



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM KONSTAMONITOU TO VATOPEDI

Distance: 7.6 km

Journey Time: 3 – 4 hours

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This attractive journey, most of it following historic *kalderimi* (stone-paved paths or tracks), involves a stiff climb from *Konstamonitou* monastery at around 200m to the ridge at over 500m altitude followed by a similar descent to *Vatopedi* monastery at near sea level. 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/or waymark arrows. The downhill section of the route was only rediscovered and reopened in May 2009.

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 ***Konstamonitou Monastery*** and turn L, heading for the gap between the single story building to L and large storehouse to R, to pick up FP (K) which begins to zig-zag uphill.
- 260 FP levels and turns R to emerge at small meadow. Continue across meadow and up road straight ahead.
- 135 Where road bends R, turn L onto overgrown track, uphill, signed *Karyes*.
- 140 As track bears L, KSO/R on narrow FP uphill, signed *Karyes*.
- 350 Path emerges at road. Turn L along road, uphill.
- 170 Road levels out. Fork R opposite sign back to *Konstamonitou*, uphill on narrow FP along overgrown track.
- 500 Rocky section of track ends; telecommunications mast on skyline ahead. At small cairns, turn R up small FP into wood. Traces of K soon appear.
Caution: May be hard to spot.
- 400 FP emerges at road on bend, with stone marker beside road to R. KSO/L uphill along road. (*Altitude 520m*)
- 75 Road, now concrete, makes sharp bend L. KSO/R on FP through narrow gully. FP traverses hill (on L) soon descending to reach . . .
- 600 Junction with ridge FP. Turn R, downhill (signed *Karyes*). (Ridge FP is

- straight on/L, signed *Esphigmenou, Hilandar and Zographou*.)
- 200 FP ends at road ascending from back R. KSO on road on level, 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 *Dochiarou*). 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**.

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.