

Tirana

inyour
pocket

2016

inyourpocket.com

N°10



9 771587 237806

€ 2,00

10!

Celebrate our 10th issue with a rundown of the 10 best reasons why you should visit Tirana

Day trips

Special guides to the nearby destinations of Dajti, Durrës and Kruja



10 Vjet

rrugë të hapura me
Raiffeisen Leasing

10 Years

of open roads with
Raiffeisen Leasing



SIGMA **INTERALBANIAN** 

VIENNA INSURANCE GROUP

Health Insurance

Property Insurance

Vehicle Insurance

Liability Insurance



www.sivig.al

kontakt@sivig.al



OPENING TIME: 11AM - 03AM

SHISHA ROOM IS THE PLACE TO BE WHETHER YOU ARE LOOKING TO HAVE A PLEASANT DRINK AND A GOOD TIME DURING THE WEEKDAYS OR WHETHER YOU'RE AFTER SOME PRE-CLUB COCKTAILS DURING THE WEEKEND. EVERY DRINK IS CRAFTED BY OUR IN-HOUSE SENIOR MIXOLOGIST'S WHO TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN THE ART OF CREATING A PERFECT COCKTAIL. THE ART AND THE GREAT HOOKAHS AT OUR LOUNGE PAIR PERFECTLY WITH OUR COCKTAILS. OUR VENUE PROVIDES THE SPACE FOR SOCIALIZATION WITH TIRANA'S ELITE SOCIAL GROUPS.

WE BOAST PLUSH SEATING, GREAT ATMOSPHERE, SENSUAL LIGHTING & MUSIC.

Shisha Rooms / Rruga themistokli germenji, pranë liceartistik / Tirana, Albania
Tel: +355 69 439 2840 / +355 68800888
Mail: reservations@shisharoomtirana.com / Web: www.shisharoomtirana.com
facebook : shisha room tirana / instagram: @shisharoom.tirana



inyour pocket

ESSENTIAL CITY GUIDES

Tirana Basics	10
The only A to Z of the city you'll ever need	
History	14
You couldn't make this stuff up	
Arrival & Transport	16
Planes, trains and automobiles	
Culture	24
Theatre, cinema, cultural centres etc.	
Restaurants	28
Everything from fine dining to street food	
Cafés	44
Now with added hipsters	
Nightlife	49
Now with added nakedness	

Contents



National Martyrs' Cemetery (see p.59)

LOUNGE *tvsh*

AROUND HERE, BRUNCH ISN'T JUST A MEAL. IT'S A WAY OF LIFE. RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE WITH A SUNNY-SIDE-UP ATTITUDE, BRUNCH IS THE PERFECT WAY TO START THE DAY AND AN EVEN BETTER WAY TO END IT. THE TVSH LOUNGE IN TIRANA IS OPEN FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER, AND EVERY MEAL HAS A BRUNCH FRAME OF MIND. IN FACT, BRUNCH IS OUR FAVOURITE VERB—AS IN "LET'S BRUNCH." THAT'S BECAUSE BRUNCH COMBINES THE BEST OF BREAKFAST AND LUNCH AND WE SERVE IT FRESH ALL DAY. THE TVSH LOUNGE ONLY SERVES RECIPES FROM SCRATCH USING THE BEST POSSIBLE INGREDIENTS AND INCORPORATING A MODERN COMFORT FOOD TWIST. EDDY, HEALTHY, FRESH, AND FUN, OUR FOOD IS AN EXPERIENCE AND OUR FRIENDLY HOSPITALITY KNOWS NO EQUAL. IN ADDITION TO OUR FOOD MENU, THE COFFEE MENU POURS UP SIGNATURE GOURMET ROASTED COFFEES, TEA CONCOCTIONS AND SMOOTHIES. SETTLE IN FOR A COMFORTABLE AFTERNOON OR STOP BY FOR A FRESH DAY BREAK PASTRY. LOOKING FOR A LITTLE EXTRA FUN AND RELAXATION? OUR BARTENDERS HANDCRAFT DRINKS DESIGNED FOR ALL TIMES OF DAY, SERVED AT THE BAR, IN THE RESTAURANT OR ON OUR SPACIOUS PATIO. OUR COCKTAIL LIST IS SO EXTENSIVE, DRINKS HAVE A MENU ALL TO THEMSELVES WITH SPECIALS EVERY DAY OF THE WEEK. IF YOU'RE IN THE MOOD FOR BEER, WINE, HOUSE-MADE SANGRIA, BLOODY MARYS, AND MORE, YOU'RE IN THE MOOD FOR THE BAR AT THE TVSH LOUNGE



St. Paul's Cathedral (see p.60)

Sightseeing	58
Enlarged, fully updated and better than ever	
Day trips	67
Dajti, Durrës and Kruja	
Shopping	75
Upmarket fashion, traditional markets and more	
Where to Stay	80
A bed for all budgets	
Directory	90
Pretty much what it says it is	
Maps & Index	104
City map and Street index	

Reservations accepted for parties of 5 or more. Call +355694392840 to reserve your table today!
Hours: Monday - Sunday
Bar: 11am - 3:30am / Food: 11am - 1am / Coffee: 7am - 1am

Foreword

A modern city is perhaps best defined by its diversity, a definition Tirana falls under these days without any fear of contradiction. True it possesses neither a train nor a bus station, but it does have gourmet burgers, bicycles to rent, free wireless internet connections and so much more to make up for its somewhat idiosyncratic public transport anomalies. A city that seemingly never sleeps, full of friendly faces and featuring surprises hidden around every corner, Albania's compact capital draws an abundance of visitors from budget backpackers looking for pastures new to entrepreneurs with an eye on the city's emerging investment opportunities.

Tirana In Your Pocket, already an amazing 10 issues old, provides everything its title promises and is packed full of useful and entirely independent information about the city from the best sights to visit during a whistle-stop stay to the best restaurants in the city to where to buy painkillers in the middle of the night on your way home from a nightclub. We hope you enjoy exploring Tirana as much as we do writing about it.

COVER STORY

In a scene that suggests two local gentlemen are turning their backs on history to concentrate on the prying to the new order, the two people in question are probably just fixing something on the wall of the new building that houses the recently opened Plaza Tirana hotel (see p.80) towering over Kaplan Pasha's Tomb (see p.64) in the foreground.



inyour pocket

Publisher

Tirana In Your Pocket
© Albania Experience Sh.PK.
Rr. Elbasanit, Nd.10, H.5, 1010 Tirana, Albania
Tel: +355 4 225 56 55, fax: +355 4 227 19 60
tirana@inyourpocket.com, www.inyourpocket.com
ISSN 1587-2378
Published 10,000 copies annually

Editorial

Editor Sco
Contributor Jeroen van Marle
Production Manager Genci Minarolli
Research Assistant Flogert Hoxha
Design Mateja Štruc
Photography Richard Schofield, Juxhin Ciftja, Albanian National History Museum
Cover photo Genci Minarolli

Sales & Circulation

Country Manager Refatjon Dobi
Tel. +355 67 409 94 36
Publisher Gazmend Haxhia

Copyright notice

Text and photographs copyright Albania Experience Sh.PK.
Maps copyright cartographer. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, without written permission from the publisher and copyright owner. The brand name In Your Pocket is used under license from UAB In Your Pocket, Bernardinų 9-4, Vilnius, Lithuania.

ABOUT IYP

In Your Pocket, the world's leading publisher of locally-produced city guides since 1992, recently launched a brand new smartphone app: **In Your Pocket City Essentials**. Featuring only hand-picked venues and sights alongside essential travel information, these city guides have been carefully crafted by our local editors and include only the places they are happy to recommend. The app - available on both *iOS* and *Android* - is free, and works offline. Go to iyp.me/app on your smartphone to download it.

To keep up with all that's new at *In Your Pocket*, follow us on *Facebook* (facebook.com/inyourpocket) or *Twitter* (twitter.com/inyourpocket).



INCOMING SERVICES
OUTGOING SERVICES
ACCOMMODATION
TICKETING



albania-experience.al

We organize events
incentives
for best performers,
meetings
motivational trips
board meetings
social programs
conferences
product launches
and similar business events
in Albania



Going for a spin in Tirana

1 THE PEOPLE

The ancient Albanian honour code known as *besa* is something the nation can be rightly proud of. Responsible for the survival of almost every single European Jew taking refuge in the country during the Nazi occupation (see p.61), *besa* is alive and well and visible in just about every smile and gesture you'll encounter whilst visiting Tirana.

2 THE FOOD

Many restaurants still serve seasonal vegetables, the grilled meat will have you reaching for an Albanian passport application form and the national cuisine blends the very best of local, Mediterranean and Turkish cooking. And then there's the *qofta* (see p.43). Seriously, what other reasons do you need?

3 THE DIVERSITY

An old gentleman speeds by on a rusty Chinese bicycle with a basket of chickens tied to the handlebars, a Bektashi follower (see p.65) charges his mobile phone on the pavement nearby and a young businesswoman pulls up to the kerb in her BMW and runs into the shop to pick up a pair of €600 Italian shoes. Welcome to Tirana.

4 THE HISTORY

It's staring you in the face everywhere you look, from the ruins of Tirana Castle (see p.64) to the bombastic façades of the Mussolini-era edifices in the city centre to the gleaming 21st century towers of contemporary capitalism.

5 THE WEATHER

There's rarely an evening you'll be forced to eat and drink indoors and far too many days when all you can think about is escaping to the cool mountain air of Kruja (see p.73) or the fresh sea breeze at Durrës (see p.69). If you love the Mediterranean climate and are bored of the Mediterranean, Tirana and the surrounding region provides the answers you've been looking for.

6 THE PRICES

No the waiter and the barman didn't both make mistakes, you really are walking back to the hotel in the middle of the night with anything but an empty wallet. Not sure what to do with all that money you're saving? Support the local economy and buy your friends and family lots of gifts and souvenirs (see p.76).

7 THE MOUNTAINS

The word Balkans originates from an old Turkish word meaning mountains, a patently obvious fact when you observe the region's topography. Tirana is surrounded by some stunning mountain panoramas that don't even require you to get out of your chair to get the most out of them. If you do feel like making the effort, Dajti (see p.68) is easily reached by cable car.

8 THE SHOPPING

From the exotic chaos of the marketplace at Pazari i Ri (see p.77) to the fancy shops and outlets inhabiting the two floors of TEG (see p.78), Tirana's shopping possibilities cover every need and expectation. If shopping really is your thing, also don't miss the abundance of unusual shops lining the streets of the suburbs.

9 THE ATTENTION TO DETAIL

A full quarter of a century out of the madness and greyness and stagnation of communism, Tirana has done a magnificent job at reinventing itself as a place for business excellence, whether it's in the form of cooking and presenting seafood dishes to perfection (see p.41) or organising trips out of the city that really engage the traveller (see p.60). Not everything's perfect yet, but we really think you'll be surprised at just how good everything is.

10 THE UNEXPECTED

Visiting Tirana is an experience full of unexpected surprises, and telling you about them would spoil the surprise. Enjoy the experience, and if you uncover anything truly unexpected and/or surprising that you think we should write about, drop us a line at tirana@inyourpocket.com or leave a comment on the website, inyourpocket.com/tirana.

**TURKISH
AIRLINES** 



Sheshi Wilson, Pallati i ri, Kati i 3-te TIRANA/ALBANIA

Call Center: +355 4 2240965 // +355 4 2258459

Fax: +355 4 2240965

Working Hours:
weekdays 09:00-17:00
Saturday Closed
Sunday Closed



Postblloku (see p.60)

ALCOHOL

As is pretty much the same throughout the Balkans, the local firewater of choice in Albania comes in the form of a fruit-based brandy known as *raki* (or *rakia*). Distilled using anything from grapes to plums and even mulberries, commercially produced *raki* contains around 40% alcohol, although you may well encounter illicit moonshine containing at least twice as much as this. Be careful! At the other end of the scale, Albania's beer (*birra*) production is dominated by the two national brands Birra Tirana and Birra Korça, of which both are lager-type concoctions that are absolutely fine to drink but that are unlikely to win any awards. Alcoholism and drunkenness in the streets are minor problems compared to many other countries in Eastern Europe with similar histories.

COMMUNISM

There are still plenty of communist-era relics to see in Tirana, by far the largest and most impressive being the gargantuan Socialist Realist mosaic adorning the façade of the city's National History Museum. It should be noted however that this mildly controversial masterpiece has been cleansed of the majority of its blatantly offensive communist iconography for reasons that many Western visitors often fail to understand. The fact of the matter is that between 1944 and 1991 Albania was one of the most isolated countries in the world, a violent and paranoid police state that used coercion, torture, false psychological imprisonment and religious persecution

as ways of maintaining law and order. Although it's now a quarter of century since Albania threw off its Marxist-Leninist shackles, many of its older citizens still carry around the various internal scars associated with a violent and dysfunctional recent past. It would be something of an exaggeration to claim that Albania is suffering from the effects of some kind of collective, post-traumatic stress syndrome, although there is at least an element of truth in this supposition. Although many of the younger generation of locals are now exploiting Albania's former communist past with various themed bars and tours, you might want to think twice before arriving at the airport in a Che Guevara t-shirt.

CRIME & SAFETY

Believed by many to be a lawless country populated by bandits and villains whose main goal in life is to separate tourists from their possessions by any means possible, Albania is in actual fact one of the safest and most relaxed countries in Europe. This isn't to say that crime doesn't exist of course, there's plenty of it around, although most is to be found taking place behind closed doors in the shady underworld of business and politics. As with anywhere else in the world, there are a few people out there willing to spoil people's holidays by stealing their luggage and helping themselves to wallets and mobile phones left in unattended jackets and bags. Be vigilant, don't stroll around dark neighbourhoods drunk, and you'll be fine. Gun ownership in Albania is common, although shootings are almost exclusively the result of internal squabbles and disputes.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

EU citizens as well as those from most other European countries plus the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Japan can enter Albania without a visa. Other travellers need to get a visa from an Albanian embassy or consulate abroad before travelling. More information can be found on the Albanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at www.mfa.gov.al. Passports should be valid for a further three months after departing Albania. Citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand have the option of entering Albania using an ID card, although we recommend still taking your passport anyway as airlines and officials are all too quickly confused.

HEALTH

Although we've never had any problems with it, many people advise against drinking the tap water in Albania,

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ambulance **Tel. 127**
 Fire **Tel. 128**
 Police **Tel. 129**

LOCAL TIME

Albania is in the Central European Time (CET) zone at GMT+1hr. When it's 12:00 in Tirana it's 06:00 in New York, 11:00 in London and 19:00 in Tokyo. Central European Summer Time (CEST, GMT+2hrs) falls between the last Sundays of March and October respectively.

especially in rural areas away from large towns and cities. A stomach infection is the last thing anyone needs, so it's worth considering sticking to bottled water, which is available in shops everywhere are extremely cheap. Medical and dental care in the country are of poor quality, and travelling with medical insurance is highly recommended. No vaccinations are needed when visiting Albania. Raw sewage is allegedly pumped into the sea at times, so be careful when visiting the coast.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Not surprisingly for a former communist country still in transition to a fully functioning and transparent democracy, Albania's infrastructure remains something of a mess, with, somewhat extraordinarily for a European capital city, Tirana lacking both train and bus stations. Expect to encounter (and get used to) anomalies including broken shower doors and bare wires even in some of the more expensive hotels. Beware of pavements with missing manhole covers, small lumps of metal sticking out of the ground and large amounts of rubbish lying around in the suburbs. Although service in bars and restaurants is gradually improving, it's still got a long way to go, although unlike in places such as Russia for example, where miserable service is considered an art form, Albanian waiters (waitresses still being something of a rarity) are almost universally gregarious. Disabled travellers thinking about visiting Albania, especially those who generally travel on a budget, should know right away they're going to find it an incredibly difficult experience.

LANGUAGE

Sounding at times not unlike Turkish with the batteries running out, Albanian is an Indo-European language with its own isolated linguistic branch. Thought to have originated from the now long-extinct Illyrian (or possibly Thracian) language, Albanian consists of two distinct dialects, namely *Gheg*, spoken in the north as well as neighbouring Kosovo and the Albanian-speaking regions of Montenegro and Macedonia, and *Tosk*, which is generally confined to the south of the country. Featuring a Latin alphabet made up of 36 letters, peculiarities include a propensity to switch the definite and indefinite endings (thus both Tirana and Tiranë) depending on their function within a sentence, a habit we try to bypass by sticking to the definite ending to avoid confusion wherever possible. English is widely spoken in Tirana, especially among the younger generation. A lot of Albanians also speak Italian, French and, in the south of the country especially, Greek.

LGBT Albania

Same-gender sex has been legal in Albania since 1995, although general attitudes are exceedingly conservative with many Albanians still stuck in the 16th century. Although Tirana is yet to feature rainbow flags and openly gay bars, the city does at least have one or two gay-friendly places to eat and drink. Travelling to exotic locations such as Albania for the LGBT community has been revolutionised over the past few years with the help of the internet, and we strongly recommend taking advantage of Google to locate and connect with local LGBT groups and organisations. A law exists in Albania banning discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity.

MARKET VALUES

Slice of byrek 40 lek (€0.25)
Espresso 70 - 90 lek (€0.60 - €0.80)
Decent bottle of local wine 250 - 300 lek (€2 - €2.50)
Pint of Birra Tirana in a pub 250 - 400 lek (€2 - €3)
Pack of cigarettes 300 lek (€2)
Taxi ride across town 300 - 500 lek (€3 - €5)
Local transport ticket 40 lek (€0.29)

Exchange rate €1 = 137.74 lek

EXCHANGE LULI





EXCHANGE LULI
 Rruga Ibrahim Rugova,
 1001 Tirana, Albania
 M: +355 6 9207 2230

Tirana Basics

MONEY & COSTS

The Albanian currency is the lek. Banknotes come in denominations of 5,000 lek, 2,000 lek, 1,000 lek, 500 lek and 200 lek, with coins available in denominations of 100 lek, 50 lek, 20 lek, 10 lek and 5 lek. The lek is a non-convertible currency and must be changed back into your own currency before leaving Albania. ATMs are found all over Tirana and don't charge for transactions, although your home bank may well do. Cash can be changed at exchange offices found all over the city and offer the best rates. It's also possible to change money in banks and many of the better hotels, although doing so in the latter should only be considered in an emergency as they always charge a whopping great commission. Chip and PIN is slow to arrive in Albania. After entering your PIN you'll also be required to sign the receipt. If you're doing anything outside the immediate city centre or are planning to travel to any remote locations, be sure to carry plenty of cash. With the exceptions of the city's five-star hotels and luxury restaurants, the cost of living for people visiting from the West remains remarkably affordable.

THE PEOPLE

A matter of considerable academic dispute, the origin of today's Albanian people almost certainly lies somewhere in the time before Christ when the Illyrians settled the region. The first written references to a specific Albanian race date back to historical records from the 11th century. Contemporary Albanians run on the mixed blood of several races who've all in one way or another had considerable influence on the nation, the only thing truly uniting them being *besa*, the unique Albanian honour code that insists on the well-being of honoured guests no matter who they are. *Besa*, which famously left Nazi-occupied Albania with a larger Jewish population at the end of WWII than at the beginning, is reason enough to visit the country. Warm, friendly, funny and inquisitive, mixing with the Albanians is guaranteed to have a lasting and positive effect on everyone who visits the country.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

New Year **January 1-2**
 Summer Day **March 14**
 Nevruz Day (Spring Equinox) **March 22**
 Orthodox/Catholic Easter (2017) **April 16**
 Labour Day **May 1**
 Eid al-Fitr **July 7**
 Eid al-Adha **September 11**
 Beatification of Mother Teresa **October 19**
 Independence Day **November 28**
 Liberation Day **November 29**
 National Youth Day **December 8**
 Christmas Day **December 25**

RELIGION

Contrary to what many people think, Albania is far from being an exclusively Muslim country, with less than 60 percent of the population claiming to adhere to Islam, a faith imported during the Ottoman occupation that many people originally converted to for economic reasons. Constitutionally a secular country and for two decades during the Hoxha regime the only atheist country in the world, Albania's other main faiths include Orthodox Christianity and Catholicism. Almost none of the tiny remaining Jewish population of the country follow Judaism. All of the houses of worship in Tirana welcome visitors as both tourists and believers.

WHEN TO GO

Boasting a Mediterranean climate featuring often stiflingly hot, dry summers and moderately cool winters during which temperatures tend to drop severely at higher altitudes, there's never an especially bad time to visit Albania. Tirana itself is buzzing all year round, with bar and restaurant terraces pretty much never closing. Choosing exactly when to visit is a matter of personal preference, although we recommend the late spring, especially during the month of May when the spring flowers are in full bloom and it's possible to walk around in shirtsleeves without burning to death. If you choose to visit during the hot summer months and are travelling on a limited budget, make sure your hotel has air conditioning.

KEEPING IN TOUCH

Free wireless internet access in Tirana is becoming increasingly common, with more and more bars, hotels, restaurants and other places where people congregate providing fast connections at no cost. Both 3G and 4G services are also available, although data roaming is far from cheap in Albania. A good idea if you need a data connection is to consider buying a prepaid Albanian SIM card. The table below provides a very basic outline of what you can expect from all four mobile providers, of whom all have shops with English-speaking staff scattered around the city centre.

	Eagle	Plus	Telekom	Vodafone
SIM price	500 lek	500 lek	500 lek	500 lek
Price/min within Albania	29 lek	26 lek	39 lek	39 lek
Price/min to UK/US	100 lek	105 lek	82 lek	190 lek
SMS within Albania	16 lek	15 lek	12 lek	13 lek
SMS to UK/US	18 lek	18 lek	18 lek	18 lek
4G	Yes	No	Yes	Yes



CONTACT US:

LANDWAYS
 Address: "Rr. Themistokli
 Germejti" Nr.10,
 Po .Box 1430
 Tirana, Albania
 Tel +355 4 2 255 655

WWW.LANDWAYS.EU



National History Museum (see p.63)

The origins of today's Albania can be traced back two-and-a-half millennia with the settling of the Illyrians in the region, the people who most agree the modern Albanians are descended from. Part of the mighty Ottoman Empire from the end of the 14th century until the beginning of the 20th, and the only people to expel Nazi Germany without any assistance from a foreign army in 1944, Albania's most recent long-term incarnation was as a post-war Communist country almost completely isolated from the rest of the world. The plucky Albanian people have been struggling with their own unique version of democracy and capitalism for the last quarter of a century, and it's anyone's guess what's going to happen next.

4th Century

The Roman Empire is divided in **395AD**. The territory of today's Albania falls into the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire.

14th Century

The Ottomans invade what's now Albania in **1385**, a rule lasting over 500 years.

15th Century

Skanderbeg, the Albanian leader, wages a war of independence against the Ottomans starting in **1443**, and enjoys remarkable success in keeping them at bay until his death in **1468**.

19th Century

After numerous crushed uprisings and the Russian victory over the Ottoman Empire, the Prizren League is founded in **1878** to fight for Albanian autonomy.

20TH CENTURY

Local uprisings break out in **1909-1912**. Albanians proclaim independence in Vlorë on **November 28, 1912**. The Treaty of London recognises Albania in **1913**, but Kosovo is given to Serbia. In **1914** Italy invades Albania. In **1920**, Albania regains independence. In **1925**, Ahmet Muhtar Zogolli becomes president, but in **1928** he proclaims Albania a kingdom and crowns himself King Zog I. He cooperates with the Italians, who invade again in **1939**, occupying Albania until **1943** when Nazi Germany takes over until their retreat in **November 1944**. Albania becomes the only Nazi-occupied country to have more Jews living in it at the end of the conflict than when it began. The Communist-led National Liberation Front takes power. Yugoslavia, Albania's erstwhile ally, tries to absorb the country, causing Albania to break with Belgrade in **1948**. After **1956**, when most of Eastern Europe undergoes de-Stalinisation, Albania maintains a hard line stance. It criticises the Soviet Union, with which it breaks relations in **1961**. In **1968** Albania withdraws from the Warsaw Pact and cultivates relations with Communist China. Imitating Beijing, Albania purges 'reactionary' influences. In its own version of the Cultural Revolution in **1967**, it outlaws religion, closes all 2,169 of the country's churches and mosques and becomes the only atheist state in the world. In **1978** the country's leaders condemn China as revisionist and Albania is left with no friends. Party head Enver Hoxha dies on **April 11, 1985**.

POST-COMMUNIST ALBANIA

After Communism collapses After Communism collapses After Communism collapses After Communism collapses After Communism collapses

1990

After Communism collapses throughout Eastern Europe, Communist Party leader Ramiz Alia announces cautious democratisation in **March**. The People's Assembly reverses the ban on religion and travel abroad in **May**. On **December 12** the Democratic Party is founded. Nine days later, the authorities remove the statue of Stalin in Tirana.

1991

In **February**, students at Enver Hoxha University launch a strike. Weeks of protests culminate in the toppling of Enver Hoxha's statue in Sheshi Skënderbej. Waves of refugees flee the country in **March**. On **March 31** the first multi-party elections in 68 years result in a victory for the Communists. In **June**, the faults in the economy become clear when thousands of Albanians seeking asylum in Italy commandeered ships. An estimated 100,000 Albanians flee the country in 12 months.

1997

Collapsing pyramid schemes spark months of rioting and lawlessness in **January**. In June, parliamentary elections result in a landslide victory for the Socialists. President Berisha, blamed for allowing the pyramid schemes to flourish, resigns.

1999

In response to Serb attacks on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, NATO launches an air war on Yugoslavia on **March 25**. The war turns Albania into a NATO base of operations, and by **May** 500,000 Kosovan refugees have flooded into the country.

2001

In **October**, Edi Rama, a former art lecturer and painter supported by the Socialist Party, is elected mayor of Tirana and initiates a series of projects that change the face of the city.

2005

In **July**, Sali Berisha's Democratic Party wins the national elections from Fatos Nano's Socialists. The election results are delayed after allegations of voting irregularities and three deaths. OSCE monitors report that the elections only partially complied with international standards. Novelist Ismail Kadare wins the first international version of Britain's Man Booker Prize.

2006

Albania signs the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, the first step towards closer cooperation with the economic superpower.

2007

In **June**, US President George W. Bush gets a hero's welcome on his visit to Albania, mingling with the crowds in Fushe Kruja where his statue now graces the town's main square.

2008

On **March 15**, explosions in a factory used for defusing old munitions wipe out the village of Gërdec, 14km from Tirana, killing 26 and wounding nearly 300. Hundreds of houses are destroyed, windows of cars on the highway are shattered, and the sound is heard as far away as Skopje some 200km to the east.

2009

In **April** Albania joins NATO. In **June** Berisha's Democratic Party narrowly wins the national elections, which were marred by continuing irregularities.

2010

The EU allows visa-free travel for Albanians to Europe's Schengen countries.

2011

In **January**, violent opposition protests erupt after a video exposes corruption by the vice prime minister Ilir Meta. Three demonstrators are killed by guards at the Prime Minister's residence.

2012

The presidential elections turn into a farce when talks between the main party leaders Edi Rama and Sali Berisha fall apart. Two candidates withdraw before the Minister of Internal Affairs Bujar Nishani is elected with a majority of 73 votes. In **November**, Albania celebrates 100 years since its declaration of independence. The EU integration process stalls when the country is refused candidate member status.

2013

Tirana's major Edi Rama of the Socialist Party wins the **June** parliamentary elections with 56% of the votes, and becomes prime minister.

2015

In **June**, the 36-year-old Socialist politician Erion Veliaj becomes Tirana's 42nd elected mayor.

2016

Tirana International Airport agrees to end its monopoly on flights in and out of the country, paving the way for the development and expansion of the airport at Kukës some 120km to the northeast of the capital.



Bicycle racing in the city centre

Getting to Albania has never been this easy, with affordable links via land, sea and air. Once you've arrived, keep in mind that as long as you're on the ground it's going to be a bumpy ride, whether you take a taxi, bus, car or train.

ARRIVING IN TIRANA

Tirana remains the last major city in the known universe without a bus or train station.

BY BUS

Despite the immense popularity of long-distance bus travel in Albania, Tirana can't quite get it together enough to build a bus station. Buses drop off passengers at various points around the city and you may need a taxi or city bus to get to your final destination.

BY CAR

Driving to Albania is an option now that the roads have greatly improved. The unusual visa arrangement at Albania's road borders, in which handing over a few euros in exchange for a stamp in your passport was necessary in order to get into the country, was recently abandoned and the biggest headaches now involve the possibility of long queues and the fact that not all borders are open around the clock.

BY FERRY

Ferry services from several Italian cities to the ports of Durrës, Shengjin and Vlora operate all year round. Flying to Corfu and taking advantage of the regular passenger ferry to Saranda in the south of the country is often the cheapest way to reach South Albania from Western Europe. The roads from Saranda to Tirana have been greatly improved over the last few years, and much of the journey involves the extremely pleasurable experience of alternately hugging the Adriatic coast and driving up and down very high mountains.

BY PLANE

Tirana's modern Nënë Tereza (Mother Teresa) airport, 17km northwest of Tirana, is a 30-minute drive away from the city centre in good traffic. Beside the baggage carousel in arrivals there are ATMs, an exchange office with so-so rates, and a tourist information desk. Buy a local SIM card at the mobile phone shops. Ignore any taxi drivers harassing new arrivals and take an official yellow airport taxi to the centre for 2,500 lek during the daytime and 3,000 lek between 21:00 and 07:00. Alternatively, hop on the Rinas Express airport bus to Sheshi Skënderbej. Buses leave every hour between 06:00 and 18:00 and tickets cost 250 lek.

BY TRAIN

A massive ongoing construction project currently extending the city centre in a northerly direction has among other things involved the destruction of several buildings, including Tirana's only train station. Visitors arriving from Shkoder, Durrës and Pogradec consequently now find themselves deposited at Kashar, a small town immediately west of the airport where shuttle buses to the northern end of Blv. Zogu I are provided in order to complete the final 15km of the journey. From here it's a short walk south to Sheshi Skënderbej. Alternatively, hail a taxi or hop on any bus heading south. Albania has no international passenger trains.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Tirana's ageing fleet of conked-out buses plies a total of 12 routes in a cloud of oily smoke between about 05:00 and 22:00. Get on, pay the conductor 40 lek and away you go. It's unlikely you'll ever have to wait more than 10 minutes to travel on one, so at these prices and at this frequency it would be somewhat impolite to complain. The city centre is so compact that the need to use public transport won't happen very often. All buses are marked with their destinations, making them relatively easy to use.

TAXIS

Taxis are a useful form of transport in Tirana, and, after 22:00, if you're too tipsy to walk or confidently operate a bicycle, they're the only game in town. Several companies use meters and can print receipts if necessary. Our experience is that drivers don't have to be reminded to use them. Rates start at 300 lek for the first 2km (sufficient for most city centre trips) and 95 lek/km after that. Between 22:00 and 07:00 the aforementioned start rate rises to 350 lek. Few drivers speak English, so it's a good idea to write down the address, or to telephone someone who can explain.

ATEX (AIRPORT EXPRESS TAXI)

Taxis to and from the airport for 2,500 lek, or 3,000 lek between 21:00-07:00. Online booking possible. ▶ **Airport**, tel. +355 67 200 88 73, www.atex.al.

MERR TAXI

English-speaking drivers arranged if called in advance. ▶ **Rr. Zihni Sako**, tel. +355 67 40 06 610, merrtaxi.com.



UNLOCK ALBANIA



Location 1: Tirana International Airport
e-mail: avis@avis.al
tel: +355 67 6012272

Location 2: Sheraton Hotel Tirana
e-mail: avis@avis.al
tel: +355 67 4051381

Arriving & Getting Around

SPEED TAXI

The ones with the kangaroo on top. ▶tel. +355 69 642 22 11, www.speedtaxi.al.

CAR RENTAL

Prices for renting a car in Albania start at around 6,000 lek (€45) a day for the cheapest model. Agencies have desks at the airport, but these are often only staffed on demand, so inform them in advance before you arrive. Make sure you have the rental agency telephone number and a good map before setting off. Albania is now pretty well covered with GPS and it's possible to use a Sat Nav to get around. Petrol costs about 154 lek per litre. Diesel 160 lek per litre.

AVIS

▶Tirana International Airport tel. +355 67 60 12 272. Sheraton Hotel Tirana, tel. +355 67 40 51 381. avis@avis.al, www.avis.al. Open 08:30 - 19:00, Sun 08:30 - 16:00. 

BUDGET

▶Tirana International Airport, Sheraton Hotel Tirana, tel. +355 67 200 7909. reservation@budget.al, www.budget.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun.

EUROPCAR

▶E-5, Rr. Durrësit 61, tel. +355 4 222 78 88, anas@abissnet.al, www.europcar.com. Open 08:00 - 17:00.

HERTZ

▶E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 4 226 25 11, hertz@hertzalbania.com, www.hertz.com. Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sun 09:00 - 17:00.

LRS CENTER

▶Tiranë-Durrës highway, tel. +355 48 20 26 54, lrscenter@yahoo.co.uk. Open 08:00 - 16:30, Sat 08:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

LUMANI

▶F-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel Tirana, tel. +355 4 223 50 21, office@lumani-enterprise.com, www.lumani-enterprise.com. Open 08:00- 20:00. Closed Sun.

NOSHI RENT A CAR

▶D/E-3, Rr. Durrësit 79, tel. +355 4 240 03 00, reservations@noshi.al, www.noshi.al. Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 17:00.

SIXT

▶E-3, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +355 4 222 39 96, sixtalbania@europe.com, www.sixt.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00.

TIRANA CAR RENTALS (TCR)

▶I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 11/4, tel. +355 4 224 05 11, info@tirana-car-rentals.com, www.tirana-car-rentals.com. Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun.

AIRPORT

TIRANA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NËNË TEREZA)

Tirana's compact and easy-to-use international airport is located 17km or so northwest of the city centre in the small settlement of Rinas and, with the exception of additional charter and summer-only flights, is used by 11 regular airlines operating flights between a number of different European destinations. Boasting free wireless internet throughout that we've never managed to connect to and containing several useful shops, cafés (there's even a café with a smoking room) and a small tourist information kiosk, the relatively low frequency of flights means arriving at the airport an hour before your flight is scheduled to depart is a perfectly acceptable and normal thing to do. To get there from the city centre, take the hourly Rinas Express airport bus from Sheshi Skënderbej between 07:00 and 19:00 for 250 lek. Alternatively a taxi should cost somewhere in the region of between 2,500 lek and 3,000 lek. In good traffic both journeys shouldn't take more than 40 minutes unless you're travelling by taxi from the eastern or southern suburbs of the city, in which case you should give yourself more time. ▶Rinas, tel. +355 4 238 16 00, www.tirana-airport.com.

AIRLINES

ADRIA AIRWAYS

▶G-5, Rr. Mine Peza 102, tel. +355 4 227 26 66, www.adria.si. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

ALITALIA (AZ)

▶H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 00 23, www.alitalia.it. Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

AUSTRIAN AIRLINES (OS)

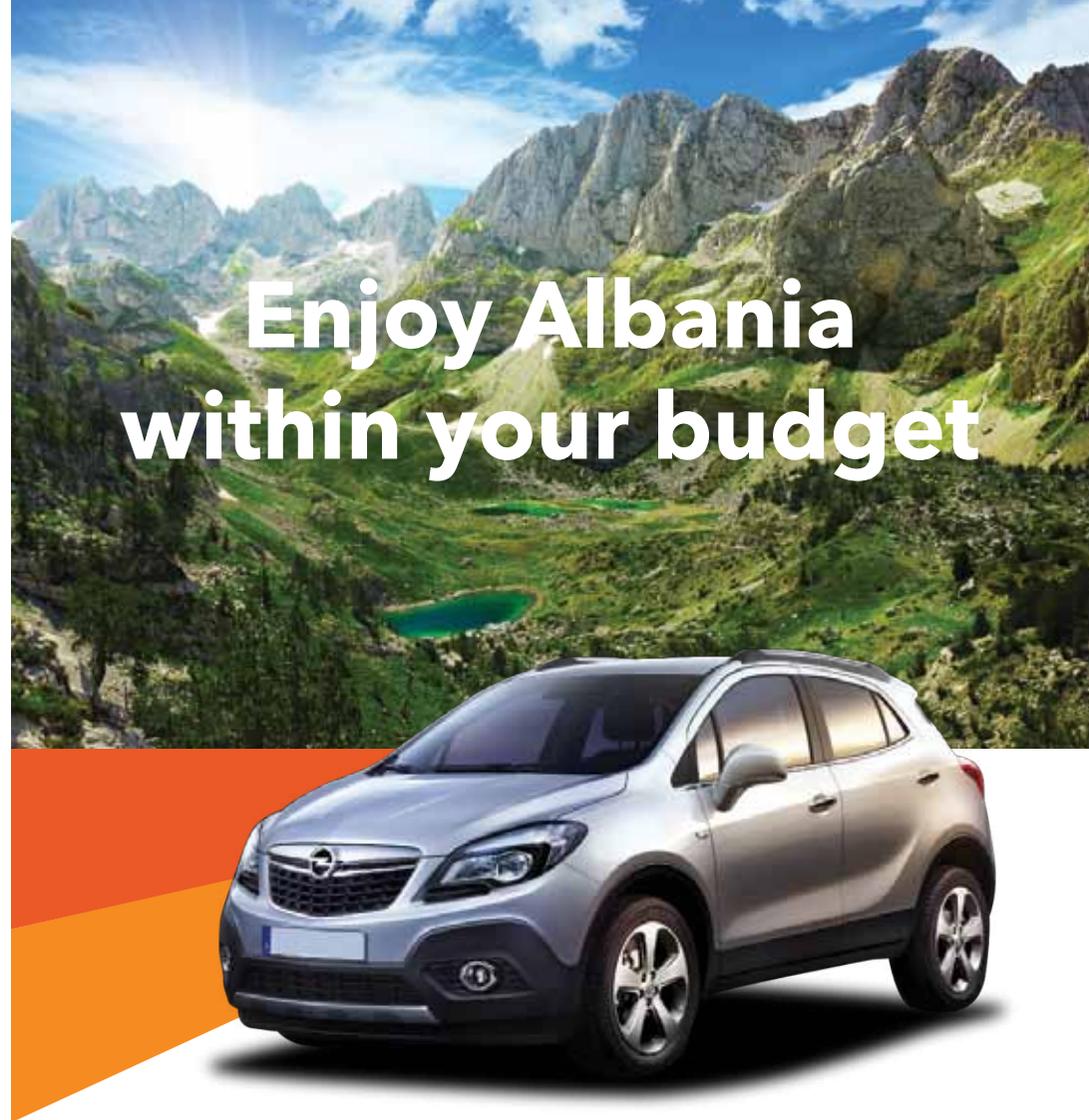
▶H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 50 29, www.austrian.com/al. Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

BRITISH AIRWAYS

▶Tirana International Airport, tel. +355 4 56 46 0000, www.ba.com. Open 08:00 - 17:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

LUFTHANSA (LH)

▶G-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 50 28, www.lufthansa.com. Open 09:00-15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.



Enjoy Albania within your budget

Make a reservation TODAY!
Mob: +355 67 200 7909
www.budget.al

Address 1: Tirana International Airport
Tirana, Albania

Address 2: Sheraton Hotel Tirana
Sheshi "Italia"
Tirana, Albania



Arriving & Getting Around

CYCLING

Back in the good old days when there were 600 cars in Albania, everyone had a bicycle. Now, in Tirana at least, it's pretty much the other way round. Bicycles were so much a part of the Hoxha regime in fact that there are those who tick all the right boxes as apparent natural cyclists nowadays who refuse to own and ride them for political reasons. There are of course other reasons for choosing not to get on a bicycle in Tirana, the most obvious one being the way people drive their cars. Much in the same way as jogging can be seen as a sign of a civilised society, so it is with cycling. Accordingly, pretty much the only people you'll see risking their lives on two wheels in the Albanian capital are old men buying bread and children riding in the safety of the city's vehicle-free parks. Renting a bicycle in Tirana is considerably easier than it was, with people such as the Tirana Backpacker Hostel (www.tiranahostel.com) and the excellent Ecovolis (www.ecovolism.com) both offering rental for a good price.

ECOVOLIS

Tirana's excellent Ecovolis bicycle sharing scheme is cheap and easy to use. The single-speed bikes are perfect for rolling around town. No complicated electronic systems here, just go to your nearest bicycle station, leave an ID card or driving license with the friendly English-speaking attendant, ask for a lock, and cycle off. Full details are on their website, which is in Albanian only but that can be translated using Google to find out the latest information. ▶tel. +355 67 204 91 64, enedmato@hotmail.com, www.ecovolism.com.



Ecovolism bicycles ready to rent

OLYMPIC AIRWAYS (OA)

▶ D-4, Blv. Zogu I, Vevë Business Centre, tel. +355 4 222 89 60. Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 13:00.

TURKISH AIRLINES (TK)

▶ E-4, Sheshi Skenderbej, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 49 02, www.turkishairlines.com. Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat 08:30 - 15:00. Closed Sun.

LONG-DISTANCE BUSES

Despite the importance of bus travel in Albania, Tirana has no bus station and only a handful of scheduled departures, indications of both the general shoddy state of the infrastructure in the country and the importance of local knowledge. Long-distance bus journeys are provided by an increasingly comfortable fleet of air-conditioned vehicles or for the more adventurous in the ubiquitous *furgon*, or minibus, a transport choice often held together with little more than a prayer and famous for departing only when all the seats are occupied and driven by people for whom safety appears to be a completely alien concept. Most long-distance buses leave in the mornings with only the most popular destinations served after lunch. At the time of writing, many of the streets in the city centre are undergoing extensive road works, a plan aimed at alleviating Tirana's growing congestion problems that has forced many of the most popular long-distance departure points to relocate. As already touched up, local knowledge is the key to successful long-distance bus travel in Albania. Asking the locals about the current situation is by far the best way of getting where you need to get to without too much fuss. Tickets can usually be bought on board, although for the more popular routes it's worth visiting one of the ticketing offices which can be found congregated behind the National History Museum and along the eastern side of Blv. Zogu I.

ALBANIA INTERLINES

Buses from Shkodra via Tirana to Athens. ▶ D-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 42 22 22 72. Open 09:00 - 21:00.

DRITA TRAVEL

Buses to Budva, Pristina, Athens, Thessaloniki and more. Online booking. ▶ E-4, Rr. Ded Gjon Luli, tel. +355 4 225 76 63, www.dritaonline.com. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

ERLI TRAVEL

Buses to Kosovo. ▶ Rr. Hoxha Tahsin 217, tel. +355 67 30 86 940. Open 08:00 - 17:00.

EUROINTERLINES

Buses to Greece. ▶ D-4, Blv. Zogu I 39, tel. +355 4 225 18 66. Open 04:00 - 21:30.

TIRANA METROPOL

Daily buses to Pristina and Peja in Kosovo. ▶ E-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 36 39. Open 08:00 - 20:00.



Hertz

READY WHENEVER YOU ARE!

Hertz

Hertz Albania
Tirana International Hotel
Tirana International Airport
Hertz Plaza, Rinas

CALL US: +355 692058775

hertz@hertzalbania.com



Arriving & Getting Around

TRAINS



Ticket to ride

Tirana's dilapidated train station has been closed and demolished as part of a master plan to build a new one more fitting with the future of the city. Until it's finished however there are no trains in or out of Tirana, with the nearest station now being 15km or so away in the small town of Kashar. Whilst some find this fact embarrassing, others consider it a blessing in disguise.

Complete with broken windows and excruciatingly slow speeds, Albania's current railway network is strictly for the most hardcore of train spotters.

DRIVING

Whilst the country's roads may be improving, the local drivers who use them continue to be among the worst imaginable, with road fatality figures some of the highest in Europe. Disrespectful of the law and seemingly unaware of the fact that pedestrians are soft and break easily, the quintessential Albanian motorist is easily distracted, oblivious to speed limits and would rather undergo torture than wear a seatbelt. Before 1991, only Party officials were allowed to own and drive cars, of which there were only about 600 in the entire country. Since then, vehicle numbers have ballooned out of all proportions relative to the state of the roads. Drivers are required by law to have a fire extinguisher, yellow vest and first aid kit in the car, and always drive with the lights on. In mountain areas, having snow chains during the winter is a good idea. In cities, be aware of everything, and if you're a pedestrian remember that to the average Albanian a zebra crossing is just some lines painted in the road. In the countryside, keep an eye out for holes in the road, mountain passes without crash barriers and donkeys. Last but not least, it's a sobering thought to remember how many people carry guns in Albania. Road rage is not advised under any circumstances.

SPEED LIMITS

Urban areas and villages **40km/hr**
Dual carriageways **90km/hr**
Highways **110km/hr**
All other roads **80km/hr**

TRAVEL AGENCIES

ALBANIA2GO

A Dutch-Albanian travel agency, offering tailor-made business, leisure and adventure trips across the country ▶ Rr. Nikolla Jorga 9/1, tel. +355 69 647 88 50, info@albania2go.com, www.albania2go.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00.

ALBANIA EXPERIENCE

Guided city tours, day trips to Apollonia, Berat, Durrës, Kruja and other destinations, plane tickets, booking the best hotels with the best discounts and much more besides. ▶ J-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, N°11/1, tel. +355 4 227 20 55, alexperience@albaniaonline.net, www.albania-experience.al. Open 08:30 - 19:00, Sat 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sun. ☑

ALBANIA HOLIDAYS

The full range of services for incoming tourists. ▶ Rr. Sami Frashëri 30, tel. +355 4 223 56 88, contact@albania-holidays.com, www.albania-holidays.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun.

ALBTOURS

A wide range of holiday options in Albania and further afield. ▶ H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rrugova, tel. +355 4 225 33 43, albtours@albaniaonline.net, www.albtoursd.al. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

DAJTI EXPRESS

▶ tel. +355 67 40 11 052, info@dajtiexpres.com, www.dajtiexpres.com/new/index.php/en. Open 08:00 - 18:00.

GULLIVER OK

Offices in the city centre, the airport; and the local tourism office in Korça. ▶ D-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 34/1, tel. +355 4 222 76 26, info@gulliver-ok.com. Open 09:00 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

LANDWAYS

▶ J-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, N°11/1, tel. +355 4 227 20 55, www.landways.eu. Open 08:30 - 19:00. Closed Sun.

MAGIC TOURS

A huge range of tours from a seasoned professional. ▶ D-4, Blv. Zogu I, 72, Veve Business Center, tel. +355 4 222 89 87, info@magictours-al.com, www.magictours-al.com. Open 08:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun.

OUTDOOR ALBANIA

The recommended outdoor specialists. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. Sami Frashëri 14, tel. +355 4 222 71 21, info@outdooralbania.com, www.outdooralbania.com. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

SONDOR

A family-run business specialising in mountain and outdoor holidays. ▶ E-4, Rr. Mine Peza, tel. +355 4 222 50 63, info@sondortravel.com, www.sondortravel.com. Open 09:00 - 16:00 ; 18:00 - 21:00. Closed Sun.



Rr. Nationale Tirane-Durres km 7 (Tirana, Albania)

Besmir Muharremi
Aftersales Dpt.
NOSHI Company (Noshi shpk)
Rruga Nationale Tirane-Durres km7
(Tirana, Albania)
Mob: +355(0)672034227
e-mail: besmir@opel-noshi.com



Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit (see p.65)

Tirana offers a surprisingly diverse selection of culture considering its size. Finding it is another matter entirely though. Visit the websites of the venues listed below, ask anyone with an interesting haircut and keep an eye out for posters around the city.

CINEMAS

Films are usually shown in their original languages with Albanian subtitles. Tickets generally cost from between 300 lek and 500 lek. The Tirana International Film Festival (www.tiranafilmfest.com) takes place every year in June.

CINEPLEXX

Seven screening rooms showing mostly Hollywood films inside the TEG shopping centre. Jump on any bus with TEG written on the front heading south along Rr. e Elbasanit. ▶ TEG, tel. +355 44 50 02 40, www.cineplexx.al. Open 10:00 - 24:00.

IMPERIAL

Big Hollywood and 3D films in two large screening rooms at the Kristal Center. Also in the city centre in the Sheraton Mall and Cinema Agimi. ▶ I-5, Hotel Sheraton, tel. +355 42 23 56 64, www.imperialcinemas.al. Open 10:00 - 24:00.

MARUBI FILM & MULTIMEDIA ACADEMY

Free screenings of a wide range of films inside the city's

only film school. Find it to the northeast of the centre near the terminus of the Kinostudio bus line. ▶ Rr. Aleksandër Moisiu 78, tel. +355 42 36 51 88, www.afmm.edu.al. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

MILLENNIUM 2

Recent American films in their original language with Albanian subtitles. Book in advance for evening and weekend screenings. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 42 25 36 54, www.kinemamillennium.com. Open 10:00 - 23:00.

CULTURAL CENTRES

Not only do these foreign-run centres allow locals and foreigners alike access to many materials, they are important promoters of international culture, and support many events.

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE

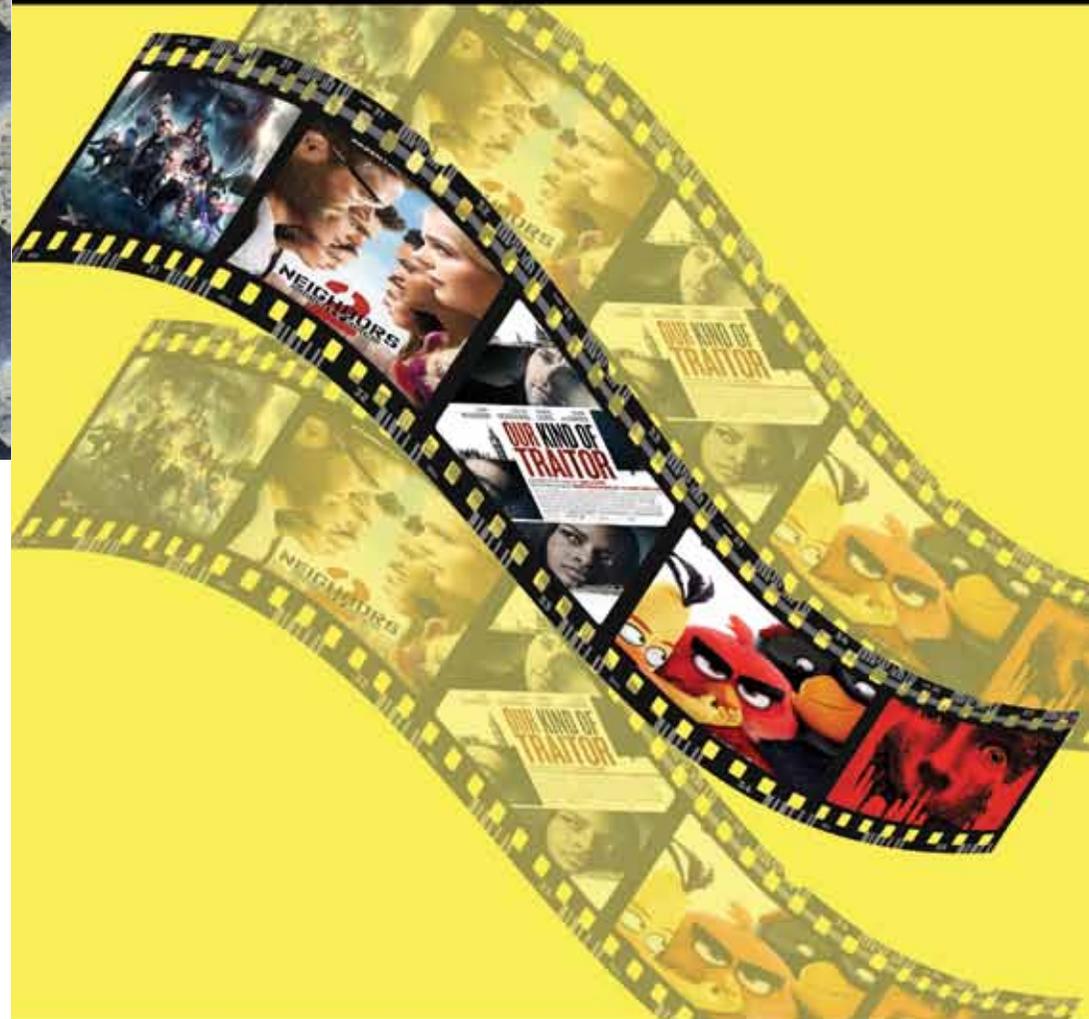
Borrow French books or language-learning materials. ▶ D-4/5, Rr. Barrikadave 122, tel. +355 4 222 56 97, www.aftirana.org. Open 10:30 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 12:30. Closed Sun.

BRITISH COUNCIL

The UK cultural and educational centre. ▶ E-2, Rr. Skenderbej 12, tel. +355 4 224 08 56, www.britishcouncil.org/albania. Open 09:00 - 17:00, Fri 09:00 - 14:30. Closed Sat, Sun.



info@imperialcinemas.al
www.imperialcinemas.al



IMPERIAL CINEMAS prane HOTEL SHERATON, KINEMA AGIMI

Tel: 04 22 66 396

Culture

GOETHE INSTITUT

The German cultural centre has a reading room with textbooks and literature inside the National Library. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. George W. Bush, tel. +355 4 222 20 17, www.goethe.de. Open 09:00 - 17:00.

ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA (ITALIAN INSTITUTE OF CULTURE)

Promotes Italian culture and language with cultural events and language courses. ▶ H-6, Rr. Pjetër Budi 58/3, tel. +355 4 237 95 79, www.iicitirana.esteri.it. Open 09:00 - 14:00, 15:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

LINCOLN CENTER

Welcome to the Lincoln Centers of Albania! We want you to have the best educational experience possible, whether you are a student, parent, or professional. Our value-driven services provide you with everything you need to support your personal and professional achievements in the areas of language and business. Our mission at Lincoln is help you define and achieve success. Learn from the people you trust. Learn with Lincoln.



Sheshi Skënderbej

▶ Rruga Ismail Qemali, Nr. 31, tel. +355 4 22 30 880, www.lincolnalbania.org. Open 09:00 - 17:00, Today 8:00AM - 8:00PM.

TIRANA EKSPRES

The railway warehouse where Tirana's most exciting 'art space' started off was unfortunately bulldozed, but they've popped up again north of the city centre. During the day you can stop by for a coffee or snack and a peek at the art exhibitions. In the evenings there are events, which range from performances, shows and film screenings to party nights. Check their facebook page for the programme. ▶ Rr. Dritan Hoxha, tel. +355 69 673 04 02, besianavathi@gmail.com, www.tiranaekspres.com. Open 08:00 - 24:00, Open for events only, usually 21:00-24:00.

TULLA

Dedicated to educational activities: art management, social and art criticism and other culture events. Founded by: Rubin Beqo, Alban Nimani, Florian Cara. ▶ I-2, Rr. Medar Shtylla. Open 08:00 - 00:00. Free entry.

US INFORMATION SERVICE (USIS)

Browse American literature, history books, periodicals and more at this centre beside the US Embassy. Also at the USAID center. ▶ H/I-6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 224 72 85. Open 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

THEATRE, OPERA & DANCE

BLACK BOX THEATRE (TEATRI KUTIA E ZEZË)

Mostly avant-garde and student shows inside the Art Academy. Once in a long while there's a performance in a foreign language. ▶ I-4/5, Sheshi Nënë Tereza, tel. +355 4 224 75 98.

NATIONAL CHILDREN'S THEATRE (TEATRI KOMBËTAR I FËMIJËVE)

Occasional puppet shows for children in a grand old building. ▶ E/F-4, Sheshi Skenderbeg, tel. +355 4 222 24 46.

NATIONAL THEATRE (TEATRI KOMBËTAR)

This is Tirana's oldest theatre, built in 1940 to honour Musolini on his visit to Albania. Performances take place between October and May, and range from Shakespeare to contemporary Albanian and foreign playwrights, though everything is in Albanian. ▶ F-4, Rr. Sermedin Said Topani, tel. +355 4 222 30 22, www.teatrikombetar.gov.al. Box office open 09:00-13:00, 18:00-20:00.

OPERA, BALLET & POPULAR ENSEMBLE THEATRE (TEATRI I OPERAS DHE BALETIT DHE ANSAMBLIT POPULLOR)

Occasional shows by Tirana's under-funded but enthusiastic opera company. ▶ E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej (Palace of Culture), tel. +355 4 222 47 53. Ticket office open 09:00-12:00, 15:00-19:00.



In the midst of the green garden of Te Stela Resort blooms Te Stela Hotel. This oasis of tranquility, located far from the noise of the capital yet only minutes away from it, offers fifteen double rooms, eighteen single rooms and three junior suites, all with abundant natural lighting.

All of the rooms overlook the outdoor pool or the landscaped garden.



Services included

- Hotel Accommodation
- Breakfast and Dinner
- Access to the Indoor Pool and the Summer Pool during the Summer Season

- Access to the Sauna, Turkish Bath, and Fitness Room
- Dedicated Parking Space

** For children between 6 and 12 years old, Half Board and Full Board Packages are offered at 50% discount.*



Address: Te Stela Resort: Tirana - Durrës highway, 7th km.

Mob: 067 20 333 81 Tel: (0)4 240 6 517

hotel@testela.al, www.testela.al



Patriotic breakfast

Alongside a long-standing and highly recommended collection of restaurants serving traditional Albanian cuisine and a raft of not-so exciting but equally enduring fast food outlets, Tirana continues to add an increasingly wide range of dining options to its repertoire, including more and more knockout Italian restaurants and a handful of much welcome additions including a genuine Indian restaurant and gourmet burger joints for the city's new generation of hipsters. With a few upmarket exceptions, dining in the capital remains an affordable extravagance that can be enjoyed outdoors for most of the year, and, remember, the further away you dine from the city centre the more you'll need a credit card and the less you'll need to tip. Menus in English are becoming increasingly popular. Eating out in Tirana has never been this good.

Restaurant prices

As an indication of cost, in each review we've listed the average price of a main course dish, without drinks.

\$ Under 500 lek
\$\$ 500 - 1,000 lek
\$\$\$ Over 1,000 lek

ALBANIAN

Albanian cuisine offers a unique fusion of predominantly Balkan, Mediterranean and Turkish flavours with an emphasis on grilled meat, fresh vegetables, exotic desserts and individual portions that could keep an entire army

marching on its stomach for a week. Restaurants serving Albanian food range from cheap and cheerful establishments complete with grubby tablecloths to places where you're very likely to bump into the rich and famous.

EMBLEMA

A leisurely 10-minute walk from the blloku in the general direction of the part of town currently undergoing the first stirrings of gentrification, this fine restaurant treads the difficult line between tradition and modernity very successfully indeed. Behind the rustic interior lies a menu of classic dishes with splashes of nouvelle cuisine thrown in with a few touches of fusion cooking for good luck. The usual Italian pasta and pizza are available if you like, but we suggest you stick to the traditional Albanian food. As always the staff are available to advise as well as take orders and deliver to your table. ▶ 1-2, Rr. Komuna e Parisit, tel. +355 42 24 56 79. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$ 

ERA

Era's flagship restaurant promotes itself as a classy dining experience and a pizza restaurant in one, although in our opinion its highest accolade comes as the best place in the city to sample the finest Albanian cuisine from all over the country. A little pricey compared to similar restaurants simply because it uses the best and freshest ingredients, find yourself rubbing shoulders with everyone from brash American backpackers to men in sharp suits delivered and driven away again in expensive-looking cars. If you don't

know what to order, the waiters are well versed in the complexities of the menu. Era's other, smaller restaurant can be found in the blloku on Rr. Sami Frashëri. ▶ H/I-5, Rruga Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 4 225 5000, www.era.al. Open 11:00 - 24:00. \$\$ 

ETNIK

Decorated with flagstones and a fireplace and one of the better options in the city for vegetarians, the positive reports flooding back about this place make its slightly unconventional location nothing to worry about in the slightest. Using fresh, local ingredients, the food is truly knock-out, and there's an admirable wine list to compliment. Come at the right time and be treated to live traditional folk music as you pile on the calories. ▶ Rr. Vllazën Huta, tel. +355 4 236 7985. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$ 

MRIZI I ZANAVE

All overseen by Avni, unquestionably one of the finest chefs in the country, the food pouring out of the kitchen in this place never disappoints. Specialising in classic local dishes containing enough calories to fuel a small power station, Mrizi i Zanave isn't the place to come if you're planning on becoming a supermodel for sure. Relatively quiet during the week, this restaurant is one among several in the city that explodes on Friday and Saturday evenings when large families and groups come to let their hair down, forget about their waistlines and dance the night away to the live music acts performing

traditional Albanian music. ▶ F-5, Rr. George W. Bush 1, tel. +355 42 26 99 31. Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$  

NANO RESORT

You'll need your own set of wheels or a taxi to enjoy the pleasures of Nano Resort, a sprawling traditional restaurant with gorgeous mountain views a good 15km south-east of the city. The no-thrills food on offer is genuinely authentic and packed with the kinds of flavours that simply don't need any fancy touches. Despite the location, the popularity of the place means that arriving to find every table occupied is a real possibility. Booking in advance is more than recommended. ▶ Dajias, Petrele, tel. +355 68 20 22 25 2. Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$ 

NARI LUNDER

Close to the old Elbasan road and not far from the TEG shopping centre, Nari Linder is set in the middle of its own massive vineyards from which it produces a fine selection of wines, brandy and *raki*, all of it and much more besides available on a menu featuring a classic range of grilled and roast meat dishes alongside the usual selection of pasta and pizza options. Greatly expanded over the last few years, this is a wonderful place to come (a journey that can be achieved for almost nothing with the aid of a local bus and a short walk) for a prolonged and relaxing meal on their huge outdoor terrace. ▶ Lunder, tel. +355 48 81 01 11, www.narilunder.al. Open 11:00 - 24:00. \$\$ 



Alpine Hotel is located in the Llogara National Park. With its classical architecture and modern which it combined nicely with the surrounding environment invites you to rest in every season of the year. Capacity: 20 rooms overlooking the park Llogara equipped with: TV, central heating, refrigerator-bar, panoramic balconies etc. Restaurant: It has two inter-

nal restaurant rooms and restaurant with outdoor terrace which offers traditional cuisine of the area with native products always fresh all accompanied by the best wines of domestic and foreign. Other: The hotel facilities will find a wonderful reception angle decorated with traditional elements with chimney for special guests, playgrounds for children, spacious parking.

Address: Parku Kombetar i Llogarase, Vlora, Albania | Mob: +355 692055936



Whatever your occasion is,
Vila Amsterdam
makes it one to remember!



Rr. Asim Zeneli 9,
Infront of Netherlands embassy

Telephone:
+355 6 82 57 73 22
+355 6 84 57 86 91
+355 6 99 91 10 75



NATYRA E QETE

The kind of place that needs a page all of its own to justify the many things it has on offer, if you ever wondered who lives in the large castle opposite the TEG shopping centre you might be interested to know that the answer is nobody live there because it's a restaurant, and much more, featuring predominantly Albanian food, of which a fair proportion is barbecued outdoors when the weather allows, several large indoor dining halls, a busy multi-layered terrace with fountains and plenty of the kids to do. There's live music too, and the comforting fact for those travelling on a budget that there are regular buses heading to TEG from the city centre that deliver you almost to the door. ▶ tel. +355 4 88 10 211, www.natyaqete.com. Open 11:00 - 24:00. \$\$.



ODA

Eat Ottoman-style in a truly traditional restaurant, sitting at low tables in a reconstructed *oda* (guest room) in an old Ottoman-era house. Surrounded by shelves with dishes, strings of garlic and peppers and old photographs, it's best to allow the waiters to suggest a succession of appetisers and mains. The food is fresh and delicious (try the *lakror në saç* oven-baked pie), unforgettable even after washing it all down with several glasses of their home-made *raki*. Find it down a little alley on the north side of the road between Rr. e Barrikadeve and Sheshi Avni Rushtemi. ▶ E-5, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi, tel. +355 42 24 95 41. Open 11:00 - 23:00, Sun 13:00 - 23:00. \$.

TAVERNA ARGJIRO

A jovial village tavern in the middle of Tirana, come with a group and start the feast with a family-size order of *meze* salads ranging from grilled vegetables to cheese. Meat lovers can get a whole lamb roasted on a spit, veal, beef and charred pork. The adventurous can order *paca* and *plendes* (offal) for breakfast. ▶ I-3, Rr. Sulejman Delvina, tel. +355 42 23 20 78. Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$.

TIRONA

Named after the *Gheg* Albanian rendition of the word Tirana, don't let a lack of English menus put you off. Featuring the usual array of meat-heavy meals accompanied with liberal amounts of salad and excellent white cheese, the waiters hold a collective database of European languages to make visits comfortable for all. Point at the meat waiting to be cooked if you have too and spend your time waiting looking at the predicable albeit charming old black and white photographs of the city a century ago. Find it more or less opposite the Orthodox Church of the Holy Annunciation. ▶ E/F-2, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 67 27 30 09 1. Open 08:00 - 23:30. \$.

VILA 31

A definite contender for Tirana's most charming restaurant and also up there on the list of places that are



Rruga Themistokli Gërmenji (Mbrapa Liceut Artistik), Tirana, Tel: +355 4 228 8888
Open: 12:00PM - 11:00PM

a nightmare to find, Villa 31 really is marvellous. Enter through a small gate with a useful number 31 next to it and choose to eat in the immaculately kept garden or venture inside to one of their equally gorgeous dining halls of which one features a wall full of shelves stuffed with model submarines. Another room has a big open brick cooking place. Quite frankly there's absolutely nothing even remotely negative to say about the place. The staff are friendly and helpful, and the extensive menu has something for everyone. From Rr. Kavajës walk down Rr. Naim Frashëri and look for the sign down the fourth alley on your right. ▶ E-2, Rr. Gjon Muzaka 31, tel. +355 42 27 81 41. Open 08:00 - 23:00. \$\$.

AMERICAN

DTOWN

Chef Niko Brati spent 13 years perfecting his craft in the US and the results are plain to see in this recommended restaurant between the US Embassy and the blok. The menu is a riotous fusion of classic American dishes with a Mediterranean twist, all of it cooked using locally sourced, seasonal ingredients. In keeping the theme of the place, Dtown is one of the few restaurants in the city offering a traditional Thanksgiving dinner. ▶ H-5, Rr. Vllazën Huta, tel. +355 4 236 79 85. Open 11:30 - 23:30. \$\$.

ASIAN

In the late 1950s, when Stalin's regime was denounced, Albania turned to the Chinese for strict moral guidance, until they too were considered too bourgeois. However, it took several decades for a proper Chinese restaurant to open in Tirana. The Asian eateries present now are not quite authentic, but do the trick if you need a filling meal.

FAR EAST

A slightly over-priced pan-Asian restaurant with elements of many Oriental cultures reflected in both the design and what they get up to in the kitchen, expect to be greeted on the white terrace by a Japanese stone lantern overlooking a gurgling stream, a prelude to the abundance of Chinese woodwork, moon gates and fish tanks inside. The extensive menu has everything from sushi to Indonesian beef *satay* to a Korean-style sizzler barbecue. ▶ H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 6, tel. +355 4 227 19 38. Open 10:00 - 01:00. \$\$.

ORIENTAL CITY

A small, family-run business with a large menu on a leafy street, Oriental City fails to impress with its name but can't do a lot wrong otherwise. The menu of mostly Chinese dishes is almost biblical in size, with an entire section given over to vegetarian options and there's a tiny little seating area if you prefer devouring your noodles al fresco. ▶ H-5, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +355 42 28 88 88. Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$.



Working up an appetite in Grand Park

MIMI THAI CHINESE

The kind of restaurant that gets a bad name thanks to the type of food snob who thinks Oriental cooking is an art form and who never had the opportunity to eat in Asia, the cornucopia of Chinese and other Asian cuisines they bash together in their woks here wouldn't be out of place in any half-way respectable Beijing suburb. There's friendly service as you'd expect from Tirana, plus a full range of chicken, pork, noodle and beef standards. The seafood specialities include calamari and shrimp. ▶ I-5, Rr. Dervish Hima, tel. +355 4 226 99 47. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

SHANG HAI

Good and affordable Chinese food is offered at Tirana's second Shang Hai restaurant, found beyond a set of carved wooden pillars in a courtyard opposite the Millennium 2 cinema. The menu has well over 100 options, all available in the dining hall, on the terrace or for takeaway. The set menus with five-to-eight dishes are good value. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 69 21 87 08 1. Open 09:00 - 23:00. \$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

BUFFET EXPRESS

The food court on the top floor of the TEG shopping centre features several kiosks where meals are ready to serve and eat in an instant. Also find a handful of similar places in the city centre. The following are two current particular favourites.

KUNG FU EXPRESS

Pictures of Bruce Lee, girls serving food wearing strange plastic facemasks and an open kitchen all add to Kung Fu Express' uniqueness, a kind of individuality Albania does so well. Featuring food that's ready to eat and food you have to wait for, recommended from personal experience are the chicken chow mein, spring rolls and prawn crackers (or prawn crisps as they like to call them here). Most dishes come in three sizes, of which the Extra is more than enough for two. ▶ E-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 69 20 92 554. Open 11:30 - 23:45. \$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

OTTOMAN'S

A beguiling fusion of fast food and traditional Turkish cuisine including meat, salad, stuffed peppers and more, all available piping hot and served on your plate in seconds. Their simple dishes of stewed beef and rice are an experience in themselves. Excellent food and superb value for money, find it in the food court on the second floor next to the Cineplex cinema. ▶ TEG. Open 09:00 - 21:00. \$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

BURGERS

Not be confused with the fast food variety, which can be found elsewhere in this guide.

BOHEMIAN BURGERS

An unwritten rule within urban hipster culture is that once you have more than a certain number of hipsters living within a certain amount of square kilometres of each other somebody has to open a hipster burger joint. Critical mass was recently reached in Tirana, and, as the name Bohemian Burgers suggests, the burger joint in question is an outstanding one. Ultra-friendly (that's right, friendly *hipsters*) and pretty much the only restaurant in Albania that can accommodate vegans beyond offering them a carrot, come here for traditional beef and veggie burgers, samosas, falafel, soups and other hipster-friendly fodder to munch on whilst having long conversations about the kinds of things hipsters are interested in. ▶ G-2, Rr. Myslym Shyri, tel. +355 69 67 48 778. Open 12:00 - 22:00. Closed Mon. \$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷

FAST FOOD

Although there's something rather satisfying about a capital city without a McDonald's, after trying the local alternatives it soon becomes clear why the American fast food giant became so globally popular. Burgers aside, everything else on offer is pretty good.

BIG BITE

For reasons that you'll discover if you choose to shorten your life and harden your arteries by eating here, it's almost worth making an early appointment with the Grim Reaper because Big Bite isn't a madly popular place for nothing. Like most other places of its kind, they haven't got a clue how to make a decent burger, but everything else here is a pure polyunsaturated pleasure. ▶ I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri 16, tel. +355 4 222 00 00. Open 24hrs. \$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

GJIRO KAMARA

A personal favourite among the city's many fast food outlets, we recommend you work your way through all of brightly coloured photographs of the meals they serve here, or, if time is of the essence, just order anything with chicken in it. Stupidly cheap, and with a well-stocked selection of ice-cold drinks to wash everything down with, Gjiro Kamara is in our opinion impossible to beat. ▶ I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 69 31 94 235. Open 10:00 - 02:00. \$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

GOODY'S

If you've ever been to Greece before then you've probably seen Goody's already, and, if you were unlucky, you went inside and ordered something to eat. Although there's no chance of hospitalisation after eating one of their burgers, you might feel sick enough to warrant lying down for an hour or so after doing so. It's not that the place sucks, it's just that we find it incomprehensible why anyone would voluntarily eat here when there are so many better options in the immediate neighbourhood. ▶ I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 44 50 30 00, www.goodysnet.com. Open 09:00 - 24:00. \$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

KOLONAT

Kolonat, Tirana's very own version of McDonald's, offers a lesson in why restaurants need to be more than just physical imitations of their Western counterparts. The menu in this gaudy teenage hangout features everything from burgers to kebabs to pizza, none of them very good although to be fair at these prices it's hard to feel ripped off. In their defence, the fries are considerably better than average. ▶ I-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 42 25 51 27, www.kolonat.com. Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

MR. CHICKEN

Mr Chicken may well sound like the daftest name for a restaurant imaginable, but don't let this minor inconvenience detract from what's one of the best and cheapest fast food restaurants in the Balkans. The menu features a lot of chicken as the name suggests, including everything from roast chicken to the house special Doner Mr Chicken. There's sandwiches too (bet you can't guess what's inside them), plus salads, a couple of risottos and a range of cold soft drinks. A highly recommended fast, low budget favourite. ▶ I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 4 225 77 08. Open 09:00 - 24:00. \$. 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

FINE DINING

When you need to really push the boat out.

APOLLONIA

The Rogner hotel's in-house restaurant is named after the ancient Greco-Roman city 100km or so south of the capital, although there's nothing ancient or crumbling about the place at all. Specialising in Albanian, Austrian and Mediterranean food, Apollonia is one of Tirana's best white tablecloth experiences. Refreshingly expensive and for good reason, dining in the wonderful garden here is one of the

Restaurants

highlights of any stay in the city, especially if the bill's getting picked up on your expense account. The restaurant also lays on arguably the finest breakfast in Albania. ▶ H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 223 50 35. Open 06:30 - 15:00, 18:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

IL GUSTO

Serving international food with an Italian twist in a combination of digital ovens and charcoal grills, Il Gusto opened in 2010 and has been a steady favourite among well-heeled locals and visitors alike ever since. The menu focuses heavily on fresh meat and seafood, whilst a small but thoughtful selection of French, Italian and Spanish wines accompany. You'll often find live jazz music performed here, and, during the summer, the small garden is a really nice place to eat indeed. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Donika Kastrioti, tel. +355 4 2 27 80 75, www.ilgustoalbania.com. Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

KARLSBERG

This classy hotel restaurant is deservedly popular with the foreign crowd. Brick arches surround the diners, while some of the country's best chefs ensure a quality meal is served time and time again from an impressive menu of Albanian and international cuisine. We're especially taken with the steaks, the salad bar and the decadent selection of cheese. During the summer, head for the open-air rooftop restaurant, a dazzlingly white classicist pleasure garden complete with fountains, amazing views and the classy White Camellia conservatory. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova (Xheko Imperial hotel), tel. +355 4 2 24 68 52. Open 07:00 - 01:00. \$\$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

METROPOLITAN

Set underneath an architecturally fascinating waved roof and on top of an equally swirly carpet, the Sheraton's in-house dining experience is as you'd expect more or less impossible to beat. Featuring a daily barbecue on the terrace and themed evenings for guests and visitors alike, the kitchen specialises in international and Mediterranean dishes whose only problem revolves around the fact that it's difficult to choose exactly what you want. Note that this is also one of the few places to do a proper Sunday brunch. ▶ J-5, Sheshi Italia (Sheraton hotel), tel. +355 4 2 27 47 07. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ 🍷 🍴 🍷 🍷

MULLIXHIU

Difficult to find and located somewhere towards the far southern end of Rr. Sami Frashëri near the lake, this is where country cottage dining meets the 21st century. Using the best locally-sourced ingredients, the menu offers and imaginative journey around traditional cuisine with lots of fancy flourishes and artistic smears of sauce on your plate. Not exactly fine dining in the more accepted sense of the term, it really is about the food here, which, although we've heard a few complaints, is really rather special. Not a big place, booking in advance during the busy periods of the week is highly recommended. ▶ K-4, Rr. Parku i Madh, tel. +355 69 66 60 444. Open 12:00 - 22:00. \$\$\$.

Restaurants

OTIUM

A firm and seasoned favourite, Otium churns out plate after plate of fabulous-looking food in a swanky if unpretentious setting from a daily menu of dishes thrown together from fresh ingredients bought by the chef every morning. Featuring gargantuan salads and a lot of well-prepared meat, the latest news here is the introduction of their excellent burgers, prepared from quality beef and certainly qualifying as a fine dining burger experience. ▶ H-3, Rr. Brigada e VIII, tel. +355 4 2 22 35 70, www.otium-restaurant.com. Open 11:30 - 23:30. \$\$\$.

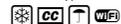


FOOD WITH A VIEW

You'd think a country boasting so many mountains wouldn't be that bothered about restaurants far from the ground. Think again.

ABA TWENTYFIRST

Including a name that describes how far it is from the street below, there's a rumour going around that the cost of a meal here is directly proportional to the stunning views rather than what you actually get on your plate. Having said that, the menu is impressive, and the chef, who generally excels at his own versions of Mediterranean nouvelle cuisine, certainly knows what his doing. The wine list is impressive too, although if you want large portions for small change this is definitely not the place for you. ▶ H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II (ABA Business Center), tel. +355 44 50 17 17. Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.



KRISTAL BAR

Not exactly what one would call a restaurant in the traditional sense, the rooftop café of the Vila Alba hotel may not be the highest in Tirana, but the view of the old rooftops spread out down below is utterly charming. The menu is almost non-existent and, as such we recommend the place as somewhere for a snack rather than a full-blown eating experience. The Viennese specialities such as *apfelstrudel* and *Sachertorte* cake are truly wonderful. ▶ F-5, Rr. Xhorxhi Martini, tel. +355 42 25 59 37, www.vila-alba.com. Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.



LA BOHÈME

Reached via a glass-panelled lift offering wonderful if somewhat heart-stopping views, this tip-tip, top floor restaurant combines a recommended selection of international, Mediterranean and Albanian cuisine with the ultimate white table cloth experience and some of the best views in the city. The prices are surprisingly good and there's even the opportunity to really push the boat out and splurge on a brilliant, albeit gut-busting, 12-course special.

OBSERVATOR

Stuck at the top of an otherwise ugly building in the middle of one of the best-preserved parts of Ottoman-era Tirana, our last visit was met with a room full of giggling teenagers downing soft drinks and listening to

hard music. As such, visiting during the week is perhaps best avoided. The place does however come alive during Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings when it's possible to have a really good time drinking cocktails, listening to live music and eating from a somewhat restrained menu. In good weather, the outdoor terrace is literally one of the highlights of a visit to the city. To find the place, go through the sliding doors to the left of the Carrefore supermarket, take the lift (button 13) on the left and walk up the final flight of stairs. ▶ D-5, Rr. e Saraçëve, tel. +355 66 40 22 220. Open 08:00 - 00:00. \$\$\$.



SKY CLUB

Perched on top of the 17-storey Sky Tower building in the very heart of the city, this magnificent restaurant offers equally inspiring views of the city and nearby mountains and is worth the heart-stopping trip in the lift even if you're only looking for an espresso. The not surprisingly wallet-emptying menu is packed with international and Albanian dishes that by all accounts are worth every penny if you're hungry and looking for a meal with an unbeatable view. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 5, tel. +355 42 22 16 66. Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$.



GRAND PARK

Proof that the city's sprawling Grand Park is a popular place to visit, find it scattered hither and thither with several large restaurants where you can eat and drink in the relative tranquility of the surrounding trees.

DRERI

Inside the hotel of the same name and anything but dreary, the food on offer here features the industry standard collection of meat dishes, pasta and salads with a better-than-average selection of wines. The outdoor terrace is a great place to eat and unwind during the summer months and there's a roaring fire in the hunting lodge-looking restaurant for the colder part of the year. ▶ Rr. e Elbasanit, tel. +355 42 37 47 45. Open 12:00 - 17:00, 19:00 - 24:00. \$\$.



JUVENILJA CASTELO

These fine purveyors of Italian and Albanian specialities inhabit a customised castle on the edge of the park. Choose to dine in one of their salons, all-encompassing balconies or on the tiered terraces overlooking the greenery. Well known for their impressive salad bar and gigantic pizzas, Juvenilja also has a second restaurant in the city centre. ▶ J-6, Rr. Gjeneral Niko Pushkini, tel. +355 42 26 66 66, www.juvenilja.com. Open 10:00 - 24:00. \$\$.



LION PARK

With a constantly changing menu and not a whiff of a lion anywhere, this impressively large restaurant sits in the middle of lovely summer garden, a really nice location for outdoor munching. Unsurprisingly, Albanian and Italian dishes feature heavily on the menu. Their piano



Taking it easy in Grand Park

bar features a stage where live music is occasionally performed. ▶ Rr. e Elbasanit, tel. +355 42 37 52 99. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$.



PRINCE PARK

A delightfully relaxed restaurant just outside the city, kids will love the multi-coloured brick paths and the madly coloured playground, while parents can retreat to the terrace for a couple of drinks and a quick snack. Like every other restaurant in the neighbourhood, Price Park specialises in Albanian and Mediterranean cuisine, although for reasons we can't quite figure out the prices here are generally much higher than the rest. ▶ Rr. e Elbasanit, tel. +355 44 50 46 64. Open 08:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$.



SOFRA E ARIUT

Up the hill on the right on the old road to Elbasan and more or less within walking distance of the city centre, this is upmarket Albanian dining at its best. The décor is mountain chic, with the waiters wandering around in traditional costumes ferrying plates and bowls piled high with classic local cuisine to die for. Complete with a sloped garden populated by a menagerie of animals the kids will love, if you can't find the energy to visit for the single attraction, it's worth mentioning that the recommended Martyrs' Cemetery is a little bit further up the hill. ▶ Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 42 37 29 04, www.sofraariut.com. Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$.



INDIAN

CHAKRA JONÉ

Now firmly established and featuring Indian chefs working away in the kitchen, you know this is the real deal just from the smell of spice that hits you when you enter. The relatively small menu is packed with classic dishes from fresh *pakora* to a proper vindaloo, plus one or two more unusual offerings as well as a big selection for vegetarians and several interesting rice options. The dessert menu is tiny to say the least, although there are a handful of *lassis*. It's a bit of hike to get here, but well worth the legwork. ▶ Rr. Tish Dahia, tel. +355 4 451 14 60, www.chakrajone.com. Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$.



INTERNATIONAL

Knowing full well that anything prepared in a kitchen could be designated as international cuisine to at least somebody, we like to rely on the category as a place where we can offer a safe haven to restaurants we have trouble pinning down as either one thing or the other. A quick flick through these listings will betray a certain amount of contradictions in our choices, but if the subjects of cuisine and dining out show us anything at all, they most certainly show us that eating in restaurants is very much a subjective pastime and not a perfect science.



CATERER • BAR & GRILL



Shërbim catering për çdo event Tuajin



Cel: +355 694047131
 enacatering@gmail.com

ENA Catering

DOOR SMARTS

Open **Hapur**
 Closed **Mbyllur**
 Push **Shtyje**
 Pull **Terhiqe**

AMOR

There's no set menu here, just what the chef/owner decides to make that day, all of it cooked fresh from produce bought the same day. Great home made pasta, excellent meat (the steaks come highly recommended), superb desserts served on old slate tiles and all at reasonable prices. It's only a little place, so booking in advance is advisable. ▶ H-2, Rr. Komuna e Parisit, tel. +355 42 24 15 73. Open 12:00 - 22:30. Closed Sun. \$\$\$.

ANTIKA

A classy upstairs restaurant with a small but well-chosen menu and a considerably better wine list than most others in town, Antika's décor has a few surprises in store, including food-preparation devices that wouldn't look out of place inside a torture chamber, but don't let that put you off your meal. With not many tables on offer, it's worth booking a table in advance here, especially if you're planning on dining at the weekend. ▶ G-4, Blv. Gjergj Fishta, tel. +355 4 450 0266, www.restorant-antika.al. Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.

CENI'S

Selling itself as a Mediterranean restaurant, Ceni's serves wonderfully fresh and original Italian and other regional food in a small basement not far from Grand Park. The owner is also a butcher, and his cuts of meat are some of the best in Tirana. With a changing daily menu you're never quite sure what's going to end up on your plate. If it helps, we recommend sticking to the pasta with additional meat for non-vegetarians. The working day business lunch is extremely good value for money. ▶ K-4, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 67 40 66 166. Open 12:00 - 23:00, Sun 12:00 - 17:00. \$\$\$.

DELANO LOUNGE

A cool and modern combined dining area and lounge with a heavy emphasis on Mediterranean food on the menu, everything that goes on the plates looks like it's been designed by a modern artist, something that doesn't always work but that they've got right here. We recommend their steaks, served on a wooden board with cheese and vegetables. Take note that if you're planning on a quiet meal, make sure you don't book a table when one of the live bands is in the house. Jazz, funk and bossa nova aren't the easiest genres to eat to. ▶ F-5, Rr. George W Bush, tel. +355 4 22 78 000, www.delano.al. Open 08:00 - 23:00, Fri, Sat 08:00 - 03:00, Sun 09:00 - 16:00. \$\$\$\$.

E JONA

Operating somewhere in the gastronomic twilight zone between café and restaurant, E Jona's offerings include everything from lasagne to *byrek*. A popular place for their quick and affordable set business lunches during the week, find the changing specials listed on the blackboard and, often during the evenings, live acoustic music on the otherwise quiet terrace. ▶ H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII 7, tel. +355 69 25 15 333. Open 07:00 - 00:00. \$.

FUSION

A café-restaurant that morphs into a cocktail bar as the evening progresses, Fusion's food is fairly fault-free, with a menu packed with treats from a very good steak to wok-friend Asian specialities. The main reason for visiting however is really the place itself, a gorgeous open space on the fifth floor with a grand patio commanding great views of the city. Popular with some of the country's 'elite', visitors have to pass through an airport-style metal detector before being granted admission. ▶ H/I-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali (Coin), tel. +355 4 22 48 313. Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$\$.

KING HOUSE

Whatever you do, don't be put off by the location of this place, located as it is above a cinema of the same name. Many argue that this is the best restaurant in Tirana and on many levels it would be hard to disagree. The food is presented in such extremely creative designs that it's sometimes hard to take it seriously, but this is no gimmick because the people in the kitchen really know what they're doing. If you can't stand eating food that looks like a painting, go for their burger which is divine. The restaurant design and the view are also well worth the visit. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 42 25 55 59. Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.

MILLENNIUM GOURMET

Decent international dining in a modern space above the cinema, with a glass pavilion surrounded by greenery, garden fragrances twittering birds in summer. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 42 26 93 16. Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.

PADAM

Inside the hotel of the same name, this elegant-looking eatery wins hands down on the gourmet scale but often fails, through no fault of its own perhaps, to fail when it comes to atmosphere. It's often empty in here, which is a bit of a shame because the chef is something of a genius and his creations are both literally and figuratively worth forking out for. Because this is genuinely a proper restaurant, not a room full of chairs and tables next to a kitchen, the best thing to do if you can afford to eat here is ask for a recommendation rather than gamble. When it's open, the adjoining terrace offers one of the best places around to dine in the open air. ▶ H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 44 50 49 13, www.padam.al. Open 10:00 - 01:00. \$\$\$\$.



One of Tirana's hundreds of outdoor cafés

PANEVINO

Slightly hidden away in the small clutch of new office buildings immediately east of Sheshi Skënderbej and a firm business dinner favourite, expect a classy interior without going too far over the top and sweaty chefs in big white hats slaving away in the open kitchen. The bill of fare features all of your favourite Italian dishes with a few surprises such as their rather awesome cheeseburger. The outside seating is a little way from the chaos in the street and provides some much needed shade during the heat of the summer. ▶ F-5, Rr. 28 Nentori, tel. +355 4 22 55 512, www.panevino.al. Open 07:30 - 23:30. \$\$.

PASTA DA PUCCI

A somewhat intimate dining experience close to the blloku, the small menu here changes daily and features whatever's best from the fresh ingredients found for sale in the markets around the city. The pasta is made on the premises and the fresh oysters are a particular hit with those who don't mind gambling with shellfish. The desserts, a little on the small side for some, are also worth a mention. ▶ Rr. Mustafa Qosja, tel. +355 69 34 34 99 9. Mon - Sun:11:00 am - 12:00 am. \$\$\$.

KOSOVAN

QEBAPTORE GJAKOVA

Located next to the Dinamo stadium, don't let the view of the auto repair shop across the street put you off because this is among one of the best dining experiences in the city. Run by a team of friendly staff from Kosovo and specialising in absolutely magnificent grilled meat dishes from the

region, ask them what to recommend if you're unsure and we promise you won't be disappointed. Everything comes served with fresh salad, unusual sauces and a hot bread roll, leaving little room for dessert albeit a likely desire to wash it all down with a bottle of ice-cold Peja beer. ▶ I-2, Rr. Medar Shtylla. Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$.

MEXICAN

MEXICO

Also trading under the name Tirana Mexican Cantina and therefore contributing to a certain amount of confusion for those trying to find the place, once you do locate it don't be put off by the canteen-style décor and the teenagers who often hang around outside. At first glance, Tirana's first Mexican restaurant doesn't appear serious at all, a fact not upheld by the surprisingly good and affordable Mexican food on offer. ▶ K-4, Rr. Sami Frasheri (Nobis complex), tel. +355 44 81 85 73. Open 09:00 - 24:00. \$\$.

SERENDIPITY

There's nothing serendipitous about Serendipity at all, with everything planned to perfection and the food pouring out of the kitchen, from the finger food to the full-blown Mexican dishes, being about as authentic as they can when you consider this is Tirana not Tijuana. With a limited number of seats and small tables outside, large groups will need to eat indoors, although they may well find themselves dropping in for a snack at dinner time and falling into bed six hours later full of tequila and burritos. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 26/1, tel. +355 42 25 93 77. Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$.

MIDDLE EASTERN

ORIENTAL MAGIC

Tirana's first proper Middle Eastern restaurant is a gorgeous little place found at the bottom of a short flight of steps in a confused bundle of shops and restaurants in the blloku. Featuring a menu of mostly predictable dishes including an average in-house hummus, spiced chicken and some imaginative rice dishes, the jury's still out on this one and the current feedback from those who know a thing or two about this kind of thing are says that they're a lot right, but not quite everything yet. We didn't have any strong objections, even if the friendly service was a little on the slow side. ▶ G/H-3, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 67 60 00 019. Open 10:00 - 23:00. \$\$.

ORGANIC

NATYRAL

Using only organic ingredients, many of them from the owner's farm, the food here is nothing to write home about, and the place has an altogether lacklustre feel to it. Still, if you happen to be extremely fussy about what you put in your face, it's good to know that Natyral is here. The international menu is far from original, and we recommend you stick to the lighter dishes such as the salads and soups. ▶ H-3/4, Rr. Pjeter Bogdani 13, tel. +355 42 25 11 22, www.naturalfarming.al. Open 08:00 - 23:00. \$\$.

PIZZA

There's barely a restaurant in Tirana that doesn't serve pizza. These ones however specialise in them. The combination of proper flour, fresh ingredients and an abundance of real pizza ovens hereabouts guarantees that pizzas in the Albanian capital are more often than not indistinguishable from the ones made in the home of the ubiquitous dish just across the water.

LA PIZZA MIA

Former pole vaulting champion Sazan Fisheku's pride and joy is this above average pizza place close to the heart of the blloku. Cooked in a traditional, wood-fired pizza oven, the food in question is exceptionally good indeed. Toppings come in a wide range of choices, or you can pretty much choose whatever you want assuming they have it. There's plenty of room inside for a large gathering, or you can simply order to take away and eat on the hoof. ▶ H-4, Rr. Pjeter Bogdani, tel. +355 4 22 27 693. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$.

PROPER PIZZA

Hugely popular with the younger, 20-something crowd, this place isn't called Proper Pizza for nothing. Choose from a baffling array of pizzas from the traditional to the more imaginative, all of them perfect for snacking on the premises or eating elsewhere. ▶ I-3, Rr. Gjin Bue Shpata, tel. +355 69 77 78 888. Open 09:00 - 06:00. \$\$.

SEAFOOD

Barely 30 minutes from the Adriatic, it shouldn't come as a great surprise to learn that Tirana features some truly outstanding seafood restaurants. Find a few scattered around the city and a tight huddle of them stretched along Blvd. Gjergj Fishta between Rr. Ibrahim Rugova and Rr. Sami Frashëri.

COLOSSEA

A little way from the city centre and focusing on both seafood and pasta, this fine restaurant with lots of wooden rafters and plain white furniture serves some of the best mussels around for a ridiculously affordable price. There's plenty more seafood available for those who prefer to avoid shellfish and a few vegetarian options to boot. Come here when a birthday or wedding is being celebrated and you'll almost certainly end up drinking and dancing with the locals. Not the easiest place in the world to find but well worth the effort. ▶ Rr. Kongresi i Lushnjë, tel. +355 69 20 74 555. Open 24Hrs. \$\$\$.

DANTE

A highly praised restaurant close to the heart of the action specialising in fresh aquatic cuisine from the local region, Dante applies an artistic philosophy and practice to the food it puts on your plate which can perhaps best be described as outsider art. We're pretty excited about the locally caught sea bass and recommend it to all, perhaps best finished off with a strong espresso and a portion of their really, really good *tiramisu*. ▶ Rr. Komuna e Parisit, tel. +355 69 73 63 339. Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$.

DETI JON

Deti Jon (Ionian Sea) is a simple affair with a fisherman's cabin feel to the place, qualities that betray something altogether more sophisticated on the subject of the food. In the time-honoured tradition, it's possible to choose exactly what goes in your stomach before they cook it, which, considering the expert knowledge the staff possess is almost superfluous but fun all the same. Whatever catch is on the menu on the day you visit is guaranteed to be fresh and delicious, meaning it's really up to you to decide what you want according to your own preferences. ▶ I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +366 69 20 96 092. Open 10:00 - 23:15. \$\$\$.

LA SCALA

Primarily a seafood restaurant but also catering to other tastes, this place close to Grand Park does an excellent job combining fish, pasta and some incredibly good sauces. If you're not sure what to order, we recommend the grilled shrimps accompanied with one of their more expensive bottles of Italian white wine. ▶ Rr. Faik Konica, tel. +355 45 60 57 11. Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.

Restaurants

LA VITA É BELLA

By most accounts one of the best seafood restaurants in the capital due to an uncompromising combination of good service, good food and good value for money, like so many of the better restaurants in Tirana the staff here have an in-depth knowledge of the food they cook and serve. The menu of always fresh ingredients is fairly diverse, and it's worth asking for advice as to what's hot before plunging in. ▶ H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 8, tel. +355 69 40 74 449, www.lavitaebella.al. Open 11:45 - 23:45. \$\$\$.

MAGIC BLUE

A modern seafood restaurant in the blloku fitted out faux-rustic style. The catch of the day can be inspected fresh on a bed of ice beside the entrance and you can simply choose the fish of your liking, or you could order one of the many seafood options on the menu, which includes octopus, calamari, shrimps, salmon and more. ▶ H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 2 27 35 55. Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$.

VILA 12

A gourmet fish restaurant that has some very fishy combinations indeed, if you're eating aspirations are as experimental as the chef's then why not go for something like the raw fish with radish, grapes and strawberries. Thankfully perhaps, there's also a good supply of traditional grilled fish and lobster. Despite all the fishy goings on in the kitchen, the service is both friendly and attentive. ▶ G/H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti 12, tel. +355 42 25 06 33. Open 11:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$.

STEAK

PAGUS

There are plenty of other things on the menu apart from their excellent Black Angus steak inside this restaurant that could also just about equally qualify as an Italian restaurant. Smack bang in the centre of the action, if you don't particularly like steak, the burgers here are pretty



Street food

special and the pasta dishes also come highly recommended. Grown ups with children might like to know that they can slice and throw a steak inside a sandwich if the kids are particularly fussy. ▶ I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +355 66 20 30 409. Open 12:00 - 23:30. \$\$.

STEAK HOUSE

This sleek first-floor steak restaurant is decked out with light wood and has a pleasant terrace overlooking the park. The menu has items such as the Mosaic mixed grill and sirloin Angus steak, but also has a range of other non-steak meals. There's knowledgeable service too. ▶ G-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova (Taiwan complex), tel. +355 42 25 12 23, www.kompleksitaiwan.al. Open 12:00 - 02:00. \$\$.

SUSHI

OPIUM

The one everyone's talking about at the time of going to press, once again don't let the location inside a cinema complex put you off because even at twice these prices you'd be impressed with the quality. Using the best rice (some would argue this is the secret to sushi) and the best of everything else, Opium's selection is big and impressive, featuring all your sushi favourites and more. The wine and sake are also good, and the desserts, so often overlooked in a sushi restaurant, are both imaginative and finger-licking perfect. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani (Millennium cinema), tel. +355 68 90 25 192. Open 11:30 - 23:30. \$\$\$.

YAMATO

Cunningly hidden away down a flight of concrete steps and through a door where visitors are greeted with a large lit-up sign proclaiming *Let There Be Light* (not true, it's actually rather dark inside), the only other sushi restaurant in Tirana worth writing about gives Opium a good run for its money in both atmosphere and taste. The menu is impressive, and the staff are as friendly as they come, although the location does make it feel a little overbearing when the place is empty. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ismail Rugova, tel. +355 68 20 06 90 5. Open 12:00 - 23:00, Sun 18:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$.

TURKISH

SOFRA TURKE

An oasis of welcome calm in an otherwise madly chaotic street, this vaguely upmarket restaurant specialises in original *kuzhina turke* as opposed to the Albanian-tinged look-alike food available in most restaurants in Tirana. Complete with old radios, pictures of old Istanbul and plenty of carpets on the walls of the kind weak-willed tourists bring back from Turkey in their luggage, several of the staff speak enough English to take diners through the menu. Surplus to the cavalcade of delicious grilled meat options is a range of classic sticky Turkish baklava desserts. ▶ F-2, Rr. Kavajës 170, tel. +355 4 2 22 68 18. Open 08:00 - 23:00. \$\$.



A classic dish at Zgara Korçare 2 (see below)

STREET FOOD

As mentioned elsewhere in this guide, Tirana's sights are best enjoyed whilst strolling its streets in a leisurely fashion, a pastime street food could almost have been invented for. With the continuing absence of a McDonald's and a propensity to sell food that's in season, eating on the hoof in the Albanian capital means there's no opportunity to default to the lowest common denominator whilst there's always a lottery-type element to what you're going to find when the calories start running low. No matter how hard you try to wander off the beaten track in Tirana, you're never more than a couple of minutes away from someone selling something hot, from grilled shrimps to corn on the cob when available to the more omnipresent options such as the Greek-style *gjiro* (available everywhere and always excellent) to the slightly more exotic *byrek*, of which more in a minute. As with *gjiro*, *qofta* (see the section dedicated to our favourite *qofta* vendor in Tirana) is made and sold from something more substantial than an improvised barbecue stall in the street, although both come pre-cooked and in need of just a little heating and serving, so getting it inside your stomach is never going to take more than a few minutes at the most. *Burek*, known to the Albanians as *byrek*, is a crumbly, pie-type snack of filo pastry filled with meat (usually beef, and never pork), cheese, occasionally spinach and, even less often, tomato. From the Turkish word *bur*, meaning to twist, *burek* is found in bakeries and specialist kiosks all over the city. The Albanian version is usually made in a round dish and cut into triangular quarters for serving. Quality varies immensely, with some being little more than pastry with a tiny amount of filling and others being more or less the other way round.

QOFTA

Known more widely as *kofta* in other parts of the world, the Albanian *qofta* is a simple, sausage-like dish made from ground beef that's cooked on an open flame and served with a wide variety of salads, sauces and fresh white bread. Popular with the more working class residents of Tirana, *qofta* restaurants are hard to find in the city centre, tending to congregate more in the suburbs. Usually pre-cooked, it's possible to order and get them reheated and on your plate in a matter of couple of minutes, making them an excellent choice when racing around the city.

ZGARA KORÇARE 2

Next to Pazari i Ri in the general direction of Sheshi Skënderbej, this is our personal favourite *qofta* place in the capital. As well as their magnificent Korça-style *qofta* served with *tzatziki* and hot bread, this basic but brilliant restaurant cooks a variety of other meat dishes with accompanying cold Korça beer and soft drinks. The wooden outside tables provide a great place to watch the madness of the city unfold in front of your unsuspecting eyes. If they're all taken there are two remarkably similar places next door. ▶ E-5, Rr. Luigi Gurakuqi. Open 09:00 - 24:00. \$.



Fresh *byrek* for sale



Fresh ingredients guaranteed

Defining a café in Tirana is as impossible as it is anywhere else. The following categories and the venues listed under them should be treated as guidelines rather than rules. The only certain fact is that the Albanian capital's café scene is bigger and better than it ever was before.

BAGELS

NYT BAGELS

This small place just east of the blloku specialises in bagels that are as good as you're going to get in this part of the world, bagels that come in two sizes with a choice of bread and fillings that can be assembled according to the wishes of the customer. Also serving a few other snacks plus coffee, soft drinks and bottled beer, there's even a tiny little outside seating area for those who can't drink their coffee without needing to do so in a cloud of smoke. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +355 69 54 07 583, www.newyorktiranabagels.com. Open 7:30 - 19:30. ☎️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

BOOK CAFÉS

EPËRSHME

This combined second-hand book and café is one of the highlights of the city and is one of those places where you can bring the whole family without fear of anyone getting bored. Serving some splendid hot and cold food alongside the coffee, take note that there's a gorgeous shel-

tered garden out the back which is by far the best place to sit and soak up the atmosphere and caffeine. On the subject of books, nearly everything for sale here is in Albanian although there's always a couple of piles of paperbacks in English kicking around. ▶ G-5, Rr. Jul Variboba 2, tel. +355 4 227 12 28. Open 08:00 - 23:30. ☎️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

FRIEND'S BOOK HOUSE

Forget about reading at this book café unless you bring something of your own as there's nothing available in English. If you must read or study, there's a quiet reading room in the basement. Find it near the main police station, just north of the river. ▶ G-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 22 66 777. Open 07:00 - 24:30. ☎️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

CLASSIC CAFÉS

BARDHË E ZI

Something of a Tirana institution, the inappropriately named Bardhë e Zi (Black and White) is anything but lacking in colour. Located along one of the busiest streets in the blloku, the mostly 20-something crowd that choose to spend time here are a friendly bunch indeed. Serving great coffee alongside a range of other drinks and snacks, the modern interior is a good place to escape the madness outside, or, if you prefer to imbibe your caffeine in a less peaceful environment, the terrace is a fine location to indulge in a little urban anthropology. ▶ H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 22 47 089. Open 24hrs. ☎️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

CENTRAL CAFÉ

On the third floor of the Galeria shopping centre, the Central Café is a good place for a quick coffee in between throwing you money away in the surrounding boutiques. Decorated in youthful orange colours and with a lounge and bar area to choose, it's not your average shopping café in the slightest. ▶ G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri, tel. +355 69 20 63 71 7, www.centralcafetirana.com. Open 09:00 - 22:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍷

CITY ART

Another name change for a Tirana institution with little else in the way of changes to report back, this enduring café still possesses its slight industrial décor feel and they continue to play a slighter better brand of music than many other places in the area. If you need more than a coffee with a whisky chaser, there's a decent menu available as well. The pasta dishes are good value and are a particular favourite. ▶ H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, tel. +355 69 40 40 20 0. Open 07:00 - 24:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

COFFEE ISLAND

This Starbucks wannabe on a busy street in the northwest of the city is by far the best place for a takeaway espresso in the area if not the city as a whole. Find all the usual variations on what can be achieved by mixing roasted coffee beans and milk alongside hot chocolate, ice tea, smoothies and frozen yoghurt. ▶ Rr. Kavajes, tel. +355 69 73 32 018. Open 8:00 - 23:30. 🍷 🍷

D'ANGELO

Another blloku favourite, this place continues to go from strength to strength. Alongside the usual roll call of inventive coffee concoctions are a range of frozen yoghurts during the summer meltdown period plus an imaginative selection of smoothies and freshly squeezed fruit juices. To compliment the caffeine, D'Angelo also dabbles in desserts, among them an irresistible and not expensive chocolate fondue for sharing with friends and family alike. ▶ Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 69 97 79 669. Open 07:00 - 24:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍷

DIVINA

A sprawling café on two floors with a large outdoor terrace, this is the place to come for the maximum sugar and caffeine overdose. The coffee's pretty good, but the ice-cream, cakes and other sweet temptations are the real reason for visiting. Although Divina also prepares meals, these should be avoided as there are many better options in the immediate area. ▶ K-4, Rr. Sami Frasherri, tel. +355 69 60 76 400. Open 7:00 - 24:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷

JUNA

Designed to look not unlike a classic Viennese coffee house, Juna's combination of excellent location and relaxed atmosphere makes it a fine place for coffee and cake. Despite its attempts to pander to a slightly older and more sophisticated clientele, you'll still come across mem-

bers of the city's younger generation filling the place from time to time, not least when they're showing international soccer on the television. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova. Open 08:00 - 23:30. ☎️ 🍷 🍷

KEVIN

Straddling that old Tirana chestnut between café and bar, Kevin's wood-panelled interior is a bit too much for some, although we choose to like it for other reasons such as it being the best place in the area around the Ottoman-era Tanners' Bridge and because it's got a great outdoor terrace. Keep an eye out for huge cork hanging over the entrance, and if you drop by during the evening be prepared for the occasional event, which could be anything from a poetry reading to a relaxed performance of classical music. ▶ F-5/6, Rr. George W. Bush, tel. +355 78 208 92 91. Open 06:30 - 23:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍷

KOMITETI

Popular with everyone from wide-eyed tourists to the Albanian photographer Bevis Fusha, Komiteti is the place everyone's talking about and refusing to leave at the moment. The idea of combining a café with a museum is nothing new, but where it's been tried before in the city and hasn't really worked, for some reason this place has managed to pull it off very nicely indeed. Tucked away just off the main street in the shadow of the Galeria shopping centre, once again the distinction between a place for a quick cup of coffee and an evening of drinking is so blurred that it's impossible to define what it is exactly beyond the fact that it's open and is almost certainly going to stay open and that if you're in town you really should drop by. ▶ G-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali, tel. +355 69 26 25 514. Open 9:00 - 2:00. ☎️ 🍷



Bird for sale at Pazari i Ri (see p.77)

Cafés

OPERA

A classic Balkan café featuring theatrical masks on the walls and waiters dressed as penguins, the only reason for visiting this place as far as we're concerned is for the location and accompanying view of Sheshi Skënderbej. This is people-watching at its best, an experience best savoured with one of their dangerously strong espressos, or, if it's hot, an ice-cold bottle of Korça or Tirana beer. ▶ E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, tel. +355 4 22 08 50. Open 08:00 - 21:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

QUO VADIS

Great location, dangerous espresso and hovering somewhere between café and place to drink the night away, Quo Vadis has staying power, a quality not to be underestimated in a world where cafés come and go in the blink of an eye. Frequented by a mostly young crowd who don't seem at all bothered about such things as needing a job, if you're looking for more than a pick-me-up, it's worth noting they also stock bottles of the original Czech Budvar beer. ▶ H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 21, tel. +355 42 26 65 90. Open 07:30 - 00:30. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

RELAX

Another fine place for lingering over a cup of coffee and reading the paper in the blloku district. This rather relaxing café has big windows and a bright interior with lots of light wood. There's a selection of magazines, should you get bored. ▶ H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, tel. +355 68 21 38 6 41. Open 07:00 - 23:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

SKY CLUB CAFÉ

The floor of the glass construction on top of the Sky Tower revolves slowly, providing a beautiful panorama of the city and nearby mountains and making up for the slightly antiseptic atmosphere. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 5, tel. +355 42 22 16 66. Open 08:00 - 23:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

STEPHEN CENTER CAFÉ

Opened in 1994 by evangelical missionaries who certainly know how to run a good café, this is one of Tirana's best, a cosmopolitan meeting place for locals and foreigners alike. There's a pleasant small terrace to gorge on bottomless coffee, freshly squeezed orange juice and eggs Benedict for breakfast whilst watching the locals sell chickens in the busy market across the street. ▶ E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tahsim 1, tel. +355 4 22 34 748. Open 07:00 - 23:00. Closed Sun. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

TIRANA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

Hotel cafés are much like hotel restaurants in that they're generally geared towards scraping together a bit more cash to keep the hotel running. In the case of the ground floor café in the Tirana International Hotel however, things are a bit different. Avoid the indoor space and head for the comfortable black sofas on the terrace where for twice the price of everywhere else it's possible to keep an eye on the locals through the palms trees and rose bushes

as they get on and off the buses that stop outside. ▶ E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, tel. +355 4 22 34 185. Open 24hrs. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

TVSH LONGUE

A popular venue for the multitude of office workers in the area during the week, TVSH serves very good espresso and has the added bonus of an enclosed terrace where smoking is permitted complete with a very handsome parrot in a cage. The staff are so laid back here that you may just have to catch their attention if you want a drink. Handy for the quirky Albanian Radio & Television Museum on the corner of the street. ▶ H-5, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +355 69 43 92 840. Open 08:00 - 23:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

VILA 3

Part of the hotel of the same name in the centre of the city, even if you're not gracing the owners with nightly appearances in your pyjamas you might want to give their outdoor café the once-over. Mostly hidden away from the street along a refreshingly cool alley lined with rose bushes and other flowering plants, this is a good place for a quick refreshment stop, especially for their freshly squeezed orange juice which is both cheap and rather delicious. ▶ G-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II 3, tel. +355 42 26 65 82. Open 07:00 - 12:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

CRÊPES

CIOCCOLATITALIANI

If God was made of sugar, this is where his followers would come to worship him. Modern, bright and always busy, Cioccolatitaliani's menu stretches well beyond crêpes with a veritable smorgasbord of tooth-destroying treats on offer, among them waffles and various concoctions in which chocolate is the main event. ▶ H/1-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 6 84 00 70 71, www.cioccolatitaliani.it. Open 08:00 - 01:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

GAMES CAFÉ

PLAY HOUSE

A fun little café for the geek to be found lurking in everyone, featuring all sorts of games to play from traditional board games to the latest in electronic gadgets. Note they also organise children's parties. ▶ I-3/4, Rr Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 69 53 24 642. Open 10:00 - 01:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

HIPSTER TIRANA

It was bound to happen sooner or later.

BEIRUT

With seating including rescued dentist chairs scattered about the place, plus bright paintings hung at jaunty angles on the walls, Beirut, which also functions as a half-way decent Lebanese restaurant and cocktail bar, is a hipster's wet dream. Unless you plan on visiting on a rainy Wednesday afternoon, this isn't the place for a quiet coffee. Just in



Café culture in the blloku

case all of the above wasn't quite exciting enough, they also have live music events here. ▶ H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, tel. +355 67 33 66 655. Open 8:30 - 3:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

NOUVELLE VAGUE

This popular establishment isn't marked by a sign, but is unmissable nevertheless due to the wild and happy colour scheme used for the furniture, walls and air ducts. Hammocks decorate the ceilings, and the bearded gentlemen behind the bar mix a great selection of shakes cocktails to a backdrop of interesting music. ▶ H-3, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani, tel. +355 69 668 01 91. Open 09:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 09:00 - 02:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

THE FUNKY MOUSTACHE

Being one of at least two places in Tirana claiming to be the first juice bar in the city, The Funky Moustache is in actual fact much more than this. A café for the home-grown hipster crowd that also provides juice, smoothies, cakes and other treats, the relaxed atmosphere inside is helped along with the imaginative inclusion of a large communal table where you can find large books of photographs lying around, among them those celebrating the former Shkodra-dwelling Italian master photographer Pietro Marubi. ▶ G/H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, tel. +355 69 97 01 043. Open 7:00 - 23:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

UNLIMITED SOUL

This recommended place serves Fuller's London Porter and for that reason alone warrants inclusion, although closer inspection reveals many more reasons to drop by. Decorated with a postmodern industrial feel complete with bright scatter cushions and tables resurrected from old pallets, Unlimited Soul wouldn't find itself out of place in any contemporary city in the west. Live music is often to be seen and heard here during the evenings. ▶ H-5,

Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +335 69 95 15 414. Open 10:00 - 24:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

JUICE BARS

BIOTEKA

One of a number of juice bars opening up around the city, this is by far the most corporate-feeling of the bunch. Surplus to the abundance of freshly squeezed fruit juices on the menu are the usual accompaniments such as smoothies and sandwiches. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 22 59 592. Open 07:00 - 21:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

HAPPY BELLY

Easily missed, this tiny place located at the bottom of a short flight of steps serves arguably the best fruit juice in the city and is run by a friendly English-speaking woman who also founded the place. Recommended. ▶ H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 69 54 50 082. Open 09:00 - 20:00.

PÂTISSERIES

PATISSERIE FRANÇAISE

Opened way back in 1999 by Marie-Thérèse Marchal and an exceedingly popular place, there are too many reasons to visit this tiny corner of France, perhaps the most important being the authenticity of the baked goods on sale. Although the Albanians are better than most at baking crusty white bread, there's nothing to beat the baguettes on offer here. Choose to take everything away in a bag to munch on later or relax inside with a decent cup of coffee and something sweet and sticky. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 1, tel. +355 4 25 13 36. Open 07:00 - 22:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓ ☔ ☕ ☚ ☛

The best **Europe** has to offer
in one great app



City Essentials

Only our favourite places
Works offline, incl. maps
Free download
Incl. dozens of other cities

**inyour
pocket**
ESSENTIAL
CITY GUIDES



The general hustle and bustle of the city streets at night

Tirana's nightlife is coming along in leaps and bounds. For many, the fun still starts with the lively and traditional *xhiro* (mass evening stroll), and ends more often than not somewhere in the bustling blloku area in the early hours of the morning. The biggest change of late has been the slow but gradual adoption of hipster culture, a welcome addition to a scene that for too long has been dominated by the Fashion TV crowd and the kind of people who still think Led Zeppelin are relevant. As is the case in many Balkan cities, there's a fine line between cafés, bars and clubs in Albania, making some of the venues we list difficult to pin down exactly. Note that Albanians still prefer sipping coffee to serious drinking, with foreigners often being the only ones knocking back the hard stuff. Perhaps the best news of all to those who've just got off the ship is that Tirana's relatively compact size and busy nightlife scene mean there's an awful lot of variety within easy walking distance.

BARS

BLA BLA

A hugely popular drinking hole in a great location, Bla Bla covers all the bases from place to sip coffee in the afternoon to venue for drinking the night away. The well-stocked bar features something to keep most people happy, and there are plenty of other attractions on offer including various international sports events beamed onto their large screens and a host of live music events. Recommended are their cocktails, whilst packing a good punch to boot. ▶ I-4, Rr. Sulejman Delvina, tel. +355 67 60 00 131. Open 24Hrs.   

CANNON

A good all-round bar with a slightly overambitious wood-panel effect throughout, Come here for long evenings of cold beer and loud music from a variety of sources including performing musicians and a whole host of DJs. The music on offer is quite diverse although nothing too experimental and the mostly young crowd who frequent the place fit in like sardines during the weekend. ▶ H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani. Open 08:00 - 23:00, Fri, Sat 08:00 - 03:00.   

CHARL'S BISTRO

An eclectic and fashionable 30-something crowd populates this fantastic lounge bar specialising in Western hits from the 1960s to the 1980. The somewhat oddly spelt venue hosts regular live music acts from across the region as well as a number of other party events on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings. The cocktail bar in the lush small garden spits out great drinks all week, plus there's a good menu of food available to soak up the excess alcohol. ▶ H-4, Rr. Pjeter Bogdani 36, tel. +355 69 20 2 29 01. Open 08:00 - 24:00, Sat 08:00 - 03:00.    

CHECKPOINT CHARLIE

Another one for the slightly older crowd and named after the infamous Berlin border crossing, Checkpoint Charlie is a raucous party bar full Berlin Wall memorabilia and a regular crowd of local ladies and gentlemen grinding away to the rhythm of classic rock and pop. Snacks such as chicken wings and French fries are always available although the main draw seems to be the affordable beer, which curiously is often sold auction-style, changing price every now and then depending on demand. Find it down the alley near the Hotel de Paris. ▶ H-4, Rr. Brigada e VIII. Open 18:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 18:00 - 04:00.     



The nearby mountains

CHEERS

Pandering to every popular culture stereotype imaginable, this perfectly adequate place to drink and be merry is among the growing number of Tirana bars with Irish aspirations that don't even vaguely qualify as an Irish bar. Featuring an admirable stockade of German beer behind the bar, and more often than not overflowing with customers during the evening, as with many bars in the immediate area your best option is to grab an outside table if you can. ▶ H-3, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani 39/1. Open 07:00 - 02:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

DADA TIRANA

Easily confused with Bla Bla after a few lagers, Dada is without question one of our current personal favourites in the city. Combining a great location with thoughtful and occasionally wacky design features, this ultra-friendly place to drink and socialise combines three effortlessly interconnected indoor and outdoor spaces each with their own unique atmosphere. Like most bars in the city centre, Bla Bla features plenty of DJs and live music, and the only negative thing we have to say about the place relates to the snacks on offer, which famously take an age to arrive and that simply isn't worth the money. If you find yourself here and hungry late at night, don't forget there are plenty of nearby places to grab a kebab. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Brigada e VIII 3/520. Open 24hrs. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

DAILY

A fine addition to Tirana's increasingly diverse nightlife scene, find a quirky mixture of decorations including hanging painted bicycles and a penchant for the finer

things in life such as some really good works of art on display and an entirely better mix of electronic music than you'll find in most places in the area. Popular with the more well-off students in the city, recommended are a few hours relaxing and drinking on the upstairs terrace. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 69 204 27 00. Open 07:00 - 24:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

DUFF TIRANA

An American-themed establishment placed suspiciously close to the US embassy, Duff (as in the beer drunk in the *Simpsons*) is essentially a sports bar with an American bias that couldn't be more patriotic if it tried. Featuring walls plastered in photographs of American sporting idols and a menu including chicken wings and nachos, they do at least offer a good selection of European beer alongside a baffling choice of cocktails. The terrace tends to get packed on warm evenings, not least when there's something sports-like flickering away on their many television screens. Alongside the endless showings of basketball and American football they do also show other sports including plenty of quality European soccer. ▶ H-3, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 69 927 70 86. Open 08:00 - 02:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

FAME

Vaguely operating along the lines of a Hemingway-Cuba theme but throwing in a lot of other cultural references along the way, find chairs and suitcases stuck to the walls and a crowd of mostly student-aged drinkers frequenting

this now well established bar just northwest of the city centre. Good for a drink and a bit of networking if nothing else, Friday evenings herald a weekly live music event of often very good jazz which tends to attract big crowds inside one of the smallest bars in the area. A bizarre and rather good anomaly in an otherwise dusty Tirana side street. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova. Open 24Hrs. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

HEMINGWAY

Vaguely operating along the lines of a Hemingway-Cuba theme but throwing in a lot of other cultural references along the way, find chairs and suitcases stuck to the walls and a crowd of mostly student-aged drinkers frequenting this recently opened bar just northwest of the city centre. Good for a drink and a bit of networking if little else, Friday evenings herald a weekly live music event which tends to attract big crowds. A bizarre anomaly in an otherwise dusty Albanian side street. ▶ E-3, Rr. Kont Urani 1, tel. +355 69 202 23 03. Open 16:00-02:00, Sept-May 07:00-02:00. 🍷 🍺 🍻

IZZY LIVING

A quirky living room-style interior and a really nice terrace on the street corner attract punters to Izzy Living, where the young and the beautiful come during the weekend for a bit of fun and a good choice of drinks. You'll often find a DJ here as is the norm nowadays. If you're feeling hungry, we recommend the toasted sandwiches with a side order of French fries. ▶ H-3, Rr. Andon Zako Çajupi. Open 07:00 - 04:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

MELBOURNE BAR

Looking a bit like a fancy furniture shop, this strange little bar north of the centre is slightly off the beaten track but worth a visit if you're in the area. Open around the clock and having little if anything at all to do with Australia despite the name and the kangaroo logo, drop by for late drinks and large plates of greasy snacks. ▶ E-3/4, Rr. Mine Peza, tel. +355 67 20 45 705. Open 24hrs. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

MUSIC BOX

A large bar first floor bar with a nice terrace overlooking the fountain where it's almost possible to escape the frisky teenage boys who come here to chase the not-so-frisky teenage girls. Leave your coat at the hat check, buy some beer, drop onto a couch and listen to some mainstream DJ music. ▶ G-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova (Taiwan complex), tel. +355 4 225 11 75. Open 07:00-02:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

ONYX

A friendly enough café by day, the fabulous Onyx transforms during the hours of darkness into something a little more upbeat. Famed for its cocktails and necessary summertime ice-creams, this multi-layered concoction is perhaps best enjoyed late at night when the outside tables sprawl across the pavement and almost into the road. One of a few places in the city where they regularly

screen live matches from the Champions League. ▶ Blv. Bajram Curri, tel. +355 68 20 07 788. Open 07:00 - 02:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

PALAZZO TAVERNA SABULUI

A combined bar, café, club and restaurant, this now well established place with a new name but little else that's changed attracts a mostly Fashion TV and 4WD crowd. Laid out in different areas according to different themes, we like certain things about the place including the lively outdoor terrace and the fabulous bar complete with a vertical garden. A great location for a sophisticated chat over a cold beer or glass of champagne. ▶ G/H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti 12, tel. +355 69 525 02 55. Open 07:00 - 02:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

PICCADILLY

Guarded by two fake red telephone boxes and decorated with Union Jack tables, this somewhat UK-obsessed bar opposite the Lugano hotel serves drinks and light snacks to a predominantly young Albanian crowd for want of something better to do. The pop art on the walls should keep visitors amused for a drink or two, but there's nothing here that's likely to turn it into a regular drinking spot. ▶ E-3, Rr. Kont Urani, tel. +355 69 202 04 14. Open 08:00 - 24:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

RADIO

Tirana's alternative youth can often be found hanging out at Radio, where old radio station logos, black and white photographs of bygone film stars and a few antique radios decorate the front room. Towards the back, the semi-open terrace looks less enticing but is still generally packed during the weekend evenings. Find it slightly hidden away in the apartment building set back from the main street. ▶ H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 29/1, tel. +355 69 28 44 24. Open 09:00 - 01:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

STEELWINGS

The presence of members of the Steelwings Albania Motorcycle Club is easily spotted, as the street outside is regularly parked full of impressive-looking motorbikes. Inside, this rocking bar is decorated with all the usual Americana. Visit on Thursdays for the unplugged sessions or on weekend nights for rock karaoke plus live rock and country music. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 69 525 36 23. Open 08:00 - 02:00. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

TAO LOUNGE

A raucous clubbing-type adventure on a sprawling wooden terrace, Tao Lounge mixes live DJs and reasonably priced cocktails and is one of the prime locations for a spirited night out in the very heart of the city. As with everything in the area, if it's not what you were looking for you're never more than 100 metres away from something that almost certainly is. ▶ H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 69 674 62 66. Open 08:00 - 00:30. ☎️ 🍷 🍺 🍻

Our SIGHTSEEING SECTION starts on p.58 and is bigger and better than ever before.



National Archaeological Museum (see p.63)

CLUBS

Don't expect the cutting-edge South London or Berlin vibe when it comes to clubbing in Tirana, its nightlife scene is still pretty much dragging itself out of the 1970s, which is fair enough considering Albania didn't really have a 1970s to speak of. In general, the girls dress for the boys and the boys dress in equally tight-fitting clothes, albeit with much less flesh hanging over the edge, and the music is hideously loud and there's quite a lot of screaming as the night progresses. The other thing to remember when clubbing in the city is that many of the best places in town don't operate all year round. We've tried our best to mention what we can about this, but decisions to open and close are often made at the last minute. Keep an eye out for the large posters advertising the bigger events pasted to walls and columns around the city. Note that several of the clubs listed here are only open for several months a year. Many of the most popular venues shut up shop during the summer and move to the coast.

AMSTERDAM

A popular club in the northwest suburbs with live acts every night. The focus here is mostly on modern traditional music with a lot of female singers. With lots of flashing lights and plenty of drinks behind the bar, this is a really good introduction to popular Albanian culture. ▶ Rr. Asim Zeneli 9, tel. +355 67 27 80 235. Open Sep - Jun. Entrance 500-1,000 lek. 📍 📞 📺 📺

BUNKER 1944

A small underground (as in its in a basement) club in the blloku with communist-era décor, cocktails served in jam jars and live acoustic music sets most evenings. Intimate and well worth looking in if you're passing late at night, those in the know say that this is the most gay-friendly place in the city. ▶ Rr. Andon Zako Çajupi, tel. +355 67 60 06 660. Open 16:00 - 00:30. Entrance free.

CRAZY CALVIN

Another popular club where live music dominates, this one specialising in the unusual and massively popular Balkan genre of Turbo-folk, a unique mixture of folk music, modern pop and traditional Balkan music. They also book a lot of related sub-genre *Tallava* bands, although it would take a specialist to differentiate the two. Culturally fascinating but definitely not for everyone's tastes. ▶ Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 66 6 62 22 22. Open Fri, Sat 23:00 - 04:00. Closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun. Entrance 500 lek. 📍 📞 📺 📺

FOLIE

Housed inside an extravagant three-storey space with plenty of glass balconies for showing everything off on, Folie has the reputation of being one of Tirana's best clubs. Complete with a fantastic outdoor terrace area too, this legendary hedonist hangout is known for its craziness. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 68 6 09 16 68.

Open (May - Dec) Fri, Sat 10:00 - 05:00. Entrance 500-1,000 lek. 📍 📞 📺 📺

LIZARD

Opened in 2006 and still massively popular with the predominately young local crowd who regular go here, this is a humble albeit sizeable shed of a place specialising in live music of several genres, most of it lying somewhere or other within the category of rock. The also put on such events as student nights, themed parties and the occasional Latin American evening. ▶ H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani, tel. +355 69 202 27 92. Open Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun 08:00 - 23:00, Fri, Sat 08:00 - 05:00. 📍 📞 📺 📺

LOLLIPOP

With space for up to 500 party animals, the extremely well established and equally popular Lolipop is an achingly cool club for cocktails, gossip and the latest in house and dance music. Hosting such names in the past as the English DJ and producer John Digweed, inside find lots of brushed steel, sofas in vivid red and blinding polka dots on the walls. ▶ H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani 36. Open closed, Fri, Sat 22:00 - 04:00. Closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun. Entrance 500 lek. 📍 📞 📺

MATRIX

A veritable monster of a club featuring a mix of live music of several genres and the chance to see real Albanian hip-hop acts. On two floors with a postmodern chromium balcony up the top, expect big light shows, smoke machines, video projections and the suspension of being able to have a conversation pretty much anywhere inside the building. ▶ Rr. Bedri Karapici (Qyteti i Nxenesve), tel. +355 69 60 95 000. Open (Sep - Jun) Fri, Sat 20:00 - 05:00. Entrance 500-1,000 lek. 📍 📞 📺



Nothing is ever as it seems in Tirana

Nightlife

MOSCOW

Capable of holding up 1,500 people, Moscow was opened in 2014 and represents the very epitome of contemporary Albanian hedonism. Perhaps the most bizarre thing about the club, which specialises in big DJ events complete with laser shows, smoke machines, neon-painted semi-naked women and people waving their arms in the air is what appears to be the complete absence of the drugs the music played here were designed for. We've only ever experienced this strange phenomenon once before (in Minsk), and it's almost worth a visit just to see how peculiar it really is. Having said that, the crowd genuinely appear to have a really good time at this place. ▶ Rr. 5 Maji, tel. +355 69 63 94 189, www.moscowclub.al. Open Sep - Jun. Entrance 500-1,000 lek. 📍 📱 📺 📺 📺

MUMJA

Originally located in the pyramid (hence the name) and now near the Millennium cinema, Mumja is a hopping club playing a wide variety of live music and DJ sets three nights a week to an often wild crowd of students. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 68 60 9 16 68. Open Thu, Fri, Sat 22:00 - 05:00. Closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun, Open Fri, Sat 23:00-06:00. Entrance 500 lek. 📍 📱 📺 📺 📺

PARIS

A fairly small an intimate club popular with a slightly older crowd and hosting intimate nights of predominantly laid back live music with a distinctive traditional modern Albanian edge. Good for dancing in couples this one, ▶ I-2, Rr. Medar Shtylla. Open Fri, Sat 20:00 - 03:00. Entrance 500 lek. 📍 📱 📺 📺

PRIME CLUB

Flashing lights, laser shows, slightly overpriced drinks and a range of music with a predominantly Turbo-folk/Tallava feel. Conforming to the unfortunate Albanian stereotype, find lots of macho men singing and gyrating on stage to a backdrop of scantily clad young (and not-so-young) women. ▶ 21 Dhjetori, tel. +355 69 84 44 420. Open (Sep - Jun) Fri, Sat 23:00 - 05:00. Entrance 500-1,000 lek. 📍 📱 📺 📺 📺

CASINOS

REGENCY INTERNATIONAL CASINO

The only licensed casino in Tirana where it's possible to play table games, the Regency has a total of 20 gaming tables and no less than 250 slot machines. To get in you'll need to be over 18 and to have some form of picture ID. Casual dress is fine. ▶ G-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova (Taiwan complex), tel. +355 4 227 47 39. Open 14:00 - 06:00. 📍 📱 📺 📺

ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

Prostitution is illegal in Albania but strip clubs aren't, so we choose to list them and let readers make up their own minds about whether they should visit them or not. A great

many of the prostitutes working in the country come from several former Soviet republics, which, so we're informed, are the same countries many of the women performing inside Tirana's strip clubs originate.

MADAMÉ AMOUR

Pole-dancing, special shows and all the rest are on offer in this throwback to the 1970s in which young women from Albania and abroad remove their clothing for the delight of anyone foolish enough to cough up the entrance fee. ▶ G-3, Velipoje, tel. +335 69 96 86 447. Open 22:00 - 06:00. 📍 📱 📺 📺

MARIA BONITA

Promising dancers from all over the Balkans and something they refer to as 'privacy', on the one hand we applaud Tirana's efforts to increase its nightlife options to a level appropriating any Western city, although we're not entirely sure whether nakedness for the pleasure of wealthy gentlemen is a step in the right direction. ▶ F-5, Rr. George W. Bush, tel. +355 67 41 11 088. Open 22:00 - 06 - 00. 📍

BOWLING & BILLIARDS

BLUR

An entertainment centre along the road to Elbasan with UV-lit bowling, snooker, pool, a restaurant, bumper cars and bouncy castles. ▶ Lunder, tel. +355 48 810 132. Open 09:30 - 24:00. 📍 📱 📺 📺 📺

SPARE TIME

Several bowling lanes on the two lower floors of the Taiwan complex. ▶ G-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova (Taiwan complex), tel. +355 4 225 11 75. Open 09:00 - 24:00. 📍 📱 📺 📺

VILA 8

A simple café bar with terrace in a quiet backstreet complete with a solitary pool table and a pleasant English-speaking owner behind the bar. ▶ Rr. Gjolekë Kokona, tel. +355 69 21 98 573. Open 24Hrs. 📍

KARAOKE

Several venues around the city organise karaoke evenings, the following being the most famous and dedicated of the bunch.

FLARES

Everyone knows alcohol and singing go together very well, especially those who like to do a bit of singing after a few beers. If this is you, or your travelling partner perhaps, then Flares is exactly the place you'll find appealing when in Tirana. A fun bar worth visiting any day of the week, on Friday and Saturday evenings the entire place is given over to that double-edged Japanese import, karaoke. Your hosts for the evening are Denis and Nardi, hard working karaoke fans who put on a very good show indeed. ▶ G-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 69 209 99 10. Open 08:00 - 4:00. 📍 📱 📺 📺

**FREE ENTRY
OPEN EVERY
NIGHT
10PM - 6AM**

MARIA BONITA

STRIP CLUB

THE SEXIEST GIRL IN TOWN

LAP DANCE | PRIVE |
TOPLESS | SHOWER SHOW

WWW.MARIABONITASTRIPCLUB.COM

ADDRESS: George W. Bush street, No.3, Tirana, Albania
MOBILE: +355 67 41 11 088 ; +355 69 79 22 023

FACEBOOK.COM/MariaBonita



House of Leaves (see below)

If you've come to Tirana to see the sights then you've probably mixed the city up with somewhere else. Boasting little to compare with the likes of London or New York, the Albanian capital's strengths lie in its vibrancy and the warmth of the people who live in it, qualities many better-known European cities lack and that Tirana possess in abundance. Tirana is very much a city for the *flâneur*, a chaotic urban concoction, bursting with unexpected sights and sounds that are best appreciated whilst strolling its streets and courtyards in a leisurely fashion. Having said that, the three sights you'll kick yourself for not visiting when in Tirana are the Et'hem Bey Mosque, the National Art Gallery and the National History Museum. Allow a maximum of 30 minutes for the mosque and at least an hour each for the gallery and museum.

CATHARTIC TIRANA

For almost 50 years the Albanians were at war with themselves, believing (or at least pretending to believe) they were fighting to defend a Socialist paradise. The reality, as everyone knows, is somewhat different. Unlike for example the three Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, occupied by Soviet Russia for a similar amount of time, the story of Communism in Albania is a strictly internal one, and it's only in the last few years that any effort has been made to confront the recent past. Two such examples, which also provide visitors to the country with a chance to experience some relatively well managed Dark Tourism, have recently emerged in Tirana.

BUNK'ART

This huge underground nuclear bunker built in the 1970s for Albania's political and military elite has been transformed into a combined museum and art space. Some 40 of the total 100-plus rooms on five sprawling levels contain exhibitions about the bunker's history, offering the first serious attempt to openly confront and openly discuss the country's silent past. Open to visitors during the summer, with an effort of almost Herculean proportions it's possible to visit out of season with the assistance of an experienced local tour guide. ▶ **Rruga e Shish-Tufines, www.bunkart.al. Open 09:00 - 16:00. Closed Mon. Admission 300 - 500 lek.**

HOUSE OF LEAVES (SHTEPIA E GJETHEVE)

Part of the current Prime Minister Edi Rama's ongoing attempts to reform Albanian society and deal more openly with its recent painful history, this genuine house of horrors opposite Christ's Resurrection Cathedral functioned as the national headquarters of the Gestapo during the Nazi occupation of 1943-1944 before falling into the hands of the Sigurimi, Albania's Communist-era version of the KGB who used it as both a listening post and place of torture during the regime's Orwellian-sounding War on Personal Comfort. With erratic opening times, this interesting experiment under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture aims to eventually turn the building into a permanent museum dedicated to secret surveillance. ▶ **F/4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova.**

CEMETERIES

GRAND PARK MEMORIAL CEMETERY (VARREZAT E MEMORIALIT TEK PARKU I MADHE)

According to the latest reliable statistics, 53 British troops, most of them intelligence agents, lost their lives in Albania during WWII. This small and well looked-after cemetery features the graves of 46 of them, and was established by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission only in 1995, their sacrifice being long suppressed from the historical Albanian narrative since Great Britain was considered an imperialist enemy for several decades. Nearby the graves stands a red stone memorial to the servicemen that bears an uncanny resemblance to the stone that used to sit on top of the Enver Hoxha's grave in the National Martyrs' Cemetery. There are even a couple of unnecessary holes in the stone that correspond directly with the where the plaque etched with Hoxha's name in gold letters was once attached. To find it, walk south to the end of Rr. Ibrahim Rugova and enter the park taking the path uphill that branches to the left and keep looking left as you reach the top of the hill. ▶ **K-6.**

NATIONAL MARTYRS' CEMETERY (VARREZAT E DËSHMORËVE)

The final resting place of some 900 Albanian partisans who gave their lives fighting to free Albania from fascist and Nazi occupation during WWII dates from 1972. Its literal and figurative crowning glory is Kristaq Rama's impressive, 12m-high white statue of Mother Albania watching over the city in her windswept concrete gown. Enver Hoxha used to be buried at her feet until he fell from grace in 1991 and was moved to the city's municipal cemetery the following year. In an interesting recent political move, Hoxha's former resting place has been occupied with the remains of Azem Hajdari, the student leader behind the fight against the regime in the late 1980s who was assassinated in Tirana in 1998. The view of the city spread out below and mountains surrounding it is worth the visit alone. ▶ **K-6, Rr. e Elbasanit.**

CHURCHES

Despite the former Communist regime's total ban on religion starting in 1967 in which all 2,169 religious buildings in Albania were closed and religious leaders of every faith persecuted, imprisoned, tortured and murdered, contemporary Albania has witnessed something of a religious revival since the regime change of 1991. As Tirana's skyline suggests, the Albanian capital is home to believers from a number of faiths including both Sunni and Bektashi Muslims, Catholics and members of the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION CATHEDRAL (KATEDRALJA RINGJALLJES SE KRISHTI)

Opened in 2012 and now the main centre for the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania, the mighty Christ's Resurrection Cathedral has a floor plan of some 1,660 square

metres and features an unattached, 46-metre bell tower equipped with 16 bells and topped with four symbolic candles, the small Nativity Chapel and even a museum in the basement. The building conforms to no traditional ecclesiastical style, and is quite simply ostentatious and vulgar in equal amounts. To see it at its best, make a visit after dark when the entire structure lights up like a Las Vegas casino. Note that, unlike in for example the Orthodox churches of Russia, where the congregation stands, this building is full of seating. ▶ **F-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova.**

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE HOLY ANNUNCIATION (KISHA ORTODOKSE E LAJMËRIMIT TË SHENJTË)

The Orthodox Church of the Holy Annunciation was built in 1964, but was closed in 1967 after Enver Hoxha began his anti-religion crusade. The building was subsequently used by the Tirana Sports Club until 1990 when it was restored to its original use. No longer the main Orthodox house of worship in the city, the Orthodox Church of the Holy Annunciation is now used primarily as a place for baptising babies. ▶ **F-2, Rr. Kavajës 151, tel. +355 4 223 50 95, www.orthodoxalbania.org.**

SACRED HEART CHURCH (KISHA E ZEMRES SE SHENJTE)

Tirana's oldest surviving Catholic church was built in 1865 as a gift from the emperor Franz Joseph. Closed in 1967 at the start of the regime's campaign against religion, the building functioned as a cinema until the early 1990s. For a Catholic church, the interior is incredibly modest, looking more like an interior one would expect to find inside a typically austere-looking church in a small English market town. Overshadowed by the much more recent St. Paul's Cathedral, the daily Mass is still reasonably well attended. ▶ **F-3, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 4 224 86 91.**

TOURIST INFORMATION

TIA TOURIST INFORMATION POINT

A useful kiosk in the airport arrivals hall complete with print editions of *Tirana In Your Pocket* and other tourist-related information. ▶ **Tirana Airport, tel. +355 4 238 49 80, www.tirana-airport.com. Open 09:00 - 19:00.**

TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE (ZYRA E INFORMACIONIT TURISTIK)

The official tourist information centre is right behind the National History Museum. As well as an ever-increasing stock on printed material on what to see and do in Tirana, this is also a good place to come for books and leaflets on Albania's other major tourist attractions. ▶ **E-4, Rr. Ded Gjo Luli 4, tel. +355 4 222 33 13, infotourism@tirana.gov.al. Open 11:00 - 17:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.**

GUIDED TOURS

ALBANIANTRIP

Started by three Tirana-born-and-bred young men with a passion for their city as well as Albania and the entire Southwestern Balkans in general, contact them for details of day trips, guided tours of some of Tirana's more unusual sights and longer tours to more destinations. Albaniantrip also offer several good value apartments for rental around the city. ► D-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 73/1, 7, tel. +355 4 239 1010, contact@albaniantrip.com. Open 8:30 - 19:00. Closed Sun.

ALBI CITY WALKS

Explore Tirana with an enthusiastic young local who enjoys showing foreigners around his home town. Albi Kusuri usually meets visitors on Fridays around 17:00 for an informative three-hour stroll past all the main sights, or, if this doesn't suit, give him a call to arrange meeting at another time and place. ► Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji, Tirana, tel. +355 69 55 81 794, albikusuri@yahoo.com.

ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL (KATEDRALJA E SHEN PALIT)

This refreshingly simple if somewhat gargantuan house of worship was consecrated in 2002. The cathedral is built using a combined triangle and circle shape, representing the Trinity and God's Eternity respectively, and features a relatively plain interior. The stained glass windows at the front feature both Mother Teresa, whose statue can also be found in the garden, and Pope John Paul II who visited the site of the church and laid the cornerstone in 1993. A range of classical music concerts are held inside the building throughout the year. Mass 17:00, Sun 09:00 (in English), 11:00, 17:00. ► G-5, Blv. Zhan D'Ark, tel. +355 4 223 46 55.

MONUMENTS

CHOPIN

Unveiled in 2010 as part of the global celebrations surrounding the 200th anniversary of the birth of Poland's most famous composer and located in a small square that also bears his name, as far as we can tell, Frederik Chopin (as it's rendered in Albanian) has absolutely no connections whatsoever with Albania with the almost singular exception of this mildly baffling bust of his likeness. ► J-4, Sheshi Shopen.

FAN NOLI

This three-metre-tall, roughly hewn statue commemorates Fan Noli (1882-1965), one of Albania's most revered (and, in some circles, controversial) historical figures. Educated at Harvard, Renaissance man Noli was a writer, composer and Orthodox bishop among other things during his complicated and colourful life. He served as prime minister in 1924 before being forced to flee the country under sentence of death. Noli spent his last years in the United States where he

conducted research into Albanian history, tentatively supported the Hoxha regime and even found time to compose a short symphony. ► E-5, Sheshi Fan Noli.

MOTHER TERESA (NËNË TEREZA)

A modest statue of the Skopje-born, ethnic Albanian Mother Teresa (Nënë Tereza, 1910-1997) stands in the southeast corner of the square named after her. An immense source of pride for Albanians, this is one of several monuments of her likeness found around the city. ► I-5, Sheshi Nënë Tereza.

POSTBLOKU (CHECKPOINT)

Part of Albania's ongoing attempts to un-erase certain aspects of its uncomfortable recent past and come to terms with its violent Communist-era history, *Postblloku* (Checkpoint), or the Memorial to Communist Isolation, commemorates the country's political prisoners who suffered under the Hoxha regime. Co-created by the former dissident Fatos Lubonja and the artist Ardian Isufi, the monument is made up of three main elements including one of the small concrete defensive bunkers that continue to litter the country, several concrete supports from the mine at the notorious Spaç labour camp where thousands of political prisoners suffered between 1968 and 1990 and a brightly painted section of the Berlin Wall from Postdamer Platz that once split Germany in two. ► H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit.

SKANDERBEG

Gjergj Kastrioti (1405-1468), known as Skanderbeg in English and Skënderbej in Albanian, is the only historical figure whom all Albanians agree was a national hero. He managed to create an independent Albanian principedom and keep it free for 25 long years. After his death, Albania was occupied by the Ottomans, but Skanderbeg's legacy preserved the Albanian national identity throughout 500 years of Ottoman rule. Albanians consider him not only the father of their nation, but also the man who saved all Europe from the Ottoman Empire. The statue was unveiled in 1968, exactly 500 years after Skanderbeg's death. ► E/F-4, Sheshi Skënderbej.

THOMAS WOODROW WILSON

One of 20 or so monuments unleashed on the city as part of Albania's centenary independence celebrations in 2012, this quite frankly pompous rendition of former US president Thomas Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) standing in the middle of a roundabout complete with stove-pipe hat is yet another example of the Albanian obsession with Uncle Sam. Political intrigue aside, we rather like it for no particular reason other than it's extremely funny. ► I-3, Sheshi Wilson.

UNKNOWN PARTISAN (PARTIZANI I PANJOHUR)

A veritable treasure trove of possible hidden meanings, the Communist-era Unknown Partisan shakes his fist at the Albanian Parliament building in the distance whilst unemployed construction workers gather underneath in the vain hope of finding casual work to feed their families. ► F-5, Rr. George W. Bush.

MUSEUMS & GALLERIES

ALBANIAN RADIO & TELEVISION MUSEUM (RADIO SHQIPETARE & MUZEU TELEVISIONIT)

A small and somewhat specialist museum inside the headquarters of the Albanian public broadcaster RTSH, find the history of radio and television in Albania explained in a handful of exhibits that will appeal to the connoisseur or anyone with a deep interest in Albanian history but almost certainly nobody else. Among

the museum's prize possessions are an early wooden Adriatic television, a Chinese studio camera that fell to pieces in less than six months and lots of historically interesting photographs. Sadly not on display are the hundreds of thousands of hours of undoubtedly fascinating footage that for a lack of funding is yet to be digitised. Visits need to be booked in advance. Give them a call on the telephone number provided. ► H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 04 222 84 44, rtsh.al. Admission free.

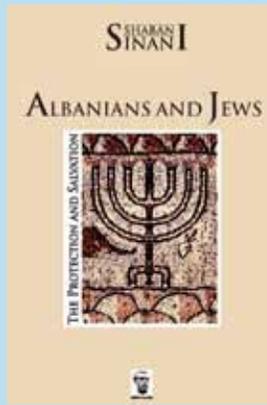
JEWISH ALBANIA

Not the first country that springs to mind when thinking about European Jewish history and culture, Albania's tiny Jewish minority has always been very much that, a small community who would have gone almost entirely unnoticed had it not been for the extraordinary events that took place in the country during the Holocaust. Albania's 2,000-year-old Jewish contribution to Albanian culture has always lived in the margins of history, the first Jewish settlers according to legend being washed ashore in 70AD from a Roman shipwreck at a point near Saranda where the ruins of a synagogue dating from around the 6th century can be found today. The country's predominantly Sephardic Jews arrived from the Iberian Peninsula after being expelled during the Spanish Inquisition at the end of the 15th century, spreading themselves thinly around the country with the exception of the coastal town of Vlora where, so it's claimed, Jews outnumbered the other inhabitants during the 16th century. Historical records show that Albania's Jewish population lived peacefully alongside their neighbours during the Ottoman period. During the 1930s, as Nazi ideology spread throughout Europe, there was even a plan to resettle thousands of European Jews under a piece of legislation that never saw the light of day known as the Bernstein-Konitz Agreement. The name Bernstein refers to the US Ambassador to Albania between 1930 and 1933, Herman Bernstein, a Lithuanian Jew who emigrated to the United States as a boy and who, had he not done so, would have almost certainly been murdered during the Holocaust in Lithuania where some 95 percent of the country's 200,000 Jews perished during the Nazi occupation of the country. As early as 1938, Albania was beginning to attract European Jews fleeing Western Europe, and by the time Italy capitulated and the Nazis invaded the country in 1943 it's estimated that over 3,000 European Jews were living in the country compared to the 200 or so at the start of WWII. Thanks to *besa*, the Albanian honour code, almost every single Jew survived the war thanks to the Albanians who protected them, making Albania the only country occupied by Nazi Germany to have a larger Jewish population at the end of the conflict than at the beginning. Despite many Jews

fighting alongside the Communist partisans to help free Albania from Nazi occupation, several decades living under Hoxha's regime meant that when it became possible to leave Albania, most Jews did so. Today's Jewish population is smaller than ever with almost all of the country's Jews living in Tirana where a small community of around 50 people live an almost exclusively secular life. With the exception of a handful of photographs and a small plaque honouring Albania's 75 Righteous Among the Nations, found inside Tirana's National History Museum, no traces of Jewish life and culture are to be found in the city. At the time of going to press, a small group of people from Albania, Lithuania, the United States and elsewhere are in the early stages of a campaign to rename a street in the Albanian capital Rruga e Besës (Besa Street) in thankful memory to the Albanian people whose honour code has done so much to protect those who've sought sanctuary in the region over the last 2,000 years or so.

Further reading

The Albanian historian Shaban Sinani's 2014 book *Albanians and Jews: The Protection and Salvation* is the first serious attempt to analyse what available data exists in an effort to finally lay to rest some of the many myths surrounding the story of Albania's unique role during the Holocaust. At 460 pages, it's not exactly light reading, but it does offer an extraordinary insight into one of the most inspiring and least well-known chapters in the history of the Nazi occupation of Europe. Copies are available for sale at Adrion International Books (see Shopping) for 2,800 lek.





Bektashi World Centre (see p.65)

CULTURE & CONTINUITY MUSEUM (MUZEUM I KULTURES DHE VAZHDIMSISE)

A tiny museum inside an equally diminutive building at the foot of the Clock Tower containing 40 or so examples of Albanian domestic artefacts from silk shirts to hand-woven socks. The items on display date from 1920 onwards, the year Tirana became the Albanian capital, which goes a long way to explaining the museum's unusual name. Note that the museum is closed for most of 2016 and is scheduled to open in December of the same year. ▶ F-4/5, Sheshi Skenderbej. Open 08:00 - 15:00. Admission free.

LINDA SPAHIU COSTUME COLLECTION (KOLEKSIONI I KOSTUMEVE LINDA SPAHIU)

Linda and her son Luris are arguably Tirana's most fervent collectors and restorers of traditional Albanian costumes. Their large and ever-growing collection is yet to find a permanent home, and so for the moment everything's on view in their apartment where they're happy to show people their magnificent stockpile of gorgeous outfits and tell you a little bit about them. Call in advance to arrange a visit then take a taxi or bus south along Rr. e Elbasanit to the first roundabout after the Martyr's Cemetery and they'll meet you there. ▶ K-6, Rr. Nuri Arabi, tel. +355 68 304 26 64. Open by appointment only. Admission free.

MEZURAJ MUSEUM (MUZEU MEZURAJ)

Albania's first private museum consists of an increasingly large collection of objects belonging to the Mezuraj family and is more than worth a visit. Featuring everything from paintings and sculptures to various archaeological artefacts, find it above the Raiffeisen bank. The entrance is hidden in the alley to the right side of the building. Almost unheard of for a tourist attraction in Albania, the museum has a fully functioning and extremely informative website in English. ▶ E-3, Rr. Kavajës (Sun Business Centre), tel. +355 42 26 71 96, www.mezuraj.museum.com. Open 10:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun. Admission 300 lek.

MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES (MUZEU I SHKENCAVE TË NATYRËS)

Opened some seven decades ago and with very few signs of any attempt to ever modernise the place, this classic, post-communist, state-run museum promises to teach visitors more about contemporary Albania than it does about the 3,000 or so exhibits on display. If you do choose to drop by, expect ancient glass cabinets full of stuffed fish, reptiles, birds and mammals as well as coral and flora. A horror show of sorts, travellers with young children who've been naughty might like to think about

bringing them here as punishment. ▶ F-2, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 42 22 90 28. Open 08:00 - 14:00. Closed Sat, Sun. Admission free.

NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (MUZEU ARKEOLOGJIK NACIONAL)

Part of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Albania, this fascinating journey into the country's early history is positively awash with artefacts dating from antiquity to the Middle Ages. Staffed by some of Albania's leading experts in their fields, items on display range from ancient jewellery to Roman statues to vast clay pots covered in shellfish that have been found during the many archaeological field trips the museum is involved in. Visitors with a real interest in the subject are encouraged to contact the museum in advance to arrange a guided tour. ▶ I-5, Sheshi Nënë Tereza, tel. +355 4 224 07 11. Open 10:30 - 14:30. Closed Sat, Sun. Admission free.

NATIONAL ART GALLERY (GALERIA KOMBËTARE E ARTEVE)

The city's must-see National Art Gallery hosts an excellent and varied collection of Albanian art covering a wide range of styles, tastes and historical periods. The permanent exhibition shows works by some of the country's earliest artists, whilst upstairs are some outstanding examples of Socialist Realist paintings depicting heroic partisans and idealised factory workers bristling with muscles and grinning with socialist satisfaction, all of it produced between 1944 and 1990 when even the size of the canvas and subject matter were dictated by the Party. On the top floor find examples of contemporary modern art, and, around the back of the building, a clutch of Communist-era monuments and some large statues of Lenin and Stalin wrapped in protective plastic. ▶ F-4/5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 42 23 39 75. Open 10:00 - 18:00. Closed Mon, Tue. Admission 200 lek.

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM (MUZEU HISTORIK KOMBËTAR)

Featuring three floors of so-called 'pavilions' dedicated to individual social and political periods of Albanian history from its very beginnings through to the communist period, this highly recommended museum has beautiful and unexpected surprises in abundance. Among the expected felt hats, pointy shoes and photographs of Ottoman-era Tirana before Enver Hoxha's ideology and the bulldozers wrecked it find some real treats, among them an eerie red room hung with hundreds of Orthodox icons and the spectacularly named Pavilion of the National Liberation Antifascist War, which remains the only place in the city where you'll find information on the amazing story of the Holocaust in Albania. The gift shop on the way out sells the usual tawdry nonsense alongside a handful of things that might be worth buying as gifts or souvenirs. The famous mosaic hanging over the entrance is slowly falling to pieces and it's only

a matter of time until the only safe way of entering the building is with a hard hat on your head. With the addition of a few more explanations in English, this excellent museum could become a genuinely outstanding one. ▶ E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, tel. +355 42 22 34 46. Open 10:00 - 17:00, Sun 10:00 - 14:00. Closed Mon. Admission 200 lek.

OTTOMAN TIRANA

Tirana existed and grew under Ottoman rule for 500 years. For lovers of Ottoman architecture however, the news isn't good. A great many of the city's original Ottoman-era buildings were destroyed by Mussolini and Hoxha, and, with the exception of the buildings listed below, little of the original Ottoman city exists. There are some exceptions however, most notably in the area immediately northeast of Sheshi Skënderbej.

CLOCK TOWER (KULLA E SAHATIT)

Tirana's Ottoman Clock Tower was built by the poet Haxhi Et'hem Bey and dates from 1822. Completed by the locals and extended to 35m in 1928 when a German-made clock was also installed (the current Chinese clock is the fourth in the tower's existence), it was for a long time the tallest building in the city. The climb up the 90 steps to the top is worth it for the excellent views of the city centre. The shadow of the tower strikes the Et'hem Bey Mosque next door at sunset, an event long used to mark closing time at the formerly adjacent market place in the area where the Palace of Culture now stands. Brightly lit at night, the tower can be seen from the far end of Rr. Durrësit when entering the city from the airport. Completely renovated in 2010, at the time of writing the structure was somewhat inexplicably covered in scaffolding and, along with the Culture & Continuity Museum immediately behind it, closed to the public until, so we're reliably informed, December 2016. ▶ F-4/5, Sheshi Skënderbej, tel. +355 4 224 32 92. Open 08:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun. Admission 100 lek.

ET'HEM BEY MOSQUE (XHAMIA E ET'HEM BEUT)

Construction of this gorgeous little mosque was started in the early 1790s by Molla Bey, a task that wasn't completed for another three decades when the building was finally finished in about 1820 by his son, Haxhi Et'hem Bey. Closed under Communist rule, the building reopened as a house of worship on January 18, 1991 without the permission of the authorities. Some 10,000 courageous people dared to attend, and remarkably the police did nothing to intervene, an event now hailed as a milestone in the rebirth of religious freedom in Albania. Take a look at the colourful frescoes outside and in the portico which depict trees, waterfalls and bridges, motifs rarely seen in Islamic art. Take your shoes off before entering. Namazi Xhumas Fridays 13:30 (May-Sep), 12:30 (Sep-May). ▶ F-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, tel. +355 4 222 37 01. Open 08:00 - 11:00.

HOUSE OF THE DERVISH KHOROSANI (SHTEPIA E DERVISH KHOROSANI)

A pretty 19th-century wooden building set in a small courtyard. Next to the gate is an octagonal *türbe* holding the graves of three *babas*. Find the house in a small courtyard 100m beyond the Alliance Française. ► **D-4, Rr. e Barrikadave. Open only By ordering. Admission free.**

KAPLAN PASHA'S TOMB (TYRBE E KAPLLAN PASHAIT)

Dating from 1817, the year of his death, this eight-columned tomb celebrates a former Ottoman ruler of the city. Originally part of a larger mosque complex that was destroyed during WWII, the monument sat neglected and full of rubbish for decades until it was incorporated into the modern building project that now graciously shields it at one corner. Grave-robbers beware, the tomb contains neither treasure nor the remains of Kaplan Pasha, who was later dug up and reburied in Istanbul. ► **F-5, Rr. 28 Nëntori.**

MAHMUD AGHA KOKONOZI MOSQUE (XHAMIA MAHMUD AGHA KOKNOZI)

Also sometimes referred to as the New Bazaar Mosque (Xhamia e Pazarit të Ri), this fine Ottoman-era building dates from the middle of the 18th century and is one of a very few of its kind to survive the atheist campaign that started in the late 1960s. Used as a food and tobacco store during the Hoxha period, the mosque was reopened in 1991. The impressive minaret, which was rebuilt after the regime change of the early 1990s, is one of only a tiny handful in the region to feature two balconies. ► **E-5, Rr. Shemsi Haka (Pazari i Ri).**

SALI SHIJAKU HOUSE (SHTEPIA E SALI SHIJAKUT)

Said by some to be the oldest house in the Balkans, this magnificent example of a traditional Ottoman-era *konak* is at least 300 years old as has over the centuries served as a military building, a hospital and even a women's prison. Now owned by the Albanian artist Sali Shijaku (b. 1933) and surrounded by a beautiful garden, the Sali Shijaku House also operates as a café and gallery containing a large collection of Impressionist and Socialist Realist paintings. ► **B-5, Rr. V. Luarasi, tel. +355 4 226 14 58. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Admission free.**

TANNERS' BRIDGE (URA E TABAKËVE)

This elegant Ottoman stone footbridge once served as the main connection between Tirana and the highlands to the east. It was used to get agricultural produce and livestock across the Lana River to the markets and sits in the traditional area of skinnners and leather workers. The Lana was rerouted in the 1930s and the bridge was neglected, eventually becoming a rubbish tip. It's now restored to its former glory and is used by pedestrians again. ► **F-6, Rr. George W. Bush. Admission free.**

TEQEJA DERVISH HATIXHE (TEQEJA DERVISH HATIXHE)

Dedicated to the female Bektashi saint Dervish Hatixhe (1798-?), the Tirana Florence Nightingale who nursed people through a cholera epidemic. After her death, a *tekke* was founded near her grave. It miraculously survived the Hoxha regime and is still visited by people of different faiths, especially women. A corridor leads past a soot-blackened candle room to where the graves of Hatixhe, members of her family and a former servant can all be seen. ► **C-4, Rr. Dervish Hatixhe. Admission Free.**

TIRANA CASTLE (KALAJA TIRANES)

Also known as the Fortress of Justinian, a name that's as equally misleading, all that remains of this former military stronghold dating from some time between the 4th and 6th centuries AD are a short section of defensive wall and some of the original foundations that have been incorporated into the modern pedestrian street it can be found along. Of possible interest is the fact that the castle remains mark the point from which today's city is generally believed to have started growing. ► **F-5, Rr. Murat Topani. Admission free.**

PARKS & GARDENS**BOTANICAL GARDENS (KOPESHTI BOTANIK)**

Part of Tirana University's Faculty of Natural Sciences, Tirana's Botanical Gardens is a pleasant, 15-hectare oasis on the western slopes of the city. Founded in 1971, the gardens house some 1,400 species of plants, representing about a third of Albania's abundance of flora. Bring a picnic to enjoy the meadows and lanes of palm trees. If the gate isn't open, wave at one of the gardeners. ► **Rr. Kodra e Diellit, tel. +355 4 222 52 87. Open 08:00 - 14:00. Admission 50 lek.**

GRAND PARK (PARKU I MADH)

A short stroll south of central Tirana, the city's Grand Park offers a convenient respite away from all the traffic and dust. At one time, thousands of the city's inhabitants came here to play and picnic. Now it's a place for people to fish, swim, stroll and have a sneaky snooze after lunch. Among the park's small collection of monuments are the tombs of the Frashëri brothers, who helped catalyse Albania's national awakening towards the end of the 19th century. Abdyl (1839-1892) was the leader of the Prizren League, Sami (1850-1904) a radical agitator for an independent Albanian republic and Naim (1846-1900) is generally recognised as being the first major Albanian-language poet. The large lake at the far northern end of the park is a popular place during the summer, and is ringed by a handful of restaurants. ► **J-5.**

RINIA PARK (PARKU RINIA)

The one-time disgraceful mess of illegal building, rubbish and shady dealings, Rinia (Youth) Park is now the proud focus of among other things the evening xhiro, when thousands of locals dress up and stroll around to

meet up and chat with friends. The spidery white building that looks like it could be the lair of a James Bond villain is an entertainment complex called Taiwan and houses restaurants, a swish terrace café, bowling alleys and a casino. The main attraction however is the fountain in front of Taiwan which in the evening fascinates hundreds of young and old onlookers with its light show. ► **F/G-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit.**

TIRANA ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS (KOPSHTI ZOOLOGJIK TIRANË)

Established in 1966 at around the same time the Hoxha regime was launching its campaign against all religion in the country, Tirana's pitiful zoo is almost too depressing to write about. Supposedly due for a turnaround in 2006 when various local and international parties set about creating an action plan to improve the place, little has changed here, and it's a tough decision to make knowing whether paying to visit the place will do any good or will simply prolong the misery of the animals imprisoned inside. Walk under the bridge at the western end of the Grand Park dam to find the entrance. ► **Rr. Haxhi Brari. Open 08:00 - 18:30. Admission 100 lek.**

PLACES OF INTEREST**BEKTASHI WORLD CENTRE (QENDRA BOTRORE BEKTASHIANE)**

The Bektashi Order is a dervish sect that fuses elements of predominantly Shia and Sufi thought into a unique blend of Islamic belief and philosophy. Founded by Balim Sultan (1457-1517) and named in honour of the Muslim mystic Haji Bektash Veli (1209-1271), the Bektashi, who traditionally attracted people from all classes of life, were found throughout the Ottoman Empire and had among their Balkan followers the Albanian national heroes Ali Pasha and Naim Frashëri. Banned briefly by the Ottoman authorities in 1826, the Bektashi Order re-emerged later in the 19th century only to be outlawed again by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk soon after the foundation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, an event that led them to move their headquarters to Albania in 1925. The fabulous Bektashi World Centre in the northeast suburbs of Tirana features a vast and impressive *tekke* with a fascinating museum in its basement and a small gift shop where visitors can buy various Bektashi-related souvenirs. Hidden in a network of small streets, follow the Kryegjyshata Botërore Bektashiane Selia e Shenjtë signs and keep an eye out for the imposing stone entrance. ► **Rr. Dhimiter Karmada, tel. +355 68 205 0397. Open 24hrs. Admission free.**

BULEVARDI DËSHMORËT E KOMBIT

The Boulevard of the Martyrs of the Nation as it's known in English is a wide and scarily impressive, 1.3km length of road stretching north-south between Sheshi Skënderbej and Sheshi Nënë Tereza. The work of the Italian architect and engineer Gherardo Bosio (1903-1941) and still featuring many of the original examples of fascist architecture that were built along its edges and around its squares, the

street dates from 1939-1941 and is the only thoroughfare in the city that gives any sense of Tirana being anything other than a typical medium-sized Balkan town. Several of the city's better museums can be found along it, among them the National Archaeological Museum, the National Art Gallery and, at its furthest northern point, the mosaic-clad National History Museum. With the addition of the Et'hem Bey Mosque, a couple of hundred metres south-east of the National History Museum, and some of the new office blocks springing up along its length, the street offers something of a condensed history lesson of the city in one architectural ensemble.

THE BLOKU

The blloku is a relatively small patchwork of streets in the southwest of Tirana saturated with some of the best bars, restaurants and shops in the city. After the war, the area was full of factories that were cleared to make way for a guarded complex of luxury residential buildings for the exclusive use of the country's ruling elite. Opened to the public during the political changes of the early 1990s, the blloku is the place to come for fine dining, people-watching from one of the district's countless outdoor terraces, driving around in expensive BMWs and generally showing off.

THE PYRAMID (PIRAMIDA)

The pyramid, as it's popularly known, opened in 1988 as a museum dedicated to the recently deceased Albanian dictator-cum-pharaoh Enver Hoxha. Designed by Hoxha's daughter Pranvera, the building was reportedly the most expensive ever constructed in Albania. After the regime collapsed, the place became a conference centre and location of a club (called The Mummy, of course). Now semi-derelict, the government wants to demolish it to make way for new parliament buildings, although a healthy debate about the destruction of the past and preservation of the park it stands in is ongoing. In front of the building, the Peace Bell installation dates from 1999 as a memorial to peace by the children of Shkodra. The metal for the bell came from thousands of bullet cartridges fired off during the lawless 1990s. ► **G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri. Open closed. Closed Sat, Sun.**

TIRANA MOSAIC (MOZAIKU I TIRANËS)

Thought by many to be the remains of a Byzantine-era Roman villa built on this site in the 3rd Century AD and uncovered in 1972, this small but recommended attraction features not only some well preserved mosaic floors as the name suggests but also a collection of beautiful carved stones complete with religious motifs that have led some to believe the original building that stood here was in fact a church. The jury is still out, and for the average visitor the debate is of little importance. Well worth an hour or so of anyone's time, despite the lack of explanations in English and the fact that it's a notoriously difficult place to find. Keep an eye out for Hallall pizzeria at the northern end of the street and walk another 100 metres. ► **E-2, Rr. Naim Frashëri, tel. +355 4 222 60 05. Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sun. Admission free.**



Dajti
EKSPRES
Aty ku toka takon qiellin!



Socialist Realist monument on the seafront at Durrës



Day trips

DAJTI, DURRËS, KRUIJA




facebook.com/dajtiexpresofficial

 Linzë, Tirana, Albania
 +355(0) 67 20 84471
 +355(0) 68 60 66070

 info@dajtiexpres.com
 www.dajtiexpres.com





The Dajti Ekspres cable car

Throughout your stay in Tirana, the ominous, dark-hued face of Mount Dajti will be tempting you with the promise of fresh air and spectacular views. Popular as both a tourist attraction for wasting a few hours in and as a 33 square-kilometre national park boasting lakes, peaks, awesome scenery and the chance to go on long hikes (at which point we should remind people embarking on the latter to let someone know they're planning do so before they leave), the following offers a brief overview aimed at those thinking of taking the softer option of the two. Visitors wanting to truly embrace the great outdoors should contact one of the specialist organisations in the area who can help plan trips as well as provide guided tours.

SEE

To say there's nothing to see on Dajti would be a slight exaggeration, assuming that is your idea of sights are lakes and mountains and forests. Everything else is best described as a disappointing seaside holiday without the sea, albeit with the added bonus of (weather permitting) breathtaking views. Most people visiting the place rarely step outside the immediate area around the top cable car station, a few hundred square metres of picnic field some 1,420 metres above sea level where it's possible to shoot empty bottles with an air-rifle and go for a ride on a pony.

EAT

BALLKONI DAJTIT

A rather lovely, Alpine-style wooden restaurant next to the cable car station with some excellent views of Tirana, this recommended place for a meal features a choice of several dining rooms of which the enclosed balcony offers the best views. Ballkoni Dajtit serves mostly Albanian cuisine, such as *fergesë me speca* (a dish with eggs and cheese), oven dishes, and, during the season, wild boar and rabbit. ▶tel. +355 67 20 84 471. Open 08:00 - 22:00. 📶 🚶 🚗 🚚 🚏 🚗 🚚

SLEEP

BELVEDERE

A space-age construction next to the cable car station, the Belvedere offers grand views of Tirana and a choice of rooms including suites that come with Jacuzzis and soft sofas. When the cable car is closed on Mondays and during bad weather, guests are shuttled back to civilisation by minibus. ▶tel. +355 67 40 11 035. 24 rooms (18 singles €50, 4 twins €60, 2 triples €75). 📶 🚶 🚗 🚚 🚏 🚗 🚚

GETTING THERE

Getting up Dajti is easier than it looks. If you're in charge of your own vehicle, of which a four-wheel-drive is recommended, take Rr. Dibrës out of the city and up around the contours of the mountain. Some 15km or so along this road is the gate to the park, where a small entrance fee is charged. Alternatively, the Austrian-built Dajti Ekspres Cable Car whisks you up in under 15 minutes. Swooping over pastures, a lake and steep rocks, the 4km route offers great views of the mountain and the city, ending at the edge of Dajti picnic field near the top of the mountain. There you can hike in the lush forests, visit the Ballkoni Dajtit restaurant, the Belvedere Hotel viewing platform, or take one of the shuttle vans to the other hillside restaurants. A taxi from the city centre to the lower station should cost about 600 lek. Note that the cable car doesn't run on Mondays and will also not operate during bad or changeable weather.

NATIONAL PARK ENTRANCE FEES

Person with vehicle 50 lek
Cars 100 lek
Minibus 150 lek
Bus 250 lek
Motorcycle 50 lek

With a population of just over 200,000, Durrës is Albania's second largest city. A busy Adriatic port a little over 30km to the west of Tirana, Durrës, which served as the country's capital between 1914 and 1920, is also one of the oldest cities in the country, a fact borne out by the surviving Byzantine and Venetian relics to be found scattered around town. Heavily bombed during WWII, the city was redeveloped as an industrial base during the communist period (when it was briefly known as Durrës-Enver Hoxha), an unfortunate episode that's blighted the suburbs with a lot of astonishingly ugly architecture. Thankfully the centre is better preserved, making Durrës a curious destination indeed, and one seriously worth finding time to visit if you've got a few hours to spare when you're in Tirana. As with all towns and cities in the country, allow at least a little time to get lost wandering Durrës' less well-known areas and soak up a little bit of unique Albanian street culture.

SEE

Durrës' diversity of sights ranges from the sublime to the ridiculous, of which the latter is best represented in a small park towards the southern end of Rr. Epidamni where a gaggle of grotesquely ugly bronze statues of John Lennon, Tina Turner and other rock legends thrust their hips a few metres away from a surviving fragment of Roman wall. If you thought the remaining Socialist Realist monuments in the city were embarrassing, these metal monstrosities take tasteless art to a new level entirely. Thankfully not everything in town is this bad.

ARCHEOLOGICAL MUSEUM (MUZEU ARKEOLOGJIK)

Overlooking the Adriatic on a site any self-respecting

hotel owner would sell their grandmother for, Albania's largest museum dedicated to the subject of archaeology dates from 1951, and was up until recently exactly what one would expect from a state-run institution operating on a tiny budget. Completely renovated and reopened in 2015, this is now an absolute must-see for anyone visiting the city. Concentrating on finds from the immediate area, especially those dating back to the Greek and Roman eras, highlights include a collection of Greek sculptures of Aphrodite and some beautiful carved gravestones from the Roman period. Unlike many of its counterparts in the country, the museum has a lot of explanations in English. ▶Rr. Taulantia 32. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Admission 300 lek.

DURRËS CASTLE (KALAJA DURRESIT)

Considerably more castle-like than the fragment of wall known as Tirana Castle, this rare example of Venetian architecture near the main harbour was built on the site of an earlier Byzantine castle of which surviving fragments can still be found built into the tower, which is rather sadly more or less all that's left of the building. In more recent history, the castle was the sight of a short siege in 1939 when some 360 Albanians held the advancing Italian army at bay for several hours. A hugely popular tourist site, the surviving tower is now a restaurant, complete with a terrace on the top offering stunning views of the sea. ▶Rr. Anastas Durrsaku.

FATITH MOSQUE (XHAMIA FATITH)

A pretty little Ottoman building dating from the very start of the 16th century, the Fatih Mosque is the third oldest in the country after mosques in Berat and Korça. ▶Rr. Xhamia.



Street art in Durrës

Durrës

GRAND MOSQUE (XHAMIA E MADHE)

Built in 1931 on the site of a former Ottoman mosque, this large, single minaret Muslim house of worship can be found in the large modern square on the corner of Rr. Epidamni and Rr. Pal Engjelli. Not the luckiest mosque in the world, the building was closed in 1967 during the ironically religious-like ban on religion in Albania and was turned into a youth centre. Damaged by an earthquake in 1979, the Grand Mosque was returned to its original purpose in 1993. Hiding underneath along Rr. Epidamni is the small Galeria Nikolet Vasia, known to showcase some highly respectable exhibitions from time to time. ▶ Rr. Glaukia.

ROMAN AMPHITHEATRE (AMFITEATRI ROMAK)

One of the largest of its kind in the Balkans and dating from the 2nd century AD, this extraordinary glimpse into Albania's ancient past can be found close to the centre of the city. Stretching over 130 metres and its widest point and capable of holding up to 20,000 spectators, the still partially buried structure was originally built for gladiator-type performances and has over the centuries been added to with a number of other buildings including an early Christian church of which little unfortunately survives. Also still surviving are some exquisite mosaics and remnants of a Byzantine market place. Open to the public and functioning as a museum, the amphitheatre is in a serious state of decay, but still remains one of the most fascinating archaeological sites in the region. ▶ Rr. Kalase. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Admission 300 lek.

EAT

As with every Albanian town, there are plenty of options for places to eat and drink in Durrës. If you're travelling on a tight schedule, take advantage of one of the many places around the city selling kebabs, byrek and other varieties of fast food for eating on the hoof. There are several cheap and cheerful places on Rr. Adria directly opposite the bus and train stations that can accommodate hungry travellers. For the more romantic-minded, the terrace on top of Durrës Castle and the restaurants on the pleasure pier offer good food supplemented with plenty of atmosphere. The Ventus restaurant complex at the far end of the pier boasts stunning views of the sun setting under the water and highly recommended if somewhat over-priced Albanian and international cuisine.

PALMA TETOVA

Inside the Vila Palma hotel on the beachfront close to Durrës Castle, Palma Tetova is one of many similar establishments in the immediate area, picked out for no other reason than the overwhelming friendliness of the staff. Not surprisingly, the menu is packed with seafood dishes alongside a decent selection of grilled meat, salads and desserts. The large outdoor terrace is perfect for relaxing and watching the daily *xhiro* unfold on the adjacent promenade. ▶ Rr. Taulantia, tel. +355 69 37 44 559. Open 08:00 - 23:00. 



PICANTE

LAGJA 1. SHETITORJA "TAULANTIA",
DURRES, ALBANIA

E-MAIL: INFO@PICANTE.AL
TEL: +355 69 2046456

WWW.PICANTE.AL



 **Lagja 1 shetitorja Taulantia Durres**
T: +355 6 9562 3856/ +355 6 9562 9274
E-mail: gustodimare.dr@gmail.com  [gusto di mare](https://www.facebook.com/gusto.di.mare)  [Gusto_di_mare](https://www.instagram.com/gusto_di_mare)



Durrës

SLEEP

Not surprisingly for a busy seaside resort, there are plenty of places to spend the night in Durrës from cheap and cheerful hostels to expensive hotels that quite frankly aren't worth spending the extra money on. If you plan to stay during the height of the summer holiday season and want a sea view, booking a room in advance is highly recommended.

DURRËS HOSTEL

A humble and exceedingly friendly budget option close to the sea, Durrës Hostel is kept scrupulously clean and comes with enough facilities to keep you alive and kicking without the expensive perks of a more upmarket hotel. The breakfast is notoriously good, and the marvellous rooftop is open to guests.

► Rr. Ramazan Jella, tel. +355 69 891 68 10. 3 rooms (4-bed dormitory €12/bed, 8-bed dormitory €11/bed, 1 double €35). 

KRISTAL

Painted inside and out in that peculiar shade of pink that glows magnificently in bright sunlight and that looks equally awful on a cloudy day, this recommended beachfront hotel offers a range of doubles, twins and family rooms, all of them with en suite bathrooms, air conditioning and free wireless internet. Get a room with a balcony overlooking the sea if you can, and if

the hotel is full, pop next door to the almost identical Hotel Ani to see if they have any available rooms.

► Rr. Taulantia 9, tel. +355 68 241 72 91, info@hotelkristaldurres.com, www.hotelkristaldurres.com. 12 rooms (6 singles €35, 4 doubles €35, 2 triples €40). 

GETTING THERE

If you don't have your own set of wheels, the only sensible way to get to Durrës is by furgon. Minibuses leave regularly throughout the day. Walk to the northern end of Blv. Zogu I, cross the street and walk west until you get to the first bus stop where someone will be standing and shouting 'Durrës' repeatedly. Ask nicely and they'll escort you to a waiting bus in a side street which will get you there in under an hour for about 120 lek. The centre is a good 10-minute walk southwest from the train and bus stations, a fact the local Municipality presumably think you already know due to a serious lack of signposts. Maps are available in a few bookshops in Tirana, or, better still, download a map of Albania onto your smartphone.

Many more information online at
tirana.inyourpocket.com



Kruja

Kruja, a 30km or so drive north from Tirana, is a recommended destination to visit for both its mountainside location and importance to Albania's historical narrative. With its origins stretching back to the Iron Age and beyond, the town has the distinction of being the capital of the first autonomous Albanian state at the end of the 12th century and the place where the noble warrior and national hero Skanderbeg held the Ottomans at bay during the 15th century. Kruja features a handful of interesting sights to keep visitors busy for a few hours, including a faux medieval castle built in Skanderbeg's honour in 1982 that now houses a museum and the better-than-average Ethnographic Museum. The town is also a popular destination for visitors seeking unusual gifts and souvenirs, which are available for sale in the Old Bazaar in the town centre. Worth sacrificing a few hours away from Tirana for, Kruja is particularly lovely during the winter when the town is often covered in snow.

SEE

On the drive up the mountain to Kruja, keep and eye out for the sign saying Gjurma e të Shenjtit Sari Saltik, a shrine on a sharp bend in the road dedicated to the venerated 13th-century Ottoman dervish Sari Saltik who

may or may not have been, as is so often the way with history, a Crimean Tatar. The smell of incense and the view are worth stopping for alone. In Kruja itself, some of the central streets have been preserved in the same fashion for the last 500 years or so and are worth having a wander around. Also of interest is the old hamam (bathhouse), now converted into a church, and the lovely Dollma tekke, a Bektashi temple building with impressive decorations. Just outside the citadel is the Old Bazaar; a single narrow street of lined with shops selling antiques, silver filigree jewellery, folk costumes, woven rugs, traditional felt hats and Mother Teresa coffee mugs. The two main sights are as follows.

ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM (MUZEU ETNOGRAFIK)

A seriously beautiful traditional Albanian house built in about 1800, exhibits on display include a 19th-century woman's folk dress, traditional copper goods and clay utensils and some gorgeous pieces of original furniture. The friendly gentleman who looks after the place can take you on an English-language tour of the rooms to give you the full and fascinating story of the place. ► Kalaja e Skenderbeut, tel. + 355 532 22 25. Open 10:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon. Admission 300 lek.



Kruja

SKANDERBEG MUSEUM (MUZEU SKENDERBEUT)

Built to honour one of Albania's best-loved (if not most-loved) national heroes, this large and somewhat ostentatious museum is something of a pilgrimage site for the people of the country, and as such there's very little to engage those who don't have a special place in their heart for the man. That said, at these prices it would be foolish to not have at least a quick poke around the place, which is full of mostly fake copies of things such as Skanderbeg's sword and spiky helmet (the originals are in Vienna). The ticket office doubles as a small bookshop, and occasionally stocks some really interesting historical material in English. ▶ **Kalaja e Skenderbeut.** Open 09:00 - 13:00, 15:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon. Admission 200 lek.

EAT

When you've finished sightseeing and shopping, head for the restaurants at the top end of the citadel which offer great views of the surroundings and serve traditional Albanian food at tourist prices. Turkish coffee comes in a traditional copper pot and is best enjoyed curled up on the rows of pillows that surround the Turkish tables of some restaurants.

SLEEP

Very few visitors find enough things to see and do in Kruja to justify bringing their pyjamas and toothbrush.

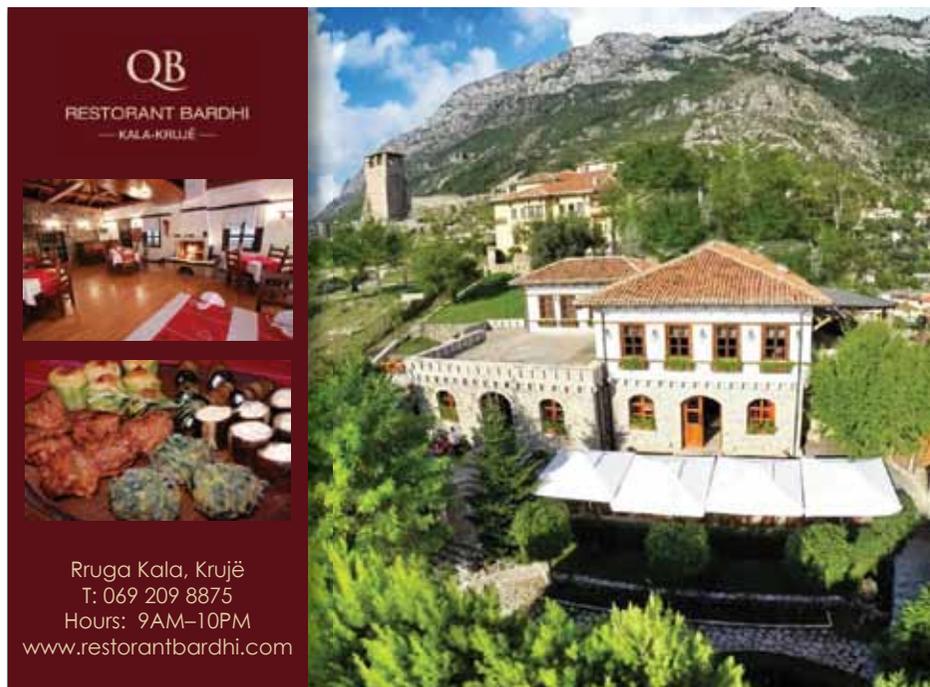
Should you find yourself in this unusual position however, help is at hand. There are a few hotels scattered around town, plus one or two more secluded places to sleep on the surrounding mountainside. Also keep an eye out for the camping site on the winding road up from the valley below.

PANORAMA HOTEL

Not called the Panorama for nothing, this popular hotel comes with well equipped rooms, the best of them boasting balconies with views to die for. The hotel also has a total of four restaurants, of which two are open most of the time and that churn out a magnificent array of local dishes. ▶ **Rr. Kala,** tel. +355 511 23 092, hotelpanoramakruje@hotmail.com, hotelpanoramakruje.com. 50 rooms (10 singles €30, 30 doubles €40, 10 triples €40).

GETTING THERE

You don't want to get a bus to Kruja unless you're seriously planning on becoming Albanian. If you must, then ask a local where they depart from and expect to pay somewhere between 100 lek and 150 lek. If you're not in Tirana with your own vehicle, a taxi currently costs around 3,000 lek (negotiate beforehand). To get there under your own steam, follow the Shkodra road out of Tirana, turn right into Fushe Kruje and stay on the main road twisting up through the forest.



A quarter of a century after the birth of modern Albanian capitalism and Tirana now boasts more or less everything the modern shopper requires, much of it conveniently tucked away inside the city's growing collection of Western-style shopping centres. If you prefer doing what the less well-paid locals do and would like to go native, there remain plenty of cheap and cheerful shops staffed by a battalion of grinning proprietors, many of them more concerned with where you're from and if you have a husband or wife than what you want to buy. Outside the city centre, certain streets often cater to singular tastes such as bicycles, second-hand clothes and furniture, almost all of it available for cash only.

BOOKS ETC.

Tirana boasts a number of shops selling English-language literature, although the selection isn't great. It's recommended you bring books or an e-reader/tablet if you want to read anything specific whilst you're here. A small selection of foreign newspapers and magazines can be found at Adrion International Books as well as in the Xheko Imperial and Sheraton hotels, although the internet is slowly killing this trend off.

ADRION INTERNATIONAL BOOKS

Albania's best selection of English-language books in (and about) Albania, including a wide selection of novels, art books, guidebooks, maps and an ever-increasing selection of locally published titles on Albanian history and culture. They also often stock a small selection of really nice (and equally expensive) old black and white postcards. Adrion also has smaller outlets in both the arrivals and departure halls at the airport and on the ground floor of the Galeria Mall. ▶ **E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, Palace of Culture,** tel. +355 42 22 62 56, www.adrionltd.com. Open 08:00 - 19:30.

CORONA

The hotel gift shop has a decent selection of newspapers, magazines and books on Albania. ▶ **E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, Tirana International Hotel,** tel. +355 69 217 73 05. Open 09:30 - 20:30. Closed Sun.

INTERNATIONAL BOOK SHOP

Books, newspapers and magazines, including some on religious themes. ▶ **E-6, Rr. Pjeter Budi,** tel. +355 68 20 68 950. Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sat.

LIBRARIA ALBANIA

A local bookshop with a selection of English-language magazines and Albania-related books. ▶ **H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri,** tel. +355 4 2 27 17 49, www.albaniabook.com. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

FASHION

Many fashion outlets are now relocating to the city's ever-increasing selection of shopping centres.

Shopping



Street art for sale

BENETTON

Italian fashion for both sexes. ▶ **E-5, Rr. M. Peza 2,** tel. +355 425 62 53, www.benetton.com. Open 08:30 - 20:30, Sun 09:00 - 14:00. **COMPTOIR DE PARIS** Expensive brand-name fashion for men, women and children. ▶ **J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Mall,** tel. +355 68 202 26 84. Open 08:00 - 16:00.

ELISSE

Elegant shoes. ▶ **G-3, Rr. Myslym Shyri,** tel. +355 4 227 43 56. Open 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 09:00 - 14:00 16:00 - 21:00, Open 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 09:00-14:00 16:00-21:00.

IL CAMINO

Shoe boutique. ▶ **G-3, Rr. Myslym Shyri 64,** tel. +355 4 224 27 85, www.ilcammino.al. Open 9:00 - 21:30. Closed Sun.

Shopping

PIERRE CARDIN

The Italian-born, French fashion designer's Tirana outlet. ▶ E-4, Rr. Ded Gjo Luli, tel. +355 67 60 00 747, pierrecardin.al. Open 10:00 - 21:00. Closed Sun.

FLOWERS & PLANTS

GARDEN JOY

The owner learned flower arranging in Greece and does it well. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 237 41 46. Open 09:00 - 21:00.

KAKTUS

Imported flowers and luxury bouquets. ▶ I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +355 69 20 49 654. Open 07:00 - 21:00.

NATYRA

Flowers from Greece arrive three times a week. Good for colourful, custom-made bouquets. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 223 06 16. Open 09:00 - 19:00.

FOOD & DRINK

MASE

High quality imported meat and other hard-to-find products such as gluten-free pasta. Also cheese, wine, sausages and jam. ▶ D-4, Rr. Sami Frasheri, tel. +355 67 607 87 53. Open 07:00 - 23:00.



Rr. Barrikadave, Infront Of Ex-Cinema 17 Nentori, Tirane

Rruga e Elbasanit, Tirane

Mon Amour

Tel: +355 4 2221 211
Mob: +355 6 8342 5097

MIA ORGANIC

Organic meat, fruit, vegetables and dairy products from local organic producers. ▶ H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali i II, tel. +355 69 760 44 49, www.mia.al. Open 07:30 - 22:00.

MON AMOUR

Fresh, hand-made chocolates, cakes, sweets and desserts all made upstairs. ▶ D-5, Rr. Barikatave, tel. +355 4 22 21 211. Open 08:00 - 21:00.

NATYRAL & ORGANIK

Organic olive oil, raki, wine, honey, and dried herbs. ▶ H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha 3, tel. +355 69 209 90 47. Open 09:00 - 21:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 14:00, 17:30 - 21:00.

SAN TARA

A great little shop selling an excellent range of wine, brandy and raki from their own vineyards. ▶ F/G-4, Rr Myslym Shyri, tel. +355 68 60 60 380. Open 08:30 - 20:00.

GIFTS & SOUVENIRS

The best souvenir shopping is in Kruja, where shop windows are full of jewellery, antiques and knickknacks. If you don't have time to get there, check these shops in Tirana. There are also some kiosks selling Albania mugs, plastic guns, dolls and bunker ashtrays at the southern end of Rr. Barrikadave. Albanian cheese and other foodstuffs also make excellent gifts if you can get them home without eating them all on the plane.

Shopping

SUVENIR KRUIJA

▶ E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tasim - 1000, tel. +355 69 20 91 777. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

MARKETS

Anyone with a cardboard box, a few packets of cigarettes and a square metre of pavement is effectively a market trader in Tirana. Whenever it rains, people will appear as if by magic, armed with a clutch of overpriced umbrellas designed to stay in one piece just long enough to outlive the downpour.

PAZARI RI

Alongside the usual fruit, vegetables, fish and meat, the myriad stalls and kiosks that together make up the city's main fresh produce market sell countless varieties of olives, cheese, pickled green tomatoes, fresh figs, wine and raki, all of it in a ramshackle collection of small squares and snaking alleyways. Animal-rights activists won't like the sight of live chickens slung over bicycle handlebars, but at least they didn't grow up in Guantanamo-style poultry farms. Early morning is the best time of day to witness (and participate) in this classic example of Balkan-style trading and haggling. Note that at the time of going to press, part of the market was undergoing something of a transformation with the construction of a brand-new building to accommodate some of the stalls. ▶ E-5, Sheshi Avni Rustemi. Open 08:00 - 17:00.



SUVENIR KRUIJA
Handicrafts and folk costumes

Rruga Hoxha Tasim - 1000 Tirane
Tel. +355 69 2091777

ART FOREVER

If you're looking for folk costumes, antique chests, wood carvings, or old books, check out this one-man show. Find it near the corner of Blv. Bajram Curri. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha 99, tel. +355 4 224 63 86. Open 10:30 - 21:00. Closed Sun.

LLESHI

Albanian folk costumes, hand-knitted vests, men's felt hats, dolls in folk dress and rugs with national motifs. ▶ E-3, Rr. Durrësit, tel. +355 4 226 30 30. Open 08:00 - 14:00, Sat 16:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

PIRRO SOUVENIRS

A good selection of handicrafts and souvenirs; Albanian flags, key rings, T-shirts, and must-have mugs depicting Enver Hoxha, King Zog and Mother Teresa among others. ▶ I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 4 222 55 87. Open 09:00 - 21:00.

PRODHIME BAKRI & FILIGRAMI

The usual tacky selection of fridge magnets and a few antiques and Communist-era bric-a-brac. Also near the Stephen Center Café. ▶ E-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, Sky Tower, tel. +355 69 209 10 07. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

RRELI-EREBARA

Traditional folk costumes from all over Albania, as well as wood, bronze and silver souvenirs, pottery, ceramics and antiques. ▶ E-4, Rr. Ded Gjo Luli, tel. +355 4 222 12 82. Open 08:00 - 21:00, Sun 08:00 - 14:00.

TREGU I ÇAMËVE

This long alley is the main clothing and miscellaneous items market in Tirana, lined with stalls packed with cheap Chinese knock-offs, socks, underwear, sports goods and plastic toys. Branching off from here, Rr. Cameria is the market street for mobile phones, kitchenware and bikes. ▶ F-3, Rruga Shyqyri Bexholli. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The following places provide services rather than goods to buy. If you need something like a memory card or battery charger for your camera, the best place to go is the Neptune shop in TEG (see Shopping centres).

A RRELI

Modern photography lab. ▶ C-4, Blv. Zogu I, 30/ Rr.Mine Peza Nr 1, tel. +355 4 222 79 65. Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sun 09:00 - 13:00, 17:00 - 21:30.

INTERGRAFIKA

▶ I-5, Rr. Dervish Hima, Kulla 3, ambjenti 11, tel. +355 4 24 68 491. Open 09:00 - 18:00.

ITAL KUMI

Combined studio and services. Handy for document photographs in a hurry. ▶ H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII 3/1, tel. +355 4 224 68 98. Open 07:00 - 02:00. Closed Sun.

SHOPPING CENTRES

Until fairly recently, Tirana's shopping centres were predominantly upmarket affairs pandering to the sophisticated tastes of the city's fashion-conscious wives and girlfriends. This all changed with the opening of TEG, a massive complex on the edge of the city reminiscent of any shopping centre found in Western Europe.

CASA ITALIA

A large complex with various mid-range shop outlets. ▶ **Tirana-Durrës highway**, tel. +355 48 86 05 12, www.casaitalia.al. Open 08:00 - 21:00.

COIN

A fancy Italian department store on the lower floors of the ABA building, selling fashion, luxury home appliances, children's toys and other nice things. There's also a currency exchange kiosk on the ground floor. ▶ **H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, ABA Business Center**, tel. +355 4 450 17 37, www.coin.al. Open 9:00 - 21:00.

GALERIA

Behind the Pyramid, the Galeria Mall has around 50 shops, bars and cafés in a pleasantly air-conditioned, four-floor complex. There's a supermarket on the ground floor. ▶ **G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri**, tel. +355 4 225 41 00, www.galeria-etc.com. Open 09:00 - 21:00.



KRISTAL CENTER

A modern shopping centre with a Conad supermarket and cinema complex. ▶ **Rr. Frang Bardhi**, tel. +355 4 480 10 28, www.kristalcenter.com. Open 09:00 - 21:00.

QTU (QENDRA TREGTARE UNIVERS)

The QTU shopping centre has a large Carrefour supermarket, electronics shop, food court and a branch of Western Union. ▶ **Tirana-Durrës highway, km 6**, tel. +355 4 238 01 03, www.qtu.al. Open Apr-Sept 09:00-22:00, Oct-Mar 09:00-21:00.

SHERATON PLAZA

The mall attached to the Sheraton hotel has a café, food court, a good little supermarket and several upmarket shops. ▶ **J-5, Sheshi Italia**, tel. +355 4 227 4707, www.sheratontiranahotel.com. Open 09:00 - 18:00.

TEG

The biggest and best shopping centre in Albania features two floors of shops, a food court, cafés, a huge Carrefour supermarket in the basement and a multiplex cinema. ▶ **TEG**, tel. +355 4 239 50 08, www.teg.al. Open 9:00 - 21:00.

TIRANA RING CENTRE

A massive complex within walking distance of the city centre complete with 60 or so shops on three levels, restaurants, ice-skating, lots of things for children to do and apartments to buy upstairs if you can't bring yourself to leave. ▶ **D-2, Rr. Muhamet Gjollësia**, tel. +355 4 45 04 251, www.ring.al. Open 07:30 - 22:00.



SPECIALITY SHOPS

ALBAPOST

An interesting shop owned by the Albanian postal service and selling recent commemorative stamps. ▶ **F-4, Rr. Reshit Çollaku**. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

ATOM

PCs, mobile phones, data projectors, monitors, accessories and lots of other computer-related goods. ▶ **G/H-3, Rruga Myslym Shyri, Tirana**, tel. +355 69 985 4199. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

ISTREAM

Official Apple dealer, in the lobby of the Tirana International Hotel. ▶ **E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej 8 (Tirana International Hotel)**, tel. +355 4 450 40 31. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

LA CASA DEL HABANO

The only place in the country to buy, and try, quality Habanos, Cohiba and Monte Cristo cigars. Deluxe smokers' accessories and a small whiskey bar too. ▶ **J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton mall**, tel. +355 68 416 63 37. Open 10:00 - 22:00.

NOSMOKE

As the name suggests, this small shop in the blloku sells everything the self-respecting vaper ever needed. ▶ **H-4, Rr Abdyl Frashri**, tel. +355 69 20 20293, Open 10:00 -

22:00.

PROSOUND

▶ **K-2, Hyrja 1, Rruga Bilal Golemi 28**, tel. +355 4 451 1195, www.prosound.al. Open 10:00 - 17:00.

SUPERMARKETS

As with so many things in Tirana over the past few years, supermarkets have evolved from a scattered selection of family-run businesses into a more Western-style approach with local and international chains opening relatively small supermarkets on an almost daily basis. The following three chains stock plenty of familiar Western goods and all accept credit cards.

CARREFOUR

The French supermarket chain has stores of various sizes all over the city. Also at TEG. ▶ **H-5, Rr. Medar Shytilla**, tel. +355 48 845 900. Open 10:00 - 21:30.

CONAD

Italian chain full of Italian and other goods. ▶ **G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri (Galeria shopping centre)**, tel. +355 4 227 01 74, www.conad.it. Open 09:00 - 22:00.

ECO MARKET

Albanian supermarket brand with shops opening all over the city. ▶ **D-4, Blv. Bajram Curri**, tel. +355 4 450 42 86. Open 09:00 - 21:00.

BEOR Ltd is the wholesale and retail carpet company,
We offer a great selection of rugs and carpets for all your home
and business needs.

Showroom Prushi Street, Vaqarr, Tirane, Albania
Mob: +355 69 20 88 373 Email: beorshpk@gmail.com



La Bohème Hotel is inside of "Vesa Center", it is a name that brings to your mind one building in the most frequented area of Tirana. Inside this building, everything is arranged with care. The Hotel, in the upper floor, is a very unique selection. In each of the rooms, apart from the modern furniture, the room and staff service, you will be able to enjoy a 360 degree view of Tirana.

The hotel offers free: breakfast, Internet, parking, gym, sauna, welcome drink and taxes. Other:
- 10% discount in Restaurant «La Bohème Roof Garden» and SPA Center.



RESTAURANT

"La Bohème" is marked in the list of "what to do" in Tirana. You can reach the restaurant with the glassy elevator which gives the possibility to enjoy the view of Tirana as you get to the upper floor. The creative, but also international cuisine is a combination of selected taste and fantasy that each chef should have, offering you a really nice lunch or dinner.

VESA SPA & FITNESS

The Spa & Fitness center offers all that you need to take care of your physical health but also of your outer appearance. You can choose the hairdressing or aesthetic services, face treatment or massage, manicure and pedicure, waxing, or you can choose fitness and physiotherapy, solar and sauna. Vesa Spa cares for each detail to make you feel very important: as you really are. When you programme your week, do not forget to mark "Hotel La Bohème" at the top of your list!



Adresa: Rr. "Abdyl Frasheri"
Vesa-Center, Kati 10-te. Tirane
Kontakt: 0694069318
E-mail: reservations@labohemetirana.com

MONARC

The Monarc is a classic-looking yellow building on a busy crossing in the city centre overlooking the Lana river. With only 12 rooms, ample attention has been lavished on details, and the interiors are characterised by a sleek dark design. The deluxe rooms come with particularly classy Jacuzzis. Head to the top floor for the bar complete with waterfall and great panoramic views of the city. ▶ F-5, Blv. Zhan D'Ark, tel. +355 4 227 45 11, www.monarc.al. 12 rooms (2 singles €80, 10 doubles €100-130). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

MONDIAL

The slightly imposing Mondial goes for the Neoclassical look and for once manages to pull the whole affair off nicely. Offering a range of standard and deluxe rooms, all of which feature a beguiling muddle of facilities, extras include a good restaurant and a couple of bars that stay open late. Not too far west of the centre, the hotel also provides a number of meeting and conference rooms. ▶ F-1, Rr. Muhamet Gjollësja, tel. +355 4 223 23 72, www.hotelmondial.com.al. 36 rooms (20 singles €80, 16 doubles €90). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

NOVHOTEL

Albania's first Best Western chain hotel overlooks the Dinamo stadium and boasts perfectly adequate rooms with balconies and generic art on the walls. The suites are grander affairs, with nice corners furnished with armchairs, sofas and fireplaces. ▶ I-3, Rr. Gjin Bue Shpata, tel. +355 4 227 49 02, info@nov-hotel.com, www.nov-hotel.com. 12 rooms (4 singles €70-90, 8 doubles €90-110). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

PADAM

Perhaps Tirana's most impressive boutique hotel has six comfortably furnished rooms that combine the villa's old style with contemporary artwork. Padam's restaurant and terrace bar are excellent as well. ▶ H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 4 450 49 13, info@padam.al, www.padam.al. 6 rooms (2 singles €70-120, 3 doubles €130-140, 1 suite €160). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

SKY HOTEL

This business hotel unfortunately only occupies the two lowest floors of the Sky Tower building, but although the view is not panoramic, the rooms are lookers themselves, decorated in black and dark purple with touches of gold. The standard doubles are large with fabulous shower heads whilst the suites have sliding glass doors and separate seating areas. Breakfast is served in the top-floor Sky Club. ▶ G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 5/1, tel. +355 4 241 59 95, skyhotel_tirana@yahoo.com, www.skyhotel-al.com. 33 rooms (2 singles €90, 28 doubles €108-160, 3 suites €210). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

THE ROOMS

By far Albania's most technologically plugged-in hotel in an upcoming part of town, the stark white rooms here are like sleeping apps. Every guest is given an iPad to control the Apple TVs, lighting, curtains, shutters and other electronics whilst those staying in the business suites also get

an iMac. All rooms have balconies, Nespresso machines and safes. Guests can also make use of the Nobis spa downstairs, making The Rooms great value for money. ▶ K-4, Rr. Sami Frasheri 56 (Nobis complex), tel. +355 4 555 05 01, www.therooms-hotel.com. 7 rooms (5 doubles €90, 2 suites €105-120). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

TIRANA INTERNATIONAL HOTEL

Built in the 1970s with help of the Chinese, for years Tirana's main landmark was the only high-rise in the country, with propaganda slogans on the roof and escape tunnels for the elite. Now thoroughly modernised, the rooms meet international standards and the hotel is especially popular for conferences. The higher floors offer breathtaking views over the city. ▶ E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej 8, tel. +355 4 223 41 85, hotel@hoteltirana.com.al, www.tiranainternational.com. 169 rooms (169 doubles €126). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

VILA ALBA

Unlike many of its type, Vila Alba has been designed to fit in with its old Tirana surroundings for a change. Thoroughly modern inside, the halls and large guest rooms are decorated with modern paintings and works of art. Breakfast is served on the wonderful rooftop café, the Krystal Bar, open for all to try Viennese pastries and snacks. ▶ F-5, Rr. Xhorxhi Martini 10, tel. +355 4 225 59 37, www.vila-alba.com. 26 rooms (3 singles €90-130, 18 doubles €110-150, 5 suites €120-€140). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

XHEKO IMPERIAL

A fascinating Albanian-style luxury hotel, the rooms in the lower front building are pretty decent, but follow a labyrinthine hall to the newer section to find the over-the-top suites that drip with glam, each named after a famous painting. The open Jacuzzi bathrooms are any girl's dream, and the fairy-tale silk-draped four-poster beds are really rather extravagant. ▶ I-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 225 95 75, contact@xheko-imperial.com, www.xheko-imperial.com. 28 rooms (7 singles €110, 6 doubles €150, 15 suites €250-350). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

MID-RANGE

Good value. Doubles between €50 and €90.

ART HOTEL NIRVANA

A good mid-range option just north of the city centre and located in the confines of a quiet courtyard, as the name suggests this hotel features rooms with a lot of paintings on the walls, all of them (the rooms, not the paintings) en suite and complete with all the trimmings including free wireless internet. The in-house restaurant is better than many. ▶ E-3, Rr. Kavajës 96/2, tel. +355 4 223 52 70, hotelnirvana@hotmail.com. 15 rooms (6 singles €45, 6 doubles €60, 1 triple €80, 2 apartments €70). ☎ 📞 📺 📶 🚰 🚿 🛏

BLOKU

A really nice hotel on a crumbling backstreet, Blloku features beautiful rooms with lots of colour and wooden floors, en suite bathrooms and wireless internet plus friendly and helpful staff. There's also a café-bar where a simple buffet breakfast is served, or, if you wish, it can be delivered to your room. ▶ J/I-4, Rr. Adem Jashari 10, tel. +355 67 38 38 383, info@bllokuhotelitirana.com, www.bllokuhotelitirana.com. 10 rooms (5 singles €50, 5 doubles €80-€65).     

BRISTOL

Offering the most exclusive accommodation in Tirana is how the lovely people who run the Bristol like to sell their hotel, a claim that would be slightly closer to the truth if they were to say it offered the most exclusive three-star accommodation in Tirana. Boasting aside, once you peel away the amusing PR you're left with an actually altogether decent place to stay, found in an excellent location. All the rooms come with en suite facilities, minibars and the now pretty much compulsory free wireless internet connections. The bar's pretty good too, and stocks an interesting selection of booze. ▶ G-2, Rr. Nikolla Jorga, tel. +355 4 222 95 37, info@hotelbristol.al, www.hotelbristol.al. 20 rooms (12 singles €40, 8 doubles €60).     

BROADWAY

Broadway has a Vegas thing going on, an effect brought together by what appears to be the place having been decorated from the bankrupt stock of a Hollywood film studio. An epic journey into the mind of an interior decorator with a minimal budget but no limits on his or her imagination, the rooms generally provide a lot of fun whilst managing to offer everything guests need at these prices. The in-house bar and restaurant are also well worth a visit. ▶ H-3, Rr. Emin Duraku 8, tel. +355 4 226 71 19, broadway@icc-al.org, www.hotelbroadway-al.com. 20 rooms (10 singles €60, 6 doubles €80, 4 suites €120).     

CAPITAL TIRANA HOTEL

Located in one of the least explored yet most interesting parts of town, the generic international design to the place might not suit everyone, but for these prices it's difficult to complain. A perfect fine place to base yourself when in Tirana, extras include a lounge bar, meeting room and business centre. ▶ E-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa, tel. +355 4 225 85 75, reservations@capitaltirana.com, www.capitaltirana.com. 29 rooms (17 singles €40-50, 10 doubles €60-65, 2 triples €70).     

CITY

A nice mid-range option close to the blloku and in the middle of an area of good bars and restaurants, City's rooms are clean and basic albeit with minibars and decent free wireless internet connections. A buffet breakfast is served in the room behind reception, which doesn't operate at other times, a minor inconvenience helped along by the

presence of a small Carrefour supermarket just around the corner. We love the clocks above the reception area, supposedly set to the correct time in cities all over the world but clearly not checked very often. ▶ H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 8/1, tel. +355 4 224 77 99, reservations@hotelcitytirana.com, www.hotelcitytirana.com. 16 rooms (10 singles €32-60, 6 doubles €75).     

COMFORT

Comfort offers an excellent choice of facilities both in the rooms and in the hotel in general. For the price, the rooms, which are clean and modern, are hard to beat whilst the extra offerings including a decent restaurant and a well stocked bar ideal for late night indulgences. Try to get a room facing away from the chaos of the streets outside. ▶ D-4, Rr. Asim Vokshi, tel. +355 4 223 32 72, www.hotelcomfort.al. 21 rooms (6 singles €50, 15 doubles €60).     

DIPLOMAT FASHION

Tirana's first proper boutique hotel has been open for over a decade now and continues to be a popular choice with those who can afford their magnificent executive and deluxe rooms as well as the less fortunate souls who have to stay in the more standard accommodation options. The facilities boast everything one would expect from a hotel in this category, plus there's a very good buffet breakfast on offer and an in-house spa featuring sauna, Jacuzzi and massage. ▶ Rr. Irfan Tomini, tel. +355 4 223 50 90. 26 rooms (10 singles €57-78, 16 doubles €70-90).     

EAGLE

One of Tirana's more unusual hotels with little in the way of facilities beyond an odd mixture of adequate albeit hardly inspiring rooms, the best reason for choosing to spend the night here is the location. Note that the hotel is located upstairs, and as far as we could tell there's no lift. ▶ www.hoteleagle.net.

ELYSÉE

A quality mid-range hotel featuring friendly service and a top location between the US and Italian embassies. The rooms are modern and quiet, with king-sized beds and iron balconies, although there's no lift to get you between the four floors. Bonuses include free wireless internet and a gurgling fountain. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji 2/173, tel. +355 4 222 28 80, info@hoteleysee-al.com, www.hoteleysee-al.com. 20 rooms (3 singles €50-65, 13 doubles €75-85, 4 triples €105).     

FERARI

If you happen to live in a giant orange wedding cake with unusual balconies and eat breakfast at home surrounded by purple walls then the claims that this hotel in the far northern suburbs of Tirana is a real home from home are correct. Clean, friendly and offering everything you need when it comes to what you'll find inside the rooms, Ferari also features conference facilities and air conditioning throughout.

We're reliably informed that the in-house restaurant churns out a good Italian breakfast. ▶ B-2, Rr. Don Bosko, tel. +355 4 235 64 02, hotel_ferari@hotmail.com. 25 rooms (25 doubles €50-60).     

FIRENZE

A surprisingly good business hotel on the boulevard just north of Sheshi Skënderbej, Firenze come with typically charming staff, modern and well-furnished rooms (some with fireplaces) and abstract art on the walls. Breakfast is served in the street-side restaurant. ▶ D-4, Blv. Zogu I 72, tel. +355 4 224 90 99, firenzehotel@albmil.com. 7 rooms (6 doubles €50, 1 twin €60).     

HOTEL MILLENNIUM

The former Belvedere is now trading as Hotel Millennium, a small hotel on a lovely traffic-free street in the city centre features really nice rooms, some with gorgeous balconies, complete with all the trimmings plus a free wireless internet system they claim never slows to a crawl. The Italian breakfast is included in the price of the room and is served on the outdoor terrace during the summer. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani 25, tel. +355 4 225 19 35, www.hotelmilennium.eu. 7 rooms (4 doubles €45-55, 3 triples €60).     

HOTEL STELA

Stuck a little way out in the beginnings of the north-eastern suburbs, Stela's spacious rooms all come with wooden floors, en suite bathrooms with either a bath or a shower, minibars and free wireless internet throughout the building. There's also quite a nice restaurant that specialises in Albanian cuisine and a bar on the ground floor. ▶ www.stelahotel.com.

ILIRIA

Iliria's smart and soundproofed rooms come in a range of options from triples to deluxe doubles and are all fitted out with satellite televisions and free wireless internet. There's a restaurant and pleasant café terrace too, all of it located inside a bright modern building just outside the centre not too far from the US Embassy. ▶ I-6, Rr. e Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 237 17 00, info@hotelliliriaticom, www.hotelliliriaticom.com. 24 hours Porter and desk. 16 rooms (13 doubles €60-80, 3 triples €90).     

JOLLY

If you're going to fill your hotel with exceedingly friendly staff then it makes sense to call it Jolly, and this is precisely what's happened here. Overlooking the crazy roundabout next to Pazari i Ri, this small hotel in one of our favourite parts of town provides simple accommodation with en suite facilities, free wireless internet and an average buffet breakfast served in a former guest room on the top floor. Although it pains us to say it, we almost missed a flight thanks to the staff on reception, who promised to wake us at 03:00 and completely forgot to do so. ▶ Sheshi Avni Rustemi, tel. +355 69 607 0890, www.jollyhotel.al/index.php/rooms. 14 rooms (8 singles €40, 6 doubles €50).     

LIVING BOUTIQUE HOTEL

Inside a beautifully restored building, the only slightly negative thing we have to say about this splendid boutique hotel is the name of the street on which it's located. Refreshingly pricey and bursting with class, the rooms are all individually designed, coming with everything necessary for a comfortable and relaxed stay. The rooftop bar with large windows is, almost literally, the icing on the cake.

NOBEL

Friendly staff, cheerfully coloured and affordable rooms and a central location, the Nobel ticks all the boxes in our opinion. Tucked behind the Tirana International Hotel, the Nobel has modern furnishings, free wireless internet and a smart little café on the ground floor with bright yellow walls, gingham tablecloths and, during the summer an outdoor terrace. ▶ E-4, Rr. Urani Pano 1/9, tel. +355 4 225 64 44, reservations@hotelnobelitirana.com, www.hotelnobeltirana.com. 9 rooms (3 singles €30, 6 doubles €45).    

SENATOR

They were still putting the finishing touches to the décor when we dropped by, although by the time this is read they'll be open and ready for business. Half way down an interesting street in the northwest of the city, Senator offers quality and class for an affordable price due to the location. We like it a lot, although we're not entirely sure about the square toilet seats in the bathrooms. ▶ D-3/4, Rr. Fortuzi 47, tel. +355 4 24 44 222, www.hotelsenator-al.com. 19 rooms (3 singles €70, 16 doubles €50-90).    

SKY HOTEL 2

With the choice of decent rooms from standard singles to suites, this nice hotel represents the top end of the three-star hotel experience. With lots of plush red carpets and located just west of Rinia Park in the very centre of the city, if you're a business professional looking for something not too shocking either visually or financially, this could well be the place for you. ▶ I-4, Rr. Reshit Çollaku, tel. +355 4 225 37 81, info@sky2hotel-al.com, www.sky2hotel-al.com. 44 rooms (6 singles €58, 29 doubles €70, 9 suites €90).    

SOKRAT

On the hectic street that leads out of the city towards the new road to Elbasan, Sokrat is a pleasant boutique hotel in a small white villa. The rooms are light and spacious, all featuring impressive bathrooms and minibars and some coming with balconies. The private garden at the front is a good place to sit and ponder the general madness taking place over the wall in the aforementioned thoroughfare. ▶ G/H-5, Rr. e Elbasanit 81, tel. +355 4 237 82 94, info@hotsokrat.com, www.hotsokrat.com. 14 rooms (10 doubles €75 - 90, 4 twins €90). Extra bed €10.    

Where To Stay

THERANDA

Featuring modern, well equipped rooms with lots of bright colours and hardwood floors, Theranda is an excellent choice for pushing the boat out a bit without having to file for bankruptcy when you get home. Ideally located on a quiet back street but within easy walking distance from where you'll find most things happening, this place is one of several in Tirana that offers the option of having breakfast in the garden during the warmer parts of the year. ▶ H-3, Rr. Andon Zako Çajupi 6-7, tel. +355 4 227 37 66, reservations@therandahotel.com, www.therandahotel.com. 14 rooms (5 singles €50-70, 6 doubles €60-90, 3 suites €90-100). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

VILA 3

Seven smart rooms in a small 1930s villa set away from the street. Fitted out with flat screen televisions, sparkling en suite bathrooms and wireless internet, it's perfect for business trips. The two top floor rooms are large but have slanting ceilings and only skylights for windows. There's a good restaurant and pizzeria downstairs. ▶ G-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II 3, tel. +355 4 226 65 82, vila_3@yahoo.com. 7 rooms (2 singles €65, 3 doubles €65-80, 2 suites €80-100). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

VILA 60

This lovely villa dating from 1931 designed by the engineer Harry Fultz has large double rooms with wooden floors. The superior rooms at the top of the building are larger, although you won't be able to look out of the high windows. The lovely glass-walled hotel café behind the building makes up for that. ▶ Rr. Fadil Rada 60, tel. +355 4 452 60 60, info@vila60.com, www.vila60.com. 12 rooms (5 singles €40-75, 7 doubles €50-85). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

VILA KËRÇIKU

In the middle of a small arcade of historical buildings directly overlooking the Central Market, the recommended Vila Kërçiku has been beautifully restored both inside and out and offers seven rooms, three with front-facing balconies and all with excellent facilities. Other incentives to book a room include an in-house pool, water and air massage, sauna and *hamam*. ▶ www.vilakerciku.com.

BUDGET

Why pay more? Doubles under €50.

AREELA

Slightly north of the action on an unpaved street and badly sign-posted to boot, locating the Areela may be a struggle but as with so many Albanian hotels the eventual discovery is rewarding. The rooms are spacious and kitsch with lots of pink polyester curtains, slippery bedspreads, air conditioning and dubious paintings of maidens on the walls. Also find free wireless internet, minibars, en suite bathrooms and edible breakfasts included in the price. ▶ C-4, Rr. Mahmut Fortuzi 5, tel. +355 4 222 65 79, areela@hotelareela.com, www.hotelareela.com. 9 rooms (2 singles €25, 5 doubles €30, 2 triples €45). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

BRIKER

A modern hotel not far from the city centre, featuring wooden floors, colourful furniture and large blue-glass windows in the rooms. The room price is the same regardless of the number of occupants. ▶ D-4/5, Rr. Barrikadave 3/24, tel. +355 4 222 95 43, hotelbriker@hotmail.com. 9 rooms (5 twins €40, 4 triples €50). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

EDER

A small hotel with just five rooms of varying styles, all of them well enough equipped for travellers on a budget. Opposite the Sacred Heart Church, a short walk from the main square and just around the corner from a clutch of embassies, it's well placed if you need to pray, play or get away. ▶ F-2, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 4 223 91 70, hoteleder@gmail.com. 5 rooms (3 singles €40, 2 doubles €60). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

FREDDY'S HOTEL

Unquestionably among the best places to stay in the centre of Tirana considering they almost give the rooms away for free, Freddy's is a marvellous family-run venture on a pleasantly quiet street. The rooms are basic to say the least, but there's en suite bathrooms and Freddy himself, the amiable, English-speaking owner who's often on hand to give advice on anything you require. The price includes a small breakfast, which in the time-honoured Albanian budget tradition comes in the form of a croissant, a glass of fruit juice and fabulously strong coffee. ▶ E-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 75, tel. +355 4 226 60 77, www.freddyshotel.com. 14 rooms (12 twins €28, 1 triple €50, 1 quadruple €59). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

GUVA E QETË

Small, basic rooms along a central, pedestrianised street. There are en suite bathrooms and televisions, but breakfast isn't included. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 4 223 54 91, guvaeqete@gmail.com. 12 rooms (6 singles €15, 6 triples €30). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

HAXHIU

This family-run hotel is tucked away off the main street and set behind potted trees and flowers. It's got a light and airy feel to it and views of old tile roofs. The relative lack of amenities is compensated by the management's eagerness to please. Taxis to the centre are provided free. So are coffee and tea. The breakfast buffet features fresh fruit and pastries. ▶ E-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa 391, tel. +355 4 236 05 47, reservation@hotelhaxhiu.com. 11 rooms (6 singles €30, 5 doubles €30). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

IDEA HOTEL & SPA

Excellent value accommodation with thrills galore, the only negative thing we really have to say about this place are the owners claims that the hotel is located in a lovely area. It's not, but don't let this put you off, because for the price this is really very hard to beat. All the rooms come with en suite facilities and free wireless internet, and, as the name suggests, there's an in-house

spa. ▶ Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 223 55 88, info@hotelidea.al, www.hotelidea.al. **Non stop.** 25 rooms (10 singles €30, 10 doubles €40, 3 triples €55, 2 quadruples €66). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

KALAJA

Kalaja amounts to a good budget choice. In this hostel-like setup, you can either share a room or be selfish and take one all for yourself. The rooms are quiet and clean, with tiled floors, basic bathrooms, a television and a fan. Best of all, the hotel is ensconced inside the ancient walls of the meagre remains of Tirana Castle. ▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani 9, tel. +355 4 225 00 00, hotel-kalaja.com. 8 rooms (2 singles €10, 5 doubles €15, 1 triple €20). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

PARLAMENTI

An affordable hotel on a quiet central street, indeed very near the Parliament building. Spacious en suite rooms overlook the terracotta roofs of the old houses that somehow survived Tirana's recent boom years. ▶ F-5, Rr. Jeronim de Rada 75, tel. +355 4 226 50 24, www.hotelparlamenti.com. 6 rooms (3 singles €25, 3 doubles €30-35). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

PIKE LOTI

Not far from the city centre, this family-run hotel offers small, clean and comfortable rooms. All come with private bathrooms, telephones, televisions and minibars. Some English is spoken. ▶ G-6, Rr. Mihal Grameno, tel. +355 4 223 51 55. 7 rooms (5 singles €25, 2 doubles €33). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

SAVANA

A good budget option just south of the action and close to the US Embassy, don't expect award-winning anything here. The attached restaurant seems to get a lot of use from the locals, which is often a good sign, and the rooms, although hardly breathtaking, are more than adequate if you plan to spend most of your time out and about in the city and beyond. No taxi required if you're out drinking every evening in the blloku. ▶ I-6, Rr. Dervish Hima 38, tel. +355 68 207 70 69, tli_985@hotmail.com. 8 rooms (8 doubles €25). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

SERENITY

This hotel on a fairly quiet street five minutes from the action provides a range of sleeping options in mildly ostentatious surroundings, with all rooms featuring en suite facilities with showers only, satellite television, minibars and free wireless internet. When we visited breakfast was being served in the bar next door. ▶ E-3, Rr. Bogdani 4, tel. +355 69 279 38 12, serenity_hotel@hotmail.com. 13 rooms (1 single €25, 12 doubles €35). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

BED & BREAKFAST

SECRET GARDEN

Featuring a small selection of en suite rooms, free parking and a host of other nice things, this blloku-located accom-

Where To Stay

modation option calls itself a bed and breakfast place although we're not really sure why. Basically it's a hotel, and a perfectly nice one at that. There's a bar too, which often features entertainment during the evenings, and, for those arriving with animals, they also allow pets to stay in the rooms. ▶ Rr. Donika Kastrioti 1, www.bandbsecretgarden.com.

STEPHEN CENTER B&B

The 'Christian environment' provided in the cosy guest-rooms of the Stephen Center is available to missionaries and other travellers and consists of simple but well-furnished rooms with twin beds, private bathrooms and adequate heating. There's laundry, wireless internet and airport pickup service too. ▶ E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tahsim 1, tel. +355 4 225 39 24, stephencenter@stephencenter.com, www.stephencenter.com. 6 rooms (2 singles €30, 4 doubles €40). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

PENSIONS

PENSION ANDREA

In a quiet location near the Parliament building, the four basic rooms at the charming Pension Andrea come with television, air conditioning, free wireless internet and private bathrooms. The owners are involved in the local arts scene and the rooms are often used by musicians playing in Tirana's bars and restaurants. Breakfast isn't included, but guests can use the communal kitchen, plus there are plenty of cafés nearby. The pension is signposted down the alley next to the Brilant Antik hotel. ▶ F-5, Rr. Jeronim de Rada 103, tel. +355 4 225 69 47, pensionandrea@gmail.com. 4 rooms (2 singles €20, 2 doubles €30). ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

APARTMENT RENTAL

ALBANIANTRIP

Modern self-catering studios and apartments sleeping between three and nine people in several locations across the city centre. Each place can be rented per room or as a whole with the choice of private or shared bathrooms. Their superb main address residence is located inside a charming old villa complete with tortoises in the garden and a small museum of communist-era bits and bobs on the ground floor. All kitchens come with a washing machine and refrigerator. Also check out their incredible range of guided tour options. ▶ D-4, Rr. Dibres 261, tel. +355 68 405 85 29, contact@albaniantrip.com, www.albaniantrip.com. 4 apartments (4 singles €20). Extra bed €5. ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

MIRROR DREAM APARTMENT

The name here is a bit misleading as the simple studio flats they provide come with no kitchen facilities, although they are in the centre of the city and they do at least have free wireless internet. A good option if there are several people camping out here, otherwise you might as well book a hotel. ▶ Rr. Zenel Baboci, tel. +355 68 405 8529. 4 apartments €40. ☎ 📺 📶 📺 📺 📺

Where To Stay

SALKU SERVICED APARTMENTS

Clean, renovated rooms equipped with refrigerator, microwave and wireless internet. A simple breakfast is included, and cheap airport transfers are available. Central and great value for money. ▶ E-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 75, tel. +355 68 203 52 61, alfredsalku@yahoo.com, www.salkuservicedapartments.com. 6 rooms €45-75.  

HOSTELS

Note that one or two of the places listed here refer to themselves as hostels but on closer inspection are somewhat different to what's generally accepted to define what a hostel is.

BUJTINA SHQIPTARE

Sometimes referring to itself as a hostel and at other times a hotel, this basic albeit perfectly friendly and respectable establishment offers and handful of simple rooms on a quiet street just north of the city centre. Don't expect sweets on the pillow when you arrive, but do be prepared for a walk welcome, which in Albania is worth more than anything a five-star hotel can provide. ▶ D-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 9/1, tel. +355 4 222 04 33, info@hostelbujtinashqiptare.com. 4 rooms (1 single €15, 2 doubles €18, 1 apartment €20).   

DESTIL

A hugely popular hostel in the city centre, thoughtfully designed and packing in enough services and facilities to keep people coming back for more. The dormitories are all clean and secure, and the small in-house café-bar is open around the clock. ▶ H-5/6, Rr. Qemal Gurnjaku, tel. +355 69 885 2388, info@destil.al. 3 rooms (5-bed dormitory, 8-bed dormitory, 9-bed dormitory €8-10/bed).   

HOSTEL ALBANIA

A villa in a quiet residential area east of the city centre has been converted into a pleasant hostel, with solid bunk beds made in Kruja and a cool basement room. The large garden has an oriental lounge corner and a beach bar with couches and palm trees. Secure parking is available for two vehicles. ▶ E-6, Rr. Beqir Luga 56, tel. +355 69 684 3233, lira@hostel-albania.com. 5 rooms (2 singles €15, 3 doubles €30).   

MILINGONA

A modern hostel with clean dormitories, bunk beds and shared facilities on each floor. There's a kitchen, a garden and a nice roof terrace where regular music and film nights are held. A short bicycle ride or a 20-minute walk from Sheshi Skënderbej, find it just off Rr. e Dibres. ▶ Rr. Riza Cerova, tel. +355 69 204 98 36, milingonahostel@gmail.com, www.milingonahostel.com. Non STop. 8 rooms (8 doubles €30).  

PROPAGANDA HOSTEL

In a quiet corner of the blloku and crammed full of dictatorship-era memorabilia including pickaxes, portraits and slogans hanging on the walls, as well as the usual dormitories also find private rooms with en suite facilities. Extras include a shared kitchen, laundry and free wireless internet throughout. ▶ H-2/3, Rr. Pjeter Bogdani 5, tel. +355 68 904 27 44, info@propagandahostel.com, www.propagandahostel.com. 9 rooms and dormitories starting from €10/bed.  

TIRANA BACKPACKER

Albania's first and perhaps best hostel is housed in a century-old Italian-style villa just off Rr. e Kavajes. What makes this place great is the welcoming reception, relaxed atmosphere, summer garden, and affordable day trips they organise around the region. Facilities include free wireless internet and a shared kitchen. Breakfast is included in the price. ▶ E-3, Rr. e Bogdaneve 3, tel. +355 68 468 23 53, tiranabackpacker@hotmail.com, www.tiranahostel.com. 6 rooms and dormitories starting from €10/bed.   

TRIP'N HOSTEL

Housed inside a colourful old villa surrounded by drab apartment buildings and run by welcoming locals, the rooms are colour-coded and the communal rooms are filled with antiques and curiosities. Each bunk bed has a locker, and the basement room is cool during the summer and warm and cosy with a fireplace in winter. Ask to see the Communist-era air-raid shelter behind the building. ▶ D/E-6, Rr. Musa Maci 1, tel. +355 68 304 89 05, contact@triphnhostel.com, www.triphnhostel.com. 5 rooms and dormitories starting from €11/bed.  

ZIG ZAG

A ramshackle chic hostel close to the city centre that's currently garnering rave reviews from all who stay there, this pet-friendly place features all the usual hostel amenities plus free wireless internet, bicycle rental and an outdoor barbecue area that has a habit of staying active all night. Somewhat difficult to find, ask a local if you get lost. ▶ F/G-2, Rr. Myslym Shyri, tel. +355 69 256 9845, tiranazigzag@gmail.com. 8 rooms (3 singles €20, 5 doubles €40).   

CAMPING

CAMPING TIRANA

Located on the edge of Lake Kusit about 15km west of Tirana, this fabulous venture is run by the local Hyka family who learned their trade working in the camping and outdoor leisure business in Italy. Facilities include places for tents and camper vans with all the trimmings including electricity, toilets, hot showers and even wireless internet. The friendly people who run the site can also arrange additional activities such as guided tours, bicycle rental, and trips around the surrounding

mountains in a 4x4 Jeep. Contact them directly for information about prices. ▶ Liqeni i Kusit (Kashar), tel. +355 68 22 42 342, bashkim.alb@gmail.com, www.campingtirana.al. 

AIRPORT

BEST WESTERN PREMIER ARK HOTEL

This fine hotel adjacent to the airport provides everything you'd expect from the Best Western Premier brand, including a choice of impressive rooms, all packed with the kind of luxuries that need no further explanation. Extras here include several drinking and dining options, high calibre conference facilities, health club, spa and outdoor swimming pool. ▶ Rinas, tel. +355 44 50 05 15, reservations@arkhotel.al, www.arkhotel.al. 56 rooms (31 singles €68-74, 20 doubles €78-84, 5 Suits €100-150) €.                 

HOTEL AIRPORT TIRANA

The best-named of several options by the airport, this hotel is near the terminal yet quite a slog around the perimeter fence, so it's extremely advisable to give them a call for a free pickup. The fire- and sound-proof rooms have bright colours, and the bathrooms are ready for take-off with their space-age shower cabins. A garden restaurant with pool at the rear is also available for those simply waiting for flights. ▶ Rinas, tel. +355 48 30 01 90, info@hotel-airporttirana.com, www.hotel-airporttirana.com. 54 rooms (18 singles

Where To Stay

€58-63, 32 doubles €69-78, 2 triples €84-110, 2 suites €136) €.           

JURGEN

An affordable and frills-free option close to the terminal building, Jurgen provides everything necessary for an overnight stay without breaking the bank. All of the rooms are en suite and come with free wireless internet, with communal facilities include a bar and restaurant and little else. Recommended for visitors on a budget with a very early flight to catch. ▶ Rinas, tel. +355 69 22 30 663. 7 rooms (6 doubles €40, 1 twin €40).   

VERZACI

It's good that Gianni is no longer among us, as he'd faint at the sight of this garish pink building with a big green V on the facade. Inside, the rooms are plain and basic. Verzaci is a five-minute walk along the main road north from the airport. Limited English spoken. ▶ Rinas, tel. +355 68 202 55 42. 22 rooms (12 singles €25, 10 doubles €25).   

VILA AEROPORT

This hotel's Aircraft Restaurant is the coolest you've seen in your life. Right here in Tirana. Built to look like a big silver cartoon plane, it's parked along the main road north of the airport. Beside it, the hotel building has large rooms and a good pool and spa area. ▶ Rinas, tel. +355 68 207 70 98, info@vilaairport.com. 20 rooms (16 doubles €40, 4 suites €50-80).             



STAY WITH PEOPLE WHO CARE

BEST WESTERN PREMIER Ark Hotel is the idyllic choice for those who travel for business or leisure purposes since its unique style, personalized services and strategic location in Tirana, always leave a long lasting positive impression to all our guests. Our brand new luxury and modern hotel in Tirana is among the top and largest in Albania and it is in position to deliver services at highest standards. The hotel is developed by "Shijaku L.T.D" and has recently become the first "PREMIER" Hotel in Albania by the World's Largest Hotel Chain, Best Western International. In BEST WESTERN PREMIER Ark Hotel in Tirana, we continually strive to ensure that we not only meet our guests' expectations, but we exceed them.

*Best Western Premier Ark hotel
Tirana Airport Albania
Airport Rd Rinas , 1053 Albania*

*Tel: + 355 4 4500 515/616,
Fax: + 355 4 4500 545
E-mail: info@arkhotel.al / reservations@arkhotel.al*



Dentists, libraries, hospitals, embassies and lots more. Note that offices usually work between 08:00 and 16:00 and are closed during the weekends. Local government employees often go home after lunch on Fridays.

ADVERTISING & PR

BRO TECH BRANDS SH.P.K

ICEBERG COMMUNICATIONS

Publicity, PR and events. ▶ I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, Pall. Edil Al-It, Zyra Nr. 1, tel. +355 4 226 76 81, www.icebergcommunication.com. Open 09:00 - 17:00, Sat 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

KASTRATI GROUP

▶ Ura e Dajlanit, Autostrada Durres-Tirane, tel. +355 52 265 168, Wwww.kastratigroup.al/sq. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

OGILVY

Big ad agency. ▶ H-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, EGT Tower, Pall 11/1, Kati 3, tel. +355 4 224 75 33, ogilvy.albania@ogilvy.com, www.ogilvyalbania.com. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

BANKS

ABI BANK

▶ E-3/4, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 42 258 755, www.abi.al/?lang=en. Open 08:30 - 15:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

ALPHA CREDIT BANK

▶ E/F-3, Rr. e Kavajës, G-Kam Center, Pall.14 Katësh, tel. +355 4 227 85 00, www.alphabank.al. Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.



- 80%
Kursim Energjie



Adresa: Blv. "Gjergj Fishta", përballë ish stacionit të fundit të Tiranës së Re
Cel: +355 67 40 92 746 | email: sales@ledshop.al
Led Shop Albania

BKT

▶ G-5, Blv. Zhan D'Ark, tel. +355 4 225 09 55, www.bkt.com.al. Open 08:30 - 15:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

CREDINS

▶ H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 21, tel. +355 4 223 40 96, www.bankacredins.com. Open 08:30 - 16:00, Sat 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

CREDIT AGRICOLE

▶ E-3, Rr. e Kavajës 59, tel. +355 4 225 87 55, www.credit-agricole.al. Open 08:15 - 15:15. Closed Sat, Sun.

FIRST INVESTMENT BANK

▶ G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 227 67 71, www.fibank.al. Open 08:15 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL BANK

▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, Qendra Eurokol, Kati 7, tel. +355 4 225 43 72, www.icbank-albania.com. Open 08:00 - 15:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

INTESA SANPAOLO BANK

▶ I-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 27, tel. +355 4 227 60 00, www.intesasanpaolobank.al. Open 08:30 - 15:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

NATIONAL BANK OF GREECE

▶ G-5/6, Rr. Dritan Hoxha, tel. +355 4 228 00 00, www.nbgbank.al. Open 08:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

PROCREDIT BANK

▶ I-3, Rr. Dritan Hoxha, tel. +355 4 238 93 00, www.procreditbank.com.al. Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun, On Saturday big branches are open, 8:00 - 13:00, others from 08:00 - 12:00.

RAIFFEISEN BANK

▶ G-5, Rr. Kavajës 44, tel. +355 4 238 13 81, www.raiffeisen.al. Open 08:30 - 15:30, Sat 09:00 - 12:30. Closed Sun.

RAIFFEISEN LEASING

▶ Kontakt Raiffeisen Leasing Sh.a Blv. B. Curri, ETC building, 10th floor, tel. +355 4 2 274 920, leasing@raiffeisen.al, www.raiffeisen-leasing.al. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

SOCIÉTÉ GÉNÉRALE ALBANIA

▶ H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 228 04 42, www.societegenerale.al. Open 08:00 - 15:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

TIRANA BANK

▶ E-3, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 226 96 17/8, www.tiranabank.al. Open 08:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

UBA BANK

▶ Rr. Dritan Hoxha, tel. +355 4 22 28 460, info@uba.com.al, www.uba.com.al. Open 09:00 - 16:30.

UNION BANK

▶ H-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 06 53, www.unionbank.al. Open 08:00 - 16:30, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

BUSINESS SERVICES

NATIONAL REGISTRATION CENTRE (QENDRA KOMBËTARE E REGJISTRIMIT)

Business registration in Albania. ▶ Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 4 225 00 66, www.qkr.gov.al. Open 08:30 - 14:00, Fri 08:30 - 13:30. Closed Sat, Sun.



ABKONS, A COMPANY THAT PROVIDES CONSULTING SERVICES APPLYING THE BEST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS.

THE DIFFERENT SERVICES ABKONS PROVIDES ARE:

- CENSUS & ASSET INVENTORY
- DUE DILIGENCE EXPERTISE
- ENGINEERING SERVICES
- ENVIRONMENT SERVICES
- FINANCIAL SERVICES
- HEALTH & SAFETY
- LAND EASEMENT AND ACQUISITION
- LEGAL & PERMITTING SERVICES
- PROJECT MANGEMENT
- SOCIO-ECONOMIC STUDIES
- SUPERVISION WORK



LOCAL Knowledge, GLOBAL Standards

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE

- AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**
▶ H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 11/3, tel. +355 4 225 97 79, www.amcham.com.al. Open 8.30 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**
▶ Blv. Petro Nini Luarasi 58, tel. +355 4 234 10 20, www.abcci.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- TIRANA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY**
▶ E-3, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 223 02 84, www.cci.al. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

DENTISTS

The Albanian for dental clinic is *klinika dentare*.

- LEDISMILE DENTAL CLINIC**
▶ Rr. Irfan Tomini, pall. Alfa, Shk.1, Ap.1, tel. +355 4 232 07 72, www.ledismile.com. Open 09:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun.
- ORTHOLUX**
▶ H/I-5, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +355 4 225 15 47, ortholux.com.
- PRODENT**
▶ F-1, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, Pall. Hekla, Kati 3, tel. +355 4 227 01 25. Open 08:30 - 14:00, 16:00 - 20:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

- TIRANA CENTRE**
▶ G-3, Rr. Bardhok Biba, Pallati i Kadarese, k.2, tel. +355 4 225 74 46, www.cosmeticdent-al.com. Open 09:00 - 19:00, Sat 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.
- UFO CLINIC**
▶ F-2, Rr. Kavajës, Pallati 3, Shk 7, tel. +355 4 224 00 28. Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 08:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

DRY CLEANERS

- FAST CLEAN**
▶ D-4, Rr. Komuna e Parisit, tel. +355 4 223 74 14. Open 07:00 - 22:00.
- PASTRIM KIMIK**
▶ I-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 223 29 76. Open 07:00 - 21:00, Sun 07:00 - 15:00.

FITNESS CENTRES

- The Sheraton and Rogner hotels also have fitness centres.
- FITNESS FORMA GYM**
▶ D-4, Rr. Maliq Muço, tel. +355 4 226 4293. Open 08:00 - 22:00.
 - MMA CENTER**
▶ D-6, Rr. Qemal Stafa, tel. +355 67 208 3913, tiranamacenter.com. Open 09:00 - 20:00.
 - ROCK TIRANA CLIMBING GYM**
▶ Rr. Ali Visha 8, tel. +355 69 608 49 14, www.rocktirana.com. Open 16:00 - 22:00, Sun 12:00 - 20:00.

- TOP TECHNOGYM**
▶ K-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 225 65 68. Open 24hrs.
- VESA SPA & FITNESS**
Fully equipped techno gym, full service spa and beauty centre specialising in a range of professional services, massage, sauna, wax, hair care and more.

FOREIGN REPRESENTATIONS

- AUSTRIA**
▶ E/F-2, Rr. Frederik Shiroka 3, tel. +355 4 227 48 55, www.bmeia.gov.at. Open 10:00 - 12:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- BULGARIA**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 12, tel. +355 4 223 31 55, www.mfa.bg. Open 08:30 - 15:00. Closed Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun.
- CHINA**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 57, tel. +355 4 223 23 85, al.chineseembassy.org.al. Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sun.
- CROATIA**
▶ F-5, Rr. Abdi Topani, Torre Drin centre, tel. +355 4 222 83 90, www.mvpei.hr. Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.
- CZECH REPUBLIC**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 10, tel. +355 4 223 40 04, www.mzv.cz/tirana. Open 09:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- DENMARK**
▶ H/I-4, Rr. Nikolla Tupe 1, Kati 4, Ap. 4, tel. +355 4 228 06 00, www.ambtirana.um.dk. Open 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- EGYPT**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 1, tel. +355 4 223 30 22, www.mfa.gov.eg. Open 09:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- FRANCE**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 14, tel. +355 4 223 42 50, www.ambafrance-al.org. Open 09:00-13:00, 14:30-17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- GERMANY**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 8, tel. +355 4 227 45 05, www.tirana.diplo.de. Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- GREECE**
Consulates in Gjirokastra and Korça. ▶ E/F-2, Rr. Frederik Shiroka 3, tel. +355 4 227 46 44, www.mfa.gr/tirana. Open 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

MMA // MUAY THAI // KICKBOXING // KRAV MAGA
SELF DEFENSE // KIDS & LADY KICK
PRIVATE TRAINING // GYM // FITNESS // BODY PUMB
AEROBI // CROSSFIT



Rr. Sali Butka, 1001 Tirana, Albania
t: +355 6 6666 6171
e: leonardvarfi86@gmail.com, fb: warriors.al

- HOLY SEE (VATICAN)**
▶ D-4, Rr. Durrësit 13, tel. +355 4 223 35 16. Open 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
- HUNGARY**
▶ E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 16, tel. +355 4 223 22 38, www.mfa.gov.hu/emb/tirana. Open 08:00 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.
- IRAN**
▶ H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohtiti 20, tel. +355 4 222 76 98, tirana.mfa.gov.ir. Open 08:00 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.
- ISRAEL**
▶ E-3, Rr. Abdyl Frasherit (EGT Tower, 14th floor), tel. +355 4450 8502, ambassador-sec@tirana.mfa.gov.il.
- ITALY**
Consulates in Vlora and Shkodra. ▶ H-5, Rr. Gjon Pali II, 2, tel. +355 4 227 59 00, www.ambtirana.esteri.it. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

A'mâr Design



A'mâr Design is a full-service company that provides complete planning, consulting and supervision for both corporate and social events, graphic and interior design projects dedicated to meeting your needs. Established in 2015 in Tirana, it is founded by three young architects and urban designers and staffed by creative professionals who will custom all of your needs.

The services are available throughout the country helping to present highly-effective events. They pride themselves on attention to detail and a "Theme" approach to quality event presentation. The team is built on people with great ideas; needless to say, part of it are professional architects and designers that are an important part of the success.

They provide the clients with events through creativity and uniqueness. Whether the event is a corporate or social one they incorporate themes, design layouts and decor with the goal of making your design-specific event a most elegant, unique and memorable experience. Each creation is well-planned, starting with the brainstorming sessions, continuing through the production and ending with the completion.



fitness forma 

Rr. Maliq Muço, near with circus
Tel: 04 226 4293,  fitness_forma
 Gym Forma, Funpage: Fitness Forma

KOSOVO

► G-4, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 6, tel. +355 4 226 16 50, www.ambasada-ks.net/al.

MACEDONIA

► F-2, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +3554 4 223 09 09, www.mfa.gov.mk. Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

MONTENEGRO

► G-5, Rr. Jul Varibova 11, tel. +355 4 226 13 09. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

NETHERLANDS

► H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 10, tel. +355 4 224 08 28, www.mfa.nl/tir. Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

POLAND

► D-2, Rr. Durrësit 123, tel. +355 4 223 41 90. Open 08.15-16.15. Closed Sat, Sun.

ROMANIA

► H-5, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji 1, tel. +355 4 225 60 71, www.mae.ro. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

RUSSIA

► H-5, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 2, tel. +355 4 225 60 40, www.albania.mid.ru. Open Mon, Wed, Fri 08:00-12:00.

SAUDI ARABIA

► D-3, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +355 4 224 83 06, www.mofa.gov.sa. Open 09:00 - 15:00, Fri 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

SERBIA

► H-4, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 9/1, tel. +355 4 223 20 91, www.tirana.mfa.gov.rs. Open 10:00 - 12:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

SLOVENIA

► I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frasherit 11/1, EGT Tower, tel. +355 4 227 48 58. Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

SPAIN

► D-2, Rr. Skënderbej 43, tel. +355 4 227 49 61, www.maec.es. Open 09:30 - 14:00, 16:00 - 19:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

SWEDEN

► H-6, Rr. Pjetër Budi 56, tel. +355 4 238 06 50, www.swedenabroad.com/tirana. Open 10:00 - 12:00. Closed Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun.

SWITZERLAND

► H-6, Rr. Elbasanit 81, tel. +355 4 223 48 88, www.eda.admin.ch/tirana. Open 09:00 - 11:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

TURKEY

► I-6, Rr. Elbasanit 65, tel. +355 4 238 03 50, www.tirana.be.mfa.gov.tr. Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

UNITED KINGDOM

► E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 12, tel. +355 4 223 49 73, www.ukinalbania.fco.gov.uk. Open 09:00 - 11:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

UNITED STATES

Visits by appointment only. ► I-6, Rr. Elbasanit 103, tel. +355 4 224 72 85, tirana.usembassy.gov. Open 14:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

AIDA (ALBANIAN INVESTMENT DEVELOPMENT AGENCY)

► G-4, Blv. Gjergj Fishta, tel. +355 4 225 10 01, www.aida.gov.al.

ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENT FUND

► H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri 10, tel. +355 4 223 55 97, www.albaniandf.org.

INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS

► Blv. Zhan D'Ark 3, tel. +355 4 222 24 11, www.instat.gov.al.

MUNICIPALITY OF TIRANA

► F-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 222 66 29, www.tirana.gov.al. Open . Closed Sun.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

► H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 1, tel. +355 4 225 65 61, www.keshilliministrave.al.

HEALTH & BEAUTY

AQUADROM

Nice place, very green area, three big swimming pools and one dedicated for kids and what was the best, only few people there (no more than 30 pax there). Good for the hot day when you are looking for relax:-), entrance - 500 lek per person for the whole day stay which is great. Good food and drinks available. We enjoy very much the lazy day in swimming pool in Tirana.

► K/j-4, Rr. Anton Ashta, prane Liqenit Artificial, Tirana 10001, Albania, tel. +355 4 24 65 52, www.aquadrom.al. Open 08:00 - 00:00.

ARDI HAIR FASHION

► H-3, Rr. Vaso Pasha 7, tel. +355 4 227 09 67. Open 08:30 - 19:30. Closed Sun.

DA SHANGHAI HEALTH CENTRE

► I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi 16/6, tel. +355 4 222 49 27. Open 09:00 - 13:00, 15:30 - 21:30. Closed Sun.

GENCI

Men's hairdresser. ► C-5, Rr. Elbasanit, Pall 2, Shk 9, Ap 70, tel. +355 4 227 23 13. Open 11:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

GOLDEN SPA

► F-4, Blv. Barjam Curri, Pallatet Agimi, tel. +355 69 20 21 023, www.goldentirana.com. Open 11:00 - 22:00. Closed Sun. [CE]

JOYEL SPA

► Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 234 79 79, www.joyelspa.com. Open 09:00 - 21:00. Closed Mon.

Directory

KREHËRI I ARTË I EDLIRËS

Women's hairdresser. ▶ G-6, Rr. Petro Nini Luarasi, Nd.61 H4, tel. +355 4 223 39 50. Open 08:00- 21:00.

SALLON SHARM

A hairdresser with a difference. Profits go to a charity improving the lives of prisoners. ▶ Rr. Bardhyl 20, tel. +355 68 606 87 77. Open 10:00 - 19:00. Closed Mon, Sun.

TIRANA YOGA

▶ Rr e Elbasanit, tel. +355 69 522 95 41, www.tiranayoga.com. Open 10:00 - 22:00.

TUTTESTETICA

Wellness centre, sauna, beauty, fitness and more. ▶ I-3, Rr. Nikolla Tupe, tel. +355 4 224 36 91, www.tuttestetica.al. Open 08:00 - 22:00, Sat 08:30 - 21:00, Sun 09:00:20:00.

VELUR SPA

Has a *hamam* (Turkish bath). ▶ G-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, Metropol Center, tel. +355 4 222 25 50. Open 09:00 - 22:00, Sun 14:00 - 22:00.

WANG YAN MASSAGE

▶ I-3, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +355 4 241 58 70. Open 09:00 - 21:00.

HOSPITALS & CLINICS

ABC CLINIC

Christian, English-speaking clinic. ▶ D-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa 260, tel. +355 4 223 41 05, www.abchealth.org. Open 09:00 - 13:00, Tue, Thu 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

AMERICAN HOSPITAL (SPITALI AMERIKAN)

A modern hospital along the Durrës highway, with international staff. ▶ tel. +355 4 235 75 35, www.spitaliamerikan.com.

HYGEIA HOSPITAL

Albania's first large private hospital. ▶ Tirana-Durrës highway, tel. +355 4 239 00 00, www.hygeia.al.

KLINIKA IRMA

A large private multi-speciality clinic near the Grand Park. Doctors speak English, French and Italian. ▶ I-4, Rr. Dora D'Istria, tel. +355 4 224 30 00. Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

LUIGI MONTI CLINIC

Part of the Catholic Diagnostic Center. ▶ E-3, Rr. Kavajës 120, tel. +355 4 222 39 06, www.unizkm.al. Open 08:00 - 14:00, 16:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun.

MARIE STOPEZ CLINIC

Family planning. ▶ H-2, Rr. Tefta Tashko Koço 10, tel. +355 4 224 10 18. Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 08:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

INSURANCE COMPANIES

EUROSIG

▶ G-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 (0) 42 238 999, info@eurosig.al, www.eurosig.al. Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun. 

INSIG

▶ E-4/5, Rr. Dibrës 91, tel. +355 4 225 68 12, www.insig.

com.al. Open 08:00 - 20:00.

INTERALBANIAN

▶ I-3, Rr. Sulejman Delvina, Zayed Business Center, tel. +355 4 222 95 78, www.interalbanian.com. Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat 08:30 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

SIGAL UNIQA GROUP AUSTRIA

▶ E-4, Blv. Zogu I 1, tel. +355 4 223 33 08, www.sigal.com.al. Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

SIGMA

▶ I-2, Rr. Komuna Parisit, tel. +355 4 225 82 54, www.sigma-al.com.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS

ALBANIAN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

▶ H-6, Rr. Elbasanit 24, tel. +355 694 74 68 56. Open 08:00 - 16:00.

ECOLE VIKTOR HYGO

▶ Rr. Tre Vellezërit Kondi, tel. +355 4 237 17 25, www.ecole-vhugo.com. Open 08:00 - 16:00.

MEMORIAL INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

▶ Rr. Dritan Hoxha 1, tel. +355 4 223 73 79. Open 08:00 - 16:00.

TIRANA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

▶ Rr. Vilat Gjermane, tel. +355 4 236 52 39. Open 08:00 - 16:00.

WORLD ACADEMY OF TIRANA

▶ Rr. Bilal Golemi 17/2, tel. +355 4 244 40 14, www.worldacademyoftirana.com. Open 08:00 - 16:00.

LANGUAGE COURSES

INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGE CENTRE

▶ D-5, Rr. Tefta Tashko-Koço, tel. +355 4 223 61 41. Open 09:00 - 19:00.

LINCOLN CENTER

▶ H-4, Rr. Qemal Stafa 184, tel. +355 4 223 08 80, www.lincolnalbania.org. Open 8:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

LAWYERS & CONSULTANTS

BOGA & ASSOCIATES

▶ H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 225 10 50, www.bogalaw.com. Open 08:30 - 18:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

DELOITTE

▶ F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, Eurocol Center, tel. +355 4 227 79 20, www.deloitte.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

KALO & ASSOCIATES

▶ E-3, Rr. Kavajës, Qendra e Businessit G-KAM, tel. +355 4 223 35 32, www.kalo-attorneys.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

KPMG

▶ H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Tower 1, tel. +355 4 227 45 24, www.kpmg.al. Open 08:30 - 17:30. Closed Sat, Sun.



SË BASHKU DREJT SUKSESIT TË SIGURTË!

- Monitoroni konsumin e karburantit në kohë reale
- Gjurmoni çdo sekondë mjetin
- Fikni mjetin në distancë
- Fotografoni rrugën sipas dëshirës nga kompjuteri juaj



Përfitoni çdo sekondë!



Certifikimi nga TUV Austria, kompania botërore e certifikimit të cilësia

Directory

TBI LAW FIRM

► D-4, Blv. Zogu I, Veve Business Center, tel. +355 4 222 89 62, www.tbi-al.com. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

TONUCCI & PARTNERS

► H-4, Rr. Abdi Toptani, tel. +355 4 225 07 11, www.tonucci.it. Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

LIBRARIES

AMERICAN CORNER

► E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej (National Library), tel. +355 4 26 99 55. Open 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

NATIONAL LIBRARY

► E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej (Palace of Culture), tel. +355 4 222 38 43, www.bksh.al. Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat, Sun 08:00 - 14:00.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY (BIBLIOTEKA UNIVERSITARE)

► I-4, Sheshi Nënë Tereza, tel. +355 4 226 94 54. Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

MEDIA

ALBANIAN DAILY NEWS

► I-5/6, Rr. Dervish Hima 1, tel. +355 4 225 61 12, www.albaniannews.com. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

TIRANA TIMES

► G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova 7/1, tel. +355 4 227 42 03, www.tiranatimes.com. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRIES

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & CONSUMER PROTECTION (MINISTRIA E BUJQESISE, USHQIMIT DHE MBROJTJES SE KONSUMATORIT)

► F-4, Sheshi Skënderbej 2, tel. +355 4 222 65 51. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (MINISTRIA E MBROJTJES)

► F-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 1, tel. +355 4 222 66 01, www.mod.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, COMMERCE & ENERGY (MINISTRIA E EKONOMISE TREGETISE & ENERJITIKES)

► F-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 2, tel. +355 4 222 76 17, www.mete.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & SCIENCE (MINISTRIA E ARISMIT & SHKENCAVE)

► E-3, Rr. Durrësit 23, tel. +355 4 222 63 07, www.mash.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT (MINISTRIA E MJEDISIT)

► D-2, Rr. Durrësit 27, tel. +355 4 227 06 30, www.moe.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE (MINISTRIA E FINANCES)

► F-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 4, tel. +355 4 222 79 37, www.minfin.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (MINISTRIA E

PUNEVE TE JASHTME)

► Blv. Gjergj Fishta 6, tel. +355 4 236 40 90, www.mfa.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MINISTRIA E SHENDETSISE)

► G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri 1, tel. +355 4 236 46 84, www.moh.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF INTEGRATION (MINISTRIA E INTEGRIMIT)

► I-5, Rr. Gjon Pali II 3, tel. +355 4 222 86 45, www.mie.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS (MINISTRIA E PUNEVE TE BRENDSHME)

► F-4, Sheshi Skënderbej 3, tel. +355 4 224 71 55, www.moi.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF JUSTICE (MINISTRIA E DREJTESISE)

► F-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 93 88, www.justice.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, SOCIAL AFFAIRS & EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (MINISTRIA E PUNES, CESHTJEVE SOCIALE & SHANSEVE TE BARABARTA)

► F-2, Rr. Kavajës 53, tel. +355 4 225 10 08, www.mpcs.gov.al.

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS, TRANSPORT & TELECOMMUNICATIONS (MINISTRIA E PUNEVE PUBLIKE, TRANSPORTIT DHE TELEKOMUNIKACIONIT)

► F-4, Sheshi Skënderbej 5, tel. +355 4 238 08 33, www.mpptt.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

MINISTRY OF TOURISM, CULTURE, YOUTH & SPORTS (MINISTRIA E TURIZMAT, KULTURE, RINISE DHE SPORTEVE)

► E-3/4, Rr. e Kavajës, tel. +355 4 222 25 08, www.mkrs.gov.al. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

NGOS

EBRD

► H-4/5, Rr. Abdi Toptani, Torre Drini, tel. +355 4 223 28 98, www.ebrd.com. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

EU DELEGATION

► I/H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, ABA Business Center, tel. +355 4 222 83 20, www.delalib.ec.europa.eu.

GTZ

► E-5, Rr. Skënderbeg 21/1, tel. +355 4 223 04 14, www.gtz.de.

IMF

► G-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Tower 1, tel. +355 4 228 04 00, www.imf.org. Open 09:00 - 17:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR MIGRATION

► H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, Vila nr 3, tel. +355 4 227 16 29, www.iom.int. Open 08:30 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

OSCE

► J-5, Sheshi Italia (Sheraton Hotel), tel. +355 4 223 59 96, www.osce.org.

SNV (DUTCH PROJECTS OFFICE)

► J-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 225 58 00, www.snvworld.org.





Blerina Avrazi
Notarie

Rr. e Durrësit, Pall.204,
T: +355 4 222 11 87
E: blerina_avrazi@yahoo.it



Unknown Partisan (see p.60)

SOROS FOUNDATION

► E-5/6, Rr. Qemal Stafa 120/1, tel. +355 4 223 46 21, www.soros.al. Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL

► Blv. Gjergj Fishta, tel. +355 4 226 74 57, www.tia.al.

UNDP

► I/H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II (ABA Business Center), tel. +355 4 240 07 21, www.undp.org.al.

UNFPA

► F-4, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 1/1, tel. +355 4 225 78 38, www.unfpa.org.

UNHCR

► G/H-4, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 4, tel. +355 4 225 01 06, www.unhcr.org.

UNICEF

► F-4, Rr. Skënderbej, tel. +355 4 227 33 35, tirana@unicef.org, www.unicef.org. Open 8:30 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

USAID

► H/G-5/6, Rr. Elbasanit 103, tel. +355 4 224 72 85, www.usaid.gov.

WHO

► H-5, Rr.Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +355 4 2236 44 84, www.un.org.al.

NOTARIES

AGIM ROBO

► H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 27/1, tel. +355 4 224 88 40. Open 08:30 - 14:00; 18:00 - 19:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

BLERINA AVRAZI

► E-3/4, Rr. e Durrësit, tel. +355 4 222 11 87.

MAJLINDA LLESHI

► H/I-2/3, Rr. Sulejman Delvina, tel. +355 69 203 66 36.

JULIAN ZHELEGU

► Pjeter Bogdani, Pll.13, tel. +355 68 20 82 258

OPTICIANS

ITALOPTIKE

► D-5, Rr. Dibrës 271, tel. +355 4 222 29 85. Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

OPTIKA BRUNA

► G-4, Blv. Bajram Curri, tel. +355 4 224 63 61, www.otticabruna.com. Open 09:00 - 13:00/16:00- 20:00. Closed Sun.

OTTICAL

► E-3, Rr. Kavajës 207, tel. +355 4 225 38 83. Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun.

PHARMACIES

FARMACIA 7-17

► C-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 222 22 41. Open 24hrs.

FARMATECH

► D-5, Rr. Barrikadave, tel. +355 4 223 65 84. Open 08:30 - 22:00. Closed Sun.

PHARMACIA AGIMI

► Blv, Zhan Dark, tel. +355 4 22 46 700.

REAL ESTATE

1 REAL ESTATE

► E-3, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 223 31 18. Open 08:00 - 19:00.

ALMA

► H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII 8/1, tel. +355 4 225 00 58. Open 10:00 - 18:00.

BALKIMO

► J-5, Sheshi Italia (Sheraton Hotel), tel. +355 4 226 63 94, www.balkimo.com.

CENTURY 21 ALBANIA

► F-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, tel. +355 4 225 05 99, www.century21albania.com. Open 09:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun.

COLLIERS

► G/H-4, Rr. Ibrahim Rugova, Sky Tower, tel. +355 4 240 04 70, www.colliers.com. Open 09:00 - 20:00.

GREEN HOURS

► C/D-5, Rr. Abdi Kazani, tel. +355 4 223 28 44, www.greenhours.net. Open 09:00 - 17:00.

INF93

► D-6, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi 8, tel. +355 4 224 95 22, www.inf-93.com. Open 09:00 - 18:00.

REMOVAL COMPANIES

ABKONS

► H-5, Rr: Themistokli Gërmenji, tel. +355 4 22 58 326,

info@abkons.com, www.abkons.com. Open 08:30 - 17:30.

GPS-ATD

► Rr. "Ali Pash Gucia ", 81/1, tel. +355 69 60 07 700, info@atd-grp.com, www.atd-grp.com.

MOVE ONE RELOCATIONS

Removal services for companies and individuals. ► D-5, Rr. Brigada 8, tel. +355 4 225 81 03, www.moveoneinc.com. Open . Closed Sat, Sun.

TRANSLATORS

FADIL METAJ

Translates English to and from Albanian, plus Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, Bulgarian and Russian.

► D-3, Rr. Durrësit, Pall. 79, Shk. 4, Kati 1, tel. +355 4 223 04 48.

TEDX

The independent TED people have started events in Tirana. A fascinating insight into the minds and lives of Albania's creatives and entrepreneurs, check www.tedx Tirana.com for information about their next event.




Pharmacy Agimi
Blv Zhan D'ark,
in front of district court, (near ish - Ekpozita Shqiperia sot)

Pharmacy Agimi 1
Rr. Muhamet Gjollësja,
near Vasil Shanto high-school

Pharmacy Agimi 2
Rr. Teodor Keko, Unaza e Re,
near with ish Astirin

Tel: +355673819899
Open: 08:00 - 24:00

ANGELO NARDELLI

1951



Rr. Sami Frasheri
Infront of Police Department, Tirane, Albania
M: +355 6 7408 3431
T: +355 4 2227 072
E: frenkliolger@gmail.com

OPERACIONI TOURNEO

Misioni juaj është misioni ynë.



GAMA E RE FORD **TOURNEO**

> **Fleksibiliteti për 5, 7 dhe 9 vënde**

Pajisur me një shumëllojshmëri mënyrash pozicionimi sediljesh dhe me një konsum karburanti mbreslënës, modelet e reja Tourneo Courier, Tourneo Connect dhe Tourneo Custom janë gati dhe presin urdhëra. Cilido qoftë misioni yt, askush nuk shkon më tej për t'ju çuar atje.

FORD - Albanian Motor Company
Autostrada TR-DR km10, Kashar-Tiranë
Tel : +355 42 407 992
E-mail : info@albanianmotor.com
www.albanianmotor.com



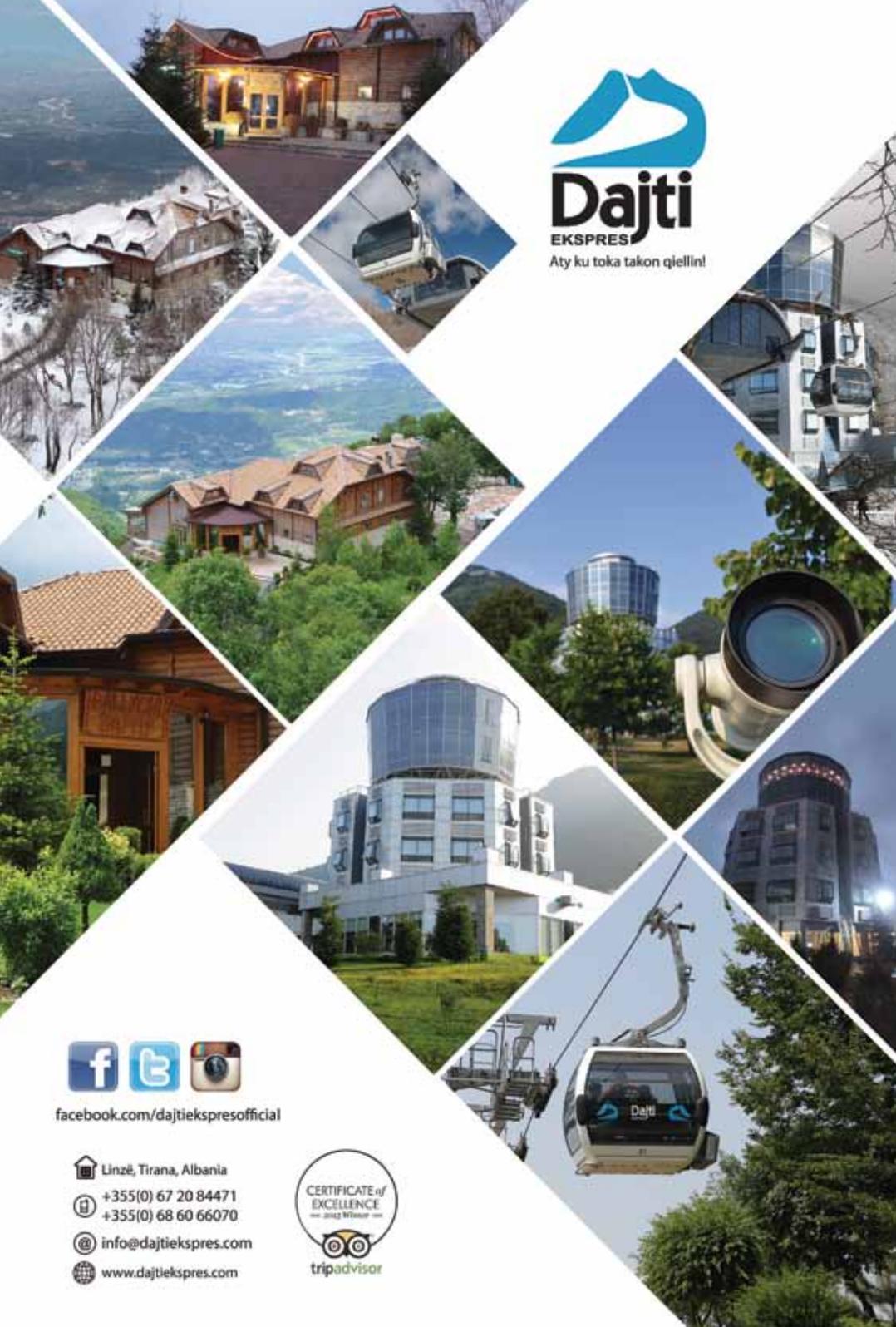
Go Further

Street register

All Tirana streets below are prefixed Rruga (Rr.). Boulevards are listed as Blv, and squares as Sheshi.



- 4 Dëshmorët C-6
- 28 Nëntori F-4/5, E-5
- Abdi Toptani F-4/5
- Abdulla Keta D-5
- Abdyl Frashëri I-3/4/5
- Adem Kruja G-2
- Ali Pashe Guçia C-5/6, D-6
- Andon Zako Çajupi H-3
- Asim Vokshi D-3/4
- Asim Zeneli H-5/6
- Bardhok Biba D-4
- Barrikadave B/C-4, D-4/5
- Begir Luga E-6
- Besim Inami F-2/3
- Bilal Konxholli C-5/6
- Blv. Bajram Curri H-1 to G-6
- Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit F-4 to I-5
- Blv. Gërgj Fishta H-1 to G-4
- Blv. Zhan D'Ark G-5 to E-6
- Blv. Zogu I C/D/E-4
- Bogdani E-3
- Brigada VIII H-3/4
- Çameria F-3/4
- Çerçiz Topulli C-4, D-5
- Ded Gjo Luli E-4
- Dervish Hatixhi D/C-4
- Dervish Hima I-5/6
- Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi J-1/2
- Dibrës C/D-5, B-5/6
- Don Bosko B/C-2
- Donika Kastrioti G/H-4
- Dora D'Istria K/J-4
- Durrësit D-2/3, E-3/4
- Edit Durham E-2
- Elbasanit G-5, H-5/6, I-6
- Emin Duraku I-2, H-3
- Fadil Rada I-2, H-3
- Faik Konica I-6
- Fatmir Haxhiu G-5
- Frederik Shiroka F-1/2, E-2
- Gjin Bue Shpata H/I-3
- Gjin Kuqalli I/J-3
- Gjon Buzuku B/C-5
- Gjon Muzaka E-2
- Gjon Pali II G/H/I-5
- Grigor Heba I-2, J-2/3
- Hajdar Hidi E/F-3
- Haki Mborja J-1
- Halim Xhelo E-2
- Haxhi Hysen Dalliu D-3, C-3/4
- Haxhi Sina C-6
- Him Kolli F-3
- Hoxhe Vokrrri D-6
- Hoxha Tahsim E/D-6
- Ibrahim Dervishi I-1
- Ibrahim Rugova F/G/H/I-4
- Isa Boletini C/D-5
- Islam Alla E/F/G-3
- Ismail Qemali H-3/4/5
- Jani Vreto E-5/6
- Jeronim de Rada F-5
- Jordan Mita A/B/C-3
- Jul Varibova G-5
- Justin Gadari E/F-2
- Jusuf Vriani I-2
- K. Shajaku B/C-4
- Kaj Karafili E-3/4
- Karl Gega B-4
- Kavajës F-1/2/3, E-3/4
- Komuna e Parisit H-2/3, I-2
- Kont Urani E-3
- Kristaq Mema D-2/3
- Lek Dukagjini I-5, J-4
- Lidhja Prizrenit I/J-4
- Liman Kaba J-2/3, K-2
- Luigj Gurakuqi E-4/5
- Mahmut Fortuzi B/C-4
- Maliq Muço D-4
- Margarita Tutulani J-3/4
- Medar Shtylla I/J/K-2
- Mehmet Broçaj D-3
- Mihal Duri E-3
- Mihal Grameno G-6
- Milto Tutulani I/J-3
- Mine Peza C-2, D-2/3, E-3
- Muhamet Gjollështa D-1/2, E-1, F-1, G-1/2, H-2
- Murat Toptani F-4/5
- Musa Agolli B-5
- Mustafa Lleshi G-6
- Mustafa Matohiti G/H-5
- Myrtezim Këlliçi E/F-5
- Myslym Shyri G-2/3, F-3/4
- Naim Frashëri E/F-2
- Nasi Pavlo H/I-6
- Nikolla Lena F-2
- Nikolla Tupe I-3/4, H-4
- Papa Kristo Negovani C-4
- Perlat Rexhepi C-4
- Petro Korçari I-1
- Petro Nini Luarasi F-6
- Pjetër Bogdani H-3/4
- Pjetër Budi H-6
- Prek Bibë Doda H-2
- Presidenti George W. Bush F-5
- Prokop Myzeqari D-3
- Qemal Guranjaku H-6
- Qemal Stafa E-5, D-5/6
- Ramzan Farka B-6
- Reshit Çollaku F-4
- Reshit Petrela B/C-4
- Robert Shvare I-1
- Sami Frashëri G-3 to J-4
- Saraçëve D-5
- Sermedin Said Toptani F-4
- Shaqir Ofshafi C-5/6
- Sheh Ahmet Pazarri I-6
- Shenasi Dishnica D/E-5
- Sheshi 21 Dhjetori F-1
- Sheshi Avni Rustemi E-5
- Sheshi Fan Noli E-5
- Sheshi Italia I-5
- Sheshi Nënë Tereza I-5
- Sheshi Skënderbeg E/F-4
- Sheshi Zogu i Zi C/D-2
- Shyqyr Bërxolli E/F-3
- Shyqyr Ishmi F-6
- Siri Kodra B-4
- Skënder Kosturi B/C-4
- Skënderbeg D/E/F-2
- Stavro Vinjau H/I-6
- Sulejman Delvina H-2, I-2/3
- Sulejman Pasha D-3/4, E-4
- Tafaj C-5/6
- Tefat Tashko Koço E-6
- Thanas Ziko B-5/6, C-6
- Themistokli Gërmenji H-5/6
- Thimi Mitko E-6
- Unaza C-2/3/4
- V. Karapici E-6
- V. Luarasi C-4/5, D-5
- Vaso Pasha G/H/I/J-4
- Vëllezërit Manastiri D-2
- Viktor Eftimiu H-1, I-1/2
- Xhezmi Delli E-2
- Xhorxhi Martini E/F-5
- Ymer Kurti I/J-3
- Zenel Babiçi D-5



Dajti
EKSPRES
Aty ku toka takon qiellin!



facebook.com/dajtiexpresofficial

Linze, Tirana, Albania

+355(0) 67 20 84471
+355(0) 68 60 66070

info@dajtiexpres.com

www.dajtiexpres.com



UNIQUE ALBANIAN BANK

Money payments and transfers
Cheques & Money exchange
Accounts and Saving schemes
Financings for Corporate
and individual clients
Trade/documentary financings

www.uba.com.al





Sheshi Italia,
Tirana, Albania

T: +355 4 2274 707
F: +355 4 2274 711

E: reservations.tirana@sheraton.com
E: sales.tirana@sheraton.com

W: www.sheratontiranahotel.com
W: www.sheraton.com/tirana