

11 Közlekedés

I came here by public transport. I took a bus number 34 to Árpád híd, then I changed to underground line 3 and travelled to Nyugati railway station. There I took a tram number 4-6 to Baross street. From there I walked here. I usually travel by car but It is difficult to park here that's why I used public transport today.

I live in Budapest. I can use several means of transport here. There is public transport and I can walk, cycle or use my car, too. Public transport includes trams, buses, trolley buses, the suburban electric train (HÉV) and the underground. And of course, you can use a taxi, too. The underground is probably the best way to travel in a big city because there are no traffic jams underground. There can be problems, of course, if somebody decides to end their life by jumping in front of an underground train. Then the underground stops for an hour or several hours and buses carry the passengers of the underground. The advantages of the underground is that it is fast even in the rush hour. The disadvantage is that an underground line is extremely expensive to build. The suburban train is also very good and fast. A tram line is cheaper to build than an underground line and is almost as good. If the tram line is separated from road traffic, the trams can travel fast even in the rush hour. A trolley bus line is even cheaper to build and trolley buses, trams, electric trains and the underground are all very environment-friendly because they run on electric energy. Buses have diesel engines so they pollute the environment. Buses and trolley buses don't need rails, they use roads, so they slow down very much in a traffic jam. A bus line is the cheapest to make because all you need is roads and buses. From the point of view of the environment travelling by public transport is better than travelling by car. If everybody travelled by public transport, there would be less pollution. If you want to use public transport, you must have a ticket. There are two kinds of tickets. The single ticket is only good for one journey and you must validate it before you start your journey. You can do it in a little machine on buses, trams, trolley-buses and suburban electric trains or at the gate that leads to the underground station. There are also tickets that are good for several days or weeks and for many journeys. You only have to show these to ticket inspectors. If you travel without a valid ticket, the ticket inspectors catch you and fine you. However, the best means of city transport is probably the bicycle in good weather. It is healthy, it does not cause pollution, you can cycle wherever you want and it is easy to park. A disadvantage is that there are not enough bikeways and cycling on a road is dangerous. You also have to be very careful to lock your bike well if you leave it somewhere because many bicycles are stolen. Travelling by motorbike is also good but a motorbike is dangerous and in bad weather it is not comfortable. On the other hand, it is easy to park. If you want to travel to another town or country, you can travel by car, by motorbike, by train or by plane. The plane is by far the fastest. Travelling by car is the most flexible because you can travel from door to door by car and you can travel at any time. It is the same if you travel by motorbike but a motorbike can carry fewer people and less luggage than a car and in bad weather it is very uncomfortable. If you want to travel a long way by car, your car must be in good condition because if it breaks down abroad for example, it is not very good. If you travel in a full car, it is cheaper than travelling by coach (távolsági busz) or by train. Normally it is more expensive to travel by plane than by train or by coach but now there are also cheap flights to many places. They are not very comfortable but they are cheap and fast. Trains in Hungary are often slow, dirty, crowded and uncomfortable, except Intercity trains. Coaches are like buses but they travel between towns and villages.

If you want to drive a car, you must have a valid driving licence. In order to get a driving licence, you must pass theoretical tests and a driving test. The driving test consists of two parts. The first is a “routine test” in a closed area, where you have to reverse, park the car and do other “tricks”. The second part is driving in real traffic. It can be frightening for a beginner. Getting a driving licence costs a lot of money and for some people it is quite difficult. People often fail one or more of the tests, most often the driving test.

I’ve had a driving licence for many years and I love driving. I have a little car but I like it very much. It is a 14-year-old Suzuki Swift hatchback. It is not new but it is very good. It is cheap, reliable, comfortable and economical. It has low fuel consumption. It has a surprising amount of space inside, even the boot is quite usable. It has never let me down.

When you drive a car, you use the steering wheel, three (or two) pedals and the gear-shift lever (if there is one) to control the car. In cars with automatic transmission there are only two pedals (there is no clutch pedal) and there is no gear-shift lever. The three pedals (from right to left) are the accelerator, the brake pedal and the clutch pedal. Behind the steering wheel there is the dashboard with instruments. The most important instruments are the speedometer, the fuel gauge, and the water or oil temperature meter or indicator.

When you want to start the car, you put it in neutral gear, turn the ignition key to start the engine, depress the clutch pedal, switch to first gear, and slowly release the clutch pedal. Then the car starts moving. If the car has automatic transmission, it is simpler to start driving. You can only drive your car on the roads if it is in good condition. Every car has to be officially checked periodically to ensure this. This check is called the MOT test. Cars are usually checked every two years.

Drivers sometimes commit traffic offences, such as reckless driving, parking violations or drinking and driving.

Pedestrians can safely cross roads where there are traffic lights and zebra crossings for them. When you drive, you must always follow the Highway Code. It is a collection of rules and tells drivers what they can and can’t do on the road.

Modern traffic has some problems. One problem is that there are too many vehicles on the road. The problem is most acute in the rush hour, when there are most vehicles on the roads. Congestion (zsúfoltság) slows down traffic and also increases pollution. Many roads are in a terrible state. There isn’t enough money to repair all the roads. Another problem is accidents. Most accidents happen because of human error. Drinking and driving is also the cause of many accidents.

In Hungary people drive on the right. It is the same in most countries but in some countries, such as Japan, England and Australia, drivers must keep to the left.