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Blog Post #1 - Budapest

## Headline: First Impressions of Budapest: A City of Contrasts and Cultural Discoveries

Moving to Budapest for my study abroad experience has been a whirlwind of excitement, exploration, and cultural adjustments. As I settle into my new home in Pest with four fellow students, I'm beginning to understand what makes this city so unique. From breathtaking landmarks to unexpected daily challenges, Budapest is a place of contrasts—where history and modernity coexist, and where the unfamiliar slowly becomes part of my routine.

One of the first things that struck me was the sheer beauty of the city. The Hungarian Parliament building, towering over the Danube, is even more breathtaking in person than in photographs. Whether viewed from across the river in Buda or up close on an evening walk, its intricate design and glowing lights create an unforgettable sight. The architecture throughout the city is equally stunning, from grand Habsburg-era buildings to ruin bars tucked away in old courtyards.



Source: <https://emerging-europe.com/culture-travel-sport/six-things-you-probably-didnt-know-about-hungarys-parliament/>

Beyond the visual appeal, daily life in Budapest has been a mix of fascination and adaptation. Running through the city has become one of my favorite ways to explore. Jogging along the Danube or through city parks like Margaret Island reveals different aspects of Budapest's character—lively streets, quiet green spaces, and hidden gems waiting to be discovered.

However, adapting to cultural differences has also brought some challenges. Grocery shopping, for example, has been an unexpected struggle. With little knowledge of Hungarian, finding basic items in supermarkets can turn into a guessing game. Labels are unfamiliar, and even something as simple as selecting the right type of milk or bread requires careful inspection. Unlike the larger, familiar-style supermarkets I'm used to, many stores here are smaller, with

limited selections and different product organization. It's a learning curve, but one that makes everyday life an adventure.

Despite the initial language barriers, Budapest is proving to be a welcoming and dynamic city. The more I explore, the more I appreciate the rhythm of life here—from the bustling streets of Pest to the historic charm of Buda. With each passing day, I feel a little more at home, navigating the unfamiliar and embracing the unexpected. One of my favorite recent experiences was ice skating at the City Park Ice Rink, one of the largest outdoor skating rinks in Europe. Surrounded by the historic Vajdahunyad Castle, gliding across the ice in such a magical setting was an unforgettable way to experience the city's winter charm.

