



Albania, Montenegro & Croatia Convention Tour: A Taste of the Balkans

9 days

The Balkans are a mosaic of cultures, and this Convention Tour invites Group Coordinators to explore the region through its most flavorful lens—its cuisine. Begin in Tirana, where a hands-on cooking class with a local chef reveals the heart of Albanian culinary traditions, from savory burek to herb-infused stews. Continue to Budva, Montenegro's coastal gem, where fresh seafood and rustic farm fare reflect centuries of Mediterranean influence. In Dubrovnik, Croatia's jewel on the Adriatic, venture into the Konavle Valley for a natural wine tasting and farm-to-table lunch that showcases the region's deep agricultural roots. Along the way, share stories, savor local liqueurs, and gain travel insights with fellow Coordinators and Go Ahead staff—all while discovering the rich cultural layers that make the Balkans so irresistibly delicious.



Your tour package includes

- 7 nights in handpicked hotels
- 7 breakfasts
- 4 lunches with beer or wine
- 4 dinners with beer or wine
- 2 food tastings
- 2 wine tastings
- 1 liquor tasting
- 1 cooking class
- 8 sightseeing tours
- Expert Tour Director & local guides
- Private deluxe motor coach

Included highlights

- Convention Tour meeting
- Albanian wine tasting
- Albanian cooking class
- Lake Skadar
- Museum of King Nikola
- Bay of Kotor
- Konavle Valley agriturismo
- Dubrovnik
- Olive oil & Croatian wine tasting

Tour pace

On this guided tour, you'll walk for at least 2 hours daily across moderately uneven terrain, including paved roads and unpaved trails, with some steep hills.

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Overnight Flight → 1 night

Day 1: Travel day

Board your overnight flight to Tirana today.

Tirana → 3 nights

Day 2: Arrival in Tirana

Included meals: welcome dinner

Welcome, or *mire se vini*, to Albania! Tonight, get to know your Tour Director and fellow Group Coordinators over a welcome dinner at a local restaurant in Tirana. Savor the signature flavors of the region—think fresh herbs like rosemary and basil, grilled lamb or beef, and flaky burek (a Balkan staple made with thin dough that's stuffed with either sweet or savory fillings)—paired with rare Albanian wine. It's the perfect introduction to the rich culinary and cultural traditions that await you in the days ahead.

Day 3: Sightseeing tour of Tirana & winery visit

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, wine tasting

Uncover the layered history of Tirana, Albania's capital, where remnants of the city's communist era stand alongside eye-popping street art, larger-than-life murals, and an exciting new cultural identity.

- Start at Bunk'Art 1, a vast subterranean bunker that was built for Albanian ruler Enver Hoxha, now transformed into a museum documenting decades of authoritarian rule. With your guide, move through its concrete chambers and low-lit hallways as you learn how surveillance, censorship, and fear shaped daily life during the communist period.
- From there, drive to Skanderbeg Square, a central meeting place named for Albania's national hero (he was adored for successfully defending the country from 13 separate Turkish invasions). Look out for the Pyramid of Tirana—a hulking concrete structure built as a tribute to Hoxha, the former prime minister, who was known for his harsh

Stalinist practices. The monument was once a symbol of oppression, but has been repurposed as a public space for learning and even includes stairs and a slide for children (and adults) to enjoy.

- Embark on a walking tour of the central part of the city, where you'll see the Et'hem Bej Mosque. It's a rare surviving religious site from the Ottoman era, with soft domes and detailed frescoes that offer a contemplative contrast to Tirana's more imposing monuments.
- Walk into the reinvigorated New Bazaar neighborhood. Here, produce vendors and coffee stalls line the walkways, and you'll have free time to explore and snack your way through the area at your own pace, whether browsing the open-air market or settling in at a cafe near Skanderbeg Square.

This afternoon, head outside of the city to explore a hidden gem of Albania's emerging wine scene.

- Visit Uka Farm, a family-run estate dedicated to reviving rare indigenous grape varieties like shesh i zi and Kallmet, once nearly lost to history. Tour the vineyards and cellar while learning how tradition and innovation blend in each bottle.
- Sit down for a farm-fresh lunch crafted with seasonal, organic ingredients—many harvested just steps from your table—and paired with Uka's expressive, terroir-driven natural wines.

Day 4: Convention Tour meeting & evening cooking class

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner

Join your group for a Convention Tour meeting, a series of presentations and discussions designed with Group Coordinators' questions, experiences, and interests in mind.

- Begin with a keynote address by senior members of Go Ahead Tours' staff, followed by an insider's view of the company and tours.
- Gather with Go Ahead staff and your fellow Group Coordinators to discuss tour planning and best practices for filling trips.

- Get an overview of the many benefits available to you as a Go Ahead Tours Group Coordinator and learn about program updates, from new app features to added perks.
- Enjoy coffee, tea, mineral water, and an included lunch.

After a free afternoon to explore Tirana at your own pace, reconvene with your fellow Group Coordinators this evening for a hands-on Albanian cooking class led by a local chef. Dive into the heart of Albanian culinary traditions as you prepare cherished regional dishes, learning the stories and techniques behind each recipe. Once the cooking is done, gather around the table to enjoy the delicious fruits of your labor, served alongside local wine and warm conversation.

Budva → 2 nights

Day 5: Budva via Shkodra & Lake Skadar

Included meals: breakfast, dinner

Continue your journey north, tracing a route that winds through Albania's rugged highlands, into Montenegro's verdant lake country, and along the glistening Adriatic coast.

- Stop in Shkodra, one of Albania's oldest cities, where you'll climb to the ancient stone walls of Rozafa Castle, perched above the confluence of three rivers. Hear the legend behind its name and storied history while you take in views stretching toward the Albanian Alps.
- Cross into Montenegro and travel through the Lake Skadar region: a patchwork of wetlands, vineyards, and mirror-like waters. Arrive in the lakeside town of Virpazar and board a boat for a scenic ride, cruising past lily pads, bird habitats (keep your eyes peeled for the rare Dalmatian pelican!), and quiet coves framed by distant hills.
- Follow the coastal road south to Budva, stopping along the way at Sveti Stefan, a fishing village turned fortified island settlement. Pause for photos and a short walk while your guide shares the unusual history of this tiny, once-private retreat.

Sit down for an included dinner at a local restaurant this evening, served with beer or wine. *Please note: Have your passport ready to present when crossing the border between Albania and Montenegro.*

Day 6: Sightseeing tour of Cetinje & Kotor

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, lunch

Discover Montenegro's layered history and striking landscapes on a journey from towns that hint at royal heritage to the pristine shores of the Adriatic.

- Walk through the streets of Cetinje, where diplomatic history and old-world politics intersect. Step into the Museum of King Nikola, a residence that once echoed with regal ambition. At the nearby Vlaska Church, examine a fence forged from captured Ottoman rifle barrels—a raw artifact of resistance that frames this 15th-century sanctuary.
- Head uphill to Njegusi, a mountain village where smoke curls from rustic smokehouses. Inside one, taste prosciutto aged in cool, fragrant air, alongside sharp cheeses and homemade spirits made from local fruit—flavors that have defined this region for ages.
- Drive down the Serpentine—a series of tight switchbacks that reveal expansive views of the Bay of Kotor, its brilliant blue waters folding into fjord-like inlets beneath towering cliffs.
- Explore the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Kotor's Old Town. The ancient town's labyrinthine alleyways open onto squares dominated by St. Tryphon's Cathedral and centuries-old fortifications. While the area can largely be dated back to medieval times, some of the Old Town dates all the way back to the Romans in 168 B.C.
- Pass the Clock Tower—built in 1602—and an Orthodox church before sitting down for this afternoon's included lunch at a local restaurant.

Dubrovnik → 2 nights

Day 7: Dubrovnik via Perast & Konavle Valley

Included meals: breakfast, lunch, liqueur tasting

Travel along the shimmering Bay of Kotor to the historic Venetian town of Perast. Here, board a traditional wooden boat to visit two unique islets: St. George, where a centuries-old monastery

stands amid cypress trees, and Our Lady of the Rocks, a chapel built atop an artificial island with walls lined by votive paintings and images of local legends. After soaking in this rare maritime heritage, cross into Croatia's Dalmatian coast.

- Arrive in Croatia's fertile Konavle Valley and step into a family-run agritourism estate, surrounded by terraced vegetable gardens growing heirloom tomatoes, peppers, and aromatic herbs.
- Hear the stories of a farming family whose practices have remained unchanged for more than five centuries, nurturing the land with hands that know every inch of soil.
- Taste traditional homemade liqueurs, made from local produce like fruit, sage, and walnuts. Then, settle into a lunch of rustic dishes prepared from vegetables, cheeses, and olive oils grown, made, and pressed on-site. The array of drinks and food is as strong, fragrant, and steeped in history as the landscape.

Then, continue your journey to Dubrovnik, where medieval walls rise above the Adriatic's sparkling blue waters.

Please note: Have your passport ready to present when crossing the border between Montenegro and Croatia.

Day 8: Sightseeing tour of Dubrovnik, olive oil & wine tasting

Included meals: breakfast, tasting, wine tasting, farewell dinner

Though its history begins in the 7th century, Dubrovnik looks more like a movie set than an ancient settlement. Epic stone walls, rising above the twinkling waves of the Adriatic, cloister the orange-roofed buildings of the Old Town—and today, you'll follow a local guide on a tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- Look out over the city from a panoramic viewpoint and bask in the sight of the Old Town, its sawtooth shoreline, and Lokrum, a car-free island that doubles as a nature reserve and is known for housing the ruins of the 1,000-year-old Benedictine monastery.
- Enter Dubrovnik's Franciscan church and monastery. Built over the course of centuries—and rebuilt after an earthquake leveled the city in 1667—it's noted for its extensive library of more than 20,000 books, manuscripts, and incunabula (pamphlets and books printed between 1450 and 1500, when the technology was first invented).

After your morning tour, make your way to a

local family-owned farm, where you'll embark on a leisurely walk through the olive groves and orchards. You'll be treated to a tasting of their organic olive oils as well as their homemade liqueurs made with the fruits from their orchard. This evening, celebrate your trip—and raise a toast to those good times—during a farewell dinner served with beer or wine.

Flight Home

Day 9: Departure

Included meals: breakfast (excluding early morning departures)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.