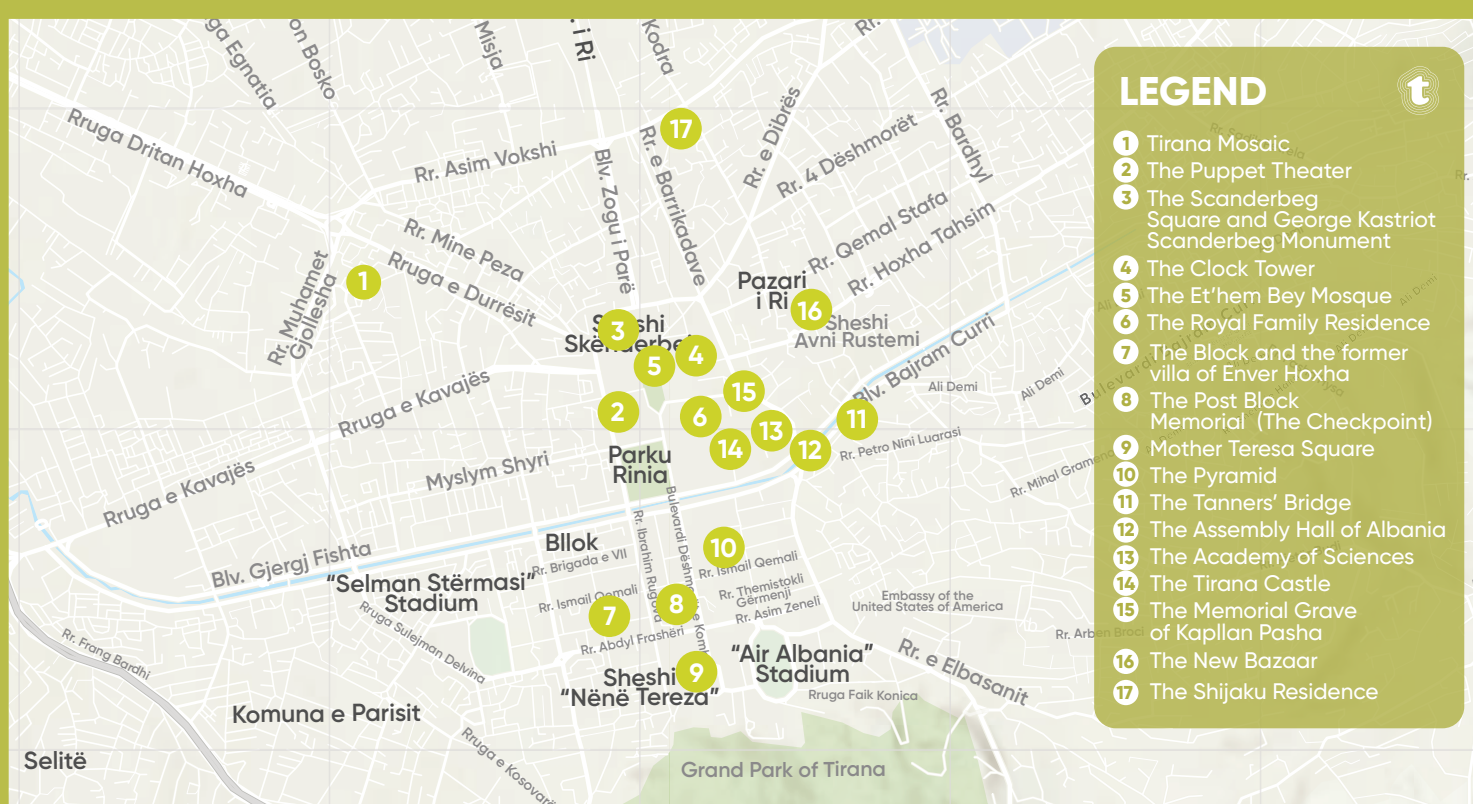


The Historical Archaeological Itinerary



LEGEND

- 1 Tirana Mosaic
- 2 The Puppet Theater
- 3 The Scanderbeg Square and George Kastriot Scanderbeg Monument
- 4 The Clock Tower
- 5 The Et'hem Bey Mosque
- 6 The Royal Family Residence
- 7 The Block and the former villa of Enver Hoxha
- 8 The Post Block Memorial (The Checkpoint)
- 9 Mother Teresa Square
- 10 The Pyramid
- 11 The Tanners' Bridge
- 12 The Assembly Hall of Albania
- 13 The Academy of Sciences
- 14 The Tirana Castle
- 15 The Memorial Grave of Kapllan Pasha
- 16 The New Bazaar
- 17 The Shijaku Residence

1 Tirana Mosaic

It was during the construction works carried out in 1972 for the construction of new residential buildings of Partizani block, that ruins of an ancient residence and a mosaic surrounding it were found. This place of residence is believed to have been a part of a rural dwelling (villa rustica) built during the first century A.D. Whereas during the III century A.D., the simple rural home was replaced by a building complex divided into two parts: the pars urbana (the residential part of the villa) and the pars rusticae (the production part of the villa), that had agricultural functions.

Later on, during the IV-V century A.D., the place of the Roman villa seems to have been occupied by a Paleo Christian Church. Bricks with crosses dating back to the period of Emperor Constantine I (306-337) were used during the transformation of the building into a religious structure.

The mosaic contains geometrical and floral patterns, as well as typical motifs of early Christianity, such as stylized braids, fish, and rosettes.

Villa Rustica and the Paleo Christian Church, also known as the Tirana Mosaic, represent quite a significant example of the antiquity of this territory.

2 The Puppet Theater (The First Parliament)

The building where the National Theater for Children or as it is otherwise called the Puppet Theater stands nowadays began to be built by the Austrians and was completed in 1925 by the Albanian state. It was originally designed as a Military Club.

With the creation of the Parliamentary Monarchy in 1928, it became the seat of the Parliament. Therefore, this building is known as the seat of the First Albanian Parliament. In 1939 it was turned into the Fascio Chamber, while in 1944, with the ascension of the Communists into power, the building served as the seat of the Antifascist National Liberation Council. From 1950 to 1961, it served as the Soviet Club, and afterwards it was adapted into a puppet theater.

Nowadays, it hosts the National Theater for Children (the Puppet Theater). After the reconstruction, this theater has a contemporary 160 seat hall. String puppets, masks, shadow theaters and pantomimes, as well as performances with actors are part of the events of the National Theater for Children.

3 The Scanderbeg Square and George Kastriot Scanderbeg Monument

The square was given the name "Scanderbeg" on November 26, 1937 in honor of the Albanian National Hero, George Kastriot Scanderbeg. It was designed to have a round shape and a fountain in the middle, while the building dominating it was that of the Old City Hall, that was demolished in 1980. The square was surrounded by traditional buildings, such as the Old Bazaar, the Clock Tower, the Et'hem Bey Mosque, the Evangelical Church (that was later demolished), etc.

During the years of the socialist regime, a statue of Stalin was erected in the square (November 4, 1951) and it remained there until 1968, when it was replaced by the monument of Scanderbeg. This monument was placed in the square on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of the death of our national hero. It is the work of sculptor Odhise Paskali in collaboration with sculptors Janaq Paço and Andrea Mano.

The latest interventions into the square were made during 2017, according to a project by the Belgian studio 51N4E. The square is now a space dedicated to pedestrians, paved with a carpet made of stones from all Albanian lands and from all the regions of Albania, over which the rainwater collected inside it flows on sunny days. The vegetation is represented by a variety of tree and plant species from all over Albania. This is the largest square in Albania, covering an area of about 40,000 m².

4 The Clock Tower

The construction work for the Clock Tower of Tirana began by Hadji Et'hem Bey in 1822 and was finished with contributions from affluent families of Tirana. Initially, the tower was 30 meters tall and the clock consisted of the clock winding mechanism and a brass bell that indicated the time by the number of strokes, since the clock had no face or hands. In 1928, the shape of the Tower was changed, and it took the appearance that it has today. Five more meters were added to it, thus reaching the height of 35 m. The tower has followed a similar path to the development of the city, and this development certainly is reflected in the tower's structure, where the bottom half is of the Ottoman style and it was built using carved stones, whereas from the balcony upwards, it is of a Western style. It was not until the 1930s, that the Tower was illuminated at night for the first time.

The Tower was damaged during World War II, but it was repaired in July 1946. During the restorative work, the wooden stairs were replaced by metallic stairs. The Clock Tower is a symbol of the emblem of Tirana Municipality, and together with the Et'hem Bey Mosque, form a unique architectural ensemble.

5 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 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. It was built using stones brought from Shtifina village situated east of Tirana. None of the four façades of the mosque resembles the others. The Et'hem Bey Mosque was declared a Cultural Monument of the First Category in 1948.

6 The Royal Family Residence

The present residence of the Royal Family was designed by an Austrian architect and was built by King Zog for his sister in 1929.

After World War II, it served as a residence of the first Council of Ministers of the communist regime. It was later used as a children's cultural center (The Palace of Pioneers).

This building manifests distinct beauty and architectural values. It still has its original mosaics, even after 50 years of neglect by the communist regime. This palace was returned to the Royal Family as their property in 2006.

7 The Block and the former villa of Enver Hoxha

The Block represents the former residential area of the senior members of the Labor Party of Albania (Communist Party). Before the 1990s, the block was a forbidden area for ordinary citizens. The history of the Block is rather special. Since the pre-war period, this was the location of some of the most charming villas in the city. Enver Hoxha turned it into a residential area for him and his "comrades" of the communist leadership.

The Block is especially visited by young people due to the numerous premises and luxurious bars and restaurants. Surely, anyone looking for livelier nightlife full of lights and nightclubs should head towards the Block.

The Former villa of Enver Hoxha

The residence where the former communist dictator, Enver Hoxha, lived consists of two villas built during different times. One of them was built in 1942 and Italian engineer Bellotti lived in it until 1944. The other villa was constructed in 1974. The older villa has traits of the Rationalist architecture of the 1930s, while the newer one manifests characteristic of the Mediterranean architecture. Situated in the former Block area, during the communist dictatorship, the building was an untouchable, taboo place that was covered in mystery. Enver Hoxha lived here all his life as a dictator, together with his family. After 1991, the villa became a governmental residence.

8 The Post Block Memorial (The Checkpoint)



The Post Block Memorial is an installation artwork that aims to act as a reminder of the crimes and suffering caused by the communist dictatorship in Albania. This memorial was inaugurated on March 26, 2013 in Dëshmorët e Kombit (The Martyrs of Nation) Boulevard in Tirana. The work is a reflection on the totalitarian regime and a reminder and homage to the political prisoners. It consists of three separate objects: A few concrete pillars from the Spaç prison, also known as the Albanian Auschwitz.

The second object is a bunker, the real symbol of the Albanian communist dictatorship. The last object is a part of the Berlin Wall and is a gift to Tirana Municipality from the Municipality of the German capital city.

The Checkpoint is the work of writer and former political dissident Fatos Lubonja and painter Ardian Isufi.

9 Mother Teresa Square



Situated at the end of Dëshmorët e Kombit (The Martyrs of the Nation) Boulevard on the southern part of Tirana, this square was designed by the Italian architect Gherardo Bosio during 1939-1940. Bosio designed the Empire Boulevard (now The Martyrs of the Nation Boulevard) that ended in Piazza Littorio.

The buildings surrounding the square had various administrative functions that were intended to form a complete political and sportive buildings complex. This square is named Nënë Tereza (Mother Teresa) in honor of Albanian Nobel Prize winner and Catholic nun. Mother Teresa of Kolkata is known all over the world for her work with the poor.

10 The Pyramid

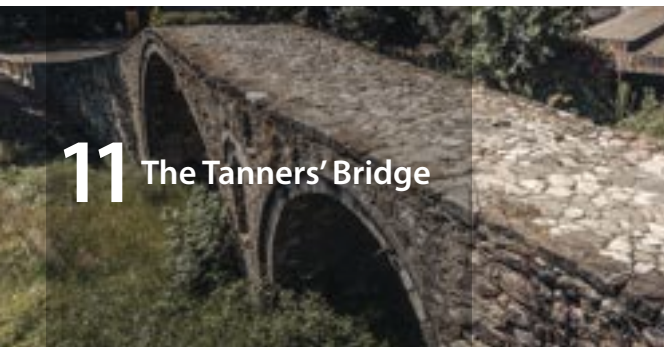


It was inaugurated on October 14, 1988 as the museum of dictator Enver Hoxha (1908-1985). The structure was designed as the wings of an eagle, a symbol of our nation, but it can only be seen as such from above, whereas from the perspective of a passer-by, it resembles a pyramid.

The design work was carried out by a group of architects led by Enver Hoxha's daughter and son-in-law. The construction began in 1986 and ended in 1988 (three years after Hoxha's death) serving as a museum of his legacy until 1991. After 1991, it became a conference and fairs center.

Presently, the basic plan for the use of the Pyramid is the creation of a Center for Digital Technology Education, which relates to many other fields using creativity and technology, an environment where young people and professionals of the field can interact using the most advanced technology, connecting technology and art in the best possible way.

11 The Tanners' Bridge



The Tanners' Bridge is a stone pedestrian bridge of the Ottoman period, built in the second half of the XIX century and erected with the contribution of the Tanners' Guild to cross over Lana. At the time, the Tanners' Guild had a special position in the social and economic life of Tirana.

In the past, this bridge was a part of the Shëngjergj road connecting Tirana with its eastern highlands. Until the 1930s, the bridge connected the two sides of Lana, where the butchers' shops and leather processing craft shops were located.

Restoration work on the bridge and interventions on its surrounding area were carried out in 2004. Currently, the bridge is only used by pedestrians.

12 The Assembly Hall of Albania



The Albanian Assembly, or as it is otherwise known, the Parliament, is a unicameral parliament consisting of 140 members elected every four years through a proportional system with multi-nominal constituencies.

The building where the assembly sessions take place was built in 1955, as an enhancement of an existing building called The Cultural League. A 40-seat raised area was created at the front for the presidium consisting of the Council of Ministers and the speaker of the Parliament and his/her deputies. The entire surface of the building measures 710m².

13 The Academy of Sciences



This building represents one of the most important seats of the Albanian institutions over the years. Initially, the building was the quarters of the first Albanian Parliament (1920-1924). Afterwards, during 1925-1926 it was the seat of A. Zogu's Government. During the period of 1929 - 1939, it served as a Royal Palace by King Zog I. It was during this occasion that the building was expanded with an extra hall on the ground floor and a staircase with a balcony in front of the entrance on the northern side to give it the looks and functions of a Royal Palace. Later on, the king moved his private residence in the upper floor of the building. During 1944-1946, the building became the seat of the Antifascist National Liberation Council (ANLC). During 1946-1962, it was the seat of the National Assembly Presidium, and from 1972 it has hosted the Academy of Sciences of Albania.

14 The Tirana Castle

This castle is situated at the historic centre of the city of Tirana, in one of its most popular areas. The castle represents a field fortification with a 160 x 120m rectangular plan with the longer stretch on the East-West direction.

Construction is believed to have taken place in the years between 1633 and the second half of the XVIII century. The castle was very soon integrated with the growth of the city, which began to expand as a result of the development of crafts, trade, etc.

The castle functioned until 1832, when it was destroyed by Mehmet Rushit Pasha.

A pedestrian area has been lately created within the walls of the Tirana Castle. The area has been transformed into a recreational space for the capital city. This area serves as a space for the promotion of local artisans and traditions, Tirana's cuisine and art.



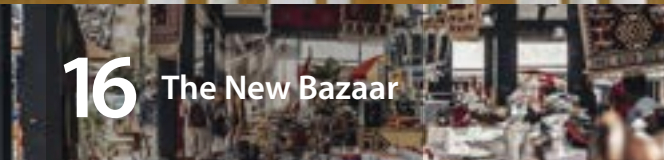
15 The Memorial Grave of Kapllan Pasha

The Memorial Grave of Kapllan Pasha, one of the rulers of Tirana, was built in the beginning of XIX century, probably between 1820-1830 and it is a part of the group of monumental tombs of the first mosque of Tirana, that was destroyed during World War II. The group had six additional graves of the same type and of different dimensions.

The structure in itself, represents a monumental grave of octagonal shape built with carved stones. It is four meters tall and consists of eight classical columns connected to each other by means of arches. One of the columns contains a carved inscription that speaks about Kapllan Toptani and that is illegible today, with the exception of the year 1326 (according to the Muslim calendar).

Kapllan Pasha was buried here in the XIX century, but his remains were later moved to Istanbul.

16 The New Bazaar



The New Bazaar began its activity in 1931. It was created as a result of the increase in commercial activity, that could no longer be covered only by the Old Bazaar. After the demolition of the Old Bazaar in 1959, the New Bazaar remained for a long time the only large marketplace for meat, fish, vegetables, and fruit in Tirana. This bazaar is located in that part of Tirana that, together with Mujo's neighborhood, represents one of the oldest areas of the city.

With the support of the Albanian-American Development Foundation, the Municipality of Tirana transformed the area by turning it into a business development area to offer a new investment model and community space.

Nowadays, the New Bazaar is a multifunctional space, where the biggest focus is on the trade of food products and on the cuisine of the nearby restaurants, as well as on organizing events such as parties, fairs, exhibitions, shows, concerts, etc.

www.pazariiri.com



17 The Shijaku Residence

This residence situated on No. 16, Virdar Luarasi Str., is a typical specimen of a Tirana residence with a "house of fire". Built during the first half of the XIX century, it represents the most evolved stage of this type of house.

It has a regular two-story quadrangular plan. The house of fire is the nucleus of the structure of the house and serves as the part connecting all its surrounding parts. The house reaches the height of two meters and does not have a ceiling, which leaves the wooden beams exposed. This is where the family cayed, cooked, and where the children slept.

This type of house is one of the oldest, and from the way it was constructed and functioned, it is not similar to houses in other cities of Albania. The house is surrounded by cob walls and the entrance is through double-door gates that are almost always covered by a simple roof.

The Shijaku Residence was declared a Cultural Monument of the First Category in 1973.

