

Some topics:

History of Vlora

1. Ancient Origins

Vlora, one of Albania's oldest cities, was founded in the 6th century BC as the ancient Greek colony of Aulon. Due to its strategic position along the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, it became an important port and trading center. During the Roman and later Byzantine periods, Vlora maintained its maritime importance, serving as a key link between East and West.

Ancient Vlora was known in antiquity as **Aulon**, a name derived from the Greek word meaning "valley" or "channel." The city was founded in the 6th century BC as a Greek colony, strategically positioned along the coast where the Adriatic and Ionian Seas meet. This location made Aulon an important maritime and commercial center in the ancient Mediterranean world.

Because of its natural harbor, the settlement quickly developed as a trading hub connecting Illyrian inland territories with Greek colonies and later with the wider Roman world. Archaeological findings suggest the presence of fortified walls, temples, and residential structures, reflecting both economic vitality and cultural exchange. Aulon played a role in regional trade networks, exporting agricultural products and benefiting from sea routes that linked southern Italy, Greece, and the Balkans.

During the Roman period, Aulon maintained its strategic importance as part of the province of Epirus Nova. The city continued to function as a port and military point, safeguarding maritime routes. Later, under Byzantine rule, it preserved its coastal significance, although its prominence fluctuated with political changes in the region.

These ancient foundations shaped Vlora's long history as a gateway between civilizations, cultures, and empires.

The image illustrates the imagined ancient settlement of Aulon overlooking the blue waters of the Adriatic Sea. Stone ruins and partial columns stand in the foreground, representing early Greek architecture. Traditional wooden ships with white sails float peacefully in the bay, symbolizing the maritime trade that once connected this coastal city to the wider Mediterranean world.



2. Medieval and Ottoman Period

The story of **Vlorë** during the Middle Ages is one of struggle, strategy, and transformation. Because of its important position on the Adriatic coast, the city became a prize for powerful empires. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Vlorë came under the control of the **Byzantine Empire**, which strengthened its fortifications and used it as a key defensive and trading post. In the 11th and 12th centuries, the city was attacked and occupied by the **Normans**, who recognized its strategic harbor. Later, the **Republic of Venice** sought control of Vlorë to dominate Adriatic trade routes. These constant changes of power show how valuable the city was for military and commercial reasons.

A major turning point came in 1417, when Vlorë was conquered by the **Ottoman Empire**. Under Ottoman rule, the city entered a new chapter. Mosques, baths, and public buildings were constructed, reshaping its urban landscape. The port expanded and became an important link between Albania, the Balkans, and the wider Mediterranean world.

Trade in agricultural products, olive oil, salt, and livestock increased. Vlorë also became an administrative center, governed by Ottoman officials. Although the city changed culturally and religiously during this time, it remained a meeting point of Eastern and Western influences.

Through wars, occupations, and development, Vlorë's medieval and Ottoman story reflects resilience and adaptation. Its harbor continued to define its destiny, shaping the city into a vital crossroads of history for centuries.



This image illustrates the Medieval and Ottoman period of **Vlorë**, presenting a vivid reconstruction of the city as a lively coastal center of trade and culture. The scene captures a fortified harbor surrounded by stone walls, watchtowers, and traditional buildings with red-tiled roofs. Near the shoreline, merchants and townspeople gather along narrow cobblestone streets, creating a sense of movement and economic activity. The marketplace appears busy, suggesting that the city functioned as an important commercial hub during this time.

Dominating the skyline is a large Ottoman-style mosque with a central dome and tall, slender minarets. The mosque symbolizes the transformation of the city after it came under the rule of the **Ottoman Empire** in the 15th century. Its architecture reflects Islamic artistic influence, blending with the older Mediterranean and Byzantine elements that were already present in the region. This mix of styles highlights how Vlora evolved culturally under different rulers.

In the harbor, several wooden sailing ships with Ottoman flags are anchored, emphasizing the importance of maritime trade. The port connects Vlora to other parts of the Adriatic and Mediterranean, making it a strategic location for commerce and military control. Small boats move between larger vessels and the shore, reinforcing the idea of daily economic exchange.

The surrounding mountains and calm blue sea create a dramatic natural backdrop. Together, these elements portray Vlora as a fortified, multicultural, and economically active city during the Medieval and Ottoman periods, reflecting its strategic importance and lasting historical legacy.



Medieval castles in Vlora Region



Medieval map of Vlorë

3. The Declaration of Independence (1912)



Vlorë holds a central place in Albanian national history. On November 28, 1912, Ismail Qemali proclaimed the independence of Albania in Vlorë, marking the end of Ottoman rule and the birth of the modern Albanian state. The city briefly served as the first capital of independent Albania.

4. 20th Century and World Wars

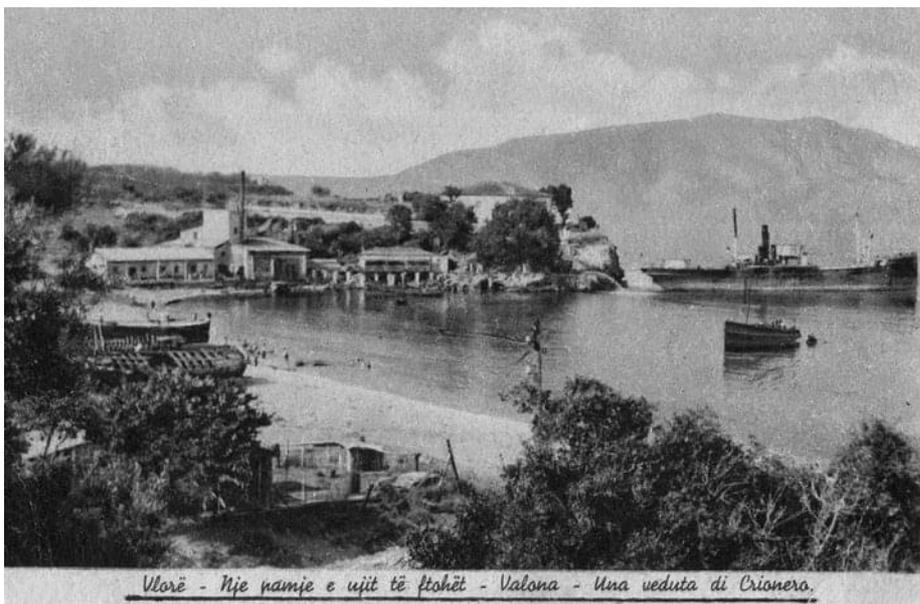
Vlora experienced Italian occupation during World War I and again during World War II. The city was also the site of the 1920 Vlora War, where Albanian forces resisted Italian control, reinforcing national sovereignty.



italian attac by the sea



Kujtim nga Vlora Valona Rrnoft Shqypëna e Shqyptarve



Vlorë - Një pamje e ujit të ftohtë - Valona - Una veduta di Crionero.

View of Cold Water zone in Vlora city



War of Vlora in 1920

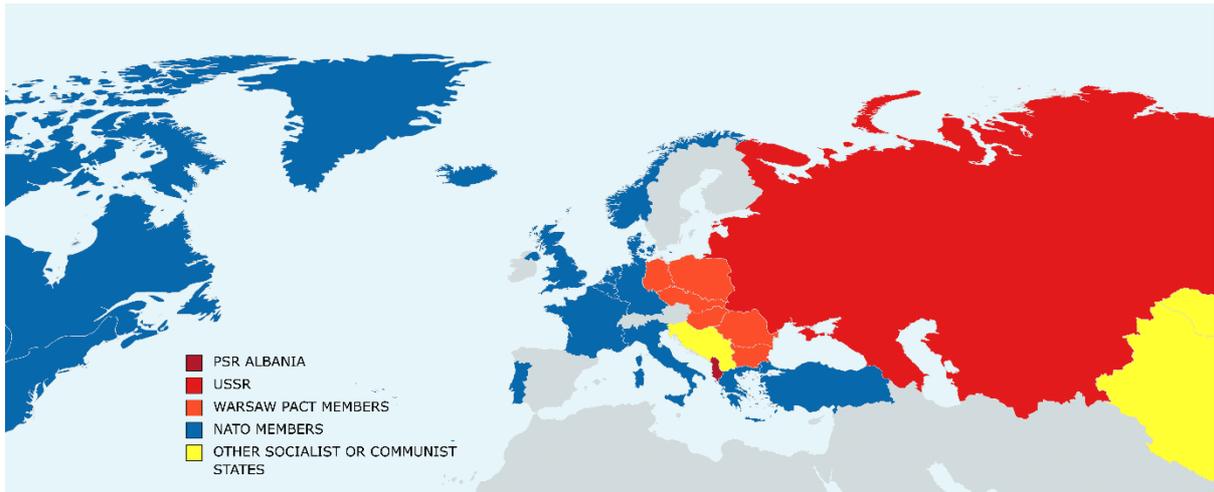


The end of second war

5. During the communist system



The dictators of Albania and Russia during a visit in Vlore.



Warsaw Pact members and other socialist states



Russian navy leaving the military naval base in Vlore in 1961



Albanian under the communist regime from 1944 to 1991



The student city of Tirana against the dictator Enver Hoxha in 1991. The falling down of socialist system 1991



The most impressive photo of immigration – Ship Vlora with 20000 Albanian people leaving Albania

6. Contemporary Vlora

Today, Vlora is a vibrant coastal city known for its tourism, beaches, and cultural heritage. Located where the Adriatic meets the Ionian Sea, it is a symbol of Albanian identity and independence, combining historical significance with modern development.

