



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

18 May - 1 June 2018

Tour 1815

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, plus the ancient Greek ruins at Butrint. Suitable for fit cyclists able to cycle up to 90kms.

Itinerary

Fri 18 May	Fly from London Gatwick to Tirana's Nënë Tereza airport on British Airways flight no BA2648, departing 08:10, arriving 12:10. Vehicle transfer to hotel in Tirana. Assemble bikes. Stay 1 night.
Sat 19 May	Cycle to Ballkan Resort via a sinuous road, a steep descent into Elbasan and a vast gorge. 72kms – 965m ascent. Stay 1 night
Sun 20 May	Cycle to Lin Village then continue alongside Lake Ohrid to Podgradec. 77kms – 1131m ascent. Stay 1 night.
Mon 21 May	Cycle to Korce via Saint Naum monastery and Galichica and Prespa National Parks. 90kms – 1573m ascent. Stay 1 night.
Tues 22 May	Cycle to Germenj. Climb into the heart of the Gramnoz mountains over Barmash Pass 1759m to Germenj, located in a tranquil valley. 72kms – 1278m ascent. Stay 1 night - cabins, 4 per cabin.
Wed 23 May	Cycle to guesthouse near Petran Permet. Climb out of the valley then descend through a spectacular gorge. 53kms – 627m ascent. Optional cycle to hot springs. Stay 1 night.
Thur 24 May	Cycle to Gjirokastrer. 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 – 498m ascent. Stay 1 night.
Fri 25 May	Cycle to Saranda by the sea. 54kms – 550m ascent. Stay 2 nights.
Sat 26 May	Optional cycle to the ancient Greek ruins of Butrint. 40kms.
Sun 27 May	Cycle to Himare. A roller coaster ride over hills and around headlands before reaching the town of Himare. 52kms – 929m ascent. Stay 1 night.
Mon 28 May	Cycle to Vlora. More ups and downs along the beautiful coast, then climb the Llagaraja pass 1025m before descending to the hotel near Vlora. 64kms – 1549m ascent. Stay 1 night.
Tues 29 May	Cycle to Berati, arguably the most beautiful town in Albania. Explore the cobbled alleys between the white-walled houses and visit the citadel high above. 91kms -717m ascent. Stay 2 nights.
Wed 30 May	Day at leisure in Berati or out and back ride to Polican. 46kms – 701m ascent. Pack bikes.
Thur 31 May	Transfer to hotel in Tirana. Rest of day at leisure in Tirana. Stay 1 night.
Fri 1 June	Transfer by coach to Tirana's Nënë Tereza airport for return British Airways flight no BA2649 to London Gatwick, departing 13:10, arriving 15:10.

Luggage carrying

Transport will be provided for the transfer of the group and bikes from Nënë Tereza Airport to the centre of Tirana, from Berati to Tirana and from Tirana to Nënë Tereza airport at the end of the tour. There will be a support vehicle for luggage, capable of carrying up to three riders and bikes if required.

Accommodation and meals

On 12 nights, accommodation will be in 2-4 star hotels of the Albanian Tourist Board grading system with en suite facilities. One night will be in a guesthouse with en suite facilities, and one night will be in cabins, 4 persons per cabin, sharing a bathroom. All rooms are based on two people sharing with breakfast and evening meal included. Lunches are included on all cycling days. Vegetarian/fish meals may be available if requested.

Price - £1499 (£1120 land only)

The price is based on a minimum number of 16 participants taking part in the tour and is calculated at a rate of 1.09 euros to £1 sterling (based on exchange rates published on www.x-rates.com on 8 September 2017; please note Booking Conditions, clause 3). If there are insufficient bookings by 9 March 2018 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 Nënë Teraza airport, Tirana
- 12 nights hotels, half board, sharing rooms
- 1 night guest house, half board, sharing rooms
- 1 night cabins, half board, sharing 4 persons per cabin, 2 persons per room
- Lunches on all cycling days
- Vehicle transfers from Nënë Teraza airport to Tirana/return and from Berati to Tirana (whether on included flight or land only)
- Support vehicle with English speaking driver/guide to carry luggage and up to 3 riders and bikes if required
- CTC Cycling Holidays & Tours costs

Price does not include:

- Travel to the start of the tour
- Lunches on non-cycling days or refreshments at morning/afternoon stops
- Gratuities for support crew
- Any other personal expenses
- Travel Insurance

Payment schedule

A deposit of £150 per person must accompany the Booking Form, with the final balance of £1349 per person (land only £970) to be paid ten weeks prior to departure, by 9 March 2018. See the payment slip for how these can be paid.

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:	Land only
Before 9 March 2018	Deposit (£ 150)	(£ 150)
9 March 2018 through to departure	100% (£ 1499)	(£ 1120)

To make a booking

Complete, sign and return the Booking Form and deposit part of the payment slip, together with the relevant part of the Insurance Declaration Form, **directly to the Tour Managers** (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

Clause 7 of our Booking Conditions stipulates that, for tours outside the UK, Travel Insurance is mandatory. Details of the level of cover needed and other conditions you should check are stated on the Booking Conditions.

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 that may be incurred due to insufficient insurance cover.

TOUR MANAGER'S INFORMATION SHEET

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

Albania

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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 also be the opportunity to visit the ruins of the ancient Greek town of Butrint, either by bike or local bus.



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.

Travel

British Airways operate the only direct flights from the UK to Tirana, and they have limited the number of bikes carried on these flights to 15. We have booked 18 seats and, as we will be travelling on these flights, there will be 15 group seats available with bikes and 3 seats without bikes. Hire bikes are available from our agent in Tirana. Maximum group size will be 20, and any remaining places will be sold 'land only'.

On 'land only' bookings, it is very important that you note that neither your Tour Manager nor CTC Holidays & Tours are responsible for you in any way until the appointed time at the designated meeting point. Should you fail to arrive at the appointed time for whatever reason, we will not be responsible for any additional expenses you may incur in order to meet up with the tour group. Before finalising travel arrangements to meet the tour, you should ensure that you have read and understood our booking conditions. Should this tour not attract sufficient bookings to reach the minimum operating size, we may cancel the tour at any time up to 10 weeks before departure. It is therefore recommended that you book fully flexible and refundable transport and accommodation or wait until you have been informed that this tour is going ahead, as in the event of the tour being cancelled, we will not be responsible for any losses incurred.

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 Saranda and Berati (optional cycling).

Accommodation / Meals

Accommodation will be in 2-4 star hotels of the Albanian Tourist Board grading system except one night in a guest house and one night in cabins. Adequate breakfasts are provided at the accommodation. Lunches will be taken at local restaurants. Evening meals are traditionally meat based, but vegetarian food is also available on request (in advance). Desserts are not normally served.

Group information

The maximum group size will be 20 (including the Tour Managers)

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 a covering for your head.

Cycles / Equipment

Roads are sealed and generally in good condition, but there are some rough stretches. Touring bikes, lightweight mountain bikes or hybrid bikes 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. Lights are not required.

Giant Rove and Giant Roam bikes are available for hire directly from the agent in Tirana. These bikes are well maintained and the gearing is suitable for the terrain. Please contact us if you require further information.

Money

The currency in Albania is the Lek (approximately 150 Lek = £1)

Maps

We have used Reise Know-How Veriag Map - ISBN-10: 3831772673. Detailed route sheets and daily profiles will be provided, and gpx tracks for Garmins are available if requested.

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 7 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 Tour Managers

We are both enthusiastic cyclists and have been CTC members for 25 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.

This will be the fourth time we have run this tour.

John and Pat Ashwell

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