

## Peaks of the Balkans – Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo



The spectacular and remote Prokletije mountain region on the Montenegrin, Albanian and Kosovan borders has been long referred to as the Accursed Mountains. Jagged sharp peaks rise Shangri-La style from verdant valleys and lush pastures; rivers, waterfalls, and lakes dot the landscape. Wolves and bears still roam freely in this part of Europe and life in the small villages and shepherd's huts is from a time gone by. Trek through this remote region and encounter historic cultures, tales of tribes and clans, excellent homemade food and genuine hospitality.

**DAY 1 :** Your adventure starts early afternoon from Podgorica, Montenegro with a transfer to the Komovi mountain region of Northern Montenegro, where you will spend your first overnight up in the mountains at the eco village at Stavna (1700m), beneath the imposing peak of Vasojevicki Kom. Enjoy a tasty home cooked welcome dinner and orientation briefing for the adventure ahead.

**DAY 2 :** Start early to ascend Vasojevicki Kom today (alt 2461m). The route opens out at the Vera Pass for your first view of the majesty of the Prokletije mountains. After descending from the peak have a lunch at Stavna and then make the one hour 30 mins drive onwards to Plav in the Prokletije foothills. Upon arrival in Plav pick up your permits which are required for crossing the borders into Albania and Kosovo on the mountain paths. Enjoy a hearty dinner with your hosts and overnight in a lodge on the lakeside.

**DAY 3 :** Set out early this morning into the heart of the Accursed mountains with a high trek across ancient trading routes on former mule tracks. The terrain is wild and incredibly spectacular. The route is 22 kms with 1100m of ascent and 1437m descent. You will need to carry your own backpacks with clothing and items needed for the next 5 days. The ascent follows the Ropojana valley and passes the 30m high Grlja waterfall. Hiking time is approx 9.5 hours with breaks. After 8.5kms the trail crosses into Albania at 1245m alt where a stone pyramid marks the border. An abandoned bunker and military outpost are reminders of the political isolation endured here in recent history. When the trail reaches the Pejes pass the incredible views of the Theth valley open up and the descent through oak and pine forest gives way to meadows. Stay overnight in a traditional guesthouse in Theth and enjoy simple, tasty home-cooked fare, including cheeses, bread, meats (cooked or cured) and local honey. Vegetables and salads are seasonally available.

**DAY 4 :** The hike from Theth to Valbona is no less spectacular. Start with a stroll through Theth to the Lock-In-Tower (Kulla e ngujimit) and then continue to the Grunas gorge and waterfall. The ascent starts here to the Valbona Pass and the total distance today is 13.9kms, around 6 hours hiking and 1070m ascent / 800m descent. Packhorses will accompany the group today in traditional style making the going easier. Dinner and overnight in a local guesthouse in Valbona.

**DAY 5 :** After breakfast a road transfer will take you 17kms to Cerem, a small, remote village which is only inhabited during summer time. The hike runs along the Montenegrin / Albanian border through the forests to Doberdol. 15kms total with 1025m ascent and 440m descent. The hiking time is around 7 hours. Overnight in Doberdol in mountain huts with basic facilities.

**DAY 6 :** Hike across to Gjeravica, Kosovo's highest mountain. Trek through bilberry covered meadows towards the mountain ridge along which runs the border between Albania and Kosovo. From the top of the ridge there are far reaching views across the Kosovan alps. The trail continues across the slopes of Gjeravica eventually descending to a small village where vehicles will transfer you onwards for an overnight in the small town of Gjakova.

**DAY 7 :** Have a break from hiking today with a visit this morning to the fascinating monastery of Decani, a UNESCO site. Built around 1330 the monastery is the largest and best preserved medieval Serbian monastery. From Decani transfer to Pec and on across the border back into Montenegro for the drive to Kolasin. Overnight in the Bianca resort and Spa where you can celebrate your trek through the Accursed mountains and relax your weary limbs !

**DAY 8 :** Transfer to Podgorica after breakfast. Tours ends in Podgorica (airport / city centre drop offs).

**FOCUS :** INTENSIVE TREKKING, ADVENTURE, REMOTE, WILDERNESS, MOUNTAINS, MOUNTAIN LIFE, MULTI CULTURAL,

**TOUR :** 8 DAYS. START AND FINISH PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO

**NEAREST INTERNATIONAL AIRPORTS :** PODGORICA, TIVAT, MONTENEGRO. TIRANA, ALBANIA.

**PRICE :** Contact us for prices depending on group size

**INCLUDED :**

- 7 NIGHTS ACCOMMODATION ON TWIN ROOM SHARE BASIS OR SHARED ACCOMMODATION IN MOUNTAIN HUT / GUESTHOUSES WHERE DESCRIBED.
- 7 x DINNER, 6 X LUNCH, 7 X BREAKFAST
- TRANSFERS DURING THE TOUR AS DESCRIBED BY MINIBUS / JEEP / TAXI
- ENGLISH SPEAKING PROFESSIONAL HIKING GUIDES THROUGHOUT
- NATIONAL PARK FEES
- CULTURAL ATTRACTION ENTRANCES
- PERMIT FOR NON-OFFICIAL BORDER CROSSING AND ARRANGEMENT FEES

**NOT INCLUDED :**

- AIRPORT TRANSFERS
- FLIGHTS
- SOFT / ALCOHOLIC DRINKS
- PERSONAL TRAVEL AND MEDICAL INSURANCE
- TIPS



In winter this parts of this region are almost entirely cut off by snow. Although the latitudes are far south, the snow is deep and lasts 5-6 months on the highest peaks. Transhumance is still very much in practice and your interaction with local people and local culture will be completely authentic, not simply recreated for tourism purposes. Your trip will help support local people to maintain small, sustainable businesses catering for hikers and climbers.