

The best bookshops in Tirana, Albania

blogs.lse.ac.uk/lsereviewofbooks/2015/04/17/the-best-bookshops-in-tirana-albania/

17/04/2015

Paulo Rui Anciaes explores Tirana, Albania's best bookshops. If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, find more information about contributing after this article.



Skanderbeg Square in Tirana, Albania. Photo Credit: [Lassi Kurkijärvi](#). CC-BY-NC.

After forty-five years of isolation and a turbulent period of political and economic transition, Albania is finally emerging onto the European stage. The capital Tirana has been revamped and is almost unrecognisable to those whose last visit was during Albania's more troubled periods. New public spaces have popped up, streets have been repaved, and building facades have been renovated across the city. Tirana is at the foot of Dajti Mountain, which can be accessed by a cable car from the western suburbs, and historical sites such as the old city of Krujë are just a few kilometres away. But most of all, Tirana is a city conducive to relaxation. It is awash with cafés to while away your time and in the early evening and you can join locals on a *xhiro* (an untranslatable word pronounced "jeero" which is the act of walking around town at the end of the day in the company of others).



Libraria Adrion in Tirana. Photo Credit: Paulo Rui Anciaes.

[Libraria Adrion](#) is the main bookshop in Tirana for books in English. It is hard to miss as it is located in [Skanderbeg Square](#), the heart of Tirana, next to the Opera. Even if you miss it, Adrion has another two branches at the airport, where you can spend your last lek. The branch in the city centre also stocks a large section of books of Albanian fiction and non-fiction, including the complete works of world-famous [Ismael Kadare](#). Even more interestingly, Adrion stocks Albanian books in several languages other than English. If you're staying a long period in Tirana and you're simply unable to live without obscurities like Japanese manga in Spanish translation, then Adrion is the place for you. But do not overindulge. Adrion is well-stocked but is not particularly cheap. English translations of Ismael Kadare cost up to 50% more than they do in other countries.

Another place to not to miss is [Friend's Book House](#). It is located in [Rruga Sami Frashëri](#), not far from the Pyramid, a huge, ugly, soon-to-be-demolished building just south of the city centre. The selection of English books in the Friend's Book House is modest but it is definitely worth a visit for the atmosphere. The basement of Friend's Book House has a library-like atmosphere and is usually full of people enjoying a quiet read or finishing their exam papers on their laptop.



Friend's Book House in Tirana. Photo Credit: Paulo Rui Anciaes.

A number of other cafés doubling-up as bookshops have opened in Tirana during the last few years. It is easy to combine a visit to several of them in an afternoon, including [Libraria Tirana Times](#) in [Rruga Andon Zako Çajupi](#) and [E7E Tirana](#) in [Rruga Jul Variboba](#) (on the opposite side of the Pyramid building). In all of them you will find good books, good coffee, and opportunities to socialise at one of their many regular literary events.

Paulo Rui Anciaes is a researcher at the Centre for Transport Studies, University College London. He completed his PhD. at the Department of Geography and Environment of the London School of Economics. Paulo blogs about [Community severance](#) and [Alternative Environmentalism](#) and contributes to the [UCL Street Mobility project](#) blog. [Read reviews by Paulo here.](#)

Do you have a favourite bookshop? If there's a bookshop that you think other students and academics should visit when they're undertaking research or visiting a city for a conference, then now's your chance to tell us all about it.

As part of a new feature on LSE Review of Books, we're asking academics and students to recommend their favourite two or three bookshops in a particular city, with the aim of building an exciting online series for our book-loving community of readers the world over.

Bookshops could be academic, alternative, foreign language, hobby-based, secret or underground institutions, second hand outlets, or connected to a university. We'd like to cover all world regions too.

If something comes to mind, we're looking for around 150 words per bookshop, detailing why this place is a must-see. Our editorial team can then find suitable photos and links to accompany the piece, though you're welcome to supply these too. We only ask that you focus on just one city or region, and two or three bookshops within it.

Email us now if you'd like to contribute: lseviewofbooks@lse.ac.uk

- Copyright 2013 LSE Review of Books