



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM ESPHIGMENOU TO VATOPEDI

Distance: 10 km

Journey Time: 3 – 3 ½ hours

© The Friends of Mount Athos, 2007 – 2012. All rights reserved. – Version 1.1

This attractive journey, with fine views and scenery, divides into three roughly equal sections. For the first section, the traditional path has been superseded by a forest road which climbs steadily up a valley and along a ridge. The remainder of the route is almost entirely along historic *kalderimi* or stone paved paths. The second section leaves the road near the top, crosses into the next valley and descends to the sea. The final part of the route follows the coast to the *Monastery of Vatopedi*.

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 takes no 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 Turn L out of **Esphigmenou Monastery** gate and L again round monastery wall.
- 100 Take main track R opposite monastery wall and follow side of cultivated valley.
- 300 At buildings (on R), take **first** track to L, uphill (signed).
- 600 Fork R where track turns L (signed).
- 150 KSO on track through gate, ignoring track to L.
- 200 Bear L on track; ignore track straight on/R.
- 700 Bear R on main track at fork (signed *Vatopedi* 30m after fork) and continue along ridge with sea below on L.
- 550 At crossroads go R (signed).

- 350 Cross fence across track which continues along R side of ridge (signed *Vatopedi*).
- 400 Turn diagonally L off track onto FP (signed *Vatopedi*).
(Approx time to this point: 1 hr 15 mins.)
- 400 Pass **Esphigmenou – Vatopedi** boundary stone on R. Continue on; at open clearing, FP drops L (signed).
- 1600 Cross forest track. KSO along FP. Lower down FP crosses several rivers.
- 1200 Turn L onto track (ignoring original FP straight on – now impassable) with river-bed on L.
- 250 Track reaches sea and bears R, now winding along cliff.
- 400 Where track bears R inland, KSO/L on path across beach and river-bed.
- 100 At foot of next headland, pick up K climbing diagonally R (signed back to *Esphigmenou*).
- 200 After zigzag bends upwards FP levels out and continues with sea below on L. (Some 400m later, there is a stone fountain set back to R, now obscured by bushes.)
Note: As of May 2012 it was necessary to climb over a large pile of earth deposited across this stretch of the FP.
- 1100 Pass stone fountain (dry) on R, FP turns 90° L.
- 650 Cross track; olive grove to R; KSO on FP; passing chapel above on L.
- 100 Reach shore soon after passing the above chapel and continue beside sea with wall on R.
- 350 Join track and continue KSO with sea still on L.
- 250 Turn R up paved road. (Straight on leads to **Vatopedi Arsanas**.)
- 150 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.