

Discover & Experience Europe's Last Secret: Albania

Eight days filled with unique natural landscapes combined with the background story of the country and the influences of various religions and politics.

- Meet the locals and be their guests
- Take a journey into the communist past of Albania
- Walk through rural villages to see the life & meet the people
- Visit three impressive UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Day - 1 Tirana

TIRANA ARRIVAL

The transfer from “Mother Teresa” airport to the hotel in down town Tirana will be according to the flight schedules. Founded in 1614, Tirana became the capital of Albania in 1920 and is the main cultural and industrial centre of the land. The city boulevards are marked with fascinating relics of the Ottoman, Italian and communist past. Tirana has changed incredibly in the last twenty years, from the dull, grey city it once was. It is a city where fun is guaranteed: lively, loud, modern, traditional, colourful, crazy, simply fascinating.

Overnight: Tirana

Day - 2 Korça

TIRANA – POGRADEČ – KORÇA (B, L, D)

Today's trip begins with a drive in the direction of the Ohrid Lake up to Lin, which has served as the summer residence of Roman emperor Justinian's parents. After the coffee break, a short walk along the lake and then uphill to the remains of the 6th century basilica are planned. The Ohrid Lake is known as the only place where the tasty “Koran” fish is to be found. The locals cook it into varied dishes which we will have the possibility to taste during our lunch at a restaurant along the lake promenade. The journey continues towards Korça. Situated on the side of the Morava Mountain, Korça is the largest city in the South-Eastern part of Albania, built on an Illyrian settlement. In the 15th century, the city developed as an artisan and trading centre and in the second half of the 19th century it became one of the biggest economic, commercial and cultural centres of the country. Visit the National Museum of Medieval Art which is one of the most important museums of the region with about 7500 objects. In the afternoon, a cooking class is planned. It will be not only a demonstration, but you also can be involved in every stage of the 5 course meal.

Overnight: Korça

Day - 3 Përmet

KORÇA – REHOVA – PËRMET (B, L, D)

After breakfast, a guided walk tour through the city of Korça and its well preserved traditional market is planned. It used to be a trading market not only for domestic goods but also for imported items originally from Turkey, Greece, Trieste and Venice. Stop then for a coffee break at a very special bar just in the heart of the market. It bears the name “Komiteti”, the most important Institution of the Communist State. Different original carefully preserved objects create a special atmosphere enabling a journey to the past, to another reality and way of life. The explanations of your guide helps you to understand, go deeper and experience it. The journey continues towards Rehoval, a remote village just in the middle of the mountains. As you walk through the cobblestone alleys it seems like in the Middle Ages. Here, be a guest of a local family for lunch and taste the local dishes cooked in a strictly traditional way using homemade local ingredients of the region of Korça. After lunch, transfer to Përmet, where you will be guest of a family and get in contact with the real life of the locals. Taste some homemade “raki” and confitures.

Overnight: Përmet

Day - 4 Gjirokastra

PËRMET – BËNJA – GJIROKASTRA (B, L, D)

The day starts with the transfer to the village of Bënje, where you can find six beautiful natural pools of thermal waters. The Langerica River forms a splendid canyon and the Ottoman Bridge of Katiu is the frame of this beautiful place. All those who don't like to walk along the canyon, can have a bath at one of the thermal pools. Transfer to Gjirokastra for lunch. In the afternoon, a guided visit of the town is planned. It is an outstanding example of an Ottoman merchant town and one of the few still surviving in the Balkans. Visit the castle and a very traditional museum house. Dinner is then served in a traditional restaurant where you can taste homemade dishes characteristic of the region, accompanied by the sound of traditional Albanian folk music called iso-polyphony. It is original music and as such is included in UNESCO's intangible cultural heritage list.

Overnight: Gjirokastra

Day - 5 Saranda

GJIROKASTRA – TRACES OF LORD BYRON – SARANDA (B, L, D)

Drive today into the region of Lunxhëri which is an outstanding example of the coexistence between different cultures and religions. Meet the shepherds and spend some time to learn how to make cheese. You will be invited even to participate and get involved as much as you like during this activity. Then, walk on the traces of Lord Byron between the villages of Qestorat and Tranoshishtë. Lunch is served in a local house. The journey continues towards Saranda. It is astonishing how the landscape changes as you travel in the direction of the Ionian coast. After only few kilometres the dwellings of past pastoral communities and traditional medieval villages, live their place to the characteristic Mediterranean villages set into the mountain sides with their stone houses nestling happily with historical monuments. On the way to Saranda, enjoy the spectacular secluded scenery of the “Blue Eye” spring and park. This spring is unique for its appearance as a deep sapphire blue “hole” beneath the surface of more tranquil turquoise water—a colour scheme typically only observed in saltwater springs. Divers have made it down 50 meters into the water, but its true depth is yet to be revealed. Dinner is organized at a restaurant that lies at the “Lëkursi

Caste" on the top of a hill overlooking the bay of Saranda.

Overnight: Saranda

Day - 6 Dhërmi

SARANDA – BUTRINT – HIKING TOUR – DHËRMI (B, L, D)

Visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Butrint in the morning. The site is well known since the 7th century B.C. as the most important city of Epirus. After the visit, drive along the scenic Ionian coast road. The Albanian Ionian Coast runs from Vlora to Saranda, in the south, opposite Corfu. The coast line is famous for its small bays, pebbly beaches and crystal-clear waters. The Riviera is one of Albania's natural beauties and certainly one of the most picturesque places in the whole Mediterranean. Since ancient times, the Albanian Coast has seen different cultural influences come and go, leaving behind a host of archaeological and historical treasures, such as ancient sites, Roman or Greek cities, hillside castles and fortresses, walled towns, monasteries, churches, mosques and other interesting jewels. Stop in Kudhës, a very traditional village with cobblestone alleys and stone houses. Enjoy your lunch with a local family and taste some traditional homemade products. Follow then the path which is wide and rocky in some parts and a small trail in others, to the village of Upper Qeparo. From the old traditional village the hike continues downhill, until you reach the bus again. A coffee break is planned in Porto Palermo Bay. It is one of the most beautiful places of the entire Ionian coast. Its harbour has been one of the most important military bases during the Cold War. The tunnel entrance, where submarines used to anchor, is visible from the road. The magnificent castle of Ali Pasha lies on a small island just in the middle of the bay.

Overnight: Dhërmi

Day - 7 Tirana

DHËRMI – TIRANA (B, L, D)

Board the boat to the Ngjipe beach in the morning. On your way, visit the Pirate's Cave. The canyon of Ngjipe is situated along the lower parts of the Ngjipe stream and was formed by water erosion. The landscape is attractive, the beach is clean and the water clear. In Ngjipe you have time to enjoy the sun and the warm sea. Walking along the canyon's length will be a real adventure, worth to be undertaken. The tour continues along the coast in the direction of the Grama bay. This part of the coast is particularly beautiful. Small pebble beaches, narrow untouched bays, underwater hidden caves, constantly colour changing sea and crystal-clear waters will make your tour an extraordinary experience. The coastal shoreline along the Bay area has cultural heritage sites of significant value and can be considered as one of the richest "rocky diaries" in the Mediterranean. In the afternoon, boat ride to Dhërmi and transfer to Tirana. After dinner at a very special slow food restaurant, you can have a drink at one of the numerous cafés or trendy bars of the "Blloku" district. The most animated quarter of the city lies at the place, where before the democratic changes, it was not allowed for the public to enter, as it was inhabited only by the higher leadership.

Overnight: Tirana

Day - 8 Tirana

TIRANA DEPARTURE (B)

Depending on your departure flight, drive to the airport for your flight home or onward flight.

Inclusions

- 7 nights in your chosen accommodation
- Meal as specified in itinerary (B = Breakfast, BR = Brunch, L = Lunch, D = Dinner)
- Activities and excursions according to itinerary

FOR EXAMPLE:

- CityTour of Tirana
- lakeside walk along Lake Ohrid
- Food tour in Pogradec
- Cooking class in Korça
- Go river walking through the wild beauty of the Langerica River and bathe in the natural thermal pools
- Hike on the traces of Lord Byron
- Enjoy a guided tour of Gjirokastra – UNESCO World Heritage
- Feel the Albanian iso-polyphony folk music – UNESCO World Heritage
- Visit a shepherd's hut and learn more about the cheese production
- Visit the ruins of Butrinti - UNESCO World Heritage
- Hiking & Boat Tour of the Ionian Coast

- Tours and excursions in mini buses/buses or with public transportation according to itinerary
- English speaking tour guide
- Admission fees according to itinerary

Exclusions

- International flights
- Meals other than mentioned in itinerary
- Tours and Excursions other than mentioned in itinerary
- Early check-in and late check-out at hotels
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips for driver/guides
- Visa fees

Payment Details:

Group from 6 persons and
more starting from (p.P)

USD 1365

Private tour for 2 persons
starting from (p.P.) USD 1933

Booking Availabilities

Booking in between : **1st March 2022 & 10th September 2022**

★★★ and ★★★★★ Star Hotels

Single Supplement	: USD 245.00
Double Room Price(per person)for the 1st + 2nd person	: USD 1933.00
Double Room Price(per person)for the 3rd + 4th person	: USD 1933.00
Double Room Price(per person)for the 5th + 6th person	: USD 1365.00