“In Your Pocket: A cheeky, well-written series of guidebooks.”

The New York Times
Located amidst government buildings and embassies in the heart of Tirana, this new complex is the capital’s only 5-star hotel and the unrivalled choice for international travelers and impeccable business events. Shops, bars and restaurants await you right outside in the Sheraton Plaza Shopping Mall, just moments from your room.

- 151 rooms, including 95 deluxe rooms, 55 suites and the Presidential Suite
- 50 Club rooms with exclusive access to the Club Lounge
- “Metropolitan” Restaurant offering Albanian and international cuisine
- “Infinity” Bar & Terrace
- Function rooms for over 500 guests
- Indoor and outdoor swimming pools
- Health club with fitness centre and sauna
- Shopping Mall with a variety of shops & cafés and a cinema
- “Il Pomodoro” Food Court located in the Shopping Mall

Sheshi Italia, Tirana, Albania
Tel: +355 42 274707
Fax: +355 42 274711
reservations.tirana@sheraton.com
www.sheraton.com/tirana
For once, Albania made all the right headlines in 2009. Foreign tourism boomed as backpackers and increasing numbers of cultural travellers discovered the country, and business was not as bad as it could have been, with the country registering one of the few positive growth rates in Europe. On the ground in Tirana, it’s been a busy year with plenty of new restaurants and hotels opening up, all of them reviewed in this new edition. Tirana In Your Pocket enjoyed growing popularity in 2009 too, and we’ve fattened the guide by 12 pages this issue.

One exciting new story regards the building of the much-discussed Tirana Rocks project, several large blocks seemingly dropped on the lakeside in the city centre, which may well come to define Tirana’s new look (if they don’t run out of money first). See page 58 for the details.

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By plane
Tirana’s gleaming Nënë Tereza (Mother Teresa) airport, 17km northwest of Tirana, is a 30-45 minute drive from the city centre. Besides 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 publication house or reproduced. 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 hourly 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, Durres and Pogradec will find themselves deposited at Tirana’s garden shed train station, at the northern end of Bf. Zugli. 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.

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 from there you’ll need a taxi or city bus to get to the centre.

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 Kavakjia and Kapoticah crossings are open 24hrs (Qafë Doli near Kerkis and Tres Urat near Permet open till 22:00). From Macedonia, Qafë Thanë is the main crossing, though the Tushemi crossing near Pogradec is quieter, has better roads and is much cheaper. Together with the Blisace 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 Murqin.

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 Vora. Flying to Corfu and using the daily ferry to Saranda or the summertime hydrofoils to Saranda/Drinara is often the cheapest way to get to the centre.

Others about TIYP
“... by far the best coverage of Sofia, Belgrade and Tirana...”
“... the most comprehensive source of information about the Albanian capital that you’re likely to come across...”
Balkanology.com, 2008
“... a full overview of sights, hotels, drinking and eating venues in and around Tirana...”
Doing Business In Tirana, Tirana municipality, 2008
“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 Simic, 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
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.

Body language and sounds
Albanians, like Bulgarians, Turks, Indians and a handful of others, shake (or perhaps wobble) their heads to mean ‘yes’ and nod (or rather jerk the head backwards while emitting a bold cluck) to mean ‘no’. Every time you see it done, it’s a pleasant little culture shock. To attract attention, Albanians cluck, hiss, or in more desperate cases honk madly.

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 visited by a friendly dog or cat. 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 wand’er about until 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 shit. Bring a torch as even in cities it can be pitch dark at night away from the main streets.

Money
The Albanian currency is the lek (plural leke). The exchange rate is: €1 = 135 lek, £1 = 153 lek, US$1 = 95 lek (December 2009), going down by 10% on the euro and dollar in 2009 after years of stability. 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. If payment in foreign currency is possible, it usually means you’re getting a bad rate (sometimes 100 lek for €1) so don’t fail for it. 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.

Visas & Passports
Citizens of the EU, most other European countries, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Japan can enter Albania without a visa. Other travelers 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 six months after departing Albania. EU citizens may enter using an ID card though we suggest still taking your passport anyway as airlines and officials are all too quickly confused.
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. Uprising break out over taxation policy in the 1840s. After Russia defeats the Ottoman Empire, the Prizren League is founded in 1878 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 recognizes it 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 abort 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.

1951

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 outlaw religion and closes all 2189 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 Communist Party head Enver Hoxha dies on April 11, 1985.

1991

In February, students at Enver Hoxha University launch a strike, demanding reforms; weeks of protests culminate in the toppling of Enver Hoxha in Skenderbeg 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 commandeer ships. An estimated 100,000 Albanians had fled the country in the previous 12 months.

1992

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

1999

In response toSerb attacks on ethnic Albanians in Kosovo, NATO launches an air war on Yugoslavia on March 24. 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 Fushë-Krujë.

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

April – Albania joins NATO. June – Berisha’s Democratic Party of Albania wins the tight-fought national elections, but does not succeed in getting a majority, requiring a coalition with the Socialist Movement for Integration party. The elections are at first declared to have been fair but soon many irregularities emerge. A political stalemate ensues when the opposition Socialist Party boycotts parliament after a ballot recount is refused.

July – Prime Minister Berisha announces that gay marriages will be legalised in Albania, to the delight of the much-disenfranchised LGBT community and to the outrage of religious leaders. The EU announces there will be no visa-free travel for Albanians due to the slow implementation of biometric passports; the shamed government promises results within a year.

December – The political stalemate between the Democratic and Socialist Parties continues and starts to harm the country’s progress in reforms and EU admission negotiations. Other European countries urge the hard-headed parties to reach a compromise.

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

Cinemas

Academy of Film & Multimedia Marubi Rr. Aleksander 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 Manush photograph family, has a cinema with free screenings of foreign movies every Thursday at 19:00 during university term. All are welcome. 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.


Millennium Cinema F-5, Rr. Murat Toprani, Pallati I Pionierit, tel. +355 4 225 36 54, +355 69 204 42 37, 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, 20:00 and 23:00. One fine day, Millennium 1 will reopen in a new building in the city centre. Tickets 200-500 lek.

Cultural centres


British Council I-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, pall. 197, tel. +355 4 228 08 56, www.britishcouncil.org.al. Rent or view books, audio-tapes, and videos (classics and recent blockbusters) or browse teaching materials. Open 10:00 - 18:00, Closed Sat, Sun.

Goethe-Institut H/I-6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 222 20 17. The German cultural centre has a reading room with textbooks and literature inside the National Library. Institute Européen de Culture (Italian Institute of Culture) H-6, Rr. Pjeter Budi 74, tel. +355 4 237 95 79, www.licitrana.esteri.it. Promotes Italian culture and language with cultural events and language courses. Open 09:00 - 14:00, 14:30-16:45, Closed Sat, Sun.

USIS (United States Information Service) H-4, 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.

Theatres

Metropolitan Center (Cultural Center of Tirana) E-4, Rr. Der Gjo Luli, tel. +355 4 225 75 28, q.metropolitan@gmail.com. A cultural centre that hosts regular performances by the Tirana City Band, the Spekter children’s folklore group, the Metropolitan Theatre group (teatre i Metropolit) and the Tirana Circus.

National Theatre (Teatri Kombëtar) F-4, Rr. Sermëdin Said Tapotit, tel. +355 4 222 89 33. This is Tirana’s oldest theatre, built in 1940 to honor 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.

Ticket office open 09:00-13:00, 15:00-19:00.


www.britishcouncil.org.al

www.afmm.edu.al

www.imperialcinemas.com

Reservations at: 04 22 53 654

www.ida-millennium.com

Address: Kruga Murat Toprani, Kompleksi Millennium

Open 08:00 - 14:00, Closed Sat, Sun.

www.ida-millennium.com
Albania’s rich and varied cultural heritage is perhaps best demonstrated by the incredible range of traditional clothing. For many centuries, the Albanians’ clothing allowed strangers to learn all kinds of things about them at a single glance: region of origin, marital status, the family’s wealth and standing, ethnicity, age, and more. During religious, social, and other special occasions, clothing was a kind of passport, and within Albania there are about 300 different traditional costumes, each linked to a specific area or even village.

Clothes were made by specialised craftsmen and women with cotton, wool and imported silk, and decorated with traditional embroidery symbols, themes like the Albanian eagle, natural scenes and patterns, incorporating gold and silver thread and small river pearls. Curiously, embroidery was a craft that was only done by men. Styles and fashions changed over the years as new materials and trends emerged, but the distinct regional variety remained. The artisans were so famed that Albania became a centre of old trade routes between west and east, local craftsmen and within Albania there are about 300 different traditional costumes, each linked to a specific area or even village.

As the use of traditional clothing waned in the 20th century, the cultural and also the real value of these items was made aware of the importance of preserving old traditional wear. A recent law prohibiting the export of items older than 50 years from Albania has ironically increased the illegal and unprofessional export of antiques and traditional clothing, leading to identity mix-ups with some Albanian traditional clothing being exhibited abroad as being from other countries in the region.

Linda Spahiu Collection

Linda and her son Luris are perhaps Tirana’s most fervent collectors and restorers of traditional Albanian costumes; they even sold the family house and moved into arented apartment to be able to purchase more clothes. Although they do not have a permanent exhibition space yet, they are happy to show their collection and sell some items to interested visitors; the photos on this page are from some of their top pieces, which include waistcoats, heavy woolen embroidered xhubleta skirts, and delicate tabecloteks. Visits to their home and storage space along the road to Elbasan can be booked via tel. +355 68 304 26 64/+355 68 212 10 08 or atelinelinda@hotmail.com; Linda speaks English and French. Take a taxi or bus to the first roundabout after the Martyrs’ Cemetery and you’ll be there. There’s no admission fee, but donations to help upkeep the collection are welcome.

Albania has huge costume collections, the National Museum alone has 30,000 artefacts, but only a small amount is exhibited. Places to view costumes, apart from Tirana’s National Museum and Spahiu Collection, include the Ethnographic Museums of Shkodra, Berat and Gjirokastra and the Tradita G&T guesthouse in Shkodra, though unfortunately the museum displays are often dull, with little in the way of explanations. Thankfully, costumes are attracting more and more local and international interest, and both private and state collections are increasingly accessible.

Meet the receptionist

Together with Tirana In Your Pocket, the hotel’s city receptionists are an important source of information for travellers and effectively ambassadors for their country. Good receptionists will be able to give you reliable restaurant, sightseeing and activity tips. With this series of interviews, Tirana In Your Pocket introduces you to the city’s most important receptionists. In this issue, we speak to Gid Shaqiri, Front Office Coordinator at the Rogner Hotel Europapark in Tirana. Mr. Shaqiri was working in a smaller hotel until he joined the Rogner’s front desk team in 2003.

This makes our hotel special… The professional service, unique atmosphere and the central location. And also our beautiful Mediterranean garden with pool of course.

Special guests’ requests… We don’t have too many strange requests, though once a guest arrived with all of her eight cats.

Special restaurants I recommend… I like to send guests to Villa Logoreci or Mama Rosa for Italian food, or to Sofra e Ariut for Albanian dishes.

Special sights I recommend… I send guests to the National Museum, up to Dajti Mountain, and to Petrole Castle.

Tirana In Your Pocket… is very helpful to us as there is a lot of complex and well-arranged information for tourists and business people.
Chateau Linza Qesarakë, Linza, Komuna e Dajtit, tel. +355 69 203 00 03/+355 69 203 00 09, ada@chateau-linzahotel.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).

Diplomat F-1, Rr. Muhamet Gjollesha 5, tel. +355 4 223 31 31/+355 4 225 84 68, fax +355 4 223 07 49, diplomat@icc-al.org, www.hoteldiplomathy.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).

Diplomat Fashion Rr. Irfan Tomini, tel. +355 4 223 50 90/+355 4 223 72 19, fax +355 4 223 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.

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).

MonarC F-5, Blv. Zhan D’Ark, tel. +355 4 227 45 11, fax +355 4 227 45 00, info@monarc.al, www.monarc.al. The MonarC is a classic-looking yellow building on a busy crossing in the centre, overlooking the Lana river. With only 12 rooms, ample attention has been made to details, and the interiors are characterised by sleek dark design and the suites come with particularly classy Jacuzzis. Despite double glazing, street noise is an issue in some rooms, and there’s no parking on-site. Head to the top floor for the bar with a waterfall and 360 degree city views.

Mondial F-1, Rr. Muhamet Gjollesha, 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 €100-120, suites €130).

Tirana International E-4, Sheshi Skenderbej 8, tel. +355 4 223 41 88, fax +355 4 223 41 88, hotel@hotel tirana.com.al, www.hotel tirana.com.al. 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.

Pleasant with exquisite service, centrally located, close to the main Boulevard, the Government House and the embassy of Italy. Free Internet access, breakfast included, good price.

Rruga Ismail Qemali, Nr8/1
Tirana, Albania
Tel-Fax: +355 4 224 77 99
www.hotelcitytirana.com
Villa 3 G-8, Rr. Gjon Pali II, N°3, tel. +355 4 226 65 82, +355 69 206 57 08, villa_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 wi-fi, 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 €100, 2 suites €130).  

Mid-range

Good value doubles from between €50-90.

Broadway H-3, Rr. Emil Duraku 8, tel. +355 4 224 46 19, fax +355 4 224 39 67, broadway@icc-al.org, www.hotel-broadway-al.com. Next to the Seinan Stermesi stadium and within an easy walking distance of the bllok area, the large Broadway hotel has a Vegas thing going on. A glass lift whisk you up to the fifth floor, the owner's favourite. 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 €100).  

California E-3, Rr. Mihal Duri 2/1, tel. +355 4 225 31 91, fax +355 4 225 31 92, california@albaniaonline.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@hoteltirana.tirana, www.hotelcitytirana.al. 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 are offered by the elegant photos of cities around the world that decorate the rooms and halls. Ask for the larger top-floor rooms unfortunately only on the two lowest floors of the Sky Tower building. TIYP was given a pre-opening tour and photographed for this week's issue of In Your Pocket, tirana.inyourpocket.com. 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. > 15 rooms (singles €32 €60, doubles €75).  

Doro City D-1, Rr. Muhamet Goljessa, 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).  

New hotel on the bllok

Sky Hotel G/H-4, Rr. Deshmoret e 4 Shkurtit N°5/1, tel. +355 4 241 99 95, fax +355 4 224 06 86, skyhotel@tirana.yahoo.com. Opened just as this guide went to print, this is Tirana's latest stylish business hotel with rooms unfortunately only on the two lowest floors of the Sky Tower building. TIYP was given a pre-opening tour and although the view is not panoramic, the rooms are decorated in black and dark purple with touches of gold. Breakfast is served in the top-floor Sky Club. > 33 rooms (2 singles €50, 24 doubles €90-110, 4 triples €118, 3 suites €130-150).  

Eder F-2, Rr. e Kavajes, tel./fax +355 4 223 91 70, tel. +355 68 24 63 23, info@ederhotel.com, www.ederhotel.com. A small hotel with just five rooms of varying styles, well-equipped for travelers 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 (singles €40, 2 doubles €50).  

Elysée H-5/6, Rr. Themistokli Gjemeni 2/173, tel. +355 4 222 28 80, fax +355 4 224 86 92, info@hoteleysee-al.com, www.hoteleysee-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 €100).  

Europa F-3/4, Rr. Myslym Shyri, tel./fax +355 4 227 47 41, tel. +355 4 222 38 76, info@hotel-europa-al, www.hotel-europa.al. Just a short crawl from Rina Park in the centre of town but hidden in a courtyard away from traffic noise, the Europa has small, balconied rooms and good facilities for business travellers. Free guarded parking too. > 18 rooms (3 singles €35, 13 doubles €50-60, 2 suites €70-80).  

Ferrari B-2, Rr. Don Bosko, tel. +355 4 235 64 02/+355 69 257 81 72. This unprepossessing but comfortable four-story 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).  

Firenze D-4, Blv. Zogu I 172, tel. +355 4 224 90 99, fax +355 4 227 20 77, firenzehotel@albmail.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 cafe terrace too. It's located along Kruja Elbasani, 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 (singles €58-68, doubles €79, triples €90).  

Kruja D-3, Rr. Mine Peza, tel. +355 4 223 81 06, fax +355 4 223 81 08, reservations@hotelskruja.com, www.hotelskruja.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 cafe outside. > 18 rooms (singles €35, doubles €50, apartment €75).  

Lugano E-3, Rr. Mihal Duri 34, tel. +355 4 222 20 23/+355 68 203 15 23, luganohotel@yahoo.com. A small and warm hotel in the very centre of town. All rooms have a quality, florid bathroom and a balcony overlooking the quiet street. > 8 rooms (singles €40, doubles €50).
Miniri E-4, Rr. Dibërës 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 €50, doubles €50-80, triples €100).

Nirvana E-3, Rr. Kavajës 96/2, tel. +355 4 223 52 70, 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. ▶ 17 rooms (singles €50, doubles €80, suites €120).

Nobel E-4, Blv. Zogu I, tel. +355 4 225 64 44/+355 69 202 07 57, reservations@hotelnobeltirana.com, www.hotelnobeltirana.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).


Stela C-5, Rr. Dibërës, tel./fax +355 4 223 55 67. With its white tile floors and large bathrooms, Stela seems a good choice. However, the rooms have thin rugs and small towels, and the rooms face a noisy street. All rooms are equipped with TV and minibars, as well as tacky artificial flowers. ▶ 9 rooms (6 singles €40, 3 doubles €60).

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 €65-100).

Victoria C-5, Rr. Dibërës 445, tel./fax +355 4 236 15 94, hotel.victoria@interalb.net. The modern Victoria, and its pizzeria, is run by a family who spent several years in Italy, and has pleasant if somewhat chintzy rooms. The reception can be found upstairs beyond the restaurant. ▶ 10 rooms (singles €50, doubles €70).

Vila Belvedere F-5, Rr. Murat Topani 25, tel. +355 4 225 19 35, vilabelvedere@albcomport.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 €30, doubles €60).

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.
Where to Stay

Airport Hotels

Hotel Airport Tirana Rinas, tel. +355 4 830 01 90, hotelairporttirana@live.com, www.hotelairporttirana.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 €60, 26 doubles €90, 2 apartments €150).

Verzaci Rinas, tel. +355 68 200 63 63. A basic, friendly hotel just metres from the airport arrivals hall. Look for the blue-glass building with the German flag on top. No luxury or soundproofing, but at least there are smiles all round. » 7 rooms (singles/doubles €40).

Vila Aeroport Rinas, tel. +355 68 207 70 98. The coolest airport hotel you’ve seen in your life is right here in Tirana. Modelled after a big silver plane and expected to open sometime in 2010, it’s parked along the road from the airport to the north. Until it opens, you’ll have to make do with the adjacent Dallas-meets-Dracula ranch with a decent restaurant, a small disco and some large rooms (6 doubles €80, 6 suites €100).

Vila Park K-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e Shqipërisë, Grand Park, Kudrat e Fëmijëve, tel. +355 4 225 66 97, fax +355 4 225 66 84, info@villaparkhotel.com, www.villaparkhotel.com. Tirana’s most tranquil hotel is set 100 metres inside the Grand Park, where the modernistic rooms of Vila Park with their balconies overlook people strolling amongst the trees. There’s a top-class gym and sauna in the adjoining building that guests can use for a €15 per day. Car access is restricted during daytime. » 12 rooms (6 doubles €80, 6 singles €100).

Vila Tafaj D-3, Rr. Mine Peza 86, tel. +355 4 222 75 81, +355 4 222 42 80, fax +355 4 222 59 56, vila@villatagas@yahoo.com, www.villatagas.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).

Meg Klaus D-3, Rr. Asim Vokshi 141, tel. +355 4 223 92 14, fax +355 4 223 92 36. A decent budget hotel near the city centre, hidden from the street in a courtyard and far from any traffic noise. Simple, cheap rooms and a café downstairs. » 11 rooms (singles €30, doubles €40, triples €50).

Ambassador D-5, Rr. Isa Boletini 36, Selvica, tel. +355 68 229 13 89. Near the market and only a ten-minute walk from the centre, the Ambassador is a simple, quiet place off the main road. The rooms are decent enough for the price and have TVs. » 12 rooms (singles €25, doubles €30).

Areatia C-4, Rr. Mahmut Fortuzi, tel. +355 4 222 65 79, fax +355 4 222 56 13, hoteliareala@yahoo.com, www. arealai50.com. A very pleasant and well-situated place on a residential road near the train station, the Areatia 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 €30, doubles €40, triples €60).

Briker D-4/5, Rr. Barrakadave 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 €40, doubles €60, triples €80).

Guva e Qetë F-5, Rr. Murat Topan, tel. +355 4 233 54 91, +355 68 270 79 01, kllidbalkan@albaniaonline.net. Small, simple, clean and quiet rooms with fridge, en suite bathrooms and TVs in a dead-central location. Amusingly, when we visited, the concierge was too drunk to even walk to the front desk, so we just grabbed some room keys to explore the place ourselves. » 12 rooms (doubles €35).

Xhokhu E-5, Rr. Gjevala Stafa 391, tel./fax +355 4 236 05 47. 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. Taxes to the centre are provided free. So are coffee and tea. The breakfast buffet features fresh fruit and pastries. » 11 rooms (6 singles and 5 doubles €30).

Kalaja F-5, Rr. Murat Topani 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. » 10 rooms (singles €30, doubles €40, triples €50).

Fortress. 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. Taxes to the centre are provided free. So are coffee and tea. The breakfast buffet features fresh fruit and pastries. » 11 rooms (6 singles and 5 doubles €30).

Budget

Why pay more, indeed? Double rooms from €25-50. 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.

Alpin C-5, Rr. Sihid Kodra, tel. +355 4 222 10 84, +355 69 406 02 88. Double rooms with small bathrooms (shower only) and balconies along a busy road. Some English is spoken at the reception. » 7 rooms (doubles €30).

Pipe Loti G-6, Rr. Mihal Grameno, tel./fax +355 4 223 51 55. Excellent service, relaxation and comfort can all be found at Vila 3, set in a safe location in central Tirana, the hotel dates from King Zog’s era (1929-1934) and is near to offices, embassies, consulates and governmental institutions.

The Vila 3 hotel has five rooms and two suites, nicely decorated in Western style with a luxurious and modern atmosphere. Rooms have optional matrimonial beds, air conditioning, minibar, satellite TV, telephone services and a wireless internet connection. Rooms service from our restaurant is available. We accept Visa and Mastercard.

The Vila 3 restaurant is well known for the delicious traditional Albanian and Italian dishes, and pizzas from our wood burning oven are served in relaxing and contemporary surroundings with a traditional touch. The bar offers exotic cocktails served according to your preferences.

The historical location, excellent and fast service, quality and safe environment of Vila 3 will be sure to make your stay in Tirana a pleasant one, and we guarantee to provide for every need you may have – your satisfaction is our only goal!

We look forward to greeting you in Vila 3.

Address: Kr. Leke Dukagjini 3, Tirane, Albania
Tel/fax: +355 04 266 58 2. Mobile: +355 69 2065 708
Email: vila_3@yahoo.com
Savana I-6, Rr. Derivsh Hima 38, tel. +355 68 207 70 69, tilla_88@hotmail.com. Basic and cheap rooms with small en suite bathrooms set above a smoky café. Good value for money if you’re only interested in the nearby bars and restaurants or an early morning bus to southern Albania. ▶ 5 rooms (single, double €25).  

Cheap

The pits - less than €25 for a sagging double.

Dafina C-4, Rr. Papa Kristo Negovani 42, tel. +355 4 223 07 77. On a side street halfway the centre and the train station, the Dafina has a handful of simple and quiet rooms. ▶ 7 rooms (single €6, double €20).  

Republica C-5, Blv. Zog I, 66, tel. +355 4 224 24 00, fax +355 4 222 50 14, republikahotel@yahoo.it. On Tirana’s busy boulevard, the Republica 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. ▶ 16 rooms (doubles €20-30, triples €30).  

Vila Verde B-4, Rr. Karl Gega, tel. +355 4 224 82 32/+355 69 230 81 11. 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 (single €10, double €20).  

Guesthouses & Apartments

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

Albaniantrip D-4, Rr. Bardhok Billa 73/1, N°7, tel. +355 68 40 58 529/+355 69 22 63 333, 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. ▶ 4 apartments (single use €20, €5 per additional person).  

Bujtina Shqiptare D-3, Rr. Sulejman Pasha, tel. +355 4 222 04 33/+355 68 219 69 03, bujtinasqiptare1@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. ▶ 8 rooms (single €12, doubles €16, triples €25).  

Endri H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, Pall. 27, Sh. 3, Ap. 30, tel. +355 4 224 41 68/+355 69 227 25 22. Endri consists of a large first floor apartment with rooms for rent, run by a friendly couple who live in the apartment next door. You have your own bathroom, either inside the room or just outside the hall, and cable TV. Limited English is spoken; bring hands and feet. ▶ Double rooms €25.  

Pension Andrea F-5, Rr. Jeronim de Rada 103, tel. +355 4 225 69 47/+355 69 209 49 15, pensionandrea@gmail.com. Four basic rooms with TV, a/c and private bathrooms come with a lovely landlady, Xhina Balo, who speaks some English. To find the unmarked pension, turn down the alley next to the Bilirani hotel; it’s the third door on the right. ▶ 4 rooms (single €20, doubles €30).  

Pension Strazimi Rr. Ali Demi, pall. 141, shk. 3, apt. 23, tel. +355 4 237 21 02/+355 69 333 83 41. The home of Xhetan and Melihat Strazimi has three basic but clean rooms with shared bathrooms. The Strazims like to lock the door by midnight, so it’s no good for party animals, but a welcoming option for budget travellers. Rr. Ali Demi is just east of the centre, off Blv. Bajram Curri, on the Uzina bus line. ▶ 3 rooms (single €5, doubles €10).  

Stephen Center B&B E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tashim 1, tel./fax +355 4 225 39 24, stephencenter@stephencenter.com, www.stephencenter.com. The ‘Christian environment’ provided in the cozy 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 (single €30, doubles €40).  

UAW Guesthouse E-2, Rr. Naim Frashëri 6, tel. +355 4 222 30 01, sevim@icc-al.org, www.uaw-al.com. One for the ladies, this. On the top floor of the ‘Useful to Albanian Women’ NGO office building, two basic rooms and a kitchenette are available for travellers. Breakfast is available at the café on the groundfloor of the villa. ▶ 2 rooms (1 single €30, 1 double €60).  

Vesa Residence I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, Vesa Center, tel. +355 4 227 88 16, artel@icc-al.org, www.vesacen-ter.com. Comfortable two-bedroom apartments sleeping up to four or five people, and equipped with a full kitchen. ▶ 7 rooms (doubles €60).  

Guantanamo refugees

What do five Uighur muslims (from China’s Xinjiang region), one Egyptian, one Algerian and an Uzbek have in common? These eight men all were found to be innocent after years in the Guantanamo Bay camp... and ended up in Albania. With no country that participated in the Afghanistan war willing to take these men in at the time, and the US refusing to send them back to their home countries, Albania was the only country in the world that agreed to give them asylum. Abu Bekir - who works at the Vlaznia restaurant on Rruga Kavajës - is one of the better-known new arrivees, his story of imprisonment by various governments having been reported in newspa-pers worldwide. Although he has not seen his wife and children for a decade, he’s here to stay and hopes to open his own pizzeria. We’ll be the first to review it.

Hostels

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

Freddy’s Hostel E-4, Rr. Bardhok Billa 75, tel. +355 4 226 60 77/+355 68 203 52 61, alfredsaliku@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 a brand new building. All rooms have cable TV and a/c,........
and some also have balconies. Sheets and towels are changed daily too - it’s like you never left your room. ★ 18 rooms (£12-16 per bed). Simple breakfast included for the €14+ beds. ★

Tirana Backpacker Hostel 1 F-5/6, Rr. Elbasani 85, tel. +355 68 216 73 57, 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, iron, free linen and towels - the downside is the traffic noise. One block east of the Rogner Hotel, at the end of Rruga Ismail Qemali. A nearby apartment is available for longer stays. ★ 5 rooms (1 double, 4 dorms with 5-6 beds €12/person). ★

Tirana Backpacker Hostel 2 F-2, Rr. Kavajës 175, tel. +355 68 216 73 57. The people behind TBH1 have found another charming villa and have turned it into a buzzing hostel. A great opportunity for getting drunk with stranglers, right safaris and outdoor adventures. The hostel has 23 beds, a nice garden, internet and washing machines. Find TBH2 in the alley behind Sofra restaurant, opposite the VW hostel, with ample opportunity for getting drunk with stranglers.

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.★

A large, modern complex on the flanks of Mount Dajti, directly to the east of the city. Many modern hotels and popular restaurants can be found here, though keeping 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.

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RESTAURANTS

Viva H-4, Rr. Pjetër Bogdani, tel. +355 4 224 63 76. Here’s a simple, central, home cooking restaurant that pleases all with good cooking and friendly service. For something local, order the tave dheu (270 lek), an oven dish with meat and cheese, or try the ethnic version, tava kosi (280 lek) that’s with yoghurt. It’s all good. Open 08:30 - 23:00.

Asian
Da Shang Hai I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, 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 an small alley. Open 12:00 - 23:00.

For East H-5, Rr. Asim Zeneli 6, tel. +355 4 227 59 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. (800-1300 lek).

Mimi I-5, Rr. Dervish Him, tel. +355 4 226 99 47. An unusually named Chinese restaurant. There’s friendly service and a full range of chicken, pork, noodle and beef standards. The seafood specialities include calamari and shrimps. Home delivery, too. Open 08:00 - 22:00.

Shang Hai F-5, Rr. Murat Topnati, tel. +355 4 225 70 12. A 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 Mikrolimanes hotel. The menu has a dazzling 126 options (plus a set of Albanian choices to lure insecure locals inside), all available in the dining hall, on the terrace or for take-away. The set menus with 5-8 dishes are good value. Open 11:00 - 23:00.

Fast food & Snacks
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. Tirana’s other popular fast-food chain. Non-stop burgers, chips and pizza. Open 24hrs.

Il Pomodor 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 a faux Parisian café with mirrors and oozing red colours ev-patisserie at the front flogging bread and cakes, and behind it aSpecies menu of mega burgers and huge four-person supersize Superkiders (named after the national hero) and ‘Big Supreme’ menus (420 lek) on the menu here. The main outlet is a tropical paradise wedged behind the colonade at the Southern end of the boulevard. Open 08:00 - 24:00. Also at (G-6) Blv. Bajram Curri.

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 cheerful and cheerful dining section or take it away to smear grease all over your face elsewhere. Open 09:00 - 24:00. (150 lek).

French
Patisserie Francaise G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, 1. A French-owned culinary amalgamation with a patisserie at the front flogging bread and cakes, and behind it a faus Parisian café with mirrors and oozing red colours everywhere. Light lunch or supper accompanied by red wine here is highly recommended. TIP readers recommend the Paris Brest cake. Open 08:30 - 22:00, (500-1500 lek).

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 mouth-watering Italian food. Open 11:00 - 23:30. (500-700 lek).

King House I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 4 225 55 59. 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 Tirana expat meeting. Meet near the Xhelo Imperial hotel. Open 07:00 - 24:00. (550-1280 lek).

Drink
Pavlova Café, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 4 222 00 20. A charming rural-style restaurant in the big city. This converted house has rustic seating inside, wooden ceilings on the first floor and the small hamam. Unfortunately the food is nothing special. Strictly for drinks and in summer tables below the vines in the shady courtyard.

Vila 31 E-2, Rr. Gjon Muzaka 31, tel. +355 4 227 81 20. With a nicely low-key decor of traditional art and costume, Serenata is the home of dishes from the southern Devoll region, centred on the town of Korça, which is of course famous for its serenades and spicy, saucy and full fat food. Try lakvci, a flat pancake 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. (600 lek).

Serenata E-3, Rr. Mihal Duri 22, tel. +355 4 273 08 89. With a nicely low-key decor of traditional art and costume, Serenata is the home of dishes from the southern Devoll region, centred on the town of Korça, which is of course famous for its serenades and spicy, saucy and full fat food. Try lakvci, a flat pancake 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. (600 lek).

London D-4, Blv. Zogu I, N° 51, tel. +355 4 223 88 51. 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 12:00 - 23:00. (85 lek).

Lulishit 1 Maji F/S-6, Rr. Presidenti George W. Bush, tel. +355 4 225 45 71. 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.

Royal H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers, tel. +355 4 226 03 28, restaurantroyal@gmail.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. (800-1200 lek).

Table menu

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<tr>
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<th>English</th>
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Fruits and vegetables

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Drinks

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26 RESTAURANTS

Food with a view

Ballkoni Dajti Mount Dajti, upper cable car station, tel. +355 68 401 10 21. A lovely Alpine-style wooden cabin restaurant with excellent views over Tirana and the wide surroundings. There are several rooms, though it’s worth asking for a table in the enclosed balcony room. The restaurant serves various Albanian and Italian meals, with prices reflecting the efforts needed to haul it all up the mountain. The service and mono-lingual staff requires some training, but it’s well worth visiting. » Open 12:00 - 20:00.

Sky Club G/H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit N°5, tel. +355 4 222 16 66, ext 143, skyclub@albanianline.net. Tirana’s most novel restaurant is perched on top of the 17-storey Sky Tower. A glass elevator stuck on the side of the building takes you up to the terrace from where there are tables and great views in all directions. The prices of the international dishes served here are as high as the location, but the views make up for that. One floor up, the café section has a revolving floor (see Cafés). » Open 08:00 - 23:00. (700-1200 lek). Admission 250 lek/pers for groups.

Serendipity I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, 26/1, tel. +355 4 225 93 77. A favourite among foreigners, Serendipity offers an irresistible combination of art nouveau, cocktail bars, and a range of international dishes with Albanian and Italian food, and T-bone steaks. There’s traditional and modern art on the walls, hedges seem 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 spotlighting. » Open 08:00 - 02:00. (500-1000 lek).

La Cantinella H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 69 207 00 82. Set back from the street, the courtyard of this elegant restaurant has a pleasant and quiet atmosphere, try a grilled meat or Albanian specialty. Inside, there are tables with red-cushioned seats, a pot stove, and wines displayed along the walls. » Open 12:00 - 24:00. (400-800 lek).

La Tavornette H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit. 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.

Mamma Rosa H-3, Rr. Sami Frashëri 20/1, tel. +355 69 317 70 84. Over the past year or two, this restaurant has changed name and cuisine so often that we’re always writing new reviews for it. First a Turkish place called Endery, then Anais with international food, it has now morphed into an Italian eatery with standard pastas and steak. What remains, thankfully, is the bathroom with a real bath where you can take refuge from this fast-changing city. » Open 11:00 - 24:00. (500-1000 lek).

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, Poli is a good spot for diplomats and other passers-by. Its sumptuous pizzas and seafood are conjured up by a chef who trained in Italy. » Open 08:00 - 24:00. (350-650 lek).

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. (750-1300 lek).

Vila Logoreci I/J-3, Rr. Gjon Pali II, tel. +355 4 224 21 12/+355 4 224 26 32, info@greenhouse.al, www.greenhouse.al. A 1930s villa with a quiet courtyard hidden behind high hedges seems the perfect place to have Mediterranean food here is a cut above the rest and certainly is worth trying. However, when we visited it was so busy that the waiters were stressed and unfriendly so perhaps it’s best to come early or avoid the Vila on busy nights. » Open 07:00 - 23:30. (700-1200 lek).

No menu

Italian

Casa di Pasta G-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Rinia Park, tel. +355 4 225 11 75/+355 4 225 11 78. 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 its effort is fine, the service can be numbingly slow. The huge fish salad is recommended on hot days. » Open 08:00 - 22:00.

Green House G-5, Rr. Jul Varibova 6, tel. +355 4 222 26 32, info@greenhouse.al, www.greenhouse.al. A large rustic Albanian tavern with wooden beams, medallions, and although their efforts result in fine dishes, the service can be indifferent. » Open 11:00 - 23:30. (700-1200 lek).

Serendipity I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Rinia Park, tel. +355 68 230 88 08. The newest addition to the Taiwan entertainment complex, this sleek first-floor steak restaurant is decked out with light wood and stone, has a pleasant terrace overlooking the park. The menu is full of 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 and wine to boot. » Open 12:00 - 02:00. (800 lek).

Vila Ferrand I-4, Rr. Nikola Tupe, tel. +355 4 225 04 46. A charmingly converted villa with seating indoors and on the terrace and balconies. The menu is fairly standard, with Italian influence. » Open 07:00 - 23:00. (400-800 lek).

Vila Metropolitan H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit. 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 try the ‘aphrodite salad’. Who could convince the UN and NGOs hopping the other lovely villas on this street to make way for progress? » Open 19:00 - 24:00.

Vila Amsterdam H-5, Rr. Asim Zemeli 9, tel. +355 4 226 74 39. Logically located opposite the Netherlands embassy building, this pleasant restaurant has great semi-covered terrace seating where you can plot the downfall of the Dutch government. Or perhaps just tuck into Albanian food and pizzas. » Open 07:00 - 02:00.

Seafood

Il Capriccio d’Zio Edi G-4, Blvd. Bajram Curri, Pallatet Agimi, tel. +355 4 223 33 21/+355 69 272 35 10. Beyond the unassuming facade, this basement restaurant specialising in Italian fish dishes is well worth a visit. Edi spent 15 years learning the trade in Italy before starting his own venture here, and his kitchen dishes out fantastic appetisers and tasty variations on fresh sea fish, squid, and shrimps. Find it near the corner with Rruga Vaso Pasha. » Open 07:30 - 24:00. (800-1200 lek).

Japanese

Yamato I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, QTU City mall, tel. +355 4 224 39 10. pegui’s favorite places, Yamato is a remarkable restaurant hidden, unannounced above the Euromax supermarket in the QTU City mall, that several locals have written to us to say it doesn’t exist. But it does, and serves pretty decent sushi, sashimi, tempura and teriyaki dishes - though the exact menu depends on which fish were netted that morning. Unfortunately, our experience was marred when we were left waiting while the waiters checked Facebook and played games on the restaurant PC, instead of attending to customers. » Open 12:00 - 24:00. Sun 18:00 - 23:00. (600-1800 lek).

Lebanese

1001 Netë H-5, Rr. Mustafa Matothi, tel. +355 4 225 88 60. Named after the 1001 Nights during which Scheherazade told unfinished tales to the Persian king to save herself from execution at dawn, Tirana’s first Levant-themed restaurant has silver curtains creating an intimate atmosphere around the low tables and Lebanese specialties such as tabuleh salad on the menu. Albanian and Italian dishes are available too. Opposite the Italian embassy. » Open 07:30 - 24:00. (800-1200 lek).

Castle dining

Kajalë e Petrelës (Petrel Castle) Petrole, tel. +355 4 69 208 81. 38. A fantastic setting for a very good restaurant. The Petrole 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 11:30 - 23:30. (700-1500 lek).

January - June 2010

Street views from the Nai café

Tirana In Your Pocket tirana.inyourpocket.com
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. Gjenerali Niko Pukshkini, tel. +355 4 226 66 66. These fine purveyors of Italian and Albanian specialities, 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 - 23:00.

Nena Mbretereshë Rr. Labinoti. The "Queen Mother" restaurant is a quaint wooden lodge-type building set on a hill overlooking the trees of Grand Park, near the Martyrs’ Cemetery. The terrace is great for a coffee or one of the grill or meat dishes on the menu, but foreigners sitting inside will have a hard time understanding why a restaurant in such a fine location keeps the curtains tightly closed. Open 07:00 - 23:00.

Sofra e Arit (Bear’s Lair) Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 237 29 04, www.sofraearit.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 chieftains around the lush terrace of this popular restaurant 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.

Magic Blue H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 227 35 55. A modern seafood restaurant in the blloku 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. (550-3400 lek).

Rozafa E-5, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi 2, tel. +355 4 224 86 70/355 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.

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, served in an earth-coloured space with framed bricks. The Italian-trained chef likes to experiment with weird combinations here, such as the raw fish with radish, grapes or strawberries as a starter, and potato-cake with cod and mozzarella as a main course. Ask for the six fish dish starter (900 lek) to sample various such creations, or ask for traditional grilled fish or lobster. The hot choc fondant cake is a worthy dessert. Open 11:00 - 23:00. (700-900 lek).

Swiss

Swiss Chalet H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 11, tel. +355 69 205 92 52, szekja@yahoo.it. Rather than being perched at lofty Alpine altitudes, this Swiss-themed restaurant can be found in a series of small rooms in a basement beside the Grand hotel. Decorated with old photos of quaint Helvetic towns, it’s a great place to sample various styles of molten cheese such as raclette (dripped) and fondue (dipped, 2,200 lek for two). There’s also fondue Bourguignonne, where you cook skewered bits of meat in a pot of boiling oil - smelly but good fun. Open 12:00 - 16:00, 19:00-23:00.

Turkish

Sofra F-2, Rr. Kavajes 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 pizza lahmacun, 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 nicknacks. It’s as if the Ottomans never left. Open 08:00 - 22:00.
All cafes and bars offer espresso (kafe ekspresi) or Turkish coffee (kafe turk). More upscale places will also serve American-style coffee (kafe filter). The only Starbucks-type place in town so far is Gregory’s.

**Artis Lounge H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 12, tel. +355 68 348 54 90, justfruits@hotmail.com.** A unique, bright and spacious café serving fresh fruits and juices, coffee, sweet and hearty crepes, sandwiches, pastas, salads and baguettes. Recommended for a healthy snack or lunch, though service can be tedious when it’s busy. Open 07:00 - 24:00, Sat, Sun 07:30 - 24:00.  

**Delikatesh H-5, Rr. Ismail Qemali 12, tel. +355 64 224 54 24.** Delicious home-made cakes and sweet chocolate things served in a restaurant that also has various Italian dishes on the menu. Perfect for an indulgent lunch. Open 07:00 - 23:00.  

Gregory’s Coffee H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers. A modern coffee and sandwich bar on the ground floor of the Twin Towers. Paniní fillings include omelet, chicken and cheese, and Albanian-style meatballs and cheese. Eat/drink in, or take away. Also on the Durrës highway in the Praktistik Diyar store.  

**Juna I-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit.** Sited in one of the busiest areas of town by the university bookstore, Juna is busy all day long. Could be the location, or the good fresh coffee they serve. Open 08:00 - 23:30.  

**Mojo H-5/6, Rr. Themistokli Gërmenji.** Big blurry photos and big bags tempt the scene for Mojo’s hip crowd. A bright café with exposed brick walls, serving drinks and sandwiches and toast. Mojo is officially a no-smoking café even though everyone happily ignores that. From 17:00-20:00 on weekdays, free coffee comes with the drinks. Open 07:30 - 02:00, 24 hrs.  

**Noi Café Rr. Abdyl Frashëri 5, Vesa Center, tel. +355 4 224 73 53.** Overlooking the street from the third floor of the Vesa complex, Noi is a pleasant and modern ‘gourmet café’ with an amazing range of wood-roasted single-origin and the biggest selection of single-origin and fair-trade coffee in town so far. There’s a pleasant and modern coffee bar, as after a hot summer’s day the large rooftop lounge area can be a perfect place to enjoy a cup of coffee on the rooftop. Open 07:00 - 23:30.  

**Pasticieri International H-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 6 225 67 50.** 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 pastries 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. Durrest, and Rr. Sami Frasheri.  

**Quo Vadis H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 27, tel. +355 4 226 65 90.** A popular café at the bllok’s main crossroads. The deep red walls provide the perfect backdrop for the hip, young and fashionable thirtyish crowd populating this fantastic lounge bar. As after a hot summer’s day the large rooftop lounge area can be a perfect place to enjoy a cup of coffee on the rooftop. Open 07:00 - 24:00.  

**Converse H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha.** The students, artists and intellectuals who visit this tiny basement ‘soccer club’ to sip their drinks while reciting poetry or pinning their own homemade art on the walls. The fun starts with the lively football, mixed with Salsa dancing, and ends at the bar. Open 07:00 - 03:00. Beer 100 lek.  

**Flares H-4, Rr. Brigada VIII, tel. +355 69 209 9910, nardumihono@yahoo.com.** Order a bottle of mineral water with your meal, and chances are you’ll get something 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. This all while Albania has excellent and abundant mineral water, and several good brands such as Glinë and Tepelenë are on the market. Just tip them in raising restaurant menus to have at least one water option 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.

**Bars**

**Buda Bar H-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 69 202 70 42.** There are enough Buddha Bars in the world to start a religion, this is certainly a nice addition to Tirana’s nightlife scene. A no-smoking café with ornamental Asian touches to flop around on. There’s good ventilation, Indian wooden screens, chilled-out music, and attentive staff. Open 09:00 - 01:00, Fri, Sat 09:00 - 03:00. Beer 300 lek.  

**Bulevard Café G-4/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Towers, tel. +355 4 226 03 34.** Inspired by Tirana and the letter B (note the shape of the café), the Bulevard is a great night option serving drinks to a thristy crowd on the third floor of the ABC towers. Sit at the bar and order a drink with photos of Old Tirana, or hang out in the curius booties lining the walls. Try to visit when Roberto, a talented Italian artist out for ever-increasing on weekend nights, followed by DJs. Open 07:30 - 02:00, Sun 18:00 - 02:00. Beer 300 lek.  

**Charli’s Bistro H-4, Rr. Pjeter Bogdani 36, tel. +355 69 202 29 01, www.charlsbistro.com.** A unique, bright and ultra-chic café section at the back, specialising in tea. The name originates from an Australian TV show where I come from, that’s illegal. Prej nga unë vij, kjo është jo legale. Open 08:00 - 24:00.  

**MonarC Bar F-5, , tel. +355 4 227 45 11, www.monarc.tirana.al.** Located in the same block as the steelwings biker bar, as after a hot summer’s day the large rooftop lounge area can be a perfect place to enjoy a cup of coffee on the rooftop. Open 07:00 - 24 hrs.

**Drink ujë, not agua**

Order a bottle of mineral water with your meal, and chances are you’ll get something 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. This all while Albania has excellent and abundant mineral water, and several good brands such as Glinë and Tepelenë are on the market. Just tip them in raising restaurant menus to have at least one water option 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.

**Book cafés**

**Epërmëve 6-5, Rr. Jul Varliba 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@yahoocom.** For literary nomads; a non-stop bookshop, café and reading room that has just had a recent study 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.  

**Stephen Center Café E-5/6, Rr. Hoxha Tashim 1, tel. +355 4 227 47 45, www.stephencenter.com.** Set up by evangelical missionaries who certainly know how to run a good café, this one is Tirana’s best, a cosmopolitan meet-place for locals and foreigners alike. There’s a pleasant terrace and a cozy-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).  

**Pub talk**

**Where is the nearest bar / club? Ku ndodhet klubi më i afërt?**  

- wine vinë  
- beer birrë  
- cocktail koktell  
- cigarette cigare  
- lighter mëndësh  
- ashtray tabak  
- man burr  
- woman jëfak  
- where can I find a taxi? Këtë mund ta gëjë një taksi?  
- you have beautiful eyes. Keni sëty bëlukur.  
- your place or mine? Vendi im apo I yti?  
- where do I come from? Tri i çdo ko është i cje?  
- where do I work? të nevoj të bëjë ef dhe vojë.  

**Where is the nearest railway station? Ku ndodhet stacioni e vajza?** Open 08:00 - 24:00.
Wine bars

The latest trend in Tirana; sophisticated interiors, quiet music and a good selection of wines to sample.

Alicora 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 antipasto 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.

Bonaparte G/H-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, tel. +355 69 407 47 03. The most upmarket wine bar in town can be found on the first floor here. 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 available. At 22:30 on Friday and Saturday nights, local radio stations are sold out in no time, ask to see if they’re available again. ➤ Open 21:00 - 01:00, Sun 17:00 - 01:00. Closed Sun.

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. (600-900 lek).

Wine Spirit I-3, Rr. Andon Zako Çajupi, tel. +355 4 228 01 42. Open 10:00 - 17:00, 19:00-24:00. Closed Sun. A small and friendly bar on the ground floor of a tall office building (also conveniently housing the IP 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, www.steelwings-albmc.com. 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 live rock and country music. ➤ Open 08:00 - 02:00.

Rockwood H-5, Rr. Papa Gjon Pali II, N°11/1, tel. +355 68 401 78 15. A small and friendly bar on the ground floor of a tall office building (also conveniently housing the IP offices), serving endless coffees by day and playing rock and other music styles at night. ➤ Open 08:00 - 02:00.

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.

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. ➤ Open 09:00 - 01:00. Sun 17:00 - 01:00.

Jazz Clubs

ImaginE H-6, Rr. Themistokli Gjergjmeni, 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. ➤ Open 07:00 - 24:00.

Rei Jazz Club I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri 5, Vesa Center, tel. +355 4 227 88 87. 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 whiskies 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.

Stylus Club Marriott I-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali, tel. +355 4 226 54 42. 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 (www.magic4.amg.com). The karaoke starts at 22:30.

Tiki I-4, Rr. Perfait 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 06:00 - 02:00, Fri, Sat 08:30 - 04:00.

Tirana Rock I-4, Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, tel. +355 69 260 06 57. One of Tirana’s best bars has a lot of wood, wild parties and loud rock music played every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. 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. ➤ Open 17:00 - 01:00, Fri, Sat 17:00 - 05:00.
Tirana

Essential Tirana

**Bars & Night clubs**

**Folie Bar**
- E-5, 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 raptured eardrums.

**Sharm Club**
- 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, paddled walls and ionian pillars), and playing the usual house hits to a happy crowd. Just east of the Sheraton.

**Venue Dance Club**
- 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. 

**Martyrs’ Cemetery**
- (Varrezat e Dëshmorëve) Rr. Elbasanit.
- This cemetery holds the remains of 900 partisans who fought for Tirana in WWII. The 12m-high white steeple and polular church were 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. 

**Pyramid of Tirana**
- Pyramid (International Culture Centre) G-5, Blv. Et’hem Bey Mosque.
- 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 disco (called The Mummy, of course). Currently it’s been renovated to house a theatre. 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.

**Skanderbeg Square**
- Sheshi Skënderbej E-4, Tirana’s main square, Shkënderbej, is that vast expanse of asphalt where you’ve got to dodge both Mercedez 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 Eth’em Bey Mosque and Skanderbeg’s statue.

**Museums & Galleries**

**Archaeological Museum**
- (Muzeu Arkeologjik) I-5, Sheshi Nene Tereza, tel. +355 4 223 65 41. 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.

**Art Gallery** (Galleria e Arteve) F-4/5, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombt.
- Tel. +355 4 223 39 75. Thoroughly looted in 1997, this gallery has seen a comeback since mayor Edi Rama’s election, and now hosts a varied collection that’s worth browsing through. Apart from an impressive selection of medieval icons, there’s a good hall devoted to realist socialist art, with busts, paintings and a very sexy statue of a factory worker. There are also usually a few temporary art exhibitions going on. Although the building needs some work, the garden outside has recently been beautifully restored. Walk to the rear of the building to find some discarded but still defiant Communist era partizan statues chiseling their fists at the sky. 

**Mezuraj Museum**
- Tirana’s first private museum consists of the 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 Rrafisren bank on the first floor of the tall business centre 500m from Skanderbeg Square; enter on the right side of the building. 

**National History Museum**
- The main sights 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 Eth’em Bey Mosque and the National History Museum before getting a coffee in the blok area.
Tirana's most significant buildings are concentrated along one thoroughfare: the Boulevard of the Martyrs (Bushati Dëshmorët e Kombit). The walk described below, from Skanderbeg Square to the Polytechnic University, will take you past Tirana's highlights in a flash. 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' alt敬 evening strolls. In fact, it used to be closed to traffic in evenings - what bliss that would be now. Cross the next street (Ruja Mysly Shyr) and on your left is the Fine Arts Gallery, then the National Museum. Hotel Darski on your right is Rrinas Park, which was until a few years ago buried beneath illegally built bars and pizzerias. 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 Lian 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 up-and-coming business centre in town is a small park with the busts of the three Frasheri 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. On the right is the former Party Committee building. Beyond Ruja Irama Qemali you'll pass the Hotel Rogner Europark, and a little further the Palace of Congresses, a boldly modernist building of mirrored glass and dynamic horizontal lines. Maybe it's the latter that gives the building a weird resemblance to a sports stadium. Originally built for Party congresses, the Palace now hosts concerts, festivals and fairs. On your right, honed off and concealed behind pine trees, is the President's Residence. This building was the Soviet embassy until 1963, when all diplomatic relations were broken off, and for a while thereafter it housed parliament. The disproportionate square above, the building of Sheshi Skenanderi, named for the nun who was arguably the most famous Albanian of the 20th century. This was the residential area of Party leaders. The complex, which is now a government residence. After Hoxha's death, the Enver Hoxha Museum (the pyramid) was built in his honour. And 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, and Hoxha's longstanding cult of personality was over. 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 dumped in Kombinatit Cemetery in west Tirana. A statue of Lenin once stood on Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, in front of the Fine Arts Gallery. Across the street stood a bust of Joseph Stalin - probably the last statue in Europe where he was thus honoured. Uncle Joe's head was cut away before the fall of the regime at the end of 1990, but this symbolic de-Stalinisation came too late to save the leaders. Behind the Ministry of the Interior on Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit stood the headquarters of the SIS (security police). The feared Sigurimi ran labor camps for political prisoners and maintained a network of informers (known as '80 lek', for the monthly 80 lek bonus they supposedly got for snitching on their countrymen). The Fine Arts Gallery has some Socialist Realist statues and paintings that are worth a look, and you can find some of Tirana's last statues huddled in a group behind the building. 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.

**Tirana In Your Pocket**

tirana.inyourpocket.com

tirana.inyourpocket.com
Tirana parks

Grand Park (Parku i Madh Ks) - 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 top politicians and generals came here on holidays to play and picnic (now it’s popular for people to sneeze after lunchtime, to fish, or to swim). The park is unfortunately not free of trash, and some locals still think they can drive and park their cars on the pedestrian paths, but this may change after the long-announced renovation of the park. Reach the park by walking up the path to the west of the university building; you’ll end up near Tirana Lake (romantically known by locals as ‘the artificial lake’), which has some intriguing crumbling concrete platforms sticking out of it and is surrounded by pleasant parkland and a few restaurants. Walk west and you’ll soon reach the dam; from here you’ll find Tirana Zoo and a few enterprising car wash businesses using up 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 later honored by the erection of a statue, which stands at the head of the cemetery; the sculptor, an Englishman named Green, decided to depict the Unknown Warrior as a man in warm weather and with a pipe in his hand. The statue was unveiled in 1968, exactly 500 years after Skanderbeg’s death. It has since become one of Tirana’s most recognizable landmarks and a symbol of national identity. The statue is actually one of Tirana’s best attractions. Nicknamed the ‘James Bond villain’ by locals, it’s a multi-level underground bowling alley, and a casino. The inmates are kept in a small block that is divided by a wall of 10 floors high. The prisoners are well fed and physically cared for, but the financial challenges of the institution are evident. The pen is small, featureless and clad with hospital tiles. The worst of it however is that the bars, a monkey gazing at the ceiling, his chin resting against the wall. The bedraggled golden eagles — supposedly the proud symbol of the Albanian spirit — are stuck up on a hanger. A little further into the park along the pond, the lamas don’t know how good they have it in their chalet housing, while at the back the gap in the broken fence seems an ideal escape route for the animals when the fences finally rust through. 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 more than 3m tall, roughly hewn stone monument commemorates Fan Noli (1832 - 1911), one of Albania’s most revered historical figures. Educated at Harvard, Noli was a writer and Ordox bishop. He served as prime minister in 1924. In his spare time he translated Shakespeare and Cervantes without a single error. 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 Skenderbeg. Gjergj Kastrioti (1405-68), also known as Skanderbeg in English and Shqiperi i Flamurit in Albanian, was the father of their nation, but also the man who saved all Europe from the Ottoman Empire. The statue was unveiled in 1932, 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.

Petrela Castle

tel. +355 69 208 8138. One of Albania’s best-preserved castles, Petrela Castle sits picturesquely on a steep slope overlooking a river, 13 km southeast of Tirana, along the road to Elbasan. It was built during the Ottoman period, laid out in a triangle, with round towers at the corners. The Ottomans held the castle for more than 250 years and after the Turks were expelled, Petrela was turned into a small village, never again capturing the citadel. 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 Kasrioti Museum (200 lek, open 09:00 - 13:00, 16:00 - 19:00, closed Mon), built to honor the man otherwise known as the Albanian George Bush disappearing watch act; go straight through this town and stay on the main road, twisting through the forest and Kruja town, until you see signs marking Kaje (fortress).

Kruja

Kruja, 47 km north of Tirana, is touted as a good daytrip from the capital, not only for sightseeing but also for souvenir-hunting. If you’ve already been to Berat and Gjirokaster, you’ll find Kruja’s pedestrianized central area a bit mundane. Even in the old citadel hamam (baths, now converted to a church) and the lovely Dolina teqe, a Bektashi temple building with impressive decorations. The best thing about Kruja is the castle which, despite its many years of Ottoman occupation, is still intact and offers a good view of the surrounding countryside and buildings. The castle was initially built during the Middle Ages by the Byzantines, then destroyed and rebuilt many times by the Ottoman Turks. The castle was captured by Skanderbeg and used as a fortress by the Albanian forces. It was finally conquered by the Turks in 1537, and has been in use as a fortress ever since. During the city’s cleanup, the buildings were covered in trash and debris, but it was eventually captured and used by Turkish soldiers. 

Getting to Kruja: A taxi will cost 2000 - 3000 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, you’ll be delighted to hear there are no signs at all to Kruja until just before the castle. Follow the Shkodra road and then take the second turn on your right; there is a huge sign in English and Skanderbeg in Albanian, is the only historical figure whom all Albanians agree was a national hero. He managed to create an independent Albanian princedom and keep it for 25 long years. Kruja was occupied by the Ottomans, but Skanderbeg’s legacy preserved the Albanian national identity throughout 500 years of Ottoman rule. The Ottoman Turks wanted to destroy the foundation of the nation, but also the man who saved all Europe from the Ottoman Empire. The statue was unveiled in 1932, 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.

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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 4 224 38 18, lost & found; tel. +355 69 206 66 26, www.tirana-airport.com is officially named Nënë Tereza or Mother Teresa airport, (also known as Rinas). The airport is 17km northwest of Tirana. The new access road and passenger terminal were opened in 2007 that were opened in 2007 have catapulted the airport into the 21st century, and passing through is a pleasant experience.

A taxi to the airport costs about €20, call a yellow cab/taxi (tel. +355 99 207 03 11) and pay 2000 lek, or 2500 lek at night. A trip via the airport usually takes 20 minutes. Parking at the airport is free for one hour, after which it costs 30 lek per hour and 40 lek per day for 3000 lek per week.


**Airports & Airlines**

- **Tirana Metropol E-4, Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit, Tirana, tel. +355 4 223 50 29, www.alitalia.com.**
- **Rogner Hotel Europapark, tel. +355 4 223 00 23, www.alitalia.com.**
- **Budget flights to Pristina.**
- **Jat Airways (JU),** E-3, Rr. Abdi T optani, Tirana, tel. +355 4 222 79 00, fax +355 4 227 25 39, tirana@jat.com, www.jat.com. Flights to Belgrade. Open 09:00 - 17:00, Sat 09:00 - 13:00, Closed Sun.
- **Malév (HV), Rr. Abdi T optani, Tirana, Tel. +355 4 222 79 00, fax +355 4 223 45 78, tirana@malev.hu, www.malev.com. Flights to Budapest. Open 09:00 - 17:00, Sat 09:00 - 13:00, Closed Sun.
- **Flights to Sofia.**
- **223 04 10, www.air.bg.**
- **Summertime flights to Cologne.**

### Buses

Buses despite the importance of bus travel in Albania, Tirana has only a few bus stations and most bus routes are well served by buses. The best option is to travel by bus from Kulla e Dhritës or from Laprak, one traffic light further along the Durrës highway.

### Flight schedule

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**This schedule is valid until 27 March 2020, but always check flight times before departure.**

**Airliner codes:**

- **J =** Adria Airways; **A3 =** Aegean; **L =** Albanian Airlines; **AZ =** Altis; **OS =** Austrian Airlines; **LZ =** Bela Air; **BA =** British Airways; **FB =** Bulgarian Airlines; **LH =** Lufthansa; **MA =** Malev; **OP =** Olympic Air; **TY =** Taff Air; **TK =** Turkish Airlines.

**In Your Pocket tirana.inyourpocket.com**

**Open 08:00 - 17:00, Sat 08:00 - 13:00. Closed Sun.**
**GETTING AROUND**

### 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 Abdi Frasheri. Petrol costs about 130 lek per litre, diesel 125 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. Deshmoret e Kombit, Rogner Europapark Hotel, tel. +355 4 222 78 88/+355 68 205 806, open 08:30 - 19:00, Sat, Sun 08:30 - 16:00. Closed Sun. Also at the airport, (tel. 068 20 55 807).**

**Europcar E-5, Rr. Durrësit 61, tel. +355 4 222 78 88/+355 69 203 28 75, info_ab@lumanienterprise.com, www.lumanienenterprise.com.**

**Sixt E-3, Rr. Kavajës 116, tel. +355 4 225 20 90, 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. Abdi Frashei, 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, Sun 08:00 - 13:00.

### 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.

**Furgon (minibus) schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Tirana to</th>
<th>First-last bus</th>
<th>Frequency, or times</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Price (one way)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAJRAM CURRI</td>
<td>06:00-14:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BERAT</td>
<td>06:30-18:00</td>
<td>twice hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DURRES</td>
<td>06:00-19:00</td>
<td>twice hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELBASAN</td>
<td>07:00-17:00</td>
<td>twice hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIER</td>
<td>06:00-17:00</td>
<td>twice hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GJIRKASTRA</td>
<td>05:30-18:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PESHKOPI</td>
<td>06:00-14:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POGRADEC</td>
<td>07:00-16:00</td>
<td>hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KORCA</td>
<td>07:00-18:00</td>
<td>hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KRUJA</td>
<td>07:00, 10:00, 12:00, 15:00, 18:00</td>
<td>45 min</td>
<td>150 lek</td>
<td>Zogu i Zi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERMET</td>
<td>06:30, 14:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SARANDA</td>
<td>04:00, 05:15, 07:00, 08:30, 09:30, 16:00, 22:00</td>
<td>7 hrs</td>
<td>1200 lek</td>
<td>Neshërak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHKKODRA</td>
<td>07:00-16:00</td>
<td>hourly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUKES</td>
<td>06:00-16:00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLORA</td>
<td>07:30-16:30, twice hourly</td>
<td>3 hrs</td>
<td>500 lek</td>
<td>Neshërak / 21 Dijetori</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

**International bus schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Tirana to</th>
<th>Departure</th>
<th>Arrival</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>To Tirana</th>
<th>Depart.</th>
<th>Arr.</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Interlines</th>
<th>Price (one way)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>06:30</td>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Interlines</td>
<td>Blv Zog</td>
<td>€25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04:00</td>
<td>19:00</td>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>21:00</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Interlines</td>
<td>Blv Zog</td>
<td>€25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:00</td>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>ATHENS</td>
<td>09:00</td>
<td>21:00</td>
<td>1-4</td>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>Interlines</td>
<td>Blv Zog</td>
<td>€25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 18:00         | 05:00     | PRISTINA | PRISTINA | 06:00 | 17:00   | 1234567 | Drita Museum | €35
| 18:00         | 05:00     | PRISTINA | PRISTINA | 06:00 | 17:00   | 1234567 | Drita Museum | €35
| 18:00         | 05:00     | PRISTINA | PRISTINA | 06:00 | 17:00   | 1234567 | Drita Museum | €35
| 08:00         | 19:00     | THESSALONIKI | 19:00 | 08:00 | 1234567 | Drita Museum | €35
| 18:00         | 05:00     | SKOPJE  | SKOPJE  | 08:00    | 20:00   | 1-3 | 5-6 | Interlines | Blv Zog | €25             |
| 21:00         | 05:00     | TETOVO | TETOVO | 21:00    | 05:00   | 1234567 | Drita Museum | €35

Schedule correct at time of publishing. Check all times before travelling.

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**Europcar**

**Open 08:00 - 18:00, Closed Sun.**

**Web: www.europcar.com.**

**Budget rental of Chevrolet, Opel, Hyundai and Mitsubishi cars. Small cars from €100 per weekend.**

---

**Avis Hertz**

**Open 08:30 - 19:00, Sat, Sun 08:30 - 17:00.**

**Web: www.hertz.com.**

**Budget rental of Chevrolet, Opel, Hyundai and Mitsubishi cars. Small cars from €100 per weekend.**

---

**Noshi Rent a Car**

**Open 08:00 - 17:00, Sat 08:00 - 14:00, Closed Sun.**

**Web: www.noshi.al.**

**Budget rental of Chevrolet, Opel, Hyundai and Mitsubishi cars. Small cars from €100 per weekend.**

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**Tirana Car Rentals**

**Open 08:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 16:00, Sun 08:00 - 13:00.**

**Web: www.tirana-car-rentals.com.**

**Local car rental agency with offices in various cities.**

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**Avis**

**Blvd. Deshmoret e Kombit, Hotel Europapark Hotel, Tel: +355 (0) 4 235011 / Fax: +355 (0) 4 235024**

**Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel**

**Tel: +355 (0) 4 266389 / Mob: +355 (0) 682055807**

**Mother Teresa Airport**

**Tel: +355 (0) 682058776**

**Web: www.avisalbania.com**

**E-mail: reservations@avisalbania.com**

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**Avis recommends Opel cars**
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.

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

Train schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Tirana</th>
<th>To Tirana</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dep. Arr.</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05:55</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>07:30</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>08:30</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:50</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:15</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:45</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:15</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:45</td>
<td>DURRES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taxis
Tras is a useful form of transport in Tirana, and after 22:00, they’re the only game in town. Several companies now use metres 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 lek for a ride to the outskirts). Between 22:00 and 07:00 the flagfall rates are 350 lek. Few drivers speak English, so it’s a good idea to write down the address, or to call someone who can explain.

Tirana Taxi
Tel. +355 68 212 55 75.

ATEX (Airport Express Taxi)
Tel. +355 4 223 54 98.

Online booking (in Albanian) possible.

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-S, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Hotel, Tel./Fax: +355 4 227 20 55, alexperience@albaniaonline.net, www.albania-experience.net. Guided city tours, day-trips to Apollonia, Berat, Durrës, Kruja and other destinations, and plane tickets. AE can also book top-end Tirana hotels at big discounts.

Albania Holidays

Albtours
H-4, Rr. Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit, Tel. +355 4 223 33 43, +355 4 224 52 42, albtours@albaniaonline.net. Near the Sky Tower, and also at Rr. Mine Peza 102.

Gulliver OK
D-4, Rr. Ismail Qemali 34/1, Tel. +355 4 222 76 26, +355 67 203 44 04 (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.

Maglic Tours
D-4, Blv. Zogu I, 72, Veve Business Center, Tel./Fax: +355 4 225 22 99, magic@albaniaonline.net. Also at Blv. Zogu I, Veve Center.

Outdoor Albania
H-5/6, Rr. Elbasani 85, Tirana Backpacker Hostel, 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, mountaincising, 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.

Tourist information

In 2009, Tirana went from zero to two tourism information centres.

TIA Tourist Information Point
TIA, Tel. +355 4 224 39 80, www.tirana-airport.com. A handy tourist information kiosk in 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, info@outdooralbania.com, www.albaniantourism.com. The city’s tourist information centre is right behind the National Museum. Drop by to get information about Tirana and copies of Tirana In Your Pocket.

Travel terms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Albanian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aeroplane</td>
<td>avion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ferry</td>
<td>trajet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>airport</td>
<td>aeroport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>car</td>
<td>veture, makinë</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>train</td>
<td>tren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bus</td>
<td>autobus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>station (bus)</td>
<td>stacion (tren, autobus)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>is it far?</td>
<td>A distel larg?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>left</td>
<td>majtas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>right</td>
<td>djëfhas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>where am I?</td>
<td>ku jam?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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

cç as in church

dh as in that

e as in set

eë as in term

gj as in dodge

g as in machine

Il as in year

Il as in still

nj 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? Çfare?

I have... Kam...

I am... Jam...

What’s your name? Si quheni?

My name is... Quhem...

I’m from... Uë jam nga...

...UK ...Anglia

...USA ...Amerika

...Germany ...Germania

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?

**Signs**

Open Hapur

Closed Mbyllur

Entrance Hiri

Exit Daje

Push Shtyj

Pull Terheq

**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 pestëdhjetë

100 njëqind

1000 njëmijë

**Days**

Monday E Hënë

Tuesday E Martë

Wednesday E Merkuri

Thursday E Enjte

Friday E Premte

Saturday E Shtunë

Sunday E Dielë

**Months**

January Janar

February Shkurt

March Mars

April Prill

May Maj

June Qershor

July Korrik

August Gusht

September Shimiter

October Teter

November Nëntor

December Dhjetor

**Time**

Now Tani

Later Më vonë

Today Sot

Tomorrow Nësër

Yesterday Dje

Since 1997, we have delivered superior foreign language, computer, and office training to more than 40,000 individuals, including numerous managers and executives.

**Find out** why more working professionals turn to Lincoln to develop their productivity skills and increase their earning potential than any other training organization in Albania.

**ENGLISH** (General Use and Professional Training)

GERMAN, SPANISH, ITALIAN and ALBANIAN language.

**PROFESSIONAL TRAINING**

SOFT SKILLS, BASIC CUSTOMER CARE, PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATION etc.

**COMPUTER TRAINING**

OFFICE SKILLS, AUTOCAD, 3D MAX, FINANCE, DESIGN, PROGRAMMING.

**CERTIFICATION**

CISCO-CCNA, Microsoft MSCE, IC3, Microsoft Office, TOEFL iBT.

1930s Italian-built ministries on Skanderbeg Square
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 represent- ed yet. Shopping is still best in the established areas such as the biftok district and along Rruga Myshy Shyri where you'll find many boutiques; you're more likely to find bargain and goofy stuff there than in the malls.

**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 Adnion shop or at their stands in the Xheko Imperial and Sheraton hotel at the Albanian post office. The Rogenier hotel lobby has foreign newspapers available for reading.

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

**Corona E-4, Sheshi Skenderbej, Tirana International Hotel**, tel. +38 69 217 73 05. The hotel gift shop has a good selection of books and 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@yaho.com. More like bookstore, the collection here is mainly Albanian though some English titles can be found too. Open 24 hrs.

**International Book Shop E-6, Rr. Hoxha Tahsim 1**, Stephen Center, Books, newspapers and magazines, including some on religious themes. Open 08.00 - 20.00, Closed Sat.


**DIY**

**Praktikër Durres highway km4, Pranë Uër Kamez.** tel. +355 4 238 84 50, www.praktiker.al. Albania’s first large DIY store also has some wonderful things for travelers; there’s also an ATM and a Gregory’s Coffee outlet. A free shuttle bus runs regularly from the main square between 07:00 and 21:30. Open 08.30 - 21.30.

**Fashion**


**Flowers**

**Flowers shop J-5, Sheshi Italia, tel. +355 68 206 05 86.** Flowers and ceramics. Open 08.00 - 18.00. Closed Sun.

**Garden Joy H-5/6, Rr. Elbasanit, tel. +355 4 237 41 46.** The owner learned flower arranging in Greece and does it well. Open 09.00 - 20.00. Kaltic H-4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, tel. +355 69 204 96 56. Imported flowers and luxury bouquets. Open 07:00 - 21:00. 

**Merkum E-3, Rr. Kavajes, tel. +355 4 225 48 00.** Next to Sensum. Also delivers flowers. Open 08.00 - 20.00.

**Natyra 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 Krujë, where shop windows are full of jewelry, antiquites and knickknacks. If you don't have time to make the trek there, check these shops in Tirana. There are also some kiosks selling Albanian mugs, plastic guns, dolls and bunier ashtayas at the southern end of Rr. Bardhakadër.

**Albapost F-4, Rr. Reshit Çollaku, fax +355 4 223 21 33, alposta@icc.al.eu.org.** Phileatic shop of the Albanian postal service, selling recent commemoratives. Open 08.00 - 16.00. Closed Sat.


**Art Forever G/H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 226 63 96.** If you’re looking for folklore souvenirs, antique chess, 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.

**Five Senses I-4, Blv. Transarë.** Corner with Rr. Durrësit. Open 10:00 - 20:00. Closed Sun.

**La Casa del Habano J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton mall, tel. +355 68 206 05 86**. A home interior shop with imported ceramic wares and antiques. As well as wood, bronze and silver souvenirs, pottery, ceramic wares and antiques. Open 08:00 - 21:00, Sun 08:00 - 14:00.


**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 of Yugoslavian cheeses. Also at I-3 F. Rr. Aljupi. Open 09:00 - 22.00.

**Euromax Tirana-Durrës highway, km6, QTU centre.** Tirana’s best supermarket. Huge shop or at the small new mall in the outskirts of town. A handy 24-hour city-centre Euromax Express can be found at Rr. Abdyl Frashëri (I-4) in the QTU city mall. 

**Kedi J-5, Sheshi Italia, Sheraton Plaza mall.** A convenient, small supermarket inside the Sheraton mall.

**Expat activities**

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

**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 breakfast. New expat arrivals and any other stray foreigners that find themselves wandering Tirana are welcome to drop by. Enjoy pancakes and fried eggs. Friendly and informal.

**Tirana International Women’s Group.** Join the TGW ladies for their monthly meetings, chat, events and activities including yoga, painting, bowling and tea sessions. See http://sites.google.com/site/twg Tirana/ home for more information or email to twg board@ gmail.com.
Public telephones

Public phones are easily found; telephone cards are available at post offices. 50 unit cards cost 560 lek; 100 unit cards 1080 lek; 200 unit cards 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. If you don’t plan to talk away a whole card, you can rent one from the ‘businessmen’ near the phone boxes for about 15-20 lek per unit.

Internet cafés

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

Global I4, Tirana
+355 4 225 06 06, Sun 08:00 - 10:00. Closed Sat.

Top Net
+355 4 221 19 33, 24 hrs.

Mobile phones

Three rather pricey providers are active in Albania. AMC (Albanian Mobile Communications) G/H-4, Tirana-Durrës highway, Salloni Mazda, tel. +355 4 235 79 76, info@albanianc.com, www.albanianc.com. Open 09:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

Tirana
Eagle Mobile H-4, Rr. Vaso Pasha, tel. +355 4 222 79 76 info@eaglemobil.al, www.eaglemobil.al.

Dial the international access number (00), the country code, the area code and the subscriber’s number. Call 14 for domestic directory assistance.

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Advertising, PR & Events

Iceberg Communications I4, Rr. Perlat Rexhepi, Pall. Edil-al-it, Zyra 1, tel./fax +355 4 226 76 81, tel.+355 69 207 67 09, office@icebergcommunication.com, www.icebergcommunication.com. Publicity, PR and events.

Ogilvy H-4, Rr. Him Kolli, Pall 10 katesh, Kati 1, tel./fax +355 4 224 75 33, info@ogilvyal.com, www.ogl"yal.com

Tirana Events Agency Sheshi Zogu i Zi, Pall. e Trebisqicis, Shk. 1, tel. +355 68 406 69 00, fax +355 4 224 75 77, info@tiranaeventagency.com, Conferences, events and other business services.

Banks

Alpha Credit Bank Rr. e Kavajës, G-Kam, Center, Tirana 4, +355 4 227 85 00, fax +355 4 222 14 48, marketing@albahna.gr, www.alphabank.al.

Banka Popullore - Societë Gjërmënje Gjëmblë, Tirana, Kati 1, Kati 9, tel. +355 4 228 04 42, fax +355 4 228 04 41, info@socgem.com, www.popullore.com


Pocket

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Postal rates (in lek)</th>
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<td>Albania</td>
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<td>Austria</td>
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<td>Czech Rep.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Tirana-Durrës highway, Salloni Mazda, tel. +355 4 235 79 76, info@albanianc.com, www.albanianc.com. Open 09:00 - 19:00, Sat 08:00 - 14:00. Closed Sun.

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**Business services**


**Chambers of Commerce**


**Hospitals & Clinics**


**Computers**


**Dry cleaners**


**Dentists**


**Emergencies**

Emergency numbers: Police 129, Fire 128

**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. Dibërës).

ABC Clinic D-5, Rr. Qemat Stafa 260, tel. +355 4 223 42 05/+355 68 260 04 05, ofice@albaniaonline.org, www.albaniaonline.org. Christian-run, English-speaking clinic. Open 08:00 - 14:00, 16:00 - 20:00, Closed Sun.

**Dentists**


**Dry cleaners**


**Dentists**


**Dry cleaners**


**Dentists**

Governmental organisations
Albania's governmental organisations.

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

Albinvest Bv.

Institute of Statistics

KESH

Insurance companies

International schools
Ecole Viktor Hygo
Rr. Tre Vellezrit Kondi, tel. +355 4 237 17 25/7, info@albania-hugo.com.

Memorial International School

International Language Centre
D-5, Rr. Luigj Gurakuqi 31/1, tel. +355 4 227 49 00, segreteriambasciata.tirana@esteri.it, www.ambtirana.esteri.it.

Language courses

Lawyers & Consultants

Tirana in Your Pocket
tirana.inyourpocket.com
Beauty & Wellness

Ardi Hair Fashion H-3, Rr. Vasco Pasha 7, tel. +355 4 227 09 67/+355 68 20 26 118, aridan.borova@yahoo.com. Professional ladies and gents salon with ammonia-free hair colouring. Open 09:00 - 12:00, Closed Sun.


Chinese doctors perform therapeutic foot (45 mins 1500 lek) and body (60 mins 3,000 lek) massages, acupuncture and herb treatments. In a second-floor apartment; look for the 'Chinese massage' sign. Open 09:00 - 20:00.

Ministries


Ministry of Foreign Affairs Bv. Gjergr Fitzhta 6, tel. +355 4 226 40 90, fax +355 4 226 20 84, minister@ita.al, www.ita.al.


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

International organisations

Albania’s non-governmental and international organisations.

EBRD (European Bank for Reconstruction and Development) Rr. Abdyl Frashëri, Torre Drini, tel. +355 4 223 28 98, fax +355 4 223 05 80, alickola@ebrd.com, www.ebrd.com.


GTZ (German Projects Office) Rr. Skënderbeg 21/1, tel. +355 4 223 04 14, fax +355 4 223 34 97, gtz-albanien@gtz.de, www.gtz.de.

IMF (International Monetary Fund) Bulevardi Dëshmorët e Kombit, Twin Tower 1, Suite 5-A, tel. +355 4 222 04 00, fax +355 4 224 08 01, info@imf.org/tirana. 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.

SVN (Dutch Projects Office) Rr. Dëshmorët e Kombit, tel. +355 4 225 58 00, fax +355 4 225 58 01, baltzans@svnworld.org, www.svnbalkans.org.


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Phone: 00 355 4 2 255 655 • Fax: 00 355 4 2 271 960
E-mail: info@acmsalbania.com • web: www.acmsalbania.com
Tirana Rocks

© MVRDV

Tirana’s lake area is seeing fast growth, and a jumble of new buildings has risen around the southern shores and beside the zoo and botanical gardens. To avoid this ad hoc growth also effecting the remaining empty area beside the lake’s dam, the Rotterdam-based architecture bureau MVRDV designed a rather spectacular masterplan to extend the park in this area and to add a high-quality and dense urban area along a new “Copa Tirana’ lakeshore drive. The plan foresees a number of large rectangular buildings to be placed at weird angles in the area below the dam. Nicknamed the Tirana Rocks, they are to be clad in local stone and will hold apartments, shops, offices, a hotel and recreational facilities. The dam is to become more pedestrian-friendly, with benches along the whole length, and remains a green corridor, linked to the third floor lobbies of the new buildings by wooden walkways. South American jacaranda trees, which flower bright purple for a month every spring, are to planted throughout the area, and lit up on summer nights. Construction of the €600 million project will start in 2010.

Directory listings can be found at http://tirana.inyourpocket.com
Street register

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

- 4 Dëshmorët C-G-G
- 28 Nënori F-6/E, E-5
- Abdol Tirani C-D-G
- Abdulla Kati D-E
- Abdool Fetiu 1-E-5/G
- Adem Krue G-2/G
- Allrafaj G-5/E, D-E
- Anemir Qamer H-3/G
- Anemir Vakali D-H-G
- Aslan Zeneli H-F-6
- Bardhok Biba D-4
- Barrikadave B/C-4, D-4/5
- Beqir Luga E-6
- Besim Trnavci F-3/2
- Bilal Konxholli C-5/6
- Blv. Bajram Curri H-1 to G-6
- Blv. Dëshmorët e Kombit F-4 to I-5
- Blv. Gjergj Fishta H-1 to G-4
- Blv. Zhan D’Ark G-5 to E-6
- Bogdani E-3
- Brigada VIII H-3/4
- Çamëria F-3/4
- Çerçiz T opulli C-4, D-5
- Ded Gjo Luli E-4
- Dervish Hatixhe D/C-4
- Dervish Hima I-5/6
- Dëshmorët e 4 Shkurtit G/H/I/J-4
- Dhimitër S. Shuteriqi J-1/2
- Dibrës C/D-5, B5/6
- Don Bosko B/C-2
- Donika Kastrioti G/H-4
- Dora D’Istria K/J-4
- Durrësit D-2/3, E-3/4
- Edit Durham E-2
- Elbasanit G-5, H-5/6, I-6
- Emin Duraku I-2, H-3
- Fadil Rada I-2, H-3
- Fatmir Haxhiu G-5
- Frederik Shiroka F-1/2, E-2
- Gjin Bue Shpata H/I-3
- Gjin Kuqali I/J-3
- Gjon Buzuku B/C-5
- Gjon Muzaka E-2
- Gjon Pali II G/H/I-5
- Grigor Heba I-2, J-2/3
- Halim Xhelo E-2
- Haxhi Hysen Dalliu D-3, C-3/4
- Haxhi Sina C-6
- Him Kolli F-3
- Hoxhe Vokrri D-6
- Hoxha T ahsim E/D-6
- Ibrahim Dervishi I-1
- Isa Boletini C/D-5
- Islam Alla E/F/G-3
- Ismail Qemali H-3/4/5
- Jan Vreto E-5/6
- Jeronim de Rada F-5
- Jordan Misja A/B/C-3
- Jul Varibova G-5
- Justin Gadari E/F-2
- Jusuf Vrioni I-2
- K. Shijaku B/C-4
- Kajo Karafili E-3/4
- Karl Gega B-4
- Kavajës F-1/2/3, E-3/4
- Kont Urani E-3
- Kristaq Mema D-2/3
- Lek Dukagjini I-5, J-4
- Lidhja Prizrenit I/J-4
- Liman Kaba J-2/3, K-2
- Luigj Gurakuqi E-4/5
- Mahmut Mbrojt B/C-4
- Malik Muto D-4
- Margarita Tarellu J-3/4
- Mihal Duri E-3
- Mihal Grameno G-6
- Milto Tarellu L-1/3
- Mine Pasq D-2, D-2/3, E-2
- Muhamet Gjedhaj D-1, E/F, G, G/H, H/2
- Murad Shyri F-4/5
- Mustafa Gjollesha D-1/2, E-1, F-1, G-1/2, H-2
- Nezir Kali G-1/2
- Nenad Frenti D-3
- Nexhir Ndraka E-6
- Nicola Tarellu F-6
- Nilton Arisa J-1
- Nilton Daker J-3
- Nilton Peza C-2, D-2/3, E-3
- Noahl Xhelo G-2
- Nimi Frenti E/F-2
- Nimo Pasq G/D-5, H-2/3, E-3
- Nisim Zajif G-6
- Nizam Vokshi D-3/4
- Nysa Petrela G-3/4
- Onat Tarellu K-1/2
- Permeti Shënep G-4
- Petre Panja L-3/2
- Petro Nacio L-2
- Pjetër Bogdani H-3/4
- Pjetër Budi H-6
- President George W. Bush F-5
- Prokop Mytaft D-3
- Punëtorët e Rilindjes see Presidenti GWB
- Qemal Guranjac H-6
- Qemal Stafa E-5, D-5/6
- Ramazan Fejza B-6
- Rexhep Cokauna F-4
- Rexhi Petsa B/C-4
- Roberta Shirona 13
- Sami Franjevic E-3 to I-4
- Sangvani D-5
- Seramorës Hajdas D-4
- Shyqyr Ishmi F-6
- Siri Kodra B-4
- Skënder Kosturi B/C-4
- Stavro Vinjau H/I-6
- Sulejman Delvina H-2, I-2/3
- Tefta Theodorsos H-5
- Thanas Ziko B/C-5, G-6
- Themistokli Gërmenji H-5/6
- Theris Mati E-6
- Vaso Pasha G/H/1-4
- Velëndritë e Miranit C-D-2
- Xhemal Delli E-2
- Xhemal Marthin E-4
- Ymer Kurti L-1/3
- Zefet Baboçi D-5
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