

BEST OF ALBANIA



DURATION
11 Days



GROUP SIZE
Small Group



ACCOMMODATION
**Boutique hotels, agro tourism,
guesthouses**



MEETING POINT
**Tirana International
Airport**



TRANSPORTATION
Private



DIFFICULTY
Moderate

It is required hiking experience and a reasonable level of fitness and the ability to handle 4-8 hours of activity a day.

Embark on an unforgettable journey to Albania, where ancient charm meets modern allure. Explore historic ruins, charming villages, and lively markets. Immerse yourself in vibrant cities, savor authentic cuisine, and embrace the warmth of Albanian hospitality. This is a land of rich culture and diverse landscapes, inviting you to create lasting memories beyond the ordinary.

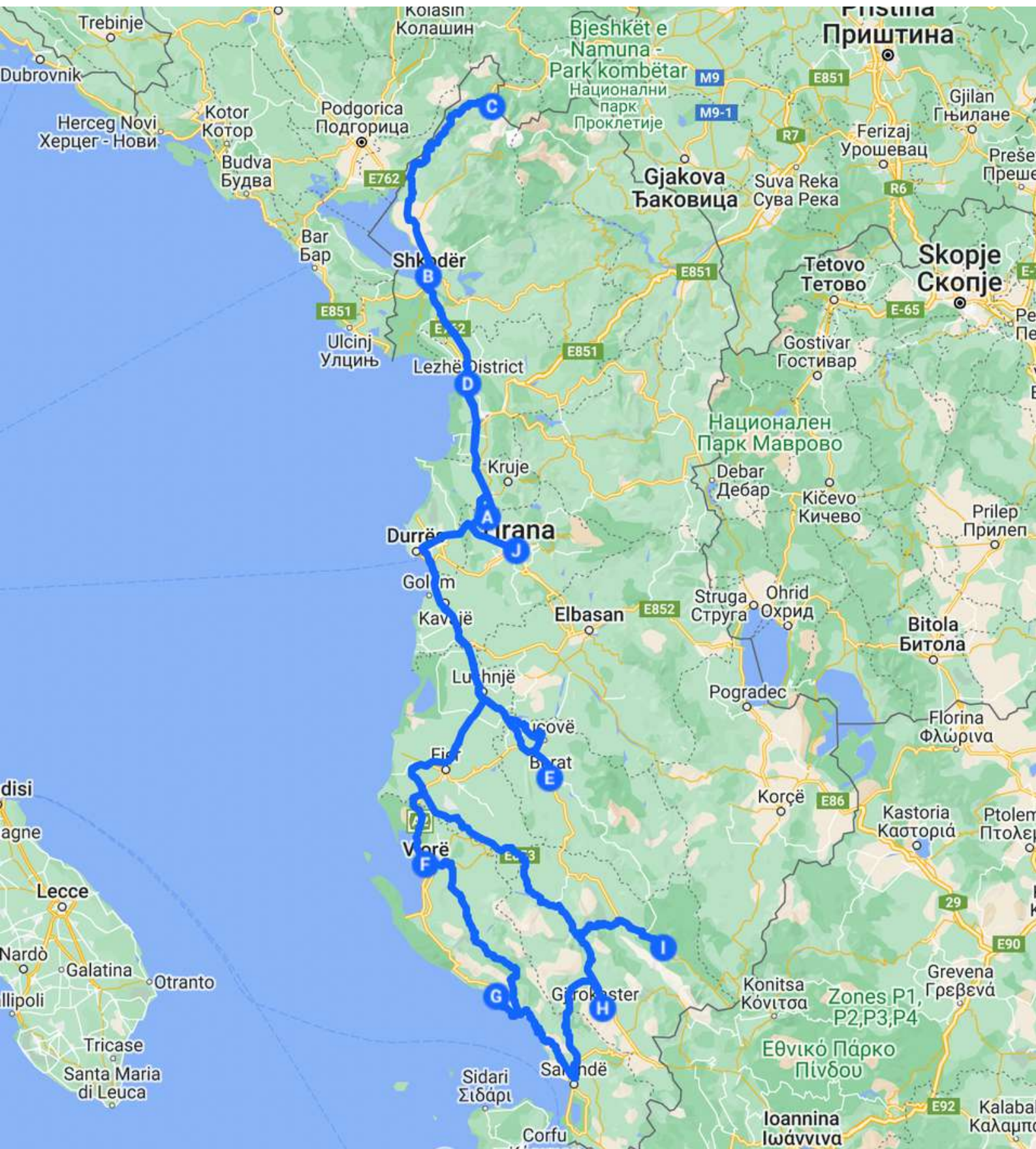
Uncover the unexpected and discover the essence of Albania – a destination where the past whispers and the present unfolds in a vibrant tapestry of experiences.

Highlights

- ⊗ Hiking Albanian Alps
- ⊗ Canoeing in Shkodra lake
- ⊗ Discover UNESCO sites
- ⊗ Rafting in Europe's First Wild River National Park
- ⊗ Meet the locals and taste delicious fresh food



Itinerary



DAY 1 Shkoder- The city of Art & Culture

Shkodër embodies a perfect blend of cultural richness, art, history, stunning nature, vibrant bazaars, and more. The city's enchanting restaurants lining the promenade and its iconic cafes contribute to an energetic urban ambiance, all while preserving the delightful charm of this traditional Albanian destination. You'll find comfort at the charming Tradita Hotel, as you prepare to paddle in the beautiful Shkodra lake. You'll enjoy a welcome dinner with your tour guide.

Paddling Shkodra lake: 3-4 hours

Level of difficulty: easy

Drive Tirana International Hotel - Shkoder : About 2 hours

The rented vehicle will be handed from an appointee of Active Albania representative, at the airport.



DAY 2 Vermosh - Hiking to Grebeni Peak

This morning you depart to get immersed into the Albanian Alps. Lëpusha village stands out as a breathtaking natural treasure in the renowned Kelmend region, inspiring numerous landscape photographers to capture its stunning beauty. The rugged terrain, crisp air, and unparalleled tranquility of this locale make it an essential destination for outdoor enthusiasts. This region is renowned not only for its natural beauty but also for its cultural significance. In 2022, the traditional female attire, "Xhubleta," was recognized as a UNESCO Heritage, underscoring the area's rich cultural values. From Shkodra you will do a panoramic drive to Lepushe with some stops and after lunch we will enjoy a 10,2 km hike to Grebeni Peak.

Starting altitude: 1'279 m/alt

Highest altitude: 1'840 m/alt

Elevation gain: 660 m/alt

Duration of afternoon hiking 5-6 hours

Level of difficulty: moderate/hard

Drive Shkoder - Lepushe : About 2,5 hours (including panoramic stops)

Local lunch and packaged dinner.



DAY 3 Vermosh - **Hiking to Vajusha Peak**

No exploration of the Albanian Alps would be truly fulfilling without ascending the Peak of Vajusha—a place where words fall short to capture its magnificence. Nestled in the Kelmendi mountains, near the Montenegrin border, this region stands as one of Albania's most enchanting areas, with the Peak of Vajusha being a particular highlight. Situated at the onset of the Bjeshkët e Namuna, this part of the Albanian Alps remains largely unexplored and undiscovered. You will do a 7,5 km hike to explore and appreciate the hidden beauty that awaits in these pristine landscapes.

Starting altitude: 1'279 m/alt

Highest altitude: 2'056 m/alt

Elevation gain: 878 m/alt

Duration of hiking 4-5 hours

Level of difficulty: moderate/hard

Drive Lepushe - Lezhe: About 3 hours

Packed lunch and traditonal dinner at Mrizi i Zanave Agrotourism.



DAY 4 Berat- **The Eternal City**

Berat stands as a pivotal national hub for culture and heritage, offering delightful walks through cobblestone lanes in its renowned Mangalem, Gorica, and Castle districts, among other treasures. As one of Albania's oldest and most historically significant cities, Berat promises a day filled with breathtaking landscapes complemented by its abundant cultural and heritage offerings. This UNESCO-protected site encompasses three expansive neighborhoods—Mangalem and Gorica, separated by the flowing Osum River, and the medieval castle, remarkably still inhabited.

Duration of culture tour 2-4 hours

Level of difficulty: easy

Drive Lezhe - Berat: About 3,5 hours

Optional stop at Kruja city on the way to Berat.

Optional cooking class in Berat (50 Eur/person)

Optional tour: Cycling in Divjaka - Karavasta National Park (50 Eur/person)

Local lunch. Dinner at Alpeta Agrotourism.



DAY 5 Vlora - Discover the only Marine Park of Albania

The day begins with the promise of exploring Vlora's captivating coastline through a speed boat tour, treating oneself to stunning panoramic views, discovering pristine beaches, and immersing in the rich tapestry of history. The first stop brings you to the renowned Haxhi Ali Cave, offering an opportunity to explore its wonders. As you cruise along the inner coast of Karaburun National Marine Park, be prepared to be captivated by the beauty of the landscape and the hidden gems that await. This will be a day filled with exploration, relaxation, and the magic of the sea as we navigate through these fascinating destinations.

Duration of speedboat tour 4-5 hours

Level of difficulty: easy

Drive: About 2 hours (Berat-Vlore)

Seafoodbased lunch.

Free evening to explore the city by your own.



DAY 6 Vlora- - Hiking to Mount Cike

Today you embark on a scenic journey through the National Park of Llogara, ascending the Qorre Summit, which proudly stands at an elevation of 2018 meters, ranking as the second-highest peak in the Ceraunian Mountains. The trail unveils itself as you traverse steep mountain slopes, with Mount Çikë dramatically plunging into the sea on the southeast—covering a remarkable altitude difference of 2000 meters in less than 5 kilometers. The upper part of Mount Çikë boasts particularly steep slopes, where the trail is discernible but challenging, involving a traverse across scree. Reaching the summit is a triumphant moment, offering a panoramic reward of untamed mountains and idyllic beaches stretching along the coastline.

Distance: 9.4 km

Elevation: 1000 m.

Route: Out and Back

Difficulty: Moderate/Hard

Drive: About 2 hours (Vlore-Himare)

Free evening to explore the city by your own.



DAY 7 Himara - **Lazy Beach Day**

Nestled along the Ionian Coast, Himara is not just a popular beach destination; it houses the enchanting old town—a medieval fortress atop a hill. With the Ionian Sea to the west and a protective mountain range to the east, the old town resembles an amphitheater. Himara, a top summer spot, holds a significant part of Albanian cultural heritage within its medieval fortress, showcasing ruins spanning over 3500 years. Perched 1 km from the Ionian shore, the Himara Castle on the cliff of Barbaka is hailed as one of the most beautiful castles in the south, offering history and stunning views.

Today you will have a relax day on the beach and we do a short visit to Himara castle before leaving to Gjirokaster.

Drive: About 2,5 hours (Vlore-Himare)

Seafood based lunch in Himare and traditional dinner in Gjirokaster.



DAY 8 Gjirokaster - Visit the Stone City of Gjirokastra

Today, you will embark on an enchanting experience through the rugged landscapes of Gjirokastra, Albania's UNESCO World Heritage gem. With its rich history and stunning architecture, you will explore the ancient streets, marveling at the well-preserved Ottoman-style houses that reflect the city's unique character. The journey will take you to the grand Gjirokastra Castle, where we will be treated to panoramic views of the surrounding countryside, offering a glimpse into the region's storied past. Get ready to immerse yourself in the vibrant local culture and food as we navigate the bustling bazaar, where we can indulge in traditional crafts and experience the authentic flavors of the region.

Duration of the culture tours : 2-3 hours

Level of difficulty: easy

Free evening to explore the city by your own.



DAY 9 Permet - Experience Europe's First Wild River National Park

Get ready for an unforgettable adventure in Europe's very first Wild River National Park, where nature's wonders and exciting experiences come together. This unspoiled sanctuary is home to more than 1,100 different plants and animals, and you'll have a chance to meet the friendly locals who call this place home. As you explore the lush, peaceful riverbanks, you'll also uncover hidden caves and tunnels beneath the ground. And for thrill-seekers, there's no shortage of excitement with activities like rafting and thermal baths of Benja- all set against the backdrop of Europe's very first Wild River National Park. Vjosa valley is more than just water; it's an incredible blend of nature and adventure waiting for you to discover.

Duration of rafting activity: 2-3 hours

Level of rafting: Class II with a few rapids of class III

Duration of visit of thermal baths: 1-2 hours

Drive: About 2,5 hours (Gjirokaster - Rafting Departure Point - Gjirokaster)

Lunch at Restaurant Antigoni.

Free evening to explore Gjirokastra city by your own.



DAY 10 - Bylis Archeological Park

You leave to the vibrant capital of Tirana. On the way we will explore the historic Tepelena Castle and marvel at the engineering brilliance of Ali Pasha's aqueduct along the Bença River. A poignant visit to the worst labor camp will be followed by a scenic drive to Bylis, where we'll savor lunch close to the archaeological park. Afterward, your journey takes you back to Tirana for a thriving evening in "Blloku".

Level of difficulty: easy

Drive: About 4 hours (Gjirokaster-Bylis-Tirane)

Local lunch in Bylis agrotourism.

Free evening to explore the capital by your own.



DAY 11 Tirana - **Feel the vibrant capital of Tirana**

You will begin our day with a fascinating exploration of Bunkart in Tirana, delving into its historical narratives and gaining a deeper understanding of Albania's past. Following this enriching experience, your journey continues with a scenic drive towards the airport, allowing us to savor the last glimpses of Albania's diverse landscapes. As we embark on this final leg, it's time to reflect on the remarkable moments and cultural encounters that have defined your Albanian adventure.

Duration of the BunkArt visit: 2-3 hours

Level of difficulty: easy

Drive: About 1 hour (Tirane - BunkArt - Tirana International Airport)

Farewell lunch.



NEED TO KNOW

WHAT IS THE FOOD LIKE AND CAN MY DIETARY REQUIREMENTS BE CATERED TO?

Albanian food is hearty and healthy, usually based around meat and vegetables much of which is seasonal and sourced locally. Popular dishes include turkey, lamb or goat Pershesh, served with a local bread known as kulac, a meat and leek pie made with thin pastry called Byrek and freshly caught fish served in a Mediterranean style. Fish dishes are often flavored with white vinegar and olive oil grown in Southern Albania and many dishes are served with wine from one the local vineyards. If you've got specific dietary needs, contact us before you book and we'll take care of to accomplish them.

WHAT IS THE WEATHER LIKE?

The best months to explore Albania are from February to July and from September to November when the weather is warm and sunny, reaching temperatures of around 30 degrees. August can be hotter, however this is usually broken up by cool coastal breezes.

WHAT SHOULD I PACK?

Recommended packing includes: - Comfortable boots - Lightweight, breathable clothing that's suitable for walking/ hiking/biking - Wind/waterproof jacket - Hat - Water bottle - Sunglasses - Sunscreen - Swimwear in case of water activities - Towel in case of water activities- A small backpack in case of outdoor activities.

PRICE

900 Eur/person

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Rented Vehicle

For all the days of your stay with unlimited mileage

Accommodation

7 nights in hotels, 3 nights in guesthouses

Meals

10 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 5 dinners

Equipments and Activities

Everything you need for canoening and rafting

24-hour emergency service

NOT INCLUDED

Flights to and from the meeting point

Personal expenses

Some meals as described

Travel insurance

Visas where required

ratuities to local hosts for included services

Any item not mentioned as included

Personal expenses

**DID NOT FIND WHAT YOU ARE
LOOKING FOR?**

LET US CREATE YOUR DREAM TRIP

Our team leader Blerina Ago will be delighted to tailor a completely personalised itinerary to suit your interests, time and budget.

Email/ Call/ WhatsApp Blerina on

blerina@activealbania.com/ +393498949201

SOME INSPIRATION



VJOSA NATIONAL PARK

[HTTPS://WWW.ADVENTURETRAVELNEWS.COM/VOTE-WITH-YOUR-PADDLE-VJOSA-NATIONAL-PARK-NOW](https://www.adventuretravelnews.com/vote-with-your-paddle-vjosa-national-park-now)

ADVENTURES NOT DAMS

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