



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM ESPHIGMENOU TO KARYES

Distance: 20 km

Journey Time: 7 – 8 hours

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WARNING: *This route is very isolated and without sources of water.*

For most of the way, this route follows the historic ridge path, the *Way of the Bey*, from which there are fine views down either to the East or to the West, or occasionally to both at once. After a climb up from *Esphigmenou*, the route follows the ridge all the way to the *Vatopedi – Karyes* road. Apart from a few short sections along minor road and track, this is all along the historic *Way of the Bey* which remains *kalderimi* in places. The next section of the original route would entail following the main road, so, instead, the final part of the route described drops down to follow the FP from *Vatopedi* to *Karyes*. Less obvious parts of the route have been marked with orange tape and/or red and white 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 And then . . .

- 0 From ***Esphigmenou Monastery*** main entrance walk straight on, ignoring tracks to L and R, and cross bridge.
- 60 At T junction with track, KSO on K. K turns R and becomes track.
- 50 Turn L off track onto FP signed *Zographou* and *Karyes*. The FP (partly K) ascends through woods.
- 1000 Stone wall on R of FP.
- 600 K straight ahead is blocked. Follow FP slightly to the R.
- 240 FP coming from ***Hilandar Monastery*** joins from R. KSO now

on combined route.

- 350 At top of hill, KSO past large stone monument with marble cross (*Marmarenios Stavros* in Greek) on L and descend hill (good views behind monument).
- 400 FP emerges at road. Turn L along road.
Note: Turning R here leads to **Zographou** (signed) in 7.5km. This route is very isolated and without sources of water.
- 100 Turn R off the road, down bank and over stream-bed to find FP in 20m (marked with orange tape). Turn L onto FP and go uphill on *K*, emerging into the open from woodland.
- 70 At T junction turn R, keeping uphill on *K* that becomes a forest track. (Views to R towards **Zographou**.)
- 750 On arriving at a small open plateau bear L downhill, still on track. (Good views of **Mount Athos**).
- 600 Pass to R of old stone water cistern. KSO on track.
- 400 Arrive on the ridge at the top of hill. Stay on track which turns L. Then turn R off track onto FP after 20m.
- The FP then roughly follows the ridge for a long distance, through varying terrain, mainly wooded, sometimes open. There are a few very good views in both directions, especially of the coast and **Vatopedi Monastery**, and towards **Mount Athos**.
- 3200 Arrive at **Chera** ('The Hand') – a brownstone monument with directions (*altitude 350m*) marking the crossing of the ridge. FP from **Zographou** to **Vatopedi** joins from R. KSO/L following sign to *Karyes*.

(Estimated time to this point: 4 – 5 hours)

- 40 Fork R on ridge path (signed *Karyes*). (To L the FP from **Zographou** continues down to **Vatopedi**.)
- 120 Pass large covered well (disused) on L. KSO, climbing gently on FP with good stretches of *K*.
- 1400 Shortly after FP crosses from west to east side of ridge, with views down towards **Vatopedi**, FP to **Konstamonitou** leaves ridge to R through gap in stone wall (signed). KSO on ridge path (signed *Karyes*) which soon crosses back to west side and descends gently before climbing again.
- 1050 FP again crosses ridge to east side and descends gently. Ignore rough path to L and R along crest of ridge.
- 700 T junction of FPs. Ignore FP ahead uphill (signed to **Konstamonitou** and **Dochiarou**). Turn L, downhill (signed

Karyes), still on ridge path.

- 200 FP emerges at forest road from back R. KSO/L on road along ridge on level, passing large stone plinth with cross inlay on R.
- 90 T-junction with track to L which leads to FP down to **Vatopedi** (signed). KSO on forest road which continues initially along crest of ridge, ignoring possible paths to R.
- 1200 Where road bends L, KSO/R (signed *Karyes*, back to *Konstamonitou* and *Zographou*).
- 250 At fork of tracks with cell visible ahead, KSO/L.
- 40 When abreast of cell (to R), turn L, uphill, on faint track which soon bends R and levels out, with woods uphill to L. Track becomes FP which crosses open area.
- Caution: Likely to be seasonally overgrown – watch out for red and white waymarks and orange marker tape.**
- 100 Bear L into trees on indistinct but marked path (watch out for red and white waymarks and orange tape). Route passes distinctive 8-trunked tree after which it becomes obvious historic FP which climbs gently through woods with hill to L.
- 400 FP emerges from woods onto open hillside with view of sea to R. Bear L on level path following contour of the hill across level scrubby area.
- 100 FP re-enters woods and begins to descend gently, becoming less distinct (follow waymarks and orange ribbon). Pass below and to R of massive chestnut tree.
- 300 Cross stream with fountain to L on further side. FP now begins to climb again. Ignore any possible paths or tracks down to R
- 300 FP emerges from woods with stone pillar on L. **Do not** take track uphill to L. **KSO on level FP** which may be seasonally overgrown. FP follows contour of hill, with telecommunications mast visible on summit ahead. FP then bears R, below hill. Track descending hill soon runs parallel to, and to L of, FP.
- 400 FP emerges onto this track just before track joins main *Vatopedi – Karyes* road. Turn R onto track and then R onto main road (towards *Karyes*).
- 140 Arrive at major crossroads with large wooden cross (**Stavros Makrygenous**). Turn L, downhill, on minor road signed to *Pantokrator* and the *Kellion of Agios Georgios Phaneromenos*.
- 900 After sharp bends first to R and then to L, FP from **Vatopedi** to **Karyes** crosses road. Turn R along FP, signed *Karyes*, on level. Fine view ahead to **Skete of St Andrew, Karyes** and **Mt**

Athos briefly appears.

- 1000 Emerge at road on outside of bend, with track back to R. KSO along road, gently uphill.
- 200 At 3-way junction where main road bends R, KSO/L (signed *Karyes*).
- 400 At T-junction, turn R on track. Track shows evidence of *K*.
- 250 Ignore track up R (signed *I K Marouda*) and KSO.
- 100 Fork L off track, downhill onto FP.
Alternatively, or if missed, continue a further 100m to T junction with large ruined building on R, and turn hard L onto concrete track downhill (signed). FP joins track from L in 30m (see next entry).
- 100 FP emerges at track. Turn L onto track, downhill.
- 30 At junction with large metal cross (on L), turn R onto track signed *Karyes*.
- 150 Ignore track L (to *Kellion Pateritsa*).
- 300 Ignore gated track back L to *kellion*. KSO on main track.
- 400 Cross *Karyes-Daphni* road. KSO, now on *K*, signed *Karyes*.
- 300 Ignore FP (*K*) up R.
- 110 Arrive at **Karyes** square 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.