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**ALBANIA**  
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# Nature and Adventure





Çika Mountain 2048m

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## RELIEF & CLIMATE

Albania has an area of 28.748 km<sup>2</sup> and is distinguished for its diverse and magnificent terrain. A great part of the territory consists of mountains and hills, and 1/3 of the territory consists of lowlands that lie mainly in the western part of the country along the Adriatic coastline. The highest peak of the country is Korab Mountain, located in the area of Dibër. The mountain is 2.751 m above sea level. This impressive relief, with many fractures and microforms, is rich in hydric resources, forests and flora and fauna. Albanian nature offers many opportunities for various outdoor tourist activities. A visitor can experience the freshness of the mountain climate and the Mediterranean warmth of the coast all within a short time frame.



**ALBANIAN  
AREA**

## RELIEF & CLIMATE

One of the biggest natural pleasures of Albania is the large amount of sunshine hours. Albania is one of the countries with the highest number of sunshine hours in Europe.

The Albanian coastline is 450 km long (including numerous lagoons in the Adriatic sea) and offers great potential for tourism. The mountainous relief can offer spectacular landscapes and different tourist activities. The snow layers covering mountains lasts for several months, thus providing opportunities for winter sports

fans. The relief of Albania is quite rich in rivers and lakes, which are very important and attractive spots for tourism and hosting various activities. The climatic conditions in Albania are suitable for guaranteeing a relatively long summer season of 5 months, which can be used for beach tourism. Summer is hot and dry and winter is mild and rainy. The average temperature in the coast is 17.5°C and in the mountains it reaches 7.5°C. The diversity of relief and climate offers endless opportunities for tourists to enjoy



THE ALBANIAN  
COASTLINE IS

450 km



THE AVERAGE  
TEMPERATURE IN  
THE COAST IS

17.5C



THE AVERAGE  
TEMPERATURE IN  
THE MOUNTAINS IS

7.5C



SUMMER  
SEASON

5 Months



## THE SEAS

▶ The Albanian coast length is **450 km**

Starting in Adriatic Sea and ending in the Ionian Sea

*Beach in Vlorë* ▶

## THE SEAS

The Albanian coast starts in the northwest, at Buna Estuary, which is also the border between Albania and Montenegro, and continues up to the Cape of Stillo in the south of Albania, bordering Greece. It has a length of 450 km, including lagoons, starting in Adriatic Sea and ending in the Ionian Sea. The Albanian coast is very beautiful and diverse. On one hand, it offers massive sandy and shallow beaches, which makes it very convenient for family vacations and on the other, there are small exotic beaches, intimate and deep. The coast is rich in capes, protected bays, numerous lagoons and

deltas. Most of the coast is ecologically clean and unharmed by human activity. In addition, lagoons and deltas are some of the most exciting spots for nature lovers and amateur fishers and hunters. They also serve as important eco-systems and have much potential for further development of eco-tourism. The underwater world is rich in archaeological objects. Nature lovers can see the flora, fauna and amazing underwater vessels and objects from ancient times to modern times. Anyone can enjoy the beauty of castles and archaeological sites that decorate the Albanian coast.





## LAKES

▶ Shkodra Lake is the lake with the largest area in the Balkans  
**368 km<sup>2</sup>**

Lake Shkodër is located between Albania and Montenegro.

*Koman Lake* ◀

## LAKES

Albania is very rich in lakes. In addition to the big lakes of Shkodra, Ohrid and Prespa, there are dozens of magnificent small lakes and many artificial lakes that attract tourists. We should mention that every major lake in Albania is distinguished for a special characteristics in the Balkan peninsula. Shkoder Lake is the lake with the largest area in the Balkans, 368 km<sup>2</sup>, out of which 149km<sup>2</sup> with a coast line of 57 km belong to the Republic of Albania. Lake Ohrid is the deepest lake in the Balkans, 289 m deep. The tectonic lakes of Prespa are located 850 m above sea level, representing the highest tectonic lakes across the Balkan peninsula.

### SHKODËR LAKE

Lake Shkodër is located between Albania and Montenegro. It has a very diversified shore, characterized by lowland marshes in the north and rocky in the south. In the southern coast, you can find the beaches of Shiroka and Zogaj. The fauna of Lake Shkodër is one of the richest in Albania. This lake and its surrounding zone is home to 45 species of fish and 270 species of birds. These birds make up 87% of all the birds of Albania. The gem of this area is definitely the pelican, the largest bird in Europe.

### OHRID LAKE

Lake Ohrid is one of the most beautiful tectonic lakes in the Balkans and Europe. It lies between Albania and Macedonia. This lake has an area of 358 km<sup>2</sup> and lies 695 m above sea level. It creates a very cool climate, especially in the hot summer season. Lake Ohrid is 4 million years old. You can find 30 species of mollusk in the lake as well as Ohrid Sponge, a rare species found only in Ohrid and in Lake Baikal.

In this lake, the famous Koran and Belushka grows, which is a type of very tasty trout. The shore of this lake offers tourism infrastructure for establishing hotels, fish restaurants, bars, etc. This area is especially known for family tourism. In addition to Pogradec, there are also well known tourist sites, such as Lin, Pojska, Tushemisht, etc. Ohrid Lake is also inscribed on the World Heritage List.

### PRESPA LAKES

The “Big Prespa” Lake lies in the territory of Albania, Macedonia and Greece, with an area of 285 km<sup>2</sup>, 44 km<sup>2</sup> of which belong to Albania. The “Small Prespa” Lake has an area of 44 km<sup>2</sup> and is situated between



Albania and Greece. Prespa lake waters, especially those of Big Prespa, are famous for their beauty and clarity. Rural tourism and ecotourism is well developed around these lakes; there are also numerous opportunities for lovers of various water sports. For nature lovers, Prespa lakes offer an impressive view, especially for those interested in aquatic flora.

### SMALL LAKES

Albania has several small lakes of glacial, karstic and artificial origin. There are numerous glacial lakes including the lakes of Lura, Doberdol Lakes - Sylbicë in the Alps of Tropoja, Balgjaj in Bulqizë, Liqeni i Zi (Black Lake) in Martanesh, Oak Lake in Gramsh, Librazhd Rajca Lakes and Shelguri Lake in Kolonjë. The karstic lakes are represented by 69 lakes of the Dumre plateau, where you can distinguish Merhoja Lake, Çestijes Lake, Long Lake, Lake Belesh, Seferani Lake, etc.

### ARTIFICIAL LAKES

The largest artificial lakes are those of Fierza, Koman, Vau i Dejës, Ulza and Shkopet. Other artificial lakes are those of Tirana, Farka reservoir, Thana in Lushnja and Gjançi in Vithkuq, Korçë. The lakes offer opportunities. They are characterized by a flora and fauna



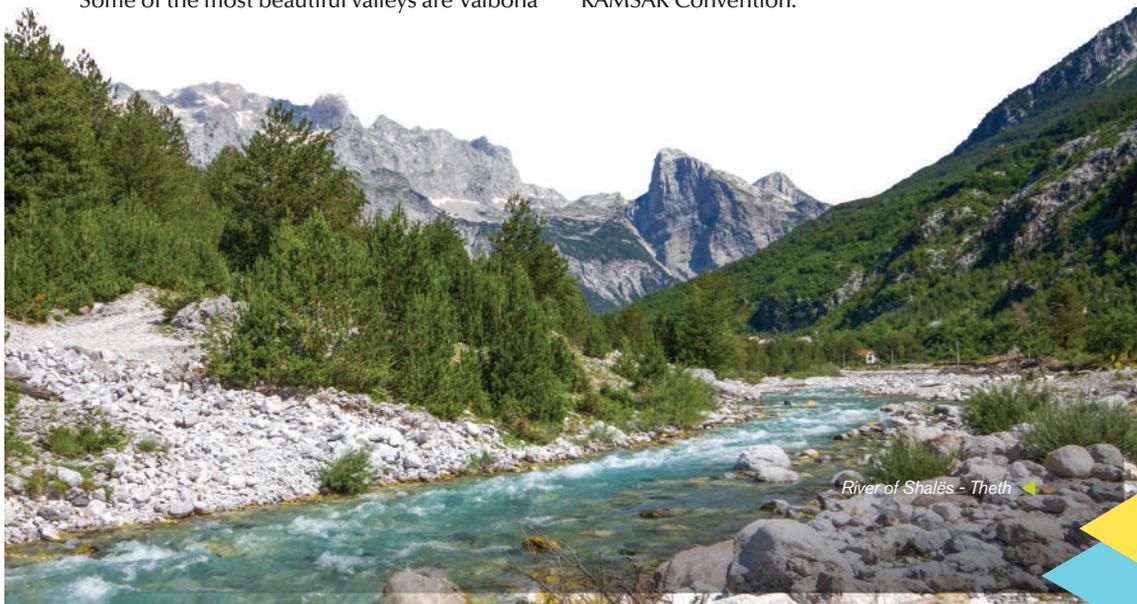
**THE LAKES OFFER OPPORTUNITIES THEY ARE CHARACTERIZED BY A FLORA AND FAUNA RICH IN PLANTS, FLOWERS, FORESTS, ANIMALS AND BIRDS OF UNIQUE SPECIES.**

rich in plants, flowers, forests, animals and birds of unique species. You can also sail on Koman lake, where you can see a similar landscape to that of the Norwegian fiords. Albanian Nature Albanian Nature is rich in water resources; it has many rivers and streams. Water resources with curative values are also the thermal waters called Llixha. These sources can be found in Leskovik (Vronomero), Dibër, Elbasan, Fushë Krujë (Bilaj), and close to Përmet (Bënjë). The resources in Syri i Kaltër in Delvinë, Uji i Ftohtë in Tepelenë, Syri i Sheganit near Shkodër Lake, Drilon close to Ohrid Lake, the Viroi in Gjirokastra, and Poçemi in Mallkastër are distinguished

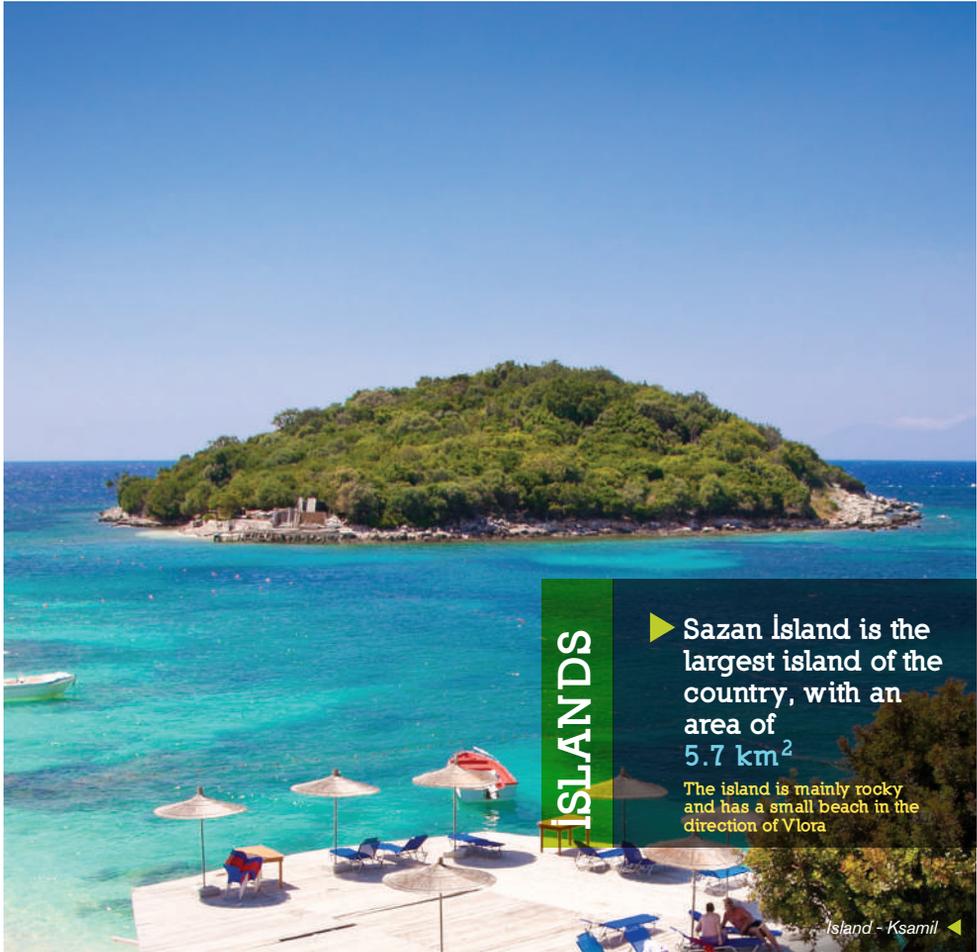
for their beauty and uniqueness. The hydrographic network of the territory of Albania consists of 11 main rivers, but combined with their branches and streams totals to 152. The longest river in Albania is the Black Drin River, with a length of 285km. The main branch of the Black Drin stems from the Ohrid lake and enters Albania through the Radika stream. Other noteworthy rivers are Valbona, Buna, Fan, Mati, Erzeni, Maccabi, Seman, Vjosa, Osum, Shushica, Devoll, Langarica, Drinos, Bistrice, etc. These rivers create gorgeous valleys and canyons. Some of the most beautiful valleys are Valbona

Valley in the Northern Alps, Tomoricë valleys, gorges of the Vjosa river, Këlcyra, canyons of the Bënça and Osumi river, etc.

These canyons, in addition to their natural beauty and splendor, are an ideal place for practicing water sports, such as canoeing and rafting. Another element of Albanian rivers are wonderful waterfalls, such as that of Grunas, Theth in the Northern Alps, Shoshan in the valley of Valbona, Kokotrafi in Konispol, Progonat waterfall in Kurvelesh, etc. The Buna river outlet, along with the alluvial island of Franz Joseph are part of the international RAMSAR Convention.



*River of Shalës - Theth*



## ISLANDS

► Sazan Island is the largest island of the country, with an area of **5.7 km<sup>2</sup>**

The island is mainly rocky and has a small beach in the direction of Vlora

Island - Ksamil ◀

## ISLANDS

### FRANZ JOSEPH ISLAND

The small island of Franz Joseph is located at the mouth of the Buna river. This island is covered by magnificent groves consisting mainly of Poplar trees, *Alnus glutinosa* and other poplar woods. It is famous for its peaceful environment and is the ideal place for those who want to take a break from a busier lifestyle.

### KUNË ISLAND

Kunë Island has an area of 125 hectares and is located near the Drini River delta in the Lezha district. There you will find dense typical Mediterranean scrub, lianas, small forests of willows and ash trees. The fauna of this island is the richest in Albania with 70 species of birds, 22 species of reptiles, 6 species of amphibians and 23 species of mammals. From the birds we can mention the wild ducks, pheasants, woodpeckers, karabullakët, *Phalacrocorax pygmaeus* and Eurasian Woodcock.

In ancient times, Roman emperors used to take different types of fish and birds from this area because they were known for their unique taste and high gastronomic qualities.

### ZVËRNECI ISLAND

Zvërneci Island is one of the islands of Narta lagoon in Vlora. It is a very picturesque island, covered with cypress trees. You can visit the church of St. Mary on this island, an ancient

church with cultural values.

### SHURDHAH ISLAND

Shurdhah Island is a small, but charming island situated in Vau i Dejës. The ruins of the medieval city of Sardis, where the feudal Dukagjini family resided, lie on this island.

### SAZAN ISLAND

Sazan Island is the largest island of the country, with an area of 5.7 km<sup>2</sup>; it is 4.8 km long and 2 km wide. The island is mainly rocky and has a small beach in the direction of Vlora called Admiral beach that is known for its very clean waters. In ancient times, Sazan was called “sason”. This island is a perfect place for fishing and underwater activities.

### MALIGRAD ISLAND

Maligrad Island is found in Lake Prespa near Liqenas village. It is one of the most visited islands. Visitors come by boat to see the hermit church of St. Mary.

### KSAMIL ISLANDS

Ksamili Islands. The four gorgeous islands of Ksamili have an area of 8.9 ha. They are very close to the coast and offer a rare and spectacular view. These islands are green in all seasons. Some of them have small and very clean beaches. The sea around these islands is known for its clarity and the landscape is magnificent.





## MOUNTAINS

▶ The mount Korab,  
the highest in  
Albania  
2.751 m

Represents a challenge for  
climbing amateurs.

Albanian Alps - Theth ◀

## MOUNTAINS

Mountains occupy 2/3 of the territory of the country. They offer great opportunities for both green and white tourism activities such as trekking, hiking, climbing, canoeing in the valleys of mountainous rivers, air sports, mountain biking, rallying with 4x4 vehicles, speleology, sport fishing in mountain streams, etc. One of the most important tourist areas is the Albanian Alps, which lie in the north of the country. Their most popular sites are: Theth, Razma, Boga, and Valbona valley. The highest peak of the Alps is Jezerca, located 2.693 m above the sea level. Other attractive areas are the zones of Korça, Vithkuqi, Dren-ova, Dardha and Voskopoja, which along with mountain tourism, offer cultural tourism, due to the plethora of churches and monasteries. Mount Korab, the highest in Albania (2.751 m) represents a challenge for climbing amateurs.

The mountainous areas are well-known for the expeditions organized there. Such as the one organized every August in Tomori mountain, in honor of Abbas Ali (Bektashi sect) and the expedition to Mount Sari Salltik in Kruja, the largest Catholic pilgrimage in honor of St. Anthony, on the



hill in the town of Laç. During the journey, visitors are met with magnificent views. In mountainous areas, there is widespread limestone and development of karstic formations. There are also a large number of caves that have been discovered. There are 35 caves in Shkodra Highland alone. The largest cave in Albania is that of Pirogoshi in Skrapar, at an altitude of 450 meters above sea level. The mountainous area east of Tirana is rich with caves. The most popular caves are Pëllumbas and Shpella e Mirë in Brari mountain. The cave of Pëllumbas is located on the spectacular canyon of Skorana in Erzeni River.



## PARKS

▶ Theth National Park is located in the heart of the Albanian Alps  
**2.630 ha**

The park is known for its dense layer of predominantly beech wood.

Theth ◀

## NATURAL NATIONAL PARKS

### DAJTI

Dajti National Park. This park is on Dajti Mountain, 26 km east of the capital, Tirana. Dajti Park has an area of 3.300 ha. There are several categories of flora, ranging from evergreen shrubs, oaks and beech. A part of the park is also Bovilla lake. In this park visitors can go hiking, climbing, etc. At this site, one gets a magnificent view of the city which is why the area is also called the "Natural balcony of Tirana". A unique feature of this park is the ride to the top of the mountain in a cable car "Dajti Express", which lasts only a few minutes and takes you through beautiful scenery. There is also hotel accommodation available for tourists.

### THETH

Theth National Park is located in the heart of the Albanian Alps, in the "Accursed Mountains" Area, with a surface of 2.630 ha. The magnificent landscape of this park is adorned by the crystal clear Thethi stream in which marble trout lives. The fascinating cataract of Grunas can also be found here. The park is known for its dense layer of predominantly beech wood, some of which

### LURA

Lura National Park is situated in the massive forest titled "Crown of Lura". A special feature of Lura park is the 12 glacial lakes that reach it. The most beautiful lake is "The Lake of

Flowers". During the summer, its surface is are 200 years old. We should mention the fact that the park constitutes the most populated area in Albania with the lynx, an endangered species. The park offers accommodation of "guesthouse" type. There are numerous opportunities for a wide range of activities such as mountain climbing, trekking, bicycle sports, speleology, sport fishing, etc. covered by white water lilies. Beech is the most common type of tree in the forests of this area. The park offers opportunities for many outdoor activities like hiking, ecotourism, horse-riding, etc.

### DIVJAK A PINE

The National Park "Divjaka Pine". Within this park is the Karavasta lagoon, the largest lagoon in Albania and one of the largest in the Mediterranean Sea. This lagoon has been part of the park since 1995 and is protected under the RAMSAR convention for its international importance. The park is covered by dense flora,

### LLOGARA

Llogara National Park is located 40 km south of the city of Vlora. This park is distinguished for its merging of mountain and sea air. The park is covered with a density of coniferous trees and is also considered to be a climatic resort. At this park you can also see the "flag" where coastal soft pines dominate. The park



offers wonderful opportunities for ecotourism such as observing birds, fishing in the lagoon, swimming, sunbathing, etc. An interesting fact about this location is that this is the westernmost point in Europe, where “curly pelicans” or the Dalmatian pelican nests. The reason for this name is that pine branches are grown only on one side of the tree. The park is also known for its Fauna., where you can find 105 different bird species. The park is also an ideal place to practice air sports, due to the favorable direction of the wind. This place hosts many

### “HOTOVA FIR” - DANGELLI

National Park “Hotova Fir” - Dangelli. This park is in the region of Frashëri, 35 km northeast of the town of Përmet. This park has an area of 1.200 hectares. It is characterised by rich flora and especially the Macedonian fir (one of the biggest parks in the Balkans, where this wood is found) Hotova Fir is a relic of the Mediterranean fruit. This park offers great opportunities for ecotourism with its residential areas and camps. Hikers and nature lovers can relax and experience an unforgettable experience here. The park is distinguished for its massive



fir trees.

### ZALL GJOCAJ

The National Park “Zall Gjoçaj” is another wonderful park, 40 km northeast of the town of Burrel. It is very beautiful and rich in resources and streams. It is a scenic area, suited for those who want to get away from the noise and prefer quietness. Regarding the fauna, one can find the brown bear, wolf, wild rabbit, squirrel, etc. here.

The National Park “Valbona” park is considered one of the natural wonders of Albania. It is one of the biggest national parks of the country, with an area of 8.000 hectares. It is located 30 km away from the town of Bajram Curri. It offers a wonderful landscape between the peaks of the Alps and park makes it an attractive spot for tourists and researchers. You can practice mountain climbing on the slopes of the valley, go sports fishing (marble trout is found in the river waters), horse riding, trekking etc

### SHTAMA PASS

Shtama Pass National Park is located in the northeast, 25 km away from the town of Kruje. The park is known as a curative center, especially for the treatment of respiratory diseases. The park has an



area of 20 km<sup>2</sup> and is known for pine forests. In this park, the famous water source of “Queen Mother” is located. From this source, high quality and very healthy water springs.

### **TOMORI**

Tomori National Park is situated in Tomorri mountain, south of the historical city of Berat. The park has an area of 4.000 hectares. In this park lies the Tomb of Abaz Ali, a holy and

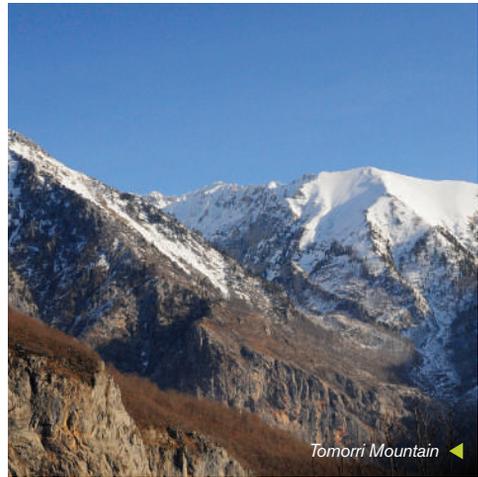
### **PRESPA**

National Park of Prespa. The largest park in Albania, with a surface of 27.750 ha includes two Prespa lakes. The park crosses the territory of three different countries, Albania, Macedonia and Greece. This park is very rich in cultural, architectural, archaeological and natural values. The ruins of Trajan castle are found here as well as a number of hermit and post Byzantine churches decorated with beautiful frescoes. One such church is St. Mary, which is located on a small worshiped man. Another activity organized here is mountain climbing and the foot of this park is a very suitable area for camping.

island near the village of Liqenas Maligrad in “Big Prespa”. The cave of Tren is another pleasant and rare site to visit at this park with its paintings from the Neolithic



Qafshitama ◀



Tomorri Mountain ◀

era. Recently, a neolithic settlement and various objects that show proof of an early civilization were discovered in this lake. Prespa Lake is the habitat of many rare species of flora and fauna. The national Park area has RAMSAR status and also earns a special status by UNESCO as a “Trans-boundary Biosphere Reserve”.

### **DRENOVA FIR**

National Park “Drenova Fir” has an area of 1.380 ha and is located in the Morava Mountains in Korca. The Geographical height of this park attracts visitors in the winter and especially in the summer. A characteristic of this park are numerous sources of cold water, which local residents have ‘baptized’ with different names, such as “Source of Old Lady”, “The source of Pilika”, “Source of St. George”, etc. The flora is represented by fir massifs, but also Fagus and Black Pine (*Pinus nigra* Arn) and pine formations. You can also visit the geo- monument “The Stone of Capi”.

### **BUTRINT**

Butrint National Park covers an area of 2.500 ha. The subtropical climate of this park attracts many Albanian and foreign tourists. The fauna and flora of this region are very diverse. We can mention the mussel which is cultivated in Lake

Butrint, famous for its nutritional value. The ancient city of Butrint, protected by UNESCO, is the “capital” of this park. In the amphitheater of Butrint, cultural and artistic activities are held in a national and international level.

### **SHEBENIK - JABLLANICE**

Shebenik - Jabllanice National Park is located in the district of Librazhd. The Park is an important ground for large mammals protected by the Conventions, thus gaining value and importance in the Balkan region. There are limited, but rich habitats here. The beauty of the valley of Rajce between the slopes of Shebenik and Jablanica, the combination of soft soils with steep ones, the existence of the great rocky masses, many cold streams, etc. raise the eco-touristic values of the area.

### **KARABURUN-SAZAN NATIONAL MARINE PARK**

Karaburun - Sazan National Marine Park is located along the Karaburun Peninsula and Sazan Island, at a distance of 1 sea mile (1852 m) from the coastline. It is the only national marine park in Albania and has been identified by local and foreign experts, as an area with great values in the context of natural heritage, archaeology and history.





## THE COAST

▶ The Albanian coast has a length of 450 km

It is rich in various formations, starting from sand beaches, bays, lagoons, pebble beaches, sea caves to many more.

Saranda ◀

## THE COAST

### VELIPOJA BEACH

Velipoja beach. The Albanian coast has a length of 450 km, including the area of lagoons. It is rich in various formations, starting from sand beaches, bays, lagoons, pebble beaches, sea caves to many more. Some parts of the coast are ecologically clean; and in this context they represent rare areas that are still intact with the Mediterranean basin.

In the north, the Albanian coast starts from the outlet of Buna River, which serves as the border with the Republic of Montenegro. In this site, due to alluvion of the river, the small island of Franz Joseph is created, which can change into a peninsula, depending on the water flow. Franz Joseph is a very interesting place for those who love nature. The flora is composed of groves, dominated by Verri, *Alnus glutinosa* and populus. The northernmost beach of the country is that of Velipoja, located 22 km from the city of Shkodra. There are 250 sunny days in this area. During the summer, temperatures reach over 20°C. Near the beach of Velipoja, Viluni lagoon is located, with an area of 130 hectares. This is an important natural ecosystem which serves as a nesting habitat

for the water fowl, with 183 species of birds. Near the beach of Velipoja there is also a hunting reserve of 700 hectares.

### SHENGJINI BEACH

Shengjini Beach is a sandy beach, part of the Lezha district. It is only 8km away from the city of Lezhe. Shëngjini is well-known for its high quality sand. This beach has 200 to 300 days of sunshine per year. In the north of Shengjin, at

### LEZHA COAST

Lezha coast has excellent natural ecosystems for the development of ecotourism, bird watching, etc. The zone of Drini delta is suitable for surfing due to the wind direction. At the outlet of Drini, you will find the lagoon system of Kune - Vain, where birds nest. There are two lagoons, that of Ceka with an area of 235 acres and that of Merxhani 77 acres. A very interesting surprise for tourists to visit is the sandy island of Kune, with an area of 125 hectares. This island is covered with hydrophytic the foot of Renci Mountain protected from the winds, there is an area called "Rana e Hedhun", famous for its sand dunes that in some places reach 10 meters high. such as: Liane, willow, ash, etc. In



this area there are 227 species of plants. In regards to wildlife, there are wild ducks, pheasants, woodpeckers, Phalacrocorax pygmaeus, heron, Eurasian wigeon, etc. There are also 70 species of birds, 22 reptiles, 6 species of amphibians and 13 species of mammals. Other beaches south of Kune and in the Tale area are frequented by tourists.. If you move even further south, you will find the Patok lagoon beaches and Mat River delta, which is a very attractive area for the Cape of “Bishti i Palles”. The Cape of Rodon is 7.5 km long and one of the most interesting areas for diving. Lalzi Bay is characterised by pine tree stripes. We should mention the beaches of St. Peter and Rrushkull, famous for the purity of their waters.

### DURRES BEACH

Durres beach is the largest and most popular beach of the country, with a length of 6 km and a long shore. The sea depth increases gradually, which makes this beach suitable for children and perfect for family holidays. There are many hotels, villas, bars, restaurants, and discos in this area. In recent years, in addition to the large number of tourists travelling daily from the capital, Durres beach has become the top location for tourists coming from Kosovo and





Macedonia. In the north of the city of Durrës, on the foot of its hills, the famous beach of Currila is located, where the waters are a deep blue.

### **GOLEM & MALI ROBI**

Golem and Mali Robi are a continuation of Durrës beaches, seen almost as a single zone because of their common traits such as the pines surrounding the beach. Some of the beaches belonging to Kavaja District, are the beaches of Spille and Karpen. These beaches

### **CAPE LAGJI**

The Cape of Lagji closes the Durrës bay from the south. It is a great spot for diving and there are several small beaches of rare beauty, such as that of Bardhori and Gjeneralj beach. Gjeneralj are distinguished for their high quality of sand, sea waters and pine trees that surround them. Recently, investments have been made in this area in order to create even better conditions for tourist accommodation. The beach is surrounded by lush vegetation that resembles a natural amphitheater. These are isolated beaches, very quiet with a very high quality of marine waters.

## K ARAVASTA LAGOON & DIVJAK A BEACH

Karavasta Lagoon and Divjaka beach - The sandy beach of Divjaka, combined with its forest and lagoon constitute a complex and great tourist destination. Divjaka forest stretches from the mouth of the Seman river up to the Shkumbini outlet. The Lagoon has an area of 4,330 hectares, representing the

## NARTA

Narta lagoon, with an area of 4.180 hectares, is the second largest lagoon in the country. The belt that separates the lagoon from the sea is covered by a pine forest. Narta Lagoon is another natural ecosystem with opportunities for developing ecotourism, bird observation, fishing etc. It represents the second premise in Albania that maintains the presence of water largest lagoon in the Albanian coast. It is one of twelve National Parks of Albania. The lagoon is at the western point of Europe where the Dalmatian pelican (*pelicanus crispus*) nests. It is due to these qualities, that the lagoon has been under the international conservation of the RAMSAR Convention since 1994.

During the winter, some 48.700 birds nest there. Besides wild ducks, you will also find the white-tail eagle, *Falco peregrinus*, (*Falco tinnunculus*) and more. The Narta area



is also known for its artisan production of high quality wine. The natural tourism and wine tourism makes an interesting combination in this lagoon.

## VLORA

Vlora is the second biggest harbour of the country and one of the most important tourist sites, offering the top product "sun & sea". The area along the Vlora beach town is distinguished for its new and modern hotels and other facilities such as bars, restaurants, discos, clubs etc. The tourist area starts south of the city, along the small and rocky beaches of Vlora bay. Across the beaches, you will see Karaburun Peninsula the largest peninsula of the coast and Sazan Island, the largest island of Albania. You can visit Jonufra beaches in the Vlora bay area, which stretch to Dukat stream close to the small town of Orikum. The beach is surrounded by a hilly area, covered with citrus, which creates a sharp contrast with the blue waters of the sea. In the south of Vlora you can find Orikum, where a yacht harbour has recently been established. Orikum beach has a length of 2 km. In this area there are sea caves of Pana and Rrapi. This is an area which can be of



During the winter,  
**48.700**  
birds nest there

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Besides wild ducks, you will also find the white-tail eagle, *Falco peregrinus*, (*Falco tinnunculus*) and more.



interest for divers, as you can explore the archaeological remains and sunken ships. Such is the Italian ship “PO”, drowned in 1941 during the Italian-Greek war. It is also said that Julius Caesar drowned the ships that his troops brought in pursuit of Pompey. The best zones for diving are Uji i Ftohte and Zhironi beach.

Here you can observe black and green algae. In the west bay of Vlora there is the Karaburun peninsula, the largest peninsula of Albania. The Karaburun Coast is spectacular with high shores, small bays and beaches.

In the north of the peninsula there is the Cave of Haxhi Ali, the largest marine cave in the country, 30 meters deep. There are also some small beaches in Karaburun, such as those of Grama and Dafina, which are distinguished for their deep waters. Near Grama beach you can find the Cave of Slaves. On the wall of Grama beach, you can find ancient writings. According to historians, it was thought to be the temple of the Diosk Pellazg tribes. Western Karaburun is one of most attractive points of the Albanian coast.

Near Karaburun peninsula, Sazan Isla located. Sazan is the largest island of Al with an area of 5.7 km<sup>2</sup>, 4.8 km long



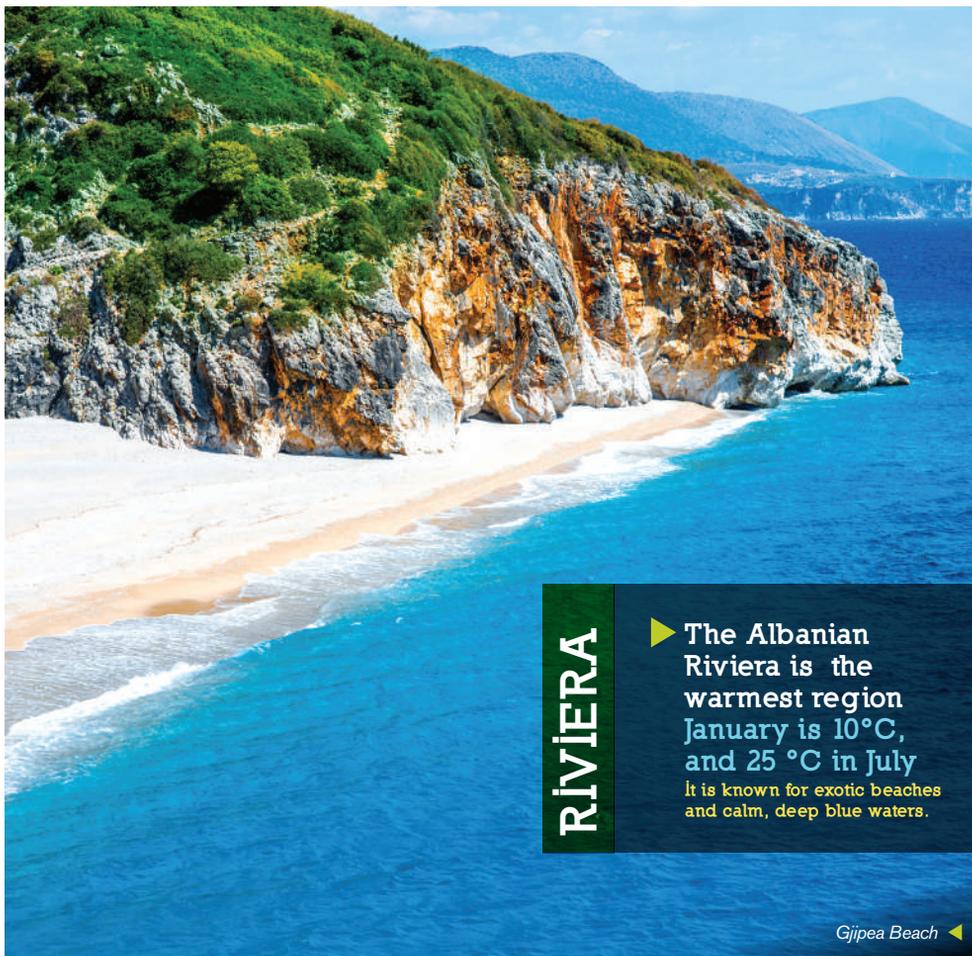
► **The best zones for diving are:**  
**Uji i Ftohte and Zhironi beach.**  
Here you can observe black and green algae.



a km wide. It is about 12 miles away from Vlorë Harbour. In antiquity the island was called Sason. The island represents a rocky block with steep shores, especially in the western part of the island. In the southeastern part of the island is the Admiral pebble beach, which is characterised by very clean waters. Sazan is an attractive spot for diving and along with the Karaburun Peninsula they constitute a real underwater park.



**SAZAN IS THE LARGEST ISLAND OF AL WITH AN AREA OF 5.7 KM<sup>2</sup>. 4.8 KM LONG A KM WIDE. IT IS ABOUT 12 MILES AWAY FROM VLORË HARBOUR.**



## RIVIERA

▶ The Albanian Riviera is the warmest region  
January is 10°C,  
and 25 °C in July

It is known for exotic beaches  
and calm, deep blue waters.

Gjipea Beach ◀

## RIVIERA

After the Llogara Pass, you will see the Ionian beaches, or what is called the “Albanian Riviera”. The Riviera is one of the most beautiful regions of Albania where the sun meets the deep sea conjoined by small, rocky and intimate beaches. This is the warmest region of Albania, where the average temperature in January is 10 °C and 25 °C in July. The area has 300 days of sunshine. From Llogara Pass, 1,057 meters above sea level, a magnificent view of the coast can be viewed. At a glance one can see the beach of Dhraleos in Palace, which is one of the most exotic beaches of the Albanian coast. It is known for calm and deep blue waters.

## HIMARA

Himara is the main center of the “ Upper Ionian coast.” The beaches of Himara are: Spille, Potami, Llamani and Livadhja. All of them are distinguished for their deep waters, rockiness and the high quality of water. Before reaching Borsh, you can find Qeparo beach and the small tectonic bay of Porto Palermo, where you can visit the castle of Ali Pasha. tourist spots and most visited of the entire Albanian coast. The crystal waters of the sea, isolated beaches, water sports and underwater diving make it very attractive to young people. Some of the beaches of Dhërmi are: Jaliksari,



## Dhërmi

**One of the most important and most frequented touristic places of the Albanian Riviera**

**The crystal waters of the sea, isolated beaches, water sports and underwater diving make it very attractive to young people.**



Dhërmi ◀



Shkambo and Gjipea. The beach of Gjipe, created by a stream, has a canyon with walls up to 70 meters high.

### **BORSHI**

Borshi is the longest beach of the Albanian Riviera, with a length of 6km. This beach is famous for its beautiful configuration surrounded by massive Mediterranean plants. Family there by boat trips, frequently available to tourists. There are several hotels, restaurants and summer discos in Dhërmi Beach. Family tourism is developed in the entire zone and the surrounding areas, offering tourists houses for rent. Vuno is located 8 km south of Dhërmi. From Vuno you can take the road to the popular beach of Jali. tourism is the main form of tourism in the area. On the road to Saranda you can visit the beaches of Bunec, Kakome and Krorëz, distinguished for their rare beauty and the crystal clear water.

### **SARANDA**

The city of Saranda is the largest inhabited area of the “Albanian Riviera” and one of the most important tourist sites of the country. The city and the area around it offer a network of hotels, starting from five-star hotels to “budget travelers” and houses for rent. Saranda is a site visited by many European and international tourists coming from Corfu, which is only 9km away. An important site



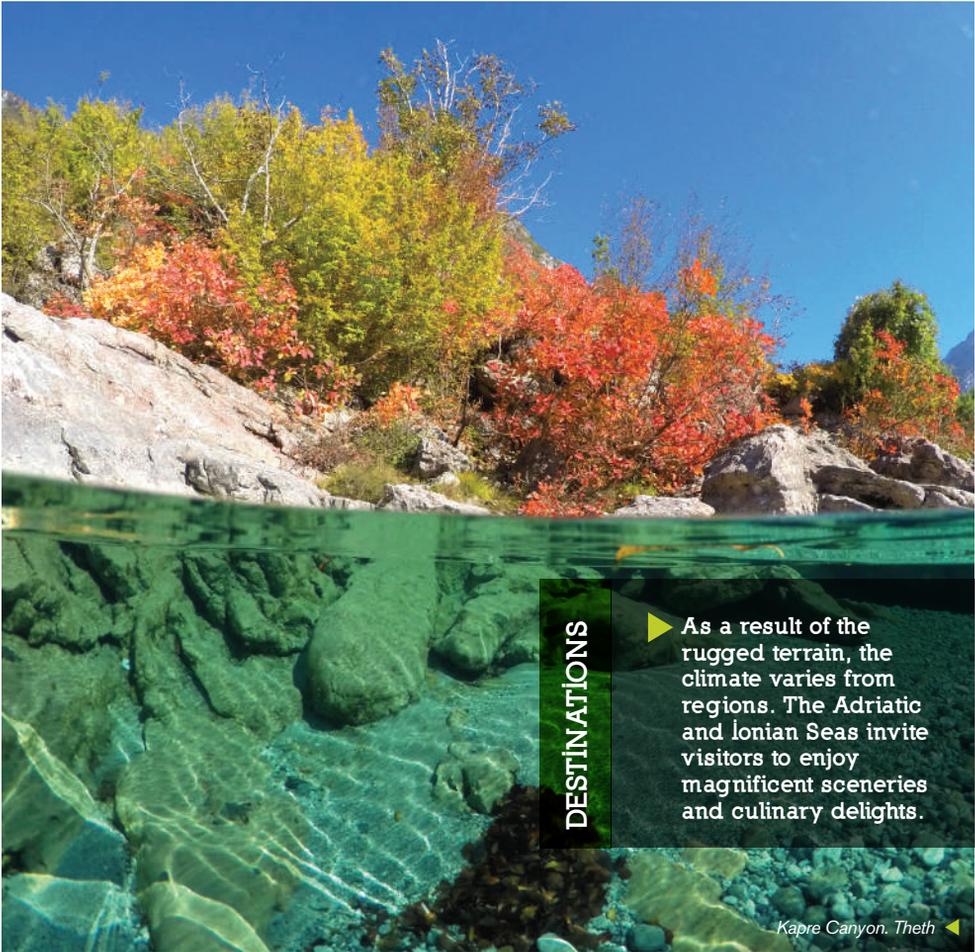
is the archaeological site of Butrint, which is part of UNESCO heritage, located 18km south of the city. In Saranda are small beaches of Central, Pllaka and Liman. The most visited site is that of Ksamil, which is located between the peninsula of the same name and Butrint lagoon. The island of Corfu and four smaller islands completely covered by green Mediterranean plants lie in front of it. There are some beautiful beaches supported by several hotels and restaurants in Ksamil.

### **BUTRINTI LAGOON**

Butrinti lagoon has an area of 16 km<sup>2</sup> and has

an outlet to the sea through the Vivari canal, 3.6 km long. This is a very suitable place for sailing. In relation to fauna, you will find there *Anas platyrhynchos*, *fulica atra*, eagle of the field, *Falco tinnunculus*, the white tail eagle, *Rhinolophus euryale*. Another rare species is the frog of Epirus, found only in Albania. The ecosystem is also suitable for the observation of birds, out of which 90 of the species are aquatic birds. Butrinti lagoon is located at the southern end of the Albanian coast which is composed with a variety of untouched beaches.





## DESTINATIONS

▶ As a result of the rugged terrain, the climate varies from regions. The Adriatic and Ionian Seas invite visitors to enjoy magnificent sceneries and culinary delights.

*Kapre Canyon, Theth* ◀

## DESTINATIONS

Albania lies on the east coast of the Balkan Peninsula and is included in the Mediterranean climate zone, with wet and relatively mild winters and hot and dry summers. As a result of the rugged terrain, the climate varies from region to region. The Adriatic and Ionian Seas invite visitors to enjoy magnificent sceneries and culinary delights. The rivers that cross the wonderful Albanian space offers the possibility to take part in several water sports like rafting, canoe, kayak, etc.. Albania's area is dominated by hills and mountains. The highest peak is Mt. Korab which rises 2.751m above sea level.



The rivers that cross the wonderful Albanian space offers the possibility to take part in several water sports like rafting, canoe, kayak, etc..



## ADVENTURE

▶ The territory of Albania offers great opportunities to exercise the activities of trekking and mountain climbing.

Mountainous regions are also attractive for outdoor camping.

*Boge – Sheep Trail* ◀

## SPORT & ADVENTURE

### Hiking and mountain climbing

There are many sites in Albania that offer opportunities for mountain climbing. The most important areas for climbing are: Jezerca, Mountain of Hekuri, Razma and many others in the Alps, Munella in Puka, Korab, Radomir and Lura in Dibra Region, Bizain Tirana, Cika mountain in the district of Vlora, Tomori mountain in Berat, Gjinari in Elbasan, Rungaja mountain in Vithkuq, Qafë Shtama park in Krujë, etc.

Mountainous regions are also attractive for outdoor camping. The territory of Albania offers great opportunities to exercise the activities of trekking and mountain climbing. An interesting trekking program is the one called "Trekking of Cika", which goes through the valley of Dukat, Cika mountain range, Kurveleshi zone and ends at the Ionian coast. The trekking route is Dukat-Tërbaç-Vranisht-Kuç-Kudhës-Qeparo.

Other areas suitable for trekking and mountain climbing are the Albanian Alps in points such as: Vermosh, Theth, Razëm, Bog, Valbona, etc. Tomori mountain, extending to the districts of Berat and Skrapar.

Other spots are Vithkuqi, Voskopoja,

Drenova in Korça District, Guri i Kamjes in Pogradec, Drino valley in the area of Dropulli, Gjirokaster District, Borsh -Zhulut route that goes through Kurvelesh.

Walking is another way to enjoy nature and at the same time, exercise. In Albania, walking is also a very popular activity. The nature and the areas with narrow trails and paths, can make this activity a very pleasant one.





**IN SOME AREAS OF ALBANIA, THE  
SNOW COVER IS ABOVE 100 DAYS,  
CREATING NATURAL CONDITIONS  
FOR SKI LOVERS.**

### **WINTER SPORTS**

We should mention that due to the elevated and mountainous terrain, Albania offers suitable natural conditions for organizing winter sports. These sports are expected to grow, thanks to many investments projected in this area. In some areas of Albania, the snow cover is above 100 days, creating natural conditions for ski lovers. In Albania we have not yet developed authentic skiing centers, but we have a number of suitable natural platforms for ski lovers. An example is Bigelli Ski Resort near Dardhë, where there is also a portable elevator. The national ski championship races are held here. Other natural platforms are those of Peltecu in Voskopjë (Korçë) which go to 1.160m above sea level and those near mountainous town of Puka, Shistavec in Kukës, Grabovë in Gramsh, Razma in Western Alps, etc.

## MOUNTAIN BIKING & EXPLORATION OF CAVES

Mountain biking & exploration of caves  
A special activity in mountain areas are also mountain biking tours. The equipment for these sports should be taken with you, as they cannot be rented. Some of the tours are organized in the Albanian Alps, such as Theth, Bogë, Vermosh etc. Another bicycle tour is one which crosses the shores of Lake Shkodër. You can also find maps of the tours, developed through joint projects of professors and students of the universities of Shkodra and Podgorica.



As a result of the widespread limestone formations in the territory of Albania, there is a development of various forms of karst, which has helped in creation of many carstic caves which have attracted many visitors. In Shkodra alone there are 35 of these caves such as: the cave of Zhylë, Juban, Muriq, Pusi, beer circles, etc. A cave of special tourist interest is the cave of Pëllumbasi, which is also called the “Black Cave”, it is located southeast of Tirana. Another cave of interest for tourists is Pirrogoshi cave. It is the largest in Albania, located in Skrapar. Other caves are: Cave Neziri (Mat), cave of Lek Pete in Kurvelesh, the cave of Treni in Devoll, etc.

## FISHING AND HORSE-RIDING

Fishing takes place on the coast, lakes and rivers. Fishing is a source of income for many inhabitants on the coast. Some of the ideal mountain areas ideal for fishing are: Valbona River valley, Thethi stream, where you can find the marble trout, and the upper valley of Vjosa, etc. Sport fishing with hooks can be done at the mouths of the rivers Vjosë, Seman, Mat, Drin, etc. Another enjoyable activity is also lagoon fishing, especially in the lagoon of Karavasta, Narta, Kune-Vain, etc. Other activities like horse riding became more organized during the reign of King Zog. After World War II, for about forty years, horse-riding was practiced only by a particular segment of Albanian army in different contests. Horse riding is practiced mainly in districts that have high quality horse-breeding centers, such as in Shkodër, Durrës, Tiranë, Elbasan (Cërrik), Korçë, Divjakë, Berat, Vlorë, Fusha e Pelave at Lura, Shishtavec in Kukës, etc. The geographic range of this sport is very interesting, as the nature in each of the above spots is combined with certain natural, historical and traditional elements. For horse riding enthusiasts in the capital, there are centers that offer horse riding, such as Mullet, Pezë etj.

**SOME OF THE IDEAL MOUNTAIN AREAS IDEAL FOR FISHING ARE: VALBONA RIVER VALLEY, THETHI STREAM, WHERE YOU CAN FIND THE MARBLE TROUT, AND THE UPPER VALLEY OF VJOSA, ETC.**



## WATER SPORTS

Water sports like rafting are held in attractive valleys which have numerous rivers and streams. They are particularly popular in the upper valleys of Osum (for rafting). The rafting route includes the wonderful canyons of Osumi. Another route is the one that crosses the bridge area of the Dashi, Lengariçës canyon in the river. Other regions where such sports are practiced include Devoll valley in the south, Valbona Shala Valleys in Albanian Alps, Tujanit scale, in the Tirana River, near the capital, at the mouth of Mat river and Patok lagoon (for canoeing), etc.



Osum ◀



## PARAGLIDING

▶ The best spot for practicing this sport is Llogara  
1.052 m  
above sea level

where the wind direction  
is favorable

## PARAGLIDING

This aeronautica sport goes back to 1990. Albania's landscape offers many opportunities for these kinds of sports, which is associated with the suitable topographic conditions and nature of Albania.

The best spot for practicing this sport is Llogora Vlora, where the wind direction is favorable. This is also the place where international meetings are held with the participation of foreign paratroopers especially those from Italy, France and others. Besides Llogora, other suitable locations for this sport are Morava, DAJTI and Taraboshi.





**UNDERWATER  
DIVING**

► **Underwater sports centers are located in North of Vloa**

During the last years, joint Albanian-American expeditions have discovered old drowned ships in the area.

## UNDERWATER DIVING

Professional diving opportunities have been developed only during the last decade. The rich underwater discoveries in Albanian seas provide a unique opportunity for divers to explore sea life and sunken ships. Underwater sports centers are located in North of Vlorë (Adriatic Sea). Towards the south, from Vlorë to Sarandë, there are numerous sports centers, where you can practice this growing sport.

During the last years, joint Albanian-American expeditions have discovered old drowned ships in the area. The most suitable places to practice this sport are Karaburun Peninsula, Sazan Island, the area north of Sarandë, Vlorë

UNDERWATER DIVING Bay, Dhërmi, Jali, Lagji Cape, Cape Rodon etc. In particular, it is Vlorë Bay that 'hides' many sunken ships of considerable antiquity. However, the most famous and popular is the Italian hospital ship "PO", which sank in March 1941 and was shot by a British airplane "Swordfish". Sunken objects reach a depth of 33 m and a length of 150 m. Another important discovery is in the north of Sarandë bay, where a sunken ship was discovered dating back to century III or IV B.C. Large amphoras are also found there. It is thought that this relic discovered

is among the best preserved of the Mediterranean. Besides sunken objects, it is also interesting to observe green and black algae, corals, etc.

Sazan Island is rich in sea life, with various underwater rocks. This serve as a habitat for a wide variety of fish and living fauna. The eastern part of the island is a popular area for diving and offers the most interesting sceneries. Diving guides are also offered by different companies in this area.

Karaburun Peninsula is a large and intact area, perfect for diving and underwater exploration. A southern stream keeps the water clean and offers excellent visibility. This area is completely intact and has been turned into a diving destination. It has a magnificent beauty and offers great potentials.

**SAZAN ISLAND IS RICH IN SEA LIFE, WITH VARIOUS UNDERWATER ROCKS. THIS SERVE AS A HABITAT FOR A WIDE VARIETY OF FISH AND LIVING FAUNA.**











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