



NEW WALKING	
type :	Hiking Tours Self-Guided
level :	🌀🌀🌀🌀🌀
duration :	8 days
period:	Apr May Jun Sep Oct
code:	ALSWCT

## Albanian Coastal Trail - Albania

### Albanian Coastal Trail

8 days, price from € 828



Beyond the **Karaburun Peninsula** and right beneath the 2000 m high **Ceuranian Peaks**, the **Albanian Riviera** stretches until the Greek border and attracts thousands of beachgoers during the hot summer months. **In spring and autumn**, the mountains and beaches are all yours to enjoy, ideally combined on this self-guided tour. Start underneath the highest coastal peaks with **stunning views of the deep blue sea** and the rugged coastline. Hike on empty shepherd's trails, through citrus groves and olive trees, from one quaint stone village to another. Swim in the **shimmering, crystal clear waters** of the Ionian Sea in some of the most secluded beaches. Breathe in the **herb-scented mountain air** every day and enjoy the finest of Albanian food, a mix of **fresh Mediterranean and hearty mountain cuisine**. Experience what lies **beyond the seashore** and what most are missing out on, all at your own pace and carefree, while we take care of your accommodation and transfers for a hassle-free adventure.

### Route

### **Day 1 Arrival in Vlore**

Welcome to Albania! We meet in Tirana (airport or city), hand out the materials (roadbook, maps, GPS unit, SIM-Card), and brief you on the upcoming days. Then, the transfer to Llogara National Park follows. Passing the salt pans of the Narta Lagoon and the historic city of Vlore, enjoying the coastal vista of the bay, you drive up to Llogara in the late afternoon. Located in the heart of the Ceraunian Mountains, it is an important biosphere reserve, famous in particular for its 500-year-old black pines and firs. The curious shapes the trees take from the winds, especially when engulfed by fog, create the atmosphere of an enchanted forest. Tonight you stay 800 m high in a comfy mountain hotel. Chose between the hotel's restaurant and other places nearby, to enjoy your first Albanian mountain meal.

### **Day 2 The 2000m high coastal mountains, 12 km**

A short transfer takes you to today's trailhead, at the highest point of the Llogara Pass (1.043 m). A narrow, partly steep trail takes you up through ancient snakeskin pines. During communism, the tree giants were tapped for resin, today they rest peacefully surrounded by chamomile and sage. You steadily walk up the zig-zag shepherd's trail, and the first viewpoint rewards with views over the endless blue of the Ionian Sea and the Albanian Riviera. Today's goal lies beneath the rocky peak of Qorre (2.018 m) at the Dhjopuri Saddle (1.600 m). There you can take a rest and enjoy the views of the Llogara Pass, separating the Karaburun Peninsula from the rest of the riviera, and the village Dukat at the foot of the mountain. Why not use the time for a high-up picnic? Later on, stroll down the same way down to one of the beer-garden restaurants. A transfer on a winding road, with an optional stop to visit Dhermi, takes you through the charming Mediterranean villages of the Riviera further down south to the small seaside city Himara. This will be your stay for the upcoming four nights, in a hotel by the sea, from where you will start your daily hikes through the picturesque pebble beaches and the idyllic villages of the Riviera.

*Distance:* 12 km

*Altitude difference:* +1550 / - 1500 m

### **Day 3 Mediterranean flair in the back country, 12 km**

The scenic morning drive along glistening bays ends at the foot of the inland village Kudhes. The winding cement road takes you through olive trees and houses up to the heart of the village, where the generous shade of the plane trees invites for a coffee in the company of the friendly locals. The rocky shepherds' path that follows upon exiting the village is adorned by bright pink oleanders and lush green cypress trees. Slowly ascending, flocks of goats grazing the grounds raise their heads towards you with curiosity. Arriving at the terraced fields, the view opens to the deep blue sea and over to the island Corfu in the close background. Soon, you arrive at the Oldtown Qeparo on the hilltop. Time seems to stand still in the maze of stone houses and cobbled streets, and a "hidden" viewpoint overlooks the olive fields and tranquil shore. From here, you can descend to the New Qeparo by the beach or continue the walk above the shoreline, across the hillside towards Borsh, to enjoy the coastal landscape a little longer. On the drive back to Himara, there's the option to visit the castle at Porto Palermo, overlooking the submarine tunnels. Inside, you can learn more about the life and reign of Ali Pasha of Tepelena and the castle's well thought through architecture.

*Distance:* 12 km

*Altitude difference:* +425 / -425 m

### **Day 4 Wonders of the Ionian coast, 12,5 km**

Instead of mountains, today's route takes you across cliffs and through Mediterranean macchia from one dazzling beach to another. It is by no means a flat walk, but it offers the perfect hike & swim day through the beaches that have turned the Albanian Riviera into a rising hot-spot. In the morning, a 30-min drive takes you to one of the most distinct upper coastal villages, Vuno. The white, stacked up houses on the hillside, the centuries old orthodox churches, the central open-air café and the partisan memorial next to it invite for an exploratory stroll. The idyllic descent through olive groves is enjoyable, as you slowly feel the salty aroma nearing the sea. Jal was dubbed the country's Ibiza, and close to it is the secluded "Aquarium". Reachable on foot only, it is named after its unusually clear water. Accompanied by the awe-inspiring colors and the sound of the crashing waves, you walk the red-earthed trail until you reach Livadhi beach. You can choose to stop here for some more swimming, walk through the city to reach your hotel or go the thousand-year-old cobblestone path up to Oldtown Himara and its castle of ancient origins. The hilltop town offers a similar atmosphere to Qeparo, a high-up view of the surroundings and is especially beautiful right before sunset.

*Distance:* 12,5 km

*Altitude difference:* +250 / -550 m

### **Day 5 Quaint villages of the south, 6 km**

Today you visit the lesser known southern part of the riviera for a coastal mountain hike, opposite to the beaches. From Lukova, an initially steep shepherd's path takes you towards the ridge, with views of the terraced hills plunging into the turquoise sea. Soon, Corfu appears in the horizon too, and once at the pass you peek at the wild, solitary inland on the other side of the mountain. Weather permitting, it's even possible to follow a steep and trail-less, yet straightforward path up to the Lavani peak, the highest point in sight. The olive tree covered coastal landscape and the bays of tomorrow's walk offer one of the most special views of the entire trip, yours to fully enjoy in peace on your picnic break. The descent follows a wide, exposed gravel road, allowing you to immerse yourself in the views all the way down to Piqeras, where you regain contact with the world again. Driving over the serpentine, you're transferred back to Himara for some rest. In the evening, you can go on an evening stroll at the busy center or for a cocktail by the beach.

*Distance:* 6 km

*Altitude difference:* +450 / -500 m

## Day 6 The prisoners Trail, 12 km

A relaxed and diverse walk takes you to the southern side of the Riviera once more. Starting in Lukova, you walk through the flower adorned houses, down the old cobblestone alleys and even discover a small waterfall. Continue through uniform paths and endless terraces of olive groves, constructed by human hand only, without the help of any machinery. Here, during communism, political prisoners were converted to forced labourers. After a smooth descent, you land in Bunec beach. The open skyline, tranquil sea, and the unusual emptiness of the pebbly shore make it seem like a scene from a stranded film. You walk along the shoreline, pass by a relict concrete quay and ascend on a little-used path, admiring the shimmer of the turquoise waters from above. Continuing the stroll along the hillside, dwelling into the Mediterranean atmosphere, the endless seeming Borsh beach slowly comes to view. It calls for a refreshing swim and one last mental picture of the romantic surroundings, before parting ways with the Ionian Sea. The driver picks you up, and you head for the heights of the Ceraunian Mountains and the Llogara National Park, at the same mountain hotel of your first overnight.

*Distance:* 12 km

*Altitude difference:* +150 / -400 m

## Day 7 The Karaburun Peninsula, 11 km

After a rich breakfast, the last and also longest hike of your journey calls. The trailhead lies at the highest point of the Llogara pass again, this time opposite of the Cika and Qorre peaks. A wide gravel path steadily leads to the radio towers at the ridge. Here, the lush green Karaburun Peninsula's western slopes plunge steeply into the deep blue Ionian Sea. Panoramic views of the rugged Albanian Riviera and the Bay of Vlora on the other side accompany the walk along the peninsula's spine. A rocky, partly trailless path gives the opportunity to climb Mt. Gjipali (1.446 m) for a high-up picnic break, taking a moment to memorize the harsh beauty of the entire coastal line. Afterward, you descend into a mountain pasture and then enter the Deep Pass, a rainforest-like green corridor that offers generous shade in the afternoon. Returning to the hotel, the driver picks you up shortly and you transfer to Tirana. There you can go on an evening stroll along the main boulevard to discover the influences that shaped the city. Choose one of the many restaurants and enjoy a last, delicious dinner, as you look back on an eventful week along the beautiful Ionian coast of Albania.

*Distance:* 11 km

*Altitude difference:* +425 / -625 m

## Day 8 Farewell Albania!

Time permitting, Tirana invites you to explore its streets and sights on a stroll. Sip an espresso in one of the charming bars, observe the busy morning flow and select special treats as edible souvenirs at the lively "New Bazaar". Interested to learn more about the communist past? "Bunkart 2" and "The House of Leaves" provide insights and are only a 5 min walk away from Tirana's main "Skanderbeg Square". Your multi-faceted journey in Albania ends with a 40 min transfer to the airport. Thank you for joining our adventure, we hope to see you again in the country of warm hospitality, countless mountains and sun-kissed beaches.

## Practical info

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Airport to fly into and from is Tirana. The airport transfer to the first accommodation is included in the price.

## Included

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### What is included

- 7 Nights in double room in \*\*/\*\* hotels with breakfast
- 2 lunches
- luggage transportation from hotel to hotel
- transfers as described in the day by day program, including the airport transfer
- maps and detailed description of the itinerary in digital form, app
- Medical and luggage travel insurance
- 24h phone assistance

### What is not included

- Transfers to the starting location and from the arriving location of the tour
- lunches and dinners, if not otherwise stated
- visits and entrance fees - tips
- personal expense
- possible sojourn taxes
- everything that is not mentioned in the "What is included" section.

### Optional Services

These services can be added to the ones included in the base price of the tour:

- Single room supplement
- cancellation insurance