

Albania becomes the Mediterranean's fastest-growing destination. Arrivals to hit 12.47 million in 2026

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Albania, a country most travellers couldn't place on a map a decade ago, has quietly become one of Europe's fastest-growing tourism markets. According to The State of Albania Travel 2026, a new intelligence report published today by Dental Tourism Albania, international arrivals are forecast to reach 12.47 million in 2025 - up from just 3.67 million in 2014, a 3.4× expansion in eleven years.

The report draws on official INSTAT arrivals data, airport traffic figures and national tourism strategy targets to chart how a country sealed off for fifty years under communist isolation reopened in 1991, spent two decades rebuilding roads and airports from scratch, and then - in the 2020s - cashed in.

A decade-long boom that even Covid couldn't bend

Between 2014 and 2025, Albania's annual international visitor count rose from 3.67M to a forecast 12.47M. The pandemic dip of 2020 (2.66M) was wiped out by 2022, and by 2023 the country had cleared the 10-million milestone for the first time. Arrivals have grown roughly 95% since 2019 - a faster post-pandemic rebound than almost any other Mediterranean destination.

The six numbers that define Albania's tourism story

12.47M visitors (2025 forecast) - Up 3.4× since 2014, the fastest decade Albania has ever recorded.

20%+ of GDP - Tourism's share of the economy including indirect effects, with €6–7B in revenue targeted by 2030.

46% from Kosovo - Nearly half of all foreign arrivals come from across the border. The wider Balkans and Southern Europe make up 71.5%.

11× airport growth - Tirana International jumped from 1.0M passengers in 2020 to 11.1M in 2025, smashing the 10M mark in 2024.

75–80% summer concentration - Of all tourist stays happen between June and September. Two months (July–August) absorb the bulk of demand.

70,000 new jobs by 2030 - The national strategy targets a 25–26% GDP share and a year-round model beyond the beach season.

A country running out of low-season

Low-cost carriers are the visible engine. Wizz Air now operates 25 routes from Tirana, its largest base in the region; Ryanair launched 18 routes in 2024; EasyJet, Lufthansa and ITA Airways have followed. International hotel brands - Marriott, Hilton, Meliá, Radisson and Hyatt - have either opened or broken ground along the 450 km coastline.

But the report's sharpest finding is structural: between 75% and 80% of all tourist stays happen between

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June and September, and July–August alone account for 37% of annual demand. The risk now is no longer attracting visitors - it's absorbing them without breaking the product.

"Albania has solved the demand problem. The next decade is about solving the calendar - turning a four-month beach season into a twelve-month destination that still feels undiscovered when you arrive in October."

The 2030 bet

Albania's national tourism strategy targets a 25–26% share of GDP, more than 70,000 new direct jobs, and €6–7 billion in annual tourism revenue by 2030. To get there, the report argues, the country must extend bookings into shoulder season, push beyond the Riviera into UNESCO heritage sites (Berat, Gjirokastër, Butrint) and the Alps (Theth, Valbona), and convert its 1.7 million-strong diaspora across Italy, Greece, Germany, Switzerland and the UK into a year-round inbound channel.

If it does, Albania could double again - from 12M to north of 20M visitors - without losing what made it worth visiting in the first place.

About the report

The State of Albania Travel 2026 is an intelligence report by Dental Tourism Albania based on official INSTAT arrivals data, Tirana International Airport traffic statistics, Albania's National Tourism Strategy 2023–2030, and aviation and hospitality market filings. It is the second edition in the publisher's 2026 series, following The State of Dental Tourism 2026.

About Dental Tourism Albania

Dental Tourism Albania is an independent intelligence platform analysing the medical and leisure tourism markets of Albania and the wider region. The publisher produces data-driven reports for travellers, clinics, investors and policymakers.

Read the full report <https://dentaltourismalbania.com/articles/albania-tourism>

Media contact Dental Tourism Albania info@dentaltourismalbania.com

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Media enquiries:

Marcela Shehu

Co-Founder, Dental Tourism Albania

Email: info@dentaltourismalbania.com

Phone: +44 7500 162655

Website: <https://dentaltourismalbania.com/>

About

Dental Tourism Albania is an online platform that connects international patients with verified, high-quality dental clinics across Albania. The platform partners with carefully selected providers offering experienced professionals, modern facilities, and high standards of care, while enabling patients to combine dental treatment with a holiday experience.

For more information

Full Name: Marcela Shehu

Title: Co-Founder

Company Name: Dental Tourism Albania

Email: info@dentaltourismalbania.com

Phone Number: +447500162655

Website: <https://dentaltourismalbania.com/>

Company Contact:

Dental Tourism Albania

T. +447500162655

E. info@dentaltourismalbania.com

W. <https://dentaltourismalbania.com/>

Additional Contact(s):

info@rankdough.com

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