



# The Essential Guide to Being Hungarian: 50 Facts and Facets of Nationhood

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## The Essential Guide to Being Hungarian: 50 Facts and Facets of Nationhood

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What is it to be Hungarian? What does it feel like? Most Hungarians are convinced that the rest of the world just doesn't get them. They are right. True, much of the world thinks highly of Hungarians--for reasons ranging from their heroism in the 1956 revolution to their genius as mathematicians, physicists, and financiers. But Hungarians do often seem to be living proof of the old joke that Magyars are in fact Martians: they may be situated in the very heart of Europe, but they are equipped with a confounding language, extraterrestrial (albeit endearing) accents, and an unearthly way of thinking.

What most Hungarians learn from life about the Magyar mind is now available, for the first time, in this user-friendly guide to what being Hungarian is all about.

*The Essential Guide to Being Hungarian* brings together twelve authors well-versed in the quintessential ingredients of being Hungarian--from the stereotypical Magyar man to the stereotypical Magyar woman, foods to folk customs, livestock to literature, film to philosophy, politics to porcelain, and scientists to sports.

In fifty short, highly readable, often witty, sometimes politically incorrect, but always candid articles, the authors demonstrate that being credibly Hungarian--like being French, Polish or Japanese--is largely a matter of carrying around in your head a potpourri of conceptions and preconceptions acquired over the years from your elders, society, school, the streets, and mass media.

Compacting this wealth of knowledge into an irresistible little book, *The Essential Guide to Being Hungarian* is an indispensable reference that will teach you how to be Hungarian, even if you already are.

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**Bibliography**

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#### Review

"A useful and entertaining appetizer for those who are interested in the past and present of Hungary and the Hungarians."

--Paul Lendvai, author of *The Hungarians*

"An anthology of well-written, witty, and self-critical pieces, reviving national stereotypes in tasteful, if not always PC humor. . . . Like the entries of an encyclopedia, each chapter initiates the reader into a facet of Hungarian life that is more or less obvious to Hungarians, but probably either unknown to or misunderstood by foreigners."

--Daniel Danyi, *Hungarian Literature Online* (hlo.hu) --Hungarian Literature Online (hlo.hu)

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#### About the Author

Istvan Bori, the lead editor, holds degrees in geography and history from the University of Szeged in Hungary. Since 1995 he has been an instructor in Budapest at the Balint Balassi Hungarian Cultural Institute, where he helped establish the Hungarian Studies Division. His specialties are twentieth-century Hungarian economic history and social geography.

The other editors are Noemi Kiss, Peter Racz, and Gabor Vaderna. Kiss is a writer and critic, and associate professor of literature at the University of Miskolc. Racz is an award-winning poet and literary translator, and the founding director of the Hungarian Translators House Foundation. Vaderna, who holds degrees in Hungarian language and literature, comparative literature, and aesthetics, is an assistant professor at Eotvos Lorand University in Budapest.

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