

Classical Highlights of Albania Tour

(7 nights-8 days)

The Classical Highlights of Albania Tour is a must for any visitor who would like to discover Albania within an acceptable time frame. It offers a great introduction into Albania's past and present history, customs and traditions. It touches all the gems of the country from ancient sites to architectural buildings and towns, comprising three UNESCO World Heritage sites. All this is accomplished in style, with excellent guides, acceptable drive lengths and stays in carefully selected high standard hotels with character. A competitive price for the quality it delivers makes this one of our best selling tours.

Day 1: Airport – Tirana

Pick up at Tirana airport and transfer to Hotel. Time permitting we will visit the National Historic Museum in Tirana offering an in depth introduction to Albanian history from prehistoric times to the present day. Traditional Albanian restaurant suggestions for dinner will be given. Overnight in Tirana.



Day 2: Tirana – Ardenica – Apollonia – Vlora (3.5 hours driving time)

Depart to Vlora where Albanian Independence was proclaimed. On the way we stop at the Monastery of Ardenica, supposed to have been built in the middle ages, as argued by a stone in entrance dating back to the 1417. In fact it is said that Scanderbeg was married at the small chapel of Ardenica. Today inside the church you can admire icon paintings of 1743-1745, by Albanian artists such as Konstandin and Athanos Zografi, as well as Konstandin Shpataraku. Proceed to the ancient city of Apollonia situated on the famous Via Egnatia - one of the most important cities in Roman times. Due to its fame and importance it was known as Apollonia Prima out of 16 ancient cities built to honour Apollo. Caesar chose to send his nephew Augustus Octavian to study oratory in Apollonia revealing the importance of this ancient city. Afterwards we continue to Vlora where we visit the Independence Museum, situated in the original house where the first Independent Albanian Government had its offices. Afternoon and evening at leisure. Overnight in Vlora.



Day 3: Vlora – Butrint (UNESCO) – Saranda (4.5 hours driving time)

After an early breakfast we depart for Saranda. Drive on the spectacular Albanian Riviera looking down at the Ionian Sea. Breathtaking sceneries await us at the Llogara pass - 1000 m above sea level. We continue on to Saranda, make a short stop at the fortress of Ali Pasha a fortification used to control the sea trade routes. Then we continue past Saranda, to the ancient city of Butrint a UNESCO world heritage site and the most important archaeological discovery in Albania. Legend associates this city with Trojan settlers who fled Troy under the leadership of Aeneas. In fact the city was first settled by Greek colonists and was continuously inhabited for centuries forming archaeological layers of several eras of civilization. Apart the beautiful antique ruins it has the added benefit of being situated in a beautiful peninsula, rich in flora and fauna. After the visits we return to Saranda for overnight.



Day 4: Saranda – Gjirokastra (UNESCO) – Berat (4.5 hours driving time)

After early breakfast we drive to Berat. On our way lays Gjirokastra, a UNESCO site and museum town with beautiful and very distinctive architecture. Visit the medieval Castle which used to be a political prison during the communist dictatorship and the Ethnographic Museum which is also the house the Albanian dictator was born in. We suggest the group should stop for lunch close to Tepelena at a traditional restaurant (optional) among beautiful scenery. In Berat we check in at the hotel and the group is then left at leisure to explore Berat. Overnight in Berat is a unique experience staying in houses up to 300 years old turned hotels.



Day 5: Berat (UNESCO) – Durres- (2.5 hours driving time)

After breakfast we visit the Castle and the Onufri Museum. Berat castle is of particular interest as people still live within its walls in their traditional houses, as have their ancestors for centuries. The castle used to have over 40 churches of which 7 still remain, including one turned into Onufri Museum. Onufri was an Albanian Icon master painter of the 16th century who painted many orthodox churches in Albania and Greece. After this interesting experience we depart for Durres one of the oldest (founded in 627 B.C.) where we have lunch by the sea (optional). After lunch we take a sightseeing tour of the Amphitheatre situated in the middle of the modern city in an inhabited area, and the Archaeological museum rich in arte facts found in the city and its suburbs. After the visits in Durres for overnight.



Day 6 & 7: Durres day of relax

Day 8: Durres day of relax

After breakfast, free to explore until time of transfer to Airport. End of our services.

Prices (Except July and August):

370 Euro p/person sharing a double/twin room for **minimum 10 participants**

482 Euro p/person sharing a double/twin room for **minimum 6 participants**

540 Euro p/person sharing a double/twin room for **minimum 4 participants**

763 Euro p/person sharing a double/ twin room for **minimum 2 participants**

Single room supplement = 106 Euro. (Single rooms will usually be double or twin for single use)

For more than 6 pax there will be guide and driver, for 6 pax and less, the guide will be as driver too).

Included:

- Transfers from and to the airport;
- Transport according to the program with medium range car, AC
- English speaking guide;
- 6 nights of accommodation in good 3-4* hotels;
- Breakfast.

Not Included:

- Flight tickets
- Lunches and dinners
- Entrance Fees
- Gratuities to driver/guide
- Everything not mentioned in the "Includes" section

