

Hiking and botanical excursion to southern Albania
(Zagoria valley and National Park Hotovë–Dangëlli)
25. April – 10. May 2025



The village of Ougdunan in the Fir of Hotovë-Dangëlli National Park (Parku Kombëtar i Bredhit të Hotovës-Dangëlli) with flowering Judas trees (*Quercis siliquastrum*).



Fodder is still collected in the landscape and brought to the villages. The village of Ndëran in the Zagoria valley, southern Albania



The Ottoman Bridge of Limar, Zagoria valley, near Tepelene (Permet region) with lush vegetation with *Phloemis fruticosa*.

Hiking, spring flower determination and observation of traditional mountain life and agriculture

Albania is one of the last European countries where we can observe traditional mountain life and agriculture. This two-week excursion aims to show you one of the less known parts of southern Albania with traditional villages, sheep and goat flocks, and an amazing mixture of spring flowers of mediterranean and Balkan Mountain vegetation. We will hike 5-7 hours a day (with some resting days in the towns of Permet and Berat) and discover the spring vegetation of southern Albania : orchids, paeonies, and vegetation types from the ruderal vegetation of towns and villages up to the high alpine vegetation belt. The National Park is also home of a lot of wildlife: brown bear, wolves, wild boar, golden eagle, Egyptian eagle, mountain hen and others.

We will spend the nights in simple shared accommodations in guest houses (first week) and with local Albanian families (second week). In the towns we'll stay in comfortable hotels in shared double rooms. Luggage transport (by horses, mules or car) up to 15 kg/person is included, so everybody can simply hike with a daypack. We will eat locally produced yummy food. In the towns we will eat in affordable local restaurts.



The orthodox monastery church of Nivan (Kisha e Manastirit të Shën Mëhillit) built in 1672 AD, today situated in the middle of the forest - one of the historical monuments of the Zagoria valley.



Shepherds hut at the Dhëmbeli pass, an old traditional caravan crossing between the Zagoria valley and the town of Permet.



The village of Kosove in the Fir of Hotove-Dangelli National Park, where we will spend a night with a local family.



Herding of goats and sheep is still one of the main agricultural activities in these mountain villages



The village of Borockë in the Fir of Hotove-Dangelli National Park, where we will spend a night with a local family.



The Fir of Hotove-Dangelli National Park has large forested parts with *Quercus pubescens* stands and in the highest parts a coniferous cover with *Abies borisii-regis*, Macedonian fir.

Some
botanical
aspects:



Solenanthus albanicus, a rare endemic Boraginaceae, the rare orchid *Limodorum abortivum*, the bell-flower *Campanula ramosissima*, and most probably *Scutellaria orientalis* var. *pinnatifida*.



We will stay with Albania families and discover the hard life in the Albanian mountains....



Wild paeonias (*Paeonia officinalis*) near Dhembeli Pass, Zagoria - Permet



Some technical details:

Organisation: Julian Wiethold (private organized excursion with help of Zbulo -Discover Albania / organisation and guide). **Costs:** around 1350 euros (1214-1440 euros depending on number of participants); students and people with limited contracts or small salaries **can receive a subvention of up to 800 euros** on request.
Travel to and from Tirana not included

Included: transport from/to Tirana to start and end of hike, accommodation (hotels in towns in shared double rooms, shared rooms in guesthouses or simple homestays during the hiking, Albanian guide (English speaking), luggage transport up to 15 kg, full board during the hike (picknick as lunch, only breakfast during town days).

Meeting on friday **25.4.** in Tirana (hotel accommodation), start to Peshtan on the morning of **26.4.**, 1 or 2 resting days in the middle of the trip in a hotel in Permet and at the end 1 or 2 nights in Berat (visit of town, ethnographical museum and castle, Unesco World heritage site). return by bus from Berat to Tirana **9.5.** in the evening; return flights or ferry departure **10.5.**

Requirements: people with **hiking experience and fitness** for hiking 5-7 hours in the mountains (up to 750 m up and maximum 1250 m downhill), interest to observe and determine plants and local vegetation, ethnology, traditional agriculture and local life in the Albanian mountains, health insurance for touristic visits to non-EU-countries, **good mountain boots obligatory**, rainwear. More information on request: julian.wiethold@inrap.fr, Tel. ++33/608711470 or ++49/17621749498



The impressive Osumi Canyon near Çorovodë, Albania