

9. Hungary

Hungary is a small country in Central Europe, in the Carpathian Basin. It is bordered by 7 countries (Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Romania, Ukraine and Slovakia). About 10 million people live here. They speak Hungarian which is not related to any other major European language.

The country is divided into the capital, 19 counties and 22 towns of county rank. The capital city of Hungary is Budapest. It's the largest city with about 2 million inhabitants. Other major cities are Debrecen, Miskolc, Szeged and Pécs.

Hungary guarantees religious freedom. Most Hungarians are Roman Catholics, Calvinists or Lutherans.

There are a lot of beautiful places to see in the country. There are some hills, but they are not very high. The highest point in Hungary is Kékestető in the Mátra Hills and its height is 1014 m.

The two largest rivers of Hungary are the Danube and the Tisza. The land is almost level here and rivers' flows slow down as they enter Hungary. The Danube is twice as wide as the Tisza, but the Tisza is 100 km longer (in Hungary).

We haven't got a sea but we have lake Balaton. Balaton is called the Hungarian Sea. It is 78 km long and it's the largest freshwater lake in Central Europe and the third largest lake in the continent. It's got nice beaches and it's the most popular place for tourists. You can swim, sail and windsurf there or ice-skate on it in the Winter. In the Summer the water is 20-25 degrees centigrade. Lake Velence is very popular as well but it's exceptionally shallow so it's threatened by slow drying. Lake Hévíz is the largest thermal lake in the world.

Transdanubia is on the west of Hungary and it's wetter and cooler than The Great Plain on the east. Northern Hungary is colder than the other parts. The central and eastern areas of the Great Plain are the driest parts of the country, and the southwestern uplands are the wettest.

Sources: Bajnóczi Beatrix, Haavisto Kirsi: Kérdések és válaszok angol nyelvből. Maxim Kiadó, 2003.

