

Albanian

Nature &

Activities







**Albanian Nature**



**Albanian Seaside**



**Sport and Adventure**

## *relief and climate*

Albania covers a total area 28 748 km<sup>2</sup> and is distinguished for its spectacular and diverse terrain. One-third of the country consists of lowlands. These are located primarily in the west and extend along the Adriatic and Ionian coasts. The remainder of the country is hilly or mountainous and offers tremendous views and vistas. The highest point in Albania, at 2,751m, is Mount Korabi in Diber district.



As one might expect, this beautiful and varied terrain offers the visitor many opportunities to enjoy Albania's natural beauty. The beauty and unique climate offered by the highlands is often just a short drive away from all that the coast and its Mediterranean-like climate have to offer. Albania also enjoys long periods of pleasant weather. The summer is the most sunny and beautiful, but the remainder of the year is beautiful, as well.







The Albanian seashore is an expansive 450 km and includes numerous lagoons. The sea has influenced Albanian history and culture since antiquity through the trade and fishing opportunities it provides. Heading north and/or east from the sea, the visitor will gain altitude, and truly begin to appreciate the highlands and, eventually, the alpine areas. Mountainous terrain in the northern Alps is breathtaking. Snow cover for nearly half the year affords numerous outdoor recreation possibilities. In particular this is present to Albanian Alps in north of country. The landscape is also strewn with numerous lakes and rivers for the traveler to enjoy.



Albania's climate is varied and seasonal. From average annual seacoast temps around 17.5°C, to the cooler highlands, averaging 7.5°C, Albania offers tremendous diversity. Summers tend to be hot and dry, while the winters are mild and offer an autumnal-like beauty. This pleasant weather supports a wide variety of recreational activities.

## *the sea*

Albanian coast begins in northwest at the Buna River Delta which marks the Albania-Montenegro border, and extends southward until it reaches Cape Stillo at the Albanian-Greek border. Including various lagoons and harbors, the coast stretches for a total of 450 km and touches two seas: the Ionian in the south, and the Adriatic in the north. Along its length, the coastline is dotted with beaches, from large and sandy to hidden and private. Beautiful rocky coastlines comprise portions of this landscape, as well. The coastline of Albania is particularly picturesque because of its relative lack of development. This unspoiled coast has been preserved as a natural beauty, and is ripe with outdoor recreation possibilities. Teeming with rich sea life, the water offers many treasures. Remnants of ancient civilizations dot the coastline as well, and demonstrate the centuries-old relationship that this area shares with the sea.





*the lakes*





Although relatively small, Albania enjoys a large number of lakes. Three of the largest are Shkodra, Ohrid, and Prespa. Each of these lakes is significant: Shkodra, at 368 km<sup>2</sup> is the largest in the Balkans. Ohrid is the deepest lake of the Balkans, and Prespa, at 850m above sea level, is the highest. Many other small lakes provide beauty and enjoyment, as well.



**Shkodra lake** is located along Albania and Montenegro's shared border. Its shore is very beautiful and consists of marshes in the north and rocky shores in the south. Two notable beaches are located at Shiroka and Zogaj. This part of southern lake is called "the hither coast", while the northern part is called "waterfront". There are several villages which are attractive to tourists (Kosani, Flaka, Kamnica, Jubica and Kalldrun). The lake is home to a tremendous variety of living creatures, including 45 species of fish and 281 species of birds.

## *the lakes*

**Ohrid lake** is one of the most beautiful tectonic lakes of the Balkans. It is located on the shared border between Albania and Macedonia. It is located 695m above sea level and accordingly, remains temperate and cool-even in the warmest summers. At an estimated four million years old, it is also one of the oldest lakes in the world. It, too, boasts a tremendous variety of fish, some of which are uniquely found in Ohrid. Notable among them is the Belushka Salmon, a delicious and highly prized fish. The most famous is Koran, which is found only in this lake all over the world. Recreational opportunities abound, particularly near Pogradec, Lin, Pojske, and Tushemisht.





*the lakes*





**Prespa lakes.** Big Prespa Lake measures 285 km<sup>2</sup> and straddles the borders of Albania, Macedonia and Greece. Little Prespa Lake, located on the Albanian-Greek border is significantly smaller, at 44 km<sup>2</sup>. As with other Albanian lakes, the Prespas enjoy beautiful, clear water. The region surrounding them offers myriad opportunities for recreation, including sightseeing, observing wildlife, ecotourism, and water sports. The area features some of the best Albania has to offer - a rare combination of resplendent natural beauty, and warm, hospitable locals will make any visit to this region memorable.



## *the lakes*

**The small lakes.** Albania also features many small, beautiful glacial lakes. Most notable among them are Doberdol and Sylbice Lakes in Tropoja, Balgjai Lake in Bulqize, and the beautiful and 60m deep Black Lake in Martanesh. Other beautiful examples include Dushku Lake in Gramsh, the four Rajca Lakes in Librazhd, and Sheleguri Lake in mount Gramozi (Kolonja District). Still others worth visiting are the 69 wonderful lakes of Dumre Plateau, near the expansive 960 ha Merhoja Lake and the 61 m deep Çestija Lake, among others.



***The Lura Lake - Dibra***



***The Balgjai Lake - Bulqiza***



*The Artificial Lake - Tirana*

Artificial lakes (Man-made lakes). Artificial lakes and reservoirs are popular for fishing and recreation. Several large ones exist in Koman, Mati (Ulëza and Shkopet), Tirana (Farka reservoir and artificial lake of the city), Lushnja (Thana reservoir), and Korça (Gjançi reservoir). These small, man-made lakes have a lot to offer. In addition to sporting opportunities, they also provide habitats for a rich variety of flora and fauna. The Koman Lake also functions as a traveling waterway.



*The Koman Lake - Tropoja*



The Albanian countryside is rich with numerous springs, rivers, and streams. There are an estimated 200 springs which each burst forth with over 200 liters of water per second. Some springs have been noted for their medicinal or curative powers, and have thus been the site of spas since antiquity. These spas are located throughout the country, but several noteworthy ones exist in Leskovik (Vronomero) Dibër, Elbasan, Benja, and Fushe-Krujë (Bilaj).



*Vronomero - Leskovik*

*Benja - Përmet*



***Buna River - Shkodra***

Three springs which are remarkable for their natural beauty are Blue Eye in Saranda, Cold Water in Tepelenë, Viroi in Gjirokaster and “Syri i Sheganit” at lake Shkodra. The network of inland Albanian waters consists of eleven major rivers and their 150 tributaries. Measuring 285km, the Black Drin River is the longest, and flows from Lake Ohrid to the Adriatic Sea. Other large rivers include the Valbona, Buna, Fani, Mati, Erzeni, Shkumbini, Seman, Vjosa, Osumi, Shushica, Devolli, Langarica, Drino, and Bistrica rivers.



***“Syri i Kaltër” (Blue Eye) - Saranda***

## *the rivers*

Some valleys and canyons created by these ancient flows offer tremendous natural beauty, as well. Among these are the Valbona and Shala Valleys in the Northern Alps, Tomorica Valley, Këlcyra Outfall on the Vjosa River and Bënça and Osumi Canyons. The canyons, in particular, offer a beautiful backdrop for a variety of paddling sports. Also a part of this vast network, are waterfalls, such as the ones located at Grunas and Theth, Shoshan and Kurvelesh.



*The Vermosh River*

### *River Shala*



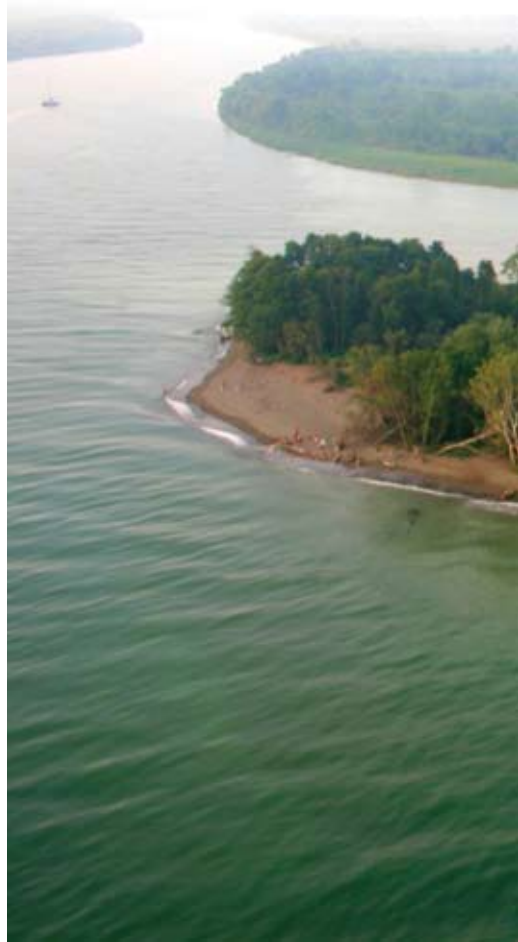
*The vOsumi Canion*



## *the islands*

**Franc Josef** is a small island located in the Buna river delta. This island is very rich with waterfowl and other bird species. The island is covered in beautiful lush greenery, as well, and provides a peaceful place to refresh and relax.

**The Sandy Island of Kune** has an area of 125 ha and lies in the delta of the Drin River. This island features extravagant and varied plant life, including everything from small Mediterranean shrubs to ash and willow forests. Wildlife is abundant as well. The island boasts seventy species of birds, twenty-two species of reptiles, six species of amphibians and twenty-three species of mammals. Since antiquity hunters have prized this island for its variety of prey. Located nearby, the secluded and private beach of Tale is worth visiting, as well.





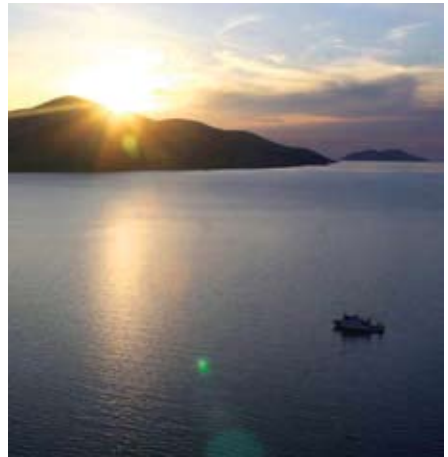




**Zverneci Island** is one of two islands in Narta Lagoon in Vlora. It is very picturesque, and its landscape is dotted with beautiful cypress trees. The island is also home to the historically significant Santa Maria Church. Access to the island is via a wooden bridge, which offers spectacular views of the lagoon.

**Shurdhahu Island** is a small, but very picturesque island located in Vau i Dejes Lake. On this island, the visitor will find the ruins of the medieval town of Sarda. It has also served as the residence of the prominent feudal Dukagjini family.

**Sazani Island** is Albania's biggest island, measuring 5.7 km<sup>2</sup>. It sits about 15km off the shore at Vlora and features mostly rocky shores, except for the magnificent Admiral beach. In antiquity, this island was known as "Sason," and it has long been a destination for divers and fishermen.



## *the islands*

**Maligradi Island** is located in Grand Pre-spa Lake. It is frequently visited by boaters who come to enjoy the beauty of the varied fauna and the historic Saint Pavllo eremite church.



**Ksamili Islands.** The four marvelous Ksamili islands total only of 8.9 ha when measured together, but feature some of the most unspoiled beauty in all of Albania. They remain covered in lush, green vegetation throughout the year, and can only be accessed by small boats. The beautiful, clear water surrounding these islands makes the pristine beaches in the area that much more special.









About two-thirds of Albania's geography is either hilly or mountainous. These elevations offer myriad outdoor recreation possibilities, including everything from paddling sports to paragliding. These areas also host a variety of tourism ventures, including eco- and agritourism. There is a renewed interest in alpine climbing and exploration, as well, with the 2,018 m Çika Ridge being a highly desirable climb. Various destinations in the Northern Alps, with elevations as high as 2,700 m, beckon to the climber, as well. Specifically the towns of Vermosh, Theth, Razëm, Bogë, and Valbona, can all serve as starting points for an expedition.



## *the mountains*

Cultural experiences abound in the mountains, too. Tomori Mountain hosts the Baba Tomori, Abaz Aliu celebration on Tomori Mountain. This festival features aspects of Albanian and Bektashi cultural traditions. The catholic "Saint Ndou" gathering in Laçi highland represents a pilgrimage destination for many of Albania's faithful. The highland areas near the Drenova, Dardha and Voskopoja regions in Korça offer rich cultural experiences as well. Among other landmarks in Albania are Enrichment Rock, an outcropping southwest of Pogradeci, and Korabi Mountain in Diber, Albania's highest peak at 2,750 m. Moving south, the traveler encounters historic Kruja. Perched among mountainous peaks, this place is where Skenderbeg united warring tribes and defended Albanian lands from Ottoman attacks.





*the mountains*





Throughout Albania, intrepid explorers will also find many vast caves, just waiting to be discovered. Professional and amateur spelunkers alike will find no shortage of underground chambers to conquer. Near Shkodra alone there are at least 35 significant caves! Pirogoshi, the largest cave in Albania, is 1,500 m long and is located in Skrapar. Other notable caves are Good cave and Pëllumbas cave, located near Tirana. Nestled in the beautiful Skorana canyon on the Erzeni River, Pëllumbas is ripe for exploration, and is Albania's second-largest cave. No fewer than 68 of Albania's caves are designated as Natural National Monuments.



## *natural national parks*

**Dajti Park** is located atop Dajti Mountain, 26 km to the east of Tirana. A magnificent and beautiful park, Dajti is 300 ha large. It boasts much lush vegetation and has groves of 200 year-old beech trees. There are significant archaeological monuments nearby, and opportunities for hiking and climbing, as well. A recently-built cable car transports visitors from the outskirts of Tirana to the park in just a few minutes. This area, known locally as "Tirana's Balcony," features several eateries which offer spectacular views of the city.







**National Park of Thethi** is situated in the Albanian Alps near Bjeshkët e Namuna, (the Cursed Mountains). It is 3,300 ha large and through it flows the beautiful Thethi River. A magnificent place to visit is the waterfall at Grunas. Significant wildlife populates this park, as well: a large community of lynx calls this tranquil area home.



## *natural national parks*

**National Park of Lura.** This park is situated on the eastern slope of the majestic Kunora e Lures (Crown of Lura). Natural beauty is everywhere here, with ancient stands of pine and no fewer than fourteen picturesque glacial lakes. In summer and winter alike, recreational opportunities abound for outdoor enthusiasts.



**Divjaka Pine National Park.** This park is located in Karavasta lagoon, and has been protected since 1994 by the Ramsar International Convent. Recognized in this way for its ecological treasures, the park offers some truly unique spectacles. Plant and animal species are diverse and truly beautiful. The park is home to many rare birds as well, including the endangered Crispy Pelican. This is the most western nesting point of this kind of bird in all Europe.









**National Park of Llogara** is situated 40 km in south of Vlorë city at the dividing point between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas. This park is notable for its expansive pine forests. The Flag Pine is among the most massive species and is remarkable for its ecological significance. Aerial activities are popular here, with numerous paragliding competitions being held within the boundaries of the park. Vistas of the nearby Vetëtimë Mountain Range and the picturesque beaches serve as the perfect setting for a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities.



**The Fir of Hotova National Park** is located in the region of Frashëri, 35 km northeast of Permeti. The Hotova Fir is a significant regional species and graces the countryside throughout the park. Nature lovers flock here and appreciate the park for its many recreation and camping opportunities.

## *natural national parks*

**Valbona Valley National Park.** This park is considered one of the most beautiful in all of Albania. Located 25km from Bajram Curri, the park features impressive scenery comprised of high alpine ridges and Valbona Valley. Diverse plant and animal species invite recreation, sightseeing, and scientific study.



**Gjocaj Grit National Park** is another wonderful park 40 km northeast of Burreli. Featuring a variety of springs and ravines, it is resplendent in natural beauty.





## *natural national parks*

**Shtama Pass National Park** is located 25 km northeast of Kruja. The spectacular views and high peaks of this location are truly breathtaking. Additionally, this park is home to Mother Queen spring, which flows with crystal clear water noted for its healthful properties.

**Tomori Mountain National Park.** Just east of Berat lies this scenic mountainous gem. Resembling a natural castle framed by lofty peaks, Tomori Mountain covers 4,000ha and reaches upward to a height of 1,200m. It is snow-covered in the winter, and holds tremendous religious significance for the Abaz Aliu tribe which lives nearby. The Bektashi tribe also calls this area home, and organizes a large religious festival every August.



**National Park of Drenova Fir** boasts an area of 1.380 ha and features the magnificent Morava Mountain. Located in Korça, the elevations and views draw enthusiasts and nature lovers throughout the year. Springs with intriguing names like "Old Woman" are abundant and serve to enhance the natural beauty.







**Prespa National Park** is the largest of Albania's national parks. It is immense at 27,750 ha, and touches the Prespa lakes. The park extends to the borders of Macedonia and Greece, and is known regionally as Balkan Park under an agreement signed by the three countries. Archeological treasures mingle with varied plant and animal species, forming a truly unique and spectacular park. The Castle of Trajan and several Byzantine-era churches feature magnificent frescoes which draw historians and sightseers alike. The Treni Cave is also located within the park boundaries, and is noted for its ancient cave paintings. Remnants of Neolithic settlements hint at the rich history and serve to further enhance the natural beauty.



## *natural national parks*

**National Park of Butrinti** has a total area of 2,500 ha. A warm, mild climate and significant archaeological artifacts draw both Albanian and foreign tourists to this beautiful area. A UNESCO World Heritage site, the park offers much more than the ruins and associated museum. Natural beauty abounds here as well, with Butrinti Lake and the clear blue waters of the nearby sea beckoning to those who enjoy the water and all it has to offer. Culinary delights are everywhere, and a mussel unique to this area is one of the most delectable of all the area's seafood.





## velipoja beach

Albanian seaside has a considerable length of 450 km, including here even the lagoon area which you find within. The seaside has a particular character and it is rich in varieties of sand beaches, capes, coves, covered bays, lagoons small gravel beaches ,sea caves etc. Some parts of this seaside are very clean ecologically, which represent in this prospective unexplored areas , very rare in Mediterranean area.

In its north part, the seaside starts with Buna river delta, which is also the country border between Republic of Albanian and republic of Montenegro. At this place, because of the river's delta it is created the small island of Franc Joseph, which changes to peninsula, depending what river can bring with it. This is a natural object of a great importance for vegetation and sea birds presence in this area. The vegetation is typical one of groves with dominations of poplars and other leaf trees. Seagulls dominate the sea bird in this area. Franc Joseph is recommended for people that love nature and prefer relaxing away from the civilization sounds.

The northern beach of the country is the one of Velipoja, situated 22 km away from Shkodra. **Velipoja** beach is a length of 4 km with high quality of sand. There are 250 sunny days and above 20 degree C days normally start by mid of May. The beach is suitable for family vacations and in general is populated from the people of Albanian north areas near to Velipoja's beach is situated lagoon of Viluni at a surface of 130 ha. This is a very important natural eco-system hosting a number of varieties of sea birds. Nerby Velipoja beach is situated also a legally hunting area of 700 ha.





*shengjini beach*



**Shëngjini** beach is another sandy beach which belongs to Lezha district. It is situated 8 km away from Lezha city. Shëngjini beach is wellknown for its high quality sand. This beach has 200 - 300 sunny days per year. In the north of Shëngjini before Renci hills is situated the wonderful beach of "Powered sand", (Rana e hedhun), which is very well protected by the winds of this area. Lezha seaside has a wonderful natural ecosystem, ideally used for developing of ecotourism, bird watching etc. The Drini river delta, because of the winds of this area, it is highly recommended for surfing. At this delta we may find lagoon system of Kune-Vain in which can easily by observe a big number of sea birds. There are two lagoons forming the system, the one of Ceka at an area of 235 ha, and the other of Merxhani of 77 ha.

The biggest surprise for tourists in this area is evaluated the sandy island of Kune at a surface of 125 ha, situated at the right side of Drini delta. This island is covered with hygrophilous vegetation. There are wildly grown green Mediterranean bushes, willows etc. In this area are numbered more that 227 kind plants. Regarding to fauna we can list a number of birds, as wild ducks, pheasants, big redheaded duck etc. It will be enough to mention that in this area are numbered 70 kind of birds out of 33 that are found in whole Albania and 6 kind of amphibians out of 15 counted in whole Albania and many mammals. South of Kune are found additional beaches less populated of **Tale** area.



## *lalezi bay*

One of the most attractive areas of Albanian Adriatic is **Lalezi** bay, which is situated from Rodon Cape to Bishti i Pallës. Rodon cape which coasts this area from north it is a wonderful natural masterpiece of 7,5 km towards the open sea. This area is one of the most highlighted areas for diving. The beaches of Lalezi bay are sandy ones, some of them surrounded by pine trees stripes. Some of the most outstanding beaches are the ones of **Shën Pjetri** and **Rrushkull**, well known for their clean deep blue waters.





*durrresi beach*





**Durrësi** beach, situated only 39 km away from Tirana, the capital of Albania is the biggest and the most populated beach of the country. It has a length of 6 km with a considerable wide strip of sand. The sea depth is increasing very gradually, which makes this beach very attractive to children and their families. The position of Durrësi bay makes it very protected by the winds. There are situated also the biggest number of tourist facilities like hotels, motels, villa compounds, bars, restaurants, discos etc. During the last few years this beach is not only for the capital daily tourists but also for tourists coming from Kosovo and Macedonia.

In the north part of Durrës city is situated the **Curila** beach, where the water is deeper and the beach is protected from the worm wind coming from the land.



## *golemi beach*

The additional beaches of **Golem** and Mali i Robit makes up by now almost the same unit with Durrës beach. They have the same characteristics. Here you can find the presence of pine forest, which decorated the seaside. Likewise in Durrës beach the concentration of tourist facilities here is very high (hotels, restaurants, bars, pubs etc).

As regards the beaches which belongs to Kavaja districts it is worthy to mention the Karpen and Spilleja beaches, which have a good reputation for the high quality of sand (rich in iodine), sea waters and dense vegetation of pine trees.



The Cape of Lagji closes the Durrës bay by the south. It is a suitable natural object to apply the diving. Nearby there are the small beaches of rare beauty of **Bardhori** and **Gjenerali**. Bardhori is a rocky beach, while Gjeneral is surrounded by lush vegetation. It looks like a natural amphitheatre. Both are secluded beaches, excellent for those who want to escape from the noise.





*karavasta lagoon*





**Karavasta Lagoon** is the biggest lagoon along Albanian coast, with an area of 4,330 ha. It is one of twelve National Parks of Albania, and it has many important values for bio-diversity. Karavasta Lagoon is the western point of Europe where nests curly pelican (*pelicanus crispus*). There is 5 % of its worldwide population. For these values Lagoon of Karavasta is under protection of International Convention of RAMSAR, since 1994. It is a very interesting experience the observation of these pelicans if you go by boat near the island where they usually perch. In this ecosystem there are 210 kinds of birds, 12 kinds of mammals and 16 kinds of reptiles. Lagoon waters which reach approximately 1.5 meters deepness are rich of fishes, especially mullet and eel, which are offered in many restaurants of **Divjaka beach**. The flora of National Park of Divjaka excels for its beauty and special freshness. There dominate conifer areas of soft and wild pines, where stand out large crown pines. The multistory forest is very rich of herbals and high woods. There excels accompaniment with ash, fir etc.

Divjaka's sea sand is rich of a considerably amount of iodine and the temperatures over 20 grade Celsius start since second half of May and continue until the beginning of October. This is an area when are combined beach activities with eco-tourism.

The embouchure of Vjosa, which lies in south, constitute in a natural protected area in both sides of river that are called Pish Poro Fier and Vlora. This is a natural area with seaside pines, isolated sandy beaches and a convenient nesting place for seabirds.

## *narta lagoon*

In south of embouchure of Vjosa there is Lagoon of Narta, which has an area of 4,180 ha, the second biggest lagoon in Albania.

**Narta Lagoon** is another natural ecosystem with possibilities for development of eco-tourism, poultries observation, fishing etc. It represents the second campus in Albania for seabirds. In Narta there are 195 kinds of poultries. During the winter there nest about 48,700 seabirds, 23% of wintrily poultries that come in Albania. There come thousands of different ducks. In parallel with them there come white tailed eagles, flamingos, peregrines, black kites etc. The area of Narta is known for its handicraft produce of high quality wine. In the future, natural tourism in the lagoon could be wreathed with "wine tour", which is produced there. In lagoon's waters there are many fishes such as eel and Narta's bass.





*Flora beach*





**Vlorë** is the second biggest harbor of the country and one of the most important points for Albanian tourism, which offers at first the product “sea and sun”. The area near the city along the Vlorë gulf beaches is known for its new and modern hotels and for the other facilities like bars, restaurants, discos, clubs etc. This is one of the most intensive tourist areas of the country.

Tourist area starts directly in south of the city along the small and rocky beaches of Vlorë's bay. There are beaches with very interesting configurations. In front of them there is peninsula of Karaburun, the largest peninsula of the coast and island of Sazani, that is also the largest island of Albania. This configuration helps the Vlorë's beaches to be protected from the winds. Jonufri's beaches that lie in this area of Vlorë's bay reach out the stream of Dukat near the small town of Orikum. The beach is surrounded by a hilly area of citrus which contrasts very nicely with the blue waters of the sea.



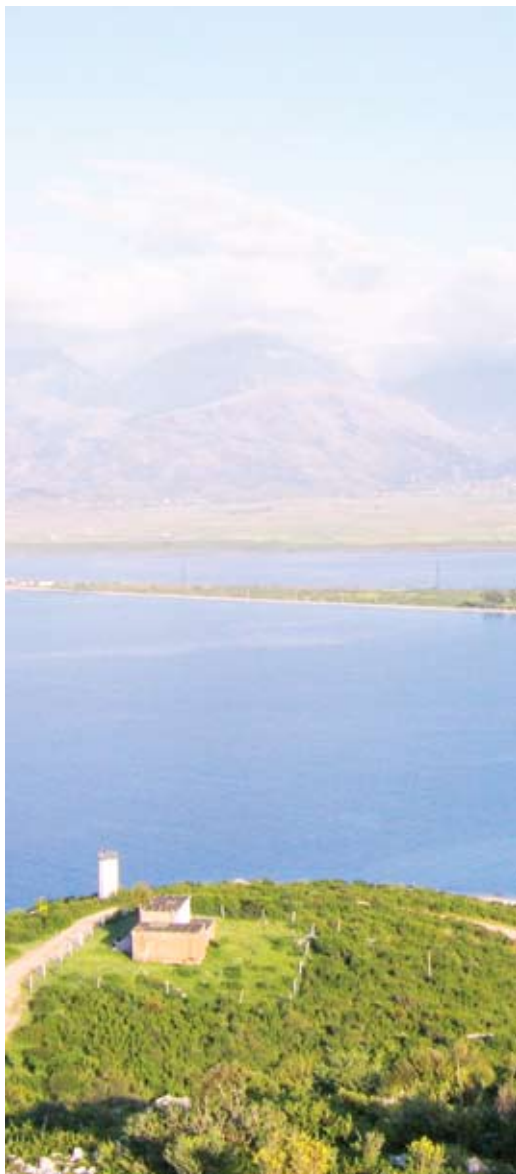
## Vlora beach

In south of Vlora's bay there is **Orikumi**, where lately is build a harbor for yachts. Orikum's beach is about 2 km long. In this area there are Pana and Rrapi sea caves.

All this area shows interest for diving, because there are archeological remains and sunken ships. One of these is Italian ship "Po", sunken in 1941 during Italian-Greek war. It is also said that Jul Cesar sank the ships of Pompeii's troops. The area of Uji i Ftohte is convenient for diving to observe different alga and the area of Zhiron for black and green alga etc.

In the west, Vlora's bay is closed with peninsula of Karaburun, the largest peninsula in Albania, about 16 km long and 4.5 km wide. The west coast of Karaburun is amazing; it has high and scrappy coasts, small bays and beaches. In the north of peninsula there is the cave of Haxhi Ali, the largest cave of the country. It is 30 meters deep, 18 meters high and 12 meters wide.

These sizes allow the entrance of boats. The cave's name is in memory of the sailor from Ulqin, who has sailed in these waters during the XVII century. We can mention many small beaches such as Arusha bay, Grama and Dafina beaches that are showed up for the deepness, high quality waters and the isolated position from the noises. Near Grama's beach there is the cave of Slaves. Bywords in antiquity there work slaves for quarry. On walls of Grama's beach there are ancient graffiti and it is thought that there was the temple of Dioskure. The western face of Karaburun is one of the most attractive points of Albanian coast for the passionate divers.









Near the peninsula of Karaburun there is the island of Sazan that is the largest island in Albania. It has an area of 5.7 km, 4.5 km length and 2 km maximal width. It is about 12 miles from Vlora's harbor. In antiquity the island was called Sason. The island represent a rocky block with sharply coasts especially the western part of the island. In the south-east part of the island there is the Admiral beach with grits, which is known for its very clean waters. Sazani is special for diving, and together with Karaburun they make "a really subsurface park".

After the saddle of Llogara, lie Jon's beaches or the beaches of "Albanian Riviera", which is one of the most beautiful regions in Albania.





Albania, the place where sun come across with the deeply sea, rocky and isolated small beaches, splendid configurations, mountain-side and hillside covered off typically Mediterranean vegetation (olives and citrus) and typically villages be constructed between mountain and sea percolated under of them. This is the wormiest region of Albania where the medium temperature of January is 10 grades and the temperature of July is 25 grades. This area has 300 days of sunny. From the saddle of Llogara which is 1.057 meters over the sea level be percolated a marvelous face of littoral which seems as contemplate by airplane.

The first beach is **Dhraleos** in Palase which has a longitude of 1.5 kilometers. This is one of the most exotic beaches of Albanian littoral, which has the tranquility, deeply and blue waters with a high quality of them. This beach goes for water sports, especially the parachutes that lunched from the saddle of Llogara.

**Dhermiu** that follow more in the south of Albania is one of the most frequented and important tourist places of Albanian littoral. The crystal waters of the sea, isolated beaches, water sports and subsurface diving make this beach very preferred by the youth generation. The beaches that are part of Dhermi are Jaliksari, Shkambo and Gjipea.









The beach of **Gjipea** has beautiful form. After the beach a stream have made a canyon walled with 70 meters. In the beach of Dhermi is located and the cave of pirates. The barges offered the sending of the tourist people. Also are located some hotels, restaurants, and summer disco. In this entire belt, including and villages is very developed "familiarity tourism", where the tourists can be accommodated in rent home. 8 kilometers from the south of Dhermi is located **Vunoi**, which every one can be oriented to the Jal.



**Himara** is the central area of the "over littoral Jonian sea". It is a touristy place that comes very animated in the summer season by the youth generation and relatives. In this beach are part Spilea, Potami, Llamani dhe Livadhja. All of them shine for the deeply water, navigability and rocky characteristic. After the **Borsh** is located the beach of **Qeparoi** and the small tectonic gulf of Porto Palermos which is located the castle of "Ali Pashait". Borshi is one of the longer littoral of Albanian Riviera with 6 meters. This beach is girded by massive Mediterranean vegetation. (Citrus and Olive's plantation). Here is very populated the familiarity tourism.

Until in the city of **Saranda** can be added the beaches of Bunecit, Kakomese and Krorzit. (Their longitude arrives till 3 kilometers) which have a beauty and crystal water.

The city of Saranda is the most inhabited center of the Riviera of Albania. It is one of the most important touristy places, especially preferred by the couple just married "honeymooners". The city and the places around it offered a system with hotels with 5 stars and hotels with "budget travelers" and rent homes. The city has a favorably position, because is located only 9 kilometers from the touristy insular of Korfuz. The rafts offered daily connection with Korfuz, and this is very helpful for Saranda to be visited and by European tourists.





## Butrinti lagoon

The **lagoon of Butrint**: This is for on account of the natural beauty and archeological, where the important archeological place is Butrinti (is located 18 kilometers in the south of the city) which has been part to the list of UNESCO. In the city of Saranda are been located and the small beaches of Centralit, Plakave and Liman. Usually the tourists prefer to visit one of the most frequented places Ksamil, which is between the peninsula of Ksamil and lagoon of Butrint. In front of it expanded the insular of Korfuz and near to the beach of **Ksamil** are located 4 small insulars of it, covered by greenness Mediterranean navigation. Their super face matures in 8.9 hectare. In Ksamil are building hotels and restaurants. An important naturally ecosystem with touristy values is the lagoon of Butrint, which pass for lake for the tectonic origin. It super face is 16 km<sup>2</sup> and is connected with the water of sea hereby the canal of Vivar with 3.6 kilometers long. The lake has the deepness of 20 meters. As a result of favorably wind direction, this is very adaptable place for practicing sailing sport. Regarding to the fauna there lives drakes, black neck ducks, bajza, eagles, falcon, bats, etc. it's developed and the world of reptilian and amphibian that proliferated in the canebrake area which are in the north-east littoral of lake. To mention in this field is epirote frog the only kind in Albania. The eco-system is very adaptable and for the observatory of poultries. Only in the forest of the archeological area near to the side of lake stand 90 kinds of poultries. The south extreme of Albania coast till in the cape of Stillos consists from the scrubby beaches kind of marshe that are totally virgin.







Albania is located east of Italy across the Adriatic Sea and thus enjoys a gentle and temperate Mediterranean climate with mild winters and warm, dry summers. The varied regions, from the towering mountains in the north to the coastal areas in the west, make Albania a beautiful and intriguing destination. Diverse plant and animal life cover this expanse and provide the perfect backdrop to a variety of activities. The clean, blue waters of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas beckon the traveler with both their scenic vistas and the culinary delights they contain. Rivers crisscross this land and offer both the beauty of the canyons they have carved and the opportunity to traverse them via raft, kayak, or canoe. Here you will find a rich cultural history which is woven into the very fabric of everyday life—from cuisine to music. Situated at the crossroads of east and west, Albania is also a convenient and nearby destination for many places throughout Europe and Asia.

The topographical surface of Albania is mostly mountainous. The highest peak is Mount Korab (Dibra district), which towers 2,751m above sea level. Mountains offer the traveler a variety of opportunities, from spelunking to skiing. Some of the areas where activities can be found are: Dajti, Llogaraja, Dardha, Bozdoveci, Voskopoja, Valbona, and Thethi. The remainder of the landscape transitions to lowland plains along the coast and then continues to the southeast. Large rivers flow throughout the country: the Vjosa, Erzen and Drin are some of the longest. These rivers supply irrigation efforts for the vast agricultural industry which flourishes here.



## *mountain climbing & hiking & walking & trekking*



Alpinism is a common sport here. A combination of mountaineering and hiking, this activity can range from a simple day trip, to a multi-day summiting expedition atop some of Albania's loftiest peaks. The Alpine Association has been in existence since 1958 and offers guided excursions into some of Albania's most beautiful and remote mountain locales. Some areas which offer a multitude of trip varieties are: Biza, Razma, Llogara, Qafe Shtama, Lura, and the Hotova Fir forests of Permet.





Mountainous regions draw other outdoor adventurers, as well. In milder weather, camping and backpacking are popular and draw enthusiasts seeking cooler weather and a change of pace from bustling city life. In addition to the areas listed above, the Germenj forests and the area surrounding Kurvelesh provide a scenic backdrop with myriad camping opportunities. Hikers will find ample trails and many places to explore in the aforementioned locations, as well. One popular trip is the “Trekking of Cika,” which leads explorers through the Dukat Valley, up portions of the Cika Mountain Range, and finally terminates at the coast near Jon’s Seashore. Other hiking opportunities abound in the Alps region of the north, and the regions surrounding Tomorr Mountain and the Drin Valley, the fir of Sotira in south of the country etc.



A variety of nature trails bring the beauty of Albania’s countryside within reach for the less adventurous traveler. While less strenuous, these treks are no less beautiful and often offer unique views of rural villages and the areas surrounding them. A vast network of trails connects these villages with each other and with other vital resources, and offers a dramatic change of pace from the hectic pace of Tirana and other large cities.

## skiing



Skiing is yet another activity that allows the intrepid explorer to experience the beauty of the mountains and surrounding areas. The deep powder and steep slopes of the Alps in the north offer spectacular skiing. The industry has enjoyed recent development around the area of Korça and several resorts can be found here. The most important in the platform of Bigëll near Boboshtica (Morava mountain), and the Voskopoja Range, 20 km west of Korça, one can find the renown "Skiing Tracks," home of the National Skiing Championship. Towering 1,160m above sea level, Voskopoja Village is known for its crisp air and flowing waters with purported curative powers. The village of Razma, located 41 km north of Shkodra is an ideal location to ski, as well. Many of the previously mentioned hiking and trekking areas are suitable for cross-country skiing. Additionally the Terbutun mountain, the platform near the town of Puka, in Shishtavec (Kukës district), in Grabova (Gramsh district), in the Korab and Lura Mountain Ranges offer potential skiing venues.





## *mountain biking & spelunking*

Mountain biking is gaining popularity in Albania, and the varied terrain and numerous trails offer many venues to explore. Some organized tours exist in the north around Theth and Boge, but some of the best and most rewarding rides require only an adventurous spirit and the willingness to look around. Only a short drive from Tirana, many opportunities await both skilled and novice mountain bikers.





The countryside of Albania is also dotted with a variety of caves. They offer a unique exploring opportunity and are, in many cases very accessible from all areas. In the areas around Shkodra alone there are more than thirty large caves. Many tourists have enjoyed exploring one of Albania's largest caves, Pëllumbasit, or the "black cave." Located southeast of Tirana, it ranges from ten to thirty-five meters wide, fifteen to forty meters high, and is approximately three hundred meters long. In Tirana district there are other caves such as Vali (Biza) and "Shpella e mirë" (Good cave) in mount Brari. Another attractive option for cave explorers is Albania's largest cave, Pirrogoshi, located near the village of Radesh in the north. Other intriguing spelunking opportunities exist in the following places: Juban, Zhylës, Murriqan and Pusi in the Shkodra region, the cave of Lekë Petës in Kurvelesh and the cave of Neziri (Mati district).



## *fishing & horseback riding*

Fishing is a popular activity throughout Albania. Salt and fresh waters are rich with fish and a variety of aquatic species. Fishing provides the primary source of income for many of the residents of coastal areas, and has played a role in Albania's history since antiquity. As in many areas of the world, Albania's stocks are at risk from overfishing, and a campaign has recently begun to dis-

seminate information and protect this valuable natural resource. Mountainous areas offer many creeks and cool, running water and excellent fishing opportunities. The Valbona River and Thethi Creek are also popular, and provide areas to catch Marble Trout. Lastly, the mouth of the Vjosa River provides an unforgettable setting for the angler.





Horseback riding is intertwined with Albania's history and has no doubt been practiced since antiquity. From the use of horses by members of the military, competitions arose which sought to determine which horse and rider were the fastest and most agile. Horse farms are common in Shkodër, Durrës, Elbasan, Korçë and Berat. Trail rides and other opportunities can be arranged at a variety of riding centers in these areas. Peza, in particular, offers some resources and lessons and is favored for its close proximity to Tirana.



## *paddling sports*

With so many bodies of water, from small reflective ponds to the class III rapids of the Osum River, there are many venues in which to try kayaking or rafting throughout Albania. Osum is a particularly popular sport for rafting in late spring and early summer, when waters are the highest. The inner walls of the canyon are beautiful here, and represent millennia of erosion by this impressive river. Other areas of interest include Lengarica Canyon, near Vjosa, and Shala and Valbona Valleys in the north.









Aerial sports such as parachuting and paragliding began to gain popularity in Albania in the early 1990's. A core group of enthusiasts had a vision for developing the sport and increasing interest among people. What has resulted from these initial efforts is a network of professional pilots and instructors that can guide both the novice and the advanced skydiver through a variety of parachuting excursions. Additionally, Albania has a beautiful and varied terrain that is conducive to this sport, and offers tremendous vistas while the participant glides back to the earth. One of the most spectacular places to try paragliding is Llogara's Neck. Towering 1,052m above sea level, the site offers favorable winds and sweeping vistas of the surrounding terrain. Divers glide down to Palas Beach, and can enjoy the natural beauty there following the descent. Since 2000, this place has hosted the International Albanian Open, which draws participants from throughout the Balkans and beyond. Although this is thought by many to be the best place to paraglide, other destinations include Sheshica (novice), and Morava, Dajti, and Taraboshi (for more advanced).



## *diving*

Professional diving opportunities have only been developed over the last decade. The rich underwater finds in Albania's seas offer a unique setting for divers to encounter sea life and shipwrecks. Diving locations are limited north of Vlora (the Adriatic coast) as the water does have significant suspended solids and thereby, reduced visibility. From Vlora to Saranda in the south, however, there are myriad locations and opportunities to engage in this increasingly popular sport. The best spots are the furthest reaches of the Karaburuni Peninsula and Sazan Island, where several recreational sites can be found. There are several historical shipwrecks within Vlora Bay. The most popular and accessible is the Italian hospital ship PO, which was sunk in March, 1941 by a torpedo from a British Swordfish. It lies in 33m of water and measures an impressive 150m long. Weather conditions may affect visibility during this dive, as winds can stir sediment, but the location is protected from the high seas and thereby suitable much of the time. Several companies offer guided dives of the wreck.









**Sazan Island** offers more in the way of sea life, with several vertical underwater cliffs that serve as habitat to a wide variety of fish and plant life. The west side of the island is the preferred area for diving and offers the most interesting scenery. The somewhat remote location of the island has helped to preserve its beauty and protect its treasures from encroaching development.

**Karaburuni Peninsula** is a large, pristine area, perfect for diving and underwater exploring. A southern current keeps the waters clear and the visibility excellent. This area is completely unspoiled and development as a diving destination is ongoing, but its beauty is impressive and its potential is great.



Other areas that offer some promising dives are: Dhermi Beach, Jali, Porto Palermo, Lukova and cape of Lagji. Development of resorts and cities has impacted these areas, though, and they tend to be overfished and somewhat less pristine.







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