



# ALBANIAN ALPS TREK

ALBANIA • TREK • ORANGE 1

## ABOUT THE CHALLENGE

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.

Our trek takes us to protected Valbona National Park, home of inspiring scenery and adventurous trekking. One of the many highlights is the high Valbona Pass, used for centuries to connect remote valleys lying among the jagged peaks of the dramatic Accursed Mountains.

The appeal of this memorable and rewarding trip is not just the incredible scenery, but the quietness of the trails – you are just as likely to meet local shepherds as other trekkers.

## ALBANIAN ALPS TREK • 9 DAYS

### Day 1: Fly Manchester to Tirana

Fly to Albania's capital, Tirana, where we transfer (approx. 30 mins) to the historic town of Kruja. Night hotel.

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### Day 2: Kruja – Valbona National Park

After a short visit to Kruja's impressive fortress, we drive to beautiful Lake Koman and take a scenic boat trip through this magnificent fjord-like canyon. The lake was formed by dam construction and is a wonderful way to reach the start of our trek. A short transfer takes us from the end of the lake to the picturesque hamlet of Kukaj (1100m) in the Valbona Valley where, time permitting, we'll have a short walk in the valley to stretch our legs. Night guesthouse.

Drive 2-3 hours; boat trip 2-3 hours

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### Day 3: Valbona Valley Hike

Setting out from our hospitable guesthouse, 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, with fabulous views of the surrounding mountains, their peaks towering up to over 2500m. After a beautifully scenic picnic, we continue to the pass (2000m), before returning to our hosts at Kukaj. Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 6-8 hours / 9km

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### Day 4: Kukaj – Rrogam

A spectacularly scenic day, which takes us up to an elevated plateau covered in thick forest. Continuing along a ridge, we reach the summit of Kinji Rrogamit (1860m) on steep trails. Fabulous views along almost the entire Valbona Valley reward our efforts, and we have plenty of time to soak up the views of the green slopes topped with dramatic mountain peaks over another picnic, and we have plenty of time to soak up the views of the green slopes topped with dramatic mountain peaks over another picnic, with ice-cold water from the pure mountain spring. We continue our trek along the opposite ridge, which brings us gradually down to the bottom of the valley (950m). Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 6-7 hours / 7km

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### Day 5: Rrogam – Valbona Pass – Thethi

A classic Alpine trail awaits us! The path over Valbona Pass (1860m) has linked the glacier valleys of Valbona and Theth for centuries, and can only be crossed by foot before the first snow falls each year. Leaving the last few stone houses of the tiny village behind, we follow a steepening trail, which leads us up into a great grassy bowl of alpine meadows, surrounded by rough slopes leading up to the pass. After a stiff climb up, we can admire the views of the jagged peaks of the Accursed Mountains that tower around us. 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. 7-8 hours / 14km

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## Day 6: Thethi – Nderlysa

Thethi is a wonderfully well-preserved alpine village, with its traditional stone houses with wood-tiled roofs, and its location surrounded by mountains is very photogenic! After our big effort yesterday, we enjoy a more relaxed pace today, taking our time to appreciate the village. We then walk past a scenic waterfall and canyon to our picnic spot at Bronze Age stone-walled terraces, discovered less than ten years ago. Fairly gentle trails then take us to Nderlysa, a quiet hamlet (850m). We can relax by the pristine turquoise pools of the nearby creek to round off our day. Night guesthouse.

Trek approx. 5-6 hours / 11km

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## Day 7: Nderlysa – Thore Pass – Tirana

Our last day in the Accursed Mountains! A scenic trail takes us through a canyon to the aptly-named Blue Eye cascade. We stop here for a break before winding gradually up through the forest to emerge in grassy alpine meadows surrounded by mountain peaks. Our last steep climb takes us up to beautiful Thore Pass (1670m), which marks the end of our trek. Here we soak up the last of the magnificent views before meeting our vehicles and heading back through the stunning Boga Valley to Shkodra, seat of an impressive lake-side castle, where we break for a coffee-stop. 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. Night hotel.

Trek approx. 4-5 hours / 7km; drive approx. 4 hours

(Dinner not included)

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## Day 8: 8-9: Fly Tirana to Manchester

You're free to explore Tirana before transferring to the airport for our late evening flight home (arriving home early hours of Day 9.)

(Lunch and Dinner not included)

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Please note, participants are required to raise a minimum of **£1,000** to take part in this challenge, 100% of which will go to Francis House.

The full tour cost will be **£1,124** (this includes your £100 registration fee).

## BUY YOUR KITBAG

**Only £42** - designed to deal with the rigours of your challenge.

Easier for accessing gear than a rucksack (especially when camping) this is probably the most cost-effective way to take your luggage on a Discover Adventure challenge!

## GRADE | ORANGE

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 (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)



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 23 Feb 2019, and the challenge is subject to change.