

HeartCycle Bicycle Touring Club

Hungary by Bike: Europe's Oldest Kingdom

- Dates:** Orientation meeting Friday, September 3, 2027. Touring 13 days: Sat, Sept 4–Thurs, Sept 16, with departure on Friday, Sept 17 (lodging last night included, totaling 14 nights).
- Coordinator:** Tina Vessels
- Rating:** Easy-Intermediate
heartcycle.org/tour-ratings
- Distance/gain:** Approximately 450 miles (725 km) with up to 16,700 feet (5,090 m) of elevation gain
- Riders:** 16 (including coordinator)
- Price:** \$4,300 (double occupancy). \$1,100 due at registration. Balance due by June 5, 2027. Limited single supplements available for \$4,800 (sharing may be required some nights). Non-motorized bikes included. E-bike +\$450.
- Cancellation:** [Standard cancellation policy](#)

Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

OVERVIEW

Join us for 2 weeks as we leave the familiar tourist routes of Western Europe behind and discover the quieter landscapes and rich traditions of central European Hungary. “Magyar” is the name Hungarians use for themselves and their language, reflecting the legacy of the Magyar tribes who settled in the Carpathian Basin more than a thousand years ago. This distinct history gives Hungary a culture unlike anywhere else in Europe. Our journey explores the peaceful western borderlands near Austria before continuing through the vineyards, villages, and rolling countryside surrounding Lake Balaton. We ride mostly flat to gently rolling terrain along bike paths, quiet country roads, and occasional rail trails—far from heavy traffic and crowded tourist centers.

Along the way, we stay in welcoming guesthouses and historic small towns where traditions are still part of everyday life rather than performances for tourists. Expect charming cafés without long lines, regional wines, thermal baths, traditional Hungarian cuisine, and warm hospitality shaped by centuries of both Catholic and Protestant influence.



Tihany Abbey over the turquoise waters of Lake Balaton

Hungarian culture reflects a fascinating blend of Central Asian origins and Central European history, expressed through its language, folk music, embroidery, horse culture, and distinctive cuisine. Although Hungary was often categorized as “Eastern European” during the Cold War because it fell within the Soviet sphere after World War II, most Hungarians today identify their country as distinctly Central European.

While cities such as Budapest are cosmopolitan and modern, rural Hungary maintains a strong connection to local heritage, community traditions, and a slower pace of life.

More than anything, this tour offers a genuine sense of discovery, exploring regions still largely untouched by mass tourism, where the experience feels authentic, relaxed, and deeply connected to history.

ITINERARY

Day 1: Friday, September 3, 2027

Győr

Orientation meeting and city tour

One bus transfer will be provided from Budapest to Győr.

After hotel check-in, we will meet for a city tour.

Győr city center is renowned for its stunning, award-winning restoration of Baroque buildings, characterized by narrow, cobbled streets and colorful facades. Major attractions include

- Széchenyi Square, the heart of the Old Town, surrounded by historic buildings;
- Cathedral Basilica of the Assumption, a major religious site;
- Győr Town Hall, an iconic, neobaroque, eclectic building; and
- Káptalan Hill, the oldest part of the city.

Day 2: Saturday, September 4

Győr to Schloss Halbturn

30-min bus transfer, then 67 km (42 mi) and 100 m (330 ft) of elevation gain

We follow the meandering oxbow branches of the Danube River through open farmland and small villages to Mosonmagyaróvár, where we pass by a 16th-century castle. We finish the day at Schloss Halbturn, Maria Theresia's 18th century baroque residence.

Day 3: Sunday, September 5

Eastern Shore of Lake Fertő (out-and back ride)

50-min bus transfer, then 53 km (33 mi) and 150 m (490 ft) of elevation gain

We ride quiet bike paths and lakeside roads along the eastern shore of Lake Fertő, passing reed beds, vineyards, and small Austrian wine villages before reaching Jois, a historic winemaking town overlooking the lake. Other sights include Fertő, Esterházy Palace (Eszterháza), which was built by Prince Nikolaus Esterházy in the 1760s. The largest and most significant Baroque palace in Hungary, it features 126 rooms, a beautiful chapel, an opera house, and a puppet theater.



Day 4: Monday, September 6

Western Shore of Lake Fertő (out-and back ride)

45-min bus transfer, then 46 km (29 mi) and 365 m (1,200 ft) of elevation gain

We ride the western shore of Lake Fertő, visit the quarry theatre in Fertőrákos and Sopron, one of Hungary's most charming historic towns. Fertőrákos Quarry and Cave Theatre is an impressive restoration both inside and out. Following the occupation of Hungary in 1944, the quarry was transformed into an internment and labor camp.



Day 5: Tuesday, September 7

Fertőd to Kőszeg

56 km (35 mi) and 460 m (1,510 ft) of elevation gain

A gentle rolling day through vineyards and wine villages before arriving in the beautifully preserved town of Kőszeg, widely known as the “Jewel Box of Hungary” for its remarkably preserved medieval town center, historic Jurisics Castle, and its pivotal 1532 defense against the Ottoman Empire. Located near the Austrian border, it is a popular destination for history, architecture, and hiking in the Kőszeg Mountains.



Day 6: Wednesday, September 8

Kőszeg to Heiligenbrunn

74 km (46 mi) and 610 m (2,000 ft) of elevation gain

More vineyards and a scenic rail trail section lead us toward Güssing, known for its impressive castle built on top of an extinct volcano.



Day 7: Thursday, September 9

Őrség Loop

53 km (33 mi) and 440 m (1,440 ft) of elevation gain

A relaxed loop through the heart of the Őrség to visit local potters, small churches, and hidden corners of this peaceful region. Őriszentpéter, the “capital” of the Őrség region in Western Hungary, offers a peaceful escape centered on nature, folk culture, and rustic gastronomy. Key activities include exploring Őrség National Park, visiting the Pityerszer Open-Air Museum, exploring the 13th-century Saint Peter Church, and cycling through the surrounding hills. Naturally, we may not have time to visit all these attractions.



Day 8: Friday, September 10

Őriszentpéter to Zalaszentgrót

74 km (46 mi) and 305 m (1,000 ft) of elevation gain

A transition day as we leave the forests of Őrség behind, pass marshlands and open countryside, and finish in the spa town of Zalaszentgrót.



Day 9: Saturday, September 11

Zalaszentgrót to Badacsony

60 km (37 mi) and 380 m (1,250 ft) of elevation gain

We ride toward Lake Balaton, Central Europe's largest lake, with a stop at the Festetics palace in Keszthely. In the evening, we visit a local wine cellar on the slopes of Badacsony, a premier Lake Balaton destination famous for volcanic wines, hiking, and stunning panoramic views. Top activities include

- hiking the Badacsony hill to the Kisfaludy lookout;
- touring local wine cellars (like Szászi Estate);
- visiting Szigliget Castle, a 13th-century cliffside castle ruins that offer views of the lake;
- exploring the Tapolca Lake Cave; and
- relaxing at Folly Arboretum, a beautiful arboretum specializing in conifers, featuring a winery and stunning, elevated views.



Day 10: Sunday, September 12

Káli Basin Loop

48 km (30 mi) and 400 m (1,310 ft) of elevation gain

A scenic ride through the Káli Basin, known for its volcanic hills, stone villages and vineyards, with a stop at Hegyestű's dramatic basalt columns rising

above the Balaton highlands. Other attractions include the rocky, wildflower-strewn fields near Szentbékállá and Kővágóörs, a charming village, known as the culinary heart of the basin, for local gourmet food and wine.



Day 11: Monday, September 13

Badacsony to Balatonfüred

56 km (35 mi) and 810 m (2,650 ft) of elevation gain

A highlight day along the northern shore of Balaton. We cross the Balaton highlands, dubbed Hungary's Tuscany, visit Tihany and its famous abbey and finish in the capital of Balaton, Balatonfüred.



Day 12: Tuesday, September 14

Rest Day in Balatonfüred

We spend the day on the water with a local sailing instructor, learning the basics and enjoying Balaton from a completely different perspective. Balatonfüred is a premier, historic resort town on Lake Balaton's northern shore, offering a mix of

relaxation, culture, and nature. Key activities include strolling the tree-lined Tagore Promenade, exploring the historic Gyógy tér (Spa Square), tasting local wines at Figula Winery, and sailing or taking boat trips on the lake.

Day 13: Wednesday, September 15

Balatonfüred to Zirc

84 km (40 mi) and 650 m (2,130 ft) of elevation gain

We leave the lake and head into the Bakony Hills toward Zirc, stopping in Veszprém for sightseeing before visiting the Cistercian monastery and its remarkable library.

- Cistercian Abbey in Zirc:
Tour the 12th-century abbey, which includes a Basilica consecrated in 1745 and an interactive visitor center detailing 800 years of monastic life.
- The Monumental Library:
Located within the abbey, the library holds over 65,000 volumes, including rare incunabula and early scientific texts.



Day 14: Thursday, September 16

Zirc to Győr

72 km (45 mi) and 390 m (1,280 ft) of elevation gain

Our final ride brings us back to Győr, with a stop at the Benedictine Abbey of Pannonhalma. You could call this the “Abbey Road” tour, and yes, the pun is fully intentional. Lodging included and bus transfer to Vienna on the 17th.



SPECIAL NOTES:

- Transfers provided from Budapest to Győr at the start and from Győr to Vienna at the end.

INCLUDED:

- Bike rental – Scott speedster or equivalent non-motorized bike; drop-bar or flat-bar
- Cell-phone holder
- Helmet
- Water bottle
- 3-star accommodations
- All breakfasts
- Daily European-style late lunch or early dinner
- Snacks at SAG stops
- All entrance fees

NOT INCLUDED:

- Lake Balaton sailing fee – will be arranged after tour sign-up
- E-bike surcharge (+\$450)
- Single room supplement – depends on availability; sharing may be required some nights
- Staff tips
- Personal expenses and souvenirs

For more information contact:

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