



# Cycling Albania

UNESCO world heritage sites in Albania

## General Information

Reise ID: 3148

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Dauer (in Tagen): 10 days

Verfügbare Monate: april - june and september till 15th november

Ankunft: Tirana

Abflug: Tirana

Min Person: min 2 persons

## Trip Details

**Some say that a visit to Albania is the closest thing to a journey into the past. It was only after the collapse of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in 1991 that the world got its first glimpse of the country. Vast snow-capped mountains, inviting beaches, charming rural villages, a genuine subsistence culture, and exceptionally warm hospitality—this is what you will find here. We take you through the best of Europe's beautiful unknown.**

**This diverse tour leads you from the quiet beauty of Lake Ohrid, across picturesque mountains and sparkling rivers, to the welcoming beaches of the Albanian Riviera, offering a taste of the best Albania has to offer. The itinerary includes visits to UNESCO World Heritage sites and fascinating insights into an untouched subsistence culture. It is a challenging route that is a feast for the senses and provides ample opportunity to experience the hospitality of the friendly Albanian people.**

Von: 01/04/2026

Bis: 28/06/2026

Preis DZ: 1690€

Preis EZ-Zuschlag: €

Preis-Zusatzkosten: €

Vorbehalt:

Gesichert:

Von: 01/09/2026

Bis: 15/11/2026

Preis DZ: 1690€

Preis EZ-Zuschlag: €

Preis-Zusatzkosten: 390€

Vorbehalt:

Gesichert:

## Travel Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrival in Tirana

Upon arrival at Tirana Airport, you will be transferred to your hotel in the city centre. After checking in, depending on your flight arrival time, you will have the opportunity to take a city tour of Tirana. Highlights include Enver Hoxha's atomic bunker, the fruit and vegetable market, and the National History Museum, located next to the newly developed city centre.

Lively and colourful, Tirana is the pulsating heart of Albania, where the hopes and dreams of this small nation converge into a swirling mix of traffic, bold consumerism, and unbridled fun. Since awakening from its communist slumber in the early 1990s, Tirana has undergone an extraordinary transformation. The centre is now unrecognizable, with buildings painted in primary colours, public squares, and pedestrian zones inviting you to stroll. Along with several excellent museums, there are plenty of reasons to arrive a day early.

### Day 2: Tirana - Pogradec

We begin the morning with a two-hour transfer to the northern shore of Lake Ohrid. After unloading our bikes and adjusting them to everyone's comfort, we will cycle along the scenic shoreline towards Pogradec. Following check-in at the hotel, we will continue cycling in the afternoon, crossing the border into North Macedonia to visit the Monastery of Saint Naum.

Lake Ohrid, one of the oldest lakes in the world, was formed in a distant geological era by tectonic shifts. With its unique flora and fauna, it is one of Europe's largest biological reserves. Home to 212 known endemic species and covering an area of 358 km<sup>2</sup>, it is likely the most diverse lake in the world, preserving prehistoric life forms that no longer exist elsewhere.

*Distance: 29 km | Total ascent: 70 m*

### Day 3: Pogradec - Korçë

Leaving Lake Ohrid, we ascend to a plateau bordered by mountains. We follow a gorge for a while until the hills open up into a vast plain featuring a colourful patchwork of individual farms. Depending on our arrival time in the city, we will have time to explore the old market and its picturesque cobblestone streets winding between

and behind the main roads. The day ends with a short walking tour of Korçë, known as the “Paris of Albania.”

In the 18th century, Korçë became a major trade and craft centre through commerce with neighbouring regions. During the Ottoman period, it emerged as a hub for the growing Albanian identity. The first school teaching in the Albanian language was established here in 1887, followed by Albania’s first girls’ school in 1891.

*Distance: 51 km | Total ascent: 512 m*

#### **Day 4: Korçë - Sotirë**

We leave the agricultural plateau of Korçë behind and climb steadily through a barren, rocky landscape dotted with wildflowers into the border mountains. Ahead lie numerous passes and valleys leading us into the heart of the Gramoz Mountains and over the Barmash Pass at 1,159 m. We will stop for lunch in Ersekë, Albania’s highest town, situated at approximately 1,000 m elevation. We will overnight at the Sotirë Farm, located in its own quiet valley and home to a wide variety of animals typical of a family operation. After checking into one of the wooded bungalows, you can relax by the fish ponds with a glass of the family’s special red wine, made from grapes grown at 1,000 m altitude.

*Distance: 72 km | Total ascent: 1,170 m*

#### **Day 5: Sotirë - Bënjë**

From Sotirë, we head onto a high plateau of pine forests surrounded by high peaks before reaching the source of the Vjosa River. We then descend through its spectacular gorge towards Leskovik. The 17 km descent to Çarshovë is a delight and one of the most scenic rides of the tour. We follow the corniche route high above the river to Përmet, renowned for its cuisine and strong raki. After arriving at our guesthouse in the village of Bënjë for lunch, we will cycle another 4 km to the Langarica thermal pools and their gorge. A 16th-century Ottoman bridge marks the spot and the end of the road. If you are feeling adventurous and wish to swim alone in one of the more remote pools built by locals every spring, you can hike upstream through one of Europe’s most beautiful gorges.

*Distance: 66 km | Total ascent: 660 m*

#### **Day 6: Bënjë - Gjirokastër**

We continue through the valley towards Këlcyrë, guarded by distant shark-tooth peaks forming another gorge. We cycle between them to the confluence of the Drinos River and follow yet another gorge. This opens up into a wide plain, above which lies the city of Gjirokastër (the “City of a Thousand Steps”) on the right. Gjirokastër, a designated “museum city,” is perhaps Albania’s most beautiful town.

*Distance: 70 km | Total ascent: 427 m*

#### **Day 7: Gjirokastër - Sarandë**

We start the day with a short transfer, bypassing some roads, and begin our cycling tour at the top of the Muzina Pass heading towards Sarandë. This gateway to southern Albania on the Ionian coast is nestled between

high mountains and the sea. A short ride on a rustic ferry takes us to Butrint, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the country's most important archaeological treasures, where the influences of various ancient peoples are clearly visible.

Inhabited since prehistoric times, Butrint was the site of a Greek colony, a Roman city, and a bishopric. After flourishing under Byzantine administration and a brief Venetian occupation, the city was abandoned in the late Middle Ages as marshes formed in the area. Today's archaeological site is a collection of ruins representing every period of the city's development.

*Distance: 70 km | Total ascent: 525 m*

#### **Day 8: Sarandë - Himarë**

It's a rollercoaster ride: we set off as the sun burns off the morning mist, climbing steeply out of Sarandë onto a rocky plateau. Then, we roll over ridges into coves and around headlands, always with breathtaking mountain scenery to the right and views of the coast to the left, before descending to the long beach and bay of Himarë. Here, there is plenty of time for a swim in the clear blue waters of the Albanian Riviera.

Along the way, we visit Porto Palermo Castle, a Venetian fortress falsely claimed to have been built in the 19th century by Ali Pasha of Tepelena, surrounded by many mysteries.

*Distance: 52 km | Total ascent: 1,064 m*

#### **Day 9: Himarë - Vlorë**

Today's ride is not only the most challenging but also the most spectacular. You will gradually ascend from sea level to 1,000 m, passing through forests, gorges, and hairpin turns. After lunch in the beautiful Llogara National Park, we descend to Vlorë, where you can spend a relaxed afternoon on the Ionian coast.

*Distance: 64 km | Total ascent: 1,590 m*

#### **Day 10: Departure**

Farewell day. Depending on your flight schedule, we will undertake a two-and-a-half-hour transfer to Rinas Airport in Tirana directly after breakfast. For those wishing to stay an extra night in Tirana or embark on other adventures, a separate transfer can be arranged.

## **INCLUDED**

Hotel Accommodation

All breakfasts, including breakfast beverages

All transfers described in the tour itinerary

Tour descriptions in English

GPX tracks

Maps and roadbook

Bicycle and other cycling accessories

Luggage transport from hotel to hotel

End-of-tour transfer to the airport

## **NOT INCLUDED**

Single room supplement

costs for electric bike

Transport to/from Albania

Helmet

Beverages

## **general information**

Arrival: Tirana

Departure: Tirana

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