Balkan Summit Adventure (7 days)
Climb the Highest Peaks of Four Countries

Challenge yourself, conquer the mighty peaks of Korab (2.756m), Gjeravica (2.656m) and Zla Kolata (2.534m) to reach truly breathtaking panoramas. An intense, off the beaten path experience in the land of the Via Dinarica. No climbing, ropes or similar.

Less peaks, more time? See the Peaks of the Balkans and High Scardus Trail trekkings.

6x overnights with hiking up to ▲ 1,500 ▼ 1,750 m
Peak Bagging the Balkans
Introduction

Highlights of the Balkan Summit Adventure
☆ Go on a real adventure in Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro - touching Macedonia
☆ Climb the mighty three – Korab (2.764m), Gjeravica (2.656m) & Zla Kolata (2.534m)
☆ Trek across of the formerly closed borders between Ex-Yugoslavia and Albania
☆ Spend a night in a shepherd’s hut to experience true local lifestyle
☆ Boat the Lake Koman & celebrate the trip in vibrant Tirana, Albania’s capital

English-speaking tour leader
7 days (6 nights) including one arrival & departure day
early June to late September (best period)
1 to 8 persons / guaranteed from the first participant
starts and ends in Tirana
4 hikes with up to 10 h walking time (Ø 8:15 h) and 1,750 m ▼▲
for the experienced only (see next page)
hotels with private ensuite rooms & guesthouse with shared rooms
luggage transport: one piece up to 15 kg in soft bags only*
Is this trip for me?

4 hikes up to 10h walking time (Ø 8:15h) and 1,750 m altitude difference.

Difficulty 4/4 Tough
At this difficulty level previous trekking experience is mandatory and you need complete confidence in your ability to trek for many days over rough terrain. Adverse weather conditions, exposed paths and scrambling sections may be part of the tour. On winter trips with snow, you need to know how to use crampons. Stamina is essential as walking days last six to nine hours, or more on occasional days, and daily ascents will likely often be above 1.000m, perhaps with the odd day ascending up to and above 1.500m.

Comfort 2/4 Welcoming
That means: hotels with priatve ensuite rooms & guesthouse with shared rooms
- participants share a room with 2-5 other travelers from the group
- includes at least one overnight at a basic accommodation
Breakdown: 2 night(s) in private ensuite, 4 night(s) in shared room(s)

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<th>Ø 8:15 h Asc VS Desc</th>
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<td>0:00</td>
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"Take only pictures, leave only footprints"
Visitors are expected to respect nature, dispose of their waste properly and be considerate of local culture and people.
Overview

Click to open an interactive map

Included
- English-speaking guide
- accommodation: 2x hotel(s), 2x guesthouse(s), 1x homestay(s), 1x hut(s)
- meals: all breakfasts, 5 lunches and 6 dinners
- transfers as foreseen by the itinerary including airport pick-up
- luggage transport: one piece up to 15 kg in soft bags only*
- entrance fees, trekking and border crossing permits (on guided tours only)
  * limited by luggage transport on horse, take a duffel or rucksack, hardcases are not suitable

Excluded
- meals not listed above as well as drinks other than table water
- personal expenses such as gratuities and souvenirs
- flights: all Zbulo tours are ground-service only
- overseas health insurance* is compulsory to offer best possible care
  * 99% of European travel insurances cover this already

Outline
1. Tirana - Radomire: homestay (-/-/D)
2. Radomire - Mt. Korab (2.764m) - Gjakova: hotel (B/LP/D)
3. Gjakova - Mt. Gjeravica (2.656m) - Doberdol: shepherd huts (B/LP/D)
4. Doberdol - Balqin - Cerem: simple guesthouse (B/LP/D)
5. Cerem - Mt. Kolata (2.534m) - Valbona: guesthouse (B/LP/D)
6. Valbona - Koman Lake - Tirana: hotel (B/L/D)
7. Tirana - Departure: - (B/-/-)

Have questions?

Click to visit our knowledge base
or write us at welcome@zbulo.org
1. Arrival to Tirana and Travel into the Highlands
Tirana (110m) - Kukes (350m) - Radomire (1.265m)

Welcome to the Balkans! Our group gathers in Tirana for a joint transfer in the afternoon. There will be both a meeting point in the city and pick-up from the airport. Please ascertain to arrive at the the latest by 3:30 pm. The transfer takes in four hours to the far North-Easterly corner of the country into the border area with Kosovo and Macedonia. The drive out of the coastal basin follows a comfortable motorway that cuts through the Mirdita highlands towards Kukes. The scenery reveals Albania's wild mountainous character, inspires our fantasy and creates anticipation for the three peaks that are waiting for us. Onward the road narrows, leads through a mighty gorge and starts climbs high above the Drini River to an unsuspecting turn off for the little village of Radomire. We're accommodated at a simple pension where dinner is waiting for us. Tomorrow's hike starts right from the doorstep.

Ask us about hotel overnights and additional transfers should you arrive earlier.

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2. The Highest Peak of Albania & Macedonia
Radomire (1.265m) - Mt. Korab (2764m) - Gjakova (375m)

We rise early and prepared to conquer the peak of Mt. Korab (2764m). It’s a strenuous day with much elevation difference but no technical difficulty. The path from the village enters the fir woods, but soon reaches open pastures speckled with shepherd huts and, towards the summit, more rocky stretches. Reaching the saddle at the border, referred to the “Gate of Korab”, we circle the peak and approach it with panoramic views of Macedonia's Mavrovo National Park and the surrounding high peaks of the Korab Koritnik Range from the backside. Having just reached the highest mountain of two countries, there's reason to celebrate. Weather allowing we have lunch on the top before returning on the same route back to last night's accommodation. You may only complete part of the route and wait for the party to return, if the entire appears too long on the first hiking day. Time allowing we take refreshments before leaving the little village for a scenic ride along the River Drin and into Europe's youngest nation - Kosovo. In the evening we reach Gjakova, where we stay in the historic bazaar quarter at a comfortable hotel.
3. The Highest Peak of Kosovo
Gjakova (375m) - Gjeravica (2.656m) - Doberdol (1.800m)

On 4x4 we drive for two hours to the seasonal pastures at the bottom of Mt. Gjeravica. Luggage is loaded on horses and with eyes set on the peak, we stride across blueberry-covered meadows to the ridgeline. The path winds through a boulder field up to a tranquil, heart-shaped alpine lake. In its surface the reflection of Gjeravica’s dark, volcanic rock resembles reptile scales, protecting the mountain within our reach from being scaled too easily. It takes little more than an hour to reach on a last steeper, rugged route the summit - this is optional and can also be skipped. From the highest point of the country, we’re watching the Dinaric Alps plunge over thousands meters into the Kosovo field and admire the landscape of the Eastern Alps. After the obligatory summit photo, we descent on well trodden, former Yugoslav border patrol routes with scenic vistas to a last grassy pass into the glacial bowl of the Doberdol Alp. Overnight in simple shepherd huts.
4. Eastern Alps & Shepherd Settlements
Doberdol (1.800m) - Balqin (1.825m) - Cerem (1.188m)

The sound of chiming bells and bleating livestock wakes us in the morning. Time appears frozen in Doberdol, where locals still live in harmony with nature, the way humankind did many years ago. This archaic place helps us ground ourselves and set our inner compass, reconsidering daily luxuries versus the simple joys of nature. In the shepherd huts we have relinquished comfort for one night, but gained so much more in return. Our walks lead through several more summer pastures along the panorama-rich rim of the deep cut Gashi River Gorge towards the Montenegrin border. The fir is home to brown bear, chamois, wolf and Albania’s national animal, the golden eagle, its wilderness preserved by the remoteness of the formerly off limits border region. Today unnoticably, we have walked for an hour through Montenegro when a weather border stone appears in front of us. With beautiful views of tomorrow’s summit, we finish the walk in the summer village of Cerem.
Wishing farewell to our host family, we start the longest stage of our trek by ascending on the soft soil of fairy-tale beech forest towards Bor Pass. Its top marks the stark contrast of the border between both countries as well as the more mellow, volcanic Eastern Alps and craggy limestone towers of the Western Alps. For an hour we pass in Montenegro through a labyrinth-like karst field that includes short scrambling sections. From Persllopit Pass (2,045m) we gaze at the summit of Zla Kolata, the climb to the peak is optional, takes two and a half hours and leads through rock bands that may require once more the use of hands. On top of Montenegro's highest peak, the efforts of this trek are rewarded with some of the best views across the heart of Accursed Mountains, into Prokletije and Valbona National Park. A stepped descent over meadows, through forest and a steep and at times stoney donkey path leads us our guesthouse in beautiful Valbona.
6. From Valbona across the Koman Lake to Tirana
Valbona (965m) - Koman Lake (182m) - Tirana (110m)

An early start allows us after an hour's drive to catch the uniquely converted bus/ferry that shuttles passengers across the Komani Lake. The tranquil, three hour boat ride through the fjord-like landscape at the outer edge of the Albanian Alps makes for the perfect ending of our trek in the Balkans. Reflect on the adventure packed days and be once more astonished by the scenery and remote hamlets lining the lake. Disembarking in Koman, we drive 90 min to lunch at the world class farm to table restaurant Mrizi i Zanave, a leader of Albania's slow food movement. Reaching Tirana in the afternoon, we check in at our centrally located hotel and explore the Ottoman, Italian and Communist period architecture that lines the boulevard while watching the capital coming to life at night. Dinner will be in the lively "Blloku" area, the most popular place for a night out! Here we celebrate our journey and personal achievements over sumptuous dinner and drinks.
7. Farewell from Albania!
Time to Say Goodbye | Options to Extend Your Trip

Airport transfer at your preferred timing

Stroll through town, visit the colorful bazaar and park that forms the green heart of Tirana. Two former nuclear shelters open their doors to visitors, the museum turned headquarters of the secret police, National History Museum and socialist period art gallery make up just a few of city’s sights. The last day presents you yet another side of diverse Albania, one that stands in stark contrast to the rural areas visited in the past days. Your multi-faceted journey through Albania ends with an organized transfer to the airport.

Thank you joining for this adventure, we hope you had a great time and hope it’s not your last visit to the country of warm hospitality, countless mountains and sun-kissed beaches.

Like to stay longer? Ask us about discounts on combined trips (up to 10%), transfers and extension nights in Tirana, Shkodra and elsewhere - plenty to explore that merits a full day in each town.

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