

# The Guide of Kelmend

Information • Guesthouses • Hotels • Restaurants • Guides • Maps

The Guide of Kelmend  
2016



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für Internationale  
Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



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# Kelmend

**Kelmend** is located on the northern part of the Republic of Albania, bordering with Montenegro. It is one of the largest settlements of Malësia e Madhe (Great Highland) having a surface area of 353 km<sup>2</sup> and a population of circa 6,000 inhabitants. Kelmend region is home to some of the most impressive landscapes in the Albanian Alps. There are eight villages in the region: Tamarë, the administrative centre of the Kelmend region, at 280 m.a.s.l.; Broja, which resembles a fortress due to the rugged mountains and rocks surrounding it, lies 12km south of Tamarë at 200-850 m.a.s.l.; Nikç, 15 km east of Tamarë, which is rich in caves, springs, waterfalls and beautiful scenery; Selcë at the altitude of 353- 1,100 m.a.s.l. is home to the largest canyon in Kelmend, a waterfall and interesting mountain trails with many caves to be explored; Lepushë, at 1,200 m.a.s.l. lies in a beautiful valley and has many stories to tell; Vermosh, one of the remotest villages at 1000 m.a.s.l. invites hikers to explore the surrounding mountains; and Kozhnja, Vukël, which have not been developed touristically yet.



Kelmend is close to the Regional Nature Park Shkrel and Kastrat, Theth and Valbona.

Archeologists have found Illyrian coins in Selcë and ceramic fragments, copper and iron tools, animal fossils and charcoal drawings from the Bronze Age, indicating early settlements in this area. Procopius of Caesarea (6<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) mentioned a Byzantine castle called Clementine in his writings to be found in what today is the region of Kelmend.

Today visitors can find good, basic accommodation if they want to staying longer in Kelmend to carry out different outdoor activities or take part in cultural festivities in Tamarë, Nikç, Predeleci Pass, Lepushë and Vermosh. The beautiful nature, the hospitality of the people and the delicious local food will make a visit to this region an unforgettable experience.

# How to reach Kelmend?



Kelmend can easily be reached by car, however a four-wheel-drive is recommended as part of the road is not paved yet and also to go to the more remote areas. From Tirana take the highway SH1/ E762 to Shkodra. From Shkodra continue on the road which directs you to Montenegro, passing Koplík and Bajza. Instead of turning left to cross the border, follow the SH20 towards Lepushë and Vermosh.



The Tourism Information Office in Tamarë, guesthouses or local guides can pick up tourists during the day with four-wheel-drives or minibus from Shkodra.



From Tirana buses and minibuses to Shkoder leave frequently (every hour; during summer even every 45 min.) from Karl Topia Square, which is also known as “Zog i Zi”. From Shkodra minibuses leave for different villages of Kelmend. All the villages of Kelmend have a minibus for village, which leave for Kelmend at Bar-Restaurant “*Malësia e Madhe*” in “Rus”.

Minibuses have the following timetable:

Vermosh – Shkodra 05:00 / Shkodra -Vermosh 14:00

Selcë – Shkodra 5:30 / Shkodra – Selcë 13:30 or 14:00

Tamarë – Shkodra 6:30 or 7:00 / Shkodra - Tamarë 13:30 – 14:00

Vukël – Shkodra 5:30 / Shkodra – Vukël 14:00



The nearest airport is Tirana International Airport (Mother Teresa Airport). The bus of the “Tirana Express” company, which departs every hour, takes you to the capital’s center. From there follow the instructions mentioned above. There is also the option to fly to Podgorica (Montenegro) and take a taxi or bus from the airport to Shkodra from where the trip can be continued by minibus or four-wheel-drive taxi.



# Places to visit in Kelmend

## Karstic Caves

There are several karstic caves in Tamarë which can be explored by tourists, however for safety reasons it is recommended to always visit caves accompanied by local guides. In the caves Nënfateshe, Bunëve të Macurkut, Bunëve të Lucajve, Lugjeve të Bardhit, and Vizit remnants of previous human dwellings have been found.

## Cave of Malqe Gruda

It is located at an elevation of 1165 m.a.s.l., at the bottom of the rock of Malqe Gruda, about 2 km away from Tamarë's neighbourhood Pojatë e Sipërme. In front of the cave tourists can have a great view of Tamarë and its surroundings. There are two entrances close to each other connected through a 310 m long tunnel. Inside the cave are calcareous tufas, a small lake, stalactites and stalagmites. Along the way there are extensions up to 25 m wide and then at a depth of 95 m a narrowing of the cave is encountered. At the end the cave is separated into four directions forming narrow corridors.

**The cave of Gjaçka**, in the vicinity of Nikç, can be found at around 200 m of its center. The dark entrance is about 20 m high and leads towards a cave with several recesses formed by water that has been passing through the cave many years ago.

## **Cemi River**

Cemi River originates in the so-called "Accursed Mountains" (*Bjeshkët e Namuna*) at 1650 m.a.s.l. and represents an interesting habitat, abundant in brown, marble and rainbow trout. To enthusiasts the river basin offers a great opportunity for bird watching, whilst others can simply enjoy the sandy riverbanks and pools which have been formed. Numerous canyons can be visited along the river, such as the canyon of Drenovë (1.4 km long and 100 metres deep), the canyon of Gërrle (900 m long and 25 m deep), or the waterfall of Sllapi, which is about 30m high.

## **Tamara's bridge**

Historians have found written records of a long, narrow bridge which has been built in the area to allow merchants to travel from Gusinje and Plav towards Peja, Prizreni and Shkup. It is said that in the 18th century the Pasha of Shkodra, Kara Mahmud Pasha, was convinced by his wife Tamara to build a new bridge after the old has been flooded. As a result she was stuck in the present-day Gusinje and Plav, where she had been visiting her family. Being greatly impressed by the region and the people, she told the Pasha to erect a new bridge. The inhabitants rewarded Tamarë by giving the bridge and the village her name.

## **Canyon of Gerrlë**

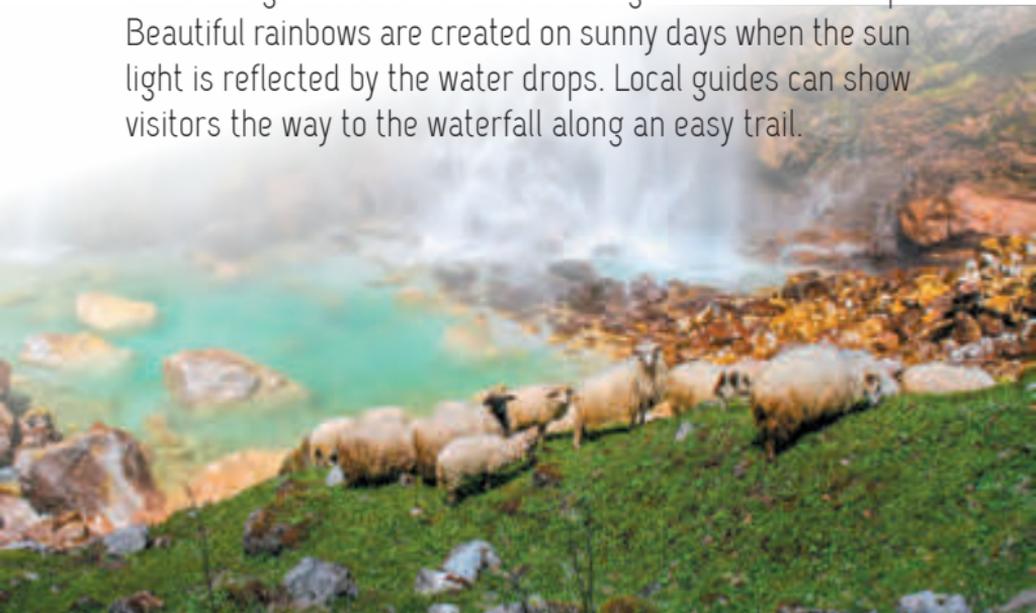
In the centre of Selcë Village, the water of the Cem River has created the Canyon of Gerrlë, which has a length of 900 m and a depth of about 25 m. At parts the canyon gets so narrow that the crowns of the trees which grow on both sides of the canyon touch each other.

## **The peaks of Jeshnica**

These peaks are famous for the large number of springs which can be found: exactly 365 of them, just like the number of days in a year. Hiking in these mountains, it might happen that tourists are welcomed into the shepherds' huts where they can try different roast meat and dairy products.

## **The Waterfall of Sllap**

Selcë village is home to the 30 m high waterfall of Sllap. Beautiful rainbows are created on sunny days when the sun light is reflected by the water drops. Local guides can show visitors the way to the waterfall along an easy trail.



Traditional female dress 'Xhubleta'







Home made bread

# Hospitality & Gastronomy

People of the Alps are known in Albania for their hospitality and eagerness to help their guests in every way possible, their humor and their talent for telling stories about the past and local traditions. It is not unusual for the hosts of a guesthouse or a restaurant to sing to the sound of a *lahuta* (one string traditional instrument) or a *çifteli* (two-string instrument). The appreciation for guests is also to be found in the food with a large variety of local products and dishes. Tourists can try different ways of preparing meat and fish; maize and potato porridge (*kaçimak*), sourcream (*maza*), boiled cheese (*djathë i zier*), *Mishavinë* cheese.

In the gardens around the houses the families produce different vegetables, as well as the potato of Vermosh, and different fruits like plums (*Prunus sp.*), grapes (*Vitis Vinifera*), cornel cherry (*Cornus Mas*), Gentian (*Sanza*), blueberries (*Vaccinium Myrtillus L.*) and pears (*Pyrus sp.*). All produce is grown organically in the area, making a trip to Kelmend also a culinary experience.

# Outdoor activities in Kelmend

**Hiking:** Several trails exist in Kelmend allowing tourists to discover the various valleys, canyons, springs, the rich flora and fauna, but also to learn about the history of the region and the local culture. Guides trained to meet tourists' expectations can accompany tourists to point out cultural monuments and natural highlights along the way. Different nature, culture and history- themed tours (see list of trails) can be organized according to the hikers experience and conditions. Summer and spring are recommended for hiking, as during winter the trails might be blocked due to heavy snow.

**Kayaking:** From October to November and from March to April Cemi river reaches the appropriate levels so that experienced kayakers can practice this sport. It is not recommended to tourists who have no experience with this kind of sport. Interested tourists should contact the Tourist Information Office before hand for further information or arrange with tour operators in Tirana.

**Mountain Biking:** Cycling enthusiasts can find numerous unpaved roads in Kelmend allowing them to breathe clean air and enjoy a variety of wonderful alpine landscapes and river valleys of “*Malësia e Madhe*”.

**Caves:** Kelmend’s different rock formations, caves, natural crevices, glaciers, etc are very attractive for those wishing to discover the Albanian Alps underground. For safety reasons, these places always have to be visited accompanied by local guides with vast experience.

**Horseback riding:** This comfortable way of exploring nature has become a popular activity offered to tourists. Numerous guesthouses and families are engaged in horse breeding and organize different trips with horses in the area.



# Marked trails in Kelmend

**9a Shtegu i pyllit - Trail of the forest** (round trip):

Vermosh (center) - Skrapatush – Vermosh (center)

**9b Shtegu i pyllit - Trail of the forest:**

Vermosh (center) – Shkalla e Rikavecit

**10a Shtegu i Kërshit të Djegur - Trail of Kërshi i Djegur**

(round trip):

Vermosh Bashkim – Qafa e Kujtë – Kërshi i Djegur –  
Vermosh Bashkim

**10b Shtegu i luleve – Trail of flowers** (round trip):

Vermosh Bashkim – Qafa e Kujtë –Liqejve – Vermosh  
Bashkim

**10c Shtegu i minierave – Trail of mines** (round trip):

Vermosh Bashkim – Qafa e Kujtë –Gjelogjia – Vermosh  
Bashkim

**11a Shtegu i italianëve – Trail of Italians:**

Vermosh Bashkim – Kantieri i Budaçit – Qafa e Përdolecit

**11b Vermosh Bashkim – Qafa e Zabelit**

**11c Shtegu i bjeshkës së Purthiqit**

Qafa e Përdolecit – Qafa e Vushmacës – Maja e Grebenit

**12a Shtegu i luftëtarit Mem Smajli – Trail of the warrior Mem Smajli** (round trip):

Vermosh (center) – Varri i (grave of) Memit – Vermosh Velipoja – Vermosh (center)

**12b Shtegu i ujit të kuq** (round trip)

Vermosh (center) – Varri i Memit – Qafa e Mojanit – Zabel – Lugu i ujit - varri i Memit – Vermosh Velipoja – Vermosh (center)

**12c Shtegu i majës së Marlulës** (round trip)

Vermosh (center) – Varri i Memit – Qafa e Mojanit – Maja e Marlulës – Zabel – varri i Memit – Vermosh Velipoja – Vermosh (center)

**13a Shtegu i Grebenit**

Vermosh (center) – Çakone – Maja e Haramis – Maja e Grebenit – Qafa e Zabelit – Vermosh Bashkim

**13b Shtegu i bjeshkës së Grebenit**

Vermosh (center) – Çakone – bjeshka e Grebenit – Qafa e Zabelit – Vermosh Bashkim

**13c Ngjitje në malin Greben**

Vermosh – Bjeshka e Grebenit – Maja e Grebenit

**14 Shtegu i Dopkut** (round trip)

Lepushë - Gropa e ujit – Paja - Dopkë – Lepushë

**15 Shtegu Maja e Berizhdolit** (round trip)

Lepushë - Qafa e Koprrishtit – Maja e Berizhdolit – Paja – Lepushë

**16a Shtegu Qafa e Trojanit** (round trip)

Lepushë - Qafa e GuritNgusht - Qafa e Trojanit - Lepushë

**16b Shtegu Trojani i vogël**

Lepushë - Qafa e Trojanit - Maja e Trojanit të vogël (2134m)

**16c Shtegu Qafa e Tute** (round trip)

Lepushë - Dopkë - Qafa e Tute - Lepushë

**17 Nikç – Qafa e Dobraçes - Theth**

**18a Skrapatush – Vila**

**18b Shtegu i shkëmbinjve**

Skrapatush – Vila – Jeshnica – Çakone

**18c Jeshnica – Gryka e Dhoz**

**19 Shtegu i kanionit – Canyon trail:**

Vermosh Bashkim – Ujëvara – Kanion

**20a Shtegu i Mbretëreshës së Bjeshkës –Queen of the Mountain Trail**

Kisha Selcë –Mreg – Jeshnica

**20b Shtegu i Jeshnicës –Jeshnica Trail**

**21a Shtegu i Karramaneve**

Kisha Selcë – Mreg

**21b Shtegu i ujëvarës së Sllapit – Trail to Sllap waterfall**

Kisha Selcë – Mreg – Ujëvara e Sllapit

**22a Shtegu i Shpellës së Shenjtë**

Ura e Tamarës - Kozhnje

**22b Shtegu i gjuetarëve – Hunters’ Trail**

Ura e Tamarës – Koznje – Kozhnje e Sipërme

## **24 Shtegu Qafa e Kercunës**

Lepushë - Qafa e Kercunës – Vukël

## **26 Shtegu Qafa e Jamës**

Lepushë - Qafa e Jamës – Nikç

## **27 Shtegu Qafa e Pejës** (connection with Theth)

Lepushë - Qafa e Jamës - Gropa e Koprrishtit - (Qafa e Pejës - Theth )

## **30a Shtegu i Livadhit të Vajushës**

Lepushë - Qafa e Dobkut – Paja - Qafa e Vajushës – Livadhi i Vajushës

## **30b Shtegu i Majës së Vajushës** (round trip)

Lepushë - Qafa e Dobkut – Paja - Qafa e Vajushës - Maja e Vajushës (2059m) – Lepushë

## **30c Shtegu i Pajës – Trail of Paja**

## **Trails connecting Kelmend with the Regional Nature Park Shkrel**

**1.** Bogë-Qafa e Bigës- Livadhet e Bogës-Qafa e Dobraçes-Nikç

**2.** Bogë-Qafë e Keqe-Fushëzezë-Qafa e Kapes-Broje-Kozhnje

# Agrobiodiversity in the Northern Alps

Due to the relative remoteness of the area, a large variety of genes, species, ecosystems and landscapes – or summed up in one word, biodiversity – can be found in the Northern Alps of Albania. People living there have preserved traditional farming practices over centuries, thereby protecting local native plants and breeds which provide for their livelihoods.

Hikers may get a taste of this exciting and colorful agricultural biodiversity, be it different varieties of grapes, cherries, maize, tomatoes, chestnut, sage or lavender or agricultural produce such as wines, salads, jams and teas or cheese and other dairy products from local breeds of goats and cattle.

Growing native species and looking after animals unique to this region helps to mitigate negative impacts of agriculture on biodiversity and to restore and preserve local ecosystems. This is important in order to preserve the quality of soil, air and water which in turn allows rare species of wild plants and animals to survive and flourish in the protected areas of the Albanian Alps.



Conserving agrobiodiversity in the Northern Alps goes along with sustainable economic and social development: farmers can compete on the market offering a larger variety to their customers. They can sell their mountain products to different guesthouses and shops in the region. This in turn attracts tourists who want to learn more about the origin of certain products and the way they are processed.



Balkan brook trout (*Salmo balcanicus*)

# Typical products and herbs

## **Balkan brook trout** (*Salmo Farioides*)

The Balkan brook trout can be found in rivers and streams of the western part of the Balkan Peninsula, in Kelmend between FushëLojë and Grabom and between Vukël and Tamarë.

Its body is thin and long, the head has a conical shape with a wide mouth and medium sized strong teeth. The trouts fish bones are thin and rounded off at the edges. Its color is olive green, getting darker towards the top, with various small red dots.

The fish prefers cold, below 18°C, clean water rich in oxygen. Depending on the water temperature, the reproduction of the Balkan brook trout is from October to late March.

## **Wild pomegranate** (*Punica granatum*)

The inhabitants of Kelmend have always collected and processed fruits and herbs growing wildly in the area. The presence of pomegranate is widespread and the plant grows spontaneously in many villages. However, it was only after the opening of the borders and the possibility of learning new recipes from the neighboring countries like

Montenegro that the locals have used this fruit to produce juice. In the last couple of years it has gained popularity and the juice is now used as a digestive (when drunk pure), or diluted in water, grapa (*raki*) or red wine.

## **Gentian** (*Gentiana lutea*)

Gentian or Sanza can be found in the northeastern part of Albania, where it grows on alpine and subalpine meadows from 800 m to 2500 m. It blooms white, blue or violet from June to August, and its root can be collected during August and September. As its roots are very deep into the ground, men use a small pick (*kazmë*) to uproot it. The flowers of the 15 cm high plant are bottleneck shaped and its roots are usually thin, long and brown.

In order to use the root, it has to be dried for about 10 days. Sanza is said to help digestion and to increase the self-defense of the body.

The root of sanza is used for the production of *raki*, to flavor water or mountain tea (*çaj malit*) and the same root can be used more than once.

## The pig of Kelmend

The pig of Kelmend is a hybrid of a small fat pig with little ears and nose present in Kelmend during communism and pigs from Montenegro. The pig of Kelmend today is bigger in size, with longer ears and nose, slimmer and considered healthier than before. Its weight can vary from a 120- 200 kg. Each sow can give birth to 8-16 pigs per year.

Local farmers feed the pigs less corn and more local herbs, bran and grass in order to have better meat. They take great pride in the way they preserve the meat for winter either as ham (*proshutë*), as dried meat (*mish i thatë*) or fried (*mish i skuqur*). The preparation of the meat starts usually after the 6<sup>th</sup> of December, Saint Nicholas Day.





# Tourist Information Office Tamarë



+355  
699198065



info@kel-  
mend-shkrel  
.org



www.kel-  
mend-shkrel  
.org



kelmendshkrel

The Tourist Information Office is located in the village of Tamarë. Staff will kindly provide information regarding accommodation, transport, outdoor activities, handicraft and typical products which can be bought in the region, and different cultural activities.

The Tourist Information Office can also help to organize guides and transport to the area. Proficient local guides can show tourists different natural and cultural highlights and have the patience to answer all sorts of questions. Various maps of the area are also available.



ref.

01

## Guesthouse “ADRIATIKU”



Adriatik  
Çekaj



+355  
692261264



-



Tamarë



All  
year round

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

“Adriatiku” guesthouse has been renovated and furnished to offer visitors comfortable accommodation whilst staying in the alpine village of Tamarë. From its balcony beautiful views can be enjoyed of the mountains. In the garden the family cultivates figs, grapes, tomatoes, beans, zucchini, and other fresh vegetables which they then serve to their guests.



15 €



3



11





ref.

02

## Guesthouse "JERINA"



Llesh  
Çekaj



+355  
693183448



-



Tamarë/  
Velebikë



All  
year round

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

Located in Tamarë village, this guesthouse is surrounded by beautiful nature. The friendly owners serve delicious ovenbaked dishes from local produce and are known for their typical home-made bread. Tourists are welcome to learn about its preparation in the authentic, traditional Kelmend way.



15 €



4



11



N/A



ref.

03

## Guesthouse "MAJA E SHNIKUT"



Gjon  
Turkaj



+355  
692435466



Andrea Turkaj



Nikç



All  
year round

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

"Maja e Shniku" is in the beautiful Nikç, an alpine village that offers a variety of outdoor activities. From the guesthouse the visitors can enjoy stunning views of the Kelmend Mountains. The lady of the house is very good chef and tourists get the chance to try tasty typical dishes from the area made from local products at this guesthouse. When sitting in the garden, tourists can enjoy the shade by the grapes which grown in front of the house. The host is also a guide who can show interested tourists the different trails, caves or waterfalls in the area.



15 €



4



12



N/A



ref.

04

## Guesthouse "PREKË ISUFI"



Prekë  
Isufi



+355  
695285003



-



Nikç



All  
year round

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

This guesthouse is a good starting point to all the natural highlights, like waterfalls and caves, in the area surrounding Nikç. Mountain guides can accompany hikers on the trip from Nikç to Theth. In the area around the guesthouse, tents can be put up for those who prefer to camp. Whether the visitors sleep inside the house or outside in a tent, they are always welcome to taste the traditional dishes prepared by the lady of the house or pick some of the grapes growing in the garden.



15 €



4



12



N/A



ref.

05

## Guesthouse "LEPUSHA"



Zef  
Nilaj



+382  
69890304



Bujtina  
Lepusha



Lëpushë



1 Mar -  
15 Nov

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

Zef and his family warmly welcome tourists to their house in the middle of the high mountains in Lepushë. Lush meadows, rivers and impressive mountains invite tourists to go hiking in the region of Kelmend accompanied by the host, who is also a certified mountain guide. After a day of outdoor activities the traditional food served at the guesthouse will be perfect to gain strength again to enjoy the nature of Lepushë the next day.



10 €



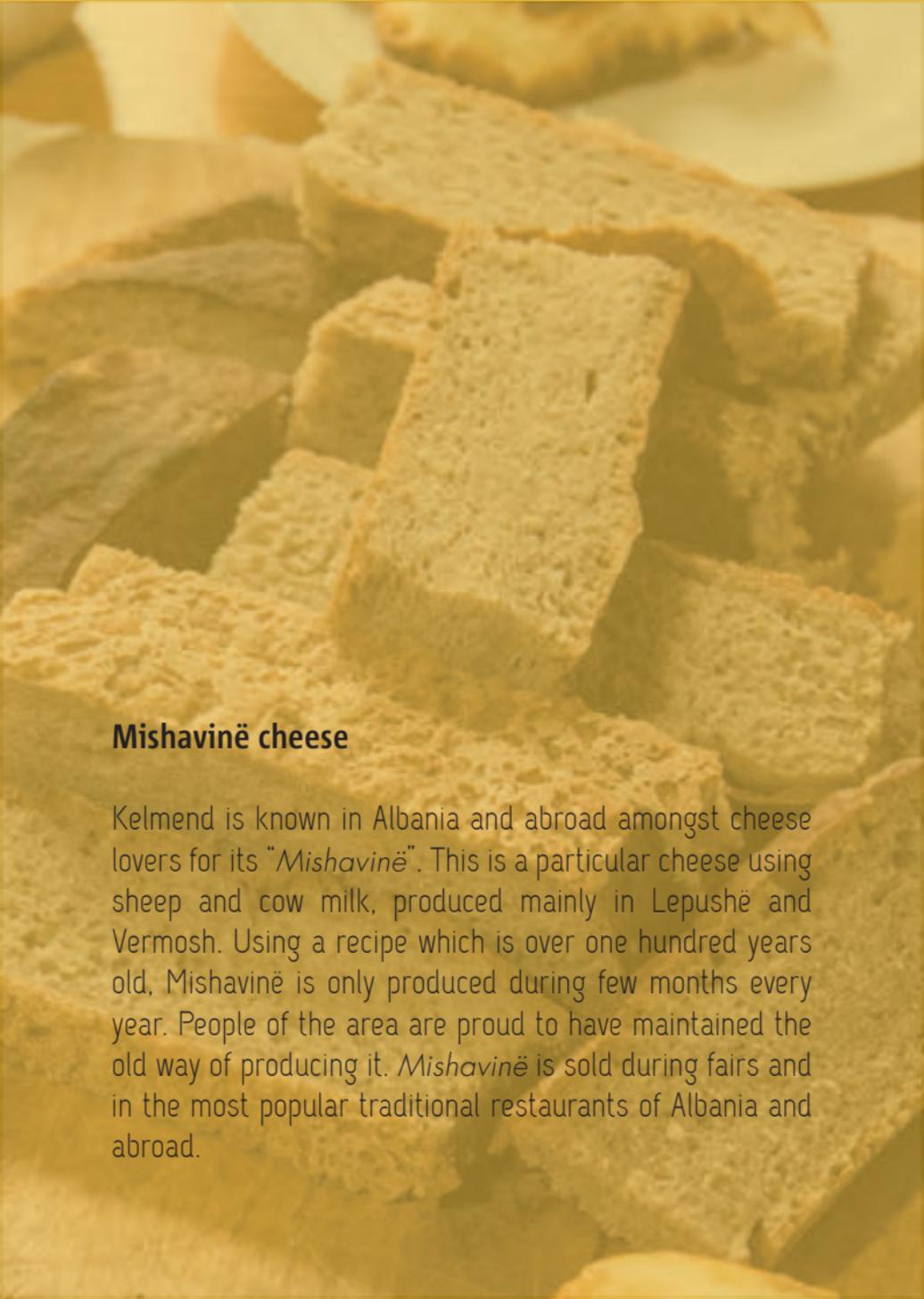
3



9







## Mishavinë cheese

Kelmend is known in Albania and abroad amongst cheese lovers for its "*Mishavinë*". This is a particular cheese using sheep and cow milk, produced mainly in Lepushë and Vermosh. Using a recipe which is over one hundred years old, *Mishavinë* is only produced during few months every year. People of the area are proud to have maintained the old way of producing it. *Mishavinë* is sold during fairs and in the most popular traditional restaurants of Albania and abroad.



ref.

06

## Guesthouse "ALPINI"



Luigj  
Cekaj



+382  
69455603



Hotel  
Alpini



Lëpushë



15 Apr -  
1 Nov

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

Alpini is a quiet guesthouse in Lepushë, allowing tourists to fully enjoy the alpine landscape, local food and different outdoor activities. The hosts can organize guides to accompany tourists on different hikes around the area, such as trail linking Lepushë with Theth, or to one of the caves. Horseback riding is also being offered.



13 €



4



15





ref.

07

## Guesthouse “TRADITA”



Kolë  
Aliaj



+382  
69559049



-



Lëpushë



1 Mar-  
1 Nov

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

“Tradita” is a traditional guesthouse which has received guests for more than a century. From here, visitors have a great view of the so-called “Accursed Mountains”. The guesthouse is decorated in a way typical for Kelmend and offers comfortable accommodation to tourists. The friendly host family provides various different typical dishes from the area, using fruits and vegetables from the own garden.



10 €



3



10





ref.

08

## Guesthouse "KOLË ALIAJ"

Kolë  
Aliaj+355  
696631773

-



Lëpushë

1 May-  
1 Nov**BRIEF INFORMATION:**

This mountain guesthouse does not only offer a great view of the alpine landscape surrounding it, but is beautifully designed and decorated in a typical way. Kola and Maria, the hosts provide traditional dishes of Kelmend prepared according to old recipes.



13 €



3



8



N/A



ref.

09

## Guesthouse "PEPUSHAJ"

Besnik  
Pepushaj+355  
685585688

-



Lëpushë

All  
year round**BRIEF INFORMATION:**

Right in the village of Lëpushë, the "Pepushaj" guesthouse can be found. The hosts like to share the stories about the area and its nature with visitors whilst enjoying traditional dishes, including the famous *Mishavinë* cheese. In the garden the family has several fruit trees which invite guests to have a taste of local agrobiodiversity.



13 €



3



9



N/A



ref.

10

## Guesthouse "MAJA E TROJANIT"



Sokol  
Nekaj



+355  
694519116



-



Budaç



Spring

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

Sokoli and his family welcome guests in their house, serving them typical delicious dishes with products from the surrounding farms. The guesthouse has enough space surrounding it to camp, to simply roam around or play football. It is also a good starting point for hiking in the forests of Kelmend Mountains.



13 €



3



11



N/A



## **Blueberries** (*Vaccinium Myrtillus L.*)

Blueberries are found in the mountain pastures of Kelmend and collected in late August/ September. The fruits are used as a traditional medicine due to their properties (i.e. they are rich in vitamin C). Blueberries are said to improve the sight, clear arteries, strengthen blood vessels, and improve intellectual capacities.

Locals cook jams out of the fruits which can be tried by the tourists when visiting Kelmend.





ref.

11

## Guesthouse “KAFE NATYRA”



Vasel  
Mitaj



+355  
69526118



-



Vermosh



All year  
round

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

“Kafe Natyra” is a lovingly decorated guesthouse and campground, completed with an outdoor bar. Whilst sipping a good cup of coffee at the bar constructed with cherry wood, visitors can relax and enjoy the surrounding nature. They can also listen to one of Vasel’s stories about the mountains or his shepherd songs after an exhausting day of outdoor activities.



15 €



6



21





ref.

12

## Guesthouse “PRELË & ANTONJO VUKILAJ”



Prelë  
Vuktilaj



+382  
69552435



www.vuktilaj  
-guest-house  
.al



Vermosh



1 Mar-  
1 Nov

### BRIEF INFORMATION:

“Vuktilaj” guesthouse is well-known in the Northern Albanian Alps. The house has a wooden front and is surrounded by a stunning landscape. Guests can taste local dishes made from organic produce like melted cheese, mutton roasted on a spit, roasted potatoes, or trout. In the garden next to the guesthouse several fruit trees can be found with cherry, black plums and pears, ready to be picked. Prelë plays the *çifteli* (a two-stringed lute) to entertain and share some of his culture with the guests.



15 €



5



27



N/A



ref.

13

## Guesthouse "LEONARD LUMAJ"

Leonard  
Lumaj+355  
693030733

-



Vermosh

1 Mar-  
1 Nov**BRIEF INFORMATION:**

Three generations welcome guests at "Leonard Lumaj". From the comfortable guesthouse, kept in the traditional local architectural style, tourists can enjoy a great view of the Kelmendi Mountains. Traditional food with home-grown and local produce is served to complete the experience.



13 €



3



10





ref.

14

## Guesthouse "PRELË TINAJ"

Prelë  
Tinaj+382  
69273395

-



Vermosh



Summer

**BRIEF INFORMATION:**

"Prelë Tinaj" guesthouse in Velipoja, a neighbourhood of Vermosh popular with tourists, allows visitors to learn a lot about the place's story and traditions. Typical food from the area is served at the guesthouse, the hosts like to share stories they have heard from their family and next to the guesthouse, is the old tower of Prekë Calit which can be visited.



15 €



1



4



N/A



ref.

15

## Guesthouse "FRATI"

Gjovalin  
Pllumaj+355  
692250681Guesthouse  
Frati

Vermosh

1 Jun-  
1 Nov**BRIEF INFORMATION:**

Gjovalin and his family welcome tourists to their house in Vermosh. The very hospitable family will love to share stories about the village and the region with the guests. "Frati" offers local typical cuisine as well as vegetarian and Italian dishes. The host is also a certified guide and can accompany tourists when discovering the area.



15 €



4



12



N/A



ref.

16

## Guesthouse "GJERGJ FRANI"

Gjergj  
Frani+355  
6669022

-



Vermosh

1 Mar-  
1 Nov**BRIEF INFORMATION:**

"Gjergj Frani" guesthouse is located at the entrance of Vermosh, one of the most beautiful villages of the area. Surrounded by an impressive landscape, tourists are invited to spend some time here, carrying out different outdoor activities or enjoying the traditional food prepared by the hosts with local products. Under the pear trees in the garden, two little bungalows invite to sit and relax.



15 €



8



25



**Wild sage (*Salvia officinalis* L.)**



## **Wild sage** (*Salvia officinalis* L.)

Wild sage, or medër in Albanian can be found mainly in the villages of Tamarë, Grabom and Selcë. It blooms at the end of May and with the beginning of July it is possible to start harvesting as the flowers have fallen down, involving the entire family. To collect wild sage a small sickle is used in order not to cut the roots which stay in the soil.

The plants grow 10-20 cm, according to the quantity of sun they receive, and the bushes usually consist of at least 10 stems. The elliptically shaped leaves are grey-green and rugose on the surface, while flowers are very small and violet.

In Kelmend wild sage is used to flavor grapa (*raki*) or for tea. It is said to cure diarrhea, dizziness, nerve and liver disorders, and to help breastfeeding women.

# Local Producers

## “Fryma e Kelmendit”

“*Fryma e Kelmendit*” (“Spirit of Kelmend” in English) was founded in 2013 as a cooperation to promote agro-tourism in Kelmend. The 30 members, amongst them farmers, guesthouse owners, mountain guides, representatives of the Tamarë Tourist Information Office and the traditional restaurant “*Bukë, Kripë e Zemër*”, decided to form “a voluntary association for the valorisation of the territory, including therefore economic, social and cultural activities for integrated development such as tourism, local products and environment protection”.

## “Gjystina Grishaj”



Lepushë



+382 69 58 64 03

Gjystina produces and sells her products in Lepushë. All is 100% organic, such as the mountain tea, which cures colds but can also be enjoyed at any other time; dried cranberries, which are rich in vitamin A and C; or Gentian, Aaron's beard, coltsfoot and other medicinal plants. Tourists can find jams in the shop, made of forest fruits from the surrounding area, grape (*raki*) with different flavours such as blueberry or Gentian, syrups, compotes and potted mushrooms.

## “Rrok Bujaj”



Tamarë



+355 69 22 33 587

Rrok offers traditional products of Kelmend made only from local products. He sells, amongst others, cornel cherries (*Cornus Mas*) and Gentian, which is used to flavour grapa (*raki*), and plums. Cornel cherries are said to cure skin diseases, articular pain and metabolic disorders; whereas Gentianis said to improve digestion, revitalize, reduce high fever and increase the production of red blood cells. Rrok elaborates compotes and jams which can be tried and bought at his shop.

## “Zina Vukçaj”



Tamarë



+355 69 43 10 920

Zina Vukçaj offers thirsty hikers delicious pomegranate juice from local wildy grown fruits, which are rich in potassium, iron and vitamins A, C and E. Apart from being very refreshing, the juice is said to increase appetite, having a positive effect on the nervous system, and to reduce facial stains and wrinkles. Zina also produces jams and conserves.



## “Gjergj Hysaj”



Selcë



+355 69 32 75 588

Gjergj has a fish reserve which can be found on the side of the road leading from Tamarë to Selcë. At the restaurant next to it, he and his wife Leze invite tourists to taste fresh grilled trout whilst enjoying the view of the crystalline water of river Cem.

## “Agostin Tinaj”



Tamarë



+355 69 32 84 845

The little brewery is located at the entrance to the village of Tamarë, offering fresh beer, with no added chemicals, produced with pure water from the Kelmend Mountains. Tamarë beer is best enjoyed accompanied with meat dishes or grilled wild trout from river Cem.

## Restaurant “Bukë, Kripë e Zemër”

The restaurant “*Bukë, Kripë e Zemër*” (Food, Salt and Heart) can be found right in the centre of the village Tamarë. Its name stands for the tradition and warmth of the people of Kelmend. All ingredients for the food served at this restaurant come from local small-scale farmers in Kelmend.

# Mountain Guides

To discover the breath taking views and the different natural and cultural monuments in Kelmend, it is recommended to hike along the signed and GPS mapped trails, and accompanied by local guidesz. They know the area very well, can point out different highlights or tell stories about the area and its past. The following mountain guides have received a vocational training, recognized by the Ministry of Welfare and Youth, organized in collaboration with the Italian Alpine Club- CAI, financed by the Italian Cooperation.



**Robert Bunjaj**  
Selcë



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**Kristian Mirukaj**  
Grabom



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**Pavlin Nilaj**  
Lëpushë



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**Zef Pllumaj**  
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**Mikel Marku**  
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 Gjystina Grishaj  
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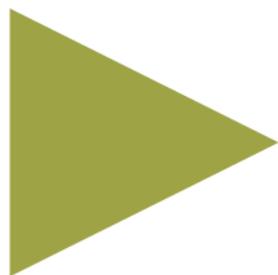
 +382 69 58 64 03





Take  
nothing  
but pictures!

Leave  
nothing  
but footprint!



Kill  
nothing  
but time!



# Dear visitors,

To make the most of your visit, please keep the following in mind:

Inform your family, friends and the local host or the landlord of the hotel/ guesthouse about your plans!

Before you start any activity always check the current weather forecast!

Constantly monitor weather conditions whilst being outside in the nature on the hiking and biking trails!

Ask your landlord for some additional information on local weather conditions, as well as specific risks!

Assess your physical fitness and select an appropriate trail in terms of its difficulty!

Start early in the morning and plan some time for relaxation, sightseeing and safe return!

Always come back during the daylight!

Start slowly. Choose a moderate and good walking speed. Take enough breaks, especially if there are children in the group!

Bring enough fluids with you!

It is recommended to take water, tea and natural juices and nutritious foods such as whole meal wheat bread, dried fruits, nuts, etc!

Use appropriate equipment for hiking or biking (shoes, etc).  
Bring a hat and sunscreen to protect your skin from the sun.

Always take your mobile phone!

Choose light and airy clothes. However, do not forget to bring with you also protective clothing against rain and lower temperatures!

A first-aid kit should be part of your equipment!

Take care of the slower or weaker members of the group and follow the speed of their walk.

Point out any potential threat to other hikers and bikers you meet!

Respect and take care of nature. Avoid unnecessary noise and do not leave garbage behind!

Follow the marked trails and use hiking and biking maps!

When in doubt, go back!

# Emergency numbers

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Road police

**126**



Medical service

**127**



Fire brigade

**128**



Police

**129**

# Symbols

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	Information		Contact person
	Number of beds		Mobile
	Forest nearby		Email
	Fireplace		Location
	Agrobiodiversity		Season
	Toilet		Website
	Restaurant/food		Language
	Playground for kids		Number of rooms
	Shower		Guide Language
	Camping		
	Hiking		
	Parking		

The prices indicated with the guesthouses are for bed and breakfast.

# Conservation of Agrobiodiversity in Rural Albania (CABRA)

Biodiversity – Opportunities for people and nature

CABRA aims to halt the loss of biodiversity and increase the diversity of domestic animal and plant species. For this to be successful, people must recognize their value and benefit from them. This is particularly the case for impoverished rural areas where many inhabitants have left their homes because they saw no economic prospects. If these areas were to stimulate higher earnings and if ownership and use rights of natural resources were strengthened, biodiversity would almost likely be better protected. Therefore, and to increase the overall value of the region, CABRA is promoting sustainable mountain tourism, agriculture and other businesses that create both economic and environmental benefits.

CABRA is acting at the national, regional and local level. It strengthens the competence of government units and administrations on all of these levels. Yet this project is not about deciding for people, but with them. That is why CABRA takes a governance approach which involves multiple stakeholders.

# Bukë, Kripë e Zemër

Food, Tradition and Culture: Processes of co-development in marginal areas of the north and south of Albania through the enhancement of knowledge and valorization of bio-traditional Mediterranean products  
O10170/VIS/ALB

The project aims at improving the socio-economic conditions of Malësi e Madhe and Përmet districts, and their adjacent border areas, the diversification and strengthening of productive activities, improvement of professional skills of local producers and providers of tourist services and the creation of a network of communication and exchange between local communities.

The valorization of tourism, cultural and gastronomic potential of these two districts is not just to improve their economic conditions, but especially to strengthen the awareness of their inhabitants regarding the beauty and the opportunities they have.

The access to financial resources (micro-credits&grants), the improvement of professional skills (organization of courses and trainings for local guides, receptionists and managers of guest-houses and professional cooks), the improvement of the quality standard of local products and agro-tourism services, the promotion of agro-tourism, agro-bio-diversity, cultural and nature tourism are the activities provided by the project to be carried out during its implementation phase (2014-2017).

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Conservation of Agrobiodiversity  
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“Bukë, Kripë e Zemër  
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