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## Kosovo, Albania and Macedonia tour

*(7 nights - 8 days)*

This tour explores the three neighbouring Balkan countries Kosovo, Albania and FYR of Macedonia with their essential monuments and sites. An excellent tour to get to know the similarities and differences of these countries.

### **Day 1: Pristina Airport – Prizren**

We welcome you at Pristina Airport and transfer to Prizren one of the most beautiful towns in Kosovo where we visit the Stone Bridge and bazaar, The Mosque of Sinan Pasha built in 1615. Overnight in Prizren.



### **Day 2: Prizren – Decan Monastery – Peja Patriarchate – Gjakova**

Prizren is known for the arts and crafts something which becomes obvious as soon as you approach the centre, with cobble stone streets, beautifully crafted shops, bars and restaurants, built in a typical Ottoman architecture. Prizren offers some great religious monuments representing different faiths, with the 14<sup>th</sup> century Orthodox Church of “Our Lady of Ljevis” being the most important, becoming part of the UNESCO list of protected Medieval Monuments of Kosovo in 2006. We continue to the Monastery complex of Decan, part of Kosovo’s UNESCO monuments. It is considered the largest medieval church in the Balkans and contains beautifully preserved fresco decorations. Continue to visit the Patriarchate of Peja constructed in the XIII century. It is composed of three small churches with beautiful frescoes. The complex of churches for its architectural and cultural values it represents is part of UNESCO. Gjakova which we visit next has a Grand Bazaar thought to be the oldest in Kosovo also known as Çarshi, full of old houses & shops, a Turkish Bathhouse or Hamam and the 16th century Hadum Aga Mosque. Overnight in Gjakova in the old quarter.



### Day 3: Gjakova – Koman Ferry – Kruja – Tirana

After an early breakfast drive to Fierza where will take the ferry to Koman on the Koman lake. A magnificent two hour ride where the beauty of the high pointed mountains falling sharply into the waters of the artificial lake of opal green waters, forms a natural panorama which will leave you gasping for air. After this spectacular experience drive to Kruja - the centre of Albanian resistance against the Turks under Albanian national hero, Scanderbeg. He kept them from crossing into Western Europe for 25 years, thus earning the title “Champion of Christ” given by the Pope of the time. We visit the Skanderbeg Museum, a very rich Ethnographic Museum and the Old Bazaar where the best handmade Albanian souvenirs can be purchased. Afterwards drive to Albania’s vibrant capital Tirana where we spend the night.



### Day 4: Tirana – Berat (UNESCO)

After breakfast take a driven tour of the major monuments and visit the National History Museum which offers a great introduction to Albania and its people. Proceed to Berat, one of the most visited and characteristic towns in Albania under the protection of UNESCO as a patronage of humanity for its architectural uniqueness. We visit the Castle and the Onufri Museum and Ethnographic museum. Berat castle is of particular interest as people still live within its walls in their traditional houses, as have their ancestors for centuries. The castle used to have over 40 churches of which 7 still remain including St. Mary’s church turned into Onufri Museum. Onufri was a famous Albanian Icon master painter of the 16th century who painted many orthodox churches in Albania and Greece, using a special red colour. After the planned visit you are left free to explore independently. Overnight in Berat.



### Day 5: Berat - Elbasan – Ohrid (UNESCO)

After breakfast depart to the city of Ohrid in neighbouring Macedonia. On the way we drive through rural villages with wonderful countryside landscapes. We stop at Elbasan for a quick visit at the castle. Afterwards proceed to Ohrid proclaimed UNESCO World Heritage area for its cultural and natural legacy. Visits include: Saint Sophia, Plashonik, Saint Painteleimon Church, the Holy Virgin of Peribleptos Church, Icon Gallery, and old Bazaar. Overnight in Ohrid.



### Day 6: Ohrid – Stobi – Skopje

After the breakfast drive to Stobi one of the most important archaeological sites in Macedonia. Lying in a fertile valley just a few minutes off the central north-south highway that connects Macedonia with Greece, the ancient city of Stobi was a vital trade route in its days. Visit the excavation sites with beautiful remains such as a 2<sup>nd</sup> century amphitheatre, the Theodosia palace and early Christian ruins with extensive and ornate mosaic floors. Afterwards depart for Skopje where we take a guided tour of the main sites. Visit the old Turkish bazaar, Mahmut Pasha Hammam, the memorial house of Mother Teresa, Stone bridge and the Macedonia Plaza. Overnight in Skopje.



### Day 7: Skopje – Gracanica Monastery – Pristina

After breakfast drive to Pristina capital of Kosovo. At Gracanica a few kilometers from Pristina, we visit a beautifully preserved Orthodox Church of Byzantine architecture founded by Serbian king Stefan Milutin in 1321, which is part of the Kosovo Medieval Monuments protected by UNESCO. The Ethnographic Museum situated in a typical Ottoman architecture house is beautifully stocked with original artefacts which testify to the traditions and way of living of the people in Kosovo. Of particular interest are the Ottoman period mosques of Pristina with probably the most beautiful, being the Fatih Mosque dating back to 1461 during the golden era of Sultan Mehmet II. Its huge ceiling domed cupola crowns a splendidly painted floral interior of Arabesque design. Nearby is Pristina's oldest building, the Çarshia Mosque completed in 1389. In late afternoon we will walk to visit: Mother Teresa Boulevard, the Monument of Scanderbeg, the clock tower, Kosovo Government building and the “New Born” monument-the symbol of this new state. Overnight in Pristina.



### Day 8: Pristina – Airport

After breakfast on the way to Airport just outside Pristina visit the Battle of Kosovo monument dedicated to the battle of 1389 between a Balkan Alliance forces against an Ottoman army led by Sultan Murad I. The battle was fierce and both leaders of the armies were killed in battle. Then continue further to visit the symbolic Tomb an monument of Sulltan Murad I. Continue to airport.

