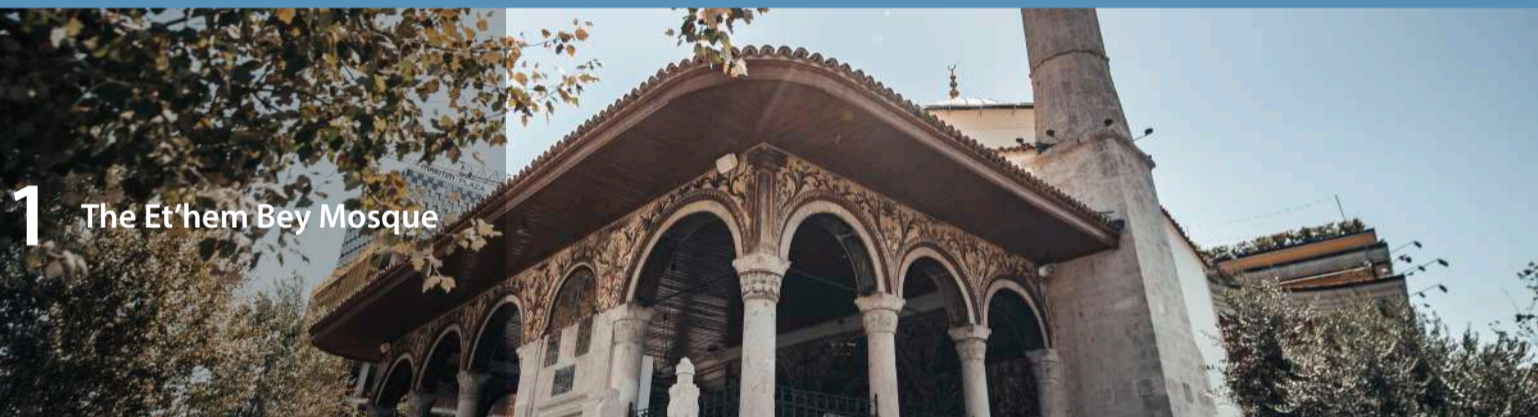
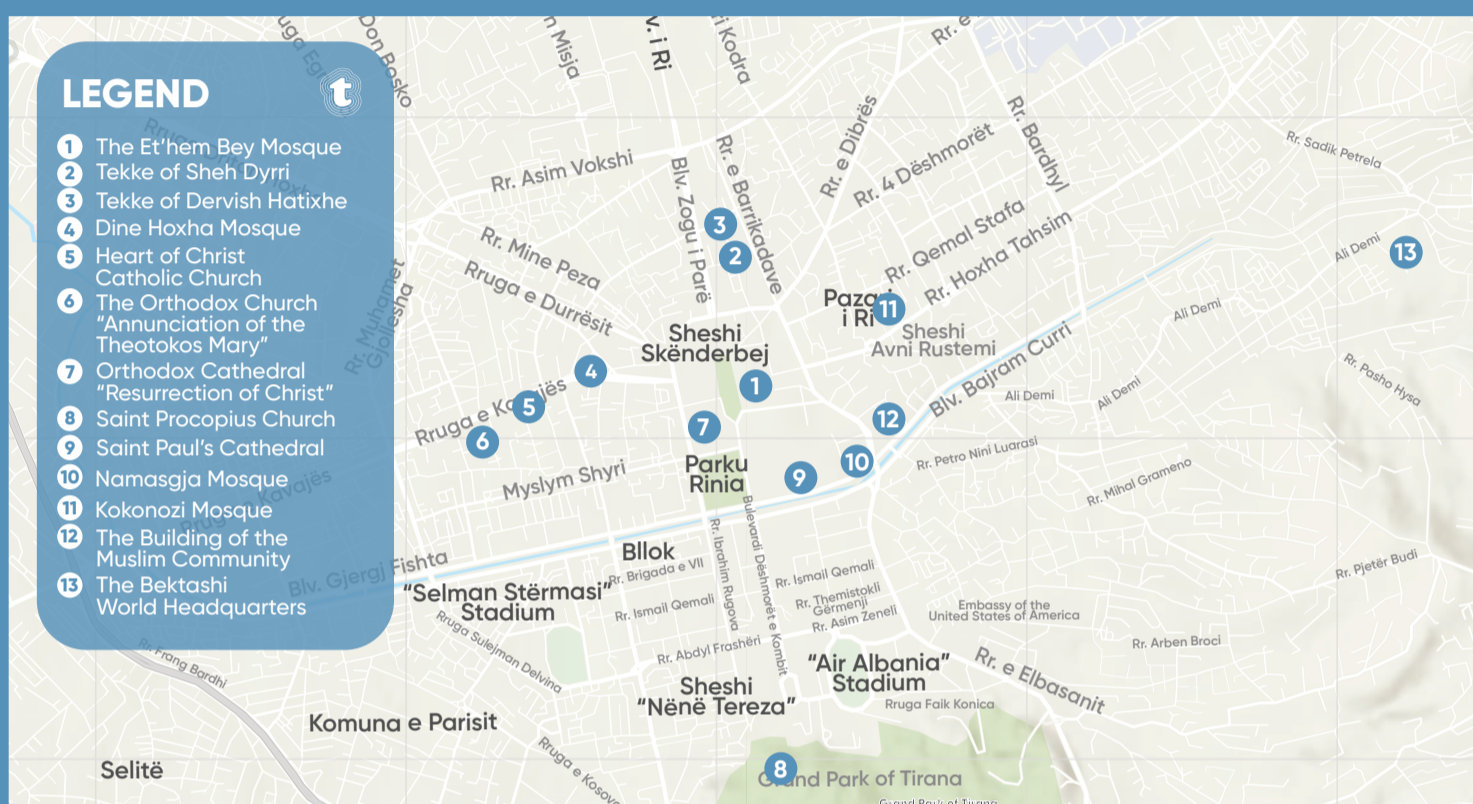


The Religious Itinerary



1 The Et'hem Bey Mosque

This mosque is the only one out of eight XVIII-XIX centuries' mosques built in Tirana that still exists today. Its foundations were laid in 1208 AH (1794 AD) by Molla Bey, but he died in 1223 AH (1807 AD) after having finished the dome. The building was finished by his son, Hadji Et'hem Bey, in 1236 AH (1821 AD) who completed the minaret, the roof, the portico and also the interior decorations and paintings. Two years later, in 1238 AH (1823 AD) the exterior paintings and decorations were also finished. The mosque consists of the prayer hall, the portico in the north and east, as well as the minaret. The mosque stands on a rectangular basis measuring 18,70 x 16.10 m in length and width and occupying a 301 m² area. It was built using stones brought from Shtish-Tufina village situated east of Tirana. None of the four façades of the mosque resembles the others. The prayer hall is a square-shaped one and was built in a single volume covered by a lead-sheet dome. Two tombs are situated on the left and right side of the entrance. The tomb on the right side belongs to Ballkiz, daughter of Sali Pasha and wife of Hadji Et'hem Bey who died in 1260 AH (1844 AD). The tombstone can still be seen today. The tomb on the left side belongs to Hadji Et'hem Bey and the date of his death, 1265 AH (1849 AD) is marked on it, but the tomb slabs are missing. This mosque is part of the building complex that constitutes the historic center of Tirana and is architecturally connected to the Clock Tower. Hadji Et'hem Bey Mosque was declared a Cultural Monument of the First Category in 1948.



2 The Tekke of Sheh Dyrri

The Tekke of Sheh Dyrri belongs to the Qadiri tariqa order. It served simultaneously as a tekke and as a residence for the Sheh and his family. The Tekke of Sheh Dyrri preserved in its compositional essence the basic features of the typical Tirana home. The foundations of the tekke were built with river stones, whereas the walls using cob and wooden pillars.

Judging from the way and the building technique used, it can be concluded that it was built at the end of the XVIII or beginning of the XIX century. It was declared a Cultural Monument of the First Category in 1963.

A 'türbe' with three tombs was formerly located in front of the tekke. During 1964 – 1965, restorative work was carried out in the tekke. In 1967, in the framework of the banning of religion and demolishing religious objects, the 'türbe' and the tombs were destroyed. After 1990, the 'türbe' was rebuilt again.



3 The Tekke of Dervish Hatixhe

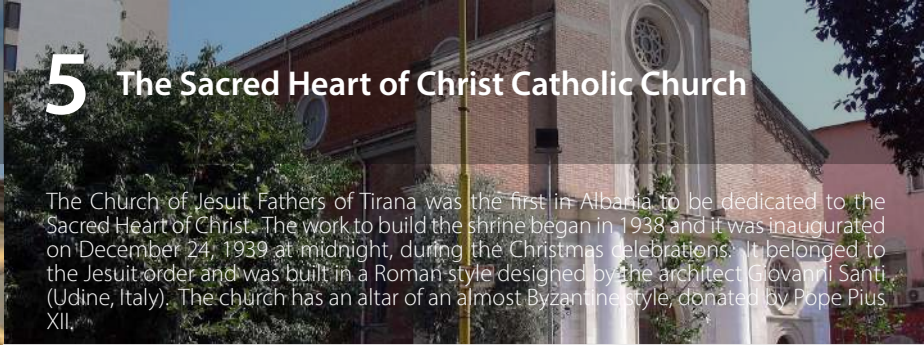
The Tekke of Dervish Hatixhe, built in 1798 and restored in 1992, remains a sacred place of pilgrimage, prayer, and peace. This tekke is dedicated to a prominent XVIII century character such as Hatixhe Skënderi, the first woman to receive the title "Dervish". This distinguished Tirana benefactor became known for her devoted care to the community, especially during the plague epidemic.

4 The Mosque of Dine Hoxha



This mosque was built in the 1930s by Dine Hoxha, a military officer in the court of King Zog I. It was closed down by the communist regime in 1967, but it was reconstructed in 1996 by the Muslim community observing the architecture of the time.

5 The Sacred Heart of Christ Catholic Church



The Church of Jesuit Fathers of Tirana was the first in Albania to be dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Christ. The work to build the shrine began in 1938 and it was inaugurated on December 24, 1939 at midnight, during the Christmas celebrations. It belonged to the Jesuit order and was built in a Roman style designed by the architect Giovanni Santi (Udine, Italy). The church has an altar of an almost Byzantine style, donated by Pope Pius XII.

At the time when religious buildings were destroyed in Albania (1967), the church was converted into a cinema and named Rinia (The Youth). The façade was changed and turned into a rectangular shape, in order for it to lose its initial form. After 1990, the church and its façade were converted back into their original state and the church was reopened. Mother Teresa visited the church during the same year. Whereas in 1997, a funeral mass was held in this church for Mother Teresa who passed away on September 5th in Kolkata, India.



6 The Orthodox Church "Annunciation of the Theotokos Mary"

This church was built near the "Karapic" mosque on September 1, 1874. Due to the drafting of the new urban plan and the pressure from the communist government, the "Annunciation of the Theotokos" church was demolished and on its ground was built Tirana International Hotel, which still exists today.

The new Orthodox Church "Annunciation of the Theotokos Mary" along "Kavaja Street" was built in 1964. During the atheist regime, the church was converted into an indoor gym. After the fall of communism in 1991, the church was returned to the Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania in a deplorable state. In 1992, it was completely reconstructed, and auxiliary rooms were added.



7 The Orthodox Cathedral "Resurrection of Christ"

The complex of the new Orthodox Cathedral "Resurrection of Christ" is built in the center of the capital, in a ground that was given gradually by state authorities (2001-2005) as compensation for the ground of the old cathedral in Tirana, which was destroyed in 1967 by the communist regime.

This complex is made up of the following buildings: the cathedral, the chapel, the bell tower, the see of the Holy Synod, and the cultural center.

The "Resurrection of Christ" orthodox cathedral presents the world with a majestic example of an Orthodox Cathedral adopting many elements of traditional Byzantine architectural design. A special feature of the church is the use of mosaics, the most prominent of which is the image of Christ Pantocrator at the dome. Frescoes have been recently painted in the church walls. Another striking feature is the iconostas made of marble and the masterfully painted icons. Adjacent to it there is a small chapel ("Nativity of Christ"), with masterfully made frescoes.

8 Saint Procopius Church

This church was originally built about 2 centuries ago (in 1778) and it is the first orthodox church in Albania after the Ottoman invasion, located in the vicinity of Lana, close to where the President's Office is today.

Based on the regulatory plan of Tirana and following the February 11, 1937 decision, regarding the situation of the building of the main boulevard and the ministerial complex, the old Saint Procopius church was expropriated and demolished. In exchange for that, the new Saint Procopius church was built on the hills in the vicinity of the Artificial Lake, where it is still located today. It was built during 1937 – 1940 according to a project designed by the Albanian architect Skënder Luarasi.



The Saint Procopius church was inaugurated on May 20, 1945. Its structure preserved the pattern of post-Byzantine structures in southwestern Balkans, that of a cross with a dome. Its construction was made using reinforced concrete, which was a novelty in Albania at the time. In 1967, when religious buildings were destroyed in Albania, the church was converted into Liqeni bar and restaurant, which included altering the structure of the building. In 1993, the restaurant was reconverted back into a church.



9 Saint Paul's Cathedral

The Cathedral was built in late 2001 and it is one of the largest and most modern cathedrals in Tirana. It belongs to the Tirana and Durrës Catholic Archdioceses. Its name is related to apostle Paul as the first preacher in the Albanian land, in 52 AD. In a letter to Romans, apostle Paul declares that he "preached the Gospel of Christ" "from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum". His statue is located in the highest spot of the cathedral. At the entrance of the cathedral, one may observe the statue of the Albanian Saint Mother Teresa and that of Pope John Paul II that are located in front of the building.



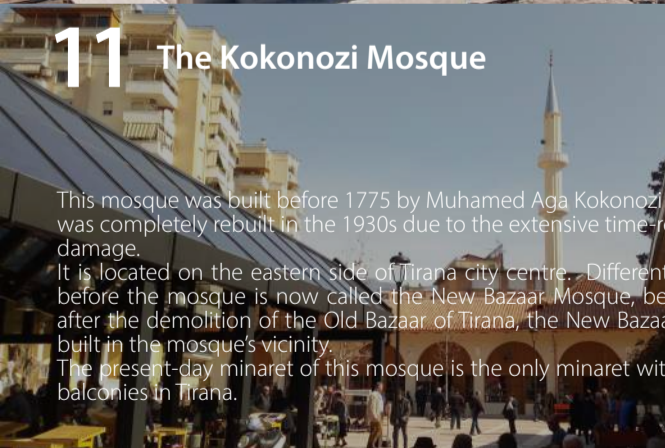
10 The Namazgah Mosque

A new mosque is being built over a 10,000 m² area at the place known as Tirana Namazgah. The mosque has a 35-metre-high dome and four minarets that reach 50 meters in height.

The Namazgah Mosque is a multifunctional building complex that transforms the Namazgah into a social area for all the inhabitants of the capital city. Over 5,000 people can attend a service at the same time, including the outside areas. Up to 10,000 people can say their prayers all together.

The complex will also include a library, a cultural center, a parking lot, a Quran school, an exhibition hall, a cafeteria and a conference hall, while a museum called The Museum of Living Together will be built adjacent to it.

11 The Kokonozi Mosque



This mosque was built before 1775 by Muhamed Aga Kokonozi and it was completely rebuilt in the 1930s due to the extensive time-related damage.

It is located on the eastern side of Tirana city centre. Different from before the mosque is now called the New Bazaar Mosque, because after the demolition of the Old Bazaar of Tirana, the New Bazaar was built in the mosque's vicinity.

The present-day minaret of this mosque is the only minaret with two balconies in Tirana.

12 The Building of the Muslim Community



This building situated in George Bush Street, once known as Camarvon Street, was built in 1927 as a palace for the princesses, King Zog's sisters. They moved there after Albania was declared a Monarchy.

The building used to belong to the Muslim Community, so the Royal Family was renting it from them. After the seizure of property by the state in the 1960s and its return after 1990, it was demolished to build in its site the existing seat of the Muslim Community.

13 The Bektashi World Headquarters

Founded by Hadji Bektash Velieu in the XIII century, Bektashism is a mystical Islamic dogma that deals with the spiritual perfection of people and respects all monotheistic religions. The main headquarters of Bektashism was moved from Anatolia to Tirana in the autumn of 1925.

In Albania, the Bektashi World Council established an independent body that was recognized by the other communities and which existed until 1967.

After almost a quarter of a century of silence in Albania, on January 27, 1991 an interim committee for the revival of the Bektashi community was set up. From then forward, the new organization has put a lot of effort in reviving Bektashi traditions in Albania. The Tekke and at the same time the World Headquarters opened in Tirana on March 22, 1991 on the occasion of Nowrus Sultan Day.

The Bektashi Museum is also located inside the premises of the Odeon (The Great Shrine) inside the Bektashi World Headquarters and it was inaugurated on September 7, 2015. This museum introduces through documents, photographs and original objects the history of Bektashism all over the world and especially in Albania. It is organized in 12 stands and 12 displays in honor of the 12 Imams. A very important element is the one dedicated to religious tolerance and harmony, to which the Bektashi World Council has given and continues to give a considerable contribution.

Today, the World Center of Bektashism has been in Albania for 90 years, it's the pride of our country.

