

# Budapest: A Beloved Location in Hollywood Films

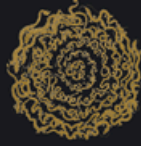
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**A Parliament Building that can be Commonly Seen in Hollywood Films**

Source: Wikimedia Commons

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nil04xySbuc>

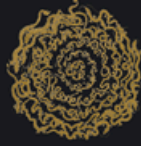


The Hungarian capital of Budapest is not a new name to Hollywood film audiences, be it fleeting glances of its renowned Synagogue or the grand Parliament building in the background, or *Marvel's Black Widow* and Hawkeye talking about what happened in Budapest in the middle of a superhero battle. The city's theaters, ornate library, hotels, baths, and famous "Whale" building can be seen in many international films. In fact, Budapest is even known as the Hollywood of Europe (Akkam, 2017)! So, it is no surprise that the Hungarian capital is a very popular shooting location for international films, especially Hollywood. It is the second-most popular filming location in Europe after London. Hungary is, in fact, the second-largest production hub in Europe after the United Kingdom. Some of the most well-known films shot in Budapest are '*Atomic Blonde*', '*All the Light We Cannot See*', '*A Good Day to Die Hard*', '*Red Heat*', '*Spy*', '*Inferno*', '*Evita*', and '*Poor Things*'.



**Széchenyi Chain Bridge and Liberty Bridge in Budapest**

Source: Wikimedia Commons



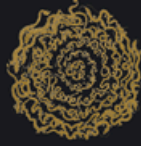
A quick walk down the storied history of Budapest can help yield insight into the city's popularity. It was an early Celtic settlement that was occupied by the Romans, who named it Aquincum. It was initially a military settlement, and they eventually transformed it into a city replete with amenities like roads, houses, baths, and amphitheatres. The next significant historical event was the arrival of the Magyar tribes, who settled in the town after they were forced out of their homeland. The Magyars established the Kingdom of Hungary, with its capital near the city. They rebuilt the city with reinforced security after invasions by the Mongols and Tatars.



**A Picturesque View of Budapest and a View of the City from the Buda Castle**

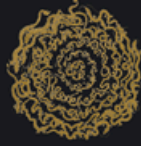
Source: Wikimedia Commons

The re-established city of Buda became one of the cultural centers of Renaissance humanist culture by the fifteenth century. However, the city was again conquered by the Ottomans, who ruled it for a century and a half. After multiple attempts, the Ottomans were removed from power, and the city enjoyed an age of prosperity. The city of Budapest as we know it today was formed in 1873 by merging the historical regions of Buda, Pest, and Óbuda. It was also the co-capital of the Austro-Hungarian empire during the First World War.



Popular Films with Scenes Set in Budapest: *'Black Widow'* and *'Spy'*

Source: Reactor and Pinnaxis

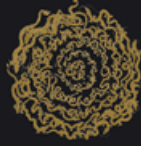


The city's multi-faceted history is a significant feature as it lends a beneficial versatility to its optics. Budapest has architectural remnants of multiple historical eras, so it can be used to depict many different cities and periods of time. Some of the notable architectural styles that can be seen in the city include ancient Roman, Gothic, Renaissance, Ottoman, Baroque, Brutalism, Classical, Neoclassical, Art Nouveau, and Contemporary. It also has a variety of different geographical backgrounds, like the Danube River and its banks, many geothermal springs, a large thermal water cave system, plains, and hills. This makes the city an “architectural cocktail” that seems to contain bits of many others” (Heathcote, 2018). Some of the most popular locations that Budapest has depicted in films are London, Berlin, Moscow, Paris, Florence, Buenos Aires, and, of course, Budapest itself.



**Budapest Often Stands in for Various Cities in Cinema: (clockwise from top left)**  
**'Evita' (Buenos Aires), 'Inferno' (Florence), 'All the Light We Cannot See' (Paris), and 'Spy Game' (Berlin)**

Source: Catwalk Yourself, The Arts Desk, Budapest Reporter, and Flatpack Films

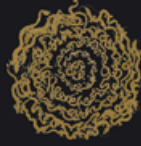


**A Shooting in Budapest for a Film set in Early 20th Century Madrid**

Source: Wikimedia Commons

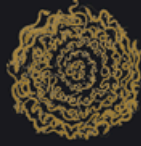
Budapest is also advantaged by the laws in Hungary, like the cash rebate system and the Hungarian Motion Picture Act. Hungary offers an uncapped 30% rebate on film production costs for films that spend the majority of their budget in the country. This stipulation allows for even foreign productions to make use of the rebate, so it is a significant factor in the popularity of Budapest as a filming location.





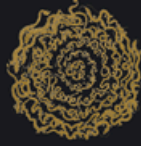
**Budapest as Moscow in Films: *'A Good Day to Die Hard'*, *'Red Sparrow'*, and *'Red Heat'***

Source: Budapest Reporter, Fashionista, and Financial Times



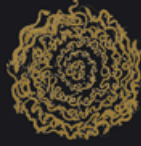
There are plenty of shooting locations available, along with an increasing number of rentable soundstages and film studio complexes. The film studios are equipped with “state-of-the-art equipment and experienced and professional local and international film crews” (BIC). Film crews can come in and get everything done, from shooting to post-production, all in Hungary itself! In fact, this level of industry expertise is what has been considered to set Budapest apart from other cities like Vancouver and Montreal. Although the city “isn’t unique in its chameleon capacity, none of the others have quite the imaginative variety of Budapest” (Heathcote, 2018). This also gives it a feeling of timelessness, where it is “both present and absent, super-specific and utterly generic”: “the perfect stand-in for cities that no longer look like they used to, or are only now being imagined” (Heathcote, 2018).





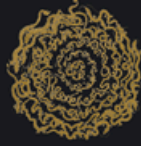
**Budapest was also the filming location for *'Poor Things'*, *'Atomic Blonde'*, and *'Midsommar'***

Source: Condé Nast Traveller, Budapest Reporter, and ScreenRant



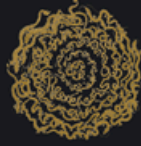
The Hungarian company Flatpack Films rightly describes Budapest as “one of the few major capitals in the world where you can go scuba diving, caving, kayaking, and hiking through seeming wilderness within the city’s boundaries” (Boissonneault, 2020). This provides a quite competitive and attractive versatility, as filmmakers can have both natural and urban filming locations as well as the technical infrastructure of an urban center. This also draws in projects set in different times, like the fictional desert planet in *‘Dune’*, the dystopian and futuristic landscape in *‘Blade Runner 2049’*, and the space complex and facilities in *‘The Martian’*. The countryside just outside the city stood in for the rural Swedish setting of *‘Midsommar’* as well. Even several television series, music videos, and car commercials have been shot here.





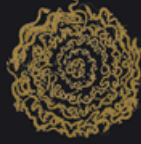
**Budapest as a Timeless Location: *'Dune'*, *'Blade Runner 2049'*, and *'The Martian'***

Source: The Hollywood Reporter, Budapest Reporter, and The Location Guide



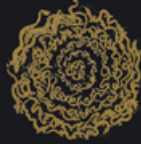
The popularity of the city has earned it the reputation of “a home away from home” for many foreign filmmakers and stars. It is not only made up of architectural memoirs and shooting locations. It also has many recreational and leisure activities, so film crews and cast members can also relax in the city as well. The city’s popularity has contributed significantly to the tourism industry. It is also helping the development of local talents by providing them with chances to work with internationally acclaimed professionals. Local film projects and performers thus get the opportunity to reach wider and more international audiences. Budapest thus remains a mainstay in Hungary’s booming cinema industry and one of the most beloved Hollywood filming locations.





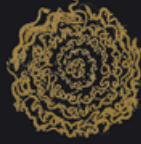
**Budapest is also a Popular Filming Location for Music Videos:  
Stills from 'Firework' by Katy Perry and 'The Boxer' by The Chemical Brothers**

Source: YouTube

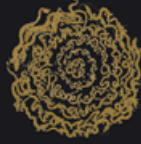


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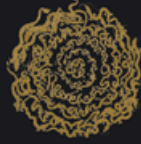


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