

TIRANA

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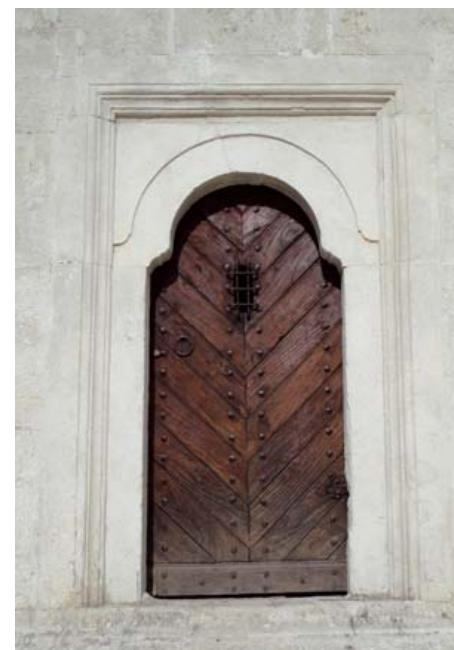
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The entrance to Tirana's clock tower

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Imaginative graffiti in the Selvia area

It's said that every country gets the leaders it deserves. If that's the case than Albanians apparently don't deserve much, as their politicians have been gambling with their future for the past two years. Ever since the disputed 2009 elections, both the Democratic and Socialist party are guilty of sabotaging Albania's progress by delaying the drafting of much-needed laws, causing scandal after scandal and generally making a mess of things while all noses should be pointing firmly in one direction. Demonstrations got out of hand in January, and three civilians ended up dead, while the politicians shifted blame again. This is especially sad as it's clear that Albanians are mature enough to understand what's going on – so it seems to be the political class that is playing a very dangerous game with an increasingly disillusioned populace.

But don't let stories about the local power-mongers put you off from visiting Albania. The locals remain heartwarming, and the country needs international contact now more than ever. In this issue of Tirana In Your Pocket we highlight one of the most important aspects of foreign travel: the food. If it's no good, a country is not worth visiting. But in the case of Albania there's good news – it's good, it's getting better all the time, and it's very affordable. Read all about it in the article by guest writer and world-famous food critic Rose Dosti on page 28. Then walk off the fat on a wonderful daytrip to the Pëllumbas cave; see page 39 for details.

That, plus the usual reams of restaurant, hotel and nightlife reviews and other essential information. We would be delighted to hear about your Albanian experience; write your own comments below the reviews on our website or write to us at tirana@inyourpocket.com.

Cover story



The shadow of the Et'hem Bey Mosque falls on Tirana's 19th century clock tower. Recently renovated, the clock is one of Tirana's few sights and was originally used by visitors of a nearby market, telling them when to shut shop and go pray or go home. Now it's used by people catching the bus from the city bus station next to it, and as a handy point of reference for foreign visitors.

About this guide - Lidhur me këtë udhëzues

www.Albania-Estate.com is the number one Albania Property portal, with many Albanian Properties for sale. Albania Estate was the original company to market Albania Property and Albania Real Estate to the overseas investor in 2005. We provide you with trustworthy Albania Property and Albania Real Estate assistance on every step of this process.

We are the oldest real estate company which has been marketing Albanian properties overseas since 2005 already.

We are proud to have served hundreds of foreign clients as well as the large and wealthy Albanian Diaspora that have bought through us. Through our partners in Albania we will be there for you on every step of the way. Our team in Albania will be happy to provide our services to you. We are present in every coastal city of our country sourcing Albanian properties to the foreign markets. Part of our services is Rental Management, Property Management and Furniture Packages. Our team is best at offering tailor made packages to our clients that have bought a property in Albania. Albania Estate considers after sale services a process as important as buying services.

Tourist information

Tirana's Tourist Information Centre is on Rruga Ded Gjo Luli, right behind the National History Museum. Drop by to get information about the city and copies of Tirana In Your Pocket. See p.44 for more information.



By plane

Tirana's gleaming Nënë Tereza (Mother Teresa) airport, 17km northwest of Tirana, is a 30-45 minute drive from the city centre. Beside the baggage carousel in arrivals there's an ATM, a BKT currency exchange office with so-so rates and the airport's tourism information desk. Buy a local SIM card at the Vodafone or Eagle Mobile shops. Ignore the taxi drivers harassing new arrivals, but take an official yellow airport taxi to the centre for 2000 lek, or 2500 lek at night. Alternatively, hop on the Rinas Express airport bus (250 lek) to Skanderbeg Square, departing every hour between 08:00 and 19:00.

By train

Albania has no international passenger trains. Weary rail arrivals from Shkodra, Durrës and Pogradec will find themselves deposited at Tirana's garden shed train station, at the northern end of Blv. Zogu I. It's a 15-20 minute walk down this boulevard to Skanderbeg Square, a short taxi ride or a hop on any bus heading that way from the bus stop across the street.

Tirana Travel Guide



By bus

Tirana has skipped the 'build a bus station' stage of urban evolution, and buses drop off passengers at various points along the ring road; it's a 15-20 minute walk down this boulevard to Skanderbeg Square, a short taxi ride, or hop on any bus heading that way from the bus stop across the street.

By car

Driving to Albania is an option now that roads and safety have greatly improved - but don't expect to get there quickly. Coming from Greece, expect long queues and grinding bureaucracy on both sides of the border. The Kakavija and Kapshtica crossings are open 24hrs; Qafë Boti near Konispol and Tre Urat near Permet open till 22:00.

From Macedonia, Qafë Thanë is the main crossing, though the Tushemisht crossing near Pogradec is quieter, has beautiful scenery and few delays. Together with the Bllace crossing near Peshkopi they are all open till 22:00; the Gorica crossing near Lake Prespa is open till 19:00.

From Kosovo, you can quickly cross over at Qafë Morina and Qafë Prush, from Montenegro at Han i Hotit and Muriqan.

By ferry

Arriving by ferry from Italy is perhaps the most relaxed way of entering the country. There are ferry lines from several Italian cities to the ports of Durrës, Shengjin and Vlora. Flying to Corfu and using the daily ferry to Saranda or the summertime hydrofoils to Saranda/Himara is often the cheapest way to reach South Albania (see www.ionian-cruises.com).

Others about TIYP

"The biannual *Tirana In Your Pocket* is a good source of information. [TIYP] lists what's going on and can be downloaded free or bought at bookshops, hotels and some of the larger kiosks for 400 lekë."

Rough Guide Europe, 2010

"For instant city guides, check out inyourpocket.com. Its 50 European city guides are regularly updated and available, for free, on the web or as PDF downloads."

Sunday Times Travel Magazine, April 2010

"These [In Your Pocket] guides are very well written and I was quite impressed."

Simon Calder, senior travel editor at The Independent, August 2, 2009

"We visited Tirana as an independent group. In Your Pocket has been an excellent help in providing us the information which we need. There are not any other companies that supply honest hotel, restaurant and nightlife info."

Greg Axon, United Kingdom, 4-2-2009

"You are great! Best city guide ever! Keep up the good work!"

Igor Simac, 5-4-2009

"Loved your Tirana publication, it was very informative. I know officials read your publication and are sensitive to its message... maybe this will send them one: streets need to be cleaned up and made pedestrian friendly!"

Carol Zachary, USA, 5-5-2009

"I'm eagerly waiting for the new Tirana and Skopje In Your Pocket guides!"

Jonas Eklund, Sweden, 22-5-2009

Basic data

Albania's population is 3,986,952 (July 2010 estimate). Apart from Albanians living in Albania proper, there are more than two million ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, hundreds of thousands in Macedonia and Montenegro, and an estimated two million in the United States, Switzerland, Germany, Greece, Italy and Canada. Although Albania is often touted as a majority Muslim country in the foreign press, 70% of the population is estimated to be non-religious or non-practising. Of the others, 21% is Muslim, 6% is Orthodox, and 3% is Catholic.

Tirana officially has 750,000 inhabitants (though the real number may be much higher), covers 42 square kilometres and lies at 110m above sea level, though two mountains of 1612m and 1828m also rise within the municipality. The city has some 30,000 students of which nearly half attend the University of Tirana.

Geography

At 28,748 square kilometres, Albania is a bit larger than Wales or Maryland. The longest rivers are the Drini, Semani and Vjosa. The largest lakes are Shkodra, Ohrid and Prespa. The highest mountain is Mt. Korabi near Peshkopi, at 2751m.

Crime & Safety

The well-being of honoured guests (you) is a major source of concern and pride for the locals - a tradition dating back to Illyrian times. Rather than being mugged in Albania, you're more likely to be overwhelmed with hospitality. Still, it's a good idea to apply the universal rules: stay alert at all times, hide valuables or leave them at home, don't wander around unlit areas at night. Be very careful where you walk - if there's not a missing manhole lid, there's another kind of big hole or bump, bits of sharp metal sticking out of the concrete, garbage or dog poo. Bring a torch as even in cities it can be pitch dark at night away from the main streets.

Driving & Roads

The roads may be improving rapidly, Albanians remain the worst drivers in Europe. Easily distracted, always using one or two hands for talking on the phone and smoking, eager to honk, disrespectful of speed limits, ignorant about the merits of seatbelts, stopping in the middle of the road to chat with a pedestrian relative, and inconsiderate to other road users, they overtake in corners at high speeds in their Mercedes as if they were still riding donkeys. That said, city-centre traffic usually only crawls along at 20-30km/hr with little risk of damage. Before 1991, only Party officials were allowed to own and drive around in cars and there were only about 600 cars in Albania, many of them deluxe Mercedes and Volvos. When the restriction was lifted, Albanians brought thousands of cars into the country from Germany, Italy and Greece. At the time, there were no traffic regulations, no driver's license requirements, no traffic enforcement and no traffic lights. Much of this has changed, but driving still requires nerves of steel and a good map. The maximum speed is 40km/hr in urban areas and villages, 80km/hr outside these areas, 90km/hr on dual carriageways and 110km/hr on highways. Drivers should have a fire extinguisher, yellow vest and first aid kit in the car, and always drive with the lights on. In mountain areas having snow chains is a good idea in winter.

Money

The Albanian currency is the lek (plural lekë). The exchange rate is: €1 = 140 lek, £1 = 166 lek, US\$1 = 103 lek (Feb 2011). Banknotes come in denominations of 200, 500, 1000, 2000 and 5000 lek, while there are coins of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 lek. Although hotels and some other businesses quote prices in euros or dollars, payment is mostly required in lek. When asking for prices in daily life, beware the curious habit Albanians have of telling you the price in 'old leks' with an additional zero (so 100 lek becomes 1000 lek). Despite the obvious advantages, this is never used to rip off foreigners, which says a lot about the way visitors are treated in this country.

ATMs ('bankomats') are now easily found in every Albanian town, and do not charge a fee for transactions, though your home bank may. If you insist on bringing along cash foreign currency, you can change your euros or dollars at banks and (better) at exchange offices in town. People who still believe in travellers' cheques can cash them at most banks at a fee and a long wait. The money men waving wads of banknotes by the statue on Skanderbeg Square offer competitive rates and are generally honest. Spend your lekë before leaving the country as they can't be exchanged abroad.

Smoking

Smoking is officially prohibited in public places, enforcement has been weak. However, plans for 2011 include stricter supervision with hefty fines for both the offenders and venue owners, and a 40% increase of tax on cigarettes.

Visas & Passports

Citizens of the EU, most other European countries, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan can enter Albania without a visa. Other travellers need to get a visa from an Albanian embassy or consulate abroad before travelling to Albania. Before you set off, confirm your entry requirements at the nearest Albanian embassy or consulate. Check all border requirements at www.mfa.gov.al. There is no longer an entry or departure tax. Your passport needs to be valid for three months after departing Albania. Citizens of the EU, Iceland, Norway, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand may enter Albania using an ID card, though we recommend still taking your passport anyway as airlines and officials are all too quickly confused.



Construction works around Skanderbeg's statue

By the seventh century BC, the Illyrians (the apparent ancestors of the Albanian nation) settle in what is now Albania. In 229-168 BC the Romans defeat the Illyrians and establish the protectorate of Illyricum.

4th Century

The Roman Empire is divided in 395 AD, and the territory of today's Albania falls into the Eastern (Byzantine) Empire.

14th Century

The Ottomans invade what is now Albania in 1385. Their rule lasts more than 500 years.

15th Century

Skanderbeg, the Albanian leader, wages a war of independence against the Ottomans starting in 1443 and enjoys remarkable success in keeping them at bay until his death in 1468.

19th Century

In the 1830s, the Ottomans crush Albanian autonomy. Uprisings break out over taxation policy in the 1840s. After Russia defeats the Ottoman Empire, the Prizren League is founded in 1878 to fight for autonomy and against the partitioning of Albanian territory.

20th Century

Local uprisings break out in 1909-1912. Albanians proclaim independence in Vlorë on November 28, 1912. The Treaty of London recognises Albania in 1913, but Kosovo is given to Serbia. In 1914, during WWI, Italy invades Albania. In 1920 Albania regains independence. In 1925 Ahmet Zogu becomes president of the new Republic of Albania, but in 1928 Zogu proclaims a kingdom and crowns himself King Zog I. He cooperates with the Italians, who invade again in 1939, occupying Albania until 1943, when the Germans take over until their retreat in November 1944. The Communist-led National Liberation Front takes power. Yugoslavia, Albania's erstwhile ally, tries to absorb the country, causing Albania to break with Belgrade in 1948. After 1956, when most of Eastern Europe undergoes de-Stalinization, Albania maintains a hardline stance. It criticises the Soviet Union, with which it breaks relations in 1961. In 1968 Albania withdraws from the Warsaw Pact. Albania cultivates relations with China. Imitating Beijing, Albania purges 'reactionary' influences. In its own version of the Cultural Revolution in 1967, it outlaws religion and closes all 2169 of the country's churches and mosques. In 1978 the leadership condemns even China as revisionist and is left with no friends. Party head Enver Hoxha dies on April 11, 1985.

1990

After the totalitarian regimes collapse everywhere else in Eastern Europe, Communist Party leader Ramiz Alia announces cautious democratisation in March. Reform comes slowly. The People's Assembly rescinds the ban on religion and on travel abroad in May. On December 12 the Democratic Party is founded, Albania's first non-Communist party in the postwar era. Nine days later, the authorities dismantle the statue of Stalin in Tirana.

1991

In February, students at Enver Hoxha University launch a strike, demanding reforms; weeks of protests culminate in the toppling of Enver Hoxha's statue in Skanderbeg Square. Waves of refugees flee the country in March. On March 31 the first multi-party elections in 68 years result in a victory for the Communists. In June the faults in the economy become clear when thousands of Albanians seeking asylum in Italy commandeered ships. An estimated 100,000 Albanians had fled the country in the previous 12 months.

1997

Collapsing pyramid schemes spark months of rioting and lawlessness throughout Albania in January. In June, parliamentary elections, held amidst nationwide unrest, result in a landslide victory for the Socialists. President Berisha, blamed for allowing the pyramid schemes to flourish, resigns.

1999

In response to Serb attacks on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, NATO launches an air war on Yugoslavia on March 25. The war turns Albania into a NATO base of operations, and by May 500,000 Kosovars have flooded into the country.

2001

In October, Edi Rama, a former art lecturer and painter supported by the Socialist Party, is elected mayor of Tirana and initiates a series of projects that change the face of the city.

2005

In July, Sali Berisha's Democratic Party wins the national elections from Fatos Nano's Socialists. The election results are delayed after allegations of voting irregularities and three deaths. OSCE monitors report that the elections only partially complied with international standards. Novelist Ismail Kadare wins the first international version of Britain's Man Booker Prize.

2006

Albania signs the Stabilisation and Association Agreement with the EU, the first step towards closer cooperation with the EU.

2007

In June, US president George W. Bush gets a hero's welcome on his visit to Albania, where he allegedly is robbed of his watch during a meet and greet with the crowds in Fushe Kruja.

2008

March 15 - An accident in a factory used for defusing old munition causes series of explosions, wiping out the village of Gërdec (14km from Tirana), killing 26 and wounding nearly 300 people. The explosions destroy hundreds of houses, shatters windows of cars on the highway, and is heard as far away as Skopje. The defence minister resigns.

2009

In April Albania joins NATO. In June Berisha's Democratic Party of Albania narrowly wins the tight-fought national elections, which were marred by many irregularities. A political stalemate ensues when the opposition Socialist Party boycotts parliament after a ballot recount is refused, and continues to organise many demonstrations.

2010

December - After delays due to dodgy Albanian passports, the EU finally announces visa-free travel for Albanians to Europe's Schengen countries, starting just before Christmas. On the day itself, there's no huge increase in cross-border traffic.

2011

January 21 - The political problems which to the frustration of many Albanians have been dragging on since 2009 lead to a violent protest. Demonstrators attack the Prime Minister's residence, and nervous guards shoot at them, killing three protesters. Foreign ambassadors continue to call for calm, dialogue and compromise to solve the problems. Yet even after this, politicians shamelessly continue their blame games.

Event information is notoriously difficult to get - visit the websites of the venues listed here, keep an eye on posters around town, and read the English-language papers for upcoming events.

Cinemas

Academy of Film & Multimedia Marubi Rr. Aleksandër Moisiu 76, tel./fax +355 4 236 51 88, info@afmm.edu.al, www.afmm.edu.al. The Academy of Film & Multimedia, named after Shkodra's famous Marubi photographer family, has a cinema with screenings of foreign movies every Thursday at 19:00 (and often other days too) during university term. Find the academy to the northeast of the centre, near the terminus of the Kinostudio bus line. See the English-language website for what's on. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun. Admission free.

Imperial Cinemas J-5, Rr. Frang Bardhi, Kristal Center mall, tel. +355 44 80 45 95, info@imperialcinemas.al, www.imperialcinemas.al. Big Hollywood and 3D films in two large screening rooms, and two smaller ones at their slightly cheaper Sheraton Mall location. In summer, there's an additional summer cinema in the Art Academy. ▶ Tickets 400-700 lek.

Millennium 2 Cinema F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, Pallati i Pionierit, tel. +355 4 225 36 54/+355 69 204 42 37, fax +355 4 225 36 56, www.ida-millennium.com. Inside the former *Pioneer Palace*, Millennium shows recent American films in their original language with Albanian subtitles. Book in advance for evening and weekend screenings. Screenings at 10:00, 12:30, 15:00, 18:00, 20:30 and 23:00. One fine day, Millennium 1 will reopen in a new building in the city centre. ▶ Open 09:00 - 23:00. Tickets 200-500 lek.



The new Galeria Nasional mall on Rruga Barrikadave

Cultural centres

Not only do these foreign-run centres allow locals and foreigners alike access to many materials, they are important promoters of international culture, and support many events.

Alliance Française D-4/5, Rr. Barrikadave 122, tel. +355 4 222 56 97/+355 4 227 48 41, info@aftirana.org, www.aleancafranceze.com. Borrow French books or language-learning materials. ▶ Open 10:30 - 20:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

British Council E-2, Rr. Skenderbej 12, tel. +355 4 224 08 56, info@britishcouncil.org.al, http://www.britishcouncil.org/albania. The UK cultural and educational centre. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Goethe Institut H-5/6, Rr. George W. Bush, tel. +355 4 222 20 17, www.goethe.de. The German cultural centre has a reading room with textbooks and literature inside the National Library.

Istituto Italiano di Cultura (Italian Institute of Culture) H-6, Rr. Pjetër Budi 74, tel. +355 4 237 95 79, www.iictirana.esteri.it. Promotes Italian culture and language with cultural events and language courses. ▶ Open 09:00 - 14:00, 15:00-17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

US Information Service (USIS) H/1-6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 224 72 85. Browse American literature, history books, periodicals and more at this centre beside the US Embassy. Also at the USAID center. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Theatre, Opera & Dance

Black Box Theatre I-4/5, Sheshi Nënë Tereza, tel. +355 4 224 75 98. Mostly avant-garde and student shows inside the Art Academy. Once in a long while there's a performance in a foreign language.

Metropolitan Center (Cultural Center of Tirana) E-4, Rr. Ded Gjo Luli, tel. +355 4 225 75 28, q.metropolitane@gmail.com. A cultural centre that hosts regular performances by the Tirana City Band, the Spekter childrens' folklore group, the Metropolitan Theatre group (*Teatri i Metropolit*) and the Tirana Circus.

National Theatre (Teatri Kombëtar) F-4, Rr. Sermedin Said Toptani, tel. +355 4 222 30 22, info@teatrikombetar.gov.al, www.teatrikombetar.gov.al. This is Tirana's oldest theatre, built in 1940 to honour Mussolini on his visit to Albania. Performances take place between October and May, and range from Shakespeare to contemporary Albanian and foreign playwrights, though everything is in Albanian. ▶ Box office open 09:00-13:00, 18:00-20:00.

National Theatre of Children (Teatri Kombëtar i Fëmijëve) E/F-4, Sheshi Austria, tel. +355 4 222 24 46/+355 4 225 91 04, kludjahila@gmail.com. Occasional puppet shows for children in a grand old building.

Opera, Ballet & Popular Ensemble Theatre (Teatri i Operas dhe Baletit dhe Ansambli Popullor) E-4, Sheshi Skenderbej, Palace of Culture, tel. +355 4 222 47 53/+355 4 222 74 71, toap@albaniaonline.net. Occasional shows by Tirana's underfunded but enthusiastic opera company. ▶ Ticket office open 09:00-12:00, 15:00-19:00.

IMPERIAL CINEMAS



IMPERIAL CINEMAS

Kristal Center, Tirana-Albania

Prenotime: 044 80 4595

Tel: +355 42 266 396

Cel: 069 54 333 44

Email: info@imperialcinemas.al

Web: www.imperialcinemas.al

Until 1991, foreigners could only stay at two dreadful hotels in Tirana. Things have changed dramatically, and now a wide variety of accommodation is available, with several good new small hotels and hostels. Most are found around the *bllok* area, and between the main square and the train station. Prices vary dramatically, and the price of a good night's sleep in both a top range suite is worth 500 nights in a simple guesthouse bed. If you go for budget accommodation, be aware that English is not always spoken (try Italian, German or Greek) and ask about their back-up generator if you'd like the heating or a/c to work. For the full hospitality experience, click to couchsurfing.com, where a few dozen kind locals offer free use of their couch for you to crash on for a few nights.

The room prices we list include breakfast unless mentioned otherwise. Hotel categories are based on the price of the cheapest double room, not on the erratic local star system. Prices are often quoted in euros, but generally have to be paid in Albanian lek.

Cream of the crop

Top-notch rooms, with doubles priced from €150.

Grand H-3, Rr. Ismail Qemali 11, tel./fax +355 4 224 79 96, tel. +355 4 225 32 19, info@grandhoteltirana.com, www.grandhoteltirana.com. Once you've walked into the Grand, you might not want to venture out again. This centrally placed hotel is one of the city's best, and its small size adds to its charm. The comfy rooms are complete with TV and telephone. The hotel also lays on frills like an indoor swimming pool, jacuzzi and sauna. ▶ 30 rooms (singles €120, doubles €160). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Rogner Europapark H-5, Biv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 223 50 35, fax +355 4 223 50 50, info@tirana.rogner.com, www.hotel-europapark.com. One of Albania's top hotels, not just for the rooms but also for its reputation as a meeting point for locals and visitors. The Rogner promises Western standards and delivers. Each room is decked out with stylish wooden furniture, satellite TV, radio, safe and fax outlet, and some have balconies. The suites look great with their stone floors. The lush garden has an astro-turf tennis court, swimming pool, playground and putting green - and even a well-preserved bunker. The excellent Apollonia restaurant and two café/bars are on site. ▶ 117 rooms (singles €210, doubles €250, 20 suites €320). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Sheraton Tirana Hotel J-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 4 227 47 07, fax +355 4 227 47 11, reservations.tirana@sheraton.com, www.sheratontiranahotel.com. A huge hotel placed at the southern edge of the city centre, overlooking the park. The comfy rooms with 'sweet sleeper' beds will suit the needs of any suit, but for the privileged there are the two Club floors with private check-in and lounge. Facilities are top notch, with a health club, indoor and outdoor swimming pools, conference facilities, the Metropolitan restaurant, Infinity bar and the Sheraton Plaza shopping mall. Room prices vary by season, so check online. ▶ 151 rooms (singles €240, 95 doubles €260, 55 suites €380, presidential suite €2530). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Xheko Imperial I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 225 95 75/+355 68 202 97 77, fax +355 4 224 68 52, contact@xheko-imperial.com, www.xheko-imperial.com. The most glam hotel in

Symbol key

[Icon] Air conditioning	[Icon] Credit cards accepted
[Icon] Conference facilities	[Icon] Facilities for the disabled
[Icon] Dataport	[Icon] Guarded parking
[Icon] Fitness centre	[Icon] Non-smoking rooms
[Icon] Restaurant	[Icon] Sauna
[Icon] Swimming pool	[Icon] Wi-Fi

town resides along a quiet street in the *bllok* area. The open jacuzzi bathrooms are any girl's dream, and the fairy-tale suites with silk-draped four-poster beds are really rather extravagant. There are less frivolous double rooms too, and two excellent restaurants. ▶ 29 rooms (7 singles €110, 6 doubles €150, 15 suites €250-350). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Upmarket

Reasonably priced luxury; double rooms from €90-140.

Arber E-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 59, tel. +355 4 227 38 11, fax +355 4 227 38 13, reservation@hotelarber.com, www.hotelarber.com. An excellent option hidden in the streets east of the Tirana International hotel. The Arber has small, efficient rooms, and is mercifully quiet compared to many other hotels. ▶ 25 rooms (5 singles €70-90, 19 doubles €110, 1 suite €150). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Brilant Antik F-5, Rr. Jeronim de Rada 79, tel. +355 4 225 11 66, fax +355 4 225 11 67, info@hotelbrilant.com, www.hotelbrilant.com. A welcoming family-run hotel in a quiet, central location. The Brilant Antik has large rooms and a traditionally furnished Albanian/Italian restaurant. English is spoken. ▶ 12 rooms (singles €60, doubles €90). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

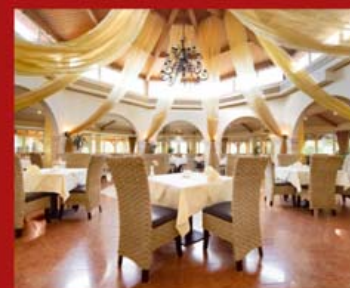
Chateau Linza Qesarakë, Linza, Komuna e Dajtit, tel. +355 69 203 00 03/+355 69 203 00 09, reservation.makhotels@gmail.com, www.chateaulinzahotel.com. Along the road out of town towards Mount Dajti, the resort-style Linza hotel is a foreigner favourite for the sweeping city views from its hillside location. Rooms and apartments are modern and spacious, and it's well-equipped for meetings and conferences too. ▶ 21 rooms (singles €90-110, doubles €110-150, 45 apartments €150-190). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Comfort D-4, Rr. Asim Vokshi, tel. +355 4 223 32 72, fax +355 4 223 31 23, info@hotelcomfort.al, www.hotelcomfort.al. Offering some of the best comfort in town at this price, this first-floor hotel, set back from the street, surprises with its well-designed and modern rooms and cosy breakfast bistro. Smoking is completely forbidden. Minuses: a tiny reception area. ▶ 11 rooms (singles €50, doubles €60-90). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]

Diplomat F-1, Rr. Sulejman Delvina 61, tel. +355 4 223 31 51, fax +355 4 223 04 57, diplomat@icc-al.org, www.agoda.com. With a light Scandinavian feel and enthusiastic staff, the Diplomat has three floors of excellent, parquet-floored rooms and a terracotta terrace with bar on the roof. ▶ 14 rooms (5 singles €100, 9 doubles €140). [Icons: Air conditioning, Credit cards accepted, Conference facilities, Facilities for the disabled, Dataport, Guarded parking, Fitness centre, Non-smoking rooms, Restaurant, Sauna, Swimming pool, Wi-Fi]



Situated on Tirana's Main city centre boulevard; "The Rogner" as it is affectionally known, is directly opposite the Presidential Palace and surrounded by all the main Ministries.



117 rooms · 13 suites · 7 junior-suites · Sat TV · Wlan · Pay TV · Room safe · Mini bar · Air condition
Key-card · 1 Restaurant · 1 Café · 2 Bars · 24 hour hotel manned security service · Luxury sun-deck area · Pool · Tennis court · Golf putting green · Tirana's most famous Mediterranean Garden

Diplomat Fashion Rr. Irfan Tomini, tel. +355 4 223 50 90/+355 4 226 72 19, fax +3554 232 07 49, reservation@diplomatfashion.com, www.diplomatfashion.com. A different city on every floor. On the New York, Milan and Paris-themed floors, rooms have decorations on the walls, cupboards and even the ceilings. Downstairs is a pleasant library and TV area, a few conference rooms and a small fitness and sauna centre. Just west of the centre along Blv. Bajram Curri. ▶ 26 rooms (singles €85-110, doubles €130-160).

Green House G-5, Rr. Jul Varibova 6, tel. +355 4 222 26 32/+355 68 207 22 62, info@greenhouse.al, www.greenhouse.al. A small and charming business hotel above the eponymous restaurant on a quiet street near all the action. With well-designed boutique rooms, some with shower and some also with a bath, great suites and wifi throughout, it's a comfortable base. ▶ 10 rooms (singles €100, doubles €110, suites €130-150).

Mondial F-1, Rr. Muhamet Gjollësja, tel./fax +355 4 223 23 72, hotelmondial@albamail.com, www.hotelmondial.com.al. An elegant and modern hotel with plush pleasant rooms that favour shades of brown to more frivolous colours. It's a kilometre from the centre, 50m from Sheshi Mustafa Qemal Ataturk. ▶ 28 rooms (singles €90, doubles €110, 6 suites €130).

Sky Hotel G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, N°5/1, tel. +355 4 241 59 95, fax +355 4 241 59 92, skyhotel_tirana@yahoo.com, www.skyhotel-al.com. This business hotel unfortunately only occupies the two lowest floors of the Sky Tower building, but although the view is not panoramic, the rooms are lookers themselves, decorated in black and dark purple with touches of gold. Standard doubles are large with fabulous shower heads, while suites have sliding glass doors and separate seating areas. Breakfast is served in the top-floor Sky Club. ▶ 33 rooms (2 singles €90, 28 doubles €108-120, 3 suites €130-180).

Tirana International Hotel & Conference Centre E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej 8, tel. +355 4 223 41 85, fax +355 4 223 41 88, hotel@hoteltirana.com.al, www.tiranainternational.com. Built in the 1970s with help of the Chinese, for years Tirana's main landmark was the only highrise in the country, with propaganda slogans on the roof and escape tunnels for the elite. Now thoroughly modernised, the rooms meet international standards and the hotel is especially popular for conferences. The higher floors offer great views over town and the mesmerising traffic on the square. Go online for their special weekend rates. ▶ 166 rooms (singles €112-130, doubles €124-142, suites €138-198).

Mid-range

Good value doubles from between €50-90.

Bermon Rr. Aleksandër Moisiu 12, tel. +355 4 237 79 39, fax +355 4 237 79 40, info@bermonhotel.com, www.bermonhotel.com. A small, very neat hotel with simple and basic rooms. Northeast of the centre near Mount Dajti, just opposite the Kinostudio complex. ▶ 13 rooms (singles €40-50, doubles €50, 1 triple €60, 1 quad €60, 1 suite €70).

Bristol G-2, Rr. Nikolla Jorga, tel. +355 4 222 95 37, fax +355 4 225 41 75, info@hotelbristol.al, www.hotelbristol.al. Modern and centrally located between Bulevard Gjergj Fishta and the Rr. Myslym Shyri shopping street, the Bristol has clean, bright 'designer' rooms, a well-stocked bar. ▶ 20 rooms (12 singles €40, 8 doubles €60, triples €75).

Broadway H-3, Rr. Emin Duraku 80, tel. +355 4 225 46 19/+355 4 226 71 19, fax +355 4 224 39 67, broadway@icc-al.org, www.hotelbroadway-al.com. Next to the Selman Stermasi stadium, Broadway has a Vegas thing going on. A glass lift whisks you up to halls decked out with pharaonic art, with rooms in corresponding styles, and especially the suites Egyptian up quite impressively, with kitsch on all walls and a massage shower. There's a decent restaurant with a lush terrace too. ▶ 20 rooms (10 singles €60, 6 doubles €80, 4 suites €120).

California E-3, Rr. Mihal Duri 2/1, tel. +355 4 225 31 91, fax +355 4 225 31 92, california@albania-online.com. Welcome to the Hotel California, where you can check out any time you like, but unlike pre-1990 Albania you can also actually leave. There's no arguing with the location of this place, and small but pleasant rooms contain generally matching furnishings and shiny bathrooms. Check out the fifth floor, the owner's favourite. ▶ 25 rooms (singles €50, doubles €70, 5 family rooms €70).

City H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 8/1, tel./fax +355 4 224 77 99, reservations@hotelcitytirana.com, www.hotelcitytirana.com. Clean, quiet and efficient rooms and friendly staff in a small business hotel down an alley off the street. The views are uninspiring as it's jammed in between highrise, but alternative vistas are offered by the elegant photos of cities around the world that decorate the rooms and halls. Ask for the larger top-floor rooms with balconies when you book. Security is top-notch as the prime minister lives next door and his goons patrol the streets. ▶ 15 rooms (singles €32-60, doubles €75).

Doro City D-1, Rr. Muhamet Gjollësja, tel. +355 4 223 22 06, fax +355 4 224 70 70, reservations@hoteldorocity.com, www.hoteldorocity.com. Along the busy ring road near the Durrës highway, Doro has quality rooms fitted with plenty of wood, and some boasting large terraces. It's a few minutes drive west of the city centre. ▶ 53 rooms (8 singles €60-80, 45 doubles €70-110, suites €100).

Elysée H-5/6, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji 2/173, tel. +355 4 222 28 80, fax +355 4 224 86 92, info@hotelysee-al.com, www.hotelysee-al.com. A quality mid-range hotel, with friendly service and a top location between the US and Italian embassies. Rooms are modern and quiet, with king-sized beds and iron balconies, though there's no lift to get you between the four floors. There's wifi, but guests can also use a PC with internet at the reception. ▶ 20 rooms (singles €50-65, doubles €75-85, triples €105).

Ferari B-2, Rr. Don Bosko, tel. +355 4 235 64 02/+355 69 257 51 72, hotel_ferari@hotmail.com, www.hotelferari.com. This unprepossessing but comfortable four-storey hotel best serves those who want to get away from the city centre. It serves a nice Italian breakfast and staff are polite. ▶ 26 rooms (doubles €50-60).



Fresh air, city views

Chateau Linza is set at the foot of Mount Dajti, offering beautiful views over Tirana while still in the freshness of the mountain breeze. The hotel has 21 rooms and suites beside the swimming pool and gardens. The 45 fully furnished apartments are perfect for your stay in Tirana besides clean air they offer plenty of privacy and full service.

Qesarekë-Linzë, Komuna e Dajtit, Tiranë, Albania Tel. +355 69 20 30 003/9
www.chateaulinzahotel.com



For your week end break



HOTEL BUTRINTI



Mali i Robit
Golem Resort



Saranda - Albania, Tel. +355 825 55 92/3/4,
hotelbutrinti@hotmail.com, www.hotelbutrinti.com

Rruga Nationale Durrës-Rrogozhinë, KM 12,
Tel. +355 579 22 115/6/7, hosamnasr@malirobotresort.com,
www.malirobotresort.com

Firenze D-4, Blv. Zogu I 72, tel. +355 4 224 90 99, fax +355 4 227 20 77, firenzehotel@albamail.com. A surprisingly good business hotel on the boulevard just north of the main square. Firenze has charming staff, modern and well-furnished rooms, some even with fireplaces, and abstract art on the walls. Breakfast is served in the street-side restaurant. ▶ 7 rooms (singles €50, doubles €70).

Iliria I-6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel./fax +355 4 237 17 00, info@iliriahotel.com, www.iliriahotel.com. Recently overhauled, the Iliria's glamorous lobby area gives access to the smart clean rooms beyond, all fitted out with satellite TV, internet and air conditioning. There's a restaurant and pleasant café terrace too. It's located along Rruga Elbasanit, a short walk southwest of the city centre, and the rooms are all soundproofed. Convenient for various embassies, the university and the Grand Park. ▶ 20 rooms (doubles €80-120, suites €100-140).

Kruja D-3, Rr. Mine Peza, tel. +355 4 223 81 06, fax +355 4 223 81 08, reservations@hotelkruja.com, www.hotelkruja.com. A decent business hotel north of the main square, with standard rooms overlooking the calm street out front. There's also a restaurant and pleasant pavement café outside. ▶ 16 rooms (1 single €35, 11 doubles €50, 3 apartments €75).

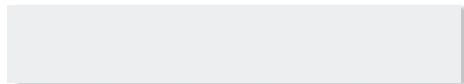
Lugano E-3, Rr. Mihal Duri Nd.24 H.7, tel./fax +355 4 222 20 23, tel. +355 68 209 87 88, luganohotel@yahoo.com, www.bar-hotel-lugano.com ; www.hotel-lugano-tirana.com. A small and warm little hotel in the very centre of town. All rooms have a quality, florid bathroom and a balcony overlooking the quiet street. Laundry service is included. ▶ 8 rooms (singles €40, doubles €50).

Miniri E-4, Rr. Dibrës 3, tel. +355 4 223 09 30, fax +355 4 223 30 96, hotel_miniri@yahoo.com, www.miniri.com. The excellent location of this Croatian-owned hotel, just off the main square, is not matched by its interiors. The peach-coloured rooms are decent but nothing special, with a small TV, phone and couch. The Croatian restaurant on the premises is the redeeming factor. ▶ 30 rooms (singles €25, doubles €40, triples €75).

Nirvana E-3, Rr. Kavajës 96/2, tel. +355 4 223 52 70/+355 68 24 11 641, fax +355 4 223 52 71, hotelnirvana@hotmail.com, www.hotel-nirvana.com. Do you think they would notice if you booked a room under the name Kurt Cobain? This large villa set back from the busy road has rooms in gaudy colours with fitting cosy furniture - go all the way and get the one with the jacuzzi. Opposite the Catholic Church. ▶ 15 rooms (singles €60, doubles €80, 1 suite - apartment €120).

Nobel E-4, Rr. Urani Pano, Nd 1, H 9, Njësia Bashklike nr.9, 1016, tel. +355 4 225 64 44/+355 69 202 07 57, reservations@hotelnobelitirana.com, www.hotelnobelitirana.com. Friendly staff, cheerfully coloured and affordable rooms, and a central location - Nobel ticks all the boxes. Tucked behind the Tirana International Hotel, the Nobel has modern furnishings, wireless internet and a decent Italian restaurant on the ground floor. ▶ 6 rooms (singles €40, doubles €50).

Palma H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri 2, tel. +355 4 223 56 31/+355 4 223 56 32, fax +355 4 225 61 31, info@hotel-palma.com, www.hotel-palma.com. A small, modern hotel in a central location in the bllok, with decent rooms and a restaurant. ▶ 12 rooms (singles €55, doubles €65, 2 suites €80).



Stela C-5, Rr. Dibrës, tel./fax +355 4 223 55 67, hotelstela@albaniaonline.net, www.stelahotel.com. With its white tile floors and large bathrooms, Stela seems a good choice. However, the rooms have thin rugs and small towels, and face a noisy street. All rooms are equipped with TV and minibars, as well as tacky artificial flowers. Prices vary by season. ▶ 9 rooms (6 singles €40, 3 doubles €50).

Theranda H-3, Rr. Andon Zako Çajupi 6-7, tel. +355 4 227 37 66, fax +355 4 227 36 89, reservations@therandahotel.com, www.therandahotel.com. A charming small hotel of high standards, one of the few to apply environmentally friendly techniques like solar panels. The self-proclaimed boutique hotel has two modern buildings (of which one pavilion-like space is used for meals), bright rooms, and experienced staff. One street west of the *bllok* area. ▶ 14 rooms (singles €45-80, doubles €60-100, 3 suites €65-110).

Vila 3 G-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, 3, tel. +355 4 226 65 82/+355 69 206 57 08, vila_3@yahoo.com. Seven smart rooms in a small 1930s villa set away from the street, behind the pyramid. Fitted out with flatscreen TVs, sparkling en suite bathrooms and wifi, it's perfect for business trips. The two top floor rooms are large but have slanting ceilings and only skylights for windows. Downstairs and on the terrace surrounding the building there's a good restaurant and pizzeria. ▶ 7 rooms (5 doubles €65, 2 suites €80).

Vila Belvedere F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani 25, tel. +355 4 225 19 35, vilabelvedere@albcmport.com. Perfectly located in the centre along a recently pedestrianised street, Belvedere doesn't offer much of a view, but the rooms are affordable and comfy. There's a PC parked in the hall for guests to use too. ▶ 8 rooms (singles €40, doubles €60).

Vila Park K-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Grand Park, Kodrat e liqenit, tel. +355 4 225 65 97, fax +355 4 225 68 64, info@vilaparkhotel.com, www.vilaparkhotel.com. Tirana's most tranquil hotel is set 100 metres inside the Grand Park, where the modern rooms with their balconies overlook people strolling amongst the trees. There's a top class gym and sauna in the adjacent building that guests can use for a fee. Note that car access is restricted during daytime. ▶ 12 rooms (6 doubles €80, 6 suites €100).

Vila Tafaj D-3, Rr. Mine Peza 86, tel. +355 4 222 75 81/+355 4 223 42 80, fax +355 4 223 59 56, vilatafaj@yahoo.com, www.tafaj.com. An elegant 1930s building in the city centre with a green garden at the back to relax in. Rooms are spacious and modern, and laundry and minibar is included in the price. The restaurant rustles up Mediterranean food. ▶ 25 rooms (8 singles €50, 15 doubles €60-90, 2 suites €90-100).

Budget

Why pay more, indeed? Double rooms up to €50. In winter, it's important to ask if the heating in cheaper hotels runs on electricity, and if the hotel has a back-up generator in case the power goes pow.

Areela C-4, Rr. Mahmut Fortuzi, tel. +355 4 222 65 79, fax +355 4 225 56 13, areela@hotelareela.tk, www.hotelareela.tk. A very pleasant and well-sign-posted place on a residential road near the train station, the Areela is housed in a building with spotlessly clean rooms and bathrooms. There's only Albanian on TV but that's compensated by the erotic art on the walls. ▶ 12 rooms (singles €25, doubles €35, triples €50). Breakfast 500 lek.

Briker D-4/5, Rr. Barrikadave 3/24, tel. +355 4 222 95 43, hotelbriker@hotmail.com. A short stroll from the main square and a few steps up from the street, the modern Briker has rooms with wooden floors, red/white furniture and large blue-glass windows. The room price is the same regardless of the number of occupants. ▶ 9 rooms (singles, doubles €40).

Eder F-2, Rr. e Kavajës, tel./fax +355 4 223 91 70, tel. +355 68 24 71 233, info@ederhotel.com, www.ederhotel.com. A small hotel with just five rooms of varying styles, well-equipped for travellers on a budget. Opposite the Catholic church, a short walk from the main square and just around the corner from a clutch of embassies, it's well placed if you need to pray, play or get away. ▶ 5 rooms (3 singles €29, 2 doubles €36).

Guva e Qetë F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 4 223 54 91/+355 68 270 79 01, klidbalkan@albaniaonline.net. Small, simple, clean and quiet rooms with fridge, en suite bathrooms and TVs in a dead-central location. ▶ 12 rooms (doubles €15-30).

Haxhiu E-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa 391, tel. +355 4 236 05 47, fax +355 4 236 05 48. This family-run hotel is tucked away off the main street and set behind potted trees and flowers. It's got a light and airy feeling and views of old tile roofs. The relative lack of amenities is compensated by the management's eagerness to please. Taxis to the centre are provided free. So are coffee and tea. The breakfast buffet features fresh fruit and pastries. ▶ 11 rooms (6 singles €30 and 5 doubles €40).

Kalaja F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani 9, tel. +355 4 225 00 00. Kalaja amounts to a good budget choice. In this hostel-like setup, you can either share a room or be selfish and take one all for yourself. Rooms are quiet and clean, with tile floors, basic bathroom, a TV and a fan. Best of all, the hotel is ensconced inside the ancient walls of Justinian's Fortress. ▶ 8 rooms (singles €10, doubles €15, triples €20).

Parlamenti F-5, Rr. Jeronim de Rada 75, tel. +355 4 226 50 24/+355 68 221 70 76. An excellent, affordable and central hotel, on a quiet street and next door to the Brilliant hotel. Spacious rooms with attached bathrooms overlook terracotta roofs, and the naughty soft focus photos in the halls are a nice touch. Free airport pick-up; English-speaking staff members are present after 10:00. ▶ 6 rooms (doubles €20).

Pike Loti G-6, Rr. Mihal Grameno, tel./fax +355 4 223 51 55. Not far from the city centre, this family-run hotel offers small, clean and comfortable rooms. All come with private bath, modern-compatible telephones, TV and minibar. Some English is spoken. ▶ 7 rooms (5 singles €25, 2 doubles €33).

Airport Hotels

Hotel Airport Tirana Rinas, tel. +355 4 830 01 90, fax +355 4 830 01 91, info@hotel-airporttirana.com, www.hotel-airporttirana.com. The best (and best-named) of several options by the airport, this hotel is near the terminal yet quite a slog around the perimeter fence, so call for a free pickup. The fire- and soundproof rooms have bright colours, and bathrooms are ready for take-off with their space-age shower cabins. A garden restaurant with pool at the rear is also available for those simply waiting for flights. ▶ 50 rooms (22 singles €70, 24 doubles €100, 2 junior suites €110, 2 apartments €150). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Verzaci Rinas, www.turisalba.com/verzaci. It's good that Gianni is no longer among us, as he'd faint at the sight of this garish pink building with a big green V on the facade. Inside, the rooms are plain and basic. Verzaci is a 5-minute walk along the main road north from the airport. Limited English spoken. ▶ 20 rooms (singles/doubles €25). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Vila Aeroport Rinas, tel. +355 68 207 70 98, info@vilaeroport.com, www.vilaeroport.com. The hotel's 'Aircraft Restaurant' is the coolest you've seen in your life. Right here in Tirana. Modelled after a big silver plane, it's parked along the road from the airport to the north. Beside it, the Dallas-meets-Dracula hotel building has a small disco and large rooms on the top floor. ▶ 20 rooms (doubles €40, 4 suites €50-80). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Republika C-5, Blv. Zog I, 66, tel. +355 4 222 24 00, fax +355 4 222 50 14, republikahotel@yahoo.it. On Tirana's busy boulevard, the Republika has decent rooms, some with en suite bathrooms, some using clean shared facilities. Handy for both the centre and the city's transport options, but get a room at the back for a quiet night's sleep. ▶ 10 rooms (doubles €10-20, triples €30). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Vila Verde B-4, Rr. Karl Gega, tel. +355 4 224 82 32/+355 69 225 77 77. Near the train station, just down the quiet street running parallel to the tracks. Expect low-standard rooms with en-suite facilities that are bearable if you need to catch an early train or a bus heading north. ▶ 7 rooms (singles €8, doubles €15). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Apartments

Albaniantrip D-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 73/1, N°7, tel. +355 68 405 85 29/+355 69 226 33 33, contact@albaniantrip.com, www.albaniantrip.com. Modern self-catering studios and apartments sleeping 3-9 people, in four locations across the city centre. They can be rented per room (with private or shared bathrooms) or as a whole, and have wifi and a fully equipped kitchen with washing machine and fridge. ▶ 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Bujtina Shqiptare D-3, Rr. Urani Pano 9/1, tel. +355 4 222 04 33/+355 68 219 69 03, bujtinashqiptare1@yahoo.com. Good budget accommodation in rooms spread across three buildings just north of the city centre. The rooms are basic but comfortable; facilities vary from room to room but all have private bathroom and TV. Breakfast is included in summer, but air-conditioning costs above €2 per day need to be paid. ▶ 3 rooms (singles €15-20, doubles €16-25). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Guesthouses

Staying at a guesthouse means you may be sharing the house and some of the facilities. But it's a great way to meet the locals and learn more about how they live. You'll be surprised at how people of meagre means lavish care and attention on their apartment interiors.

Pension Andrea F-5, Rr. Jeronim de Rada 103, Rrugica Anton Arapi, tel. +355 4 225 69 47/+355 69 209 49 15, pensionandrea@gmail.com. In a quiet location near the Parliament building, Pension Andrea's four basic rooms with TV, a/c and private bathrooms come with a lovely landlady, Xhina Ballo, who speaks some English. To find the unmarked pension, turn down the alley next to the Brilliant hotel; it's the third door on the right. ▶ 4 rooms (singles €20, doubles €30). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Stephen Center B&B E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tahsim 1, tel./fax +355 4 225 39 24, stephencenter@stephencenter.com, www.stephencenter.com. The 'Christian environment' provided in the cosy guestrooms of the Stephen Center is available to missionaries and other travellers and consists of simple but well-furnished rooms with twin beds, private bathroom and adequate heating. There's laundry, wifi and airport pickup service too. ▶ 6 rooms (singles €30, doubles €40). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Hostels

The number of hostels in Albania has rocketed since 2009, anticipating the flood of smelly backpackers expected to scrounge through the country in coming years. Note that the Kalaja hotel (see *Budget hotels*) has a few rooms that are available as dorms.

Freddy's Hostel E-4, Rr. Bardhok Biba 75, tel. +355 4 226 60 77/+355 68 203 52 61, alfredsalku@yahoo.com, www.freddyshostel.com. Eminently suitable for flashpackers, Freddy's is just a short walk north of the main square down a quiet street. It's more of a guesthouse than a true hostel, with modern two- and three-bedded rooms (no bunk beds), in several apartments spread over several adjacent buildings. All rooms have cable TV and a/c, and some also have balconies. A simple breakfast is provided for beds over €14. Sheets and towels are changed daily too - it's like you never left your mummy. ▶ 8 rooms (€12-16 per bed). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Hostel Albania E-6, Rr. Beqir Luga 56, tel. +355 672 78 37 98, lira@hostel-albania.com, www.hostel-albania.com. A villa in a quiet residential area east of the city centre has been converted into a pleasant hostel, with solid bunkbeds made in Kruja, a nice garden with an oriental lounge corner and indoor parking for 2 vehicles. The basement rooms are cool in summer, breakfast is included and there's bike rental for the intrepid. ▶ 4 dorm rooms (beds €11-13). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Milingona D-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa 277, tel. +355 69 204 98 36/+355 69 226 07 75, milingonahostel@gmail.com, www.milingonahostel.com. The ant' is a spanking modern hostel in a canary yellow building near the main market, with clean dorms, bunk beds and shared facilities on each floor. There's a kitchen (with occasional cooking lessons), a garden and a roof terrace where regular music and film nights are held. Discounted rates for groups and from Nov-Feb. ▶ 5 rooms (2 eight-bed dorms, 3 six-bed dorms, €12 per person). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Tirana Backpacker Hostel H-5/6, Rr. Elbasanit 85, tel. +355 68 216 73 57/+355 69 211 95 96, tiranabackpacker@hotmail.com, www.tiranahostel.com. The charming, yellow 1940s Villa Karajani is home to the first hostel in the country, with a set of basic rooms with bunk beds. Guests can use the garden kitchen and terrace, washing machine, internet, free linen and towels - the downside is the traffic noise. The friendly owners organise regular day trips, bar crawls, and film nights. Reception open from 08:00-22:00. One block east of the Rogner Hotel, at the end of Rrugica Ismail Qemali. ▶ 5 rooms (4 six-bed dorms, 1 five-bed dorm, €12 per bed). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Out of town

Tirana's playgrounds are in the green valley southeast of town along the road to Elbasan, and in the foothills of Mount Dajti, directly to the east of the city. Many modern hotels and popular restaurants can be found here, though keep in mind that you won't get much sleep on weekend nights - always check that they don't have a wedding or other party planned during your stay.

Belvedere (Dajti Tower) Mount Dajti, top cable car station, tel. +355 67 401 10 35, marketing@dajtitower.com, www.dajtitower.com. A space-age construction beside the top station of the Mount Dajti cable car, Belvedere sits at 1420 metres above sea level and offers grand views over Tirana from its modern rooms. The suites come with jacuzzi baths and comfy sofas, and tables in the top-floor breakfast bar rotate around the windows. When the cable car is closed on Mondays and during bad weather, guests are shuttled to town by minibus. ▶ 24 rooms (4 singles €25, 18 doubles €60-100, 2 suites €60). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Dajti Park Tirana-Dajti road, km 8, tel. +355 4 230 22 33, fax +355 4 230 22 34, info@dajtipark.com, www.dajtipark.com. A large, modern complex on the flanks of Mount Dajti, just 9km east of Tirana and 800 metres above sea level, the Dajti Park offers great views of the city and is a pleasant place to chill out, enjoy the pool or let the kids romp around. The guest rooms have balconies and are well-equipped. Free pickup from the airport. ▶ 24 rooms (singles €40, doubles €50, triples €60). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Panorama Tirana-Dajti road, km 22, tel./fax +355 4 236 31 24, tel. +355 68 202 39 36, panorama@albaniaonline.net, www.panoramadajti.net. A complex in Mount Dajti national park offering wooden chalets amidst landscaped grounds and a well-to-do restaurant. Shuttle buses to the complex depart regularly from the top station of the cable car, or you can drive up. Good restaurant on site too. ▶ 11 rooms (7 doubles €40, 2 singles €30, 4 chalets €40). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Venue Park Mullet, Tirana-Elbasan road, km 15, tel. +355 68 328 66 66. In the summer many Tiranans trek here to swim in the nice pool. The odd green marble effect in the rooms can be endured in return for the stunning view of Petrela Castle on the opposite peak. ▶ 9 rooms (singles and doubles €20, 1 suite €30). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗

Vila Toscana Ndroq, old Tirana-Durrës road km 12, tel. +355 69 207 91 33/+355 69 207 91 31, vila.toscana@yahoo.co.uk. A complex with a restaurant, lovely outdoor seating and several good rooms, set in green countryside at a short distance from Tirana. ▶ 16 rooms (14 doubles €60, 2 suites). 📶 📺 🍳 🚰 🚿 🛏 🛎 🚗



Stay at Freddy's in the city centre and discover Tirana. Comfortable modern rooms for 2-4 people, from €12 per person. Cable TV, wifi and a/c in all rooms.



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Tirana, Albania
Tel. (+355)(0)68 203 52 61
alfredsalku@yahoo.com
www.freddyshostel.com

Albanian cuisine is surprisingly good and tasty, a mix of Mediterranean and Balkan traditions, with plenty of fresh fish and produce. Standards are often high, with many members of the Albanian emigrant diaspora returning with years of experience in the catering industries around the world. Dining in Tirana is cheap and even in upmarket restaurants a main course will not cost much.

Upmarket

Apollonia H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Europapark Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 50 35, www.hotel-europapark.com. Apollonia excels in Albanian and international specialities, with for example steak salad, *qofte Korça* (meatballs) and even Austrian *Käsespätzle* (noodles with cheese). The domed restaurant has a stylish setting, with additional outdoor seating in the lush hotel garden. ▶ Open 06:30 - 15:00, 18:00-23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Carlsberg I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Xheko Imperial Hotel, tel. +355 4 224 68 52. The classy first-floor Carlsberg restaurant in the Xheko Imperial Hotel is deservedly popular with the foreign crowd. Brick arches surround the diners, while some of the country's best cooks and waiters ensure a quality meal. It's hard to go wrong with anything here, but we are especially taken with the steaks, the salad bar and the decadent selection of cheese. In summer, head for the open-air rooftop restaurant, a dazzlingly white classicist pleasure garden complete with fountains, amazing views and the classy *White Camellia* conservatory. ▶ Open 12:00 - 22:30. \$\$\$

Metropolitan J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, tel. +355 4 227 47 07. Set underneath a groovy wave roof, the Sheraton's Metropolitan restaurant has excellent Albanian and international fusion dishes on offer at international prices. The dress code is smart casual. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Otium H-3, Rr. Brigada e VIII, tel. +355 4 222 35 70, info@otium-restaurant.com, www.otium-restaurant.com. One of our favourite places, Otium is a deliciously unpretentious place for a great meal. Clamber up the steps to the first floor dining room and be wowed by fast and knowledgeable staff. The salads feed two, the pasta dish that we had was excellent and we heard good things about the lamb confit. Recommended. ▶ Open 11:30 - 23:30. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑



Spring rains in the bilok area

Symbol key

☑ Air conditioning	☑ Outside seating
☑ Credit cards accepted	☑ Guarded parking
☑ Occasional live music	☑ Take away
☑ No smoking	☑ Wi-Fi
☑ Child friendly	☑ Home delivery

Restaurant prices

As an indication of cost, in each review we've indicated the average price of a main course, without drinks:

\$ up to 500 lekë
 \$\$ between 500-1000 lekë
 \$\$\$ over 1000 lekë

Vinum E-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa 60, tel. +355 4 223 08 22/+355 68 208 49 00. The colourfully-garbed chef in this quaint establishment deserves a medal for creativity. Seriously. Where else do you find quail stuffed with ricotta and foie gras? Or lamb with almonds covered with pastry crust? Or a salad of mango, figs and walnuts that tastes great, or a soup made with carrots and orange? Even the bread is original - beet, olive and walnuts, oven fresh and very good. Okay, so it's expensive, but you'll go back. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Albanian

Bantia H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 224 46 57. Excellent traditional Albanian food served in a large restaurant with nice photos of old Tirana (with English captions no less). Try the *tavë* oven dish served with Korça meatballs or the speciality, *petulla te fshjra*, or village pie. If you're bringing hungry friends, consider ordering a *lakror*, a large flat hearty pie stuffed with onion, leek, creamy cheese, or vegetables. Pilsner Urquell is on tap. ▶ Open 11:00 - 01:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Emblema I-2, Rr. Komuna e Parisit, tel. +355 4 224 56 79. With chunky wooden tables, an open fireplace and walls lined with odds and ends you could be at your granny's house, if your granny were Albanian. The usual selection of pasta and pizza are available but stick to the traditional Albanian food; try the oven-baked *saç* meat dish. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Era H-3, Rr. Ismail Qemali 33, tel. +355 4 225 78 05, era_delivery@yahoo.com. Meaning 'wind', this popular and foreigner-friendly spot makes for a good casual lunch or dinner. The Albanian food is excellent; try the stuffed eggplant and peppers, and *fërgesë* (fried minced lamb, feta cheese and garlic). It's often crammed, so best book ahead. Near the corner with Rr. Sami Frashëri. ▶ Open 11:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Castle dining

Kalaja e Petrelës (Petrela Castle) Petrelë, tel. +355 69 208 81 38/+355 68 231 83 33. A fantastic setting for a very good restaurant. The Petrela castle restaurant has tables both outside and in the little tower, all with great views of the surrounding valleys and hills. The food is traditional Albanian, served with a smile. Half an hour's drive east of Tirana along the road to Elbasan. ▶ Open 11:00 - 23:00, Sat, Sun 10:30 - 23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

€1 = 140 lek, £1 = 166 lek,
 US\$1 = 103 lek (Feb 5, 2011)

Serenata E-3, Rr. Mihal Duri 22, tel. +355 4 273 08 89. With a nicely low-key decor of traditional art and costumes, Serenata is the home of dishes from the southern Devolli region, centred on the town of Korça, which is famous for its serenades and spicy, saucy and full fat food. Try *lakror*, a flat pie stuffed with green beans, tomatoes, herbs and spices or *tave me qofte*, spiced meatballs baked in a clay bowl. Next to Hotel California. ▶ Open 09:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑

Sirius I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frasherit, tel. +355 69 207 26 56. This place doesn't end with the rattan/jungle patio. A step into the bar area sets the mood for romance in the comfy, cosy crevices of leather couches. Then up the knee-cracking stairs there is a restaurant serving fish and a handful of Albanian specialities (*pace koke*, *tasqebab*). But if you're looking for a bargain, check the blackboard, and don't miss one of the best chicken noodle soups you'll find in town. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$

Taverna Argjiro I-3, Rr. Sulejman Delvina, tel. +355 4 223 20 78. Meat lovers will get their fill at this little bar/taverna where whole lamb is roasted on a spit, veal, beef and pork are charred, and where *paca* and *plendes* (offal) are prized breakfast dishes. Start the feast with a family-size order of *meze* salads ranging from grilled vegetables to cheese for an ultimate Albanian village experience. Near the Dinamo stadium. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Menu decoder

Meat & Fish	Mish & Peshku
beef	mish lope
chicken	pulë
lamb	qengji
pork	derrri
sausage	shukuk
veal	mish vici
schnitzel	shnitcell
fish	mish peshku
salmon	salmon
sea food	fruta deti
trout	troftë

Fruits and vegetables	Frutat dhe perimet
apple	mollë
banana	banane
cabbag	lakër
carrot	karrotë
eggplant	patëllxhan
mushrooms	këpurdha
orange	portokall
peppers	specca
tomatoes	domate

Drinks	Pijet
beer	birrë
juice	lëng
wine	verë
water	ujë

Mrizi i Zanave F-5, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush 1, tel. +355 4 226 99 31/+355 68 207 44 49. Mrizi i Zanave restaurant is named after Gjergj Fishta's Renaissance-era sonnet book *Valley of Goddesses*. Enjoy excellent traditional Albanian cuisine here in modern surroundings reminiscent of a tavern, with flagstone floors, plenty of wood, and live music on weekends. If that's not enough, the owner has a cooking show on TV. To find it, walk east along Bulevardi Zhan D'Ark from the Tanners' Bridge and turn left into the first street. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑

Oda E-5, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi, tel. +355 4 224 95 41. Eat Ottoman-style in Tirana's only true traditional restaurant, sitting on (indeed) ottomans at low tables in a reconstructed *oda* (guest room) in an old house. Surrounded by shelves with dishes, strings of garlic and peppers and old photos, it's best to allow the waiters to suggest a succession of appetisers and mains. The food is fresh and delicious (try the *lakror në saç* oven-baked pie), unforgettable even after washing it all down with their home-made raki. Find Oda down the first alley west of the market. ▶ Open 11:00 - 23:00, Sun 13:00 - 23:00. \$ ☑

Sarajet F-5, Rr. Abdi Topani 7, tel. +355 4 242 12 84/+355 68 602 50 36, reservime@sarajet.com, www.sarajet.com. The restaurant/bar might have a tough time living up to glory of this 19th century villa wooden villa that once housed the legendary Toptani family. One imagines cigarette smoke-filled rooms sparkling with music, dance and conversation. Back to the mundane menu, you have the predictable traditional and contemporary selection of pasta, fish and meat, some typical Albanian *gjel* casseroles and a few "huh?" exceptions, such as fried cornbread and fritters. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

MRIZI I ZANAVE
 TRADITIONAL ALBANIAN RESTAURANT

Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush 1
 Tel. +355 4 226 99 31

Vila 31 E-2, Rr. Gjon Muzaka 31, tel. +355 4 227 81 41/+355 69 20 83 317. A charming rural-style restaurant in the big city. This converted house has rustic seating inside, and in summer tables below the vines in the shady courtyard. The food is honest peasant fare such as grilled meat and ribs of lamb, with the *tave Vila 31* (an oven-baked pot of cheese, vegetables and egg for 350 lek) as the standout choice. From Rruga Kavajës walk down Rruga Naim Frashëri and look for the sign down the fourth alley on your right. ▶ Open 08:00 - 23:00. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Viva H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani, tel. +355 4 224 63 76, lokaliviva@live.com. Here's a simple, central, affordable home cooking restaurant that pleases all with good food, friendly service and nargila pipes. For something local, order the *tave dheu*, an oven dish with meat and cheese, or try the Elbasan version, *tava kosi* that's with yoghurt. Or the brain cutlets. It's all good. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 24 hours. \$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Asian

Da Shang Hai I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurrit, 25/1, tel. +355 4 227 19 87. Good Chinese food served in wonderfully chintzy surroundings, just the way the Chinese like it. The English-language menu, kindly translated by the US embassy staff, lists a good value set menu deal as well as several fish dishes. Find Da Shang Hai signposted down a small alley near the Sheko Imperial hotel. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$

Far East H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 6, tel. +355 4 227 19 38. Part of a Greek restaurant chain, this pan-Asian restaurant has elements of many Oriental cultures reflected in both the design and the menu. You're greeted on the white terrace by a Japanese stone lantern overlooking a gurgling stream, while inside it's all Chinese woodwork, moon gates and fish tanks. The menu has everything from sushi (from 600 lek) to Indonesian satay beef and a Korean-style sizzler barbecue. ▶ Open 10:00 - 01:00. \$\$\$-\$\$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Mimi I-5, Rr. Dervish Hima, tel. +355 4 226 99 47. An unusually named Chinese restaurant near the Qemal Stafa stadium. There's friendly service and a full range of chicken, pork, noodle and beef standards. The seafood specialities include calamari and shrimps. ▶ Open 08:00 - 22:00. \$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Shang Hai F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 4 225 70 12/+355 69 218 70 81. Good and affordable Chinese food is offered at Tirana's second Shang Hai restaurant, found beyond a set of carved wooden pillars in a courtyard opposite the Millennium 2 cinema. The menu has well over 100 options (including a set of Albanian choices for insecure locals), all available in the dining hall, on the terrace or for take-away. The set menus with 5-8 dishes are good value. ▶ Open 09:00 - 23:00. \$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

No menu

Let go of those old-fashioned certainties, and visit a restaurant that doesn't do menus.

Amor F-1, Rr. Muhamet Gjollës, tel. +355 4 224 15 73/+355 69 407 81 06. No menu here, just what the chef/owner decides to make that day, all cooked fresh. Great home made pasta, excellent meat, superb desserts and all at reasonable prices. Don't miss the chocolate mousse. It's only a little place so booking is advisable for dinner. ▶ Open 12:00 - 22:30. Closed Sun. \$\$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

French

Pâtisserie Française G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurrit 1, tel. +355 4 25 13 36. The café tries hard to be so very French, down to the décor, oversized cocoa cups, filter coffee, the *Salade Nicoise*, brioche and baguette, fabulous fruit tarts and even the French accent of its charming owner, Marie Therese Marchal. It's all very clean, consistently fresh food even when the daily special is not very special. The service is lovely, if not professional, but you can't have everything. ▶ Open 07:00 - 22:00. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

International

Billionaire G-5, Rr. Jul Varibova 13, tel. +355 4 227 37 16. Situated on one of the few streets in central Tirana still lined with old-fashioned villas, Billionaire adds to the atmosphere by providing a restful terrace and garden where you can smell the flowers as you sip your drink or dine on mainly Italian food. ▶ Open 11:00 - 23:30. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

King House I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurrit, tel. +355 4 225 55 59, kinghouse@king-house.net, www.king-house.net. There's nothing outstanding about the King House; just reliably good Albanian and Italian food served in pleasant surroundings by friendly and attentive staff. Home of the informal Friday night Tirana expat meeting. Near the Xheko Imperial hotel. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

London D-4, Blv. Zogu I, N°51, tel. +355 4 223 88 51/+355 69 207 00 81, rest.london@yahoo.com. Wandering Brits should feel right at home here in this small Albanian corner of Blighty, where British and Italian food is served. A favourite for expats and visitors alike. ▶ Open 11:00 - 23:00. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Lulishte 1 Maji F-5/6, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush, tel. +355 4 223 0151/+355 67 203 12 03, info@lulishte1maji.com, www.lulishte1maji.com. A large, tree-shaded garden beside the river, shared by four restaurants, fountains and a playground. There's pasta and pizza at low prices and a large red building housing the culinary equivalent of the UN, with kebabs, Mexican and Chinese food. ▶ Open 11:30 - 23:00. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Millennium F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, Pallati i Pionierit, tel. +355 4 226 93 16. Decent international dining in a modern space above the cinema, with a glass pavilion surrounded by greenery, garden fragrances twittering birds in summer. ▶ \$-\$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

Pastarella H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti 18, tel. +355 4 226 55 98. What a pleasant spot to meet friends and enjoy a *sufflage* or Spanish paella, if not just a cup of coffee or a glass of cognac, in this airy beige and white Mediterranean bar café in a converted villa. Pastas, salads, a few Greek dishes, fish and meats all fall into the normal realm of expectation, but nothing more. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$

Piazza E-4, Sheshi Harry Truman, tel. +355 4 223 07 06/+355 69 403 03 00, piazzatirana@yahoo.com. Piazza was Tirana's first truly elegant restaurant, and is still a great spot to kill time and watch people. The terrace is screened from the traffic by flower beds, palm trees and a fountain and is a better choice than the slightly tacky indoor area. Piazza serves sandwiches, pizza and other snacks. ▶ Open 12:00 - 17:00, 19:00-23:00. \$\$ ☎ ☑ ☑ ☑ ☑

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ABA TWENTY FIRST

FINE RESTAURANT



ABA TWENTYFIRST

Aba Business Center
Rruga Papa Gjon Pali II
Tel. +355 44501717
Mob. +355 69 4037054

Food with a view

ABA Twentyfirst H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 4 450 17 17, twentyfirst@ababusinesscenter.al. If nothing else gets to you entering this cool leather and glass restaurant, the wrap-around view of Tirana from the top of the city's tallest building alone will be worth the steep price of drinks or the tempting 6,000 lekë tasting menu designed by chef Ignazio Campanale, which includes foie gras and red mullet. Note that taking photos of the view is not allowed up here. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Ballkoni Dajtit Mount Dajti, upper cable car station, tel. +355 67 401 10 21, marketing@dajtiekspres.com, www.ballkonidajtit.com. A lovely Alpine-style wooden restaurant with excellent views over Tirana. There are several dining rooms, though it's worth asking for a table in the enclosed balcony room for the views. The restaurant serves Albanian and Italian meals such as *fergesë me specë* (a dish with eggs and cheese), oven dishes, and in season also wild boar and rabbit. Note that the cable car does not operate on Mondays. ▶ Open 12:00 - 22:00. \$\$

Sky Club G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit N°5, tel. +355 4 222 16 66, ext 143, skyclub@albania-online.net. The spectacular view of Tirana adds sparkle to this romantic room on top of the 17-storey Sky Tower with its red floral chairs, elegantly set tables, and a duo playing songs that remind you of Vienna in the 1940s. Among the surprises in the all too familiar menu are wild fish, baked duck, and home-made pasta. Foreigners will find a few traditional Albanian dishes to try. Count on superb service from the waiters. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Royal G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers, tel. +355 4 228 03 28, restaurantroyal@hotmail.com. Located on the fourth floor of the Twin Towers, this restaurant combines fine dining with a nice view of the main boulevard and the city skyline. Come on a warm night and dine al fresco in the glow of the pyramid. A good selection of wines is available to accompany a large variety of mains. ▶ Open 08:00 - 22:30. \$\$\$

Serendipity I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, 26/1, tel. +355 4 225 93 77/+355 69 404 45 57. The Hard Rock Cafe décor in this popular café is as much a mish-mash as its unfocused menu. You've got Marilyn, Jackie, the Beatles, odd flags, rock album covers - the works - plastered on the walls, and you've got a menu with a dizzying number of cuisines that simply don't fuse. Mexican, Italian, Mediterranean, Albanian. Is the food good? Sometimes. Does it matter? Not much. People flock to this place for the chimichanga and heart-shaped pizza. Ditch the spinach soup. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Shakesbeer H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 4 224 44 13/+355 69 207 64 54. Despite the corny name, Shakesbeer is well worth a visit for its vibrant atmosphere, spacious rooms, the garden and its multinational menu. The cook, a returnee from London, conjurs up exotic dishes from Mexico, Thailand, Spain (*paella*), Germany (*bratwurst*) and even Jamaica. There's local grilled fish and meat too for those who want to eat closer to home. ▶ Open 08:00 - 03:00. \$\$\$

€1 = 140 lek, £1 = 166 lek,
US\$1 = 103 lek (Feb 5, 2011)

Steakhouse G-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Rinia Park, Taiwan, tel. +355 68 230 88 08. This sleek first-floor steak restaurant is decked out with light wood and has a pleasant terrace overlooking the park. The menu has items such as the Mosaic mixed grill and sirloin Angus steak, but also has a range of other non-steak meals. There's knowledgeable service too. ▶ Open 12:00 - 02:00. \$\$\$

Viking H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 7, tel. +355 4 227 12 98/+355 68 202 38 25. A scruffy but friendly local restaurant/bar that's best visited for its pleasant covered terrace. You'll find the usual international suspects on the menu, with great homemade pasta and very little influence of pillaging Scandinavians. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Vila Ambassador Chocolat H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 2, ina_chocolat@yahoo.com. The former East German embassy is a much happier place now that it's home to excellent fish and meat dishes (try the three-course menu), and is deservedly well known for the great desserts. Staff is knowledgeable, and the cluster of orange rooms have an intimate atmosphere. Great for a special evening out. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Vila Amsterdam H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 9, tel. +355 4 226 74 39. Logically located right opposite the Netherlands embassy building, this pleasant restaurant has great semi-covered terrace seating where you can plot the downfall of

Restaurant talk

Waiter!	Kamariër!
A table for two	Një tavolinë për dy
Non-smoking / smoking	Ndalohet duhani / Lejohet duhani
The menu please	Menunë ju lutem
I'd like to order	Do doja ta bëja porosin
Do you have vegetarian food?	Kni ushqim vegjetarian
Surprise me!	Më befaso
The bill, please	Faturën ju lutem

the Dutch government. Or perhaps just tuck into Albanian food and pizzas. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$

Vila Metropolitan H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 68 33 02 07. Right beside the dictator's old villa, this nicely converted villa is the largest city-centre venue with a café on the ground floor and the terrace around, and a stylish restaurant upstairs. There's traditional and modern art on the walls, and a varied menu; for vegetarian *viagra* try the 'aphrodisiac salad'. Who'll convince the UN and NGOs hogging the other lovely villas on this street to make way for progress? ▶ Open 19:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Xibraku Rr. e Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 245 25 42/+355 69 208 50 55, xibrakucenter@yahoo.com, xibraku-center.tripod.com. You might need a tour guide to navigate this meandering, multi-level collection of bars, restaurants and conference hall in the plush hinterland of Tirana's famous road to Elbasan. But if you don't mind lots of stairs, there is something for everyone's taste, from country kitchen to its ultramodern bar. Opposite the Presidential Residence. ▶ Open 11:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

XIBRAKU RESTAURANT



Rr. e Elbasanit, Tiranë, Phone: +355 4 24 525 42



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ABA Fifth

Aba Business Center, Mbi Coin
Rruga Papa Gjon Pali II
Tel: +355 4 450 17 20

Italian

ABA Fifth H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 4 450 17 20, fifth@ababusinesscenter.al. This bar and restaurant is Twentyfirst's little sister, on the fifth floor above the Coin Gallery. Its grand patio gives patrons a bird's eye view of the Qemal Stafa football stadium as well as a spectacular three-corner panorama of Tirana. Here you'll want to stay for the smoothies or the bargain breakfast or bistro lunch, or dinner which includes wok dishes. ▶ Open 07:30 - 24:00. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Al Brigantino H-5, Rr. Themistokli Germenji 3/1, tel. +355 69 224 18 34. A neat Italian restaurant with a seafaring theme - paintings, nautical maps on the ceiling and a huge model ship between the tables. The food is fresh and good. Opposite the Romanian embassy. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$-\$\$\$

Casa di Pasta G-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Taiwan complex, tel. +355 4 225 11 75/+355 4 225 11 78, www.kompleksitaiwan.com. A large Italian eatery occupying half of the Taiwan complex, and looking like any neo-rustic restaurant. The open kitchen offers full views of cooks whacking lamb chops into submission, spinning pizza dough or preparing the "capricious fish salad", and although their efforts result in fine dishes, the service can be numbingly slow. The huge fruit salad is recommended on hot days. ▶ Open 12:00 - 02:00. \$\$\$

Delice H-3, Rr. Ismail Qemali 2, tel. +355 4 226 49 56/+355 68 207 75 73. Alas, food is served only at lunchtime, but the prices are almost half those of its pricey neighbour, Era, and beats it by a mile in its slick presentation.

Delice offers a satisfying three-course lunch Saturdays and Sundays. If you want to taste and not gorge on pasta, try the appetizer-size ravioli or tagliatelle. Otherwise the main dishes (including goat) should satisfy a lumberjack. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$

Fiore I-5, Rr. Dervish Hima 4, tel. +355 4 223 63 94. The focal point of this old world Italian restaurant is the open kitchen pizza oven, but customers head for the fish display case where the catch includes jumbo shrimp, *levrek* and *barbun*, among others, at expected prices. Otherwise you'll find the usual pizza, pasta-risotto with a surprise or two in the meat line-up (roasted rabbit), all fairly priced, as are the Albanian and Italian wines. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$

Green House G-5, Rr. Jul Varibova 6, tel. +355 4 222 26 32, www.greenhouse.al. A 1930s villa with a quiet courtyard hidden behind high hedges seems the perfect place to have Mediterranean meals, accompanied by a good selection of wines. The outside seating area has a tropical feel to it, while inside it's all minimalist chic with delicate spot lighting. ▶ Open 09:00 - 12:00. \$\$\$

La Cantinella H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 69 207 00 82. Set back from the street, the courtyard of this elegant Italian grill house is a pleasant and quiet place to try a grilled meat or Albanian speciality. Inside, there are tables with red-cushioned seats, a pot stove, and wines displayed along the walls. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$

La Tavernetta H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 225 48 34. Lurking in a cellar below a modern high-rise lies this rustic Albanian tavern with wooden beams, medallions, large spoons and lutes. The reasonable Italian food here is complemented by an excellent salad bar. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$

Napoli D-2, Rr. Durrësit 79, tel. +355 4 223 15 67, www.restaurantnapoli.com. One of the first private restaurants to open in 1991 and strategically placed near the clutch of embassies along Rr. Skenderbeg, Napoli is a good spot for diplomats and other passers-by. Its scrumptious pizzas and seafood are conjured up by a chef who trained in Italy. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Pirro Mani Rr. Ali Demi 131, tel. +355 4 234 75 67/+355 69 202 98 63. Famed locally for the Italian food on offer, Pirro Mani is named after the celebrity owner and has no arsonist links whatsoever. There's a large seating area in the garden, while the rustic interior is also capable of holding a wedding party or two. On weekends, call in advance to check it's not booked full. Just east of the city centre. ▶ Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Cooks United

Albanian Federation of Cooks (Federata e Kuzhinierëve Shqiptarë) Tirana, tel. +355 67 262 35 56/+355 69 203 39 22, federata.kuzhinierve.shqiperi@gmail.com. Two famous local chefs, Dorjan Belli and Ilir Ndreko started this network of over 40 professional chefs to work on improving local and international cuisine in Albania, and to organise culinary charity events. ▶

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Park restaurants

Lining Tirana's Grand Park are several large restaurants where you can relax in the cool fresh air and say hello to a bear.

Juvenilja Castelo J-6, Rr. Gjeneral Niko Pushkini, tel. +355 4 226 66 66. These fine purveyors of Italian and Albanian specialties, a multi-talented salad bar and gigantic pizza inhabit a customised castle on the edge of the park. Excellent dining in large rooms, all-encompassing balconies or tiered-terraces overlooking the greenery. ▶ Open 10:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Queen Park Tirana-Elbasan road, km 5, tel. +355 68 202 10 23. The grand building set on the edge of the park offers two floors with a big terrace for dining, and is popular with the locals for festive events. It may not be fit for a queen, but it's certainly not bad. ▶ Open 10:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Sofra e Ariut (Bear's Lair) Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 237 29 04, info@sofraeariut.com, www.sofraeariut.com. Resembling a Swiss chalet, the elegant interiors are great for long Albanian lunches or dinners. The cages containing Liza the bear, some monkeys, eagles and chickens around the lush terrace may cause you to raise your eyebrows, but they're housed in better conditions than animals in the local zoo. Near the Martyrs' Cemetery. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Vila Logoreci I/J-3, Rr. Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 4 224 71 90, vilalogoreci@yahoo.it. A superb-looking restaurant in an old villa, with cosy indoor rooms and a terrace with a pond. The Italian food here is a cut above the rest and the daily special is certainly worth trying. It's best to come early or avoid the Vila on very busy nights. ▶ Open 07:30 - 23:30. \$\$\$

Japanese

Yamato I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, QTU City mall, tel. +355 4 225 82 38, yamato@manetci.com.al. Albania's first Japanese restaurant is so well-hidden, unmarked above the Euromax supermarket in the QTU City mall, that several locals have written to us to say it does not exist. But it does, and serves pretty decent sushi, sashimi, tempura and teriyaki dishes made in the open kitchen - though the exact menu depends on which fish were netted that morning. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00, Sun 18:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$

Pizza

Bogova G-3, Rr. Myslym Shyri 47, tel. +355 4 223 52 00. Named after a beautiful river in southern Albania, this place is well known by the locals. Tasty pizzas served in fresh surroundings. ▶ Open 12:00 - 22:00. \$

La Voglia F-4, Rr. Reshit Çollaku 36, tel. +355 4 225 88 99. La Voglia draws a chic young Albanian crowd to the restaurant occupying a square that is the closest thing that Tirana has to an Italian piazza. DJs spin chill tunes outside in summer. Just across the square, the restaurant has another outlet, imaginatively named La Voglia 2. ▶ Open 09:00 - 01:00. \$

Loro Borici I-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 4 224 06 54. Named for one of Albania's best-known soccer players, this quiet family-run pizzeria offers a wide selection of delicious pizzas, fresh salads, and a full bar. ▶ Open 06:30 - 23:00. \$

Venecia I-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 4 223 32 33. Excellent pizza, but also a great place for coffee and cakes. If weather allows, sit outside on the nice terrace with interesting views of the ragged arse of the Qemal Stafa stadium. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. \$

Seafood

Magic Blue H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 227 35 55, magic.blue.restorant@gmail.com. A modern seafood restaurant in the *bllok* fitted out rustic-style. The catch of the day can be inspected fresh on a bed of ice beside the entrance and you can simply choose the fish of your liking, or you could order one of the many seafood options on the menu, which includes octopus, calamari, shrimps, salmon and more. There's live piano music every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday evening. ▶ Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Rozafa E-5, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi 89, tel. +355 4 222 27 86/+355 4 223 91 14, www.rozafa.com.al. With fish and other seafood coming fresh from their own fish market across the street, you can choose between superb cheap seafood or superb expensive seafood at the two Rozafa restaurants, both located in one building. Treat yourself at least once to the upmarket version (down the alley and through the wooden door on the left); try the seafood buffet, piled high with more tentacles and suckers that you can count. ▶ Open 12:00 - 24:00. \$\$\$

Spaghetti House & Fish D-2, Rr. Duresit 240, tel. +355 4 224 79 23/+355 69 208 80 30. Fish and pasta? Actually, you get the best of both at this somewhat run-down joint now considered numero uno among fish lovers. Most fish is sold by the kilo at prices you gladly pay while gagging. It's that good. You choose the variety grade A or B fish from Albanian waters - *koc, levrek, merluc, barbut, kallamare*, even lobster, and it's cooked as you like it, with or without the pasta. There is only beer and wine to wash it all down, but who cares? ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. Closed Sun. \$\$\$

The Best of Tirana

The staff at Tirana In Your Pocket have had fun writing what we think about the city's restaurants, bars, clubs and sights - but now it's time for the readers to make themselves heard. What is your favourite place in Tirana for local food, for a snack, for drinks, or for a conference? In the next edition we'll have a questionnaire and an online poll. Write to us at tirana@inyourpocket.com to let us know your favourites so we can draw up the shortlist for voting. The categories are...

Best Albanian restaurant
Best Italian restaurant
Best international restaurant
Best fast food restaurant
Best burek shop
Best pizza restaurant
Best café/bar
Best club
Best cultural institution
Best Tirana sight
Best daytrip destination
Best Albanian beach
Best shopping centre
Best business hotel
Best leisure hotel
Best hotel outside Tirana
Best conference venue

Vila 12 G/H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti 12, tel. +355 4 225 06 33. A gourmet fish restaurant that has some very fishy combinations indeed. The chef likes to experiment; try the raw fish with radish, grapes and strawberries, or the potato-cake with cod and mozzarella. Thankfully there's also traditional grilled fish and lobster. The hot choc fondant cake is a worthy dessert. ▶ Open 11:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$

Snacks & Fast food

Concentrations of grease can be found around the intersection of Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit and Rr. Abdyl Frashëri. See also the café reviews for healthier snacks.

Big Bite I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri 16, tel. +355 4 222 00 00. Love it or hate it, no other restaurant gets as many reader comments (both good and bad) on the *Tirana In Your Pocket* website. The second most popular fast-food chain in town has burgers, chips and pizza, non-stop. ▶ Open 24hrs. \$

Il Pomodoro Food Court H-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Plaza Mall. A food court inside the mall attached to the Sheraton hotel, with three cuisines on offer: Mexican, Italian and Asian. Popular for office lunches and for a quick dinner. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$-\$\$

Kolonat I-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 4 225 51 27. Albania's first US-style fastfood chain comes complete with plagiarised McD logo and packaging. Those bored with Ronald's concoctions may like the huge four-person superpizzas, *Skanderburgers* (named after the national hero) and 'Big Supreme' menus on the menu here. The main outlet is a large tent wedged behind the colonnade at the southern end of the boulevard. Also on (G-6) Blv. Bajram Curri. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. \$

Restaurant prices

As an indication of cost, in each review we've indicated the average price of a main course, without drinks:
\$ up to 500 lekë
\$\$ between 500-1000 lekë
\$\$\$ over 1000 lekë

Mr. Chicken I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 4 225 77 08. It's hot and it's busy, but the delicious freshly cooked rotisserie chicken is worth waiting for. You can also get decent chips and kebabs here. Sit in the cheap and cheerful dining section or take it away to smear grease all over your face elsewhere. ▶ Open 09:00 - 24:00. \$

Turkish

Istanbul H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 4 227 29 32. A modest-looking Turkish restaurant that nevertheless serves up some fantastic food. Besides kebabs and pita dishes, do try the tasty *Künefe-kadayif* (pastry with cheese) dessert.

Sofra Turke F-2, Rr. Kavajës 170, tel. +355 4 222 68 18. Although Albanian food is heavily influenced by the Turks, this restaurant serving original *kuzhina turke* is worth the short walk west from the centre. Try the Turkish *Iahmaxhun* pizza, one of the many kebab dishes, or sink your teeth into sweet sticky baklava pastries. Prices are very reasonable for the feast you'll get, and the place is nicely decorated with kilim carpets, instruments, nargil pipes and other knicknacks. It's as if the Ottomans never left. ▶ Open 08:00 - 23:00. \$\$\$



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Delicious lakror pie

All that fat, all that sugar and all that drippy oil, once the stamp of 500 years of Ottoman gastronomic excess, if not decadence, had been purged from the cuisine along with other purges of Albania's past, when the communist regime took over in 1945. And it lasted until the regime fell in 1991. Happily, the spare, semi-starved low calorie, low fat, low cholesterol, no-taste cuisine of that drab era is gone, and now that Albania is attempting to market-economize itself into shape, "food" is back. But nowhere near its former culinary opulence, if you want to characterize a cuisine formerly rich in fat, sugar and flours as such. Today there is hardly a housewife left in the country who knows how to make a decent *byrek*, *baklava* or *revani* dripping with butter. Forget the richness of syrups oozing like golden lava from the crisp layers of baked filo pastries, shanks glistening with spongy layers of crispy fat, mounds of rice overflowing with fruits and nuts like meteors shot from the sun. All that's gone, it's true, but there is a culinary comeback of sorts in restaurants, if not yet in homes.

The wonderful thing about returning to Albania last year after a ten-year absence when only green onions were sold in markets, was to find a thriving, bustling restaurant scene with people actually sitting in cafés munching on pizza or sticking their forks into mounds of spaghetti, heaps of French fries and pick on fish from the oceans and lakes of Albania's rich marine life. Today, the streets are alive with the smell of food wafting in the air. Tiny storefronts are places to find *byrek* made into flaky triangle puffs and filled with cheese, spinach and meat. They're hot from the oven when early morning customers arrive to pick them up by the bagful. It was a pleasure to see a whole lamb on a spit sizzling over flames on the patio of **Taverna Argjiro**, a restaurant right beside the street. And then there are the still mushrooming pizza and pasta places and Greek fast food stands almost on every street corner.

Mass immigration to Italy and Greece in the early 1990s, set off by 50 years of isolation, inspired today's cuisine dominated by pizza and pasta and Greek *giro* sandwiches, *moussaka* and *pasticio* found in restaurants everywhere you look. Who has the best product is a matter of personal taste, but my taste for Italian pasta leads me to the cheerful, well-managed **Casa di Pasta** at Taiwan, the huge complex of bars and restaurants in the heart of the city.

Where to eat Albanian

There is no shortage of restaurants serving Albanian specialties throughout Tirana's bustling restaurant community. Some favourites are Carlsberg, Era, Gurra e Perrise, Juvenilja, Panorama, Taverna Argjiro and Xibraku.

Then there are the Albanian specialties that everyone likes plugged into the pizza pasta menus as if they were in harmony. **Era**, one of the best eateries in Tirana, probably boasts the best and brightest of regional Albanian dishes representing coastal, northern and southern regional specialties. Who would think of ordering *melci* (calf's lung), and other offal neither known nor preferred by most foreigners? But there they are along with *ferges*, the popular Tirana speciality with cheese, eggs and bits of meat or liver and 27 other Albanian specialties including steaks originating in Elbasan, meatballs from Korca and, corneal spinach mush from Gjirokastra, as well as Mediterranean specialties from Crete and other Greek regions.

Because a large number of produce that ordinarily might be grown in Albania's temperate plains are imported, Albania, a traditionally agricultural country may be one of the last countries in Europe to have real seasonality in food, causing prices to be high as well. Do such economic disparities and high cost affect the cuisine? One can point to the lack of variety and the tendency to be repetitive in menu choices as concrete evidence of its effect, even while grocery chains such as Conad and Euromax introduced such items as avocado and mango and strawberries to the marketplace, without much effect to the restaurateurs who understandably must watch their profit margin and clientèle who seem satisfied with the familiar items.

Still there's a bright future for Albanian cuisine now that visas for travel abroad are available to the citizenry, promising new ideas, new visions and new products to filter into the society and its cuisine. And who knows – perhaps all that butter and cream will find their way back into the once opulent Albanian cuisine.

By Rose Dosti



Street food: sheep head

All cafes and bars offer espresso (*kafë ekspres*) or Turkish coffee (*kafë turke*). More upscale places will also serve American-style coffee (*kafë filter*). The only Starbucks-type place in town is Gregory's.

Artist Lounge H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 12, justfruits@hotmail.com. A unique, bright and spacious café serving fresh fruit juices and smoothies, coffee, sweet and hearty crepes, sandwiches, pasta, salads and baguettes. Recommended for a healthy snack or lunch, though service is often tediously slow. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00, Sat, Sun 07:30 - 24:00. \$ ☎ 📶

Bardhë e Zi H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 224 70 89. The biggest attraction in 'Black and White' is the huge black-and-white photograph collection of Albanian artist Artur Gorishti. Modern and comfortable, this café serves a damn good cappuccino. Near the corner with Rr. Ismail Qemali. ▶ Open 24 hours. ☎ 📶

Coffee Store I-5, Sheshi Italia. A boldly-named, modern coffee house overlooking the Kolonat fast food tent beside the stadium. There's good coffee, and tasty paninis if you're up for a snack. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00.

Delikatesë H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 12, tel. +355 4 224 54 24, www.pasticeridelikatese.com. Delicious home-made cakes and sweet chocolatey things served in a restaurant that also has various Italian dishes on the menu. Perfect for an indulgent lunch. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:30, Sun 08:30 - 23:30. ☎ 📶

Gregory's Coffee H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers, tel. +355 4 228 04 81, info@gregorys.gr, www.gregorys.gr. A modern coffee and sandwich bar on the ground floor of the Twin Towers. The fresh panini fillings include omelet, chicken and Albanian-style meatballs and cheese, and there's pie too. Try the fantastic hot or cold chocolate drinks. Also at the airport. ▶ Open 06:00 - 17:00, Sat 06:00 - 15:00, Sun 06:00 - 14:00. \$ ☎ 📶

Jumeirah F-5, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush, tel. +355 68 251 56 99. Named after a Dubai district and built with Emiratic opulence in mind, Jumeirah is a three-floor complex with plenty of mirrors, fake palm trees and a bar on the top floor. Serving drinks as well as cakes from the ground-floor patisserie, the bar has a nice rooftop terrace. The piano keys get tickled in the evening. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. 📶

Book cafés

Epër7shme G-5, Rr. Jul Variboba 2, tel. +355 4 227 12 88. A lovely book café, unfortunately with very few English-language titles in the shop section. Find the friendly owners and their friends hanging out at the café section at the back, specialising in tea. The name means 'suitable' - and it's more than that. ▶ Open 08:00 - 22:30. ☎ 📶

Friend's Book House G-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 226 67 77, friendbookhouse@yahoo.com. For literary insomniacs: a non-stop bookshop, café and reading room that also has a quiet study room in the basement. There are not many English-language titles on offer but you can always bring your own book or newspaper along. Near the main police station, just north of the river. ▶ Open 24hrs. ☎ 📶

Mojo H-5/6, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji. Big blurry photos and big lamps set the scene for Mojo's hip crowd. A bright café serving drinks and snacks such as sandwiches and toast. Mojo is officially a no-smoking café even though everyone happily ignores that. From 17:00-20:00 on weekdays, free snacks come with the drinks. ▶ Open 07:00 - 01:00. ☎ 📶

Pasticeri International I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 4 225 67 50, pasticeri.international@yahoo.com. The only thing international about this place might be your presence - but it's still one of the better places to go to get your sugar-and-coffee fix. Wolf down tarts and various other pastries - if you can find a seat, that is. The children will love the small playground in the adjacent park. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. Also on Rr. Durrësit. ☎ 📶

Pasticeri Twin Towers G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 228 02 89. A good location in the Twin Towers looking out over the Pyramid, this place is bright, modern and airy. Ice cream and cakes complement the rather overpriced coffee, and you can while away the time enjoying the erratic spellings of the Scotch whisky on the menu. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. ☎ 📶

Pirro H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel Europapark, tel. +355 4 223 50 35, www.hotel-europapark.com. The Rogner's relaxed lobby café/bar is something of a meeting place for diplomats, NATO military, businesspeople, and other hobnobbing foreigners. Apart from newspapers and fast wifi, Pirro has a great shaded terrace overlooking the tropical garden. On Thursdays there's live jazz music from 21:00. ▶ Open 06:00 - 24:00. ☎ 📶

Quo Vadis H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 21, tel. +355 4 226 65 90, qvo-vadis@quovadis.com, www.quovadis.com. A popular café at the *bllok*'s main crossroads. The deep red walls provide the perfect backdrop for the hip, young and rich to do their thang. We recommend ordering a coffee, a pint of hair gel and a clipped goatee. ▶ Open 07:30 - 01:00. ☎ 📶

Relax H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, tel. +355 68 213 86 41. Big windows and a bright interior with lots of light wood ensure that Relax lives up to its name. It's a great place to linger over a cup of coffee and read the paper. If you forgot to bring your own, the café kindly provides a selection for you. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. ☎ 📶

Sky Club Café G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit N°5, tel. +355 4 222 16 66. The floor of the glass box on top of Albania's highest building revolves slowly to give a 360-degree panorama of the city, electricity permitting. That's also the main reason to come - the coffee and cakes on offer are pricey and no better than those at ground level. ▶ Open 08:00 - 23:00. Groups: admission 250 lek/person. ☎

Stephen Center Café E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tahsim 1, tel. +355 4 223 47 48, www.stephencenter.com. Set up by evangelical missionaries who certainly know how to run a good café, this is one of Tirana's best, a cosmopolitan meeting place for locals and foreigners alike. There's a pleasant terrace and a cosy smoke-free interior with a poster of New York's twin towers. There's free wifi, fresh juice, 90 lek bottomless coffee, salads, pastas, sandwiches, pancakes, burgers, pizza, Mexican dishes, English breakfast and on Saturdays waffles. Amen! ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. Closed Sun. (600-750 lek). ☎ 📶

Tirana's nightlife scene is not bad at all, and is improving fast. The fun starts with the lively *xhiro* (mass evening stroll), and ends at the bustling *blloku* area. There's a fine line between cafés, bars and clubs (and indeed workplaces) in Albania, and some venues that we have listed as cafés or bars are known to morph into clubs on weekend nights. You'll know when the sound gets cranked up and long-legged gogo girls climb onto your table. Note that Albanians prefer sipping coffee to serious drinking, and foreign types are often the only sad souls knocking back the hard stuff.

Bars

Alfa Club D-4/5, Rr. Barrikadave 14, tel. +355 4 224 03 66. A hip young crowd, smoke, drinks and mixed music styles - all you need for a good night out. Bottle of wine or whiskey for 7,500 lek. ▶ Open 23:00 - 03:00. Closed Mon, Tue. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Bon Bon H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani, tel. +355 69 541 81 80. A bar on Tirana's most fashionable nightlife street serving the city's best Mojitos. ▶ Open 08:30 - 02:00, Fri, Sat 08:30 - 04:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Cameleon H-4, Rr. Dervish Hima, tel. +355 69 205 13 78. A compact and modern bar in a riot of bright primary colours. Cameleon's novelty is the ever-changing display of multi-coloured lights throughout the evening. It's a little hard to tell what's in your glass when everything shifts from blue to orange, but it's less annoying than you might think. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. Beer 300 lek. ☎ ☑

Canon H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani. Let's rock! In chilled style, in a narrow dog's leg room painted bright orange you will find



Chilling at Steelwings

Tirana's indie-rock youth packed in tighter than the socks in Lenny Kravitz's flared rock star trousers. ▶ Open 08:00 - 23:00, Fri, Sat 08:00 - 03:00. Beer 500 lek. ☎ ☑

Caramel Lounge H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Twin Towers. A lounge bar set on the second floor of the Twin Towers, with cracking cocktails, lounge music and views over to the Pyramid. ▶ Open 07:00 - 03:00. ☎ ☑

Charl's Bistro H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani 36, tel. +355 69 202 29 01, info@charlsbistro.com, www.charlsbistro.com. An eclectic, fashionable thirtyish crowd populates this fantastic lounge bar with 1960s-80s inspired music in the *bllok* area. The somewhat oddly spelt bar regularly puts on live music acts from across the region and various other events from Thursday to Saturday, but the cocktail bar in the lush small garden spits out great drinks all week. ▶ Open 24 hours. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Code I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri. Attracting a somewhat older crowd than usual for the *bllok*, The Code is a spacious arched bar with a library corner, sofas and Tuborg on tap. Regular parties include the *Jazz & Gold Hits* evenings, with live bands. Just beside the Vesa Centre complex.

Converse G/H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha. The students, artists and intellectuals that visit this tiny basement 'social club' to sip coffee and play chess seem the exact opposites of the loud hairy men slamming down shots at Steelwings next door. A good place to pick up conversation with young Tiranians, recite poetry or pin your own home-made artwork on the walls. ▶ Open 09:00 - 03:00. Beer 100 lek. ☎ ☑

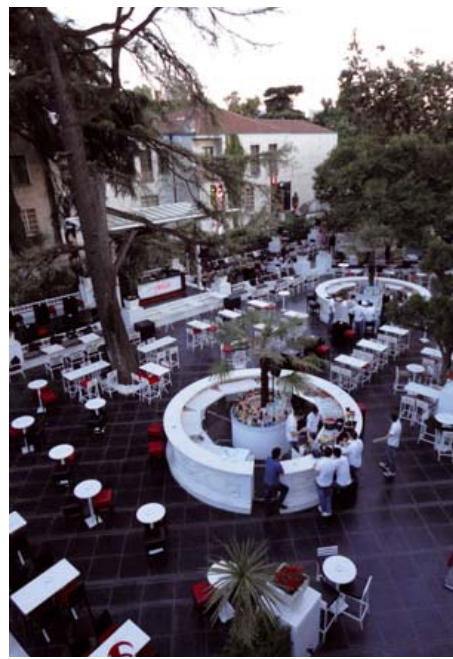
Davidoff Club G/H-4, Biv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 69 204 27 00. To the young students at the Davidoff, it's all about seeing or being seen. The large bar on the first floor of the building has big windows for watching the crowded streets and terraces below. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00.

Flares H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 69 209 99 10, nardimuho@yahoo.com. Squeeze yourself into this bar at the weekend and be prepared for a singalong or even a star turn. When the karaoke is turned off, just relax and enjoy the modern Albanian art on display. Owners Denis and Nardi work hard to make this a welcoming spot and Flares is justifiably popular with locals and expats. ▶ Open 07:00 - 01:00, Thu, Fri, Sat 07:00 - 03:00. Beer 300 lek. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Iguana II H-4, Rr. Brigada e VIII, tel. +355 69 207 20 71. Pictures of lizards appropriately adorn the walls of this youthful first-floor bar, and the corner location means you have views over late night pedestrians on two streets. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00.

Infinity J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, tel. +355 4 227 47 07. The Sheraton's elegant piano bar and lounge is a peaceful place for a beer, or something stronger, sometimes accompanied by live music. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Living Room F-5, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush 16, tel. +355 4 226 51 30/+355 67 203 32 25. Literally a cool bar, as after a hot summer's day the large rooftop lounge area catches the evening breeze. That's when the pretty people dress up and come out in force to cram themselves on the multilevel decks overlooking the city. In winter, retreat to the first floor of the building with its living room style bar. The restaurant (summer only) serves good pasta and fish dishes, though it's the cocktails and daily DJ parties that interest the majority of visitors. ▶ Open 19:00 - 03:00. Beer 400 lek. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓



The La Folie club terrace

Lizard H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani, tel. +355 69 202 27 92. A large shed of a place that regularly gets crammed with young locals, delighted with the live rock music. Drop by Wednesdays for the hot Latin nights. ▶ Open 24hrs. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Meduza H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti, tel. +355 4 222 35 98. A large bar in the wacky *pallati me birila* building. English and Australian beers are on tap, there's a good-value lunch menu and in the evening a selection of Italian, Lebanese and international dishes is served, followed by cocktails. There's live music on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday with Salsa dancing, DJs and bands. The Prime Minister lives upstairs, which explains the nervous guards telling you not to take pictures on the street, and when he has a headache the volume gets turned down. ▶ Open 06:00 - 01:00. Beer 400 lek. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Music Box G-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Rinia Park, tel. +355 4 225 11 75. A spacious, upmarket bar on the first floor of the Taiwan complex, with a nice terrace overlooking the fountain. Leave your coat at the wardrobe and sag in a couch to listen to DJ music. ▶ Open 07:00 - 02:00. Beer 500 lek.

Noel F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 4 224 36 38. A film lover's den of delights, Noel is appropriately owned by the director of the local film institute, and is set in a basement opposite the Millennium 2 cinema. A mature crowd of culture vultures can be found sitting eating and drinking at tables amidst hundreds of magazine photos of movie icons and scenes. Food on offer includes traditional *tava* and *qofte* meatballs. ▶ Open 10:00 - 17:00, 19:00-24:00. Closed Sun.

Drink ujë, not aqua

Order a bottle of mineral water with your meal, and chances are that you'll get sparkling water that was shipped all the way from France, Italy or further away - usually at a high price for both the environment and the diner's wallet. All this while Albania has excellent and abundant mineral water, and several good brands such as Glina and Tepelena are on the market. Join TIYP in asking restaurant managers to have at least one local brand on the menu so patrons have the choice. The Albanian economy needs all the support it can get, and this will help in a small way.

Radio H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 29/1, tel. +355 69 28 44 24. One of Tirana's cooler bars, covered in old radio station logos, a Guernica painting, a typewriter on a stool and a few antique radios scattered around. Filled with students and others on most nights, it's a relaxed place to listen to chilled music and chat. Find it in an apartment building set back from the street.

Rock 'n Roll I-6, Rr. Dervish Hima. A small bar with classic green and red wallpaper and a great atmosphere, very popular with locals and foreigners alike. Mercifully, no house music is played here, just honest blues, country and the odd rock 'n roll song, with DJs sometimes dropping by to spin their discs. The usual drinks are served, with a good selection of whiskeys to fuel the night. ▶ Open 08:00 - 02:00. ☎ ☑

Rockwood H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, N°11/1. A small and friendly bar on the ground floor of a tall office building (also conveniently housing the IYP offices), serving endless coffees by day and playing rock and other music styles at night. ▶ Open 07:00 - 02:00.

Steelwings (Harley Davidson Bar) G/H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 69 202 23 31. Official home of the Steelwings Albania Motorcycle Club and easily located by the multitude of cool rides parked outside, this rocking bar full of leather-clad motorbike enthusiasts is decorated with all the usual Americana. It's a very friendly place, and the owners Tani and Dani stress that everyone is welcome. Visit on Thursdays for the unplugged sessions or on weekend nights for rock karaoke and live rock and country music. ▶ Open 08:00 - 02:00. Beer 200 lek. ☎ ☑ ☒ ☓

Pub talk

Where is the nearest club?	<i>Ku ndodhet klubi më I afërt?</i>
I need a...	<i>Dua një</i>
... beer	<i>birrë</i>
... wine	<i>verë</i>
... cocktail	<i>kokteli</i>
... cigarette	<i>cigare</i>
... lighter	<i>çakmak</i>
... ashtray	<i>tabak</i>
... man	<i>burr</i>
... woman	<i>grua</i>
Where can I find a taxi?	<i>Ku mund ta gjejë një taksi?</i>
You have beautiful eyes.	<i>Keni sy të bukur.</i>
Your place or mine?	<i>Vendi im apo I yti?</i>
Where I come from, that's illegal.	<i>Prej nga unë vij, kjo është jo legale.</i>

Wine bars

Sophisticated interiors, quiet music and a good selection of wines to sample.

30 Over H-3, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani 8/1, tel. +355 68 407 43 16. When you've had enough of Tirana's relentless youthfulness, head to this *vinoteka* where they aim for a more mature clientèle. Lit by candlesticks in empty bottles, this is a decent place as any to enjoy a glass of wine (some 15 types are available from across the world) with some snacks. From mid-Oct to mid-May there's live music on weekend nights. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00. ☎ 📍 📺

Alcora G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers, tel. +355 4 228 01 42. A popular and stylishly upmarket wine bar on the fourth floor of the Twin Towers complex. The locals come here for the see-and-be-seen factor and nip coffee and wine or taste the antipasta dishes. There's a very nice terrace with views of the treetops, budgies in a cage and a tree lit up pink. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00. ☎ 📍

Alejandro H/I-4, Rr. Nikolla Tupe, tel. +355 4 225 17 75. A cheerful wine bar appropriately hung with empty bottles, well-stocked with Italian, Spanish, Chilean and other wines at around 300 lek a glass. Although the focus is on wine and grappa, there are some anti-pasta dishes available so you can keep going all night. ▶ Open 18:00 - 02:30. ☎ 📍 📺

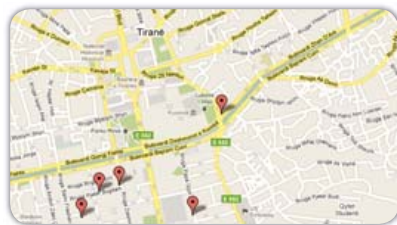
Bonaparte G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 69 407 47 03. The most upmarket wine bar in town comes highly recommended by online *Tirana In Your Pocket* readers. On the first floor of the building, overlooked by a portrait of Napoleon, visitors can get sozzled on a dizzying array of quality French wines, cognac and over 30 types of whiskey. Exclusive Armagnac brandy is also served at €1500 a bottle or a mere €150 per glass. Snacks are served, as are Cuban cigars that may be smoked here. Pity about the smoke. ▶ Open 09:00 - 01:00, Sun 17:00 - 01:00.

Enoteca Joan H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani 8, tel. +355 69 207 35 90. A wine-lovers' café run by a sommelier - what could possibly be better? Sample a large variety of mainly Italian wines, as well as some great Italian and French dishes, in this small venue that's set back from the road. ▶ Open 11:30 - 23:00, Sun 18:30 - 23:00. \$\$\$

Wine Shop H-5, Rr. Vaso Pasha. Heavy and earnest wood furniture sends echoes around this wonderfully chilled alternative to the younger-focus of Tirana nightlife. Wines from around Europe and open cask examples from Albania and Macedonia are offered at good prices. Accompany these with salty tidbits and Albanian cheeses. ▶ Open 08:00 - 23:00. ☎

Wine Spirit I-3, Rr. Andon Zako Çajupi, tel. +355 69 208 84 81/+355 69 208 65 95, koncept4@hotmail.com. Hidden deep in the bllok area near the Conad supermarket, this is one of Tirana's better wine bar/restaurants, with a dark wood interior with old carpets and a grand piano. The walls are lined with wine bottles, as they should be, and the selection of Italian, French and other foreign wines is complemented by a selection of Albanian reds, of which Kajoshi is worth a try. There's Italian food on offer and on Friday and Saturday evenings there's live tinkling on the piano. ▶ Open 17:00 - 01:00. \$\$\$ ☎ 📍 📺 📺

The best places to eat, drink, see, sleep and experience could be metres away.



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Out now.



Stylus Club Marriott H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 69 309 68 10. A café and bar behind Enver Hoxha's old villa that really comes alive during the Friday and Saturday night karaoke sessions - warble along to your favourite Albanian or foreign song together with the *Magic 4* group. The karaoke starts at 22:30. ▶ Open 07:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 22:30 - 05:00.

Tiki I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi. Surf's up at the tropical-style Tiki Bar, where surfboards stand in the sand, a ropey ship-theme dominates the two-storey interior, and palm leaf parasols shade the cocktail-sipping patrons from the Albanian sun. Wednesdays sees bands play live here, while house and R&B DJs take over on Friday and Saturday. ▶ Open 08:00 - 02:00, Fri, Sat 08:30 - 04:00. 📍 📺

Tirana Rock I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 69 206 57/+355 67 208 05 71. One of Tirana's best bars, the Rock has a lot of wood, wild parties and loud live music played every Wednesday (unplugged), Thursday (new bands), Friday and Saturday (rock). Their classic Tirana Rock Café T-shirts sold out in no time, ask to see if they're available again. Admission is free, though beer costs more when bands play. Closing times are very flexible. ▶ Open 09:00 - 03:00, Sun 17:00 - 03:00. ☎ 📍 📺 📺

Unit Bar H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani. Tirana's only reggae bar is a basic, friendly place, a far cry from the slick lounges just down the street. The owners are proud that only 'selected' reggae, electro and underground music is played, and there's an alternative live band playing every few weeks. Don't miss the annual Bob Marley birthday party (around Feb 6). ▶ Open 08:00 - 03:00. ☎ 📍 📺

Vogue Lounge H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit. One of the newer villa conversions in town, first a politburo residence and then a UN office, Vogue is the trendiest of the lot. With a glass-fronted facade, comfy chairs, designer lamps, mellow music and a terrace with pond underneath the palm trees it's crammed with the city's beautiful at night. ▶ Open 07:30 - 02:00. ☎ 📍

Zanzibar H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti. Despite the name there is nothing very African about this place apart from the mural of the Sahel plain that runs the length of one wall and a few random elephant carvings. One of six bars in a row in a crazy building, it's fun to sit outside and compare your waiter's performance with the rest. ▶ Open 07:00 - 23:00. ☎ 📍

Pubs

Irish Bar H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani. A fantastic Irish bar in the *bllok* area, with several Irish, German and Belgian beers on offer, though lacking pub grub. There are TV screens showing sports. The best thing about the bar is the buzzing atmosphere and the pleasant outside seating area. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 08:00 - 03:00. ☎ 📍

Clubs

Calvin Rr. Elbasanit 118/1, tel. +355 4 237 99 99/+355 68 212 79 61. Come jiggle with the glittering girls. A purple and lime green lego brick motif, both inside and out, with the latest Turbofolk (traditional Balkan music on speed) blasted at a happy crowd. Just east of the centre. ▶ Open 24 hrs. Beer 250-500 lek. ☎ 📺

Folie F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 68 609 22 22, foliebar@gmail.com, www.myspace.com/foliebar. Playing 'selected music for good people' in an extravagant three-storey space with plenty of glass balconies for making yourself seen, Folie is one of Tirana's best clubs. Set beside the Millennium cinema, it has a fantastic outdoor terrace area too. Watch the posters for their themed nights. ▶ ☎ 📍 📺

Lollipop H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani 36, tel. +355 67 206 75 00, lollipoptirana@gmail.com, www.myspace.com/lollipoptirana. An aching trendy club for Tirana's coolest people, with lots of brushed steel, sofas in vivid red and blinding white and polka dots on the wall. At the weekend the DJs come out and do their thing competing against the live bands at Charl's Bistro across the street. Strictly a house and dance music venue. ▶ Open 12:00 - 05:00. Closed Sun. Beer 400 lek. ☎ 📍 📺

Mumja F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, tel. +355 68 609 16 68, mumja.bar@gmail.com. Originally located in the pyramid (hence the name) and now near the Millennium cinema, Mumja is a hopping club playing a wide variety of music on weekend nights to a wild crowd of students. ▶ Open Fri, Sat 23:00-04:00. ☎

Raum H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 69 337 02 01. How loud can a student bar get? Raum does its best to put this to the test, and the crowd dancing away the night in this first-floor bar must be deaf for days after the party. Expect friendly students, cheap cocktails, sweaty moves on the dance floor and ruptured eardrums.



The parliament building by night

Sharm Club I-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 4 224 90 26, www.sharm-club.net. With a large outdoor space for cooling down on warm nights, Sharm is a disco club done up in outrageous colours and materials (think glass floors, padded walls and Ionian pillars), and playing the usual house hits to a happy crowd. Just east of the Sheraton. ▶ Open Fri, Sat 22:00-03:00. ☎ 📍

Venue Dance Club Rr. Sadik Petrela 20, tel. +355 68 601 11 11, info@venueclub.com, www.venueclub.com. A rocking dance club with a rather strange name playing house and dance music, with occasional stage shows and live music. There's a terrific party atmosphere and cheap drinks. The club is northeast of the centre near Rruga Qemal Stafa, near the ring road; tell the cabbie it's near Profarma. In July and August the whole club moves to Durrës. ▶ Open Fri, Sat 22:00-04:30. ☎ 📍 📺

Casinos

Regency Casino G-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Rinia Park, Taiwan, tel. +355 4 227 47 39, www.regencycasino.al. The casino inside the Taiwan complex has 20 gaming tables and 250 slot machines. Dress up, bring ID and be older than 21 to get in.

Jazz Clubs

Imagine H-6, Sheshi Skënderbej 8, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 68 206 10 88. A rock bar with a homage to the late great John Lennon, with black and white photos of him and other famous musicians lining the walls. Imagine is pleasant enough for some late-night drinking, but is at its best when live rock music is played on Fridays and Saturdays. At the rear of the hotel. ▶ Open Wed-Sat 19:30-03:00. ☎ 📍

Rei Jazz Club I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri 5, Vesa Center, tel. +355 4 227 88 16. A great bar dedicated to recorded and live jazz music on the ground floor of the Vesa Center building. Only drinks are served, and there's a good variety of beer, wine, cocktails and dozens of whiskeys available. At 22:30 on Friday and Saturday nights, local and foreign artists play live; the admission fee charged on these nights includes a drink. ▶ Open 08:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 08:00 - 02:00. Admission on concert nights 1,500 lek.

Essential Tirana

Tirana's sights are quite low-key, and therefore the must-sees can nearly be counted on one finger. If time allows you to take in some culture, follow our short city walk (see page 36), visiting the **Et'hem Bey Mosque** and the **National History Museum** before getting a coffee in the *bllok* area.

Points of interest

Central Market (Pazari i ri) E-5, Sheshi Avni Rustemi. Small fruit and vegetable stalls can be found across the city, but the daily *pazari i ri* ('new market') truly captures the spirit of the country in a messy explosion of colour, people, fresh produce and trash. Apart from fruit, vegetables, fish and meat, the stalls display a dozen varieties of olives, cheeses, wines and raki throughout small squares and snaking alleyways. Animal rights activists won't like the sight of bunches of live chickens slung over bicycle handlebars, but at least these chicks didn't grow up in Guantanamo poultry farms. Early morning is the best time of day to witness Balkan-style trading and haggling.

Martyrs' Cemetery (Varrezat e Dëshmorëve) Rr. Elbasanit. This cemetery holds the remains of 900 partisans who fought for Tirana in WWII. The 12m-high dynamic white statue of Mother Albania, inaugurated in 1972, watches over the graves in a windswept gown. Enver Hoxha used to be buried at her feet until he fell from grace in 1991. From the heights of the cemetery, Tirana and Mt. Dajti are spread out panoramically before you. A short drive on the bus to Sauk. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00.

Pyramid (Piramida) G-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit. The pyramid, as it's popularly known, opened in 1988 as a museum dedicated to the Albanian dictator-cum-pharaoh Enver Hoxha. Designed by Hoxha's daughter Pranvera, the building was reportedly the most expensive ever erected in Albania. After the regime collapsed, the place became a conference center and location of a club (called *The Mummy*, of course). Now semi-derelict, the government wants to demolish it to make place for new parliament buildings, though there's a healthy heated debate about the destruction of the past and preservation of the park going on. In front of the building, the Peace Bell installation was made in 1999 as a memorial to peace by the children of Shkodra. The bell's metal comes from thousands of bullet cartridges, fired off during the lawless 1990s.

Tourist information

TIA Tourist Information Point TIA, tel. +355 4 238 49 80, www.tirana-airport.com. A handy tourist information kiosk at the airport arrivals hall, with *Tirana In Your Pocket* guides, maps, providing answers to questions about Tirana and Albania. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00.

Tourist Information Office (Zyra e Informacionit Turistik) E-4, Rr. Ded Gjo Luli, tel. +355 4 222 33 13, infotourism@tirana.gov.al, www.tirana.gov.al. The city's friendly tourist information centre is right behind the National Museum. Drop by to get information about Tirana and copies of *Tirana In Your Pocket*. ▶ Open Apr-Oct 09:00-19:00, Sat, Sun 09:00-16:00; Nov-Mar 09:00-17:00, Sat, Sun 09:00-16:00.

Skanderbeg Square (Sheshi Skënderbej) E-4, . Tirana's main square, Sheshi Skënderbej, is that vast expanse of asphalt where you've got to dodge both Mercedes and plastic kiddie cars. The square was large even before World War II, but the Communists made it absolutely massive (and in the process, cleared away an old bazaar). Started in 1958, the pompous Palace of Culture was built with Soviet assistance. But when Albanian-Soviet relations deteriorated, the chief Soviet engineer on the project gathered up all the blueprints and left the country. Chinese experts had to be called in to finish the job. Today this building contains the Opera and the National Library. The mosaic on the facade of the National History Museum represents the flow of Albanian history. The Puppet Theater has a surprising past: before World War II, it housed King Zog's puppet parliament. Other sights here include the imposing red-brick National Bank, the Et'hem Bey Mosque and Skanderbeg's statue.

As part of a complete makeover of Tirana's city centre, the square is currently under construction, and when they finally finish (nobody dares to estimate when), it is to be green and pedestrianised, surrounded by 80m-high buildings to accentuate the core of the city.

Churches

Cathedral of St. Paul (Katedralja e Shen Palit) G-5, Blv. Zhan D'Ark, tel. +355 4 223 46 55. Tirana's Catholic cathedral looks somewhat bland on the outside save for the statue of St Paul perched on the roof, but it has a quite nice interior with impressive concrete architecture. Note Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul II featured in the stained glass windows. ▶ Open 06:00 - 12:00; 14:00-19:00. Open 08:30-12:30, 17:00-19:00, winter afternoons: 16:00-19:00.

Heart of Christ Church (Kisha Zemra e Krishtit) F-3, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 4 224 86 91. Tirana's oldest surviving Catholic church is the Romance-style Jesuit church, built by Giovanni Santi (from Udine in Italy) in 1939. In 1967, when all religious activity in Albania was banned, it was stripped of its frescoes and turned into a cinema. It reopened as a church in 1991, with two chapels repainted in 1999. Visitors are welcome in the morning and afternoon hours.



Mosaic fragment at the Shëngjin Church ruin



The new Orthodox Cathedral clock tower

Orthodox Cathedral (Katedralja e re Ortodokse) F-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit. Under construction, the massive new Orthodox cathedral currently looks like a nuclear power plant. The modern-style building with lots of concrete and a space-age bell tower should be finished in 2011.

Orthodox Church (Kisha Ortodokse) F-2, Rr. Kavajës 151, tel. +355 4 223 50 95/2234117, fax +355 4 223 21 09, www.orthodoxalbania.org. The Orthodox Church of the Holy Annunciation was built in 1964, but closed in 1967 and was then used to house the Tirana Sports Club. Services resumed in 1990. The Orthodox Church of Albania first became autocephalous in 1937 and again in 1992.

Museums & Galleries

Archaeological Museum (Muzeu Arkeologjik) I-5, Sheshi Nënë Tereza, tel. +355 4 224 07 11. Archeology buffs who aren't satisfied by the finds on display at the National History Museum will find even more fragments of various finds here, from pottery and animal statuettes to arrowheads and jewellery. ▶ Open 10:30 - 14:30. Closed Sat, Sun. Admission free.

Linda Spahiu Costume Collection tel. +355 68 304 26 64/+355 68 212 10 08, atelielinda@hotmail.com. Linda and her son Luris are perhaps Tirana's most fervent collectors and restorers of traditional Albanian costumes; they sold the family house and moved into a rented apartment to be able to purchase more items. Although they do not have a permanent exhibition space yet, they are happy to show their collection and sell some items to interested visitors. Their top pieces, which include waistcoats, heavy woollen embroidered xhubleta skirts, and delicate tablecloths. Luris speaks English and French. Take a taxi or bus up Rr. Elbasanit to the first roundabout after the Martyr's Cemetery and you'll be met there. ▶ Open by appointment. Admission free, donations welcome.

Old habits - new leks

Old habits die hard, old Albanian habits in particular. Take the currency, the lek. In 1964 and 1991, a zero was cut from the currency and new banknotes and coins introduced to make the numbers easier to handle. But still, you'll get sometimes get quoted amounts in old leks in shops, so you're told to pay 1000 lek rather than 100. This is not to rip you off - it's just an old habit that's just as comfy as those awful slippers you wear at home, and even if you do put down ten times the amount necessary, you'll get the right change. Even though all the signs and price tags in shops are new lek, not all Albanian minds have made the transition.

Mezuraj Museum (Mezuraj Muze) E-3, Rr. Kavajës, Sun Business Centre, tel. +355 4 226 71 96, info@mezuraj-museum, www.mezuraj-museum. Tirana's first private museum consists of 800-object Mezuraj family collection of which a changing selection is on display. Two rooms are dedicated to Albanian paintings and sculptures, with a striking Socialist Realist depiction of happy young people on a harvest campaign. There are also various archaeological artefacts on display, including Greek amphorae, beautiful bronze-age jewellery, 4th century weights, spearheads, and a plate from the sunken Italian warship 'Po'. Find the museum above the Raiffeisen bank on the first floor of the tall business centre 500m from Sheshi Skanderbeg; enter on the right side of the building. ▶ Open 10:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun. Admission 300 lek.

National Art Gallery (Galeria Kombëtare e Arteve) F-4/5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 223 39 75, www.gka.al. Looted in 1997, the city's art museum has seen a comeback and now hosts a varied collection. Besides the changing shows, there's a permanent exhibition of works by Albania's earliest painters starting in the 1800s, most of it thoroughly plagiarized since the 1990s by hundreds of living painters. The floors above contain realist socialist works depicting heroic partisans, Albania's industrial might and factory workers, produced from 1944 to 1990 during Hoxha's dictatorship when even the size of canvas and subject matter were dictated. The top floor is devoted to contemporary modern art by artists who are at last free to give the stroke of a brush their own expression. The gallery is surrounded by a lovely park, and as a special bonus at the rear of the building you'll find some still-defiant Communist-era partisan statues clenching their fists at the sky, as well as huge statues of Lenin and Stalin. ▶ Open 10:00 - 17:00, Sun 10:00-14:00. Closed Mon. Research complete, December 15 10, silvia spoke to Arben, Admission 200 lek.

National History Museum (Muzeu Historik Kombëtar) E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, tel. +355 4 222 34 46, muzeut@yahoo.com. You can't miss the gargantuan mosaic on the facade - it represents the development of Albania's history with everyone from Ilirians to partisans represented. Inside, each hall covers one of the stages in the development of the Albanian nation. Repeated looting in the 1990s has robbed the museum of many artefacts, but it remains the best place in Albania to tank up on history and to view beautiful finds from the many archeological sites across the country. One hall focuses on the years around the Second World War and the resistance movements, while the museum ends with a harrowing exhibition about Albania's gruesome labour camp system and the thousands of men and women who were swallowed by it. There are some English texts but it's best to bring an Albanian for a better understanding. The museum shop is an excellent place to shop for books and traditional crafts. ▶ Open 10:00 - 17:00, Sun 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Mon. Admission 200 lek.

City walk

Tirana's most significant buildings are concentrated along one thoroughfare: Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit, the "Boulevard of the Martyrs". The walk described below, from Skanderbeg Square to the Polytechnic University, will take you past Tirana's highlights in a flash.



Tirana's main boulevard

Starting underneath the mosaic of the National Museum on Skanderbeg Square, pass Et'hem Bey Mosque towards the elegant government buildings at the end of the square, housing ministries and the town hall. These were built in the 1930s, during the rule of King Zog.

The grand boulevard leading south from here was the brainchild of the Italian Fascists, who held parades here during World War II. It later became the venue for the locals' *xhiro* (evening stroll). In fact, it used to be closed off to traffic in evenings - what bliss that would be now. Cross the next street (Rruga Myslym Shyri) and on your left is the Art Gallery, then, hidden behind pine trees, the former Hotel Dajti. On your right is Rinia Park, which was concealed beneath illegally built bars and pizzerias in the 1990s. The municipality reclaimed the area, and with popular support bulldozed the buildings in order to restore the park.

Walk across the next wide streets (Bulevardi Zhan D'Ark; Bulevardi Bajram Curri) and perhaps without noticing you've crossed the Lana River, whose green banks were also crammed with illegal buildings until order was restored. Here you arrive at the 'pyramid'. On your right, next to the Twin Tower business centre is a small park with the busts of the three Frashëri brothers.

Just past the next crossing on your left is the Prime Minister's Residence, which was once the Communist Party headquarters. During official demonstrations and parades, Party leaders stood on the balcony here and waved to the masses below. In January 2011, this was the scene of rioting and three deaths when nervous guards opened fire on demonstrators. On the right is the former Party Committee building.

Beyond Rruga Ismail Qemali you'll pass the Rogner Europapark Hotel, and a little further the modernist Palace of Congresses. Originally built for Party congresses, it now hosts concerts, festivals and fairs. On your right, fenced off and concealed behind trees, is the President's Palace. This building served as the Soviet embassy until 1961, when all diplomatic relations were broken off, and for a while thereafter it housed parliament.

The disproportionately large, empty square at the end of the boulevard is Sheshi Nënë Tereza (Mother Teresa Square), named for the nun who was arguably the most famous Albanian of the 20th century; her statue can be found up the steps. To the left is the Archaeological Museum; on the right, the Art Academy. At the southern end of the boulevard stands the Polytechnic University, originally erected by the Italian Fascists. Its imposing stone façade certainly seems better fitted for reviewing goose-stepping soldiers than for studying in. Going further down the paths on either side of the university whisks you out of urban Tirana and into the Grand Park.



National Art Gallery

Natural Science Museum (Museu i Shkencave Të Natyrës) F-2, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 4 222 90 28.

This small, old-fashioned collection in a ramshackle building includes lots of stuffed animals (of the taxidermic, not cuddly, kind), birds and various strange sea creatures, including the biggest sea turtle ever found in Albania. ▶ Open 08:00 - 14:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Shëngjin Church Mosaic (Mozaiku i Tiranës) E-2, Rr. Naim Frashëri.

An excavated Byzantine-era church ruin that was only discovered in 1972 boasts Tirana's oldest artworks: mosaics with geometric patterns and depictions of poultry and fish. Nicely exhibited in a little park and protected by a makeshift roof, there are also various stones, some from the church iconostasis, scattered around the site. Unfortunately there's little in the way of explanations. A little obscure but well worth a look if you're in this part of town: look for the Hallall pizzeria on the northern end of the street, and walk 100 metres west. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sun. Admission free.

Zeta Gallery I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, Hekla Center, tel. +355 4 226 66 80/+355 68 213 01 80, zeta.artgallery@yahoo.com.

A windowless room on the second floor of a new building has changing art exhibitions by young local and international artists. When we visited, we saw a looped video of a guy shooting at something in the Grand Park, and photos comparing 1980s Tirana to the current situation. ▶ Open 09:30-14:00, 17:00-20:30. Closed Sun.

Ottoman Tirana

Clock Tower (Kulla e sahatit) F-4/5, Sheshi Skenderbej, tel. +355 4 224 32 92. Tirana's landmark central sight is the clock tower from 1822. Brightly lit at night, it can be seen from the far end of Rr. Durrësit when entering the city. Started off by Et'hem Bey, completed by the locals and extended to 35m in 1928, when a German-made clock was also installed, it was for long the highest building in town, and the views of the city centre from the top are worth the climb. The shadow of the tower strikes the mosque at sunset, an event long used to demark the closing time of the formerly adjacent market place. ▶ Open Mon 09:00-13:00, Thu 09:00-13:00, 16:00-18:00. Admission 100 lek.

Et'hem Bey Mosque (Xhamia e Et'hem Beut) F-4, Sheshi Skenderbej, tel. +355 4 222 37 01. Perhaps the only real sight in Tirana, this pretty mosque is right on the city's main square, making it hard to miss. Construction of the 'Xhamia e Haxhi Ethem Beut' mosque started in 1794 and was finished in 1821 by Et'hem Bey (who evidently got all the credit). Closed under communist rule, the mosque reopened as a house of worship in 1991, without permission from the authorities. 10,000 courageous people dared to attend and remarkably the police did not interfere. The event was a milestone in the rebirth of religious freedom in Albania. Take a look at the frescoes outside and in the portico which depict trees, waterfalls and bridges - motifs rarely seen in Islamic art. Take your shoes off before entering the inner room. ▶ Open for tourists 08:00-11:00.

Fortress of Justinian (Kalaja) F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani. When this fortress was built in the 6th century, Albania was but an outpost on the western fringe of the Byzantine Empire. The fortress the place where the main east-west and north-south roads crossed, and formed the heart of Tirana. About all that's left of the fortress above ground is a 6m-high Ottoman-era wall, covered in vines. In late 2008, archaeologists uncovered the extensive fortress foundations that will soon be incorporated into the pedestrianised street.

Galeria Shijaku (Sali Shijaku House) B-5, Rr. V. Luarasi, tel. +355 4 226 14 58. A large Ottoman-era *konak* house surrounded by a lovely garden and a high wall. There's a shady café terrace in the garden, while the high main room has been converted into an art gallery. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00.

House of the Dervish Khorosani D-4, Rr. Barrikadave. A pretty 19th century wooden building set in a small courtyard. Next to the gate is an octagonal *türbe* holding the graves of three babas. Find the house in a small courtyard 100m beyond the French cultural institute.

Tanners' Bridge (Ura e tabakëve) F-6, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush, intersection with Blv. Zhan D'Ark. This elegant Ottoman stone footbridge was once the main connection between Tirana and the highlands to the east. It was used to get agricultural produce and livestock across the Lana River to the markets, and sits in the area of skimmers and leather workers. The Lana was rerouted in the 1930s and the bridge was neglected, eventually becoming a rubbish tip. It's now restored to its former glory and is used by pedestrians again. Watch out - slippery when wet.

Teqeja Dervish Hatixhe C-4, Rr. Dervish Hatixhe. Dedicated to the female Bekdash Islamic saint Dervish Hatixhe who was the Tirana Nightingale, nursing people through a cholera epidemic. On her death in 1798 a tekke was founded near her *türbe* (grave). It miraculously survived the communist era and is still visited by people of varying religions, especially women. A corridor leads past a soot-blackened candle room to where the graves of Hatixhe and her family members can be seen.

Tomb of Kaplan Pasha (Tyrbë e Kapllan Pasha) F-5, Rr. 28 Nëntori. This *türbe*, or tomb, dates from 1817. It honours Kaplan Pasha, who ruled Tirana in the early 19th century. It consists of eight classical columns linked by arches. Left derelict, trash-strewn and half-sunk into the pavement and lit only by a blue neon lamp for many years, it is now to be renovated and graciously shielded by the concave wall of the high-rise building currently under construction next to it.

Communist sights

Just over 15 years ago, all Albania was a living Stalinist theme park. Since then, most of the 'attractions' have disappeared, but a few relics are still left over. During the communist era, the *bllok* (block) area was completely cordoned off by armed guards. This was the residential area of Party leaders. The collection of villas here, impressive enough by Western standards, absolutely dazzled the average Albanian once this area was opened to the public. The three-storey modular home on the corner of Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit and Rr. Ismail Qemali was dictator Enver Hoxha's villa, which is now a government residence. After Hoxha's death, the Enver Hoxha Memorial (the pyramid) was built in his honour. A massive gilded statue of Hoxha was erected on Skanderbeg Square - you can still see the raised pedestal. It was dramatically toppled by demonstrators in 1991, ending Hoxha's longstanding cult of personality. After the regime collapsed, not even Hoxha's remains could evade the judgement of history. Originally buried with honours in the Martyrs' Cemetery, Hoxha was dug up in 1992 and unceremoniously filed away in Kombinati Cemetery in west Tirana.

A statue of Lenin once stood on Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit, in front of the Art Gallery. Across the street stood a bust of Joseph Stalin - probably the last place in Europe besides Georgia where he was thus honoured. Uncle Joe's head was carted away before the fall of the regime at the end of 1990, but this symbolical de-Stalinisation came too late to save the leaders.

Behind the Ministry of the Interior on Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit stood the headquarters of the *Sigurimi* (state security police). The feared organisation ran labour camps for political prisoners and maintained a network of informers (known as '80 lek men', for the monthly bonus they supposedly got for snitching on their countrymen). The Arts Gallery has some Socialist Realist statues and paintings that are worth a look, but walk around the back to find some of Tirana's last Commie statues huddled behind the building. There's a few workers and soldiers there, but most impressive are the huge statues of Lenin and a very rare one of Stalin.

The best place to get more information about Albania's totalitarian years is the National History Museum which has a large hall dedicated to the period.



Vladimir and Joseph, behind the National Art Gallery

Tirana parks

Grand Park (Parku i Madh) K-5. A short stroll south of central Tirana, the Grand Park is a haven from all the traffic and dust. At one time, thousands of the city's inhabitants came here on holidays to play and picnic; now it's a place for people to snooze after lunchtime, to fish, or to swim.

Reach the park by walking up the path to the west of the university building; you'll end up near Tirana Lake (romantically known as 'the artificial lake'), which is surrounded by pleasant parkland and a few restaurants. Walk west and you'll soon reach the dam, at the other end of which you'll find Tirana Zoo and a few enterprising car wash businesses using up all the lake water.

Walk east uphill to find several intriguing memorials. One is the well-tended cemetery for the British troops who died fighting the Germans in WWII. Their sacrifice was long suppressed from the historical record, since Britain was considered an imperialist enemy. Nearby stand several grey stones listing the names of all German soldiers who died in Albania during WWII, some of them buried at this site. Just up the hill are the tombs of the Frashëri brothers, who helped catalyse the Albanian national awakening in the late 19th century. Abdyl was leader of the Prizren League; Sami was a radical agitator for an independent Albanian republic; and Naim was the first major Albanian-language poet. Across the field to the right is an anti-fascist monument.

The Palace of the Brigades, which once served as the residence of King Zog, stands at the far edge of the park along Rr. Elbasanit and was named for the partisans who captured it in WWII. Now used for official receptions (and with a military headquarters nearby), it is off limits to the public.

Rinia Park G-4, Biv. Dëshmorët e Kombit. A decade ago, Rinia Park was a disgraceful mess of illegal constructions, garbage and shady dealings. During the city's clean-up, the buildings were bulldozed and the result is this pleasant spot of green. The park is now the proud focus of the evening *xhira*, when thousands of people dress up and stroll around to meet up and chat with friends. The spidery white building that looks like it could be the lair of a James Bond villain is an entertainment complex called Taiwan, apparently for being a sort of island in the park, housing restaurants, a swish terrace café, bowling alleys and a casino. The main attraction however is the fountain in front of Taiwan which in the evening fascinates hundreds of young and old onlookers with its light show.



Walking in the park

Parks & Gardens

Botanical gardens (Kopshti Botanik) tel. +355 4 222 52 87. Part of Tirana University's Faculty of Natural Sciences, Tirana's botanical garden is a pleasant 15-hectare area on the slopes to the southwest of the centre. Founded in 1971, it houses about 1400 species of plants, representing about a third of the Albanian flora. Near to the zoo. ▶ Open 08:00 - 14:00.

Zoo (Kopshti Zoologjik Tiranë) Grand Park. Visiting Tirana's zoo is a fairly depressing experience. The inmates are kept in a small block that is divided into ten cells. The animals appear to be reasonably well fed and physically cared for, but the financial challenges of the institution are evident. The pens are small, featureless and clad with hospital tiles. The wolf scatters at any approach to the bars, a monkey gazes at the ceiling, his chin resting against the wall. The bedraggled golden eagles - supposedly the proud symbol of Albania - do have a perch, but it's a stepladder. A little further into the park along the pond, the lamas don't know how good they have it in their chalet housing. We've heard of plans to overhaul the zoo, but there's been little action till now. Find the zoo's unmarked entrance gate on the square at the end of the Grand Park dam. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00. Admission 50 lek.

Statues & Monuments

Fan Noli Statue E-5, Sheshi Fan Noli. This 3-metre-tall, roughly hewn statue commemorates Fan Noli (1882-1965), one of Albania's most revered historical figures. Educated at Harvard, Noli was a writer and Orthodox bishop. He served as prime minister in 1924. In his spare time he translated Shakespeare and Cervantes into Albanian.

Monument for the Righteous Gentiles of Albania E-4, Sheshi Skenderbeg. During World War Two, thousands of Jews from across Europe fled to Albania to avoid Nazi persecution, and together with Bulgaria, this was the only European country where all of them survived thanks to the local citizens. A bilingual plaque on the corner of the National Museum lists the names of 33 Albanians who helped shelter Jews, and there's empty space for adding the many names that are yet unknown.

Mother Teresa Statue I-5, Sheshi Nënë Tereza. A modest statue of Skopje-born but ethnic Albanian Nënë Tereza or Mother Teresa stands in the southeast corner of the square named after her.

Skanderbeg Statue E/F-4, Sheshi Skenderbej. Gjergj Kastrioti (1405-68), also known as Skanderbeg in English and Skenderbej in Albanian, is the only historical figure whom all Albanians agree was a national hero. He managed to create an independent Albanian principedom and keep it free for 25 long years. After his death, Albania was occupied by the Ottomans, but Skanderbeg's legacy preserved the Albanian national identity throughout 500 years of Ottoman rule. Albanians consider him not only the father of their nation, but also the man who saved all Europe from the Ottoman Empire. The statue was unveiled in 1968, exactly 500 years after Skanderbeg's death. Considering the era in which it was made, it's surprising how little concession the sculptor made to official socialist-realist style.

Unknown Partisan Statue F-5, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush. Fist upraised, fighting mad, charging forward with a rifle in his hand - yes, it's none other than the Unknown Partisan. This statue was erected to honor the many Albanian partisans who gave their lives fighting the fascists. Those guys hanging out around the monument in the morning are not WWII buffs but day labourers waiting for work, with their powerdrills and tools on display.

No trip to Tirana is complete without a trip out of Tirana. When you've had enough of dust, mud and traffic, get out and see some of the impressive landscapes in the surrounding area.

Kruja Kalaja e Krujës, Krujë, tel. +355 5 211 22 25, www.muzeukombetarskenderbeukruje.com. Kruja, 47 km north of Tirana, is touted as a good daytrip from the capital, not only for sightseeing but also for souvenir-hunting. However, if you've already been to Berat and Gjirokaster, you may be disappointed with the humble nature of this town. The most important sight in Kruja is the semi-ruined **citadel** area, a fortress dating back to the fifth or sixth century and perched dramatically on a rocky outcrop. Only by the end of the 12th century was the citadel completed. It weathered many sieges, the most famous being the Ottoman campaigns repulsed by the Albanian warrior Skanderbeg and his men. Kruja thus became a symbol of national resistance - not until 1478 (after Skanderbeg's death) did the Ottomans succeed in capturing the citadel. One of the few original structures remaining is the clock tower, which was an observation and signalling post. To the left of the citadel's main entrance is the **Gjergj Kastriot Skënderbeu Museum** (tel.+355 5 11 22 25, open May-Sept 08:00-13:00, 16:00-19:00, closed Mon; Oct-Apr 09:00-13:00, 16:00-18:00, closed Mon, admission 200 lek), built to honour the man otherwise known as Skanderbeg, and a shrine for Albanians though less interesting for foreigners. The museum was built with a fake medieval façade in 1982 and houses copies of Skanderbeg's sword and spiky helmet (the originals are in Vienna), paintings and exhibits (mostly replicas) presenting Skanderbeg's struggle against the Ottomans. Nearby is the excellent small **Ethnographic Museum** (same times and contact details, admission 200 lek) which displays the beautiful interior of a traditional Albanian house around 1800. Exhibits include 19th-century folk dress, as well as traditional copper goods and clay utensils. The friendly caretaker will take you on a whirlwind English-language tour of the rooms.

Though usually skipped by most visitors, the small streets immediately below the Ethnographic Museum are Kruja's best; narrow and winding past high courtyard walls like they did 500 years ago. Wander around and you'll come across the old citadel **hamam** (bathhouse, now converted to a church) and the lovely **Dollma teqe**, a Bektashi temple building with impressive decorations.

Just outside the citadel is the old **bazaar**; one street of quaint shops with windows full of antiques, silver filigree jewellery, folk costumes, woven rugs and traditional felt hats. Bargain hard, they're used to quoting high prices. When you're done shopping and sightseeing, head for the **restaurants** at the top end of the citadel, which offer great views of the surroundings and serve Albanian food. Turkish coffee comes in a traditional copper pot and is best enjoyed curled up on the rows of pillows that surround the Turkish tables of some restaurants.

Getting to Kruja: A taxi will cost 2,000-3,000 lek (negotiate this beforehand). The bus costs 150 lek. As Kruja is just 30 minutes from the airport, it can easily be visited in the morning for some last minute shopping before you catch your flight. If you're **driving**, follow the Shkodra road from Tirana, turn right into Fushe Kruje (famous for the George Bush disappearing watch act); stay on the main road, twisting up through the forest and Kruja town, until you see signs marked *Kalaje* (fortress).

Pëllumbas Cave (Shpella e Pëllumbasit) tel. +355 68 360 78 43, www.shpellaepellumbasit.com. For a delightful trip away from the city, visit the cave in Pëllumbas for some fresh air, beautiful rural landscapes, an invigorating walk, a swim in the river and some ancient history. From Pëllumbas village it's a two-kilometre guided walk along a well-prepared path along the Erzen river canyon to the cave

Dajti Ekspres cable car



Dajti Ekspres Cable Car (Teleferik) Linza, tel. +355 4 237 91 11, dajtiekspres@yahoo.com, www.dajtiekspres.com. Whisking you up to 1230m above sea level in under 15 minutes, the Austrian-built Dajti Express cable car on the outskirts of Tirana is a fun ride. Swooping over pastures, a lake and steep rocks, the 4km route offers great views of the mountain and the city, ending at the edge of Dajti picnic field near the top of the mountain. There you can hike in the lush forests, visit the Balkoni Dajtit restaurant, the Belvedere Hotel viewing platform, or take one of the shuttle vans to the other hillside restaurants. A taxi from the city centre to the lower station should cost 600 lek. A free shuttle bus service is available from the terminus of the Porcelan bus line; or take the Linza bus to its terminus and walk uphill another 5 minutes. If you're driving, follow Rruga Hoxha Taksim east and follow the signs. ▶ Open 08:00 - 21:00. Closed Mon. Return tickets 700 lekë, children under 6 free.

entrance, where hardhats are provided - bring a torch. Known as the *Shpella e Zeze* (Black Cave), it's 360 metres deep, up to 45 metres high and features some great stalactites. It was inhabited in prehistoric times, first by bears who left a scattering of bones, and later by humans who dropped all manner of tools in the neolithic, bronze and iron ages. Pëllumbas village is 27km east of Tirana along the road to Elbasan; turn left at the 'Ujvara Resort' sign and drive up into the village, turning left at the 'Pëllumbas' sign. Ask around for local guide Behar Duqi (or call the number above in advance), who takes visitors to and into the cave. Buses to Pëllumbas depart from Rruga Elbasan at 05:15 and 07:15, returning at 18:00. **Outdoor Albania** (see *Travel agents*) does regular daytrips (€30/25) to the area which include transport, guiding and a traditional meal (their association was instrumental in opening up this cave for visitors). ▶ Admission 100 lek.

Petrela Castle (Kalaja e Petrelës) Petrelë, Tiranë, tel. +355 69 208 8138. One of Albania's best-preserved castles, Petrela sits picturesquely on a steep slope overlooking a river, 15km southeast of Tirana, along the road to Elbasan. On a clear day you can see all the way to Kruja. Emperor Justinian fortified this place to defend the settlement of Dyrrachium (now Durrës). The tower in the centre dates back to 500 AD; surrounding it are walls from the Byzantine period, laid out in a triangle, with round towers at the corners. The castle was used during Skanderbeg's war against the Turks; his sister Mamica lived here and defended the castle, but it was eventually captured and used by Turkish soldiers. ▶ Open 11:00 - 23:00. Admission free.

Arriving in Tirana is not as straightforward and smooth as it should be, but we're working on it. Once you're here, keep in mind that as long as you are on the ground it's going to be a bumpy ride, whether you take a taxi, bus or car.

Airport & Airlines

Tirana International Airport (TIA, tel. +355 4 38 18 00, lost & amp; found tel. +355 69 206 66 26, www.tirana-airport.com) is officially named Nënë Tereza or Mother Teresa airport, but is also known as Rinas. The airport is 17km northwest of Tirana along a new access road. Passing through is a pleasant experience.

A taxi to the airport costs about €20, call a yellow **Airport Express Taxi** (ATE, tel. 223 34 19, 068 204 95 98, 068 207 03 11) and pay 2000 lek, or 2500 lek at night. A trip to the airport usually takes 30 minutes. **Parking** at the airport is free for 15 minutes, 150 lek for an hour, 720 lek for a day and 3000 lek per week.

The **Rinas Express airport bus** (tel. 069 209 89 08, 069 205 40 02) departs every hour between 07:00 and 19:00 from beside the National Museum on Skenderbeg Square; tickets cost 250 lek and the trip takes 30-45 minutes. Buses from the airport to the centre depart every hour between 08:00 and 19:00.

Airport facilities include free wifi and an Adrion press shop (open 03:00-21:00) selling newspapers, books, Albania T-shirts, *In Your Pocket* city guides, and the *Albania Business Guide* and *Book of Lists* investor handbooks. Vodafone and Eagle both have shops selling SIM and recharge cards. There's a tourist information desk in the arrivals area only. The small departures area has fashion, jewellery and

duty-free shops (www.albaniadutyfree.com, tel. +355 42 38 19 48, open 07:00-23:00), and a small Adrion press shop. Smoking is banned in the terminal, except for a small room in the departures area.

Adria Airways (JP) G-5, Rr. Mine Peza, 102, tel./fax +355 4 227 26 66, tel. +355 69 407 66 14, adria@adria-albania.com, www.adria.si. Flights to Ljubljana. ▶ Open 08:30 - 19:30, Sat 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

Albanian Airlines (LV) E-3, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 shkurtit, tel. +355 4 223 51 62, fax +355 4 223 51 38, ticketing@albanianair.com, www.albanianair.com. Flights to several European destinations. ▶ Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat, Sun 08:00 - 18:00.

Alitalia (AZ) H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Europapark Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 00 23, reservation@all-fly-one.com, www.alitalia.it. Flights to Rome. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

Austrian Airlines (OS) H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel Europapark, tel. +355 4 223 50 29/+355 4 223 50 28, tirana.office@austrian.com, www.austrian.com/al. Flights to Vienna. ▶ Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Belle Air (LZ) Bulevardi Zogu I, N°1 Qendra Tregtare Tirana, tel. +355 4 224 01 75, reservation@flybelleair.com, www.belleair.al. Budget flights to Pristina in Kosovo, various Italian cities and summer destinations in Turkey and Egypt. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

British Airways (BA) www.ba.com. Flights to London Gatwick.

Germanwings (4U) tel. +44 871 702 99 74, www.germanwings.com. Summertime flights to Cologne, from June-Sept.

Jetairfly (TB) tel. +32 70 22 00 00, www.jetairfly.com. Budget flights to Brussels between June-Oct.

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Flight schedule

From Tirana			To Tirana			
Days	Dep.	Arr.	City	Days	Dep.	Arr.
-2-4-6-7	16:20	17:30	ANCONA (LZ)	-2-4-6-7	18:20	19:50
-----6	07:00	09:00	AMSTERDAM (LV)	-----6	09:45	11:45
1234567	15:45	18:05	ATHENS (OP)	1234567	14:40	15:05
1-----6	09:50	12:50	ATHENS (A3)	1-----6	08:55	09:10
-2-45-7	16:55	19:10	ATHENS (A3)	-2-45-7	14:00	16:15
-3-5-7	16:00	18:20	ATHENS (LV)	-3-5-7	18:30	19:10
1-4-6	05:10	06:30	BUDAPEST (MA)	-3-5-7	23:10	00:30
1234567	15:10	16:30	BUDAPEST (MA)	1234567	13:10	14:30
1-3-5--	12:40	14:10	FLORENCE (LZ)	1-3-5--	15:00	16:30
-----6	07:30	09:00	FLORENCE (LZ)	-----6	09:50	11:20
-----6	08:10	10:40	FRANKFURT (LV)	-----6	11:30	14:00
-2-----	11:10	13:40	FRANKFURT (LV)	-2-----	14:40	17:10
-----4	12:00	14:30	FRANKFURT (LV)	-----4	15:40	18:10
-----7	15:45	18:15	FRANKFURT (LV)	-----7	19:25	21:45
1-3-6--	18:10	20:00	GENOVA (LZ)	1-3-6--	21:00	22:50
123-5--	09:00	11:30	ISTANBUL (LV)	123-5--	12:30	13:00
-----7	13:00	15:55	ISTANBUL (LV)	-----7	16:55	17:25
1-34---	10:50	13:25	ISTANBUL (TK)	1-34---	09:05	09:50
-2-567	14:50	17:25	ISTANBUL (TK)	-2-567	18:45	17:30
1234567	15:10	16:30	LJUBJANA (JP)	1234567	13:15	14:20
-----7	14:15	16:20	LONDON LGW (BA)	-----7	09:30	13:30
12-4---	15:05	17:10	LONDON LGW (BA)	12-4---	10:20	14:20
-----6	19:35	21:40	LONDON LGW (BA)	-----6	14:45	18:45
1-3-5-7	08:15	10:30	LONDON STN (LV)	1-3-5-7	11:15	15:30
-2-4---	08:00	09:55	MILAN (LV)	-2-4---	10:45	12:45
-----7	18:00	19:55	MILAN (LV)	-----7	20:45	22:45
1234-67	12:50	14:40	MILAN (LZ)	1234-67	15:30	17:20
----5--	18:00	19:50	MILAN (LZ)	----5--	20:50	22:40
1-3-5--	17:45	19:25	MILAN (AZ)	1-3-5--	14:55	16:45
-----7	12:00	13:45	MILAN (AZ)	-----7	09:15	11:05
1234567	12:45	14:35	MUNICH (LH)	1234567	10:25	12:10
---4-7	11:20	12:50	NAPLES (LZ)	---4-7	13:40	15:10
-3-5-7	15:00	17:45	PARIS (LV)	-3-5-7	18:30	21:15
-2-4-7	07:30	09:20	PISA (LZ)	-2-4-7	10:20	12:00
---4-7	07:50	08:40	PRISTINA (LZ)	---4-7	16:30	17:20
123-56-	13:30	14:20	PRISTINA (LZ)	123-56-	15:10	16:00
1234567	18:40	19:30	PRISTINA (LZ)	1234567	10:30	11:20
-2-----	08:15	09:05	PRISTINA (LV)	-2-----	09:40	10:30
1-----	09:00	09:50	PRISTINA (LV)	1-----	10:05	11:15
---4---	13:45	14:35	PRISTINA (LV)	---4---	15:10	16:00
-----6	19:30	20:20	PRISTINA (LV)	-----6	06:55	07:45
1234567	09:00	09:30	PRISTINA (6Y)	1234567	15:10	15:40
1234567	12:00	12:30	PRISTINA (6Y)	1234567	18:00	18:30
1234567	06:00	07:25	ROME (AZ)	1234567	10:00	11:25
1234567	12:05	13:30	ROME (AZ)	1234567	22:00	23:25
1-3-----	07:30	08:55	ROME (LZ)	1-3-----	10:00	11:30
-2-4-67	12:10	13:35	ROME (LZ)	-2-4-67	14:40	16:10
---5---	17:00	18:25	ROME (LZ)	---5---	19:45	21:00
1-----	05:00	06:20	ROME (LV)	1-----	07:30	09:00
-3-6--	09:00	10:20	ROME (LV)	-3-6--	11:30	13:00
-2-----	03:45	06:35	SOFIA (FB)	1-----	17:30	18:40
---5---	11:20	13:59	SOFIA (FB)	---4---	21:10	22:15
-----6	12:10	14:10	STUTTGART (LZ)	-----6	15:50	17:50
-2-5--	18:00	19:40	TRIESTE (LZ)	-2-5--	20:40	22:30
1-3-5--	13:55	15:55	TURIN (LV)	1-3-5--	16:55	18:55
-----7	09:00	11:00	TURIN (LV)	-----7	12:00	14:00
-2-----	07:10	09:00	TURIN (LZ)	-2-----	10:00	11:50
-----7	18:10	20:00	TURIN (LZ)	-----6	21:00	22:50
1-3-5--	05:00	06:35	VIENNA (OS)	-2-4-6-	22:15	23:55
1234567	14:20	16:00	VIENNA (OS)	1234567	10:50	12:25
1-5---	12:10	14:10	ZURICH (LZ)	1-5---	15:50	17:50
---5---	13:45	15:45	ZURICH (LV)	---6-	16:30	18:30
---4---	16:45	18:45	ZURICH (LV)	---4---	19:30	21:30

This selected schedule is valid until March 2011. Always check flight times before departure. For the full schedule, see www.tirana.inyourpocket.com. Airline codes: JP = Adria Airways; A3 = Aegean; LV = Albanian Airlines; AZ = Alitalia; OS = Austrian Airlines; LZ = Belle Air; BA = British Airways; FB = Bulgarian Airlines; LH = Lufthansa; MA = Malev; OP = Olympic Air; 6Y = Tafa Air; TK = Turkish Airlines.

Lufthansa (LH) G-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Europapark Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 50 28/+355 4 223 50 29, fax +355 4 223 50 26, tirana.office@australian.com, www.lufthansa.com. Flights to Munich. Also at the airport: tel. +355 4 238 19 26, open 09:00-17:00, Sat, Sun 10:00-15:00. ▶ Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Malev (MA) F-5, Rr. Abdi Toptani, Torre Drin Centre, tel. +355 4 222 79 00, fax +355 4 223 45 78, info@sarakotravel.com, www.sarakotravel.com. Flights to Budapest. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

Olympic Airways (OA) D-4, Blv. Zog I, Veve Business Centre, tel. +355 4 222 89 60, www.olympic-airways.com. Flights to Athens. ▶ Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 13:00.

Turkish Airlines (TK) E-4, Sheshi Skenderbej, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 49 02/+355 4 222 89 60, fax +355 4 222 89 61, www.turkishairlines.com. Flights to Istanbul. ▶ Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat 08:30 - 15:00. Closed Sun.

Long-distance buses

Despite the importance of bus travel in Albania, Tirana has no bus station and few scheduled departures, so it's all a bit of a Balkan mess. Bus transport is either in normal buses, increasingly comfortable and with

air-conditioning, or in minivans called *furgons* which may be a bit cheaper and faster, but take risks in blind corners.

Most bus departures are between early morning and early afternoon. Only the most popular cities also have connections in the late afternoon too, so it's best to set off early. International buses often depart from behind the National History Museum, where you'll also find most of the ticketing agencies. Buses to Durrës depart very regularly from beside the train station. Buses to Shkodra depart nearby, from Rruga Karl Gega.

Minibuses (*furgons*) depart as soon as they're full, starting from various places in town, sometimes trawling through the streets to find more passengers to cram in. See the timetable for approximate operating hours, prices and departure points. It's a good idea to ask around for the exact departure locations before travel.

Furgons heading southeast for Elbasan, Pogradec and Korça will most likely depart from beside the Qemal Stafa stadium and trawl around on Rruga Elbasan. Those south to Berat, Vlora, Gjirokastra and Saranda depart from Nëshërak and Sheshi 21 Djetori, west of the centre. Those heading to the north (Shkodra, Kukës, etc) leave from Sheshi Zogu i Zi or from Laprak, one traffic light further along the Durrës highway.

A very useful online furgon and bus schedule with departures from Tirana can be found at <http://www.matinic.us/albania/furgon.php>.

Furgon (minibus) schedule

From Tirana City	First-last bus + frequency, or times	Duration	Price	Departs from:
BAJRAM CURRI	06:00 - 14:00	6 hrs	1000 lek	Zogu i Zi
BERAT	06:30-18:00, twice hourly	2 hrs	400 lek	Nëshërak / 21 Dhjetori
DURRËS	06:00-19:00, twice hourly	40 min	150 lek	Train station
ELBASAN	07:00 - 17:00 twice hourly	1.5 hrs	300 lek	Rruga Elbasanit
FIER	06:00-17:00, twice hourly	2 hrs	400 lek	Nëshërak / 21 Dhjetori
GJIROKASTRA	05:00-18:30	4 hrs	800 lek	Nëshërak / 21 Dhjetori
PESHKOPI	06:00-14:00	5 hrs	800 lek	Laprak, one traffic light beyond Zogu i Zi
POGRADEC	07:00 - 16:00 hourly	3 hrs	500 lek	Qemal Stafa Stadium, Enonomic faculty
KORÇA	07:00 - 16:00 hourly	4 hrs	600 lek	Qemal Stafa Stadium
KRUJA	07:00, 10:00, 12:00, 15:00, 18:00	45 min	150 lek	Zogu i Zi
PERMET	06:30, 14:00	4 hrs	500 lek	Nëshërak
SARANDA	04:00, 05:15, 07:00, 08:30, 09:30, 16:00, 22:00	7 hrs	1200 lek	Nëshërak
SHKODRA	07:00-16:00, hourly	2 hrs	300 lek	Train station / Zogu i Zi
KUKES	06:00 - 16:00	2 hrs	8000 lek	Zogu i Zi
VLORA	05:30-16:30, twice hourly	3 hrs	500 lek	Nëshërak / 21 Dhjetori

Approximate times only, inform locally for more details. For Himare and the Riviera coast, change buses at Vlora.

International bus schedule

From Tirana Departure	Arrival	City	To Tirana Dep.	Arr.	Company	From	Price (one way)
15:30	06:30	ATHENS	08:00	20:00	Interlines	Blv Zog I	€25
04:00	19:00	ATHENS	09:00	21:00	Interlines	Blv Zog I	€25
08:00	20:00	ATHENS	20:00	08:00	Drita	Museum	€35
18:00	05:00	PEJA	06:00	17:00	Sondor	Museum	€20
18:00	05:00	PRISTINA	06:00	17:00	Sondor	Museum	€20
18:00	05:00	PRISTINA	06:00	17:00	Monopol	Museum	€20
18:00	06:00	PRISTINA	06:00	17:00	Drita	Museum	€20
08:00	19:00	THESSALONIKI	19:00	08:00	Drita	Museum	€25
18:00	05:00	SKOPJE	18:00	05:00	Sondor	Museum	€20
21:00	05:00	TETOVO	21:00	05:00	Sondor	Museum	€20

Check all times before travelling.

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email: avis@avis.al

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Blv. Dëshmoret e Kombit , Rogner Europapark Hotel
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Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel
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Tirana International Airport
Mob: +355672065970

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What you said

A selection of reader's comments from the Tirana In Your Pocket website. You too can add your opinion, below every review on www.tirana.inyourpocket.com.

Irish Bar

Nice place, nice music, nice people.

Viola - Italy

Wine Spirit

Wine Spirit has become my expat haunt. Excellent food from a first-class chef, and the perfect combination of spirits both intellectual and alcoholic! An absolute must on the regular nights' out list!

Lori - USA

Charl's Bistro

Simply the best. We had a ball and judging by the exuberant crowds Charl's was making a lot of people happy.

Eva Agolli - Danbury CT, USA

Orthodox Cathedral

The modern style is a tragedy in the making. The only part of the new cathedral worth anything is the great dome from the interior. I hope that mosaic decoration will be used along with carved marble to add as much quality to the interior finishes as is possible.

Danny - New York, USA

Bonaparte

It has a nice and warmly ambience. But it's a pity that smoking is allowed.

Emily - Tirana

The ham was of superior quality. Next time with my friend Alvaro we will go again since they serve tapas there. It's a pity they don't have Spanish wine!

Silvia - Barcelona, Spain

Serendipity

My favourite place. They make the best tapas in Albania! Do not forget to try the Eros Pizza.

Alda - Tirana

Rockwood

A great place, in a nice area, beautiful people.

Anton - Tirana

Istanbul

The food is delicious, and the atmosphere is nice and peaceful. I strongly recommend the excellent dessert!

Munife Danaci, Turkey

Era

Garzi the camp waiter provides excellent and friendly service, food is good and inexpensive.

Tony - England

A great and very busy restaurant in a very hip neighborhood. Great food and friendly staff. Strongly recommend.

David De Mille - Las Vegas

Lollipop

Loooooooooooooooooooooove it! Thanks for many many MANY great evenings!

Anke - Belgium

TIYP

I like your site, Tirana In Your Pocket!

Pat Williams - MA, USA

Balkania & Albania Interlines D-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4222 22 72, albania.interlines@hotmail.com, www.albinterlines.webs.com. Buses from Shkodra via Tirana to Athens. ▶ Open 07:00 - 21:00.

Drita E-4, Rr. Ded Gjon Luli, tel. +355 4 225 12 77, eurodrita@yahoo.com, www.dritatravel.com. Buses to Pristina, Athens and Thessaloniki. The first bus agency to have a website and online booking. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00.

EuroInterlines D-4, Blv. Zogu I, 39, tel. +355 4 225 18 66, euointerlines39@gmail.com. Buses to Greece. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00.

Sondor E-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 222 50 63/+355 69 239 49 29, info@sondortravel.com, www.sondor-travel.com. Buses to Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro. ▶ Open 08:30 - 20:30. Closed Sun.

Tirana Metropol E-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 36 39/+355 69 284 72 01, tirana-metropol@live.com. Buses to Kosovo (Pristina office tel. 044 614 814, Peja office tel. 044 68 38 78). ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00.

Car rental

Lack of parking space, signs and general discipline makes driving in Tirana adventurous, but despite the apparent chaos traffic doesn't really move very fast. When parking, beware of Tirana's new and effective tow-trucks. The only central parking garage can be found below the Vesa Center on Rruga Abdyl Frashëri. Petrol costs about 165 lek per litre, diesel 160 lek per litre. Renting a car costs from around €45 per day for the cheapest model. The agencies have desks at the airport, but these are often only manned on demand, so inform them in advance. Make sure you have the agency helpline number and a good map before setting off.

Avis H-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Europapark Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 50 11, fax +355 4 227 19 60, avis@avis.al, www.avis.al. Avis operates a fleet of Opel and Chevrolet vehicles. Also at the airport. ▶ Open 08:30 - 19:00, Sun 08:30 - 14:00. Also at Hotel Sheraton (tel. 26 63 89/068 20 55 806, open 08:30 - 18:30, Sun 08:30 - 14:00) and the airport (tel. 068 20 55 807). 

Budget H-6, Rr. Elbasanit, Nd. 10, H. 5, tel./fax +355 4 450 55 55, tel. +355 67 203 42 67, reservation@budget.al, www.budget.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun.

Europcar E-5, Rr. Durrësit 61, tel. +355 4 222 78 88/+355 68 209 39 22, fax +355 4 224 65 11, europcar@abissnet.com, www.europcar.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

Hertz E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 4 226 25 11/+355 69 205 87 75, hertz@albaniaonline.net, www.hertz.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sun 08:00 - 16:00. Also at the airport, open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat, Sun 08:00 - 16:00.

Lumani F-5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Rogner Hotel Europapark, tel. +355 4 223 50 21/+355 68 409 58 75, office@lumani-enterprise.com, www.lumani-enterprise.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Noshi Rent a Car D/E-3, Rr. Durrësit 79, tel. +355 4 240 03 00/+355 69 203 78 24, reservations@noshi.al, www.noshi.al. Budget rental of Chevrolet, Opel, Hyundai and Mitsubishi cars. Small cars from €100 per weekend. Facebook fans get 10% off for short rentals. ▶ Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat, Sun 09:00 - 17:00.

Sixt E-3, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +355 4 225 90 20, www.e-sixt.com. Also at the airport (tel. +355 69 206 85 00). ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00, Sat 08:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

Tirana Car Rentals (TCR) I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, P. 11, Sh. 4, tel. +355 4 224 05 11/+355 69 205 10 72, info@tirana-car-rentals.com, www.tirana-car-rentals.com. Local car rental agency with offices in various cities. ▶ Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun.

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- Customized itineraries designed for individual travelers & groups
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Tel/Fax +355 (0) 824 3697

E-mail: info@gulliver-ok.com; reservation@gulliver-ok.com

Web: www.gulliver-ok.com

Train schedule

From Tirana Dep.	To Tirana Arr.	To Tirana City	To Tirana Dep.	To Tirana Arr.	Price
05:30	06:27	DURRËS	06:15	07:15	70 lek
		DURRËS	08:45	09:45	70 lek
08:30	09:31	DURRËS	09:20	10:20	70 lek
14:10	15:07	DURRËS	13:05	14:04	70 lek
15:25	16:23	DURRËS		17:01	70 lek
16:30	17:27	DURRËS	16:45	17:43	70 lek
19:55	20:48	DURRËS	20:05	21:05	70 lek
14:10	18:20	ELBASAN	05:40	09:55	190 lek
05:30	13:10	POGRADEC	12:50	19:35	295 lek
13:15	16:50	SHKODRA	05:40	08:30	145 lek
16:25	22:15	VLORA	04:30	10:25	250 lek

Timetable and prices correct at time of publication; check all details in advance.

Public transport

Tirana has a few bus lines, marked on the map in this guide. A ticket costs 30 lek per ride regardless of distance, to be paid to the conductor on board. Buses run every 6-15 minutes between 05:00 and 22:00. The days of dilapidated old state buses conking out in the middle of the road are over - Tirana has a fleet of privately-run buses, dipped liberally in advertising.

Bike rental

On quiet weekends, cycling around Tirana is a delight. Both the Tirana Backpacker Hostel (1,000 lek per day) and Hostel Albania have bikes that are for rent. The Tirana Backpacker Hostel also offers guided bike day trips to Mount Dajti.

Taxis

Taxis are a useful form of transport in Tirana, and after 22:00, they're the only game in town. Several companies use meters and can print receipts; our experience so far is that drivers do not have to be reminded to use them. Rates start at 300 lek for the first 2km (sufficient for most city centre trips) and 95 lek/km after that (count on paying 500-700 lek for a ride to the outskirts). Between 22:00 and 07:00 the flagfall is 350 lek. Few drivers speak English, so it's a good idea to write down the address, or to call someone who can explain.

ATEX (Airport Express Taxi) Rr. Mine Peza 2, tel. +355 67 208 01 91/+355 67 200 88 73, lisejda.boshnjaku@atex.com, www.atex.al. Taxis to/from the airport for 2,000 lek, or 2,500 lek between 21:00 and 07:00. Online booking (in Albanian) possible.

Travel terms

aeroplane	avion
ferry	traget
airport	aeroport
car	veture, makinë
train	tren
bus	autobus
station (train, bus)	stacion (tren, autobus)
Is it far?	A është larg?
left	majtas
right	djathas
where am I?	ku jam?

Radio Taxi Rr. Myslym shyri, tel. +355 4 224 44 44/+355 68 224 44 44, taxikorrekt@hotmail.com.
Tirana Taxi Rr. e Saracëve, Te Selvia, tel. +355 68 212 55 75/+355 68 605 55 31.

Trains

Albania's railway network is basic and slow, and has no services to neighbouring countries. Unless you're a train fan, taking a bus is faster and more comfortable, though the run to Durrës is perfectly bearable.

Train station B-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 10 94. Tirana's train station is a basic metal and concrete shed next to the dusty Durrës bus parking lot. Tickets can be bought just before departure. There's no left luggage office.

Travel agents

Tirana's travel agents can arrange everything from plane tickets to hotel bookings, car rental and tours.

Albania Experience J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, tel./fax +355 4 227 20 55, alexperience@albaniaonline.net, www.albania-experience.al. Guided city tours, daytrips to Apollonia, Berat, Durrës, Kruja and other destinations, and plane tickets. AE can also book top-end Tirana hotels at big discounts. ▶ Open 08:30 - 19:00, Sat 08:30 - 17:00. Closed Sun. [66]

Albania Holidays Rr. Sami Frashëri, Pall. 20, shk.1 Apt.8, tel. +355 4 223 56 88, fax +355 4 223 54 98, contact@albania-holidays.com, www.albania-holidays.com. Runs the www.albania-hotel.com hotel booking website. ▶ Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun.

Albtours H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 225 33 43, fax +355 4 225 33 42, albtours@albania-online.net. Near the Sky Tower, also at Rr. Mine Peza 102. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

ATHS E-3, Sheshi Skënderbej, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 24 24, www.plazh.com. Also at Librit Universitar, Rr. A Frashëri, Tiranë. Tel: 04-224-0955 Blv. Kryesor, Durrës. Tel: 05-222-2621 ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Gulliver OK D-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 34/1, tel. +355 4 222 76 26/+355 67 205 11 40 (airport), info@gulliver-ok.com, www.gulliver-ok.com. Travel agent with offices in Tirana's city centre and airport; also runs an agency and the local tourism office in Korça. ▶ Open 09:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Magic Tours D-4, Blv. Zogu I, 72, Veve Business Center, tel./fax +355 4 222 89 87, tel. +355 69 203 28 90, magictours@albbmail.com, www.magictours-al.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Outdoor Albania H-5/6, Rr. Sami Frashëri, Qendra Metropol, Pall. Vortek, tel./fax +355 4 222 71 21, Info@outdooralbania.com, www.outdooralbania.com. Tailor-made tours with activities such as trekking, mountain biking, rafting, kayaking, mountaineering, paragliding and 4WD trips. Daytrips in the mountains near Tirana too. In winter, activities are limited to snowshoeing and hiking. See also their booking site www.travel-tirana.com. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

€1 = 140 lek, £1 = 166 lek,
US\$1 = 103 lek (Feb 5, 2011)

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Post

Central Post office F-4, Rr. Çameria, tel. +355 4 222 62 82, www.postashqiptare.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. (08:00 - 13:00 for parcels).

Express mail

The safest, though not the cheapest, way to send valuable or urgent items.

Albanian Courier Tirana-Durrës highway, Salloni Mazda, tel. +355 4 235 79 76, info@albaniancourier.com, www.albaniancourier.al. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

DHL E-4, Tiranë-Durrës highway, km 8, tel. +355 4 222 76 67, dhlalbania@dhl.com, www.dhl.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 08:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

EMS F-4, Rr. Reshit Çollaku 4, tel. +355 4 225 88 28, fax +355 4 225 97 70, posta@postashqiptare.al, www.postashqiptare.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 13:00.

FedEx F-6, Blv. Zogu i Parë, Veve Business Center, tel. +355 4 225 32 03, +355 4 223 50 56, fax +355 4 225 36 30, ulysses-fedex@icc-al.org, www.fedex.com/al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00, Sat 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

TNT E-4, Rr. Mine Peza 2, tel. +355 4 223 49 14, fax +355 4 223 54 89, tntalbania@yahoo.com, www.tnt.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sun.

UPS H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 32/1, tel. +355 4 225 97 42, fax +355 4 225 97 43, aloperations@unitrans.com.al, www.ups.com. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:30, Sat 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

Telephone calls

International calls

Dial the international access number (00), the country code, the area code and the subscriber's number. Call 124 for directory assistance.

National calls

For calls outside Tirana, dial 0, the city code and the subscriber's number. Call 14 for domestic directory assistance.

Local calls

Tirana numbers have seven digits, all starting with a 2 or a 3.

Calling Albania from abroad

Dial the country code (355), then the city code (Tirana is 4) or the mobile phone number without the initial zero.

Mobile phones

Four providers are active in Albania. **AMC** numbers start with 068, **Eagle Mobile** numbers with 067, **Plus** with 066 and **Vodafone** numbers with 069. You can easily purchase pre-paid SIM cards for around 600 lek at the providers'

Post rates

Postal rates for postcards/letters (under 20gr) are:

Albania	20 lek
Europe	40 lek
Elsewhere	60 lek

shops; you'll need ID and a local address (which can be that of your hotel). Recharge cards are widely available across the country. National rates for pre-paid calls are between 30-55 lek per minute.

AMC (Albanian Mobile Communications) G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Sky Tower, tel. +355 4 227 50 00, fax +355 4 227 52 43, contact_us@amc.al, www.amc.al. ▶ Open 08:30 - 21:00.

Eagle Mobile H-4, Rr. Murat Toptani 12, tel. +355 4 229 01 00, fax +355 4 229 01 90, info@eaglemobile.al, www.eaglemobile.al. Also at Rr. Myslim Shyri 6 and at the airport.

Plus H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 450 15 00, info@plus.al, www.plus.al. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00.

Vodafone H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, N°5, tel. +355 4 228 32 01, +355 69 222 01 11, www.vodafone.al. Also at the airport. ▶ Open 08:30 - 21:00.

Public telephones

Some pay phones do work, but those at hotels and post offices often work better. Telephone cards are available at post offices. 50 unit cards cost 560 lek; 100 units 980 lek; 200 units 1800 lek. New cards should be wrapped in clear plastic. People on the street also sell cards; beware that you'll likely be paying more. Don't let them get away until you have verified the card at a public telephone. If you don't plan to talk away a whole card, you can rent one from the 'businessmen' lingering near the phone boxes. Prices will run about 15-20 lek per unit.

Internet cafés

Free wifi is increasingly common in city-centre cafés, restaurants and hotel lobbies such as the Rogner. It's also available free at the airport. In the internet cafés listed below, expect to pay 100-150 lek per hour for internet access (and plenty of noise from little boys playing Counterstrike).

Global I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi 13, tel. +355 4 225 63 06, e-global@hotmail.com, www.e-global.com. ▶ Open 09:00 - 02:00.

Net 1-I-4, Rr. Nikolla Tupe 1b. Good internet club with 24 computers. The club also offers a cinema where DVD movies are screened. **Top-Net H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 67 219 03 39.** Basement internet café with helpful staff and a bar. ▶ Open 08:30 - 04:00.

Internet providers

ABCOR Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Kompleksi Green Park, Kulla 2, Kati II, tel. +355 4 450 01 39, info@abcom.al, www.abcom.al. Broadband internet, data transmission, VPN, wifi, hosting, e-mail solutions, digital cable TV and telephony services.

Abissnet Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 4 225 60 01, fax +355 4 225 60 02, info@abissnet.al, www.abissnet.al. **Ada Net Rr. Dervish Hima 1, tel. +355 4 560 06 24, support@adanet.com.al, www.adanet.com.al.** ▶ Open 09:00 - 22:00, Sat 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 10:00 - 13:00.

Albania Online Rr. Donika Kastrioti 4, tel. +355 4 225 11 22, fax +355 4 225 11 33, www.albaniaonline.net. **Primo Rr. Donika Kastrioti 4, tel. +355 4 240 0123, fax +355 4 225 11 33, sales@primo.al, www.primo.al.** **Tring Communications Rr. Don Bosko, Tower 6, tel. +355 4 480 00 00, fax +355 4 480 00 01, info@tring.al, www.tring.al.**

Tirana IYP iPhone app

This spring, IYP will launch the very first iPhone city guide in Albania, when the new Tirana In Your Pocket app becomes available in the Apple online store. Browse through the full guide, view maps online and offline, and let your phone guide you to any reviewed place using GPS.

Albanian telephone codes

Berat	32	Kuçova	33	Peshkopi	373
Durrës	52	Kukës	24	Pogradec	832
Elbasan	54	Laç	30	Saranda	85
Fier	34	Lezha	36	Shijak	571
Gjirokastra	84	Librazhdi	353	Shkodra	22
Kavaja	554	Lushnjë	35	Tepelena	814
Korça	82	Peqin	512	Tirana	4
Kruja	511	Përmet	813	Vlora	47

Country codes

Albania	355	Hungary	36	Romania	40
Australia	61	Ireland	353	Russia	7
Austria	43	Israel	972	Serbia	381
Belarus	375	Italy	39	Slovakia	421
Belgium	32	Japan	81	Slovenia	386
Bulgaria	359	Kosovo	381	Spain	34
Croatia	385	Latvia	371	Sweden	46
Czech Rep.	420	Lithuania	370	Switzerland	41
Denmark	45	Moldova	373	Turkey	90
Estonia	372	Montenegro	382	UK	44
Finland	358	Netherlands	31	Ukraine	380
France	33	Norway	47	USA	1
Germany	49	Poland	48		
Greece	30	Portugal	351		

Dërgesa Ekspres në Gjithë Botën

- Shërbim postar derë më derë Brenda 24 orëve
- Avion i dedikuar çdo ditë
- Shërbime dhe opsione të shumëllojshme
- Ndjekje e pakos dhe dorëzim online

Rr. "Ismail Qemali",
Nr. 32/1
Tiranë, Albania.

Tel.: 04 22 59 742
Mob.: 067 20 48 904
068 20 48 904
069 20 48 904

aloperations@unitrans.com.al

Deliver More



AC ALBANIAN COURIER Shërbime të shpejta postare

Dorëzohmë kudo dhe në kohë: Dokumente, Pako, Dhurata, Fatura, Ftesa, Kartolina ...

7 ditë në javë në shërbimin tuaj

Tel: +355 (4) 2357 976/152/149, Mob: 068 4000660/069 4000660/067 2000660, Fax: +355 (4) 357 977
E-mail: albanian.courier@albaniancourier.al, www.albaniancourier.al

Këto dhe shumë shërbime të tjera në të gjitha agjencitë:

The ladies love Tirana. You may be surprised, but the city is actually a great shopping destination. The city centre is small and you can easily walk everywhere, and without exception the staff is friendly and reasonably competent. Especially shoe shopping is good: they're cheap (around 30% less than in other European cities), most are of Italian quality, and there's great variety. For clothes the story is slightly different, as not all international brands are represented yet. Shopping is still best in the established areas such as in the *bllok* district and along Rruga Myslym Shyri where you'll find many boutiques; you're more likely to find bargains and groovy stuff there than in the malls.

Art Galleries

Galeria Te & Gi D-2/3, Rr. Durrësit 144a, tel. +355 4 223 04 16, tegigallery@albbmail.com. Tirana's first gallery, located in a strange modern building, is still going strong, selling traditional, abstract and modern paintings, including some very nice landscapes. ▶ Open 09:00 - 14:00, 16:00-20:00. Open 09:00 - 14:00, 17:00 - 20:00.

Books

Tirana has a number of shops selling English literature, but the selection isn't great so bring fodder from abroad if you want to read something specific while you're here. Foreign magazines and newspapers can be found at the Adrion shop or at their stands in the Xheko Imperial and Sheraton hotel (at the Albanian Experience travel agency office). The Rogner hotel lobby bar has foreign newspapers available for reading.

Adrion International Books E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, Palace of Culture, tel. +355 4 222 62 56, books@adrionltd.com, www.adrionltd.com. The best selection



BOOKS, NEWSPAPERS MAGAZINES GIFTS AND SOUVENIRS

CORONA

Sheshi Skënderbej
Tirana International Hotel
Tel. +355 69 217 73 05

Shopping centres

Much to the delight of locals and foreigners alike, Tirana has been enriched with several malls or smaller shopping galleries over the past years. The QTU centre along the Durres highway was the first in 2005, and several city-centre and peripheral malls have followed.

Citypark Albania Tirana-Durrës highway, km 8, tel. +355 4 237 64 24, www.cityparkalbania.com. Albania's largest shopping centre has some 180 shops, a Mercator hypermarket, food court, a 550 square metre skating rink, Cartoonland, entertainment and events. Just beyond the airport turn-off.

Coin H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Palli II, ABA Business Center, www.coin.al. Brand new Italian department store with fashion and home appliances.

Galeria Mall G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri, tel. +355 4 225 41 00. Housed in the European Trade Centre building behind the pyramid, the Galeria mall has 50 shops, bars and cafés in a pleasantly air-conditioned four-floor complex. There's a supermarket on the ground floor. ▶ Open 09:00 - 20:00.

Kristal Center Rr. Frang Bardhi, tel. +355 4 480 10 28, info@kristalcenter.com, www.kristalcenter.com. A modern shopping centre with a Conad supermarket and a cinema complex. Free shuttle bus from Sheshi Skënderbeg square. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00.

QTU (Qendra Tregtare Unives) Tirana-Durrës highway, km 6, tel. +355 38 01 00, www.qtu-al.com. The QTU shopping centre has a supermarket, electronics store and a shuttle bus from the National Museum. The small QTU City mall can be found on Rruga Abdyl Frashëri. ▶ Open Apr-Sept 09:00-22:00, Oct-Mar 09:00-21:00.
Sheraton Plaza J-5, Sheshi Italia. The mall attached to the Sheraton hotel has a café, a food court, a good little supermarket and several upmarket shops.

of books on Albania (or on anything else) in English. Lots of magazines as well. Also at the airport, in both the main hall and departures. ▶ Open 09:00 - 20:00.

Corona E-4, Sheshi Skënderbej, Tirana International Hotel, tel. +355 69 217 73 05. The hotel gift shop has a good selection of newspapers, magazines and books on Albania, and souvenirs too. ▶ Open 09:30 - 20:30. Closed Sun.

Friend's Book House G-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 226 67 77, friendbookhouse@yahoo.com. More café than bookstore, the collection here is mainly Albanian though some English titles can be found too. ▶ Open 24 hrs.
Libraria Albania H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 227 17 49, www.albaniabook.com. A local bookshop with a selection of English-language magazines and Albania-related books. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00.

Shtepia e Librit D-4, Rr. Barrikadave, Galeria Nasional mall, tel. +355 4 450 32 62, admin@shtepiaelibr.com, www.shtepiaelibr.com. Tirana's newest book store, with a small but growing selection of English titles. On the first floor of the new Galeria Nasional shopping centre. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00.

DIY

Praktiker Shkodra highway km 4, Pranë Urë Kamëz, tel. +355 4 238 84 50, www.praktiker.al. Albania's first large DIY market also stocks useful things for travellers. Free shuttle bus from Tirana's main square. ▶ Open 08:30 - 21:00.

Electronics

Molla G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Sky Tower, tel. +355 69 202 90 58, info@apple-albania.com. Albania's only Apple shop (guess what *molla* means) can be found inside the Sky Tower. Sales and repairs of all Apple products. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00. Closed Sun.

Fashion

Benetton G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri, Galeria mall. Italian fashion for both sexes. ▶ Open 08:30 - 20:30, Sun 09:00 - 14:00.
Il Cammino G-3, Rr. Myslym Shyri 64. Shoe boutique. Also on Rr. Kavajës 20 and Rr. Abdyl Frashëri 6.

Nino Vitali F/G-3, Rr. Myslym Shyri, tel. +355 4 227 44 70. ▶ Open 09:00-14:30, 18:00-20:30.

X-Large G-4, Bul. Bajram Curri, Pallatet Agimi, tel. +355 4 225 02 18. Boutique with women's fashion. ▶ Open 09:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Flowers

Kaktus I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +355 69 204 96 54. Imported flowers and luxury bouquets. ▶ Open 07:00 - 21:00.

Merkom E-3, Rr. Kavajës, tel. +355 4 225 47 70. Next to Samsung. Also delivers flowers. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:30.

Natyrta H-5/6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 223 06 16. Flowers from Greece arrive three times a week. Good for colourful, custom-made bouquets. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00.

Souvenirs & Gifts

The best souvenir shopping is north of Tirana in Kruja, where shop windows are full of jewelry, antiques and knickknacks. If you don't have time to make the trek there, check these shops in Tirana. There are also some kiosks selling Albania mugs, plastic guns, dolls and bunker ashtrays at the southern end of Rr. Barrikadave.

Art Forever G/H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha 99, tel. +355 4 224 63 86. If you're looking for folk costumes, antique chests, wood carvings, or old books, check out this one-man show. Near the corner with Blv. Bajram Curri. ▶ Open 10:30 - 21:00. Closed Sun.

Le Futur H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 223 27 68, www.lefutur.al. Dozens of crazy novelty gifts, between 300-4,000 lek. Everything from desktop rocket launch installations to wallets made from South African licence plates. ▶ Open 09:00 - 22:00, Sun 10:00 - 21:00.

Pirro Souvenirs I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 4 222 55 87. A good selection of handicrafts and souvenirs; Albanian flags, keyrings and T-shirts, and must-have mugs depicting Enver Hoxha, King Zog and Mother Teresa among others. Also on Rr. e Durrësit. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00.

Speciality shops

La Casa del Habano J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton mall, tel. +355 68 416 63 37, www.kalimancaribe.com. The only place in the country to buy, and try, quality Habanos, Cohiba and Monte Cristo cigars. Deluxe smokers' accessories and a small whiskey bar too. ▶ Open 10:00 - 22:00.

Supermarkets

Conad G-5, Blv. Bajram Curri, Galeria mall, tel. +355 4 227 01 74. A supermarket chain that (incredibly) ships everything from Italy - even the fruit and veg. There's a decent selection meats and cheeses. Also at (I-3) Rr. A.Z. Çajupi. ▶ Open 09:00 - 22:00.

X-LARGE
B O U T I Q U E

Adresa: Kontakt:
Pallatet Agimi Tel: +355 4 2250218
Blv. Bajram Curri
Tiranë

Expat activities

New expat arrivals and any stray foreigners that find themselves wandering Tirana are welcome to mingle with Tirana's small but active group of expats.

Internations

The www.internations.org social network site has occasional expat meet-ups and activities in Tirana.

King House Dinner Night

Every Friday, there's an informal Tirana expat dinner at King House, from 19:30 till late. King House serves food for those who are hungry, or just drinks for those who aren't. All are welcome to drop by.

Tirana Dinner Club

Every Wednesday, a group of expats chooses a different restaurant to eat at. Send an email to tiranadinner@gmail.com to get on the mailing list.

Tirana Hash

Every Saturday the family-friendly Tirana Hash (10-70 Albanians and expats) meets at 11:30 for a relaxed to strenuous walk or run somewhere near Tirana, inevitably followed by relaxed to strenuous drinking and late lunch session at the Chicken Shack or elsewhere. See www.tiranahash.com of Facebook for more information. Everybody welcome, transport for the car-less is arranged on the spot.

Tirana International Women's Group

Join the TWIG ladies for their monthly meetings, charity events and activities including yoga, painting, bowling and tea sessions. See <http://sites.google.com/site/twigtirana/home> for more information or email to twig-board@gmail.com.

From foreign representations to high-finance, from dentists to American libraries: the *Tirana In Your Pocket* directory is your one stop shop for names and numbers. Offices usually work from 08:00-16:00 and are closed on weekends, with government employees often going home on Friday after lunch.

Advertising & PR

Iceberg Communications I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, Pall. Edil Al-It, tel./fax +355 4 226 76 81, office@icebergcommunication.com, www.icebergcommunication.com. Publicity, PR and events.
Ogilvy H-4, Rr. Him Kolli, Pall 10 katesh, Kati 1, tel. +355 4 224 75 33, fax +355 4 226 24 19, ogilvy.albania@ogilvy.com, www.ogilvy.com.

Banks

Alpha Credit Bank Rr. e Kavajës, G-Kam Center, Pall.14 katësh, tel. +355 4 227 85 00, fax +355 4 222 14 48, marketing.albania@alpha.gr, www.alphabank.al. ▶ Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
BKT (Banka Kombëtare Tregtare) Bul. Zhan D'Ark, tel. +355 4 225 09 55, fax +355 4 225 09 56, tsan@bkt.com.al, www.bkt.com.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
Credins Rr. Ismail Qemali 21, tel. +355 4 223 40 96, fax +355 4 222 29 16, info@bankacredins.com, www.bankacredins.com. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:00, Sat 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.
Emporiki Bank Albania Rr. e Kavajës 27, 1001, Tirana Tower, tel. +355 4 225 87 55, fax +355 4 224 09 95, headoffice@emporiki.com.al, www.emporiki.com.al. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

International Commercial Bank Rr. Murat Topani, Qendra Eurokol, Kati 7, tel. +355 4 225 43 72/2256254, fax +355 4 225 43 68, info@icbank-albania.com, www.icbanking.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 15:30. Closed Sat, Sun.
Intesa Sanpaolo Bank Rr. Ismail Qemali 27, tel. +355 4 227 60 00, fax +355 4 224 87 62, info@intesasanpaolobank.al, www.intesasanpaolobank.al. ▶ Open 08:30 - 15:30. Closed Sat, Sun.
National Bank of Greece Rr e Durrësit, Godina Comfort, tel. +355 4 228 00 00, fax +355 4 223 36 13, nbgalbania@icc-al.org, www.nbg.gr. ▶ Open 08:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
ProCredit Bank I-3, Rr. Dritan Hoxha, Laprakë, tel. +355 4 238 93 00, fax +355 4 223 39 18, info@procreditbank.com.al, www.procreditbank.com.al. At the southern end of the street. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun. On Saturday big branches are open, 8:00 -13:00, others from 08:00 -12:00
Raiffeisen Bank Blv. Bajram Curri, ETC, tel. +355 4 238 13 81, fax +355 4 224 79 12, info@raiffeisen.al, www.raiffeisen.al. ▶ Open 08:30 - 15:30, Sat 09:00 - 12:30. Closed Sun.
Société Générale Albania Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers, Kulla 1, Kati 9, tel. +355 4 228 04 42, fax +355 4 228 04 41, bp.info@socgen.com, www.societegenerale.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 15:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.
Tirana Bank Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, P.O Box: 2400/1, tel. +355 4 226 96 17/8/+355 4 227 77 00, fax +355 4 226 30 22, info@tiranabank.al, www.tiranabank.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
Union Bank Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 06 53, fax +355 4 226 21 83, info@unionbank.al, www.unionbank.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:30, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

Business services

ACMS (Albanian Center for Management Services) H-5, Rr. Gjon Pali II, 11/1, tel. +355 4 225 56 55/+355 4 225 76 05, fax +355 4 22719 60, info@cmsalbania.com, www.cmsalbania.com. Training, executive search, consulting, auditing and other business services.
Albanian Business Network Rr.Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 68 385 95 50, contact@al-bn.com, www.al-bn.com. A networking organisation and business club for professionals, businesses and investors interested in Albania.
National Registration Centre (Qendra Kombëtare e Regjistrimit) Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 4 225 00 66, fax +355 4 225 55 32, info@qkr.gov.al, www.qkr.gov.al. The NRC is the one-stop-shop for business registrations in Albania. ▶ Open 08:30 - 14:00, Fri 08:30 - 13:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

Chambers of Commerce

American Chamber of Commerce H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Sky Tower 11/3, tel. +355 4 225 97 79, fax +355 4 223 53 50, info@amcham.com.al, www.amcham.com.al.
British Chamber of Commerce & Industry Blv. Petro Nini Luarasi 58, tel. +355 4 234 10 20, fax +355 4 237 98 85, info@abcci.com, www.abcci.com.
Tirana Chamber of Commerce & Industry E-3, Rr. Kavajës 6, tel. +355 4 223 02 84, fax +355 4 222 79 97, info@cci.al, www.cci.al.

Computers

Computer & Copier System (CCS) I-3, Rr. Sulejman Delvina pranë Stadiumit Dinamo, tel. +355 4 225 90 04/5, fax +355 4 223 55 77, info@ccs-albania.com, www.ccs-albania.com. Sells PCs, copy machines, software and hardware. ▶ Open 08:30 - 17:00, Fri 08:30 - 16:00, Sat 08:30 - 13:00. Closed Sun.
InfoSoft Group (Gjergji Centre) F-5, Rr. Murat Topani, Gjergji Centre, tel. +355 4 225 11 80, fax +355 4 223 29 90, www.infosoftgroup.com.al. Hardware, software, service provider. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

Dentists

In Albanian, 'dental clinic' is 'klinikë dentare'. Easy. Now floss.

Ledismile Dental Clinic Rr. Irfan Tomini, pall. Alfa, Shk.1, Ap.1, tel. +355 4 232 07 72/+355 69 406 60 00, ledismile@yahoo.com, www.ledismile.com. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00. Closed Sun.
Prodent F-1, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, Pall. Hekla, Kati 3, tel. +355 4 227 01 25, arkonda@yahoo.com. ▶ Open 08:30 - 14:00, 16:00 - 20:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.
Tirana Centre G-3, Rr. Bardhok Biba, Pallati i Kadarese, k.2, tel. +355 4 225 74 46/+355 4 223 15 64, info@cosmeticdent-al.com, www.cosmeticdent-al.com. Near Albanian Telecom. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00, Sat 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.
UFO Clinic F-2, Rr. Kavajës, Pallati 3, Shk 7, tel. +355 4 224 00 28, fax +355 4 224 16 87. Who wouldn't like their dental work done by Martians? Behind the Central Bank building. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 08:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

prodent
KLINIKË DENTARE

Rr. Abdyl Frashëri
Pall. Hekla Kati 3
Tel. +355 4 227 01 25
+355 69 202 85 96
+355 68 402 08 18

Dry cleaners

Fast Clean D-4, Rr. Komuna e Parisit, tel. +355 4 223 74 14. ▶ Open 07:00 - 22:00.
Pastrim Kimik I-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, tel. +355 4 223 29 76. The best dry-cleaning in Tirana. Fast service, good prices. Below the ProCredit Bank. ▶ Open 07:00 - 21:00, Sun 07:00 - 15:00.

Embassies

Many of Tirana's embassies and consulates can be found along Rruga Skënderbej, and in the area just east of the stadium. It's highly advisable to phone in advance to check the opening times or to make an appointment. The opening times listed here refer to the working hours of the visa/visitor departments.

Austria E/F-2, Rr. Frederik Shiroka 3, tel. +355 4 227 48 55, fax +355 4 223 3140, tirana-ob@bmeia.gv.at, www.bmeia.gv.at. ▶ Open 10:00 - 12:00. Closed Sat, Sun.
Bulgaria E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 12, tel. +355 4 223 31 55, fax +355 4 223 22 72, bgemb-alb@afb.net.al, www.mfa.bg. ▶ Open 08:30 - 15:00. Closed Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun.
China E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 57, tel. +355 4 223 23 85, fax +355 4 223 31 59, chinaemb_al@mfa.gov.cn, al.chineseembassy.org.al. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sun.
Croatia F-5, Rr. Abdi Topani, Torre Drin centre, tel. +355 4 222 83 90/+355 4 225 69 48, fax +355 4 223 05 78, croemb.tirana@mvpel.hr, www.mvpel.hr. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.
Czech Republic E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 10, tel. +355 4 223 04 04/+355 4 223 21 17, fax +355 4 223 21 59, tirana@embassy.mzv.cz, www.mzv.cz/tirana. ▶ Open 09:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

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www.icebergcommunication.com

Denmark H/I-4, Rr. Nikolla Tupe 1, Kati 4, Ap. 4, tel. +355 4 228 06 00, fax +355 4 228 06 30, tiaamb@um.dk, www.ambtirana.um.dk. ▶ Open 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Egypt E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 1, tel. +355 4 223 30 22/+355 4 224 79 86, fax +355 4 223 22 95, egyemb@albaniaonline.net, www.mfa.gov.eg. ▶ Open 09:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

France E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 14, tel. +355 4 223 42 50, fax +355 4 223 44 42, ambafrance.tr@adanet.com.al, www.ambafrance-al.org. ▶ Open 09:00-13:00, 14:30-17:00. Closed Sat, Sun. "SC 19-01-10"

Germany E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 8, tel. +355 4 227 45 05/+355 4 227 45 06, fax +355 4 223 34 97, info@tira.diplo.de, www.tirana.diplo.de. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Greece E/F-2, Rr. Frederik Shiroka 3, tel. +355 4 227 46 44, fax +355 4 223 41 40, gremb.tir@mfa.gr, www.mfa.gr/tirana. Consulates in Gjirokastra and Korça. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Holy See (Vatican) D-4, Rr. Durrësit 13, tel. +355 4 223 35 16, fax +355 4 223 20 01, nunapal@icc-al.org. ▶ Open 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Hungary E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 16, tel. +355 4 223 22 38/+355 4 223 49 03, fax +355 4 222 54 11, mission.tia@kum.hu, www.mfa.gov.hu/emb/tirana. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

Iran H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matohiti 20, tel. +355 4 222 76 98/+355 4 225 50 38, fax +355 4 223 04 09, ambiran@icc.al.eu.org, tirana.mfa.gov.ir. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

Italy H-5, Rr. Gjon Pali II, 2, tel. +355 4 227 59 00, fax +355 4 227 49 00, segreteriambasciata.tirana@esteri.it, www.ambtirana.esteri.it. Consulates in Vlora and Shkodra. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Macedonia F-2, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +3554 4 223 09 09, fax +355 4 223 25 14, tirana@mfa.gov.mk, www.mfa.gov.mk. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

Montenegro G-5, Rr. Jul Varibova 11, tel. +355 4 226 13 09, fax +355 4 225 74 06, albania@mfa.gov.me. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Netherlands H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 10, tel. +355 4 224 08 28/+355 4 224 08 26, fax +355 4 223 27 23, tir@minbuza.nl, www.mfa.nl/tir. ▶ Open 08:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Poland D-2, Rr. Durrësit 123, tel. +355 4 223 41 90, fax +355 4 223 33 64, polemb@albaniaonline.net. ▶ Open 08.15 - 16.15. Closed Sat, Sun.

Romania H-5, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji 1, tel. +355 4 225 60 71, fax +355 4 225 60 72, roemb@adanet.com.al, www.mae.ro. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Russia H-5, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 2, tel. +355 4 225 60 40, fax +355 4 225 60 46, rusemb@albmil.com, www.albania.mid.ru. ▶ Open Mon, Wed, Fri 08:00-12:00.

Saudi Arabia D-3, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +355 4 224 83 06, fax +355 4 222 99 82, embasadarab@albaniaonline.net, www.mofa.gov.sa. ▶ Open 09:00 - 15:00, Fri 09:00 - 13:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Serbia H-4, Rr. Donika Kastrioti 9/1, tel. +355 4 223 20 91, fax +355 4 223 20 89, ambatira@icc-al.org, www.tirana.mfa.gov.rs. ▶ Open 10:00 - 12:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Slovenia I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frasherë 11/1, EGT Tower, tel. +355 4 227 48 58, fax +355 4 222 13 11, vti@gov.si. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

Spain D-2, Rr. Skënderbej 43, tel. +355 4 227 49 61, fax +355 4 222 53 83, emb.tirana@maec.es, www.maec.es. ▶ Open 09:30 - 14:00, 16:00-19:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Sweden H-6, Rr. Pjetër Budi 76, tel. +355 4 238 06 50, fax +355 4 238 06 60, ambassaden.tirana@sida.se, www.sweden.gov.se. ▶ Open 10:00 - 12:00. Closed Mon, Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun.

Switzerland H-6, Rr. Elbasanit 81, tel. +355 4 223 48 88, fax +355 4 223 48 89, tir.vertretung@eda.admin.ch, www.eda.admin.ch/tirana. ▶ Open 09:00 - 11:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Turkey I-6, Rr. Elbasanit 65, tel. +355 4 238 03 50, fax +355 4 234 77 67, turkemb@atnet.al, www.tirana.be.mfa.gov.tr. ▶ Open 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

United Kingdom E-2, Rr. Skënderbej 12, tel. +355 4 223 49 73, fax +355 4 224 76 97, enquiries.tirana@fco.gov.uk, www.ukinalbania.fco.gov.uk. ▶ Open 09:00 - 11:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

United States I-6, Rr. Elbasanit 103, tel. +355 4 224 72 85, fax +355 4 223 22 22, http://tirana.usembassy.gov. Visits by appointment only. ▶ Open 14:00 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Fitness centres

Tirana Fitness Centre I-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, tel. +355 4 227 47 07. Workout room, sauna, and massage by appointment. ▶ Open 24hrs.

Top Technogym K-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Vila Park, tel. +355 4 225 65 68, top_technogym@yahoo.com. Tirana's best gym, with various fitness machines, an oxygen sauna, steam sauna and jacuzzi. Beside the Vila Park hotel, 100 metres inside the Grand Park. ▶ Open 24hrs.

Governmental organisations

Albania's governmental organisations. Note that these often do not work on Friday afternoon.

Albanian Development Fund Rr. Sami Frashëri 10, tel. +355 4 223 55 97, fax +355 4 223 48 85, adf@albanianfd.org, www.albanianfd.org.

Albinvest Blv. Gjergj Fishta, Pall. Shallvareve, tel. +355 4 225 28 86, fax +355 4 222 23 41, info@albinvest.gov.al, www.albinvest.gov.al.

Institute of Statistics (INSTAT) Blv. Zhan D'Ark 3, tel. +355 4 222 24 11, fax +355 4 222 83 00, inuria@instat.gov.al, www.instat.gov.al. Publishes a yearly report called *Albania in Figures (Shqipëria në Shifra)*.

KESH Rr. Vasil Shanto, tel. +355 4 225 97 29, fax +355 4 223 20 46, www.kesh.com.al. National electricity corporation.

Hair, Beauty & Wellness

Ardi Hair Fashion H-3, Rr. Vaso Pasha 7, tel. +355 4 227 09 67/+355 68 20 26 118, ardian.borova@yahoo.com. Professional ladies and gents salon with ammonia-free hair colouring. ▶ Open 08:30 - 19:30. Closed Sun.

Da Shanghai Health Centre I-3, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi 16/6, tel. +355 4 222 49 27/+355 69 247 62 71. Chinese doctors perform therapeutic foot (45 mins 1500 lek) and body (60 mins 3,000 lek) massages, acupuncture and herbal baths (15 mins 500 lek). ▶ Open 09:00 - 13:00, 15:30-21:30. Closed Sun.

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Police 129, Fire 128

Language

Albanian is an Indo-European language with a 36-letter alphabet; like the country itself it is one of a kind. There are distant links with Romanian, and many words on loan from Turkish, Greek and Slavic.

An increasing number of Albanians speaks a foreign language: Italian is extremely widespread (thanks to satellite dishes and emigration), English is catching on fast, and many Albanians in the south understand Greek.

Pronunciation

a as in father	c as in pizza
ç as in church	dh as in that
e as in set	ë as in term
gj as in dodge	i as in machine
j as in year	ll as in still
rj as in union	q as show
r as in rope	rr is a trilled r
x as in judge	

Niceties & Necessities

Yes	Po
No	Jo
Good	Mirë
Please	Ju lutem
Thank you	Faleminderit
Sorry!	Më vjen keq!
Good morning	Mirëmëngjes
Good day	Mirdita
Hello	ç'kemi
Good night	Natën e mirë
Good luck with your work!	Punë e mbarë!
Cheers!	Gëzuar!
All the best!	Gjithë të mirat!
Excuse me!	Më falni!
How are you?	Si jeni?

Practicalities

When?	Kur?
Where?	Ku?
Who?	Kush?
Why?	Pse?
What?	Çfarë?
I have...	Kam...
I am...	Jam...
What's your name?	Si quheni?
My name is...	Quhem...
I'm from...	Une jam nga...
...UK	...Anglia
...USA	...Amerika
...Germany	...Gjermania
I don't understand	Nuk kuptoj
I don't speak Albanian	Nuk flas shqip
A ticket, please	Një biletë, ju lutem
How much does this cost?	Sa kushton?

Numbers

0 zero	1 një	2 dy
3 tre	4 katër	5 pesë
6 gjashtë	7 shtatë	8 tetë
9 nentë	10 dhjetë	20 njëzet
50 pesëdhjetë	100 njëqind	1000 njëmijë

Time

Now <i>Tani</i>	Later <i>Më vonë</i>
Today <i>Sot</i>	Tomorrow <i>Nesër</i>
Yesterday <i>Dje</i>	

Genci C-5, Rr. Elbasanit, Pall 2, Shk 9, Ap 70, tel. +355 4 227 23 13/+355 68 206 16 00. Men's hairdresser. ▶ Open 11:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Joyel Spa Rr. e Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 234 79 79, info@joyelspa.com, www.joyelspa.com. Beautiful spa offering massages, body and facial treatments, physiotherapy, yoga and more. Opposite the Calvin club. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00. Closed Mon.

Krehëri i artë i Edlirës G-6, Rr. Petro Nini Luarasi, Nd.61 H4, tel. +355 4 223 39 50. Women's hairdresser. ▶ Open 08:00 - 21:00.

Sallon Sharm Rr. Bardhyl 20, Unazë, tel. +355 68 606 87 77, www.sharm-sallon.com. A hairdresser with a difference - profits go to a charity improving the lives of prisoners. Haircuts (men Monday only), make-up, facials, manicures and more. On the ringroad near the eastern end of Rruga Qemal Stafa. Call ahead. ▶ Open 10:00 - 19:00. Closed Mon, Sun.

Velur Spa G-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri, Metropol Center, tel. +355 4 222 25 50/+355 69 203 29 00, info@velurspa.com, www.velurspa.com. A smart 'Spa & Relax' centre on the lower floor of the Metropol building. There's a *hamam* (Turkish bath) and you can undergo massage, hydrotherapy, waxing, facials, manicure/pedicure, and skin treatments with Thai mud, herbs and even chocolate. ▶ Open 09:00 - 22:00, Sun 14:00 - 22:00.

Wang Yan Massage (Dragoi i Zjarrtë) I-3, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +355 4 241 58 70, dragoizjarrte@hotmail.com. Various kinds of massage (therapeutic, foot, keep-fit) from 2,500 lek per hour, as well as acupuncture and herb treatments. In a second-floor apartment; look for the 'Chinese massage' sign. ▶ Open 09:00 - 21:00.

Hospitals & Clinics

Clinics do not usually take patients outside office hours. For emergencies, go to the American Hospital or to the Civilian Hospital (northeast of the centre on Rr. Dibrës).

ABC Clinic D-5, Rr. Qemal Stafa 260, tel. +355 4 223 41 05/+355 68 260 04 05, healthcenter@abchealth.org, www.abchealth.org. Christian, English-speaking clinic. ▶ Open 09:00 - 13:00, Tue, Thu 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

American Hospital (Spitali Amerikan) Pranë Spitalit Ushtarak, Laprakë, tel. +355 4 235 75 35, fax +355 4 235 76 34, info@spitaliamerikan.com, www.spitaliamerikan.com. A new and modern hospital along the Durrës highway, with international staff and a good English-language website.

DSF Medical Centre Rr. Irfan Tomini Nr.5-1, tel. +355 4 223 27 99. ▶ Open 08:00 - 14:00, 16:00 - 20:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Hygeia Hospital Tirana-Durrës highway, km1, Fushë Mëz, tel. +355 4 239 00 00/+355 4 232 30 00 (emergencies), info@hygeia.al, www.hygeia.al. Albania's first large private hospital, opened in 2010.

Klinika Irma Rr. Dora D'Istria, Pall. Triss, tel. +355 4 224 30 00/+355 4 224 28 80, klinikairma@gmail.com. A large private multi-speciality clinic near the Grand Park. Doctors speak English, French and Italian. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sun.

€1 = 140 lek, £1 = 166 lek,
US\$1 = 103 lek (Feb 5, 2011)



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Km 01 of the secondary road of Tirana-Durrës Highway,
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Emergency: +355 4 2323 000
Fax: +355 4 2388 996

Luigi Monti Clinic E-3, Rr. Kavajës 120, tel. +355 4 222 39 06, fax +355 4 223 11 25, poliambulanca@fzkm.org, www.unizkm.al. Part of the Catholic Diagnostic Center. ▶ Open 08:00 - 14:00, 16:00-19:00. Closed Sun.

Marie Stopes Clinic Rr. Tefta Tashko Koço 10, tel./fax +355 4 224 10 18, mstopes@iccal.org, www.mariestopesalbania.com. Family planning clinic providing safe, comprehensive reproductive healthcare and education in a country where contraception and abortion were illegal until 1991. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 08:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

Orthodox Clinic Rr. Dibrës 159, tel. +355 4 236 09 25/+355 4 238 22 10, fax +355 4 237 48 04, klinika-orthodhokse@yahoo.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

Insurance companies

Insig Rr.e Dibrës, Nr. 91, tel. +355 4 225 68 12, fax +355 4 223 41 80, marra@insig.com.al, www.insig.com.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00.

InterAlbanian I-3, Rr. Sulejman Delvina, Zayed Business Center, tel. +355 4 222 95 78/+355 4 225 51 71, fax +355 4 222 95 11, kontakt@interalbanian.com, www.interalbanian.com. ▶ Open 08:30 - 17:00, Sat 08:30 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

Sigal Uniqa Group Austria Blv. Zog I, No. 1, tel. +355 4 223 33 08, fax +355 4 225 02 20, info@sigal.com.al, www.sigal.com.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

Sigma Rr.Komuna Parisit, Pallatet Lura k.2, POB 1714, tel. +355 4 225 82 54, fax +355 4 225 82 53, info@sigma-al.com, www.sigma-al.com.

International organisations

Albania's non-governmental and international organisations.

EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) Rr. Abdi Toptani, Torre Drini k.4, tel. +355 4 223 28 98, fax +355 4 223 05 80, alickola@ebrd.com, www.ebrd.com. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Ekolevizja Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, Shk 3, Ap 4, tel./fax +355 4 223 48 51, ekolevizja@yahoo.com, www.ekolevizja.org. A network of ecology groups across Albania. ▶ Open 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

European Union Delegation ABA BRr. Papa Gjon Pali II, ABBA Business Center, 17th floor, tel. +355 4 222 83 20, fax +355 4 223 07 52, delegation-albania@ec.europa.eu, www.delalib.ec.europa.eu.

GTZ (German Projects Office) Rr. Skënderbeg 21/1, tel. +355 4 223 04 14, fax +355 4 225 17 92, gtz-albanien@gtz.de, www.gtz.de.

IMF Resident Mission in albania (International Monetary Fund) Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Tower 1, Suite 5-4, tel. +355 4 228 04 00, fax +355 4 228 04 01, rr-alb@imf.org, www.imf.org/tirana. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

IOM (International Office for Migration) H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, Vila nr 3, tel. +355 4 227 16 29, fax +355 4 225 78 35, iomtirana@iom.int, www.iom.int/albania. ▶ Open 08:30 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, tel. +355 4 223 59 96, fax +355 4 224 86 84, pm-al@osce.org, www.osce.org/albania.

SNV (Dutch Projects Office) Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 225 58 00, fax +355 4 225 58 01, balkans@snvworld.org, www.snvworld.org.

Soros Foundation (NOSA) Rr. Qemal Stafa 120/1, tel. +355 4 223 46 21/+355 4 223 42 23, fax +355 4 223 58 56, info@osfa.soros.al, www.soros.al. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Transparency International Bul. Gjergj Fishta, tel. +355 4 226 74 57, info@tia.al, www.tia.al.

UNDP (United Nations Development Program) Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II (ABA Bussines Center) kati 6, tel. +355 4 240 07 21, fax +355 4 240 07 25, info@un.org.al, www.undp.org.al.

UNFPA (United Nations Fund for Population) Rr. Donika Kastrioti 1/1, tel. +355 4 225 78 38, fax +355 4 223 22 83, registry@unfpa.org.al, www.unfpa.org.

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) Rr. Donika Kastrioti 4, tel. +355 4 225 01 06, fax +355 4 222 84 92, berberi@unhcr.org, www.unhcr.org.

UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) Rr. Skënderbej, Godina Volkswagen, Kati 3, tel. +355 4 227 33 35, fax +355 4 224 37 75, tirana@unicef.org, www.unicef.org. ▶ Open 8:30 - 17:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

USAID (United States Aid) Rr. Elbasanit 103, tel. +355 4 224 72 85, fax +355 4 223 22 22, www.usaid.gov.

WHO (World Health Organisation) Rr.Themistokli Gërmenji, Pall. 10, tel. +355 4 2236 44 84, fax +355 4 226 61 62, office@who-albania.org, www.un.org.al.

International schools

Ecole Viktor Hygo Rr. Tre Vellezërit Kondi, tel. +355 4 237 17 25/+355 69 20 61 677, info@ecole-vhugo.com, www.ecole-vhugo.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:00.

Memorial International School Rr. Durrësit, tel. +355 4 223 73 79, info@mistedu.net, www.mistedu.com.

Tirana International School (TIS) Rr. Tre Vellezërit Kondi, tel. +355 4 236 52 39, tirana@qsi.org, www.qsiweb.org/alb.

Language courses

International Language Centre D-5, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi Nd.5, H.4, Njësia Bashkiake 2, POB 1017, tel. +355 4 223 61 41/+355 4 223 46 60, ilc@prim.al. Albanian lessons for beginners to advanced students. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00.

Lincoln Center H-4, Rr. Qemal Stafa 184, tel. +355 4 223 08 80, info@lincoln.org.al, www.lincolnalbania.org. Albanian for foreigners as well as English, German, Spanish and computer courses. Inside Enver Hoxha's old villa, and two other outlets. ▶ Open 8:00 - 20:00.

Lawyers & Consultants

Boga & Associates Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Kompleksi Green Park, tel. +355 4 225 10 50/+355 68 206 20 10, fax +355 4 225 10 55, info@bogalaw.com, www.bogalaw.com. ▶ Open 08:30 - 06:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

Deloitte F-5, Rr. Murat Toptani, Eurocol Center, tel. +355 4 227 79 20, fax +355 4 227 79 90, alzhja@deloittece.com, www.deloitte.com/al.

Kalo & Associates E-3, Rr. Kavajës, Qendra e Bussinesit G-KAM, tel. +355 4 223 35 32, fax +355 4 222 47 27, info@kalo-attorneys.com, www.kalo-attorneys.com.



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KPMG H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Tower 1, tel. +355 4 227 45 24, fax +355 4 223 55 34, office@kpmg.com, www.kpmg.al. ▶ Open 08:30 - 17:30. Closed Sat, Sun.

TBI Law Firm D-4, Blv. Zog I, Veve Business Center, tel./fax +355 4 222 89 62, ketrin.topciu@tbi-al.com, www.tbi-al.com.

Tonucci & Partners H-4, Rr. Abdi Toptani, Torre Drini, tel. +355 4 225 07 11, fax +355 4 225 07 13, tirana.tonucci.it, www.tonucci.it.

Libraries

American Corner E-4, Sheshi Skenderbeg (National Library), tel. +355 4 26 99 55, nildakajo@yahoo.com. A library with American books and magazines. ▶ Open 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

National Library E-4, Sheshi Skenderbeg, Palace of Culture, tel./fax +355 4 222 38 43, www.bksh.al. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sat, Sun 08:00 - 14:00.

University Library (Biblioteka Universitare) I-4, Sheshi Nënë Tereza, tel. +355 4 226 94 54. ▶ Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.

Media

Albanian Daily News Rr. Dervish Hima, No. 1, tel. +355 4 225 61 12, fax +355 4 224 08 88, infoadn@albnet.com, www.albaniannews.com. A daily English-language newspaper with a website for subscribers.

Tirana Times tel. +355 4 227 42 03, www.tirana-times.com. A weekly newspaper in rather dodgy English with national and international news, features and events. For sale in hotels and at newsstands for 350 lek. Also offers an online daily news subscription.

Ministries

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection Sheshi Skënderbej 2, tel./fax +355 4 222 65 51, info@mbumk.gov.al, www.mbumk.gov.al.

Ministry of Defence Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 1, tel. +355 4 222 66 01, fax +355 4 222 83 25, kontakt@mod.gov.al, www.mod.gov.al.

Ministry of Economy, Commerce and Energy Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 2, tel. +355 4 222 76 17, kabineti@mete.gov.al, www.mete.gov.al.

Ministry of Education and Science Rr. Durrësit 23, tel. +355 4 222 63 07, fax +355 4 223 20 02, mashad-min@mash.gov.al, www.mash.gov.al.

Ministry of Environment Rr. Durrësit 27, tel. +355 4 227 06 30, fax +355 4 227 06 27, mpazaj@moe.gov.al, www.moe.gov.al.

Ministry of Finance Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 4, tel. +355 4 222 79 37, fax +355 4 222 84 94, generalsecretary@minfin.gov.al, www.minfin.gov.al.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Blv. Gjergj Fishta 6, tel. +355 4 236 40 90, fax +355 4 236 20 84, info@mfa.gov.al, www.mfa.gov.al.

Ministry of Health Blv. Bajram Curri 1, tel. +355 4 236 46 84, fax +355 4 237 61 92, kabineti@moh.gov.al, www.moh.gov.al.

Ministry of Integration I-5, Rr. Gjon Pali II, nr. 3, tel. +355 4 222 86 45, fax +355 4 225 62 67, elda.kalaja@mie.gov.al, www.mie.gov.al.

Ministry of Interior Affairs Sheshi Skënderbej 3, tel./fax +355 4 224 71 55, ministria.brendshme@moi.gov.al, www.moi.gov.al.

Ministry of Justice Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 93 88, fax +355 4 223 45 60, ministri@justice.gov.al, www.justice.gov.al.

Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities Rr. Kavajës 53, tel. +355 4 225 10 08, fax +355 4 222 83 40, kontakt@mpcs.gov.al, www.mpcs.gov.al.

Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication Sheshi Skënderbej 5, tel. +355 4 238 08 33, jeta.rustemi@mpptt.gov.al, www.mpptt.gov.al.

Ministry of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Rr. e Kavajës, tel. +355 4 222 25 08, fax +355 4 227 12 59, informacion@mtkrs.gov.al, www.mkrs.gov.al.

Municipality of Tirana Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 222 66 29/+355 4 225 30 53, fax +355 4 222 84 30, info@tirana.gov.al, www.tirana.gov.al.

Prime Minister's Office Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit 1, tel. +355 4 225 65 61, ext. 440, fax +3554 223 48 18, info@km.gov.al, www.keshilliministrave.al.

Moval companies

Move One Relocations D-5, Rr. Brigada 8, Pall. Tekno-Projekt, Shk 2, Ap 3/2, tel./fax +355 4 225 81 03, albania@moveoneinc.com, www.moveoneinc.com. Moveals for companies and individuals, as well as tailor-made relocation, home search and settling-in services.

Notaries

These offices provide notary work and legal assistance. Some also do written translations into and from English, French, German, Italian, Greek and Turkish.

Agim Robo H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 27/1, tel. +355 4 224 88 40, agimrobo@hotmail.com. ▶ Open 08:30 - 14:00; 18:00-19:00. Closed Sat, Sun.



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A.Rreli C-4, Biv. Zogu I, 30/ Rr.Mine Peza Nr 1, tel. +355 4 222 79 65/ 222 23 29/+355 68 20 29 675, fotorreli@albmil.com. A chain of modern photo labs. Digital developing too. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00, Sun 09:00 - 13:00, 17:00-21:30.

Ital Kumi H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, 3/1, tel. +355 4 224 68 98/+355 69 202 03 60, loungebar042@gmail.com. ▶ Open 07:00 - 02:00. Closed Sun.

Real estate

Albania Property Group Rr. Islam Alla, tel./fax +355 4 227 17 46, info@albaniapropertygroup.com, www.albaniapropertygroup.com.

Alb Property Rr. Dervish Hima, tel. +355 4 224 62 53, info@alb-property.com, www.alb-property.com.

Alma Rr. Brigada VIII 8/1, tel. +355 4 225 00 58/+355 69 209 80 98, office@alma-realestate.com, www.alma-realestate.com. Flats, houses, offices for sale and for rent, property management and more.

Balkimo Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, tel. +355 4 226 63 94, fax +355 4 225 47 60, info@balkimo.com, www.balkimo.com.

Century 21 Albania Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit . Leskova building, tel. +355 4 225 05 99, fax +355 4 225 78 29, info@century21albania.com, www.century21albania.com.

Colliers G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Sky Tower, suite 141, tel. +355 4 240 04 70, fax +355 4 240 04 71, albania@colliers.com, www.colliers.com.

Green Hours Rr. Abdi Kazani, P. Luarasi 2a, tel./fax +355 4 223 28 44, info@greenhours.net, www.greenhours.net. Specialises in building plots and agricultural land.

INF93 Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi 8, tel./fax +355 4 224 95 22, inf93@abaniaonline.net, www.inf-93.com.

Real Estate Imobiliari Rr. Kavajës, Pall. 3, Shk. 7, Ap. 66, tel. +355 4 223 31 18, reale@icc.al.eu.org.

Swimming pools

Aquadrom K-3, Liqeni Artificial, Tirane, tel. +355 4 225 62 57. West of the Grand Park are these four outdoor swimming pools. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00. Open May-Oct Admission 300-400 lek.

Chateau Linza Rr. Porcelanit, Qesarakë, Linza, tel. +355 69 203 00 03, www.chateaulinzahotel.com. Hotel pool open for visitors.

Park Venue Mullet, Tirana-Elbasan road km 15, tel. +355 68 328 66 66. A hotel pool available for all to use. ▶ Admission 500 lek.

Tennis courts

Grand Park Tennis Courts K-3, Aquadrom Complex, West of the park. Next to the Aquadrom complex, just to the west of the park.

Rogner Europapark Courts H-5, Biv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 223 50 35, info@tirana.rogner.com. Call ahead for reservations. ▶ Open 24 hours opened.

Translations

Fadil Metaj D-3, Rr. Duresit, Pall. 79, Shk. 4, Kati 1, tel. +355 4 223 04 48, fmetaj2005@yahoo.com. Translates English to/from Albanian, Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, Bulgarian and Russian.

Blerina Avrazi Rr. e Durrësit, Pall.204, tel. +355 4 222 11 87, fax +355 4 480 51 99, blerina_avrazi@yahoo.it.

Dhimitra Qarri G-3, Biv. Bajram Curri, Pallatet 1Maji, Shk. 3, Ap 24, tel. +355 4 225 12 00/+355 69 209 55 71, vqarri@yahoo.com.

Fatime Metaj D-3, Rr. Durrësit 118, Shk. 1, Ap. 1, tel. +355 4 223 98 72, fatimemetaj@yahoo.com.

Majlinda Lleshi Rr. Sulejman Delvina, pranë qendrës Zayed, majlinda06@yahoo.it.

Opticians

ItaloOptike D-5, Rr. Dibrës 271, tel. +355 4 222 29 85. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Optika Bruna G-4, Biv. Bajram Curri, Pallatet Agimi, tel./fax +355 4 224 63 61, www.opticabruna.com. ▶ Open 09:00 - 13:00/16:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

Ottical E-3, Rr. Kavajës 207, tel. +355 4 225 38 83, info@ottical.com. ▶ Open 08:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun. Open 09:00-13:00, 16:00-20:00. Closed Sun.

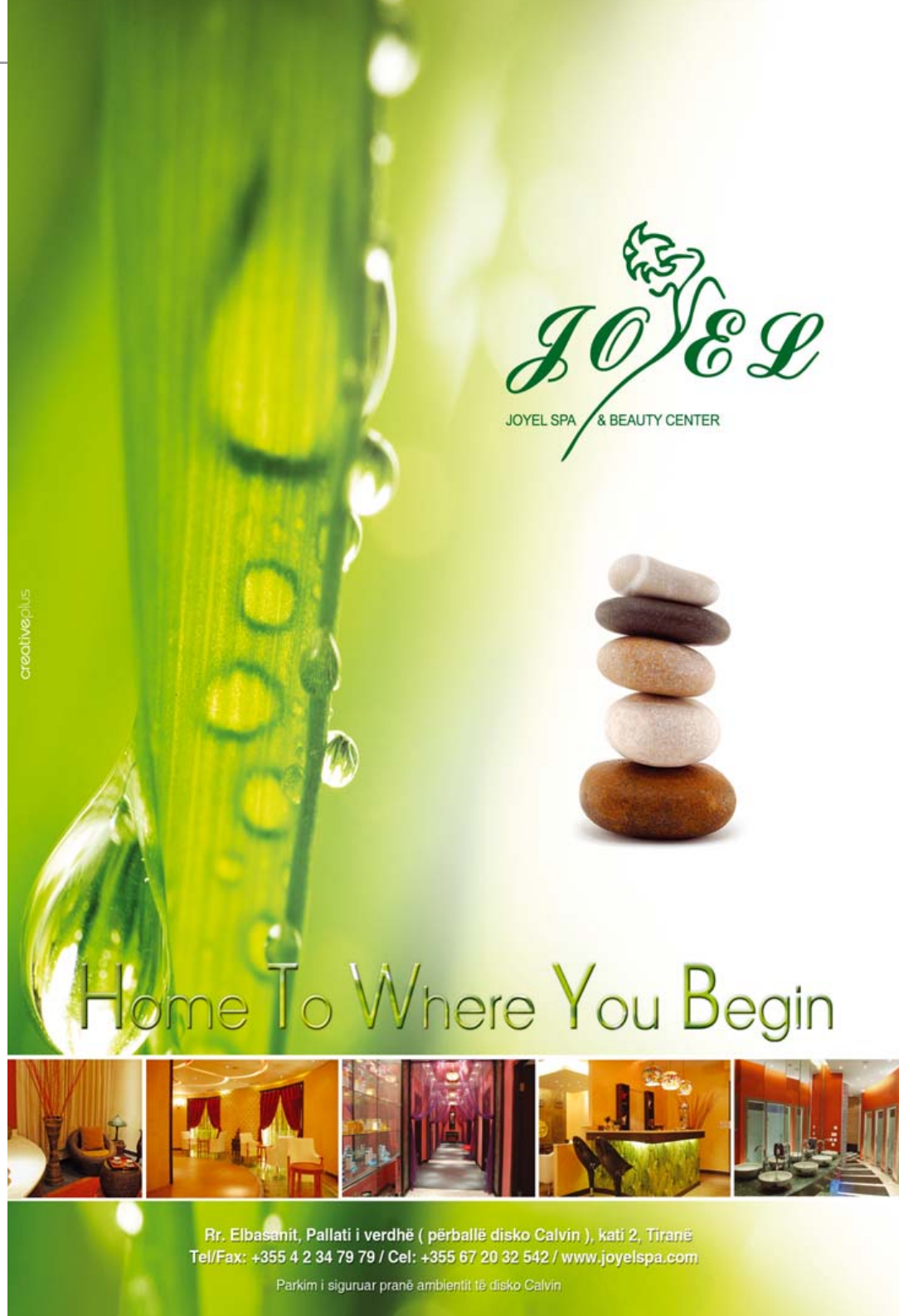
Pharmacies

Farmacia 7-17 C-4, Biv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 222 22 41. The non-stop city centre pharmacy. Next to the Tirana Bank. ▶ Open 24hrs.

Farmacit Regji dhe Bime Mjeksore H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 222 67 59. ▶ Open 09:00-14:00, 17:00-20:00. On duty 24hrs.

Farmatech D-5, Rr. Barrikadave, tel. +355 4 223 65 84, info@farmatech.net. Modern pharmacy, English spoken. ▶ Open 08:30 - 22:00. Closed Sun.


Rudi Farma D-4, Biv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 224 89 51. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.



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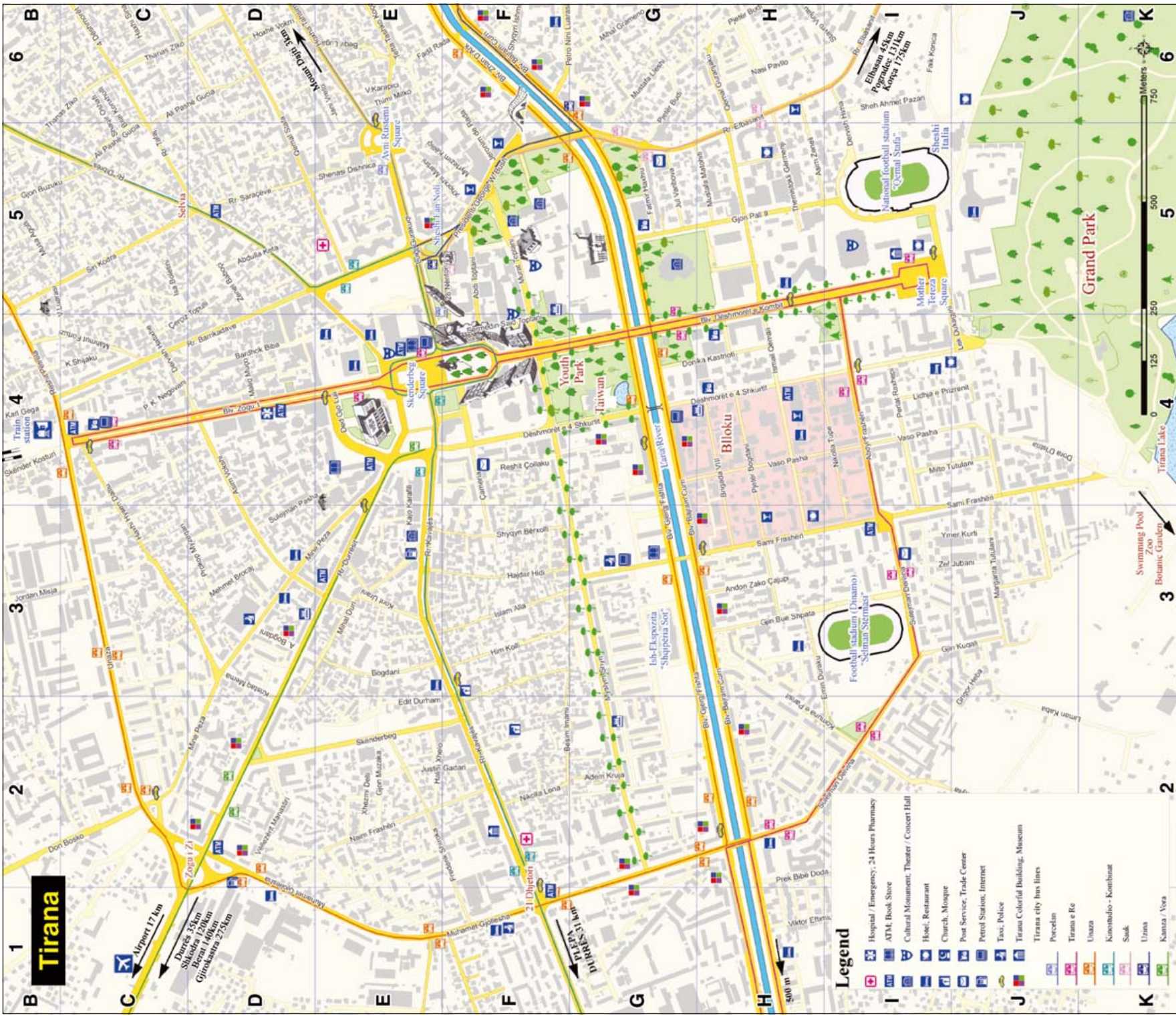
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Parkim i siguruar pranë ambientit të disko Calvin



Street register

All Tirana streets below are prefixed 'Rruga' (Rr.); boulevards are listed as 'Blv', squares as 'Sheshi'.

4 Dëshmorët	C-6	Liman Kaba	J-2/3, K-2
28 Nëntori	F-4/5, E-5	Luigj Gurakuqi	E-4/5
Abdi Toptani	F-4/5	Mahmut Fortuzi	B/C-4
Abdulla Keta	D-5	Maliq Muço	D-4
Abdyl Frashëri	I-3/4/5	Margareta Tutulani	J-3/4
Adem Kruja	G-2	Medar Shtylla	I/J/K-2
Ali Pashe Gucia	C-5/6, D-6	Mehmet Broçaj	D-3
Andon Zako Çajupi	H-3	Mihal Duri	E-3
Asim Vokshi	D-3/4	Mihal Grameno	G-6
Asim Zeneli	H-5/6	Mito Tutulani	I/J-3
Bardhok Bllba	D-4	Mine Peza	C-2, D-2/3, E-3
Barrakadave	B/C-4, D-4/5	Muhamet Gjollësia	
Begir Luga	E-6	D-1/2, E-1, F-1, G-1/2, H-2	
Besim Imami	F-2/3	Murat Toptani	F-4/5
Bilal Konxholli	C-5/6	Musa Agolli	B-5
Blv. Bajram Curri	H-1 to G-6	Mustafa Lleshi	G-6
Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit	F-4 to I-5	Mustafa Matothi	G/H-5
Blv. Gërgj Fishta	H-1 to G-4	Myrtezim Këlliçi	E/F-5
Blv. Zhan D'Ark	G-5 to E-6	Myslim Shyri	G-2/3, F-3/4
Blv. Zogu I	C/D/E-4	Naim Frashëri	E/F-2
Bogdani	E-3	Nasi Pavlo	H/I-6
Brigada VIII	H-3/4	Nikolla Lena	F-2
Camëria	F-3/4	Nikolla Tupe	I-3/4, H-4
Cerçiz Topalli	C-4, D-5	Papa Kristo Negovani	C-4
Ded Gjo Lull	E-4	Pjerat Rexhepi	C-4
Dervish Hatixhe	D/C-4	Petro Korçari	I-1
Dervish Hima	I-5/6	Petro Nini Luarasi	F-6
Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit	G/H/I/J-4	Pjetër Bogdani	H-3/4
Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi	J-1/2	Pjetër Budi	H-6
Dibrës	C/D-5, B-5/6	Prek Bibë Doda	H-2
Don Bosko	B/C-2	Presidenti George W. Bush	F-5
Donika Kastrioti	G/H-4	Prokop Myzeqari	D-3
Dora D'istria	K/J-4	Punëtorët e Rilindjes	
Durrësit	D-2/3, E-3/4	see Presidenti GWB	
Edit Durham	E-2	Qemal Guranjaku	H-6
Ebasanik	G-5, H-5/6, I-6	Qemal Stafa	E-5, D-5/6
Emin Duraku	I-2, H-3	Ramzan Farka	B-6
Fadil Rada	I-2, H-3	Reshit Çollaku	F-4
Faik Konica	I-6	Reshit Petrela	B/C-4
Fatmir Haxhiu	G-5	Robert Shvare	I-1
Frederik Shiroka	F-1/2, E-2	Sami Frashëri	G-3 to J-4
Gjin Bue Shpata	H/I-3	Saraçëve	D-5
Gjin Kuçali	I/J-3	Sermedin Said Toptani	F-4
Gjon Buzuku	B/C-5	Shaqir Ofshafi	C-5/6
Gjon Muzaka	E-2	Sheh Ahmet Pazarin	I-6
Gjorgj Heba	I-2, J-2/3	Shenasi Dishnica	D/E-5
Hajdar Hidi	E/F-3	Sheshi 21 Dhjetori	F-1
Haki Mborja	J-1	Sheshi Avni Rustemi	E-5
Halim Xhelu	E-2	Sheshi Fan Noli	E-5
Haxhi Hyssen Dalliu	D-3, C-3/4	Sheshi Italia	I-5
Haxhi Sina	C-3/4	Sheshi Nënë Tereza	I-5
Him Kollri	F-3	Sheshi Skënderbeg	E/F-4
Hoxha Vokri	D-6	Sheshi Zogu i Zi	C/D-2
Hoxha Tahsim	E/D-6	Shyqyr Bërzholl	E/F-3
Ibrahim Dervishi	I-1	Shyqyr Ishmi	F-6
Isa Boletini	C/D-5	Siri Kodra	B-4
Islam Alla	E/F/G-3	Skënder Kosturi	B/C-4
Ismail Qemali	H-3/4/5	Skënderbeg	D/E/F-2
Jani Vreto	E-5/6	Stavro Vinçau	H/I-6
Jeronim de Rada	F-5	Sulejman Delvina	H-2, I-2/3
Jordan Misja	A/B/C-3	Sulejman Pasha	D-3/4, E-4
Jul Varbova	G-5	Tafaj	C-5/6
Justin Gadari	E/F-2	Tefta Tashko Koço	E-6
Jusuf Vriioni	I-2	Thanas Ziko	B-5/6, C-6
K. Shijaku	B/C-4	Themistokli Gërmenji	H-5/6
Kajo Karafilii	E-3/4	Thimi Mitko	E-6
Karl Gega	B-4	Unaza	C-2/3/4
Kavajës	F-1/2/3, E-3/4	V. Karapaci	E-6
Komuna e Parisit	H-2/3, I-2	V. Luarasi	C-4/5, D-5
Kont Urani	E-3	Vaso Pasha	G/H/I-4
Kristaq Mema	D-2/3	Vëllezërit Manastiri	D-2
Lek Dukagjini	I-5, J-4	Viktor Eftimiu	H-1, I-1/2
Lidhja Prizrent	I/J-4	Xhezmi Delli	E-2
		Xhorxhi Martini	E/F-5
		Ymer Kurti	I/J-3
		Zenel Baboçi	D-5

30 Over	32	Elysée	12	Milingona	16	Shëngjin Church Mosaic	36
ABA Fifth	24	Emblema	18	Millennium	20	Sheraton Tirana Hotel	10
ABA Twentyfirst	22	Enoteca Joan	32	Mimi	20	Sirius	19
Albaniantrip	16	Eper7shme	29	Miniri	14	Skanderbeg Square	34
Albanian Federation of Cooks	24	Era	18	Mojo	29	Skanderbeg Statue	38
Al Brigantino	24	Et'hem Bey Mosque	37	Mondial	12	Sky Club	22
Alcora	32	Fan Noli Statue	38	Monument for the Righteous	36	Sky Club Café	29
Alejandro	32	Far East	20	Gentiles of Albania	38	Sky Hotel	12
Alfa Club	30	Ferari	12	Mother Teresa Statue	38	Sofra e Ariut	26
Amor	20	Fiore	24	Mr. Chicken	27	Sofra Turke	27
Apollonia	18	Firenze	14	Mrizi i Zanave	19	Spaghetti House & Fish	26
Arber	10	Flares	30	Mumja	33	Steakhouse	23
Archaeological Museum	35	Folie	33	Music Box	31	Steelwings	31
Areela	15	Fortress of Justinian	37	Napoli	24	Stela	14
Artist Lounge	29	Freddy's Hostel	16	National Art Gallery	35	Stephen Center B&B	16
Ballkoni Dajtit	22	Friend's Book House	29	National History Museum	35	Stephen Center Café	29
Bantia	18	Galeria Shijaku	37	Natural Science Museum	36	Stylus Club Marriott	32
Bardhë e Zi	29	Grand	10	Nirvana	14	Tanners' Bridge	37
Belvedere	17	Grand Park	38	Nobel	14	Taverna Argjiro	19
Bermon	12	Green House	12, 24	Noel	31	Teqaja Dervish Hatixhe	37
Big Bite	27	Gregory's Coffee	29	Oda	19	Theranda	14
Billionaire	20	Guva e Qetë	15	Orthodox Cathedral	35	Tiki	32
Bogova	26	Haxhiu	15	Orthodox Church	35	Tirana Backpacker Hostel	17
Bonaparte	32	Heart of Christ Church	34	Otium	18	Tirana International Hotel & Conference Centre	12
Bon Bon	30	Hostel Albania	16	Palma	14	Tirana Rock	32
Botanical gardens	38	Hotel Airport Tirana	16	Panorama	17	Tomb of Kaplan Pasha	37
Briker	15	House of the Dervish	37	Parlamenti	15	Unit Bar	32
Brilant Antik	10	Khorosani	37	Pastarella	20	Unknown Partisan Statue	38
Bristol	12	Iguana II	30	Pasticeri International	29	Venecia	26
Broadway	12	Iliria	14	Pasticeri Twin Towers	29	Venue Dance Club	33
Bujtina Shqiptare	16	Il Pomodoro Food Court	27	Patisserie Française	20	Venue Park	17
California	12	Imagine	33	Pellumbas Cave	39	Verzaci	16
Calvin	33	Infinity	30	Pension Andrea	16	Viking	23
Cameleon	30	Irish Bar	33	Petrela Castle	39	Vila 3	14
Canon	30	Istanbul	27	Piazza	20	Vila 12	27
Caramel Lounge	30	Jumeirah	29	Pike Loti	15	Vila 31	20
Carlsberg	18	Juvenilja Castelo	26	Pirro	29	Vila Aeroport	16
Casa di Pasta	24	Kalaja	15	Pirro Mani	24	Vila Ambasador Chocolat	23
Cathedral of St. Paul	34	Kalaja e Petrelës	18	Pyramid	34	Vila Amsterdam	23
Central Market	34	King House	20	Queen Park	26	Vila Belvedere	14
Charl's Bistro	30	Kolonat	27	Quo Vadis	29	Vila Logoreci	26
Chateau Linza	10	Kruja	14, 39	Radio	31	Vila Metropolitan	23
City	12	La Cantinella	24	Raum	33	Vila Park	14
Clock Tower	36	La Tavernetta	24	Regency Casino	33	Vila Tafaj	14
Code	30	La Voglia	26	Rei Jazz Club	33	Vila Toscana	17
Coffee Store	29	Linda Spahiu Costume Collection	35	Relax	29	Vila Verde	16
Comfort	10	Living Room	30	Republika	16	Vinum	18
Converse	30	Lizard	31	Rinia Park	38	Viva	20
Dajti Ekspres Cable Car	39	Lollipop	33	Rock 'n Roll	31	Vogue Lounge	33
Dajti Park	17	London	20	Rockwood	31	Wine Shop	32
Da Shang Hai	20	Loro Borici	26	Rogner Europapark	10	Wine Spirit	32
Davidoff Club	30	Lugano	14	Royal	22	Xheko Imperial	10
Delice	24	Lulishte 1 Maji	20	Rozafa	26	Xibraku	23
Delikatëse	29	Magic Blue	26	Sarajet	19	Yamato	26
Diplomat	10	Martyrs' Cemetery	34	Serenata	19	Zanzibar	33
Diplomat Fashion	12	Meduza	31	Serendipity	22	Zeta Gallery	36
Doro City	12	Metropolitan	18	Shakesbeer	22	Zoo	38
Eder	15	Mezuraj Museum	35	Shang Hai	20		
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