

FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM ZOGRAPHOU TO VATOPEDI VIA CHERA



Distance: 6.6 km Journey Time: 2½ hours

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This walk goes deep into the heart of the Athos woods, far from any sign of human habitation. After leaving *Zographou* along a track, there is a sharp ascent by *kalderimi*, and then a more gentle ascent by forest tracks, to *Chera*. The route then descends by narrow paths through woods, with glimpses of *Vatopedi Monastery*.

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: ΒΑΤΟΠΑΔΙΟΥ = *Vatopedi*; ΖΩΓΡΑΦΟΥ = *Zographou*;
ΧΕΡΑ = *Chera*; ΧΙΛΑΝΔΑΡΙΟΥ = *Hilandar*;
ΕΣΦΙΓΜΕΝΟΥ = *Esphigmenou*; ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = *Karyes*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

- 17** From the entrance of ***Zographou Monastery***, walk diagonally up to the R initially on broad *K*, as directed to *Vatopedi* by large signpost. Ignore lesser tracks to L and R.
- 400 **16** Where track bends sharply R take FP ahead/L on outside of bend (signed). This soon climbs steeply.
- 750 **15** FP emerges onto forest track. Turn L along track (signed), initially uphill but becomes level.
- 400 **14** Ignore track descending to L. KSO (signed).
- 40 **13** At fork, take track to L, uphill (signed).
- 550 **12** Turn R off track over bank onto narrow FP (signed) through woods, now level.

- 250 **11** Path arrives at **Chera** ('The Hand') – a brownstone monument marking the crossing of the ridge with directions carved on it (*Altitude 350m*).
- (Approximate time to this point: 50 minutes.)*
- Follow ridge path straight on/R, signed *Vatopedi* and *Karyes*.
- Note:** Turning L onto the ridge path here leads to *Hilandar* and *Esphigmenou*.
- 40 **10** Fork L, signed *Vatopedi*. (R is ridge path towards *Karyes*.) FP soon begins to descend, gently at first, but later steeply, with remains of *K*, very rough in places. Follow signs or waymarks downhill, ignoring any smaller paths to L or R.
- 2000 **9** Cross forest road. KSO on FP ahead (signed *Vatopedi*). Ignore track which appears below R and KSO on FP.
- 200 **8** Cross forest road. KSO on FP ahead (signed), to R of water tank.
- 100 **7** Pass fountain on R. FP bears L, crossing watercourse, initially slightly uphill.
- 700 **6** Reach open area with olive grove – *Vatopedi* visible ahead. Bear L through olive grove on descending FP which joins and then leaves local track. Keep man-made reservoir on R.
- 500 **5** At bottom of hill, FP ends at junction of tracks. Turn R onto track and bear immediately L (signed), ignoring tracks joining from R.
- 230 **4** Track reaches the sea and turns R along shore. Cross stream using footbridge if necessary.
- 250 **2** Turn R (signed) up steep broad paved path between buildings. (Straight on leads to *Vatopedi Arsanas*.)
- 150 **1** Arrive at *Vatopedi Monastery* entrance.

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.