



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM KONSTAMONITOU TO VATOPEDI

Distance: 7.6 km Journey Time: 3 – 4 hours

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Warning: *The route from Konstamonitou to the ridge has been severely damaged by winter rains and in one place has collapsed. The path is difficult and requires great care in places (see below).*

This attractive journey is a more southerly alternative to the route via *Chera*, joining the route from *Dochiarion* at the ridge. The route mostly follows historic *kalderimi* (stone-paved paths or tracks) and involves a stiff climb from *Konstamonitou* monastery at around 200m to the ridge at over 500m altitude followed by a similar descent to *Vatopedi* monastery at near sea level. Much of the route is through forest but there are some excellent views on both sides of the ridge. Where necessary or helpful, the route is marked with orange tape and/or waymark arrows.

Note: All distances given (in metres) should be taken as approximate. 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 Leave the gate of ***Konstamonitou Monastery*** and turn L, heading for the gap between the single story building to L and large storehouse to R, to pick up FP (K) which begins to zig-zag uphill (signed *Karyes*).
- 260 FP levels and turns R to emerge at small meadow. Continue across meadow and up road straight ahead.
- 110 Where road bends R, turn L onto overgrown track, uphill, signed *Karyes*.
- 140 As track bears L, KSO/R on narrow FP uphill, signed *Karyes*.
- 350 Path emerges at track. Turn L along track, uphill.

Caution: After about 100m a major landslide has carried the track away. Cross uphill of the landslide with great care.

- 170 Track, now overgrown, levels out. Fork R, uphill on remains of severely water-damaged and overgrown former track (marked with orange tape).
- Caution: Junction may be hard to spot. Take great care.**
- 430 Rocky section of track ends; telecommunications mast on skyline ahead. Turn R up FP into wood (signed *Karyes*) on FP which has been severely damaged by storm water.
- Caution: May be hard to spot. Take great care.**
- 440 FP emerges at road on bend, with stone boundary marker beside road to R. KSO/L uphill along road, signed *Karyes*. (*Altitude 520m*)
- 75 Road, now concrete, makes sharp bend L. KSO/R on FP (signed *Karyes* and *Vatopedi*) through narrow gully. FP traverses hill (on L) soon descending.
- Caution: Trees have fallen across FP. Take care.**
- 560 Reach junction with ridge FP. Turn R, downhill (signed *Karyes*). (Ridge FP is straight on/L, signed *Esphigmenou*, *Hilandar* and *Zographou*.)
- 200 FP ends at road ascending from back R. KSO on road on level, passing large stone plinth with cross inlay on R. (This *stavros*, or cross, marks a crossing point of the ridge.)
- 90 Turn L (signed) along forest track which may be overgrown. Track initially bears R, uphill, before descending.
- 180 Bear R off track onto FP. FP continues downhill, often through trees and may be indistinct or seasonally overgrown in places. Watch out for waymark arrows and orange tape. Views of ***Vatopedi*** and its bay appear.
- 280 At T junction with another FP, turn L, on level (R may be blocked).
- 60 FP emerges at level road. Cross road to follow track, possibly overgrown, which descends opposite (signed *Vatopedi*). Ignore grassy track slightly to the R. Track crosses scrubland before becoming FP (*K*), which soon descends more steeply into valley. Ignore possible FPs joining from R.
- 700 At valley bottom, cross stream bed below ancient tree and KSO on FP, now level.
- 50 KSO on FP, signed *Vatopedi (monopati)*, which traverses hillside. Ignore descent on R down bank to forest road below.
- Note:** *monopati* means footpath in Greek.
- 450 FP crosses open grassy area (possibly overgrown track). KSO.

- 300 FP bears R and descends to forest road. Cross road and KSO on FP (signed *Vatopedi*), initially across open area. Continue downhill past remains of wooden structure on R. Remains of *K* evident in places.
- 1050 Reach and cross road. KSO, still downhill, on FP which contains periodic stretches of *K*. On occasions, the waymarked route leaves *K* in one place and joins *K* again later on.
- 550 FP levels out at valley bottom (signed *Vatopedi* and reverse direction *Dochiariou*). Bear slightly R and cross stream. Then turn L and follow R edge of stream bed.
- 80 Bear R out of stream bed to emerge onto road at the outside of a sharp bend in the road. Bear L along road, downhill (signed *Vatopedi*).
- 30 Cross stream at ford.
- 30 Bear R at fork onto lower road (signed *Vatopedi*).
- 25 Cross stream at ford and about 15m later bear R at fork onto lower road.
- 200 Cross stream. Then pass orchard on R.
- 240 After end of orchard, KSO/R at fork, uphill with stone wall on R. ***Vatopedi Monastery*** soon visible ahead. Road becomes *K*.
- 350 Track joins from L and *K* road joins from R just before covered well on R. KSO.
- 100 Arrive at the gate of ***Vatopedi Monastery***.

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.