

ALBANIA

Three Cities: Tirana, Durrës, and Krujë

Presentation by
Paul Pacter
Collier County Library
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Flag of Albania: Double-headed eagle

- In Albanian, the name of the country is Shqipëria.
- Which means "land of the eagles".

Albania Facts – 1

- **Area:** 11,100 square miles (about the size of Maryland).
- **Population:** 3,047,000 (est. 2017) (declining slightly each year since 1989 – emigration).
- **Median age:** 33.
- **Literacy:** 98% (men and women same).

Albania Facts – 2

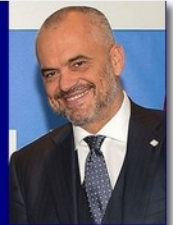
- **Capital:** Tirana.
- **Language:** Albanian.
- **National Holiday:** Nov 28 – celebrate independence from Ottoman Empire Nov 28, 1912.
- **Drive:** Right.

Albania Facts – 3

- **Government:** Parliamentary constitutional republic.
- **National government has all powers** except those expressly given to localities.
- **Unicameral Parliament ("Assembly"):** 140 elected members.
- **President:** Ilir Mehta (since 2007). Elected by Assembly. 5-year term. Largely ceremonial.
- **Prime Minister:** Nominated by Assembly majority party. Appointed by President.



Edi Rama Socialist Prime Minister of Albania since 2013 Election Fraud?



Albania protests: Petrol bombs hurled at PM's office

Thousands of Albanians have been protesting against Prime Minister Edi Rama, with some throwing petrol bombs at his office.

For the last three months, there have been anti-government demonstrations in Albania. Mr Rama faces allegations of electoral fraud and corruption.

Opposition leader Lulzim Basha urged crowds to continue protests until Mr Rama steps down from power.



May 2019

Albania Facts – 4

- **Ethnic groups:** Sensitive issue. Government says 97% are Albanian. Minorities (Greeks, Macedonians, Serbs etc) say they are about 15%.
- **Religion:**
 - Muslim: 59%.
 - Roman Catholic: 10%.
 - Orthodox: 7%.
 - Others or none: 26%.

1967-1990: All religion is outlawed. All 2,169 churches and mosques closed!

Albania Facts – 5

- **Economy:** #1 is Agriculture – employs 41% of population. Fruit, vegetables, dairy, meat.
- **Currency:** Lek 110 = US\$1.
- **Unemployment:**
 - Overall 14%.
 - Youth (17-24): 40%.



Albania Facts – 6

- **EU Membership:** No, but is a candidate since 2014.
- **NATO membership:** Yes since 2009.
- **Location:** Balkan Peninsula.
- **Albania's largest trading partners:** Italy, Greece, China, Spain, Kosovo, and the United States.

Albania History - 1

- 167 BC to 395 AD: Roman.
- 395 to 1100s: Byzantine (eastern Roman). Christianity.
- 1200s-1400s: Independent kingdom. Christianity.
- 1480-1912: Ruled by Ottoman Empire. Islam.

Albania History - 2

- 1912 Independence from the Ottoman Empire. Became Principality of Albania.
- 1925 Albanian Republic (1st republic).
- 1928 Albanian Kingdom.
- 1939 Italy invaded Albania. King of Italy rules until 1945.

Albania History - 3

- 1946 People's Republic of Albania (2nd republic). Aligned with Soviet Union. Monarchy annulled.
- 1946 to 1985 Enver Hoxha led Albania as Communist Party First Secretary and head of state. At times also foreign minister and defense minister.

Albania History - 4 Enver Hoxha



Albania History - 5 Enver Hoxha



Fall of Communism. Dec 11, 1990 Hoxha statue toppled in Tirana's main square.



The Guardian story about Hoxha June 28, 2019:

"He had most of his close associates from the early years shot, and also had thousands of real and imagined political enemies among the rest of the population executed, imprisoned or exiled to closed-off settlements from which they were forbidden to leave."

"There is still no proper monument in Tirana to Hoxha's victims."

Albania History - 7

Enver Hoxha - Positives:

- Rebuilt economy in ruins after WW2.
- Raised literacy from 5% to 98%.
- Agricultural self sufficiency.
- Built railway line.

Enver Hoxha Negatives:

- Brutal dictator.
- Forced labor camps and slaughter of non-communists.
- Poverty and other failures of socialist economic policies.

Albania History

I have not collected stamps for over half a century, but it is still true: You can learn a lot of history just from stamps...



Albanian Stamps



1945

1939 Italy invades Albania.



1945

King Victor Emmanuel III proclaims himself King of Albania.



Hoxha 1949

January 1946 Communists take control of Albania.



Hoxha 1951

Enver Hoxha 1st Secretary (head of state). Until his death 1985.



Hoxha 1951

Until his death 1985.

Celebration of Communism



1957

"People's Republic of Albania".



1963

Just "Albania" (Shqipëria).



1967



1968

60th birthday of Enver Hoxha.



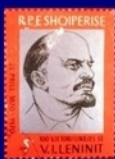
1969

Mao Zedong



1969

Karl Marx



1970 Albanian Stamps



Lenin

1974



1973 Mao Zedong

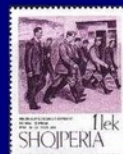


Enver Hoxha Stamps

1974



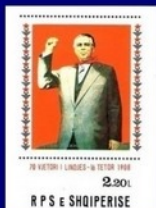
1977



1974



1976



1978 Enver Hoxha 70th Birthday



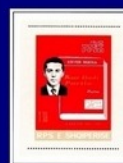
Hoxha and Stalin

1979



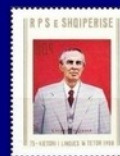
1980

Enver Hoxha Stamps



1981

Celebrate publication of Hoxha memoirs



1983 75th Birthday

Enver Hoxha Stamps



1984

40th Anniversary of socialism in Albania

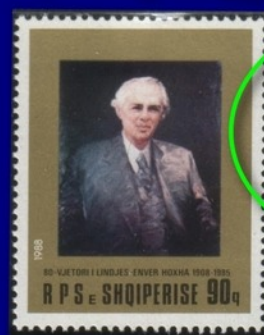


1985

Death of Enver Hoxha April 11, 1985

80th anniversary of Hoxha birth. Opening of Enver Hoxha museum.

Keep this stamp in mind...



1988

A few recent Albanian stamps



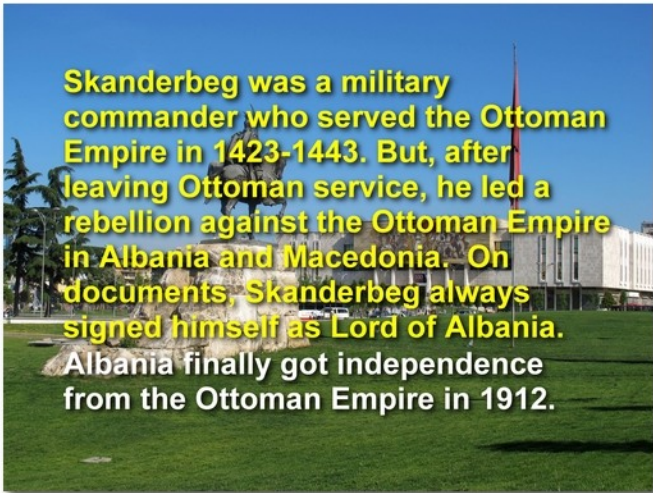
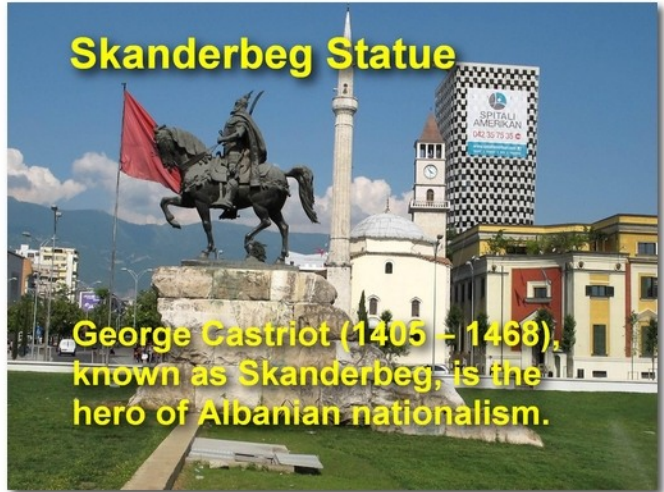
1997



2000

1999: In response to Serb attacks on ethnic Muslim Albanians in Kosovo, NATO launches an air war on Yugoslavia on March 25, 1999.

- The war turns Albania into a NATO base of operations.
- By May 1999, 500,000 Kosovan refugees have flooded into Albania.





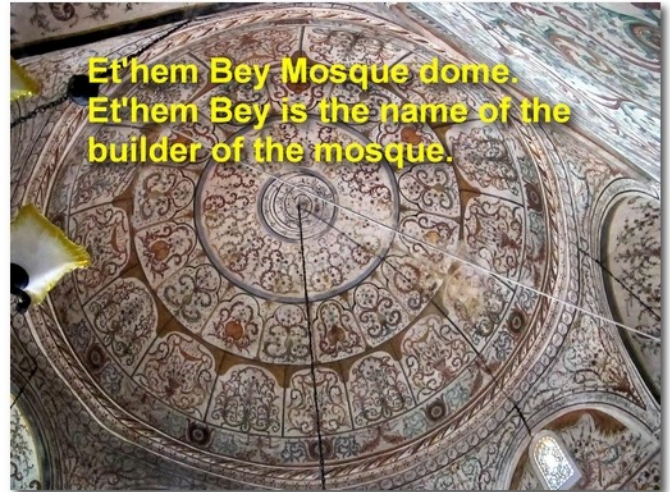
Et'hem Bey Mosque interior
Visitors are welcome.



Et'hem Bey Mosque interior



Et'hem Bey Mosque interior



Et'hem Bey Mosque dome.
Et'hem Bey is the name of the builder of the mosque.



Prime Minister's Office
Prime Minister is appointed by the President. Prime Minister is head of government (like a chief operating officer).



Prime Minister's Office
1941



Albania Government Ministry Building



Tirana City Hall

Gov't. Ministry

Skanderbeg Sq.



Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

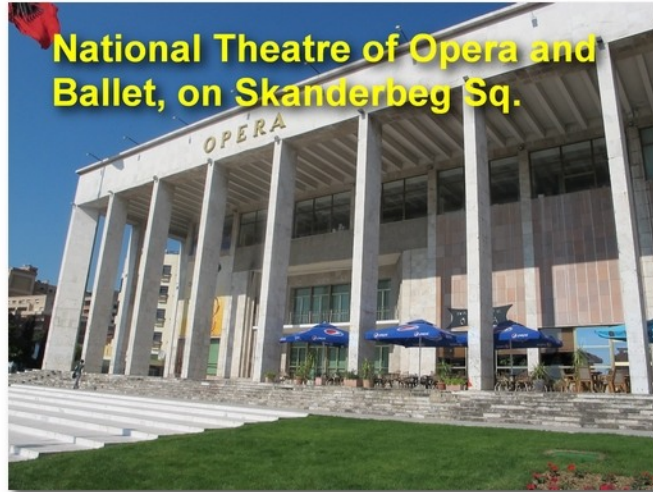


Council of Ministers Offices



National Theatre of Opera and Ballet - 1953 (aka Palace of Culture)

On Skanderbeg Square



National Theatre of Opera and Ballet, on Skanderbeg Sq.

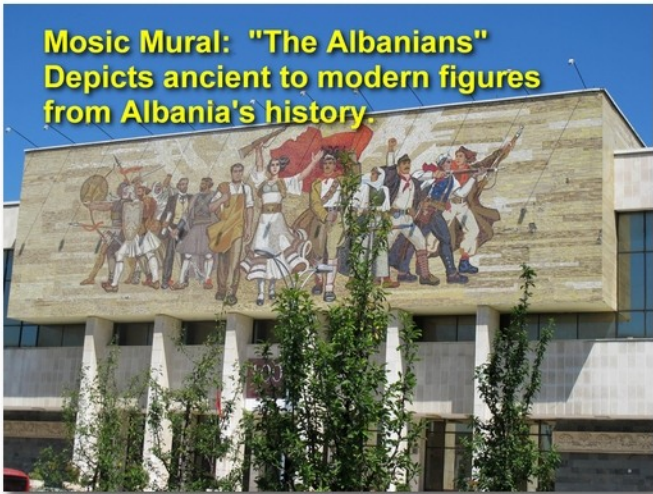


Opera House today

Palace of Culture early 1970s - Enver Hoxha rally



National Museum of History - 1981 On Skanderbeg Square



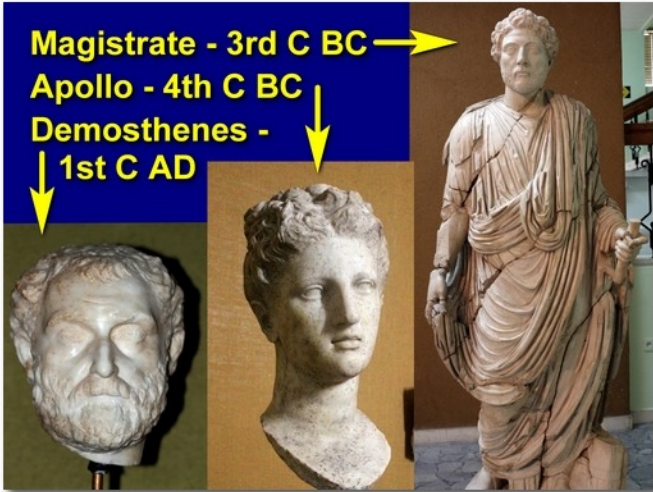
Mosaic Mural: "The Albanians" Depicts ancient to modern figures from Albania's history.



National Museum of History Exhibit Halls:

- Antiquity.
- Middle Ages.
- Renaissance.
- Independence.
- Iconography.
- National Liberation
- Antifascist War.
- Communist Terror.
- Mother Teresa.

Note: Photos are from the Internet due to restrictions



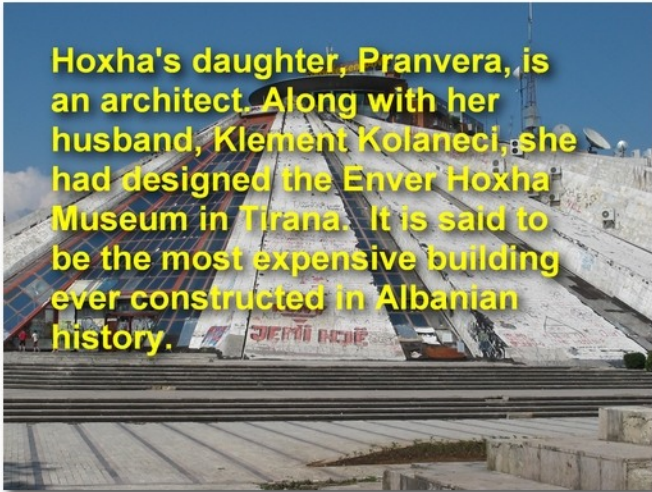
**A few minutes ago we looked at this 1988 stamp of the Hoxha Museum...
Opening of Enver Hoxha museum.**



...well, with the fall of Communism and the democratization of Albania, the Hoxha Museum has been abandoned!



Hoxha's daughter, Pranvera, is an architect. Along with her husband, Klement Kolaneci, she had designed the Enver Hoxha Museum in Tirana. It is said to be the most expensive building ever constructed in Albanian history.

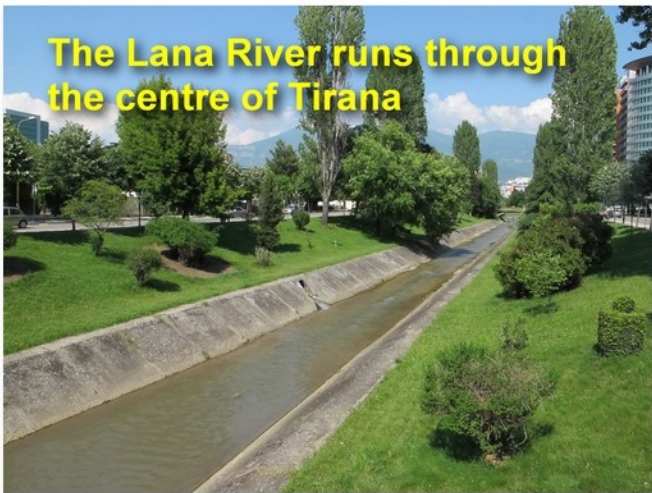


The Hoxha Pyramid is in sad condition today.

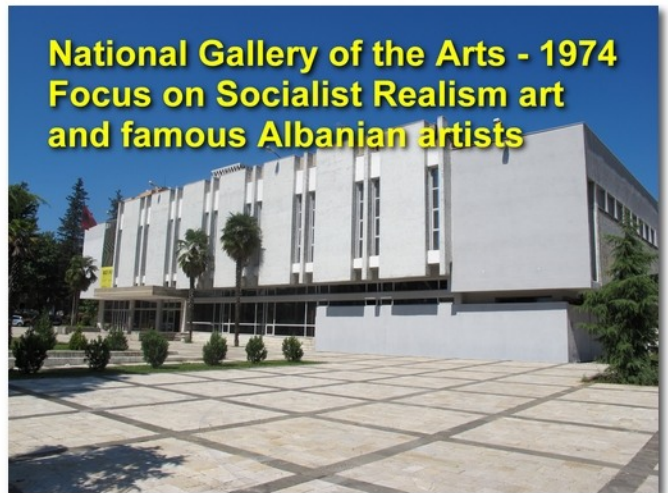
**Symbolic: Most Albanians today reject the Communist era.
Will be renovated into an I.T. education center.**



The Lana River runs through the centre of Tirana



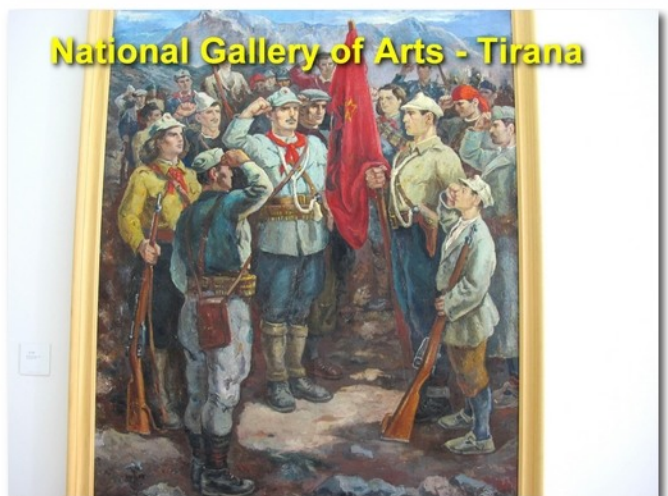
**National Gallery of the Arts - 1974
Focus on Socialist Realism art and famous Albanian artists**



**National Gallery of Arts
Skanderbeg**



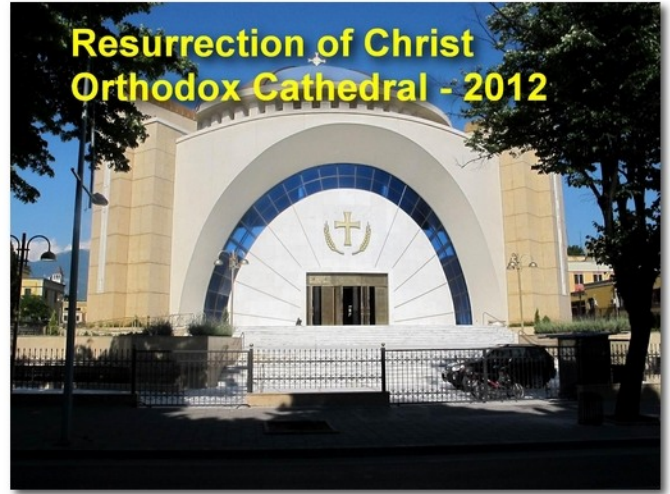
National Gallery of Arts - Tirana



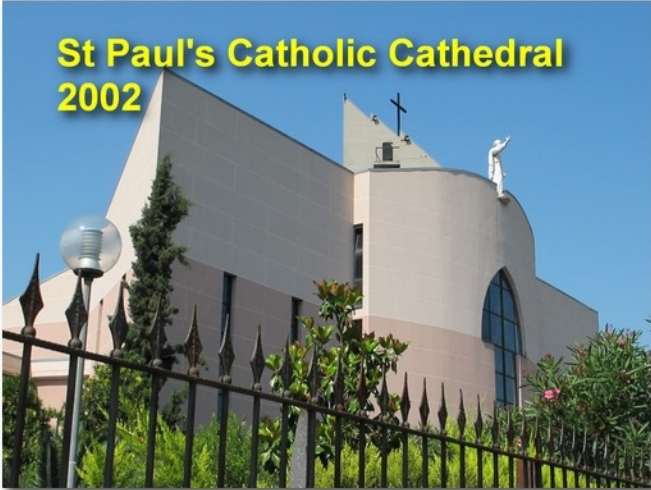
**National Gallery of Arts
Soviet era
sculptures**



**Resurrection of Christ
Orthodox Cathedral - 2012**



**St Paul's Catholic Cathedral
2002**



**New "Great Mosque of Tirana"
Under construction, funded by
Turkey, much resentment by
Albanians including Albanian Muslims.
\$35 million.
5,000 worshippers.
Open 2019.**



Office and Shopping Complex



Tirana International Hotel

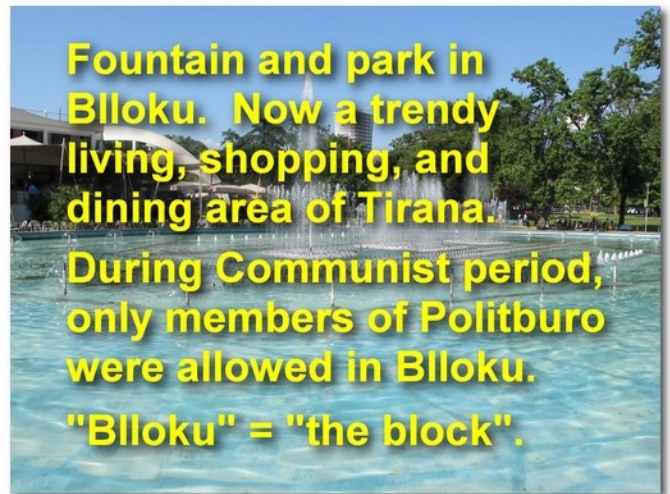


**Newsstand - Notice the
Security**



**Fountain and park in
Blloku. Now a trendy living,
shopping, and dining area of Tirana.**

**During Communist period,
only members of Politburo
were allowed in Blloku.
"Blloku" = "the block".**





Blloku Park



**Casino and Shopping
Blloku**



Restaurant in Blloku



Apartments in Blloku



**Newer apartments in
Blloku**



Blloku restaurant and bar



Trendy Blloku



Blloku



**USAID
Office
in
Blloku**

USAID | ALBANIA
PROGRAMI PËR FORCIMIN
E SISTEMIT TË DREJTËSISË NË SHQIPËRI
JUST
ALBANIAN JUSTICE SECTOR
STRENGTHENING PROJECT
KATI 3 FLOOR 3

USAID | FSVC | MEGA
Programi i Zhvillimit të Sektorit Financiar
Financial Sector Development Program



**Tirana University
Largest in Albania**

35,000 students



Tirana University



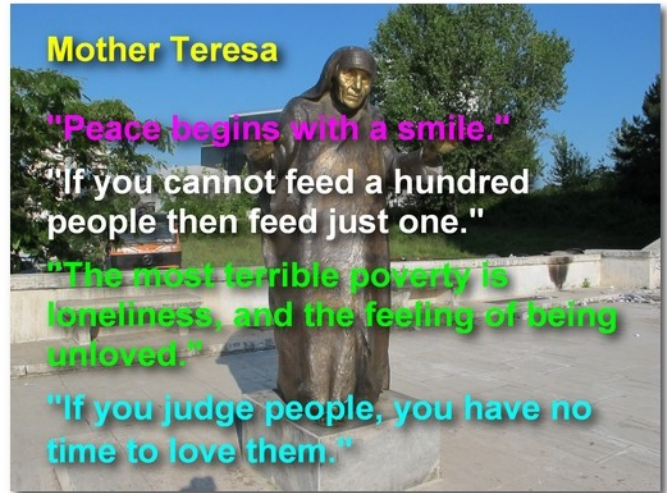
On Tirana University Campus

FAST FOOD · PIZZERIA
Pizzeria
UNIVERSITETI
Byrek = filled phyllo pastry
Meat
Cheese
Spinach
Pizza boat
Pizza
Calzone
Kebab
Pastry
Ham
Pie
Sandwich



Mother Teresa - 1910-1997
She was Albanian
St Teresa of Calcutta (2016)
Nobel Peace Prize 1979

**Albanian Name:
Anjezë Gonxhe Bojaxhiu**



Mother Teresa

"Peace begins with a smile."

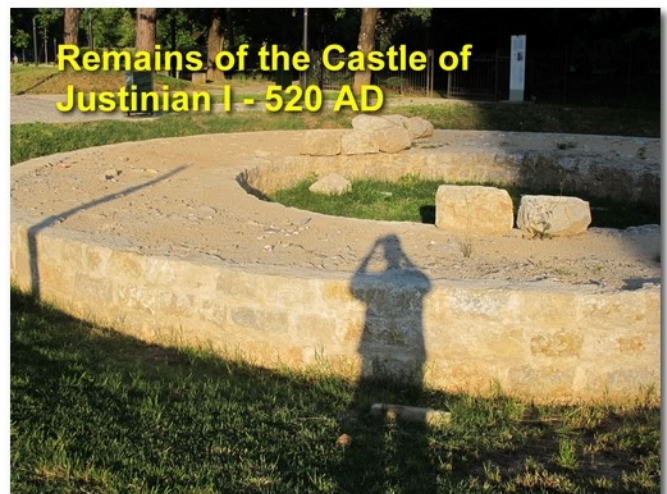
"If you cannot feed a hundred people then feed just one."

"The most terrible poverty is loneliness, and the feeling of being unloved."

"If you judge people, you have no time to love them."



**Walls of the Castle of Justinian I
520 AD**



**Remains of the Castle of
Justinian I - 520 AD**

Antique Car Rally - Tirana



Antique Car Rally - Tirana



George W Bush is the only US President to have visited Albania

**RRUGA
GEORGE W. BUSH**

**Received a hero's welcome
in 2007.**

George W Bush Road, Tirana



**Government Office for the
"intergration of former political
persecutors"**



**Albania
National Library**

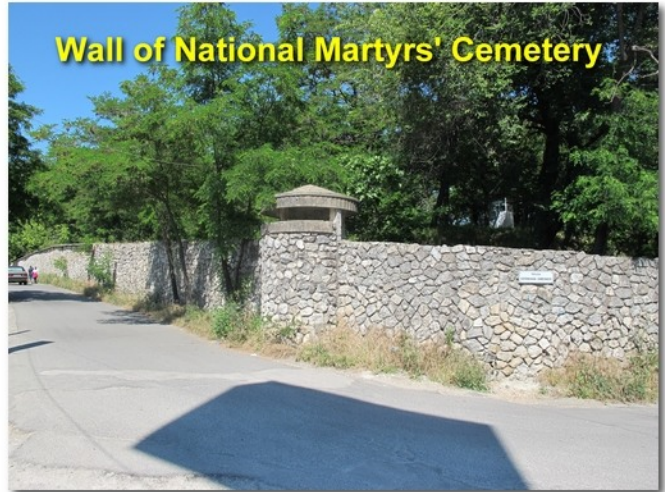
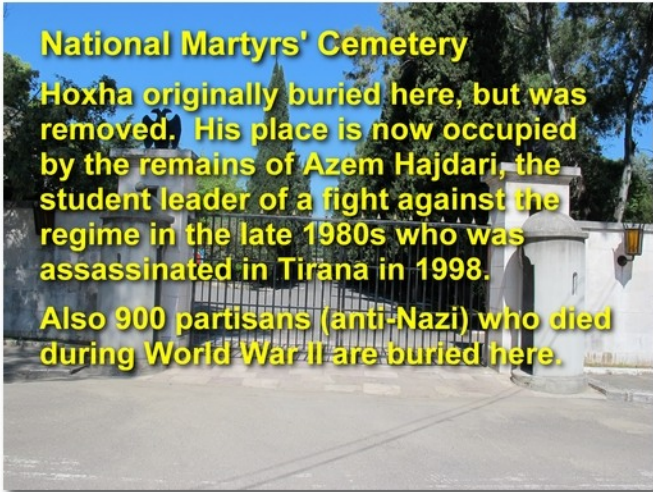


**Painting buildings in bright and bold colors.
An initiative of the current prime-minister Edi Rama,
while he was Tirana's mayor 2000-2011.
Brighten up 50 years of neglect under Communism.**



Soviet-era buildings brightened up





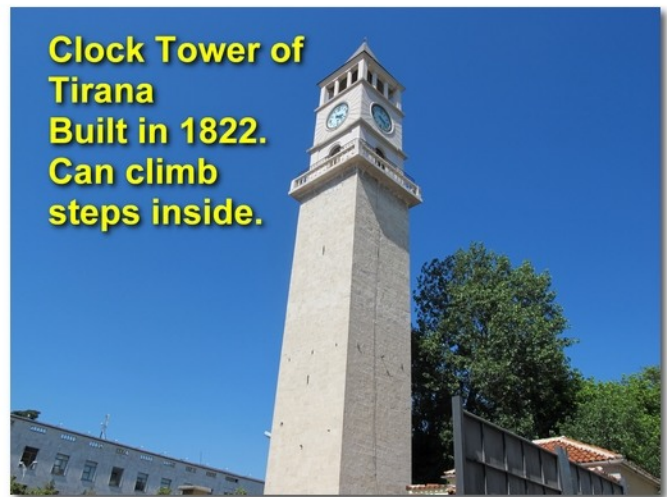


Driving in Albania: From "Tirana in Your Pocket": "The local drivers [are] among the worst imaginable, with road fatality figures some of the highest in Europe. Disrespectful of the law and seemingly unaware that pedestrians are soft and break easily, the quintessential Albanian motorist is easily distracted, oblivious to speed limits, and would rather undergo torture than wear a seatbelt. Before 1991, only Party officials were allowed to own and drive cars, of which there were only about 600 in the entire country. Since then, vehicle numbers have ballooned out of all proportions relative to the state of the roads. If you're a pedestrian remember that to the average Albanian a zebra crossing is just some lines painted in the road."





Albanian National Theatre



**Clock Tower of Tirana
Built in 1822.
Can climb steps inside.**



2010 restoration of clock tower was funded by United States

The restoration of Tirana's Clock-tower was funded by the people of the United States of America, through the Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation, by Albanian Ministry of Culture, and by -Bjola- Co, in cooperation with the Municipality of Tirana - February 11th 2010



Avni Rustemi was Albanian patriot and militant.

In 1920 he assassinated a military leader who was plotting to overthrow the government of the newly independent Albania. Rustemi himself was assassinated in 1924.

AVNI RUSTEMI
HERO I POPULLIT
1895 - 1924



Old building near the City Market



**Pazari i Ri
Central Market**

Merentino is the local brand of cookies, crackers, and chips



Pazari i Ri (Central Market)

Fish Meat Fish Bakery



Peshk (Fish) Shop



Pazari i Ri (Central Market)



Lek 110 = US\$ 1
Presumably these prices are for one kilo (2.2 pounds)



Pazari i Ri
Literally: New Bazaar (Market)



Pazari i Ri (Central Market)
Roasted chickens



Pazari i Ri (Central Market) Olives



Pazari i Ri (Central Market)
Not only food...



Cheese Shop
Dhie = Goat
Dele = Ewe (sheep)
Lope = Cow



Cheese (Djath) Shop
Permeti, Tepelene, and Gjirokastra are famous cheese-making areas in Albania

Me →

Older buildings in Tirana



Older buildings in Tirana



Older buildings in Tirana



Street Market



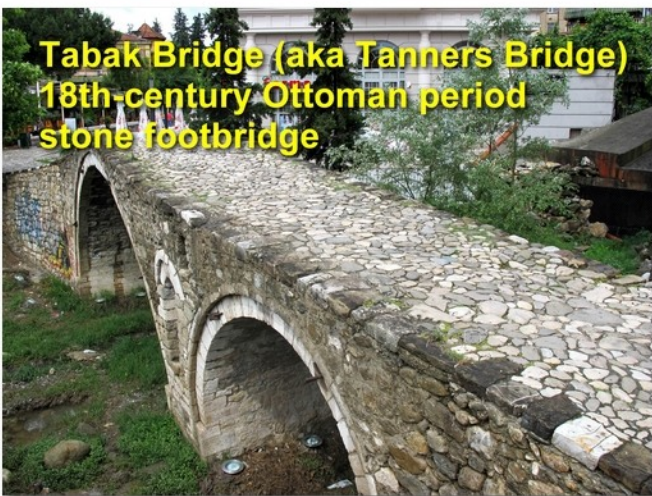
Street Market



Notice the street sweeper's broom

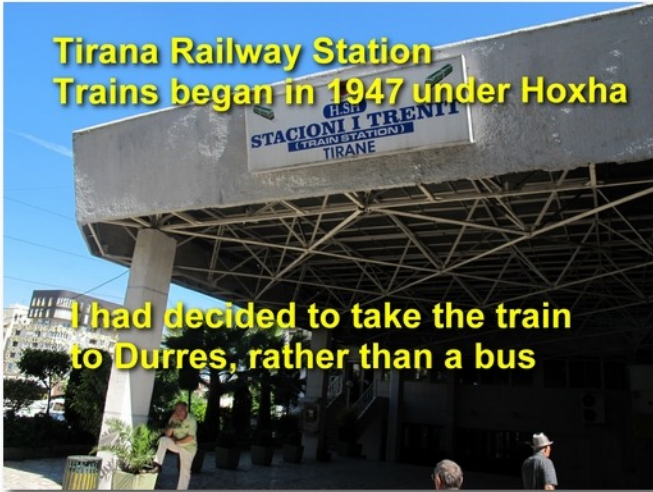


**Tabak Bridge (aka Tanners Bridge)
18th-century Ottoman period
stone footbridge**



Tabak Bridge - 18th-century





Tirana Railway Station
Trains began in 1947 under Hoxha

I had decided to take the train to Durres, rather than a bus



The entire Albanian train schedule

Buy ticket on the train



Obvious lack of maintenance.
Carriages bought second-hand from East Germany.

My Train



Notice the windows on the train carriages

Albanian Railway System
Number of passengers per year:
1994 (peak): 4,022,000
2013: 329,000



Czech-built locomotive 1978

Albanian Railway system
Passenger Kilometers (PAX x KM):
1993: 223,000,000
2013: 12,000,000



My train - exterior looks rough...

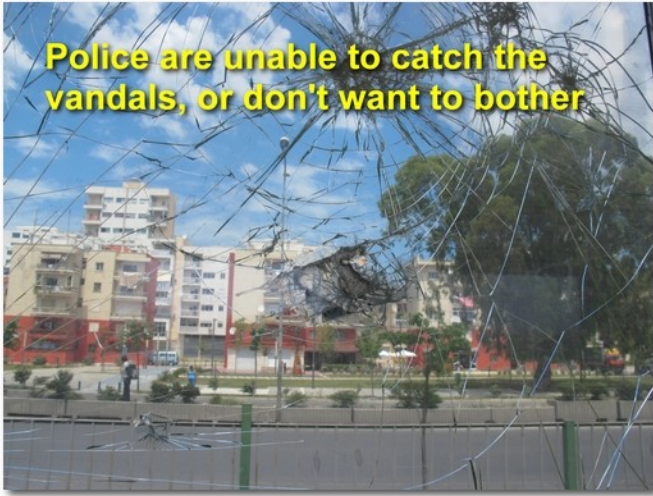


...interior surprisingly well maintained, but few customers.



Vandals pelt the train with rocks as it moves along the tracks!

Police are unable to catch the vandals, or don't want to bother



Just about every window in every car



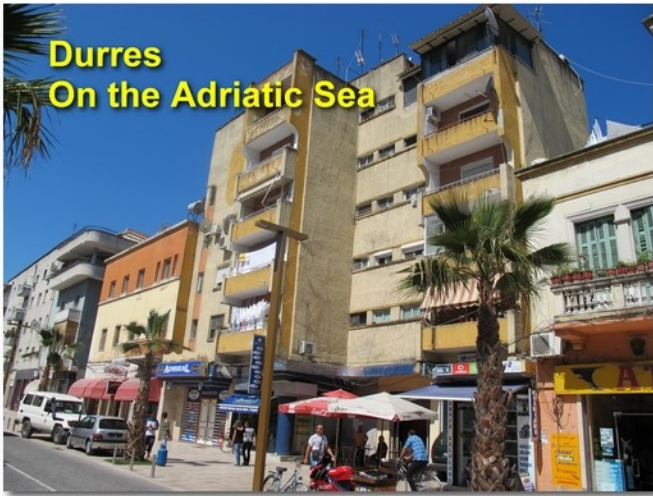
So cannot get a clear picture of the lovely countryside



Durres - 2nd largest city in Albania (pop. 210,000). Was once the capital of Albania.



**Durres
On the Adriatic Sea**



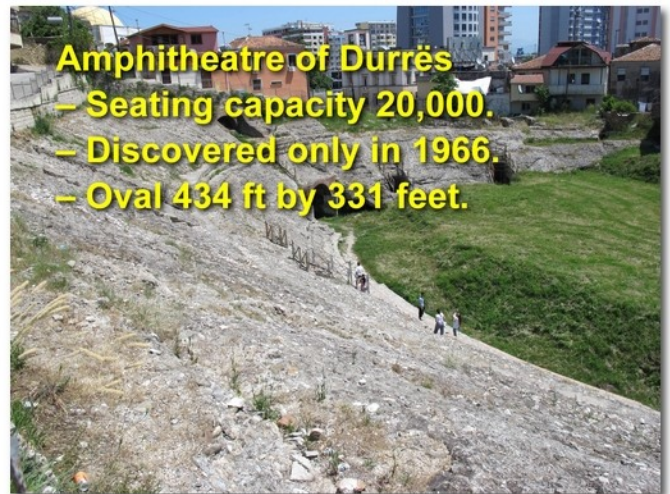
**Durres, Albania
West of Tirana
one hour by train.**

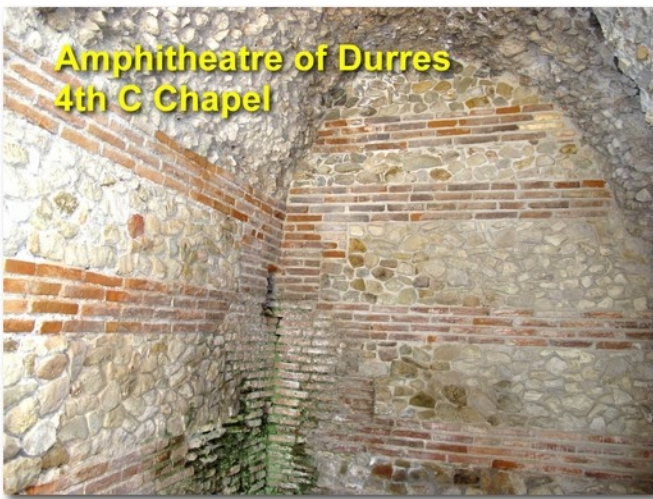


**Amphitheatre of Durrës
2nd century AD**

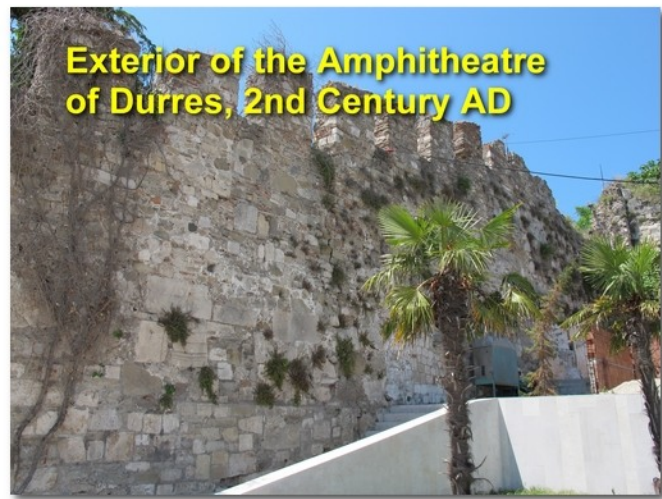


**Amphitheatre of Durrës
– Seating capacity 20,000.
– Discovered only in 1966.
– Oval 434 ft by 331 feet.**





**Amphitheatre of Durres
4th C Chapel**



**Exterior of the Amphitheatre
of Durres, 2nd Century AD**



Durres Communist era buildings



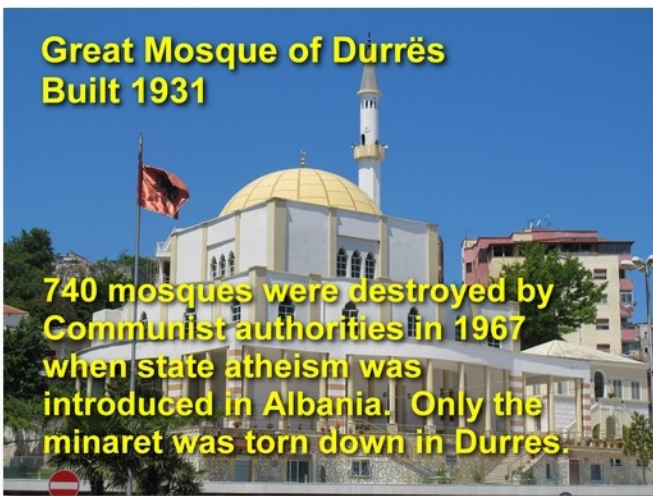
Durres Communist-era buildings



Outdoor Obituaries in Albania



**Margarita Lek 350-450
Salami Lek100=US\$1 Size??
Proscuitto
Mushroom
Prosc. & Salami
Prosc. & Mushroom
Mixed
Vegetarian
Spicy**



**Great Mosque of Durrës
Built 1931**

**740 mosques were destroyed by
Communist authorities in 1967
when state atheism was
introduced in Albania. Only the
minaret was torn down in Durres.**

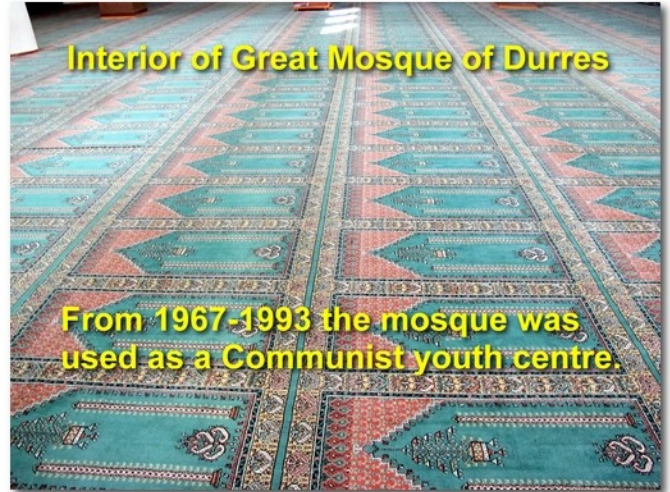


**Great Mosque of Durrës - 1931*
Closed by Hoxha 1967
Reopened 1993**

*** Sign says 1938
Wikipedia says 1931**



Interior of Great Mosque of Durres



Interior of Great Mosque of Durres

From 1967-1993 the mosque was used as a Communist youth centre.



Durres Cultural Centre

More obituaries

Dyrrachium is the old name for Durres



Saint Lucia Co-cathedral
Roman Catholic
Durres
1868?



Train back to Tirana
Second-hand Italian coaches
1959



Windows cracked, as before



Arrive Back in Tirana



Bus to Kruje (lovely)

When I bought the bus ticket in Tirana they did not tell me that the bus leaves you on a remote highway where you need to buy a mini-bus ticket to historic Kruje. I followed the crowd.



Albanian countryside on the way to Kruje



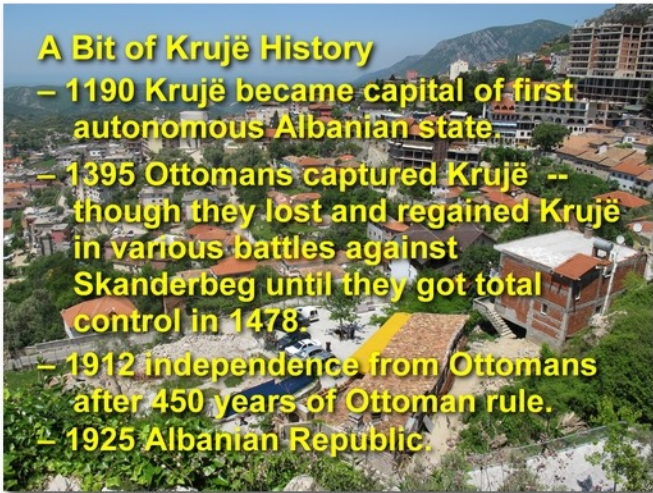
Kruje - Historic town Home of Gjergj Skanderbeg Altitude 2,000+ feet

Main sights:

- Castle (1190).
- Walls and Watch Tower.
- Skanderbeg Museum (inside the castle).
- Bazaar (17th c).

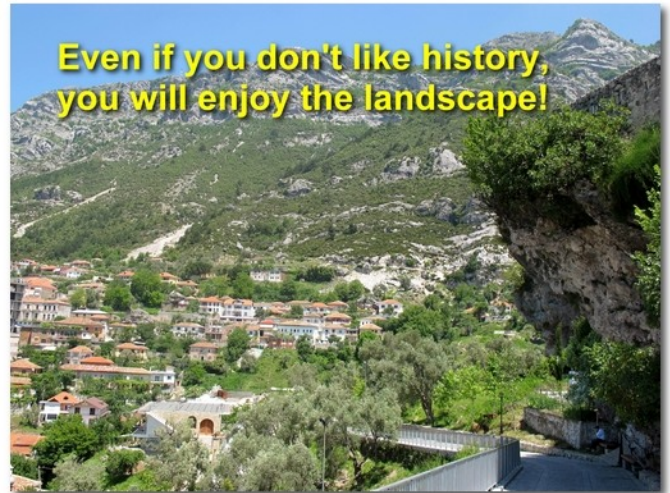


Krujë is set on a hillside > 2,000 foot altitude

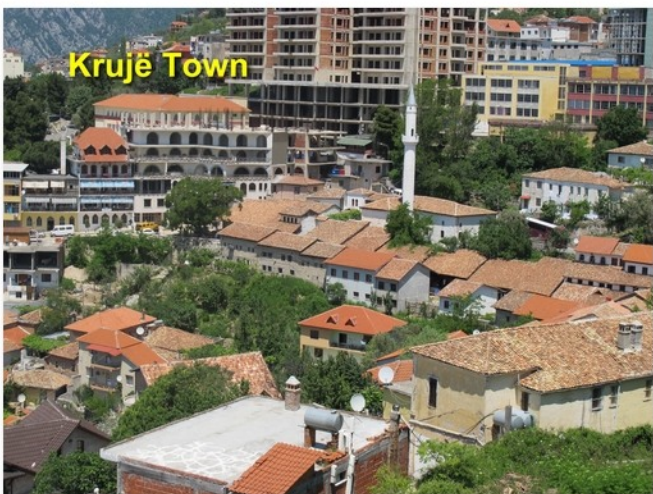


A Bit of Krujë History

- 1190 Krujë became capital of first autonomous Albanian state
- 1395 Ottomans captured Krujë -- though they lost and regained Krujë in various battles against Skanderbeg until they got total control in 1478.
- 1912 independence from Ottomans after 450 years of Ottoman rule.
- 1925 Albanian Republic.



Even if you don't like history, you will enjoy the landscape!



Krujë Town



Krujë Town



Kruje Castle
Built 1190
Major restoration 1982



Kruje Castle



Skanderebeg Museum
Part of Kruje Castle

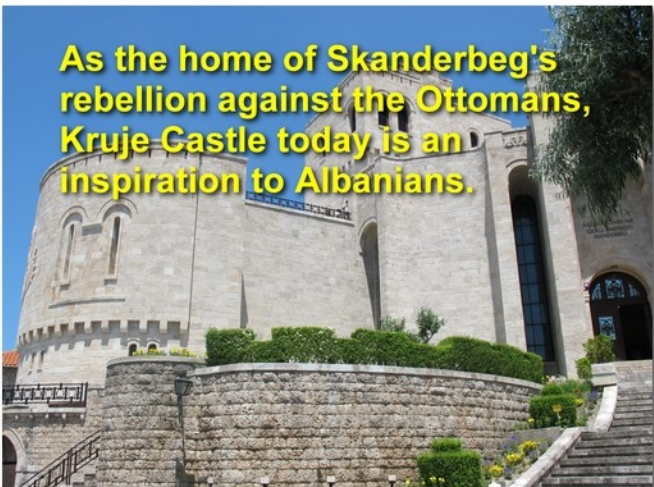


There has been a bazaar (market)
outside Kruje Castle since 17th c



Kruje Castle Bazaar

Traditional Albanian
brimless cap
called Qeleshe
(also Plis)



As the home of Skanderbeg's
rebellion against the Ottomans,
Kruje Castle today is an
inspiration to Albanians.



Skanderbeg and Kruje Castle
are on the 5,000 lek note



Kruje Castle Bazaar



Kruje Castle Bazaar



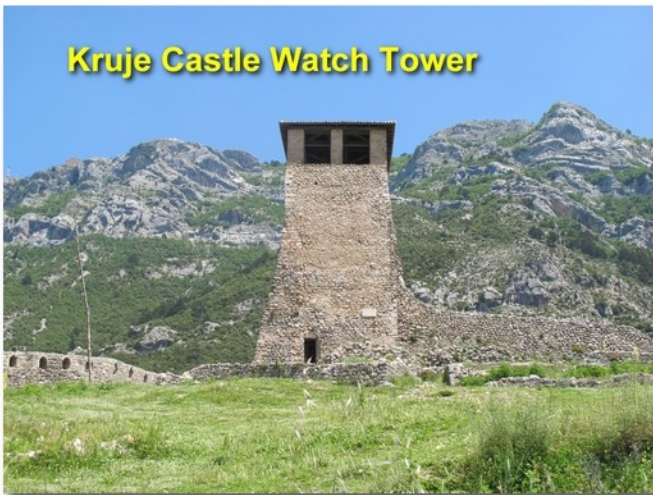
Skanderbeg Museum



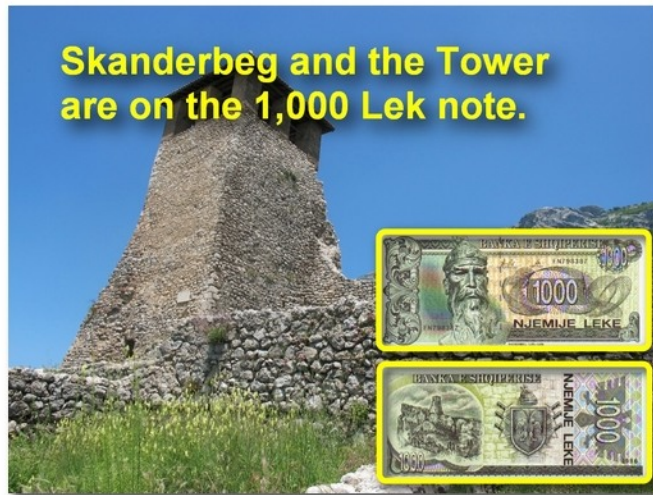
Kruje Castle Fortifications



Kruje Castle Fortifications



Kruje Castle Watch Tower



Skanderbeg and the Tower are on the 1,000 Lek note.



Skanderbeg on Albanian Coins

1926

1968



Skanderbeg Museum

Skanderbeg Museum



Skanderbeg Museum



Main Tower of Kruje Castle - 1190



Remains of the Fatih Sultan Mehmed Mosque - 1481



Remains of the Fatih Sultan Mehmed Mosque - 1481



Kruje Castle Bazaar



Kruje Castle Bazaar



Downhill Walk to Kruje Town





Kruje Town
Also spelled
Kruja



Kruje Town



Kruje Town is a tourist centre



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town

**Argjendar
= Jeweler**



Kruje Town
Souvenirs -- yes
Antiques -- probably not.



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town



Kruje Town

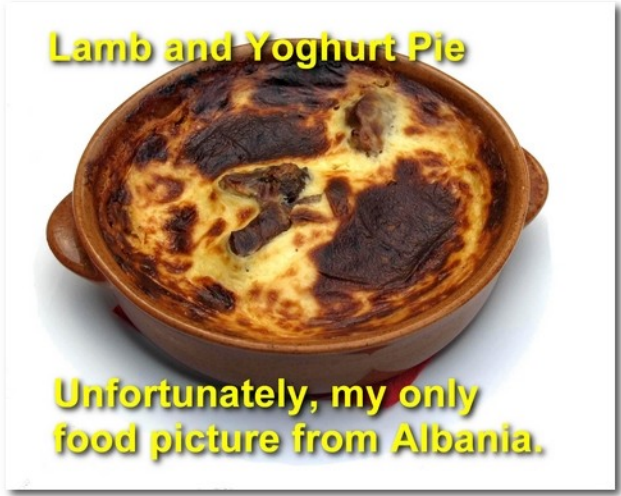


No need for big bus back to Tirana. These furgons (shared taxis) are Lek 200 (US\$2) 40km to Skanderbeg Square.

Of course you may wait 10-15 minutes until they get someone to fill each seat.



Statue of Xorxh W Bush in Kruje



Lamb and Yoghurt Pie

Unfortunately, my only food picture from Albania.



**Thanks for Joining
Our Visit to Albania.**

THE END

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