

# ARTICLE - Hungary - Budapest Baths

## Bathing In Budapest at the Gellert Thermal Baths

article and image by [Carole Terwilliger Meyers](#)



Gellert Thermal Baths  
in Budapest, Hungary

After enduring a 24-hour-plus journey from San Francisco to Budapest, I checked into my hotel, then quickly hopped into a cab to reach the famous Gellert thermal baths before they

closed.

Once there, I was overwhelmed by the size and beauty of this art nouveau gem. Japanese tourists waiting in line were as confused as I, studying the "menu" of options but presciently requesting a safe for their valuables. Before my husband was siphoned off to the men's side, we agreed to meet later in the outdoor pools, and the adventure was on.

An unfriendly attendant, who reminded me of Queen Latifah's character in Chicago, retained the key to my private changing room but seemed too busy to do anything other than her job. I worried on and off anyway, because my purse and passport were among the belongings I left there.

After a cool, mixed-sexes soak, where everyone wore bathing suits, I moved on to an all-women hot bath, where about 10% of the soakers went nude. As I relaxed, mesmerized by the echoing sounds bouncing off the 1913 mosaics decorating the walls and ceiling, I appreciated the older women who walked around unselfconsciously, many with their suit tops dropped, displaying the ravages of childbirth and time. Later, in an even hotter bath, I thought about doing the same but wasn't able to drop my reserve.

Though the language barrier caused confusion about when to use what shower and where the steam room might be, I got by and found the room for a 15-minute "medical curative massage" I'd paid for upon entry. After an excessive, disorganized wait, I got assertive. The attendant with the keys did some loud talking, and I was in. Sprinkled with what I thought was talc, I endured my "dry massage," thinking that perhaps my masseuse was irritated with me.

This exotic experience is indeed a great cure for jet-lag. Though I perspired heavily that night (I heard later that it was probably finely-ground salt that had been rubbed on me and that this was my body purging itself of impurities), I also

slept the sleep of the blessed. My husband tossed and turned. He hadn't signed up for a massage.

We never did meet at the outdoor pools. Apparently they are a whole separate experience at additional cost. And as good a reason as any to return.

### **shelter**

#### **[Four Seasons Hotel Gresham Palace](#)**

This art nouveau masterpiece sits on the Danube River and features extraordinary floral arrangements designed to match the building.

### **food/drink**

In this city famous for its many historic coffeehouses, my favorite was **[Ruszwurm Cukraszda](#)**.

A helpful guide: "Historic Coffeehouses."

### **more information**

#### **[Visit Hungary](#)**

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