



## ALBANIA & MONTENEGRO

**PEAKS OF THE BALKANS, HIKING THE ALBANIAN ALPS  
BY FOOT  
9-DAYS**

The Albanian and Montenegrin Alps are located at the southern part of the Dinaric mountain range that stretches parallel to the Adriatic Sea. Let us immerse you in Balkan life as you traverse three prime alpine Albanian valleys, as well as one in Montenegro. You'll experience friendly locals and taste traditional cuisine. We've included a farm to table dinner on a farm and winery. The tour includes some sites of historical significance as well, in Kruja, Shkodra, Valbone and Thethi. Albania and Montenegro are two of the emerging destinations of Eastern Europe and the scenery on this trip will take your breath away.

## Day 1

### ALBANIA - TIRANA - KRUJA

#### TREKKING

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Upon arrival into Mother Theresa Airport, make your way to your hotel in the historic town of Kruja, located only 30km away. The hotel is located by the Ottoman Bazaar and the Kruja Fortress, where George Kastrioti Skanderbeg, the Albanian National Hero, led an incredible resistance to the Ottomans in the 15th century. If time allows, you can venture out to explore the captivating surroundings on foot before dinner. In the evening, you'll meet your guide at the hotel as well as the rest of the group over a welcome dinner of local dishes typical to the area.

**Meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel



## Day 2

### ALBANIA - KRUJA - LEPUSHE

#### TREKKING

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We'll start our Albanian adventure with a hearty breakfast and then transfer by vehicle 1.5 hours to the town of Shkodra. After some time to explore the town, we get back into our van and drive another 1.5 hours to Kelmend, the 'rooftop of Albania' via the scenic pass of 'Leqet e Hotit.' We'll pick up our picnic lunch in Tamara and then it's just a short distance to the trailhead, where we'll begin our first hike, which is mostly an ascent, to a cascading waterfall. We'll stop for a picnic somewhere along the river before descending back into the valley. At the bottom, we'll meet our vehicle and have a short transfer to the village of Lepushe. There, we will check into a basic local guesthouse, owned by an Albanian family, and they'll prepare us a dinner of traditional dishes.

**Hiking Duration:** 3 hours

**Distance:** 7 km / 4 mi

**Ascent:** + 690 m (2264 ft)

**Descent:** - 690 m (2264 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Basic guesthouse

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### Day 3

## ALBANIA - LEPUSHE - MONTENEGRO - LAKE PLAVE

### TREKKING

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This morning starts as we hike out from the village on foot to reach the pastures of Dobku. We will steadily ascend, and as we get higher, we will pass between the peaks of Popadija and Talijanka, officially entering in Montenegro. When we arrive at the Volusnice Cliffs, our hiking efforts will be more than compensated by a breathtaking view of the rugged mountains in the Grebaje Valley. This is truly one of Montenegro's most beautiful landscapes! After all of our efforts of ascending this plateau, the remainder of the hike is downhill on a mixture of scree, dirt path, and forest trails. At the bottom of the valley, we'll relax and enjoy a well-earned lunch in a mountain restaurant. From here we'll have a 30-minute transfer to our cozy hotel along the serene lakeshore. There will be some time to relax and explore the area before for dinner together.

**Hiking Duration:** 5 hours

**Distance:** 10 km / 6 mi

**Ascent:** + 840 m (2756 ft)

**Descent:** - 910 m (2986 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel

### Day 4

## LAKE PLAVE - VALBONE VALLEY

### TREKKING

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Without a doubt, this is one of the most memorable days of the trip. The day begins with a short transfer to a trailhead near the village of Vusanje. Today and tomorrow our luggage will get loaded onto horses, while we set out hiking along a path that leads us back into Albania and over the Bori Pass. We will stop by an area with fresh water springs to enjoy a picnic lunch. After lunch, with the mighty rocky domes of the Kollata Mountains as our backdrop, we'll gradually make our way downhill through meadows. Our long but unforgettable day hiking will finish as we reach the shepherd's village. From there, we'll have a short transfer to the beautiful Valbone Valley. Upon settling in at our valley hotel, there is some free time to relax or explore the serene surroundings on foot before meeting together again for dinner.

**Hiking Duration:** 5 - 6 hours

**Distance:** 13 km / 8 mi

**Ascent:** + 800 m (2625 ft)

**Descent:** - 700 m (2297 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel

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## Day 5

### ALBANIA - VALBONE - THETHI

#### TREKKING

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Today is another exhilarating day with show-stopping views of the rugged Alps as we ascend up to the top of the range. The first half of the trek is all up, but the views are worth the effort. We'll use horses again to carry our luggage to our next guesthouse. Today's hike is along one of the Albanian Alps' most classic routes. For centuries, this high pass connected the glacier valleys of Valbone and Thethi. Crossing on foot is only possible during summer or early autumn because of snow. We'll pass through some small villages and after passing the last houses of Rrogam Valley, the trail will begin to steepen towards a large bowl of alpine meadows. We will steadily ascend until we reach a lookout point at the top of the pass. This elevated location is one of Europe's lesser known treasures and offers a great panorama of the jagged peaks that tower around us -- 'Bjeshket e Namuna,' the 'Accursed Mountains.' From here, the final section of our hike is an easier descent towards the village of Thethi, and the path takes us through dense woods and grassy meadows. We'll stop for a picnic lunch on the descent, in a little hideaway on the mountainside. Late afternoon, we will arrive at our basic guesthouse in Thethi with time to enjoy the evening at leisure before a great dinner, prepared by the local family who owns the guesthouse.

**Hiking Duration:** 6 - 7 hours

**Distance:** 16 km / 10 mi

**Ascent:** + 870 m (2854 ft)

**Descent:** - 1050 m (3445 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Basic guesthouse

## Day 6

### ALBANIA - THETHI - NDERLYSA

#### TREKKING

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This morning we set off on foot from the guesthouse to explore the region around Thethi, which is Albania's best-preserved alpine village. Surrounded by mountains, this village is truly a spectacular sight. The stone houses have wood-tiled roofs and some of the town's stonewalled terraces date back to the bronze era. We'll visit the village church and other attractions before beginning a hike out from the village and along the Shala River. The hike today is much easier than the hikes of the last few days, just to give our muscles a break after the last few days. Our destination tonight is the tranquil hamlet of Nderlysa. There, we'll reach our next guesthouse in plenty of time for an afternoon of relaxation. Located next to the crystal blue Kaprea Creek, the guesthouse is the perfect place to relax in nature or enjoy a leisurely wander and a swim. Later, we'll all meet again for dinner. As has become customary at the guesthouses on this tour, we'll enjoy a traditional family style Albanian dinner together, cooked by our guesthouse hosts.

**Hiking Duration:** 4 - 5 hours

**Distance:** 7 km / 4 mi

**Ascent:** + 250 m (820 ft)

**Descent:** - 470 m (1542 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Basic guesthouse

## Day 7

### ALBANIA - NDERLYSA - TIRANA

#### TREKKING

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Our final day of trekking is up to the Thore Pass. After a hearty breakfast at our guesthouse, we bid a farewell to the family and transfer by vehicle for a short drive. It's a bumpy, mountain road, through the village and forest, across meadows and gradually climbing in the direction of the Thore Pass. We eventually reach the memorial of Edith Durham - respecting her support of the Albanians after World War One. This spot offers fantastic views on the Thethi Valley, with the imposing big wall of Mt Harapit. Here we'll start our hike, surrounded by striking peaks all the way to the pass. At the top there is time to take some panoramic photos before descending into the Boga valley. Here our driver will be waiting to drive us to the Uka Farm, a family-run organic farm and producing fine Albanian wines and spirits. There is a restaurant on the farm and we'll have a celebratory dinner here after touring around the farm. After dinner we have a short drive back to Tirana, to our hotel for the night. After getting settled in at our comfortable hotel, the remainder of the evening will be free to enjoy the city at our own leisure. There is much to see and explore even at night here as Tirana has been labeled one of the liveliest capitals of 'New Europe.'

**Hiking Duration:** 4 - 5 hours

**Distance:** 9 km / 6 mi

**Ascent:** + 1200 m (3937 ft)

**Descent:** - 100 m (328 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel

## Day 8

### TIRANA

#### HIKING & SIGHTSEEING

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After breakfast today, we'll start with a short 30-minute transfer through the city to arrive at the 'Dajti Express' station. There, we will take a cable car up to Mount Dajti's plateau, located at approximately 1000 m. From there, we will hike through the forest to reach Tujani Summit for the best aerial views over Tirana and the region. We'll start our descent on foot, stopping for lunch in a traditional and panoramic mountain restaurant. After lunch, we'll descend the rest of the way by cable car again. Next, we'll visit Bunk'Art - the areas large complex of communist era tunnels that have been enriched with art and memorabilia. We'll then return into the city centre for a short walking tour of Tirana, highlighting the city's attractions. After some time to explore on our own, we will meet together again for our final dinner in a restaurant that exemplifies the city's fine culinary traditions.

**Sightseeing Duration:** 2 - 3 hours

**Distance:** 5 km / 3 mi

**Ascent:** + 460 m (1509 ft)

**Descent:** - 460 m (1509 ft)

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel

## Day 9

### TIRANA

#### DEPARTURE

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Today marks the end of your Albanian adventures. This morning, if time allows after breakfast, you can explore Tirana a little bit before your international flight home.

**Meals:** Breakfast



## TRIP INCLUSIONS

### **Trip Includes**

All accommodation (twin shared), meals as indicated, land transportation and English speaking guides.

### **Not Included**

International airfare, airport departure taxes, airport transfers\*, gratuities, meals not indicated and items of a personal nature.

*\*We can add transfers upon request as an additional service booking.*

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