



TOUR PROSPECTUS

This prospectus sets out the contents of the tour and together with the Booking Conditions and Booking Form is the basis of our contract with you.

Albania

26 May - 9 June 2015

Tour 1520

In 2014, the New York Times ranked Albania 4th among 50 recommended destinations. In 2011, Lonely Planet ranked it at number 1. Now is the time to visit Albania, as it emerges from its political constraints. This tour will start in buzzing Tirana before cycling over mountains, through gorges and villages. Encounter friendly people struggling with a subsistence lifestyle, and visit beautiful seaside resorts on the Ionian coast. There will be free time in Berati, reputedly the most beautiful town in Albania and a World Heritage site, and visits to Gjirokastrer, another World Heritage town, and the ancient Greek ruins at Butrinti. Suitable for fit cyclists able to cycle up to 118kms..

Itinerary

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| Tues 26 May | Fly from London Gatwick to Tirana on British Airways flight no BA2648, departing 1440, arriving 1835. Vehicle transfer to hotel in Tirana. Stay 2 nights. |
| Wed 27 May | Assemble bikes. Rest of day at leisure to explore Tirana. |
| Thurs 28 May | Cycle to near Elbasan via a sinuous road that contours the ridge, with glimpses of the sea on one side and the jagged mountains on the other. After a steep descent into Elbasan, continue via a vast gorge to the hotel. 63kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Fri 29 May | Cycle to Pogradec via Macedonia or shorter option. Continue through the gorge until the hills open up to a vast plain and a patchwork of farms. Cross the border into Macedonia, circuit Lake Ohrid and eventually cross back into Albania. 118kms / 76kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Sat 30 May | Cycle to Korce. 89kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Sun 31 May | Cycle to Germetj. Climb into the heart of the Gramnoz mountains over Barmash Pass (1759m) to Germetj, located in a tranquil valley. 72kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Mon 1 June | Cycle to guesthouse near Petran (Permet). From Germetj climb out of the valley to a high grassy plateau surrounded by soaring peaks before reaching the source of the River Vjosa and descending through a spectacular gorge to Leskove. Continue descending to Cashare, then follow the cornice route high above to the guesthouse, situated on a bluff above the river. 53kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Tues 2 June | Cycle to Gjirokastrer. Return to the main road and continue along the valley through another gorge to Drinos where the scenery opens up into a wide plain and the town of Gjirokastrer (city of 1000 steps) high above. Explore the narrow cobbled alleys and Ottoman houses. 71kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Wed 3 June | Cycle to Saranda by the sea via the ancient Greek town of Butrint or shorter option direct to Saranda. 96km / 54kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Thurs 4 June | Cycle to Himare. A roller coaster ride over hills and around headlands, always with mountains on the right and sea to the left, before reaching the town of Himare. A shorter day with some steep climbs. 51kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Fri 5 June | Cycle to Vlora. More ups and downs along the beautiful coast, then climb the Llagaraja pass (1025m) before descending to the port of Vlora. 66kms. Stay 1 night. |
| Sat 6 June | Cycle 30kms then vehicle transfer to Berati, arguably the most beautiful town in Albania. Explore the cobbled alleys between the white walled houses and visit the citadel high above. Stay 2 nights. |
| Sun 7 June | Day at leisure in Berati or out and back ride to Corovode – a tough spectacular ride through the mountains. 100kms. |
| Mon 8 June | Pack bikes. Afternoon transfer to Kruje, a fortified town close to the airport. Stay 1 night. |
| Tues 9 June | Visit the castle, bazaar, museums and shops before transferring by coach to Tirana airport for return British Airways flight no BA2649 to London Gatwick, departing 1920, arriving 2120. |

Luggage carrying

Transport will be provided for the transfer of the group and bikes from Nene Tereza Airport to Tirana, for the short transfer to Berati on 4 June, the transfer from Berati to Kruje and from Kruje to Nene Tereza airport. There will be a support vehicle for luggage, capable of carrying up to 7 riders and bikes if required.

Accommodation and meals

On 11 nights, accommodation will be in 2-4 star hotels of the Albanian Tourist Board grading system with en suite facilities. Three nights will be in guesthouses. All rooms are based on two people sharing; breakfast and evening meal included. Lunches are included on all cycling days. Vegetarian/fish meals may be available.

Price - £1450

The price is based on a minimum number of 16 participants taking part in the tour and is calculated at a rate of 1.2 euros to £1 sterling (based on exchange rates published on www.x-rates.com on 22 July 2014; please note Booking Conditions, clause 4). If there are insufficient bookings by 17 March 2015 we will contact you and return all monies paid, though in certain circumstances the tour may still run at below minimum numbers but at the same price.

Price includes:

- Return flights London Gatwick to Nene Teraza airport, Tirana
- 11 nights hotels, half board, sharing rooms
- 3 nights guest houses, half board, sharing rooms
- Lunches on all cycling days
- Vehicle transfers from Nene Teraza airport to Tirana, to Berati on 6 June, from Berati to Kruje and from Kruje to Nene Teraza airport, Tirana
- Support vehicle with English speaking driver/guide to carry luggage and up to 7 riders and bikes if required
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price does not include:

- Lunches on non-cycling days or refreshments at morning and afternoon stops
- BA's additional hold luggage fee (approx. £40 per bag)
- Gratuities for support crew
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

Payment schedule

A deposit of £250 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £1200 per person is to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 17 March 2015 Cheques should be made payable to **CTC Tours** or complete the credit/debit card slip in the booking pack.

Cancellations

Should you be forced to cancel your booking for any reason you must notify us in writing. Cancellation charges are as follows:

Written notice received:	Cancellation charge:
Before 17 March 2015	Deposit (£ 250)
17 March 2015 through to departure	100% (£1450)

To make a booking

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form together with your deposit and the relevant part of the Travel Insurance Declaration Form **directly to the leader** (address on Booking Form).



Passports, Visas and Health

EU citizens must hold a passport that is still valid for at least six months at the end of the tour. Holders of non-EU passports are advised to check whether they require a visa.

There are no compulsory vaccinations for EU residents although it is strongly recommended that your tetanus vaccination is up to date at the time of travel. You should contact your doctor at least 3 months prior to travel to obtain the latest advice to travellers.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking that you are adequately insured for this tour.

Whether you already hold a policy or will be taking out a new one, the cover it offers must be comparable to that stated in clause 8 of the Booking Conditions, and you must complete the enclosed Insurance Declaration Form and return it with your Booking Form.

CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours Ltd can accept no responsibility for any costs you may incur due to insufficient insurance cover.

LEADER'S INFORMATION SHEET

The information below is given by the tour leader to help enquirers decide if the tour is suitable for them.

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The area covered by the Tour

The tour covers the area of the country south of Tirana. It is mountainous, and the cycling can be quite strenuous. The main roads follow valleys, often following rivers that have carved out huge gorges. There is an extensive plateau around Lake Ohrid and Gjirokastra, providing a patchwork landscape of fields and remnants of the collective farms.

The beautiful Ionian coast is heavily indented, the land being covered in pine forest offering some shade to the new road as it snakes its way up and down through fishing villages. We will overnight in Saranda, the largest town in the south, and along the coast in Himare and the port of Vlora. There will be the opportunity to visit the ruins of the ancient Greek town of Butrinti.

Inland, the museum towns of Gjirokastra and Berati allow you to wander through their cobbled alleyways, taking in their architectural beauties of white-washed Ottoman houses whose courtyards are covered in trailing vines shaded by trees. In contrast, buzzing Tirana, like any other European city, has cafes, bars, restaurants, hotels and shops.

Rides and rest days

This tour is classified as suitable for experienced touring cyclists. On several days there are demanding climbs, but the distances are generally modest, and a support vehicle will carry all luggage and provide assistance to tired riders if requested. It is not practical to ride as one group, and you are free to progress at your own speed. We will regroup occasionally throughout the day. Garmin files and detailed route instructions will be provided approximately 3 weeks prior to the start of the tour.



There will be rest days in Tirana and Berati (optional cycling) and time to explore Kruje on the final day before departing in the late afternoon for the airport.

Accommodation / Meals

Accommodation will be in 2-4 star hotels of the Albanian Tourist Board grading system and 3 nights will be spent in guest houses. Breakfast is continental style with bread, jams, coffee etc. Lunches will be taken at local restaurants. Evening meals are traditionally meat based, but vegetarian food is also available on request (in advance).

Group information

The maximum group size will be 20 including the leaders.

Weather and Clothing

At this time of year the weather should be sunny and warm, with cool early mornings and temperatures dropping rapidly at night in the mountains as the sun goes down. Rain or thunder storms are possible in the mountains. It is recommended you take a fleece and long trousers for evenings and waterproof cycling jacket and gloves in case of rain. Sunscreen is essential, as is covering your head.

Cycles / Equipment

Roads are sealed and generally in good condition; some are new. Touring bikes, lightweight mountain bikes or hybrid will all be suitable if geared for long climbs. Ensure that your bike is well maintained and that you have tools and spares for simple roadside adjustments and puncture repairs. You will not need to carry luggage as this will be transferred, but a bar bag, rack pack or saddlebag will be needed for wet weather gear, camera and snacks etc. Mudguards are optional.

British Airways' free baggage allowance is one bag (or bike), maximum weight 23kgs, plus hand luggage 7kgs. Your bike must be properly boxed or bagged, handlebars turned, pedals removed and tyres deflated. If you take an additional bag, there is a charge of £40 each way (payable at the check-in desk at Gatwick). You will be able to avoid this cost if you pack some items with your bike and travel with hand luggage only. The cost of an extra bag is not included in the tour cost.

Money

The currency in Albania is the Lek (approximately 180 Lek = £1)

Maps

We have used Reise Know-How Veriag Map - ISBN-10: 3831772673. Detailed route sheets and daily profiles will be provided.

Bradt Travel Guide - Albania – ISBN-13 978 1 84162 387 0 – is a useful source of information.

Travel Insurance and Advice

Make sure you have read Clause 8 in the Booking Conditions. Before booking you should check the Foreign Office 'Travel Advice by Country' at www.fco.gov.uk or on 0845 850 2829.

About the leaders

We are both enthusiastic cyclists and have been CTC members for 23 years. We have led tours to many worldwide destinations (see www.comebiking.com), and each year we look forward to the reunion with regular travelling companions but also get great satisfaction from introducing new members to the unique camaraderie of CTC holidays. We do not have a set style of leadership but adapt to suit the needs of the group. We encourage all prospective participants to contact us to talk through the tour prior to booking.

We have not been to Albania but this is an established CTC tour that has been run several times. We will be exploring this tour with you.

John and Pat Ashwell

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