



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM SKITI AGIA ANNA TO MEGISTI LAVRA AND SKITI TIMIOU PRODROMOU

Distance: To Megisti Lavra 12.7 km, To Timiou Prodromou 10.4 km

Journey Time: 5 - 6 hours

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Note: The path from *Skiti Agia Anna* to *Megisti Lavra* and *Skiti Timiou Prodromou* is challenging. Pilgrims need to be careful, especially if not physically fit. Much of this route is very isolated, but there are many sources of water.

This magnificent route offers spectacular views and has special importance as it is the main part of the SW route from *Simonopetra* to *Megisti Lavra*. It follows the southern slopes of the *Athos* ‘massif’ and crosses the ‘desert’ (*erimos* in Greek) which is the heart of *Athonite* asceticism, an area that lacks any type of road or track. Although the route lies outside the main settlements of the area, there are plenty of paths leading off it towards them (the most important paths can be found in the [gpx file](#) of the “The Far South” entry in the List of Mount Athos Footpaths).

Note: All distances given (in metres) should be taken as approximate. The numbers shown in the form **1** are Waypoints to be found in associated GPS tracking. The route described is liable to unpredictable change: for example, forestry work, road or track construction and plant growth may alter the route, or its appearance. Signposts may disappear or new ones appear. The Friends of Mount Athos strives to keep this description correct and up to date but cannot take responsibility for its accuracy.

Abbreviations: L = Left; R = Right; KSO = Keep straight on;
FP = Footpath; K = *Kalderimi* (stone-paved FP or track)

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

- 0 **1** Leave *Agia Anna Kyriakon* courtyard entrance and go towards bell tower.
- 20 **2** At bell tower ascend steps and KSO on ascending concrete FP with steps. Continue uphill between the buildings (cells) of the *Skiti*.

Note: Turning L on the FP leads to *Nea Skiti* and *Ag. Pavlou* (signed). Turning R on the FP leads to *Arsanas Agia Anna* (after 1.4Km), *Mikra Agia Anna* (after 1.3Km), *Katounakia* (after 1.9Km), *Karoulia* (approximately after 3Km) and *Agios Vasilios* (after 4Km).

- 260 **3** Pass water tank on R and KSO on ascending FP. The FP continues to ascend, zigzagging (partly *K*) with steps in places and passes through scree.
- 900 **4** Pass stone/concrete shelter (with old disused well and benches inside) on L.
- 150 **5** At fork, ignore minor FP ahead (which leads to *agiasma* – spring/fountain). Bear R, still on main FP which continues to ascend (signed).
- 170 **6** At fork with small bench, ignore minor FP ahead / L that leads to *kellion*. Bear R still on main FP which continues to ascend.
- 220 **7** Pass view point with large wooden cross on R. Spectacular views of *Agia Anna*, the western coast of the *Athonite peninsula* and nearby *Sithonia*. FP then becomes level.
- 650 **8** Ignore FP on R (signed) to ***Katounakia*** and ***Mikra Agia Anna*** (easy to miss).
- Note:** This path is more direct (it does not pass through ***Agios Vasilios***), but is steeper than the one that starts from Stavros a few meters ahead (WP **9** or **10**).
- KSO on main FP.
- 25 **9** Arrive at clearing at ***Stavros*** ('cross' in Greek) **Pass** (altitude 760 m). KSO on main FP, now starting to descend (signed).
- Note:** FPs from ***Stavros*** lead on L (signed) to ***Athos summit*** (altitude 2033m after 5.2Km), and on R (signed) to ***Agios Vasilios***, ***Katounakia*** and ***Mikra Agia Anna***.
- 25 **10** At fork with tap at L, KSO/L, descending on main FP.
- Note (1):** This tap is the last source of fresh water for those aiming to climb ***Athos summit***. There is a well with rain water at ***Panagia*** chapel/refuge at 1510m after 3.2Km (well dries out at the end summer).
- Note (2):** Turning R here on the FP, meets the FP starting at WP **9** in a few meters, which leads to ***Agios Vasilios***, ***Katounakia*** and ***Mikra Agia Anna***.
- 450 **11** Ignore FP on R signed to ***Kerasia*** cells and ***Kleftiko*** (*Kerasia's arsanas*) (after 3.5 Km). KSO still on main FP (signed).

- 250 **12** At fork KSO/L still on main FP (signed).
Note: Bearing R here leads to **Skiti Kafsokalyvia (Skiti Agias Triados)** (after 3.6Km) and **Agios Nilos** cells (after 5.7Km) (signed).
- 750 **13** At junction with wooden fence on L, ignore FP to the R, which leads to **Kerasia** cells. KSO.
- 120 **14** Ignore FP to the R, which leads to **Kerasia** cells (signed). KSO (signed).
- 500 **15** Ignore path coming up from the R, with red wooden cross fixed to a tree at the fork. KSO still on main FP (signed *Lavra*). FP passes through scree after 600m.
- 1200 **16** Water trough on L.
- 350 **17** Arrive at “rest area” with table and benches on L, fenced water tank on R and running water crossing the FP. KSO.
- 700 **18** Arrive at junction with bench. Several trees contain (accurate) direction signs. Ignore FP to R that leads to **Agios Nilos** cells (after 1.7Km) and **Skiti Kafsokalivia (Skiti Agias Triados)** (after 3.8Km). KSO/ L (signed). FP becomes rocky and descends steeply.
- 230 **19** FP crosses stream bed over fine small stone bridge and continues on the other side of the valley.
- 550 **20** Bench on R and a water pipe and tap. The path continues descending steeply.
- 970 **21** Ignore FP coming up from back R from **Agios Petros** cells (after 500m). KSO.
- 230 **22** Ignore FP coming up from back R from **Megali Sara** (‘big scree’ in Greek), **Agios Nilos** cells and **Skiti Kafsokalyvia**. KSO, round to the L. Pass through gate, ruined building on L and wooden cross on R at large rocky outcrop. This is **Chairi Pass** (altitude 500m). Magnificent views of **Skiti Timiou Prodromou**, **Megisti Lavra** and SE corner of **Athonite peninsula**.
- 90 **23** At fork:

For Megisti Lavra Monastery:

Bear L onto upper FP (signed). FP starts to descend.

- 1400 **24** At junction with FP coming from back R, KSO/L (signed).
- Note:** Turning hard R on the FP leads in 50m to a nice fountain with water trough and thence to ***Skiti Timiou Prodromou*** mainly on tracks (signed).
- 380 **25** *K* has collapsed. Follow 'improvised' pathway through undergrowth.
- Rejoin *K* and continue, descending.
- 820 **26** FP descends to concrete road (signed opposite direction). Turn L onto road (ignoring the old route which continues above the road to L).
- 460 **27** Just after concrete ends, turn R onto FP (signed).
- 390 **28** Ignore FP to the L (signed to cave of *Koukouzelis*, the famous chanter) and KSO.
- 90 **29** KSO on FP (*K*) having ***Megisti Lavra Monastery*** in plain view ahead, ignoring track to R before gardens on R (signed opposite direction). Pass gardens, on R (towards the sea), and the ossuary and the police station on L to reach Monastery wall.
- 360 **30** After following Monastery wall, arrive at the entrance of ***Megisti Lavra Monastery***.

For Skiti Timiou Prodromou:

Turn R on FP (signed) which descends steadily zigzagging in places.

- 1300 **31** At fork with FP coming from back L, KSO (signed opposite direction) on FP parallel to but above the main road (a few meters below on L) and wall on the R that supports water pipes and follows an old aqueduct.
- 180 **32** FP emerge at main road with ***Skiti Timiou Prodromou*** in view ahead. KSO.
- 60 **33** Arrive at the entrance of the ***Skiti Timiou Prodromou***.

This description has been produced by ***The Friends of Mount Athos***, a charitable organisation which, among other activities, works with monasteries to keep this, and certain other footpaths on the Holy Mountain, open. Copies of this and similar descriptions are available, free, from the Friends website, www.athosfriends.org and in a number of places on or associated with the Holy Mountain.