



Visit a reconstructed Vlach dwelling- *kalive*

Only 3 km southeast of the town of Përmet, in the *Albturist Eco Camping* campsite, you are offered the chance to visit a traditional Vlach dwelling – the *kalive*. The location correlates with one of the Vlach's temporary camps set along their seasonal transhumance route. It represents a circular domed-shape structure of 20 square meters and 4 m high, made of wooden sticks and covered with a thatched roof, once housing an entire Vlach family. The interior has mud-plastered walls, a simple hearth and wooden shelves.

This dwelling exemplifies an aspect of the Vlach's living history and was reconstructed using the same authentic techniques and materials as used in the past.

Here, you will meet two welcoming people, Dona and Robert, who can explain more about the Vlach culture and arrange multiple outdoor adventurous activities across the landscape of the Upper Vjosa valley, including rafting, hiking, climbing and a lot more.

For more information visit the website:
www.exploringpermet.com



Explore a breathtaking cultural landscape along the route

For more information about the hiking trails
scan the QR codes



Trail 1



Trail 2



Walking with the **Vlach**: Hikes **in the mountains** of the **Upper Vjosa** valley





Who are the Vlach?

The Vlach know themselves as *Arāmān/Rāmān*. They are a people who have historically inhabited swathes of the Balkans. They are distinguished by their language, a dialect derived from Latin, and by their way of living, based primarily on pastoral transhumance.

The Vlach are initially mentioned in Byzantine sources of the 11th century, occupying the mountain areas of Thessaly, known as *Megali Vlachia*, and subsequently in the territories of Epirus, Macedonia and beyond.

The Upper Vjosa valley was one of the main routes used during Vlach seasonal movements from winter pastures on the Ionian coast, towards the summer pastures on the Mount Gramos. The whole journey would last around ten days, and Vlach families were followed by substantial herds of sheep. Daily camps of simple woolen tents were set up on their treks. Once at the summer pastures, the Vlach build their yearly encampment, consisting of several familiar dwellings, known as '*kalive*'.

During the Late Medieval era, Vlach families began to settle permanently in the mountain areas to the east of the Upper Vjosa valley, ultimately losing their nomadic lifestyle, but not their language. Other Vlach continued to travel until 1950, when the Albanian state banned Vlach transhumance, and several families were settled in villages of the valley.



WALKING WITH THE VLACH

Following in these nomads footsteps will lead you along the past into the lovely countryside of the Vjosa valley.

These trails are part of longer border itineraries that in Albania start from the Ionian coast around Saranda, across the mountainous regions of Zagori and Përmet ending at Mount Gramoz in Kolonja. In the past, Vlach families would camp here in rich and extensive pasture lands. Originally, the journeys continued beyond the present national borders into the mountainous regions of Greece and Macedonia.

HIKING TRAIL 1

Beginning at Mount Dhëmbel, this route leads towards the mountain regions in the east, up to the border with Greece, in Mount Gramoz. The entire trek should last up to 5 days for a distance of 90 km long. The suggested camping spots along the way correspond with the daily camps that Vlach used to set up during their journeys. The trail takes you among unspoiled mountain landscapes dotted with historical monuments and stone-built villages of a particular architecture on the way.

HIKING TRAIL 2

This is an alternative walk that strays from the main historic route of the Vlach. It is around 4 km long and it provides a daily walking alternative with a lot to explore. From the town of Përmet, you can choose to walk, cycle or drive for c. 21 km towards the south until reaching the start of the trail at the village of Dracova. Once there, take the right-hand path that leads along a watercourse lined up with old plane trees and gardens up to its spring. On the slope of the hill to the west are remains of the Bronze Age settlement of Dedejan. A narrow path up past the spring, of about 3 hours walking, takes through a beech and pine forest, leading to the beautiful meadow below the steep rocky cliff of Mount Nemërçka.