

# Walking in the Balkan Borderlands

Trip Code: BBL

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Walk through the magnificent landscapes of Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania
- Explore Lake Skadar home to rare birdlife and stay in Lovcen National Park
- Head off the beaten track and discover a rich melting pot of cultures
- Experience traditional guesthouses and family home cooking

**AT A GLANCE**

- 6 days walking
- Max altitude - 2250m
- Join at Pristina, End in Dubrovnik

**ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS**

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

## Introduction

Breath-taking landscapes, remote trails, towering mountains, meandering rivers, crystal clear lakes, colourful flora, eclectic architecture, fascinating history, a melting pot of cultures, tasty food and one of the warmest welcomes on the planet – welcome to the Balkan Borderlands. This fantastic cross-border walking holiday explores wild regions and follows trails along the Peaks of the Balkans route. As we weave our way through spectacular mountains and explore some of Europe's wildest scenery, we're guaranteed a warm Balkan welcome, simple way of life and unique experience. We start in the historical gem of Peja nestled at the foot of Kosovo's Rugova Mountains and home to charming Ottoman architecture and a rare opportunity to step back in time. After Peja we discover Kosovo's wild beauty and hike through traditional villages before heading over the Jelenak Pass and into Albania's magnificent Accursed Mountains. By crossing remote borders and walking through lush valleys, we criss-cross between dramatic Montenegro and majestic Albania whilst surrounded by incredible scenery. After transferring to Virpazar in Montenegro, we sail across Lake Skadar home to wonderful birdlife, stay in the breath-taking heart of Lovcen National Park and explore the Bay of Kotor, Europe's most southern fjord. This multi-country holiday takes you on an incredible walking and cultural journey through a very special area of Europe.

### Is this holiday for you?

This wonderful walking holiday follows remote trails between valleys and villages that are mainly used by local shepherds and villagers. As you'd expect in mountainous areas of Europe, paths are rugged and can be slippery underfoot, whilst in June we may encounter late lying areas of snow to cross. As on all alpine walking holidays, there are some steep ascents and descents and long days, so you should ensure you are physically prepared and able to walk for approximately 6 - 8 hours each day, and for several days continuously. Homestay and guesthouse accommodation in the mountains is simple and this area of the Balkans still observes a very traditional way of life. (This holiday requires a trekking permit so a copy of your passport is required by the KE office after booking). This wonderful walking holiday follows remote trails between valleys and villages that are mainly used by local shepherds and villagers. As you'd expect in mountainous areas of Europe, paths are rugged and can be slippery underfoot, whilst in June we may encounter late lying areas of snow to cross. As on all alpine walking holidays, there are some steep ascents and descents and long days, so you should ensure you are physically prepared and able to walk for approximately 6 - 8 hours each day, and for several days continuously. Homestay and guesthouse accommodation in the mountains is simple and this area of the Balkans still observes a very traditional way of life. (This holiday requires a trekking permit so a copy of your passport is required by the KE office after booking).

# Itinerary

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Version:

## Holiday Information

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### What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- All land transport required by the itinerary
- National park entrance fees
- All excursions as mentioned in the itinerary

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Any extra activities and excursions
- Tips
- Miscellaneous personal expenditure - drinks and souvenirs etc

### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the Hotel in Peja.

A single group transfer from Pristina Airport to the first nights hotel in Peja is provided.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single group transfer to Dubrovnik Airport.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

### Meal Plan

Breakfasts, 4 lunches and 7 dinners are included.

## Food & Water

Water from the taps may not be drinkable in all locations on this trip - please check with your guide. We recommend taking water purification tablets and a reusable bottle with a filter such as [Water-to-Go](#), which can both be used to help make safe other water sources. Please note that we do not encourage the purchase of single use plastic bottles.

With a mix of Balkan, Turkish and European influences, the food in this part of the world is fantastic. In the hotels breakfast are continental style, with cereals, bread and jam, tea, coffee and sometimes eggs. You may also have the chance to try a more traditional breakfast of flavoured rice. At the guesthouses, breakfasts are also simple. Packed lunches are provided and will consist of bread and a variety of meats, cheeses, tomatoes and cucumber. There will also be plenty of fruit, biscuits and cake. Evening meals include traditional soups, fantastic locally-grown vegetables, local dairy produce and meat dishes. Soups, stews, and goulashes are common. There is always plenty of bread which is usually Italian style, often served with a tomato and olive salad and various cheeses. On and near the coast, the diet is even more Mediterranean with fish understandably featuring in the most common dishes. Water is provided, but very often this is from local wells or mountain streams and is not chlorinated. If you are concerned about drinking untreated water, we suggest you bring a supply of water treatment tablets.

## Accommodation

During this holiday the group will spend 1 night at a comfortable hotel in Peja/Pec, 1 night at a similar establishment in Virpazar, and 2 nights in Kotor. These hotels provide twin-sharing, en-suite accommodation.

There will also be 3 nights in simple homestay /guesthouse/lodge-style accommodation with simple bathroom facilities. During these 3 nights the group are staying in remote places which have very little tourism infrastructure, which is all part of the cultural experience. Whilst staying in the guesthouses and lodges, it's good to keep in mind these are people's homes and although they are basic, they are selected for their friendliness and location which more than makes up for the lack of hotel facilities. Rooms are likely to accommodate between 2 and 5 people per room and it may be necessary for male and female group members to share depending on the group make-up..

If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex for the 3 hotel nights. Single rooms are available for these nights at a supplementary cost. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

## Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.



## Spending Money

Approximately £100 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including your bar bills and reasonable tips to the support crew. If you intend to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly (credit cards can be useful in this respect). Kosovo & Montenegro use the Euro, and the Lek is the currency of Albania. You should obtain Euros for this holiday. By far the easiest way to obtain your travel cash is from ATM's using a credit card or a debit card. ATM's are available at the airport in Pristina and in Peja, as well as Cetinje and Kotor. OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES (Subject to change) Boat ride to Lady of the Rock : €5, Local bus to Perast : €1 each way.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips do not form part of the wages of local staff but they are very much appreciated. It is important to remember that tipping is voluntary and should be dependent on good service. It is best if the tip is given at the end of the trip by the group as a whole. We recommend that each group member contributes around £30 and that tips are then distributed between the guide and support staff as the group feels is appropriate.

## Additional Information

During this holiday we trek across the borders of Albania, Kosovo and Montenegro. A trekking permit will be applied for on your behalf by our local agent. Please send a copy of your passport into the KE office after you have been confirmed on the holiday.

## Baggage Allowance

There is no weight restriction as such on this holiday other than that imposed by your international carrier (normally 20kg). However, we do ask you to restrict your luggage to one trek bag/suitcase and one small daypack per person.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

## Flight payment

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining in Pristina (Kosovo) and departing from Dubrovnik (Croatia). For clients making their own flight arrangements, Pristina Airport is the most convenient for transfers to the group hotel. Please refer to 'Joining Arrangements and Transfers' in the trip dossier for further details.

Flights SHOULD NOT be booked until you have received your booking confirmation and the trip is showing 'Guaranteed to Run' or 'Limited'.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

### Europe

Your passport must meet 2 requirements. It must be:

- less than 10 years old on the day you enter (check the 'date of issue')
- valid for at least 3 months after the day you plan to leave (check the 'expiry date')

For the latest details on visiting countries within the EU or the European Economic Area (EEA), please check the UK Government website

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

For this holiday we require a scanned copy of the main pages of your passport. Please email this to the office when your holiday is guaranteed to run.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The unit of currency in Albania is the Lek.

The currency for part or all of this holiday is the Euro.

## Preparing for your Holiday

It makes a lot of sense to spend some time before coming on a walking holiday getting some additional exercise. Regular walking in hill or back country is the best preparation. Running and swimming are also good for developing better cardiovascular fitness and stamina.

## Climate

Daytime temperatures in the lower valleys will vary between 15°C and 30°C at the times of year we operate this trip. The weather in summer is generally excellent - with hot days, clear skies and little rain. Note that temperatures do drop in the evenings in the mountains by several degrees. High up, we may encounter cooler conditions and stormy weather cannot be ruled out at any time of year in this mountainous region. At the coast the temperatures will be higher.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travellaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travellaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Western Balkans Lonely Planet
- Southeastern Europe Lonely Planet
- The Accursed Mountains - Robert Carver
- Broken April - Ismail Kadare
- High Albania - Edith Durham
- The Mountains of Montenegro - A Walkers and Trekkers Guide. Rudolf Abraham. (Cicerone)
- Kosovo Bradt guide

## Maps

### **Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro**

1:600,00. Detailed, double-sided road map of Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, with index and city centre street enlargements of Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Clearly shows the national road network and selected provincial and local roads, with each class of road clearly indicated and road numbers shown. Intermediate driving distances between locations are shown in kilometres alongside the road, motorway filling stations are shown and motorway junctions are indicated.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List



The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

**You must bring the following items:**

- Hiking boots
- Socks
- Trekking trousers
- Waterproof overtrousers
- Underwear
- Baselayer shirts (1 short sleeve, 1 long sleeve)
- Light fleece shirt or mid-layer
- Warm fleece jacket or jumper
- Waterproof jacket
- T-shirts or casual shirts
- Lightweight thermal gloves
- Sunhat
- Warm hat
- Sunglasses
- Daypack 30 litres
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Sun protection (including for lips)

- Water bottles 1 Litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)

Water purification tablets (Water is provided, but very often this is from local wells or mountain

- streams and is not chlorinated. If you are concerned about drinking untreated water, we suggest you bring a supply of water treatment tablets.)

- Washbag and toiletries

- Travel towel

- Antibacterial hand wash

- Small padlock (to lock your KE trek bag)

- Name and address label for your trek bag (for Customs when the bags travel across borders by vehicles unaccompanied by their owners)

Basic First Aid Kit including Insect repellent (DEET); antiseptic cream; throat lozenges; diarrhoea

- treatment (Diocalm or Immodium); painkillers; plasters and blister treatment; and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose sweets and vitamin tablets are a useful addition.

◆ **The following items are optional:**

- Sheet sleeping bag liner

- Trainers or sandals

- Spare laces

- Shorts

- Travel clothes

- Trekking poles

- Camera

- Pen-knife

- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.

[>> Find out more](#)

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary, joining at the hotel in Pristina and departing from Dubrovnik. Single timed transfers are included from/to Pristina and Dubrovnik Airports.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London Heathrow to Pristina (Kosovo). Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the early afternoon of the same day (day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary from Dubrovnik (Croatia), arriving in the UK later that same evening.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

This wonderful walking holiday was created by KE staff that lived in the Balkans and takes you on one of their favourite cross-border journeys. Join the Balkan experts and explore on foot a contrasting variety of countries deep in the heart of an undiscovered Europe.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 30/10/2024 and the trip is subject to change