

Albania

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Albania is a country in southeastern Europe. It is bordered by Montenegro in the north, Serbia (Kosovo) in the north-east, the Republic of Macedonia in the east, and Greece in the south, has a coast on the Adriatic Sea in the west, and a coast on the Ionian Sea in the southwest. The country is formally named the **Republic of Albania**.

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Origin and history of the name

The Albanian name of the country, **Shqipëria**, translates into English as *Land of the Eagles*, hence the two-

Republika e Shqipërise



[\(In detail\)](#)



[\(In detail\)](#)

National motto: none



<u>Official language:</u>	<u>Albanian</u>
<u>Capital:</u>	<u>Tirana</u> (Tiranë)
- Population:	353,400 (2003)
- Coordinates:	41°20'N, 19°48'E
<u>Head of State:</u>	<u>Alfred Moisiu</u> , <i>President</i>
<u>Head of Government:</u>	<u>Fatos Nano</u> , <i>Prime Minister</i>
<u>Area:</u>	<u>Ranked 139th</u>
- Total:	<u>28,748 km²</u>
- % water:	4.7%
<u>Land borders:</u>	720 km
<u>Coastline:</u>	362 km
<u>Population:</u>	<u>Ranked 126th</u>
- Total:	3,582,205 (2003)
- Density:	125/km²

headed bird on the national flag and emblem. The derivation of the name **Albania** is of considerable antiquity, dating back perhaps to the pre-Celtic *alb* (*hill*), from whence *Alps*, or possibly from the Indo-european *albh* (*white*), from whence *albino* and *Albion*.

History

Main article: History of Albania

Illyrians arise as a people speaking an Indo-European language around 1000 BC. The Illyrian culture was influenced by the Greek culture (mainly the south Illyrian tribes). Albania being also the site of several Greek colonies. After

being conquered by a number of nations mainly the Byzantine Empire, it became a part of the Ottoman Empire in 1478 after years of resistance under the leadership of Gjergj Kastrioti Skenderbeg, the Albanian National Hero.

After the First Balkan War, Albania declared its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. The country was ruled by King Zog I until 1939 when it was occupied by Italy. The communists took over after World War II, in November 1944, under the leader of the resistance, Enver Hoxha. From 1945 until 1990 Albania had one of the most repressive governments in Europe.

Until 1990, five years after the death of Hoxha, Albania was an extremely isolationist communist state, with little contact even with the other communist states. Between 1990 and 1992 Albania ended 46 years of xenophobic Communist rule and established a multiparty democracy. The transition has proven difficult as successive governments have tried to deal

<u>GDP:</u> - Total (2003) - GDP/capita - GDP/capita	<u>112th</u> , <u>106th</u> , <u>130th</u> , <u>93rd</u> <u>US\$15.7 Billion (PPP)</u> <u>\$4,400 (PPP)</u> <u>\$2,230 (Nominal)</u>
<u>Independence:</u>	From the <u>Ottoman Empire</u> <u>November 28, 1912</u>
<u>National Day:</u>	<u>28 November</u>
<u>Religions:</u>	<u>Muslim</u> 70% <u>Greek Orthodox</u> 20% <u>Roman Catholic</u> 10%
<u>Currency:</u>	<u>Lek (Lk) = 100 qindarka</u>
<u>Time zone:</u>	<u>UTC+2:00</u>
<u>National anthem:</u>	<i><u>Hymni i Flamurit (/Rreth Flamurit Të Për Bashkuar)</u></i> <i><u>Albanian: Hymn to the Flag (/The Flag That United Us In The Struggle)</u></i>
<u>Internet TLD:</u>	<u>.al</u>
<u>Calling Code:</u>	<u>355</u>

with high unemployment, widespread corruption, a dilapidated infrastructure, powerful organized crime networks with links to high government officials, and disruptive political opponents.

Politics

Main article: [Politics of Albania](#)

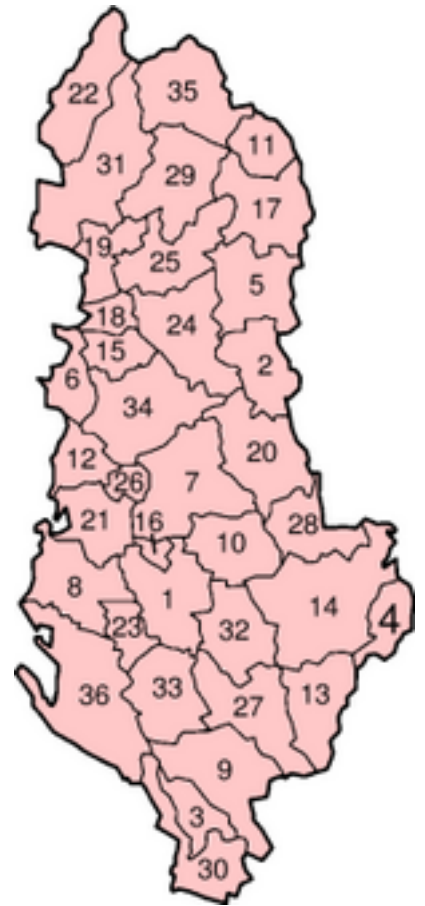
Head of state is the president, which is elected by the *Kuvendi Popullor*, or People's Assembly. The main part of the Assembly's 140 members are elected by the Albanians in elections every 4 years. 100 of the parliament members are chosen by the people with direct vote while the other 40 members are chosen using proportional system. The president is assisted by a council of ministers, which is appointed by the president.

Administrative Divisions

Main articles: [Districts of Albania](#) and [Counties of Albania](#)

Albania is divided into 36 *rrethe* (districts). Several districts are then grouped a *qark* (county or prefecture), of which there are 12. The capital city, Tiranë, has a special status. The districts are:-

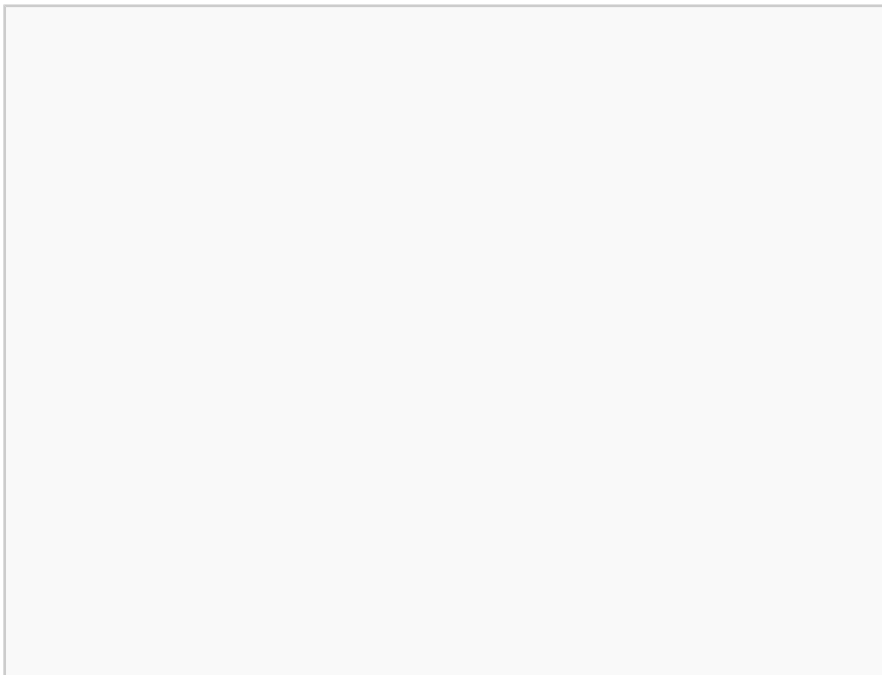
- 1 [Berat](#)
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- 6 [Durrës](#)
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- 24 [Mat](#)
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- 28 [Pogradec](#)
- 29 [Pukë](#)
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- 31 [Shkodër](#)
- 32 [Skrapar](#)
- 33 [Tepelenë](#)
- 34 [Tiranë](#)
- 35 [Tropojë](#)
- 36 [Vlorë](#)



See also: List of cities in Albania (*Note: some cities have the same name as the district they are in*).

Geography

Main article: Geography of Albania





Map of Albania

Albania consists of mostly hilly and mountainous terrain, the highest mountain, Korab in the district of Dibra reaching up to 2,753 m. The country mostly has a land climate, with cold winters and hot summers.

Besides capital city Tirana, with 520,000 inhabitants, the principal cities are Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodër, Gjirokastër, Vlorë and Korçë.

Economy

Main article: Economy of Albania

Albania is one of Europe's poorest countries, with half of the economically-active population still engaged in agriculture and a fifth said to be working abroad. The country has to deal with a high unemployment rate, corruption up to high government levels and organised crime.

The country exports nearly nothing and imports a lot from Greece and Italy. The money for

imports comes from the financial aid and from the money that refugees working abroad bring to Albania. This is a good status-quo business for both Greece and Italy. The Greek government also makes money by unofficially selling visas to Albanian citizens, who are not allowed to travel freely abroad. For this reason both countries have several visa consulates in major cities of Albania, and oppose indirectly every possibility of free movement from Albanian citizens in EU.

Demographics

Main article: Demographics of Albania

Most of the population is Albanian (96% 1989 est.), but there is a sizeable Greek minority (2% 1989 est.). Many ethnic Albanians also live in bordering Kosovo. The language is Albanian, although some Greek is also spoken in the small villages of south bordering Greece.

Since the occupation by the Ottomans, the majority of Albanians have been Muslim (70%), even though religion was prohibited during the communist era. The Eastern Orthodox (20%) and Catholic Church (10%) are the other main religions in Albania, though in Albania religious fanaticism has never been a serious problem with people from different religions leaving in peace and even getting married without any problem.

Culture

Main article: Culture of Albania

- Cuisine of Albania
- Music of Albania

Miscellaneous topics

- List of Albania-related articles
- List of Albanians
- List of sovereign states
- Communications in Albania
- Education in Albania

- [Foreign relations of Albania](#)
- [Military of Albania](#)
- [Transportation in Albania](#)
- [Public holidays in Albania](#)

External links

- [Albanian Etymological Dictionary](http://www.geocities.com/protoillyrian) (*http://www.geocities.com/protoillyrian*)
- [Albanian phone directory](http://195.22.199.151) (*http://195.22.199.151*)
- [CIA - The World Factbook -- Albania](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html) (*http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/al.html*) - [CIA's](#) Factbook on Albania
- [General information on Albanians](http://www.albanian.com/community/index.php) (*http://www.albanian.com/community/index.php*)
- [More links of the Albanian government](http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/al.html) (*http://www.gksoft.com/govt/en/al.html*)
- [OPIC Guide on Albania](http://www.opic.gov/links/countryInfo.asp?country=Albania®ion=euro) (*http://www.opic.gov/links/countryInfo.asp?country=Albania®ion=euro*)
- [Travel guide to Albania](http://www.travelconsumer.com/countries/albania.htm) (*http://www.travelconsumer.com/countries/albania.htm*)

Official government websites

- [Department of Information](http://www.keshilliministrave.al/english/default.asp) (*http://www.keshilliministrave.al/english/default.asp*) ([Albanian](#) and [English](#))
- [The Albanian Parliament](http://www.parlament.al) (*http://www.parlament.al*) ([Albanian](#), [English](#) and [French](#))
- [Presidency of Albania](http://www.president.al) (*http://www.president.al*) ([Albanian](#) and [English](#))
- [Albanian Institute of Statistics](http://www.instat.gov.al) (*http://www.instat.gov.al*) ([Albanian](#) and [English](#))

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