



# Tour Information



# Discovering Albania





# Travel

## Covid-19 Travel Information

Do not travel or go to the airport if you or anyone that you are travelling with have Covid-19 symptoms.

As of 01 May 2022, all COVID-19 restrictions on entering Albania have been lifted. Albania does not require any COVID-19 vaccination proof, or a negative test result to enter the country, regardless of your vaccination status.

Whilst it is no longer necessary for fully vaccinated passengers to test before or after travel, you may want to take some lateral flow test kits with you.

Should you show any Covid symptoms during the tour please inform the tour manager immediately.

You may want to refer to the following Gov.UK website for useful information:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-travel-during-coronavirus>

## Passports

You may need to renew your British Passport if you are travelling to an EU country. **Please ensure your passport is less than 10 years old (even if it has 6 months or more left on it) and has at least 6 months validity remaining from the date of travel.**

For more information, please visit: [passport checker](#)

## Visas

As a tourist visiting from the UK, you do not need a visa for short trips to Albania. You'll be able to stay for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. For all other passport holders please check the visa requirements with the appropriate embassy.

For further information, please check here: [travel to the EU](#)

Embassy of Albania: 33 St. George's Drive, Westminster, London SW1V 4DG.

Tel: 020 7828 8897.



## Tickets

Included with your detailed itinerary is an e-ticket, which shows your flight reference number. You will need to quote/show this reference number at

the check-in desk and you will be issued with your boarding pass. Online check-in is available 24 hours prior to departure.

Your Group Scheduled or Club Class ticket is non-transferable and non-refundable. No refund can be given for non-used portions.



## Baggage Allowance

We advise you to check the baggage allowances carefully as you are likely to be charged the excess if you exceed the weight limit. Maximum weights for single bags apply.

With British Airways your ticket includes one hold bag of up to 23kg plus one cabin bag no bigger than 56 x 45x 25cm including handles, pockets and wheels, and a personal bag (handbag or computer case) no bigger than 45 x 36 x 20cm including handles, pockets and wheels.

For more information please visit

[www.britishairways.com](http://www.britishairways.com)

## Transfers

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

## Special Requests

If you haven't already, please notify Travel Editions of any special requests as soon as possible to allow sufficient time to make the necessary arrangements. Please note that some airlines may charge for use of wheelchairs.

## Border Control

At border control, you may need to show a return or onward ticket, show you have enough money for your stay, use separate lanes from EU, EEA and Swiss citizens when queuing.



# 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 ensuite facilities, air-con, TV, telephone and Wi-Fi. There are two restaurants available at the hotel which offer an excellent standard of traditional dishes.

<http://hotelpanoramakruje.com/>

## Hotel Opera, Tirana

Situated just steps away from Skenderberg Square and the National Museum, this elegant hotel features an on-site restaurant and free WiFi available throughout the property. Each room is air conditioned and has a flat-screen TV, as well as a private bathroom equipped with a shower.

<https://hoteloopera.al/>

## Hotel Bologna, Vlore

Hotel Bologna is located very near the beach and offers modern rooms that overlook the sea and a restaurant with a spacious terrace that serves Italian and seafood specialties. The air-conditioned rooms come with LCD cable TVs. Each room also features a private bathroom and a seating area with a desk and chair. There is also free Wi-Fi.

<https://hotelbolognavlore.al/>

## Hotel Brilant, Sarande

The Brilant 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 ensuite facilities, air-con, minibar, TV and Wi-Fi.

<https://www.brilanthotel.com/>

## Hotel Rose Garden, Gjirokaster

This boutique hotel with just 8 rooms features a seasonal outdoor swimming pool, a garden, bar and a shared lounge. Among the facilities of this property are a restaurant, room service and a 24-hour front desk, along with free Wi-Fi.

<https://www.hotelalbanian.com/rose-garden-hotel/>

## 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 Mangalemi quarter. The hotel has a restaurant serving traditional dishes which offers a terrace overlooking the city. Rooms at the hotel offer ensuite facilities, air con, minibar, TV and WiFi.

<http://www.mangalemihotel.com/>

## Dining

Although most dinners are included, you will have the opportunity to eat out during the lunch breaks when you will have the opportunity to try some of the local cuisine.

Albania's food is based very heavily on meat, particularly lamb and beef, cooked in a typically Middle Eastern style. The main influence of Albanian cuisine is that of Turkey. Among the most common dishes in Albania are romsteak (patties made of minced meat), qofte (meat balls) and shishqebap (sheesh kababs). A number of other meat-based dishes are also popular; these include rosto me salcë kosi (roast beef with sour cream), fërges (beef stew), and çonlek (a meat stew with onions). The country grows a lot of olives, citrus fruits and grapes, and all appear prominently in local menus. The country produces, like every other Mediterranean land, lots of wine; white and reds, with the former usually better than the latter; in addition, there are fruit liqueurs of different types, uzo - an aniseed-flavoured liqueur, and brandies locally called konjak and raki. Albania is also known for its coffee- the strong kafe turke and the milder kafe ekspres (espresso).

## Meals included in the holiday

Breakfast daily and 5 dinners.

## Taking food into EU countries

You are not able to take meat, milk or any products containing them into EU countries.



# Destination

## Tirana

Lively colourful Tirana is the beating heart of Albania, where this tiny nation's hopes and dreams coalesce into a vibrant whirl of traffic, brash consumerism, and unfettered fun. Having undergone a transformation of extraordinary proportions since awakening from its communist slumber in the early 1990s, Tirana's centre is now unrecognisable, with buildings painted in primary colours, and public squares and pedestrianised streets that are a pleasure to wander.

## Gjirokaster

The city of Gjirokaster 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. Gjirokastra is known as 'The City of Stone'.

## Natural Historical Museum, Tirana

Albania's largest museum, the National Historical Museum has seven pavilions of exhibits. You will 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 will 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.

## 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.

## Bunk'art 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.

## 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 built in the 5th century. Set atop a rocky hill, the castle withstood massive sieges from the Ottomans – even famous Mehmed II "The Conqueror" could not break the castle's small defenses. Today, the castle is still a source of inspiration for Albanians everywhere.

## Apollonia

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.

## Roman site of Oricum

Of the many archaeological treasures in Albania, the ancient port of Oricum is arguably one of the most intriguing. This forgotten city played a crucial role in Julius Caesar's ascent to total domination. Yet, during the better part of the 20th century, the communist regime isolated Albania from the rest of the world. Archaeologists are only now scratching the surface of the site's potential.

## Butrint

The ancient ruins of Butrint, 18km south of Sarande, are famed for their size, beauty and tranquillity. They're in a fantastic natural setting

and are part of a 29 sq km national park. The remains – Albania's finest – are from a variety of periods, spanning 2500 years.

### **Lekursi Castle**

Lekursi 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 Saranda. It's located about 3-4km away from the centre of 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.

### **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 sits next to one of the towers as a reminder of the struggle against Western influence.

### **Byllis**

For the Albanians, the city of Byllis, dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C, is one of the most important archaeological sites in Albania. With its fascinating ruins and breath-taking views, Byllis is one of the numerous hidden treasures of south-central Albania.

### **Berat**

This historic UNESCO city, the pride of Albanian architecture, 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.



## 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 quite cool 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). In reality 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 Christianity.

**Currency**– Leke (LEK) £1 = 145 Leke. Notes are in denominations of LEK 5000, 2000, 1000, 500, 200. Coins are in denominations of LEK 100, 50, 20, 10, 5, 1. The import and export of local currency is prohibited. Currency can be very easily exchanged at Bureau de Change and Banks with competitive rates of exchange. We will arrange for this to be done for you on the first day of the tour.

**Banks** – Cashpoints compatible with international banking networks are widespread; every town of any size has at least one. You can also change sterling locally at the many Exchange offices, these will be advised by the guide.

**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 so we advise you do the same. Bottled water is reasonably priced and available everywhere.

**Shopping** – Along with the opportunity to shop for clothing and souvenirs in some resorts in Albania like Kruja, Vlore & Sarande, still Tirana remains the centre of shopping. Lots of the small shops offer a great variety of clothes, shoes, bags and other accessories made in Italy, Turkey and Greece.

**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. **Please note, using a UK mobile in Albania is expensive. Check costs with your provider before travel.**

**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 awards 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 that are fairly sturdy and definitely comfortable.

### 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.

### Grading

This tour has been graded as **Moderate** Walking between sites, lots of standing for viewing.



## Health

### 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](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk)

### Doctor/Dentist

Please talk to your tour manager if you are feeling unwell and they will organise for you to see a Doctor. If you do make a visit to either of these services and have treatment, please keep any receipts for insurance claims.



## Hospital

The nearest hospitals are in Tirana. Your tour manager/guide/hotel reception will assist if you need to visit a hospital during your stay.

**Keep any receipts for insurance claims.**

### Inoculations

No compulsory vaccinations are required for travel in Albania.

### Pharmacies

For minor ailments, pharmacies sell almost everything over the counter including antibiotics.



## Insurance

### Travel Insurance

**As the EHIC card is not valid in Albania, we strongly recommend that you take out an appropriate travel insurance policy when you travel abroad.**

If you require medical assistance whilst abroad it is essential that you contact the emergency number of your insurance company to advise them of the situation. 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 action whilst in resort.



**Should an emergency arise, please call our offices on:**

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

Outside of the hours mentioned above telephone our emergency staff on:

00 30 6977 465892 or 00 44 7841 023807

**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 are in need of consular assistance during your holiday, please contact:

British Embassy Albania

Rruga Skenderbeg 12

Tirana

Albania

Tel: +355 4 2 34973

Email: [british.embassytirana@fco.gov.uk](mailto:british.embassytirana@fco.gov.uk)

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