

PART ONE GENERAL INFORMATION 1

Chapter 1 Background Information 3

Geography and climate 3, Natural history and conservation 4, History 6, Government and politics 18, Economy 18, Ethnic groups 19, Language 20, Religion 21, Education 23, Culture 23

Chapter 2 Practical Information 27

When to visit 27, Highlights 27, Suggested itineraries 28, Tour operators 30, Red tape 31, Embassies 31, Getting there and away 32, Health 34, Safety 36, Women travellers 36, Black and minority ethnic travellers 37, LGBT travellers 37, Travellers with disabilities 37, Travelling with children 38, What to take 38, Money Budgeting 40, Getting around 41, Accommodation 47, Eating and drinking 48, Public holidays 51, Shopping 52, Arts and entertainment 52, Photography 52, Media and communications 52, Albanian time and business 54, Cultural etiquette 55, Travelling positively 56

PART TWO THE GUIDE 59

Chapter 3 Tirana 61

Getting there and away 64, Getting around 64, Tourist information 65, Where to stay 65, Where to eat and drink 71, Entertainment and nightlife 73, Shopping 74, Other practicalities 74, What to see and do 75

Chapter 4 Excursions from Tirana 87

Durrësi 87, Divjaka 98, Kruja 100, Apollonia and Ardenica 104, Byllis 107, Elbasani 111, Berati 118

Chapter 5 The Southeast 129

Korça 129, Voskopoja 137, Prehistoric sites 138, Pogradeci 139, The Prespa Lakes 144, The Gramoz Mountains 145, Përmeti 146

Chapter 6 The Northeast 155

Mirdita 155, The Lura Lakes 159, Puka 161, Tropoja 164, Kukësi 172, Peshkopia 177, Mati 180

Chapter 7 The Northwest 183

Shkodra 183, Lezha 196, The Albanian Alps 202

Chapter 8 The Southwest 215

Saranda 215, Butrint 222, Around Saranda 227, Gjirokastra 229, Libohova 242, Tepelena 244, The Riviera 245, Vloora 252

Appendix 1 Language 263

Appendix 2 Further Information 271

Index 276

Index of advertisers 280