ Looks to Form Croatia Govt after Surprise Win," *Balkan Insight*, 12 September 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/09/12/hdz-wins-on-croatia-elections-promises-government-09-12-2016/>
- 25 About Hungary, "PM Orbán Builds Relations with Croatia in Zagreb," 4 December 2018, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-builds-relations-with-croatia-in-zagreb/>
- 26 About Hungary, "Hungary Signs Defense Cooperation Agreement with Croatia," 9 April 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-signs-defense-cooperation-agreement-with-croatia/>
- 27 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Hungarian-Croatian Bilateral Relations to Be Improved," Government of Hungary, 9 July 2015, <https://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade/news/hungarian-croatian-bilateral-relations-to-be-improved>
- 28 Hungary Today, "Croatia Court Finds MOL Chief Executive Guilty on Corruption Charges," 30 December 2019, <https://hungarytoday.hu/croatia-court-finds-mol-chief-hernadi-guilty-on-corruption-charges/>
- 29 Sven Milekic, "Croatia Acts to Heal Breach with Hungary," *Balkan Insight*, 3 February 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/02/03/new-government-to-improve-troubled-croatia-hungary-relations-02-02-2016/>
- 30 David A. Wemer, "The Three Seas Initiative Explained," *Atlantic Council*, 11 February 2019, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-three-seas-initiative-explained-2/>
- 31 Sven Milekic, "Croatia Acts to Heal Breach with Hungary," *Balkan Insight*, 3 February 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2016/02/03/new-government-to-improve-troubled-croatia-hungary-relations-02-02-2016/>

Historical divisions between Hungary and Romania date back centuries. Emotions over the sizeable loss of Transylvania in the Treaty of Trianon are still raw in Hungary. Ethnic Hungarians in Romania are often leveraged as a wedge issue by the governments of both countries. In 2010, the Hungarian parliament voted to give ethnic Hungarians living abroad the right to claim Hungarian nationality, a move opposed by Romania.^{32, 33}

The estimated 1.2 million ethnic Hungarians in Romania complain of discrimination, though the Romanian authorities view their complaints as a provocation meant to raise the issue of autonomy or reunification with Hungary. In 2016, 37% of Hungarians thought that their country had bad relations with Romania and 52% wanted to see improvement in the bilateral relations.³⁴ In 2019, tensions over the erection of concrete crosses memorializing Romanian soldiers buried in a mostly Hungarian military cemetery in Transylvania escalated into a diplomatic incident between the two countries.³⁵

Despite the strained relations surrounding ethnic minorities, the two countries still manage to cooperate, especially when it comes to trade. In 2007, Hungary supported Romania's accession to the European Union.^{36, 37} Romania is Hungary's second-largest export market. In 2017, Hungary exported USD 5.83 billion worth of goods to Romania and Romania exported to Hungary USD 3.19 billion in goods and services.^{38, 39}

Serbia

Serbia is considered one of Hungary's closest allies and the two countries have warm relations.^{40, 41} Hungary is a strong supporter of Serbia's bid to join the European Union. Both countries are sensitive to the issue of ethnic minority rights. Serbia has placated Hungary's nationalist base by acknowledging historical atrocities committed against the Hungarian community. In 2013, Serbia adopted a resolution condemning crimes committed against Hungarian civilians in World War II. Serbia also did not oppose a Hungarian law on nationality and voting rights for Hungarians living in neighboring countries.^{42, 43, 44} Conversely, the Serbian minority in Hungary enjoys the

support of the Hungarian government and receives funds to preserve its language, schools, churches, and

32 Euractive, "Hungary and Romania Face off Over an Ethnic Dispute," 21 February 2013, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/languages-culture/opinion/hungary-and-romania-face-off-over-an-ethnic-dispute/>

33 Ana Milošević, "Serbia and Hungary Play Cynical Games with the Past," Balkan Insight, 6 April 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/04/06/feature-04-05-2018/>

34 Romania Insider, "What Do the Hungarians Think about the Hungarian-Romanian Relations?" 26 January 2016, <https://www.romania-insider.com/what-do-the-hungarians-think-about-the-hungarian-romanian-relations>

35 Marcel Gascón Barberá, "Hungary, Romania Trade Words over Transylvanian Cemetery Dispute," Balkan Insight, 7 June 2019, <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/06/07/hungary-romania-trade-words-over-transylvanian-cemetery-dispute/>

36 Ana Maria Luca, "Autonomy Demands Strain Hungary-Romania Relations," Balkan Insight, 16 January 2016, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/01/16/autonomy-demands-strain-hungary-romania-relations-01-15-2018/>

37 Euractive, "Hungary and Romania Face off over an Ethnic Dispute," 21 February 2013, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/languages-culture/opinion/hungary-and-romania-face-off-over-an-ethnic-dispute/>

38 OEC, "Hungary," 2017, <https://oec.world/en/profile/country/hun/>

39 Sorin Melenciuc, "Romania is Hungary's Second-Largest Export Market; Germany, Italy and France Are the Main Destinations of Romanian Exports," Business Review, 27 March 2018, <https://business-review.eu/news/romania-is-hungarys-second-largest-export-market-germany-italy-and-france-are-the-main-destinations-of-romanian-exports-162985>

40 B92, "Serbia Has Many Friends—but Hungary Is Special," 11 September 2017, https://www.b92.net/eng/news/politics.php?yyyy=2017&mm=09&dd=11&nav_id=102285

41 Telegraf, "The Relations between Hungary and Serbia at the Highest Historical Level: Szijjarto Conveyed the Message of Orban to President Vucic," 27 July 2018, <https://www.telegraf.rs/english/2978615-the-relations-between-hungary-and-serbia-at-the-highest-historical-level-szijjarto-conveyed-the-message-of-orban-to-president-vucic-photo>

42 Ana Milošević, "Serbia and Hungary Play Cynical Games with the Past," Balkan Insight, 6 April 2018, <https://balkaninsight.com/2018/04/06/feature-04-05-2018/>

43 About Hungary, "PM Orbán: Hungary Supports Serbia's EU Membership Bid," 16 April 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/pm-orban-hungary-supports-serbias-eu-membership-bid/>

44 About Hungary, "Hungary Backs Serbia for EU Integration," 9 October 2017, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-backs-serbia-for-eu-integration/>

cultural heritage.⁴⁵

Economic ties are equally strong. Hungarian investments in Serbia help the Serbian economy, particularly in the agriculture and food industry. The Hungarian oil company MOL is a major investor in the Serbian fuel market. Bilateral trade between the two sides exceeds USD 2 billion per year. Construction of a section of the Turkish Stream natural gas pipeline traversing the Hungarian-Serbian border is in its early stages. The agreement between the two countries was signed in 2019 and is the result of Hungary's interest in opening a new gas corridor to transport Russian natural gas from Turkey to Hungary.^{46, 47, 48, 49}

Slovenia

Hungary and Slovenia have often been side by side in their post-communist transitions, and they both joined the European Union in 2004. In recent years, relations have become influenced by political interests. Viktor Orban maintains ties with Slovenian right-wing political actors and supports the former prime minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša. Businesses associated with Orban's Fidesz party contribute millions to Slovenian media outlets owned by Janša's right-wing political party, SDS (Slovenska Demokratska Stranka.) SDS returns the favor by supporting Fidesz.^{50, 51} In 2019 a diplomatic incident erupted between the two countries after a Slovenian liberal magazine published a caricature of Orban doing the Nazi salute.^{52, 53, 54}

There are several Slovenian villages on the Hungarian border region and about 7,500 ethnic Hungarians in Slovenia. The border regions on both sides are severely underdeveloped and have higher poverty rates than their respective national averages.⁵⁵ The Hungarian government offers ethnic Hungarians in Slovenia a path to citizenship and invests in Hungarian cultural bodies and media outlets.⁵⁶

Bilateral trade is relatively small. Hungary's exports to Slovenia amount to USD 1.9 billion a year, considerably

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- 45 Government of the Republic of Serbia, "Excellent Relations, Mutual Respect between Serbia, Hungary," 15 April 2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/139868/excellent-relations-mutual-respect-between-serbia-hungary.php%20%20gov%20of%20Serbia%20website%202019>
- 46 Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Hungary Has the Best Relationship With Serbia from Among it [sic] Neighbours," Government of Hungary, 17 October 2017, <https://www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-foreign-affairs-and-trade/news/hungary-has-the-best-relationship-with-serbia-from-among-it-neighbours>
- 47 About Hungary, "Hungary Signs Gas Pipeline Agreement with Serbia," 17 June 2019, <http://abouthungary.hu/news-in-brief/hungary-signs-gas-pipeline-agreement-with-serbia/>
- 48 Government of the Republic of Serbia, "Excellent Relations, Mutual Respect between Serbia, Hungary," 15 April 2019, <https://www.srbija.gov.rs/vest/en/139868/excellent-relations-mutual-respect-between-serbia-hungary.php%20%20gov%20of%20Serbia%20website%202019>
- 49 Olesya Astakhova, "Update 1—TurkStream 2nd Leg to Go Via Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary," Reuters, 26 July 2019, <https://www.reuters.com/article/russia-turkstream-route/update-1-turkstream-2nd-leg-to-go-via-bulgaria-serbia-and-hungary-idUSL8N24R4AU>
- 50 Hungarian Spectrum, "Orbán's Adventures in Slovenia and North Macedonia," 11 February 2020, <https://hungarianspectrum.org/tag/slovenian-hungarian-relations/>
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less than other neighboring countries. Imports from Slovenia to Hungary are even smaller, amounting to slightly below USD 1 billion.⁵⁷

Slovakia

Slovakia and Hungary have had strained relations since the breakup of Czechoslovakia in 1993. In 1999, a full-blown diplomatic crisis erupted when Hungary's president at the time, Laszlo Solyom, was denied entry to Slovakia. Relations have improved in recent years. In 2019, Slovakia's president visited his counterpart in Budapest and emphasized the constructive dialogue, especially regarding national minority communities in Slovakia.^{58, 59} The two countries also have common interests in building an energy corridor and opposing EU migrant quotas. A natural gas pipeline links the two countries and work is being done to connect their electricity grids.^{60, 61, 62}

Slovakia is home to a large Hungarian diaspora population and Hungary provides financial support to an ethnic Hungarian political party that would support Hungarian interests in Slovakia. There is a sizeable Slovak community in southern Hungary. Additionally, many Slovaks live in cheaper areas of rural northern Hungary and commute to work in Slovakia's capital Bratislava.⁶³

Ukraine

There are some 150,000 ethnic Hungarians in Ukraine. In 2014, Hungary demanded autonomy for ethnic Hungarians in Transcarpathia, drawing heavy criticism from Ukraine. Relations took a turn for the worse in 2017 when Ukraine established Ukrainian as the country's official language and essentially banned the use of ethnic languages—particularly Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, and Polish—in the public sphere and secondary schools. In retaliation to the law, Hungary announced that it would block Ukraine's bid to integrate with the European Union and NATO but promised it would lift the veto and provide USD 54 million for border infrastructure development if Ukraine restored the language rights for ethnic Hungarians.^{64, 65, 66, 67}

Another point of contention between that two countries is Hungary's move to give citizenship to ethnic Hungarians who live in neighboring countries. Ukraine does not permit dual citizenship and the Hungarian policy drew anger

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from Kiev.⁶⁸ Despite these tensions, Hungary is signaling that it wants to improve relations with Ukraine and hopes to establish a positive dialogue that will resolve issues related to its ethnic Hungarian minority.^{69, 70}

Police

Two agencies provide law enforcement services in Hungary: The Hungarian National Police (HNP) and the Customs and Finance Guard. The HNP includes the border police and is led by the National Police Commissioner under the Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement. The Customs and Finance Guard is overseen by the Ministry of Finance.⁷¹

The HNP has 42,000 personnel and is tasked with the protection of the public, border protection, and control of border traffic. The Hungarian Border Guard was integrated into the HNP in 2008. The HNP conducts all policing duties within Hungary, including investigations, patrols, antiterrorism activities, traffic control, and border control. The body is divided by county with further subdivisions for regions and towns. The National Police Headquarters is divided into four general directorates for criminal investigations, law enforcement, economic affairs, and protection of dignitaries. The HNP operates the 112 national emergency response system, called the ESR.^{72, 73, 74}

The border guard consists of 3,500 uniformed personnel that operate 67 border police outposts. The border guard is responsible for stopping and investigating illegal migrants. Units are equipped with off-road vehicles, night vision devices, and thermal cameras. Border control duties are coordinated by the General Department of Border Control.^{75, 76} Since 2015, Hungarian soldiers also patrol the borders along with police officers, particularly in the south. Drones and helicopters are deployed in reconnaissance to secure the borders.⁷⁷ Hungary has been a member of Interpol since 1981.⁷⁸

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Military

The Hungarian Defense Forces (HDF) has 25,000 active military personnel and 8,000 reservists. It has been an all-volunteer force since 2004. Hungary plans to have 30,000 soldiers on active duty by 2026. There are also plans to grow the reserve force to 20,000 and establish voluntary regional defense units. Enlisted personnel serve a minimum of three years but can extend to 20 years. Noncommissioned officers begin their careers by attending military technical college; they can serve until the age of 60. Officers must have a college degree; most officers are graduates of the National Defense University.^{79, 80, 81, 82}

With security matters such as illegal migration and terrorism regarded as top priorities, Hungary aims to build the strongest and most effective armed forces in the region.^{83, 84} During the last decade, Hungary has been developing new training, logistics, and leadership systems and building a new Joint Forces Command structure. The Hungarian military has gained considerable experience working with NATO and other forces in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo, and from participating in international military exercises.⁸⁵ In 2019, 2,400 Hungarian troops served in foreign peacekeeping missions.⁸⁶

Hungary's land forces include 30 tanks, 944 armored vehicles, and 33 towed artillery. Hungary recently bought 44 new and 12 used Leopard 2A7 tanks and 24 PZH self-propelled guns from Germany. There are plans to buy Swedish Carl Gustav hand-held antitank weapons. Hungary will start manufacturing infantry small arms with Czech licenses.^{87, 88}

Airpower includes 8 MI-8 and MI-24 attack helicopters, some which were renovated in Russia, 24 other helicopters, 4 transport aircraft, and 12 fighter jets. In recent years, the ministry of defense has acquired Airbus H145M and H225M helicopters, Airbus A319 aircraft, and a Dassault Falcon 7X jet.^{89, 90, 91}

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In 2019, Hungary was Germany's top weapons buyer, spending USD 1.97 billion to upgrade its military. By 2023, Hungary plans to raise the defense spending to 2% of GDP and by 2024 allocate 20% of its defense budget to research and development. Hungary also plans to purchase weapon systems from Turkey, France, and the Czech Republic.^{92, 93}

Cybersecurity

In 2013 Hungary was one of the first countries in Central Europe to adopt a national cybersecurity strategy, based on EU and NATO cybersecurity principles. The government also established a council for coordination of cybersecurity issues at the highest political level. The National Electronic Information Security Authority operates under the Ministry of the Interior and handles the data of central and local government agencies. In 2017, the National University of Public Services set up an academy to support cybersecurity research and experts and improve IT infrastructure.^{94, 95, 96} Hungary is considered among the most cyber-secure countries in Eastern and Central Europe.⁹⁷

Issues Affecting Stability

Hungary has relative political stability with the Fidesz-led government, which controls the media, courts, universities, and scientific research and dominates public discourse. Currently, this political stability is coupled with economic success. The national debt and deficit have dropped, inflation is low, and the unemployment rate is low and continues to drop.^{98, 99} Because of the popularity of Fidesz government and the economic upturn, the political opposition of the fragmented left and center-left has little room for maneuvering. The far-right party Jobbik has toned down its rhetoric and allied with left-wing parties in an effort to diminish Fidesz.^{100, 101}

The transnational center-right European People's Party (EPP), with which Fidesz is aligned at the EU level, has leverage over Orban's government because it contributes heavily to Hungary's infrastructure. The EPP suspended Fidesz's membership in 2019, after the publication of an EU report detailing the regression of the rule of law in Hungary. The suspension means that Orban cannot participate in meetings of EPP leaders ahead of EU summits.^{102, 103}

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Hungary's geographic location makes it attractive to international crime organizations involved in the trafficking of illicit goods such as arms, drugs, and people. These groups control most of the crime in the country, including prostitution, drugs, vehicle theft, and money laundering.¹⁰⁴

Water Security

Hungary is rich in freshwater resources, both surface and groundwater. However, the increase in the demand for water and environmental pollution threatens the quality and availability of clean and safe water. To address these issues, Hungary has adopted a national water strategy to preserve and protect its water resources. Hungary's Great Plain is vulnerable to drought and the chance of recurrent droughts is increasing due to climate change.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁶ Hungary is at a low risk of facing water stress in the future.¹⁰⁷

Outlook

Hungary's ruling Fidesz party is expected to come under pressure both at home and abroad for its controversial policies. In rural areas, Fidesz still maintains strong support, but urban voters are increasingly leaving the party. An EU investigation into Hungary's human rights violations and undemocratic governance is expected to continue. More conflicts are also expected between Fidesz and the EPP. In 2020, an EPP evaluation committee is scheduled to visit Hungary to assess its judicial independence, freedom of expression, corruption, and the situation of refugees. The committee's findings might determine the future of Fidesz in the EPP. Expulsion from the EPP would be a serious blow to Orban and Fidesz.^{108, 109, 110}

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Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 5 | Security, Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. Hungary and Austria collaborate on nuclear energy projects. True False
2. Relations between Hungary and Romania have strained over demands for autonomy from the ethnic Hungarian minority living in Romania. True False
3. Serbia is Hungary's strongest ally in Central Europe. True False
4. The proximity to the Slovakian capital Bratislava has led to a significant increase in the cost of living in northern Hungary. True False
5. Hungarians who live outside Hungary can claim Hungarian citizenship. True False

Hungary in Perspective

Chapter 5 | Security, Assessment Answers

1. False:
Hungary relies heavily on nuclear energy while Austria opposes nuclear energy projects and is determined to remain nuclear-free.
2. True:
The estimated 1.2 million ethnic Hungarians who live in Romania complain of discrimination but the Romanian authorities view their complaints as a provocation to raise the issue of autonomy or reunification with Hungary.
3. True:
Serbia seeks Hungary's support for its bid to join the European Union and Hungary has a vested interest in the large ethnic Hungarian minority living in Serbia.
4. False:
Many Slovaks live in cheaper areas of rural northern Hungary and commute to work in Bratislava.
5. True:
In 2010, the Hungarian Parliament voted to give ethnic Hungarians who live abroad the right to claim Hungarian nationality as second citizenship.

Hungary in Perspective

Further Readings and Resources

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“Hungary’s Extremism May Be Harbinger of Europe’s Political Future.” YouTube video, 9:30. PBS NewsHour. 3 November 2018, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xxkqfClwmos>

“Hungary under Orban.” YouTube video, 17:27. France24 English. 28 May 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V_b0yYJWsKk

“The Rise of the Far-Right in Hungary.” YouTube video, 9:59. Channel 4 News. 27 May 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zxOKZ5sYW18>

“Viktor Orban’s ‘Illiberal Democracy.’” YouTube video, 13:52, BBC Newsnight. 26 April 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QrftUpWOsc>

Hungary in Perspective

Final Assessment

Read the following statements and answer True or False

1. The city of Debrecen was once called Calvinist Rome. True False
2. Air pollution is a serious concern for Hungary. True False
3. Drava, a medieval-era nun whose prayers purportedly saved the city from flooding, is the patron saint of Budapest. True False
4. Transdanubia is Hungary's only bullet train service, connecting Budapest with Vienna and Austria. True False
5. Lángos is a first-century Roman settlement and a UNESCO World Heritage Site located west of Budapest. True False
6. Hungary fought on the side of the Allies during World War II. True False
7. Hungary had a large Jewish minority before World War II. True False
8. Hungary became a communist country shortly after World War II. True False
9. The Hungarian leadership was so fearful of another Soviet invasion into Eastern Europe that it condemned the 1968 uprising in Czechoslovakia. True False
10. Communist Hungary ceased to exist in 1990. True False

11. Far-right political parties and sentiments have been gaining in popularity in Hungary in the last decade. True False
12. Hungary fails to attract foreign investors because of concern over political instability. True False
13. The official currency of Hungary is the euro. Hungary is one of the 19 EU countries that constitute the Eurozone. True False
14. Most of Hungary's oil is imported from Russia. True False
15. Hungary supports Ukraine's accession to the European Union and NATO. True False
16. Hungary is one of the most corrupt countries in the European Union. True False
17. Hungarian paprika is a spice mix made of sundried tomatoes and herbs. True False
18. Pécs is a bird of prey from ancient pagan mythology that serves as Hungary's national symbol. True False
19. The city of Szeged was destroyed by flooding in the 19th century. True False
20. Hungary is one of the fastest-growing EU economies. True False
21. The Magyars are a small Turkic minority that lives near the border with Romania. True False
22. Unicum is Hungary's iconic liqueur, enjoyed as a digestif and aperitif. True False

23. Hungary is one of the few European countries that will suffer from water insecurity in the future. True False
24. Hungary has a three-year mandatory military service for males who reach the age of 18. True False
25. The voting right of Fidesz in the European People's Party has been suspended over Hungary's human rights violations and undemocratic governance. True False

Hungary in Perspective

Final Assessment Answers

1. True:
Debrecen, Hungary's second-largest city, was nicknamed the Calvinist Rome because of its status as a major spiritual center during the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century.
2. True:
Car emissions and electric power plants emit sulfur dioxide into the air by burning high-sulfur coals, diesel, and other sulfur-containing fuels.
3. False:
The Drava is the fourth-largest tributary of the Danube. The river forms the border between Croatia and Hungary before heading back into Croatia to meet the Danube.
4. False:
Transdanubia is a region that lies west of the Danube River and consists of a mixture of lowlands and highlands.
5. False:
Lángos, the best-known fast food in Hungary, is a sweet deep-fried dough that looks like pizza and is served with sour cream, minced garlic sauce, and cheese toppings.
6. False:
Hungary allied with Nazi Germany at the beginning of World War II. In 1941, Hungary declared war on the Soviet Union and entered World War II as Germany's ally against the United States and Britain.
7. True:
Jews have lived in Hungary since the time of the Roman Empire. Before World War II and the Holocaust, there were nearly 825,000 Jews in Hungary.
8. True:
In 1948, communists and social democrats consolidated power under the Soviet occupation, adopted a new constitution, nationalized the industry, collectivized agriculture, and conducted a terror campaign to subdue the population.
9. False:
Hungary came under Moscow's influence so thoroughly in the 1960s that by 1968 it readily participated in the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia and the bloody suppression of the "Prague Spring" revolt.
10. True:
In the autumn of 1989, Hungarian communist rule was dismantled and a transition to a multi-party democracy began. The first free multiparty parliamentary elections took place in 1990.

11. True:
The far-right Jobbik party won seats in the European Parliament in 2009 and the Hungarian legislature in 2010. Since 2010, Hungary has become a haven for aggrieved nationalists from Western Europe and the United States.
12. False:
Hungary is an attractive market for foreign investment because of its geographic location, sound infrastructure, and affordable, educated, and highly skilled labor force.
13. False:
The Hungarian currency is the forint (HUF). The National Bank has the sole authority to issue currency and coins.
14. True:
Despite a temporary closure of the South Stream pipeline in early 2019, Russian oil is likely to remain dominant until Budapest's new energy strategy is implemented.
15. False:
In retaliation for Ukraine's controversial language law that bans the use of ethnic languages, Hungary announced that it would block Ukraine's bids to join the European Union and NATO.
16. True:
In 2019, Hungary ranked 70 out of 180 countries in a global corruption index. The only European country with a lower score was Bulgaria, occupying the 74th place.
17. False:
Paprika is a powder made from a variety of peppers that are harvested and then sorted, toasted, and blended to create different varieties. Paprika is Hungary's national spice.
18. False:
Pécs is Hungary's fifth-largest city. It is rich in Turkish architecture and home to Hungary's earliest university, the University of Pécs, founded in 1367.
19. True:
After the 1879 floods, the city was rebuilt and the main boulevard features the names of Rome, Brussels, Berlin, Paris, London, Moscow, and Vienna, recalling the donations made by the peoples of those cities.
20. True:
Hungary has one of the most developed financial systems in the region. Infrastructure and a legal and regulatory framework give Hungary a favorable environment for sustainable growth.
21. False:
The Magyars were a pagan Finno-Ugric tribe that arose in central Russia and spoke a language that evolved into modern Hungarian, also called Magyar. Hungarians trace their history to the Magyars.

22. True:
Unicum has a bitter, herbal flavor. It is made from a blend of over 40 herbs and spices according to an 18th century recipe from the Imperial Court. It is served in almost every bar, club, and restaurant.
23. False:
Hungary is rich in freshwater resources, both surface and groundwater, and is not likely to face major water stress in the future.
24. False:
In 2004, Hungary abolished mandatory military service. In the all-volunteer armed forces, enlisted personnel serve a minimum of 3 years and can extend to 20 years.
25. True:
Some members of the European People's Party called for the expulsion of Fidesz unless Viktor Orban makes some concessions.