



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM SIMONOPETRA TO KARYES AND KOUTLOUMOUSIOU

Distance: 11.8 km Journey Time: 4 – 4½ hours

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After a short distance on the main road out of *Simonopetra*, the first part of this route follows a *kalderimi* path that climbs steeply up as far as the *Kellion of Agios Dimitrios* from which a fairly lengthy ascent along track leads to the ridge. The route then follows the historic *Way of the Bey (Beylidikos Dromos)* that once ran along the the spine of the Athonite Peninsula. Now this section of the historic route is a broad road, steeper parts of which are concrete, but it offers occasional good views to *Karyes* and across the peninsula. The last part follows the historic *kalderimi* from *Daphni* to *Karyes* which descends steeply into *Karyes* from close to *Stavros* (where this route crosses the ridge).

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: *ΚΑΡΥΕΣ* = *Karyes*; *ΚΟΥΤΛΟΥΜΟΥΣΙΟΥ* = *Koutloumousiou*;
ΔΑΦΝΗ = *Daphni*; *ΣΙΜΩΝΟΣ ΠΕΤΡΑΣ* = *Simonopetra*
ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΥ = *Philotheou*; *ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ* = *Grigoriou*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

26 Leave gate of *Simonopetra Monastery* and turn L along main road (stone-paved at the beginning) towards *Daphni*. Pass between the buildings of the monastery, over a bridge, kiosk with excellent view of *Simonopetra* on L and *Osios Simon* cave (with small chapel) on R.

750

25 At fork with minor track with construction with semi-circular stone platform on R, fork R off road onto ascending minor track.

- 90 **24** Opposite small telecommunications installation on L, take ascending FP (*K*) on R which climbs hillside, zigzagging for a long stretch.
- 1400 **23** FP crosses stream bed with small lake. KSO on FP (partly *K*) which continues zigzag climb.
- 520 **22** FP emerges onto track. KSO/L now on track.
- 200 **21** 50m after hairpin bend, turn hard L off track onto ascending FP. FP soon runs parallel to the fence of *Kellion of Agios Dimitrios* gardens.
- 360 **20** Emerge onto track (signed *Simonopetra* in opposite direction) and turn R along track with fence of *Kellion* on L.
- 50 **19** At junction, just after the corner of the *Kellion* fence, turn hard L onto ascending track, still with *Kellion* fence on L.
- 1000 **18** Track joins from back L. KSO.
- 30 **17** Arrive at major junction of many tracks. KSO/L on ascending track, signed *Philotheou* and *Grigoriou* (not straight on/R on level - descending).
- 400 **16** Track joins from R (signed *Grigoriou*). KSO (signed *Karyes*).
- 820 **15** 40m after crossing metal barrier, arrive at major junction. Ignore road to R which goes to ***Philotheou*** (signed). KSO (signed *Karyes*) on road which follows the route of the historic *Way of the Bey*.
- 950 **14** Ignore fork with minor track to R. KSO on road, downhill.
- 420 **13** Pass building on L. KSO still on ridge road, downhill.
- 520 **12** Cross ford, still on ridge road, downhill.
- 520 **11** Arrive at junction where ridge road meets other forest tracks. KSO on ridge road, initially ascending. Road then starts to descend gently for a long distance through a forest of chestnut trees, offering occasional good views in both directions.

- 1950 **9** 30m before ridge road reaches **Stavros** (cross, marking a crossing-point of the ridge) **10** and joins main Karyes - Daphni road, track joins from back R. Turn hard R off ridge road onto track, signed *Koutloumousiou*.
- 70 **8** Turn hard L off track onto FP heading down.
- 350 **7** FP joins track descending from L. KSO/R down track. Track surface soon begins to contain stretches of *K*. Ignore lesser track joining from R.
- 900 **5** Soon after kellation on R, where track turns sharp R, bear L onto FP (*K*).
- 300 **2** Arrive at T-junction opposite *Karyes* bakery.

For *Koutloumousiou Monastery*

- Turn R along *K*.
- 180 **3** Pass through gate into the grounds of *Koutloumousiou Monastery*.
- 300 **4** Arrive at entrance to *Koutloumousiou Monastery*, on R.

For *Karyes*

- Turn L along *K*, with *Protaton* ahead and, keeping it on L, continue along *Karyes* main street, past bar and fountain.
- 200 **1** Arrive at square in *Karyes* 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.