



Albanian Archaeological Tours

The area of today's Albania has been populated since prehistoric times. In antiquity, much of it was settled by the Illyrians, possible ancestors of present-day Albanians. The modern Albanian state comprises the southernmost part of ancient Illyria and the northern part of ancient Epirus. Surrounded by powerful, warring empires, Albania has experienced considerable violence and competition for control throughout its history. Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Venetians and Ottomans swept through, leaving their cultural mark as well as their ruins. Archaeological research shows that the lands that are today inhabited by Albanians were first populated in the Paleolithic Age (Stone Age). The first areas settled were those with favorable climatic and geographic conditions. For all tourists, which will be mostly interested, to that kind of tourism, and focus to the archeology, come and enjoy the program shown below. Welcome to the antiquity of ALBANIA.

Day 01: Airport Mother Theresa - Tirana

Day 02: Tirana - Kruja - Durres

Day 03: Durres - Apollonia - Vlora

Day 04: Vlora - Saranda

Day 05: Saranda - Butrinti - Saranda

Day 06: Saranda - Finiq - Gjirokastra - Antigonea

Day 07: Gjirokastra - Bylis - Berat

Day 08: Berat - Tirana

Day 09: Tirana

Day 10: Tirana - Out

DAY 01 : AIRPORT MOTHER THERESA - TIRANA Arrival in the Airport Mother Tereza. Airport procedures. Please send us in advance all the passport and arrival details. Meeting Guide & Driver and transfer to the hotel. Enjoy a welcome dinner and overnight. Accommodation will be in a hotel in Tirana D

AY 02 : TIRANA - KRUJA - DURRES After the breakfast meet the group at the lobby and departure for a sightseeing tour in Kruja city. Is situated only 90 min far from Tirana city. On this day, we will be mostly focused in the History along the Ottoman Empire. Kruja is exactly the city where the tradition and History are crossed together Kruja, as the famous English painter Edward Lear quotes it as "...a charming little town all up in the sky". Our guide will lead you through the ancient history of Kruja area, its people, culture and tradition. From the adobe type dwelling places to the Ottoman houses and communist flats, you'll experience newly modern buildings, in the city center as well on the top of Sari-Salltik mountain. Get off the bus in the city center and start the walking tour toward the Bazaar. Enjoy the architectural values of the cobble stones and wooden shops. Proceed to the fortress through the main gate. Skenderbeg museum, build during communism, invites you to a wonderful historic insights of medieval period. Do not forget the ethnographic museum, which displays a lively exhibition of rich tradition and culture of the Kruja people and those, who used it as a stopover on their way to central or southern Albania. Leaving Kruja and driving to Durres city. Afternoon city tour in Durres, which is another site, with completely different sight and point of view. We will be mostly focused to the ruins and archeology in Durres area. Some important buildings in Durrës include the main library, the cultural center with the Aleksander Moisiu Theater, the Estrada Theater, the puppet theater, the philharmonic orchestra, etc. There are also several museums such as Byzantine Forum, Venetian Torra (small castle open as a bar), Ancient city wall, The Exhibition of Folk Culture (open 8.00-13.00 for each day) The mosaic of Arapaj, Arapaj village (it can be opened only with special permit) the Archaeological Museum and the Museum of History. Check in hotel. Enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Durres.

DAY 03 : DURRES - APOLLONIA - VLORA After the breakfast in the hotel, meet the group at the hotel lobby for departure program. This day we will have the possibility to enjoy sightseeing tour where the history interlaces with archeology in the different époque of Albanian tribe. First stop will be in Durres. Apollonia - An ancient city, one of the biggest in Adriatic basin and the most distinguished among 30 others that bore the same name during antiquity. It was built on a hill (whose tops are respectively 101 and 103 m above the sea level), a position that overlooks the whole area and leads through Vjosa River to Adriatic. During its first years of existence, Apollonia kept close contacts with Corfu and Corinth and played the part of a trade negotiator between Hellenians and Illyrians. During 5th century BC it became an advanced economic centre with numerous crafts and extended its relations with both the Illyrian world and Attica and later on with Magma Grecia (Southern Italy). The sight of Apollonia, is divided in to 2 parts. The visitors may have the chance to Visit the Ruins of the old city, and the second one is The Museum of Apollonia. After tour in Apollonia we drive to Vlora city. Late afternoon check in hotel. Enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation & overnight in the hotel in Vlora

DAY 04 : VLORA - SARANDA After the breakfast in hotel meet the group at the hotel lobby and departure trip. This is a wonderful panoramic tour that passes through the Jonian Riviera. Some

brief visits to traditional villages, as Llogara, Dhermi, Vunoi. We will stop to have lunch (Facultative) to Llogara area, enjoying the nice scenery among the pinewoods. Late afternoon we arrive in Saranda. Check in hotel, enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Saranda.

DAY 05 : SARANDA - BUTRINTI - SARANDA In the morning, after the breakfast, meet the group at the hotel lobby for departure trip. Driving to Butrinti. The ancient city, just 20 min far. Butrinti - Archaeological artifacts prove that during the 7th and the 6th centuries BC Butrint was a proto-urban centre, but it was only during the 5th century BC that it turned into a full city. By the end of the 4th century the agora, the boulevard, a small temple and the theatre holding 1500 seats were built up, the latter one fortunately being preserved till our days. The complex of the theatre and other buildings like Asklep's temple, portico, baths, etc. form the most magnificent part of the ancient city. During late antiquity and early Middle Ages, Butrint flourished greatly. The construction of the baptistery, which is the most important monument of the early Christian period, dates from this time. The baptistery, which has a round shape with a diameter of 13.50 m, is laid with multicolored geometric and animal mosaic motifs and bears special artistic values. The hall has two rows of granite colonnades upon which the roof rests. After tour back in Saranda. Afternoon free time in the city center (Possibility to enjoy the dinner in Lekursi Castle, an interesting sight nowadays combined to a traditional restaurant). Check in hotel, enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Saranda.

DAY 06 : SARANDA - FINIQ - GJIROKASTRA - ANTIGONEA In the morning, after the breakfast, meet the group at the hotel lobby for departure trip. Transfer to Gjirokastra city. On way short stop to Finiq area. Finiq (Phoinike) - Declared an Archaeological Park, by the Council of Ministers decision No.396, on 31/03/2005. Phoinike is situated ca.8 km east of the modern city of Saranda and about 20 km from the Greek border. In antiquity the territory around the site belonged to Chaonia, part of the Epirus kingdom, and it is rich in finds from the Classical to the Byzantine period, while in the distance to the south of the ancient city lies the Butrint lake. Ancient sources mention the wealth of the city, especially during the Hellenistic period, between the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C. when Phoinike was a leading city in the Epirote League. Within the walls of Phoinike was signed the end of the first Macedonian War, the document took of the name "the Peace of Phoinike". The city's prosperity continued also during the Roman imperial period, while during the Byzantine period the city records about 10 centuries of continuous life. The Ottoman occupation of Phoinike came abruptly and the city declined by taking the form of a small village. A thesaurus (a small prostylos temple), the theatre, Hellenistic houses, several Roman water cisterns and a Byzantine church can be seen while visiting Phoinike. After tour in Finiq, continue to Gjirokastra city, with a brief city tour. Gjirokastra - Many houses in Gjirokastër have a distinctive local style that has earned the city the nickname "Town of the Stones", because most of the old houses have roofs covered with stones. Of a great importance and interesting to be visit, are The Museum of Weapons (inside the castle) The Ethnographic Museum or known as the Enver Hoxha house, The Castle of Gjirokastra, The characteristic house of Zekate, an important family in Gjirokastra. Transfer down town and continue to another archeological site as Antigonea. Antigonea - lies on a hill about 600 meters above sea level The Agora of the city has been excavated and a Stoa, 59 meters long and 9 m wide has been brought to light. Coins from various city states have been found in excavations, arriving from Korkyra (modern Corfu), Apollonia, Dyrrachium, Oricum, Ambracia but also the Epirote League, most of them made of bronze and few in silver. A triconch Palaeo-Christian basilica has been found at the site, dated to the 6th century A.D., and decorated with a mosaic floor. The Egyptian god Anubis is represented on the central panel of the mosaic, and according to one

interpretation it may depict Saint Christopher "the Dog-head". Check in hotel, enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Gjirokastra.

DAY 07 : GJIROKASTRA - BYLIS - BERAT In the morning, after the breakfast, meet the group at the hotel lobby for departure trip. Transfer to Berat city. On way we will have a short stop to the archeological ancient site of Bylis. Bylis - (in today Mallakasttra) which is a very important archeological center in Albania, is one of ancient Illyrian cities inhabited by the tribe of Bylliones. Established in the third century B.C., Bylis flourished as a political, economic, and cultural center of the community. The city was governed by an annual council of civil servants. In 230-146 B.C., it introduced bronze coins, which were used throughout this region. The handicrafts from the workshops of Bylis were competing with the handicrafts of Apollonia. The surrounding wall of Bylis, built in the second quarter of the fourth century B.C., is very well-preserved. It is 2250 m long, 3.5 m wide and 8-9 m high and it surrounds an area of 30 ha. The wall is triangular. The city consisted of several quarters and objects, such as the agora, which sheltered the inhabitants of the villages and their wealth in the event of war. It is very interesting to see: The theatre, which is larger than that of Butrint and was built in the middle of the third century B.C. The monumental fountain of the 3rd century. - Several stadium elements. - Medieval cultural objects such as Basilica. In the Church of Bylis which was build on the IV-th century AD, the mosaics have Illyrian (Illyrian) motifs which for the church later where known as pagan ones. After tour in Bylis transfer to Berat. Check in hotel, enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Berat.

DAY 08 : BERAT - TIRANA In the morning, after the breakfast meet the group at the lobby and continue with a sightseeing tour in Berat. Berat - The town is still renowned for its historic architecture and scenic beauty and is known as the "Town of a Thousand Windows", due to the many large windows of the old decorated houses overlooking the town. The Citadel overlooks the river and the modern city as well as the old Christian quarter across the river. Modern Berat consists of three parts divided by the Osum River: Goritsa ("little mountain" in Old Slavonic, Mangalem and Kalaja, the latter being a residential quarter within the old Byzantine citadel that overlooks the town. The town also has a 15th century mosque and a number of churches of the Albanian Orthodox Church, whose autocephaly was proclaimed there in 1922. Several of the churches house works by the renowned 16th century painter Onufri. Of inters it is also the Onufri Museum in the city. After tour transfer back to Tirana. Check in hotel, Free in leisure, enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Tirana.

DAY 09 : TIRANA

Morning after breakfast meet the group at the lobby and departure for a sightseeing tour in Tirana city. Tirana - "The Albanians" - a mosaic on the face of the National Historical Museum, Statue of Skanderbeg in Skanderbeg Square, Et'hem Bey Mosque at the south east corner of Skanderbeg Square - The Clock Tower next to the Et'hem Bey Mosque, Government buildings: at the south end of Skanderbeg Square. Roman Catholic Church of Saint Paul: completed in 2001, the largest church in Tirana. Orthodox Church of St Prokop was built in 1780. The Tabakëve and Terzive bridges (respectively in front of the Parliament building and on Elbasani Street) date from the beginning of the 20th century. The Palace of Culture (Pallati I Kulturës), where the Theatre of Opera and Ballet and the National Library stand, was completed in 1963 on the site of the former Trade of Tirana building, with the first brick being placed by Soviet president Nikita Khrushchev in 1959. The monument to Mother Albania, 12 meters high, was inaugurated in the Dëshmoret e Kombit cemetery in 1971. The Academy of Sciences building, The Gallery of Figurative, The International Cultural Centre, formerly the Enver Hoxha Museum, was inaugurated in 1988. Popularly referred to as 'the Pyramid', it was designed by a group of architects under the direction

of the dictator's daughter, Pranvera Hoxha, and her husband Klement Kolaneci. The Palac of
Congres, and President Resident, all this wonderfull buildings

, extended, along the Bulevard Deshmoret e Kombit, the Bulevard of Albanian History. All this
wonderful things you could get to our Capital along to panorama tour in Tirana. After tour transfer
back to the hotel, enjoy the dinner and overnight. Accommodation in the hotel in Tirana. DAY10 :
TIRANA - OUT After the breakfast, meet the group at the lobby and check out. Transfer to the
Airport Mother Theresa. End of service