

**UNESCO 10 Day Tour in Albania
Guided**

Valid for the season 2025

Please read the updated information carefully, as some alterations may have occurred recently and we want you to be optimally prepared for the trip.

The tour itinerary enclosed can vary to previously published tour information relating to this tour due to further developments, changes or implications between the time of publishing and the actual tour. The contents of these travel documents is subjective in relation to the actual tour experience, as the guides are authorised to change/modify the tour program on site in relation to weather, logistical or legal situations in the travel destination.

Important telephone numbers

- Staff member on site:

- Junid: +355 69 2475728

- General emergency call Albania/
Police: 19

- Fire department: 18

- Emergency: 17

- Office Germany: +49 (0) 7531 361860 (only Monday to Friday)

- British Embassy
Rruga Skënderbeg 12, Tirana, Albania
Phone: +355 4 223 4973

- U.S. Embassy Tirana
Rruga Stavro Vinjau 14, Tirana,
Albania, Phone: +(355) 4 2247 285

- Consulate of Canada
Tirana, Albania
Phone: + 355 4 225 7274

Telephoning with your Cellular Phone

You can use your cellular phone almost everywhere in Albania. When calling an Albanian number, dial only the number of your party without the international code 00355.

When phoning countries other than Albania dial the respective international code of the country and then the number of your party without the 0.

If your family or friends would like to call you during your journey on your cellular phone they may just dial the regular number without any country code.

About the guest information

The information included into this brochure will help you with your preparation for your Cycling tour in Albania. Before travelling to your destination the brochure offers you an overview of sights and specialties of the region. Of course the brochure can be used on site during the tour, so that you are always informed about the recent and most important sights on your way.

The detailed tour description and the daily maps are handed out by one of our employees on site.

Travel insurances

The travel insurance is not compulsory. However, you will certainly feel more at ease if you have insured yourself against cancellation, accidents, theft and illness even if it is only for this trip.

Participants take part at their own risk. You should ask your health insurance company about insurance coverage and request an overseas medical certificate.

Entering the country

Valid identification documents/passports are indispensable for entry into Albania.

We advise you to contact the responsible authority in your home country to inquire about current entry regulations (possible visa requirements) as we cannot take responsibility for any incorrect information.

Please note that provisional passports and replacement documents are generally not recognized. Children (regardless of the age) must either present a child identification card or passport. Only to be listed in the passport of one of the parents is not sufficient anymore.

Substitute ID documents after misplacement

Please contact the responsible authority of your home country for further information on entry regulations (especially in case of lost/substitute documents).

Currency

Albania's currency is the Lek (pl. Lekë). For instance one EUR equals aprx. 97 Lekë, one USD equals aprx.93 Lekë, one CAD equals aprx. 83 Lekë, one AUD equals aprx. 75 Lekë, one NZD equals aprx. 70 Lekë and one GBP equals aprx. 106 Lekë (exchange rates as of January 2024)

At many places you will have time to get some local money at an automatic teller machine or to exchange money at a bank or foreign exchange office. Your tour guide can tell you the nearest place for withdrawing or changing money.

EC-teller machines are also found in most overnight towns. We suggest not to bring any traveller cheques.

Vaccinations

In January 2019, WHO declared the delay or omission of vaccination a threat to global health. In particular, the lack of protection against measles poses a high risk in view of the increasing number of cases internationally. Please check your and your children's vaccination against measles as part of your travel preparations and have it supplemented if necessary.

There are no specific vaccinations required for your trip, only the customary basic protection is advised. Therefore we recommend getting shots against tetanus and diphtheria which are administered in combination. A booster shot every ten years is required. A single vaccination dose is sufficient even if the last inoculation took place more than ten years ago. The only mandatory vaccination for entering Albania is one against yellow fever in case that you are entering the country coming from a region where yellow fever is endemic.

In addition we recommend an FSME vaccination. It protects against inflammatory diseases such as meningitis which is mainly caused by tick bites. The FSME inoculation consists of 3 injections. The first two are given within 1 to 3 months. The third one follows after 9 to 12 months. The protection becomes active about 14 days after the second inoculation and for persons under 60 it lasts for approximately 5 years. Persons older than 60 should get a booster shot already after 3 years.

Persons with chronic illnesses of the liver are advised to consult their family doctor about possible Hepatitis A and B vaccinations.

We generally recommend you to consult your doctor (or a specialist for tropic diseases) plenty of time before your trip in order to get any necessary inoculations.

Please be aware that some vaccinations have to be repeated in order to be effective.

Medication

We highly recommend to consult your general practitioner about possible precautions against allergies and other illnesses you may be susceptible to.

Please also remember any personal medication especially in case of diabetes mellitus requiring insulin as well as an emergency kit in case of a bee or wasp allergy. It is essential to take these drugs with you on the bike trip. Therefore make sure that your luggage contains an appropriate container.

Should you use medicine that requires specific storage conditions we ask you to inform us about this before the trip because we cannot always guarantee such conditions on a trip.

If you need specific medicine or suffer from specific ailments we kindly ask you to inform your tour guides (on a guided tour) urgently at the beginning of the trip so that they can take appropriate measures in case of an emergency.

Also please remember to bring your vaccination records. You will be asked to provide them should you need medical attention.

In preparation for your journey

Participants with a pre-existing condition are able to reduce risks by considerate prearrangements. Your own health and capability as well as your expectations should be rated on a realistic basis. To do an exercise echocardiography might be reasonable. Be prepared to handle with care. (see Medication & Vaccinations)

Climate

What you will need to pack depends of course largely on the weather you can expect on your holiday. The average monthly air and water temperatures that have been measured in the last few years are illustrated in the diagram.

Please be aware that this graph is based upon average readings taken in the last few years and that the temperatures listed in the table cannot be

guaranteed for the respective months. We have always experienced weather surprises during the last years.

Packing List

Cycling clothes

- Short & long cycling pants (possibly padded)
- Sport shirts (quick drying material protects against catching colds; pure cotton is not suitable: although it absorbs sweat, it does not let it evaporate)
- Windproof jacket
- Trainers or trekking sandals
- Bicycle helmet
- Bicycle gloves
- Rain wear
- Sunglasses

Tip: For cold and wet days: the onion-principle, i.e. several thin layers of clothes worn on top of each other, which can gradually be taken off.

Money & Documents

- Foreign currency/money card/credit card
- Identity card and/or passport (make copies and store separately, so that in case of loss substitutes can easily be obtained)
- Travel documents
- Health insurance for abroad and/or travel insurance
- Vaccination records
- Cellular phone/telephone card (save or write down important numbers)

Useful things for on the way

- Cereal bars & glucose for bicycle tours
- Sunscreen & after sun products
- (if any) Bathing suits & bathing shoes/sandals
- Snorkeling equipment
- Long pants and pullovers for cold spells
- Possibly own saddle (without seat post) and click-on pedals
- Adapter for European Sockets
- Camera to record the most beautiful holiday events

Tip: On our bike tours we supply panniers for storing everything you need on the bike tours.

Varia

- Toiletries (body wash, shampoo etc.)
- Personal medication
- Small first-aid kit including band-aids, insect repellent and, if necessary, travel pills
- Travel literature
- Charging cable for camera and cellular phone
- Adapter for European sockets
- Everything else you usually take on trips

Travel Guides

To prepare for this journey we recommend in particular the following travel guides for you:

You can order those guidebooks easily on the internet.

Albania, Gilian Glover

Published: March 2018 (6th edition)

ISBN-13: 9781784770785

albanien/albania; Reise Know-How map (1:220,000)

ISBN: 978-3-8317-7267-4

8th edition, published 2016

(waterproof)

Transfer at the end of the journey

A collective transfer takes you from your hotel in Vlorë to the airport Tirana (TIA) on the last day of your journey.

The morning transfer from Vlorë to Tirana Int Airport leaves between 8 - 9 am.

Please keep in mind, that a transfer to Tirana airport needs aprx. 2,5 hours. We recommend to book a return flight that leaves after 1 pm.

(possible) **Accommodation**

In the following we would like to present you possible accommodations, which you might expect on your hotel & bike trip (bookings are subject to availability).

We use the best accommodation standard that exist here at the moment. So far the Albania infrastructure allows we use 4 star hotels in big cities and 3 stars hotels in smaller ones with en suite facilities (according to Albanian Tourist Board grading system). Family owned guesthouses are used at remote locations.

Rooms are shared two people per room.
All hotels provide safe storage for your bicycles.

If for whatever reason one of the hotels would be cancelled due to unexpected circumstances the tour operator will arrange a worthy replacement and will duly inform the participants about this change.

Catering

Your booking consists of Continental breakfast at the hotels, which is usually ready at 7.30 am.

Full board is only included in the tour price when you chose the guided tour.

Luggage Service & Help Line

During your tour you do not have to worry about your luggage. A dependable luggage service from hotel to hotel is offered by our transport service while you can cycle hassle free.

With a guided tour luggage will be carried in your supporting vehicle.

Should you have any problem you may of course always contact our tour guide.

“Emergency Numbers“

- Employee on site: Junid: +355 6924 75728

Hotels (Booking is subject to availability)

1st Night: Tirana

The stylish Hotel Sky 2 is situated in the centre of Tirana.

2nd Night: Pogradec

The Hotel Milenium is perfectly situated at lake Ohrid and therefore a highlight. It is one of the very best hotels in this area. A unique place to relax and enjoy; made for a romantic holiday with your loved ones.

Your hotel offers 51 comfortable, climatized rooms with bathroom and terrace. Nearly half of the rooms can be found in the „old“ wing. The others are located in the close by new wing of the hotel complex. Explore the shores of lake Ohrid or relax on one of the welcoming beaches. There is plenty of nature to discover at one of the oldest lakes in Europe. UNESCO protected site since 1979.

3rd Night: Korçë

Located in the centre of Korçë, the Hotel Bocca has 20 comfortably equipped rooms. Not far from the hotel is the brewery and the National Museum.

4th Night: Gërmenjë

Guesthouse Farm Sotira – Gërmenj. A magical place to fall in love with and to enjoy. Nicely imbedded in a landscape to dream of: crystal clear water, nature at its best, sunlight to bath in...

Time travel back to the roots: delicious, locally grown, organic food; traditionally prepared with love on a charcoal grill; served with a glass of wine or raki

5th Night: Përmet

Guesthouse Coli - Përmet (Additional information on site ...)

6th Night: Gjirokastrë

Your Hotel Çajupi is nicely located in the center of Gjirokastrë right below the mighty fortress. It connects the modern and the old part of the town. Built under communist rule in the 1960s it is well known for its outstanding cuisine and staff. And has a superb reputation world wide. 35 comfortable, air-conditioned rooms wait for you. An amazing view from the hotel bar expects you. Look across the slate made roofs from high above.

7th Night: Sarandë (surroundings)

Villa Nertili (Ksamil), which is with a private beach in front of the Hotel, is about 400m away from the Saranda Main Promenade. Each room has a television and a private bathroom.

8th Night: Himarë

Hotel Rondo's opened it's doors in summer of 2012 in a unique environment next to the beauty of the Ionia Sea. It's mission is to offer a complete package of holidays, adventure and tradition as well as food and drink in one place.

9th Night: Vlorë

Hotel Naos is a brand new hotel in Radhimë, near the city of Vlorë. The hotel was born out of a desire to offer an unparalleled and authentic taste of the Vlorë Bay to our visitors; and functions as a boutique hotel / artistic reference point for the area. The hotel features 26 rooms and apartments, all of which with sea-facing balconies and a very high standard of comfort. Picasso Restaurant, one of the most renowned seafood restaurants of Vlora, offers a selection of authentic dishes and mediterranean classics. Quality sun-bathing and fun in the water are guaranteed by our private pool and beach as well as the nearby boats which depart daily for the virgin beaches of the Karaburun Peninsula.

Level 3

Medium-difficult to difficult tours in mountainous stretches of 25 to 40 mi./45 to 72 km on usually quiet asphalt or gravel roads at an average elevation of 2,427 ft./740 meters are cycled individually at your personal speed, following a route description. You always have the whole day at your disposal to cover the route. The tours selected by us follow well-asphalted, sometimes completely new roads. Albanian drivers are generally very considerate of bikers.

If you decide to go on a **guided** tour, you have an escort vehicle (Van, 8 seats with a trailer for up to 20 bikes) at your disposal on each tour, which is able to transport your luggage as well as up to seven people. Your tour guide has expert knowledge of the region. Since we prefer that every person cycles at his/her own speed, it can happen that the group splits up during ascents. In that case, meeting points - usually at the mountain peak – are arranged, where the group meets again.

Weather

Albania has temperate, Mediterranean climate. With the beginning of spring things really start to heat up. Clear skies and balmy temperatures provide a nice way to ease into the heat of summer. Cycling season: April to June; September till October.

Language

Due to our international audience all tours are conducted in English.

Bringing your own Bike

Your tour price includes the use of a rental bike. We urgently discourage you from bringing your own bike because the transport from your hometown to Albania by airplane is both costly and risky.

The bikes often get damaged during transport and the transfer taxis are often unwilling to transport bike boxes.

Own Saddle and Click Pedals

Our rental bikes are equipped with flat pedals. Should you not want to be without your own click pedals (or own saddle – without the seat post), please bring them with you and let your tour guide attach them to your rental bike.

Panniers

We offer water proof panniers on the tour. They can be used e. g. to store drinks, clothes, camera.

To ensure that bike panniers remain water proof they have to be closed tight.

Rental Bikes

On arrival you receive a 30-gear rental bike Giant Roam 1 X-Road (ALUXX SL-Grade Aluminum, Shimano XT 30-speed drive, SR Suntour SF13 NCX Disc suspension fork with cushion stopp, Shimano M505 hydraulic disc brakes) and porter.

In order to supply you with the bicycle that fits you, we need to know how tall you are. Should you not have given us this information along with your booking, we ask you to pass it on to our office team.

E-Bikes

Cycle hassle-free and climb mountains without difficulty, enjoy nature and landscapes unlimited. Electronic bikes will make it possible.

The Giant Explore E+ = GTS 2019 can be rented for 160 €/week (limited amount: 5/on request).

Kindly take care of your rental bike. Park it at safe places - not next to the sea to keep it away from salt water.

Obligatory Safety Helmets

Helmet use is mandatory on all cycle tours. You are strongly encouraged to bring your own (well-fitted) helmet to guarantee optimum protection. Rental helmets are only available in limited numbers (reservation requested). For children below 16 years there is a helmet duty in Albania.

Useful Equipment

Cycling jerseys & cycling pants

You do not really need a special sports outfit for our trekking tours. Normal recreation clothes are quite sufficient. However, for our cycling tours most of our guests prefer wearing special cycling clothes made of synthetics that do not absorb but wick away sweat. Thus the clothes always feel dry which prevents the body from cooling off too quickly. Bicycle jerseys are usually cut longer in

the back so that the bent-over rump is covered completely. They should be made of high-quality material closely lag the body and not flutter when riding at high speed.

Wearing padded cycling pants prevents pressure discomfort and soreness. The cut of the crotch of men's and women's cycling pants differs considerably. Well-fitting cycling pants should be elastic, have an elastic waistband and should never pinch or constrict at the top and at the crotch or the legs. Paying attention to good quality, the right material, a good fit and sufficient freedom of movement assure that your cycling apparel - and with it cycling itself - will remain a long-lasting pleasure.

Cycling apparel can be purchased at any cycling store where you can try on the clothes on the spot. You can also order from suppliers on the internet.

Cycling helmets

Cycling helmets are offered by numerous suppliers in various price and quality categories. When buying a bicycle helmet we urgently recommend getting advice at a specialist store since finding the optimum helmet depends on quite a number of things. Avoid at all cost buying a helmet because of its looks; the main criteria should be a perfect fit.

Cycling gloves

Cycling gloves offer good protection against injuries (mainly abrasions). They improve your grip control and also help to avoid numbness in your hands which happens frequently on long tours. Like the helmets they are sold by numerous suppliers. When buying cycling gloves for the first time you should get advice at a specialist shop because cycling gloves should have optimum fit too and be suited to the intended purpose.

Guided Tour Albania: Each guided tour has two leaders, one cycles with the group and one drives the supporting van.

Extend your holidays

Would you like to be in vicinity for a few days before or would you like to spend a few days in Albania after your trip? We like to recommend some accommodations in Tirana to you:

Hotel SKY 2 (see 1st night of journey)

If you wish to book a room you are kindly requested to contact our office team:

Albania (Shqipëria) is rising as one of Europe's hottest and least expensive destinations. Its unspoiled beaches, snowcapped mountains, traditional cuisine, Cold War era artefacts, unique traditions, unrivaled hospitality and wild countryside are ripe for a flourishing tourist market. Some say that visiting Albania is as close as you'll get to traveling back in time. This tour includes 3 UNESCO world heritage sites.

1st Day Tirana (Arrival)

Individual arrival at Tirana. Depending on your timetable arriving to Tirana you can enjoy a walk by yourself through Tirana until you meet the Guide and the group at the hotel at 6 pm for the tour briefing. After the briefing we will join the Welcome Dinner.

2nd Day Qafë Thanë to Tushemisht (Pogradec) (aprx. 25 mi./40 km)

Morning transfer (distance: 69 mi./110 km/1.5 - 2 h) to the Albanian-Macedonian border. Start cycling along the lake, stopping for lunch at one of the many restaurants at the shore of the lake. After lunch continue through Pogradec to Tushemisht, near the other Albanian-Macedonian border on the south-east corner of the lake. After checking in the hotel we will ride to St. Naum in Macedonia to visit the beautiful Monastery. Don't forget your passport.

3rd Day Tushemisht (Pogradec) to Korçë (aprx. 32 mi/51 km)

A climb out from the lake into another high plateau bounded by mountains. Continue following the gorge for a while until the hills open up leading into a vast plain, a patchwork of individual farms and colours. An early arrival in Korçë allows you to go for a cultural tour around the city known as the Paris of Albania.

4th Day Korçë to Sotire (aprx. 45 mi/72 km)

We start cycling leaving behind the agricultural plateau of Korçë climbing steadily into the border mountains through a landscape of barren rock interspersed with wild flowers. Numerous cols and valleys lie ahead, climbing into the heart of the Gramoz Mountains and over the Barmash Pass (1,159m) to Sotire lying in its own tranquil valley.

5th Day Sotire to Benje (Përmet) (aprx. 32.5 mi/60 km)

A climb out from Sotire to a high grassy plateau surrounded by soaring peaks before reaching the source of the River Vjosa and descending through its spectacular gorge to Leskovik. Descending to Çarshove and then following the corniche route high above the river to Benje situated on a bluff above the river.

After lunch and checking in the guesthouse we will take a short ride to the thermal springs for a swim at the end of the Langarica canyons.

6th Day Benje to Gjirokastër (aprx. 44 mi/70 km)

Continue along the valley towards Kelcyra the distant shark's tooth peaks, which guards a further gorge. Ride between them to the confluence of the Drinos river following yet another gorge. This opens out into a wide plain with the town of Gjirokastër (city of 1,000 steps) high above on your right side.

7th Day Gjirokastër to Sarandë (via Butrint) (aprx. 44 mi/70 km)

After a fast 16 mi. (25 km) morning transfer we will start riding toward Sarandë, which lies along the Ionian coast, sandwiched between the high mountains and the sea and close to the ancient remains of Butrint. As an UNESCO World Heritage Site, Butrint is one of the county's most important archaeological sites, tracing its origins back to the Greeks and the Romans.

8th Day Sarandë to Himarë (aprx. 32 mi/51 km)

A roller coaster of a ride, leaving as the mist is burnt off by the sun, climbing steeply out of Sarandë to a rocky plateau. Then it's over cols into bays and around headlands, always with the stunning mountain scenery to the right and sea to the left before descending to the long beach and the bay of Himarë.

9th Day Himarë to Vlorë (aprx. 41 mi/65 km)

Today's route is as challenging as it is spectacular. Cycling up to the Llogara pass 1,000 m above the blue water of the Ionian Sea and its National Park, home to black pine, Eurasian otter and golden eagles. The park is a scenic expanse of protected woodland that encompasses the forests on the northern side of the Llogara Pass. After lunch we cycle downhill all the way to Vlorë.

10th Day Departure (transfer time aprx. 2,5 hrs)

Farewell! Morning transfer from Vlorë to Tirana Int. Airport. Please keep in mind, that a transfer to Tirana airport needs aprx. 2,5 hours. We recommend to book a return flight that leaves after 1 pm.