

**What are you
waiting for?**



Saint Catherine's

Caring for you at Hospice and Home

**SAINT CATHERINE'S
ALBANIAN ALPS
CHARITY TREK**

22-29 SEPTEMBER 2023

Join us for the trip of a lifetime in aid of patient care



Join us for an unforgettable trip and help
raise essential funds for hospice care.
Call us on 01723 378406 for your registration pack.



Saint Catherine's

Caring for you at Hospice and Home

Throxenby Lane, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 5RE
Telephone: 01723 351 421

www.saintcatherines.org.uk



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Trip overview – what can I expect?

Highlights

- Traverse lush green valleys, wildflower meadows and craggy passes in Albania and Montenegro.
- Scale the heights of the Zla Kolata, Montenegro's highest mountain (2,534m).
- Hike to the remote valley of Theth in the heart of the Albanian Alps.
- Cross the jagged heights of the Valbona Pass.
- Encounter a traditional way of life in remote villages.

Albania is a country with unspoiled landscapes and a traditional way of life. This little-visited corner of Europe offers both astonishing beauty and wonderful hospitality. The spectacular mountains are virtually impenetrable apart from a series of high passes that link remote communities to the outside world. Following some ancient paths, you will hike in the south west of Montenegro and encounter some breathtaking landscapes.

Eight day trip, five day trek

What's included



Flights



Transport



Accommodation



Food



Water whilst trekking



First-aid trained, English-speaking guide

Your challenge day by day

DAY 1, FRI 22 SEP 2023

INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT TO TIRANA; DRIVE TO SHKODËR

After meeting your fellow challengers at the airport, a short flight takes you to Tirana, Albania, where you will meet the local challenge team and then drive directly to Shkodër, the oldest and largest town of Northern Albania. Overnight in a hotel close to the centre of town, with your first group dinner in the lively pedestrian area.

Dinner included



DAY 2, SAT 23 SEP 2023

THE HIGHLANDS OF KELMEND FROM VERMOSH TO LËPUSHË (APPROX. 6 HRS)

This morning, your trek begins after a short transfer to Vermosh, the most northern village of Albania. Winding your way on a forest trail eventually leads to the high meadows of Zabeli, before reaching the Peak of Grebenit (1,840m) from where there are great views of Mount Trojan (2,194m) and the jagged silhouette of the Accursed Mountains. After a picnic lunch, the hike continues through a beech forest until you reach the Pass of Berdolec, marking the entrance of Lëpushë village and your overnight stop. There should be time to explore this beautiful alpine village in the late afternoon before dinner at your guesthouse.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner included

DAY 3, SUN 24 SEP 2023

INTO GREBAJE VALLEY VIA THE TALJANKA PEAK (APPROX. 7 HRS)

Leaving behind the last houses of the village, the trail climbs through the meadow of Dobku to a ridge leading to the peak of Taljanka and into Montenegro. At Volusnica, you'll find the perfect spot to have a picnic looking out over the Grebaje Valley and towering peaks of the Karanfil massif. After descending to the bottom of the valley, a short transfer takes you to the shores of Lake Plav and to your hotel.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner included



Your challenge day by day *(continued)*

DAY 4, MON 25 SEP 2023

ON FOOT FROM MONTENEGRO TO ALBANIA, "PEJA" PASS (APPROX. 6-8 HRS)

A short transfer after breakfast to the village of Vuthaj, sees the start of a long hike to reach the Valley of Theth in the heart of the Albanian Alps. Your luggage will be loaded on to horses who will accompany you on the trail. Climbing slowly out of the valley of Ropojana, the trail ascends on a steep path after the alpine lake of Gjeshtar until you reach the rocky plateau of Runica. Here the spectacular peaks of the Karanfil Mountains as well as the Albanian Alps tower above you. At Peja Pass (1,730m) you'll stop for lunch with views over the Valley of Theth, before starting your way down and back into Albania. The trail winds beside the rocky dome of Harapi Peak (2,216m) which dominates the end of the valley and leads you to Theth, your overnight guesthouse.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner included



DAY 5, TUE 26 SEP 2023

THE VALBONA PASS (APPROX. 8 HRS)

Loading your luggage on to the horses again, you'll leave the Valley of Theth behind and climb towards Valbona Pass to reach the next valley, the Valbona valley. The scenery changes many times from rocky mountain paths to green pastures, winding through beech woods and grassy meadows to scree on the higher sections. Once at the pass, on a clear day, the highest peaks of the Albanian Alps can be seen such as Jezerca, 2,694m and Radohimës, 2,570m. At one point you can look out over the Valbona valley on one side and the Theth valley on the other. From here the path winds downhill towards Valbona and a forest trail leads to the village of Rrogam at the bottom of the valley. Tonight's stay is in a guesthouse.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner included

DAY 6, WED 27 SEP 2023

LUGU I PERSLLOPIT (APPROX. 7-9 HRS)

After a hearty breakfast, today's hike is one of the toughest with the option (and weather dependent) of climbing to the top of the Zla Kolata, Montenegro's

highest mountain at 2,534m above sea level. Leaving the village, the path meanders through birch trees and streams until it reaches the open alpine meadows at the foot of the Kollata massif. Climbing to the Bori pass on the border with Montenegro, you need to use your hands as you climb over a limestone rock wall to the Persllopit pass. Once here, and depending on the weather, you can climb to the top of the Zla Kolata from where there are stunning views over the Accursed Mountains. Descending on the same path to the Lugu i Persllopit pass, you then walk through a forest with views to the Valbona valley. Once here, you can look out on the 2,694m high Mt. Jezerca, the highest peak of the massif and one of the most beautiful viewpoints of the Albanian Alps. You'll return to your guesthouse for dinner after a rewarding day's trek.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner included

DAY 7, THU 28 SEP 2023

SHALA CANYON

Today is relaxing and well-earned and a short transfer will take you to the docks of Fierza, from where a spectacular boat ride through the canyon of Lake Koman will follow. During the ride, you'll reach the Canyon of Shala, an amazing secluded haven of pure nature, where you'll have the opportunity to swim and have lunch. Later on, after reaching the docks of Koman, you'll continue your transfer towards Tirana, for your celebration dinner and hotel stay.

Breakfast, lunch, dinner included.

DAY 8, FRI 29 SEP 2023

TRANSFER TO AIRPORT FLIGHT TO LONDON

This morning it is time to say goodbye to Albania as well as new found friends and trekking partners. A transfer will take you back to Tirana airport for your flight back to the UK.

Breakfast included.



Essential trip information

Level of difficulty - challenging

A “challenging” trip will test someone who is relatively fit and has a spirit of adventure. You may have had some previous experience, but this is not necessary as long as the correct training is undertaken.

Climate and terrain

Albania has a Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and cool, wet winters. The daytime temperatures during the challenge should be between 25C – 28C, falling at night to 12C – 15C. Higher up, the conditions may be cooler and wet and rainy weather cannot be ruled out at any time of the year in the mountains.

Most of the walks are on well-defined footpaths, mountain trails and some dirt tracks. The terrain can be very rocky and slippery in parts with some gravel slopes.

Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous local support guides and staff to assist them.

Group size

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 14 people and a maximum of approx. 30 people.

Accommodation and toilets

On this challenge you will spend three nights in hotels and four nights in guesthouses.

The hotels offer a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally, rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities. Whilst in the guesthouses there will be 3-4 people in each room and each room has en-suite facilities.

Toilets will range from basic during the trek to normal western standards in the accommodation. Bring your own toilet paper just in case!

More questions?

Detailed trip notes and a kit list can be found at www.charitychallenge.com/expedition/info/3590/Trek-the-Albanian-Alps

Challenge costs

Minimum sponsorship

- **Pay a non-refundable registration fee of £325 when you book.**
- **Raise a minimum of £2,445 for Saint Catherine's.**

At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required (£1,956) must be sent to the charity 12 weeks before departure (by 30/06/2023), and the remaining 20% (£489) within four weeks of completing the challenge (by 27/10/2023).

The cost of the trek is covered within the sponsorship you raise. It is possible to pay part or the full amount of the challenge yourself rather than raising sponsorship if you would prefer.

For further details about different payment and fundraising options go to www.charitychallenge.com/expedition/costs/3590/Trek-the-Albanian-Alps

How will you be supported?

This trip is organised by Charity Challenge. For more than 20 years, Charity Challenge has worked with tens of thousands of individuals, charities, corporate organisations and private groups. The company has operated hundreds of treks, rides, and climbs, in every environment from mountains to deserts and including the North and South Poles.

The fundraisers at Saint Catherine's will work closely with the company to ensure this adventure will be a trip of a lifetime.

A fundraiser at Saint Catherine's will be your main point of contact. They will support you from signing up to the challenge, throughout your fundraising journey and getting organised for the trip. You will be provided with pre departure information, fitness plans, packing lists, luggage labels and all the information you need for an enjoyable and stress-free challenge.

Saint Catherine's will organise group walks, a Facebook group and meetings to allow the team to get to know one another. Your fundraiser will be in regular contact with you and on hand to answer any questions.

How do I sign up?

Contact the fundraising team on **01723 378406** for your registration pack.