



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM DOCHIARIOU TO VATOPEDI

Distance: 9.7 Km

Journey Time: 3 ½ – 4 hours

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Much of this attractive journey follows historic *kalderimi* (stone-paved paths or tracks), starting with a stiff climb from *Dochiariou Monastery* at sea level. There follows fairly lengthy section along roads the rest of the way to the ridge at over 500m altitude, after which another similar *kalderimi* path descends to *Vatopedi Monastery* near sea level. There are some excellent views on both sides of the ridge. The route from the ridge down to *Vatopedi* was only reopened in May 2009. 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 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 *Dochiariou Monastery* and turn L on K.
- 70 Fork L away from sea, uphill on K with fountain and wall on L.
- 80 At junction at top of rise, turn hard L onto FP (K) which zig-zags up past terraces.
- 340 FP emerges onto rough track with concrete reservoir to L. FP continuation ahead is blocked. Turn L to follow track which climbs hillside with valley to R. (FP is marked with orange tape and reverse direction signed *Dochiariou*.)
- 750 Track passes small concrete hut and bears L, continuing uphill. Turn R off track onto level FP just after hut (signed *Karyes* and *Vatopedi*).
- 75 FP crosses stream-bed at valley bottom and begins to climb, soon zig-zagging up hillside.
- 930 FP emerges at track near top of ridge. Cross track and KSO on FP which continues ahead (marked with orange tape).

- 200 FP emerges onto track. Turn L along the track. (FP is marked with orange tape and with a red and white waymark arrow in the reverse direction.)
- 100 At T junction with road, turn R along the road, uphill. (Track is marked with a red and white waymark arrow in the reverse direction.)
- Fine views of **Mount Athos** across valley to R.
- Pass yellow iron cross on L.
- 1250 At fork in road at top of rise, bear L, uphill.
- Note:** The main road, signed *Karyes*, continues straight on/R, soon downhill. The reverse direction is signed *Konstamonitou*, *Zographou* and *Hilandar*.
- 120 At fork in road, bear R on level/downhill (signed *Vatopedi*).
- 250 Track joins the road from R. KSO uphill on road.
- 900 Reach top of ridge where FP joins the road from L. (This is the ridge path and is signed to *Konstamonitou*, *Esphigmenou* and *Hilandar*.) KSO on road, now level and signed *Karyes*, passing large stone plinth with cross inlay on R. (This *stavros* marks a crossing point of the ridge.)
- 90 Turn L (signed) along forest track which initially bears R, uphill before descending. Views of **Vatopedi** and its bay appear. Ignore side tracks to L or R.
- 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.
- Note:** Logging in this area has resulted in the loss of sections of the original FP.
- 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 descending 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 FP blocked ahead. Turn R to descend bank to forest road some 20m below.
- 20 Turn L along road (signed *Vatopedi*) to traverse hillside (on L).
- 700 At open area, where road bends L round headland, turn hard R (signed *Vatopedi*) onto FP which passes to R of wooden structure, downhill. Remains of *K* evident in places.

- 1050 Reach and cross road. KSO on FP (*K*) still downhill. Due to forestry, the route here deviates from the *K* for short waymarked stretches.
- 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*).
- 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 *K* road joins from R just before covered well on R. KSO.
- 100 Arrive at the gate of ***Vatopedi Monastery***.
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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.