EQUUS JOURNEYS
HORSEBACK TRAVEL & EQUESTRIAN TRADITIONS SINCE 1972

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Sea and Mountains of Albania

ALBANIA

This **horseback trail in Albania** is a fast-paced ride for experienced riders. This is a perfect holiday for those eager to discover a preserved environment and ride across varied ecosystems during the week. Riding sure-footed **local horses**, you will go over exciting mountain paths before you reach the Ionian sea and its pathways lined with olive trees. This trail also follows the tracks of King Ilirian Skerdilajd, on his way to conquer Kaonia 2,300 years ago, and is a great **historical and cultural experience**!

Fast Ride	**8 days (6 riding)**	**From £1,382**	


Sea & Mountains of Albania


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ITINERARY

Highlights

- Discover Albania's layered history on horseback, riding past ancient ruins, castles, churches and monasteries alongside bunkers and military relics from the country's communist past.

- Experience a unique trail with that combines Albania's Ionian coastline with dramatic mountain scenery.

- Ride through historic paths, olive groves and pine forests, stopping at panoramic viewpoints over the coast and inland valleys.

- Enjoy authentic Albanian hospitality in local family homes.

- From May to the end of September you can enjoy swimming in the sea (without horses) on two of the trail days.

Day 1 — 1 : EUROPE - TIRANA - GJIROKASTRA

Your flight to Tirana should ideally land in the morning, but no later than 14:00 to allow time for the transfer and a visit of Gjirokastra with your guides. From the airport the transfer will be by mini-van or off-road car and will take around 3-4 hours (250km).

Flights are not included but can be booked upon request.

Quick tip: you can also fly to Corfu and catch the ferry to Saranda, where you will be picked-up. The ferry times can be unpredictable due to local conditions and we advise you arrive a day early.

Your hotel is a short walk from the historical centre of Gjirokastra: you will have the opportunity to visit the town and old Bazaar before dinner. You can

also visit Enver Hoxha's house, Gjirokastra castle, the church of the Old Bazaar, the mosque of the Bazaar and Skenduli House: this is a good glimpse into the traditional life as it is in Gjirokastra!

This evening dinner will be served at a traditional restaurant, and you will accompanied by your guides. This is a good time to discuss your riding ability and learn more about the trip before the start of your riding adventure begins in the morning.

Day 2 — 2 : VIROI PARK - FUSHBARDHA - 5-6 hours riding

A short drive to the stables where you will meet the horses. You will start riding at 360m above sea level. You will be surprised by how this mountainous ecosystem can change so suddenly. You will find yourself crossing valleys that welcome faster paces. The morning will be spent riding through hills, rivers, forest as well as steep ascents and descents.
You will have a short break at the monastery of Cepo - which has one of the most strategic views of the Drino Valley. Today, only two parts remain from the former monastery complex: the basilica with a dome and dozens of former guesthouses which have hosted travellers for centuries.

After lunch at a local farm, you ride down to the river of Kardhiq. Today's ride finishes after around 5-6 hours at the village of Fushbardha, one of the most important centres of Laberia´s area. You will spend the evening and night in a village house enjoying homemade traditional food and drinks.

Your guides will go back to Gjirokastra in the evening. It is your responsibility to ensure the horses are fed and watered in the evening, and again in the morning.

Day 3 — 3 : FUSHBARDHA - BORSH - 8 hours riding (incl. leading)

After a traditional breakfast at the family house, get ready for a very long day riding (8h - up to 9 hours). The ride will follow the tracks of the King Skerdilajd Army which passed through the "Neck of the Rock" around 2,300 years ago. He led the invasion army in 230 BC to the capital of Epirus Phoinike (Finiq). The path combines beautiful woods, mountain climbing, rocky landscapes and ruins of ancient civilizations. Basha Stones, Dhespina cave, the Rock of Kaze, The Valley of Cheries, the Crooked Brook, Shameti Brook, Trullas Neck and Derrasa Hole are some of the local sights en route today. Lunch break will be in a valley surrounded by a small oak forest.

You continue through the mountain of Borsh towards the next village. Today's landscape offers wild unspoiled views. Flowers, ancient trees, streams, hundreds of goats, sheep and cows will be part of this riding experience. Be prepared to walk for approx. 1h30 during the day on difficult paths and steep hills going down (good mountain hiking shoes are recommended).

You will arrive at a family house late in the afternoon and enjoy traditional food, rich in olive oil. Wine, raki and mountain tea will be a welcome addition at the end of this long day in the saddle!

Day 4 — 4 : BORSH - PIGERAS - 4 hours riding

Today is a shorter but very pleasant riding day. First, you will visit the castle of Borsh (known in history as Castle of Sopot) located on a hill at 500m above sea level and dates back to about IV-III century B.C.

After visiting the Castle ruins you will start a 3 hour ride from Borsh and take the old road along the seaside. Olive trees, oranges, lemons, citrus and grapefruit are planted everywhere on the upper part of the road. Many defence bunkers remained along the seaside of Piqeras, an old fishing village. You will finish your ride in the village and drive to the sea for a lunch break on the beach. After lunch you can enjoy a fairly long break - a siesta and a swim are on the cards! You will visit the village of Shen Vasil, a medieval center with a dark history during the dictatorship era, as it served as a labor camp for political prisoners. Traces of this tumultuous past can still be seen throughout the village.

You will spend the night in a family house, and perhaps a lovely dinner of seafood, local cheese and salad. Home-made raki and wine will be offered with the meal.

Day 5 — 5 : BUNEC - SHPELLA - HUNDECOVA - SHEN VASIL - 5 hours riding

This morning you will enjoy breakfast on the terrace with beautiful views over the Ionian Sea. You can enjoy traditional byrek (cheese pie) and cookies, butter, fresh milk and honey. Today's trail will take you to the sea through olive tree terraces to the beach of Bunec. You will ride up again to Lukove village and down to the sea again through some challenging landscapes. Lunch will be held at a small restaurant by the sea.

The lunch break includes the chance to swim (without the horses) and relax for several hours. As you explore the challenging landscapes of the region, you will continue your journey towards the village of Shen Vasil, which you visited the previous day. Along the way, you may encounter herds of sheep and goats accompanied by local shepherds. This region has a strong rural tradition, and you might get a glimpse into the daily lives of the local population.

Overnight with a local family.

Day 6 — 6: VARFAJ VILLAGE - LAZARAT - 6-7h riding (incl. leading)

The day begins with the ascent of Mount Sopoti. Initially, you will ride through gentle and picturesque hills towards Varfaj village, where you will witness by breathtaking views.
As you continue to reach the summit of Mount Sopoti, you will stop at some natural springs to water the horses, refill our bottles, and refresh ourselves.

After the Varaj village, the ascents become steeper and more rocky so you will ride at a slower pace until reaching the summit of Mount Sopoti, where a delightful picnic lunch awaits.

The descent provides a panoramic view of the Drinos valley. Please note that there are a few sections that require you to dismount and lead your horse.
You will arrive at Lazarat village, and spend the night in a local home which offers you an authentic experience.

Day 7 — 7 : FUSHEBARDHA - GJIROKASTRA - 3 hours riding

On the final day of the ride, you will make your way back to the stables near Gjirokstra. The trail will take you through diverse landscapes, including valleys, and the picturesque Drino's valley.

You will have the opportunity to enjoy cantering and galloping through open fields. As you approach the Asim Zaneli village, you will ascend the hills and, eventually arrive back at the stables.

After saying goodbye to the horses, you will have a picnic thoughtfully
prepared by a local family.

Farewell dinner in Gjirokastra and overnight at a hotel.

Day 8 — 8 : GJIROKASTRA - TIRANA - EUROPE

After breakfast at the hotel you will be transferred back to the airport of Tirana. Your flight should depart in the afternoon.

If you are flying out of Corfu please allow for an extra day to ensure you have time to cross over with the ferry.

DATES & PRICES

DEPARTURE	RETURN	PRICE WITHOUT FLIGHTS	STATUS
08/05/2027	15/05/2027	£1,382	Full
22/05/2027	29/05/2027	£1,382	Full
05/06/2027	12/06/2027	£1,382	Full
19/06/2027	26/06/2027	£1,382	Last seats
03/07/2027	10/07/2027	£1,382	Guaranteed departure
17/07/2027	24/07/2027	£1,382	Guaranteed departure
31/07/2027	07/08/2027	£1,382	Guaranteed departure
21/08/2027	28/08/2027	£1,382	Guaranteed departure
04/09/2027	11/09/2027	£1,382	Full
18/09/2027	25/09/2027	£1,382	Full
02/10/2027	09/10/2027	£1,382	Full
09/10/2027	16/10/2027	£1,382	Guaranteed departure

Price details

- Flights to your destination are not included. We can look into the best flight options for you upon request.

- Rates are per person and based on sharing a room (up to 4 beds) in the homes of local hosts.

- Groups are made up of 3-12 riders, with one or two English-speaking guides.

- Please note: the ride will also confirm for 2 riders on payment of a supplement of c. €178/£150/$195 in 2026. Once the group has reached 3 people, we will remove this supplement from your invoice and refund you if you have already paid it.

- It is not possible to guarantee single rooms during the trail. However, you can guarantee a single room for your first and last nights, spent in hotels, for a €30 supplement per night (2026), payable locally in Euros.

- Return transfers are not included and will be invoiced:

> Tirana airport to Gjirokastra: €90/£80/$100 return per person, 225 km, 3-4 hours. Flights that fit the normal transfer's schedule should be planned to arrive no later than 14:30 pm and departures after 1pm.
If your flights do not match these transfers, a private transfer can be organised from Tirana airport:
- 1 rider: €140/£120/$160 one way
- 2 riders: €70/£65/$80 one way
- 3+ riders: €55/£50/$65 one way
We cannot organise transfers from the city centre. There is a bus every hour starting from the centre of Tirana (behind the opera palace) to the airport, or you can take a taxi.
> Saranda Port to Gjirokastra: €50/£45/$60 return per person, 64km, 1 hour. Transfers departing from Saranda no later than 15:00. If flying in and out of Corfu, please allow one extra day as ferry schedules can be unpredictable due to local conditions.

- Children from 12yo are welcome on the trail, provided they have reasonable levels of fitness, sufficient riding ability and are accompanied by an adult.
Please Note
The itinerary may be modified at anytime for security reasons, meteorological or events beyond our control such as blocked roads, rivers in flood, drought, strikes and local holidays. Equus Journeys, our local partners and their local guides will always strive to find the best solution and will alter the itinerary as needed.
The names of the hotels and accommodation are given for information only and depending on availability, they may be modified without notice and replaced by another of a similar standard.

Price includes

SUPPORT TEAM

1 English-speaking horse guide

LOGISTICS

1 support vehicle

ACCOMMODATION

Room in private home on D2, 3, 4, 5 and 6
Room in a standard hotel on D1 and D7

MEALS

Full board from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 8

Price doesn't include

TRANSPORT

Return airport transfers, invoiced before you go - see above for details
International flights

EXTRAS

Tips to the local team
Entry fees to the museums and local attractions
Small group supplement - see above for the details

INSURANCE

Cancellation and travel insurance are not included in the above listed price. Please note that insurance is mandatory. We recommend taking out an insurance policy as soon as your trip is booked to cover you in case of cancellation
Visas and personal purchase

Optional

ACCOMMODATION

Single room supplement - only possible on the first and last nights.

EQUESTRIAN INFO

Horses

The horses are a local breed of Tarpan and Arabian horses. They are small but robust, and perfectly suited to the rocky terrain. There are 23 horses in total - steady, brave and sure-footed, they make ideal equine companions.

Guide & local team

Aurel and Kristina are specialised in mountainous trail rides. Their objective is to offer a trail combining culture, history, nature, and always in the respect of the horses. They love their country and its history.

All trails are accompanied by a lead guide and a back up guide. They speak English, Italian and Greek.

Minimum riding ability

MINIMUM RIDING ABILITY

You need to be a competent rider, capable of riding at all paces in the outdoors, over steep and technical paths. Previous trail riding experience is recommended.

Rider weight limit: 90 kilos / 14,1 st / 198 lbs. This is a strict limit as the horses are small and the terrain is demanding.

PACE

The pace is varied to include trots, canters and possible gallops in the valleys. Some of the riding is across varied terrain so you need to be secure in the saddle. There are some technical paths and steep hills where you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot (please make sure to wear appropriate footwear). The horses are sure-footed, make sure to trust their judgement!

Please note that although this trail includes some beach riding, any fast riding takes place along an old path 100m from the beach. The sand is rocky and therefore is only suitable for walking on.
The mountain horses are also not too keen on the water, so they will not tend to want to paddle.

TACKING ABILITY AND PARTICIPATION

You will be asked to help look after the horses in the morning, at lunch time and dinner time. Please note that the horses stay in paddocks near your guesthouses while the guides go back to the stables for the night, wich means you will be asked to feed the horses in the evening and morning.

You can help groom and tack up although this is not mandatory.

TRIP CONDITIONS AND REQUESTED EXPERIENCE

You should have experience riding outdoors on trails and be confident riding in open spaces. You need to be fit enough for this trail. On some occasions you will be asked to dismount and lead your horse on foot over steep hills and rocky terrain. Some paths are close to the cliffs, so this is not suitable for riders suffering from vertigo.

The terrain is quite rugged and stony - the horses are well trained, sure-footed and quite used to navigating terrain that would be tricky for most European/Western horses.

Please note that although this trail includes some beach riding, any fast riding takes place along an old path 200m from the beach. The sand is rocky and therefore is only suitable for walking on. The mountain horses are also not too keen on the water so will not tend to want to paddle!

EQUESTRIAN EQUIPMENT

English saddles and bridles.

Personal saddlebags are welcome if riders would like to bring their own. Small saddlebags are provided by the team but just for food and water.

Helmets are mandatory and you should bring your own.

TRAVEL INFO

COMFORT

You will stay in modest homestay accommodation with locals, except for the first and last nights that are spent in hotels.

Hotel: double or triple ensuite bedrooms. Wifi is available.

Guesthouses/Home stays: twin rooms (sometimes triple, or quadruple), shared bathrooms. Your hosts don't necessarily speak English but a little bit of raki and sign language go a long way!

Very limited internet access/signal during the trail.

MEALS

The local gastronomy is delicious and varied. During the ride, you will enjoy freshly prepared meals that will give you a sample of the Albanian gastronomy.

Country breakfast with local dairy products, honey, pancakes; pies and cakes, eggs, milk, tea and coffee.
Lunches: on most days, you will have your lunch at a local small restaurant/cafe. On days in which you have picnics, you will prepare your own lunch (in the morning) according to your taste (bread, cheese, vegetables, eggs...). Sometimes you will bring this with you in your saddlebags, and sometimes it will be brought to you by the back up vehicle.
Dinner is a hot meal prepared by your hosts (veal, pork, chicken, goat or fish), with local wines and raki.

Dietary requests can usually be accommodated if mentioned in advance - please inform your travel advisor upon booking.

CLIMATE

This ride takes place in southern Albania which is around 5 degrees warmer than the rest of the country. You will experience different types of weather on the trail; from cooler mountainous air to a warmer climate down on the coast.

The best time to visit Albania is the months of April, May, June and September, with lovely warm weather. July and August are dry and temperatures can be extremely hot, from 25 to 45°C! In October, November and March, there is a chance of rain and temperatures average 10-15°C, with April starting to get warmer.

TIPS

Tips are left to your discretion and are not mandatory.
The local currency is the Lek, but Euro is widely accepted.

PACKING LIST

Please pack carefully and sensibly: the following guide is here to give you an idea of what to bring. This list must be adapted depending on the season and individual needs.

Head
- Helmet
- Sunglasses - with a cord attached so they don't fly off when riding
- Buff or bandana

Upper body
- Long sleeved shirts provide protection from the sun or branches and are an extra layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight fleece or jumper
- Warm fleece or jumper (and a spare in case one gets wet)
- Warm and waterproof jacket - it can rain outside July and August and the evenings can be cooler.

Legs
- 2 Lightweight, comfortable riding trousers or jodhpurs
- Casual trousers for the evenings, such as jeans or tracksuit bottoms
- Bathing suit and towel

Hands and Feet
- Comfortable riding boots. We recommend good hiking boots with half chaps. There might be some walking over steep trails so we don't recommend taking your favourite long leather boots in case they get damaged, and normal riding boots with a smooth sole can be slippery when walking on foot.
- Trainers or equivalent light shoes for the evenings
- Several pairs of socks
- Gloves. Waterproof gloves can be particularly useful.

Other useful items
- Bumbag for carrying your camera and small items whilst riding
- Water bottle
- Swiss army knife (or equivalent)
- Ear plugs (for light sleepers)

Medical kit
- Any medication you regularly take
- Sunscreen and lip balm - should be high factor
- Insect repellent, preferably containing deet
- Blister plasters in case of any rubs
- Antiseptic cream, plasters, aspirin, anti-histamine, insect-bite salve etc...
- Spare prescription glasses/contact lenses
- Eye drops
- Imodium or similar anti-diarrhoea medication
- Antiseptic wipes
- Handwash gel

Our Recommendations
- Backpacks cannot be worn whilst riding. We recommend a small bumbag or a coat with pockets so that you can carry small items with you during the day (camera, sunscreen, lipbalm etc)
- We recommend travelling in your riding boots and carrying your hat and some riding clothes in your hand luggage - then if your luggage goes astray you are still able to ride!
- We recommend taking a copy of your passport and insurance documents with you in case you lose your originals
- Take a second, smaller bag to pack things you may need during the day such as a book or suncream then you can easily access it during the long lunch break
- You can bring pictures of your family and small gifts for your host family if you like.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

1. **Travel light.** It's a little known fact, but the lighter you pack, the better for the environment as heavy bags will produce higher emissions (when flying a plane or driving a car!).
2. **Reduce plastic waste.** Take your favorite reusable bottle with you. Avoid single-use bags, cups, or straws.
3. **Preserve nature.** Always take your rubbish with you during the ride and recycle them. Leave all the flowers or plants as you found them, and never get too close when observing wildlife. Make sure to use eco-friendly products such as body wash or laundry detergent (if camping) to protect both your skin and the environment.
4. **Choose your experiences carefully.** Respect animal life by not participating in any activities that abuse wild animals (shows, elephant rides, etc.).
5. **Support local populations.** Buy local handicrafts, be respectful of customs, and learn about the culture of local communities.
6. **Share!** Raise awareness among your family and friends about sustainable tourism.

For more information please see this page .