

## ALBANIA CUSTOMS

### Greetings

Most Albanians greet with a handshake, but friends may also hug. Greetings between women may also include a kiss to each cheek.

Typical phrases include *Si jeni?* (How are you?), *Si keni kaluar?* (How are you doing?), *Ç'kemi?* (What's up?), or *Njatjeta* (Hello).

Friends may also greet by saying *Miremengjes* (Good morning).

When parting, they say *Mir u pafshim* (Good-bye), *Do te shihemi* (See you later), *Shendet* (Stay healthy), or *Gjithe te mirat* (All the best).

Northern male villagers greet by lifting the cap and saying *Tungjatjeta* (Have a long life).

Albanians smile or nod when passing strangers on the street.

### Gestures

To indicate “yes,” one shakes the head slowly from left to right. A person signals “no” either by nodding briefly up and down or by clicking the tongue and nodding the head down once.

A “thumbs up” gesture is impolite, meaning “You’ll get nothing from me.”

Placing the left hand over the chest and moving the head slightly shows appreciation.

Showing both hands with open fingers, palms up, means “Our conversation is over.”

### Holidays

Official public holidays include New Year’s (1–2 Jan.), Orthodox and Catholic Easter (Friday–Monday), May Day (1 May), Independence Day (28 November), and Catholic Christmas (25–26 Dec.).

Muslims celebrate *Ramasan Bairam* (feast at the end of *Ramadan*, the holy month of fasting) and *Kurban Bairam* (Feast of the Sacrifice).

The most popular holiday is New Year’s Eve, which Albanians celebrate with dancing, joking, singing, and eating big meals (usually a turkey dinner with special desserts such as *baklava* or *kadaif*, two types of nut-filled pastries). They spend the following day visiting and sharing holiday sweets.