



EUROPE · RECOMMENDED 10 DAYS

✦ Mangalem quarter, Berat

Albania

Mountains, lakes, Ottoman towns and the Riviera: the whole of Albania in one loop, private and at your own pace

RECOMMENDED LENGTH

10 days

DATES

Your choice
you pick the dates

TRANSPORT

Self-drive
or private driver

PRICE

Coming soon
via the interest list

I arrange this 10-day round trip in full for you as a private trip, in one loop from Tirana airport: Krujë, Roman Durrës, the UNESCO towns of Berat and Gjirokastër, the Blue Eye, Sarandë with Butrint and Ksamil, the Albanian Riviera and Apollonia, finishing in the capital Tirana. You drive a rental car yourself or travel with a private driver, and you explore everything at your own pace.

✓ Personally composed

✓ No group travel

✓ At your own pace

✓ Leave out or add what you like

✓ Dates of your choice

✓ Eat wherever you like

Highlights

- ★ Skanderbeg's castle in Krujë
- ★ The Roman amphitheatre of Durrës
- ★ Berat and Gjirokaštër, the two Ottoman UNESCO towns, with two nights in Gjirokaštër
- ★ Sarandë, Butrint, Ksamil and the Blue Eye (Syri i Kaltër)
- ★ The beaches of the Albanian Riviera, a night in Dhërmi and the Llogara Pass
- ★ Apollonia, Ardenica and the pelicans of Divjakë-Karavasta
- ★ Tirana and its communist past in Bunk'Art 2

Best time to travel

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC

■ best time to travel: advice only, you travel when you like

TRAVELLERS

Only your own party, from 1 traveller. No group travel, no fellow travellers you don't know.

LENGTH

Recommended: 10 days · shorter or longer is always possible

DATES

Completely flexible: you leave on the day that suits you.

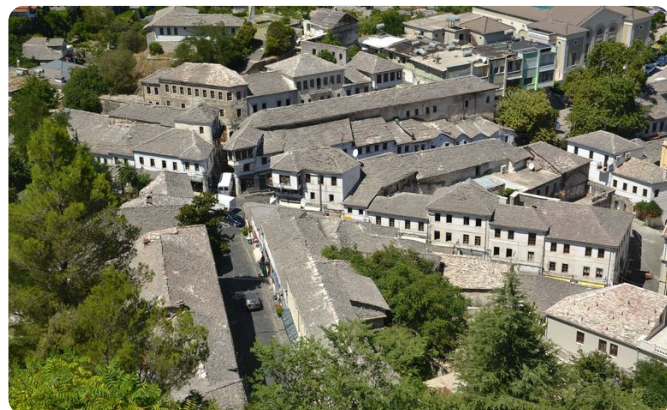
Your route on the map



Map: Natural Earth (public domain) · the arcs show the order of the route, not the exact road

- 1 Krujë
1 night · day 1
- 2 Berat
1 night · day 2
- 3 Gjirokaštër
2 nights · day 3–4
- 4 Sarandë
2 nights · day 5–6
- 5 Dhërmi
1 night · day 7
- 6 Divjakë
1 night · day 8
- 7 Tirana
1 night · day 9
- ◇ Tirana airport day 1, 10

---> overland, arrow = direction of travel day trip
◇ airport / connection



DAY 3 The stone roofs of Gjirokaštër's old town



DAY 7 Gjipe cove on the Albanian Riviera

My recommended route

This is the route as I put it together for you. It is a starting point, not a fixed programme: leave out what doesn't appeal to you, add what you would like to do and travel at your own pace. Everything below is arranged for you in advance. Prefer a guide at Berat, Gjirokastër or Butrint? I am happy to arrange one, at extra cost.

DAY 1

Arrival and Krujë KRUJË

Flight to Tirana (approx. 2h30). At the airport your rental car is ready, or your private driver is waiting with a name sign. In about 30 minutes you are in Krujë, the mountain town of national hero Skanderbeg: you stroll through the covered old bazaar and up to the castle with the Skanderbeg Museum. You sleep with a view over the castle and the plain.



Krujë Castle with its clock tower

DAY 2

Durrës and Berat BERAT ♦ BREAKFAST

You drive from Krujë to the coast (approx. 1 hour) and have lunch in Durrës, where you visit the Roman amphitheatre, one of the largest in the Balkans, right in the middle of the town. Then you drive on to Berat (approx. 1h45), the 'town of a thousand windows' (UNESCO). You walk through the Mangalem quarter and across the bridge to Gorica, which has the best view of the white Ottoman houses. At sunset you climb to the citadel, where people still live inside the old walls, with the holy mountain Tomorr looking on in the distance.

DAY 3

Gjirokastër, the stone town GJIROKASTËR ♦ BREAKFAST

Drive (approx. 2h45) to Gjirokastër (UNESCO), with lunch at my address on the old market square. In the afternoon you visit the castle high above the town, with its long vaulted galleries and the view over the Drino valley. In the evening you eat traditional food in the old bazaar.

DAY 4

A day in Gjirokastër GJIROKASTËR ♦ BREAKFAST

Today you take your time in the stone town. You visit the Zekate and Skenduli tower houses, the birthplace of writer Ismail Kadare and the secret Cold War tunnel. The afternoon is free to wander the steep lanes and the old bazaar.

DAY 5

The Blue Eye and Sarandë SARANDË ♦ BREAKFAST

On the way to the coast you stop at the Blue Eye (Syri i Kaltër), a spring of clear turquoise water in the middle of the forest. Then you drive on to Sarandë on the Ionian Sea (approx. 1h30 in total). The rest of the day is free: a swim in the sea and in the evening a stroll along the promenade, looking out over Corfu.

DAY 6

Butrint and Ksamil SARANDË ♦ BREAKFAST

In the morning you visit Butrint (UNESCO, approx. 30 minutes' drive), a Greek, Roman and Venetian city in a green nature park on a lagoon. For lunch you drive to Ksamil, where you can eat mussels by the water. In the afternoon you enjoy the white beaches and the little islands off Ksamil.

DAY 7

The Albanian Riviera DHËRMI ♦ BREAKFAST

You follow the Albanian Riviera northwards (approx. 2 hours without stops), with time for the beach of Borsh, the Venetian castle of Porto Palermo on its peninsula and the cove of Gjipe. You sleep in Dhërmi, at the foot of the Llogara Pass, with the afternoon free for the beach of Dhërmi or Drymades.

DAY 8

Llogara, Apollonia and Ardenica DIVJAKË ♦ BREAKFAST

Over the Llogara Pass, with a splendid view of the coast, you drive to Vlorë. Then come Greek and Roman Apollonia and the Byzantine monastery of Ardenica (approx. 3 hours' driving in total). Feel like more? With a detour of about 1 hour you also visit the Illyrian city of Byllis, high above the Vjosa valley. You sleep in Divjakë, close to the coast.

DAY 9

Divjakë-Karavasta and Tirana TIRANA ♦ BREAKFAST

In the morning you walk in Divjakë-Karavasta National Park, with pine forests, dunes and the lagoon where pelicans live. Then you drive to Tirana (approx. 1h30). In the afternoon you explore the capital on foot: Skanderbeg Square with the Et'hem Bey Mosque, the clock tower and the Orthodox cathedral, the Pyramid of Tirana, the old Tanners' Bridge and Avni Rustemi square with the New Bazaar. In Bunk'Art 2, a nuclear bunker close to Skanderbeg Square, you discover how Albania lived under communism.

DAY 10 Flight home ♦ BREAKFAST

A relaxed morning in Tirana, for a last coffee or a visit to the New Bazaar. Then you drive to the airport (approx. 30 minutes), where you return your rental car or your private driver drops you off. Flight home.

What I arrange for you

1 Pickup on arrival

On arrival at Tirana airport your rental car is ready, or your private driver is waiting with a name sign. On the last day you return your rental car at the airport, or your driver drops you at departures.

2 Hotels

Every night is booked and confirmed in advance, at the level you choose: Budget, Comfort or Premium. Prefer another hotel? I change it.

3 Transport

You choose: self-drive with a rental car waiting for you, or a private driver and private transfers. Domestic flights, trains and boats where they make sense, all booked in advance.

4 Activities, at your pace

The activities and entrance tickets on the route. No guide or group travels with you: you set the pace, and anything you would rather skip, you simply leave out.

5 Eat wherever you like

Breakfast is included, as are the meals at remote camps and lodges where there is no alternative. For the rest I give you my restaurant tips, but you are completely free to choose where you eat. I never recommend a place because I earn a commission on it.

Level and transport

Price coming soon – join the interest list to be the first to receive it.

ACCOMMODATION LEVEL	Self-drive	Private driver
	rental car, everything pre-booked	private transfers and driver
Budget simple, clean and well located	price to follow	price to follow
Comfort characterful mid-range	price to follow	price to follow
Premium the best addresses on the ground	price to follow	price to follow
WITH 4 TRAVELLERS	the price per person goes down: you share the car and driver.	
TRAVELLING SOLO	you pay a supplement: you cover the cost of the room and transport alone.	
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT	I'm happy to book your flight for you, or you book it yourself; if I book it, the flight price for your dates is in your personal quote. Flight to Tirana and back, not included. I am happy to book the flight for you, or you book it yourself.	

SELF-DRIVE

Albania is a wonderful country to drive yourself: the main roads are good, the mountain roads spectacular, and you stop wherever you like. You collect your rental car (full insurance with zero excess) at Tirana airport on day 1 and return it there on day 10. Fuel, tolls and parking are paid locally. Do take care on the winding road over the Llogara Pass and with the sometimes impulsive driving style; your roadbook lists a parking place at every hotel.

WITH A PRIVATE DRIVER

A private driver takes you in a comfortable vehicle for the whole trip, from the airport on day 1 to the airport on day 10. He knows the mountain roads, waits during your visits and drops you at the edge of the old town centres. You never have to drive or park and can enjoy the views without a care.

Three accommodation levels

Budget

Well-reviewed family hotels and guesthouses, often with a home-made breakfast, in or near the old centres.

Comfort

Characterful hotels and small boutique hotels in the old centres, with a castle view in Krujë and Gjirokastër.

MY FAVOURITE the hotels in Krujë, Berat, Gjirokastër and Tirana

Premium

The best-reviewed boutique and four-star hotels on the route, with a spa, pool or view. In Divjakë you stay in the Comfort hotel: there is no better address there.

Possible guided moments

Prefer a guide? I can add a local guide to any activity.

- ✦ On this trip you discover everything at your own pace, without a fixed guide: your roadbook tells you what to see where.
- ✦ Optional, at extra cost: a licensed local guide at Berat (day 2), Gjirokastër (day 3 or 4) or Butrint (day 6). I am happy to arrange one for you.

Ideas to adapt the route

- Add the north (4 extra nights): Shkodër with Rozafa Castle and a boat trip on Lake Shkodër, Theth in the Albanian Alps with the walk to the Blue Eye of Theth, and the ferry across Lake Koman
- Korçë and Lake Ohrid: two extra nights, with lunch in Pogradec on the lake, the old bazaar of Korçë (with a guesthouse I chose myself) and the drive past Mount Tomorr to Berat; or across the border to Ohrid and St Naum in North Macedonia
- Add Kosovo, after the north: take the ferry across Lake Koman to Fierza and drive on to Prizren, the most beautiful Ottoman town in Kosovo
- Longer: extra beach days on the Riviera
- Adventure: a 4x4 trip to the summit of Mount Tomorr or a rafting trip in the Osum canyon
- More sea: a night in Orikum on the bay of Vlorë, or an extra beach night in Ksamil
- Combination: self-drive, with a private driver for the longest drives

Included

- ✓ 9 nights at the level you choose (Budget, Comfort or Premium): guesthouses, family hotels and boutique hotels (double room, breakfast and tourist tax included)
- ✓ Your choice: rental car from Tirana airport (days 1–10, full insurance with zero excess; fuel, tolls and parking are paid locally) or private driver with a comfortable vehicle who meets you at the airport on day 1 and takes you back on day 10
- ✓ All listed entrance fees: Krujë, Durrës, Berat, Gjirokastër, Butrint, the Blue Eye, Porto Palermo, Apollonia, Ardenica and Bunk'Art 2
- ✓ Detailed roadbook with routes, car parks and my favourite restaurants

Not included

- Flights to and from Tirana: I am happy to book the flight for you, or you book it yourself
- Meals other than breakfast, and drinks (allow approx. €25–40 pp per day; my restaurant tips are in your roadbook)
- Tips
- Travel and cancellation insurance (with medical cover: Albania is not an EU country)
- Optional activities and personal expenses, such as a private guide or a 4x4 trip to the summit of Mount Tomorr
- When self-driving: fuel, tolls and parking (paid locally)
- When self-driving: credit-card deposit for the rental car and any traffic fines

Practical information

VISA (BELGIAN CITIZENS)

No visa required. Your Belgian identity card (eID) or passport gets you into Albania; a passport is handy if your eID was ever reported lost.

HEALTH

No vaccinations required. The European Health Insurance Card is not valid here: take travel insurance with medical cover. Good walking shoes for the cobbled castle lanes; summer is warm on the coast and in the towns.

CURRENCY & PAYMENT

Albanian lek (ALL); euros are often accepted. Cards are accepted in hotels and larger restaurants; bring cash for small restaurants, car parks, entrance fees and the ferry.

FLIGHT TIME FROM BRUSSELS

Approx. 2h30 to 2h50 direct to Tirana.

TIME DIFFERENCE

No time difference.

LANGUAGE

Albanian; English and often Italian in the tourism sector.

MEALS

Breakfast is included every day. For the other meals you get my restaurant recommendations, but you are completely free to choose where and when you eat: I never steer you to expensive restaurants in return for a commission.

GUIDES

By default you travel without a guide. Prefer a guide? I can add a local guide to any activity.

As of September 2026: check diplomatie.belgium.be (travel advice) and wanda.be (health) before you travel.

Travelling responsibly

I recommend May, June, September and October, outside the busy summer on the coast. You stay in family-run guesthouses and small locally owned hotels, and eat at small restaurants with regional produce. In the old town centres you walk. Albania is a short flight from Belgium; CO₂ offsetting is available.



Steennot Travels

Contact

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Personally composed, down to the last detail.

No group travel and no fixed dates: you travel privately, at your own pace. Leave out what doesn't appeal to you, add what you like. I give you my restaurant tips, but you choose freely where you eat: nobody sends you to expensive restaurants for a commission.

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COVER Mangalem quarter, Berat · Photo: Avi1111 dr. avishai teicher · CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Berat,_Mangalem_quarter,_Albania.JPG · *cropped, resized*

DAY 1 Krujë Castle with its clock tower · Photo: AgronBeqiriPh · CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Kalaja_e_Krujes_8.jpg · *cropped, resized*

PRICE

Price coming soon – join the interest list to be the first to receive it.

Interested? Join the no-obligation list at steennot-travels.be or email info@steennot-travels.be. Other dates, more or fewer days, something left out or added? Everything can be adapted.

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DAY 3 The stone roofs of Gjirokastër's old town · Photo: Pudelek · CC BY-SA 4.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gjirokastër_-_roofs.JPG · *cropped, resized*

DAY 7 Gjipe cove on the Albanian Riviera · Photo: Pudelek · CC BY-SA 3.0 (creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/) · commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Gjipe_beach,_Albania.JPG · *cropped, resized, recompressed*