



Albanian Alps Trek

CHALLENGE:
TREKMAIN ACCOMMODATION:
COMMUNALCHALLENGE FACTOR:
TERRAIN

The Albanian Alps offer an unspoilt wilderness of magnificent snow-capped peaks, gorges, lakes and dense forests, dotted with tiny stone-built hamlets that have changed little in years. Stunning Alpine trails, without the crowds!

Our trek takes us to protected Valbona National Park, home of inspiring scenery and adventurous trekking, where we explore the valleys and high alpine pastures. Our biggest challenge is the classic trail in this region – the high Valbona Pass, used for centuries to connect remote valleys lying among the jagged peaks of the dramatic Accursed Mountains.

We round off our week with time in Shkodra and Tirana, adding cultural discovery to a week already packed with highlights.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Fly Jersey to London

Overnight stay at an airport hotel before an early morning flight the next day. Night hotel

Day 2: Fly London to Tirana; transfer to Kruja

Fly to Albania's capital, Tirana, where we transfer (approx. 30 mins) to the historic town of Kruja, where we have dinner and a trip briefing, and prepare our kit before getting a good night's rest. Night hotel.

Day 3: Kruja – Valbona National Park

Our trip kicks off with a real gem! An early start sees us driving to Lake Koman, a beautiful lake formed by dam construction – and the best access to the Valbona Valley. This scenic boat trip takes us through a magnificent fjord-like canyon to the heart of trekking country. Docking at the end of the lake, a short transfer brings us to our hospitable guesthouse in the Valbona Valley where, time permitting, we'll stretch our legs with an easy hike in the valley. This is a long day, but a wonderful introduction to your Alpine surroundings. Night guesthouse.

Drive approx. 4 hours; boat trip 2-3 hours; trek approx. 2-3 hours

Day 4: Valbona Valley Hike

Today's mountain trek not only whets our appetite for the scenery to come, but also serves as a good warm-up for our big challenge tomorrow. After a short transfer to the trailhead, we start hiking through beech and pine forest, following a shepherd's path into the more remote landscapes of the eastern Albanian Alps. Our path ascends smoothly amidst green alpine



DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

pastures (lying at approx. 1700m), with stunning views of the rocky domes of Mount Jezerca (2695m) and Mount Rosi (2560m). These surroundings make a wonderful backdrop for our picnic lunch. If we're all feeling great, we continue hiking up to the pass (2000m), before returning back down to the valley. Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 6-8 hours / 8-9km

Day 5: Valbona – Valbona Pass – Thethi

The big challenge, and the classic trail of the Albanian Alps! The path over Valbona Pass (1860m) has linked the glacier valleys of Valbona and Theth for centuries, and can only be crossed by foot from early summer to the first snowfall of winter. A short transfer brings us to our trailhead at the tiny village of Rrogam, with its traditional stone houses. We follow a steepening trail, which leads us up into a large grassy bowl of alpine meadows surrounded by rugged slopes that ascend to Valbona Pass. It's a stiff climb, but the views of the jagged peaks of the Accursed Mountains are a good reward. Our route then descends through forest and grassy meadows, losing over 1000m of altitude, to the traditional village of Thethi (850m). Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 8-9 hours / 14km

Day 6: Theth Valley Hike

More than a few muscles may be aching from yesterday's efforts, and we take the initial ascent nice and steady to warm up slowly. Our path takes us up steeply from Thethi, winding up through lush verdant forest. When the trees thin out and we can take in our surroundings, they are breath-taking: steep cliffs, cascading waterfalls, and alpine meadows abundant with colourful wildflowers. We finally arrive at Fusha e Denellit (1573m), a vast, serene alpine arena surrounded by towering peaks. We can explore the meadows and enjoy the tranquillity. Returning to Theth the same way, we should have plenty of time to relax in the village. Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 5-6 hours / 14km

Day 7: Thethi – Nderlysa

Thethi is a wonderfully well-preserved alpine village, with its traditional stone houses with wood-tiled roofs, and its photogenic location surrounded by mountains. Today we can enjoy a more relaxed pace, and take our time to appreciate the village,



CHALLENGE GRADING

Our trips are graded from Challenging (Grade 1) to Extreme (Grade 5).

This trek is graded **Tough (3)**. Main challenges lie in the long days trekking through remote, rugged terrain, and over steep, exposed mountain passes.

Many factors influence the Challenge Grading, such as terrain, distances, climate, altitude, living conditions, etc. The grade reflects the overall trip; some sections will feel more challenging than others. Unusual weather conditions also have a significant impact, and not all people are tested by the same aspects.

Our grading levels are intended as a guide, but span a broad spectrum; trips within the same grade will still vary in the level of challenge provided.



DETAILED ITINERARY (cont.)

including its much-photographed stone church. Our route also takes in a scenic waterfall and canyon, before following relatively gentle trails to Nderlysa, a quiet hamlet (850m). We can relax by the pristine turquoise pools of the nearby creek to round off our last day in the Alps. A short transfer takes us back to Thethi. Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 5-6 hours / 10km

Day 8: Thethi – Shkodra – Tirana

We say our farewells to Thethi and the Alps, as we drive through the stunning Boga Valley to the lovely lakeside city of Shkodra. An ancient city known for its arts and culture, there's plenty to see in the historic Old Town. We can enjoy a leisurely stroll through the charming streets, buy souvenirs and enjoy a coffee-stop in one of the many cafés, or there's the option to visit the ancient ruins of Rozafa Castle, strategically perched on a hill just outside the city. We then head to Tirana, a dynamic, young town with interesting Italian-influenced architecture, which forms a significant contrast to our week in the remote Alps. Tonight we'll head out for a slap-up dinner to celebrate our many achievements over the past week. Night hotel.

(Lunch not included)

Drive approx. 4 hours

Day 9: Fly Tirana to London - Jersey

You're free to explore Tirana (depending on flight times) before transferring to the airport for our flight to London and onwards to Jersey.

