

Here's my Study Abroad Story

Arvind Suresh St. Olaf College: Budapest Semester in Mathematics Budapest, Hungary

Major: Mathematics

Program: Budapest Semester in Mathematics is a study-abroad program designed for undergraduates at American and Canadian universities to study mathematics in Budapest.

It is a fantastic program because it is academically rigorous, and at the same time gives you a base from which to explore

Europe. There is a wide range of math classes offered, so students of pretty much all levels of math are welcome. Besides the math classes, the program offers beginner and intermediate levels of Hungarian language classes, and a few other classes on Hungarian art, culture, and

history. The professors are from a number of prestigious universities and mathematics research institutes. They are excellent teachers. The classes themselves are held in McDaniel College, which is very near the city center, so students on the program are exposed to a lively city life.



Typical Day: I walked everywhere in Budapest because the city is so small. On a typical day, I would spend a couple of hours walking between places, eat out or cook at home, hang out with the kids on the program that lived 10 minutes away, go for a stroll by the Danube (which was a 3-minute walk from my home-stay), get a pastry from some bakery or spend time at a cafe (this was a must), and, last but not least, attend class and do homework.

Highlights: Budapest satisfied my craving to listen to classical music live, and it satisfied it in the grandest of ways. The various concert halls in the city are out of the world, both for their acoustics and their grandeur, and they still stand out as highlights of my adventure. But what really hit the spot for me in this program was the people on it. We had several potluck nights. We got together and cooked and had jam sessions. We bonded over our love (or like) for math. A couple of friends even got me addicted to chess. It was great.

Challenges: The only real challenge I faced in Budapest was managing my work and play. Other than that, I lived a fairly stress-free life, so I suppose the only advice I can offer to students that are considering the program is to consider it strongly.

Advice: There is a wide variety of classes of varying difficulty. Shop around during the 'shopping period', you may end up liking a class that wasn't on your original list. I would highly recommend traveling within Hungary itself; it is a beautiful country. Also, Budapest itself has a bunch of great sights to check out. You should especially take advantage of the superb bakeries scattered around the city. Besides this, the most important advice I can think of is - carry *noms* from home, especially stuff like peanut butter.