

Albania (with Macedonia) – Land of Eagles

Tour Code AM

Although Albania has only very recently emerged as a European destination for the inquisitive traveller, its friendly people and rich variety of archaeological and historical sites, combined with stunning, wild mountainous scenery is reason enough to warrant a comprehensive visit. With a number of listed UNESCO World Heritage sites and fascinating medieval castles and towns, this detailed 11 day tour is designed to allow for adequate time to fully appreciate the beauty of this lesser visited yet alluring country, known in antiquity as Illyria, the Land of Eagles. We also include two nights at the UNESCO listed town of Ohrid in Macedonia



Skanderberg Statue and National Flag,
Tirana © www.syderimages.com

ITINERARY

Day 1 Fly to Tirana

Afternoon departure from London Gatwick on British Airways direct to Tirana. Evening arrival and transfer to the Theranda hotel for two nights

Day 2 Visit Shkroda

We drive into the northern region of the country to visit the picturesque town of Shkodra and the nearby Rozafa fortress. We pause at Lake Shkodra for lunch and spend the afternoon in the old town exploring its narrow streets and Turkish mosque and baths. We return to Tirana in the late afternoon and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 3 Drive to Lake Ohrid, MACEDONIA

We head east today and pause at the Turkish castle at Elbasani before continuing into Macedonia and the town of Ohrid, situated on the east shore of Lake Ohrid. UNESCO listed, the town is known as Macedonian Jerusalem, as a large number of churches. Two nights at the Tino hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 4 In Ohrid, MACEDONIA

We have a morning tour of the town including St Sophia Cathedral, the oldest cathedral in Macedonia, and the Gallery of Icons that houses the largest icon collection in the world. We have an afternoon visit to the Monastery of St Naum by boat, wonderfully located overlooking the lake (B,D)

Day 5 Visit Korca and Voskopoja

Once an important trade town, Korca is famous for its excellent collection of over 150 icons housed in its Medieval Arts Museum. We will also be able to visit the town's mosque of Mirahori, one of the oldest in the country, built in 1469. We continue to Voskopoja, one of the most important European towns of the Ottoman period and visit a number of churches with their recently restored frescoes. We return to Korca for leisure time to visit the old bazaar. Overnight at the Grand hotel. Dinner at a local restaurant (B,D)

Day 6 Visit Gjirokastra

Our first visit of the day is to the Tumulus at Kamenica, one of the most representative monuments of the prehistory of Albania and that of the wider region. A scenic mountain drive brings us to the UNESCO heritage town of Gjirokastra, birthplace of Enver Hoxha.

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We visit the dictator's home now a museum, and the Ottoman citadel, a former political prison that houses a weapons museum. The old town is charming to stroll around with its well preserved wood and stone architecture. Overnight at Cajupi hotel with dinner (B,D)

Day 7 Visit Butrinti. Drive to Saranda

A scenic drive this morning to the coastal resort of Saranda. We have a morning tour of the UNESCO heritage site of Butrint with its Greco-Roman town ruins including a third century BC theatre and bathhouses plus the largest baptistery in the Balkans. Overnight at the Brilant hotel with dinner tonight in a castle overlooking the Ionian Sea and Island of Corfu! (B,D)

Day 8 Visit Vlora

Driving north along the Albanian Riviera we arrive at Vlora, where important events in the recent struggle for freedom and independence took place. The Museum of Independence well documents the recent history of Albania, whilst the Historical and Ethnographical Museums cover the country's heritage and traditions. The nearby Kanina castle with its majestic views dates back to the time of Justinian. Overnight and dinner at the Parvasia hotel (B,D)

Day 9 Visit Apollonia and Berati

A morning tour of the Greco-Roman ruins at Apollonia, an important trading port until the third century AD. We continue to Berati, a beautifully located town on the banks of the river Osum. With a wealth of medieval churches and Ottoman architecture to see we spend the afternoon in this UNESCO heritage listed gem. Overnight and dinner at a traditional Berati guesthouse (B,D)

Day 10 Visit Durrresi. Drive to Tirana

We journey north to the coastal site of Durrresi to explore the largest amphitheatre in the Balkans and the archaeological museum. We continue to Tirana and transfer to the Theranda hotel for one night. This evenings' restaurant dinner is accompanied by a folk show (B,D)

Day 11 In Tirana. Visit Kruja. Fly to London

We have a morning tour in the Albanian capital to visit the National Museum and its architectural highlights such as Ethem Bey mosque, Scanderberg square and its famous clock tower. We spend the afternoon in Kruja, a hilltop town and centre of the Albanian resistance against the Ottomans. We visit the Scanderberg Museum and the old bazaar full of local handicrafts. We have a short journey to the airport in the early evening for our return flight with British Airways arriving into London Gatwick (B)

Cost £1395.00 per person in a twin room (excluding international flight) Single supplement £200.00



Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by an experienced Syder Travel tour manager
- ▶ Albanian guide for the duration of the tour
- ▶ All transportation by a/c minibus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including entrance fees
- ▶ Accommodation ranges from three star hotels and traditional guesthouse in Berati
- ▶ Half board meals in local restaurants or traditional guesthouses
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Bottled water daily
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities

Not included – travel insurance, visa fees, drinks, guide and driver gratuities, British Airways international flights (cost £205.00)