

# Jim Gold International Folk Dance Tours

# Albania!

## and the Greek Island of Corfu!

Folk Dancing, Culture, Art, History, Adventure !

May 24-June 3, 2023

Led by Lee Otterholt  
Guided by Kliti Zika

### Kosovo Extension: June 3-5

- ★ See Tirana, Durrës, Vlora, Kruja, Saranda, Berat, Shkoder, and Corfu!
- ★ Visit Butrinti, and Gjirokastra, and three UNESCO World Heritage sites!
- ★ Explore the Greek Island of Corfu!
- ★ Meet Albanian folk dance groups!
- ★ Folk dance with local Albanian teachers!
- ★ International dancing with Lee Otterholt!

- ★ Price includes transfers, hotels, private bus, guide, sightseeing, all breakfasts and dinners !

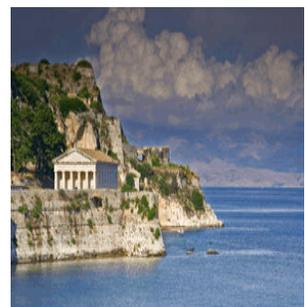
### Itinerary

**Day 1: Wednesday, May 24: Wednesday-** Depart on airlines of your choice to Albania.

**Day 2: Thursday, May 25:** Transfer from Tirana International Airport to our hotel in Durrës. Welcome dinner in a traditional restaurant. Overnight in the Arvi Hotel.

**Day 3: Friday May 26: Durrës-Apollonia-Vlore**

Morning walking tour of Durrës. 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 Lee and local teachers.** Overnight in Vlora. Dinner and accommodation at Vlora International Hotel.

#### **.Day 4. Saturday, May 27: Vlora- Saranda**

Drive along the spectacular Albanian Riviera looking down at the Ionian Sea. Upon leaving Radhima, the landscape dramatically changes as we climb to 1100 meters above sea level through the forest of Llogara National Park. Stop for refreshment and photos in Llogara, then continue on Strada Bianca road for a visit to a local family in Dhermi village where treats of raki and local deserts wait for us. Continue driving south through the seven villages of the Himara region. Lunch in local restaurant in Himara. The region of Himara is 72 kms 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. **Folk dancing with Lee and local teachers.** Dinner in local restaurant by the sea. Overnight in Saranda's Brilant Hotel.



#### **Day 5-6: Sunday-Monday, May 28-29: Saranda-Corfu**

Depart by ferry for three days on the sun swept Ionian island of Corfu. World Heritage Old Town and miles of scenic coastline. Relax, swim, sunbath, tour, visit archaeological museums, or stroll the beaches. Delve into the myths of ancient Greece.. Overnights in Corfu Holiday Palace Hotel.

#### **Day 7: Tuesday, May 30: Corfu-Butrinti - Gjirokastra**

Take the ferry from Corfu back to Saranda. Then 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. 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 is an ethnographic museum open to visitors. **Folk dancing with Lee and local teachers.** Dinner and overnight at Cajupi Hotel in Gjirokastra.



#### **Day 8: Wednesday, May 31: Gjirokastra-Korca**

Beautiful landscape drive to reach the cultural Capital of Albania, the city of Korca. Afternoon walk tour through the city to meet later with the famous dancer Bardhi Pojani. Overnight at Hotel Kocibelli

#### **Day 9: Thursday, June 1: Korca-Berat**

Morning drive to Berat, one of the most fascinating Albanian towns with a mixture of cultural influences. Established in the 3rd century B.C by an Illyrian tribe of central Albania, it was known as the fortified city of Antipatrea. In 1417 the town was occupied by the Turks who build mosques in the area below the town's old castle. Berat, situated at the foot of Tomorri Mountain

and on the shores of River Osum, 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. Lunch in local restaurant in Berat. The castle is the only one in Albania and perhaps one of the few in the World that still has houses and inhabitants within its walls, going about their daily life in exactly the same place their predecessors did centuries ago. We will visit the Fortress, Onufri

Museum and several churches and mosques. Dinner in a traditional restaurant. Overnight in Berat. Hotel Onufri.



#### **Day 10: Friday, June 2: Berat-Shkodra**

After breakfast we'll depart for Shkodra with its 4th century BC Illyrian castle. From the top of the castle we can look towards the horizon with views as far away as Montenegro in the northwest and Shkodra Lake in the northeast. Lunch in local restaurant in Shkodra. Dinner a traditional restaurant where Albanian highlands food is served.. Overnight in Shkodra. Colosseo Hotel.

#### **Day 11: Saturday, June 3: Shkodra-Lezha-Kruja-Tirana**

After breakfast, continue to 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. After lunch in traditional restaurant, in Kruja, 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 Pashë Toptani. Proceed to Tirana. Dinner and folk dancing with Genc Kastrati. Overnight in Tirana International Hotel.



#### **Day 12: Sunday, June 4: Tirana**

After breakfast we'll visit Et'Hem Bej Mosque, one of the most beautiful in Albania. Then see recently discovered ruins of Justinian castle near the center of Tirana. Drive to a private art gallery in an 18th century traditional Tirana House. While at the gallery, will have a rare opportunity to admire paintings dating back to the time of socialist realism. Afternoon at leisure. Evening We'll explore the area where villas of Albanian communist leaders still stand. Nearby are boutiques, pubs and exclusive jewelry shops. Maybe Folk dancing local teachers. Dinner in local restaurant. Overnight in Tirana. Tirana International Hotel.

#### **Day 13: Monday, June 5: Tirana**

We'll transfer you to Tirana international airport for your flight back home

## **Kosovo Extension**

#### **Day 13: Monday, June 5: Prizren**

For guests who decide for the Kosovo Extension, we continue after the delivery in the airport of the rest of the group: Drive towards Kosova to Prizren. Lunch on the way or in the Old City of Prizren, maybe free time. After checking in at our hotel, located in the heart of Old Town, we make a walking tour to visit this beautiful city. The Catholic Cathedral, 14th century Serbian Basilica, 16th century Mosque and the Museum of the Albanian League of 1878, are our highlights! The old city with such a moving history offers a lot from all the communities who are populating it till today, Albanians, Serbs, Turks, Bosnians and so on. Dinner in our Hotel or a restaurant in town Also, possible Folk Show. Overnight at Hotel Centrum.

#### **Day 14: Tuesday, June 5: Peja, Gjakova**

Morning drive northwards to Peja. On route visit Gjakova, with the renovated bazaar, after the burning during the last war, 1999. The Hadumi Mosque, one of the oldest in Balkans, is a highlight with the wall paintings and a very rare/old architecture. Later we drive to visit one of the most important Serbian Monasteries, Visoki Decani, where the Serbian king from the 14th century is buried. Lunch on the way (optional). Our journey continues to Pej, where we check in at our hotel, Hotel Dukagjini! For dinner we drive inside the marvelous Rugova Canion at a local restaurant where we can enjoy and dance together with the local folk group from Rugova.

#### **Day 15: Wednesday, June 6: Wednesday- Transfer to the Airport of Prishtina**

(People on the Kosovo extension should book return flight from Prishtina, not Tirana. It is more convenient than driving back to Tirana ... and the airfare from Prishtina is less expensive!)

### **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: \$4495**

**REGISTRATION FORM:** Enclosed is my registration deposit of \$200 per person. Single supplement: \$695 Additional charges: \$185 hotel taxes and service. \$285 Kosovo single supplement \$275. Gratuities and drinks during meals not included. Program subject to change without notice. Cancellations 90 days prior to departure: Total refund. Less than 90 days: No refund. Travel insurance recommended

**Total balance due March 10, 2023.**

Kosovo extension Yes  No

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

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**Changes:** Prices and program subject to change without notice

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