

Spring Edition - Issue nr.1 - USA

travel

Albania

MAGAZINE

ADRIATIK TOURS LLC

**INTRODUCING
ALBANIA**

**AS A NEW
DESTINATION**

IN EUROPE





Welcome to Paradise Durrës, Albania

5 Star Luxury Resort, totally renovated and refurbished in 2017

Adriatik hotel and resort, open all year round, is our exclusive partner for your accommodation in Albania. Experience the world class quality service in a luxury, Five star Beachfront Resort.

You can book online the best rates only through Adriatik Tours LLC
www.adriatikhotel.com



Where Is Albania Located?

Albania is a European country located in the western part of the Balkan Peninsula.

In Albanian the country is called Shqipëria which means “ the land of eagles ”.

Albania is bordered to the northwest by Kosovo and Montenegro, to the east by the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, to the south by Greece, and to the west by the Adriatic Sea and Italy.

Tirane is the capital of Albania with an estimated population in 2018 of 421,000 inhabitants.

Other major cities are:

Durres, the port and the second largest city, population 113,000.

Elbasan, the agricultural center, Population 78,000.

The ancient city of Shkodër, population 95,000 and the port of Vlorë.

Albania is one of the smallest countries in Europe. It stretches 345 km from north to south and 145 km from west to east. Its total area is 11,100 square miles. The relief of Albania is mountainous with peaks between 2,100 and 2,600 m. To the north, in the Albanian Alps, forming the southern limit of the Alps, stands the highest point in the country, Mount Korab (2,764 m). In the center and in the south of the country, the mountains are interspersed with high plateaus and basins. You will find pristine, sandy and rocky beaches, in over 300 miles of coastline, while sharing the Adriatic Sea with Italy and the Ionian Sea with Greece. Most of the rivers flow from east to west towards the Adriatic Sea. The most important of them Drin, Shkumbin and Mat, have wide valleys.

The three big lakes of the country are Shkodër in the northwest, Ohrid and Préspa in the east, span the borders.



Major airlines connect (TIA) Tirana's International Airport, Mother Theresa, with the rest of the world:

Alitalia through Rome is only 1 hour and 20 minutes flight time.

Turkish Airlines through Istanbul is 1 hour and 15 minutes flight time.

British Airways through London is 3 hours flight time.

Lufthansa through Munich is 1 hour and 30 minutes flight time.

Austrian Airways from Vienna is a 1 hour flight.

Air Serbia through Belgrade is just a 1 hour flight.

Adria Airways through Ljubljana is 1 hour flight time.

Transavia connect Tirana and Paris in 1 hour and 50 minutes time.

Aegean Air through Athens is 1 hour 10 minutes flight time.

Other low cost airlines , connect Tirana to other European cities, like Norwegian, Eurowings, Blu-Express, Ernest Fly, Israir, Albawings, Pegasus, Small Planet Airlines, TUI, etc..



In this issue:

Classical Destinations:

Durrës, 37 km coastline, 2700 years of history

Berat - a 2400 years-old precious package

Saranda, Mediterranean Love

Special Interest Tours:

Albanian Food Tour 2018

Riding horses through the paths
of Medieval Trails



travel²
MAGAZINE *Albania*

Adriatik Tours LLC:

970 Farmington Avenue, Suite 208
West Hartford, Connecticut 06107

Contact:

1-860-936-2216
gm@adriatiktours.com
www.adriatiktours.com

Editor: Blue Agency ©

Partner: Adriatic Tours, LLC

Executive Director, Albania:
Florian Baba

Editor in Chief:
Flora Xhemani Baba

Travel Consultant &
Publisher in the USA:
Nevila Dudaj

Marketing:
Blue Agency &
Adriatik Tours, LLC

Distribution:
Adriatik Tours, LLC



Albania

a destination to discover
in the Mediterranean

ADRIATIK TOURS, LLC, a Travel Agency,
based in West Hartford, Connecticut
& BLUE AGENCY, based in Tirana, Albania,
Are proudly announcing the first publication of
TRAVEL2 ALBANIA Magazine, for the USA and Canada.
This Magazine will be published quarterly, focusing on
Special Tours and Travel to Albania.

You will explore interesting facts about this hidden gem in the
Mediterranean, see our customized tours of cities and places to visit.
We will offer to you, exclusively, our wholesale priced tours and
5 star hotel accommodations, when you book through our Agency.

We are committed to showing you our beautiful country and to
present our readers with a new, wonderful, affordable destination
to discover and a new adventure to follow. We are motivated to
nurture a long term relation between the American traveler, with their
sense of adventure to enjoy life and experience the beauty of nature,
and the strong bond between our countries.

We are happy that the staff of Travel2 Albania Magazine has entrusted
us with the opportunity to represent Albania, as the first official
messenger in the USA. We established a partnership with Blue
Editions, the most experienced publisher & editor of Tourism
Magazine in Albania, for the last 15 years, the only official and reliable
touristic source, in Albania .

Albania has been featured in print in American media as a major
attraction in the Mediterranean. The articles have boasted the role of a
prologue for a story, that every visitor to Albania called upon an
unconditional love relationship.

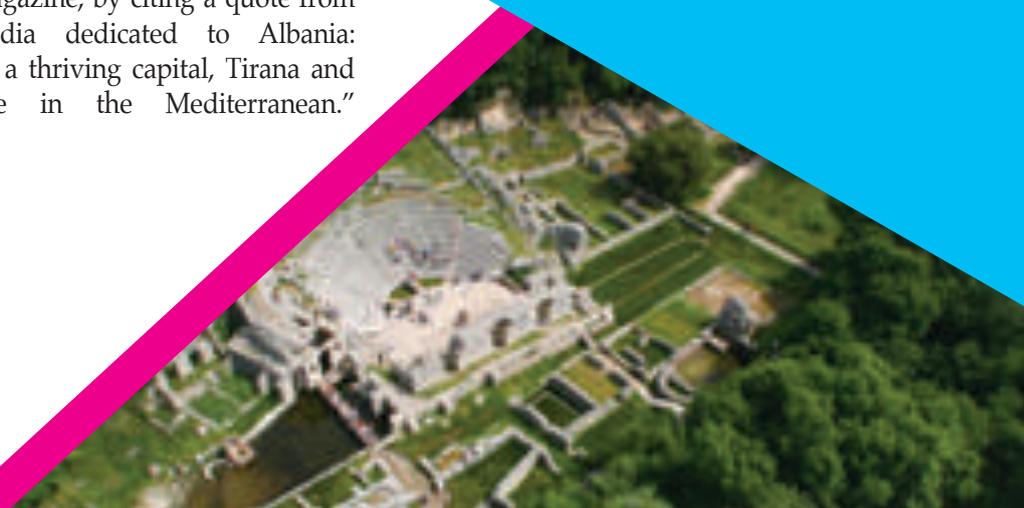
We invite you to enjoy reading our magazine, by citing a quote from
one of the world's tourism media dedicated to Albania:
"With it's stunning mountain scenery, a thriving capital, Tirana and
beaches, to rival any elsewhere in the Mediterranean."
- Lonely Planet



Mrs. Nevila Dudaj
General Manager & Founder
Adriatik Tours LLC

My name is Nevila Dudaj. I am an expert in
hospitality and a passionate world traveler. I
was born and raised in Tirana, Albania.
I am the Founder and Manager of Adriatik
Tours, LLC established in September 2017, in
West Hartford, Connecticut.
This agency is the subsidiary & international
sales office for The 5 Star Adriatik Hotel
located in Durrës, Albania.
Me and my ambitious team, are proudly
promoting Albania as a new and attractive
destination. We are working hard to soon
become the new Destination Management
Company for Albania, in the USA & Canada.
This magazine will be the first blooming
flower of the Albanian Spring Season.

Enjoy your reading





A large Albanian community has been living in The United States of America for more than a century.

Only Adriatik Tours, LLC had the ambition and the courage to expand it's activity in the USA, with the sole purpose of showing the beauty of Albania to America and assisting clients with all their travel needs.

This is the reason why we decided to bring our first issue of Travel 2 Albania Magazine exclusively to U.S. readers, in partnership with the Blue Editions Agency.

TRIP TO CROATIA & ALBANIA - TESTIMONIAL - APRIL 2018

Ms. Roland lives in New York. She is an energetic traveler, 87 years old, who has visited 64 countries of the world. We were so excited to plan and organize her customized trip to Croatia and Albania. She booked our 15 day package tour with Adriatik Tours, LLC. She started the tour in Dubrovnik. Our guide and driver picked her up at the airport, than after 2 nights stay in Croatia, they headed to Durres, Albania. The luxury beach front resort Hotel Adriatik hosted her for the next 12 nights. She had a great time touring a different city everyday. Ms. Roland explored Vlora, Fieri, Ardenica, Durres, Tirana, Zverneci, Butriniti, Saranda, Kruja Shkodra, Berati & Gjirokastra. We asked her few questions:

Ms. Roland, why did you pick Albania?

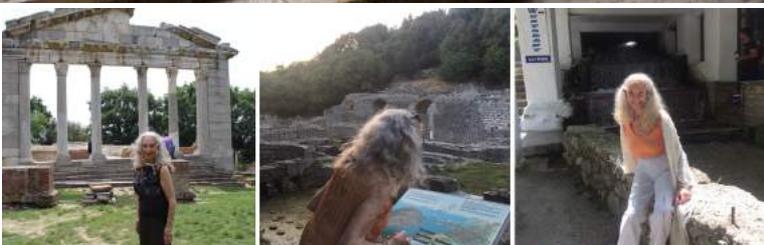
My travel agent recommended this new destination to me. The package was very affordable to stay in a 5 star hotel, to have guided tours everyday and I was curious to see this new destination that many people in New York are talking about. My friends asked me why Albania, and I am glad I with my choice. It was the best decision ever!

What's your impression of Albania?

Albania is wonderful, it was a great surprise, I didn't expect to find such an old country, so many archaeological sites, so much history and beautiful stories behind them. Let me tell you, it costs so little to visit museums & historic places. Only \$2 to \$3 a ticket. The food and wine are amazing, fresh, and taste incredibly good. Everything is so affordable. I will recommend Albania to everyone I know. It's a wonderful country and the people here are so friendly, they smile, the help and they are all very kind to me. I have visited a lot of cities, but Durres was impressive and Saranda as well. They remind me of the French Riviera, but the difference is that the prices here are 10 times cheaper. I really enjoyed this trip very much.

Thank You Nevila and Adriatik Tours LLC!

Ms. Erika Roland



visit DURRËS



the ideal destination for everyone

Near to the museum is the amphitheater, with a capacity of 20 thousand seats it was the largest in the Balkans. A tour would be best with a visit to Taulantia boulevard, bordering the sea in the area known as Currila, where most of the restaurants, bars and nightclubs are located, enriching the gastronomic side and the entertainment of the night. There are many other interesting places to visit both inside and outside of the city, such as the Basilica of Arapaj, the Byzantine Fountain and the Venetian Tower. Visit the icon of Albanian Luxury Tourism built 60 years ago and just completely renovated, the famous Beachfront Luxury 5 Star Adriatik Hotel. www.adriatikhotel.com

Nature and Adventure

Rodoni's Cape is also known as the divergent coastline of the Great Sandy Durresi Bay. Nature tourists visit Rodoni's Cape for various activities such as retreats, camping, walking, hiking, etc.

In Rodon's Bay are hidden two prominent cultural monuments, the Skanderbeg Castle and the Church of Saint Nicholas, which transform Rodoni into a cultural destination. Rodoni's beaches with crystal clear water and sandy shores are the most beautiful of Durres. Rodoni gives you one more reason to extend your vacation in Durres, as it requires at least a full day to visit.



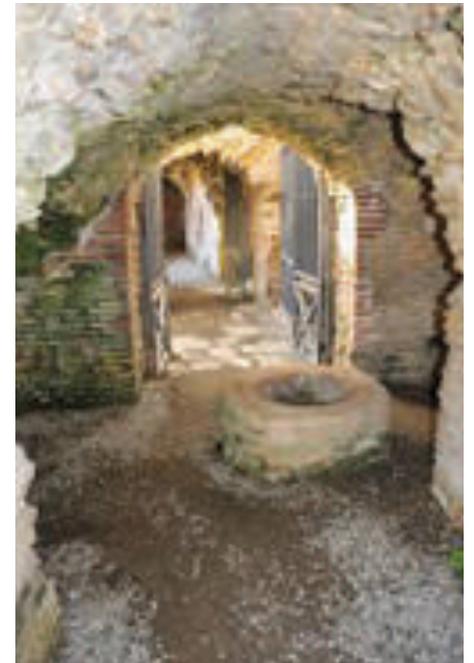
Gastronomy and Summer Tours

Do you think we could talk to you about Durres without mentioning the wonderful Mediterranean kitchens? Durres is the city where some of the best restaurants in Albania are located, especially if you're looking for seafood. Visit one of the many top-rate hotels and restaurants to enjoy

Mediterranean delicacies at a seaside table, with fresh produce and quality local wine on the scenic Durres shores. But Durres is also ideal for another kind of tourism, which has become the trend of recent years; Summer turtles. In the rural areas of Durres, Shijak and Kavaja, a chain of farms and vineyards have been created, growing grape and producing wine, cultivating agricultural and livestock crops and creating wonderful agro-tourism spots where the taste of tradition has become the source of the tourist product. You can't leave Durres before enjoying such a tour. You will feel the great taste of Central Albania.

What we recommend to you?

If you do not live in Albania, come for a visit from November to May in winter and spring or in autumn, between September and October. Off season would be the ideal period where the warm Mediterranean climate in Durres, the low traffic, the beauty of nature and our quality hospitality and service is the best kept secret.



In the Albanian tourist market, special efforts are made to entice the citizens of Tirana as half of Albania it is, to come and spend their weekends in Durres.

But Durres is far more than just a tourist destination. If we want to use it linearly, is almost 70 kilometers of continuous coastline that begins at Cape Rodoni and ends at Bashtova Castle and Kavaja's shores, which are one and uninterrupted.

Massive & Intimate Beaches

In economic terms Durres is Albania's tourist destination, which gives the national budget the highest income. Only in Durres you can find large reception capacities, which await the large number of charter tourists, who are also the largest tourism demand. The sandy beaches of Durres are so ideal for family vacation, which is also the largest part of the tourist industry. There are hundreds of thousands of family tourists from the border of the Dajlani Bridge,

near the end of the Maritime Port, along the big beaches of Apollonia, Iliria and Teuta, through Plepat and continuing to Shkmbi i Kavajës up to Përroi i Agait, where the boundary with Kavaja is.

But even romantics and young people can find their favorite corners if they go a little further from Taulantia boulevard, to the Currilat Beach, with clean water and varied beach landscapes blended with sand and pumice. If you go a little further you can see the beautiful beach of Kallmi which, besides intimacy, also maintains a clean sea full of interesting flora and fauna, enriched with colorful shores.

Durres of Cruisers

In recent years, Durres has become the host of numerous cruisers and, like Saranda in the South, promises a concrete future in this tourist area. It only needs a dedicated port which in the future, should turn this sector into lucrative tourism. This is the latest trend of world tourism.

Cultural Heritage

Durres actually offers it all, the sea, the beaches, a city with a history of over three thousand years. One of the most prominent of Antiquity with which our identity is closely linked, Durres is a city continuously nestled between BC millennia and to this day speaks through culture, Roman, Illyrian, Byzantine and Medieval, until the last legacy of the last millennium. With a number of sites and monuments of cultural heritage in the Balkans, this ancient city has not lost its charm, even though the chaotic developments of the last decades. The most prominent points that would be ideal nourishment for daily tours in Durres are also close to each other. The largest archaeological museum in Albania is located in Durres and has a rich list of exhibits that would satisfy the curiosity of every passionate history tourist.

Saranda

THE ALBANIAN TOURISM METROPOLIS

After embarking on the giant MSC cruise ship your destination is Saranda, confirmed as a metropolis of Albanian tourism, due to the numerous nationalities of the visitors. It is MSC Poesia cruiser which, after departing from Venice, also stops in Saranda on its weekly tour involving the Italian Bar, Katakolon and Mikonos in Greece, as well as Dubrovnik in Croatia. Within 8 hours of staying in Saranda, a good part of the 3,000 MSC Poesia passengers will visit the Butrint National Park. Visitors can also patronize the restaurants and bars thereby bringing the city thousands of euros per day. Concerning Butrint tickets, you probably know that for Albanian visitors it costs 300 lekë, for foreigners 500 lekë, while for foreign group of visitors the ticket is 500 lekë. With MSC Poesia in addition to dozens of cruisers and yachts anchored during the season on its shores this summer, Saranda expected to experience a real tourist boom, also due to the significant decline in tourism on the shores of Asia Minor and North Africa.

The white beaches with crystal clear waters, Butrint's world heritage, Blue Eye of Delvina and the Ksamili Islands are some of the main attractions and the reason why this summer you should definitely visit Saranda - to feel truly appreciate the Ionian Blue Bay, Saranda sits opposite Corfu, as a

“cocoon”. of ancient mythology, who continuously wants to attract it. We suggest you visit Saranda in each of the four seasons because the nature and the city has a lot to offer in each one. In Spring you can admire it's green spaces and the beautiful mountain scenery and the sea. Spring Greenness “invades” the outskirts of the city and a few miles from its center; you can go in any direction to enjoy the “renaissance” of vegetation everywhere in Butrint, in Blue Eye, on the terraces of Lukova, among the sources of Borshi etc... During the summer the blue Ionian beaches which surround the city, starting from Ksamil and finishing at Krorezi beach, invite visitors to dive into the water sports.

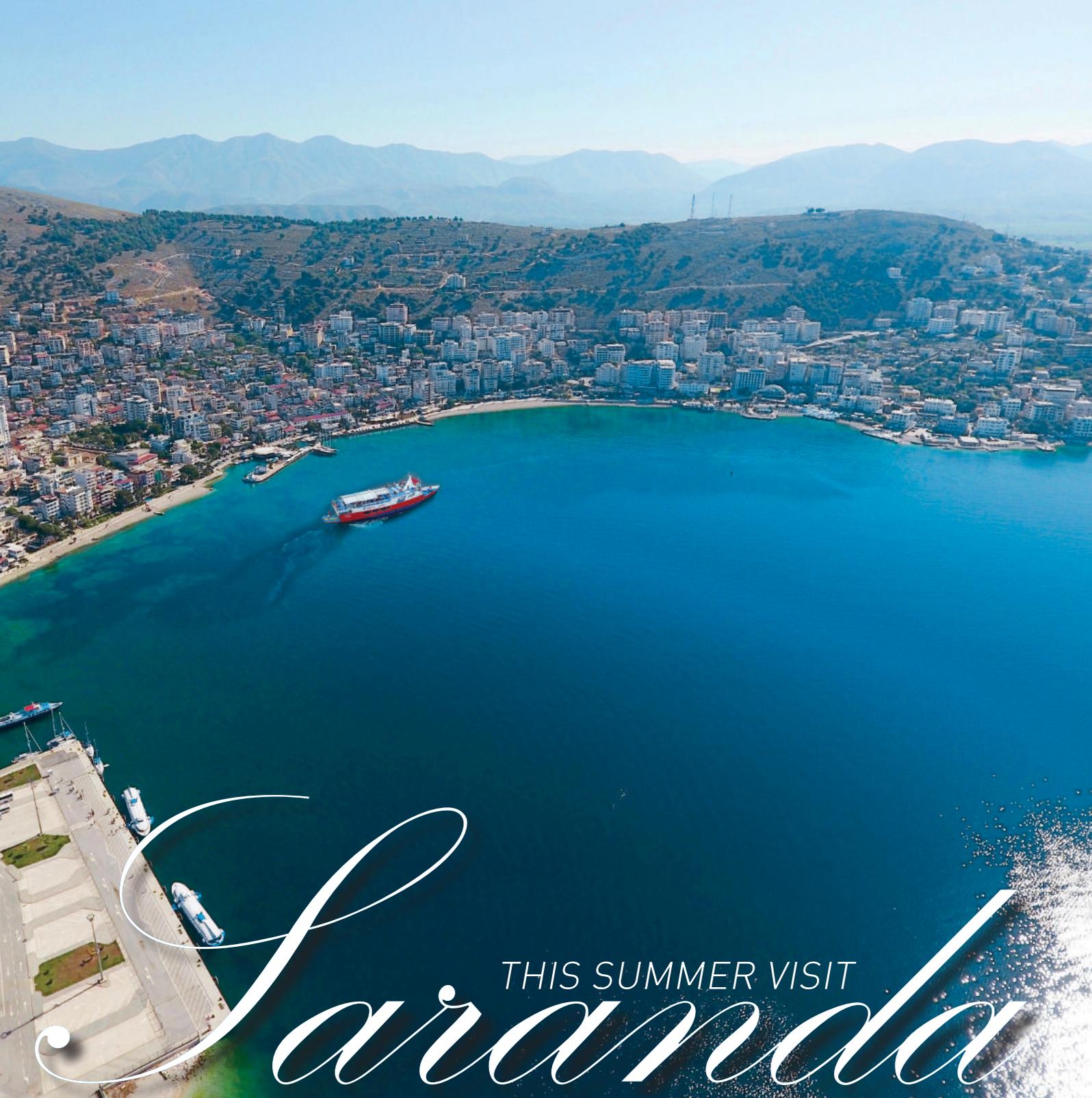
In autumn, nature offers wonderful views of olives, citrus and bio products, which decorate the agro-tourist fair spaces, getting the attention of the numerous visitors. While enjoying the winter; you could enrich the days with the grace of the “Queen of the Lake”- the Butrinti Mussle. Also in good weather you can visit numerous monuments of cultural heritage, in a climate that inherits more than 280 sunny days.

Graced from the terraces of olives and citrus, embodied with white, blue and green of Ionian vegetation and beaches, Saranda can be considered the Nymph of the Ionian Seashore.



Going toward it, you will find Butrint, the land of Virgil and Aenea, Ksamili with the rare islands, the only ‘Blue Eye’ in Delvina, the ruins of Finiqi of Epirotans, the South Polyphony music, the Mussle-Queen of the lake, but most of all the Ionian sea, which seduces everyone of us ...

Saranda is the largest Albanian tourism center. A clean city, full of life, it invites every year thousands of tourists and vacationers who consider it the best opportunity for relaxation and entertainment. Many citizens from Albania, but also the Albanian territories in Kosovo and Macedonia, including many foreigners have bought apartments in Saranda. The city is now transformed into a “cosmopolitan” space.



Saranda is well-known to the world even during the communist regime. After the '90's, Saranda has changed into a real tourist friendly city which welcomes more than 700,000 people during the summer season. There are many new restaurants and hotels to accommodate the tourists.

Saranda is the destination of foreign visitors not only for its deep blue waters of the Ionian sea, which offers amazing bays in different villages, but for the cultural and historic values, which are represented mostly from the ancient city of Buthrotus, (UNESCO heritage), Phoenic, the monasteries and different churches

of the Byzantine period. Don't forget to visit the natural attractive points as Ksamili, Blue Eye, Kakome etc... With so many points of interest as archaeological, historical and religious places, with a lot of facilities, the natural beauties, the city and the surrounding areas has attracted the attention of tourists.

The strategic position - the Greek neighborhood, just a few miles away from the location of Corfu - has helped Saranda to become in recent years the cruisers destination. The boats and ships sometimes stay for hours or just for a short visit to the city, or for the whole weekend, two to three days.

For a longer vacation, travel tours are best organized by Albania's prestigious travel agencies. Many visitors are not only curious about just Butrint, (which is included in their guide to the country of departure), but also for the many other destinations and places that they do not know and for which they might be interested to see.

[Places to visit and things to see](#)

The town has broad seaside promenades where you can stroll in the morning and evening. There are great interesting archaeological sights such as the Onhezmi Castle walls and the ruins of its tower to the sea shore and the mosaics inside the old

castle walls. The first mosaic is located in the ruins of a Palaeochristian Basilica of the eleventh century. The church is located at the beginning of Skanderbeg Street.

The Castle of Lekursi, is situated at the southern top of the hill that dominates the bay of Saranda. From that point you can see Korfuzi, Delvina and its basin, the coast, Butrinti, and further into the valley of Pavllë. You can also visit numerous other castles such as Vivari Castle and Ali Pasha Castle, situated at Butrinti National Park. Borshi Castle and a lot of ruins of smaller castles are situated in the area around Saranda.

The Beaches

Saranda is a coastal city with the most beautiful beaches in Albania. Apart from the coastline which reels the city as a blue ribbon, a wonderful series of bays also adorn it, starting at Ksamil, and finishing at Borshi, these places are becoming the most coveted by tourists during the summer. Some of its numerous beaches are: Youth Beach, named the promenade's beach in the city, which is cozy in all the ways. With fine sand, thrown annually by the municipality, it is a very convenient beach for children and families.

The "Mirrors" Beach, situated along the route to Ksamili is mostly frequented by young people. It is a beach with crystal clear water, tiny white gravel and a wonderful landscape.

The Monastery Beach, is named so because situated up the hill, is the Monastery of St. George in Deme. This is also a beach with crystalline waters and highly frequented by young people.

Ksamili Beach only 15km away from Saranda, has truly miraculous water, that despite the intensification of buildings that have impaired this view, remains the most frequented area in Saranda, especially for the capital's vacationers. Many of the beaches have received their names according to the place they are located, and of course the beaches of the islands can only be reached by boat, with a fee that ranges from 200 to 500 lekë.

Kakome Bay is one of the most beautiful and famous bays of Saranda and Albania. The Kakome Bay area was projected as a convenient place to build a tourist village but nothing has sprung up except a small springboard that serves to anchor boats so the beach is actually frequented only by daily tourists who come to visit the historical objects and places of worship.



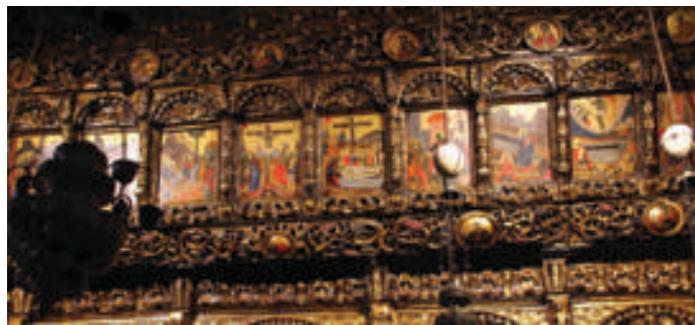
Foto: Blue Albania ©

Berat

*a 2,400 year-old
precious package*

Berat is a valuable heritage city protected by UNESCO. It came back to light after the reconstruction of the Lushnje-Berat Road and it has experienced a yearly increase of tourist traffic, especially foreigners. During 2017, Berat and the surrounding areas, received 60,000 visitors, a satisfactory increase from previous years. It can be said now that Berat offers the full touristic package culture-nature-adventure and fortunately, it accommodates a year-round tourist season. In actuality there isn't an all year surge, the high season is spread significantly, starting from the early months of spring, reaching an ever increasing peak in July-August, while groups of visitors continue to arrive until late autumn. In all sincerity, a few years ago we looked with sadness at the few buses stopping by with exhausted passengers after traveling on the rugged roads. The tourists got off in front of Tomomi Hotel or beside Mangalem and felt bored with the idleness of city, a cultural heritage that had recently become part of UNESCO, and that received so few tourists from abroad!

Berat's cultural heritage is thousands-of-years-old, a castle-city that lives uninterrupted for more than 2400 years, not akin to any other place in Albania, with an invaluable



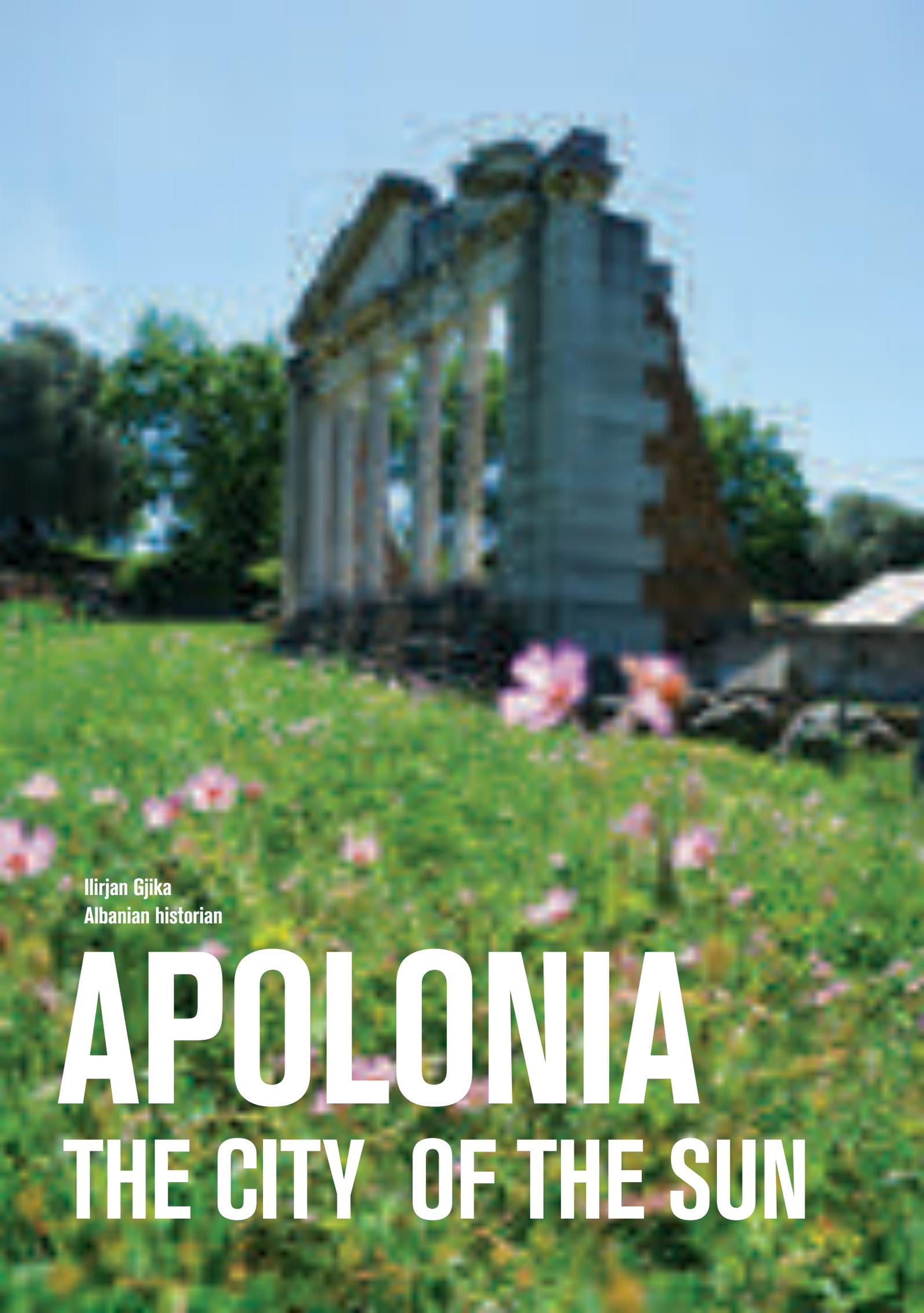
cultural heritage. The religious heritage for example is preserved in many cult objects and the rare oeuvres of Onufri, within an exceptional museum, the most visited place in the city by foreign tourists. Together with the Ethnographic Museum, Onufri Museum makes up the ensemble that holds the name of National Center of Museums of Berat that yields a high number of visitors, which increases with each passing year. This is also thanks to a highly efficient, professional management staff, who are deeply committed. Lodging in Berat makes for an unforgettable experience. Admittedly, sleeping is not the most important part

of a tourist's experience, but a large number of hotels in Berat, located in the old neighborhoods of Mangalem and Gorica, and within the castle walls, don't just offer a good sleep. Mangalemi Hotel, Hotel Belgradi, Vila Alkesander, Muzaka, Kodiket, White City, and Vila Sigal have become rare museums, each element of the buildings, the inner decor and furnishing, transmit a valuable piece of tradition or history.

Eating breakfast, lunch or dinner in each of the aforementioned hotels is not a simple experience but one where you can learn about the regional cuisine, and taste gliko, organic food, and traditional dishes that are prepared using old recipes from homemakers of Berat and are focal points on the menus at city's restaurants. The famous products of Berat such as olive oil, and the canteen wines of Cobo, Nurellari, and Luani, the figs of Roshnik or the jams and glikos are all local products made by Sidnej inc., which serve as souvenirs for tourists. Talking about souvenirs, Berat is a unique place

because of the master woodcarvers and stone-carvers. Unlike any other place, the authentic souvenirs are displayed in the windows of antique and souvenir shops, avoiding at a maximum the Chinese stuff that can be usually seen in other shop windows around Albania. Berati has an artisanal center that works as a cooperative and encourages local producers to return to handmade techniques, so much preferred by tourists nowadays. Fortunately for Berat, there are some tourist point offices that offer many services for tourists and this is a positive trait, since not every city in Albania offers tourist info points. House of Tourists, 1001 Albania Adventures, with their info offices are not limited to street and road orientations, or trading small souvenirs, but they offer full tourist packages to visit Berat for several days. The young folks at 1001 Albanian Adventures are avid and they discover all hidden trails and present them to the tourist. These are the undiscovered parts of Berat, the surrounding natural spots and local nuances that at first sight don't seem as important as the cultural side. This has drawn a great deal of interest among tourists that are hungry for fresh explorations. Berat possesses a valuable asset, incomparable to any other cultural city; Osumi canyon is a natural gem that has become a preferred destination in the Albanian adventure thanks to Albania Rafting, which presents

this experience to active tourists around the world. Deemed as one of the most beautiful experiences, the rafting adventure in the Osumi Canyons across the road from Berat-Permet, combined with the rafting in Vjosa River, have admittedly increased the number of tourists in Berat each year. Today, satisfied by the ever increasing number of visitors, we are impatiently anticipating the moment when all the streets in the city, the neighborhoods of Mangalem and Gorica, and the mazes of the castle will be full of tourists in summer and winter. Berati deserves it. Berati has everything!



Ilirjan Gjika
Albanian historian

APOLONIA

THE CITY OF THE SUN

Did you know that Apollonia is the place where the roman emperor Octavian Augustus studied?

One of the most important roads that connects East and West, Rome with Kostandinopolis, once upon a time used to start here. Now, Apollonia marks the end of a rural road that leads straight into it. Opened Since 2005, Apollonia, the archaeological center of Albania, performs as the National Archaeological Park. Domestic and foreign tourists visit here. Every summer there are archaeological expeditions developed together with the Medieval Monastery Museum. Experience authentic, historic, cultural tourism where beautiful nature is in the surrounding landscape. Visiting for the first time or again and again and imagine how the Apollonia monuments used to be before the archaeologist's pickaxe began "knocking on earth". Situated only 10 km to the west of the city of Fier, Apollonia can be reached easily. Just 15 minutes ride by car from the city, through Small Myzeqe, on the top of some small hills appears Apollonia, "The city of sun".

Right there at the entrance of the Archaeological Park Admir is waiting for us, a young archaeologist, smartly dressed as always, but the optical glasses that he wears give him an appearance of an intellectual. After presenting ourselves we let him know the purpose of our visit, the preparation of an article for the newest tourism magazine "Travel2 Albania". I think we should start the visit from the "Impluvium Vila" proposes Admir, the place where last summer the Albanian-French archaeological mission discovered the two busts that made headlines within the world of archaeologists. Here at the end of this channel, which separates the two insula (apartment buildings) as they are called in archeology, "fell in their tracks" randomly during excavations, Admir says without hiding his enthusiasm.

After visiting the house with the mosaics of which are covered with sand in order to be protected, Admir leads us to the museum, which is the "heart" of the park. Opened in 1958 on the premises of the monastery of Saint Mary, it contains 200 artifacts such as inscriptions, statues, ceramic objects, sarcophagus, miliar stones, etc... The uniqueness of it is that the values here are added also from the Byzantine churches, a work of genuine architectural XII century, which our great writer Noli calls a "masterpiece of Byzantine art".

On the porch of the church, Admir presents us with churchman Socrates, a lovely and debonair figure who will be our guide leading us through the romanik porch of the church, the mosaic of the Byzantine emperor

Michael VIII Paleolog, columns, inscriptions, a drum, so everything from the church, which is a museum within the museum.

This is the room where once lived the famous writer Jakov Xoxa. Here he wrote his famous novel, "Dead River". Everyone in our village Pojan, loved Jakov, everyone tried to be the first to respect and treat him and follow him. Leading us through the rooms of the monastery, where after he opened a portmanteau, Socrates laid out a bottle of brandy to treat us according to the tradition of the area.

After we separate from churchman Socrates, we leave the monastery and step toward the ruins of ancient monuments. Walking on the green grass we hear a few steps behind us. Do not fear, Admir says to us, it is Lulja (Flower), the dog of the park. Lulja is really a peaceful dog that followed us till the end of our visit. It appeared here a few years ago and now everyone, archaeologists, park employees and tourists are used to his presence. To tease Lulja is cause for diplomatic incident, Admir adds laughing and shows us an episode, when a famous ambassador shouted at a television operator, who kicked Lulja when he came unintentionally in front of the camera. We are in spring says Admir, and after a few months they will start the work 2 expeditions. The French one this year will dig the Hellenistic Agora, traces of which were found a few years ago, while the German expedition is working in the theater for some years. The work here is lead by Burhan Dauti, the oldest archaeologist in Albania. He has the merits of discovering this object in 1971 along with his wife, the first female archaeologist, Alexandra Manon. Along with our charming companion Admir, we visit a group of monuments, the Buleterion - the seat of the city council, the Library, the Temple of Diana, the Odeon, Temenos wall, obelisk of Apollo and Stoan. All objects were discovered by the French Archaeological Mission, led by Leon Rey. After the Rei, who worked for 14 years in discovering Apollonia "Sun City", will be all names known to the Albanian Archaeology who have excavated here. Later we stopped on the top of the highest hill (104 m) of the ancient city. Once, Artemisa's temple stood there, from which only one of the foundation blocks is preserved. It was here in 1933 that Rey Leon lifted the house of the French Archaeological Mission, which was baptized by the locals as "french home". It was restored in 2001 and is used by archaeological expeditions.

Today, the back has been converted into a bar-restaurant in the form of an ethnographic mini-museum.

It has welcomed dozens of archaeologists, researchers and tourists from all six continents. A special guest was her son Leon REI, Jean Gabriel, who along with Albanian archaeologist, Neritan Ceka, "discovered" a bust and memorial plaque dedicated to Leon REIT, "Shliman of Apollonia". In the bar, surrounded by olives and booths with pictures that reflect the Rei's excavations, Petrit, the manager of the "Rei" gave us a pair of binoculars to look at the beautiful surrounding landscape. We could see the Adriatic, Karaburun, Sazani, and whole mount Tomorri and Myzeqe field.

To visitors, Apollonia, Admir began to explain, "now" the archaeologist of our mission, offers not only ruins, the museum, the medieval monastery and landmarks, but also a relaxing landscape together with a rich menu of local kitchens of Myzeqe. Following the conversation suddenly we saw a bride wearing a white dress and veil, who had come here along with her fiance to prepare a wedding video clip. It has become a common occurrence the presence of brides with white dress in Apollonia. He said that this season we could call this place "the city of brides" After taking some other photos, our feet lead us to the gate where we come across a group of Italian tourists. Our visit here has come to an end and we think that under our feet is the largest archaeological "mine" of Albania, and in itself maintains a one hundredth of what has been discovered until today.



This is Apollonia, which takes two to three hours to visit and where millions of broken pottery debris of ancient time and centuries accompany you everywhere.

Excavations

During the First World War, namely in the years 1916-1918, Shober Prashniker, an Austrian archaeologists undertook the first archaeological excavations in Apollonia. Their mission was organized by the Vienna Academy of Sciences, which in cooperation with the military command of Austro-Hungary, was aimed at tracing the areas occupied by archaeological objects and sending them to Vienna. In Apollonia, Prashnikeri at some point dug the city as the acropolis, flats, necropolis and the surrounding wall.



He collected many items, most of which are in the monastery of Apollonia and surrounding churches. Prashnikeri published the results of excavations and studies in his book: "Muzaka and Mallakstra" which was published in Vienna in 1920.

With the creation of the Albanian state, in Apollonia started the "era" of proper archaeological excavation. In the years 1924-1939 the French mission worked here, which is funded by the Academy of Fine Arts and French Society of Archaeology. The mission was led by archaeologist Leon Rey, who over the years developed 15 excavation campaigns, revealing dust from the oblivion of centuries for the ancient city. Results of the French mission were successful. Thus in 1924 two Roman houses were discovered, while in 1925-1929 a new porch came to light. In 1930 the location of the old necropolis in Kryegjate was determined. In this year the Buleterion buildings were revealed while in 1932 the Odeon, Libraries, part of the city walls and many important items were discovered. Rei published the results of his work in the magazine "Big" French archaeological mission. With the objects detected in Apollonia, opened the archaeological museum: "Zogu I" on October 8, 1936 in Vlora. His building served as a part of the house that had been the seat of government of Ismail Kamal. This museum was robbed when Albania was invaded by the Italian army in 1939. That year the Italian authorities allowed the French archaeological mission working at Apollonia to be replaced with an archaeological Italian expedition.

In 1945 Leon Rei attempted to restore jobs that had left half the Apollonia, but the Communist authorities banned it. Excavations resumed in 1941 under the direction of archaeologist, Claudio Sestieri. Their outcome was the discovery of a gymnasium, a part of the perimeter wall and a building near the monastery walls. Further developments led to war, Sestieri to escape from Albania and the archaeological excavations were interrupted for a short period. They resumed after the war but in other conditions. The first Albanian archaeologist, who was involved in excavations at Apollonia was Hasan Ceka. He began work in 1930 as a representative of the Albanian Ministry of Education and Culture, near the French archaeological mission. In 1948, After War World II, Hasan Ceka resumed work in Apollonia. He began to work with another Albanian colleague, Skender Anamali. Together they worked on the walls surrounding neighborhoods of the city and western terraces, shifted to soils, rediscovering landmarks, and completed excavations conducted earlier. In addition to this work in 1958 Hasan Ceka published the first book on the ancient city called "Apollonia", which contained archaeological excavations of a historic city, and a detailed description of the monuments discovered by that time. In Apollonia, Hasan Ceka worked for about 40 years, finishing off with Rein excavations and discoveries made several important monuments such as: porch in 1952, surrounding wall, fountain, in the years 1963-1968 and the wall of the acropolis.

In 1957, the archaeologists Islam Selim, Frano Prendi and Aleksandra Mano joined Apollonia's permanent expedition. Two years (1958-1960) in Apollonia, Albanian archeologists also worked alongside eight Soviet archaeologists, led by Vladimir Borisov Bllavatski and Irida Borisova. Their major help was in the establishment of the Archaeological Museum, which opened in 1958. Discovered during this time were a part of the Eastern Wall, the Temple of Diana, Prytaneoni, D and G apartments etc... The first Albanian women in the profession, Aleksandra Mano worked along side the archeologists. She worked on the Necropolis, which was excavated in 1962 and the Theater which she discovered in the summer of 1971, along with her husband, archaeologist Burhan Dautaj.

Aleksandra Mano was among experts who possessed mastery of reading and deciphering the ceramic dies. All her studies about Apollonia, were published in scientific journals "Illyria" and "Monuments" was published in 2006 under the title "Apollonia of Illyria." Together with her husband they discovered the Theater and the Western Road out of the city center. Another archaeologist who worked in Apollonia was Dhimosten Budina. He along with colleague Frano Prendi developed work in dwellings of the second and third centuries. In one of them, in D flat, Dhimosten Budina found "House of Achilles", which was called so for the mosaic on the floor, considered one of the most beautiful mosaics detected in Apollonia. Neritan Ceka, one of the most prominent representatives of today's Albanian archaeology, worked in Apollonia for a long period.



From a young age, he was engaged in expeditions organized by his father, archaeologist Hasan Ceka. Besides separate studies published in the specialized press as: Magazine Illyria and Monuments, he published a book "Illyria Apollonia" in 1982. Neritan Ceka summarizes in the book, all the data of studies conducted by history and archeology by that time on Apollonia. In 2004 he also published an edition of Apollonia Guide, a tourist guide.

Besides archaeologists, architects, ethnographers and historians, in Apollonia restorers worked for a long time; Koco Zheku, Guri Pani, Spiro Koci, Laser Papajani, etc.. They preserved and restored several monuments, which became accessible as monumental Fontana, Temenos Wall and Gate, Porch, the Odeon etc.

In 1975 they re-established the facade of Buleterion, symbol of the city of Apollonia, which really is a work of exceptional architecture. Meanwhile, after the fall of the communist regime for archeology other conditions were created for development. After numerous attempts in 1992, the Albanian-French archaeological mission was founded by archaeologists Pier Kaban and Neritan Ceka, funded by the French Foreign Ministry and the Archaeological Institute of Tirana.

They intended to undertake new excavations in Apollonia and the study of ancient monuments of the city, from the archaic up to the medieval period and publishing their studies. They calculated the area of the city, discovering the route that linked the porch with the acropolis and several buildings, which are: a flat, some magazines, tracts walls, a temple, and two busts last year.

Meanwhile, one of the study programs of the Albanian-French mission would be the publication of the Archaeological Atlas of Apollonia, which was a summary of all results of excavations made since the nineteenth century to the present.

It was implemented in 2007, in Rome, the authorship of a group of researchers. The French team did a new stratigraphical calculation of the ancient city area of 85ha or .85 kilometers. In 2001, the Albanian-German archaeological mission started its operation in Apollonia which was focused on two sectors: in the theater and on the roof of the old stoas.(covered walk)

In the ancient theater the excavations were resumed where they were interrupted in 1981 by Alexandra Mano and Burhan Dautaj, this time without his collaborator and wife A. Mano, archaeologist Burhan Dautaj focused on northern areas and theater orchestra. Meanwhile, another group of this mission under the direction of archaeologist Lahi Union, focused on the amphora wall excavation of which had started in the 1939's by Leon Rein.

History

Apollonia which lived for 11 centuries between 620 BC and 479 was a city-state that originated as a product of the process of "Great Greek colonization" VIII-VI centuries BC, on the shores of Illyria, which were populated by the community of Taulantia tribal. Stefan Bizantini, one of ancient authors say that "it was the largest city and most important of the 32 colonies that were established across the Mediterranean with the name of god Apollo". According to Strabo, the city spanned 60 miles (9 km) of coastline and 10 miles (1.5 km) from the river bed Vjosa, on the back of a series of hills. The first colonists were to be conducted by 200 Corinthian leader Gylak. Then another group arrived from Corcyre comers, and Dysponti Kikusi. The city's original name was Gylakea in honor of its founder, and later it was called Apollonia. As time passed here were placed a substantial population of Illyrian, which would play an important role in the life of this polis. Apollonia was raised on the backs of two hills with height 101 and 104 m, extending to the field.

The city was built according to the architectural plans of Hippodamus of Miletus, renowned architect of antiquity. It had straight roads, primary and secondary, which intersect with each other by creating small residential blocks. Rugged terrain was regulated by the terraces, while a vast network of underground channels served to collect water deficit, which was deposited in the cistern and used as water reserves.

Need dictated that Apollonians be protected from various attacks, used to build a powerful network of defense walls, which reached a length of 4.5 km. Within these walls rose a whole complex of buildings public and private character such as: the Acropolis, Temples, Theaters, Agoras, Stoat, Buleterion, Libraries, public and private buildings.

Over time Apollonia would turn into a major and important city, and was rightly called by Cicero, known politician and Roman oratory in 43 BC. In it operated many famous characters of history as Glauk of Taulantia, Pirro of Epirus, and Cassander and Philip V of Macedonia, great Pompey, Caesar or Octavian, who spent part of his time here.

From Apollonia started the southern branch of the ancient road Via Egnatia, which was the most important artery linking West with East. The importance of the city retained until late antiquity when it converted into one of the main centers of spreading Christianity. Bishop Marin of Apollonia, is one of the first 70 bishops appointed by St. Paul himself.

While other bishops as Eukariti and Eusebi participated at the most important councils of the clergy. Earthquakes of the years 234 and 345, displacement and attacks from Vjosa bed of barbarian people, eventually caused Apollonia to be abandoned in the Vth century.

AdriatikTours,LLC

successfully presented Albania as a new destination
at the NY Times Travel Show

Interview with Nevila Dudaj

General Manager / Founder Adriatik Tours LLC

From Flora Xhemani Baba

Adriatik Tours LLC, is the first agency representing Albanian tourism in New York, exhibiting at the NY Times Travel Show for the first time, introducing Albania to the American market.

They opened in September 2017 in West Hartford, Connecticut, as the international sales office of the Adriatik Hotel, located in Durres Albania, a Beachfront Luxury 5 Star Resort:

www.adriatikhotel.com

Adriatik Tours, LLC, is a Travel Agency, and a Destination Management Company, offering to US Travel Agents and Tour Operators, wholesale prices on special packages and tours to Albania.

Although in recent years Albania has increased participation in tourism fairs, Albania, as a country, never participated at Trade Shows in America.

In January 26-28th of 2018, thanks to Adriatik Tours, LLC, finally Albania was promoted for the first time, at stand # 577 of the NY Times Travel Show.

Albania's name was not simply appearing on that stand, but its presence was wonderfully conveyed through this participation. Adriatik Tours, LLC was serving as a tourist board information point, followed by a traditional Albanian performance and the presentation of the best Albanian destinations.





Question: What impressions did you get from the Trade Show?

Nevila Dudaj:

It was an incredible experience, a necessary experience for our business marketing and promotion. We were very enthusiastic, even before our participation. This representation was part of our business and marketing strategy plan.

The challenge for Adriatik Tours LLC, to be present as the newest DMC in America promoting Albania as the new destination in the Mediterranean. Our office staff, Angel, Mena, and also two other experienced travel professionals, Pepi & Jason, did a great job to make our presence more effective and successful. With their professional co-operation Stand # 577 in the European Sector, proudly represented Albania in front of a large number of visitors and professionals, interested in learning more about Albania.

This year, the 15th year, this show had the largest attendance since its inception with 32,398 attendees (a 7.6% increase over 2017) including

- 10,268 trade attendees
- 1,384 media
- 22,130 consumer attendees
- Over 600 exhibiting companies from over 176 countries.

Question: How was your presentation conveyed to the American media?

Nevila Dudaj:

In NY Times newspaper, the NY Times Trade show website, their social media networks and television. We were mentioned as the first US agency that promotes Albania as a touristic destination. We were invited to have our own press conference the first day, dedicated only to tourism professionals, at 12:00 noon, on January 26, 2018, where we had the opportunity to reveal the values of our country, pointing to our 45 minute presentation, what Albania offers as a country, our religions, distinguished Albanian Celebrities around the world, what international media say about our destination. Albanians are a warm and welcoming people, who respect and host foreigners, based on our old tradition, of BESA (Faith – Trust) , hundreds of years old.



Question: What would you highlight about Albania, and for what reason an American should visit your country ?

Nevila Dudaj:

American bloggers and travelers, who visited Albania already, have listed from 10 to 75 reasons to visit our country, but I will list only the most important features:

- Conveniently located in Europe, easily reachable while visiting Italy, France, Croatia, Greece, and could be easily combined with those trips.
- Laying close to the countries above, sharing the same natural beauty, coastlines, climate, sharing Adriatic and Ionian Seas.
- Incredible prices, just a fraction of our neighbor countries... while offering a lot of quality tourism alternatives, adventures, sailing, mountain sceneries, luxury stays, high hotel standards.
- Albanians are great hosts, and speak very good English. They love foreigners, especially Americans. You will experience the warmest hospitality to remember!
- An incredible food experience, fresh organic food, seafood fresh from the boats, from the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, totally different from anything else. Still this country cultivates small farms, in the old fashion way.
- A lot of culture and history, museums, religion, cities to explore, more than 3,000 years old. Many of the visitors to our stand, in the following days, were well informed where Albania was, through our brochures and video presentations, because they kindly stated to lack geography, but of course they were curious to know more about Albania, and Albanians.



What topic was of interest and attracted questions from journalists at the Press Conference?

Nevila Dudaj:

The curiosity of journalists and bloggers at the conference was mostly addressed to airline companies flying to Albania, especially whether we have direct flights to New York, which turned out to be the most commonly asked question for 99% of the people I've met and talked to during all the Trade Show days. Actually, there is still no direct NY-Tirana flight at this time, but I believe that very soon it will be happening. It's not by coincidence, that two executives of prestigious airline companies, attending the Trade Show, headed to our stand, sharing the same interest, to initiate negotiations with the Albanian State regarding this topic.

The distance from Europe, our organized tours, the history we come from, the languages we speak, the statistics of Americans who have visited Albania, how safe is Albania to travel for families, individuals and single women travelers.

An interesting fact, was the special interest of CBS's journalist, Peter Greenberg for Albania, and specifically, a warm invitation, for the Prime Minister, or the President of Albania, to become part of his show.



Question: How well do correlate ADRIATIK TOURS, LLC business strategy with the NY Times Trade Show as the first initiative of a travel agency that specializes in Albania travel?

Nevila Dudaj:

We exhibited at this important event, considering our experience in the tourism sector in Albania, and a long study about the US Market, where interest for Albania is incredibly high. Americans go to Mexico, Hawaii, The Caribbean, or visit Europe's rich cultural sites, but they love to explore new places and cultures. Albania is the undiscovered beauty in Europe and it has so much to offer.

So we have set the quality, over the quantity of tourists who enter Albania. This will bring a lot of social improvements, long term economic growth of our country, a healthy growth of the quality of hospitality services of our hotels and restaurants. American tourists are very demanding for good service. The tourists coming from US, are interested to visit Albania during Fall, Winter and Spring season. Our presence in America, positioned in this part of the market, creates a formal and reliable communication channel, between our two countries. The US Travel Agents and Tour Operators would benefit from purchasing wholesale, affordable packages to Albania, and increase their profits.

Question: Does ADRIATIK TOURS, LLC operate as an incoming and outgoing tour agency, offering full services provided by any American Agency?

Nevila Dudaj:

Our main goal and mission is to offer travel to Albania for outgoing US travelers, but the second goal is that our reliable presence in the US market, would serve to strengthen a partnership.

Question: To whom do you dedicate this experience and what else do you want to say?

Nevila Dudaj:

I am so grateful to have experienced this unique opportunity! This experience was precious to me, and is related to many factors, hard work, and people who contributed to its success. Especially, for this first participation in the New York Times Travel Show, we thank the publishers of Blue Editions Travel Magazine, for our PR material support, their social media support, brochures, calendars and magazines. Thanks, to what is more important to me, my family, who support and always offer unconditional help to me! Thanks to all the staff of the Adriatik Hotel in Durrës, who assisted our participation in this initiative!

Thanks to the staff of our office in America. Many thanks and gratitude to all those people who, with their presence and confidence in our initiative, made this event possible. A lot of gratitude and special thanks to Rozafati Group, the talented Choreographer Angelina Nika, to all the kids and their parents, for their wonderful and colorful performance on both days of the Trade Show on the European Stage.

Adriatik Tours, LLC welcomes you to it's NYC Travel Show stand next year!



Instagram@travel2albania
Facebook: Adriatik Tours LLC
Address: 970 Farmington Ave,
Suite 208
West Hartford, CT 06107
www.adriatiktours.com
Email: gm@adriatiktours.com

Tim Neville: Albania is high on my list

He has traveled worldwide, has written for prestigious media as the New York Times, has seen the culture of different countries, however, Tim Neville says that he would wholeheartedly like to live in Albania, have a small house at the edge of a beach or up in the mountains, to eat Albanian food and learn the Albanian language. Once again, the famous American journalist takes the opportunity to demonstrate the values of Albania, the country to whom he has fallen in love

1. When was the first time you visited Albania?

September 23, 2012. I remember this day very clearly because it ended up being one of my favorite travel moments ever. I was with a group of Americans on a guided hiking trip along portions of the peaks of the Balkans trail and we walked over the mountains from Gusinje - or Gucia - to Theth. The alpine scenery was unforgettable, the sky so big and the meadows so green. After I saw some of Hoxha's infamous bunkers, I really felt like we were doing something that not very many people

had ever been allowed to do. (The permit system that allowed us to walk over an unguarded border point was also very, very new). We walked into Theth at night, checked into a stone guesthouse and stayed up late drinking brandy and talking with the owner by candlelight. We ate farmer cheese and crispy goat. It was fairytale and I could not understand how so few international travelers had ever heard about this place. I knew right then and there that I had "discovered" a truly special place and that I should come back.

2. Why do you think that our country is so special if you have visited half of the world?

It's true, I have been to many, many countries now - maybe 70? - and oftentimes people in places that are relatively new to tourism can't understand why in the world a foreigner would want to come to their country. But Albania is something different. Your country is tiny but has so much diversity - from sparkling beaches to towering mountains - and you're incredibly blessed culturally. You have ruins, ancient villages, modern cities, thrilling



adventures, lovely nature, outstanding food and a fascinating, though very difficult history. And coolest of all from a traveler's perspective, Albania is still figuring itself out. You can feel the changes happening, the clashes between the ancient and the new, the raw and the industrial, at every turn. Albanians are also some of the most welcoming people I've ever met. People inviting me into homes, to beers, for dinner: You don't get that in, say, Switzerland, which I also love. Albania is Switzerland before all the money came in.

I have sometimes dreamt about owning a small place near a beach or in the mountains where I could bring my family, write, eat “tavë kosi” everyday and learn Albanian.

3. How many times have you visited Albania until now?

I've made three trips there and two to Kosovo. I'm trying to come back again this summer to go fishing.

4. Will there be a next time?

Absolutely. The pessimist in me says a place as good as Albania can't last. There's no way. Assuming you guys don't make some very bad decisions or get too greedy, Albania will become a cooler Croatia or a smaller Italy. That is both a good and a bad thing, in my view. It's good because it will mean more jobs and better standards of living for Albanians and “doing things right” could become a deep source of pride for a people who have suffered enough. But it's also bad (for me) because the menus will become more expensive, the inns will be more upscale and the tourist path will become well worn. So I want to see it now while it's still relatively cheap, fresh and untrammled. One day I will tell my grandchildren “I remember being in Albania when you could travel the whole country and not bump into another American” and they'll think that's ridiculous.

5. You are a journalist but you are also a traveler. According to your opinion, what's the biggest problem of the Albanian tourism?

Right now two things: Infrastructure and corruption, and I imagine those two things are related. If you want more tourists to spend more money there you need to protect, restore and defend your natural areas and cultural sites from greedy, short-sighted interests. Your

hotels need to be more standardized and the roads improved. You need to get a grip on illegal building or building in areas that should be left open. You need leaders with vision who can resist the urge to better themselves at the expense of others. In short, Albanians need to organize and come up with a strategic plan for developing the tourism sector in a sustainable, cohesive way. I hear this is happening along your coast, which is possibly your most precious asset. But a plan that everyone can get behind is a tough thing because the benefits from such a plan take a long time to materialize. Albanians have already been waiting a very long time. It means increasing your wealth gradually for the long run and not trying to cut corners overnight. I think Albanians in 1997 learned the very hard way what can happen when you try to get rich overnight. You have quality assets that deserve quality treatment. Be patient with them but destroy corruption immediately.

6. And, what's the strongest point?

Albania is like a kitchen with every ingredient for a meal unlike anything anyone has ever tasted. (And I LOVE Albanian food, by the way.) You have all of these elements - nature, culture, activities, history - that are so unique and the people are still trying to find the best ways to cook them. Albania is still relatively unknown. Show people one picture of an amazing Albanian beach or of the mountains around Theth and they won't believe it is Albania. No one else can really offer a traveler - especially a traveler to Europe! - that sense of discovery. Again, Albanians are also very friendly. Some of the kindest people I met had no clue that I was a writer and had no reason to treat me well. It came from their own hearts. This is extremely touching and the single best thing for Albanian tourism. No one wants to go to an unfriendly or fake-friendly place.

7. Are there special things or special people on your memories that maybe you haven't had the chance to mention somewhere. You may confess to us.

I know that I have a very romantic view of Albania. I also know that a lot of suffering still happens there. On two of my trips to Albania I've visited with a politician from the town of Permet, a really great, ambitious, but frustrated guy, who helped explain some of the “real” Albania to me. I've never been able to get him into one of my stories but the things he told me are haunting and influence what I write about Albania. His stories about the anarchy that broke out in the 1990s were terrifying. So while Albania has all this potential to be something really great, history suggests it also has the potential to be violent and awful and I worry that a switch could flick at any time. I have sometimes dreamt about owning a small place near a beach or in the mountains where I could bring my family, write, eat “tavë kosi” everyday and learn Albanian, but the security situation needs a longer record of stability to convince me things won't turn violent again. In the meantime, I'm happy to visit as often as I can.

8. Which country of the world is the most beautiful, if you have one in your mind.

This is a tough question because, like people, they're all so different. As a travel writer, I make it my mission to try to find the beautiful, surprising or unexpected side of places and in this way Albania is a treasure chest. So a lot of my answer would depend on the time of year I visit. I can't imagine a more beautiful place than Chamonix, France, for icy alpine grandeur in winter.



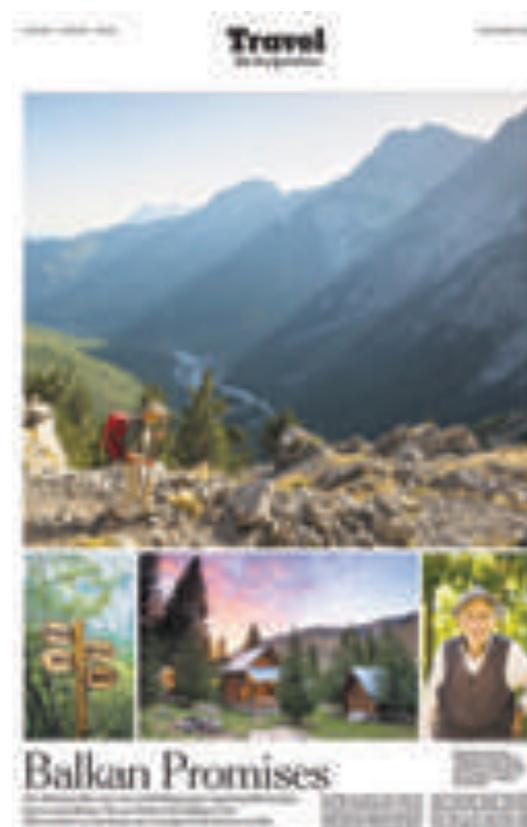


Fiji has beautiful coral reefs. Switzerland's valleys are sublime in the fall. The light in northern portion of the United States state of New Mexico is exquisite in summer. Argentina's rivers are world class. I'll never forget lying in the grasslands of Mongolia without a road or a fence around for a thousand kilometers in any direction. The sky was so big I swear you could feel it sitting on your chest. Albania is high on my list, too. The Osum Canyon with all of those waterfalls raining off of all those cliffs is spectacular. Rafting through that canyon was easily the most dramatic, day-long whitewater rafting I've ever done, anywhere.

9. You are almost a hero in Albania for all the articles you have written until now for our country. Can Albanians hope that other articles will be published in the NYT or elsewhere about Albania?

That's very kind to say but I am not a hero. Everything that's amazing about your country would still be amazing if I'd never walked across that border in September 2012. I was just lucky enough to see it when I did and to have the means to let others know about it in

a big way. But yes, I have other stories about Albania in the oven, though none for the New York Times. **My next one, which I think is my best one, will be coming out in Outside magazine's June issue. (www.outsideonline.com).** Outside is a major magazine in the US with close to 2 million readers, I think. The story is called "Europe has a Secret" and it attempts to introduce active American adventure travelers to Albania. It focuses largely on an Albanian guy who runs an outdoor adventure company based in Tirana, while explaining the history and issues facing the country. It's a "warts and all" story as we say, meaning, I don't ignore the ugly. And yet the majority of the piece showcases Albania's beauty. By combining the ugly realities with the outstanding beauty, the article has an overall message of "hope"- a hope that Albania will realize its potential to become something truly great. If that happens, there's no doubt who will be the real heroes.





albaniantravel.info
travel

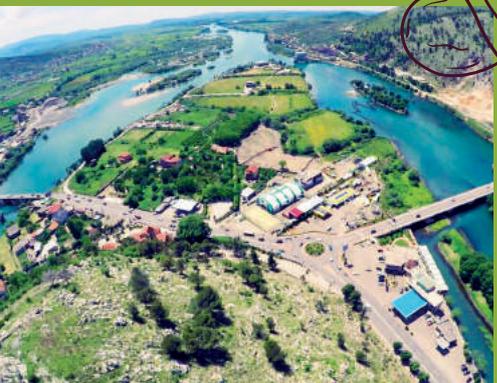
The best culinary tours offered from
Travel Magazine in Albania for 2018

Dear Readers!

Today, gastronomic tourism is the trend of the moment; everywhere around the world. Tourists travel just to taste new and unique flavors that they can not find elsewhere but in the country that offers them, foods grown in the wild, far from genetic modifications or chemical treatments that have filled the world. Albania is the right place to offer delicious, natural, home grown food on small farms, bringing back ancient recipes that clearly identify each of its areas through culinary art. An invaluable asset, a small part of which we have brought to these culinary tours. But above all, you dear tourists, can enjoy these gastronomic treasures at really competitive prices in relation to all other destinations in Europe, even the region. So, welcome to the rich Albanian Mahogany!

*Albanian
Food Tours
2018*





The North Albanian itineraries

not only culinary but also a pilgrimage in history, in authentic natural heritage and in the Albanian culture

From Luan Dervishej

Albania is as small as it is big. Most of the borders of Albania can now be easily reached by car or bus. With the increase in tourists interested in exploration of Albanian cultural and natural assets, tourism proves a wealth with substantial values. Nowadays, one can travel from Tirana to the northernmost point of Vermosh, within a four hour drive. However, as a tourist we want to explore the attractions step by step, along the way, which would extend the traveling time up to a week.

Gastronomy (the art of choosing, cooking, and eating good food) as part of tourism should not be left out from the exploration of the nature and cultures of the destination. This means to dive in and understand the environment, traditions, the origin of the products and the culture behind preparing and cooking. By exploring the local cuisine you can understand and choose what is special and authentic. An experience that you can only find along the way.

What you will need is: the desire to ask, explore, and enjoy the beauty, and the necessary information for the destinations, and a mobile phone with google maps. For tourists who are not keen to drive themselves and undertake such adventures, hire a guide. With the exception of the road to Qafë-Thore-Theth, all the other main destinations can be reached by car on modern asphalt roads.

The itineraries in the district cover all the main categories of the touristic products: natural, rural, cultural, products of the sun and wind originated from a complex picturesque view and biodiversity. The wide range of biodiversity passes through areas and parks awarded with national, international or regional values, like the reservoir of Kune - Vain, up to the protected area of Buna river, near the Natural Park of Shkoda's lake, the regional park of Shkrel, the National Park of Theth and even up to Vermosh as the future park of the Albanian Alps. The itineraries pass through the Adriatic coast, across lagoons, exotic and affirmed beaches, fields and hill areas rich with not only agro-biodiversity but also historical and cultural heritage.

Beyond experiencing and enjoying the touristic journey and lots of picture taking opportunities, you will come away enriched with historical and geographical knowledge of the local culture as well as a deeper appreciation of the country's values and the Albanian autochthonous heritage. Therefore, the exploration of the region could be experienced as a pilgrimage in history, cultural heritage and Albanian nature.



The Itineraries:

1. From Patok to Shengjin: the diversity of the Adriatic coastline - landscape varieties, rich biodiversity, different options to relax and explore a wide variety of culinary.
2. The history of gastronomy and agro-biodiversity from the Zadrime field in Bushat - wine, cheese and olives of Kallmet - to the art of culinary at Mrizi i Zanave; from the Fishta and Mjeda cradle to Bushati, the residency of princes and pashas.
3. Admiring the natural panorama along Buna from Velipoja, up to the tava e krapit at the Shkoda's lake - reachable by car but also by walk and bicycle; explore more water and birds in their habitat, boats and fishing, vegetables of Oblike and local goats, Zogaj carpets, "tave krapit" and qefulli ne "tjegull"
4. Shkoda - the crown of greatness of the North and the Albanian authentic values - a castle at the edge of the lake which unites the mountain and the sea; an exploration of values that must be explored step by step.
5. The Alps Valleys - at the entrance of the mountains, with a rich agro-biodiversity and an endless history - From the Mesi bridge and the Kiri valley, along Drishti at the Reçi's chestnuts and towards Veleçik in Razëm.
6. Theth - the heart of the mountains - for the passionate ones who like to dive into nature and hiking.
7. Kelmendi - The highland of traditions - from xhuleta and Logu i bjeshkeve local contest, to Mishavina cheese and Cemi trout.

Wine and Olive Route around the Central Albania

A long culinary tour, wineries and extra virgin olive oil factories in the Tirana-Durres area



Should we suggest and you accept a culinary travel-tale through Middle Albania, it is likely that those who are at least a little familiar with that part of Albania would think of the traditional dishes like 'tava e dheut', 'tava e kosit', all kinds of roasted meat, and other dishes either inherited or influenced from the Ottoman cuisine that presently has gained all of its own characteristics and is called the Middle Albania Cuisine.

We, in fact, would introduce this beautiful part of Albania to you in a completely different way – by presenting two ancient cultures in Albania: vine-growing and olive-growing.

Our typical Mediterranean country, is well provided for the cultivation of vines and, as the archeological findings show, it is one of the most ancient vine-growing places. Presently, the enological market in Albania is represented by several successful wine producers like Kallmeti, Arbëri, Kokomani, Belba, Bardha, Herta, Skënderbeu, etc. who are now working together with the native viticulturists, agronomists and enologists to implement their know-how in the Albanian land.

So, as soon as you find yourself among the endless vineries where we are about to travel, or in any of the wineries like the wonderful Kokomani Winery, you probably couldn't help exclaiming in amazement: "What does Tuscany have that is better than this?"

Naturally Tuscany has more, but the Middle Albania has a lot to offer. It presently is the richest area of wineries in Albania that produce a high quality wine well confirmed by the numerous prizes awarded in national and international events. It also has an abundant amount of traditional factories that produce extra virgin olive oil. We are about to show you the best of this agro-tourist industry that is on the list of tourist itineraries right away.

WINE TOURS

SHEHI FAMILY Winery

We'll start our tour in Farkë e Madhe, Tirana, at the Shehi family Winery. Wine producing is a tradition in the Shehi family well preserved by the five Shehi brothers who have re-built a modern and at the same time traditional winery that occupies a big area. The winery is located in the middle of a land planted with different grape varieties, olive trees and other fruit trees. It consists of a spacious traditionally furnished area with the guests room sided by settees, the fireplace, etc. and

a children play ground that welcomes many visitors. Shehi Family Winery offers wine tasting and traditional products.

Lundër Winery

In Tirana surroundings, where a pleasant hilly relief



stretches out adjoining the capital like a crown, several qualitative wineries are situated. One of them, Lundra Winery, created in the 1992, is located next to a 60 hectares vineyard where all the vinification, bottling and packing processes are performed in a closed cycle, finished and taken to the market. The Winery is open for a tour to visitors who can see the entire vinification process. The most suitable period of the year to tour the vineyard is between September and October when the visitors may attend the grape harvesting. Wine tasting in the Winery is also offered.

NARI LUNDRÁ Winery

Lundra is a well known village for its vineries and vine-growing natural elements. Its inhabitants have always grown vines and produced wine in the traditional way. Now, one of those wine-making places is the "Nari Lundra" Winery which started to operate in 1992. The grape they use for the production of their white and red wines and also for their raki, is from the famous Lundra vineyards. Their wine and raki are exclusively produced for Nari Lundra restaurant. The winery, where the grape

harvesting can be attended, and the winery, where the wine-making process can be observed, are tourist destinations. But, should you wish, accompanied by a guide, to expand your visit to the surrounding area, you may want to visit Petrela Castle, the ancient Illyrian town of Persqop, Pëllumbasi cave, Cyclopes' eye, etc.

ENOL Winery, Preza, Vora

Now we'll descend Lundra hills and continue our tour to the North of the capital where Enol Winery welcomes the tourists as a visiting destination throughout the year. Situated in the middle of fertile hills and surrounded by vineries and olive groves, Enol Winery offers not only wine tasting but also traditional food in a restaurant located above the Winery. With a variety of products, Enol is a suitable setting for all ages.

VILA SHEHI, Gjokaj, Vorë

Vora area, where Vila Shehi is located, has a suitable vine-growing climate as well. Vila Shehi offers high quality products that are made of the grape from the surrounding vineyard. Vila Shehi's Winery is open throughout the year offering tours of the Winery Museum and wine tasting room where the house wine and the local wine of the area can be sampled. The grape vine varieties cultivated there and that date back to the 1967, are: Shesh i Bardhë, Shesh i Zi, and Merlot. Produced in a traditional way that is enriched by the science and the art of wine-making, the wine is 'grown old' in large oak barrels and then taken through laboratory tests and tasting sessions by specialists. Some of the Vila Shehi products are: Shesh i Bardhë wine, Shesh i Zi wine, Merlot wine, Cabernet Sauvignon wine, Rose wine, Muscat raki, Grape raki, etc.

BARDHA WINERY, Marikaj, Tirana

The well-known Bardha family, originating from Leskoviku (Albania) and with a deep-rooted tradition in vine-growing, would undoubtedly be part of our tour as they have established a quality Winery in Marikaj. Located on a soft hilly relief and surrounded by vineyard and olive-groves hills, Bardha Winery, in addition to offering a gorgeous landscape, is distinguished for its high quality products. Among its most popular wines

Për një orientim më të mirë, shihni hartën që Agjencia për Zhvillim Rajonal 2 ka përgatitur për këtë tur. Ju mund të zgjidhni nga aty edhe edhe itinerare të veçuara sipas dëshirës tuaj

For a better orientation, see the map that Regional Development Agency 2 has prepared for this tour. You can also choose separate itineraries according to your wishes





are: Merlot wine, Shesh i Bardhë, Cabernet Cuvee made of Cabernet, Leskoviku Merlot and Shesh i Zi grapes.

Add to the delight of quality wine tasting in this area of Tirana, the pleasure of cultural sites. Here's our advice; visit Preza Castle, a medieval castle where apart from touching the history you will enjoy the spectacular views of Tirana and Kruja.

HERTA WINERY, Maminas, Shijak

Leaving Tirana behind, we enter the Durrësi area where a number of wineries have either prospered or are on the way to developing not only their products but also of their establishments. Such is Herta Winery. You can find there high quality wine like Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, white wine made of the Sheshi i Bardhe grape variety, of the biological Merlot DYrrahu variety, etc. Wine tasting is offered in the winery along with local and traditional products. A visitable destination as well is the winery that stretches out next to Herta Winery.

ENISA Winery, Sukth, Durrës

Enisa Winery is a destination worth visiting during the fruit harvesting period, particularly in August, September and October. Also when the wine and raki are produced from August till November. Enisa Winery, in addition to wine tasting, offers visitors tours of the winery surrounding the Winery, tours of the fruit trees and nut trees fields, and of its olive-grove.

DUKA WINERY, Lalëz, Ishëm, Durrës

Duka Winery, a true tourist destination where the vineyard, wine-making unit and the wine cellar are worth visiting. There you can also see the Topani Lake and stop at the restaurant by the Lake to taste the wine and enjoy the traditional food.

All set up in an area filled with attractions especially natural, a visit to the Durrës wineries will give you the opportunity to visit the entire Rodoni Cape area, an area full of history, nature, virgin beaches and vacations filled with adventure.

SKËNDERBEU Winery, Rrashbull – Durrës

"Gjergj Kastrioti Skënderbeu" Alcoholic Drinks Manufactory is the biggest of this kind in Albania. It is positioned on Rrashbulli Hill and occupies an area of about 45,000 square meters. Originating from 1933, it was established by an Italian family in Sukth that started by a simple grape processing using modest capacities. In 1957 the construction of the Winery on Rrashbulli Hill started. In 1960 the first 3 buildings were finished increasing the wine manufacturing capacity. The voluminous construction work continued until 1987 transforming the manufactory into the biggest facility of this kind in the country. The products of this winery are esteemed several times with prizes in national and international competitions. In 2001, the manufactory was privatized, invigorating its further development. Presently, they own about 40 hectares of winery on Arapaj Hills. The grapes produced from these vineyards are used as the raw material for the production of white and red wines. "Skënderbeu" Alcoholic Drinks Manufactory produces about 13 kinds of wines and other alcoholic drinks, like Skënderbeu Brandy, Bato Brandy, Muscat Raki, Grape Raki, Fernet, Orange punch, Primitivo nectar, different liquors, white and red vinegar, and balsamic vinegar.



KOKOMANI WINERY, Eminas i Vogël, Shijak

Last but not least of the Durrësi wine tour, Kokomani Winery is the most beautiful of them all and is located in the most favorable place to enjoy all the impressive panorama views and the beauty of this Tuscan-like winery. The restaurant was added recently to enrich the wine tasting experience.

Kokomani Winery is located on the hilly area of Central Albania, in Eminas i Vogël Village, next to Shesh Village, where the well-known Shesh variety of grape originates from. This autochthonous variety comes in two types: Shesh i Bardhë and Shesh i Zi, which are popular for the production of a quality wine very specific for its flavor and taste. The founders of this winery have enriched the ancient tradition of vine-growing and wine-making in this area with their 15 years of experience in Tuscany, Italy, at the most prestigious wineries of that region. Kokomani Winery produces three types of high quality wines both in consistency and image. Shesh i Bardhe, Shesh i Zi, and Shën Mhill, the latter is an international classic wine made by mixing the three well-known Bordeaux varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdo and Merlot.

BELBA 2000, Kavajë

Our wine tour will come to an end in a special and very famous winery in Kavaja. In addition to the high quality products, Belba Winery is known for the modern equipment and technology they use to process the selected grapes into wine. Grape varieties are selected based on the land type where the vines will grow. The area is ideal for the cultivation of Sheshi i Zi, Sheshi i Bardhë, Chardonnay, Prugnolo Gentile, Trebbiano, Toscana, Merlot, and Cabernet varieties. Founders of this winery, the Belba brothers, worked and were specialized in winery cultivation and grape processing for a period of 11 years in Italy, in La Casella Winery in Montepulciano, province of Siena, Tuscany. After this experience, they returned to Albania, to their homeland, where they established Belba Winery. The wineries, of which grape Belba wine is made, are located in Golemas Village. The most popular products of Belba Winery are: Kavaljon Reserve Wine made of Progiolo Gentile and Montepulciano grape, Chardonnay Kavaljon Wine made of Chardonnay grape, Kavaljon red wine made of Sangiovese, Montepulciano and Merlot grape, Shesh i Bardhe Kavaljon Wine made of Shesh i Bardhe grape, Shesh i Zi Kavaljon Wine made of Shesh i Zi grapes.





OLIVE TOURS

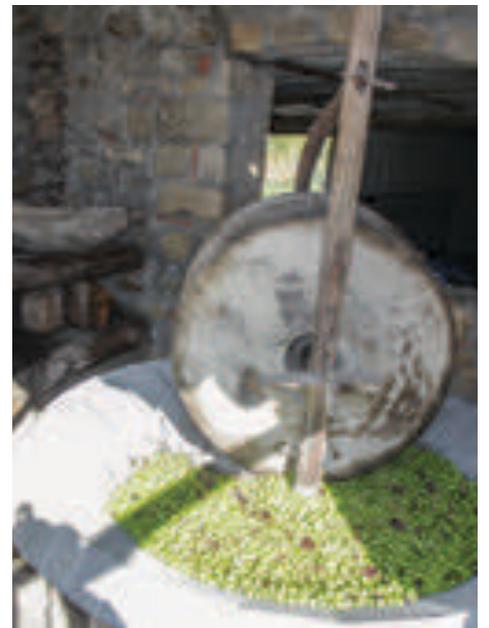
Rich in olive trees, some of them hundreds and a few some thousands years old, Albania has a Mediterranean relief suitable for the production of quality olive oil. Numerous hills planted of olive trees offer good opportunities for the development of an oil producing industry. Presently, operating both in the native and in the foreign markets, several small olive oil factories are known. They produce extra virgin olive oil that is certified and has the parameters of a bio product, unlike many in Albania. A visit to these factories will give you the opportunity to see closely those rare exemplars, the 3-4 thousand years old olive trees that may be the oldest ones in the entire Mediterranean basin.

IVAP, Mullet, Petrele

IVAP Company operates in the collection, processing and trade of olives and olive oil and its by products, wholesale and retail. One can take a tour of the IVAP olive oil establishment at any time, but the most interesting time is when the olive oil is processed. The visitors will have the opportunity to taste different types of olive oil made of different olive varieties that are collected in different areas. The biological extra virgin olive oil of the IVAP Company is awarded with international prizes.

SHKALLA, Lundër, Tirana

Shkalla Olive Oil Factory is located in Lundër. It is a family business that started 100 years ago when in Ramazan Shkalla's family oil mill, the olives of Farkë Village were milled. You can take a tour of the establishment at any time, but the most interesting period is the olive oil processing between October and December. Because the olives are collected in different areas, you can taste different types of olive oil. Shkalla olive oil is esteemed with international prizes as a biological extra virgin olive oil.



"TRE MIQTË", Ndroq, Tirana

"Tre Miqtë" Oil Factory in Ndroq maintains European standards of oil producing. They process light green and dark green olive varieties. The factory is open to native and foreign tourist to take a tour of its premises and see the olive oil processing and the 250 years old olive oil mill. The products of this factory have been demonstrated in national and international fairs and honored with appreciation and quality certificates. In addition to the establishment tour, the visitors may enjoy the traditional food in the restaurant nearby or in the open field under the 500 years old olive trees.

SUBASHI, Marikaj, Vorë

Located in the center of Marikaj, Subashi factory uses the cold and continuous oil extracting system. Subashi Olive Oil Factory has participated in different competitions and has won several prizes. Marikaj's hills, of which olives this factory is furnished from, are rich in olives whose age varies from 15 years, 60-70 years, 400-500 years and 800 years old to a couple of thousand years old for a few of them. In this olive grove you can find all kinds of flora and fauna of the area like the edible plants and flowers, aroma plants, different spices, etc. In the surrounding area you can take a tour to the old church near Kuçi, to Marikaj Lake, to the Oil Mill and Shop, etc. Subashi Oil Factory offers about 35 products made of plants from its olive grove. They can be tasted in the factory premises accompanied by other local products.





1001 ALBANIAN ADVENTURES

This tour is offered by "1001 Albanian Adventures", an agency specializing in incoming tourism that recognizes and identifies the tourist values of the Berat area and not only, as an UNESCO world heritage but also the entire natural and cultural areas around Berat

From Ardit Fiska

If we told you since the beginning of the tour that we will take you to Berat, you would certainly recall the magical Mangalem, white houses, the castle, Gorica in the front and the bridge connecting two historical neighborhoods. But, not this time. We will not take you to Berat. We could go after the tour to visit and see up close the 2500-years-old city of Berat. For our culinary tour we decided to go to a new place, one that perhaps you haven't visited yet. If you heard about the famous wine of Berat or its figs, they come from Roshnik. This is the place you will visit today, a place where grapes are cultivated to make wine and where the most famous figs of Albania come from. Roshniku is a village in Berat, at the foot of Tomorri Mountain that is known for grapes, figs, organic wine production known as "Pules of Berat," and the best organic dishes in the area. The countryside of Roshniku is breathtaking and the locals would even tell you Roshniku has the best nature. Locals are known to be hard working loving people. All of them are busy with viticulture and arboriculture, making the village a well-known destination for culinary tourism. Visit the vineyards of Alpeta wine cellar right as you enter Roshnik. The grapevine plantation is an investment made by the Fiska Family 22 years ago and it offers an exquisite pleasure for visiting tourists. Visiting groups are organized by "1001 Albanian Adventures" and leave with the best impressions. They visit the vines, taste the canteen wine, Merlot or Pules of Roshniku and even a glass of rakia made from the best grapes. The village is rather captivating with traditional houses and the building of the Museum of Roshniku stands out because it was built 300 years ago. It is among the most ancient standing museums in Albania.

Roshniku

the village full of history, sleeping under the feet of Tomorri mountain

We didn't bring you all the way to Roshniku only to visit the vines and the beauties of the village. Roshniku offers local cuisine prepared in Restaurant Roshniku. These traditional dishes are 100% organic and have a special taste unique to Berat and Albania. This is why the village has quickly become well-liked by tourists, and has entered the list of agencies as a culinary destination. Some recommended dishes are: baked hunted birds served with vegetables, rosnica, cabrito, lamb, lakror with wild cabbages, pispili, and qumështorë. The baking process is done with saç, a huge metal dish that is heated and put on top of the food for slow cooking preserving the naturalness and freshness of the food. There is a variety of sweets too. The famous figs, fresh or dried, motley jams made from figs and other fruits. Roshniku is a famous cultivating place for fresh produce during every season.

You can enjoy a walk in the vineyards, buy local organic product from the fair, participate in a variety of activities organized in the village, and taste the delicious cuisine prepared especially for your pleasure.



Think of the delightful days of spring and summer, outdoors in nature. In late autumn and deep winter, by the hearth fire while tasting the delicious dishes that come one after the other. The owners of the house are serving food and telling entertaining stories of the village. A village that gave birth to five viziers, out of 35 Albanians who served in the Ottoman Empire and the list goes on with many other personalities and renowned people that originated from Roshniku, in Berat.



Our suggestion: Even though the village is beautiful in every season with the landscape of Tomorri Mountain, we suggest you visit Roshniku in September. It is the best season, when vineyards are ready for the harvest and the municipality of Berat organizes a big party celebrating Roshniku.



Përmet the temple of living attractions

A tasteful journey in the valley of Vjosa with the Pro Permet Consortium



Slow Food®Përmet



The first day: Towards Përmet

The national route Tepelena-Girocastro is the one to follow in order to reach Përmet till the Lekël village and after having passed the old Iron Bridge the street becomes full of curves that wind towards the Dragot village. There is another iron bridge that was built 75 years ago by the famous Italian company "Ansaldo". The street keeps on following the Vjosa River and after a few minutes of travel the valley narrows and on its right side the Këlcyra's gorge appears. Surrounded by a wonderful natural landscape there are two bar-restaurants where you can stop to rest a bit under the flowing waters that flow from the mountain. Këlcyra is only 3 km away

and you can have lunch at the "Sarajet" restaurant, that is near the entrance of the city or restaurant "SofraZagorite" that is situated in the center of the city.

Both restaurants offer a lovely atmosphere where you can find beautiful wood interiors that are combined with a modern and welcoming style. Here you can find some of the typical village dishes: the chicken of the village with nuts, fresh salads and of course the traditional homemade beverages like wine and grappa.

After the lunch break it is possible to visit the "Ndoni" cheese factory that is near the restaurants and where

you can try some of the cheese that it is produced with the milk arriving from the Malshova area. After this stop you can drive towards Përmet. The next stop is near the "Bejko" winery that is at the entrance of Piskova village.

There you can see the interior of the winery and the different processes of wine making while tasting of course a glass of wine and listening to Marsel, the owner of the winery. Then you can go towards Përmet, the city that appears after a few minutes of driving.

The city is really small, clean and on the edge of the Vjosa River. The city of roses, culture, tradition, music, wine, raki and poetry, is an area composed of thousands of attractions from the rich past of this country. Despite the fact that in other places the first attractions of a city are the monuments, here in Përmet the first attractions for the tourists are actually the people and their vivacity. This is not only because of heart, culture and art reasons but also justified by food and unique taste.

In the evening, after checking in at the "Alvero" Hotel or HoteRamiz" or "Hotel Ana" or "Kompleksi Aroma", we can have dinner at the "Antigonea" Restaurant, member of the chefs alliance in Albania and one of the most attended by the tourists. Chef Urimi is always worried that the menu reflects the traditional cooking and that the ingredients are always fresh.

Second day: Visiting the Bënjë village and the thermal waters

After having a healthy breakfast with local products in the hotel, we can proceed towards the Bënjë village. The street goes on towards

the Langarica canyon.

At sunset we go back to Përmet to have dinner at the "Familiari", that offers rich local cooking in a lovely atmosphere.

Third day: visit to Përmet city

After breakfast, we start the tour of the city. The house of Congress of Permet and the Italian barracks are our first stops. Then we enter the historic part of the city. We can visit the church of "Shën e Premtes", famous for his special wall paintings with scenes from the Scriptures of 1808 done by TerpoZografi. Iconostasis and wood sculptures have been realized under the direction of the Albanian artisan Dhimitrit Konica,



while the engraving on a stone slab suggests that the church was built in 1776 by the master Ilia Kristo. After this we can do a quick visit to Zanës who is a very passionate artisan. She'll tell us her passion for knitting and crochet work. Afterwards we can do a tour around the city following the characteristic street made out of pebbles till we reach the City Cinema that is in the same shape that it was at the time of communism. We can also visit the church of "San Nicola" which has

Petran village and right before it we have to turn left towards the Thermal Waters.

The Benje village is 5 km away from the national street that is crossed by a street (dirt road) that can be done by off-road vehicles. At the beginning of the village there is the Benja Church that has old and characteristic architecture. We ring the bell and the guardian of the church opens the doors and tells us its story. Before taking the road again, we visit a traditional house where we can taste the grappa and gliko. At the "Alvi" restaurant we can have lunch with fresh wild fish directly from the river served with different salads and beverages.

After the lunch break we go to the Thermal Waters to enjoy the natural and curative miracle of the area. There are six sources at the base of big rocks on both sides of the Lengarica river canyon. The nature here is wild and all around the view is stunning.

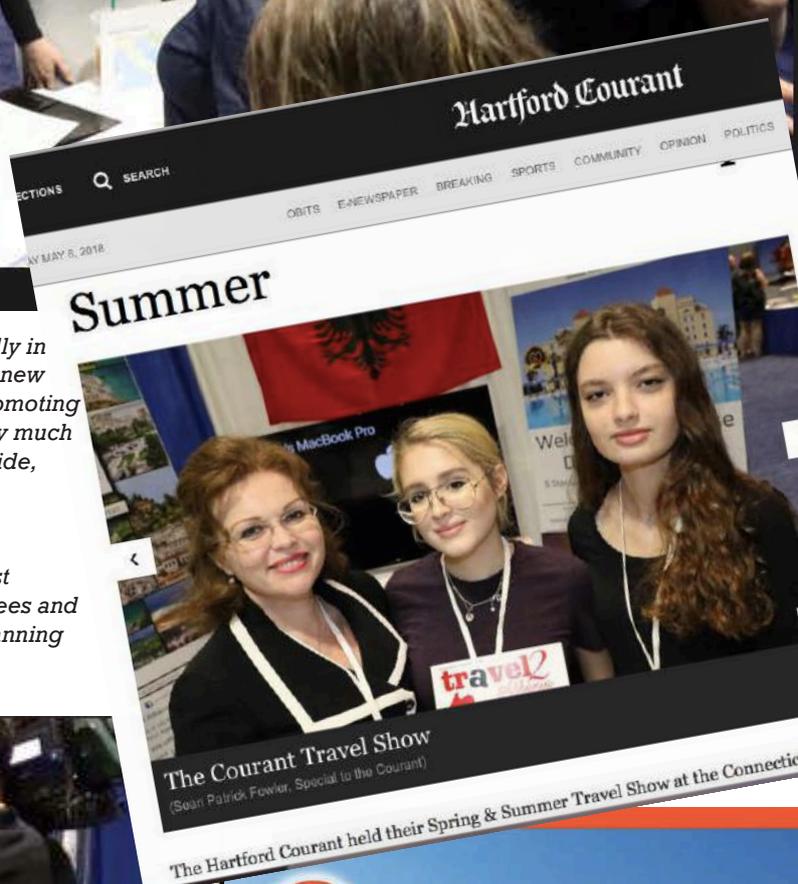
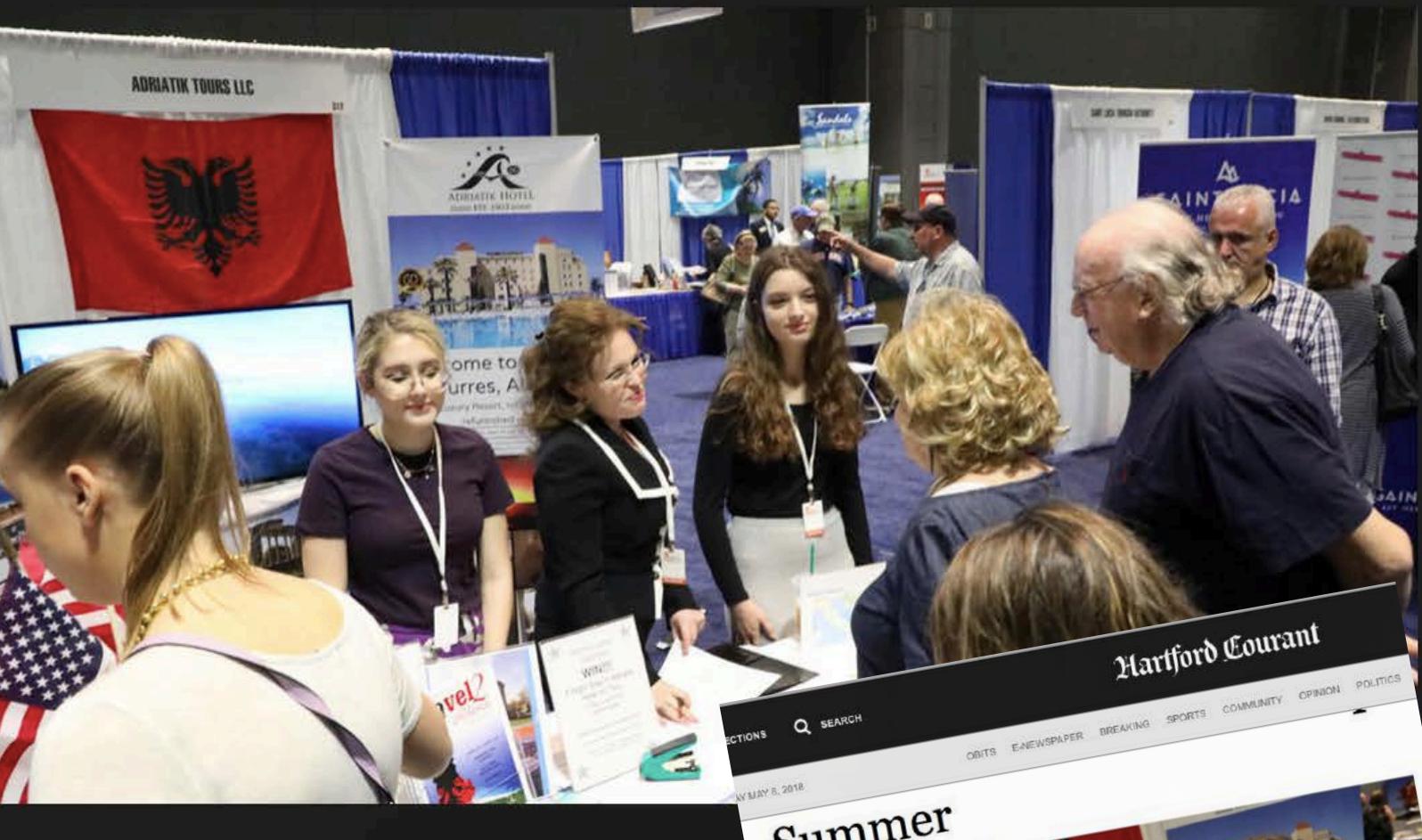
We can stay at the Thermal Water all afternoon whether submerging into the water or exploring

the same characteristics of the other churches in Përmet. Then we can look at the typical houses in the city and we can go towards the new neighborhood where we can visit the "Bualioti" wine cellar. In the end we can climb to the top of the City Stone for a beautiful look at the city and the Vjosa River from the top. We stop at the gliko laboratory where we can see the production of gliko and how it is made. Eftalia and Odeta, two friends who own the business, offer to let us try some types of gliko and also tell us their story.

For lunch break we go to "Aroma" and then we leave Përmet. On the way back we stop at Kuqar village where there is the "Meshini" cheese factory. The cheese factory is on top of an old Italian bunker, also known as cheese factory bunker. There we can taste and buy some cheese products.

After this last stop, we take the road to Tirana, ending an interesting weekend filled with the exploration and characteristic flavors of the beautiful traditions of Përmet.





Our West Hartford Team of Adriatik Tours LLC, exhibited very successfully in Hartford Courant Trade Show on May 5th 2018, introducing Albania as a new destination in USA. This is part of our marketing plan, expanding and promoting all over the US, raising awareness about our beautiful country, worth very much visiting. Our agency offers a full service travel service, for travel nationwide, internationally, but we specialize in Europe and Mediterranean region. Hartford Courant Spring & Summer Travel Show May 5, 2018

Hartford Courant's Spring & Summer Travel Show is Connecticut's largest consumer summer planning travel expo, hosting more than 5,000 attendees and over 100 exhibiting destinations. The show serves as a summer travel planning guide, with show-only deals, giveaways, sampling and fun!



Our West Hartford Team of Adriatik Tours LLC, exhibited very successfully in Hartford Courant Trade Show on May 5th 2018, introducing Albania as a new destination in USA. This is part of our marketing plan, expanding and promoting all over the US, raising awareness about our beautiful country, worth very much visiting.

Our agency offers full service travel service, for travel nationwide & internationally, but we are specialized in Europe and Mediterranean region. The Trade show, took place at Connecticut Convention Center.

Sarah Cody from Chanel 8 interviewed Mrs. Dudaj for the Morning Live Show and for the Chanel 8 News program of 6 p.m, on the same day. Our stand had a lot of attention from the visitors coming from Connecticut, and this resulted in hundreds of applications for our drawing. A winner of our giveaway prize was selected, winning a 5 nights stay for two, in a suite at Adriatik Hotel, Luxury 5 Star, located in Albania.



Xhubleta - Malësia e madhe
(Great Highland, North Albania)



Tirana, Kruja, Kavaja
Central Albania

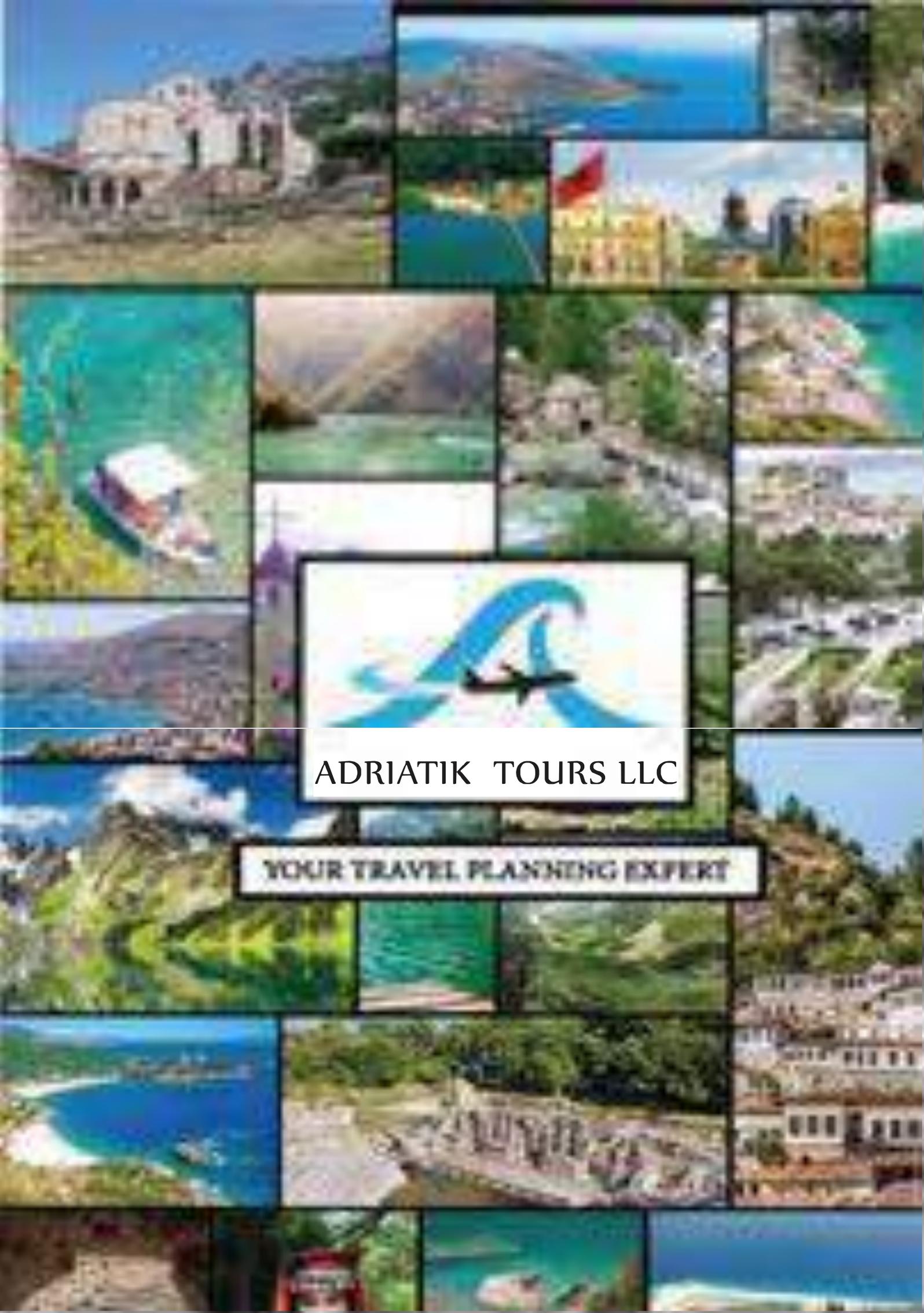
Albanian Folk Costumes



Mirdita region
North Albania



Kolonjë area
Southeast Albania



ADRIATIK TOURS LLC

YOUR TRAVEL PLANNING EXPERT