

**Explore Online**

Our website is full of more information to encourage you to consider Albania as your next destination. It will also provide you with the essential information on how to get around, where to stay, what to see, and suggested reading for more information on the country.

Check it out: [www.albaniantourism.com](http://www.albaniantourism.com)  
[www.akt.gov.al](http://www.akt.gov.al)

# A New Mediterranean Love







# Coastal Beaches

The Albanian coast offers visitors an escape to calm, quiet waters as almost the entire coast is sheltered from winds, making it a paradise for swimmers. The coast stretches for about 450 km with very clean waters and many untouched, uninhabited beaches.

The Albanian coast offers two distinct zones: the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. Beaches on the northern Adriatic coast are shallow and excellent

for children and family vacations. Much of the coastline is composed of pine forests and several lagoons offering a great potential for ecotourism and nature lovers. The southern Ionian coastline is dramatically rugged, with steep backdrops to fine smooth gravel beaches. It is generally frequented by the younger generations and honeymooners, and offers many opportunities for water activities and diving, as well.







# Food and Drink

Albanian cuisine is type of Mediterranean diet, known for its high nutritive value and excellent taste and reflects both Turkish and European influences. Among of the many typical dishes, visitors should not miss byrek, minced meat, vegetables, eggs and cheese in flaky pastry; tave kosi, mutton baked in a dish with yogurt and eggs; pasterma or dried smoked meat; tave korani, a unique kind of trout found only in Lake Ohrid, baked with nuts, sauce and onions; fasule, a thick soup of white dry bean with onions; and pasha qofte, a hot soup with meatballs, rice and eggs.

Albania is well known for its “Scanderbeg” cognac, mentioned for its unique flavor and aroma. Vineyards are widely spread around the Albanian countryside. The most popular type of wines produced in the country are Merlot, Cabernet, Pinot Noir, Kallmet, Riesling, Shesh i zi, and San Gjovese. But the most popular and traditional of Albanian beverages is raki. It is usually made from grapes, though there are also other kinds of raki made from plums, mulberries and walnuts.





# City Experiences

Filled with young people and those young at heart, the cities of Albania showcase typical architecture and UNESCO cultural sites, sometimes surrounded by castles and always something unique. With the smiling faces of their inhabitants, the cities of Albania welcome visitors to enjoy a city experience.

## Tirana

The hub of economic and cultural life in the country, the capital city of Tirana is the most vibrant city in Albania. Tirana is rapidly taking on the mantle of a typical European city with smart restaurants, new hotels, boutiques, sidewalk cafes and a growing number of convention and conference facilities. Here visitors will find a wide range of cultural activities and museums, a dynamic and colorful night life and many other possibilities for different excursions in and around Tirana.



## Durrës

One of the most ancient cities in Albania, Durrës is the principal port and the second largest city in the country. It possesses the one of the most popular beaches in the country and is home to the second largest amphitheatre in the Balkans, which includes a newly opened and modernized archaeological museum.



## Kruja

Perched on the slopes of a mountain with a fantastic panoramic view 32 km from the capital, Kruja is the home to Albania's national hero, Gjergj Kastriot Scanderbeg and the museum in his honor. Visitors should also not miss the traditional bazaar and the highly-regarded Ethnographic Museum.



## Shkodra

The historic capital of northern Albania, Shkodra is blessed with a natural beauty. Three rivers encircle this city which sits on the shores of Lake Shkodra, with the magnificent Albanian Alps close by. The history of the city is symbolized by Rozafa Castle, perched high above the city and presents a great opportunity to survey Shkodra and its surroundings for all visitors.



## Gjirokastra

The museum-city of Gjirokastra is known as "the city of stone" due to its predominance in almost the entire architecture of the city. Named a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005, the city boasts characteristic houses that resemble tiny castles built one above the other with their rooftops made of stone. Gjirokastra has also the largest castle in the country where one of the largest festivals in the country, the National Folk Festival, is organized every 4-5 years. The next festival will be in 2009.



# Albania

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## Berati

One of the oldest cities in Albania, Berat is known as the "City of 1000 Windows" and became a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2008. Visitors will see typical Ottoman architecture, a well-preserved and inhabited castle, and a museum of icons painted by Onufri, the famous 16th century Albanian icon painter. Visitors should also not miss the traditional home cooking and opportunities to climb nearby Mount Tomor.



## Vlora

The coastal city with two seas, Vlora is one of the most preferable seaside cities in Albania. A panoramic and poetic coastline south of the city makes the trip to Vlora unforgettable. Visiting three museums and other religious monuments, including the most famous monument, "Kuzum Baba" on the top of a hill overlooking the city, will help build up an appetite for dinner at one of the city's many fabulous fish restaurants.



## Pogradec

Near the tranquil deep waters of Lake Ohrid and breathtaking mountain scenery, Pogradec has long been considered as a center for rest and relaxation. The only Albanian city on the shores of Lake Ohrid, Pogradec is known as the "City of Flowers" and is great place for families. Visitors should not miss the opportunity to try the grilled fish Alcoran, a kind of trout found only in Lake Ohrid.



## Korça

Located in southeastern Albania, Korça has a festive atmosphere and hosts many carnivals. The city is known for its special kind of songs, called "city-songs", which are sang often, even in the open street without occasion. The cobblestone alleyways, museums and the warm atmosphere that prevails here, will seduce tourists to pay a visit to Korça.



## Elbasan

Located in very heart of Albania, Elbasan was a very important station of old Roman road to Athens, the Via Egnatia. Today tourists may visit the walls of Skampini Castle which encompass the inhabited quarters of the city. Tourists may also visit a complex of religious monuments, both Christian and Islamic, and near to the city there are famous thermal waters, in use since Roman times.









# Welcome to Albania

Albania is a land to be loved. In this small Mediterranean country, virgin nature and cultural mysteries combine to create a unique sense of place. From the crisp white snow of the mountains to the red fields of spring poppies, Albania's landscape is ever-changing with the seasons, offering visitors to enjoy a warm summer beach holiday or a challenging mountain trek in the fall.

In Albania, visitors are welcomed as guests as part of the country's rich cultural traditions and heritage. The warm hospitality of the Albanians will make everyone feel at home in this small wonderful land.

Come to Albania – we welcome you as our guest!





REPUBLIKA E SHQIPËRISË  
  
AGJENCIA KOMBËTARE  
E TURIZMIT  
Rruga 11





# Our Agency

Known as the “Land of the Eagles” (“Shqipëria”) in Albanian, the country of Albania has a long history of tourism, dating back to the time of Emperor Justinian in the fifth century. The Emperor’s family was known to vacation at Lin village on the shores of Lake Ohrid, just north of Pogradec. Several other famous travelers have traveled to Albania over the centuries: Lord Byron, Edith Wharton, Rebecca West, amongst others. Many of them left their impressions of Albania through their written works, describing in glittering terms this “Land of the Eagles”.

The first tourist association in Albania was established in 1928 as the “Royal Tourist Automotive Club”. A few years later in 1933 the first National Tourist Organization was established. After the Second World War in 1955 the ALBTURIST enterprise was established as a state controlled company. In April 1992, Albania created its first

Ministry of Tourism, which has varied over the years with different names. Today the Ministry also encompasses the sectors of culture, youth and sports.

The Albanian National Tourism Agency (NTA) was established in September 2007 by a special decision given by the Council of Ministers and is part of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports. The mission of the NTA is to promote tourism in the country through the facilitation of tourism development and by marketing the Albanian tourism industry worldwide.

The NTA is comprised of two technical offices in addition to the Office of Finance and Human Resources. The two technical offices are the Directory of Tourism Promotion and the Directory of Tourism Assistance. More information can be found on the Agency’s official website, [www.akt.gov.al](http://www.akt.gov.al).









# Culture and History at a Glance

"The house of the Albanian is open to the guest". This is a quote from the "Kanun", a 16th century moral code. But hospitality is just one of the reasons that tourists come and visit this small country.

Throughout the centuries Albania has been a contact point for numerous cultures, from the Illyrians to the Greeks, Romans, Venetians,

Byzantines and Ottomans. The importance of Albania has been honored by UNESCO, which has included three of the country's cultural attractions on its List of World Heritage Sites: the ancient city of Butrint and the two museum cities of Gjirokastra and Berat. But Albania's culture does not stop there – artisan practices are alive and flourishing and the country's tradition of iso-polyphonic singing is under protection by UNESCO, recognized as unique in the world.







# Natural Splendors and Outdoor Activities

Within a small territory, Albanian nature is amazing. The country is home to twelve national parks, all of them with something unique to offer. For instance, Divjaka National Park is the western-most nesting site in Europe for the Dalmatian pelican, an endangered species and draw for many birdwatchers. These wetlands are also protected under the International Convention of Ramsar since 1994. In the southern extreme of Albania, Butrint National Park is also a protected wetlands due to its high diversity of flora and fauna together with the archaeological remains of the ancient city of Butrint, which are sheltered in the midst of a subtropical jungle of laurels and high trees.

Llogara National Park is located more than 1000 meters above sea level and is only a short distance for the welcoming beaches of the Albanian Riviera, where tourists can combine the freshness of mountain air with the warmth of the sea. The cliffs of Llogara are internationally recognized as one of the best places in the Balkans for the practice and competition of air sports, such as paragliding.

Many other outdoor activities are also available in Albania, such as trekking, mountain climbing, hiking, skiing, rafting, kayaking, bird watching, fishing, mountain biking and more. Visitors can organize these activities through the different travel agents that specialize in outdoor and adventure tourism.

