

## **Endless beaches and mountain coast**

Logbook Day 16 - [Albania](#) (Shangjin - Cap Pali - Vlore - Saranda)

Kicking off from Shangjin some 20 nm to Cap Poli. Not much to see on the way. Just beaches and that very shallow towards the beach. Compared to Croatia or Montenegro, there is nearly non on the water. On that day, there are just two more boats that are passing my way.

First time seen a [flying fish](#), speeding out of our way.

Anchor at Cap Pali at 3m, still some 300 m to the shore. A nice place so, with the Jolie Fleur as the only boat at anchor. Some bunkers were rolled into the sea, possibly as wave breakers a better use.

A quiet night. Weather forecast however predicts some strong southerly winds from the evening.

Durres seems from far, just a large industrial city. Not so much to see. All along the coast just beach, shallow water. No place to anchor or hide.

I got to hurry to get to Vlore, as it is just a 60nm beach to Vlore with no place to hide or safely anchor. Vlore provides a bay surrounded by mountains that should provide protection. Even so the wind for the day was OK, I kept the engine running to speed up. Since there is only beach, there is no protection along the way. No place to hide from a storm. Vlore is the best and only option.

Arriving just a minute to sunset, I drop anchor close to the beach in a sandy patch. Should hold. I have a rest. Just short.

As predicted, some hour later, the wind picked up. It is dark, not much to see. Just the noise, the howling of the wind in the rig and the abrupt movements of the Jolie Fleur when she

drifted around and pulled hard at the anchor. Splashing of the waves on the boat's hull. A more or less sleepless night, always an eye on the anchor and my position on GPS. Does it hold? Do we get dragged?

Two more boats in the bay. A Canadian catamaran. They tried about 4 times to put the anchor to a safe hold. A Croatian boat, that was dragged with the anchor down out to the sea. They recognized and were lucky. There are ship wrecks nearby. If that anchor would get tangled in those.... They re-set the anchor again.

A horrible with wind gusts of 30 knots and more. The mountains, opposite to the expected protection, seemed to accelerate the wind kind of randomly. The wind "falls" down the mountain slope, accelerating and hitting us hard from different sides. Bang, another one. The Jolie Fleur is shaking, rig is rattling,... anchor holds. Out at sea, there is just a 3-4 meter high white spray of waves and wind. Looks horrible. No place to go.

The wind will not drop before 05:00 the next morning. Another sleepless night ahead. As it gets dark, the senses shift. From visual, to audio and balance. The sound of the wind seems to get more intense. The drifting and pulling on the anchor is kind of violent. Another 8 hours to keep watch. I have a knife ready. If the anchor fails, there is not much you can do alone on a boat. Cut the anchor, drive out to sea and be safe off rocks and shore.

At 05:00, the wind kept roaring. Now lower winds are predicted for 13:00. At 09:00, that shifted to 16:00. There seems to be a window around noon time with a little less wind. Maybe a chance to get around the cap. But it is another 50 miles of steep mountain coast with no place to stop or seek shelter. If I go, we have to go all the way to Saranda.

At 11:00, off we go. Knowing it will get tough around the cap. And that how it was. 30 knots of headwinds, steep and high waves that were build up over the last 36h, carrying all the energy of the storm. The 14kw engine roared in high rpm to fight its way through. Another 7

miles and it should get better.

Since I don't like to arrive at Saranda at night, looking for an anchorage at dark, I put the engine to slow and we cruise with 2.5-3 knots through the night to arrive at Saranda at about 07:00.

### **Resume: is Albania a place for sailors?**

Well, rather limited. Entry and custom procedures are difficult and expensive, requiring the support of a ship agent. 60 Euro for entry, 60 Euro for exit papers. The coast is either shallow and beach, or steep and rocks. Few places to hide and be safe.

The northern part is just a 80 mile beach, with Durres and Shengjin as larger ports. Even so the cities are touristic, the harbors are mostly industrial. The beach is very shallow. You can basically anchor everywhere, but all exposed to wind and waves and at 5m depth still some mile from the shore. The beach in itself is an endless party zone. Like Rimini, Ibiza or Mallorca. Music audible even some 10-20km off coast. Young people having a good time.

The southern part is high mountains with a steep coast line. Impressive, but only little places to hide at the 45 nm stretch. Bays are suitable for one or two boats, typically rather deep anchorages. So you need to have a lot of luck to find a spot.

Vlore and the bay are the most protected areas. Just about 40 nm to Italy, it is for Italians an entry / start point for the crossing. There is a marina that should be OK.

Overall, I think Greece, Croatia and Italy are the better places for sailors. Maybe in some 10 years with more infrastructure it might be nice.

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22h sailing, 48 nm

Wind 30-0 kn,SE

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n-CapPali



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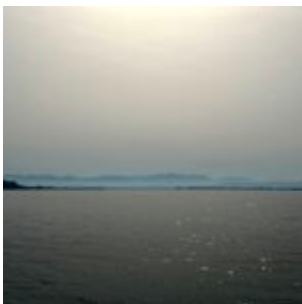
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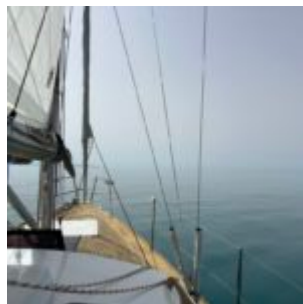
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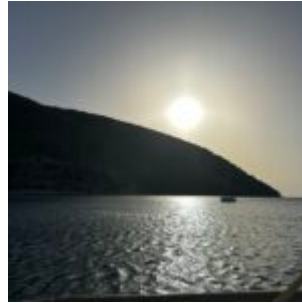
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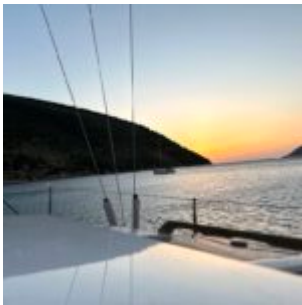
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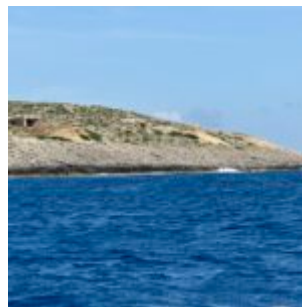
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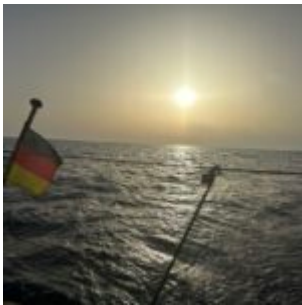
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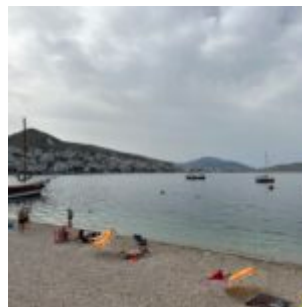
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