Albania and Montenegro's Wonders

**Day 1: Podgorica - Shkoder (Shkodra)**

Arrival in **Podgorica** located on the banks of six rivers (Moraca, Ribnica, Zeta, Sitnica, Mareza and Cijevna), has the characteristics of a modern European city, even though you can easily recognize the traces of a long history. Two thousand years ago, at the mouth of the rivers Ribnica and Moraca, in fact, the Illyrian city and Roman of Birziminium, later called in Slavic language Ribnica, from the first half of the 14th century Podgorica. From 1946 to 1990 it was called Titograd (in honor of Marshal Josip Broz Tito), becoming the capital of the Socialist Republic of Montenegro, federated to Yugoslavia. On the 2nd of April 1992 the name of Podgorica resumed and from 21 May 2006 is the capital of the newly established independent state of Montenegro. Visit of **Ostrog**, the largest Montenegrin Orthodox sanctuary, located in a rock massif, often hidden by the clouds. It was founded by the Herzegovinian Metropolitan Basil in the seventeenth century who was buried here and proclaimed a holy healer. Pilgrims come to the monastery from all parts of the world to pray and ask for graces (it is believed that the remains of St. Basil of Ostrog are miraculous). It is a meeting place for all three great confessions: Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 2: Shkoder Lake**

Breakfast at the hotel, a full day visit of **Shkoder**, the largest lake in the Balkans, as well as the largest reserve of birds in Europe, the last habitat of pelicans in the old continent. Its shores are veryjagged with various gulfs, islands and peninsulas, even if partly stagnant (covered with a large layer ofreeds and a "carpet" of marsh plants) and in partstony (with hidden bays among the boulders of the mountain Rumija)

 Dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 3: Virpazar - Cettinje - Njegusi Village- Budva –Cetinje**

After breakfast at the hotel, departure for **Cetinje** (via Podgorica) approx. 1 h of travel Arrival to Cetinje, the historic capital and the royal seat of Montenegro, as evidenced by its architecture: the **Billiard Palace** (built by Njegos in the 1838), the **Palace of King Nicholas**, the **Blue Palace**, the **Royal Theater Zetski dom** and other buildings where once were placed the consulates of the great European powers (in the Government Palace, in neo-baroque style, right now there is the National Art Museum, where you can see the Blue Chapel with one of the most famous icons of the Christian world: the Madonna di Filermosa, as well as some collections of contemporary art. In the monastery of the town, a symbol of the Montenegrin spirituality, of the history, of the love for the freedom and education, are also preserved the remains and relics of great value, like the hand of St. John the Baptist and the first printed book in the Balkans by the South Slavs. Proceeding to the village of **Niegusi**, a settlement of 17 residents distributed in 6 families. The name comes from one of the oldest Montenegrin tribes that inhabited this area and are still found in small communities today, preserving the original architecture of the houses.

 Two typical products exclusively from this area contribute decisively to characterize the traditional Montenegrin cuisine: the Njeguški (a cheese) and Njeguški pršut ( a prosciutto). This village is best known for being the birthplace of many princes and kings of Montenegro belonging to the Petrović-Njegoš dynasty.

Continuation to **Budva** (Niegosi - Budva circa 45 min of travel), lunch in a restaurant in Budva. After lunch guided tour of Budva, summer stage of theater and festivals, city of beautiful beaches and nightlife. According to archaeological findings, the city is one of the oldest settlements in this part of the Mediterranean, dating back to 2,500 years ago. According to a legend, it was founded by Cadmus, son of the Phoenician king Agenora, exiled by Thebes arrived on a wagon pulled by oxen on the Adriatic coast. In the centre of Budva a Roman necropolis has been discovered and underneath it another Greek one. Surrounded by 15th century walls, defensive towers and fortresses' esplanades, it consists of a structure formed by casings and small squares with monuments of the various Mediterranean cultures, where takes place the most important artistic and cultural event of the region "**Budva, the city of the theater**". Return to Cetinje for dinner and overnight in hotel.

**Day 4: The bay of Kotor - Perast - Risan – Tivat**

After breakfast at the hotel, departure via bus to the bay of **Kotor**, one of the most beautiful fiords in the Mediterranean, that penetrate the inland for a full 28 miles. Its striking landscape has attracted not only great writers (Lord Byron, Bernard Show, Margaret Yourcenar, Ivo Andric, etc.), but also European kings and princes (the English Queen Margaret and the former Italian king Umberto II of Savoy, princesses of the Spanish royal palace), the world's most famous actors (Sophia Loren, Elizabeth Taylor, Kirk Douglas) and the most beautiful women in the world (Doris Day, Claudia Schiffer, Catherine Zeta-Jones), conquered by thebeauty of Montenegro, in the same waythe Roman patricians were drawn to it, whose villas adornedthe city of **Risan** (oldest settlement of **Boka Kotorska**, who already Queen Teuta had chosen as its home and where the mosaics of theRoman period are been kept). The **Perast** landscape is dominated by the 15th century church of St. Nicholas. High above stands the old Venetian fortress and the tower of the church of Madonna of the Rosary of the 17th century. Also, it represents the baroque unit which is the best preserved in this part of the Adriatic, a city where the famous sea captains built magnificent palaces, surrounded by enchanting gardens with exotic flora. The medieval walls and towers of the ancient cities coastal still preserve a historical precious treasure, represented by monasteries, churches and cathedrals, of rare beauty and artistic value. Because of this, some of them, like Kotor, are preserved in this part of the Adriatic, a city where the famous sea captains built magnificent palaces, surrounded by enchanting gardens with exotic flora. The medieval walls and towers of the ancient cities coastal still preserve a historical treasure precious, represented by monasteries, churches and cathedrals, of rare beauty and artistic value. For this reason, some of them, like Kotor (Kotor), are you are included in the cultural heritage under the protection by UNESCO. **Tivat**, the youngest city of **Boka**, during the Middle Ages was a place where nobles built their castles, villas and churches, while today is a modern marina for boating enthusiasts.

 Dinner and overnight in hotel in Cetinje.

**Day 5: Cetinje - Ulcinj- Bar- Return back home**

After breakfast at the hotel, departure for **Ulcinj**, one of the most beautiful bays in the world and the most southern city of Montenegro. In the past it was known by the name of Cita's Dolcinius and some people have speculated that Miguel Cervantes, in the famous book "Don Quixote", has given the main character the name of Dulcinia. A city of ancient origins, it has seen Illyrian, Roman, Byzantine, Montenegrin domination, Serbian and Venetian. Conquered by the Turks in 1571, was transformed into a pirate base, from where their fast ships were patrolling the Adriatic attacking the Christian ships and bringing slaves and loot into the harbor.

Numerous Venetian attempts to re-conquer the citydidn't yield any results until in the 19th centurythe ferocious pirates turned into peaceful merchants and sailors.

Lunch in restaurant in Ulcinj. Continuation for **Stari Bar** (Old Bar), the old townof Bar, just a few kilometers from the new and modern, on the slopes of the Rumija Mountains(Romea Mountains), large port in which they dockmerchant and passenger ships from almost all coastal countries,as well as the first station from which depart thetrains in the direction of Belgrade and Europe.