Trekking the Accursed Mountains of Albania

Trip Code: ALB

Version:

WALK & TREK	GUIDED GROUP	5 MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience jaw dropping scenery and wonderful hospitality at local homestays
- Trek over the stunning Valbona Pass, linking the remote mountain villages of Theth and Valbona
- Cross the border into Montenegro via glacial valleys and limestone peaks to the tranquil Grebaje

Valley
- Enjoy a scenic boat ride on Lake Koman, often compared to the fjords of Norway
- Stay in the historical towns of Shkodra and Kruja and explore these true cultural gems

AT A GLANCE

- 5 days trekking
- Max altitude - 2060m
- Join at Tirana

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

A land of jaw dropping scenery, wonderful hospitality and fascinating culture, Albania is a Balkan gem and perfect for a unique walking holiday. Known as the land of smiles, Albanians are proud of their strong traditions and stunning scenery including the magnificent Accursed Mountains. This European wilderness is home to spectacular alpine landscapes and superb wildlife including lynx, chamois, wolf, deer, golden eagles, buzzards, owls and falcons. Our journey begins in Shkodra, the cultural gateway to the Albanian Alps, before venturing into the dramatic landscapes of Grebaje Valley and the remote beauty of Ropojana Valley. From there, hike to the stunning village of Theth via the scenic Peja Pass, a route offering panoramic views of the surrounding peaks. Spend a day hiking to the refreshing Blue Eye from Nderlysaj, a natural spring of extraordinary colour and clarity. Continue your alpine adventure by trekking across the iconic Valbona Pass, followed by a challenging but rewarding hike over the Rosi Mountain Pass. Cruise across the breath-taking Lake Koman, often called the “Norwegian fjords of the Balkans,” before wrapping up your adventure with a final night in the charming historical town of Kruja.

Is this holiday for you?

The spectacular Accursed Mountains (Albanian Alps) offers low-level (max 2000m) but challenging and remote walking alongside traditional homestays. During this holiday we follow well-established footpaths and mule tracks between valleys and villages that are rocky but non-technical. A couple of days involve out and back walks up to truly dramatic locations, which are holiday highlights. Whilst based in Thethi and Valbona you are free to opt in or out of the daily walk if you prefer to enjoy the surroundings of the homestay. A holiday highlight is the challenging Valbona Pass which takes you into the next valley and unfortunately cannot be avoided apart from a long road journey. Before this holiday it’s good to prepare yourself for walking between 6 and 7 hours each day and be comfortable with steep ascents and descents. Albania is an amazing country and perfect for walkers who are looking for challenging hiking and longer days in amazing mountain scenery.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed Tirana Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- All meals
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- All activities/excursions/entrance fees mentioned except where specified as 'optional'
- Baggage transfers by pack-horses or mules during the trek

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Tips
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at Tirana Airport in the early afternoon of Day 1.

A single transfer from Tirana Airport to the group hotel in Shkodra is provided mid-afternoon on Day 1.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals, from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8, are included.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

Water from the taps may not be drinkable in all locations on this trip - please check with your guide. We recommend taking water purification tablets and a reusable bottle with a filter such as **Water-to-Go**, which can both be used to help make safe other water sources. Please note that we do not encourage the purchase of single use plastic bottles.

With a mix of Balkan, Turkish and European influences, Albania offers a rich variety of dishes. In hotels breakfast are continental style, with cereals, bread and jam, tea, coffee and sometimes eggs. You may also have the chance to try a more traditional Albanian breakfast of flavoured rice. At the guesthouses, breakfasts are simple but filling. Picnic lunches are provided (bread, meat, cheese, tomatoes, cucumber etc. There will also be fruit and a snack/muesli bar etc. Evening meals include traditional soups, locally-grown vegetables, local dairy and meat dishes. The village accommodation is based deep in the heart of the Albanian mountains and the lifestyle here is very simple therefore “packed lunches” or sandwiches will not be the same as you are used to at home. However what is prepared is all freshly cooked and evening meals are based on what the local family would have themselves. If you are someone who enjoys chocolate/sweets/nuts on the trail then please feel free to bring extra snacks from home. Water is provided, but very often this is from local wells or mountain streams and is not chlorinated. If you are concerned about drinking untreated water, we suggest you bring a supply of water treatment tablets.

Accommodation

During this holiday, the group will spend 1 night at a comfortable hotel in Shkodra and 1 night at a similar establishment in Kruja. These hotels provide twin-sharing accommodation.

There will also be 5 nights in simple village guesthouse /homestays in Vusanje, Thethi and the Valbona Valley. Whilst we do our best to accommodate rooming preferences, in some locations, dormitory-style accommodation is the only option. However, we always ensure that male and female participants are separated. The village guesthouses, whilst charming and friendly have basic facilities but the warm welcome more than makes up for the lack of hotel facilities! Staying with local families is all part of the overall Albanian trekking experience and allows us to experience a genuine side to the Albanian Alps.

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex for the 2 hotel nights. Single rooms are available for a supplementary cost for these 2 nights. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader, one or more support vehicle drivers (on Days 1, 2, 7 and 8), and a team of pack-animals and their handlers during some of the trekking days.

Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

Spending Money

Approximately £150 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including your bar bills and reasonable tips to the support crew. If you intend to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly. Albania's unit of currency is the Lek. ATM machines are available at Tirana Airport, in Shkodra and in Kruja. Credit cards can be used to purchase goods and services in some shops, hotels and restaurants in Albania.

Guidance on Tipping

Tips do not form part of the wages of local staff but they are very much appreciated. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. It is best if the tip is given at the end of the trip by the group as a whole. We recommend that each group member contributes around £25 and that tips are then distributed between the guide and support staff as the group feels is appropriate.

Baggage Allowance

Baggage will be transported between overnight stops by vehicle, other than on day 5 when it will be transported by mules. There is no weight restriction other than that imposed by your international carrier but we do ask you to limit your luggage to one piece which weighs no more than 15kgs plus your day pack. For this holiday we recommend a soft holdall or rucksack (not a suitcase) which is easier to secure and more comfortable for the mules.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

Flight payment

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Tirana. For clients making their own flight arrangements, Tirana Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to 'Joining Arrangements and Transfers' in the trip dossier for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the trip is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Visa Albania

UK and USA passport holders do not require a visa for shorts stays.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The unit of currency in Albania is the Lek.

Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on an active holiday getting some additional exercise. Whilst regular hiking in hill or back country is the best preparation, running, cycling and swimming are also good for developing better cardiovascular fitness and stamina. Before departure, we suggest that you try to fit in a number of long walks in hilly country.

Climate

Daytime temperatures in the lower valleys will vary between 20ºC and 30ºC at the times of year we operate this trip. The weather in summer is generally excellent - with hot days, clear skies and little rain. Note that temperatures do drop in the evenings by several degrees. High up, we may encounter cooler conditions and stormy weather cannot be ruled out at any time of year in this mountainous region.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- The Accursed Mountains - Robert Carver
- Broken April - Ismail Kadare
- General of the Dead Army - Ismail Kadare
- High Albania - Edith Durham
- The Albanians : A Modern History - Miranda Vickers

Maps

Albania Road Map. Freytag and Berndt. 1:400,000.

Road map of the entire country of Albania.

Private Groups Information

Make this KE Adventure holiday your own!

- Do our normal group departure dates not fit?
- Would you prefer to travel with just friends and/or family?
- Are you looking to organise a trip for your local walking, biking or mountaineering club?

It's really easy to make a trip your own. Simply select from our full range of adventure holidays and choose the dates that work for you and your group.

We are experts in creating holidays for groups of friends, families, charities and clubs. Our personal service means you'll be fully involved as we make the arrangements for your perfect adventure holiday.

Independence with Security

Travelling as a KE Private Group allows you more flexibility and choice, but still with the peace of mind that everything is pre-planned and arranged for your group by a reputable adventure travel company.

To take your first step to an amazing adventure with your friends and family complete the private group enquiry form, or call our **Sales Experts on: 017687 73966**

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Explore International

This holiday is part of our Explore International range. Participants on these trips can book through KE or through our international partner. This helps us to gather together sufficient numbers of like-minded adventurers to get your holiday up and running quickly. Led by an English-speaking guide, the cosmopolitan nature of these groups can be an important part of the experience!

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

You should bring the following items:

- Hiking boots
- Trekking trousers / shorts
- Baselayer shirts (1 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve)
- T-shirts or casual shirts
- Socks & Underwear
- Light fleece shirt or mid-layer
- Warm fleece jacket or jumper
- Waterproof jacket & overtrousers
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottle (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Travel towel
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Insect repellent; antiseptic cream; throat lozenges; diarrhoea treatment (Diocalm or Imodium); painkillers; plasters and blister treatment; and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

Glucose sweets and vitamin tablets are a useful addition.

The following items are optional:

- Training shoes or sandals
- Trekking poles (highly recommended)
- Camera
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Land Only Information

Please refer to the 'Joining Arrangements & Transfers' within Holiday Information for further details.

Flights and other transport to your destination should not be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the departure is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting and ending at Tirana Airport. A group transfer from Tirana Airport to Shkodra will be provided in the early evening on Day 1. A single transfer back to Tirana Airport from Kruja is also provided on the final day of the holiday.

There are a number of low cost carriers offering direct flights to and from Tirana. If you would like to take advantage of these schedules please check the timings of the provided transfers on Day 1 and Day 9 with the office team.

Flight Inclusive Information

Limited seats are available at the advertised flight price, please book as early as you can. If we are unable to secure seats at the price shown, or you have requested regional departures and/or upgrades, we will provide you with an alternative quote. It is likely that flight payment will be in advance of your final holiday balance. Booking a flight inclusive package means you will benefit from full financial protection, eases your holiday planning, and leaves us to deal with airlines and schedule changes. If you book flights through KE Adventure Travel we will offset the carbon of your flight.

Regional departures and/or alternative carriers are available on request.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Tirana with Austrian Airlines. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the early evening of the same day (Day 1 of the itinerary). Return flights will depart Tirana at around midday on the final day of the holiday, arriving in the UK later that same evening.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

With KE you'll enjoy your final night in the medieval town of Kruja complete with walled fortress and cobbled streets. We believe it's the perfect place to raise a glass of raki and celebrate a trekking adventure. Kruja also gives you a real taste of Albanian life with its fantastic bazaar and atmospheric coffee houses.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 11/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change