

The Best of Albania
10 days – 9 nights
Tirana, Kruja, Durres, Berat, Ardenica, Apollonia, Vlora, Llogara, Himara, Saranda, Butrint,
Gjirokaster, Korca, Pogradec, Elbasan
Discovery, Culture, History

This program may be operated for individuals or for groups
This is a suggested itinerary

Between Greece and Italy, Albania has known a turbulent history made of conquests and reconquests. The Illyrian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman civilizations have followed one another, shaping an extremely varied heritage which takes its visitors on a formidable journey through time.

Day 1: Tirana

On arrival at Tirana International Airport you'll be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. Rest of the day free. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [D]

Day 2: Tirana, Durres

Tirana is divided into two parts around the river: On the left embankment is the Blokus district and the lake, on the other the side the museums, theaters and institutions! The Blokus is the old communist city that gained a new life after the mayor Edi Rama ordered the buildings painted in live colors making the most photogenic part of Tirana. You also find there the house of dictator Enver Hoxa and the pyramid dedicated to him by his daughter. On the right embankment you'll find the Skanderbeg Grand Place with its big wheel and the Skanderbeg statue, the magnificent Ethem Bey mosque built at the end of the 18th century, the Clock Tower, Kulla e Sahatit which can be climbed and give a panoramic view of the city and the imposing museum of national history and the mosaics of its facade, hymn to the past glory of Albania. After this walking tour, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant and spend some time in the city's market. Then, we drive to Durres, the main resort area in Albania along the Adriatic Sea. Visit the amphitheater and have a walk along the beach area of Golem. Dinner and overnight in Durres. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Durres, Berat, Ardenica, Apollonia, Vlora

Drive to Berat, proclaimed as a Live Museum Town. Explore the medieval fortress of the Old Town. Visit the Cathedral of St Nicholas which hosts the museum of Onufri, a famous icon's painter. Enjoy the view from the top of the hill overlooking the Osumi River. Lunch in Berat before continuing to Apollonia stopping at Ardenica to visit the 13th century Byzantine monastery. Apollonia was founded during the 6th century B.C. and its remains, in the archaeological site, are rich in monuments. Visit the museum and the Byzantine Church of St. Mary. Then, continue to Vlora, visit the Monument of Independence and see the Mosque of Muradie, built in 1452. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 4: Vlora, Llogara, Himara, Saranda

Today, we go along the coast towards Saranda. On our way we explore the National Park of Llogara and stop at the charming fish village of Himara, along the Albanian Riviera, a good spot to have lunch. In the afternoon, we reach Saranda and take a walk along the Belvedere of this nice coastal town situated just a few miles from the beautiful Greek island of Corfu. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 5: Saranda (Butrint)

After breakfast we take a leisurely drive on the coastal road transitioning from the Adriatic Sea to the Ionic sea and seeing the island of Corfu just 2 miles away across the strait. Our excursion is focused on the archeological site of Butrint, founded by the Trojans during the first millennium BC. Explore the amphitheater, the remains of the Thermal Bath, the Baptistery, the Lion's Gate, the walls of a basilica dating from the 4th century and enjoy the view from the top of the medieval fortress overlooking the

town of Saranda. Lunch in Butrint. In the afternoon, we return to Saranda for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 6: Sarande, Gjirokaster

Departure for "the blue eye", a real natural curiosity. It is an enchanting place, a sort of 45 m deep water source surrounded by forests. Its name comes from its unusual blue-green color which forms like an iris in the middle. Continuation to the town of Gjirokastër classified as World Heritage by UNESCO, visit the museum and city tour: the citadel, the small alleys, the mosques. Lunch. Departure for Allow, a timeless city because it has not changed since the communist era. It is also known for its fresh and natural products. Meet a local family with whom a unique moment will be shared and taste a dessert. Overnight dinner in Gjirokastër or Allow. [B/L/D]

Day 7: Gjirokaster, Korca

Departure in the direction of Korca via magnificent and grandiose landscapes, the road plunges into the gorges with a magnificent panorama of the surrounding nature. Picnic lunch at a fish farm. Arrival in Korca. During the Ottoman period, the city became one of the centers of the Albanian renaissance. The first Albanian language school was established there in 1887. Visit this city steeped in history and its market in the old quarter. Beer tasting. Korca's beer is very famous and has even received numerous awards at Belgian festivals. Dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 8: Korca, Pogradec, Elbasan, Tirana

Departure for Lake Pogradec which borders with North Macedonia. It is the deepest lake in the Balkans but it is also one of the oldest in the world. Discovery of a fishing village. Lunch. Road to Elbasan, one of the most important cities in Albania. Visit the citadel-fortress, an unmissable place in the city with its wall and its clock tower. Inside the ramparts we randomly discover alleys paved with old villas full of charm and one of the oldest mosques in the country: the King's Mosque. Overnight dinner in Tirana. [B/L/D]

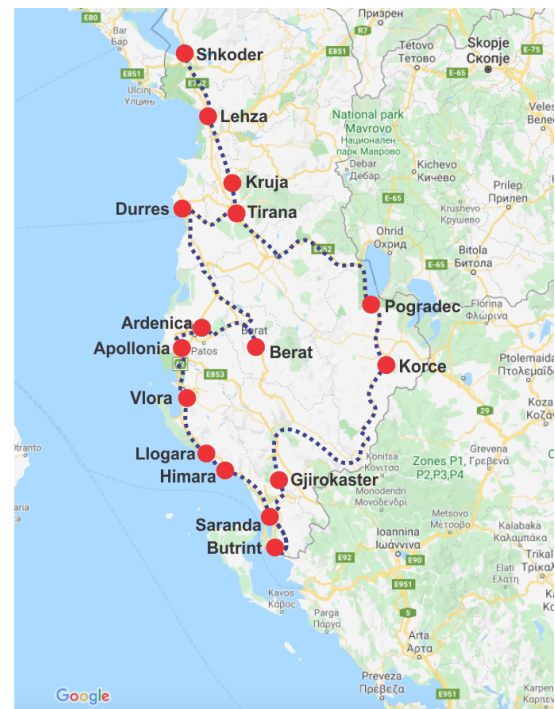
Day 9: Tirana (Lezha, Shkodra)

We drive from Tirana towards Shkoder, the only Illyrian capital mentioned in the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. While visiting the castle of Rozafa, we will not only experience the supremacy that the Illyrians would have felt over their enemies in such an imposing castle, but we will also admire a breathtaking 360-degree view of the valley, the two Buna rivers. and Drin, Shkoder Lake and the surrounding mountains. Time for lunch at a local restaurant and drive to Lezha. In Lezha we will see the mausoleum of Skanderbeg, the national hero of the Albanians. He was buried inside the church of Saint Nicholas. Now, we are head to Kruja, the Albanian resistance center against the Ottomans under the national hero, Scanderbeg. He prevented the Ottoman armies from entering Western Europe for 25 years, thus obtaining the title "Athleta Christi" awarded by the pope of the time. We will visit the Skanderbeg museum and a rich ethnographic museum where almost all the objects are original and date from the end of the 19th century. Finally, we cross the famous Kruja bazaar, where there are traditional crafts and souvenirs and return to Tirana for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 10: Tirana, USA

After breakfast you may have some time to relax. At the appointed time you'll be met and transferred to Corfu airport to board your connecting flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [D] = Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner



Your Tour includes:

- Round-trip airfare USA-Vienna-Tirana
- Arrival and departure Transfers
- 9 nights' accommodation in First Class hotels:
 - Tirana 3 nights
 - Durres 1 night
 - Vlora 1 night
 - Saranda 2 nights
 - Gjirokaster 1 night
 - Korca 1 night
- Meals:
 - Breakfast daily
 - 8 lunches
 - 9 dinners
 - Drink during meals (glass of wine, beer, soda or water)
- Discovery of the main UNESCO sites
- Meeting with an Albanian family
- Lunch at a fish farm

- Beer tasting
- Rozafa Castle
- Skanderbeg mausoleum
- Kruja bazaar
- Entrance fees for sites visited
- English-speaking guide throughout the tour
- A/C vehicle throughout the tour
- English-speaking guide throughout the tour
- Tourist promotion and hotel service taxes

Tour does not include:

- Any taxes related to airfares or airports
- Meals not mentioned under inclusions
- Travel Insurance
- Visas
- Tips to guides or drivers
- Expenses of a personal nature
- Any item not mentioned as "Included"

Hotels in your Tour:

| City | Hotel Name | Tripadvisor |
|--------------------|--------------------|-------------|
| First Class | | |
| Tirana | Prestige Hotel | 4.5 |
| Durres | Hôtel Arvi | 4 |
| Vlora | Patner Hotel | 4 |
| Saranda | Hotel Brilant | 4 |
| Gjirokoster | Kerculla Resort | 5 |
| Korca | Life Gallery Hotel | 4.5 |

Hotel will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices:

From: \$1,419 including airfare

Add-ons available from all US gateways.

Prices are per person and may change without notice

These programs can be customized for individuals and for groups

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- **Airfare**
We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares
- **Program**
You may add or remove;
 - Trip days
 - Cities and sites
 - Meals
- **Other options**
 - The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sight-seeing where available
 - If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Tour Code: AL03TIA20VT

Options:

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

Group Quotations

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.