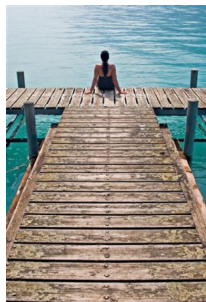


# HUNGARIAN TOURISM: FOREIGN VISITORS DISCOVER LOCAL SPA TOWNS



Hungarian spa towns have taken some of the pressure off Budapest for Hungarian tourism. The amount of foreign visitors has been rising in 2009, despite Hungarian outbound tourism being on the decrease.

Ask most people outside Hungary to name one Hungarian city and they will have no problem. Ask them to name two and they are generally stuck. Despite the beauty of Budapest and the unique and undoubted charm it boasts, the rest of Hungary is entirely reliant upon the capital and even Hungarians would admit this. Most transport in Hungary has to go through the capital, as do most tourists. However, as the country's economic situation improves, so is tourism.

**Recent data by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office have shown that the spa towns of Heviz, Hajduszoboszlo and Siofuk have been attracting more and more tourists.** Budapest and these three cities were the most popular destinations for foreign visitors last year. The capital, of course, remains on top. Last year the city's tourism board recorded 4.7 million guest nights of foreign tourists.

Austrians and Germans have often made use of the relatively nearby Balaton Lake, yet never has Heviz been so popular amongst foreigners as it is today. The natural curative element of the local lake along with balneological treatment for patients lure spa fans as well as those looking for cheaper relaxing holidays.

On the other side of Hungary, on the backwaters of the Tisza River, we find Hajduszoboszlo, another spa town with stunning surrounding views of the infamous Hungarian Great Plain. **The popularity of this town has soared in recent years, accommodating not only tourists from neighboring countries, yet also a great deal of Western spa lovers.**

The amount of foreign visitors to Hungary rose by 2.7% to 40.62 million in 2009, while the number of Hungarians traveling abroad fell 3.0% to 16.90 million. If current trends continue, foreigners, having overcome some pronunciation difficulties, should be able to name a number of Hungarian locations.

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