



Balkans: Accursed Mountains Trek

Charity Challenge Brochure



FROM ALEX A MESSAGE

From a young age grew a passion for travel, adventure and seeing new cultures, which I channelled into creating **Endeavours Adventures**. We exist to curate **legendary experiences** around the globe and **connect amazing people together**, utilising the power of adventure to create a force for good in the world.

This means ensuring our challenges are **sustainable, memorable and built with you at heart**. I truly mean it when I say that adventure can be **life-changing**, so join our community today to help **change the world, meet new friends and discover your potential!**

It's time **'To Make Adventure A Global Force for Good!'**

A. Taylor
Alex Taylor
Founder



Accursed Mountains Trek

Challenge overview



THE WORLD'S **NEWEST** TRANSNATIONAL HIKING EXPERIENCE!

The Accursed Mountains trek is a **winner of multiple prestigious global awards**, offering a truly unique, affordable and immersive adventure through some of Europe's most untouched landscapes.

Join our 10-day unrivalled adventure through the peaks of the Balkans, crossing through three stunning countries: **Albania**, **Montenegro** and **Kosovo**. Find yourself exploring vast **alpine meadows**, beautiful **lakes**, untouched **waterfalls**, rugged **mountains** and more...



10 DAYS, 7 of which are trekking



STANDARD REGISTRATION FEE: £350



STANDARD FUNDRAISING TARGET: £1195



INCLUDES: See page 10



DIFFICULTY:   (3/5)



ALBANIAN ALPS ROUTE

DAY 3



DAY 8

Highest peak in Kosovo
- Mt Gjeravica, 2656m



DAY 4



Accursed Mountains Trek Itinerary



Day 1: Arrive in Albania

Meet and greet with the guide in Tirana, followed by a transfer to Shkodra, one of the oldest inhabited cities in Albania with a 2500-year-old history.

Depending on the time you will arrive, we will do a short city tour in Shkoder visiting some of the most interesting sights of the city.

- ✓ **Included:** Airport transfer, guided tour
- ✓ **Meals:** Dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Hotel



Day 2: Adventure Begins! Komani Lake Boat Ride & Hike Valbona River

We take a two-hour drive to Komani Lake in the morning and board our boat for the transfer across the lake to the "Blini Park" - Shala River, known as the Thailand of Europe.

Admire the immensity of the river and the myriad shades of blue. Isolated from high peaks, the blue water of Shala River offers adventurers a panorama of those that resemble Thailand's.

After the scenic boating, we will have a short warming-up walk beside Valbona River.

Walking: 2hrs; 4-5km

- ✓ **Included:** Boat ride, mountain guide, luggage transfer
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse





Accursed Mountains Trek Itinerary



Day 3: Valbona to Theth

Today we hike from Valbona to Theth via the spectacular Valbona Pass. Here, you will experience stunning, panoramic views with Thethi and Valbona both visible from either side.

Walking: 6-7hrs; 16km

- ✓ **Included:** Mountain guide, luggage transfer by horse
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse



Day 4: Thethi National Park to Nderlyse and Blue Eye

As we walk into Thethi National Park, the snowy peak of Bosh, Radohime and Kakia give us a taste of the unmatched mountain scenery to come.

The village of Theth is one of the most picturesque places in Northern Albania. We will visit the local beauty spots in and around the village, such as the stone Catholic Church, the blood feud tower 'Kulla e Ngujimit', the waterfall, the Grunasi Canyon, bathtubs of Nderlysa, and the Blue Eye Lake.

Walking: 5-6hrs; 10 km

- ✓ **Included:** Mountain guide, luggage transfer
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse



Accursed Mountains Trek Itinerary



Day 5: Theth to Vusanje & Prokletike National Park

Today we cross the border between Albania and Montenegro, starting the first 4-5km with a 4x4 ride to Okol village, the starting point of the trail.

The path then passes along the craggiest part of the Prokletije/Bjeshkët e Namuna/Alpet Shqipëtare Mountains. Almost the entire hike is surrounded by steep mountains with stunning views. This itinerary allows us a glance into the region's past when it was a forbidden zone during the Communist era. A border military post, some bunkers, and the border crossing pyramid sign still remains by the crossing.

We will have a picnic lunch in lush Alpine meadows carpeted with wildflowers and full of butterflies.

Walking: 8-9hrs; 17km

- ✓ **Included:** 4x4 ride, mountain guide, luggage transfer
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse



Day 6: Karanfili's Massif

After crossing Vallushnica Peak, you will pass over the ridge of Karanfili's Massif, before the third and final ascent to Taljanka Peak, 2056m. After soaking in the beauty of this special spot, we will descend down to the Valley and be transferred back to Vusanje.

Walking: 6-7hrs; 11.5 km

- ✓ **Included:** Mountain guide, luggage transfer, transfer to Vusanje
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse



Accursed Mountains Trek

Itinerary



Day 7: Babino Valley Via Hrid Lake to Doberdol

Starting with a short transfer to Babino Polje, you will walk up to Hrid Lake, an amazing place to rest and swim.

Next, we continue to walk towards Doberdol pasture, crossing the green border from Montenegro to Albania and passing by the Three-border point (Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro).

Walking: 7-8hrs; 12km

- ✓ **Included:** Transfer to Babino Polje, mountain guide, luggage transfer
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse



Day 8: Doberdol to Mt. Gjeravica Summit

The last day of the trek takes you from Doberdol via Gjeravica Summit 2656m (the highest peak in Kosovo) to Gropa Erenikut then to Prizren. You will pass two glacial lakes, Heart Lake and Big Lake of Gjeravica, and the flag & visitor book of Mt Gjeravica at the top of the mountain which the team can sign and take photos next to.

After a delicious lunch in the Grand Hotel Gjeravica, you will be driven to Prizren, a historic city in Kosovo with a vibrant culture, food and drinks.

Walking: 7-8hrs; 13 km

- ✓ **Included:** Mountain guide, luggage transfer, transfer to Prizren
- ✓ **Meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- ✓ **Accommodation:** Mountain hut guesthouse



Accursed Mountains Trek Itinerary



Day 9: Prizren to Tirana

After breakfast, we will have a cultural tour to get more familiar with the city of Prizren.

After lunch we drive to Tirana and settle into our hotel. Then we will heading into the city to explore its rich and diverse history, food and drinks.

- ✓ **Included:** *Tour of Prizren, transfer to Tirana*
- ✓ **Meals:** *Breakfast*
- ✓ **Accommodation:** *Hotel*



Day 10: Final Day

Today, you will have a free and relaxing morning in Tirana, visiting any places left on your to-do list and buying last-minute souvenirs for yourself, family and friends.

After lunch, our adventure finishes with a private transfer to the Airport, ending our exciting trek in the heart of the Balkans.

- ✓ **Included:** *Airport transfer*
- ✓ **Meals:** *Breakfast*



ALBANIA



Albanians don't call their country Albania. It is called Shqipëri in their mother tongue.



Nodding your head means NO and shaking your head means YES - confusing, right?!

Albanian Phrases:

- Hello: *Përshëndetje*
- Goodbye: *Lamtumirë*
- Please: *Ju lutem*
- Thank you: *Faleminderit*
- Yes: *Po*
- No: *Jo*
- Do you speak English?: *A flisni anglisht?*



KOSOVO



90% of the population of Kosovo are Albanians! So, Albanian is also Kosovo's official language, along with Serbian.



The name "Kosovo" derives from the name of a place in Serbia meaning "field of blackbirds".



More than 70% of the country's population is under the age of 35, which makes it the youngest country in all of Europe.



MONTENEGRO



Montenegro got its name from the dark mountain forests that cover the land. The name breaks down into two words, 'monte' and 'negro' (black, mountain), dating the 15th century.

The official language of Montenegro recently became Montenegrin, despite only a quarter of the population speaking it.

Montenegrin Phrases:

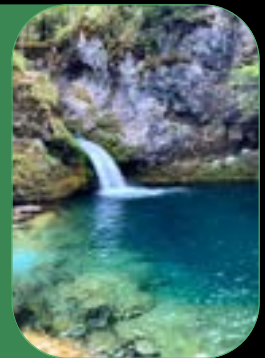
- Hello: *Zdravo*
- Goodbye: *Dovidenja*
- Please: *Molim*
- Thank you: *Hvala*
- Yes: *Da*
- No: *Ne*
- Do you speak English?: *Da li pričate Engleski?*



5 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE BALKANS!

CLIMATE

The climate in the Balkans during our trek is Mediterranean, meaning it is hot and humid, with temperatures up to 27/28 degrees. However, as we head at altitude further into the mountains the nights can be very cold, with temperatures as low as 0 degrees, so you should pack for both occasions.



FOOD

Balkan cuisine is meat-heavy and full of flavour. There's also a lot of 'stuffed' dishes - from peppers to cabbage leaves. We can first-hand confirm that the overwhelming flavours will not disappoint!



WHAT AM I GETTING FOR MY MONEY?

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ Airport transfer to and from your accommodation
- ✓ Accommodation during the challenge
- ✓ All meals specified
- ✓ Professional, English and Albanian speaking local guides
- ✓ Luggage transport during the trek (you will only need to carry a day bag during the trek)
- ✓ Transport in country by boat, 4x4 and minibus
- ✓ All entrance fees
- ✓ Safe drinking water during the trek
- ✓ Endeavours Adventures representative in-country
- ✓ Fundraising support
- ✓ 24/7 UK emergency line and support whilst on the challenge

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ Meals not specified
- ✗ Personal equipment (e.g. luggage, trekking equipment, etc)
- ✗ Flights to & from Albania
- ✗ Tips for guides and porters
- ✗ Visa's (if applicable)
- ✗ Vaccinations (if required)



FUNDRAISING & EXPERIENCE COSTS

HOW DOES IT WORK?

To help change the world and sign up to one of our charity challenges, first you need to pay a **registration fee** to secure your place!

Next, its time to fundraise for charity! With plenty of support, you and the team will each fundraise to hit your **fundraising target** by **6-8 weeks** before your start date. Once you reach this target your place is *confirmed* and its time for your adventure!

CHOOSING A SIGN-UP OPTION:

You can choose any sign-up option - you do not need any prior fundraising experience to join any of these options! You can also change this option after signing up. We recommend:

- **Flexi 1** to confident fundraisers
- **Flexi 2** to those with busy time schedules/smaller time commitments

STANDARD		
FLEXI 1		FLEXI 2
REGISTRATION £250	REGISTRATION £350	REGISTRATION £595
FUNDRAISING TARGET £1495	FUNDRAISING TARGET £1195	FUNDRAISING TARGET £795

REGISTRATION FEE: THIS IS ALL YOU PAY!

Aaaand you can pay this in several ways:

Option 1: Pay in full

Option 2: Pay 50/50 (Now, January)

Option 3: Pay an initial £95 and 5 monthly payments thereafter

100% refundable during the 48-hours cooling off period after you sign-up, and 75% refundable for 2 weeks. Non-refundable from thereafter.

HARDSHIP FUND

More details on page 14.

FUNDRAISING TARGET:

Your fundraising deadline is 6-8 weeks before your challenge starts. You **MUST** reach the target by the deadline to go on the trip.

Please note, this is NOT your money! This is the amount you'll gather through donations by fundraising. The difference you will be making for your charity is unmatched.





FUNDRAISING

I've never done a charity challenge before, how on Earth will I fundraise?!



SIGN UP:

Upon signing up, you'll receive a welcome email with 2 links:

1. To set up your **JustGiving page** - this is where all your donations will go and you can keep track of how much you've raised (how exciting!)
2. To join the **Team EA Balkans group chat** with everyone else doing the Balkans trek - aka a group chat of your future friends for life!



TEAM SUPPORT:

Put yours and the teams skills to use by organising; Quiz Nights, Raffles, Eurovision or large event parties, Knock-Out Tournaments, Football Matches, Bake Sales, and so much more!



EA SUPPORT:

- Monthly fundraising workshops
- Monthly newsletter packed with fundraising ideas and examples
- On hand support via text or phone call
- Online fundraising resource pack



CHARITY SUPPORT:

- 121's - can help you turn any idea/hobby into a fundraiser
- Can organise bucket collections (possibility of raising £100's!)
- Send you resources such as t-shirts & buckets upon request



EXTERNAL SUPPORT:

Reach out to corporate or small businesses for raffle prizes, sponsorship or matched fundraising!

Reach out to people you know for old clothes to sell, cakes for a bake sale, raffle prizes turning uni socials into fundraisers, and so much more!



FUNDRAISING COMPLETE!

Congratulations! All thanks to you, your fundraising is going to make a big difference for your charity - how amazing is that?! Your place on the challenge is now confirmed! You can start preparing for your challenge.



STUDENT FUNDRAISERS

Students, like you, who have chosen to make a difference during their time at university. This could be you!



Georgia - Peru: Machu Picchu Trek

First year, studying English literature at Bristol University

Georgia raised **£1069** for UnseenUK in **one single event** by:

Collaborating with the University of Bristol's Women's Football Club on their annual Sunday **tournament event**. The event saw different sports teams at the university competing in women's, men's, and mixed 7-a-side matches. The day was incredible, and Georgia raised a staggering £1,069 through **ticket sales** and a **bake sale** alongside the tournament, which she stationed on.

Megan - Iceland: Fire and Ice trek

First year, studying geography at Durham University

Megan raised **over £2,700** for ARUK by:

- Spreading the word to her **network** and asked them to share to their networks (which included a donation from a family members' church).
- **Sold clothes** throughout the year, including her networks' clothes that they no longer wanted.
- **Sold her bike**, plus her **dad's old motorcycle parts**.
- Asked for **donations for her birthday** instead of gifts.
- Used **easyfundraising** throughout the year.



Mathias - Peru: Machu Picchu Trek

Third year, studying international relations at Exeter University

Mathias raised **£488** for Hope for Children in **one single event** by:

- Organising Exeter university's first ever "**Men's Football World Cup**"

Mathias raised a total of **£1100** throughout the year by:

- Street **bucket collections**
- Completed a **half-marathon**
- Hosted **pub quizzes** and **bake sales**
- Organised several **sport tournaments** (table tennis, football)



FUNDRAISING FAQ'S

Do I have to reach the fundraising target?

Yes! After paying the registration fee, you must also reach your fundraising target to guarantee your place on the challenge.
But fear not! We have an expert team of fundraising guides and support available to help you alongside the incredible support you shall receive directly from the charity.

Who does the money fundraised go to?

All the money you fundraise goes directly to your charity. Once you reach your fundraising target, your charity will use a portion of this money to cover the remaining costs of your challenge, whilst the majority goes to supporting their important work.

What is the hardship fund?

Our hardship fund helps cover the cost of the reg fee for those eligible. If you would like to check your eligibility, please email team@endeavoursadventures.com.

How much of the fundraising covers the cost of the trip?

Operating a minimum 49:51 (Trip Cost:Charity) cost ratio, we are the industry leading % of fundraising remaining with your charity
AND
100% of all money raised over the fundraising target and Gift Aid remain with your charity.

Can I change my fundraising option?

Yes, you are able to change your fundraising option for your challenge, provided that it is before your final fundraising deadline. However, you must talk to your charity representative or a member of the Endeavours Adventures team first before this can be confirmed. A change in your fundraising option will incur a £20 administration fee.

What happens if I do not reach my fundraising target?

If you have not reached your target by the final fundraising deadline date, you can defer your place on the challenge to next year and pay a deferral fee (£70).

If you reached 80% of your fundraising target by the final deadline, you may be allowed to go on the challenge in the current year, and then fundraise the remaining amount of money once you are back.

However, if you have not reached your target and have not been in communication with us, the Endeavours Adventures team will cancel your place on the challenge.



FAQ'S

How difficult is this trek?

This trek is rated 3/5 on its challenge level of difficulty, as you will be trekking between 5-8 hours each trekking day.

Many people of different athletic abilities take on the Balkans trek and you will be supported throughout the challenge by your guide and fellow team-mates.

We strongly recommend that you practice some form of hiking with different types of ground, steepness, and even practice walking with the bag you will wear on the challenge, as well as your walking boots, at least 16-18 weeks before the challenge date.

Who will be looking after me during the challenge?

You will be looked after by accredited, English speaking local guides along with an Endeavours Adventures representative.

Who carries my big bag?

During the trek, you are only required to carry a small day bag (around 25-30l). Your big bag will be transferred for you from campsite to campsite.

Are flights included?

Flights are NOT included in this trip, allowing you to fly from wherever is most convenient for you, and at more flexible dates (as we find many people want to travel to the Balkans before or after the challenge to do some of their own travelling).

That being said, we provide details on times to arrive by and suggested flights/budgets you can book.

Will I get altitude sickness?

It is unlikely that you will get altitude sickness on this trek. However, if you are concerned about this, you can bring altitude sickness medication if you wish, prior to speaking to your GP.

Who will I be travelling with?

Group sizes normally range from between 8-14 participants from across the UK. With our university challenge groups comprised of fellow students (and your future friends!) from one, or multiple organisations.

Where will I be staying?

During the trek, we primarily use guesthouses. Most of the guesthouses are made of old stones, wooden, and typically cosy and one-story properties. Guesthouses are room-shared between the same sex and the same group. Guesthouses provide: Shampoo, towels, bed, blankets, and a hot shower.



FAQ'S

Is this challenge safe?

At Endeavours Adventures we place safety at the heart of what we do. Whilst an element of risk always exists within each challenge, we have worked with our partners in country and implemented our own procedures to minimise risk whilst still ensuring you have an incredible challenge experience! All our challenges are risked assessed in line with BS8848 British Standards of Trekking.

Is this challenge sustainable?

At Endeavours Adventures, we value sustainability and responsible tourism at the highest level to deliver a fulfilling, enjoyable experience whilst supporting local communities. We work with all stakeholders to monitor our operations and strive to continually improve what we do and encourage all our participants try to reduce single use plastics by bringing reusable water bottles and minimising plastic use where possible. We are fully committed to being a sustainable business with a social purpose. Endeavours Adventures are proud to be climate positive in our travel practices for our challenges, which means we go beyond achieving net zero carbon emissions to create an environmental benefit.

What dietary options are available?

Food is important to us. Good and nourishing food makes a good trip even better. All meals and snacks whilst on trek are included in the tour price, unless stated otherwise.

Endeavours Adventures can cater for all dietary options. At 8 weeks before your challenge start date, a form will be sent to you to request this information. Through this, we will ensure that you are catered for, and will keep you updated on any issues regarding your dietary requests.

What kit do I need?

Scan here to access the kit list:



What if I no longer can make my challenge dates?

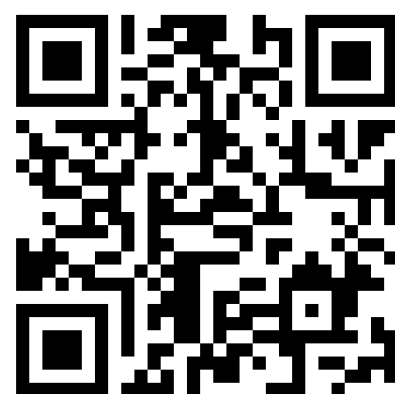
We offer **free** placement deferrals if you let us know before the end of March 2024. We offer **free/discounted** deferrals due to family/health complications, depending on what the situation is and how close it is to the challenge start date. In all other circumstance, you'll need to pay a £70 deferral fee.





**ENDEAVOURS
ADVENTURES**

READY FOR YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE?



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FACEBOOK/LINKEDIN: Endeavours Adventures