

Albanian Alps Trek



Duration: 9 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.

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.

DETAILED ITINERARY

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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)

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)

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).

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](#)

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.

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 communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), 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.

Accommodation

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

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.

PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

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.

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.

BUY YOUR KITBAG

Only £45 (inc p&p) - 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!



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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 24 Apr 2024, and the challenge is subject to change.