MAGAZINE

A DRIATIK HOTEL

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REASONS

HOTEL ADRIATIK A family experience

DURRËS Albanian coastal city rich with antiquity

> **EXPLORE** Berat Castle

AN EPIC RAFTING

Adventure along Albania's rivers

> KUKËS Breathe at the

height of the mountain

ALISA DUDAJ

The Albanian Fashion Designer in New York fashion week

narried in Albania



Menu • Adriatik taste mosaic • Shrimp flambee in cognac and orange sauce • Ricotta & spinach stuffed pasta in Alfredo sauce • Sea bass elegance on creamy potato

GALA

with broccoli and asparagus

Lemon sorbeto
Beef tenderloin with forest fruits sauce
Countdown with champagne
Turkey with chestnut

New Year's tradition

• Homemade Baklava with ice cream

CHILDREN'S PRICING

CHILDREN UNDER 5 YEARS: Up to consumption CHILDREN AGED 5-11 YEARS: **50%** of the price

DINNER 119€ PER PERSON DINNER & ACCOMMODATION 159€ PER PERSON

> FOR RESERVATIONS +355 69 707 5784 | +355 69 20 21 778 we events@adriatikhotel.com





CONTENTS

GET INSPIRED BY TRAVEL **EXPERIENCES**



ALICE TAYLOR Alice in Albania, 250 adventures

32 DURRËS Albanian coastal city rich with antiquity

> DONIKA GUNTHER An excelent mindfulness & spiritual coach

THE TRAIL OF COLORS IN KUKËS Breathe at the height of the mountain

7 REASIONS TO VISIT ALBANIA, Europe's hidden gem

THE CASTLE OF TIRANA A new cultural destination

36

38

40

44

46

49

VJOSA RIVER Europe's last wild river, a natural wonder

ADRIATIK HOTEL DURRËS A relaxing retreat on the shores of the Adriatik Sea

ALBANA MUÇAJ HOTEL ADRIATIK A 5-STAR HOME V formily experience

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DID YOU KNOW?

The Adriatik Hotel itself is an important part of Albanian history. Before 1990, people visiting the Adriatik were scanned in advance by the Albanian government. It was the only destination in Durrës for foreign personalities and Albanians.



Living in Tirana, my holidays at the Adriatic are short, but frequent. It's an ideal solution for the family. It's hard to arrive in Durrës, at the entrance of the Adriatik, and not find a sunny day. The advantage of the weather allows you to enjoy every environment-inside, outside, in the beach area, in the indoor and outdoor bars, in the spa, and in the sea-water pool, one of the hotel's treasures.

The ritual of my children is now established, between the hurried dropping of bags in the room and the collection of towels, like trophies for the holiday. I often joke with them, saying, "don't wander off into the unknown." They are so enthusiastic and eager to enjoy all the services and environments of the hotel that you can only follow them with your eyes from one area to another, from the indoor pool to the outdoor one, or from the pool to the children's area. Our little one enjoys another activity very dear to him-making pizzas with the kids. Preparing a

pizza, baking it with the assistance of the staff, and then eating the pizza you made yourself, is one of the most important projects for a child, as they get to taste, in the truest sense of the word, the results of their work.

The spaces, facilities, and tranquility provided allow each of us to engage in activities independently. While the adults enjoy an aperitif, the children have fun with their activities. To return to the difference between a 5-star hotel and others, I come back to the colors, but not only that. The lobby of Hotel Adriatik is a 24hour open exhibition of Albanian culture and history. The photographs of Marubi tell of the culture, clothing, and lifestyle of the Albanian elite over the past 100 years. In the photos of events at Hotel Adriatik over the years, import-







ant local and foreign personalities appear. The Adriatik Hotel itself is an important part of Albanian history. Before 1990, people visiting the Adriatik were scanned in advance by the Albanian government. It was the only destination in Durrës for foreign personalities and Albanians. This makes you curious to understand how government officials moved, which rooms they slept in, where they sat more... And as you travel through these thoughts, all the developments around bring you into a sunny environment with warm people, so much so that I love to call it a 5-star home.

As a journalist, but also as someone who has lived abroad for several years, I think it evokes a similar feeling even if you come from outside. There you find exactly what you would want as part of the diaspora-the warmth of the Albanian people, but also the quality of service. To quell the longing for the country, there are vests and traditional clothing pieces that lead you to the offices of Albanian Tours located within the hotel, where you can choose your preferred guide for travels throughout Albania or the Balkans. Often, even I, who live in Albania, miss the short Albanian traditions... As a preferred destination, I have seen Adriatik as an opportunity to engage in activities that I pursue with my commitments. One of them is the Women Startup Competition. We held the





"My profession as a journalist has given me an extraordinary opportunity to travel to many places. In most cases, the welcoming hotels are 5-star, as anyone who invites journalists to an event aims to show maximum respect."

> first event of the Women Startup Competition in Albania and the buffet dinner precisely in the large hall of Hotel Adriatik. An event that went very well and without stress for me, due to the meticulous care of the hotel's events department. This allowed me to host and welcome my invited friends, including foreigners and those from the diaspora.

> But, as we Albanians say, one thing leads to another, and on the eve of Christmas, I take a step I hadn't even thought of before. With the income in Albania, few can take on hosting 16 people for Christmas Eve, who can also sleep in a 5-star hotel. At least not a journalist. But at Adriatik, once you are a guest, you are always a friend. After a conversation with the General Manager, I booked for my small and large family (16 people on Christmas Eve). Arranging the rooms for my nephews and nieces, along with my children, on the floor where the reserved rooms were located, exploring each other's rooms to see who had the best one, descending for dinner, enthusiastic and a bit chaotic, reminded us of a big family from the movie "Home Alone," who set off on a Christmas trip. Of course, we didn't forget anyone at home \bigcirc . We were all in the hotel, enjoying the holidays, a delicious dinner at a large table, and a royal breakfast, united and filled with love.







BY ANJEZA SELIMAJ

Albania, nestled in the heart of the Balkans, is an ideal destination for an unforgettable wedding. With its sunny skies and stunning seas, comparable to Greece, but at a more affordable price, Albania offers the perfect setting for the most beautiful day of your life.

More and more couples, from Albanians in the diaspora to citizens from around the world, are

choosing Albania for their weddings. And at the forefront of this trend is Hotel Adriatik, located on the picturesque coast of Durrës. This 5-star historic venue, renowned for its expansive surroundings, seaside location, and excellent infrastructure, has become a favorite for weddings. Both Albanians and foreign couples have tied the knot here, celebrating their love with family and friends.

WHY ALBANIA AND HOTEL ADRIATIK?

Hotel Adriatik offers the perfect combination of elegance and history. Since 1957, this glamorous hotel has been the site of countless love stories. Here, every wedding is a unique celebration, offering the ideal setting to create a truly magical day.









"Once in a while, right in the middle of an ordinary life, love gives you a fairytale."





Why Albania and Hotel Adriatik?

Hotel Adriatik offers the perfect combination of elegance and history. Since 1957, this glamorous hotel has been the site of countless love stories. Here, every wedding is a unique celebration, offering the ideal setting to create a truly magical day. At Hotel Adriatik, your ordinary moments become extraordinary memories. The luxurious venue provides a spectacular backdrop for your dream wedding, where every detail is thoughtfully designed, and emotions run high. We invite you to write your love story here, where time seems to stand still.

A MAGICAL **EXPERIENCE**

Siri, one of the brides married this year at Adriatik, said, "I had a wonderful time at the Adriatik Hotel with my husband, where we celebrated our wedding. It was a magical experience, and I recommend the Adriatik Hotel to everyone."

Why choose Hotel Adriatik?

ELEGANCE AND CHARM: A sophisticated 5-star venue with timeless beauty. STUNNING VIEWS: Exchange your vows with the sparkling Adriatic Sea as your backdrop.

IMPECCABLE SERVICE: Our dedicated team ensures every detail is flawlessly executed. TAILORED EXPERIENCES: Whether you prefer an intimate ceremony or a grand celebration, we'll create the perfect experience just for you.







The Services Include

VENUE SELECTION: Explore a range of enchanting indoor and outdoor spaces. CATERING EXCELLENCE: Enjoy gourmet cuisine crafted by our talented chefs. DÉCOR AND FLORAL ARTISTRY: We'll transform our venue into your personal wonderland.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY:

Capture every special moment in stunning detail.

ACCOMMODATION: Relax in a romantic suite for the newlyweds and sea-view rooms for guests, providing the perfect balance of luxury and comfort.

ENTERTAINMENT AND MUSIC: From DJs and live bands to unique performances, we offer a variety of entertainment options.











Venue selection

Whether your celebration is intimate or grand, Hotel Adriatik offers the perfect venue at the best price. Iliria Luxury Restaurant, located on the ground floor, boasts breathtaking views of the Adriatic Sea, providing a stunning backdrop for your special day.

Enchanting entertainment options

ORIENTAL DANCE SHOW: Exotic rhythms, vibrant costumes, and mesmerizing movements will enthrall your guests.

TRADITIONAL ALBANIAN DANCES: Celebrate Albania's rich cultural heritage with spirited dances in authentic costumes.

PIANO OR VIOLIN PERFORMANCES:

Live music adds an elegant touch, whether it's a soulful piano ballad or the sweet notes of a violin. Personalize your playlist to reflect your unique journey together.

CHIC WEDDING CAKE DESIGNS: Our pastry chefs can create stunning cakes of any design or complexity. Choose from timeless styles with simple, elegant shapes adorned with edible flowers, whimsical butterflies, or luscious berries and fruits.

CAPTURING **EVERY MOMENT**

Our professional photographers and videographers are experts at capturing authentic, candid moments. They'll create timeless memories, ensuring that your love story is beautifully framed.

IMAGINE **THE SCENE**

Standing on the sun-drenched shores, the rhythmic sound of waves serenading your love as the grandeur of the sea meets the sky. Here, two hearts unite in perfect harmony.





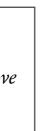


Wedding Package Benefits

WELCOME DRINK: Upon arrival, the newlyweds are greeted with a refreshing welcome drink. SWEET TREATS: Champagne, dessert, and fruits await the couple in their suite on their wedding day. MENU TASTING: Enjoy a tasting session for two to select your perfect wedding menu.

Host your wedding celebration in this historic venue since 1957. Style, glamour, and a central location in Durrës city











SPECIAL ACCOMMODATION RATES: Discounted rates are available for wedding guests staying at the hotel.

PARKING: We offer a spacious parking lot with a capacity of 120 cars, ensuring convenience for all your guests.



ANJEZA SELIMAJ

Events Manager

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- Plazh, Durrës, Albania

AN EPIC RAFTING

LONG ALBANIA'S RIVERS BY ALTEA YZEIRAJ

Albania has quickly become popular as one of Europe's top rafting destinations. Having rivers flowing through the rugged Balkan landscape, the country provides for many opportunities on exciting whitewater rafting adventures. From the fast rapids of Vjosa to the calmer floats along the Osumi, rafting Albania's rivers promises adventures unlike anywhere else.





The canyon of Langarica, that of Holta in Gramsh and Osum, always past the period of June and obtaining the necessary means, are fantastic for on foot and by swimming.

CHOOSING A REPUTABLE RAFTING COMPANY

Several rafting outfitters operate in Albania, but travelers should be careful on selecting based on experience, safety practices and environmental responsibility around these delicate areas. Albania Rafting Group leads the scene with expert multilingual guides, high-quality gear, extensive safety measures, and small groups. They focus closely on each client's skills and preferences to create a customized adventure.

BEST CONDITIONS FROM SPRING TO SUMMER

Seeing how the mountain snow and rain swell Albania's rivers, the ideal rafting months are April to early July. During this period, pleasant weather accompanied by sunshine enhances the experience of sparkling turquoise waters flowing through emerald canyons. Outfitters recommend booking spring rafting trips well in advance due to high demand. For rafters of all skill levels seeking Albania's exhilarating rivers, the country tempts with gorgeous scenery, heart-racing rapids, hospitable villages and a commitment to conservation—the recipe for a legendary Balkan adventure.



THE VJOSA RIVER STANDS OUT

The most popular river for rafting in Albania is Vjosa, also considered one of Europe's last remaining wild rivers. Starting high up in the Pindus Mountains near Greece, Vjosa flows freely for 270 kilometers, fueled by mountain snow and spring rains. The resulting rapids represent a challenge to even very experienced rafters due to their nonstop intensity. The sections near Tepelene are known for some of Albania's most difficult Class IV rapids, while beginners can harden their skills around Permet. Beyond the rapids, Vjosa impresses visitors due to its untouched wilderness beauty and conservation efforts.

In the Vjosa river, adventure enthusiasts get the chance to go Kayaking, Packrafting and Hydrospeeding.

MANY RIVERS TO EXPLORE

While Vjosa gets a lot of buzz, Albania has many suitable rivers for rafting trips catering to different abilities. The Langarica, Shala and Osumi Rivers offer smoother rafting with fun rapids between beautiful canyons and forest gorges. Trips on these rivers go past old Ottoman bridges, quiet mountain villages, and stunning emerald swimming holes to relax. Visitors enjoy the warm hospitality shown by locals in riverside towns who share homemade wine and traditional food.

Rivers suitable for rafting other than Vjosa would be:

- The 3 million year old canyons of Osum, only 60 km from the ancient city of Berat (January-June)
- Kayak and pack rafting in the canyons of Osum July-October Canyon Exploring via swim and hike July-October
- Bistrica river in Saranda
- Black Drin in Peshkopia, Dibra district up North (year round)
- Shkumbin in Elbasan (March-June)

Langarica Canyon and Shala river are not suitable for rafting.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are plenty of tourists who wish to kayak for days from the Greek border to the Adriatic Sea. https://www.albrafting.org/tour/multi-day-kayaking-vjosa-river-camping-6-days Other branches of the Vjosa river, fantastic for amateurs are

https://www.albrafting.org/tour/packrafting-tepelenabenca-river in Tepelenë and Drinos in Gjirokastra.







MRIZI I ZANAVE *Julian of the second states* IN THE HEART **OF ALBANIAN** HOSPITALITY BY ALVINA ZANA

Through the passion and hardwork on cultivating their land, Altin Prenga alongside his family, have provided a rather invaluable asset when it comes to the area of Zadrima, where Mrizi i Zanave also lies nowadays. Accompanied by the experience received in Italy, where they emigrated alongside his father, the Prenga brothers; Altin and Anton, not only managed to build their agrotourism. They were able to economically liven up the area, brought back old recipes, hence turning it into a tourist attraction for both the local and foreign tourism.

Nestled in the lush landscapes of Lezhë, Albania, Mrizi i Zanave is more than just a restaurant; it's a gastronomic haven that celebrates the bounty of the land and the warmth of Albanian hospitality. This culinary oasis, with its commitment to farmto-table dining, has earned a well-deserved reputation as one of the finest dining establishments in the region, providing a unique and unforgettable experience for food enthusiasts.

FARM-TO-TABLE PHILOSOPHY

What distinguishes Mrizi i Zanave is its steadfast commitment to the farm-to-table philosophy. Nestled on a vast estate that features its own organic farm, orchards, and vineyards, the restaurant emphasizes sourcing the freshest, locally produced ingredients. This dedication ensures that every dish served is a celebration of the rich flavors and authentic tastes of Albania's fertile soil.

CHARMING AMBIANCE

Upon entering Mrizi i Zanave, guests are welcomed into a charming and rustic ambiance that reflects the authenticity of the Albanian countryside. The restaurant is housed in a beautifully restored traditional farmhouse, surrounded by gardens and orchards, creating a serene and inviting atmosphere. Whether seated indoors or in the picturesque outdoor courtyard, diners are treated to an immersive experience that goes beyond the plate.

EXQUISITE CULINARY CREATIONS

The heart of Mrizi i Zanave lies in its culinary creations, expertly crafted by a team of skilled chefs who showcase the diversity and quality of Albanian ingredients. The menu evolves with the seasons, offering a dynamic array of dishes that highlight the freshness and uniqueness of each ingredient. From traditional Albanian delicacies to inventive modern twists, every bite is a journey of its own through the region's flavors.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

Beyond its culinary excellence, Mrizi i Zanave is actively engaged in promoting sustainability and community development. The restaurant supports local farmers and artisans, contributing to the economic growth of the region. The commitment to sustainable practices at Mrizi i Zanave encompasses waste reduction, energy efficiency, and environmental conservation, establishing it as a responsible and conscientious culinary destination. Mrizi i Zanave in Lezhë is not merely a restaurant; it's an embodiment of Albanian culture, a celebration to the land's bountifulness, and a testimonial to the power of community-driven hospitality. From its farmto-table philosophy and exquisite culinary creations to its commitment to sustainability and engaging culinary experiences, it stands out as a shining example of culinary excellence and genuine Albanian hospitality. For those seeking a unique and immersive gastronomic journey. Mrizi i Zanave is a destination that promises to tantalize taste buds, uplift the spirit, and carve lasting memories.





SIGNATURE DISHES AND LOCAL SPECIALTIES

Mrizi i Zanave takes pride in presenting a range of signature dishes that capture the essence of Albanian cuisine. Guests can savor specialties like "Tavë Kosi," a mouthwatering baked lamb and yogurt dish, or indulge in the rich flavors of "Fërgesë," a traditional Albanian pepper and feta cheese casserole. The menu also features an impressive selection of local wines, showcasing the vineyard's own produce.

CULINARY EXPERIENCES BEYOND THE PLATE

At Mrizi i Zanave, the dining experience goes beyond the plate. The restaurant offers guided tours of its organic farm, allowing guests to witness firsthand the journey of ingredients from the soil to the table. Cooking classes and workshops are also available, providing an opportunity for enthusiasts to learn the art of Albanian cooking from the talented chefs themselves.





39€ per person ONE drink per person Music by DJ Seven

24

At 20:00

Q____



pristmas

Ment Mena

Detox Salad
Homemade Bread with a mix of sauces
Cheese with sesame and caramelized apple

Risotto with pumpkin and guanciale
Rigatoni with chicken and truffle

• Beef fillet with polenta and demi-glace sauce

Chocolate cake

Figh Mena

Adriatic Salad
 Bruschetta with cream cheese and salmon
 Steamed vegetables

Cassarecce with pesto, arugula, and shrimp
 Risotto with octopus and beetroot cream

• Fish fillet with mashed potatoes and spinach

Rafaelo Cake

FOR RESERVATIONS







Alisa Dudaj was the first albanian fashion designer in New York Fashion Week this February 2024, showcasing the Albanian tradition. Graduate from Parsons University, receiving the invitation was to her surprise. "It was an amazing event. The only thing I knew there was: how many pieces I needed to showcase. From there on, I began to think on the concept and on what I wanted to get my inspiration from. My brand has a strong basis on Albanian traditional clothing", said Alisa Dudaj. This was an opportunity for Alisa to showcase her identity as an Albanian. This time she looked at the shapes, and made a modern, ready to wear dress collection. She took pride on the fact that she was one of the pioneers when it comes to taking the Albanian tradition to New York. Upon sharing the collection, Alisa received a better grasp at the high rate of interest in Albanian traditions. Dudaj has launched a new business of fashion design in Albania, where many women work in handcrafts for ALISA DUDAJ. ALISA DUDAJ, the sustainable readyto-wear brand, has launched its representative/retail office in the US. The brand is well-known for manufacturing unique pieces using traditional motifs and original handmade embroidery crafted by talented Albanian women in Albania. When she is not busy designing for her brand in Albania, Alisa Dudaj also works as a Designer for Adriatik Tours, the renowned travel services company based in the United States.

Visit www.alisadudaj.com to explore the stunning collection and support our mission towards sustainable fashion as an award-winning Albanian fashion designer.

ALISADUDAJ* THE ALBANIAN

IN NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

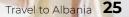
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ALBANIA'S HISTORIC FORTRESS AND CULTURAL TREASURE

Standing prominently atop a hill overlooking Berat lies the impressive Berat Castle, its sturdy stone ramparts and towers exuding history. This ancient citadel provides valuable insights into Albania's complex past, from Illyrian times through the Byzantine and Ottoman eras, earning it UNESCO World.



Despite conquests and transformations over centuries, the steadfast Berat Castle remains a meaningful emblem of Albanian resilience as well as cultural continuity worth spending time within.



HERITAGE STATUS

Beyond the rich history, visitors also discover lovely views, artistic gems and long standing local traditions woven into everyday life.

ORIGINS BLEND FACTS AND LORE

Evidence indicates fortified structures existed since the 4th century BCE. Some credit Emperor Justinian with building defenses in the 6th century AD to control the strategic location. Mythic tales also suggest Helen of Troy's brother constructed the citadel to protect the princess after her kidnapping. While the actual beginnings remain uncertain, the stories hint at the site's antiquity.

CONQUERED YET NEVER CONCEDED

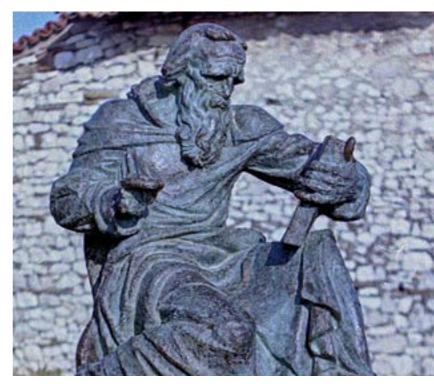
Through history, the fortress withstood numerous attacks and seizures which steadily expanded its structures. The Byzantines, Venetians, Bulgarians and Ottomans held the stronghold for periods. Their respective influences show through towers, churches, mosques and buildings visible today. Despite the armies passing through, the defiant castle endured.

LAYERS OF DIVERSE ARCHITECTURE

Wandering the grounds reveals epochs of history through the range of architecture. See the 13th century Holy Trinity Church, 15th century Ottoman-built Red and White Mosques, and the large 18th century merchant Qesarakio house. Turning any corner may uncover a Romaniote synagogue, old cistern, or modest artisan home.

BREATHTAKING VANTAGE POINTS

The high Mangalem viewpoint provides superb 180° views of the town, river and mountains. Equally impressive is the sunset overlook above the historic quarters, best enjoyed from a cafe with local wine as amber light blankets the scenery. These spots offer photographers wonderfully inspiring shots.





LIVING CULTURE WITHIN **THE CITADEL**

Remarkably, some 600 residents still dwell inside the Berat Castle boundaries. Witness everyday life - women baking bread, craftsmen playing trades, children playing lively games along the aged lanes. This community spirit prevails through festivals like the traditional Carnival parade held before Lent each year.





ONUFRI MUSEUM'S ALBANIAN SACRED ART

Within the castle walls lies the Onufri Museum, dedicated to the influential 16th century religious iconographer sharing its name. Visitors admire his ornate crosses. saint depictions, and delicate silver Christian and Islamic spiritual artifacts alongside contemporaries.

ALICE TAYLER

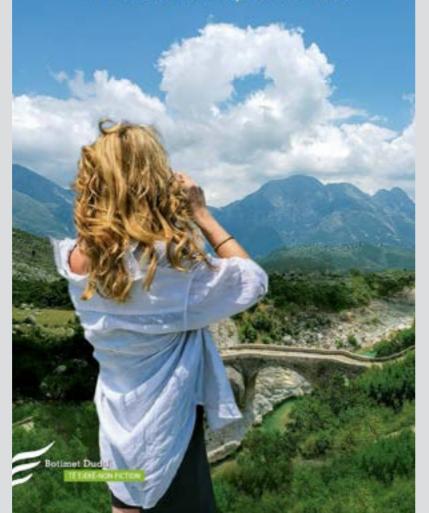
This summer, Hotel Adriatik in Durrës proudly hosted the book promotion of Alice Taylor - The Balkanista and a Meet the Author event. Guests had the unique opportunity to learn about Alice Taylor's incredible journey through Albania, discovering its culture, mentality, and traditions through her eyes. Her deep affection for Albania shines through in her writing, capturing the essence of a country that continues to evolve while preserving its rich heritage. In 250 Adventures, Alice vividly recounts her experiences with remarkable talent, responsibility, and professionalism. Prepare to be captivated as she takes you on her Albanian journey, one that you can experience yourself through her book. Grab your copy here: Alice's Book.

The event was graced by notable Albanian celebrities, including Fadil Berisha, Nevila Dudaj, Bashkim Hoxha, and Tony Dovolani.

250 Adventures is not just a collection of Alice's personal experiences, but also an invitation to explore Albania through its cultural and historical landmarks, food and drink, unique traditions, and fascinating people. It serves as both a guide for those eager to visit and a snapshot of Albania's ongoing transformation—culturally, demographically, socially, and infrastructurally.

As Alice poignantly captures, some people have passed on, places have changed, and traditions are fading, but they remain preserved in this book through her stories and photographs. Understanding Albania fully might take more than 250 adventures, but this is certainly a great place to start.

ALICE TAYLOR ALICE IN ALBANIA 250 adventures | 250 aventura



icein





DURRES

ALBANIAN constal city RICH WITH ANTIQUITY

BY ALVINA ZANAJ

On Albania's western coast along the Adriatic Sea rests the port city of Durrës, one of the Mediterranean's most continuously inhabited urban areas with nearly 3,000 years of history. Once an illustrious naval base and trade hub nurtured by Greeks, Romans, Byzantines and Venetians in turn, remnants of each glorious age litter Durrës. Beyond the visible antiquity, discover a thriving contemporary city renowned for vibrant culture, relic-filled museums, restored amphitheaters, medieval fortresses, delectable seafood, and nearby stretches of spectacular golden sand beaches kissing some of Europe's clearest waters.

F



THE STORIED ANCIENT PORT OF EPIDAMNOS/DYRRACHIUM

Founded in 627 BCE by colonists from Corinth and Corcyra, the city flourished as a strategic Adriatic base. Under Greek influence as Epidamnos, it minted coins by the 4th century BCE and nurtured the arts. Conquered in 229 BCE by invading Illyrian tribes and later seized by Rome in 168 BCE, the renamed Dyrrachium blossomed further. Julius Caesar himself temporarily ruled here for a stint. As the western terminus point for the vital Via Egnatia overland trade route linking Rome to Byzantium, Dyrrachium's wealth and prestige swelled. Remnants of ancient Greek defensive walls, cemeteries and the later Roman architecture astonish visitors today.



AMPHITHEATERS OLD AND NEW

Of the Roman relics scattered through Durres, none compare to the magnificence of the 2nd century CE amphitheater constructed to seat 15,000-20,000 spectators. Though partly ruined and occasionally used as a medieval quarry for stone, enough soaring arches, carved columns and vaulted passageways remain to inspire awe. In the modern day, the theater comes alive each summer with the Durrës International Film SummerFest using the antique backdrop for screenings and concerts. For year-round entertainment, the open-air Durrës Amphitheater built in 2011 hosts concerts and performing arts.



LAYERS OF HISTORY WITHIN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

While ruins capture attention outdoors, the Durrës Archaeological Museum displays tangible history indoors through artifacts from ancient times onwards. Showcases feature exquisite Hellenistic and Roman era mosaics, sculpture fragments, glassware, jewelry pieces and utilitarian objects, all beautifully preserved. Standouts include the Kangellar mosaic depicting a court musician, and unusual Roman bathhouse heating systems. Upstairs, find local medieval, Ottoman and modern era art, textiles and photography.

THE MEDIEVAL DURRËS CASTLE AND VENETIAN TOWER

Though the initial foundations of Durrës Castle likely stem from Byzantine times, the main extant fortification dates to the Anjevin occupation in the late 13th/early 14th century. Strategically positioned along the coastline for monitoring maritime traffic, the castle contains a complex now inhabited by townspeople. Inside are remnants of royal chambers, churches and other structures awaiting archaeological excavation. Also poking above the rooftops is the cylindrical 15th century Venetian Tower, offering panoramic views over terracotta roofs and across the harbor.





CULINARY BOUNTY FROM LAND AND SEA

As a bustling port, Durrës excels in fresh seafood at waterfront spots grilling orodata snapper, mussels sizzling in garlic and olive oil, tangy octopus salads, and more. Equally beloved are the meat-centric specialties like fluffy byrek pies, succulent kebabs, and meze dips with



vegetables. Locals wash it all down with rich red wine or ever-present espresso. Don't leave without sampling scrumptious regional sweet specialties like llokum candy and bakllava oozing with honeyed syrup.

With vestiges of lost civilizations at every turn yet pulsating with contemporary culture, Durrës remains among Albania's most remarkable and resilient cities to encounter today. Visitors depart enchanted by this layers-deep settlement wrapping around a sparkling sea harbor.



DONIKA GUNTHER

th excellen MINDFULNESS AND SPIRITUAL COACH

DID YOU KNOW?

Donika Gunther is a Mindfulness and piritual Coach. Her journey towards growth is a success story, not only for herself but also for the opportunities that coaches like Donika create in the surrounding community. Founder of Mindfulness with a Purpose, she has shared with us her journey and goals."

How did your career start?

Change can be incredibly uncomfortable. Finding the motivation to change is an important first step. My career as a life coach started about 17 years ago when my life took an unexpected turn, and I was faced with unexpected difficult challenges. First, my divorce, followed by the death of both my parents the following year.

The realization that I was a single mother with a seven-year-old daughter who was emotionally, financially, alone, and betrayed was a pivotal moment in my life. To rediscover myself again, I had to lose myself.

I decided to turn my pain into my purpose, making those moments of discomfort my best moment of my self- discovery journey and embrace everything with compassion and new mindset and realize what are the most important things in life, my daughter, my health, my family, my students and people who are in my life.

It was a long journey but worth taking. It brought me to where I am right now.

I started joining yoga, meditation and wellness classes, taking countless courses, workshops, found crest coaches and surrounded myself with likeminded people with a great vision for life. This was the beginning of my journey.

You primarily lived in the US and worked there. But you have decided to offer your services in Albania as well. Can you tell us more about this? Albania is where I was born and I will never forget where I came from. My career and life have been en-



hanced by my Albanian values, traditions, heritage, and hospitality. We live a fast-paced life, and forget to take care of ourselves, our mental, physical and emotional well-being. It's important to learn how to be more present, let go of our past wounds, and create a better and healthier life for ourselves, our children, and our communities. I am aware that those who are ready to make positive life changes and live a more fulfilling and healthier life can gain benefit from my services in Albania.

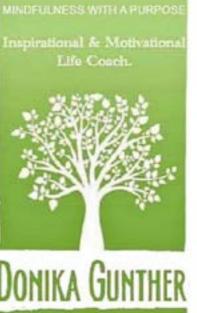
Can you tell us about the most important services you offer and what these services aim to achieve? I help clients:

Set and achieve their personal and professional goals. Breaking free from limiting beliefs. How to overcome negative thoughts and improve their mindset. Finding freedom from burnout and overwhelm. Finding their purpose by delving deeper into their self-discovery journey.

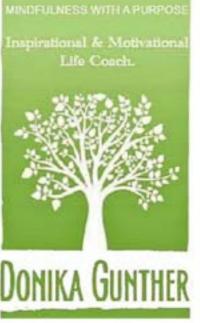
I am able to provide a range of services, including advice, counseling, guidance, teaching, and support through:

- One-on-One coaching
- Workshops
- Healing Retreat
- Public Speaking
- Energy & Intuitive Healing

• If you decide to work with me, I would be thrilled and honored to have the opportunity to work with you.













DONIKA GUNTHER

Founder of Mindfulness with a Purpose

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THE TRAIL

OF COLORS IN reaffe AT THE HEIGHT THE MOUNTAIN

Nestled in the northeastern corner of Albania, the city of Kukës is a haven for nature enthusiasts seeking a unique blend of tranquility and vibrant landscapes. Among the many attractions that draw travelers to this region, "The Trail of Colors" stands out as a mesmerizing journey through the heights of the mountains, inviting visitors to breathe in the pure mountain air while immersing themselves in a palette of natural beauty.

THE TRAIL OF COLORS UNVEILED

The Trail of Colors, also known as "Shtegu i Ngjyrave" in Albanian, is a hiking trail that winds its way through the stunning





FLORAL DIVERSITY

One of the most enchanting aspects of The Trail of Colors is the incredible diversity of plant life that adorns the mountains. Alpine flowers, rare orchids, and a variety of wild herbs carpet the trail, creating a kaleidoscope of colors that captivates the senses. Botany enthusiasts will find themselves immersed in a unique ecosystem, with each step revealing a new floral wonder.





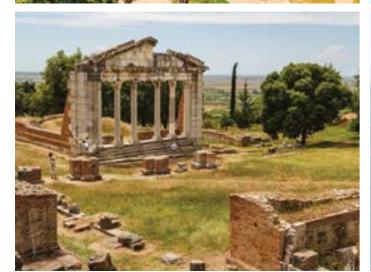
PANORAMIC VISTAS

The Trail of Colors rewards hikers not only with a vibrant underfoot experience but also with panoramic vistas that stretch as far as the eye can see. As trekkers reach higher elevations, they are treated to sweeping views of the surrounding mountains, valleys, and even glimpses of Kukës city nestled in the embrace of nature.

REASIONS TO VISIT











BY NEVILA DUDAJ

Founder of Adriatik Tours LLC, in the United States, and Albania

With 24 years of experience in tourism and hospitality, I am a dedicated professional passionate about crafting unforgettable guest experiences. As the owner and general manager of the historic **Adriatik Hotel, Best Western Premier Collection** in Durrës, Albania, I bring a wealth of knowledge about Albania's tourism potential and its vibrant cultural heritage.

I aim to redefine Albanian tourism by emphasizing authentic experiences, sustainable practices, and unparalleled service quality.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nestled along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, across the sea from Italy, bordering with Greece in south, Albania is a treasure waiting to be discovered. With its stunning landscapes, rich history, and warm hospitality, this Balkan country offers a unique travel experience that rivals more famous European destinations. Here are seven compelling reasons why Albania should be on your travel bucket list.

PRISTINE BEACHES AND THE ALBANIAN RIVIERA

Albania boasts some of the most unspoiled beaches in Europe. The Albanian Riviera, stretching from Velipoja in North, Durres in center, to Saranda in South, offers turquoise waters, dramatic cliffs, and charming coastal villages. Destinations like Durres are ideal for families and kids, with beautiful sandy beaches, than toward south, Vlora, Dhërmi, Himara, and Ksamil are perfect for sunbathing, snorkeling, and soaking in the Mediterranean vibes.

2 RICH HISTORY AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

With a history spanning millennia, Albania is a tapestry of ancient civilizations. Durrës city, known as the cradle of the Illyrian civilization, located only 30 minutes drive from Tirana. This unique 2,700 years old city will surprise you

with the ruins & antiquities, like the Amphitheater, Antique city walls, Tower, making you feel like you are in Rome. Visit the UNESCO-listed sites of Berat, known as the "City of a Thousand Windows," and Gjirokastër, a stunning Ottoman-era town and castle. Don't miss Apollonia & Butrint, an archaeological site that tells the story of Greek, Roman, and Byzantine eras.







BREATHTAKING MOUNTAIN 3 LANDSCAPES

Adventure seekers will love Albania's dramatic mountain ranges. The Albanian Alps, often called the "Accursed Mountains," are ideal for hiking, offering rugged trails, picturesque villages, and panoramic views. The Valbona Valley National Park and Theth National Park are must-visit spots for nature lovers.



AFFORDABLE TRAVEL **EXPERIENCE**

Compared to Western Europe, Albania is incredibly budget-friendly. From accommodation to dining, you can enjoy high-quality experiences at a fraction of the cost. Savor a delicious meal of fresh seafood or traditional dishes like byrek and tave kosi for just a few euros. Dine at Adriatik Hotel with the most incredible Seaview in Durres, taste the delicious seafood dishes and delicacies prepared by 5 star chefs.

DELICIOUS CUISINE AND LOCAL 5 WINES

Albania's culinary scene is a delightful mix of Mediterranean and Balkan influences. Taste fresh seafood along the coast, enjoy farm-to-table meals in the countryside, and sip on locally produced wines and raki, the traditional Albanian spirit. Our beautiful country's gastronomy is a feast for foodies.





WARM HOSPITALITY

Albanians are known for their generosity and friendliness. Guests are treated with a unique level of care, often being invited into homes for coffee or a meal. This warm hospitality makes every traveler feel like part of the family.







UNTOUCHED NATURE AND 7 **ECO-TOURISM**

From the serene Lake Ohrid to the wetlands of Divjaka-Karavasta National Park, Albania offers a wealth of biodiversity. Outdoor enthusiasts can explore lush forests, waterfalls, and serene lakes. Albania's commitment to preserving its natural beauty makes it a paradise for eco-tourism.

Albania is a land of contrasts: where ancient ruins meet modern cities, and rugged mountains give way to pristine beaches. Its charm lies in its authenticity, affordability, and the promise of adventure. Whether you're a history buff, a foodie, or an outdoor enthusiast, Albania has something special to offer.



WHERE TO GO

Plan your trip now with Adriatik Tours LLC, and discover why this hidden gem of Europe is fast becoming a must-visit destination.

> Contact us: ⊠ gm@adriatiktours.com

Read about us: www.adriatiktours.com







A NEW **CULTURAL** DESTINATION

BY ALTEA YZEIRAJ

"The Old Bazaar" or "Pazari i Ri" in Albanian, within the walls of Castle of Tirana has been restored to the likes of the citizens, visitors, and admirers of our country and traditions it holds.

With a range of service units lined up one after another on both sides of the pedestrian street, this space where the bygone intertwines with the modern, such as culinary and artisan areas; has turned into a powerful voice when it comes to promoting cultural and material heritage. Built in vicinity to the old castle of Justinian, one of the few archaeological remains still present in the heart of the Albanian capital, the Castle is owned by the Toptani family, one of the wealthiest families in Albania and the Balkan region, originating from the beautiful city of Kruja, whom moved to Tirana in the seventeenth century.

One of the most well-known members of the family line; the poet, artist, and activist Murat Toptani, to whom the beautiful pedestrian street of Tirana, where the Castle is





located, is dedicated to, played a fundamental role in the ranks of the national movement for the Albanian overhaul against the Ottoman Empire, which in 1912 in Vlorë led to Albania's independence from that empire, after about five hundred years under its rule.

You can enjoy traditional Albanian cuisine, the finest gastronomic fantasies, experience the aroma of the sea with products elegantly served, taste the most prestigious Albanian and import wines, cocktails, fruit juices, etc. If you find yourself to be passionate about sweets, you can come and taste or choose items of your taste to take away. Enthusiasts of unique products can find the most beautiful handmade creations, clothing, jewelry, and decorative objects. Contemporary art galleries where works by renowned Albanian artists line up and add curiosity and knowledge about authentic collections of Albanian heritage and folk-





lore. And, as the saying goes: "For guests to knock on your door, put the kettle on".

Furthermore, throughout the year, gastronomic events, music, and exhibitions are organized in the wonderful and vast areas of the Castle.

Due to its old and still largely undiscovered history, which reflects the great historical and cultural values of Tirana, the city of all Albanians, it is the right choice for anyone who wants to visit Tirana and for anyone who would go for a stylistically beautiful place.

DID YOU KNOW

Nowadays, after careful restoration, Tirana Castle has turned into an oasis in which visitors can put their finger on all they desire as a new cultural destination and a place to enjoy traditional food, visit galleries and exquisite shops offering Albanian and artisanal products.



EUROPE'S LAST WILD RIVER, **A NATURAL WONDER** BY ALBANA MUCAJ

Flowing through the heart of the Balkans, the Vjosa River stands as a testament to the untouched beauty of nature. Often referred to as Europe's last wild river, the Vjosa meanders through Albania, captivating all who encounter its pristine waters and the breathtaking landscapes that surround it. As debates about conservation and development echo, the Vjosa River remains a symbol of the delicate balance between progress and the preservation of our planet's natural wonders. The Vjosa River originates in Greece and flows uninterrupted for approximately 272 kilometers, coursing through Albania before emptying into the Adriatic Sea. What sets the Vjosa apart is its remarkable lack of dams and human-made obstructions along its length, making it one of the few remaining free-flowing rivers in Europe. Its untamed beauty draws nature enthusiasts, scientists, and adventurers alike, each seeking to witness the unique ecosystem that has flourished along its banks. The Vjosa River is not just a watercourse; it's a biodiversity



PhotoHound

hotspot. The river and its surrounding riparian areas host a diverse array of flora and fauna, many of which are rare or endangered. Fish species like the huchen and the softmouthed trout find refuge in the Vjosa's crystal-clear waters, while the riverbanks provide habitat for numerous bird species, including the elusive and endangered Egyptian vulture. Despite its ecological significance, the Vjosa River faces threats from proposed hydropower projects that aim to harness its energy for electricity production. The potential consequences of damming the Vjosa include the disruption of fish migration routes, alteration of sediment flow, and the loss of critical habitats. Conservationists, local communities, and environmental organizations have united to advocate for



the protection of the Vjosa and its surrounding ecosystems, emphasizing the need to preserve this natural wonder for future generations.

For those seeking an adventure off the beaten path, the Vjosa River offers a variety of activities. Rafting enthusiasts can navigate its rapids, taking in the stunning scenery as they drift downstream. Kayakers find joy in the river's twists and turns, while hikers explore the pristine landscapes of the Vjosa River Valley. These activities not only provide a thrilling experience but also foster a deep appreciation for the river's unspoiled beauty. Beyond its ecological importance, the Vjosa River holds cultural significance for the communities along its course. Villages and towns nestled on its banks rely on the river for sustenance, irrigation, and economic activities such as

fishing. The Vjosa has played a role in shaping the traditions and lifestyles of these communities, further emphasizing the interconnectedness of nature and culture in the region. The Vjosa River stands as a beacon of natural wonder in a rapidly changing world. As the last wild river in Europe, it symbolizes the importance of preserving untouched ecosystems for the benefit of biodiversity, local communities, and future generations. The ongoing discussions surrounding its conservation serve as a reminder that, in the face of development pressures, there are places like the Vjosa that deserve protection to ensure the delicate balance between progress and the preservation of our planet's irreplaceable natural treasures.



Travel to Albania 47

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EXPLORING ALBANIA

Nestled along the picturesque shores of the Adriatik sea, the Adriatik Hotel in Durres is a luxury destination that offers tranquility, comfort, and exceptional hospitality. This charming hotel has become a top choice for travelers seeking a blend of comfort, cultural richness, and stunning natural beauty.

As a 5-star leisure and business hotel, Adriatik Hotel welcomes guests year-round to its beachfront location. Only 25 minutes drive from Tirana International Airport. It is the only member of the Historic Hotels of Europe in Albania and is proud to be part of the Heritage Hotels of Europe.

Adriatik Hotel is also an ideal wedding destination, with a





alle/d



BOOK YOUR SERVICES ON +355 69 995 4570 ≤ spa-services@adriatikhotel.com

48 Travel to Albania

FORLE/d



ON THE SHORES OF THE APRIATIK SEA



GREAT LOCATION

One of the best features of the Adriatik Hotel Durres is its prime beachfront location. Situated along the lovely Adriatic coastline, the hotel offers nice views of the sea and beach. Guests can enjoy the soothing sounds of waves, creating a peaceful atmosphere for relaxation.



dedicated events team that specializes in planning and executing successful events, conferences, exhibitions, and show.

COMFORTABLE ACCOMMODATIONS

The hotel offers a range of well-designed rooms and suites, each blending modern facilities and elegant style. From the moment guests arrive, they find themselves in a sophisticated setting. Spacious rooms, comfortable furnishings, and good amenities ensure an enjoyable stay.

EXCEPTIONAL DINING

Adriatik Hotel Durres offers a wide variety of delicious dishes to satisfy every taste. The hotel's restaurants highlight regional cuisine, with chefs using fresh local ingredients. Guests can enjoy traditional Albanian dishes, italian and mediterranean cuisine, all while taking in beautiful views of the Adriatic Sea.

RELAXING SPA AND WELLNESS FACILITIES

For those seeking relaxation, the hotel features a serene spa and wellness center that feels like a retreat. Guests can indulge in therapeutic treatments and wellness programs designed to bring peace to the body and mind. Enjoy a soothing massage, relax in the sauna, or lounge by the pool with lovely coastal views.

NEARBY CULTURAL SITES AND LANDMARKS

Adriatik Hotel Durres is conveniently located near historical and cultural attractions, providing guests opportunities to explore. The nearby city of Durres boasts ancient ruins, museums, and local markets that offer a glimpse into the region's rich history. The hotel staff is happy to provide suggestions for experiencing the area's cultural treasures.



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CARING HOSPITALITY

What sets Adriatik Hotel Durres apart is its commitment to excellent service. The warm and professional staff works hard to ensure every guest has an enjoyable stay. Whether arranging outings, recommending local attractions, or attending to special requests, the attentive hotel team aims to create memorable experiences. For travelers seeking a high-quality destination that combines luxury, natural beauty, and cultural richness, Adriatik Hotel Durres is an ideal choice. With its beachfront location, comfortable rooms, delicious dining options, and top-rated service, this charming hotel invites guests to discover Albania's stunning coastal paradise.

USCANA BAR



ADRIATIK TOURS LLC

We unveil enchanting destinations. From the storied streets of Albania, where history dances in the breeze, to the tranquil coastal heaven of beaches, where the sea whispers tales of ancient legends - these destinations promise an unforgettable getaway...