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# Eating

Budapest is currently undergoing something of a restaurant revolution. Stodgy and heavy Hungarian food (p26) is being 'enlightened', brought up to date and rechristened as *kortárs magyar konyha* (modern Hungarian cuisine) at many midrange and upmarket restaurants; judging from the bookings at the establishments serving it, it's here to stay. At the same time, a fair few vegetarian (or partially vegetarian) restaurants have opened up in recent years and more 'regular' restaurants have a greater selection of 'real' vegetarian dishes – not just fried cheese and stuffed mushroom caps. And ethnic food – from Middle Eastern and Greek to takeaway Thai and Chinese – has become very popular. It all makes a very nice change from the not-too-distant days when munching on a cheeseburger at McDonald's was an attractive alternative to tussling with an overcooked *bécsiszelet* (Wiener schnitzel) in yet another smoky *vendéglő* (small restaurant) where the waiters just didn't want to know.

If looking for something cheap and cheerful, international fast-food places abound in Budapest (Oktogon is full of them), but old-style *önkiszolgáló* (self-service restaurants), the mainstay of both white- and blue-collar workers in the old regime are fast disappearing.

More interesting places for local colour and better value in the long run are the wonderful little restaurants called *étkezde*, canteens not unlike British 'cafés' that serve simple dishes that change every day. A meal should easily cost under 1000Ft. You'll find *gyors kínai büfé* (Chinese fast-food 'buffets') serving uninspired but cheap rice and noodle dishes everywhere in Budapest. Traditional coffee houses and newly popular teahouses are primarily known for their teas and coffees, but sometimes serve cakes and light meals as well. These are listed in the Drinking section of the Entertainment chapter.

## Opening Hours & Reservations

Most restaurants are open from 10am or 11am to 11pm or midnight; if there are no times listed under a particular entry in this chapter, you can assume the place will be open between those hours. It's always best to arrive by 9pm or 10pm (at the latest), though, to ensure being served.

It is advisable to book tables at medium-priced to expensive restaurants.

## How Much?

Very roughly, a two-course sit-down meal for one person with a glass of wine or beer for under 2500Ft in Budapest is 'budget' (though you can eat 'cheaply' for less than that), while a 'moderate' meal will cost up to 5000Ft. There's a big jump to an 'expensive' meal (5000Ft to 7500Ft), and 'very expensive' is anything above that. Most restaurants offer a good-value *menü* (set menu) of two or three courses at lunch.

## Tipping

The way you tip in restaurants here is unusual. You never leave the money on the table – this is considered both stupid and rude – but tell the waiter how much you're paying in total. If the bill is, say, 2700Ft, you're paying with a 5000Ft note and you think the waiter deserves a gratuity of around 10%, first ask if service is included (some restaurants add it to the bill automatically, which makes tipping unnecessary). If it isn't, say you're paying 3000Ft or that you want 2000Ft back.

It is not unknown for waiters to try to rip you off once they see you are a foreigner. They may try to bring you an unordered dish or make a 'mistake' when tallying the bill. If you think there's a discrepancy, ask for the menu and check the bill carefully. If you've been taken for more than 15% or 20% of the bill, call for the manager. Otherwise just don't leave a tip.

## Self-Catering

Budapest counts some 20 large food markets, most of them in Pest. They are usually open from 6am or 6.30am to 6pm weekdays and to 2pm on Saturday. Monday is always very quiet (if the market is open at all). Supermarkets and 24-hour shops selling everything from cheese and cold cuts to cigarettes and beer abound on both sides of the Danube. Fresh food is generally sold by weight or by piece (*darab*). When ordering by weight, you specify by kilos or *deka* (decagrams – 50dg is equal to 0.5kg or a little more than 1lb).

### BUDA

One of the largest and most central food markets in Buda is the **Fény utca market** (Map pp218–19; II Fény utca; h 6am–6pm Mon–Fri, 6am–2pm Sat; m M2 Moszkva tér) next to the Mammút shopping mall (p143). **Kaiser's Szupermarket** (Map pp228–9; cnr XI Október 23 utca & XI Bercsényi utca; h 7am–8pm Mon–Fri, 7am–4pm Sat, 8am–3pm Sun; j 4) is a good-sized supermarket south of XI Béla Bartók út, and a shop called **Ezred Nonstop** (Map p220; I Attila utca 57; h 24hr; g 78) is open around the clock.

### PEST

Two of the most central (though not the most colourful or well-stocked) markets are **Rákóczi tér market** (Map pp218–19; VIII Rákóczi tér 8; h 6am–4pm Mon, 6am–6pm Tue–Fri, 6am–1pm Sat; j 4 or 6) and, near V Szabadság tér, **Hold utca market** (Map p222; V Hold utca 11; h 6am–5pm Mon, 6.30am–6pm Tue–Fri, 6.30am–2pm Sat; m M3 Arany János utca).

Large supermarkets are everywhere in Pest, including **Match** (Map p222; VIII Rákóczi út 50; h 6am–9pm Mon–Fri, 7am–8pm Sat, 7am–3pm Sun; m M3 Blaha Lujza tér) facing Blaha Lujza tér, with a **district VI branch** (Map p222; VI Andrassy út 30; h 7am–8pm Mon–Fri, 7am–6pm Sat; m M1 Opera) at the corner with VI Nagymező utca; **Kaiser's Szupermarket** (Map p222; VI Nyugati tér 1-2; h 7am–8pm Mon–Sat, 7am–4pm Sun; m M3 Nyugati pályaudvar), opposite the Nyugati train station; and **Rothschild** (Map p222; XIII Szent István körút 4; h 6am–8pm Mon–Fri, 7am–6pm Sat, 9am–5pm Sun; j 4 or 6), with a good supply of kosher products and a **district VI branch** (Map p222; VI Teréz körút 19; h 24hr; j 4 or 6).

There are nonstop shops open very late or even 24 hours throughout Pest, including the **Nyugati ABC** (Map p222; track 13, Nyugati train station; h 24hr; m M3 Nyugati pályaudvar); the **Keleti Sarok** (Map pp218–19; VIII Baross tér 3; h 6am–midnight; m M2 Keleti pályaudvar) near the Keleti train station; and the **Mini Coop** (Map p222; VI Nagymező utca 60; h 24hr; m M1 Opera).

### BUTTERFLY Map p222

**VI Teréz körút 20; 90Ft per scoop; h 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat; m M1 Oktogon**

This place – and *not* the pastry shop next door, which is called *Vajassütemények boltja* – is the place in Pest for ice cream, as you'll be able to deduce from the queues outside.

### LEHEL CSARNOK Map pp218–19

**Lehel Market; XIII Lehel tér; h 6am–6pm Mon–Fri, 6am–2pm Sat, 6am–1pm Sun; m M3 Lehel tér**

One of Pest's more interesting traditional markets, Lehel Csarnok is housed in a hideous boat-like structure, which was designed by László Rajk, son of the communist minister of the interior executed for 'Titoism' in 1949. This is apparently his revenge.

### MEZES KUCKO Map p222

**Honey Nook; XIII Jászai Mari tér 4; h 10am–6pm Mon–Fri year-round, 9am–1pm Sat Oct–May; j 4 or 6**

The place to go if you've got the urge for something sweet; its nut-and-honey cookies (180Ft per 10dg) are to die for, and the colourful gingerbread hearts (400Ft to 600Ft) make excellent gifts.

### NAGY TAMÁS Map p224

**Big Tom; % 317 4268; V Gerlőczy utca 3; h 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–1pm Sat; m M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér**

Budapest's best cheese shop stocks more than 200 varieties of Hungarian and imported cheeses; ask for the Hungarian *kecskesajt* (goat's cheese) made by an eccentric theatre critic.

## NAGYCSARNOK

Map p224  
Great Market; IX Vámház körút 1-3; h 6am-5pm  
Mon, 6am-6pm Tue-Fri, 6am-2pm Sat; j 47 or 49  
This is Budapest's biggest market, though it has become a bit of a tourist trap since it was renovated for the millicentenary in 1996. Still, plenty of locals head here for fruit and vegetables, deli items, fish and meat. There are good food stalls on the west side of the 3rd level.

## BUDA

Buda can't claim anything close to the same number of restaurants as Pest can but what it does have are high-quality, very atmospheric dining venues. From romantic spots with spectacular views and live piano music up on Castle Hill to the little neighbourhood eateries of Óbuda, so long established they make a cameo in Hungarian literature, restaurants on this side offer great food and romance.

## CASTLE HILL CAFÉ PIERROT

Map p220 Hungarian, International  
% 375 6971; I Fortuna utca 14; soups 990-1190Ft, starters 1590-2980Ft, mains 2690-5890Ft; h 11am-midnight; g 16  
This very stylish and long-established café-cum-bar-cum-restaurant is one of the very few places to be recommended on Castle Hill. The décor is, well – what else? – clownish and there's live piano music nightly. The food is Hungo-hybrid and quite good, and staff are exceptionally friendly.

## RIVALDA

Map p220 International  
% 489 0236; I Színház utca 5-9; starters 975-1800Ft, mains 3000-4500Ft; h 11.30am-11.30pm; g 16  
An international café-restaurant in an old convent next to the National Dance Theatre with some modern Hungarian favourites, Rivalda has a thespian theme and a delightful garden courtyard. This is the second of very few places we'd choose to visit in the generally touristy and expensive Castle District. The menu changes frequently and the wine list is among the best.

## GELLÉRT HILL & THE TABÁN

**ARANYSZARVAS** Map p220 Hungarian  
% 375 6451; I Szarvas tér 1; soups 150-890Ft, starters 1100-2900Ft, mains 2180-3500Ft; h noon-11pm; g 86  
Set in an 18th-century inn literally at the foot of Castle Hill, the 'Golden Stag' serves up – guess what? – game dishes. There's piano music Thursday to Saturday in the evening, and the covered outside terrace in summer, when grills are available, is inviting. Vegetarians will give this place a wide berth and head for nearby Éden.

## ÉDEN

Map p220 Vegetarian  
% 375 7575; I Döbrentei utca 9; soups 590-690Ft, mains 990-1790Ft; h noon-11pm Sun-Thu; g 86  
This place in a mid-18th-century townhouse below Castle Hill must have the classiest location of any vegetarian restaurant anywhere. Seating is in the 1st-floor dining room and, in warmer months, in the pleasant courtyard. Note that Éden is closed on Friday and Saturday.

## MARCELLO

Map pp228-9 Italian  
% 466 6231; XI Bartók Béla út 40; soup 450Ft, pizza & pasta 820-950Ft, mains 1680-2880Ft; h noon-10pm Mon-Sat; j 49  
Popular with students from the nearby university since it was founded some 15 years ago, this father-and-son-owned operation just down the road from XI Gellért tér offers reliable Italian fare at affordable prices. The salad bar (small/large 580/780Ft) is good value and the lasagne (950Ft) almost legendary in these parts.

## TABÁNI TERASZ

Map p220 Hungarian  
% 201 1086; I Apród utca 10; soups & starters 690-890Ft, mains 1850-2750Ft; h 11.30am-midnight; g 86  
This charming terrace restaurant at the foot of Castle Hill is giving the long-established Aranyzarvas (opposite) a run for its money. It's a modern take on the same, with less calorific Hungarian dishes and an excellent wine selection. The candle-lit cellar is a delight in winter.

## VÍZIVÁROS

**KACSA** Map pp218-19 Hungarian  
% 201 9992; II Fő utca 75; soups 450-750Ft, starters 800-2300Ft, mains 1200-3600Ft; h noon-midnight; g 86  
'Duck' is the place to go, well, 'quackers', though you need not restrict yourself to just dishes with a bill (2200Ft to 2800Ft). It's a fairly elegant place, with art on the walls and piano music in the evening so dress appropriately. Fresh ingredients but stuffy service and pricey wines.

## LE JARDIN DE PARIS

Map p220 French  
% 201 0047; II Fő utca 20; soups 900-1900Ft, starters 1500-3000Ft, mains 1950-4650Ft; h noon-midnight; g 86  
A regular haunt of staff from the French Institute across the road (who should know *la cuisine française*), 'The Parisian Garden' is housed in Kapiszatory House, a wonderful old townhouse abutting an ancient castle wall. The back garden ablaze in fairy lights is enchanting in summer. Try the home-made pâtés and the brasserie-style steak and chips.

## MALOMTÓ

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, International  
% 336 1830; II Frankel Leó utca 48; soups 750-1100Ft, starters 1400-2100Ft, mains 2400-4200Ft; h noon-10pm; j 17  
The 'Mill Lake', north of Margit körút and just across from the Lukács Baths, is a welcome arrival, with up-to-date, fresh décor and an inspired menu of modern Hungarian and international – especially game and seafood – dishes, many with an Asian spin. But its major draw is its unique position on the edge of a tiny lake filled with water lilies and croaking green frogs; a seat on the

## TOP FIVE BUDA RESTAURANTS

- Malomtó (left)
- Malignán (p96)
- Kisbuda Gyöngye (p96)
- Tabáni Terasz (left)
- Le Jardin de Paris (left)

terrace in the warmer months is not just recommended it's mandatory.

## MAROS SÖRÖZŐ

Map pp218-19 Slovakian  
% 212 3746; XII Maros utca 16; soups 310-600Ft, starters 650-1450Ft, mains 910-2270Ft; h 11am-11pm; j 61  
This brasserie just northwest of Déli train station serves some of the best (and most generous) Slovakian dishes in town. Try the *sztrapacska* (potato dumplings; 1070Ft) with smoked ham or the beef in red wine with noodles which, of course, must be washed down with Zlatý Bažant (Golden Pheasant) draught beer.

## MARXIM

Map pp218-19 Italian  
% 316 0231; II Kis Rókus utca 23; pizza 590-1250Ft, pasta 620-890Ft; h noon-1am Mon-Thu, noon-2am Fri & Sat, 6pm-1am Sun; m M2  
Moszkva tér  
A short walk (very logically) from Moscow Sq, this odd place is a hangout for teens who have added a layer of their own graffiti to the communist memorabilia and kitsch. OK, we all know Stalin *szuksz*, but it's still a curiosity for those who appreciate the Gulag, Lenin and Red October pizzas and the campy Stalinist décor.

## MONGOLIAN BARBECUE

Map pp218-19 Asian  
% 212 1859; XII Márvány utca 19/a; buffet before 5pm 2590Ft, after 5pm & weekends 4390Ft; h noon-5pm & 6pm-midnight; j 61  
South of Moszkva tér, this restaurant is another one of those all-you-can-eat pseudo-Asian places where you choose the raw ingredients and legions of cooks stir-fry it for you. The difference here is that as much beer and wine as you can sink is included in the price. During summer there's also seating in an attractive, tree-filled courtyard. Don't expect gourmet cuisine but if you're hungry (and thirsty) and skint, head here.

THIS IMAGE  
NOT AVAILABLE  
IN PICK & MIX

## TOP FIVE ASIAN RESTAURANTS

- Seoul House (below)
- Új Lanzhou (below)
- Nefrit (opposite)
- Fuji (opposite)
- Kama Sutra (p113)

### SEOUL HOUSE Map p220 Korean

% 201 9607; I Fő utca 8; soups 400-1000Ft, rice & noodle dishes 2200Ft, mains 2100-2700Ft;

h noon-3pm & 6-11pm Mon-Sat; g 86

This place serves excellent Korean food, from barbecue grills to *kimchi* (pickled spicy cabbage) dishes. Not the most atmospheric place in town and service is rather grim but, well, that makes it all very authentic.

### SZENT JUPÁT

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, Late Night

% 212 2923; II Retek utca 16; soups 360-550Ft, mains 1490-1990Ft; h noon-6am; m M2

Moszkva tér

Szent Júpát is the classic late-night choice for solid Hungarian fare – consider splitting a dish with a friend. It's just north of Moszkva tér and opposite the Fény utca market so within easy striking distance of both Buda and Pest.

### ÚJ LANZHOU Map pp218-19 Chinese

% 201 9247; II Fő utca 71; soups 290-340Ft, starters 390-990Ft, mains 1290-2390Ft; h 11.30am-11pm; g 86

They say that the 'New Lanzhou' is not as authentic as its miniscule sister-restaurant Lanzhou (Map pp218-19; % 314 1080; VIII Luther utca; h 11:30am-11pm; m M2 Keleni pályaudvar) over in Pest, but you could have fooled us. This place is also more stylish and closer to the real world so no doubt it will be a winner.

## ÓBUDA & AQUINCUM

**KÉHLI** Map pp226-7 Hungarian

% 368 0613; III Mókus utca 22; soups 580-880Ft, starters 980-2880Ft, mains 1480-6280Ft; h noon-midnight; g 86

A rustic but stylish place in Óbuda, Kéhlí has some of the best traditional Hungarian food. In fact one of Hungary's best-loved writers, the novelist Gyula Krúdy (1878-1933), who

lived in nearby Dugovits Titusz tér, moonlighted as a restaurant critic and enjoyed Kéhlí's bone marrow on toast (980Ft as a starter – and better than it sounds!) so much he included it in one of his novels.

**KISBUDA GYÖNGYE** Map pp226-7 Hungarian

% 368 6402; III Kenyeres utca 34; soups 880-1180Ft, starters 920-2980Ft, mains 2380-4880Ft; h noon-midnight Mon-Sat; g 60

This is a favourite traditional and very eccentric Hungarian restaurant in Óbuda; the antique-strewn dining room and attentive service manage to create a *fin-de-siècle* atmosphere. Try the excellent goose-liver dishes (around 3400Ft) and more pedestrian things like *csirke paprikás* (chicken paprika; 2380Ft). The roving fiddler sometimes gets in the way; ignore him.

**LEROY CAFÉ** Map pp226-7 International

% 439 1698; III Bécsi út 63; soups 590-890Ft, starters 1280-1780Ft, mains 2150-3750Ft; h 1pm-midnight; g 86

Like the other branches of this ever-expanding chain, including a Pest branch (Map p222; % 411 0915; VI Liszt Ferenc tér 10; h noon-midnight; m M1 Oktogon), this café-restaurant serves international cuisine that is not especially inspired but is of a certain standard – and there just when you've ordered one too many pints of Dreher. Pasta dishes (1550Ft to 2250Ft) are always good blotter. The large terrace fills up (and stays that way) very early in the warm weather.

**MAHARAJA** Map pp226-7 Indian

% 250 7544; III Bécsi út 89-91; starters 450-1500Ft, mains 1500-4000Ft; h noon-11pm; j 17 This Óbuda institution was the first Indian restaurant to open in Budapest. It specialises in northern Indian dishes and has never been the best in town, but it does manage some mean samosas. It recently opened a branch called City Maharaja (Map p222; % 351 1289; VII Csengery utca 24; h noon-11pm; j 4 or 6) in Pest's Erzsébetváros.

**MALIGÁN** Map pp226-7 Hungarian, Wine

% 240 9010; III Lajos utca 38; soups 650-980Ft, starters 1450-1950Ft, mains 1950-3500Ft; h noon-11pm; g 86

No-one but no-one takes their wine as seriously as the folk at Maligán, a fabulous

cellar wine restaurant in Óbuda. It's become a firm favourite, and nothing is more enjoyable than eating course after course of extremely well-prepared modern Hungarian cuisine with 4cL of excellent wine recommended by the waiter-sommelier. Try the tenderloin of *mangalica* (a form of pork; 1950Ft) roasted with morel sauce or sirloin of grey cattle with onion duck-liver ragout (1800Ft). There are regularly scheduled blind wine tastings ([www.malign.hu](http://www.malign.hu)).

**MENNYEI ÍZEK** Map pp226-7 Korean, Chinese

% 388 6430; Pacsirtamező utca 13; dishes 490-990Ft; h noon-9pm; g 86 That's 'Celestial Tastes' to you... This little Korean-Chinese hole in the wall serves excellent and very cheap dishes such as spicy pork with eggplant and lots of the hot pickled cabbage called *kimchi*. It's a great place for refuelling en route to/from Aquincum.

**ROZMARING** Map pp226-7 Hungarian

% 367 1301; III Árpád fejedelem útja 125; soups 690-950Ft, starters 790-1650Ft, mains 1290-3950Ft; h noon-midnight Mon-Sat, noon-9pm Sun; HÉV Tímár utca

You probably wouldn't come all the way up here for the food – it's uninspired Hungarian at best – but the flower-bedecked covered terraces at 'Rosemary' (as in the herb) that look onto the Danube and the western side of Margaret Island (the water tower just visible above the trees) are a delight in summer.

### ÚJ SÍPOS HALÁSZKERT

Map pp226-7 Hungarian

New Piper Fisher's Garden; % 388 8745; III Fő tér 6; soups 950-1950Ft, starters 1200-2100Ft, mains 1650-3300Ft; h noon-midnight; g 86

This lovely, very traditional restaurant in Óbuda faces (and, in the warmer weather, has outside seating in) the district's most beautiful square, which is worth the trip in itself. Try the *halászlé* (fish soup; from 950Ft). Service is very good here.

**WASABI** Map pp226-7 Japanese

% 430 1056; III Szépvölgyi út 15; lunch Mon-Fri 2990Ft, Sat & Sun 3990Ft, dinner daily 3990Ft; h 11am-11pm; g 86 The sushi conveyor belt has finally arrived in Budapest and has headed straight for

Óbuda. There are more than five dozen items to choose from, fish is flown in fresh every other day and the restaurant has minimalist décor and a very cool feel. A winner.

## BUDA HILLS

**ARCADE** Map pp218-19 International

% 225 1969; XII Kiss János altábornagy utca 38; soups 790Ft, starters 850-2450Ft, mains 2690-4990Ft; h noon-4pm & 6pm-midnight Mon-Sat; j 59

This distant (we're talking kilometres here) cousin of Café Kör (p112) in Buda's well-heeled district XII southwest of the Déli train station has superb and very creative international cuisine, a much coveted leafy terrace set between two converging roads and seamless service. Dress up. There's an excellent wine list.

**FUJI** Map p216 Japanese

% 325 7111; II Csátárka út 54; set meals 2500-5800Ft; h noon-11pm; g 29

Above Rózsadomb (the poshest area of Budapest) in district II and on the corner of Zöldlomb utca and Zöldkert út, Fuji is a long way to schlep for sushi, sashimi and sukiyaki. But this is the most authentic Japanese game in town, judging from the repeat clientele who nip in for noodles and more.

**NÁNCSI NÉNI** Hungarian

Auntie Nancy; % 397 2742; II Ördögárok út 80; meals per person about 4000Ft; h noon-11pm; j 56

Auntie Náncsi, any loopy old lady in Hungarian, is a perennial favourite with Hungarians and expats alike and very much of a sound mind. Housed in a wood-panelled cabin in Hűvösvölgy, the restaurant specialises in game in autumn and winter. In summer it's the lighter fare and garden seating that attract.

**NEFRIT** Map pp218-19 Chinese

% 213 9039; XII Apór Vilmos tér; soups & starters 390-1680Ft, mains 1220-2660Ft; h noon-midnight; j 59

This Chinese restaurant housed in a small villa on the way to the Buda Hills is popular with diplomats who like what purports to be authentic Cantonese and Szechuan

cuisines. The dim sum (610Ft to 850Ft), hard to find in Budapest, is acceptable and some of the seafood dishes quite good. Service is particularly prompt.

**REMÍZ** Map p216 Hungarian, International

% 275 1396; II Budakeszi út 5; soups 780-1240Ft, starters 980-2620Ft, mains 1980-3220Ft; h 9am-midnight; j 56

Next to an old tram depot (*remíz*) in the Buda Hills, this virtual institution kitted out in retro décor remains excellent for its grilled dishes, especially the ribs (1980Ft to 2880Ft), competitive prices and verdant garden terrace. The portions are huge and the service is flawless.

## SZÉP ILONA

Map p216 Hungarian, International

% 275 1392; II Budakeszi út 1-3; soups 420-800Ft, starters 600-2210Ft, mains 1000-3470Ft; h 11.30am-10pm; j 56

This old favourite in the Buda Hills and opposite the Remíz is the place to come for heavy, indigenous Hungarian and other dishes at very modest prices. The name refers to the 'Beautiful Helen' of poet Mihály Vörösmarty's ballad who falls in love with a dashing 'hunter' who turns out to be the young king Matthias Corvinus (see p79). It's a sad story.

## CHEAP EATS – BUDA

### DÉLI KINAI GYORSÉTEREM

Map pp218-19 Chinese

% 355 4565; XII Alkotás utca 1/a; starters 140-300Ft, mains 730-1720Ft; h 9am-10.30pm; m M2 Déli pályaudvar

This very cheap Chinese place just opposite the Déli train station is suitable for a last-minute feed before you head off.

### FORTUNA ÖNKISZOLGÁLÓ

Map p220 Hungarian, Self-Service

Fortune Self-Service Restaurant; % 375 2401; I Fortuna utca 4; soups 200-300Ft, mains 500-700Ft; h 11.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri; g 16

You'll find cheap and fast weekday lunches in the Castle District at this place, a very basic but clean and cheerful self-service restaurant. Reach it via the stairs on the left side as you enter the Fortuna Passage.

## GASZTRÓ HÚS-HENTESÁRU

Map pp218-19 Butcher's Shop

% 212 4159; II Margit körút 2; dishes from 250Ft; h 7am-6pm Mon, 6am-7pm Tue-Fri, 6am-1pm Sat; j 4 or 6

Opposite the first stop of trams 4 and 6 on the west side of Margaret Bridge, this place with the unappetising name of Gastro Meat and Butcher Products is a traditional butcher shop also serving cooked sausages and roast chicken, which is common in Hungary.

**IL TRENO** Map pp218-19 Italian

% 356 2846; II Retek utca 12; pizzas 820-1790Ft, pasta 990-1290Ft; h 10.30am-11pm; m M2 Moszkva tér

With a cheap set menu (950Ft), a half-dozen branches throughout the city and a thriving takeaway service (% 814 1414), 'The Train' (its first branch was opposite Déli train station) is one of the most popular pizzerias in town. Seating at this branch is in the neighbouring Trombitás restaurant or, in warmer months, in a positive oasis of a courtyard off busy Moszkva tér.

## ÍZ-É FALODA

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, Self-Service

% 345 4130, 238 0282; II Lövőház utca 12; soups 250-380Ft, mains 320-590Ft; h 11am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat; m M2 Moszkva tér

The 'Drink-Eat Snack Bar' is a clean, modern and cheap self-service place in Fény utca market next to the Mammut shopping mall. It has excellent *főzelék* (see p29) dishes.

## NAGYI PALACSINTÁZÓJA

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, Late Night

Granny's Palacsinta Place; % 201 5321; I Hattyú utca 16; set menus 780-1060Ft; h 24hr; m M2 Moszkva tér

This place, with branches in Buda (Map p220; % 212 4866; I Batthyány tér 5; h 24hr; m M2 Batthyány tér), Óbuda (Map pp226-7; % 212 4866; III Záhony utca 2; h 24hr; g 34) and still another across the river in Pest (Map p224; % 418 0721; V Petőfi Sándor tér 17-19; h 24hr; m M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér) with Internet access does Hungarian pancakes – both savoury (218Ft to 398Ft) and sweet (118Ft to 398Ft) varieties – round the clock. It's always packed.

(Continued on page 111)

(Continued from page 98)

## TOLDI ÉTKEZDE

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, Étkeзде

% 214 3867; I Batthyány utca 14; starters 160-390Ft, mains 689-980Ft; h 11am-4pm Mon-Fri; g 39

This little eatery just west of Fő utca is the place to come if you're in search of Hungarian comfort food at lunchtime (weekdays only). Unusually for this kind of place, there are at least a half-dozen real vegetarian dishes to choose from.

## PEST

Pest offers a much wider range of restaurants than Buda does – especially when it comes to things like ethnic cuisine. Not always as sophisticated as those across the Danube, Pest-side eateries are often more relaxed and (it must be said) hipper.

## INNER TOWN

**BANGKOK HOUSE** Map p224 Thai

% 266 0584; V Só utca 3; soups & Thai salads 550-2250Ft, mains 1450-4550Ft; h noon-11pm; j 47 or 49

Bangkok House is done up in kitsch, Asian-esque décor that recalls takeaway places on any British high street or American strip mall. But the Thai- and Laotian-inspired dishes are acceptable in a city where Southeast Asian restaurants are at a premium, and the staff is friendly. There's a tourist menu (1460Ft) available from noon to 4pm.

**FATÁL** Map p224 Hungarian

% 266 2607; V Váci utca 67; soups 580-890Ft, dishes 1890-2190Ft; h 11.30am-2am; j 47 or 49

This place serves massive Hungarian meals on *fatal* (wooden platters) or in iron cauldrons in three rustic rooms. And follow the rules: bring your appetite and its friends; avoid the noisy backroom; and book in advance.

**KÁROLYI ÉTTEREM** Map p224 Hungarian

% 328 0240; V Károlyi Mihály utca 16; soups 600-650Ft, starters 1050-1800Ft, mains 2450-3350Ft; h 10am-11pm; g 15

This place beckons not so much for the food (though it is decent enough) but for

its location in the renovated Károly Palace (Károlyi Palota) near ELTE university. It has a wonderful terrace in the palace courtyard open in the warmer months and the menu has lots of options for vegetarians.

**KÁRPÁTIA** Map p224 Hungarian

% 317 3596; V Ferenciek tere 7-8; starters 800-2000Ft, mains 2800-5900Ft; h 11am-11pm; m M3 Ferenciek tere

A veritable palace of *fin-de-siècle* design dating back 120 years that has to be seen to be believed, the 'Carpathia' serves almost modern Hungarian and Transylvanian specialities in both its restaurant and cheaper pub, and there is a lovely covered garden terrace. This is the place to hear authentic *csárdás* Gypsy music.

**KÉPÍRÓ** Map p224 French

% 266 0430; V Képiró utca 3; soups 900-1100Ft, starters 1450-2950Ft, mains 2200-3950Ft; h noon-3pm & 6pm-midnight Mon-Fri, 6pm-midnight Sat & Sun; m M3 Kálvin tér

Using the old word for 'painter', this restaurant is one of the more stylishly appointed eateries in town, with provocative frescoes on the walls and canned jazz. The food is French classical (it gets a red Michelin mention), the service professional and there is a decent selection of vegetarian dishes.

**MOMOTARO RAMEN** Map p222 Asian

% 269 2037; V Széchenyi utca 16; noodles 900-1700Ft, mains 1100-2500Ft; h 11am-10pm; g 15

This is a favourite pit stop for noodles – especially the soup variety – when *pálinka* had been a-flowing the night before. But it's also good for dumplings and more substantial dishes, including the odd Szechuan one.

**ÓCEÁN BÁR & GRILL** Map p224 Seafood

% 266 1826; V Petőfi tér 3-5; soups 900-1250Ft, starters 990-2790Ft, mains 2490-5450Ft; h noon-midnight; j 2 or 2/a

We'd like to say this place has made quite a splash in Budapest but we're afraid we'd be arrested by the pun police. Still, it's making waves with its fresher-than-fresh seafood flown in daily from Scandinavia, congenial décor and wonderful fishmonger's/ delicatessen (enter from Régiposta utca; h 10am-9pm). We'll come back for the

curried crabmeat soufflé and the boiled lobster (1990Ft per 100g) but we do wish they'd remove that aquarium. There's a three-course set lunch for 5000Ft.

### SPOON Map p224 International

% 411 0933; off V Vigadó tér; mains 2690-4500Ft; h noon-midnight; j 2 or 2/a  
If you like the idea of dining on the high waters but still remaining tethered to the bank (just in case) Spoon's for you. It serves international cuisine amid bright and breezy surrounds and the choices for vegetarians are great. You can't beat the views of the castle and Chain Bridge. It also does sushi (300Ft to 900Ft), hand rolls (880Ft to 3000Ft) and sashimi (2550Ft to 4800Ft).

### SUSHI AN Map p224 Japanese

% 317 4239; V Harmincad utca 4; sushi per piece 300-600Ft, hand rolls 900-1400Ft, sets 1900-3900Ft; h noon-10pm; m M1/2/3 Deák Ferenc tér  
This tiny sushi bar next to the British embassy in central Pest is great for sushi and sashimi but even better for Japanese sets served with miso soup. But there's not much more room in here than space to swing a cat.

### TAVERNA PIREUS REMBETIKO

Map p224 Greek  
% 266 0292; V Fővám tér 2-3; starters 590-1590Ft, mains 1690-2290Ft; h noon-midnight; j 47 or 49  
Overlooking a patch of green and facing the Great Market Hall, this place serves reasonably priced and pretty authentic Greek fare. Rembetiko is a folk music school and a style of traditional Greek music; there are live performances on Friday and Saturday evening. The courtyard is tempting in summer.

### TRATTORIA TOSCANA Map p224 Italian

% 327 0045; V Belgrád rakpart 13; starters 990-3200Ft, pasta & pizza 1350-2690Ft, mains 1500-3390Ft; h noon-midnight; g 15  
Hard by the Danube, this trattoria serves rustic and very authentic Italian and Tuscan food, including *ribollito alla chiantigiana*, a hearty vegetable soup stewed with *cannellini* (white Tuscan beans) and Parmesan cheese. The focaccia is excellent too.

### VEGETARIUM Map p224 Vegetarian

% 484 0848; V Cukor utca 3; soups & starters 490-760Ft, mains 950-1500Ft; h 11.30am-10pm Mon-Sat; m M3 Ferenciek tere  
A basement restaurant just off Egyetem tér, the Vegetarium, Budapest's (and Hungary's) oldest meat-free restaurant, serves vegetarian and organic food of the old style but there are lots of choices for vegans here too. Set lunch is a snip at just 650Ft.

## NORTHERN INNER TOWN

### CAFÉ KÖR Map p224 International

% 311 0053; V Sas utca 17; salads 730-2110Ft, mains 1590-3190Ft; h 10am-10pm Mon-Sat; g 15  
Just behind the Basilica of St Stephen, the 'Circle Café' is a great place for a light meal at any time, including late breakfast (460Ft to 590Ft). Salads, desserts and daily specials are always recommended, and there are more ambitious three/four-course wine-tasting menus for 4900/6900Ft.

### CAFÉ MOKKA Map p224 International

% 328 0081; V Sas utca 4; soups 890-960Ft, dishes 2450-5950Ft; h noon-midnight; g 15  
The name of the game here is 'ethno-cuisine' (don't know either), with a mish-mash of dishes; you'll virtually need a map and compass to read the menu. But we love the space and the great African theme and there's a good wine list. The three-course set menu (7000Ft) with wine is good value.

### GOVINDA Map p224 Vegetarian

% 269 1625, 473 1309; V Vigyázó Ferenc utca 4; soups 350Ft, dishes 240-450Ft; h noon-9pm Mon-Sat; g 15  
As well as wholesome salads, soups and desserts, Govinda serves up a daily set menu plate (small/large 1280/1600Ft). Run by a Buddhist and blessed by the Dalai Lama when it was first opened, the restaurant is in a basement near Chain Bridge.

### GRESHAM KÁVÉHÁZ International

Map p224  
% 268 5110; Four Seasons Gresham Palace Hotel, V Roosevelt tér 5-6; soup 1200Ft, starters 1600-3200Ft, mains 2600-3900Ft; h 6.30am-11.30pm Mon-Fri, 7am-11.30pm Sat, noon-10pm Sun; j 2 or 2/a  
Hotel coffee shops – even ones that masquerade as proper restaurants and call

themselves PPHRs (popular-priced hotel restaurants) in the hospitality trade – don't usually make the grade as far as we are concerned but this one in a stunning newly renovated hotel is worth its weight in majolica tiles. There's live jazz every Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 7pm.

### IGUANA Map p222 Mexican

% 331 4352; V Zoltán utca 16; starters 430-1590Ft, mains 1890-3990Ft; h 11.30am-12.30am; g 15  
Iguana serves decent-enough Mexican food (not a difficult task in this cantina-free desert of a town), but it's hard to say whether the pull is the chilli (1050Ft to 1490Ft), the enchilada and burrito combination *platos* (2090Ft to 2290Ft) or the frenetic and very boozy 'we-party-every-night-style' atmosphere.

### KAMA SUTRA Map p224 Indian

% 373 0092; V Október 6 utca 19; starters 450-899Ft, mains 1200-2800Ft; h 11am-11pm; g 15  
This new arrival is a welcome one indeed: decent curries and tandoor dishes in up-beat surrounds in the very heart of town. Try the samosas (450Ft) and chicken vindaloo (1600Ft). It's definitely a cut above the usual curry-house atmosphere and the perfect place for a meal before moving on for the evening.

### LA FONTAINE Map p224 French

% 317 3715; V Mérleg utca 10; starters 1190-2990Ft, mains 1990-6990Ft; h noon-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 7-10.30pm daily; g 15  
'The Fountain' is a Parisian-style 'café-théâtre', with more of the former than the latter. The relatively simple brasserie food is good, especially the leg of lamb and the steak *frites*. There is also a much wider choice of fish dishes than one would normally find in such a restaurant.

### LOU LOU Map p224 French

% 312 4505; V Vigyázó Ferenc utca 4; soups 800Ft, starters 1600-2800Ft, mains 2300-4400Ft; h noon-3pm & 7-11pm Mon-Fri, 7-11pm Sat; g 15  
One of the most popular places with expatriate *français* in Budapest is this bistro with excellent daily specials. Two signature dishes are the marinated grilled breast of duck with orange and Arabica coffee sauce (3100Ft) and the rack of lamb with garlic and *haricots verts* (3600Ft).

## TOP FIVE PEST RESTAURANTS

- Óceán Bár & Grill (p111)
- Menza (p114)
- Múzeum (p117)
- Fausto (p115)
- Vörös és Fehér (p118)

### TOM-GEORGE Map p224 International

% 266 3525; V Október 6 utca 8; soups 680-1680Ft, starters 1650-3580Ft, mains 2500-6200Ft; h noon-midnight; g 15  
Let's be honest. What's the point of eating in a place that could be in London or New York when in Budapest? This über-trendy and overdecorated place is the venue of the moment and not an unpleasant spot. It's just that the menu is all over the place – contemporary Hungarian, Argentine steaks (3200Ft to 7600Ft) and sushi (420Ft to 1400Ft) is not fusion it's confusion – and the service is as attitudinous as a film star being IDed. Set lunch is 1350Ft.

## ÚJLIPÓTVÁROS & TERÉZVÁROS

### ALHAMBRA Map p222 Spanish, Moroccan

% 354 1068; VI Jókai tér 3; starters 790-1980Ft, mains 890-2490Ft; h noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 6pm-midnight Sat & Sun; m M1 Oktogon  
This place, which almost certainly has taken inspiration from the celebrated Moro restaurant in London, serves Spanish food with a North African twist as well as straightforward Moroccan dishes such as couscous and tajines. The décor is decidedly more Moorish than the dishes, though, which also include Spanish things like empanadas (790Ft to 890Ft) and paella (2100Ft to 2600Ft). Set midweek lunch is 980Ft.

### ARTICSÓKA Map p222 Mediterranean

% 302 7757; VI Zichy Jenő utca 17; soups 690-1300Ft, starters 1260-2950Ft, mains 2920-6000Ft; h 11am-midnight; m M3 Arany János utca  
Charming Articsóka is tastefully decorated and has an atrium, roof-top terrace and a theatre that can accommodate 100 people. There's live music every second week of the month, and the atmosphere should win a prize. The food is more Hungo-Med than

Italian (but heading in that general direction). Pasta dishes (1400Ft to 2200Ft) are especially recommended.

**FIRKÁSZ** Map pp218-19 Hungarian  
% 450 1118; Tátra utca 18; soups 590-790Ft, starters 1150-1690Ft, mains 1990-3600Ft; h noon-midnight; g 15

Set up by former journalists (the name means 'hack' in Hungarian), Firkász is a retro Hungarian restaurant with lovely old mementos on the walls, excellent home cooking and a great wine list. And you can't beat the location in Újlipótváros. Would that they were all like this...

### MARQUIS DE SALADE

Map p222 International  
% 302 4086; VI Hajós utca 43; soups & salads 800-1700Ft, mains 2500-3400Ft; h 11am-1am; trolleybus 72 or 73

This is a serious hybrid of a place, with dishes from Russia and Azerbaijan as well as Hungary. There are lots of quality vegetarian choices, too, in the basement restaurant. And, by the way, it's not just about *salade*.

**MENZA** Map p222 Hungarian  
% 413 1482; VI Liszt Ferenc ter 2; soups 590-650Ft, starters 990-1390Ft, mains 1390-2790Ft; h 10am-midnight; m M1 Oktogon

On Budapest's most lively square, this up-market Hungarian restaurant takes its name

from the Hungarian for a drab school canteen – something it is anything but. Book a table; it's fabulously stylish and always packed by diners who come for the simply but perfectly cooked Hungarian classics with a modern spin. Weekday two-course set lunches are a snip at 790Ft.

### MÓRI KISVENDÉGLŐ

Map pp218-19 Hungarian Jewish, Étkezde  
% 349 8390; XIII Pozsonyi út 39; dishes 480-1500Ft; h 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, 10am-3pm Fri; trolleybus 76 or 79

Sample some of the best home-cooked Hungarian Jewish food in Budapest at this simple *borozó* (wine bar) and restaurant, a short walk north of Szent István körút. But, as the owner warns our 'dear readers', get here by 3pm if you want to eat the famous *főzelék*.

**MOSSELEN** Map p222 Belgian  
% 452 0535; www.mosselen.hu; XIII Pannónia utca 14; soup 610Ft, starters 1290-2100Ft, mains 1890-3390Ft; h noon-midnight; g 15

This pleasant pub-restaurant in Újlipótváros serves Belgian (and some Hungarian) specialities, including its namesake, mussels, and has a wide selection of Belgian beers, including some of the fruit-flavoured ones. A beer tasting of six costs 1650Ft and there is a good snacks menu (990Ft to 1340Ft).

**OKAY ITALIA** Map p222 Italian  
% 349 2991; XIII Szent István körút 20; pizza 1320-1790Ft, pasta 1460-2290Ft, mains 1680-3050Ft; h 11am-midnight Mon-Fri, noon-midnight Sat & Sun; j 4 or 6

Okay is a perennially popular place run by Italians with a full range of dishes with a nearby branch (Map p222; % 332 6960; V Nyugati tér 6; m M3 Nyugati pályaudvar) that serves just pasta and pizza, which is what most people come for in any case. Both restaurants have terraces.

**PESTI VENDÉGLŐ** Map p224 Hungarian  
% 266 3227; VI Paulay Ede utca 5; soups 350-650Ft, starters 490-1350Ft, mains 1250-1750Ft; h 11am-11pm; m M1/2/3 Deák tér

Here is a great choice for someone trying traditional Hungarian specialities for the first time. This very popular family-run and clean eatery close to Deák tér offers a lighter take on standard Hungarian favourites, and the staff is very welcoming and helpful.

### POZSONYI KISVENDÉGLŐ

Map pp218-19 Hungarian  
% 329 2911; XIII Radnóti Miklós utca 38; soups 350-520Ft, starters 680-850Ft, mains 750-1350Ft; h 11am-midnight; trolleybus 76 or 79

Visit this neighbourhood restaurant on the corner of Pozsonyi út offering the ultimate local experience: gargantuan portions of standard Hungarian favourites, rock-bottom prices and a cast of local characters. There's a bank of tables on the pavement in summer and simple set weekday menus for 550Ft.

### TROFÉA GRILL

Map pp218-19 International, Buffet  
% 270 0366; XIII Visegrádi utca 50/a; lunch/dinner Mon-Thu 2200/3000Ft, lunch & dinner Fri-Sun 3600Ft; h noon-midnight Mon-Fri, 11.30am-midnight Sat, 11.30am-9pm Sun; m M3 Lehel tér  
When you really could eat a horse (which might be there somewhere), head for the Troféa. It's an enormous buffet of more than 100 cold and hot dishes over which diners swarm like bees while being observed by the cooks from their kitchen. Considering there's goose liver and salmon on the table (at least for a while) it's good value.

**VOGUE** Map pp218-19 South Slav  
% 350 7000, 06-30 942 5027; XIII Újpesti alsó rakpart 1; soups 650-1000Ft, starters 700-2000Ft; h 11am-1am; trolleybus 76 & 79

This fine old vessel moored off XIII Szent István Park in Újlipótváros and opposite the eastern side of Margaret Island has fine views south to Margaret and Széchenyi Chain Bridges and – unusually – you can also take in both sides of the river. The food is Serbian and other South Slav – *čevapčići* (spicy meatballs), *pljeskavica* (spicy meat patties) and *ražnjići* (shish kebab) – always grilled and always in large portions.

## ERZSÉBETVÁROS

**AL-AMIR** Map p224 Middle Eastern  
% 352 1422; VII Király utca 17; meze 650-850Ft, mains 1490-2300Ft; h noon-11pm; m M1 Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út

Arguably the most authentic Middle Eastern (in this case, Syrian) place in town and light years from the gyros and falafel places found along the Big Ring Road (p119). Al-Amir too has a window selling takeaway gyros (500Ft) and falafels (450Ft), but we're talking quality here.

**CARMEL PINCE** Map p224 Jewish  
% 322 1834, 342 4585; VII Kazinczy utca 31; soups 380-900Ft, starters 600-2200Ft, mains 1400-3000Ft; h noon-11pm; trolleybus 74

Decidedly *not* kosher – signs outside will warn you of that fact in six living languages – but the 'Carmel Cellar' has authentic Ashkenazi specialities such as gefilte fish (800Ft), *matzo*-ball soup (700Ft) and a *cholent* almost as good as the one Aunt Goldie used to make. There's live *klezmer* music (see p19) on Thursday evening. A three-course tourist menu (1800Ft) is available daily from noon to 6pm.

**FAUSTO** Map p224 Italian  
% 269 6806; VII Dohány utca 5; soups 1300-3300Ft, starters 2400-4200Ft, mains 3200-6400Ft; h noon-3pm & 7pm-11pm Mon-Sat; trolleybus 74

Still the most upmarket (and expensive) Italian restaurant in town, Fausto has brilliant pasta dishes, daily specials and desserts; there are lots of choices for vegetarians. The yellow walls and antique furniture provide an elegant touch and the Italian wine selection is huge. It remains

THIS IMAGE  
NOT AVAILABLE  
IN PICK & MIX

one of the most pleasant dining experiences in Budapest.

### HANNA Map p224 Kosher

% 342 1072; VII Dob utca 35; lunch per person 3000Ft; h 8am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, 8am-10pm Fri, 11am-2pm Sat, 8am-2pm Sun; j 4 or 6  
Housed upstairs in an old school in the Orthodox Synagogue complex, this simple eatery is as soulless as the devil himself, but if you answer to a Higher Authority on matters culinary, it is another option for kosher food at lunchtime only. (On the Sabbath meals are available later but you must pay for them in advance.)

### KINOR DAVID Map p224 Kosher

% 512 8783; VII Dohány utca 10; soup 800-1300Ft, mains 2800-3200Ft; h 11am-11pm Mon-Fri & Sun, noon-2pm Sat; trolleybus 74  
Budapest's largest kosher restaurant, 'David's Harp' is a cut above the usual and serves dinner as well. There are special fish dishes (3000Ft to 4500Ft) and Israeli treats (2600Ft to 3100Ft) as well. Pay in advance for Friday dinner and Saturday lunch.

### MAGDALENA MERLO

Map p222 Hungarian, Italian  
% 322 3278; VII Király utca 59; starters 460-520Ft; mains 1190-2190Ft; h 10am-midnight; j 4 or 6  
This restaurant, conveniently catty-cornered from the Ferenc Liszt Academy of Music, serves an odd mix of Hungarian and Italian dishes. What's more, since it was the Svejik (from Jaroslav Hašek's satirical novel *The Good Soldier Svejk*) for many years it has retained a page of 'nostalgic' Czech and Slovak dishes (895Ft to 1390Ft) for those who can't let go of the memories.

### SHALIMAR Map p222 Indian

% 352 0297; VII Dob utca 50; starters 690-1680Ft, mains 1720-2480Ft; h noon-4pm & 6pm-midnight; j 4 or 6  
Shalimar is a rather tired-looking place serving tandoori, tikka and kebab dishes that taste like they've come via southern Hungary (there's got to be paprika in there somewhere) rather than India, but at least it's a fix when you need it. We're told the chef's from Nepal, which may explain the hybrid tastes. Still the mutton biryani (2480Ft) is a force to be reckoned with and

vegetarian dishes (1050Ft to 1460Ft) are plentiful.

### SPINOZA CAFÉ Map p224 International

% 413 7488; VII Dob utca 15; starters 1190-1490Ft, mains 1590-2990Ft; h 11am-11pm; j 47 or 49  
This very attractive café-restaurant in the Jewish district has become a personal favourite both for meals and as a chill-out zone. The venue includes both an art gallery and theatre, where events take place from May to September, along with a restaurant and coffee house. The food is an unusual (but successful) hybrid of Hungarian, Dutch and Jewish; try the signature chicken with honey and garlic or the roast goose leg with apple and red cabbage. There's live music on Thursday from 7pm.

## JÓZSEFVÁROS & FERENCVÁROS

### BIOPONT Map p222 Vegetarian

% 266 4601; VIII Krúdy utca 7; soups 290Ft, dishes 380-660Ft; h 10am-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-10pm Sat & Sun; j 4 or 6  
In the Darshan Udvar complex (p124), this is a pleasant place for a meatless organic meal, with all dishes available in both full and half-portions. There are also 'bio' sandwiches (320Ft) and pizzas (800Ft to 1290Ft) if you just want a snack. The attached Samadhi Spiritual Centre hosts all sorts of programmes, classes and lectures.

### CSÜLÖK CSÁRDA Map pp218-19 Hungarian

% 210 7897; VIII Berzsenyi utca 4; soups 350-690Ft, starters 790-1500Ft, mains 990-2290Ft; h noon-11pm Mon-Fri, 5-11pm Sat & Sun; m M2 Keleti pályaudvar  
The rough-and-ready 'Pork Knuckle Inn' serves just that and other country specialities in enormous quantities in a cellar restaurant. Slide into one of the wooden booths and order a plate to share before you board your train at the nearby Keleti station.

### FÜLEMÜLE Map p222 Hungarian, Jewish

% 266 7947; VIII Köfaragó utca 5; soups 570-590Ft, starters 790-2700Ft, mains 1300-3700Ft; h noon-11pm; g 7  
This quaint Hungarian restaurant that looks like time stood still just before WWII is

quite a find in deepest Józsefváros and well worth the search. Dishes mingle Hungarian and international tastes with some old-style Jewish favourites.

### MÚZEUM Map p224 Hungarian

% 338 4221, 267 0375; VIII Múzeum körút 12; soups 700-800Ft, starters 1400-3400Ft, mains 2400-4400Ft; h noon-midnight Mon-Sat; j 47 or 49  
This is the place to come if you want to really dine in style. Múzeum is a café-restaurant that is still going strong after more than a century at the same location near the National Museum. The food is excellent and reliable, if not particularly inventive, and there is a good-value, three-course set menu (2600Ft) that is available noon to 4pm.

### PATA NEGRA Map p224 Spanish

% 215 5616; IX Kálvin tér 8; tapas 250-650Ft, plates 500-1200Ft; h 11am-midnight Mon-Wed, 11am-1am Thu & Fri, noon-1am Sat, noon-midnight Sun; m M3 Kálvin tér  
The 'Black Foot' – it's a special kind of Spanish cured ham – is a new cellar-like Spanish tapas bar and restaurant at the (almost) top of trendy Ráday utca. There are good cheese and excellent wine selections, and it's very vegetarian-friendly.

### PINK CADILLAC

Map pp218-19 Italian  
% 216 1412; IX Ráday utca 22; pizzas 720-1890Ft, set menu 2500Ft; h 11am-12.30am Sun-Thu, 11am-1am Fri & Sat; g 15  
More of an upbeat 1950s diner than a pizzeria, the Pink Cadillac still reigns supreme on IX Ráday utca after all this time. If you don't like the surrounds, have it delivered to Paris Texas (that's a pub next door and not some one-horse town in the Lone Star State; p124). There's a set menu for 2500Ft.

### SHIRAZ Map pp218-19 Middle Eastern

% 218 0881; IX Ráday utca 21; starters & salads 750-1450Ft, mains 1400-3200Ft; h noon-midnight; g 15  
A 'Persian' restaurant with carpets and hookahs loaded with apple, peach and strawberry tobacco (990Ft) to lure in the punters. The food is tasty but not particularly substantial and most are stew-like in form and taste.

## TOP FIVE OLD-STYLE HUNGARIAN RESTAURANTS

- Firkász (p114)
- Kéhl (p96)
- Náncsi Néni (p97)
- Kárpátia (p111)
- Móri Kisvendéglő (p114)

### SOUL CAFÉ Map p224 International

% 217 6986; IX Ráday utca 11-13; starters 590-1890Ft, mains 1980-2980Ft; h noon-1am; m M3 Kálvin tér  
One of the better choices along a street full of so-so restaurants and iffy cafés, the Soul has inventive Continental food and décor. You can order anything from a sandwich (850Ft) or a pizza (890Ft to 1500Ft) to a full meal, including many vegetarian dishes (590Ft to 1890Ft). It has a great terrace.

### STEX ALFRED

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, Late Night  
% 318 5716; VIII József körút 55-57; starters 450-1990Ft, mains 950-3000Ft; h 8am-6am; m M3 Ferenc körút  
A big, noisy place that's open almost 24 hours, the Stex is north of the Applied Arts Museum. The menu offers soups, sandwiches, pasta, fish and meat dishes as well as vegetarian choices (750Ft to 890Ft). It transforms into a lively bar late at night. Best of all, there's breakfast (350Ft to 910Ft).

### TAIWAN Map pp228-9 Chinese

% 215 1236; IX Gyáli út 3/b; soups 395-880Ft, mains 960-2250Ft; h noon-midnight; m M3 Nagyvárud tér  
In the same building as the Fortuna Hotel (p164) in south Ferencváros, this mammoth Chinese restaurant (think airline hangar – in red) may seem a long way to go for a bit of rice but it's one of the few places in Budapest that does decent dim sum.

### VÖRÖS POSTAKOCSI

Map p224 Hungarian  
% 217 6756; IX Ráday 15; soups 750-900Ft, starters 990-2190Ft, mains 1590-3600Ft; h 11.30am-midnight; g 15  
What was for over three decades a more than forgettable eatery serving



to 590Ft) and salads (890Ft to 990Ft). There is also a **Northern Inner Town branch** (Map p224; % 332 9348; V Október 6 utca 15; h 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat; g 15) as well as a **Buda branch** (Map pp218-19; % 438 3104; II Retek utca 18; h 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat; m M2 Moszkva tér) behind the Mammut shopping mall.

## FALAFEL FALODA

Map p222 Vegetarian, Israeli  
% 267 9567; VI Paulay Ede utca 53; small/large sandwiches 400/600Ft, salads 520-700Ft; h 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat; trolleybus 70 or 78 This inexpensive place just down from Budapest's theatre district has Israeli-style nosh. You pay a fixed price to stuff a piece of pita bread or fill a plastic container from a great assortment of salads. It also has a good variety of soups (270Ft to 310Ft).

## FŐZELÉK FALÓ

Map p222 Hungarian, Étkezde  
% 266 6398; VI Nagymező utca 18; dishes 280-450Ft; h 9am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10am-7pm Sat; m M1 Opera Some people say that this *étkezde*, which keeps relatively extended hours, is the best in town. It's very convenient to the bars of Liszt Ferenc tér and the music academy, but is always busy and it seems like there's never a place to sit down.

## FRICI PAPA KIFŐZDÉJE

Map p222 Hungarian, Étkezde  
% 351 0197; VI Király utca 55; soups 280-440Ft, mains 430-530Ft; h 11am-9pm Mon-Sat; j 4 or 6 'Papa Frank's Canteen' is larger and more modern than most *étkezde*. Excellent *főzelék* dishes are 290Ft to 340Ft.

## HÁROM TESTVÉR

Map p222 Middle Eastern, Self-Service  
% 342 2377; VII Erzsébet körút 17; salads 350-450Ft, gyros & kebabs 500-900Ft; h 9am-3am; j 4 or 6 Great any time but especially for a late-night snack or post-club bit of blotter, the 'Three Brothers' have branches throughout Pest, including a **Szent István körút branch** (Map p222; % 329 2951; XIII Szent István körút 20-22; h 9am-3am Sun-Wed, 9am-4am Thu, 9am-5am Fri & Sat; j 4 or 6) and a **Teréz körút branch** (Map p222; % 312 5835; VI Teréz körút 60-62; h 9am-3am; j 4 or 6).

## CITY PARK

**BAGOLYVÁR** Map pp218-19 Hungarian  
% 468 3110; XIV Állatkerti út 2; soups 500-880Ft, mains 1330-2400Ft; h noon-11pm; m M1 Hősök tere

With reworked Hungarian classics that make it a winner, the 'Owl's Castle' attracts the Budapest cognoscenti, who leave its sister restaurant next door, Gundel, to the expense-account brigade. It's staffed entirely by women – in the kitchen, at tables and in front of house. (We don't know either.) There's a three-course set menu for 3620Ft.

## HAN KUK GUAN

Map pp218-19 Korean  
% 460 0838; XIV Ilka utca 22; dishes 850-2250Ft; h noon-10pm Mon-Sat; trolleybus 75 or 77 No-one is going to be able to tell you what a Korean joint is doing way out in district XIV southeast of City Park, but who cares? It's about as authentic as you'll find. Try any of the barbecues or the *p'ajon* (green onion pancakes) served with seafood.

## ROBINSON

Map pp218-19 International  
% 422 0222; XIV Városligeti tó; soups 790-890Ft, starters 1990-2890Ft, mains 2790-4800Ft; h noon-4pm & 6pm-midnight; m M1 Hősök tere Inside leafy City Park, Robinson is the place to secure a table on the lakeside terrace on a warm summer's evening. There are excellent starters like sliced goose liver (2890Ft) and homemade venison pâté to begin the dining experience. Mains include *fogas* (Balaton pike-perch; 3790Ft), grilled tuna and smoked duck breast cooked on lava stones.

## CHEAP EATS – PEST

**CENTRAL EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY CAFETERIA** Map p224 Self-Service  
% 327 3000; V Nádor utca 9; soups 190-235Ft, mains 380-495Ft; h 11.30am-4pm Mon-Fri; g 15 The *cafeteria* at the conveniently located Central European University is open to all and also serves pizza (220ft to 250Ft).

## DURCIN

Map p224 Sandwiches  
% 267 9624; VI Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út 7; sandwiches 120-140Ft; h 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat, 8am-noon Sun; m M1/2/3 Deák tér This is the place to go for bite-sized open-face sandwiches as well as soups (510Ft

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IN PICK & MIX

both packaged and baked goods, including excellent cakes. Set lunches are a bargain at 490Ft to 990Ft.

## PREMIER

Map pp218-19 Hungarian, International  
% 342 1768; VI Andrassy út 101; soups 950-1850Ft, starters 1600-3700Ft, mains 2200-4200Ft; h 11am-11pm; m M1 Bajza utca In the hallowed Art Nouveau-influenced halls of the Hungarian Journalists' Association and just far enough from the House of Terror for our comfort, the Premier attracts a motley crew of media types and diplomats from nearby embassies and consulates with its Hungarian comfort food and international dishes. Check out the stained glass.

## VÖRÖS ÉS FEHÉR

Map p222 Hungarian, Wine  
% 413 1545; VI Andrassy út 41; soups 650-950Ft, starters 1450-1950Ft, mains 1650-4300Ft; h 11am-midnight; m M1 Oktogon The 'Red and White' is all about wine – Hungarian to be precise – and here you can order from the top of the shelf by the 0.1L to sip and compare. The menu is brief but has come into its own in recent years. It hasn't eclipsed the wine but it certainly plays a greater role than it did. The pork dishes are superb.

Hungarian stodge and overlooked by all but the bravest or most desperate of diners in Ferencváros has reemerged Phoenix-like as a trendy retro Hungarian restaurant. If you want a take on how modern Hungarians think they used to eat when times were tougher (and less health-conscious), visit the 'Red Postal Coach'.

## ANDRÁSSY ÚT

**GOA** Map p224 International  
% 302 2570; VI Andrassy út 8; soups 850-1150Ft, starters 950-2250Ft, mains 2550-4500Ft; h noon-midnight; m M1 Bajcsy-Zsilinszky út This new, very well-dressed kid on the block is *the* place at the 'mo to be seen to be 'A' (as in list). It's the trendiest place in town and the food is very good. The salads (1450Ft to 2150Ft) are especially recommended.

## NAPFÉNYES ÍZEK

Map pp218-19 Vegetarian  
% 351 5649; VII Rózsa utca 39; soups 450-850Ft, pasta & pizza 1190-1490Ft, mains 1190-1650Ft; h 10am-11pm Mon-Fri, noon-10.30pm Sat & Sun; trolleybus 73 or 76 'Sunny Tastes' is a bit out of the way (unless you're staying near Andrassy út, but the wholesome foods and the speciality cakes are worth the trip out here. There is an organic shop where you can stock up on

**HOLLY** Map p222 Hungarian, Étkezde  
 % 772 0895; cnr VI Jókai utca 24; soups & starters  
 280-380Ft, mains 410-560Ft; h 11.30am-6pm  
 Mon-Thu, 11.30am-4pm Fri; j 4 or 6  
 This very popular new *étkezde* is an excellent place for lunch or an early evening meal. There are daily specials and the menu changes every week.

**KÁDÁR** Map p222 Hungarian, Étkezde  
 % 321 3622; X Klauzál tér 9; soups 400Ft, mains  
 580-1100Ft; h 11.30am-3.30pm Tue-Sat; j 4 or 6  
 Located in the heart of the Jewish district, Kádár is probably the most popular and authentic *étkezde* you will find in town. Unfortunately, it closes for most of the month of August.

**KISHARANG** Map p224 Hungarian, Étkezde  
 % 269 3861; V Október 6 utca 17; soups 145-230Ft,  
 mains 290-850Ft; h 11am-8pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am-  
 4.30pm Sat & Sun; ☞ 15  
 The central 'Little Bell' is an *étkezde* that is on the top of the list with students and staff of the nearby Central European University. The daily specials are something to look forward to and the retro décor is a bit of fun.

**NAGY FAL** Map p224 Chinese  
 % 353 4021; V Nádor utca 20; dishes 410-1595Ft;  
 h 9.30am-10pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-10pm Sat &  
 Sun; ☞ 15  
 This cheap and cheerful Chinese place has a seemingly endless menu of dishes to eat

in or take away. It's all pretty samey stuff but it's a budget Asian option in the heart of town.

**PICK HÁZ** Map p222 Hungarian, Self-Service  
 % 331 7783; V Kossuth Lajos tér 9; sandwiches &  
 salads 140-180Ft, mains 210-580Ft; h 8am-4pm  
 Mon-Fri; m M2 Kossuth Lajos tér  
 Next to M2 Kossuth Lajos tér metro station, this self-service eatery is above the famous salami manufacturer's central showroom, just opposite the Parliament building.

**SOHO PALACSINTABÁR**  
 Map p222 Hungarian  
 VI Nagymező utca 21; pancakes 198-480Ft; h 9am-  
 3am Mon-Wed, 9am Thu-3am Mon; m M1 Opera  
 It may not be as popular as the Nagyi Palacsintázója chain (p98), but the Soho can provide a fix of *palacsinta* (Hungarian-style pancakes) till the wee hours just as effortlessly. Try the more unusual pancake varieties like Mexican. Open non-stop from Thursday to Monday morning.

**SZERÁJ** Map p222 Middle Eastern, Self-Service  
 % 311 6690; XIII Szent István körút 13; salads &  
 meze 200-400Ft, mains 1100-1250Ft; h 9am-5am;  
 j 4 or 6  
 This is a very inexpensive self-service Turkish place for felafels and kebabs (700Ft), with some 10 varieties on offer. Szeráj is open late.

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