

Albania : approx dates 8-22nd July 2012

This trip is mainly about exploration and new routing. I am in the process of making contact with people that have been there and we have been very lucky to make contact with one of the guys who took part in putting up a big route on the Arapit mountain (see picture to



right) and he has offered to put us in touch with some Albanian climbers who speak english.

Therefore information at the moment is limited but so far this is what I have. It is likely getting there may need to be a joint venture and then teams can work on there own in terms of routes and mountains attempted.

Location/access

Flights seem to go via British Airways from London to Tirana (Kelmend Province North Albania) for around £200 return in July. But we may need some excess baggage on top of that! From Tirana we would ideally hire some 4x4 vehicles between us.

The main town before travelling into the Albanian alps appears to be Tirana and then on to Shkodhra. Drive from Shkodhra north in direction Podgorica, turn right in Koplík, follow the narrow road to Boga (1hour from Shkodrha) where the paved road ends. From here take the dirt road, which is in a poor state for another 30 kilometres. This road is best done with 4x4

although locals also use their common cars. **More research needed.** The picture to the right is the access valley and meadow.

The best overview of the area's climbing is at

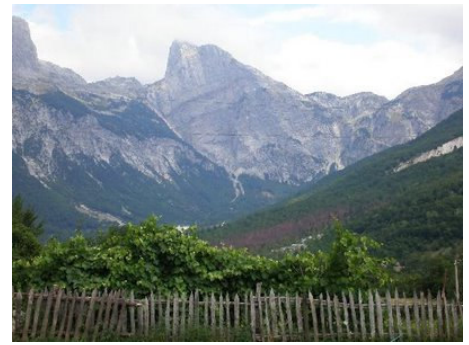
<http://www.summitpost.org/maje-e-arapit/658619>



Accommodation

The reports seem to show camping but there is also reference to a guest houses(some way from the meadow) for around £15 a night. It looks like we are likely to end up camping to be closer to the climbing but at present the cost is unknown.

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Medical support

From a report from Eldon caving club it must be made clear that any illness or injury sustained in the region has the potential for developing into something serious as there is no official medical assistance available in the area. Healthcare is by various members of the community using a range of self taught skills. There is no emergency service of any description in this mountain region. Nearest hospital is Shkoder which isn't well equipped, Tirana seems to be the nearest. There is no mountain rescue services of any description in Albania, any attempt of rescue and evacuation of injured people would be the responsibility of the other team members. We would therefore need to arrange appropriate medical support.

Scope for new development

I am hoping to be able to gather more information on the scope for development both on the Arapit wall and on other mountains in the area from contacts I am presently making. However it looks like there will be opportunities for ridge routes, single pitch bolted routes and multi pitch long routes.

The following are the links I have so far:

<http://www.geoquest-verlag.de/?q=node/186> -report on the arapit route

<http://www.geoquest-verlag.de/?q=node/186> -video on climbing in Albania

<http://www.geoquest-verlag.de/?q=node/186> -page on arapit

<http://www.summitpost.org/maja-lagojvet/553225>

Alternative climbing area

The Bovilla Climbing Area is the first sport climbing area of Albania, the web information says that it is definitely worth a weekend trip. It's beautiful setting near the Lake and the paradise-like swimming possibility in the canyon underneath makes this place so special. Even in the hot summer months one can find shade either in the morning on the sector Tufa or in the evening in the sector Lakeview.

Cost

We may need to arrange for some fixed rope, bolting guns and bolts, which we would need to share costs for and we may also want to buy a joint tent for storage. We may be able to getting some funding for some of the costs. Or people have equipment already which would reduce the shared costs. Therefore including flights, accommodation, excess baggage and equipment total cost in the region of £700-£800.