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# The Author

## Steve Fallon



Steve made his first visit to Budapest during the early 1980s with three things on his 'to do' list: (1) visit a thermal spa; (2) drink masses of Tokaj wine; and (3) buy some fruit for his friends in Poland whose children, born

under the neofascist regime of General Wojciech Jaruzelski, had never seen (much less tasted) such 'exotics' as bananas. Having accomplished all three, he visited Budapest again and again, moving there in 1992, where he learned to love the Hungarian language, *pálinka* more than Tokaj and very hot thermal water – not necessarily in that order. Now based in London, Steve returns to Budapest regularly for a fix of all three. He has worked on every edition of *Budapest* and *Hungary*.

## STEVE'S TOP BUDAPEST DAY

Let's just say for the sake of argument that I wake up late on my last day in Budapest, work accomplished and conscience (if not head) clear. I skip breakfast and head for the Gellért Baths (p136). After a therapeutic soak and a 15-minute tussle with a mountainous masseur, I hobble across Independence Bridge (p57), glancing up behind me at my best girlfriend, Lady Liberty (p57) holding a palm frond above her head atop Gellért Hill, and jump on tram 2, which runs along the river to Újlipótváros, Budapest's Upper East Side. There's no better place in town than the Móri Kisvendéglő (p114) for some post-party Hungarian soul food. From here it's just a hop, skip and a jump to Margaret Island (p62). I may stroll, I may cycle, I may kip in the sun, but I'm sticking to the beaten track, thank you very much – in this city of passion and pricey real estate, lovers seize every opportunity and, frankly, any bush will do. Afterwards, I need a fix of Art Nouveau/Secessionist architecture and the No 1 metro (the 'little underground') beckons. It's dorky being a trainspotter but, as the Dalai Lama

once told me, 'You only live twice' (or did he say 'thrice?'). Sinuous curves, asymmetrical forms and other bizarre shapes now under my belt, I can think about the really important things – a slice of something sweet at Lukács coffee house (p126), or a sundowner at one of the terrace café-bars on Liszt Ferenc tér (p123). Dinner will be at the Múzeum (p117) next to the National Museum, still my favourite upmarket Hungarian eatery after all these years (1885 – the restaurant, of course – to be precise) and the rest of the evening hopefully debauched at one of the *kertek* (p129) – the 'gardens' (or any outdoor venues) that open at night in the warmer months.

## PHOTOGRAPHER

### Richard Nebesky

Born one snowy night in the grungy Prague suburb of Zizkov – one of the world's most photogenic cities – it was not long after Richard got out of his cot that his father, an avid photo enthusiast, gave him his first point-and-shoot unit. Ever since, the camera was by his side on wander treks, ski adventures, cycling trips and while researching Lonely Planet books around the globe. He has also worked for various magazines and travel guide book publishers, and had plenty of social photography projects.

Photographing Budapest in winter, with regular drizzle and grey skies, was a challenge. Just as well that this imperial city of the former Hungarian empire is full of such wonderfully photogenic structures.

## LONELY PLANET AUTHORS

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