GEEO ITINERARY

Albania 7/25/2027

Day 1: Tirana Arrive in Tirana at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m. Take an orientation walk before an optional group dinner.

Arrive at any time. There are no planned activities until the Welcome Meeting in the evening. The tour starts in Tirana, and the nearest airport is **Tirana International Airport (TIA)**.

Consider arriving 1-2 days early to explore the city, adjust to the time zone, and buffer against flight delays. We can book extra hotel nights for you.

Hotel Check-in and Welcome Meeting
Hotel check-in is normally between 2–3 p.m. Check with reception for the exact time and location of the group welcome meeting, typically between 6–7 p.m. Please make every effort to attend this meeting. If you're running late, send a message in the group WhatsApp or call the emergency number on your trip voucher so that your tour leader can let you know where and when to meet the group.

After the meeting, head off on an orientation walk starting at the very center of the city, the Skanderbeg Square, a large open area surrounded by several important sights of Tirana. Walk to the old Tirana neighbourhoods (or what remains of them), where you'll find a mix of communist architecture and recently built modern structures and venues.

Afterwards, you can choose to get dinner at a restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another.

> **Joining Instructions**
> When you arrive at the airport, you can either take a taxi or an airport shuttle, which is located outside of the arrivals terminal and goes to Skanderbeg Sqaure, which is the central square of Tirana. Another option is booking a transfer through HolidayTaxis.

Day 2: Tirana/Vlorë Drive east from Tirana to the 3000-year-old Roman ruins of Durrës, including its 20,000-seat amphitheater. Continue south to Vlorë for an old-town walk, visiting the Muradie Mosque and other landmarks. Evening free to relax and watch the Adriatic sunset.

Drive east from Tirana this morning to the coast, and explore Durrës, the most ancient city in Albania with almost 3,000 years of history. Its foundation dates back to 627 B.C. when the Corinthians and settlers from Corcyra invaded the Illyrian territory of the Taulants. The Durrës amphitheater is the largest and most important Roman amphitheater in Albania. Built in the 2nd century AD under Emperor Trajan, it once accommodated up to 20,000 people for various spectating events, including gladiator fights and other ancient games. The amphitheater was discovered in 1966 and is now one of the best ways to experience the city's ancient history.

In the afternoon, continue south to the city of Vlorë and set off on an orientation tour of Vlorë's Old Town. The Muradie Mosque (or Lead Mosque) is one of the most important structures in Vlorë. Built in 1537 by Ottoman Turkish architect Mimar Sinan, it is distinctive for its exceptional brickwork. Vlorë looks west over the Adriatic, making it a perfect spot for watching the sunset as well.

Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast

Day 3: Vlorë From Tragjas, hike up to a mountain shepherd outpost, meet locals, and learn about traditional life over a traditional lunch. Hike back down and return to Vlorë, with the rest of the day free to explore or relax

Immerse yourself in Albanian culture today on a hike to a shepherd outpost in the mountains. We'll go to the old Tragjas farm of Sofo and Dhurata. Then, hike a short trail of approximately 3km with an elevation gain of around 280m to reach the shepherds' outpost, where you can experience the authentic life of the Albanians, their traditions, and life in the mountains, all just a short distance from the sea. Enjoy a traditonal lunch at the farm before hiking back down to the bus to return to Vlorë. The total hike is 5-6 km.

The remainder of the day is free to explore the city or to relax.

Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch

Day 4: Vlorë/Gjirokastër Drive the Albanian Riviera to Gjirokastër, stopping in Himarë for lunch, visiting Ali Pasha's castle at Ksamil, and exploring the UNESCO ruins of Butrint before arriving in the evening.

Travel south along the stunning Albanian Riviera, a drive filled with dramatic mountain and coastal views. Stop first in the seaside town of Himarë, whose roots stretch back to Illyrian times. Explore the atmospheric old town and climb to its hilltop castle for sweeping views of the coast. The lower town, with its seaside promenade, offers the perfect setting for a relaxed stroll and lunch in one of the Mediterranean-style taverns.

Continue to Ksamil, where you'll visit Ali Pasha's Castle, perched at the tip of a rocky peninsula. Built in the early 19th century by the influential Ottoman ruler Ali Pasha of Tepelena—sometimes called the "Muslim Bonaparte"—the fortress features prominently in European literature and history, celebrated by Alexander Dumas and Lord Byron. Its dramatic location makes it one of Albania's most evocative landmarks.

The journey continues to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Butrint, one of the most important archaeological sites in the Balkans. First settled by the Greeks and later expanded by the Romans, Butrint was once a thriving port city on Mediterranean trade routes. Earthquakes and flooding eventually forced its abandonment, leaving behind remarkably preserved ruins hidden beneath centuries of silt. Walk among its temples, theatres, baths, and basilicas, gaining insight into thousands of years of history.

In the evening, drive inland to the "stone city" of Gjirokastër, a UNESCO-listed town known for its Ottoman architecture and hilltop fortress. Upon arrival, check into your hotel and enjoy free time to relax after a day rich with culture, history, and spectacular scenery.

Approximate travel time: 5 hrs by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast

Day 5: Gjirokastër Explore Gjirokastër's old town with visits to the obelisk and castle, then enjoy free time for lunch. In the afternoon, tour a local winery with tastings and a light dinner before returning to the hotel.

Set off with your tour leader to explore Gjirokastër and it's main attractions. See the old town and the stunning historical landmarks like the Skendulaj House, the Obelisk, and Girokastra Castle with it's Weapon Museum that used to be the castle's prison. Afterwards, take some free time to continue exploring and to find some lunch.

In the afternoon, transfer to a local family-run winery for a memorable culinary and cultural experience. Tour the vineyard with an expert guide, learning about native grape varieties and the careful traditions of Albanian winemaking. Enjoy a tasting of both white and red wines, each paired with regionally sourced accompaniments and fresh farm fruits.

The rest of the evening is free after returning to the hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner

Day 6: Gjirokastër/Berat Drive north to Berat, famed for its white Ottoman houses. In the afternoon, explore the castle, 13th-century fortress, and the historic neighborhoods of Mangalem and Gorica. Enjoy free time before a traditional Albanian farewell dinner.

Drive north today to the riverside city of Berat, known for its white Ottoman houses. Take an afternoon tour of the Castle of Berat with its chapels, typical houses, the ancient walls of Antipatrea, and the Orthodox Cathedral with its art collection from 16th-century iconography artist Onufri. Visit the traditional low neighborhoods of Mangalem and Gorica, which gave Berat the nickname “Town of a 1001 Windows.“

The remainder of the day is free to continue exploring before regrouping in the evening for a traditional Albanian meal and farewell dinner.

Approximate travel time: 3 hrs by private vehicle
Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner

Day 7: Berat/Tirana Leave Berat after breakfast for the drive back to Tirana, where the tour ends on arrival at approximately 11 AM. Please do not book onward air travel from Tirana before 2pm.

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If you wish to extend your stay in Tirana, consider requesting post-trip accommodation with us.

Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk.

Meals included: Breakfast

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Where you’ll stay

The hotels listed below reflect the properties expected to be used for this program. Final accommodations are subject to change based on group size, availability, or seasonality. The confirmed start and end hotels are listed on your trip voucher:

Day 1 Tirana (Jul 25): Hotel Idea Signature Tirana

Day 2 Vlorë (Jul 26): Hotel Bologna Vlore

Day 3 Vlorë (Jul 27): Hotel Bologna Vlore

Day 4 Gjirokastër (Jul 28): Hotel Number One

Day 5 Gjirokastër (Jul 29): Hotel Number One

Day 6 Berat (Jul 30): Hotel Kaceli Berat

**__Itinerary Disclaimer__: While it is our intention to adhere to the routes described on our website, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable, to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The information on our website is a general guide to the tour and region, and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.*