

# Hungarian Stamps 2011

## HEALTH TOURISM – SPAS Lukács and Gellért Spas

**MAGYAR POSTA**  
**STAMP ISSUE**  
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Magyar Posta is starting the release of a series of regular stamps presenting Hungary's spas. The stamps for 2011 show some characteristic details of the Lukács and Gellért Spas. The stamp designs feature interior and exterior views of the spas as well as statues of St Luke, whose name the Lukács Baths bear, and Venus bathing. The first day covers are decorated by a work of art from each of the spas. The designs of the special postmarks depict stylised drawings shown on the stamps.

The area of present day Budapest has been inhabited for thousands of years and the city has been noted for its spas and baths for two thousand years. The first early period of the city's bathing culture is represented by former baths unearthed in the settlements of various tribes and at the garrison of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Legion and the city of Aquincum in the Roman province of Pannonia. The first record of the period after the Conquest of Hungary by the Magyar tribes is from 1178 mentioning a settlement in the area of today's Lukács and Császárszék Spas whose name means upper thermal water. Later records reveal that the lower thermal water spring was at the bottom of Gellért Hill. The second great era was brought about under Turkish rule with their public baths built in characteristic Ottoman style around thermal springs, which embodied their unique bathing culture. The third era was the Age of Enlightenment. Studies from the first third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century already record the useful nature of the thermal springs of Buda. Buda-

pest, which has the most thermal springs with a curative effect of any capital in the world, acquired the title the "City of Spas" in the early 1930s.

**Lukács Spa** • In the 12<sup>th</sup> century the Knights of St John, who cared for the sick, and later the Knights of Rhodes and Malta settled in the neighbourhood of today's Lukács Baths, and built baths next to their monasteries. These also functioned during the Turkish era, but the energy of the springs was used mainly for gun powder production and grinding grain in mills. After Buda was recaptured from the Turks, the baths came into the royal treasury's ownership. In 1884 the baths were bought from the treasury by Fülöp Palotay, which started a series of reconstructions. A spa hotel was erected, a modern hydrotherapy unit was opened and the swimming pool rebuilt. People seeking cures came from all over the world, and placed marble plaques on the walls in the baths' courtyard in gratitude for their successful treatment. The baths' drinking hall was built in 1937.

**Gellért Spa** • Records from as early as the 15<sup>th</sup> century refer to the miraculous effect of the springs that now feed the baths. These sources were also favoured by the Turks as they were larger and hotter than the contemporary baths in Buda. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century they were popularly known as the muddy baths due to the fine sludge that settled at the bottom of the pools and was then stirred up by the rising water. The Gellért Spa and Hotel, built in the Art Nouveau style and known worldwide, opened in 1918, and was then expanded by a wave pool in 1927 and an effervescent pool in 1934. During recent modernisation works, the indoor and outdoor sitting pools and the children's pool have been renovated, and modern filtering equipment fitted. Today the spa offers a wide range of medical and health services. (Source: [budapestgyogyfurdoi.hu](http://budapestgyogyfurdoi.hu))

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