

Shkëndijë

SHËRBESE PËR FËMIJËT

Reaching Albanian Children and Helping Others do the same

Albania Missions Guide



With Spark Ministries



www.sparkministries.org

Shkëndijë is a registered charity in Albania and a member of the Albanian Evangelical Alliance
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Greetings to you from Albania

Firstly, let me thank you for volunteering for a life changing mission experience in this amazing country that's close to my heart.

I remember back when I first arrived for a two-week mission, the team leader saying: *"Missions will either make you or break you; It will either bring out the best in you or the worst; but one thing is for sure: you will not go back the same!"*

Albania is not quite the 'wild west' as it was several years ago, but the whole missions experience will challenge you in many ways....So get ready!!!

Secondly, I have put together this short guide and helpful information for you to get a feel of what to expect and come better prepared with the right heart and willing attitude. Please take time to read it carefully so as to prevent any possible problems or misunderstandings once here.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions or uncertainties. Looking forward to meet you soon on Albanian soil,

Rachel Wilson

Founder and Director of Spark Ministries

In The Beginning...

- Rachel Wilson visited Albania for the first time in the summer of 1993 as part of a short term team with LightForce International and did the same a year later.
- After graduating from the Mattersey Hall Bible College Rachel ventured out to Albania again serving the LightForce vision for four years, where she was involved in humanitarian aid, children's ministry & church planting.
- In 1997 Rachel, after searching through her experiences and knowing over half the population was under the age of 18, felt that the most effective way to bring long-term change to a needy Albania was through the children, the 'Albania of Tomorrow', and so in September 2000, 'Shkëndijë' - Spark Ministries was birthed.

The Vision

- To Proclaim Jesus and His morals relevantly to Albanian Children, seeing them come to know & grow in God and help others to do the same.

Objectives

- Pioneer children's evangelistic works, which in effect will affect Albanian families so as to see the nucleus for church planting.
- Prepare and release Albanian nationals into children's ministry.
- Produce materials to resource & equip the Albanian Church for children's ministry.

We believe very much in becoming a positive part of the communities we are reaching and that Spiritual and Practical work should not be separated, as one is a natural expression of the other. Hence in outworking the vision, we seek to fulfil real needs in the community; whether practical, educational or physical.



Practical Information

Preparation before departure:

Medical

Immunisations: Ask at your local GP to be sure of which and how soon before departure you need immunisations. Hepatitis A + B, Polio, Diphtheria and Tetanus are usually required. Typhoid is also sometimes recommended. If you're from the UK, all of these are free on the NHS, except Hep B. However, if you are having a combined Hep A + B, they should not charge you. Make sure you leave plenty of time for these as some of them are done in courses and it takes up to one month before you are completely covered.

Insurance: Short term and long term volunteers are required to have insurance that covers them in the case of a medical emergency. For non-emergency situations, thankfully a variety of relatively good health options are available in Tirana now. There are quality staff and equipment for most of your needs, as well as the ability to refer you to the best source of help for things beyond their scope. Please give a photocopy of your insurance details to your emergency contact (noted on your application), before departure. Shkëndijë suggests long termers might want to check out SALT insurance (www.saltinsurance.com).

('ABC Health Centre' is a Christian organization that provides general medical consultations but also does emergency consultations and can assist with a medical evacuation.

Telephone: 042 234105 or www.abchealth.org

Often 'referrals' they may offer is to the "Orthodox Clinic" (Tel: 04-360925).

Prepare people around you: Connect with your church and encourage people to pray for you and if it is needed, to sponsor you on your mission here. Remember to pass on any contact details too!

Prepare yourself: Do take time to read through all the information properly. We highly recommend you learn a few useful Albanian words before coming and if possible even read one or two of the recommended books. Prepare yourself to be outside of your comfort zone and flexible.

Check list:

- Passport and photocopy
- Insurance doc
- Spending money
- Appropriate clothes
- Towel and toiletries
- Swim wear
- Sun protection
- Insect repellent
- Residency Permit docs (if needed)

Other useful things to bring: Torch, Tea/Coffee, Good book/reading material, Note pad/pen, Small amount of your favourite nibbles/snacks, Wet wipes, Basic 1st aid kit, Inside footwear, Travel clock, European Travel adaptor. Long-termers also might want to bring their laptop, if they have one.

On arrival: Arrival is much more civilized now than several years ago! However, there might be the odd beggar or taxi driver that might approach you, especially if arriving at the port. Do not start opening your purses/wallets to get anything out or allow any one to carry your bags. Just proceed to the pre-arranged pick up place and keep hold of your bags. The driver / vehicle will have 'Shkëndijë' identification. If there are any problems/delays the 'Shkëndijë' director can be reached at all times on (+355) 69 4093409 for UK and (+11355) 69 4093049 for the USA.

If your stay extends past 30 days, you must present your passport at the local police station in your town within the first 20 days. We will escort you for this. (If you plan to be in Albania more than 90 days you must begin the process to obtain a residence permit; again, we will help you with this. See appendix page 11).

Money: The local currency is called Lek. In 1964 a zero was dropped off each amount so that 100 Lek became 10 Lek. To add to the confusion, merchants still give prices in both old and new Lek. For example, a merchant may say that a banana is 250 Lek, but he or she actually means 25 Lek.

There are now many good private exchange offices, but it's still wise to count the money before walking out. Banks generally have a lower exchange rate than exchange offices. Initially a Shkëndijë team leader will help you with this.

ATM's (Cash points) are available nation-wide at banks like Bank of Tirana, Raiffeisen Bank and ProCredit. They accept most International Debit and Credit Cards. 'ProCredit' allows you to withdraw in Euros and Lekë.

Postal Service: The Albanian postal system is generally reliable but rather slow (a letter to/from the UK will take approximately 10 - 14 days, from America approximately 14 - 20 days). Shkëndijë's postal address for receiving mail is:

Volunteer's Name
Shkëndijë
Rruga Fadil Rada Nr 78
Tirana
Albania

Email and Internet: There are many Internet Cafés now in most main towns. If you have a laptop, wireless connections are available in most café bars. (Lezhe 'Drini', 'Mosart'/Tirana 'Steven centre'). Also if you are staying where there is a land line it might be possible to connect to the internet through 'Albtelekom' or 'Tring'. Please check with your host first whether they are on a limited or unlimited MB deal before downloading large files, like your favourite YouTube videos!

Telephones: There are now 5 Cellular Phone services in Albania – 'AMC', 'Vodafone', 'Eagle', 'Plus' and T-Mobile using pre-paid SIM cards which cost around 1000 Lek. These will work in any 'unlocked' phone. Shkëndijë does have a spare SIM number available on agreement, particularly team leaders. For emergencies only people can call the Shkëndijë number +355 694093049.

Albanian office hours: Normal office hours are 8 am to 2 pm, though at any time the offices can be closed without notice and employees may not show up for several hours or have long coffee breaks. A good general rule is to go somewhere early. Be ready to have to return several times to get your business done, especially with any governmental office. Be aware that, corruption unfortunately, permeates most business and government dealings. Use caution!

Toilets: Western toilets are becoming more common, especially in the cities; however, Turkish toilets (squatty potties) are still found in many restaurants, homes and in most villages. Do not put the toilet paper in the toilet (if toilet paper is provided!) use the nearest bin.

Drinking water: It is highly encouraged for foreigners to drink bottled or filtered water and plenty of it in hot weather. It's very easy to get dehydrated in the summer.

Getting around: Buses and Mini vans (Furgons) operate between towns and cities in Albania for a very reasonable price. (Lezhe –Tirana 250-350 leke). In the capital, Tirana, buses also operate within the city for a very small charge (40 leke). Traffic is at best chaotic and unregulated! Vehicles and bikes have the right of way. Pedestrians are expected to get out of the way - fast!

Personal Safety: Watch out for your valuables and bags. Theft is a problem and we as foreigners have more things and are a natural target. Don't leave bags unattended or valuables in an unlocked vehicle or on show. It is safer to leave your valuables at home and just take what you need with you. Make a copy of your passport and keep it with you rather than your actual passport. Be careful while loading and unloading luggage, supplies, etc... and have someone stay with the vehicle while you are going in and out of your home or office.

The more you blend in to the crowd the less likely you are to become a target of a pickpocket. Walking around with your camera, snapping at everything and money pouch hanging around your neck or waist, screams out - 'I'm a foreigner, target me!' When walking out, talk quietly. Your different language advertises that you are a foreigner. Although times are generally much safer, it is still not wise for women to walk alone. In general, women walk places in pairs or in groups, even in the daylight hours in smaller towns or villages. In the summer people are generally out later, enjoying the cooler evenings so it is fairly safe until 9 pm. In the winter people are inside much earlier and after 8pm the streets of the capital can be empty. Outside of Tirana, it is even more important for women to be escorted and the streets are empty as early as 4 or 5 pm in the winter when it gets dark earlier. In Albanian culture women staying out late at night may communicate a lack of moral character on their part so be careful about what you are communicating. Shkëndijë's general rule for short term volunteers is; when walking out there is a min of two guys / two girls + one guy and it's ideal to have a trusted Albanian, advised by Shkëndijë.

Weather: Hot in summer (up to 40 c), cold in winter and usually pleasant in spring and autumn, when it's not raining! Expect to go home with a slight tan, most times of the year.

Embassy or Consulate: It is generally wise to register with your Embassy or Consulate if you will be staying in the country for more than 90 days in one year. You will need to take your passport with you and it may be necessary to re-register with your Embassy each year. An online registration for UK citizens is now available at ukinalbania.fco.gov.uk/en/help-for-british-nationals/living-in-albania/registering-with-us and for American citizens at <http://tirana.usembassy.gov/smart.html>

<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/albania> is another link worth checking out.

**IF THERE IS ANYTHING THAT IS UNCLEAR OR THAT YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT,
PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO ASK YOUR TEAM LEADER OR EMAIL OUR OFFICE
BEFORE DEPARTURE.**

Shkëndijë policies for volunteers:

Dress:

This is something that changes depending on the time of year, the type of mission and from place to place! But a general rule is; modest and nothing tight, revealing or see through. In towns in summer, skirts and shorts no shorter than 2" above the knee / tops not strappy or low cut. In a village setting in summer, skirts below the knee or ¾ trousers / tops with short sleeves. If you're not sure ask an Albanian member of staff before going out.

Relationships:

Married or engaged couples: If you come on mission as a married or engaged couple your contact with each other in public might be limited compared to what you are used to. Holding hands or linking arms is acceptable and in a town perhaps even a 'peck on the cheek'. (Note: Shkëndijë can't always guarantee that married couples will be in a room together, it's accommodation dependent.)

Dating couples: If on mission as a dating couple, since dating doesn't really exist in Albania, it will need to be decided, based upon the length and seriousness of your relationship, as to whether your status for your time here will be as an engaged couple or 'just friends'.

Singles: Shkëndijë strictly forbids short term volunteers forming a relationship whilst on mission; with either a member of your team or an Albanian.

Free time, out and about:

If in your free time you want to leave the accommodation quarters or break away from the group, short term volunteers will need to inform or get permission from their team leader. The team leader will need to know where you want to go, how long you will be and with whom you will be going. Shkëndijë's general rule for short term volunteers is 'safety in numbers'- when walking out, a min of, two guys together / two girls + one guy and it is ideal to have a trusted Albanian advised by Shkëndijë with you. It is also advisable that ladies do not look into men's eyes when out in public. With long - termers it is likely that some of these rules will be relaxed as language and culture knowledge increase.

Non-Christians:

Shkëndijë welcomes non-Christian volunteers on practical and humanitarian projects, but we would ask them to be accommodating to the fact that Shkëndijë is a Christian organisation and is based on Christian morals and would wish for them to honour that and to act accordingly.

Smoking:

Smokers are kindly asked to be as discreet as possible and not to smoke when out in public or when in or around the accommodation quarters.

Alcohol:

Shkëndijë does not have a 'no drinking' policy, but would ask volunteers to drink in moderation - (as if you were driving). If you get offered the national drink 'Raki' – beware it has a kick! Note: Albanian ladies tend not to drink alcohol, perhaps only a glass of red wine with a meal; so female volunteers are asked to follow your host or leader's advice.

'Mavericks':

While 'Shkëndijë' encourages healthy suggestions, ideas and positive input about the mission, it deals strongly with people that think they are coming out to run their 'own little mission' or 'hijack' the mission! People that come to back bite, complain and sow division or negativity will be dealt with accordingly. Any disobedience that causes a problem to the team, team leader or discredits the mission may result in the person being sent home at their own expense. Volunteers are required to fit in with the work, schedules and duties with a willing heart.

Other religions:

Shkëndijë is a non-denominational Evangelical Christian organisation and, while we share our message of love, we seek not to offend, pull down or criticize any other world region/faith-group or get into heavy, heated debates. We require all our volunteers to do the same.

Culture Tips

Two common phrases in the world of missions are “culture shock” and “culture stress.” During your stay in Albania it is inevitable that you will encounter things that will not make sense to you. The key phrase in understanding another culture is that generally “it’s not wrong, it’s just different.” While here you will see many things that to you may seem “slow”, “out of place”, or even downright “wrong”, but you will benefit much if you come into your time here not as a judge of what is right and wrong in the culture, but as a learner. Who knows? By the end of your stay here, you may even come to appreciate those very differences that initially seemed “wrong” to you. So, be prepared ahead of time and ask for people to pray that you will be accepting and loving in all circumstances.

It is important to remember that you are representing Christian mission while you are in Albania and as such, it is necessary to act appropriately by the standards of Albanian culture. Be careful how your actions are being perceived as it could have a negative consequence on your work and witness, hence jeopardise the mission.

Take time to relate before getting down to business. Albanians are warm, friendly and fun-loving. They may stare at foreigners, especially women, but this is not a sign that they consider you a nuisance or an intruder. The people tend to be very forward and are probably simply wondering where you are from and why you are in their country. This isn’t as much as an issue in Tirana or the larger towns now that foreigners are more common. Albanians are very people-oriented while westerners tend to be task-oriented. Greetings (Good Morning, How are you? How is your family?) are important. It would be considered rude to begin a conversation with what you want to do or to get right down to business. A general rule of thumb is to remember, “There is always time for a friend.” So even if you are running late, it is still expected that you would stop and greet your friend and ask how they are doing. Also, Albanians tend to be event-oriented, whereas westerners tend to be time-oriented. For example, it is often more important that everyone be present before the program begin than that it begins exactly at the designated time. You will find that flexibility and being relaxed will take you a long way in enjoying your time here.

Start interacting right away in your new environment. Unlike some cultures where everyone seems to be in a rush, Albanians usually don’t mind taking time to interact with a customer in their store, or exchange pleasantries with a diner at their restaurant. Feel free to engage in conversations, even if you don’t speak any Albanian. Many Albanians speak at least some English and will always at least try to figure out what you are saying. Albanians greatly appreciate any attempt foreigners make at learning even a little of their language, so make sure you familiarise yourself with basic greetings and phrases. A little knowledge and a good attitude will take you far here.

Albanians are usually straightforward in their conversations and actually enjoy a good debate. What might sound like an argument to a foreigner may just be an enjoyable conversation, so don’t get anxious if an Albanian raises his voice, he’s just expressing himself!

Take time to go for visits to your friends’ homes. For most foreigners, Albanians will amaze you with their hospitality and generosity. Going for a visit to someone’s home is a way to communicate respect and friendship. It is normal just to drop in on someone, you need not call ahead (this is changing in the larger cities). At the same time, your Albanian friends may drop in on you unannounced. Because of the high value on relationships, it is expected that everything else will be stopped in order to spend time with the guest.

If you go for a visit, be prepared to be served a number of sweets, fruit, possibly Raki (Albanian whiskey) and usually coffee in the end. If you do not want to drink what is offered to you, you should still lift the glass or cup to your lips out of respect. Even if you are not staying for a meal but are just for a visit, you will rarely leave an Albanian home hungry! After the coffee is served you may end the visit. An hour or so is a normal length of a visit.

Just a general comment about liking something that they possess will generally lead to it becoming a gift for you, so be cautious about your comments!

(Generic toasts when visiting people:

Look at your host, lifting your glass before you drink and say: “Gezuar!” or “Për të mirët!”)

Show respect. Respect is an important aspect of this culture. This is evident in the greetings and farewells. When someone enters the room, it is a common courtesy for everyone present to stand up. The one who entered will generally shake everyone's hand, starting from the oldest to the youngest. This is also true when someone leaves. It is also understood that guests will take their shoes off outside the door or directly inside the door. Even if the host insists you don't, it is best to take them off.

Keeping in touch Don't promise or even allude to anything which you can't follow through on. In the west "maybe" usually means, "It's possible, but probably not," but to Albanians "maybe" generally means, "Probably yes." Don't say you'll try to get a student visa, or any kind of visas or anything else. It's easy for us to say we'll keep in touch, write letters send copies of pictures. And although our intentions are generally good, once we get back to life in the fast lane, we can fail to follow through. So, be careful in what you promise. One practical suggestion for getting copies of pictures to your Albanian friend (which are very valuable in the eyes of those to whom you are ministering) is to get your film developed prior to leaving and make doubles right away. That way you can either deliver the pictures personally before you leave, or you can leave the copies with the long-term missionary who will be following up on your contacts (giving him or her another reason to contact and follow up on those whom you've met). Of course, 'facebook' is also an easy way to keep in contact with foreigners, but be careful when adding/accepting friends – be aware of what view your facebook page presents of you, and whether or not it will seem acceptable by Albanian standards, especially regarding your photos.

Background to Albanian Culture: While there is state law in Albania, Albanian folk law is still widely followed, particularly in the north. This code of conduct, known as the Kanun of Lek Dukagjin, is still prevalent in much of Albania today, and can be seen especially in the role of women in society and through the culture of blood feuds.

Don't give special attention to someone of the opposite sex. Spending a lot of time or giving "special" attention to a member of the opposite gender may be interpreted that you want to pursue marriage or that you are a 'loose' person. So, it's a good idea to be very careful and even a little reserved in any relations with persons of the opposite sex. This is true because Albanians don't "date" the way westerners do, or develop casual friendships with people of the opposite sex. The steps from casual interest to engagement are very short. (Example: if a single male and female of marriageable age go for coffee together 3 or more times, it basically means they are engaged). It is easy to see how we as foreigners can easily send confusing signals by our words and actions and if this happens it can be very painful to set right or damaging to the mission. Keep these things in mind as well as you share about your own life and any past relationships. Also note that engagement in Albania is considered almost as marriage, and very rarely gets broken off. In fact, people can be killed for breaking off an engagement.

Albanians may be more affectionate in their interaction with the same gender. It will not be uncommon for you to see two men or two women walking arm-in-arm or even hand-in-hand. This doesn't have the same connotations as it would probably have outside of Albania. It is simply a sign of their friendship for one another.

These points can vary between village and city; the culture is changing rapidly, for example Tirana, the capital city, is very western and metropolitan.



Brief History of Albania

Albania is mostly mountainous with coastal lowlands. The population is about 3.4 million (not including those who have emigrated) and contains a number of ethnic minorities. The largest of these minorities are the Romani ("Gypsies") and Greeks. It was the last European country to fall from communism. Albanian has a long, rich and difficult history in the Balkan Peninsula.

Albanians are descendants of the Illyrians, an ancient Indo-European people whom Paul referred to in Romans 15:19 ("from Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ"). Over the centuries they have suffered under foreign rule as many other peoples, including the Romans, Slavs, Serbs, and Turks, have invaded them.

One of the most difficult periods of foreign rule began in the 15th Century when the Ottoman Turks invaded. In 1442, George Kastrioti (Skanderbeg) united Albanians in defence against the Turks and kept them at bay for a quarter century. However, after his death, Kruje (his stronghold) fell in 1478 and Turkish occupation of the country was complete by 1501.

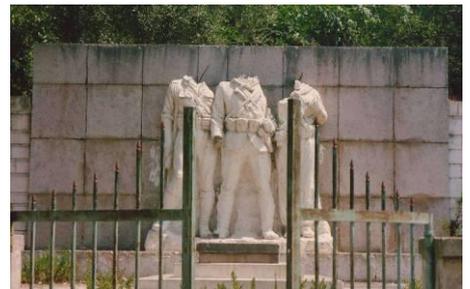
During this time many people were converted to Islam. The Turkish occupation also influenced many other aspects of life including language and the role of women in society.

In the 19th Century the Ottoman Empire began to weaken and Albania rebelled and later became an independent country in 1912. When the borders were redefined in 1913, Albania lost almost half of its land and population to former Yugoslavia and Greece.

In the 1920's Fan S. Noli attempted to establish a democracy; however in 1928, Ahmed Zogu, the former prime minister, declared himself king. During World War II, Albania was occupied by the Italians and later by the Germans. Then, in 1944, Enver Hoxha assumed control, beginning over four decades of Communist dictatorship.

Albania was ruled by a very strong Stalinist variety of Communism. The Albanian people became more and more isolated as their government broke off established relations with Yugoslavia, the Soviet Union, and China. In 1967, Albania became the first nation in history to declare itself officially atheistic. After Hoxha's death in 1985, the Communist regime began to decline.

Finally, in 1992, Albanians elected a democratic government. After the collapse of several financial pyramid schemes in 1997, Albania was thrown into chaos. A socialist government was elected at the time and was in power until 2007 when the Democratic Party won the elections. The situation has been very calm here since 1999. The last decade has seen massive changes in Albania – both good and bad. There is religious freedom, with about 70% of the population Muslim, 20% Orthodox and 10% Catholic; but materialism seems to have become the religion of choice for many. A great number of Albanians have fled to find work in other countries in order to provide for their families. After many decades of forced atheism, most Albanians don't take their religion seriously.



Further Information can be found on the website < www.sparkministries.org >

Appendix

What you need for a residency permit (Leje qendrimi)

You will need to get a residency permit (Leje qendrimi) to stay in Albania if:

- You are planning to stay in Albania for more than 90 days in one year
- This includes two/three separate trips in the same year where the total is over 90 days

What you will need to get in the UK for your residency permit:

- A police certificate stating you have no previous criminal convictions, which must be legally notarised with the apostille stamp.
- A birth certificate that has also been legally notarised with the apostille stamp.
- If married, a marriage certificate which again will need to be notarised with the apostille stamp.
- 3 passport photos.

What to do before your departure (2 months before):

- 1) Firstly you must get a **police certificate** which states that you have not been arrested, or have previous criminal convictions. This must be no more than 6 months old by the time you are applying for your residency permit.
This police certificate is NOT a criminal records check, but is simply a certificate stating there is no information about you on the police computer. There are various ways of attaining the form, which include visiting, writing to, or telephoning your local police station, or you can visit their website and download and print your own copy. Once you have completed the form send it to the address (you will be informed where to send the form on the application form) with your payment of £10 (NOT in cash). It can take up to 40 days for your certificate to come through the post.
- 2) Secondly, when you receive the police check, you must get it legally notarised with the **apostille stamp**. At the same time, you must also get your birth certificate notarised (with the apostille stamp) as well as a marriage certificate (again the apostille stamp is required).
UK citizens you must visit 'www.fco.gov.uk/en' to get documents notarised. (Be aware, there are other sites acting as 'middle-men' agencies that are unnecessary, expensive, slow and insecure). Then simply search for apostille stamp and follow the application process. It will cost you £30 per apostille stamp needed, plus however much you need to pay in postage, both of which can be paid for online.
- 3) Get three passport photos.

Once you have arrived in Albania:

- 1) Your police check and your birth certificate with the apostille stamp on it will need to be translated into Albanian. Make photocopies of your birth (and marriage) certificate with the apostille stamp and also the photograph pages in your passport. These will then need to be notarised in Albania to show they are accurate copies of the real document, which will allow you to keep hold of your passport, and real birth and marriage certificates.
- 2) Shkëndijë will sort out other documents that are needed.
- 3) A final check you have all the documents need needed before you apply for your residency permit (Leje qendrimi):
 - 3 passport photos
 - Police check from your home country that has been notarised with the apostille stamp
 - A notarised photocopy of:
 - your passport (pages showing your photo and your details)
 - birth certificate (with apostille stamp showing)
 - Marriage certificate (with apostille stamp showing)
 - Proof of your place of residency showing the address (e.g. a rent contract).
 - Letter from Shkëndijë outlining your reason for visit and length of stay.
 - Letter from the cults office and the VUSH (Albanian Evangelical Alliance) office proving you are working with a Christian organisation for a religious purpose (religious immigrants do not have to pay a fee for the visa application).
 - A filled in application form for the residency permit (Shkëndijë will provide the form)
- 4) Arrange a visit to your local residency officer (Shkëndijë will advise) ensuring that you are knowledgeable about the following before you arrive:
 - Any of your previous visits to Albania, and their dates.
 - Your reasons for wanting to stay in Albania
 - How you intend to be financially secure over your stay in Albania, e.g. financial support from a church, or previous savings.
- 5) You may receive a short term visa after 1 – 2 weeks of handing in your documents, which you can use to prove you are allowed to stay in the country while your residency permit is being prepared (this could take 4 – 8 weeks).

Books on Albanian History and Culture

The Bridge on the Drina by Ivo Andric

“This is a fictional book by a Nobel prize winner which follows lives lived on one bridge over the centuries. This book helps give one perspective of the events and cultures which have shaped the peoples of the Balkan Peninsula.”

Broken April by Ismail Kadare.

A well written novel dealing with mountain culture in Albania, particularly with the culture of the blood feud. This book brings to life the Kanun of Lek Dukagjin, the ancient law of the Illirians.

The Albanians by Edwin Jacques

The author served as a minister of the gospel in Albania in the late 1930's and early 1940's until he was expelled by the new communist government. This work is one of the most comprehensive histories of the Albanian people available.

Café Europa by Slavenka Drakulić.

Gives the perspective of a Yugoslav citizen explaining the eastern European mindset, and how the fall of Communism has affected their worldview. A very insightful and self-aware book.

High Albania by Edith Durham.

First published in 1909, this book was one of the first to bring to light the hidden and mysterious life of the northern Albanians.

Albania and the Albanians by Edith Durham.

This book is a compilation of letters and articles written between 1903 and 1944 by Edith Durham on the subject of Albania.

FILM

Falja e gjakut

Albanian film which explores the culture of 'blood-feuds' as a way of revenge in Albania.

Albanian Language for Beginners

(Shkëndijë has an audio basic learning CD, available on request)

Alphabet & Pronunciation

A	-father	I	-bee	RR	-borrow
B	-boy	J	-year	S	-sun
C	-bats	K	-kite	SH	-shall
Ç	-charm	L	-light	T	-tell
D	-deck	LL	-balloon	TH	-thick
DH	-they	M	-mine	U	-spook
E	-estuary	N	-nine	V	-very
Ë	-duck	NJ	-onion	X	-adz
F	-fleet	O	-post	XH	-judge, jug
G	-game	P	pencil	Y	-new
GJ	-legion	Q	-mature	Z	-zoo
H	-hotel	R	-remember	ZH	-treasure

Common Words & Phrases

yes/no/maybe	<i>po/jo/ndoshta</i>
good/bad/so-so	<i>mirë/keq/ashtu-ashtu</i>
please/thank you	<i>ju lutem/faleminderit</i>
you are welcome	<i>s'ka perse</i>
no problem	<i>s'ka problem</i>
excuse me (for attention)	<i>ju lutem</i>
excuse me (for inconvenience)	<i>më falni</i>
I'm very sorry	<i>më vjen keq</i>
very, a lot/little	<i>shumë/pak</i>
more/less	<i>më shumë/më pak</i>
hello/what's up?	<i>ç'kemi?</i>
how are you?	<i>si jeni? (formal); si je? (informal)</i>
good morning	<i>mirë mëngjes</i>
good day/good evening	<i>mirëdita/mirëmbrema</i>
good bye/good night	<i>mirupafshim/natën e mirë</i>
Where is the...	<i>Ku është...</i>
bathroom?	<i>banja?</i>
what/who/why/how	<i>çfarë/kush/pse/si</i>
Do you speak English?	<i>A flisni Anglisht?</i>
My name is...	<i>Qhem...</i>
What is your name?	<i>Si e ke emrin?</i>
I don't know Albanian.	<i>Nuk di shqip.</i>
I don't understand.	<i>Nuk kuptoj.</i>
Do you have toilet paper?	<i>A keni letër higjienike?</i>
How much does it cost?	<i>Sa kushton?</i>
new lek/old lek	<i>lek të reja/lek të vjetra</i>

Some the information has been taken from the AEP new missionary orientation guide

Verb Conjugation

Regular Verb "To Learn"

I learn	<i>Unë mësoj</i>
You learn	<i>Ti mëson</i>
He/She learns	<i>Ai/Ajo meson</i>
We learn	<i>Ne mësojmë</i>
You (pl.) learn	<i>Ju mësoni</i>
They learn	<i>Ata/Ato mësojnë</i>

Irregular Verb "To Be"

I am	<i>Unë jam</i>
You are	<i>Ti je</i>
He/She is	<i>Ai/Ajo është</i>
We are	<i>Ne jemi</i>
You (pl.) are	<i>Ju jeni</i>
They are	<i>Ata/ato janë</i>