

Chapter 6

Geography of Tourism in Hungary

Katalin Formadi, Peter Mayer and Erzsébet Péntzes

Abstract Tourism as a new discipline emerged in Hungary in the 1960s. Since then different topics have been researched, such as tourist conditions of the Balaton and Danube regions or medical tourism in Hungary. The 1980s was the time of the first comprehensive analysis of natural resources regarding tourism aspect. In the last decade of the twentieth century, some new topics were researched, such as city or rural tourism. The beginning of a new century meant a more interdisciplinary approach to tourism. This chapter presents the natural preconditions for tourism such as relief features, climatic, hydrologic and biographic conditions. Short description allows us to point the most attractive areas of the country in terms of recreation. The special attention is paid to the protected areas existing in Hungary, among them 10 national parks, whose potential concerning the tourist movement and the infrastructure supporting the reception of values is also discussed. The cultural part of tourist values is presented in the most important tourist sites—in this case: World Heritage Sites, culture centres and the most recognizable values represented by museums as a part of tangible heritage and cultural events as the intangible potential. The tourist infrastructure of the country is presented through both transport and sport-recreational and accommodation elements. First element along with the state of transport infrastructure describes hiking trails, cycling routes and winter sports facilities. The accommodation sector situation in the last two decades presents changes in its capacity and spatial differentiation. An important part is the analysis of the contemporary situation of tourist movement in Hungary: domestic and international tourism, seasonality and its regional distribution. In the last part, the main types of tourism such as spa and wellness or rural tourism are described.

K. Formadi · P. Mayer (✉) · E. Péntzes
Department of Tourism, Faculty of Economics, University of Pannonia, Veszprém, Hungary
e-mail: mayer@turizmus.uni-pannon.hu

© Springer International Publishing AG 2017
K. Widawski and J. Wyrzykowski (eds.), *The Geography of Tourism
of Central and Eastern European Countries*, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-42205-3_6

6.1 Geographical Research of Tourism in Hungary, Its Main Research Problems and Topics

Tourism emerged as a new discipline in the 1960s in Hungary. The Hungarian geographical researches turned to the tourism in the second part of the 1960s, after the III. Tourism Colloquium has specified the subjects and research fields of the tourism geography. Some of the researches approached tourism topics from the natural resources and attraction facilities (Pécsi 1967); the others studied the natural and social factors and their impacts in a complex way and analysed the touristic acts divided into regional levels (Kóródi and Somogyi 1968). In the 1970s, the studies went on with the touristic conditions of the Balaton and the Danube Bend, as well as the medical tourism of Hungary. A few dissertations were made in the field of the international and national regional structure of tourism (Aubert 2006). Somogyi (1981, 1987) has made the first comprehensive analysis of the natural resources regarding tourism aspects, and Berényi (1981, 1986) wrote it with the socio-geographical resources and settlements with local communities. The geography of tourism had—following the German schools—a strong regional approach with a lot of encyclopaedic learnings, and the literature in tourism geography was more descriptive than analysing.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the NUTS 4 regions appeared and some paper tried to show up its importance in the tourism development. New topics came up within the social-geography: the city tourism (Michalkó 1999) as well as the rural tourism (Aubert-Szabó 1992) and at the same time, the tourism researches emphasize tourism as an opportunity of the rural development factors (Kollarik 1991).

By joining the EU, Hungary lost its air of mystery as a communist landscape and became friendlier and less dangerous, and therefore, the number of individual travellers grew. The geographical papers and books became much more development-focused than they were before. Every region, touristic region, many cities, small regions and tourism products created their own tourism strategies which were based on tourism researches made by the tourism geographers, too. The interdisciplinarity of tourism has never been so expressed than after 2004.

The main topics of traditional, conventional and modern tourism geography in Hungary are the following:

1. *New topics of geographical researches* in tourism and recreation, studying trends and other fields of studies within tourism, theoretical–methodological issues of modern tourism geography, and geographical approaches of tourism products and phenomena.
2. *Descriptive analysis* of an area from supply and demand point of view: attractions (natural and sociocultural), infra- and suprastructure, socio-economic facts and features. Presents findings of facts and current situations within historical contexts; data of guests' number, overnight stays, activities

and spending. These studies are readings of the current situation and are good basis for the development strategies.

3. *Tourism and quality of life assessment*: these researches are development based, with a strong human–geography outlook. The stakeholders and visitors are analysed group specifically, and it concentrates on the nature–culture–society harmony, with a holistic and multidisciplinary approach. Studies draw up critics and use empirical methods.
4. *Spatial analysis of tourism—from territorial and product aspects*: spatial models of tourism, functional–spatial typology of resorts and destinations, displaying the intensity of tourism, patterns of tourism flows, regional tourism spatial analysis, displaying tourism demand in the country or in regions and destinations.
5. *The tourism in the Euroregion types of cross-border cooperations*: this became a well-studied field of research from the beginning of 1990s. After change in political system in Central and Eastern Europe, the cross-border cooperation was articulated at the borders of Hungary. What kind of new strategies are available for these regions and what are the fields of cooperation, as well as analysis of the success factors, were the topics of the cross-border studies.
6. *Measuring natural, sociocultural and economic impacts of tourism*: tourism needs to consider not only the effective planning but the monitoring and impact assessment as well. The research projects are looking for the answer for “how” considering “what” with the extant theories. Tourism impact assessments analyse the natural, social and economic impacts of certain destinations or products of a destination, e.g. rural tourism in an area. The researchers develop and adapt methods for measuring tourism impacts.
7. *Mapping tourism*: creating thematic maps by publishing the Tourism Atlas of Hungary and other tourism maps which are cartographic representation of spatial organization of tourism and recreation.
8. *Environmental issues and factors of tourism*: since tourism is said to be one of the fastest growing fields of economy, researches tend to reveal the positive and negative impacts of tourism on the natural and sociocultural environments as well. These studies together with the tourism impact assessment examine the environmental–tourism gap and provide solutions and best practices for the sustainable future.
9. *Creating tourism strategies and concepts*: the tourism researchers are ready to assemble the tourism strategies and policies with the help of the former and recent studies.
10. *Tourism product research issues*: health tourism, rural tourism, wine and gastronomic, cultural, MICE and eco-active tourism are the main tourism products to be researched. Studies intent to monitor the market trends, the enterprises’ functions and plays and all stakeholders’ role playing in a tourism product or in a destination.

6.2 Assessment of Conditions and Factors for Tourism Development in Hungary

6.2.1 Localization Preconditions and Factors for Tourism Development

Localization preconditions for tourism include *natural preconditions* and cultural-historical preconditions (man-made) (Mariot 1971).

6.2.1.1 Natural Preconditions for Tourism

Many researches carried out until today to analyse the natural preconditions for tourism showed up a general agreement that natural preconditions have a great influence on the natural potential of an area, thus on tourism as well. Though we know since Porter's famous model (Porter 1990), what argues that the "key" factors of production (or specialized factors) are created, not inherited, the natural preconditions still have great impacts of the socio-economic development so as to tourism.

The natural preconditions as follows: relief features (together with the rocks), climatic, hydrologic and biographic conditions.

As shown in topographic map of Hungary (Fig. 6.1), the country mostly has plains, and mountains can be found only in the middle of Transdanubia (300–



Fig. 6.1 Topographic map of Hungary (Source Cseh Lajos)

600 m) and in the northern part of East Hungary (600–100 m). Most of the country has an elevation of fewer than 200 m. Although Hungary has several moderately high ranges of mountains, those reach heights of 300 m or more cover less than 2% of the country. The highest point in the country is Kékes (1014 m) in the Mátra Mountains north-east of Budapest. The lowest spot is 77.6 m above sea level, located in the south, near Szeged.

Hungary is basically divided into the 7 major geographical areas which vary in relief: the Great Hungarian Plain (Alföld), the Northern Mountains, Transdanubian Hills (Mountains), Little Plain (Kisalföld), Transdanubian Hills (Southern Transdanubia), Mecsek Mountains at Pécs and Alpokalja (literally the foothills of the Alps, Western Transdanubia).

The Great Alföld is the floodplain of the River Tisza and Danube, and it occupies more than the half of the country's territory. The Hungarian plain is mostly for the agriculture, and it has also sandy areas (Kiskunság, Nyírség, Hajdúság), forests, meadows and marshlands. Almost in the middle of the Alföld is found the "Pusztá", a long and uncultivated expanse which is famous for its Hungarian folklore and for being a well-known internationally visited destination.

The Transdanubian Mountains stretch from the west part of Lake Balaton to the Danube Bend near Budapest, where it meets the Northern Mountains. The Northern Mountains lie north of Budapest and run in the north-easterly direction south of the border with Slovakia. The higher ridges, which are mostly forested, were rich in coal and iron deposits but the mining industry was closed in the early 2000s. Mecsek is the southernmost Hungarian Mountain Range, located north from Pécs. There are some interesting basalt hills (monadnocks) in Transdanubia and in the middle of the Northern Mountains, where the basalt made spectacular rock formations. The Limestone Mountains are rich in karst phenomena, caves and karrenfields.

Prominent hydrologic features are the thermal springs and wells all around Hungary. Hungary has a very high geothermic gradient; therefore, it has a large potential for thermal waters. Thermal wells are the remains of natural gas and oil researches, and the thermal springs were known from the roman age. The thermal water is widely used for thermal baths and medical-wellness institutions. Lake Hévíz, the largest bathable thermal lake in the world (47,500 m² in area), is located in Hungary as well. The Lake Cave (Bartlangtó) in Tapolca and the Cave Bath in Miskolctapolca are also notable as being subsurface thermal lakes.

Hungary's two main rivers such as Tisza and Danube are suitable for shipping, and the other affluents and nature courses of rivers (meanders) provide good opportunity for river tourism, kayak, canoe and boat tours (Körös, Hernád, Bodrog, Maros, Zala, Rába, Dráva, etc.). Most part of the rivers is regulated; those remained natural or semi-natural (Dráva, Kis-Duna, Bodrog) are protected and places of ecotourism and birdwatching.

There are five important lakes in Hungary: Lake Fertő (Neusiedler See), 4/5 part shared with Austria, which is rather an eco-active destination with its reedy area, Lake Tisza, Lake Velence and Lake Balaton are all wide-known freshwater summer resorts. The northern third of Lake Tisza belongs to a national park, but the

southern part is available even with motorized boats as well. Smaller reservoirs can be found everywhere in the country, and they are weekend-resort and have only local or regional significance in tourism.

Attractive biographic features are for vast woodland areas mainly in the mountains in Hungary. 19% of Hungary is covered by forests and its proportion is growing. Typical woods are beech on the 600–1000 m regions of the mountains and oak–hornbeam in lower regions. First, pines are artificially planted in Hungary, except in Western Hungary where they are native. Willow, acacias, planes, etc., are the woods of the riverside and the plain forests. These forests are the habitats of mammals and therefore for hunting tourism: deers, wild boars, roes, ducks and geese are the most important fair game animals in Hungary. There are some places in the country where hunting tourism is one of the main tourism products (Gemenc, Gyulaj).

Natural vegetation can be found on a maximum of 9–10% of the whole territory of Hungary because of the human intervention. The vegetation is very rich in species despite the small area and featureless relief of the country (about 2200 species of plants). Hungary, where the climatic conditions are varied, is a meeting point for Atlantic, continental and Mediterranean plant species.

Wetlands, moors, and saline plains are rich in protected flora and fauna. Hungary has 23 Ramsar area (international convention for wetland protection), which are famous for their birds, especially migratory birds and birdwatching facilities (Tatai Lake, Kesznyéten, Kiskunsági Szikes Lakes, Fehértó in Kardoskút, Drava at Szaporca, etc.). During the autumn time, the magnificent sight of the wild geese and herons' migration enthral the visitors in Hortobágy and Tata.

The most attractive areas of Hungary in terms of active recreation are mountain areas (Pilis and Budai Hills around Budapest, Danube Bend, Kőszegi Hills and Balaton Uplands). Among highly attractive areas belong also sparsely populated woodland areas and interesting natural features (Bükk Mountains, Írott-kő, Mátra Mountains, Bakony, Balaton Uplands, Mecsek, etc.) and areas with a lake or water reservoirs (Balaton, Velencei Lake, Lake Tisza, Holt-Tisza at Lakitelek, Deseda, Nyékládháza, etc.).

Located in the northern hemisphere and far from the influence of the large oceans, Hungary has a temperate continental climate, with large differences between summer and winter seasons. Due to the fact that Hungary has a small territory and it has a low level of ventricular configuration, there are no significant differences between the climatic conditions of individual regions. The continental features (more considerable sunshine duration, lower level of cloudiness, larger temperature variation, and less precipitation) grow from the west to the east. The same features grow from the mountains towards the lowland centre of the basin. The most continental region is located in the middle of the Great Plain.

Hungary's annual mean temperature is 8–11 °C, with extremes ranging from about –29 °C in winter to 42 °C in summer. The average temperature of the summer months is around 20 °C, a bit below 0 °C in winter. Average yearly rainfall is 600–800 mm. The western part of the country receives more rain than the eastern part, where severe droughts may occur in summertime. Weather conditions in the

Great Plain can be especially harsh, with hot summers, cold winters, and scant rainfall.

In the south of the area between the Danube and the Tisza rivers, the annual total of sunshine hours is 2100; however, alongside the western border it is only 1700–1800. The annual total of global solar radiation, especially its summer maximum, is favourable for tourism. The highest temperatures are recorded alongside the south-eastern border.

The climate, rocks and soils were favourable for wine growing. There are 22 wine regions in Hungary, and the most famous are Tokaj, Villány and Eger. Wine routes with high-quality services were developed in many wine regions of Hungary in recent years; together they serve the gastronomic experience.

There are several large nature-protected areas that represent a compact complex of nature-oriented preconditions for tourism development. These are areas with high concentration of natural attractive features on the one hand, and on the other hand they are highly homogenous units with common characteristics.

According to the Act on Nature Conservation No. LIII. of 1996, there are four types of protected areas in Hungary on the basis of the extent of the conservation, their aims and their national and international importance (www.termeszetvedelem.hu):

- national park (10),
- landscape protection area (38),
- nature conservation area (160),
- natural monument (1).

There are natural features which are “ex lege” protected by law qualified as nature conservation area: moors and alkaline lakes (Kiskunsági Alkaline Lakes) and qualified as natural monument: kurgans, earth fortifications, springs and sinkholes. All caves are protected by the law in Hungary (more than 3000 caves).

In Hungary, the proportion of the protected natural areas grew to 10.4% of the country’s area (2007), including the registered, “ex lege” protected moors, mires and sodic lakes—9942 ha became protected (Fig. 6.2).

National parks are areas under the strongest protection, areas that are unique either nationally or internationally.

There are 10 national parks in Hungary which are handled by a certain regional national park directorate (Fig. 6.2): Aggtelek (karst and caves), Bükk (karst and forest), Hortobágy (Pusztas and Lake Tisza), Körös-Maros (grasslands, alkaline lakes, meanders and meadows), Kiskunság (sand dunes and alkaline lakes), Duna-Ipoly (mountains and plains), Balaton Uplands (wetlands, forests and grasslands), Duna-Dráva (floodplains), Fertő-Hanság (lakes and moors), and Őrség (forestry and landscape). The national parks protect geological, botanical, zoological and cultural–historical resources. There are 38 landscape-protected areas in Hungary. The most known are Gerecsei, Hollókői, Kelet-Cserhádi, Kelet-Mecseki, Kőszegi, Magas-Bakonyi, Somlói, Mártélyi, Sághegyi, Soproni, Szigetközi, Szatmár-Beregi, Vértesi, Zselici-protected landscape area. Some protected areas are

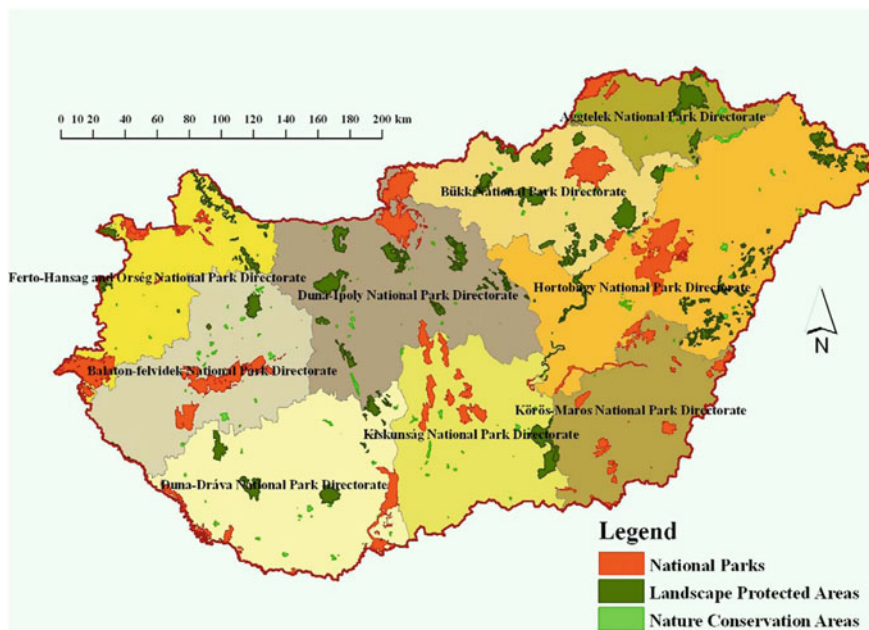


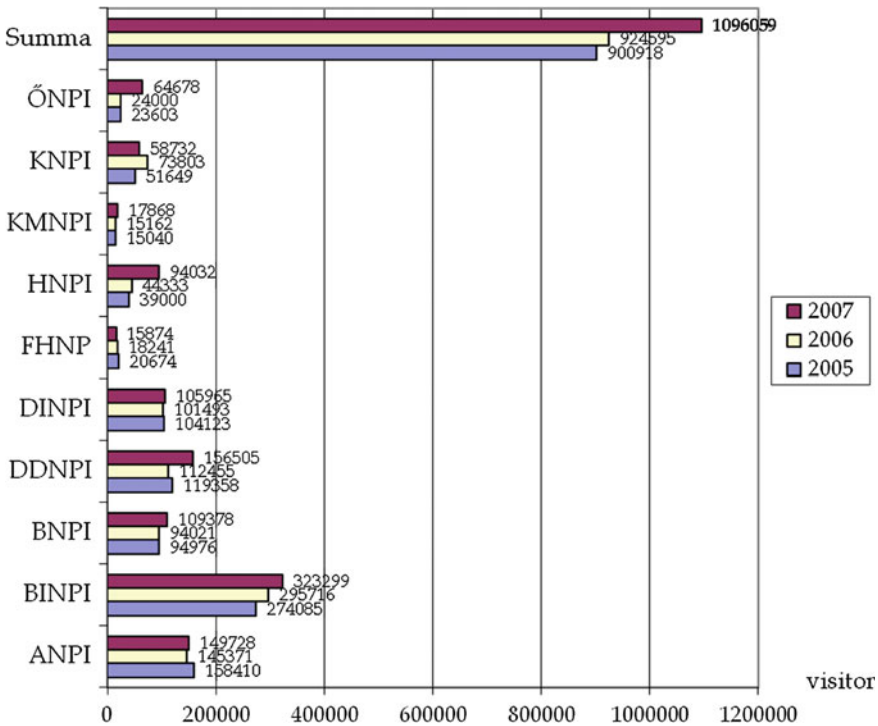
Fig. 6.2 Protected areas of Hungary (Source Erdi et al. 2007)

World Heritage Sites as well: Aggtelek, Hortobágy, Fertő-Hanság National Park, Zempléni Landscape-Protected Area as Tokaj Wine Region.

The protected areas of Hungary, especially the national parks, are the flagships of nature-based tourism in Hungary, especially for ecotourism and nature-based active tourism such as cycling, hiking, trekking, and kayak-canoe touring. The national park directorate has on site and ex site exhibitions, visitor centres, hiking trails and study trails; they are improving their interpretation techniques every year. Since the protected places are mainly on rural areas, the rural tourism and the rural private accommodations can serve the tourism together in these destinations. The World Heritage sites provide information system and other tourism infrastructure for the visitors throughout the year.

All the Hungarian national parks and protected landscape areas are popular among tourist and have recreational use as well. Nevertheless, the attractiveness of the national parks is diverse. The major attractions among the national parks are the Balaton-felvidéki National Park (as very close to the Lake Balaton) and the Aggtelek National Park (the karst formation is also a World Heritage Site) (Fig. 6.3).

Generally, the attractiveness of the National Park is influenced by the character of the landscape, the distance from a big city or touristic region beside of its natural resources. The supply of visitor centres of the Hungarian national parks is listed in



Abbreviations:
 ÖNPI – Őrségi National Park Directorate
 KNPI – Kiskunsági National Park Directorate
 KMNPI –Körös-Maros National Park Directorate
 HNPI – Hortobágyi National Park Directorate
 HNPI – Fertő-Hanság National Park Directorate
 DINPI – Duna-Ipoly National Park Directorate
 DDNPI – Duna-Dráva National Park Directorate
 BNPI – Bükk National Park Directorate
 BFNPI – Balaton-felvidéki National Park Directorate
 ANPI – Aggteleki National Park Directorate

Fig. 6.3 Visitors in Hungarian National Parks (2005–2007) (Source Ministry of Environment and Water 2008)

Table 6.1. It can be stated that the nature trails and caves dominate the natural attractions of Hungary.

6.2.2 Cultural–Historical Preconditions of Tourism

The culture resources play significant role in tourism. The cultural attractions are very diversified due to the complexity of cultural resources. The classification of cultural resources could be related to the nature of it:

Table 6.1 Types of visitor centres

| Various types of visitor centres in the protected areas (listed according to the national parks) | ANPI | BINPI | BNPI | DDNPI | DINPI | FHÓNPI | HNPI | KMNPI | KNPI | Sum |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Visitor centres | 5 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 26 |
| Nature trails | 8 | 11 | 33 | 29 | 13 | 20 | 6 | 5 | 23 | 148 |
| Caves | 6 | 4 | 19 | 3 | 7 | - | - | - | - | 39 |
| Folk/heritage museum | 1 | 1 | 3 | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | 7 |
| Botanic garden | - | 1 | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | 3 |
| Other educational centre (museum) | 2 | 6 | 11 | 3 | - | 3 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 39 |
| Erdei iskola | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | - | 1 | - | 2 | 6 |
| Altogether | 22 | 26 | 69 | 40 | 27 | 27 | 19 | 9 | 30 | 268 |

Source: Ministry of Environment and Water (2008)

- material culture includes the history of art and architecture,
- cognitive culture includes the history of people, land and their language,
- normative culture includes the traditions, the lifestyle (rituals, events) and values of traditional communities.

In a different approach, the cultural attractions are divided into the following groups: cultural–historical sights, culture centres and culture events. In this paper, we shall provide an overview of these latter categories.

6.2.2.1 Cultural–Historical and Heritage Sites

Cultural–historical sites are important evidences of historical development, way of life and the traditional societies. Cultural–historical sites can be divided into three categories: movable sites, immovable sites and set of sites.

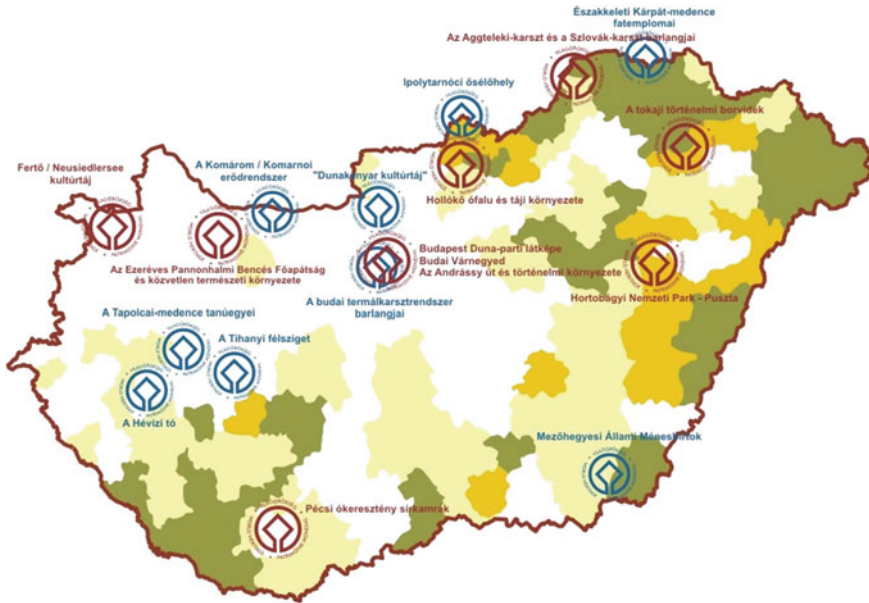
In Hungary, there are more than 700 protected monuments, including castles, mansions, castle and fortress ruins (many of the latter have been or are being renovated). The reconstruction of the most important ones (Csesznek, Csobánc, Diósgyőr, Szécsény, Somló, etc.) had started in 2001–2011 Castle Programme however not finished yet. Lots of them operate as hotel, museum and/or event venue. The architectural sites (immovable) are one of the most important cultural attractions. There are three roman monuments: the ancient city of Aquincum is used to be a military base (castrum), TÁC-Gorsium Open-Air Museum and Archaeological Garden and Villa Farm Romana Baláca and Garden of Ruins. There are several thematic visitor centres; however, the most important once are the Szentendrei Open-Air Museum and Ópusztaszeri Történeti Emlékpark.

The Hungarian traditions also provide potentials for the tourism: the Hungarian folk monuments, riding traditions, folk crafts and the local gastronomy. There are famous folk traditions related to special folk groups (e.g. palóc, matyó, sokác).

There are sites of historical importance that often are sites for an important historical event (e.g. fight of Mohács and Pákozd), historical cities (e.g. Ópusztaszer), birthplace or memorial of an outstanding person (e.g. Széchenyi mausoleum) and other religious sites (e.g. Pannonhalma, Vác). The sites of historical importance play minor role in the tourism offers.

There are thematic routes which related to specific historical or architectural period or to a memorable person (e.g. Baroque Route, Limes-route, Sisi-Path, St. Martin's Route). These routes often exceed the Hungarian borders based on international cooperations. There are more common ways to find religious routes (e.g. pilgrimages, Via Margaritanum).

Internationally, the highest level of protection is devoted to the world heritage sites. In Hungary, 8 sights have been listed among the UNESCO world cultural heritage sights and 10 more are nominated on the world heritage list. The cartogram below shows their geographical distribution around the country (Fig. 6.4 and Table 6.2).



Abbreviations:
 red are the listed ones,
 blue are the nominates
 light-yellow: disadvantaged region
 orange-yellow: very disadvantaged region
 green area: the most deprived regions with state support

Fig. 6.4 Location of the World Heritage Sites and the nominates (*Source* Hungarian Cultural Tourism Strategy 2009)

Table 6.2 World Heritage Sites in Hungary, 2010

| World Heritage Sites | Type of heritage | Year |
|---|------------------------------|------|
| Old Village of Hollókő | Cultural | 1987 |
| Budapest (the Banks of the Danube and the Buda Castle District) | Cultural | 1987 |
| Aggtelek National Park—caves and karstic system | Natural | 1995 |
| Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma | Cultural | 1996 |
| Hortobágy National Park | Cultural landscape | 1999 |
| Early Christian Necropolis/Catacombs in Pécs | Cultural | 2000 |
| Fertő – Neusiedler See | Cultural landscape | 2001 |
| Tokaj-Hegyalja Wine Region | Cultural landscape | 2002 |
| Budapest, Andrassy Avenue | Cultural | 2002 |
| Busó Festivities in Mohács (masked end-of-winter carnival) | Intangible cultural heritage | 2009 |

Source World Heritage Convention (2010)

6.2.2.2 Culture Centres

The second group of cultural–historical potential is represented by culture centres that have represent material, cognitive and normative aspects of culture. This correlates with their character, and they tend to be fixed in time. Culture centres are divided into three categories: museums, galleries and memorials, theatres and observatories and planetariums (Photographs 6.1, 6.2, 6.3 and Table 6.3).

The statistical data show that museums, galleries and memorials belong among the most important culture centres in Hungary. In 2008, there were 666 museums and 3232 exhibitions and they were visited by more than 10.18 million people. In most of the cases, the museums and galleries are situated in big towns and cities. The most important museums are listed in Table 6.4.

From economic point of view or from the point of view of added value generation, theatres occupy the first place among all establishments offering cultural services. There were 54 theatres in 2008 in Hungary, offering about 13,484



Photograph 6.1 Budapest (Source M. Góralewicz-Drozdowska)

Photograph 6.2 Tihany
(Source M. Góralewicz-Drozdowska)



Photograph 6.3 Lutheran Church in Sopron (*Source* M. Góralewicz-Drozdowska)



Table 6.3 Number of museums and their demands

| Year, area | Museum | Exhibition | Visitors (in thousand) | Number of the brochures, publications | Number of the visitors per thousand inhabitant |
|-----------------|--------|------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 2000 | 812 | 2804 | 9895 | 3292 | 987 |
| 2001 | 815 | 2828 | 9663 | 3649 | 947 |
| 2002 | 815 | 2625 | 9775 | 3620 | 962 |
| 2003 | 794 | 2722 | 10,321 | 3164 | 1019 |
| 2004 | 792 | 2756 | 10,744 | 3708 | 1137 |
| 2005 | 772 | 2774 | 11,335 | 3494 | 1139 |
| 2006 | 652 | 2841 | 11,618 | 3519 | 1154 |
| 2007 | 635 | 2886 | 11,175 | 3339 | 1111 |
| 2008 | 666 | 3232 | 10,180 | 3450 | 1014 |
| From it: | | | | | |
| In Budapest | 77 | 564 | 3824 | 1814 | 2242 |
| In other cities | 403 | 2235 | 5032 | 1603 | 986 |
| In villages | 186 | 433 | 1324 | 33 | 410 |

Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2009)

Table 6.4 Most popular museums in 2009 in Hungary

| | Name of the museum | Place |
|-----|--|--------------|
| 1. | Museum of Fine Arts | Budapest |
| 2. | Helikon Castle Museum | Keszthely |
| 3. | Dobó István Museum | Eger |
| 4. | Millenáris Park | Budapest |
| 5. | Hungarian Scientific and Transportation Museum | Budapest |
| 6. | Zilahy Aladár Forestry Museum | Szilvásvárad |
| 7. | Hungarian National Museum | Budapest |
| 8. | Openair Ethnographical Museum | Szentendre |
| 9. | Hungarian Nature History Museum | Budapest |
| 10. | Terror House Museum | Budapest |
| 11. | Hungarian National Gallery | Budapest |
| 12. | Benedictine Abbey Museum | Tihany |
| 13. | Hungarian Jewish Museum and Archive | Budapest |
| 14. | Rákóczi Museum | Sárospatak |
| 15. | Gödöllői Castle Park | Gödöllő |

Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2009)

performances and attracting nearly 4.04 million theatre-lovers. Spatial localization of theatres is closely connected with cities and that is why a vast majority of them are located there: 21 located in Budapest and 33 in other cities and half of the performances were visited in the capital city. There are alternative theatres, in 2007 34 open-air theatres were registered and offered 505 performances in 2007. Altogether with the alternative theatres, the performances are shared according to the following:

- 40% prose,
- 27% puppet and children performances, and
- 23% light opera and musicals.

In Budapest, some of the theatres (Madách Theatre, Operett Theatre) and the Opera House offer performances in foreign languages or subtitle the performances in English. The most known is the MŰPA where concert hall has 1800 seats. Due to the investments, there are more modern cultural halls outside of Budapest, too—in Debrecen, Szeged, Sopron, Hódmezővásárhely.

The performing arts become more trendy and attractive, especially among the city travellers related to the specific locations (former industrial areas), contemporary art institute hosting exhibitions and conferences (e.g. Trafó—house of contemporary art) and creative cultural event (e.g. Placc festival—started as an alternative festival for young architects, various artists and musicians who created new image and interpretation for different sites in Budapest; e.g. garages' doors are decorated differently or the Cinetrip event when a traditional spa hosts an entertaining event) (Fig. 6.5).

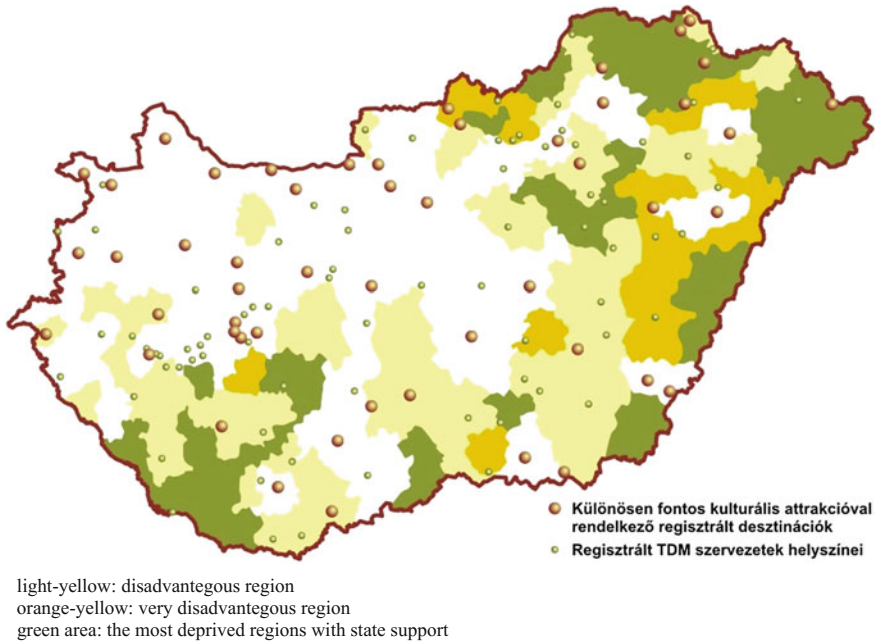


Fig. 6.5 Destinations with cultural attractions (Source Hungarian Cultural Tourism Strategy 2009)

6.2.2.3 Cultural Events

High Culture

The number of cultural events in Hungary is extremely high; however, not all of these are of international importance. Furthermore, the main themes of the events also vary from high arts (classical music, museum art) to folk art, contemporary art and everyday living.

In the high arts domain, there are internationally acknowledged festivals in Hungary. The most important of these is the *Budapest Spring Festival* which has more than 20-year tradition with concerts, operas, operettas and dances, taken place at the end of March every year. Another important festival in Budapest is the *Wagner Day* in June. The *Opera and Ballet Festival* is organized in August in the capital city. In other cities, there are less internationally recognized festivals than in the capital city. Most known festivals are given as follows:

- *The Operafestival* in Miskolc at the beginning of June is the major such event outside of the capital,
- *The Festival of Classical Music* in Kaposvár in August is a successful more recent development, featuring a week of high-quality music performances along with art exhibitions and discussions,

- *Harpfestival* takes place at the Royal Palace in Gödöllő, 30 km from Budapest in October.

Hungary provides the visitor with a wide selection of theatre. There are state-owned and private theatre groupings both in Budapest and in almost all major towns. Three major theatre festivals take place in the country:

- *Open-Air Festival* in Szeged is a recognized summer theatre festival in July, featuring spectacular performances in front of the magnificent cathedral of this South Hungarian city,
- *POSZT* is a one-week meeting place of theatre groups from all over the country as well, as from abroad. It takes place early June in Pécs, the 2010 Cultural Capital of Europe,
- *Deszka* (“Stage”) is a festival of contemporary Hungarian drama in Eastern Hungarian Debrecen in March.

The *Budapest International Film Festival* is a new initiative aimed at widening the scope of the traditional national film festivals.

The major contemporary fine arts festival is the *ArtMarket* in Budapest. The event that takes place in October each year provides an excellent overview of the Central European art scene.

Folk Art

A wide range of folk art events take place throughout the country, ranging from folk dance and folk song performances and festivals to folk art markets offering textiles, pottery wood carving or baskets.

Despite its cosmopolitan urban culture, Budapest also offers folk festivals. The *National Folk Dance Festival and Folk Art Market* is an annual event held in the major stadium of Budapest and attracting over 40,000 visitors.

As in the countryside virtually every village offers folk art events, this experience is present with almost all holidays made in Hungary. The majority of these events are organized around traditional religious or agricultural festivities, such as Easter, harvest or the Advent period. Important festivals in the countryside are given as:

- *Busó Festival* in Mohács, listed as World Intangible Heritage by the UNESCO, is a carnival in February
- *Eastern Festival* in Hollókő, a World Heritage traditional village in the north-east of Hungary, provides insight into the traditions and beliefs of the “Palóc” ethnic group;
- *Kőrös-völgyi sokadalom* in Gyula (in South-East Hungary) early July is a folk dance and folk art festival especially for children;
- *Summerfest International Folklore Festival* in Ráckeve features folk dancers and musicians from over 100 countries;

- *Harvest festivities* in Pannonhalma (location of the well-known World Heritage Benedictine Monastery) are held mid-September and provide folk dance, music and an art market along with wine tasting.

Popular Events

Third-category cultural events are those based on a theme linked to contemporary living. These include a wide range of subjects, targeting diverse segments.

There are Europe-wide acknowledged *pop festivals* in Hungary. The major such event—and one of the largest festivals of the country in general—is the *Sziget Festival* on Budapest's Shipyard Island. With 20+ stages and hundreds of other programmes, this event attracts 400.000 visitors, many of whom arrive from abroad. Recently, this festival has been voted the best European major pop festival. Other festivals include the *Volt* in Sopron, the *Hegyalja* in Tokaj (next to the well-known wine region) and the *Balaton Sound* in Zamárdi. These festivals attract tens of thousands of visitors. A unique experience is the *Valley of Arts*, a 10-day event at the end of July, featuring an interesting mix of world, folk, rock and jazz music, as well as experimental theatre and an arts and crafts market. Interestingly, nowadays the region of 5 villages is also branded as the “Valley of Arts”; thus, this is unique example of an event transforming the image of a place and the identity of the local inhabitants.

Major *children's festivals* are the *Zabhegyező Festival* in Budapest and the *Győrökőc Festival* in Győr. These involve theatre and puppet theatre performances, concerts, art exhibitions and of course many interactive games.

Students' festivals are organized in every major university towns such as *Debrecen*, *Szeged*, *Pécs*, *Veszprém*—and of course in Budapest. Although part of their programmes is internally organized and thus only accessible for students, some spectacular events—opening ceremonies, competitions, etc.,—are organized in open air to be accessible for the wider public.

Gastronomy is a distinctive aspect of culture. Generally, festivals themed with gastronomy are increasingly popular with visitors and they also provide a unique opportunity to funnel economic income from tourism to agriculture and other sectors and thus deepen and widen the economic impact of tourism. Some examples of gastronomic festivals include the following:

- *Sausage Festival* in Békéscsaba, which is a national meeting place for masters of sausage making. This event, taking place at the third weekend of October, attracts approximately 80,000 visitors,
- *Fish soup (Halászlé) Festivals* in Baja (at the Danube) and Szeged (at the Tisza) are popular events, with over 1000 teams cooking various varieties of the traditional Hungarian fish soup on open fire,
- *Ördögkatlan* in Villány is an attractive amalgam of a wine and rock festival in the Villány wine region (known for its heavy dry red wines).

Furthermore, there are hundreds of smaller events themed with local gastronomy, as well as a series of local wine and beer festivals.

6.3 Basic and Secondary Infrastructure of Tourism (Realization Preconditions for Tourism)

Generally, the geographical research highlights the most important segment of tourism infrastructure, and transportation system, the accommodation facilities and the sport-recreational facilities. The following chapter deals with the analysis of spatial localization of the element of tourism infrastructure in Hungary.

6.3.1 Transport and Sport-Recreational Infrastructure

Transport plays a key role in terms of the interrelationship and interconnections that exist with tourism. This chapter provides a quick overview of how the transport infrastructure implicates the tourism in Hungary and what kind of active tourism facilities is attached to the visitors.

6.3.1.1 Transport Infrastructure

The central location of Hungary makes the country the meeting area of the north-west–south-east and the south-west–north-east transport system of Europe. So the transit traffic is considerable. All of the transport modes (surface—road and railway, water and air) have centralized configuration, and the centre is the capital, Budapest. Density of the road transport system is medium compared to the European average. Highways and main roads run mostly parallel with the railways (Fig. 6.6).

Transportation lines run from Budapest radially, heading towards all the regions of Hungary. The Hungarian road infrastructure is currently undergoing major government-supported reconstruction to extend the length of four-lane highways, which currently only cover only a part of the country.

Total public road length is 160,000 km in Hungary today. Though Hungary has some 52% higher density than that of the average of the EU-15 countries, the highway network needs to be developed; those regions which have not got direct connections by a highway are slowly accessible on road.

Seven of Hungary's eight major highways start from Budapest and all of them link up with the European road network. Motorways are marked by "M", and international roads (European transit roads) are marked by "E". Seven of the eight main roads start from Budapest (designated by single digit numbers, running clockwise from the Vienna motorway M1).

Recently, international cooperation has been strengthened with the neighbouring countries to foster this endeavour by harmonizing road network developments. A top priority of the Hungarian government is to further extend and reconstruct the road network in Hungary.

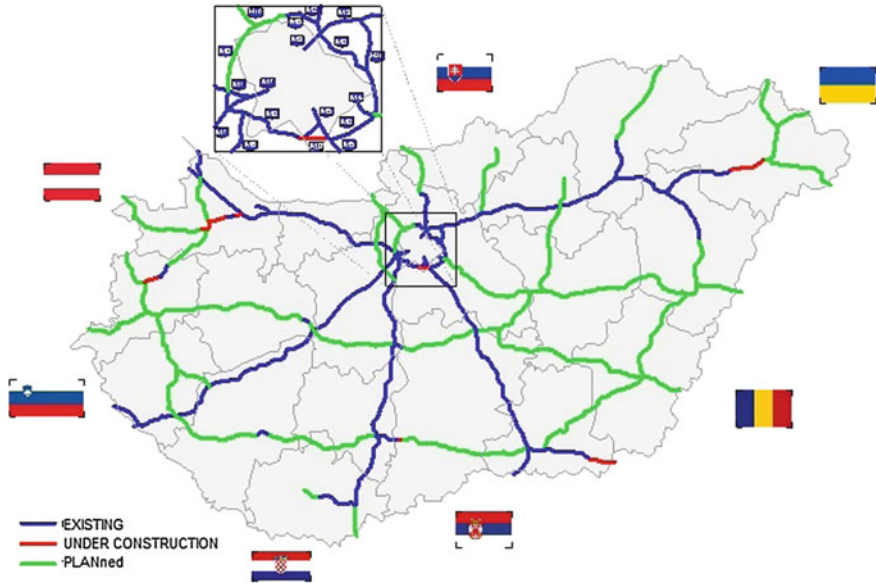


Fig. 6.6 Highway routes in Hungary

This routes network was formed historically together with the railway network. The most developed road lines are the trans-European Helsinki corridors, which run NW-SE, SW-NE, N-S and W-E through the country.

Scheduled coach transport is widely used everywhere, especially in the countryside. Every settlement is accessible by scheduled bus routes which are run by the regional “VOLÁN” coach transport companies.

The Hungarian railroad company is called MÁV-START. Budapest is the centre of the railway network, and 7607-km-long rail routes radiate throughout the country. Faster trains are the Intercity (IC) trains or the express trains. They also have comfortable first-class sections. Local trains go relatively slow, stop at every station and often they only have a second-class compartment.

The suburban lines linking Budapest are very well developed and operate frequently. The lack of diagonal railway lines still hampers direct connections between certain parts of the country and carriers are forced to use longer routes. The railway network covers the whole country, except for peripheral areas. The Hungarian railways need an overall modernization. Settlements without railway are connected to the transport by coaches.

Hungary is landlocked but has access to the Black Sea and the North Sea via the River Danube. Major ports are located in Győr-Gönyű, Budapest, Dunaújváros and Baja. The opening of the Danube-Rhine-Main channel in 1992 made possible the performance of export–import traffic with the countries along the Rhine and the maritime ports in the North, too. Several cruising routes go along the River Danube

between Budapest and Szentendre towards Esztergom, Győr and Vienna and along the lower part of the River Tisza.

The water transport of the Lake Balaton is operated by the local shipping company, and the ferry between Tihany and Zámárdi, Fonyód and Badacsony makes the biggest traffic on the lake. Besides the regular ship services, they provide boat service and ship-charter service, too. The ships for special programmes where customers can find catering services of the highest standard meeting the most demanding requirements are getting more and more popular. The sailing facilities provided by their fleet of ships.

The shipping company runs the largest yacht-port chain, which includes 10 large and 11 other yacht ports (Balatonkenese, Siófok, Balatonfüred, Badacsony, Balatonboglár, etc.).

Hungary has a few domestic and international airports. The largest one is Budapest Liszt Ferenc Airport in Ferihegy. This airport currently operates on three modern terminals (1, 2A and 2B). Budapest is serviced by numerous major international airlines, with significant growth in the charter air service market to closer destinations in the region. Budapest is also accessible by many low-cost airlines as well. Debrecen and Pécs have smaller international airports with regional low-cost carrier flights.

6.3.1.2 Hiking Trails

Hungary has quite extensive and often very beautiful forests within its borders which are a great place to do some hiking. The hiking movements and infrastructure is organized by the Hungarian “Friends of Nature”—Hungarian Rambler’s Association—organization. They maintain the hiking trails, organize hiking events and give the background of the hiking activities in the country. Hungary is wealth of beautiful natural areas, many of which provide excellent opportunities for hiking, the hills are available for anybody and almost all places are allowed to visit except the strongly protected areas. Hungary incorporates a rich diversity of different terrains and landscapes from the hills and mountains in the northern uplands of Hungary, to the flat and low lying ground of the Great Plain that spreads across central and eastern Hungary. The terrain and climate in the forest is really quite pleasant and conducive to hiking.

There are 22,000 km signed hiking trails throughout the country, and the signs are coloured with blue, red, green and yellow. Colours are assigned to hiking trails on the basis of length and difficulty and the shape of the sign shows the other information about the trail (whether if it is a main hiking road or leads directly to the top of a hill or to a cave).

There are very good and detailed hiking maps about the hiking routes of the smaller regions of Hungary (mainly geographical regions such as mountains and hills).

Marked paths with highest density which are very popular hiking places are Budai-Mountains, Pilis, Börzsöny (because the market Budapest is very close),

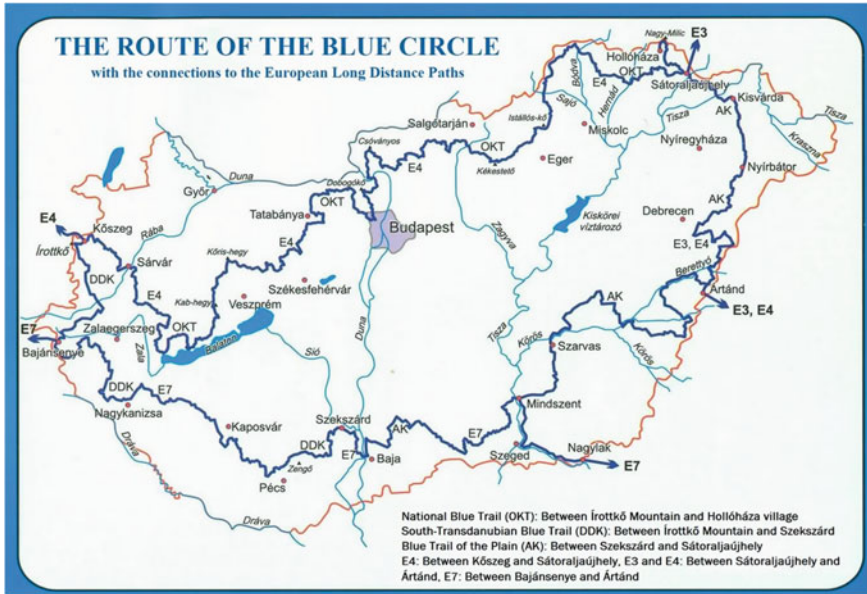


Fig. 6.7 Route of the Blue Circle (*Source* Hungarian Rambler's Association)

Gerecse, Vértes, Bükk, Zemplén, MÁtra, Kőszegi-Mountains, Soproni Mountains, Mecsek.

In the mountains, trekkers can find cheap self-serviced accommodation (“tourist’s houses”), operated by the hiking clubs.

Considering the hiking, Hungary has the oldest long distance path in Europe, which was born in 1938, more than 70 years ago (Fig. 6.7). The long route of the National Blue Trail starts on the 884 m tall peak of Írottó Mountain at the Austrian–Hungarian border and leads to the peak Nagy-Milic at the north-eastern border of Slovakia. Its total length was measured to be 1128.2 km and the total elevation change (climb) was found to be 30,213 m in a Western-Eastern direction over the whole route. The Blue Trail is well maintained and to achieve the whole route has its own hiking campaign.

6.3.1.3 Cycling Routes

Hungary has approximately 2000 km of roads on which cycling is allowed and has more than 2000 km of cycle track which has developed mainly in recent years in response to the increasing demand for cycling tourism. In addition, cycling services have risen to European standards, with repair shops and hotel, camping and catering outlets dotted along some cycle tracks in some destinations (Lake Tisza, Balaton, Lake Fertő, and South Danube Valley). Cycling is now permitted in a number of

hilly and woodland regions, including national parks, but it is important to know that cyclists must keep to marked routes (www.gotohungary.com).

Two international cycling routes lead through Hungary: Eurovelo 6 (Rivers' route, from France and Germany along the Danube) and Eurovelo 11 (comes from the north direction and goes along the Tisza). The Eurovelo 6 route follows the Danube River and is nearly wholly on dedicated cycle paths which are asphalt but sometimes digress on to a few dirt tracks or short stretches or road with little traffic. This easy route goes through Szigetköz with many new good cycling tracks than through the historical towns of Győr and Esztergom. Add to this the rustic, traditional landscapes of fields, vineyards and forests all bordering the large Danube itself and this makes for a relaxing cycle tour.

Since the 1990s, there has been an increasing social demand for a healthy way of life along with an environmental consciousness, so cycling has become part of society's active lifestyle.

Among developments in Hungary, separate mention must be made of the cycle route all the way around the Lake Balaton but the Danube Bend and the Buda hills also offer great opportunities for cycling tours for those who prefer to use their own physical strength.

Bicycles can be transported by train within Hungary for a small surcharge on routes marked by a bicycle icon on the timetable.

The most popular biking route around Lake Balaton is approximately 200 km (Fig. 6.8).

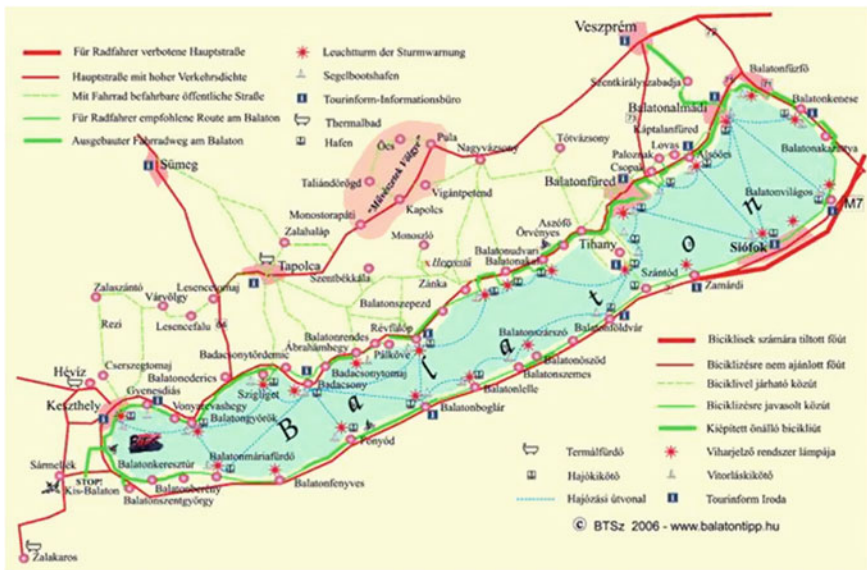


Fig. 6.8 Most popular cycling route at Lake Balaton (Source Balantontipp Strandkalauz)

The lake and its surroundings make up the country's main recreational area and the centre for many of Hungary's mineral-rich-quality white wines. The Balaton region is very health-oriented, so many area hostels and hotels also have bikes for rent. A Balaton cycling guidebook in Hungarian and English covers the region in detail, with info on restaurants and hotels.

Several companies run organized cycling tours around Hungary, including Hooked on cycling. Velo-Touring runs tours in several parts of Hungary, including one that goes from Lake Balaton to the sparsely populated red wine region of Villány, plus a tour covering the whole distance between Budapest and Vienna.

6.3.1.4 Winter Sports Recreation Facilities

Despite that the Hungarian ski areas cannot be compared with the ski resorts of the neighbouring countries, there are some very popular ski slopes visited by thousands of people on winter weekends.

The Hungarian ski association counts nearly 30 ski resorts, but there are only 8–10 places which are with the appropriate infrastructure equipped (lifts, technology for artificial snow making, treatment and lighting of the slopes); the others are with a single-rope tow running up the side. Since the slopes are usually not treated with artificial snow, ski is very weather dependant.

The Mátra ski area has three ski centres equipped with lifts, snowguns and lights: Kékestető, Galyatető, Mátraháza. There are cross-country skiing routes around Galyatető. The 980-metre-long run has a grade difference of 200 m and suitable for ski-running and snowboarding as well. The hotels nearby provide various other opportunities for active resource as well: saunas, fitness centres and wellness programmes are available during the whole year.

The Bükk ski area attracts the neighbouring population of the town Miskolc and Eger. Bánkút ski area located on the highland of the mountains with many but quite short ski slopes. This is a very pleasant area for children and beginners. The Bükk Plateau is an appropriate terrain for cross-country skiing as well, and snow can remain until March.

In the Börzsöny Mountains, you can find Nagy-Hideg-hegy ski centre and on the other side of the Danube is located one of the best developed ski centres Visegrád Nagyvillám. Since there is a large market close to this area, they investigated first to snowguns and other skiing facilities.

6.3.2 Accommodation Facilities

As a result of the collapse of the Berlin Wall and the opening of the Hungarian Borders, tourism in Hungary has undergone fundamental changes at the beginning of the 1990s: the profile of incoming visitors and the major sending markets has changed and new markets showed interest to travel inbound (ex-socialist blocks

intended to travel to the West, beside the German-speaking countries, visitors from Italy, the Netherlands, Japan and USA have increased). These changes have implicated huge investments in the tourism infrastructure which focused on quality instead of mass tourism. New attractions (e.g. festivals) were created and health and convention facilities were opened up.

The accommodation sector has undergone major transformation. First, the privatization process: the former accommodation facilities belonging to trade unions were taken over by national and foreign investors and redeveloped as commercial hotels. Second, many high-quality (4–5 stars) hotels opened due to new investments and reconstruction. Third, new international hotel chains entered the Hungarian market, partly by taking over existing hotel chains (e.g. the Pannonia hotel company's takeover by the Accor group) and partly by purpose-built new developments.

In Hungary, all establishments operated as a business for overnight accommodation and residence, throughout the year or seasonally, authorized by a permit (hotels, pensions or guest houses, tourist hostels, youth hostels, holiday chalets, camping sites) qualify as public accommodation establishments. The criteria for the various types of public accommodation establishments are laid out in decree 45/1998 (24 June).

The capacity and spatial differentiation of accommodation facilities reflects the attractiveness of the Hungarian region. The capacity of Hungarian public accommodation establishments grew significantly since 1990. The output of the Hungarian Statistical Office shows that the number of units had risen by approximately three times and the number of beds by 60% by 2010 (from 927 establishments offering 187,025 beds to 2957 establishments with 311,490 beds). The growth intensity is showed in Fig. 6.9.

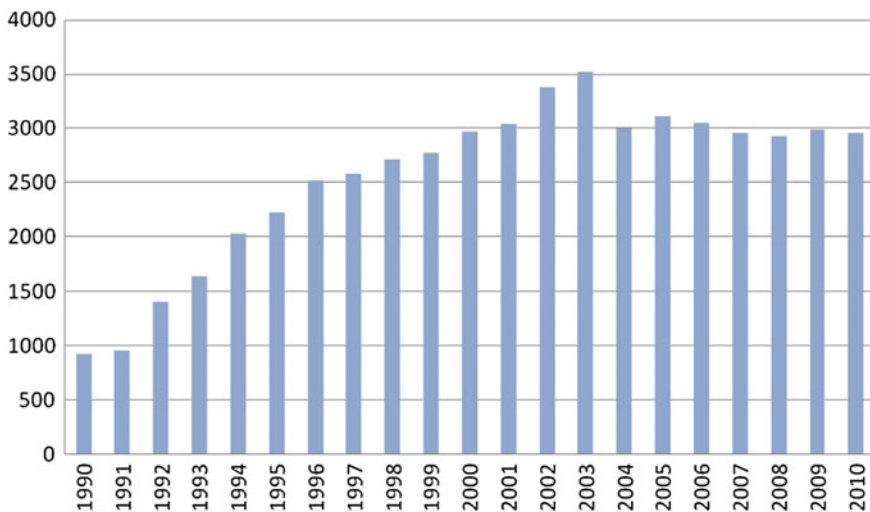


Fig. 6.9 Number of beds in Hungarian collective accommodation facilities between 1990 and 2010 (Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2009)

The number and structure of hotels have changed due to the changes in the political system: the number of one-star hotels drop down (from 122 to 75 units between 1990 and 2002) and the high category hotels grew. The number of four stars hotels rose from 21 to 82 between 1990 and 2002. The 5-star hotels were mainly located in the capital city (10 out of 12 5 star hotels in 2002). The 2- to 3-star hotels' capacities also have risen: the number of 3-star hotels from 83 to 400 and that of the 2-star hotels from 97 to 210.

In 2010, altogether 900 hotels were registered and out of this 169 are spa or wellness hotels. The number of bed and breakfast (pensions) has increased significantly: in 1990, 176 B&B units were run and in 2001 1050 pensions which had grown from 19% to the 35.7% of the total commercial accommodation facilities.

According to latest data from 2010, the number of collective accommodation facilities in Hungary was 2957 with the total capacity 311,490 beds. The proportion of beds in various types of collection accommodation facilities are as follows: 39.7% in hotels and similar establishments (of that 26.5% are in spa or wellness hotels), 12.1% pension (B&B), 20.3% in holiday dwellings and hostels and 27.8% in camping.

Tourist facilities have since the very beginning show a strong geographical concentration: most of the capacity have been concentrated mainly in Budapest (Central Danubia) and in the major tourism destinations such as the Lake Balaton Region (Central Transdanubia), followed by the Western Transdanubia and Southern Transdanubia. The share of each region did not change significantly over the years. In 2010, 14.2% of the Hungarian collective accommodation facilities are located in Budapest, and 28.3% at the Lake Balaton (Fig. 6.10).

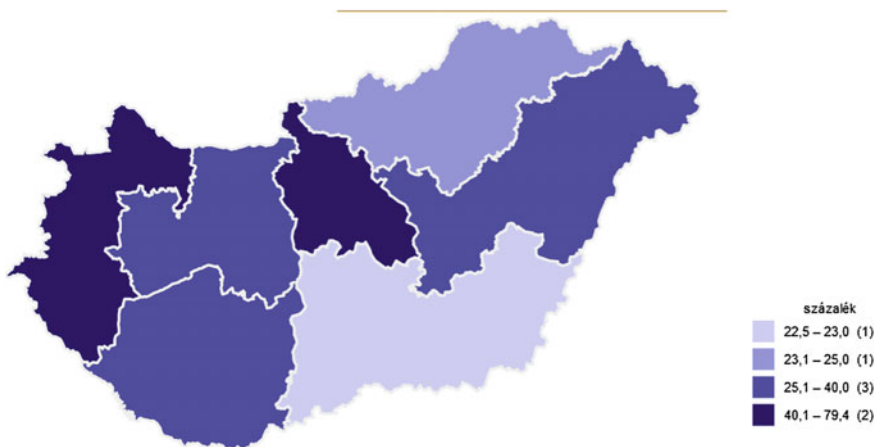


Fig. 6.10 Share of hotels within collective accommodation by regions (*Source* Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016)

The highest share of hotels within the collective accommodations is in Central Danubia (due to Budapest) (79.4%), followed by Western Transdanubia (48.9%). In all other regions, the hotel's share within the collective accommodations is between 22 and 29%.

6.4 Visitors and Number of Visits (Selective Factors of Tourism)

This chapter will discuss the demand for tourism in Hungary, including both domestic tourism and trips of foreigners to the country. It will provide a detailed geographical, seasonal and economic insight into visitor flows.

Generally, the importance of tourism for the Hungarian economy is significant. According to the WTTC (2011), tourism spending directly accounts for 4% of the Hungarian GDP. The overall impact (including supply chain and investment impacts) of tourism is 10.5%.

Much of this income has been generated by foreign visitors to the country, with 59.7% of all direct spending generated by international tourism. Domestic tourism accounts for the rest, 40.3% of all income. In terms of the type of tourism, Hungary is predominantly a leisure market, with 85.7% of all direct spending generated by leisure tourism and only 14.3% accounted to business tourism. Although the latter figures represent the relatively low performance of the Hungarian economy, at the time of economic turmoil this structure seems to exercise a stabilizing effect over the overall economic performance of the tourism sector.

Concerning figures on the number of trips, no reliable overall data exist. Whereas overnight trips are accurately measured by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (HCSO), the scope of one-day trips may only be estimated on the basis of sample-based surveys. Based on these data sources, we can estimate that a total of 137.2 million tourist trips were carried out in Hungary in 2010 (Table 6.5).

6.4.1 Domestic Tourism

*One-day trips*¹ are the most common form of tourism with two-thirds (66.5%) of the Hungarian population participated at least in one such trip in 2010. Those, who did, carried out 12 one-day trips on average during the year—one in each month on average. These figures lead to an estimated 79.2 million domestic day trips annually. These figures mean that although still a substantial portion of the Hungarian

¹Information on one-day trips is stemming from sample-based survey of the Hungarian population. The survey is carried out for times a year by the Hungarian Statistical Office and involves a sample of 7500 persons (15.000 prior to 2008).

Table 6.5 Scope of Hungarian tourism: number of visitor trips in Hungary (million trips)

| | | Trip length | | Total |
|--------|---------------|--------------|----------------|-------|
| | | One-day trip | Overnight trip | |
| Origin | Domestic | 79.2 | 18.1 | 97.3 |
| | International | 30.4 | 9.5 | 39.9 |
| Total | | 109.6 | 27.6 | 137.2 |

Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2016)

population does not travel at all, for those who have been mobile such excursions tend to become a normal component of everyday life.

The most important motivation of taking a one-day trip by far shopping with 42.3% of day-trippers referred to this. The second motivation is visiting friends and relatives (18.3%) followed by city trips (6%), sun-and-beach (5.3%), as well as health reasons (5%).

Overnight trips are considered to be the most important segment of tourism. Due to spending on accommodation, such trips are seen to play a more positive economic impact on destination areas. 34.9% of all Hungarians undertook 18.1 million domestic overnight trips spending at least one night away from home. On these trips, they spent a total of 74.1 million overnights away from home. In the same manner as in the case of one-day trips, we can distinguish between an immobile and a mobile part of the population. Again, those, who travelled, did so 5.2 times on average.

In terms of motivations, more than half (51.7%) of all domestic overnight trips were aiming at visiting friends and relatives. The second most important motivation was relaxation with 38.9%—the majority of these trips were sun-and-beach-type holidays. Other motivations, such as health, other niche leisure activities and work, played secondary role only.

6.4.2 International Tourism

6.4.2.1 One-Day Trips

A total of 39.9 million international visitors have been observed in Hungary in 2010. The majority of them (30.4 million) have made one-day trips. International one-day trips occur as excursions (entering a leaving through the same section of the border) or transit trips (leaving at a different border section than entering). 14.1 million persons (46.3% of one-day visitors) were transit passengers.²

²This figure does not include the number air transit passengers, as they do not enter Hungary administratively.

Due to geographical reasons, the majority of international one-day trips to Hungary are made by residents of neighbouring countries. Clearly, three permissive factors influence the share of generating countries: the length of the borderline between the two countries, the permeability of state borders and geo-location of the other country:

1. Considering the first aspect, the borderline is longest between Hungary and Slovakia (679 km), followed by Romania (453 km), Austria (356 km) and Croatia (355 km). A longer borderline means that the opportunity to visit the other country is economically available to a larger number of residents possibly resulting in more contacts between the two countries.
2. In the second aspect, residents from neighbouring Schengen countries, such as Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia, enjoy the easiest access to Hungary (in fact for them a trip to Hungary is as hassle-free, as a domestic trip). For non-Schengen EU country such as Romania, though there is some control on the border, these formalities are simplified enabling them to travel a “fast lane” as compared to non-EU countries.
3. The third aspect, geo-location, influences whether transit routes lead through Hungary. In this respect, east–west transit routes (along TEN-T IV. corridor from Romania to Austria and Slovakia as well, as IV. and V/c corridor from Serbia to Austria and Slovakia).

As an outcome of these factors, Slovakia is the most important generating county for Hungary on the one-day market with 7.8 million trips in 2010. This is followed by Romania (6.7 million trips) and Austria (5.8 million trips).

One-day trips also occur from non-neighbouring countries, especially by visitors spending their holiday in a neighbouring country and visiting Hungary for one day (excursions) and by transit passengers. In this segment, Poland (1 million trips), Germany (0.9 million trips) and Czech Republic (0.7 million trips) are the most important generating countries.

The motivations of one-day visitors vary. Hungary is visited primarily as a transit country to Western Europe by residents of Romanian, Ukraine and Serbia. Cultural connections stemming from Hungarian minorities living abroad are important motivations in relation to Slovakia, Romania and Serbia. Third, cross-border shopping occurs in all relations, but primarily from Austria and Slovakia due to the favourable Euro/Forint exchange rates since the beginning of the financial crisis.

Although there are no exact and updated figures on motivation, activity and spending of international one-day visitors, we can state that the majority of them only travels through Hungary without significant impact on the tourism sector. In border areas, however, demand from one-day visitors is an important factor of the local economy, especially in the case of basic goods (food, petrol) and of services (gastronomy, leisure, beauty and health).

6.4.2.2 Overnight trips

9.5 million overnight trips have been registered in Hungary in 2010. Five million tourist visited Hungary for a short trip (1–3 nights) and additional 4.5 million for a trip lasting 4+ nights. This figure highlights that international tourism to Hungary fits very well into the European trend of taking more shorter holidays instead of one long summer vacation.

The major generating country in the overnight trip segment for Hungary is Germany with 2.3 million trips per annum (0.8 million short trips and 1.5 million 4+ nights trips). With that, they account for 23.8% of all overnight trips and, what is economically probably even more important, 32.4% of longer trips. Second to Germany is Austria, with 0.98 million trips (of which 0.4 millions are 4+ nights). This is 9.8% of all overnight trips and 9.9% of 4+ night trips. The third rank goes to Romania with 0.96 millions, 9.6% of all overnight trips (but only 0.14 million, or 3.1% of 4+ nights). Significantly generating countries are Slovakia (0.59 millions, 6.2%), Poland (0.56 millions, 5.9%), USA (0.39 millions, 4.1%), UK (0.32 millions, 3.7%) and Czech Republic (0.27 millions, 2.9%). This means that the overwhelming majority of tourists arrive from the Europe (90.1%), and within that from the EU (80.1% of all overnight visitors).

Currently, no exact data on international tourists' motivations exist. From partial research, we can deduct that the majority of these tourists visited Hungary for leisure purposes, only approximately 15% of them for business. Of the leisure tourists city certainly sun-and-beach-type relaxation and also health and wellness motivated form the majority. Second to that is urban tourism (with the key importance of Budapest). Other motivations (e.g. activity or learning) should be considered as niche markets for Hungary (although with great potentials). Important to see that "visiting friends and relatives" is an essential motivation for overnight visitors, as well.

6.4.3 Seasonality

In 2010, a total of 7.5 million tourist arrivals have been registered in Hungarian commercial accommodation units (Fig. 31). As the data show, demand for tourism in Hungary is characterized by medium seasonality. Based on the statistics from the accommodation sector, it is clear that the main season is the summer, with July (1 million arrivals) and August (1.1 million arrivals) being the peak months. A total of 28.1% of all arrivals have been registered during these two months. The concentration of demand occurs due to two main reasons (Fig. 6.11).

First, these months are the warmest and driest, that is, most suitable for tourism. Second, this is the period of summer school vacations in the main countries of origin (Hungary: mid-June to end of August, and Germany: mid-July to

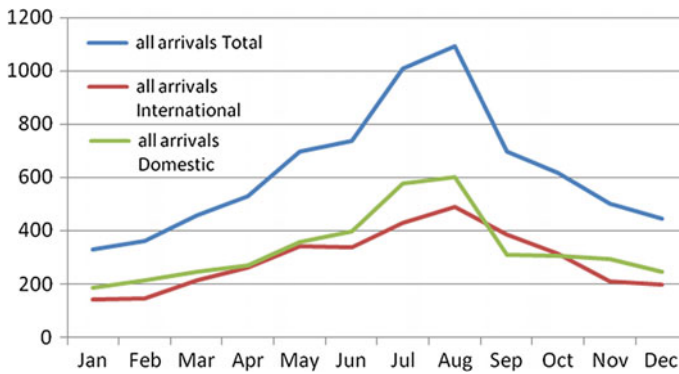


Fig. 6.11 Tourist arrivals in commercial accommodations in Hungary in 2010 (Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016)

mid-September). Demand is the lowest in June (0.32 million arrivals). From here, there is a gradual increase in June (0.73 million arrivals). The summer peak is followed by a rather sharp decline in September (0.69 million) and then a gradual decrease in December (0.44 million arrivals). As of regional differences, Lake Balaton offering sun-and-beach holidays suffers most from seasonality, whereas business tourism provides a solid basis for the accommodation sector in Budapest. Considering the main components of demand, it is obvious that seasonality of domestic tourism is higher than that of international tourism. On the one hand, this is due to the concentration of the school vacations to the summer in Hungary (11 weeks from mid-August to 1 September). On the other hand, culturally the summer holiday is still considered as the only alternative for the main holiday, although the development of a range of wellness facilities nowadays provide the opportunity for water-based holiday throughout the year. From the point of view of tourism supply, it is obvious that during summer seasonally operating units (e.g. campsites) are also open; thus, the capacities offered are also higher.

Not only are there more trips based on the use of commercial accommodation in July and August, but the average length of stay is also longer during these months. January to May and September to December values vary between 2.25 and 2.57 nights. As opposed to this relatively flat section of the graph, July and August outnumber with 3.05 nights each. These figures highlight that not only the quantity but also the quality of trips is different during the summer months. The average length of stay is always higher with international than with domestic tourists, which is what can be expected given the higher costs of access necessary to reach a Hungarian destination from abroad. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the seasonal difference of domestic tourists' average length of stay is higher than that of international tourists. Whereas domestic tourists figure during the low seasons (January to May and September to December) falls within the range 2.11–2.34 to reach

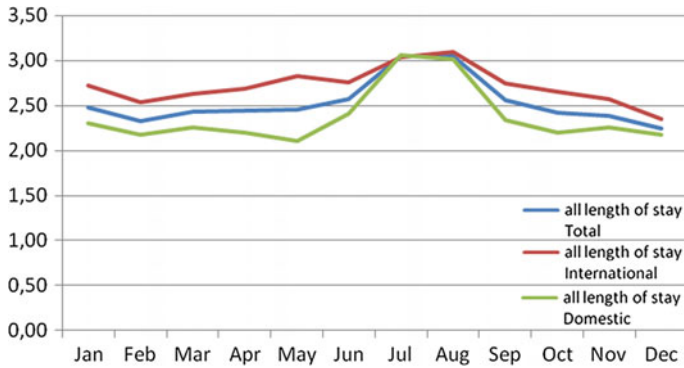


Fig. 6.12 Average length of stay in commercial accommodations in Hungary in 2010 (Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016)

heights in June, July and August (2.41, 3.06 and 3.01, respectively), the curve of international tourists' figures is flat with all values falling into the 2.54–3.1 interval (except December, with 2.34 nights) (Fig. 6.12).

The same trends are obvious for the seasonality of guest nights. Here the summer peak is even higher. Of the somewhat more than 19 million guest nights in commercial accommodation units 32.8% falls to July (3.1 million) and to August (3.3 million). Lowest month is again January with 0.81 million guest nights. Demand from domestic tourists is higher in the winter (in January and February and also in November and December) and summer months (July and August). International tourist nights outnumber domestic nights in April, May, September and October (Fig. 6.13).

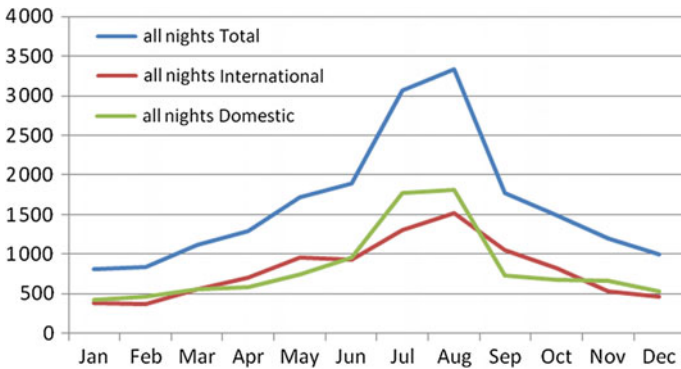


Fig. 6.13 Tourist nights in commercial accommodations in Hungary in 2010 (Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016)

6.4.4 *Regional Distribution of Tourism Flows*

In domestic tourism, Budapest is clearly the most important generating market: it generates 29.4% of all trips as opposed to its 17% share of the population. Also Central Hungary, the area including Budapest and most of its agglomeration, generates a higher proportion of tourist trips than its proportion in Hungarian population (39% of trips as opposed to 29.5% of population). The third most important generating area is Central Transdanubia, the area lying north of Lake Balaton and west of Budapest: it generates 13.9% of all tourist trips (also above its 11% share of population). The rest of Hungary's (Northern Great Plain, North Hungary, Southern Transdanubia, Southern Great Plain and Western Transdanubia regions) share of tourism is below their share of population indicating a lower-than-average willingness to domestic travel (Table 6.6).

Lake Balaton is the winner among the Hungarian tourism destinations—especially if we take the highly seasonal character of sun-and-beach tourism, the main product here, into consideration. A total of 22.1% of all trips lead to this area. Given that the Lake Balaton area has only a population of approximately 300,000, it is obvious that this region is heavily depending on tourism. Second to that is Budapest, the capital city of Hungary with its 18.7% share. Here, tourism is less seasonal and, although tourism is an important part of the local economy and at some locations real tourist hotspots exist, the concentration of visitors is less visible than at Lake Balaton. The rest of tourist trips are distributed both regionally and thematically all over Hungary. They lead to a range of smaller cities and spa locations, to national parks and rural areas. This geographical distribution is in line with a thematic variegation: cultural tourism, wellness, ecotourism, events and conferences, sun-and-beach as well, as rural tourism all occur.

Considering the accommodation statistics (which represent only a small fraction of all trips, however, a more substantial proportion of tourist spending), there is a considerable difference among Hungarian and international tourists (Table 6.7).

In 2010 in collective accommodation establishments in Hungary, approximately 7.47 million guests and 19.5 million guest nights were registered. The proportion of domestic and foreign guests slightly grows but the average length of stay remained (2.6 guest nights). The domestic tourism slowly but steadily grows in respect of the guest nights and domestic guests. The longest stay recorded in the Western Transdanubian region (Fig. 6.14).

6.5 **Main Forms and Types of Tourism**

The tourism product of Hungary is diverse, offering a range of thematic types of tourism. These involve **water recreation** (holidays at lakes and rivers with the dominance of Lake Balaton), **health and wellness tourism** (predominantly not only spa locations, but also several mountain and cave health resorts), **urban and**

Table 6.6 Share of regions by population

| Place of residence | Destination | | | | | | | | | | Total |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|---------------|-------|
| | Balaton | Budapest | South-east Hungary | Southern Transdanubia | Northern Great Plain | North Hungary | Central Transdanubia | Western Transdanubia | Lake Tisza | | |
| Central Hungary | 8199 | 6764 | 2350 | 868 | 2887 | 3077 | 2851 | 1396 | 521 | 28,912 | |
| <i>of which: Budapest</i> | 6576 | 4712 | 1796 | 696 | 1775 | 2440 | 2243 | 1119 | 468 | 21,827 | |
| Central Transdanubia | 1867 | 1107 | 349 | 735 | 752 | 536 | 3807 | 1082 | 55 | 10,291 | |
| Western Transdanubia | 1507 | 667 | 141 | 299 | 81 | 241 | 577 | 1469 | 0 | 4982 | |
| Southern Transdanubia | 1984 | 1435 | 473 | 1879 | 128 | 166 | 376 | 685 | 39 | 7164 | |
| North Hungary | 762 | 1485 | 162 | 91 | 832 | 3435 | 107 | 101 | 605 | 7580 | |
| Northern Great Plain | 725 | 1395 | 819 | 209 | 4698 | 1171 | 166 | 235 | 138 | 9556 | |
| Southern Great Plain | 1326 | 996 | 1979 | 253 | 396 | 470 | 124 | 126 | 3 | 5674 | |
| Total | 16,370 | 13,848 | 6273 | 4334 | 9775 | 9096 | 8007 | 5094 | 1361 | 74,159 | |

Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2016)

Table 6.7 Spatial differentiation of number of visitors in Hungarian commercial accommodation facilities in 2010

| | International tourists | | Hungarian tourist | |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---------------|-------------------|---------------|
| | Total | (%) | Total | (%) |
| Central Hungary | 5228.813 | 55.9 | 1284.495 | 13.3 |
| <i>of which Budapest</i> | <i>5045.559</i> | <i>53.9</i> | <i>808.383</i> | <i>8.4</i> |
| Central Transdanubia | 699.738 | 7.5 | 1398.238 | 14.5 |
| Western Transdanubia | 1920.783 | 20.5 | 2360.881 | 24.4 |
| Southern Transdanubia | 498.408 | 5.3 | 1360.023 | 14.1 |
| North Hungary | 233.770 | 2.5 | 1176.162 | 12.2 |
| Northern Great Plain | 548.102 | 5.9 | 1264.995 | 13.1 |
| Southern Great Plain | 228.759 | 2.4 | 827.567 | 8.6 |
| Total | 9358.373 | 100.00 | 9672.361 | 100.00 |

Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2016)

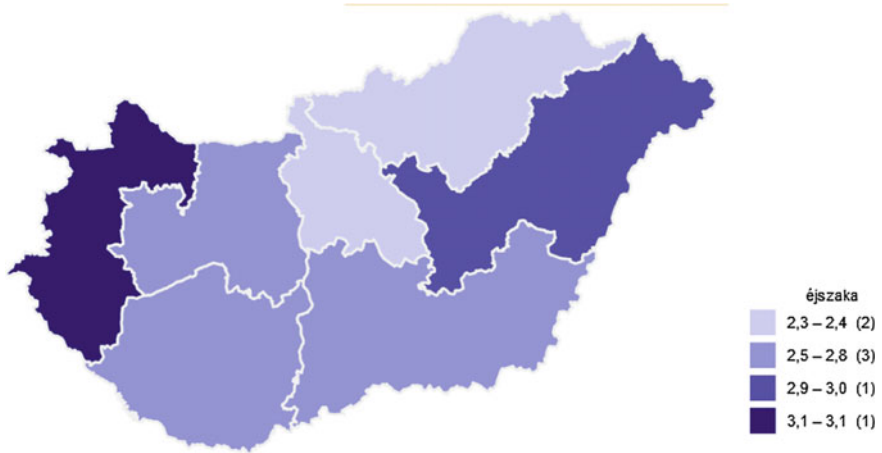


Fig. 6.14 Average length of stay by regions (Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016)

cultural tourism (historic cities, monuments, castles and the like, as well as contemporary cultural events) **rural tourism and ecotourism** (various forms of tourism in the countryside, partly in protected areas) and **business tourism** (involving travel for both business purposes and conferences and incentives).

6.5.1 Summer Water Recreation

In Hungary, summer water recreation is the most important type of leisure tourism (beside visiting friends and relatives). In terms of geographical resources, water

recreation in Hungary is based on rivers, natural and artificial lakes. Most of these waters are shallow which means that they not only warm up rather quickly, but also cool down again, if the weather turns bad. Thus, the climate in Hungary would allow for the use of these resources during the months May–September (with some risk due to weather changes). However, the clientele of these destinations being mainly families with children, the school holidays on the major source markets, limit the seasonality to the summer months July–August.

Clearly, the most important destination for summer water recreation is Lake Balaton. With a surface of 594 km², a coastline of 194 km and an average depth of 3.0–3.6 m, this is largest freshwater recreation area in Central Europe. The lake offers a wide range of tourism accommodation facilities from camp sites and youth hostels to four-star hotels (Balaton szálláshely stat). The access to the lake area improved during the last decade with the development of the M7 motorway along the southern coast, providing easy access from Budapest and the Eastern part of Hungary. This also relived the recreational area from the heavy transport load. Access from the north-west (including Austria and Western Europe) remains weak with two-lane highways. After a closure of the only commercial airport due the economic crisis, from 2011 Balaton is accessible again for charter and scheduled flights. Passenger numbers, however, remain low yet (Sármellék stat). Lake Balaton offers diverse opportunities for water recreation, from beaches to water and ground sports, as well as accompanying cultural events.

Further lakes with recreational function involve Lake Fertő (or Neusiedler), shared with Austria, Lake Velence and Lake Tisza, a reservoir on River Tisza. All of these lakes share recreation and conservation functions with parts of both lakes enjoying protected area status. As a consequence, they serve water recreation and ecotourism as well. The tourism infrastructure at these lakes is well developed (in Fertő pre-dominantly the Austrian part). A range of further smaller lakes throughout the country serve recreational purposes. Whereas some of these are artificial reservoirs (e.g. Lake Orfű and Lake Vadása), most of them occupy former river beds (e.g. Lake Szelidi, Holt-Kőrös, Holt-Szamos).

The rivers are secondary to water recreation in Hungary. Although the Danube, the Tisza and the Kőrös rivers offer sporadic locations for water recreation (beaches), other forms of tourism are more important (e.g. water sports as kayaking, canoeing and like). The international transport route function of Danube is more important than tourism.

The last two decades witnessed a fast development of services and sport facilities. Beaches were renewed in order to offer a higher quality of services and to meet the standards of EU legislation. Most important sport facilities developed include marinas, cycle track along the coastline of the along the main rivers.

6.5.2 *Spa Tourism and Wellness*

Health and wellness tourism encompasses travel motivated by maintaining and improving one's physical and mental health, ranging from travel for the purposes of a medical intervention at a medical clinic to fitness and beauty treatments at a wellness centre. Most important market segments include women, middle age and younger couples with higher education and above average income levels. Accompanying educational programmes on nutrition, beauty or stress management, along with outdoor activities (e.g. bicycling, walking, and wine tourism), is also popular.

With its outstanding geothermal capacity, traditional spas and the domestic spa culture, Hungary has a great potential in health and wellness tourism. Geographically, thermal spas are spread all over Hungary.

As Smith and Puczkó demonstrate, HWT has a wide spectrum (2008, p. 7). Health tourism is “the provision of health facilities utilizing natural resources of the country, in particular mineral water and climate” (IUTO 1973 in Puczkó and Smith 2008). Basically, the natural resources-based HWT offer can be divided into two momentous parts: curative and wellness tourism. The Hungarian spa sector has been developed as a branch of health care, tourism only being a secondary market for decades. Traditionally, spas served health purposes, offering a combination of balneotherapy and physiotherapy. Undoubtedly, the jewel of Hungarian health tourism is Hévíz with its unique thermal lake. In Hévíz, located near to the Western coast of Lake Balaton, hot springs feed a one hectare thermal lake. The medical indications involve rheumatic locomotor diseases, osteoporosis, degenerative spinal/joint diseases and a range of other problems of the locomotor system. A carefully renovated historic spa built on the lake and a well-established hospital and high-quality hotels offer a unique health tourism product.

While Hévíz remained a predominantly health-related destination, most of the other Hungarian spas changed their main focus from health to wellness. Early 2000' government and EU programmes fostered the development of new and attractive wellness extensions to traditional spas (e.g. Sárvár, Bük, Zalakaros, Harkány, Gyula, Jadúszoboszló, Debrecen, Miskolctapolca) and also the development of brand new wellness spa's and water fun parks (e.g. Budapest, Pápa, Siklós, Zalaegerszeg, Kecskemét).

Beside the public spas wellness facilities have also been developed at almost all upscale and even by many midscale hotels to make the accommodation more attractive. Only a few of these developments became a major international or domestic attraction in itself. Hévíz, Bük, Sárvár, Hajdúszoboszló, Zalakaros, Harkány, Gyula, Hajdúszoboszló are among them. As opposed to these, the majority of spa developments have a double function. First, they serve local leisure purposes, with an attraction radius up to 50 km. Second, they play an important role in diversifying the regional tourism product, offering a weather-independent side programme to tourists who visit the area for other purposes (e.g. cultural or rural tourism).

The actual trend in wellness is diversification and specialization. After the quantitative development of spa facilities, the sector is now confronted with intense competition both on domestic and on the international markets. Although the Hungarian spa sector enjoys a competitive price advantage (related to Austria, Slovakia and Slovenia), more and more spas aim at the development of additional offer aimed at specific target markets. The newest, extremely successful example of that is Sárvár, where children-friendly facilities (small slides, shallow pools, child animation) have been developed. Further development priorities are as follows:

- branding through creation of environmentally sensitive and “healthy” destinations,
- diversification of the health and wellness product in line with market trends (specific target groups, as children elderly, women, men, etc.),
- clustering experiences in order to enhance the overall experience and satisfaction of the consumer, including the cooperation among spas to develop a “regional spa experience”,
- developing inter-regional thematization and specialization of the health and wellness product in order to decrease competition among neighbouring regions,
- linking indoor and outdoor experiences in order to offer a more complex product, and
- integration of the health and wellness product with other regional tourism offer creating an experiential value chain.

6.5.3 Urban and Cultural Tourism

In Hungary, urban tourism development is considered to be part of the wider urban regeneration efforts. Virtually all cities and towns aim at redefining themselves as cultural hotspots providing experiences both to local inhabitants and to tourists. With its eventful history, Hungary and its cities and towns provide an experience of religious and cultural diversity. A truly Western European Christian culture is laced with historical influences from Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Past heritage is present in the form of well-preserved monuments and lively customs. Historical townscapes of Budapest, Győr, Sopron, Veszprém, Pécs, Szeged, Debrecen and Eger provide a unique insight into the past of Hungary. However, urban and cultural tourism also involves the reinterpretation of the urban heritage in the form of contemporary cultural events and exhibitions.

Inevitably Budapest, being the only metropolitan centre on the European scale in Hungary is also the major urban destination. The main tourism product of the capital city is the city trip, including sightseeing, entertainment and shopping as primary activities. Furthermore, the city offers a rich cultural life, including major events (see above), museums and exhibitions and also a high-level gastronomy. Budapest is well known for its the unique cityscape lying along the two shores of the Danube. Major sights include the mediaeval Castle District, nineteenth-century

glamour Heroe's square and Andrásy Street, the Parliament Building and the Cathedral. Further areas worth visiting are the cultural district near Király Street and Liszt Square with its many theatres and restaurants, the old-fashioned market halls and also the historic spas (Gellért, Rác, Rudas, and Király). The city also offers famous parks and gardens as the Margit island on the Danube and the Városliget (Town park) next Heroes square. In terms of contemporary culture, the city offers great venues such as the A38 music club on a ship or the Trafo house of contemporary arts.

In terms of tourist infrastructure and services, Budapest is the major transport hub in Hungary. With the centralized road and rail network, the capital is the major interchange for those aiming at visiting the countryside. Although other small regional airports also exist, Budapest Liszt Ferenc Airport is the major international airport in the country. Budapest hosts 2.3 million overnights (37.4% of all hotel guest nights) in 36.714 hotel beds (31% of all hotel capacities of Hungary).

Among the towns of the countryside, Pécs in Southern Hungary, next to the Croatian border, is the most well known as it has been the Cultural Capital of Hungary in 2010. With its 2000-year-old history Pécs is melting pot of Western and Balkan cultures. Major sights include the World Heritage early Christian tombs and chapels, the Cathedral, the main square with a Turkish Mosque, the old city and the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter, established at the premises of a China Manufacture.

Further urban tourism highlights are Sopron, Győr, Veszprém, Székesfehérvár, Szeged, Debrecen, Miskolc and Eger. Development priorities in urban and cultural tourism are as follows:

- increasing attractiveness of towns and major free-standing cultural landmarks through renovation, reconstruction and regeneration efforts retaining destination “sense of place”,
- development of a “tourism orientation” and an understanding of visitor needs among local population and particularly potential tourism services providers,
- development of tourism attractions and services creating an experiential value chain for visitors,
- raising awareness of existing cultural attractions, strengthening their role in the image formation of the region,
- improving the experience of cultural tourism consumption and fostering adjustment of the offer to the requirements of different traveller segments.

6.5.4 Rural Tourism

Rural tourism encompasses trips and holidays to a rural setting motivated by the desire to experience the natural, down-to-earth life in the countryside including stays and even participation in farm life. Most important market segments include families with small children, middle age and older couples with higher education and income levels. During rural holidays, it is very likely visitors will seek to

engage in a variety of activities available in the broader destination (e.g. bicycling, health and wellness, wine tourism) also attaching a great deal of importance to experiencing the local “sense of place”.

Rural tourism is being developed throughout Hungary driven mainly by national and regional development policies aiming at the diversification of rural revenue sources. This is in many places slow due to very little professional experience in hospitality and tourism former agricultural areas, lack of effective support and willingness to cooperate. Rural tourism can, thus, be presently considered a generally underdeveloped product with some occasional exceptions mostly involving quality food and beverage services on family-owned farms. Notwithstanding these, there are several areas providing a competitive and diverse rural tourism experience. The most successful rural destinations are Balaton Highlands including Valley of arts, the Órség, Kiskunság Tanya and the Kelet-Mecsek.

6.5.5 Ecotourism

Ecotourism is generally understood as ecologically sensitive travel to relatively undisturbed natural locations. The target market members are environmentally focused, outdoor enthusiasts, above 30, with higher education and income levels. Visiting protected or unique nature sites is the main motive of travel, with the educational component of the trip being very pronounced.

In Hungary, ecotourism is concentrated in National Parks. Hungarian National Parks are diverse, offering nature experiences of grasslands, wetlands, forests and caves. The oldest national park is the Hortobágy, established in 1973, and is the largest continuous natural grassland in Europe. Together with Kiskunság National Park, they represent a unique coexistence of humans and nature based on traditional sustainable land use. Bükk National Park is forest area, whereas Aggtelek National Park hosts the longest caves of Hungary (together with Slovakia). Fertő-Hanság National Park (together with Austrian Neusiedler See National Park) includes the westernmost Eurasian steppe lake, Lake Felső (or Lake Neusiedler in German). Duna-Dráva and Duna-Ipoly National Parks include sections of the Danube along with side rivers Dráva (next to Croatia in Southern Hungary) and the Ipoly (next to Slovakia in the North), whereas the Körös-Maros National Park includes the Körös and Maros rivers and the uncontrolled countryside next to them. Balaton Highland National Park includes wetlands and cultural landscape of rural countryside, whereas Órség National Park is a countryside area.

Ecotourism development priorities are the following:

- preservation and sustainable development of all natural landscape and particularly of all protected natural areas,
- development of facilities and services enabling the creation of a competitive ecotourism product,

- integration of ecotourism with other regional tourism offer creating an experiential value chain for visitors,
- development of an attractive destination image,
- increasing visitor number and spending year-round.

6.5.6 Business (Trade Fair and Congress) Tourism

According to the Central Statistical Office, 29% of foreigners who visited Hungary in 2009 arrived with a business reason, or to participate at a conference. In 2009, Hungary hosted 356 international conferences and 90 international fairs and exhibitions. These numbers show a 33% decrease in the number of international conferences and a 58% increase in the number of fairs and exhibitions compared to the previous year, when 531 and 57 such events were held, respectively. According to the ICCA statistics, Budapest became the 6th most visited conference city in Europe.

Based on the data provided by the partners of the Hungarian Convention Bureau, the average number of participants per meeting was 230.4 in 2009, which is an increase compared to last year (225.3). Projecting this average to the total number of meetings held in the country throughout the year (356), the estimated total number of participants is more than 82,000. Counting with the average length of conferences (3.3 days), the estimated total number of days that conferences have been held in Hungary is 1174.8. This means that every day there were 3.2 international events somewhere in the country on average (Hungarian Convention Bureau).

Most of the conferences (74.7%) were held in conference hotels, followed by congress centres (13.1%), while universities and other scientific institutions hosted 8.1% of the international events. The rest of the international conferences (4.1%) accommodated in other type of venues.

The average number of nations participating in these events increased to 12. The average length of the conferences is 3.3. Most of the conferences lasted for 2 days. 73% of the international conferences in 2009 were held in Budapest. Medical conferences accounted for 26.9% of the total number of international conferences and economic conferences for 16.7%. About 79% of the participants at the conferences were foreigners, the biggest number from the UK, France, North America, Belgium, Czech Republic and Germany.

6.6 Tourism Regionalization in Hungary (Spatial Organization)

The statistical regions in Hungary were created in 1999 by the Law 1999/XCII amending Law 1996/XXI. The seven regions are groupings of the 19 counties and the capital city of Budapest (Fig. 6.15 and Table 6.8).

The Northern Hungary includes the counties of Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén, Heves, Nógrád. Its centre is Miskolc which is the fourth biggest city of Hungary with 170.000 inhabitants, after Budapest, Debrecen and Szeged, and second largest with agglomeration.

The Northern Great Plain includes the counties of Hajdú-Bihar, Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg. The second largest city of



Fig. 6.15 Hungarian statistical regions (Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2016)

Table 6.8 Regions' areas and density

| Region | Regional centre | Area (km ²) | Density (/km ²) |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Northern Hungary | Miskolc | 13,428 | 96 |
| Northern Great Plain | Debrecen | 17,749 | 88 |
| Southern Great Plain | Szeged | 18,339 | 75 |
| Central Hungary | Budapest | 6919 | 408 |
| Central Transdanubia | Székesfehérvár | 11,237 | 99 |
| Western Transdanubia | Győr | 11,209 | 90 |
| Southern Transdanubia | Pécs | 14,169 | 70 |

Source Hungarian Central Statistical Office (2016)



Fig. 6.16 Hungarian tourism regions (Source Hungarian Tourism Plc. 2010)

Hungary (Debrecen) is the centre of this region. The Southern Great Plain includes the counties of Bács-Kiskun, Békés, Csongrád. Central Hungary includes the capital city and Pest County with Szeged centre (the third largest city). Central Transdanubia includes the counties of Veszprém, Fejér- and Komárom-Esztergom counties. Western Transdanubia includes the counties Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas and Zala. Southern Transdanubia includes the counties Barany, Somogy and Tolna.

The tourism regions differ from the statistical regions. Hungary has 9 tourism regions—namely Northern Hungary, Northern Great Plain, Southern Great Plain, Southern Transdanubia, Western Transdanubia, Central Transdanubia, Budapest and surroundings, extended with the Lake Balaton and the Tisza Lake. The tourism regions are created by the 4/2000. (II.2.) GM regulation. These regions differ from the existing administrative and statistical regions (Fig. 6.16).

According to the tourism regions, the Hungarian Tourism Plc. has nine regional marketing directorates. The main activities of these regional directorates are the following:

- to raise knowledge about the region and strengthen its image,
- to enhance the quality of offered services and products,
- to help the cooperation between the service suppliers in the region in order to provide competitive services,
- to coordinate the regional marketing activities,
- to represent the region in national/international fairs, and
- to evaluate regional proposals and tenders.

References

- Aubert, A. (2006). A turizmusföldrajz helye és súlya a nemzetközi és hazai geográfiai szakirodalom tükrében. In *III. Magyar Földrajzi Konferencia tudományos közleményei*. Budapest, 2006, szeptember 6–7 (pp. 1–8). Budapest: MTA Földrajztudományi Kutatóintézet. CD-kiadvány és <http://geography.hu>.
- Aubert, A., & Szabó, G. (1992). *A falusi turizmus újraindításának és fejlesztésének lehetőségei Baranya megye két eltérő adottságú településcsoportjában*. Pécs: MTA RKK DTI.
- Berényi, I. (1981). *Az üdülőterületek felhasználásának kérdései Szentendre példáján* (Területi kutatások 4) (pp. 109–118). Budapest.
- Berényi, I. (1986). *A települések természeti környezetének értékelése az idegenforgalom szempontjából* (Idegenforgalmi közlemények 3) (pp. 3–9). Budapest.
- Erdi, R., Zsembery, R., Gyalog, G. (2007). *Facts & figures of protected sites in Hungary*. Ministry of Environment and Water.
- Formadi, K., & Mayer, P. (2010a). Employment as a factor of value creation in tourism. In A. Clarke (Ed.). *Constructing Central Europe. Competitiveness in Tourism* (pp. 299–313). Veszprém: Pannon Egyetem.
- Formadi, K., & Mayer, P. (2010b). Strategic development of business event management. In J. Marak, J. Wyrzykowski (Eds.). *Conditions of the foreign tourism development in Central and Eastern Europe*, Vol. 11, Conditions, state and development perspectives of business tourism (pp. 25–35). Wrocław: University of Wrocław.
- Hungarian Central Statistical Office. (2016). www.ksh.hu.
- Hungarian Convention Bureau. (2016). www.hcb.hu.
- Hungarian Tourism Plc. (2016). www.itthon.hu.
- Jancsik, A., Madarasz, E., Mayer, P., Raffai, Cs. (2009a). Does it everyone differently? – destination management approaches in Hungary. In J. Marak, J. Wyrzykowski (Eds.). *Tourism Role in Regional Economy*, Vol. II. Wrocław: Wyzsza Szkola Handlowa.
- Jancsik, A., Madarasz, E., Mayer, P., Raffai, Cs. (2009b). Tourinform offices' attitudes towards change and innovations. In *Kultúrák találkozása a Turizmusban*. Győr: Nyugat-Magyarországi Egyetem.
- Kollarik, A. (1991). *Területfejlesztés, környezetvédelem és az idegenforgalom*. Budapest: BKE-AULA.
- Kóródi, J., & Somogyi, S. (1968). *Idegenforgalmi Földrajz I–II*. Budapest: Közgazdasági és Jogi Könyvkiadó.
- Mayer, P., & Priszinger, K. (2010). Tourism As Solution – Perceived Risks Influencing Participation in Health-Related Tourism. *Journal of Tourism Challenges and Trends*, 3(2), 141–151.
- Michalkó, G. (1999). *A városi turizmus elmélete és gyakorlata*. Budapest: MTA FKI.
- Michalkó, G. (2005). A humánökológia szerepe a magyarországi turizmusföldrajz modernizációjában. *Turizmus Bulletin*, 9(1), 32–42.
- Pawlitcz, A., & Mayer, P. (2010). Financing Tourist Information Service. Comparative Study of West Pomerania Province, Poland and Lake Balaton, Hungary. In *Scientific Journal of Szczecin University*, 592 (Economic Problems of Tourism 14). Szczecin: University of Szczecin.
- Pécsi, M. (1967). *III. Idegenforgalmi Kollokvium. 1966*. Budapest Panoráma.
- Porter, M. (1990). *Competitive Advantage of Nations*. New York: Free Press.
- Puczko, L., & Smith, M. (2008). *Health and Wellness Tourism*. Elsevier/ Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Somogyi, S. (1981). *Magyarország természeti adottságai az országos üdülőterületi terv szempontjából*. Budapest: MTA FKI.
- Somogyi, S. (1987). *Magyarország természeti adottságainak idegenforgalmi szempontú értékelése. Elmélet, módszer, gyakorlat*. Budapest: MTA FKI.