

TOURISM INFORMATION OFFICE BERAT

Municipality of Berat



Welcome to Berat

The city of Berat stretches over the so called Topallti Valley, traversed by the Osum River. A first look is enough to understand the reason why it has been named White City. It is a fine example of a peaceful co-existence among the different religious and ethnic communities, Christian, Sunni Islam and Bektashi. It has been inhabited continuously since late fourth century B.C and is a witness to the diversity of the urban societies that are almost extinct today. It presents aspects of civilizations that go back as far as the 4th century BC.

The long history of the city is in fact the history of encounters between different civilizations and people. This secular and multiethnic reality is one of the main pillars of the city's cultural heritage. It is though a common occurrence in Albania's heritage and cultural identity. This cultural variety coupled with the setting, makes Berat a huge, live museum. At its height, in medieval period, there were more than 30 churches inside the Castle, today there are only 10. The earliest churches are mainly from the 13th and 14th century, while the dwelling houses generally belong to the 18th and 19th centuries. A considerable number of them were reconstructed following the earthquake that hit the city on October 15th 1851, and thereafter the city acquired the appearance it has today. The houses are inhabited even now, and in 1948, the monuments were set under state protection. Berat, known as the City of the windows one upon another, because of the large number of windows overlooking the city from the old houses, was declared a museum city, and was thus saved from the destruction wrought during the Cultural Revolution of 1967.



Figura 1 - Gorica quarter

The three old quarters are inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List since July 8th 2008 with the justification that Berat is "a rare example of the architectural character typical of the Ottoman period."

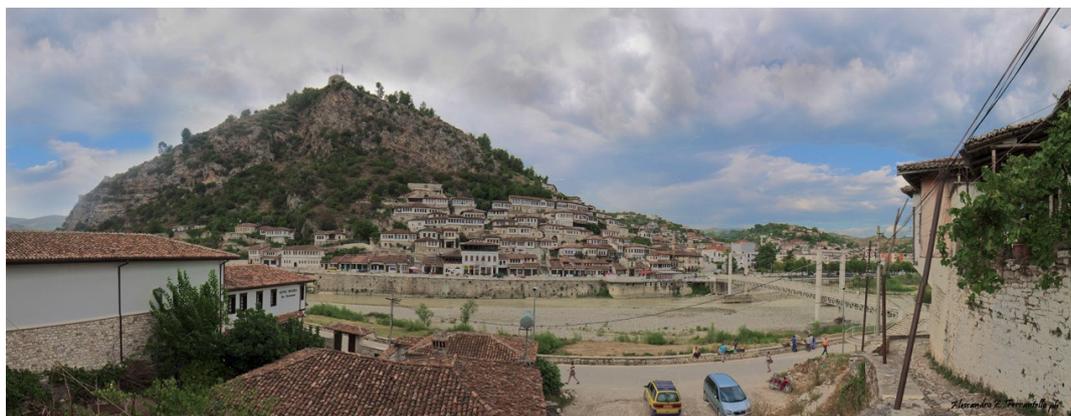


Figura 2 - A View of the new bridge, Mangalem quarter and castle

Berat is a modern city, whose past cannot be comprehended without its tradition. It is famous for the characteristic Tosk Poliphonic song, where three to four voices are accompanied by a chorus. this form of Albanian music (isopoliphony) is widely performed during celebrations and also in local bars and restaurants. Berat is known for its contribution to the Albanian culture. It is the city of Mehmet Ali Vrioni (Vice chairman of the Albanian Union of Prizren), as well as a number of signatories of the Albanian Declaration of Independence in 1912 including Taq Tutulani Vexhi Buharaja, Babë Dud Karbunara, and Ilias Bey Vrioni.



Figura 3 - Shpiraq Mountain



Figura 4 - Tomori Mountain

To the east rises the Tomori Mountain while in the southeast Shpirag Mountain creates the background to the west. The inner areas of Berat, with the rich variety of their ecosystems, offer various entertainments for interested travelers. Outside the city, the countryside has steep and spectacular canyons, fine for hikes, and archaeological sites with histories and myths yet to be discovered.

Welcome to Berat!