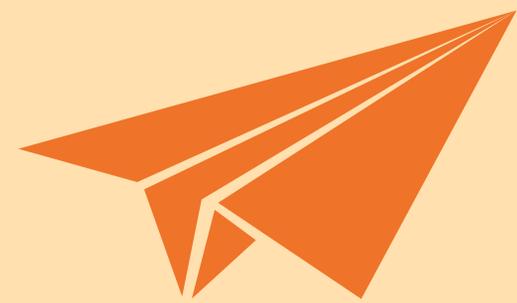


# Magyaroute



Sylvia Hwang, YAGM '23-'24

## NICHE WORDS THAT I'VE PICKED UP SO FAR

Mézeskalács: gingerbread  
(even though it literally  
translates to honey cake)

Minden: all, everything. I  
learned this because I was  
looking up the translation of my  
favorite movie (Everything  
Everywhere All At Once).

Vidra: otter. Because I did a  
presentation featuring the  
Seattle Aquarium.

Lunda: puffin (bird).  
Same as vidra.

Nyitva: open,  
Zarva: closed  
(for stores)



Good news: the grief stage of YAGM has mostly passed. (Mostly.)  
The bad news: we've entered into a new stage, one that I have lovingly  
called "we'll figure it out."

It is a time for wild experiments and unpreparedness, only this time  
it tends to be less about missing my old situation of living and more  
about trying to figure out what to do and say and be in all of my new  
areas of being. I am generally a person who doesn't really know what's  
going on half the time even in my native language, for multiple  
reasons. For example, I tend to miss a lot of things that people are  
trying to say because I take them at face value, and people have told  
me that I've missed following hidden directions that were seemingly  
obvious to everyone else. So in Hungarian, I miss even more details.  
I've gotten used to wildly guessing meanings to words based on  
context clues, and then flipping through the dictionary to find the  
actual meaning later. And when the context is lost on me, I feel like I'm  
learning to read again for the first time as the months pass.

It's chaotic, sure, but I've found peace with it all the same. In the  
times when I don't know what's going on, it's actually quite relaxing.  
It's nice to know that at least this time, I understand the reason for the  
lapse in communication. And when I do want to understand what is  
going on, or want to feel included, I have friends to talk to about it  
here. It forces me to ask for help, which I think has been good for  
building community. My friends who speak Hungarian have been kind  
enough to help me translate some things, and I can bond with my  
friends who don't speak Hungarian by trying to learn the language  
together. The language barrier is real, of course, and differences  
between countries are there. But in both places-- within any place--  
the acts of love and the people who are kind and funny and smart and  
brave are always there.



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1: Sara and I in the audience of the Budapest Opera House! Deák Tér (the school I volunteer at) invited us both to see a dress rehearsal ballet performance of Spartacus.

2: Sara and I again, enjoying lángos (a Hungarian flatbread traditionally served topped with sour cream and cheese) in downtown Budapest.

3: The children's sermon at Mandák Ház, which is the church I attend on Sundays.

4: Students performing a class dance at a James Bond themed event at Deák Tér.

5: Me and Winnie, Kelly and Aaron's canine-in-residence. (She tolerates me laying on her and I love her for it.)

6: The 2023 Central Europe cohort (Madeline, Connor, Sara, and me) painting candles for an advent wreath.

7: An Ender Dragon from Minecraft on the ceiling of a Deák Tér classroom, as part of a classroom decoration contest between classes of students.

8: A part of the memorial that remembers the Pan-European picnic in 1989, which was a peace demonstration that took place on the border of Hungary and Austria.

9. The intricately painted ceiling of the Budapest Opera House.

