ALBANIA

Albanian Alps Trek







ACTIVITY	ACCOMMODATION	CHALLENGE FACTORS	DURATION:	GRADE
Trek	Communal	Terrain	8 days	

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.

This trip generates around **65 kg of CO_2 per person.** Because of our commitment to responsible travel, **we offset 100% of these emissions**, including flights booked with us.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: 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 2: 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

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Day 3: 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 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: 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, 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 7: 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 8: Fly Tirana to London

You're free to explore Tirana before transferring to the airport for our flight home.

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Return flights from London to Tirana
- All transfers as part of itinerary
- All accommodation in hotels (twin-share) and guesthouses
- All meals except where specified
- Discover Adventure crew (number dependent on group size)
- Local support and back up equipment
- Entry to National Park and any other sites included in the itinerary
- Airline taxes
- **We offset 100% of the carbon emissions from your trip, including flights booked with us**

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Travel insurance
- Any meals where specified in the itinerary
- Personal spending money, souvenirs, drinks, and tips for the local guides/support crew

- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

GRADE | ORANGE

All our trips are designed to provide a challenge. Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **ORANGE** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors. Trip duration, accommodation and living conditions are also taken into account. Some sections will feel more challenging than others, but the grade reflects the overall trip. Unusual weather conditions can also have a significant impact.

The Accommodation icon indicates the living conditions while trekking/cycling. While there are usually several factors that present a challenge, the Challenge icon indicates the trip's most challenging element, for most people.

Trip grading explained

CHALLENGE INFORMATION

DETAILED INFORMATION

Leaders & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments, knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely. In some destinations we work together as a team with local guides to help set up or break camp, or prepare meals. Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something!

Trip Safety

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with appropriate communication devices (eg phones, radios), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary, should local conditions dictate. Pre-trip administration - such as medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

Flight Information

Group flights usually leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick but may also depart from regional airports, and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination and low cost airlines may be used for short haul flights. If you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details.

By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

Accommodation

We stay in local guesthouses in mountain villages. They are wonderfully located and very hospitable, but expect fairly simple facilities. Most rooms sleep 3-4 people. In towns we stay in hotels of a good standard hotels, on a twin-share basis.

Roomshare Arrangements

Our trips are sold on a shared accommodation basis. Some nights are usually twin-share. On some nights we are likely to sleep in more communal rooms such as dormitories, huts, local homestays, etc., depending on the trip, and you may be sharing with a larger number of participants or the whole group; this type of accommodation cannot always be single-sex.

You can tell us if you are travelling with someone else on the trip when you book or within your passenger portal, and we will do all we can to accommodate this request. It is important that each person completes the room share request on their bookings. For customers booking and travelling together, including same-sex couples, a double bed can be requested if available.

If you're not familiar with anyone in the group, rest assured, we always pair you with someone of the same gender (as per the information you provided when booking, or passport markers), and a similar age where possible. We're actively working to improve our system's gender restrictions to be more inclusive, and we've recently made significant strides in this area. If you identify differently from the gender marker on your passport and would like to discuss this before booking, please feel free to reach out to us.

Single Supplements

In most standard hotels, we can usually offer a limited number of single rooms. This is upon request, on a first-come, first-served basis, and additional charges apply. In more communal accommodation, single rooms are rarely an option. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten at our accommodation each evening. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we may be in very rural or remote areas, or among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

Challenge Grading

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Trip grading explained

Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

Terrain

Walking terrain varies from wide tracks through valleys and mountain pastures, to narrow, uneven rock or dirt paths on exposed ridges. There are steep ascents and descents, and the exposed nature of the terrain adds to the challenge, especially given the length of some trek days. Part of our route is remote, with no vehicle access, so fitness and stamina are key.

Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, with plenty of information, and we are always available if you need advice.

Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the FCO's advice on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. Please ensure you allow plenty of time to apply for your visa; we will provide you will all necessary information 6 weeks prior to depature to assist with your application.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check the NaTHNaC Travel Health Pro website for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on all of our challenges outside of the UK; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed, or as soon as you're able to purchase some, and at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel prior to departure, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

We all hope never to need it, and thankfully most of the time we don't, but on those rare occasions when you do, you want it to cover you as best it can. Whilst it's a fairly boring admin task relating to your trip of a lifetime, it is really important you ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation, so make sure you're happy with the level of cover. There are lots of suppliers out there, with a wide range in levels of cover; generally speaking, you get what you pay for! Get and pay for the right level of cover and then you can go on your adventure not having to worry about the what-if's. For more details click here.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24-hr medical emergency phone number provided by your insurers.

Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by email or post. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration, administration and amendment fees are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a

minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge Our typical groups run with approximately 15-25 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.

Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - Passenger Portal Log in.

Independent Reviews 96%

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Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 12 Nov 2026, and the challenge is subject to change.