



**Albania – The Cycle Albania Bike Tour 2018**  
**Self-Guided or Guided Bike Tour**  
**10 days / 9 nights**



This diverse tour will lead you from the tranquil beauty of Lake Ohrid, via picturesque mountains and sparkling rivers, to the inviting beaches of the Albanian Riviera, providing a taste of all the very best that the south has to offer. This incorporates visits to UNESCO heritage sites, as well as fascinating glimpses into an untouched subsistence culture. A challenging cycling route, providing a feast for the senses and plenty of opportunity to experience the hospitality of the friendly Albanian people.

Some say that visiting Albania is as close as you'll get to traveling back in time. It wasn't until the collapse of the People's Socialist Republic of Albania in 1991 that the world got its first glimpse of the country within. Huge snow-capped mountains, inviting beaches, pretty rural villages, a genuine subsistence culture and an exceptionally friendly welcome is what you will find here. We ride through the very best of Europe's beautiful unknown.

**OK Cycle & Adventure Tours Inc. - 666 Kirkwood Ave - Suite B102 – Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1Z 5X9**  
[www.okcycletours.com](http://www.okcycletours.com) Toll Free 1-888-621-6818 Local 613-702-5350



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### Itinerary Day to Day

#### **Day 1: Arrival in Tirana**

Rendezvous at Tiranãa airport and transfer to hotel in Tiranãa city centre. Meet the rest of the tour group over a relaxing dinner. After check-in in at the hotel, depending on the arriving flights, we will have the chance to do a tour of Tirana and visit the nuclear bunker of Enver Hoxha, the fruit and vegetable market and the national museum of history next to the newly build city centre of Tirana. Before the welcome dinner, your tour guide will go with you, through all the tour details and tell you everything you need to know about the amazing tour you are about the journey. Panniers will be given to you at this point that you will use for the duration of the tour as well as a set of maps with details about each riding day.

#### **Day 2: Tiranë – Pogradec 40 km (driving 120 km/2hrs) + 174 m**

We will start the morning with a two hour transfer to the northern side of Lake Ohrid. From where, after we have unloaded the bicycles and fitted them to everyone's comfort we will start cycling along the scenic shore of lake Ohrid towards Pogradec. After reaching our hotel in the town of Tushemisht, just 4 km east of Pogradec, lunch will be served at a waterfront restaurant at Drilon national park. After checking in the hotel we will continue cycling in the afternoon, crossing over into Macedonia, and visiting the monastery of St Naum.



#### **Day 3: Pogradec to Korce 51 km + 412 m**

Leaving Lake Ohrid, we climb to a high plateau bounded by mountains. We continue following the gorge for a while until the hills open up, leading to a vast plain and a colourful patchwork of individual farms. Depending on our arrival at the city, we will have the time to visit the old market and its quaint cobblestone streets run between and behind the main streets. Day ends with a short walking tour of Korcë, the Paris of Albania.



#### **Day 4: Korce to Sotire 72 km + 1170 m**

We leave behind the agricultural plateau of Korcë, ascending steadily into the Border Mountains through a landscape of barren rock interspersed with wild flowers. Numerous cols and valleys lie ahead, climbing into the heart of the Grammoz Mountains and over the Barmash Pass at 1,159m. We will stop for lunch in the town of Ersekë, the highest city in Albania at about 1000m above sea level. Overnight at Sotirë farm, nestled in its own tranquil valley with all kinds of animals a family farm can have. After checking in one of the wooded bungalows, relax by the fish ponds with a glass of the families' special red wine made from grapes growing at 1000m of elevation.



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**Day 5: Sotire to Benje 66 km + 661 m**

A climb out from Sotirë to a high grassy plateau surrounded by soaring peaks, before reaching the source of the River Vjosa and descending through its spectacular gorge to Leskovik. The 17 kilometer long descend to Çarshovë is both a pleasure and a thrill to cycle in one of the most scenic rides of the tour. We follow the corniche route high above the river to Përmet, famed for its cuisine and strong raki. After arriving at our guesthouse for lunch, in the village of Bënjë, we will there after continue cycling for another 4 kilometer to the thermal pools of Langarica and its canyon. A 16th century ancient ottoman bridge marks the spot and the end of the road. If you feel adventurous and want to swim alone in one of the more secluded pools, built every spring by the locals, hike upriver through one of the most magnificent canyons in Europe.

**Day 6: -Benje to Gjirokaster 70 km + 427 m**

We continue along the valley towards Këlcyrë, the distant shark's tooth peaks, which guard a further gorge. Ride between them to the confluence of the Drinos, following yet another gorge. This opens out into a wide plain with the town of Gjirokastër (city of 1,000 steps) high above on the right. Gjirokastër, a 'museum' town, is perhaps the most beautiful in Albania. After checking in our hotel we will go on exploring on a guided tour, the charming cobbled alleyways between the white-walled buildings and the fascinating traditional houses of Skenduli and Zekateve. Last but not least we will visit the citadel of Gjirokaster nestled on the cliff, with its history and amazing view of the city from



**Day 7: Gjirokaster to Sarande (via Butrint) 70 km + 525 m**

We will start the day with a brief transfer, skipping some road and starting our cycling at the top of Muzina pass towards Sarandë. The gateway to southern Albania on the Ionian coast, sandwiched between the high mountains and the sea. A short ride on a rustic ferry brings us to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Butrint, one of the country's most important archaeological treasures, where the influences of various ancient people are clearly visible. After a guided tour in Butrint, we will make our way along the coast heading north with the island of Corfu always in your sight.



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**Day 8: Sarande to Himare 52 km + 1064 m**

A rollercoaster ride, we leave as the early morning mist is burnt off by the sun, climbing steeply out of Sarandë to a rocky plateau. Then it's over cols into bays and around headlands, always with the stunning mountain scenery to the right and coastal views to the left before descending to the long beach and the bay of Himarë, where there's plenty of time for a swim in the clear blue water.



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**Day 9: Himare to Vlore 64 km + 1590 m**

Today's ride is not only the most challenging but also the most spectacular in Albania. You will gradually climb from sea level up to 1,000m through forests, gorges and hairpin bends. After lunch in the beautiful national park of Llogara we will descend towards Vlorë for an afternoon's relaxation by the Ionian Sea.

**Day 10: Departure - Transfer to Tirana Airport driving 160 km (2.5 hrs)**

Farewell day. Depending on your flight, right after breakfast we will transfer for two and a half hours to Rinas airport in Tirana. A separate transfer will be offered to those staying another night in Tirana or continuing on other adventures.





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### Route



### Technical Characteristics:

**Tour Profile:** Moderate to challenging. All the roads except for big cities are free of traffic and very well maintained. The drivers are patient and forgiving.

**Distance:** 485 km / 6023 m total climb

**Travel Season:** *Self-Guided Tours:* Daily arrival April – June and September – October 2018

*Guided Tours:* May 3; May 29; June 30; August 28; September 13; September 24; October 9 and October 20



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**Price per Person:**

Self-Guided Double Occupancy	€ 780.00
Guided Double Occupancy	€ 950.00
Single Supplement	€ 135.00
E-Bike Rental	€ 160.00
Transfer Airport to Tirana (1-3 pax)	€ 20.00
Transfer Airport to Tirana (4-7 pax)	€ 50.00

**Included:**

*Self-Guided Tour:*

- Hotel accommodation, double occupancy
- All Breakfasts
- All Transfers described on the tour
- Bicycle and all bike accessories
- Turn by turn description, bike computer
- Luggage transfer from hotel to hotel

*Guided Tour:*

- Accommodation for 9 nights
- All lunches and dinners
- All breakfasts
- Multilingual tour guide
- Bike rental and water bottle
- All attraction site fees
- Support van
- Snacks on the road

**Not Included:**

- Flights to/from Albania
- Drinks with meals
- Airport shuttle service
- Riding gear or helmet
- Gratuities for guides
- E-bike rental (On request)



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### Bikes



#### **Giant Roam for Men**

Size: Extra Large (58.5cm) Large (53cm)  
Medium (48cm) Small (43cm)  
ALUXX SL-Grade Aluminum, Shimano Deore  
30 speed, SR Suntour NCX-D LO 700C with  
remote lock-out, Shimano M395 hydraulic  
disc brakes.



#### **Giant Rove for Women**

Size: Large (53cm) Medium (47cm) Small  
(42cm) XSmall (37cm)  
ALUXX SL-Grade Aluminum, Shimano Deore  
30 speed, SR Suntour NCX-D LO 700C  
Shimano M446 hydraulic disc brakes, Giant  
tires P-R3, 700x23c.



#### **Giant Anyroad**

Size: Extra Large (55.5cm) Large (52.5cm)  
MLarge (50.5cm) Medium (47.5cm) Small  
(46.5)  
ALUXX-Grade Aluminum, Shimano FD/RD,  
SRAM BB7 Road hydraulic disc brakes  
Shimano CS-HG62-10 11-34, 10-sp, Shimano  
FC-R460, 34/48



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#### **Giant Explore E+ - E-Bike for Men**

Size: Extra Large (55.5cm) Large (52.5cm)  
Large (50.5cm)

ALUXX-Grade Aluminum, SR Suntour NEX  
Hydraulik-Lockout, 180/160mm hydraulic  
disc brakes GIANT EnergyPakF Lithium-Ion  
battery pack, 36V-11.36Ah (409Wh)



#### **Giant Explore E+ | E-Bike for Women**

Size: Large (52.5cm) Medium (47.5cm) Small  
(46.5)

ALUXX-Grade Aluminum, SR Suntour NEX  
Hydraulik-Lockout, 180/160mm hydraulic  
disc brakes GIANT EnergyPakF Lithium-Ion  
battery pack, 36V-11.36Ah (409Wh)

*Assisting people in realizing their touring dreams worldwide is our passion.*

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**THIS IS A PARTNER TOUR FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT**  
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