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Ondrej Špánik • Albania • 2021-08-13

My sister next to oversized booze at the Vienna's Duty Free Shop.



**3:06PM, Somewhere in the clouds** - Right now, me and my brother are flying with the prestigious low-cost WizzAir into the murderous\* capital of Albania - Tirana, the beginning of our ultimate Balkan adventure. The first complaint, a 2 hour long flight delay, marking 5 and a half hours at the airport. Well anyway, who cares, we're alive and the mood ain't going below 5/10. +5 points Muránske buchty\*\*, -5 points Not enough chairs at the airport, +10 points We got a place to stay for just 14€ for both of us with 9.5/10 rating. (\*sk. "týrat" means "to torment", \*\*leftover food from my sister's hike)

*And that marks the last diary entry by my sister. Why is that so? She was so immersed in the moment after we arrived, that she never found the mood for any further writing. Next up, you will have to enjoy just me and my complaints .*



**7:03PM, Present at the Rooster hostel** - Finally, we're able to rest for a few minutes, because before our arrival the following events took place...

We've landed at the Tirana International Airport and immediately after exiting the plane, we were fanned by a rather high temperature alongside the hellish sun, which immediately started to bake our skin. It also got a bit harder to breathe.

Now that the delayed arrival was behind us, and as we got past the fast customs for EU citizens, we started looking for our pre-paid bus to the city center. From simply looking around we were spotted by an Albanian dude, who barely spoke any English... or rather didn't speak any English at all, yet still managed to explain to us, by simply pointing at his watch and using his hands, that the bus will arrive at

**4:30PM**. Peak conversation, more like this will follow, because nobody here understands anything we can say and Google Translate combined with any language is literally useless in Albanian. We found a shop at the airport and bought ourselves some water for 199Lek. Of course, the bus was either ~20 minutes late, or our favorite Albanian dude had incorrectly explained himself or we didn't understand him that precisely, well anyway, **5PM** and we're off to the city. Once we arrived, we got greeted by the Albanian traffic.

*Constantly honking on each other, more dirt in general, people with large sacks at the back of their bikes, buildings that are completely falling apart next to the main street, unsafe chaotic electrical wiring, nonexistent crosswalks, ...*





Next up we find ourselves looking for our bank's ATM, which was promoted by our bank, in the mobile app, to have free withdrawals, even here in Albania. Well, nope ☹, of course we got lied to. Who cares anyway... Moving through the side streets we arrive at our hostel, where we're greeted by the first and only person who not only speaks English, but is actually British, the reception lady. We were overjoyed, because we could finally get some help getting around. We've departed the hostel for a walk around Tirana in search of food. We found a traditional restaurant in an odd alley, then got ourselves Tave Dheu and veal, both with rice. Yum!



As I approached the cashier, she seemed so nervous in front of me, that she completely miscalculated how much I owed her. While I explained to her that she made a mistake a thought went through my head *"Did she just get a crush on me?"* immediately followed by *"Nah, I don't have time or space for this"*. On the way back we bought tiny travel shampoos in the Rossmann drug store, then I bought myself a lemonade in the Conad store (kind of like Coop Jednota or 7/11), because the Lemon Soda we had with the food was too damn good. We also found the city's marketplace, obviously closed at this hour. *I may not have been to India or Iran, but it sure felt like someone merged London and*

*Tehran into a single place. This is apparently still Europe.*

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