

ALBANIA

Country name	Albania
State title	Republic of Albania
Name of citizen	Albanian
Official language	Albanian (<i>sqi</i>) ¹
Country name in official language	Shqipëria
State title in official language	Republika e Shqipërisë
Script	Roman
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	AL/ALB
Capital in official language	Tiranë or Tirana (see geographical names policy below)
English conventional name of capital	Tirana
Population	2,402,113 (September 2023 est.) ²
Area	28,748 sq km ³

Introduction

Albania lies in the Balkan peninsula of south-eastern Europe on the Adriatic and Ionian Sea within the Mediterranean Sea. It became independent from the Ottoman Empire in 1912 with international boundaries little different from today. It shares international boundaries with four countries: Greece, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo.

Geographical names policy

Albanian names are written in Roman script. Place names should be taken from official Albanian-language sources and all diacritical marks should be retained. Mapping can be found on Albania's [State Authority for Geospatial Information \(ASIG\) Geoportal](#).

Nouns in Albanian may be in the definite or indefinite grammatical forms, which usually makes a minor difference to the end of the word. Large-scale maps produced during the late Communist era (1970s and 1980s) typically used the definite forms, but **the practice in Albania now is to use the indefinite form, except in certain instances where the definite is required for grammatical reasons. PCGN advice is to follow this style, reflecting the forms as shown on current official Albanian cartographic products.** Specifically, the indefinite form is used for all populated place names, short-form administrative division names and all physical feature names which do not include a generic term. The definite form will be

¹ ISO 639 language codes are provided for the languages referred to in this Factfile.

² [2023 Albanian Census](#)

³ [Albanian Regional Statistical Yearbook 2021](#)

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used for all long-form administrative division names and all physical feature names which contain a generic term. For reference, the *Counties of Albania* table (p4) shows both definite and indefinite forms of the centre seats.

The capital of Albania is Tiranë. In the definite form, this is Tirana, which is also the usual spelling in English.

Languages

The official language of Albania is Albanian (Albanian: *shqip*)⁴. Albanian is an Indo-European language, so is distantly related to e.g. English, German, but forms its own sub-group without any closely-related living languages. The standard spoken and written form of Albanian is revised and merged from the two main dialects, Gheg (*aln*) and Tosk (*als*), though it is based more on the Tosk dialect.

Linguistic minorities in Albania speak Greek (*ell*), Macedonian (*mkd*), Aromanian (*rup*) and Vlax Romani (*rmy*). Aromanian is a Romance language similar to Romanian, but without a standard written form. Macedonian is official in Pustec Municipality in eastern Albania, and names may be encountered in Macedonian in this area.⁵ Such names can be retained (in brackets, and romanized using the [BGN/PCGN 2013 Agreement on the Romanization of Macedonian](#)) alongside the Albanian forms where considered useful: e.g. Gollomboç (Globočeni).

Orthography

Standard Albanian is written using 25 letters of the Roman alphabet (excluding w). Two additional letters exist with diacritics: c with cedilla and e with dieresis.

Inventory of additional characters

Albanian character	Unicode encoding	Albanian character	Unicode encoding
Ç	00C7	ç	00E7
Ë	00CB	ë	00EB

Alphabetical order

Albanian dictionaries are presented in the same order as English except that the two letters with diacritics come directly after their counterparts without.

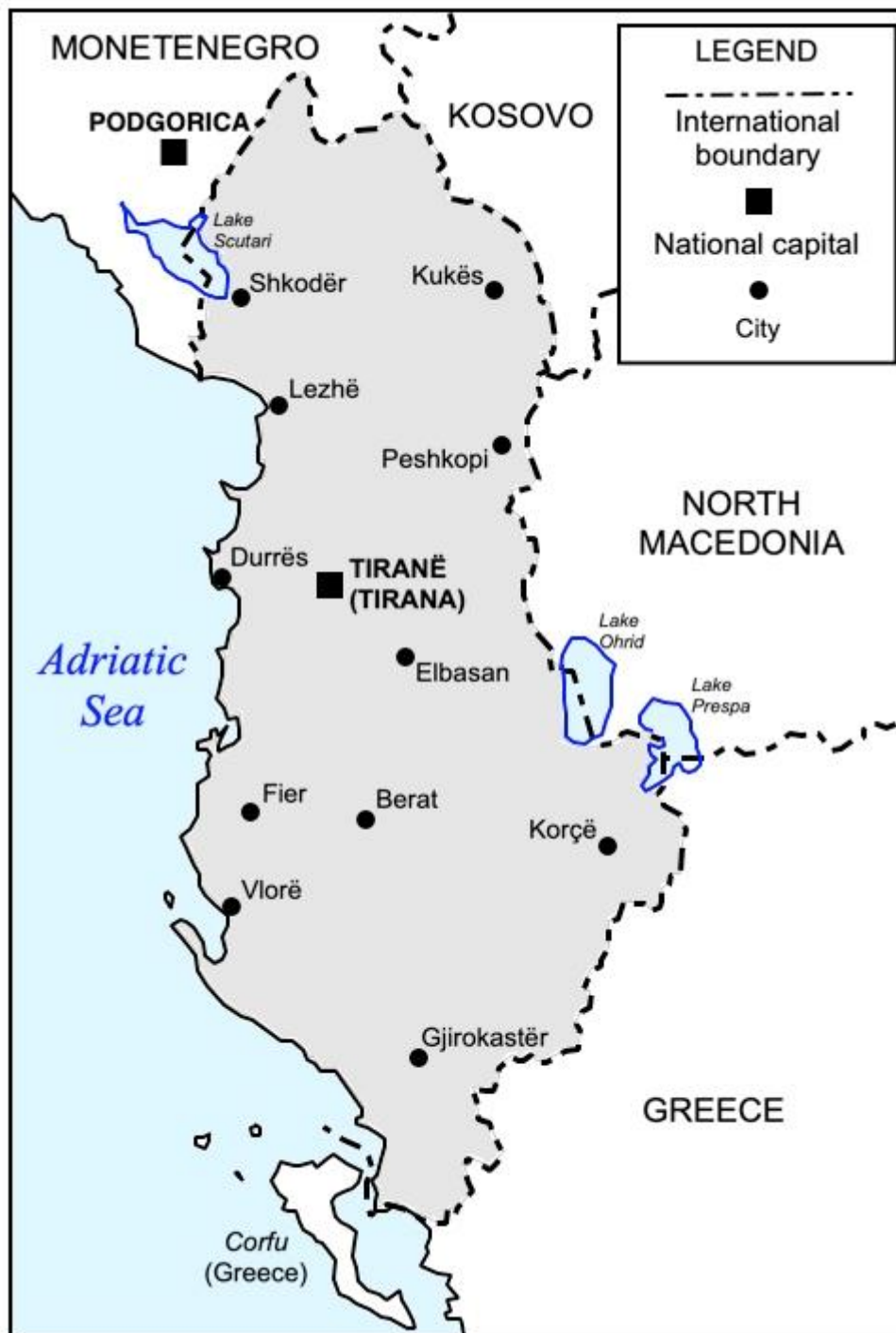
Upper-case letters are used in Albanian less often than in English. A generic geographical term may have a lower-case initial if it is part of a place name; PCGN recommends reflecting the presentation used on an official source.⁶

⁴ <https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/2/41888.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.bashkiapustec.gov.al/home/>

⁶ It should be noted that the US BGN, and therefore the Geographic Names Database, capitalises generic terms.

Map of Albania



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative structure

Since 2000, Albania has been divided into twelve counties (Albanian: *qark*). These replaced the 36 former districts (*rreth*). Each county (except Dibër) is named after its centre.⁷ They are divided into municipalities, 61 in total.

Counties of Albania

Full county name (definite form – PCGN recommended) ⁸	County centre (indefinite form - PCGN recommended)	County centre (definite form)	ISO 3166-2 code	No. of municipalities	Latitude and Longitude of county centre
Qarku i Beratit	Berat	Berati	AL-01	5	40 43N 19 57E
Qarku i Dibrës	Peshkopi	Peshkopia	AL-09	4	41 41N 20 26E
Qarku i Durrësit	Durrës	Durrësi	AL-02	3	41 19N 19 27E
Qarku i Elbasanit	Elbasan	Elbasani	AL-03	7	41 07N 20 05E
Qarku i Fierit	Fier	Fieri	AL-04	6	40 44N 19 34E
Qarku i Gjirokastrës	Gjirokastrë	Gjirokastra	AL-05	7	40 04N 20 08E
Qarku i Korçës	Korçë	Korça	AL-06	6	40 37N 20 47E
Qarku i Kukësit	Kukës	Kukësi	AL-07	3	42 05N 20 25E
Qarku i Lezhës	Lezhë	Lezha	AL-08	3	41 47N 19 39E
Qarku i Shkodrës	Shkodër	Shkodra	AL-10	5	42 04N 19 31E
Qarku i Tiranës	Tiranë	Tirana	AL-11	5	41 20N 19 49E
Qarku i Vlorës	Vlorë	Vlora	AL-12	7	40 27N 19 29E

Useful references

- Albanian Association of Municipalities: <https://shkb.al/en/about-us/about-us/>
- Albanian language resources: <https://lrc.la.utexas.edu/eieol/albol>
- [Albanian Regional Statistical Yearbook 2021](#)
- Albania's [State Authority for Geospatial Information \(ASIG\) Geoportal](#)
- [2023 Albanian Census](#)
- BBC Country Profile (no longer updated): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17679574>

⁷ For cartographic purposes, short forms of county names may be used, normally based on the name of the administrative centre (e.g. Shkodër, Korçë, Gjirokastrë). The exception is Dibër, where the short form Dibër should be used instead of the capital name, Peshkopi. Note that if short forms are used, these should be in the indefinite form, as per the county centre names.

⁸ County names are shown in their official definite forms (e.g. Qarku i Beratit), consistent with Albanian government usage. County capitals are shown in both indefinite and definite forms for reference, to illustrate Albanian grammatical usage, however, PCGN recommends the use of the indefinite form (e.g. Berat) for the names of the capitals.

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- BGN Albania Country Policy:
https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSSearch/GNSDocs/policies/Albania_Country_Policy_webversion_Latest.pdf
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/albania/>
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/albania>
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com;
<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/3/2/41888.pdf>
- Pustec Municipality: <https://www.bashkiapustec.gov.al/home/>
- Unicode: www.unicode.org
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server:
<https://geonames.nga.mil/geonames/GNSHome/welcome.html>

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