
Tourism in Albanian Territories

NEVRUZ ORUQI, PhD

St. Clement of Ohrid University of Bitola
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Ohrid

XHELIL BEKTESHI, PhD

St. Clement of Ohrid University of Bitola
Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality, Ohrid

Abstract

Tourism as an activity appears when a certain level of socio-economic development of a country is reached. Tourism is born and developed when the conditions are created for people to leave their permanent residence and temporarily spend time in a temporary residence to relax, have fun, or for other touristic reasons.

Albania and Kosovo have great tourism potential. This is due to the geographical position in which they are located, the high natural values they have, and the many historical and cultural aspects that are intertwined in it. For these reasons, our country has been classified in recent years by the international travel agency, as one of the most interesting tourist destinations in the world.

Albania and Kosovo have the potential for many types of tourism, but there is great interest in coastal, cultural, mountain, religious, active, and rural tourism, then there is interest in our food, our wines, and interest in visiting the lakes in Albania.

Tourism also helps the state to stimulate local industry and trade, to promote cultural values and natural resources, to protect cultural heritage, and so on. With the help of tourism, the state strengthens the economy, the country is developed, new investments are attracted, new jobs are created, and living standards are improved.

Keywords: Albania, Kosovo, cultural heritage, coastal tourism.

INTRODUCTION

Albania as a touristic region is known for its wonderful landscape, characterized by an unparalleled variety of world-class natural and cultural attractions in a small geographical area, its endless coastline and over 11 islands where most of which are small, except Sazan Island and Kuna Island where they cover an area of over 1 km² these are famous Islands throughout the Balkans, due to their incomparable beauty¹. The number of tourists from around the world increased from 5.9 million in 2018 to more than 6.7 million in 2019, marking an increase of 15%. Foreign nationals entering Albania come mainly from the following countries: Kosovo (35%), northern Macedonia (11%), Greece (9%), Montenegro (6%), and Italy (7%).

The most developed types of tourism in Albania:

- Coastal tourism
- Cultural / Historical Tourism
- Mountain tourism
- Health Tourism

In addition to the sea and the sun, tourism forms an essential part of Albania's identity, present, and future.

Kosovo is distinguished by its natural resources, where the potential for tourism in Kosovo is closely related to its geographical position. The mountainous south of Kosovo has a high potential for winter tourism, whereas a possibility of winter tourism is the Ski Center in Brezovica, in the Sharr Mountains. Sharr Mountains offer excellent tourism opportunities such as skiing, eco-tourism, parachuting from mountain heights, mountain biking, rock climbing, mountaineering, horseback riding, etc.

In addition to the tourist resort mentioned above, Kosovo is rich in mountains, artificial lakes, and rivers, which offer good opportunities for hunting and fishing.

Coastal tourism in Albania

Usually, tourism near the sea is concentrated in the west of the country and especially in Velipoja, Shën Gjin, Durrës, Vlora, and Saranda, Ksamili. You must have an application in Albania and use a large number of services, accommodation facilities, business facilities, craft

¹https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista_e_ishujve_n%C3%AB_Shqip%C3%ABri

centers, parks attracting the latest requirements and the effects of foreign tourists.

- **We can say that Durrës** is one of the most important cities in Albania as a tourist destination. Where in the southern part of Durrës is its beach, which is about 10 km long. Recently, Durrës has become a key destination for many European tourists, who through connections with travel agencies, choose exactly the beautiful coastal city to spend their holidays. A city full of life, where tourist offers will allow you to book and choose from a wide range of hotels, of all categories and prices².

-**Vlora** is located in the southwest of Albania with a population of 189,000 inhabitants. Vlora is the city where the Declaration of Albanian Independence was proclaimed on November 28, 1912. Vlora is an important tourist, commercial and maritime center in Albania, in Vlora is developed the fishing industry.

Vlora is a tourist center and along its beaches, you will find many hotels and restaurants, in recent years there has been a great development of tourism, due to the natural beauty accompanied by this development with the construction of many hotels, restaurants, beaches.

- **Saranda** is a coastal city in the south of Albania, offers a special style and atmosphere for tourists is close to the border with Greece, a place that has wonderful beaches in the Ionian Sea. But in Saranda we can also find other beauties like Corfu, which is an attractive place for those who are passionate about history. Saranda is considered as one of the most modern resorts in the region that offers many attractions for visitors.

- **Velipoja** is a very pleasant tourist center, with a diverse landscape. Velipoja offers vacationers the opportunity to spend holidays on a coastline with clean water and fine sand, but not only that, it is rich in unique natural values, in which are distinguished: Large dune with a length of 14 km and width 50–200 m with fine and clean sand, which is called by the inhabitants “râna e dermanit” for its healing properties³.

² <https://durrelajm.al/speciale-lifestyle/ven-det-qe-nuk-duhen-lene-pa-vizituar-ne-durres>

³ <https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velipoja>

Mountain tourism in Albania

Mountain tourism in Albania is an excellent alternative for the autumn and winter season. Starting from Thethi & Valbona National Parks to the Cursed Mountains. Mountain tourism is also preferred by foreigners. The area of Thethi is considered for many tourists one of the most beautiful mountainous parts in all of Europe.

Thethi National Park: Located in the Albanian Alps, near the Namuna Mountains, 70 km from Shkodra, has an area of about 2,630 hectares. Its waters descend from a height of 25 meters. The natural resources of this area in Theth are connected with the cultural and historical heritage of the local inhabitants who live there, thus forming the most important bases for the development of tourism. Harap Cave and Bira e Rrathëve, which with their size and interesting phenomena that carry inside them like underground lakes, gallery.

Valbona Valley National Park: Located in the district of Tropoja, we can say that it is one of the most important natural resources in Albania and with the improvement, in recent years, of the road infrastructure and the investments of the inhabitants themselves, in this part of the Albanian Alps tourism is developing rapidly.

Valbona Park has an area of about 8,000 hectares and is located 25-30 km north of the town of Bajram Curri. The mountainous landscape, the waters of the Valbona River, and the ecosystem of the park, in recent years at a high pace, are attracting more and more domestic and foreign tourists, this is understood to be due to road improvements, power supply, and investments in residents themselves for hosting vacationers.

Voskopoja: It is located about 21 km from Korça on a plateau 1160 m above sea level. Characteristic of the place is clean air and fresh and curative water. Skiing can be practiced during the winter. The village is one of the most attractive areas in this part of the Balkans⁴.

Dajti Mountain National Park: Located in the eastern part of the capital that reaches an altitude of about 1600 meters. It is located near Tirana with about 26 species of trees and forest shrubs. Dajti Mountain

⁴<https://12vite.com/turizmi-ne-trevat-shqiptare-projekt-ne-qytetari/>

was declared a National Park in 1966 and covers an area of 3,300 hectares. This place is very frequented by tourists. It is also known as the "Natural Balcony of Tirana" which offers accommodation for tourists.

Tourism in Kosovo

Tourism in Kosovo is a growing sector with many tourists visiting the place every year where Kosovo is characterized by archaeological heritage from the times of Illyrians, Dardanians, Romans, Byzantines. Kosovo as a tourist destination has two peculiarities that are appreciated by tourists, there are very welcoming people where it has its origins in our traditions and traditional food.

Kosovo has mountain tourist places, health, natural objects, and cultural-historical objects, which can be used by visitors for excursions, sports, leisure, culture, education, and training. Starting from the Cursed Mountains, Sharr Mountains, Mirusha, Drini i Bardhë, Gadima Cave, Prizren, Peja, Gjakova, and Ura without river in Vushtrri and other regions.

Mirusha Waterfalls and Drini Waterfall

Mirusha Waterfall and Drini Waterfall are two very special tourist attractions in Kosovo. They are often visited by numerous tourists, coming from all over the world. Mirusha Waterfalls are located in the Municipality of Malisheva.

They are part of a park of special natural, scientific, cultural, and tourist importance. Mirusha River, during its flow, passes through a gorge which is known as Mirusha River Canyon and here creates 12 waterfalls and 16 lakes that represent a rare morpho-hydrological phenomenon. Drini i Bardhë waterfall is located in the village of Radavc, 11 km away from the city of Peja⁵.

Marble Cave in Gadime

Marble Cave, or otherwise known as "Gadima Cave", due to its location, in the village of Gadima in the Municipality of Lipjan, is 1500 meters long, but visitors are allowed to see only 1300 meters.

⁵<https://www.monitor.al/turizmi-ne-kosove-cfare-ofron-shteti-10-mije-km%C2%B2-per-vizitoret/>

Mountain Gjeravica

Gjeravica Mountain is the highest mountain in Kosovo. It is located near the Cursed Mountains and has an altitude of 2656 meters above sea level. The nearest town is Deçan. Hiking is the main activity for hiking on Mount Gjeravica.

Gjeravica Mountain is located in the west of Kosovo, ie in the mountains of the Cursed Mountains that share the state border of the Municipality of Deçan with Albania. The peak of Gjeravica belongs to the territory of the Municipality of Deçan and near it is the other peak Gusani, with a height of 2639 meters above sea level, ranking second after the peak of Gjeravica.

Mountain Lubotenit

Ljuboten lies on the border between Kosovo and Macedonia and has an altitude of 2,498 meters above sea level. This is another important and well-known hiking destination. Near the point stands Lake Meadow, which is considered one of the most beautiful lakes in the Balkans.

Prizren Castle

Prizren is a city with history, from where a large part of Albanian history has been written. Prizren Castle is the symbol of the city and an important element in the cultural identity of Kosovo. The Castle of Prizren lies on an area of about one and a half hectares, from the Castle you can see the whole of Prizren together with its fields. As for the construction of the Castle, the exact time of its construction is not known, archaeologists say that they belong to periods of historical change, from the ancient and the Byzantine.

The base of the Castle contains a network of tunnels, one of which after 1938 was used as a water reservoir, as part of the hydro-electric and water supply system of Prizren⁶.

PRISTINA

Prishtina is a lively city and many people enter the country. It has some of the best nightlife in the Balkans, interesting museums. It is the capital of Kosovo where you can also go by bus from Albania, Macedonia, Serbia, and Bosnia, which makes it a great destination for

⁶https://www.ecmandryshe.org/repository/docs/PRIZRENIVENDTAKIM_I_CIVILIZIMEVE_shq.pdf

a tour in the Balkans. The main place of interest is at the exit of Prishtina. Gracanica Monastery is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. There are also several beautiful religious temples to visit. Highlights include the Jashar Pasha Mosque and Mother Teresa Cathedral. Prishtina has a very good nightlife, especially on Fridays and Saturdays. There are a large number of different bars to visit. The owners are friendly and hospitable. As in the rest of Kosovo⁷.

LITERATURE

1. https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lista_e_ishujve_n%C3%AB_Shqip%C3%ABri
2. <https://durrelajm.al/speciale-lifestyle/ven-det-qe-nuk-duhen-lene-pa-vizituar-ne-durres>
3. <https://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Velipoja>
4. <https://12vite.com/turizmi-ne-trevat-shqiptare-projekt-ne-qytetari/>
5. <https://www.monitor.al/turizmi-ne-kosove-cfare-ofron-shteti-10-mije-km%C2%B2-per-vizitoret/>
6. https://www.ecmandryshe.org/repository/docs/PRIZRENI_VENDTAKIM_I_CIVILIZIMEVE_shq.pdf

⁷<https://www.monitor.al/turizmi-ne-kosove-cfare-ofron-shteti-10-mije-km%C2%B2-per-vizitoret/>