



Corfu & Albania

From a Greek Island to the Land
of the Double Headed Eagle

Arranged with Travel Editions Group Travel for The Arts Society Dorking

Chillon Palace gardens, Corfu

21 - 28 October 2024 – 8 days from *£1,875pp

This delightful tour offers two destinations in one exquisite package. Magnificent, verdant Corfu - our home for the first two nights - was Homer's 'beautiful and rich land, with a wonderful mountain and coastal scenery as well as a rich heritage shaped by Byzantine, Roman, Venetian and British influences. Then across the sea to little known Albania, to explore its fascinating history, archaeology and culture, offering a heady mix of castles, monasteries, classical sites and historic UNESCO World Heritage towns, all set amidst spectacular scenery.



Berat, Albania



Butrint, Albania

This holiday is operated by Travel Editions Group Travel

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*Based on 20 passengers. An initial deposit of £300 per person, due by 28th February 2024.



Mon Repos

Day-by-day itinerary

21st October: Fly from London

Heathrow to Corfu with BA.

Transfer by coach from Dorking to Heathrow for flight to Corfu. On arrival, transfer to the comfortable beach front five-star Kontokali Bay, situated a short drive from the island's historic capital, Corfu Town, for a two-night stay. Dinner at the hotel.

22nd October: Mon Repos, Corfu Town and Achillion Palace gardens.

Our day begins at Mon Repos Palace, a 19th century house set in lush gardens that was built by British High Commissioner Fredric Adams in 1826, as a gift to his wife, Nina Palatianou, who came from Corfu. Mon Repos is also where Prince Philip was born. After our visit here, we have time for coffee at a lovely view point, Kanoni, that looks

across to tiny Mouse Island and the pretty monastery of Vlacherna, one of the most photographed spots on the island. Then it's on to the island's capital to explore on foot with our guide. Historic Corfu Town is a fascinating and attractive town that owes its character to its extensive history and the influence of the various occupiers of the island who left a beautiful architectural legacy, including its Venetian fortress which sits proudly on a promontory that juts into the sea. Magnificent buildings line the narrow streets that are perfect for strolling and exploring but also for lingering and enjoying a break in one of the many cafes or restaurants that line the atmospheric streets. A guided walking tour will show you the highlights. After free time for lunch we will head to the gardens of the Achilleion Palace (only the gardens are currently open to the public) and learn

the story of Empress Elisabeth of Austria (known as 'Sissi') and Kaiser William II of Germany, whose common bond was their adoration of Corfu, Greece and its culture. Return to the hotel for dinner and evening at leisure.

23rd October: Hydrofoil to Sarande Lekursi Castle, Butrint.

Check-out from the Kontokali Bay and join our bus for a short transfer to the port where, after proceeding through customs, we join the Hydrofoil to Sarande, Albania (40 minutes journey). On arrival in Sarande we will be met by our coach, that will take us the short distance to Lekursi Castle, where we can enjoy incredible views across Sarande all the way to Corfu. It's then onto the UNESCO World Heritage archaeological site of Butrint. Inhabited since prehistoric times, Butrint has been the site of a Greek



Lekursi Castle



Corfu old town



colony, a Roman city and a bishopric. Following a period of prosperity under Byzantine administration, then a brief occupation by the Venetians, the city was abandoned in the late Middle Ages after marshes formed in the area. The present archaeological site is a repository of ruins representing each period in the city's development. Returning to Butrint, there will be free time for lunch before checking into our hotel, the Hotel Agimi or Hotel Brilant in Sarande for a one-night stay. Dinner this evening at a local restaurant.

24th October: Sarande to Gjirokaaster. Depart Sarande for the historic town of Gjirokaaster. The old quarter of Gjirokaaster is known as the 'City of Stone', because the tall houses here used solid stone slabs for roofing. Our visits begin with the impressive 8th century

castle, formerly used as a prison. The castle has spectacular views across the town and its splendid traditional houses, one of which is now a fascinating folk museum and was the birthplace of Enver Hoxha, the Albanian Stalinist dictator. Check-in to the Rose Garden Hotel or Hotel Kodra, Gjirokaaster for a one-night stay. Evening at leisure where the tour manager will suggest local restaurants to choose from.

25th October: Gjirokaaster to Byllis and Berat.

Depart Gjirokaaster for Byllis and Berat. Our drive today takes us through beautiful scenery to the Hellenistic and Roman city of Byllis, an extensive site set within great Hellenistic walls in a spectacular mountainous region. Then it's on to Berat, a UNESCO World heritage site known as the "city of a thousand

windows". Towered over to the east by Tomorr Mountain at 2415m, it was founded in the 4th century B.C. The old part of the city has a remarkable collection of fine traditional houses of great architectural importance, as well as Byzantine churches, a mosque, and a fortress. Overnight at the Mangalemi, Onufri or Portik Hotel in Berat. Dinner at a traditional restaurant.

26th October: Berat to Apollonia and on to Tirana.

Leaving Berat behind, we head to the UNESCO site of Apollonia, one of the most well-known classical sites found in Albania, dating from the 6th century BC. It's a lovely site with the ruins scattered amongst an open nature. Then it's on to Tirana and check-in to the Hotel Lot Boutique or Hotel Opera for a two-night stay.



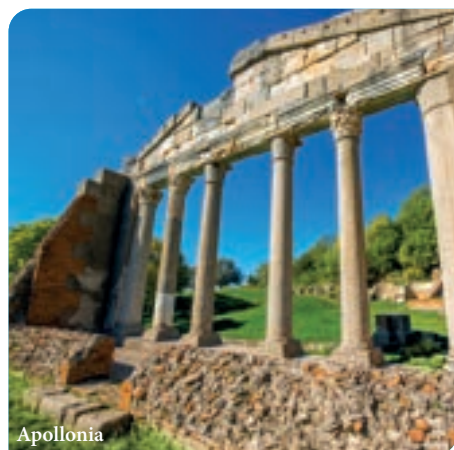


Tirana

27th October: Tirana and the Bunk'Art 1.

Albania's lively capital, Tirana, has positively blossomed since Albania left communism behind and today is a thriving modern city. Our visits here include the National Historical Museum, the early 19th century Ethem Bey Mosque and a secret nuclear bunker from the cold war era, known today as the Bunk'Art 1 Museum. This huge bunker, one of thousands built throughout Albania due to Hoxer's paranoia of a nuclear attack, was built specifically for Hoxer and his political companions and remained secret for much of its existence. It's a fascinating place to visit, especially knowing it was built as recently as the 1970s. Dinner at a local restaurant.

28th October: Depart Tirana and transfer to the airport for return flight to London Heathrow and onwards by coach to Dorking.



Apollonia

Where you stay

Kontokali Bay Resort Hotel

- 2 nights

The five-star Kontokali Bay Spa Hotel, located on the lush Kontokali Peninsula, offers comfortable rooms and a magnificent setting. The included rooms in the tour are all bay view rooms, all have private bathroom facilities, safe, hairdryer, TV, free wi-fi, air-conditioning, telephone and tea/coffee making facilities. Sea view rooms are available at a small supplement.

Hotel Agimi or Hotel Brilant in Sarande

- 1 night

Comfortable four-star hotels, just 100m from the main boulevard and 50m from the sea.

Rose Garden Hotel or Hotel Kodra,

Gjirokaštër - 1 night

Excellent four-star hotels situated just below the Old Castle at Gjirokaštër. Built in the typical and attractive traditional design, facilities include a bar, garden, lounge and seasonal swimming pool.

Hotel Mangalemi, Hotel Onufri or Hotel Portik, Berat - 1 night

Charming, historic hotels in the heart of Berat.

Hotel Lot Boutique or Opera, Tirana

- 2 nights

Four-star centrally located hotels offering modern rooms with easy access on foot to the sites of Tirana.

Included in the price

- Return transfers from Dorking to Heathrow
- Return flights from London Heathrow to Corfu and Tirana to London Heathrow
- Two nights on HB basis at the Kontokali Bay Hotel, Corfu
- One night in Sarande, one night in Gjirokaštër, one night in Berat and two nights in Tirana, staying at good standard four-star or boutique style hotels on bed and breakfast basis
- Four dinners with wine in Albania
- Transfers tours and all entrances
- Local guide and tour manager throughout
- All gratuities
- Whispers headsets where required

Not included

- Supplement for single occupancy £260
- Holiday insurance
- Meals other than those stated
- Items of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls
- Portage

