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# Trumbeta Shqiptare

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Volume 99

June 2017

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The Official Publication of the Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.



*“We, American citizens and Canadian citizens, of Albanian descent and others interested in Albanian-Americans, desiring to form and perpetuate a federation and promote its objectives and principles; to effect a perfect and harmonious understanding between ourselves and others, to promote the cause of good citizenship in the country in which we live; to stimulate the spirit of good fellowship and good cooperation; do hereby establish and ordain these By-Laws.”*

**Please visit us at: [www.AANO.org](http://www.AANO.org)**



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**2016-2017  
NATIONAL OFFICERS & BOARD OF GOVERNORS**

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**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

June 2017

### *President's Message*

Greetings everyone! Happy spring/summer. This has been an interesting year for the AANO because we are entering uncharted waters and working on some things that are new for us. First, we are planning our first convention ever in Texas! Our plans for our convention in Dallas, which is set to take place from August 3 to August 5, 2017, at the Westin Galleria, are shaping up really well and we are looking forward to a really nice blend of "old" and "new" faces. There is a large Albanian community in Dallas, most of whom have never had the opportunity to attend a convention who are very excited about this prospect and I know many of us who have attended conventions for years are excited about going to a new great city and meeting new people. The hotel is in a great location and is attached to a large mall and the community there is planning activities for us during the daytime as well. I think anyone who does not go will regret it! From the location, to the people, to the planned entertainment, it promises to be a first-class event.

Our National Board meeting to work on the finishing details, as well as to select this year's scholarship recipients, is to take place on June 3rd in Detroit. Gayle Orlow, our National Scholarship Applications person, has done a great job going through the applications and honing it down to 21 applicants whose applications have met all of the criteria required, and the National Board is currently in the process of grading the 21 final applicants. The system is such that the Board does not know the identity of the applicants until after the process is completed in the interest of complete fairness. I can tell you that after going through some of these applications, it is going to be a difficult task because we are fortunate to have some very qualified students.

### *Mesazhi i Presidentit*

Another exciting thing we have been dealing with this year looks like we are going to be able to get some chapters to be more active and maybe initiate some new chapters. We are hoping that Dallas becomes a chapter at the upcoming convention. The Philadelphia Chapter is currently trying to rejuvenate, and we have been actively working with the Washington DC Chapter, who have been more active locally than nationally, to bring them more into the fold. Clearly, new energy is always good (as well as appreciated by those of us who work tireless hours sometimes needing more assistance).

I hope you are also excited about bringing some new people into the fold and rejuvenating some of the previously existing chapters, and going to a new city and state in August! Keeping core values and principles but changing things up a little bit is sometimes the shot in the arm that we need!

I hope you all enjoy your summer vacations and that you plan on making Dallas one of your destinations this year. The community there is supporting us wholeheartedly so let's do our part and support them as well!

I look forward to seeing you!



Julia L. Black  
National President  
Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.



**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

## **CHAPTER ACTIVITIES**

### *The Detroit Chapter*



The Detroit Chapter is currently planning their third annual "Shqipo's at the Tigers" trip! If you are going to be in the area on Thursday, June 28th, the Tigers will be playing Kansas City. Tickets are only \$25 and includes a small soft drink, a hot dog, and a bag of chips per person. It should be a great time and we would love to have you join us. For tickets, please email Julia Black immediately at [julialisablack@hotmail.com](mailto:julialisablack@hotmail.com). These events have been immensely fun and well attended. See you at the ball game !!

*Also, thank you to Bonnie Halim, manager and event planner of the Days Inn at Detroit Metro Airport, for her past and present assistance regarding AANO National Officers meetings.*

*The National Board wishes  
all of our members ...  
a Happy and Safe Summer !!*



## ***Attention Past Scholarship Winners***



We would love to know what you're doing !!

Please send your information to Gayle Orlow ([gorlow@comcast.net](mailto:gorlow@comcast.net)) and list the year that you won your scholarship, where you attended school, your major, and what has transpired since. If you like, attach a photo.

We enjoy keeping up to date on our Scholarship recipients.

**If you would like to make a donation to the  
AANO Scholarship Fund, please send your  
contribution to:**

### **AANO SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

**c/o Lea Bitta  
2800 North Lake Shore Drive, #510  
Chicago, IL 60610**

**[ebitta2@gmail.com](mailto:ebitta2@gmail.com)**



**Donations to the Scholarship Fund are  
Tax Deductible**

### **National Board members meet in Detroit on Sunday, June 3, 2017.**

The National Board and National Board of Governors all met in Detroit on June 3rd to select this year's scholarship recipients and discuss many of the organization's pending issues. They did a lot of work on planning for the Convention in Dallas and the upcoming Queen Pageant. The Queen Pageant application can be found online, as well as in this issue, and we would like to encourage people to participate.

After the board meeting, some of the members attended an Albanian Festival in Detroit which brought in musicians and entertainers from many states as well as Kosovo and Albania. A lot of the entertainers were staying at the hotel where the meeting was held, and so there was a lot of interaction between the entertainers and the National Board, which was wonderful. They were able to see many beautiful costumes and talk to many interesting people.

A special thank you to the Albanian-owned Days Inn in Romulus, Michiga, for hosting the meeting and being so accommodating. We greatly appreciate their hospitality!



*Pictured with the National Board is renowned singer Sabri Fejzallahu*

[www.AANO.org](http://www.AANO.org)



*Young girls from NY participating in Detroit's Albanian Festival*



**Membership to the A.A.N.O. is valid for only one year. If you would like more information about becoming a member, contact your local chapter or look on our web site for a chapter near you.**



*Dallas, Texas – 2017 Convention !!*



**Albanian-American**  
*National Organization*

## PRESENTS

*71st Annual Convention*

*&*

*24th Queen Pageant*

*August 4 -6, 2017*

*Dallas, TX*

*The Westin Galleria Dallas*

[www.aano.org](http://www.aano.org)



## EVENT INFORMATION

Friday, August 4, 2017

- Board Meeting
- Hotel pool
- Queen Pageant at 8:00 PM
- Dancing, live Albanian music and DJ

Saturday, August 5, 2017

- City tours
- Shopping at Galleria Mall
- Cultural room
- Wander Dallas
- Afternoon at the Pool
- Cocktails starting at 6:00 pm
- Banquet Dinner Dance (Cocktail Attire is required)
- Music by Luljeta Pellumbi and DJ

Sunday, August 6, 2017

- Closed morning Board Meeting
- Open General Meeting
- Election of Officers
- 2018 Convention Bids
- Coffee and Pastries
- Closing Ceremony

Sunday Night Event (separate pricing)

- Evening at Sneaky Pete's Lewisville Lake (check AANO.org for pricing)

## HOTEL INFORMATION

The Westin Galleria Dallas  
13340 Dallas Parkway, Dallas, TX  
(972) 934-9494 or (888)-627-8536

Online:

<https://www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/AANO>

Single/double \$139, Triple \$164, Quad \$189

Cut-off date: July 14, 2017

**Convention Ticket Information**

AANO Members # \_\_\_\_\_ \$160.00  
Non-AANO Members # \_\_\_\_\_ \$185.00  
Children 16 & Under # \_\_\_\_\_ \$100.00  
Early bird special \$160.00 by 6/30/17

**DEADLINE DATE July 17, 2017**

*SEMI-FORMAL ATTIRE REQUIRED FOR SATURDAY EVENING*

Total Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

List ALL names included in your reservation:

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Reserve your tickets online: [ww.aano.org](http://ww.aano.org)

or mail check (provide email) to:

**Etleva Teli**  
**1140 Hygate Dr.**  
**Roselle, IL 60172**

**E-Mail: etlevat@yahoo.com**

Make check payable to: AANO Inc.

**Preferred seating with:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Ad Journal Prices**

**Commemorative Booklet**

_____ Gold Page	\$500.00
_____ Silver Page	\$300.00
_____ Inside Covers	\$200.00
_____ Full Page	\$125.00
_____ Half Page	\$75.00
_____ Quarter Page	\$50.00
_____ Booster Page	\$30.00
<b>*To add photo</b>	<b>\$25.00</b>

**Ad Journal Deadline:**

**July 17, 2017**

**Ad and payment to:**

**Iris Maluka**

**42835 Pilgrim Square**

**South Riding, VA 20152**

**E-mail: [aanodc@gmail.com](mailto:aanodc@gmail.com)**

**Check made payable to:**

**AANO Inc.**



**Queen Pageant Information**

**Application and Qualifications**

**also online at**

**AANO.org**



**ALBANIAN-AMERICAN NATIONAL ORGANIZATION  
TWENTY-FOURTH AANO, INC. QUEEN PAGEANT  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 4, 2017**

**At the 71<sup>st</sup> Annual AANO Convention hosted by the National Organization  
August 4, 2017 at the Westin Galleria, Dallas, Texas**

*Application Form*

**Name:**

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First	Middle	Last
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**Address:**

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Number and Street	City	State	Zip
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**Date of Birth:**

**Place of Birth:**

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**Chapter of Membership:**

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Member at Large: Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_

Year of High School Graduation (or expected graduation): \_\_\_\_\_

College Attended/Attending: \_\_\_\_\_ Graduation Year \_\_\_\_\_

Degree(s) obtained: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe any special awards or extra activities (attach a separate page if necessary):

Work Experience:

---

Albanian Lineage:

Father:	Y	N	Place of Birth:
Mother:	Y	N	Place of Birth:
Paternal Grandparents:	Y	N	Place of Birth:
Maternal Grandparents:	Y	N	Place of Birth:

**Duties of the Reigning Queen:**

To attend all National Conventions (on a complimentary basis); to serve as the Official Hostess of the Albanian-American National Organization, Inc.; to be actively involved with all cultural/scholarship events.

**Queen Pageant Rules and Regulations: (Please Type or Print all responses)**

1. Only Members in good standing of the AANO, Inc. Chapters or Members at Large are eligible. You may become a member by contacting your nearest chapter or do so at large online at aano.org.
2. Deadline for filing application is July 21, 2017.
3. All contestants must submit an approximately one-page (can be a little shorter or longer) essay entitled, "My vision for the AANO."
4. All applications must be accompanied by a recent photo (glossy 5 x 7). You may submit one or two pictures but at least one must be a headshot.
5. All applications must be accompanied by some proof of membership to the AANO, Inc., or a written statement of who you paid dues to.
6. Dress is formal evening wear (e.g., long evening gown).
7. All contestants will be interviewed on Friday, August 4, 2017. Each contestant will be notified of her interview time.
8. Pageant Rehearsal will be held at approximately 4:00 p.m. on Friday, August 4, 2017.
9. The Queen and 1<sup>st</sup> runner-up will be selected by three (3) non-Albanian judges.
10. The contestants will be judged on character, personality, poise, and written and verbal communication skills.
11. All contestants are expected to attend at least the Friday and Saturday night events of the Convention/Queen Pageant weekend.

**Awards:**

Queen will receive a \$500.00 honorarium.

Please make sure to complete and send **all applications by July 21, 2017** to:

Julia L. Black  
8305 S. Saginaw Street, Suite 10  
Grand Blanc, MI 48439

Or via Email at: [julialisablack@hotmail.com](mailto:julialisablack@hotmail.com)  
You may also use the email address for any questions.

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*The AANO, Inc has been perpetuating Albanian ethnicity since 1946 in the United States and Canada. We are a non-religious and non-political organization. Our goals are to maintain Albanian traditions, language, culture, education and social activities.*



### Sponsors

#### **Gold:** Table for 8

1 Gold Page in the Ad Journal  
Announcement at Convention  
Listing on our web page  
Display on easel  
\$5,000

#### **Silver:** Table for 4

1 Silver Page in the Ad Journal  
Announcement at Convention  
Listing on our web page  
Display on easel  
\$3,000

#### **Bronze:** Table for 2

Listing on our web page  
Announcement at Convention  
\$1,000

#### **Contact:**

Richard Rafail  
41 Thatcher Ave.  
Harrison, NY 10528  
[rrafail@yahoo.com](mailto:rrafail@yahoo.com)

## ***SOCIAL NEWS***

### ***Engagement/Wedding***



#### **Detroit**

Congratulations to active Detroit Chapter participants Rapo Nazarko and Evi Nardi who were married in a small ceremony at the Teqe Bektashijane in Taylor, Michigan, on May 14, 2017, with their immediate families. We wish them every happiness for a long and healthy life together.

Rapo is a former Detroit Board of Governor and an active Detroit Chapter member. Brother Ferit is past President and past National Secretary. Rapo and Ferit are the sons of Engjell and Zenepe Nazarko.



*The Nazarko Family pictured with Ferit, wife Xheni, and their two daughter.*

#### **Chicago**

Brian Balinski 's wedding day is set for August 5, 2017. He is the son of Ken and Kathy Nicholas Balinski. Our congratulations to Brian and the Balinski, Nicholas, and Bitta families.

*Babies*

**New York**

Samantha (Rafail) and BJ Gobena welcomed Joseph Quinn (7lbs., 1oz and 20 inches) to their family on January 25th. Congratulations on your new bundle of joy, and to Grandpa Rich Rafail!



*New Home*



**New York**

Stephanie (Rafail) and Billy Angarano have moved into their new home in Mount Kisco, NY in May. Best wishes!



**REMINDER ...**

*If you have any news, or newsworthy articles, you would like to see included in Trumbeta Shqiptare, please forward the information to the editor.*

*Thank you for your continued support!*

*Graduations/Class Notes*



**Chicago**

The Chicago Chapter wants to congratulate George Teli on his 8th grade graduation from Springwood Middle School on May 24, 2017. George is the son of Chicago Chapter members Llambi and Etleva Teli. We want to wish George good luck and lots of success in high school.



*George Teli with proud parents Llambi and Etleva*

**Detroit**

Congratulations to Matt (Mecho) Halim upon his graduation from the University of Michigan. Matt graduated with a degree in economics, class of 2017. We wish him a fulfilling and exciting future. He is the son of Bonnie Halim and grandson of Mynyr and Sanije Nazifi, all of whom have been active participants in the Albanian community.

Adrian Halim, son of Bonnie Halim, is currently a student at UCLA, majoring in film production. We wish him well and who knows ... he could be the next Steven Spielberg or George Lucas !!

**Worcester**

Congratulations to Jennifer Rouvina on her graduation from Simmons College in Boston with a Master of Science-Nurse Practitioner Degree. She is also a member of Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society. Jennifer is the daughter of proud parents Tom and Jan Rouvina. We wish her success in her new career, as do Mike and Abby.



*Jennifer Rouvina*



***Obituaries***

**Detroit**



Sylvia Jemali, age 79 of Detroit, Dearborn, Farmington, Novi, Ann Arbor, MI and Clearwater Beach, Florida, passed away on February 26, 2017 at the Beacon Hill Assisted Living Facility. She was a very kind and caring person who enjoyed helping others and spending time with her family and friends. She was a loving mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Sylvia was a long-time member of the AANO Detroit Chapter before moving to Florida. She is survived by her only child James (Elizabeth) Zeqollari, grandchildren Captain Angela Zeqollari, Crystal (Keith) Rikli, Robert (SSGT Allison) Gochenour, great-grandsons Seth and Samuel Gochenour, sisters Liria Hasho, Dita (Robert) MacDonald, many nieces and nephews.

**Personal note from the Detroit Chapter:**

*Sylvia Zeqollari (nee Jemali) chaired the first Detroit AANO Convention in 1980. She was actively involved in all things Albanian. She was a great asset to our community and an excellent example of achievement by first generation Albanian women at that time.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Condolences to the family of Elmas Elmazaj, father of a long-time Detroit AANO supporter Esma Elmazaj. Elmas passed away on November 1, 2016. He was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. His memory lives on through his family and will be greatly missed by those who knew him. He was born in a village near Fier, Albania and escaped during the communist regime. He will be remembered for having a big heart and

for liking to laugh and joke. His home was open throughout the years to Albanians from different states and countries. He truly loved his family, Albania, and the United States until the day he died. He was a true patriot. May his memory be eternal.

**Worcester**



Sophie (Geotis) Christo, 91, passed away on March 1, 2017. Her husband of 66 years, Peter Christo, passed away in 2013. Sophie leaves her two daughters, Barbara Pero and her husband Louis, and Roberta Alera and her husband Keith. She was proud of her 5 grandchildren, Michelle Vasil and her husband Paul, Dr. Stephanie Pero Fournier and her husband John, Steven Pero, Kristin Bell and her husband Michael, and Jason Alera. She also leaves 4 great-grandchildren; David and Mathew Fournier and Charles and Sophia Vasil, as well as her brother-in-law William Christo and his wife Loula, sister-in-law Mary Stevens, and many nieces and nephews. Sophie was a member of St. Mary's Albanian Orthodox Church and the Women's Guild. She loved baking and volunteering at the Albanian Festivals with her husband and family.

\*\*\*\*\*



Joan (Nicholas) Smith passed away unexpectedly on March 11, 2017 at the age of 79. Joan was the daughter of Louis and Olga (Sthika) Nicholas. Her husband of 18 years, Ralph Smith, Jr., passed away in 2008. She is survived by her brother, Robert

Nicholas and his wife Judith, along with their children, Robert Nicholas and Angela Nicholas, her three step-children, her best friend Mary Stevens, and other extended family members and friends. Besides her husband and parents, Joan was pre-deceased by her brother, James "Jimmy" Nicholas. Joan was very involved at St Mary's Albanian Orthodox church, was a member of the St Mary's Women's Guild, and a volunteer in many of its church functions including the semi-annual festival. She was also a long-time member of the Worcester Chapter AANO.

\*\*\*\*\*



Anna (George) Pillary, 80, passed away peacefully on Friday, June 2, 2017. Her husband of 22 years, Constatine Pillary pre-deceased her in 1991. She is survived by her son, Thomas. Pillary, and her beloved granddaughter, Hannah Pillary. She also leaves a brother, Gust George, four sisters, Elaine Dionis, Cleo George, Sophie George and Jean George, and many nieces and nephews. She is pre-deceased by four sisters, Catherine Costa, Alexandria Bardho, Naomi Veshi and Mary George. Anna was the daughter of Peter and Angeline George and was a member of Saint Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church and its Women's Guild, was a past officer for the Albanian-American National Organization, and a delegate for the Orthodox Archdiocese of America. Ms. Pillary was also an active participant in the bi-annual Church festival.

*Our deepest sympathy to the families of our recently departed former members and friends of the AANO.*

**I Përjetshëm Kutimi i Tyre!  
May their Memories be Eternal!**

## *Travel*

### **DIONIS FAMILY FROM WORCESTER CHAPTER AANO HEADING TO ALBANIA THIS SUMMER**



Sydney and Zach Dionis will be heading to Albania this summer. Sydney will be at "Camp Elbasan" and Zach will be at the seminary school in Durrës as both will be counselors for the Orthodox Church Camp for 10 days, working with children ages 9 - 12.

Their parents, Mark and Sandy, will be joining them in July for a two-week family vacation, visiting family and touring the country.

Sydney will be blogging again this summer at: <http://dearalbaniahesydneyversion.wordpress.org> so you can follow her adventures and read about her visit last year. In 2016, Sydney had just over 2,000 views and is hoping to reach 3,000 views this year.

More photos to follow upon their return. We wish them all a happy and safe trip back to the homeland!



**Camp Elbasan**



*The WASHINGTON DC CHAPTER hosted another successful Independence Day Celebration. This is the fourth time that our chapter has hosted this annual event. It has now become a tradition for the Metropolitan community to celebrate such an important event. Over 150 Albanians joined this wonderful celebration and this time was more special because all the leaders from all the Albanian organizations in the Metropolitan area helped to make it a success. And what a great success it was ... way to go AANO DC Chapter! Thanks to all the members for making this a truly memorable evening.*



**Members from all other Organizations in DC**



**Albanian Ambassador, Mrs. Floreta Faber**



Young Generation listening to the speeches



Kosovo Ambassador Vlora Citaku & Mrs. Maluka



Mrs. Balla teaching children to dance



Young Generation dancing Valle Shqiptare



Mrs. Anila, Mrs. Selimaj, Evisa & Mrs. Aliaj



Mr. Aliaj & Mr. Stoja (friends since high school)



Mrs. Boci dancing with her son Daniel



Mr. & Mrs. Stoja



Mrs. Valbona & Evisa Selimaj  
(Mom & Daughter) - Lovely!



Mr. Balla dancing with his  
daughter Wendi Balla



Mrs. Luku with her son Chris



Celebration at the end of the Party

**FESTIVAL 2017 | June 2 ~ 3 ~ 4**

St. Mary's Assumption Albanian Orthodox Church of Worcester, MA held their Festival on **June 2, 3, and 4, 2017.**

Under a massive tent, rain or shine, over 10,000 visitors, over 200 volunteers. Live entertainment from Europe & the USA, 3000 lbs of lamb, thousands of individual pastries, 250 lakror pies, 75 trays of baklava, and hours and hours of volunteer time!!

Everyone is Albanian for a day. If you missed this year's Festival, it will be held again in 2019. It's a place where neighbors, family and friends gather to have a great time, under the tent, no matter their race, religion or ethnic background!!





Written January 20, 2017  
by Alketa Kita-Marishta (*Chicago Chapter Member*)  
Dublin, Ireland



Seal of the Grand Vizier

## Albanians Rulers for Five Centuries in a Big Empire

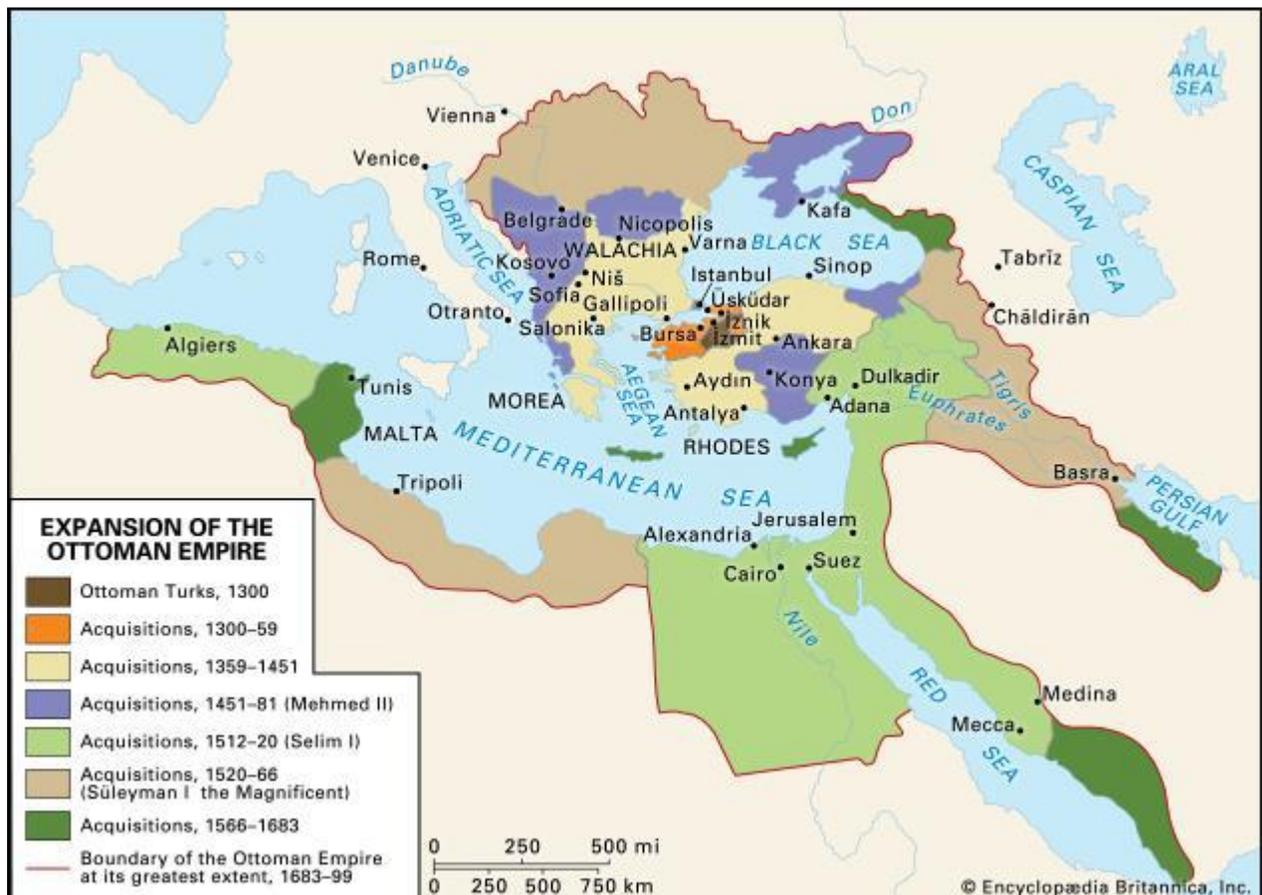
Beginning in the 9<sup>th</sup> century, after weakening of the Byzantine Empire, Albania, came under the domination of other foreign powers: Bulgarians, Norman crusaders, southern Italians, Serbs and Venetians. Massive migrations of Albanians abroad started in 1347, especially to Greece and Italy after occupation of Serbs under Stefan Dusan. After end of nearly 1,000 years of the Byzantine rule, in 1388-1443, the country was occupied by the Ottoman Turks, who were expanding their power in the Balkans. After 1443, for the next 25 years, Albanians under their military genius Gjergj Kastrioti, known as Skenderbeg, succeeded in driving occupiers out. The first time that Albanian princes were rallied and operated together to frustrate every attempt by the Turks to regain Albania. After Skenderbeg's death, Albanian resistance gradually collapsed and enabling Turks to reoccupy the country in 1506.

Ottoman empire had survived for more than 500 years with the rule of Sultan and Grand Viziers. The Grand Vizier was as a prime minister and had absolute power of attorney. The offices of the Grand Vizier were located at the Sublime Porte. During the period from 1320 until 1922, there were a total of 219 Grand Viziers, 46 or 20% were Albanian born or Albanian origin (Table 1). Beyazid Pasha was the first Albanian origin Grand Vizier that was appointed in 1413-1421. The first Grand Vizier of Ottoman empire was a Alaeddin Pasha, a Turk that took office in 1320 until 1331; and the last Grand Vizier was Ahmet Tevfik Pasha, a Turk with the third time taking his office in 1920 through November 1922. It is important to mention that during the reign of Sultan Suleyman the "Magnificent" as he was called from the West, all the four Grand Viziers were Albanians. One of the first Grand Viziers was an Albanian born from town of Parga of Greece, Pargali Ibrahim Pasha. Ibrahim was sold as slave by age of 6 at the Ottoman palace. He befriended Suleyman at the young age and later he was promoted so fast at age of 28 as Grand Vizier. Amongst many titles, he was known as the most handsome man in the empire. Ibrahim was known as "French" Ibrahim due to his real power behind Ottoman Empire in negotiating with Catholic powers and his taste and manners. He was a skilled commander and spoke many languages. Even Suleyman purportedly promised him will never execute, Pargali Ibrahim was executed in 1536 thirteen years later after his

appointment as Grand Vizier. His palace is still standing in Istanbul and is called Art and Islamic Museum. Suleyman Sultan greatly regretted execution of Ibrahim and that was reflected in his poems years later. In the last minutes of his life, Suleyman's last word was "Ibrahim". The other three Albanian Grand Viziers, Ayaz, Lutfi and Rustem, were appointed during Suleyman Sultan reign. The 5-star Turkish serial "Magnificent Century" portrays all four Albanian Grand Viziers.

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## Music of Albania

*From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*

**Albanian music** ([Albanian](#): *Muzikë popullore* or *Muzikë shqiptare*) displays a variety of influences. Albanian folk music traditions differ by region, with major stylistic differences between the traditional music of the [Ghegs](#) in the North and [Tosks](#) in the South. Since the 1920s, some composers such as [Fan S. Noli](#) have also produced works of Albanian [classical music](#). One of the most important venues exhibiting traditional Albanian music is the [Gjirokaštër National Folklore Festival](#) held every five years in [Gjirokaštër](#), southern Albania.

### History



Photo of the Band of Freedom, a musical group of the [Albanian National Awakening](#) that was active in the City of [Korçë](#), 1909.

Albania's political, military and cultural domination by outside elements have contributed to the country's modern music scene. Albanian music is a fusion of the music of Southeastern Europe. However, the Albanian people kept maintained vast cultural identity away from their overlords, with many living in rural and remote mountains.

### Folk music

Albanian folk music falls into three stylistic groups, with other important [music areas](#) around [Shkodër](#) and [Tirana](#); the major groupings are the [Ghegs](#) of the north and southern Labs and [Tosks](#). The northern and southern traditions are contrasted by the "rugged and heroic" tone of the north and the "relaxed, gentle and exceptionally beautiful" form of

the south. These disparate styles are unified by "the intensity that both performers and listeners give to their music as a medium for patriotic expression and as a vehicle carrying the narrative of [oral history](#)", as well as certain characteristics like the use of rhythms such as 3/8, 5/8 and 10/8. The first compilation of Albanian folk music was made by [Pjetër Dungu](#) in 1940.

Albanian folk songs can be divided into major groups, the heroic epics of the north, and the sweetly melodic [lullabies](#), love songs, [wedding music](#), [work songs](#) and other kinds of song. The music of various festivals and holidays is also an important part of Albanian folk song, especially those that celebrate St. Lazarus Day (*the llazore*), which inaugurates the springtime. Lullabies and [laments](#) are very important kinds of Albanian folk song, and are generally performed by solo women.

### Northern Albania



*Lahutar* playing the [Lahuta](#) in Northern Albania.

The [Ghegs](#) from North of the [Shkumbini River](#) are known for a distinctive variety of sung epic poetry. Many of these are about [Skanderbeg](#), a legendary 15th century warrior who led the struggle against the [Turks](#), and the "constant Albanian themes of honour, hospitality, treachery and revenge". These traditions are a form of oral history for the Ghegs, and also "preserve and inculcate moral codes and social values", necessary in a society that, until the early 20th century, relied on blood feuds as its "primary means of law enforcement."

Styles of epics also include the *këngë trimash/kreshnikësh* (*Songs of brave men/frontier*

warriors), [ballads](#) and [Vajtimes maje krahi](#) (cries). Major epics include *Mujo and Halil* and *Halil and Hajrije*.

The most traditional variety of epic poetry is the [Albanian Songs of the Frontier Warriors](#). These epic poems are sung, accompanied by a *lahuta*, a one-stringed [fiddle](#). It is rarely performed in modern Albania, but is found in the northern highlands.

Somewhat further south, around [Dibër](#) and [Kërçovë](#) in [Macedonia](#), the *lahuta* is not used, replaced by the [çifteli](#), a two-stringed instrument in which one string is used for the [drone](#) and one for the [melody](#). Though men are the traditional performers (exception made for the [sworn virgins](#)), women have increasingly been taking part in epic balladry.

Along with the *def*, [çifteli](#) and *sharki* are used in a style of dance and pastoral songs. Homemade [wind instruments](#) are traditionally used by [shepherds](#) in northern Albania; these include the *zumarë*, an unusual kind of clarinet. This shepherds' music is "melancholic and contemplative" in tone. The songs called *maje-krahi* are another important part of North Albanian folk song; these were originally used by mountaineers to communicate over wide distances, but are now seen as songs. *Maje-krahi* songs require the full range of the voice and are full of "melismatic nuances and falsetto cries."

### Southern Albania



Folk group from Southern Albania

Southern Albanian music is soft and gentle, and polyphonic in nature with similarities with Greek music on [polyphonic song of Epirus](#). [Vlorë](#) in the southwest has perhaps the most unusual vocal traditions in the area, with four distinct parts (*taker*, *thrower*, *turner* and *drone*) that combine to create a complex and emotionally cathartic melody. Author Kim Burton has described the melodies as "decorated with [falsetto](#) and [vibrato](#), sometimes interrupted by wild and mournful cries." This polyphonic vocal music is full of power that "stems from the tension between the immense emotional weight it carries, rooted in centuries of pride, poverty and oppression, and the strictly formal, almost ritualistic nature of its structure."

Southern Albania is also known for funeral laments with a chorus and one to two soloists with overlapping, mournful voices. There is a prominent folk love song tradition in the south, in which performers use free rhythm and consonant harmonies, elaborated with [ornamentation](#) and [melisma](#).

The [Tosk](#) people are known for ensembles consisting of [violins](#), [clarinets](#), *lahutë* (a kind of [lute](#)) and *def* from [Korçë](#), but the city of [Përmet](#) is the center for southern musical innovation.

Southern instrumental music includes the *sedate kaba*, an ensemble-driven by a clarinet or violin alongside accordions and *llautës*. The *kaba* is an improvised and melancholic style with melodies that Kim Burton describes as "both fresh and ancient", "ornamented with swoops, glides and growls of an almost vocal quality", exemplifying the "combination of passion with restraint that is the hallmark of Albanian culture."



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## Recipes

### Pulë me Oriz (Chicken Pilaf)



#### Ingredients

##### *For the Chicken*

18 [Chicken Drumsticks](#)

1 Tbsp [Paprika](#)

1 Tbsp [Parsley](#)

1/4 Tsp [Salt](#)

1/4 Tsp [Pepper](#)

2 Tbsp [Olive Oil](#)

##### *For the Rice*

1 Diced [Onion](#)

25g [Butter](#)

2 Tbsp [Olive Oil](#)

200g [Rice](#)

2 Pints [Vegetable Stock](#)

#### *Serving 1/6*

This Albanian Chicken Pilaf is known as Pulë me Oriz. The rice is baked with seasoning and in the juices of the chicken which gives the rice a brown coloring. The chicken is moist and falls away from the bones while the rice is light and soft.

In Albania you will find a lot of rice dishes and in almost every case served as a meal rather than a side. Albanian Baked Lamb and Rice with Yogurt (Tavë Kosi) is one of the most traditional and popular dishes or, fruits and spices are added to make the rice into a pudding known as Kabuni.

I find that when using rice in Albanian dishes, **Basmati rice** is the closest – it can be fried, boiled and baked without becoming soggy and starchy. Rice is normally fried for a few minutes in a combination of butter and oil first before seasoning being added and then cooked in meat juices mixed with boiling water.



### Method

#### Pre-cook the Chicken

You will need a large deep sided baking tray (I use a traditional Albanian circle tray but you can use anything that is big enough to fit all the chicken). Sprinkle the remaining oil over the base of the tray.

In a small bowl mix well the paprika, parsley, salt, pepper and half the oil.

Rub the mix over all the chicken, placing each onto baking tray.

Place in the oven on the middle shelf, 180 degrees for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes remove the chicken from the oven and remove all the chicken out of the tray and keep to one side. These will not be fully cooked yet.

#### Preparing the Rice

In a saucepan add the butter, olive oil and onion. Fry for 2-3 minutes until the butter is fully melted and the onion is just starting to brown.

Add the rice and stir continuously for a minute ensuring the rice is mixed with the onion then add the vegetable stock - be careful as this will spit as you add it to the pan. Bring to the boil.

Once the rice has come to the boil empty the saucepan into the baking tray and stir into the oil and juices left by the chicken.

Add all the chicken ensuring there is a bit of space between each one.

#### Cooking

Cover the baking tray with foil and place back in the oven for 40 minutes.

Once removed from the oven, remove the foil and leave to cool slightly before serving. I serve the tray directly to the table.



[myalbanianfood.com](http://myalbanianfood.com)

## Fergesë e Tiranës me Piperka



### Ingredients

- 5 Roasted & Diced [Red Bell Peppers](#)
- 1 Diced [Onions](#)
- 150g [Feta Cheese](#)
- 400g Diced [Tomatoes](#)
- 1 Tsp [Chilli Flakes](#)
- 20g [Flour](#)
- 20g [Butter](#)
- 40g [Greek Yogurt](#)
- 2 Tbsp [Basil](#)
- [Pepper](#)
- [Salt](#)
- [Olive Oil](#)

### About this Recipe

Albanian Fergesë is one of Albania's national dishes and what I love most about it is that it can be widely adapted. I have come to know that there seems to be two versions of the dish – Fergesë e Tiranës me piperka (Made with Peppers) and [Fergesë me mëlçi](#) (made with Liver).

Fergesë e Tiranës me piperka is a vegetarian dish that is more often served as a side where as Fergese me melçi (or [Tavë Dheu](#) as we call it in the north) is a main meal.

This is a great recipe that allows me to get out

my clay dishes and bake the same way you would back in Albania.

This recipe is best cooked in clay dishes, 15cm by 5cm deep. It gives it a natural authentic taste and looks good too!

**Tip:** You can add chicken liver to this Albanian fergesë dish, you will need 400g – 500g, diced and browned. Mix it into the final mixture before separating into bowls and put in the oven.

### Method

#### Prepare the Pepper Mix

Sweat the onion in a small drop of olive oil until softened - about 3 minutes, then remove and set aside.

Simmer the red bell peppers, tomatoes and basil on a medium to high heat for 10 minutes - the mixture should have thickened with little liquid remaining. Mix in the onion and set aside to cool.

#### Prepare the Cheese Mix

In a separate small saucepan melt the butter. Mix in the flour to form a roux. Crumble in the feta while stirring quickly. Once all has melted, you should have a thick texture - add the yogurt.

#### Prepare the Fergesë for cooking

Mix the feta and yogurt mixture into it into the pepper and tomatoes mixture. Season with the Chilli flakes, salt and pepper.

#### Cooking

Split into 2 dishes and cook on 180 degrees for 30 minutes. Leave to cool slightly before serving - best served with crusty bread.

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