We have received confirmation from the Albanian Minister of Defence of our visits to Albanian Air Force (AAF) airbases and storage sites, plus various aircraft on display in and around Tirana:

- Farka AFB
- Gjader AFB
- Kucova AFB
- Tirana – Rinas AFB
- Tirana – Lapraka
- Albanian Defence Museum
- Headquarters of the Air Force
- East Gate Shopping Centre

Although the AAF operate modern aircraft, they are unique in Europe in that they still have a sizeable number of classic Soviet and Chinese versions of Russian fixed and rotary wing MiGs, Mils and Ilyushins.

No longer operational, they were withdrawn years ago and placed in open or covered storage, on dispersals, in hardened aircraft shelters (HASs) and even in a tunnel bored into a mountainside! But they are there to be seen and photographed.

Over the years very few seem to have disappeared at the hands of the local scrapmen, as confirmed by looking at recently taken images of the various airbases on Google Earth!

For further information we recommend this excellent website which gives type and serial number of most, if not all, of the aircraft and helicopters. Click on any of the locations, e.g. “Farke”; when it opens right-click and select “Print”; in “Print Preview” scroll down to the last pages where you will see some fabulous photographs of the aircraft. On my computer system they only appear on “Print Preview”!

Website:  www.eurodemobbed.org.uk/locations.php?country=134

We have had several very successful tours to see and photograph these aircraft. We also have had other requests refused. However, the Minister of Defence himself has very kindly approved our visits, so whilst the ‘door’ is currently open, that is no guarantee that it will remain so in the years ahead. Here, then, is a chance to see some famous ‘Cold War Warriors’ along with the beautiful Albanian scenery and to meet the friendly, welcoming people.

We fly with British Airways from London’s Gatwick Airport on their direct service to/from Tirana; travel in-country is by chartered coach (see appropriate paragraph on page 4 “General Information”; stay each night in a 4* hotel on a bed, breakfast and evening meal basis; and are accompanied at all times by a local English-speaking guide, AAF escort officer and one of our well travelled and experienced Aviation Tours Manager.

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**PROVISIONAL ITINERARY (all times local)**

**DAY 1: MONDAY, 3rd SEPTEMBER**

Between 13:00 and 13:25 please check in with British Airways in the South Terminal at London’s Gatwick Airport. Then meet your Ian Allan Tour Manager and fellow enthusiasts who will be waiting in the adjacent area. We recommend you check in no later than 2 hours prior to departure: 13:25.
Tour 227816 – Albania – Provisional Itinerary – Issue 1

Gatwick Airport, South Terminal
Flight: BA 2648
Departs: 15:25

Tirana
Arrives: 19:20

Gatwick Airport, South Terminal  Flight: BA 2648                             Departs: 15:25
Tirana                                              Arrives:  19:20

After the customary arrival procedures we meet our local guide and transfer into the centre of the Albanian capital. We stay 3 nights at the Tirana International Hotel on a bed, breakfast and evening meal basis. On-site facilities include 2 restaurants, bar, night club and free wi-fi.

The hotel is located in the main square and next to various historical and cultural points of the city such as the National Historical Museum, Castle of Tirana, Opera House, Art Gallery; and main institutions like the Albanian Parliament, Ministries, National Bank etc. On the other side of the square is a park with a number of pavement cafes. Website: http://tiranainternational.com/portal/index.php/en/

DAY 2: TUESDAY, 4th SEPTEMBER
With our Albanian Air Force escort officer joining us, at 09:00 we set out for Farka AB, hidden away among the beautiful forested hills 5kms from Tirana. Here we will see the modern helicopters in operation today: AB205, AB206, AS532, Bo105M and EC135s. There is – or used to be - a Z-5 gate guardian.

There are also some withdrawn from use/stored helicopters as seen in the background of the photo right.

In the afternoon we arrive at the reserve airbase of Gjader the FAS’s main aircraft storage site.

Its most incredible feature is the Chinese-built 600 meter ‘hangar’ bored through the mountain and reminiscent of a similar tunnel at the famous Chinese Air Force Museum at Datan Shan in China.

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, 5th SEPTEMBER
At 09:00 we set off on the 2 hour drive to Kucova AB home of the Akademia e Forcave Ajore.

In our request we specifically asked for a walk-round tour to see and photograph the aircraft which are located at several places on the base: on the concrete dispersals, the engineering facility and a storage area. The base also has a ‘hangar’ in the mountainside!

Arriving in the outskirts of Tirana we stop by the East Gate shopping centre where there is a Shenyang F-7 sitting on a plinth.

We arrive back in Tirana early evening.

DAY 4: THURSDAY, 6th SEPTEMBER
This morning we visit Rinas airbase which is co-located at Tirana’s Mother Teresa International Airport. Here we see the aircraft preserved on the Headquarters site, then go on to the operational area where there are H-5s, Y-5s, FT-5s, F-6s and F-7As stored in hardened aircraft shelters or in the open. Also visible during our last visit were the mangled remains of several Ilyushin (Avia) 14s.

Returning to the city, we go see the Nanchang PT-6, Shenyang F-6 and F-7 and Harbin Z-5, all of which are on display at the Defence Museum.

Then to the Headquarters of the AAF where there is a MiG-19S in the grounds.

Arriving back at our hotel, the remainder of the day is free in the Albanian capital.

Tonight we enjoy our evening meal at a local restaurant and, as a way of thanking them, host our Albanian Air Force escort officer and local guide. Their meal and drinks will be paid for by a donation from members of the group.
DAY 5: FRIDAY, 7th SEPTEMBER

At 08:30 we leave for the old Lapraka airbase which was swallowed up by the suburbs of Tirana many years ago. In the 2 hangars are helicopters of the Njesia e Aviacionit s Ministrie e Brendshme (AS350B) and Njesia e Aviacionit a Ministrie s Shendefesise (Bo105, EC-135 and SA319B).

We then return to Tirana Airport, about a 30-minutes drive away, and check-in with British Airways for our flight back to London. Latest recommended check in time is 2 hours prior to departure: 11:10. Lunch, at your own expense, can be taken at the airport.

✈ Tirana
✈ Gatwick Airport, South Terminal

Tirana     Flight: BA 2649  Departs: 13:10
✈ Gatwick Airport, South Terminal  Arrives: 15:10

Whilst waiting for our luggage in Baggage Reclaim, we take the opportunity to bid each farewell – until the next time.

Note: there is no Departure Tax payable on leaving Albania.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRICE PER PERSON</th>
<th>TOUR: 227816</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From: £ 1,098.00</td>
<td>Package price based on sharing a twin bedded room on a bed and breakfast basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£ 160.00</td>
<td>Single room supplement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On request</td>
<td>Land-only (NO flights) PLEASE SPEAK WITH ONE OF OUR CONSULTANTS BEFORE BOOKING</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COST INCLUDES

✈ Flights on the scheduled services of British Airways from London’s Gatwick Airport, as stated
✈ UK and Albanian airport taxes & UK Passenger Service Charge (subject to change)
✈ All coach transfers and transportation as stated
✈ 4-nights hotel accommodation in rooms with private facilities
✈ Breakfast and evening meal each day
✈ Evening meal at a local restaurant on Day 4
✈ Expenses of Albanian Air Force escort
✈ Services of local English-speaking guide
✈ Services of an Ian Allan Tour Manager throughout

NOT INCLUDED

✈ Meals, e.g. lunch, other than those as stated above
✈ Visas – not required by UK/EU citizens - see page 4
✈ Travel insurance – see page 6
✈ Personal expenditure, e.g. telephone calls, laundry, drinks, etc.
✈ Gratuity for coach drivers
✈ Tips and gratuities
GENERAL INFORMATION

Payment for Ian Allan Aviation Tours
A deposit of £400.00 per person should accompany your Booking Form, with the balance due 10 weeks prior to the tour’s departure. Please see your Booking Confirmation/Invoice for the exact date. Please note that a reminder of the payment date will not be sent.

Passports and Visas
Citizens of the UK and EU are required to be in possession of a Full UK Passport, which must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of your return. You may also refer to the World Travel Guide website: www.wtgonline.com for general information on passports, visas and health requirements.

UK and EU passport holders do not require a visa to enter Albania.
If you hold a non UK or EU passport please contact the nearest Albanian Embassy or Consulate.

Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) Consular Advice
The FCO’s consular service is a major operation. Every hour of every day consular staff around the world are advising and helping British nationals. For up-to-date passport, visa and security information on the destination you intend visiting, we suggest you visit: www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo

In addition, the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) provide an Information Line for UK callers only, telephone: 020 3117 0599. This line is open between the hours 10:00 – 16:00, Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays).

Coach Travel
Ian Allan Aviation Tours only use coaches chartered from reputable companies, with a driver. Where we have had to cancel a tour, due to the small number of bookings, we have looked at the possibility of renting a 16-18 seater mini-van, with our tour manager driving. However, without exception, the hiring of such a vehicle is illegal if any of the occupants make any payment towards the rental price, fuel and/or other expenses - known as “for hire or reward”.

Any such rental, made without these facts being made known to the rental company at the time of booking, also invalidates all insurance covering the vehicle, contents and persons. The DVLA has also confirmed that any “for hire or reward” rental could breach the normal driving classification of a standard U.K. driver’s license. Therefore, we do not undertake any tours using 9-18 seater mini-vans from a rental company; either with our tour manager, or a member of the group, driving.

Baggage Regulations – British Airways – Departing from London’s Gatwick Airport
Hold baggage – BA’s baggage rules, for Economy Class, currently allow 1 piece in the aircraft’s hold, up to a maximum weight of 23kgs (51lbs), and dimension of 90cm x 75cm x 43cm (35.5in x 29.5in x 16in), including the handle, pockets and wheels. Where it is clear that a passenger cannot manage one bag of 23kgs, they will be able to check-in an additional bag free of charge, as long as the sum weight of both bags when totalled does not exceed 23kgs. Any amount in excess of 23kgs and excess baggage charges are likely to be applied.

Hand baggage - Passengers departing from or transferring through Gatwick can take 2 standard-sized bags no bigger than 56cm x 45cm x 25cm (22” x 17.5” x 9.85”) including wheels, pockets and handles. There is no weight limit for cabin bags, provided passengers can lift the bags, unaided, into the overhead lockers in the aircraft cabin. Your bag must also fit into the bag gauge located in the check-in area.

Your second piece of hand luggage, e.g. a laptop or handbag, can be up to the dimensions 45cm x 36cm x 20cm (18in x 14in x 8in), including the handle and pockets and must fit under the seat in front of you.

Restrictions remain in place for the carriage of liquids, gels, and creams in hand baggage for all passengers departing from and transferring through all EU airports. Some other airports around the world operate their own restrictions. Customers are advised to check before they travel.
Limited quantities of liquids (individual containers must not exceed 100ml or 3.5 fl oz), are allowed as hand baggage but must be carried separately through security in a clear plastic, zip-top or re-sealable bag that does not exceed 20cm x 20cm (8 inches x 8 inches), or quart size. Items must fit in the bag comfortably and the bag must be completely closed.

The bag can only contain liquids such as shampoo, suntan lotions, creams, toothpaste, hair gel and hair spray, perfumes, cosmetics such as mascara and lip gloss, water and other drinks, soups and syrups and other items of a similar consistency.

Cigarette lighters are NOT permitted in hold baggage or through the security search. These may be purchased airside.

Hand baggage can also include electronic equipment such as mobile phones, digital cameras and MP3 players (such as i-Pods). Laptops must be removed from the bag for x-ray.

Prescription medicines in liquid form, e.g. diabetic kit can also be included.

At security all remaining items should be placed in the tray provided for screening, e.g. car keys and fobs, cash, solid food, books, newspapers, cigarettes and tobacco, belts and shoes. Pushchairs and walking aids are permitted but must be x-ray screened. All wheelchairs will be subject to search. Please note: you may be subject to a hand search by the security team and required to remove footwear to be x-ray screened.

**Baggage Weight Restrictions – UK Airports**

Since 1st June 2004, any single piece of checked baggage weighing more than 70lbs (32kgs) has not been accepted at check-in by any airline operating from London’s Gatwick Airport. The BAA may introduce this limit at their other airports in the UK (and so might non-BAA airports), in an attempt to reduce manual handling injuries amongst airport staff. Please bear this in mind when packing your suitcase.

**Meals**

On this tour your breakfast and evening meal is included in the tour price.

**Health Requirements**

There are no known mandatory or recommended precautions for visiting Albania, however, we strongly recommend you consult your local doctor or health centre for the latest information.

**Climate and Clothing**

The weather in Tirana in September should be quite warm at 22°C (71.6°F). Afternoons can be hot with average high temperatures reaching 27°C (80.6°F). Overnight temperatures are generally mild with an average low of 14°C (57.2°F). Therefore, we recommend summer items of clothing, with a jumper or jacket for the cooler evenings. We also suggest you check the 5-day weather forecast before packing your suitcase!

**Currency**

Local currency is the Albanian lek. Today many, if not all, Albanians accept the Euro. However, the rate of exchange may be poor, so pay in lek wherever possible.

Major credit and debit cards are accepted in most banks, large supermarkets and international hotels. Smaller businesses and taxis often only accept cash. There are numerous ATMs in Tirana as well as bureaux de change where Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are widely accepted. Although street money-changers operate openly, they do so illegally.

**Internet & Wi-fi**

Internet coverage is generally very good and wi-fi is available in the hotel.

**Mobile Phones**

Very good reception in Tirana but it is a problem in the mountain regions.

**Electricity & Plugs**

Normal 220v, with European 2-pin round wall sockets.
Travel Insurance
For citizens of the United Kingdom, Ian Allan Travel Ltd are able to offer competitive and comprehensive insurance cover. However, if you do not wish to take out our insurance, you must ensure that comparable or greater cover is taken. The number of your Insurance Policy should be written, if known, on your Booking Form at the time of making the reservation, but no later than the date when final payment is due. A copy of the policy must be forwarded to Ian Allan Travel Ltd.

Individual insurance policies are arranged through CoverMore Insurance Services Limited; the premiums for which will vary according to your circumstances. Full details are available on request.

These policies also include cover for non-scheduled flights, i.e. pleasure flights, where the aircraft is licensed and insured to undertake such flights, and where a payment is made.

Wheelchair Assistance at Airports.
Anyone requiring wheelchair assistance at airports must have this service requested and confirmed in advance. Airlines and/or airports can no longer provide this service without prior confirmation, therefore, please annotate your booking form accordingly.

Wheelchair Users or Walking Disability
Wheelchair users, and anyone who has a walking disability (including those who can walk only a limited distance and/or at a slow pace), may well be stopped by the Albanian authorities from going 'air side' on their operational airbases - this is an Albanian flight safety regulation.

Flexible Itinerary
We are very happy for enthusiasts to take time away from the printed itinerary to pursue their own interests during multi-day stays in the same place, so long as they inform the Tour Manager. It will be the individual’s responsibility to ensure that they re-join the group in the hotel at the stated time on the day of departure.

Land Only Price
For enthusiasts who would prefer to join the tour in Tirana (instead of flying from the UK with the main group), we will be very pleased to provide a ‘Land Only’ price on request. You are strongly advised to contact us before making your own flight arrangements in the event that there has been a change to the published itinerary. Please note that the ‘Land only’ price is based on you meeting the tour at the International Hotel, Tirana and no airport transfer is included on Day 1. However, the transfer on the last day is included.

Flight Timings & Connecting Travel Arrangements to Departure Airport
All flight departure and arrival times are correct at the time of preparing each itinerary; however, airlines may change these times with little or no prior warning. In practice such changes are only a few minutes either way and the final itinerary will show the actual times. Clients making their own arrangements to get to the departure airport by air, rail, coach etc., should bare the above in mind if purchasing non-refundable or non-changeable tickets. Ian Allan Travel cannot be held responsible for any changes to flight times and any privately arranged travel tickets to the airport becoming invalid.

Pre-departure
For connecting flights from UK regional airports - please call Ian Allan Travel on 01932 255625 for the latest special offers available.

Airport Hotel and/or Car Parking: we can offer special rates for the above at most UK airports, please ask for details.

Pleasure Flights – Disclaimer
Should you decide to undertake any pleasure/sightseeing flights which have not been offered or sanctioned by us, Ian Allan Travel Ltd will not be held liable for any injuries or death resulting thereon.

Tours Affected by World Events or Unforeseen/Unplanned Circumstances
In an ever-changing world, events may occur immediately before or during a tour that result in cancellations or changes to the tour itinerary. For example, an increase in security may result in an approved visit being cancelled by the host, etc. Ian Allan Travel Ltd cannot be held responsible for any tour being cancelled, or itineraries affected, due to world events or circumstances beyond our control.