



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM ESPHIGMENOY TO KARYES

Distance: 19 km

Journey Time: 7 – 8 hours

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WARNING: *Much of this route is very isolated and without sources of water. In a number of places (indicated below) the route may be difficult to follow.*

For most of the way, this route follows the historic ridge path, the *Way of the Bey*, from which there are fine views down either to the East or to the West, or occasionally to both at once. After a climb up from *Esphigmenou*, the route follows the ridge all the way to the *Vatopedi – Karyes* road. Apart from a few sections along minor road and track, this is all along the historic *Way of the Bey* which remains *kalderimi* in places. The next section of the original route would entail following the main road, so, instead, the final part of the route described drops down to follow the FP from *Vatopedi* to *Karyes*. Less obvious parts of the route have been marked with orange tape and/or red and white waymark arrows.

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)

Transliterations: ΧΕΡΑ = *Chera*; ΔΟΧΕΙΑΡΙΟΥ = *Dochiarion*;
ΚΩΝΣΤΑΜΟΝΙΤΟΥ = *Konstamonitou*;
ΒΑΤΟΠΑΔΙΟΥ = *Vatopedi*; ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = *Karyes*;
ΕΣΦΙΓΜΕΝΟΥ = *Esphigmenou*; ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡΙΟΥ =
Hilandar; ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΥ = *Zographou*;

Description of Route:

Walk And then . . .

46 From *Esphigmenou Monastery* main entrance walk straight on, ignoring tracks to L and R, and cross bridge.

60

45 At T junction with track, KSO uphill on K. K turns R and becomes track.

- 50 **44** Turn L off track onto FP signed *Zographou* and *Karyes*. The FP (partly K) ascends through woods.
- 1000 **43** Stone wall on R of FP.
- 450 **42** K straight ahead is blocked. Follow FP slightly to the R.
- 240 **41** FP coming from ***Hilandar Monastery*** joins from R. KSO now on combined route (signed *Karyes* and *Chera*).
- 350 **40** At top of hill, KSO past large stone monument with marble cross (*Marmarenios Stavros* in Greek) on L and descend hill. (Good views behind monument. 20m to the R, behind woods, there is a stone frontier marker obelisk.)
- 400 **39** FP emerges at track. Turn L along track (signed *Karyes*).
Note: Turning R here leads to ***Zographou*** (signed) after 4.5km by stream bed FP or 7.5km by track. Both routes are very isolated and without sources of water.
- 100 **38** Turn R off the track (signed *Karyes* and *Chera*), down bank and over stream-bed to find FP in 20m (marked with orange tape). Turn L onto FP and go uphill on *K*, emerging into the open from woodland.
- 70 **36** FP emerges at broad track. Turn R, keeping uphill, starting a long ascent on broad track (signed *Vatopedi* and *Chera*). There are a few good views of ***Mount Athos*** and R towards ***Zographou***.
- 1350 **35** Arrive at open area. Pass newly-built fountain with trough on L and old stone water cistern below on R. KSO uphill on narrower track (signed *Vatopedi*).
Caution:- Easy to miss.
The track bends R and becomes *K* in places (may be overgrown).
- 400 **34A** Arrive on the ridge at the top of hill. Turns L (signed *Vatopedi*, *Chera* and *Karyes*) across open plateau. Then, after 20m, turn R onto FP.
Caution: Easy to miss.
The FP then roughly follows the ridge for a long distance, through varying terrain, mainly wooded, sometimes open. There are a few very good views in both directions, especially of the coast and ***Vatopedi Monastery***, and towards ***Mount Athos***.

3300

33 Arrive at **Chera** ('The Hand') – a brownstone monument marking the crossing of the ridge with directions carved on it (*altitude 350m*). FP from **Zographou** to **Vatopedi** joins from R. KSO/L following sign to *Karyes*.

(Estimated time to this point: 3 – 3½ hours)

40

32 Fork R on ridge path (signed *Karyes*). (To L the FP from **Zographou** continues down to **Vatopedi**.)

120

31 Pass large covered well (disused) on L. KSO, climbing gently on FP with good stretches of *K*.

1400

30 Shortly after FP crosses from west to east side of ridge, with views down towards **Vatopedi**, FP to **Konstamonitou** leaves ridge to R through gap in stone wall (signed). KSO on ridge path (signed *Karyes*) which soon crosses back to west side and descends gently before climbing again.

1200

29 FP again crosses ridge to east side and descends gently. Ignore rough path to L and R along crest of ridge.

700

28 T junction of FPs. Ignore FP ahead uphill (signed to **Konstamonitou** and **Dochiarou**). Turn L, downhill (signed *Karyes*), still on ridge path.

200

27 FP emerges at forest road from back R (signed **Dochiarou**). KSO/L on road along ridge on level, passing large stone plinth with cross inlay on R.

90

26 T-junction with track to L which leads to FP down to **Vatopedi** (signed). KSO on forest road which continues initially along crest of ridge, ignoring possible paths to R.

1200

25 Where road bends L, KSO/R along track.

250

24 At fork of tracks, KSO/L. Cell, of **Agios Dimitrios**, becomes visible ahead.

Note: The track to the R leads to a fountain with running water to the R of the building.

40

23 When level with steps of cell (to R), turn sharp L, uphill, on faint track which soon bends R and levels out, with woods uphill to L. Track becomes FP which crosses open area.

Caution: *The route here is likely to be seasonally very overgrown and may not be obvious – watch out for red and white waymarks and orange marker tape.*

- 250 **22** Bear L into trees on indistinct but marked path (watch out for red and white waymarks and orange tape). Route passes distinctive 8-trunked tree after which it becomes obvious historic FP which climbs gently through woods with hill to L.
- 400 **21** FP emerges from woods onto open hillside with view of sea to R. Bear L on narrow level path following contour of the hill across level scrubby area.
- Caution: FP may be overgrown and indistinct. Watch for orange tape.**
- 60 **20** FP re-enters woods and begins to descend gently, becoming less distinct (follow waymarks and orange tape). Pass below and to R of massive ancient chestnut tree and then bear R.
- Note:** Hollow interior of tree contains a small makeshift chapel.
- 200 **19** Cross stream (and wire rope if across path) with fountain (dry) to L on further side. FP now begins to climb again. Ignore any possible paths or tracks down to R.
- 300 **18** FP reaches open area with stone pillar above to L. **Do not** take track uphill to L. **KSO on level FP** which may be seasonally overgrown. FP follows contour of hill. Telecommunications mast may be visible on summit ahead. FP then bears R, below hill. Track from mast descending hill soon runs parallel to, and to L of, FP.
- 400 **17** FP emerges onto this track just before track joins main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road. Turn R onto track and then R onto main road (towards **Karyes**).
- 100 **15** Arrive at major crossroads with large wooden cross (**Stavros Makrygenous**). Turn L, downhill, on minor road signed to *Karyes*, *Pantokrator* and the *Kellion of Agios Georgios Phaneromenos*.
- 900 **14** After sharp bends first to R and then to L, FP from *Vatopedi* to **Karyes** crosses road. Turn R along FP, signed *Karyes*, on level. Fine view ahead to **Skete of St Andrew**, **Karyes** and **Mt Athos** briefly appears.
- 730 **13A** At fork, ignore track to L. KSO on *K*.
- 180 **13** Emerge at road on outside of bend, with track back to R. KSO along road, gently uphill.

- 200 **12** At 3-way junction where main road bends R, KSO/L (signed *Karyes*).
- 400 **11** At T-junction, turn R on track. Track shows evidence of *K*.
- 250 **10** Ignore track up R (signed *I K Marouda*). KSO, signed *Karyes*.
- 100 **9** Fork L off track, downhill onto FP (signed *Karyes*).
Alternatively, or if missed, continue a further 100m to T junction with large ruined building on R, and turn hard L onto concrete track downhill (signed). FP joins track from L in 30m (see next entry).
- 100 **8** FP emerges at track. Turn L onto track, downhill.
- 30 **7** At junction with large metal cross (on L), turn R onto track signed *Karyes*.
- 180 **6** Ignore broad concrete track L (to ***Kellion Pateritsa***). KSO/R.
- 280 **5** Ignore gated track back L to *kellion*. KSO on main track.
- 400 **4** Cross *Karyes-Daphni* road. KSO, now on *K*, signed *Karyes*.
- 300 **3** Ignore FP (*K*) up R.
- 110 **1** Arrive at ***Karyes*** square where the buses arrive.

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.