



Free Lions

The England Fanzine from the Football Supporters' Association



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FSA FOOTBALL
SUPPORTERS'
ASSOCIATION

ISSUE:
198

Albania v England
16th November, 2025

TO NEW YORK, WE'RE ON OUR WAY

Ticket Information

Despite the shocking prices set by FIFA, we've no doubt thousands of England's most loyal will trek across the pond to visit our American friends for the 2026 World Cup.

Fans looking to buy through the ESTC will have to await information from them, at the time of going to print they were still waiting on FIFA, so apologies if this is slightly out of date. We do not expect to be hit by dynamic pricing, however early price releases show a fluctuation of prices depending on location. Based on what we have seen, should you obtain a category 3 ticket at each game up to the final, this could set you back around \$4700.

If, as in previous tournaments, fans are forced to pay this up front, then that is a huge chunk to be sitting in FIFA's bank account as opposed to yours, or worse still on a credit card with no knowledge of how far England will progress. Should we fall short in North America, let's hope there isn't a huge dip in the exchange rates as that could see your refunds being a lot less than what you paid!

The Tournament Format and Stadiums

This is the first World Cup with 48 teams. 12 groups with 4 teams will start off this mammoth 104-game tournament. 39 days all told, finishing on July 19th at the MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

Mexico will kick the tournament off in Mexico City on June 11th at the Azteca Stadium. Canada and the US will start a day later on Friday 12th in Toronto and Los Angeles respectively. The first games of the tournament will continue over the next 5 days, meaning some teams could be waiting almost a week to kick-start their tournament.

The stadiums are spread across 16 different locations. Canada has two, Toronto and Vancouver, Mexico has three, Guadalajara, Mexico City and Monterrey, with the remaining 11 residing in the US in Atlanta, Boston, Dallas, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Miami, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Seattle. But beware, some of those stadiums are a significant distance from the named cities.

Fan Guide

Like previous tournaments we will once again be looking to produce a guide to the tournament, in conjunction with the FA, which will be made available to ESTC members.

Visa/Entry Requirements

Canada: If arriving into Canada by air, a visa is required at a current cost of CAN\$7. A visa is not required if travelling in by land from the USA.

USA: An ESTA will be required for all UK residents at a current cost of \$40. You should apply for this as soon as you have your travel booked.

Mexico: There are no visa entry requirements, although a departure tax may be required on exit, and you must complete an Entry Immigration Form online if arriving by land, which you must keep for exit.

All key information for supporters will be communicated by the FA and ourselves over the coming months, so keep an eye on your emails and social media. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out via the contact details on page 3.

Free Lions

The free England fanzine produced and distributed by the Football Supporters' Association (FSA) as part of our Fans' Embassy service

FSA

ISSUE:
198

Albania v England

Sunday November 16th, Air Albania Stadium, Tirana
2026 World Cup qualifiers | 18:00 kick-off (local time)
England will likely play in white



Welcome to Albania. Tirana is the destination for the end of our 2025 campaign and the end of 2026 World Cup qualifying.

We're heading to Canada, Mexico and the USA for the 2026 World Cup! England will be seeded going into the draw on December 5th in the US capital Washington DC. As to where we play, it's anyone's guess. Fifteen possible destinations across 3 countries are all open to us.

Our hosts could have secured a spot in the play-offs by the time this game kicks off, that is if we have beaten Serbia at Wembley on Thursday and Albania beat Andorra.

There's a good chance we won't see you again until we land on North American soil if, as expected, March's friendlies end up at home. Keep an eye on our social media for any key information relating to the World Cup. As always, ESTC ticketing information will come from the FA.

Ticket sales are expected to start in December. We've gone public

reference our disgust at the prices set for the World Cup, and whilst at the time of going to print we were unaware of what the cost of a participating nation ticket will be, we are still gobsmacked at the pricing set for general admission. More needs to be done by football's governing bodies around the world to challenge the continued money-grabbing attitudes that we see at the top of our game, that impacts hard-working fans like you.

Anyway, for now, let's round this campaign off. 1,920 England faithful will fill one half of the South Stand at the 22,500 capacity Air Albania Stadium. This represents around 9% of the stadium capacity, which is set slightly lower at 21,150 due to segregation. UEFA rules stipulate that 5% must be given to away teams.

As always, the Fans' Embassy will be on hand to support you in Tirana. Our 24/7 service is contactable by any method you can see at the side of this page.

Emergency contact numbers

General Emergency 112

Ambulance 127

Fire Service 128

Police 129

British Embassy

+355 4 223 4973 or

FCDO online help:

<https://www.contact.service.csd.fco.gov.uk/home>

Twitter (X): @WeAreFreeLions

Facebook: [facebook.com/FreeLions](https://www.facebook.com/FreeLions)

WhatsApp:



Instagram: @WeAreFreeLions

Helpline: +44 7956 12 13 14

Email: freelions@thefsa.org.uk

Gifts & Postcards

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Tyne and Wear, SR5 9UW

IT WASN'T ME

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Cover image courtesy of the FA. Images throughout this guide courtesy of the FA, Alamy and the Unsplash creative commons library.

THANK YOU

This edition of the Free Lions was written by Thomas Concannon, but was supported in its production by Richard Weekes, Steve Lewis, Gareth Parkin, Wayne Mitchell, Ashley Brown, Kevin Miles OBE, Clive Hetherington, Joe Hetherington, Phil Rowley and Jonny Sams.

Cover Story

Morgan Rogers, the Aston Villa star, is yet another coming to the fore of the England ranks. He bagged his first England goal against Wales at Wembley in October. Aged just 23, he will be heating up the competition in that area of the pitch alongside Palmer and Bellingham, like us I bet he can't wait for next year's World Cup.



© The FA/Getty

The Opposition

From Clive Hetherington

© Alamy

The hard work may be done, but England's visit to Tirana – the final game of the successful quest for World Cup qualification – is now as close as it will come to a stern test in this campaign.

Most expected Serbia to pose a threat to the Three Lions in their group. Yet Albania's 1-0 defeat of their fierce rivals in Leskovac last month was confirmation of how far short Serbia fell under Dragan Stojkovic's sterile leadership, which ended with his resignation immediately after that loss and following September's 5-0 drubbing by England. Rey Manaj scored the goal for Albania at the Dubocica Stadium in first-half stoppage time to boost belief.

The last time the Three Lions were in Tirana, the world was still living in the shadow of Covid. There were no fans at the Arena Kombetare for a 2-0 World Cup qualifying victory, courtesy of goals by Harry Kane and Mason Mount.

That was in March 2021 and England, who beat Albania 5-0 at Wembley eight months later when Kane hit a hat-trick and all the goals came in the

first half, went on to qualify for Qatar as group winners. Albania, meanwhile, finished third in the group and saw their dreams of reaching a first World Cup perish once more.

England are in the same section as the men in red and black in World Cup qualifying for the fourth time. It's an Albania who have enjoyed some success since the January 2023 appointment of former Arsenal and Manchester City left-back Sylvinho.

The Brazilian led Albania to qualification for Euro 2024, only the second time they had made it to the final stages of a European Championship. In qualifying, Albania topped their group and lost just once, 1-0 away to Poland. Avenging that defeat with a 2-0 win and a 3-0 home victory over the ten-man Czech Republic, proved crucial.

It was also a decent showing in Germany where – although they came bottom in their group – in between a 2-1 defeat by Italy and 1-0 loss to tournament winners Spain, they drew 2-2 with Croatia. A disappointing Nations League campaign

followed, ending in relegation to League C.

Albania were then England's opponents in Thomas Tuchel's first match as Three Lions boss, losing 2-0 at Wembley before a 3-0 home win against Andorra. Former Watford frontman Manaj scored twice inside the first 20 minutes and forward Myrto Uzuni, a substitute, netted in stoppage time.

A goalless home stalemate with Serbia in June preceded a 1-1 draw in Latvia where Albania were denied victory after home defender Antonijis Cernomordijis scored in both ends.

In September, winger Jasir Asani's solitary penalty separated the sides in a friendly in Gibraltar and when qualifying resumed, Albania edged the return with Latvia, but only through midfielder Kristjan Asllani's spot-kick.

After beating Serbia, Albania overcame first-time World Cup qualifiers Jordan 4-2 here in a friendly, Burnley striker Armando Broja scoring. Andorra then hosted Albania before England's return to the Balkans.

Those of us who were there in September 2001 will remember comedy legend Norman Wisdom providing half-time entertainment on Albania's visit to Newcastle for a World Cup qualifier.

Norman, who died at 95 in 2010, was a huge favourite in Albania thanks to the late communist dictator Enver Hoxha's perceived liking for his comic persona as a working-class hero.

And Wisdom performed a slapstick penalty shoot-out at St. James' Park on the night Sven-Goran Eriksson's England beat Albania 2-0. Michael Owen, who four years later became a Newcastle player, and Liverpool

teammate Robbie Fowler, were the scorers.

Under six months earlier, Norman had been guest of honour when England visited Tirana, where the travelling fans feared a Wisdom-style pratfall before the Three Lions won 3-1. Owen and Manchester United pair Paul Scholes and Andy Cole struck in a tense encounter.

It took until the 73rd minute for Owen to break the deadlock and after Scholes scored four minutes from time, Altin Raklli replied late on before Cole's first England goal with virtually the last kick.



Albania: Key Three

By Joe Hetherington



Armando Broja

Probably the most familiar name to England fans, having played for five teams in the Premier League, Broja is likely to line up on the right wing. Since moving to Burnley from Chelsea in a £20million deal this summer, the 24-year-old has struggled to get into the Claret's starting eleven. He has, however, been a regular fixture for his international side over the past four years and broke his goal-scoring duck in a 4-2 win in a friendly at home to Jordan last month.



Rey Manaj

Albania's first-choice centre forward, Manaj made himself a national hero last month by scoring the winning goal against arch rivals Serbia. Beginning his career in Italy, he made a handful of appearances for Inter Milan before moving to Spain where he played for Albacete and Barcelona's B side. Two seasons ago, the forward had a fleeting spell at Watford during which he made only six league appearances before his contract was terminated. Currently with UAE side Al-Sharjah, the 28-year-old made his international debut in 2015.



Kristjan Asllani

An integral member of Albania's engine room. Possessing great vision as well as a good range of passing, the midfielder quickly established himself in the side after making his international bow three years ago and played in every game of his country's Euro 24 campaign. Asllani's penalty was the only goal in September's home World Cup qualifier with Latvia. Twice a Champions League runner-up, the 23-year-old has so far played his entire club career in Italy, and is now on loan at Torino from Inter Milan.

Clive's Verdict

Albania 0 England 2

England boast a 100 per cent record against Albania, winning all seven World Cup qualifying encounters, scoring an average of three goals per game and conceding only once. A strong England B team also beat Albania 3-1 in a 2007 friendly at Burnley's Turf Moor. After the 5-0 thrashings of Serbia in Belgrade and Latvia in Riga, and confirmation of World Cup qualification, the Three Lions should have little trouble maintaining their dominance over Albania.

Scouse Phil's Music Quiz

As you know, the Albanian national team are known as the Red and Blacks, so here is a quiz where the question, answer or indeed both contain the words 'red' or 'black'.

1. Which English female singer released the album 'Back to Black' in 2006?
2. And which iconic rock band released their 7th studio album in 1980 entitled 'Back in Black'?
3. Which group, named after the Unemployment benefit card, took the song 'Red Red Wine' to No.1 in 1983?
4. Also in 1983, which American singer released the song 'Little Red Corvette' from his album entitled '1999'?
5. 'Black is the colour of my voice' is a stage show inspired by the songs and life of which female singer and Civil Rights activist, probably best known for her song 'Mississippi Goddam'?
6. Which band fronted by Mick Hucknall, had various UK No 1s including 'Money's Too Tight to Mention', 'Fairground' and 'Holding Back the Years'?
7. Which American Hip Hop group took the song 'Where is the Love' to No.1 in 2003?
8. 'Red' is the title of Taylor Swift's 4th studio album, released in 2012, but how old is she now?
9. Ozzy Osbourne was famously the lead singer of Black Sabbath, but what was his real first name, Matthew, Mark, Luke or John?
10. '99 Red Balloons' was a UK No.1 hit for the band Nena in 1984, but from which country do the band originate?



© Alamy

Welcome to Tirana Your Free Lions Guide

Welcome to the Albanian capital of Tirana for England's first visit here with fans in attendance since our 3-1 victory in March 2001.

Albania is yet another one for many supporters to tick off their list in this part of the world, with recent trips to Serbia, North Macedonia and Greece, and trips to Kosovo and Montenegro not too far in the past.

Albania, located in the Balkans, is a relatively young country following its declared independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1912, and has a population of 2.4million, with just over half a million residing in its capital. It is surrounded by the Dajti mountains, which if you have a window seat when flying in or out will make for some stunning views if the weather is clear. It is amongst both the wettest and yet sunniest cities in Europe, with 2,544 hours of sunlight per year if you're counting, so of course we'd come in November when sunset is just before 4:30pm.

Albania, whilst not directly involved in the Yugoslav War, faced some shelling on its borders with the then Yugoslavia, partly due to its support of Kosovo. Albania is currently going through the

application stage of becoming a member of the European Union.

When you arrive and exit this country, e-Gates are available for UK citizens, and the queues were relatively quick in our experience here back in September. For the stamp enthusiasts, we didn't get one on entry or exit in our passports.

As with Serbia however, mobile data will not be covered by many providers so e-Sims will be needed. We'd advise sorting one before you travel, however if reading this before you land, there are options to buy a sim when you arrive at the airport, just outside arrivals. We did ask, but it seems the data options are for around 2-3 weeks rather than days, at a cost of roughly €25.

The currency here is the Albanian Lek, however Euros are accepted in some places. Cash machines are available in most areas of the city.

There are three major professional football teams in Tirana. KF Tirana, Partizani Tirana and Dinamo City, who ply their trade in the Kategorija Superiore.

Ticket Collection

A full 100% ticket collection will be in operation again, this time at the International Tirana Hotel, just off Skanderbeg Square. The entrance will be just next to the main hotel entrance so as not to bother guests, FA stewards will be visible in their usual orange hi-vis.



You must collect your own ticket, you cannot collect on someone's behalf and you must present photo ID, be that passport, driving license or an ESTC membership card.

The collection times will be as follows:

Saturday 15th Nov: 11:00-19:00

Sunday 16th Nov: 10:00-16:00

ESTC Helpline on collection days: +447790371105

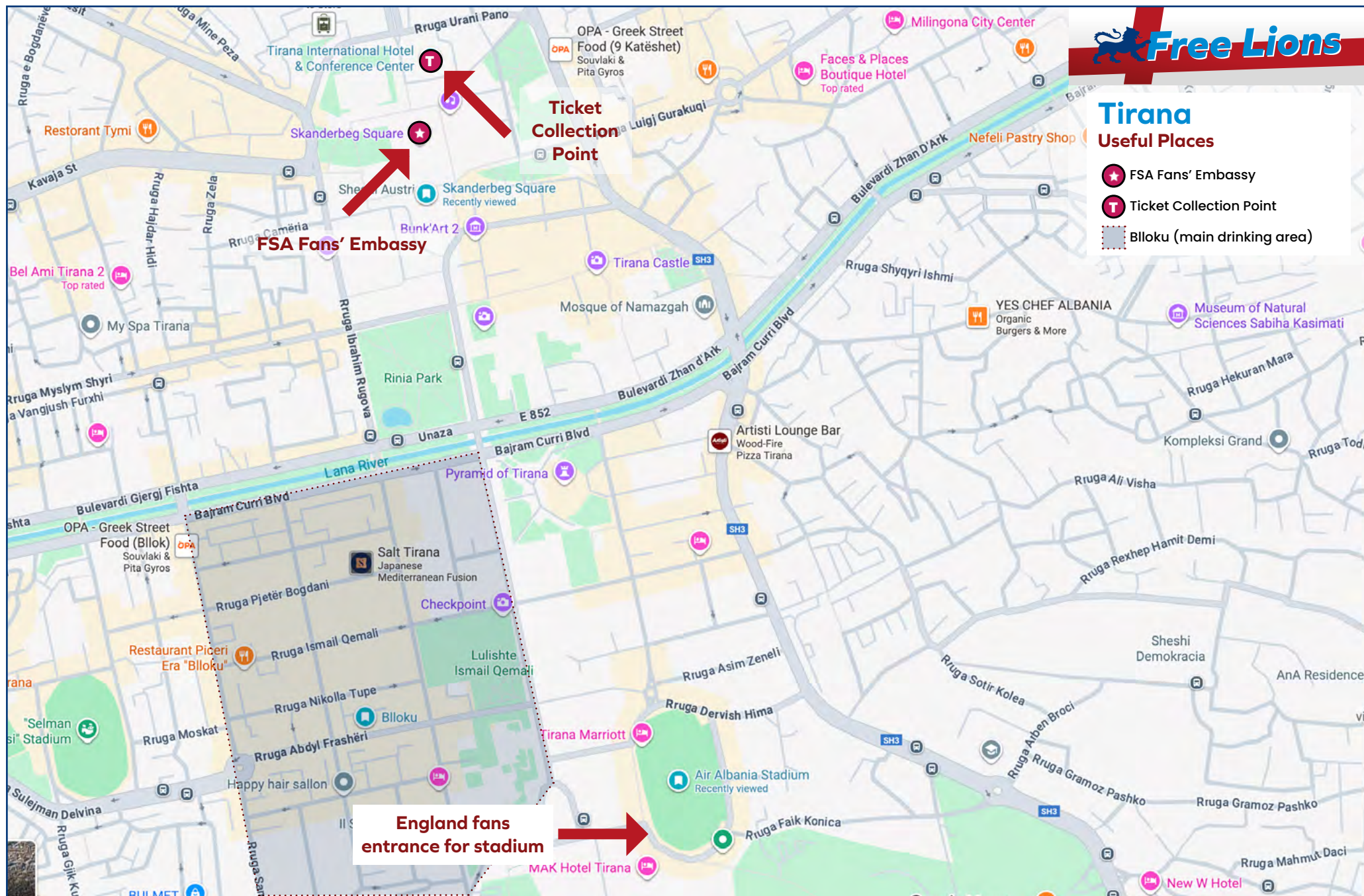
Fans' Embassy

The Fans' Embassy for this trip will be located in Skanderbeg Square, situated right next to the ticket collection point at the International Tirana Hotel, not to be confused with the Intercontinental right next door.

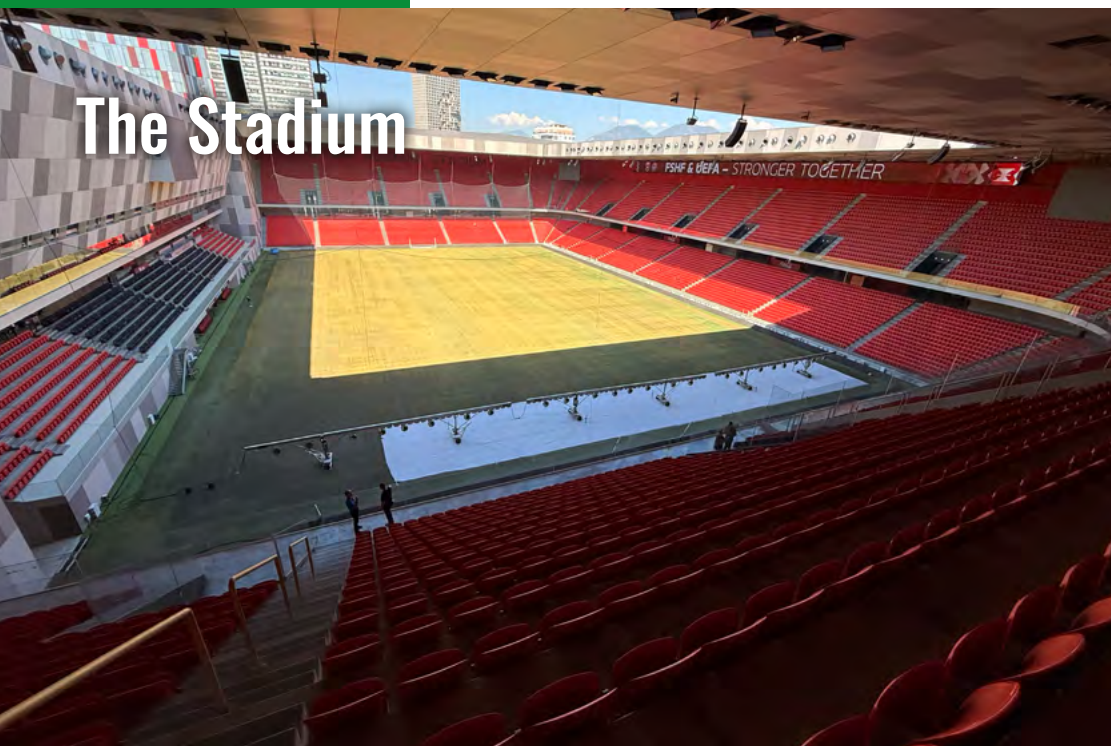


Our volunteer, by fans for fans service will be available on Saturday 15th November from around 11am until around 5pm, and again on matchday from around 10am until around 3pm.

Remember, you can contact us on WhatsApp or give us a ring on **+447956121314** if you need any help at all.



The Stadium

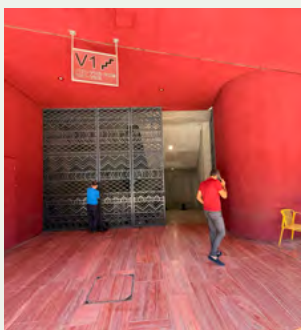


The Air Albania Stadium, or Arena Kombëtare, holds 22,500 spectators, with just under that available for this game. The stadium opened in 2019 and was built on the site of the former Qemal Stafa Stadium, the first competitive men's game took place here in 2019, a 2-0 win for France against the Albanians. This was also the venue of the 2022 UEFA Conference League final.

This is actually England's second visit here, but who truly remembers COVID football? We ended that game in March 2021 victorious, with Mason Mount and Harry Kane securing a 2-0 win to help us qualify for Qatar 2022.

The stadium has three sides that have two pretty even tiers, with England occupying both upper and lower tiers in one half

of the South Stand. Concessions are available inside the ground, but please be warned we have been told it is CASH ONLY. There are actually four cash machines directly next to our entrance outside.



One side of the stadium is primarily built for hospitality where the dugouts sit, which adds to the character of this

ground, it's pretty decent, and no running track!

Strangely enough, the rows at this stadium start with Row A at the back of the stand, rather than the front. The seats are numbered by block, so there may be a few Row A seat 1s, so beware if you decide to be daring and actually take up your correct seat. Be warned, the upper tier is quite steep, but the leg room is superb!

Neither the male or female toilets are that big, so expect queues.

We expect to be held back for around 20-30 minutes at the end of the game.

In terms of match programmes, we did ask and there is a digital version available. Long live the printed Free Lions, are we right?

Getting to the ground



Walk if you can, that's pretty much it.

Taxis won't be able to get that close to the stadium due to road closures, meaning you'll face a bit of a walk anyway, nor will public transport be able to get very near.

From the Skanderbeg Square, it's around a 1.4km walk, approx 20 mins. Since the main bars are closer to the stadium than that, we would suggest just doing it on foot if you can, and the same after the game heading back.

If your accommodation is further out, your best bet is walking back to the city centre and grabbing a taxi from there.

We are at the south side of the stadium, so the far end of the ground if you are walking from the city.

Ground rules

We are not expecting alcohol to be served but other soft drinks will be. **CASH IS KING**, please come armed with it.

Upon arrival at the stadium, you will have a visual ticket check by the police and private security before body searches at the gate. Fans will then enter the stadium and climb precisely 28 steps up (yes, we counted them just for you) onto the first level, where fans with tickets in the lower tier can enter. There are two turnstiles for fans in the lower so expect queues if you arrive late.

Fans with tickets in the upper tier

will continue up another flight of stairs, four turnstiles await you up there. If you have a lower tier ticket, it will not work in the upper, and vice versa, so please don't try this as it will only add to the queues.

Flags are allowed at standard size of 2 x 1.5m, but to be honest there really isn't many places you can hang them as glass panels sit at the front of both the upper and lower tiers. We wouldn't advise hanging them on the fence between the home and away sections either, with instances in the past of flags being a bit of a trophy for the locals.

Bags of A4 size are allowed, however there is no bag drop at the stadium. Power banks we believe will be allowed but this is a police decision, we'll confirm this on the day of the game. Try not to bring any item you think they may take off you.

The usual ground rules also apply, no guns, no knives, no pyro, no flag poles, no pets.

You are required to have photo ID on you, however this doesn't have to be a passport. It can be a driving license or even a photocopy of your passport, do not count on your ESTC membership card covering this.



Getting around

When you arrive at the airport, our advice is to grab a taxi, you'll see them as you exit arrivals to the left. As you exit and head outside, on your right will be a booth if you are looking to pay by card. You'll pay there and take the ticket to the taxi rank, which is located just next to the car rentals.

A taxi to the city is approx €25, or around 2500 Albanian Lek. If paying by cash, make sure you agree the price before setting off. In our experience, some drivers will say they can take card but actually can't or won't. A journey will take around 30-40 minutes. Buses are available but take over an hour.

In fairness, traffic isn't great around the city, the driving is chaotic, and that is being very kind! The spatial awareness of some of the drivers here is to be admired;

some will go for what looks like an impossible gap.



Once in the city you can pretty much walk everywhere. The main areas are all close to each other, but if travelling a little further you can get taxis or public transport. Uber doesn't work here but other apps such as Clust App and VrapOn do. Public transport buses cost around 40 Leks and run from 06:00-23:00 every day.

When heading back to the airport, make sure to leave a bit of time as the traffic can be quite bad.

Things to see and do

Both Albania and Tirana's Ottoman past will be on show when you visit, with signs of its recent communist past too.

Skanderbeg Square will be one you will naturally visit given it is where the ticket collection point is, there you will notice Tirana's Rock, the Skanderbeg Building built to resemble Gjergj Kastrioti known as Skanderbeg, a central figure in the history of Albania, and a national hero.

One recommendation is the Dajti Ekspres Cable Car, located just 15 minutes from the city centre. You can take a cable car up the Dajti Mountain, the longest of its

kind in the Balkans. From here you will have stunning views of the city, and if you visit the Dajti Tower Hotel, there is a rotating bar and cafe. 45 minutes here will give you a full 360° view of the stunning surroundings.

In Tirana itself, you can visit the Pyramid of Tirana, although avoid this later in the day on matchday due to it being a meeting point for the home supporters. The Pyramid was used as a NATO base in the 1999 Kosovo War although originally a museum. You can walk up the outside of the pyramid, steps have been installed to allow you to do this.



Near here, next to the Albanian parliament buildings, is the Fortress of Justinian, located near the n'Mes restaurant we recommend. Dating back to 1300 not much is left of the walls, all you can see now is a 20ft high Ottoman-era wall, but inside there is a bazaar, filled with shops and traditional cuisine restaurants.

Eating and drinking



Tirana's main eating and drinking areas are concentrated between the main Skanderbeg Square and the stadium, so pretty ideal for matchday.

This area is known as the Blloku (Block). Around here are plenty of bars and restaurants including cocktail and lounge bars, themed bars such as Duff Sports Bar, the logo of which resembles Duff beer from the Simpsons. There are also some rooftop bars here, as well as a few Irish bars.

One in particular, the New Irish Pub, will be great for the Karaoke enthusiasts amongst you, which, judging by social media from the recent trip to Riga, a few of you are pretty good at!

Elsewhere in the city, there are many little bars you can try out, you might note that the drinking culture isn't that central to life in Albania, although alcohol is readily available.

In terms of restaurants, one recommendation based on our experience is n'Mes, located on Shetitorja Murat Toptani. If this is up your street, try the mixed grill,

if there is a group of you then you can order this for 2 or 4 people. For four people it cost us around £40, and it was more than enough.



Albania's national dish is the Tave Kosi, a casserole of lamb, rice and tangy yogurt and egg sauce. Or, replace your Greggs cravings with a Byrek, pastry filled with spinach and cheese.

There are a few outdoor areas, however we're unsure what the weather will be like. With it being November we've been told to expect rain, and when it rains, it hammers down!

One place to avoid on matchday is the Fresheri, next to the Pyramid, this is a popular meeting point for home supporters. We would advise heading slightly to the south west of Skanderbeg Square to the Block. You won't go wrong here.

QUIZ ANSWERS

Music quiz Page 6

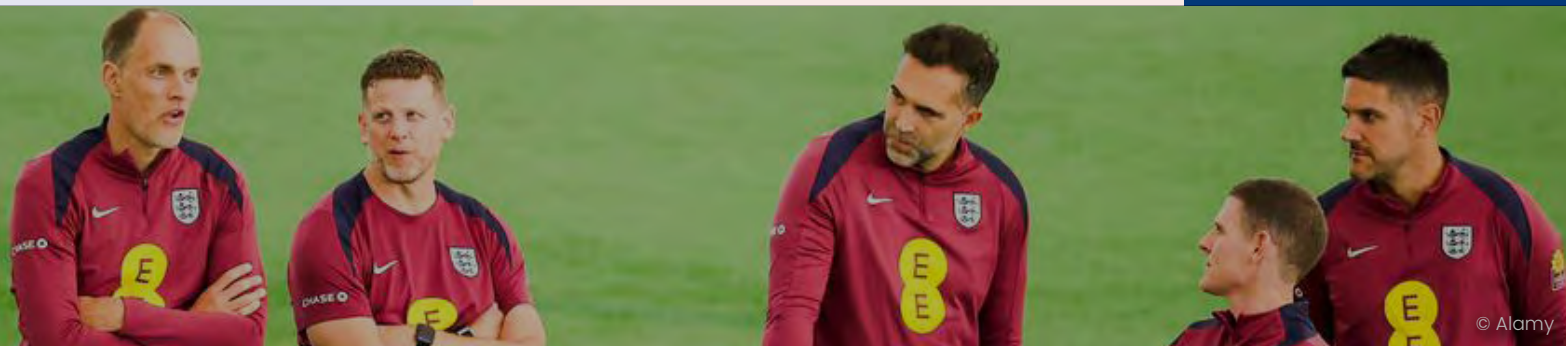
- 1. Amy Winehouse
- 2. AC/DC
- 3. UB40
- 4. Prince
- 5. Nina Simone
- 6. Simply Red
- 7. Black Eyed Peas
- 8. 35
- 9. John
- 10. (West) Germany

Football quiz Page 16

- 1. He was born in Slough, and signed for Tottenham Hotspurs' academy.
 - 2. James Milner
 - 3. Napoli
 - 4. Plymouth Argyle (it's also the most westerly).
 - 5. Between 68 and 70cms (27-28 inches)
 - 6. Galatasaray (Istanbul, Turkey)
 - 7. The letter B (far too many of them to name)!
 - 8. Geisenkirchen
 - 9. Nottingham Forest
 - 10. Raheem Sterling
- Head Spinner:
Peter Schmeichel (2001), Brad Friedel (2004), Paul Robinson (2007), Tim Howard (2012), Asmir Begovic (2013)
and Alisson Becker (2021)

Final word from Clive

From Clive Hetherington



If you want the best in corporate hospitality as an England fan, exclusive membership of what was once 'Club Wembley' is required. The rebranded 'Experiences by Wembley Stadium' offer the premium seats these days.

But it's places in Thomas Tuchel's squad that are now at a premium as players clamour to make into 'Club England'.

The esprit de corps that has developed since Tuchel's first game as England manager in March when his side began World Cup qualifying with a 2-0 Wembley win over Albania, our hosts here in Tirana, has seen the set-up compared to a club environment.

It's a tag that Tuchel readily recognises and embraces, with the German stressing: "It's a club feel because we play very aggressively, with a high press, it's a very physical game that we play, it's very demanding, but it gets everyone going.

"Everyone needs to go and buy into the idea because otherwise you cannot press so high. We win a lot of balls and the guys train at a high level, it's a very good group and it's a pleasure to coach them. It's step by step – and we're getting there."

The first big step for Tuchel's England was World Cup qualification, which was scarcely ever in doubt but was secured after their 5-0 victory away to Latvia last month. Captain Harry Kane returned, having sat out the 3-0 friendly win over Wales at Wembley five days earlier with an injury niggle, to score twice in Riga.

Tuchel, who had Kane under his wing at Bayern Munich, reckons his skipper is "on top of the list" of strikers he has worked with and England's talisman said: "No matter who you play, you have to set a high standard to keep the momentum we've built and I think it showed. Qualifying with two games to go with no goals conceded was a great achievement.

"We have some fantastic players who weren't in Latvia and we're going to need them. As we know, going into major tournaments, there's always chopping and changing."

Harry Kane

Those missing – again – were the likes of Jude Bellingham, Phil Foden, Cole Palmer, Jack Grealish and Trent Alexander-Arnold. While Bellingham and Palmer, if fit, will be hard to ignore for duty in North America next summer, remarkably, there are no guarantees for them nor several others when it comes to Tuchel's squad selection.

Against Latvia, Djed Spence – making only his second England start – exhibited the confidence in the ranks with a rabona cross. When the Tottenham full-back produced a more conventional right-wing delivery moments later, it led to England's fourth goal; the ball cannoning in off unfortunate substitute Maksims Tonisevs at the back post.

There was still less than an hour gone after the Londoner's impactful, wicked centre. Before then, superb strikes by Newcastle winger Anthony Gordon – his second senior goal for his country – and Kane, who quickly completed his brace with a convincingly converted penalty, had given England a commanding half-time lead.

Their fifth came four minutes from the end, Arsenal's Eberechi Eze finishing in emphatic fashion after coming off the bench to replace Morgan Rogers on the hour.

Former England striker and now pundit, Ian Wright, said: "Even though the opposition is the type we should be beating, I feel we've seen more energy in the passing and the pressing.

"People are talking about the pressing [at the World Cup] because it might be hot, so we'll have to see when that comes around. But we've seen the progression in recent games in the way the players are playing with more intensity."

Ian Wright

Wright's ITV colleague Roy Keane, who when in charge of Sunderland always placed enormous store on performances in training, spoke of England's "happy camp" and highlighted how much Tuchel

talks about what is shown on the practice pitch.

Without a hint of irony, Keane said: "I've never heard a manager talk so much about what happens in training. We can talk about Palmer, Grealish, Foden, [Marcus] Rashford was a sub, they have all that talent, but it's what you do in training and your attitude.

"Whatever these players bring to the party, the balance of the team has to be right or else they won't be involved."

Tuchel complained about the lack of noise from the home fans when England faced Wales, but he smiled in Riga and gave a thumbs-up when he heard the travelling supporters' ironic cry of "are we loud enough for you?!"

Wales were caught in a Wembley whirlwind, all the goals coming inside the first 20 minutes. The Three Lions were ahead in only the third minute when centre-back Marc Guehi kept an attack alive to find playmaker Rogers, who finished clinically from close-range for his first senior England goal.

After his impressive display in the 5-0 hammering of Serbia in Belgrade, Rogers followed up with another influential performance. It was his assist for Aston Villa colleague Ollie

Watkins – standing in for Kane – which prompted the second against the Welsh.

Then, Bukayo Saka celebrated his return to Tuchel's squad after injury by becoming Arsenal's highest all-time England scorer with the sort of goal which is now something of a trademark: cutting in from the right to crash a shot into the far corner. There were shades of the goal Saka scored as he compiled his first-ever hat-trick in a 7-0 Euro 2024 qualifying win against North Macedonia at Old Trafford in June 2023.

And it was the winger's 13th strike in an England shirt, beating the Gunners' Cliff Bastin, whose record had stood for over 87 years.

Ian Wright, who in 1997 broke Bastin's Arsenal scoring record of 178, was desperately unlucky to never appear in a major international competition. The Three Lions only featured in three top tournaments during Wright's senior England time, but he was overlooked for Euros 92 and 96, while injury struck cruelly before the 1998 World Cup.

By contrast, Saka looks to be heading to his fourth successive major tournament. England are almost spoiling the nation these days. Wouldn't it be great if they could really spoil us next July?



Albania

Wordsearch

Albania! Find the surnames from the Albanian National Side that beat Serbia in Leskovac back in October. This side are on the brink of a World Cup playoff.

Goalkeepers

Thomas STRAKOSHA
Simon SIMONI
Mario DAJSINANI

AEK Athens
Kaiserslautern
Egnatia Rrogozhine

Defenders

Naser ALIJI
Ivan BALLIU
Mario MITAJ
Elseid HYSAJ
Enea MIHAJ
Arlind AJETI
Bërat DJIMSITI
Klismar ÇAKE

Dinamo Tirana
Rayo Vallecano
Al-Ittihad
Lazio
Atlanta United
Bodrum
Atalanta
Shkendija

Midfielders

Julian SHEHU
Medon BERISHA
Kristjan ASLLANI
Ylber RAMADANI
Qazim LACI
Nazmi GRIPSHI
Nedim BAJRAMI

Widzew Lodz
Lecce
Torino
Lecce
Rizespor
Astana
Rangers

Forwards

Myrto UZUNI
Jasir ASANI
Rey MANAJ
Armando BROJA
Mirind DAKU
Arber HOXHA

Austin
Esteghlal
Sharjah
Burnley
Rubin Kazan
Dinamo Zagreb

N L A C I V D I N A N I S J A D
U R A M A D A N I S D G L G U B
F G I B P L G A V A N I D I Z E
C N M A R M R R M N D O Z B U R
I I N J Q U A T I I O H O D N I
N C E R W I N N D P V I O K I S
A K R A V N T O A C S K I X G H
L O H M L P G I D J Y H J A H A
L L Z I U H E H S W D U I M Y A
S G C U I P L S B M B A J E T I
A T R S N R S R S B I D L P B I
M I H A J L O I A J R J V T N N
P E K A C J G G R U K A D N K O
E R S A A P W I U J I J A T I M
R Y J P S B A L L I U H G W A I
H B R S M L P A H S O K A R T S

Free Lions Football Quiz by Scouse Phil

- Forward Armando Broja was born in which Royal Berkshire town? And which Premier League academy did he join from Burnham Juniors?
- Which current Premier League player scored his 1st goal in the Premier League for Leeds aged 16 back in 2002?
- Who are the current Serie A champions in Italy?
- Which is the most southerly football league club in England?
- According to the FA Laws of the game, what must the circumference of the ball be between in centimetres (or inches)?
- The Ali Sami Yen Stadium, with its famous 'Welcome to Hell' banner, was the previous home ground of which team, who are competing in this season's Champions League?
- 15 of the current 92 football league teams start with the same letter, which one?
- In which German city did England play their first game in the 2024 Euro Finals tournament, with a 1-0 win v Serbia?
- Which is the oldest current Premier League side, dating its formation back to 1865?
- I was born in Kingston, Jamaica in 1995, have played for 4 Premier League sides and have scored 20 times in my senior England career. Who am I?

HEAD SPINNER

Name the six goalkeepers that have scored a PL goal.

