



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN FROM VATOPEDI TO KONSTAMONITOU

Distance: 7.6 km Journey Time: 3 – 4 hours

© The Friends of Mount Athos, 2007 – 2015. All rights reserved. – Version 1.4

Warning: *The route from the ridge to Konstamonitou 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*, initially following the route to *Dochiarion*. The route mostly follows historic *kalderimi* (stone-paved paths or tracks) and involves a stiff climb from *Vatopedi Monastery* at near sea level to the ridge at over 500m altitude followed by a similar descent to *Konstamonitou Monastery* at around 200m. 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 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 gate of ***Vatopedi Monastery*** and turn L along paved road, with monastery on L.
- 100 After covered well on L, take R fork downhill on road, initially *K*. Ignore track that forks to R after 30m.
- 350 Another road joins from back R. KSO, now with orchard on L.
- 220 After orchard ends, ignore FP to L (signed to *Skete of Agios Dimitrios*). 20m later, cross stream. KSO on road.
- 180 Join larger road from back R. 30m later cross stream at ford.
- 60 Where road makes sharp bend to the left, uphill, bear R along FP signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiarion* which descends and bears L into stream-bed.

- 80 Cross stream and bear R uphill on FP, passing another sign to *Dochiarion*. FP contains periodic stretches of *K*. On occasions, the waymarked route leaves *K* in one place and joins *K* again later on.
- 550 Reach and cross road. KSO on FP (*K*), uphill.
- 1050 Shortly after passing remains of wooden structure on R, reach and cross road. FP continues ahead, bearing L to follow the contour of the hill (signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiarion*).
- 300 FP crosses open grassy area (possibly overgrown track). KSO.
- 500 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 FP crosses flatter, more open scrubby/grassy area before reaching road. KSO, uphill on *K* on far side of road (signed).
- 60 At waymarked junction, fork R off this FP, onto less distinct 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 barred.

FP continues to climb, often through trees, and may be seasonally overgrown in places. Watch out for waymark arrows and orange tape.

- 280 FP joins overgrown track. Bear L along track.
- 180 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 Where road bears L, downhill (signed *Dochiarion*), KSO/R on ridge FP ahead, signed *Konstamonitou*, *Esphigmenou* and *Hilandar*.
- 200 At T junction, bear L, signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiarion*. (To R, signed *Esphigmenou*, *Hilandar* and *Zographou*, is continuation of ridge FP.) FP climbs steadily before levelling out, traversing hill (on R).

Caution: Trees have fallen across FP. Take care.

- 560 Emerge at road at outside of concreted sharp bend. KSO/L downhill on road, signed *Konstamonitou* (uphill leads to telecommunications mast.)

- 75 Where road bends L, before it passes stone marker on R, KSO/R signed *Konstamonitou*, on rocky FP downhill (*Altitude 520m*).
Caution: FP has been severely damaged by storm water. Difficult descent – take great care.
- 440 FP descends to remains of severely water-damaged and overgrown former track. Turn L onto track, downhill, with hillside on L.
Caution: Difficult descent – take great care.
- 430 Track joins another overgrown track from back R. Turn L along track, marked with orange tape, downhill. Monastery soon comes into view below in valley to R.
Caution: After a few metres, a major landslide has carried the track away. Cross uphill of the landslide with great care.
- 170 Turn hard R onto FP signed *Konstamonitou*, downhill.
- 350 FP joins overgrown track at bend. KSO/L downhill along track (*Karyes* signed back up FP).
Note: This junction is not obvious and may not be noticed.
- 140 Track joins road at outside of hairpin bend. Turn R down road (*Karyes* signed back up track).
- 110 Road reaches open area and bends L. KSO across open area to pick up FP which bears L, becomes *K* and zig-zags downhill. Monastery soon visible just below.
- 160 FP flattens out and passes to R of building towards Monastery ahead.
- 100 Arrive at gate of ***Konstamonitou 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.