

THE DOS AND DON'TS FOR EUROPE'S TOP MUSIC FESTIVAL

Surviving Sziget

The world-renowned Sziget Festival returns to Óbuda Island again this summer from August 10-17, as one of the most popular music festivals in Europe brings together as many as 400,000 music fans from around Hungary and across Europe. Named as the Best Major Festival in Europe in 2012 and 2014 and widely considered as a must-see event, Sziget remains at the forefront of what a big music festival should be. To best enjoy your experience on the island, The Budapest Times gives you the Sziget 2015 Festival Guide.

■ LEE REANEY

No matter whether you plan to head to the island just for a single day to catch your favourite act or whether you plan to bring your 18-person tent so you can throw the biggest party on the beach, there are a few things that every Sztizen (see Infobox for definition) should remember to bring with them. Keep these things in mind when packing:

Things to bring:

- **Your ticket.** They'll need to scan the barcode so that you can get inside. Do not leave home without it.

- **Tip:** Don't let anyone photograph or copy your ticket. If anyone else gets your barcode, you'll need to find a different ticket.

- **Tip:** Do not buy tickets from unofficial websites or scalpers. These are often forgeries, the festival will not let you in and it can be very difficult to get your money back.

- **Food and drink:** This is essential if you're camping and wise even if you're not. Stores and restaurants are available onsite and so are places to refill your water bottle.

- **Other necessities:** Earplugs are very useful, especially if you plan to be close to the stage. If you smoke bring plenty (up to 20 packets). It can be difficult to find them on the island. If you plan to be sexually active bring condoms. Everyone will thank you. If you take medications bring enough for your time there. Pretty straightforward.

- **Weather protection:** It can be hot at Sziget so you will need to pack your swimsuit and hat, your shades and some sunscreen. Rain does tend to happen; in

this case – do everyone a favour and pack a raincoat instead of an umbrella. Warm clothes are handy for the evenings and bug repellent is useful too.

- **Footwear:** Both of the open- and closed-toe variety. Your feet will thank you for breathing during the day and for protecting them from the jumping hordes during the more popular shows.

- **Toiletries:** Tissues and/or toilet paper are worth their weight in gold here, and hand sanitiser is also a popular and useful item. Toothpaste is nice to have with you as well.

- **Flashlight:** You'll need all your camping accessories – obviously – if you plan to camp. But a torch and batteries are incredibly useful at night.

- **Electronic chargers:** There will be plenty of places to recharge your equipment, so pack your cords. This being said, don't forget to pack your equipment too – cameras, phones and the like.

- **Forints:** There will be places to exchange dollars or euros on the island but they don't offer rates as good as you'll find in central Budapest.

Things not to bring:

- **Drugs and alcohol:** There are plenty of places to find a drink onsite so don't worry about bringing your own alcohol (you can't bring it in anyways). You know that drugs are illegal in Hungary, right?

- **Weapons:** No knives or baseball bats or brass knuckles, okay? Well, short knives of less than 8cm are all right for cutting the food you bring. Just don't use it as a weapon, capiche?

- **Glassware:** Glass has a funny way of finding itself broken when in the middle of thousands of rowdy partygoers. It's very dangerous when it is. So please leave it at home.

- **Selfie sticks:** We all know our love for pictures of ourselves, especially at an event as cool as Sziget. But these things are dangerous in a crowd and can be used as a weapon. Just get someone around you to take a photo. You won't have problems finding someone to help.

Some dos and don'ts for your best Sziget experience

With over 1,000 shows at dozens of venues across the island, you'll have no trouble discovering what you like and what you never knew that you liked. Sziget is more than just a music festival – it's a celebration of art and culture and all of the things that bring us closer together as human beings. For your best Sziget experience, here are a few dos and don'ts:

- **Do make new friends:** Wander off on your own and get lost. Ask someone for directions or to take a picture with you or for advice on music. Really, just find any excuse to talk to somebody. Sztizens are friendly and you'll meet some unforgettable people.

- **Don't have unprotected sex:** There are better memories and souvenirs to bring home than a nasty sexually transmitted disease. The morning-after pill is not as effective as having the guy "strap up" in the first place. Use a condom.

- **Do prank your friends:** There may be no better time this year to hide their clothes while they're sleeping or toilet paper their tent. Be creative. And get a video!

- **Don't prank your neighbours:** The same doesn't exactly apply to those we don't know so well. But be warned – there are Sztizen pranksters on the prowl.



- **Do go exploring:** The island is large and beautiful and there is something new and wonderful to be found in the most unexpected places. Look for the luminarium, get some sun on the beach or find the dance company that will give you your very own, one-minute theatre performance. There is so much to see and do.

- **Don't get slobbering drunk:** We're not being your grandpappies here – go get your drink on. But if you want to remember the festival or don't want to be sick as a dog for the next day's events, remember to pace yourself. And drink lots of water.

- **Do try something new:** Find a style of music you've never heard before. Ask around for groups that you should try to see. Find a new activity that looks interesting. Get married! (It only counts on the island, so what do you have to lose?)

- **Do explore Budapest:** It's a wonderful city and so much goes on outside of Sziget itself. Check out one of our world-renowned spas, explore the Buda

Castle and St. Stephen's cathedral, or go on a relaxing river cruise along the Danube. All this and more awaits you in Budapest. Happy Sziget-ing.

