



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN FROM VATOPEDI TO DOCHIARIOU

Distance: 9.7 Km Journey Time: 3½ – 4 hours

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WARNING: *As of September 2017 the final part of the route – the descent from the road above Dochiariou **9** to the monastery – was partially very overgrown. Although not blocked, anyone walking this route should be very careful and expect to face many difficult stretches. Hence it is recommended only for experienced pilgrims.*

*It is possible to avoid the difficult stretches by continuing along the road from WP **9** to the monastery, but that route is 2.5km longer and is less attractive.*

Much of this attractive journey follows historic *kalderimi* (stone-paved paths or tracks), starting with a stiff climb from *Vatopedi Monastery* near sea level to the ridge at over 450m altitude. There follows a fairly lengthy descent along roads until another historic path leads steeply down, through woods and then terracing, to *Dochiariou Monastery* also at sea level. There are some excellent views on both sides of the ridge. Less obvious parts of the route have been marked with orange tape and/or 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: ΒΑΤΟΠΑΙΔΙΟΥ = Vatopedi; ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = Karyes;
ΔΟΧΕΙΑΡΙΟΥ = Dochiariou; ΚΩΝΣΤΑΜΟΝΙΤΟΥ =
Konstamonitou; ΕΣΦΙΓΜΕΝΟΥ = Esphigmenou;
ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡΙΟΥ = Hilandar; ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΥ = Zographou

Description of Route:

| <u>Walk (m)</u> | <u>And then . . .</u> |
|-----------------|---|
| 0 | 30 Leave gate of <i>Vatopedi Monastery</i> and turn L along paved road, with monastery on L. |
| 100 | 29 After covered well on L, take R fork downhill on road, initially K. Ignore track that forks to R after 30m. |

- 350 **28** Another road joins from back R. KSO, now with orchard on L.
- 220 **27A** After orchard ends, ignore FP to L (signed to *Skete of Agios Dimitrios*). 20m later, cross stream. KSO on road.
- 200 **26** Join larger road from back R. 30m later cross stream at ford.
- 90 **24** Where road makes sharp bend to the left, uphill, bear R along FP signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiarou* which descends and bears L into stream-bed.
- 80 **23** Cross stream and bear R uphill on FP, passing another sign to *Dochiarou*. FP contains periodic stretches of *K*. On occasions, the waymarked route leaves *K* in one place and joins *K* again later on.
- 550 **22** Reach and cross road. KSO on FP (*K*), uphill.
- 1050 **21** Reach and cross road. FP continues ahead, bearing L to follow the contour of the hill (signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiarou*).
- 200 **20** FP crosses open grassy area (possibly overgrown track). KSO.
- 500 **18** FP crosses stream-bed below ancient tree and starts to zig-zag up side of valley on *K*. Keep uphill, ignoring possible FPs to L.
- 750 **17** FP crosses flatter, more open scrubby/grassy area before reaching road. KSO, uphill on *K* on far side of road (signed).
- 60 **16** At waymarked junction of FPs, fork R onto FP uphill. (Telecommunications mast may be visible on hilltop ahead.)
Caution: This turning may be difficult to spot although the way straight ahead may be overgrown or barred.
 FP continues to climb, often through trees, and may be seasonally overgrown in places. Watch out for waymark arrows and orange tape.
- 280 **15** FP becomes overgrown track. Continue along track.
- 180 **14** Track reaches ridge road at T junction. Turn R along road on level (telecommunications mast on hill ahead), soon passing large stone plinth with cross inlay (a *stavros*, that is a cross, marking a crossing point of the ridge) on L.

- 90 **13** Bear L on road (signed *Dochiarion*), now downhill. Ignore ridge FP which continues ahead (signed *Konstamonitou*, *Esphigmenou* and *Hilandar*).
- 900 **12** Track joins the road from L. KSO on road.
- 250 **11** Road joins from R. Bear L along road (signed *Dochiarion*).
- 120 **10** Main road joins from back L (signed L to *Karyes*). Bear R (signed *Konstamonitou*, *Zographou* and *Hilandar*), now on main road.
- The road soon starts a long descent towards the sea with fine views across the valley to the L towards **Mount Athos**.
- Pass yellow iron cross on R.
- 1250 **9** Shortly before road bends R round headland, with sea ahead, turn hard L off road onto small track (signed *Dochiarion*), which descends roughly along the crest of a ridge.
- Caution: May be difficult to spot. Route may be very overgrown. Please read the Warning on the front page of this path description.**
- 100 **8** Turn R off track onto FP (signed *Dochiarion*).
- Caution: May be difficult to spot.**
- 200 **7** FP emerges at grassy track. KSO, descending bank on further side to pick up continuation of FP which zig-zags down into valley (marked with orange tape).
- 930 **6** FP crosses stream-bed in valley bottom. KSO now on level.
- 75 **5** FP emerges at rough track just before a small concrete hut (marked with orange tape; reverse direction signed *Karyes* and *Vatopedi*). Turn L to follow track, downhill past hut, with valley to L.
- 750 **4** Pass large concrete reservoir, on R. At reservoir, bear L and then R to pick up FP (signed *Dochiarion*) which continues to descend and soon begins to zig-zag past terraces with views of ***Dochiarion*** below.
- Note:** Continuation of FP uphill to L is now impassable
- 370 **3** At junction by buildings, turn hard R on *K* towards monastery, ignoring tracks back to L.
- 150 **1** Arrive at gate of ***Dochiarion 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.