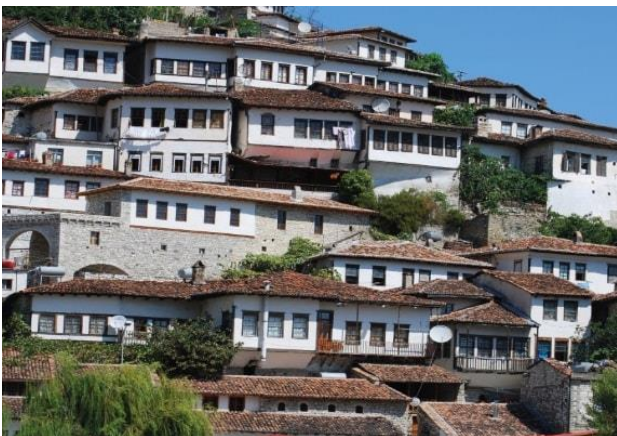


Tour
Information



Discover Albania





Travel

Passports

Please ensure your 10-year British Passport is not out of date and is valid for a full six months beyond the duration of your visit. The name on your passport must match the name on your flight ticket/E-ticket otherwise you may be refused boarding at the airport.

Visas

Visas are not required for Albania for citizens of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

Embassy of Albania: 33 St. George's Drive, Westminster, London SW1V 4PS.
Tel: 020 7828 8897.



Tickets

Included with this documentation is an itinerary which includes a reference number for your flight. At check-in you will need to quote/show this and you will be issued with your boarding pass. **Online check-in is not available for this booking.** Visit the British Airways website for more information: www.britishairways.com

Please check that the details on your documentation are accurate and that all names are spelt correctly and match the names on your passport. Your flight ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



Baggage Allowance

We advise that you stick to the baggage allowances advised. If your luggage is found to be heavier than the airlines baggage allowances the charges at the airport will be hefty.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45 x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and one personal bag, such as a handbag or computer bag.

For more information please visit www.britishairways.com

Labels

Please use the luggage labels provided. It is useful to have your home address located inside your suitcase should the label go astray.

Departure Tax

UK Flight Taxes are included in the price of your holiday.

Transfers

On arrival at Tirana Airport please collect your luggage and exit the luggage area and proceed until you are in the arrival's hall. You will find your Tour Manager situated in arrivals, holding a Travel Editions sign. The journey time to resort is approximately 45 mins.

Special Requests

If you haven't done so already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements.



Accommodation

Hotel Panorama, Kruje

The 4-star Panorama Hotel is well located in the city centre and offers panoramic views over the castle, mountain and Adriatic Sea to the west. All rooms are modern and offer en-suite facilities, air-con, TV, telephone and Wi-Fi. There are two restaurants available at the hotel which offer a variety of traditional dishes.

For more information visit the hotel website:
<http://hotelpanoramakruje.com/>

Hotel Partner, Vlore

This 4-star modern, hotel is just 200m from Vlore town centre, the Muradie Mosque and the sea. The hotel facilities include a lounge bar and restaurant. Rooms are all modern and feature private bathroom, AC, mini-bar, telephone, satellite TV and Wi-Fi.

For more information visit the hotel website:
<http://www.hotelpartner.al/>

Hotel Brillant, Sarande

The Brillant Hotel is a modern 4-star hotel located just 100m from the main boulevard and 50m from the sea.

This hotel offers a bar, rooms with en-suite facilities, AC, minibar, telephone, TV and Wi-Fi.

For more information visit the hotel website:
<https://www.brilanthotel.com/>

Hotel Argjiro, Gjirokaster

Located in the heart of historical Gjirokaster, the Hotel Argjiro is close to all touristic attractions like Old Bazaar and Argjiro castle.

The hotel boasts a bar, roof garden and rooms are all en-suite with TV, hairdryer, AC and Wi-Fi.

For more information visit the hotel website:
<http://www.hotelargjiro.al/?lang=en>

Hotel Mangalemi, Berat

The first hotel that opened in Berat after the 1991 change of system in Albania, this hotel is conveniently located in the Mangalem quarter. The hotel has a restaurant serving traditional dishes which offers a terrace overlooking the city. Rooms at the hotel offer en-suite facilities, AC, minibar, TV and WiFi.

For more information visit the hotel website:
<http://www.mangalemihotel.com/>

Hotel Rezidenca Desarat, Berat

The Hotel Rezidenca Desaret is situated just a few metres from the city centre and is surrounded by fantastic views. The hotel was restored in 2016, adding an excellent combination of tradition and modern. Bedrooms all have private bathroom facilities with shower as well as AC, balcony, TV, Wi-Fi and telephone.

For more information visit the hotel website:
<http://rezidencadesaret.com/en/>



Food

Albania's largely meat-based cuisine brings together elements of Slavic, Turkish and Italian cuisines. Spit-roasted lamb is the traditional dish of choice, though today it's qebab (kebabs) and qoftë (grilled lamb rissoles) that dominate menus, often served with a bowl of kos (yogurt). Another interesting dish is fergesë, a mix of egg, onions and tomatoes (and meat in some regions) cooked in a clay pot. Lunch is traditionally the biggest meal of the day for Albanians. Traditionally, people went home to their houses to have lunch with their families, but it is now common to have lunch with groups of friends at restaurants or cafeterias. Lunch sometimes consists of gjellë, a main dish of slowly cooked meat with various vegetables, accompanied by a salad of fresh vegetables, such as tomatoes, cucumbers, green peppers, onions and olives. Salads are typically served with meat dishes and are dressed with salt, virgin olive oil, white vinegar or lemon juice. Grilled or fried vegetables and sausages and various forms of omelettes are also eaten during lunch.

There are some excellent desserts on offer, including spongy shendetlije, cream-saturated trilece, and the usual Turkish pastries. Bakllava is made frequently in Albania, especially around certain religious holidays of Muslims, Catholics and Orthodox. It is prepared on large trays and cut into a variety of shapes. Baklava is either with hazelnuts or walnuts sweetened with syrup.



Drink

Coffee is consumed throughout the day, espresso now leads the old traditional Turkish-style, with grounds at the bottom (kafe turke). There are cafés on every corner, and it's worth noting that cafés and bars generally melt into the same grey area – what's one by day will usually become the other by night.

The alcoholic drink of choice is raki – like coffee, this spirit is something of a way of life in Albania, and usually consumed with meals. The country also produces some good wine, mostly red, though most locals will own to a preference for Macedonian varieties; Rilindja is a good, easy-to-find local label. Beer is easy to find, and it's also worth sampling the local Skënderbeg cognac,

which is available in most places. Albania is a traditionally wine drinking country. The people of Albania drink wine in moderation and almost always at meals or social occasions. The origins of wine production in Albania can be traced back 6,000 years and evidence suggesting wine production confirm that Albania is among the earliest wine producer in Europe.

Meals included in the price of your holiday are:

Breakfast – daily

Dinner – on 4 evenings



Destination

Tirana

Tirana, the capital of Albania, is known for its colourful Ottoman, Fascist and Soviet-era architecture. Pastel buildings surround the city's focal point, Skanderbeg Square, which is named for its equestrian statue of a national hero. On the square's north end is the modernist National History Museum, covering prehistoric times through Communist rule and the anti-Communist uprisings of the 1990s.

Kruje

Krujë is situated in north central Albania. Located between Mount Krujë and the Ishëm River, the city is only 20 km north of the capital, Tirana. In 1190 Krujë became the capital of the first autonomous Albanian state in the middle ages, the Principality of Arbër, later it was to become the capital of the Kingdom of Albania.

Vlore

Vlorë is the third city of the Republic of Albania. It is the capital of the surrounding Vlorë County. Located on the south-eastern Adriatic Sea, the city was founded as an Ancient Greek colony in the sixth century BC under the name of Aulon and has been continuously inhabited ever since. It became the seat of a bishopric. In modern times, the city served briefly as the capital of Albania. Notably, the Albanian Declaration of Independence was proclaimed here on November 28 in 1912.

Sarandë

Sarandë one of most charming towns of the Albanian Riviera, and during the summer months it seems that Tirana relocates here to enjoy the busy beach and busier nightlife along its crowd-filled seaside promenade. What was once a sleepy fishing village is now a thriving city which is known for its blue deep waters of the Mediterranean. Near Sarandë are the remains of the ancient city of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage site

Gjirokaster

The city of Gjirokaster, known as 'The City of Stone', is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List and is one of the most attractive tourist sites of

the country. Perched on the eastern side of the 'Wide Mountain', the city began as a fourth century castle, which is today the greatest castle in the whole country. Inside the fortress is the Museum of Weapons, where weapons of different periods up until the Second World War are displayed.

Berat

Berat is known as 'the city of one thousand windows' because of its remarkable collection of fine traditional ottoman style houses. This 2413-year-old city, the pride of Albanian architecture, which is under the protection of UNESCO is located 120 KM from Tirana. The city forms a wonderful combination of eastern and western cultures, costumes, traditions and is a testament to the country's tradition of religious harmony.

Places of interest included in the tour:

National Historical Museum

Albania's largest museum, National Historical Museum has seven pavilions of exhibits. You'll spot the attraction by the large mosaic above the front entrance called "The Albanians." Each pavilion showcases a different period in Albania's history from antiquity to communism. In the antiquity pavilion you'll see objects from prehistory to the Middle Ages, including tools from daily life, coins, and base reliefs. As you move forward in time, the exhibits get more political, celebrating Albanian independence and decrying abuses from outside nations. Beyond the socio-political history, there is also an iconography exhibit with notable works by local artists and a large exhibit sharing Albania's story from World War II.

For more information about the museum, visit: <http://www.mhk.gov.al/?lang=en>

Et'hem Bey Mosque

To one side of the Skanderbeg square the 1789–1823 Et'hem Bey Mosque was spared destruction during the atheism campaign of the late 1960s because of its status as a cultural monument. Small and elegant, it's one of the oldest buildings

left in the city. Take your shoes off to look inside at the beautifully painted dome.

For more information about the Mosque, visit:

<http://www.visit-tirana.com/things-to-do/monuments-and-cultural-sites/19/et%E2%80%99hem-bey-mosque>

BunkArt 2

Bunk'art 2 reconstructs the history of the Albanian Ministry of Internal Affairs from 1912 to 1991 and reveals the secrets of "Sigurimi", the political police that was the harsh persecution weapon used by the regime of Enver Hoxha. Bunk'art 2 is the first major video museum exhibition dedicated to the victims of communist terror.

For more information about the Bunk Art Museum, visit:

<https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2016/jun/25/albania-tirana-bunkers-museums-communist>

Kruje Castle

Krujë castle is one of the most famous forts of Albania. Archaeological finds showed that the castles hill has been inhabited since the 3rd century, while the castle itself was set in the 5th-6th century.

Set atop of a rocky hill, the castle withstood massive sieges from the Ottomans – even famous Mehmed II "The Conqueror" could not break the castle's small defences. Today, the castle is a major tourist attraction, and is still a source of inspiration for Albanians everywhere.

For more information about Kruje Castle, visit:

<https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/kruje-castle>

Skanderbeg Museum

The National Museum "George Kastrioti Skanderbeg" in Krujë, is one of the most important and visited museums in Albania. The museum was built at the end of the 70's and was opened on November 1, 1982. It has the character of a memorial that is treated as a northern Albanian tower. The name of the museum honours the Albanian national hero Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbej. An Albanian Military Leader. He is considered the most prominent historical figure in all Albanian history and is a national hero and known as the Dragon of Albania. He grew up in the town of Kruja during the 15th century, where he excelled

in his studies at the Ottoman military school and was awarded the Turkish title of Iskander Bey, or Lord Alexander

For more information about Skanderbeg Museum, visit:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Museum_%26Gjergj_Kastrioti_Sk%C3%ABnderbeu%22

Ardenica Monastery

The Monastery of the Nativity of the Theotokos in Ardenica or simply Ardenica Monastery is an Eastern Orthodox monastery, north of Lushnje, Albania. Built by Byzantine Emperor, Andronikos II Palaiologos in 1282 after the victory against the Angevins in the Siege of Berat, the monastery is famous as the place where, in 1451, Skanderbeg celebrated his marriage to Andronika Arianiti. In 1780 the Monastery started a theological school to prepare clerics in Greek Orthodoxy. The Church of Saint Mary within the monastery contains frescoes from brothers Kostandin and Athanas Zografi, notably one of saint John Kukuzelis, born in Durrës, Albania.

For more information about Ardenica Monastery, visit:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ardenica_Monastery

Apollonia

Apollonia is one of the most well-known archaeological sites in the country. It is founded in 588 BC by the Greek colonists coming from Corinth and Corcyra near the mouth of Vjosa River. Apollonia is one of 30 ancient towns dedicated to the god Apollo. The site was already used by Corinthian traders and the Taulantii, an Illyrian tribe, who remained closely involved with the settlement for centuries and lived alongside the Greek colonists

The ruins of the ancient Illyrian city of Apollonia sit on a remote hilltop location some 12km west of the city of Fier. While definitely one of Albania's most important ancient sites, the ruins have fairly minimal descriptions and can be quite hard to piece together, though the onsite Apollonia Museum complex is excellent, and does much to make up for the lack of context in the archaeological site itself.

For more information about Apollonia, visit:

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5885/>

Ali Pasha Castle

The impressive Castle of Anthoussa is located on top of a hill between Parga and Agia and was named after Ali Pasha of Tepelenë who resided there until 1820. The current fortress was rebuilt in 1819 and dominates the entire region and overlooks the sea and the town of Parga. It served as a base of operations against the residents of Parga, who resisted the Ottoman attacks.

For more information about the castle, visit:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ali_Pasha_Castle

Butrint

The ancient ruins of Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage Centre, lie 18km south of Sarande and are famed for their size, beauty and tranquillity. They have a fantastic natural setting and are part of a 29-sq-km national park. The remains – Albania's finest – are a microcosm of Mediterranean history, with occupation dating from 50, 000 BC, at its earliest evidence, up to the 19th century AD.

For more information about Butrint, visit:
<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/570>

Lekuresi Castle

Lekuresi Castle was built in the early 16th century by Sultan Suleymani and is located on the top of a hill in Lëkurës looking directly over Sarande. The castle was initially built to protect the city from invaders accessing the coastline by boat. From the castle you have great views of Corfu and Ksamil islands

For more information about Lekursi Castle, visit:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%C3%ABkur%C3%ABsi_Castle

Gjirokaster Castle

The fort sits on top of a hill that towers over the surrounding town making it a striking monument to the grandeur of the past. The site continued to operate as a prison until 1968, and now the castle complex is operated as a historical site, including an arms museum devoted to the weapons of Albania's independence. Even outside of the museum proper the castles halls are sprinkled with abandoned World War II tanks, and there is even an American fighter plane that was shot down

during the war that serves as a reminder of the struggle against Western influence.

For more information about Gjirokaster Castle, visit:
http://www.gjirokastra.org/sub_links/visiting_sub/visiting_castle.html

Blue Eye

The Blue Eye, known locally as Syri and Kalter, is a water spring and natural phenomenon occurring near Muzinë in Vlorë County, southern Albania. A popular tourist attraction, the clear blue water of the river bubbles forth from a depth of more than fifty-metres. Divers have descended to fifty metres, but it is still unclear what the actual depth of the karst hole is. This is the initial water source of Bistricë river, 25 km long, which ends in the Ionian Sea south of Sarandë.

For more information about Blue Eye, visit:
<https://www.balkanvibe.com/story/Blue-Eye-The-Most-Beautiful-Water-Spring-in-Albania/290>

Reading Suggestions

Adam Yamey, *Rediscovering Albania*.

Adam Yamey's informative travelogue offers a new and interesting look at Albania: its valiant people, its intriguing history, its wonderful landscapes, and its myriad attractions. The author, who first visited the country in 1984 when it was ruled by a Stalinist dictatorship, rediscovers Albania now that it has become a democracy. Profusely illustrated, *Rediscovering Albania* introduces one of Europe's lesser-known countries.

Miranda Vickers, *The Albanians: A Modern History*

This is the first full account of a country that, following decades of isolation, has undergone unprecedented changes to its political system: the collapse of communism, the progression to multi-party elections and the upheaval that followed the March 1997 uprising. Miranda Vickers traces the history of the Albanian people from the Ottoman period to the formation of the Albanian Communist Party.



The Basics

Climate – Albania has a Mediterranean climate, so the weather at this time of year is likely to be pleasant but can still be cool at times and there is the chance of the odd shower. Our best advice is to come prepared. Layers are useful as is a rain jacket and small umbrella.

Time – GMT +2 hours (Summer time Apr-Oct); GMT + 1 (Standard time Nov-Mar). This means, summer or winter, Albania is 1 hour ahead of the UK

Language – Albanian

Religion – The most- commonly practised religion is Islam followed by Orthodox Christianity.

National holidays – New Year's day (01 Jan); Orthodox Christmas Day (07 Jan); Spring Holiday (15 Mar); Orthodox Easter Sunday (28 Apr); Orthodox Easter Monday (29 Apr); Labour day (01 May); Eid al-Fitr (04 Jun); Eid al-Adha (12 Aug); Saint Teresa Sanctification Day (05 Sep); National Youth Day (09 Dec); Independence day (28 Nov); Christmas day (25 Dec).

Currency – Leke (LEK) £1 = 145 Leke. Notes are in denominations of LEK 5000, 1000, 500, 200 and 100. Coins are in denominations of LEK 100, 50, 20, 10, and 5. The import and export of local currency is prohibited. Currency can easily be exchanged at the many Bureau de Change shops and Banks found in Albania

Banks – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are widespread; every town of any size has at least one.

Credit cards – Credit cards are accepted only by top-of-the-range hotels and restaurants

Electricity – 230 volt, two-pin continental plug.

Drinking water – Albanian tap water is treated and is safe for brushing teeth or cooking and in some places good for drinking. Nevertheless, most of the Albanians drink bottled water and we recommend you do the same. Bottled water is easily available to buy.

Shops and museums – The best place to shop for traditional crafts is Kruja, the bazaar there has felt-makers, rug-weavers and antique dealers. Generally, shops are open 0900-1500 Monday to Sunday and then again for a couple of hours in the early evening. Not all shops open on Sundays.

Telephones/mobiles – Albania has a good level of mobile coverage, though there are still some areas where getting a signal can be hard. If you are calling the UK from a mobile in Albania, you will need to prefix the number with the international dialling code 0044.

Tipping –To keep our tours affordable, we do not increase the tour price by adding in tips. However, in the tourism industry, there is a certain level of expectation that, when receiving a good service, one does award with a tip. Tour Managers, Representatives, Guides and Drivers appreciate a tip at the end of their involvement with the tour, but this is entirely at your discretion. We believe in allowing you to tip according to your level of satisfaction with their services.

Walking shoes – for visits to archaeological sites, which can be a little rocky underfoot, we recommend that you take shoes which have good gripping soles.

Tour manager

Your Tour Manager will be on hand throughout the tour to ensure that everything operates according to plan. If you have any problems or questions, please see him or her immediately and they will do their utmost to resolve any issues.



Health

Doctor/Dentist/Chemist

Please talk to your Tour Manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a doctor.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.



Hospital

Your Tour Manager/hotel reception will arrange hospital transport.

Keep receipts for insurance claims.

General Health Advice

We suggest you take a good supply of your own individual medicines with you and always keep some in your hand luggage in case you get delayed or your luggage goes astray. General-purpose supplies for bites, stings, or scratches, and your usual medication for headaches, or stomach upsets are always recommended. Oral re-hydration sachets are excellent for topping up salt and glucose levels.

Visit the NHS Fit for Travel website for more generally information specific to the country you are visiting – www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk

Inoculations

You should check with your own doctor and take their advice as to which inoculations are required for the country you are visiting, as only they know your medical history and recommendations are liable to change at short notice. However, no compulsory vaccinations are required for travel in Albania at the current time.

Sun Protection

Always ensure you take sufficient sun protection and moisturiser. A sun hat and sunglasses are also advisable.

Pharmacies

For minor ailments, pharmacies sell almost everything over the counter. They are generally quite stocked and will often speak some basic English



Insurance

As EHIC is not valid in Albania, we strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy before you travel.

To be covered under your Travel Insurance Policy, if you become ill, it is essential that you contact a local doctor and also telephone the emergency number of your insurance company. You will **NOT** be covered for any claim unless this procedure is carried out. Your insurance company will then decide on the best course of medical attention.



Emergencies

Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:

00 44 20 7251 0045 (Mon-Fri 0900-1700),

Outside the above hours please telephone our emergency staff on:

00 44 7899 796542 or

00 44 7831 133079 or

00 44 1235 850720

PLEASE USE THESE NUMBERS ONLY IN THE EVENT OF A GENUINE EMERGENCY.

If you are calling an Albanian number from a UK mobile, you should prefix the number with the Albanian international dialling code 00 355.

If you find that you need consular assistance during your holiday:

British Embassy Albania

Rruga Skenderbeg 12

Tirana

Albania

Tel: +355 4 2 34973

Email: british.embassytirana@fco.gov.uk

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