

**Surprising Albania
8 days – 7 nights**

**Kruja, Tirana, Durres, Berat, Apollonia, Vlora, Butrint, Saranda, Gjirokaster, Korca, Pogradec, Elbasan
Discovery, Culture, History**

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

Crossed by the main ancient routes, in particular Via Egnatia which linked Rome and Constantinople (crossed at Elbasan), Albania has housed a wide range of civilizations, and whether it is Greek, Roman, Byzantine or Ottoman, each has left its mark. Albanians are proud, respectful and honorable. These principles govern all relationships in society. If you are their host, your well-being will be their priority - but never say no to a glass of raki!

Day 1: Tirana, Kruja

You'll be welcomed by our representative upon arrival at Tirana airport and driven to Kruja, on Albania's west coast. This medieval city leaning against the cliff is nicknamed the "balcony of the Adriatic" by its inhabitants. Depending on your flight schedule, discover the city with its cobbled, narrow and winding streets. Visit the recently restored castle and its museum which reveals the story of glorious battles, an essential and fascinating chapter in medieval Albanian history. Stroll through the traditional bazaar to discover local crafts. It is one of the best places in the country to buy souvenirs. [D]

Day 2: Kruja, Tirana, Durres

Depart for the capital, Tirana, and visit the city's highlights like Skanderberg Square with the Et'hem Bey mosque, the national museum, the snuffbox bridge. Discover the world center of Bektachis, a variant of Islam unique in the world. Stroll through the Blloku district with its colorful facades, its famous brand boutiques and its small stalls. After lunch at a local restaurant we leave for the seaside town of Durres, that, today, is the second largest city in Albania and the main port of the country. Visit the fortress and its Venetian tower, its amphitheater (one of the largest on the Balkan peninsula) and its museum. Dinner in a fish restaurant with a magnificent view of the Adriatic. [B/L/D]

Day 3: Durres, Berat, Apollonia, Vlora

On our way to Vlora, we head first to the interior towards the town of Berat, a city classified by UNESCO as a World Heritage site in 2008. It is a city museum which abounds in architectural marvels. During our tour we visit the castle, the Onufri museum with its fascinating paintings and a church near the ramparts. After lunch we continue to Apollonia, an ancient Greek city, listed as a UNESCO Heritage site, to admire its superb old buildings scattered among olive trees. Then, we take the road to Vlora and the Otranto Canal, where the Adriatic Sea meets the Ionian Sea. Enjoy dinner an overnight at the hotel in Vlora. [B/LD]

Day 4: Vlora, Butrint, Saranda

This morning we take a tour of Vlora and, then, drive to the extreme Albanian south via the Llogara pass and its national park with its dense forest and breathtaking view of the Albanian Riviera. Continue the drive along the cliffs that plunge into the sea towards the bay of Porto Palermo located near a pretty cove with transparent waters and a great spot for lunch. In the afternoon, continue towards the archaeological site of Butrint, which has been inhabited since prehistoric times and is another of the many UNESCO heritage sites in Albania. Continuing further south to almost reach Albania's border with Greece and visit Ksamil and its beaches comparable only to Bora Bora. Driving back north, discover Saranda's castle with its small frescoes and breathtaking view of Corfu. After check-in at the hotel get ready for dinner with folklore show at the castle. [B/L/D]

Day 5: Saranda, Gjirokaster

We leave for "The Blue Eye", a natural spring on the way to Gjirokaster. It is an enchanting place, a sort of 150-foot deep water source surrounded by forests. Its name comes from its unusual blue-green

color which forms like an iris in the middle. After a short stop, continue to the UNESCO's World Heritage town of Gjirokastër to visit the museum and take a city tour. Admire the citadel, the small alleys of cobble stones, old houses and the mosques. Enjoy lunch at one of the town's restaurants. In the afternoon we visit a timeless town nearby that has not changed since the communist era. Meet a local family to share a unique moment and taste a dessert. After check-in, some free time to explore the town before dinner at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 6: Gjirokaster, Korca

During our 4-hour drive to Korca, via magnificent and grandiose landscapes, the road plunges into the gorges with a magnificent panorama of the surrounding nature. Stop for a picnic lunch at a fish farm before arriving 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 and enjoy a tasting of Korca's beer. The beer is very famous and has even received numerous awards at international festivals. Dinner at overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

Day 7: Korca, Pogradec, Elbasan, Tirana

Departure for Lake Pogradec which borders with North Macedonia. The lake is not only the deepest in the Balkans but, also one of the oldest in the world. Opportunity to discover a fishing village to enjoy lunch. In the afternoon we drive to Elbasan, one of the most important cities in Albania, to visit the citadel-fortress, an unmissable place in the walled city with its clock tower. Inside the ramparts we randomly discover alleys bordered by old villas full of charm and one of the oldest mosques in the country: The King's Mosque. Dinner and overnight in Tirana. [B/L/D]

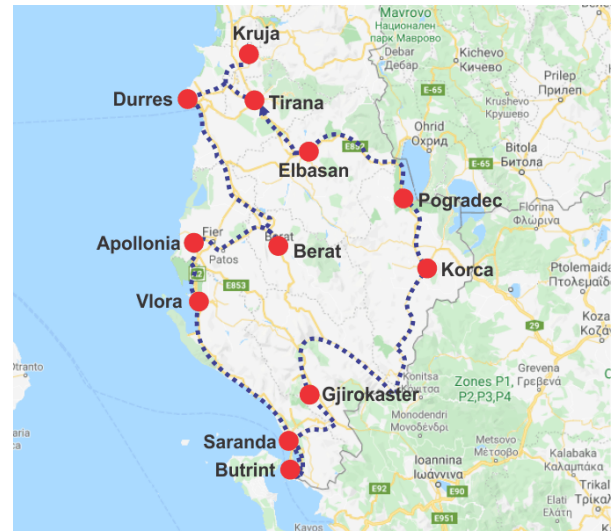
Day 8: Tirana, USA

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:

- Arrival and departure Transfers
- 7 nights' accommodation in First Class hotels:
 - Kruja 1 nights
 - Durres 1 night
 - Vlora 1 night
 - Saranda 1 night
 - Gjirokaster 1 night
 - Korca 1 night
 - Tirana 1 night
- Meals:
 - Breakfast daily
 - 6 lunches
 - 6 dinners
 - Drink during meals (glass of wine, beer, soda or water)



- Tour old Tirana & Blloku
- Berat Castle
- Apollonia Greek Ruins
- Butrint archeological site
- Saranda Castle
- Gjirokaster historic town
- Korca beer tasting
- Elbasan Citadel-Fortress
- Meeting with an Albanian family
- Lunch at a fish farm
- Entrance fees for sites visited
- A/ C vehicle throughout the tour
- English-speaking guide throughout the tour
- English-speaking guide throughout the tour
- Tourist promotion and hotel service taxes

Tour does not include:

- International airfares
- 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		
Kruja	Hotel Kruja	4
Durres	Hôtel Arvi	4
Vlore	Patner Hotel	4
Saranda	Hotel Brilant	4
Gjirokaster	Kerculla Resort	5
Korca	Life Gallery Hotel	4.5
Tirana	Prestige Hotel	4.5

Hotel will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices:

These programs can be customized for individuals and 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: AL01TIA20VT

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.