

**Jim Gold International Folk Tours**

Travel to

**Albania**

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# Albania!

**October 4-17, 2015**

with

**Jim Gold & Lee Otterholt**

**Kosovo extension: October 17-21**



- ★ See Tirana, Durres, Vlora, Kruja, Saranda, Berat, and Shkodra.
- ★ Visit Butrinti, and Gjirokastra, and three UNESCO World Heritage sites!
- ★ Meet Albanian folk dance groups!
- ★ Folk dance with local Albanians and master teacher Genc Kastrati!
- ★ International folk dancing with Lee Otterholt!
- ★ Price includes round trip air, transfers, hotels, private bus, guide, sightseeing, all breakfasts and dinners !

## Itinerary

**Day 1: Sunday, October 4:** Depart from NYC on Turkish airlines.

**Day 2: Monday, October 5:** Transfer from Tirana International Airport to our hotel in Durres. Welcome dinner in a traditional restaurant. Overnight in the Arvi Hotel.

**Day 3: Tuesday, October 6: Durres—Apollonia—Vlore**

Morning walking tour of Durres. Then we'll drive through Albania's oil fields towards the 7th century BC archaeological site of Apollonia, second largest Greek colony in Albania. We'll explore the Odeon, Pritaneon, and Temple of Diana. Then a scenic drive along the coast of Vlora Bay, through the Coldwater tunnel, next to the ex-dictator's villa. Before arriving to Vlora, a short stop at the island Monastery of Zvernec surrounded by beautiful nature. **Folk dancing with Genc Kastrati, famous Albanian folk dance teacher.** Dinner and overnight at Vlora International Hotel.



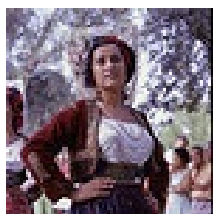
#### **Day 4. Wednesday, October 7: Vlora—Saranda**

Drive along the spectacular Albanian Riviera looking down at the Ionian Sea. Upon leaving Radhima, the landscape dramatically changes as we climb through the forest of Llogara National Park. Stop for refreshment and photos in Llogara. Continue driving south through the seven villages of the Himara region. Lunch in local restaurant in Himara. The region of Himara is rich with natural and historical monuments such as Llamany beach and the 18th century Panormic castle of Ali Pasha. After a short coffee break at the springs of Borshi, we'll continue our tour towards Saranda. **Hear polyphonic songs performed, then folk dance with local Zeri I Bilbilit te Sarandes group.** Dinner in local restaurant by the sea. Overnight in Saranda's Brilant Hotel.



#### **Day 5: Thursday, October 8: Saranda and Butrinti**

Drive to 7th century BC city of Butrinti, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See Asclepeion temple, Roman baths, and aqueduct to learn more about the history of this town, originating as a Greek colony in the 7th century BC. Visit the museum in the 14th century Venetian castle. Return to explore the center of town where an ancient synagogue was discovered. Afternoon free to relax and explore the town. Dinner and overnight in Saranda's Brilant Hotel.



#### **Day 6: Friday, October 9: Saranda—Blue Eye Spring—Saranda**

Visit to Blue Eye Spring, a wonderful natural site reached through a short walk through woodlands. Lunch optional either at Blue Eye or in Saranda. Dinner in local restaurant in Ksamil. Overnight in Saranda's Brilant Hotel.

#### **Days 7: Saturday, October 10: Gjirokastra**

Drive towards Gjirokastra, a UNESCO World Heritage town, tour the 14th century castle. Gjirokastra is best known as the birthplace of Enver Hoxha, dictator of Albania (1908-1985). His house, open to visitors, is an ethnographic museum. Visit Skendulli house. **Folk dancing with Lee and local teachers.** Dinner and overnight at Cajupi Hotel in Gjirokastra.



#### **Day 8: Sunday, October 11: Berat**

Morning drive to the fascinating town of Berat, on the shores of River Osum. The town is famous for its white-washed houses with many windows which give it the nickname "town of a thousand windows". Before arriving to Berat we will make a short visit at one of the famous winery in Albania for wine tasting. **Folk dancing with Lee.** Dinner and overnight at Mangalemi Hotel.



#### **Day 9: Monday, October 12: Berat**

Berat castle is the only one in Albania that still has houses and inhabitants within its walls. We will visit the Fortress, several churches and mosques, and the Onufri Museum. Dinner and overnight at Mangalemi Hotel.

#### **Day 10: Tuesday, October 13: Kruja—Lissus—Shkodra**

Depart for Shkodra with its 4th century BC Illyrian castle. Visit the ancient town of Lissius, dating back to second century BC. Explore the Roman castle and Saint Nicolas cathedral where the national hero, Scanderbeg is buried. Then drive to Kruja, Scanderbeg's home town. We'll tour a traditional carpet workshop located in the 18th century bazaar. Here you can find and purchase many excellent Albanian souvenirs and antiques. We'll explore the castle in which dwell the Bektashi—a little-known





Muslim sect— Dollma Teqe (Bektashi Mosque). Later we'll see the Ethnographic Museum located in a traditional house built in the 18th century A.D (1764), by Ismail Pashe Toptani Drive on to Shkodra. Dinner a traditional restaurant where Albanian highlands food is served. Folk dance with Lee. Overnight in Shkodra. Colosseo Hotel.

#### Day 11: Wednesday, October 14: Shkodra

Visit Marubi Fototeka Museum, Photographic Museum with a selection of prints taken in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. illustrating local life during that period. Walk the newly renovated pedestrian area of Italian and Austrian architecture. Then we proceed to a village between Lezha and Shkodra. Dinner at “Mrizi I Zanave” translated “Field of the Fairies” restaurant, built with sustainable agro-tourism in mind. We will taste some delicacies of this region such as pickles, local cheeses, bio olive oil, several kinds of bread and the specialty, young goat meat done in a traditional way. Folk dancing with Lee. Overnight in Shkodra. Colosseo Hotel.



#### Day 12: Thursday, October 15: Shkoder—Koman—Tirana

After breakfast drive to Lake Koman. **Fantastic boat ride on Lake Komani through gorges, beautiful scenery and remote villages.** Lunch can be on the boat (there are sandwiches, fried potatoes) or in Fierza (optional). Return via Prizren, Kukes to Tirana. Folk dancing with Lee and local teachers, if time permits. Dinner in local restaurant. Overnight in Tirana International Hotel.

#### Day 13: Friday, October 16: Tirana

Morning drive around center of Tirana. Visit Et'Hem Bej Mosque, built in 1789, one of the most beautiful mosques in Albania and the Tirana's Clock Tower which tells us more about the history of Tirana. Continue with a walking tour. Visit the square, new Orthodox Cathedral, and recently discovered ruins of Justinian castle. Drive to private art gallery Sali Shijaku House located in an 18th century traditional Tirana House, and see old style socialist realism paintings. Afternoon at leisure. Dinner in local restaurant. Folk dancing with Lee. Overnight in Tirana International Hotel.



**Day 14: Saturday, October 17:** Transfer to Tirana international airport for flight back home.

## KOSOVO EXTENSION

#### Day 14: Saturday, October 17: Tiranë—Gjakovë.

After breakfast, drive to Gjakova for a visit of the town which has one of the oldest bazaars built in the 17th century which has survived till today. This ancient shopping center has many stores and stalls where you can buy all sorts of handicrafts. Aside from shopping, the Gjakova Old Bazaar also has a 15th century mosque which is one of the major attractions at the site. Dinner, then overnight in Hotel Quarshia e Jupave .



#### Day 15: Sunday, October 18: Deçan—Pej—Prishtinë.

Morning drive towards Peja through the magnificent the Rugova Gorge to the Decani Monastery near it. This monastery complex is a wonderful example of the Orthodox religious architecture and art part of UNESCO World Heritage Site and a must for anyone visiting Kosovo. After visits continue to the capital Pristina where we take a walking familiarization tour and overnight. Dinner, then overnight at Hotel Sirius.



**Day 16: Monday, October 19: Prishtina—Graçanica—Ulpjana—Prizren.**

Visit the 1389 Kosovo Battlefield, Sultan Murat's grave, Graçanica Monastery, and Ulpiana an ancient Roman site. Ulpiana flourished a glorious city "urb splendidissima" until destroyed in 479 A.D. by the Goths. **Folk dancing with Lee and local teachers.** Dinner, then overnight at Theranda Hotel



**Day 17: Tuesday, October 20: Prizren—Tiranë.**



Visit Prizren, situated on the slopes of the Sharr Mountains and on the banks of the river Bistrica, and one of the most beautiful towns of Kosovo. The craftsmen of Prizren are well known for their beautiful gold and silver articles and other folk handcrafts. Prizren has best preserved the architectural style of the past. Return to Tirana. Dinner and accommodation at Tirana International Hotel.

**Day 18: Wednesday, October 21: Transfer to Tirana international airport for flight back home.**

**About Jim Gold**

Jim brings a love of music, people and languages to his tours and dance classes, making them a joy for all ages. For over 25 years, he has led **Jim Gold International Folk Tours** to Bulgaria, Greece, Norway, Turkey, Hungary, Israel, Jordan, Croatia, Slovenia, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Egypt, Tunisia, Russia, the Baltics and Spain to experience their history and culture, from a folk dance perspective. He is also the author of ten books. His latest is: 50 Folk Dances Choreographed by Jim Gold. Jim is a classical guitarist and folk singer as well. He has performed on TV, at universities and schools, and on national radio.



**About Lee Otterholt**

Lee Otterholt, born in USA of Norwegian-American parents, has lived and worked in Norway as a professional dancer, teacher, and choreographer. He founded the Center for International Folk Dance in Oslo, and was professor of dance folklore at the Norwegian National College of Ballet, and University College of Oslo. Lee established folk dance and performing groups in Norway, taught at festivals and workshops throughout Europe, United States, and East Asia, and authored folk dance and instructional manuals for Norwegian schools. He was a choreographer for the Opening Ceremony of the Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer.



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**Land Only: \$3495    Land and Air: \$4395**  
**Kosovo extension: \$1295**

**REGISTRATION FORM:**

I can't wait to go! Enclosed is my registration deposit of \$200 per person. Single supplement: \$695. Additional charges: air tax: \$395. Service charges: \$85. Kosovo extension: \$1295 Kosovo single supplement \$295. Gratuities and drinks during meals not included. Program subject to change without notice. Cancellations 45 days prior to departure: Refund: 50% of total price. Less than 30 days: No refund. Travel insurance recommended.

**Total balance due July 1, 2015**

Kosovo extension: Yes ☐ No ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
No. of people \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

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