

ALBANIA, KOSOVO & NTH MACEDONIA

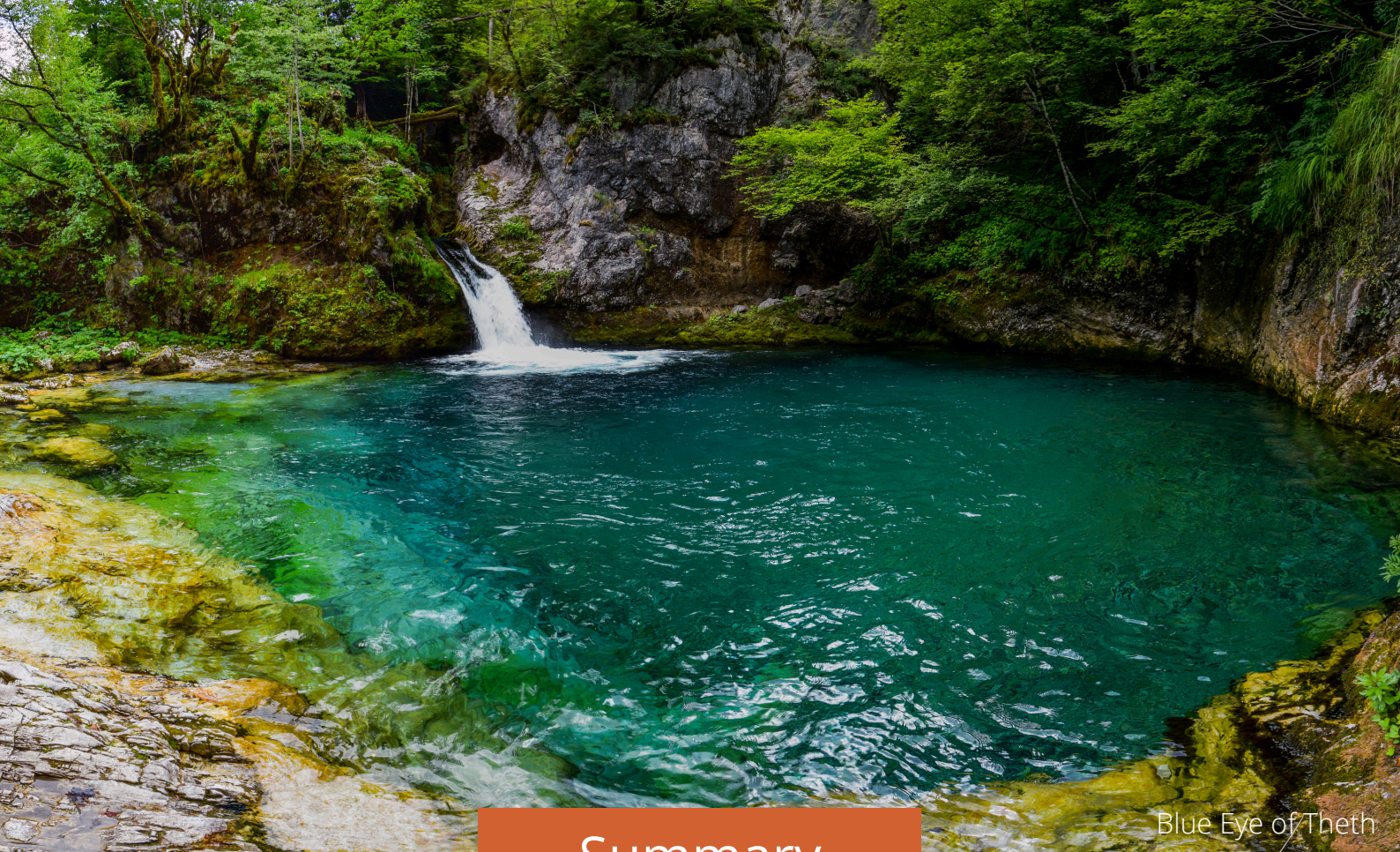
HIKING & CULTURAL TOUR

9 Days/8 Nights

15-23 Sep 2026

Tour Highlights...

Albanian Alps | Theth National Park | The Blue Eye of Theth | Valbona Pass hike | Prizren
Pristina | Matka Canyon | Ottoman & Byzantine architecture | Skopje | Lake Ohrid



Blue Eye of Theth

Summary

Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia are poised to become much sought-after tourist destinations due to their untouched natural beauty, rich cultural heritage, and affordability. Join ICON Adventures in 2026 for a fully guided small group tour filled with authentic experiences, adventurous activities, and unique, off-the-beaten-path discoveries.

The mountainous regions of Albania, Kosovo, and North Macedonia offer a blend of rugged landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and unparalleled natural beauty.

On this fully guided 9-day hiking and cultural tour we start in the Theth and Valbonë Valley National Parks in the Albanian Alps. We have 3 days of hiking here, to explore the mountains and valleys, breath-taking peaks, alpine meadows, and traditional mountain villages.

We then travel into Kosovo, to the town of Prizren at the foot of the Sharr Mountains where the Ottoman architecture is reflected in the historic buildings. Pristina, with its rich tapestry of mosques, cathedrals, and markets is our next destination. From here we cross the border into North Macedonia and stop off at the spectacular Matka Canyon, known for its butterfly colonies, and take a boat ride to explore Vrelo Cave, one of the deepest in the world. The journey continues to the cultural heart of the Balkans, Skopje, where Mother Teresa was born. We explore the Ottoman-era Old Bazaar and the ancient Stone Bridge before moving onto the UNESCO-listed town of Ohrid, on the shores of Lake Ohrid. Expert local guides will join us to impart their intimate knowledge as we venture around the cities, ensuring a fully immersive experience.

Come with us on this unforgettable journey through the southern Balkans, where stunning landscapes remain unspoiled by mass tourism. Experience a rich blend of Eastern and Western cultures, shaped by ancient civilizations, the Ottoman Empire and more recent historical events. Engage with local traditions, cuisine, and customs in a way that feels genuine and far from the crowded tourist trails.

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Shkoder, Albania

Day 1 (D) Meet and Greet - Welcome to Albania

If you are joining from our Montenegro tour you will transfer with the group to Shkoder. If you are joining from another destination we will assist you to arrange your transfer to Shkoder, if required. We meet at our hotel at 6pm today, and catch up with our fellow travel companions over dinner, and find all about our upcoming adventure.

O/N 1 nt Shkoder (Hotel Chicago or similar)

Day 2 (B,L,D) Theth National Park

We begin our tour in Shkoder with a visit to the historic Rozafa Fortress, offering stunning views and a glimpse into the region's rich history. After exploring the fortress, we'll take a coffee break in the town of Shiroke, known for its peaceful ambiance and natural beauty. We continue onto Theth, stopping along the way in the mountain village of Boge and Thore Pass, where we'll enjoy a lunch with one of the most spectacular views in Northern Albania.

After settling into our guesthouse there will be time to chill out before we set off on a guided walk through the village. We will learn about this remote village in the heart of the Albanian Alps, renowned for its traditional stone houses, and cultural landmarks like the centuries-old church and the Tower of Nikoll Koçeku. A rustic dinner washed down with a glass or two of Raki will ensure a good night sleep ready for our first hiking day tomorrow.

O/N 2 nts Theth, Polia Guesthouse (or similar)

Day 3 (B,L,D) The Blue Eye of Theth & Grunas Waterfall, Hike 10kms

Today we head off on a hike exploring the pristine Theth National Park. The walk to Grunas Waterfall is truly stunning, as the trail follows the river and offers amazing views of the surrounding mountains. The water flows through a limestone mountain to fall into a pristine blue pond. You can swim if you want... but the water is quite cold. We continue on to the Blue Eye of Theth, a natural spring with crystal-clear, vibrant turquoise water. Again the opportunity for a swim arises if you are keen. We will enjoy a picnic lunch here before heading back to the village of Theth.

Day 4 (B,L,D) Hike Valbonë Pass, Hike 15kms

Today we tackle the Valbonë Pass, a key highlight of our trip. The pass connects the picturesque valleys of Theth and Valbonë in one of the most remote and beautiful regions of the Balkans. Offering stunning panoramic views of rugged peaks, deep valleys, and verdant landscapes. The trail typically takes 6-8 hours as it winds through alpine meadows and forests, and rocky terrains. We'll stop for many rest breaks, photo ops, and a picnic lunch as we traverse the pass. At the summit, it will all be worthwhile as we are treated to breath-taking vistas of both valleys. Tonight, we'll savour our well-deserved dinner and then sleep like logs - we've earned it!

O/N 1 nt Valbonë, Kol Gjoni Hotel (or similar)

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Day 5 (B,D) Prizren & Pristina, Kosovo

This morning we cross the border into Kosovo and stop in the town of Prizren. Considered to be the cultural capital of Kosovo, this charming, vivacious town with mountains all around is a real hidden treasure. On arrival we meet our local guide for a walking tour of the city visiting the Sinan Pasha Mosque, The Church of Our Lady of Ljevis (UNESCO listed), and the Ottoman Old Town known for its gold and silver filigree craftsmen. Enjoy some free time before we leave for Pristina, the capital of Kosovo. This afternoon we join a local guide for a walking tour of Pristina and discover the city of many mosques, cathedrals, and markets. Then it's onto dinner at a local restaurant.

O/N 1 nt Pristina, LaCorte Hotel (or similar)

Day 6 (B,D) Matka Canyon & Skopje, North Macedonia

We are off to North Macedonia today, but first making a stop at the stunning Matka Canyon, famous for its butterfly colonies. Here, we'll take a boat ride to explore the Vrelo Cave, one of the deepest caves in the world. Afterward, enjoy some free time for lunch before the short drive to Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia. We'll embark on a walking tour of the city, visiting notable landmarks such as the Mother Teresa Memorial House, which was established in 2009 to honour the renowned humanitarian who was born here. We'll also visit the old railway station and the historic Stone Bridge, which dates back to 1451. We will finish the day with a relaxing evening in Skopje and dinner at a local restaurant.

O/N 1 nt Skopje, Premium Hotel (or similar)

Day 7 (B,D) Ohrid

After leaving Skopje this morning we head to the UNESCO-listed city of Ohrid, on the shores of Lake Ohrid. Influenced by Greek, Roman, Ottoman, and Byzantine eras, Ohrid boasts remarkable medieval architecture and its cultural heritage is showcased through its numerous churches, monasteries, and vibrant annual festivals. To discover more about this city we embark on a guided tour with a local. We'll see sights such as the glorious Church of Saint Sophia, the National Workshop for a handmade paper-making demonstration, Samuil's Fortress and its historic 4th-century walls, the Ancient Theatre of Ohrid, and the cliff-top Church of Saint John with its 11th-century frescos. This evening we will enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

O/N 1 nt Ohrid, Villa Arte Hotel (or similar)

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Day 8 (B,D) Ohrid to Tirana

Before we leave Ohrid today we will visit the Bay of Bones Museum, a prehistoric settlement located on Lake Ohrid. This one of a kind museum is an authentic reconstruction of the stilt-house settlement, dating back between 700 and 1200 BC. We continue onto the medieval Monastery of Saint Naum, built in the traditional Macedonian architectural style and featuring a well-preserved church and frescoes dating from the 16th century. Following the shores of Lake Ohrid we cross the border back into Albania and stop at Pogradec, for lakeside lunch stop. It is then onto Tirana, the capital of Albania for our last night together. Back in the city tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner together.
O/N 1nt Tirana, Starlight Hotel (or similar)

Day 9 (B) Departure

The tour comes to an end after breakfast this morning. Wow! What an adventure across these 3 fascinating Balkan countries. If you are leaving today, we will transfer you to the airport.

The Details:

PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group Escorted Tour - Min 6 - Max 14
- Australian Host
- Fully guided with a professional English-speaking guide and expert local guides
- 8 nights accomm 3-4 Star hotels & guesthouses
- Meals: 8B, 3L & 8D (drinks at own expense)
- Private transport, tours as mentioned, & national park & some sight-seeing entrance fees

COST PER PERSON

- Twin or double share: \$4050/person
- Single supp: \$850/person (own room)

PRICE EXCLUDES:

- Flights
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Tipping - allow EUR30-50pp
- Meals not mentioned on itinerary
- All expenses of a personal nature
- Arrival and departure transfers if not part of the group transfers

ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS OFFERED:

- Booking flights
- Travel insurance
- Pre or post tour travel

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