

## FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN



### FROM PANTOKRATOR TO VATOPEDI VIA KOLITSOU

**Distance:** [9] km

**Journey Time:** [2½ - 3] hours

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**WARNING:** *This description is still under development – the directions and distances have not been independently validated and distances in square brackets are very approximate.*

*Note also that the footpath between Kolitsou and Vatopedi contains a **very steep ascent** of about 2 metres that the less agile may find very difficult.*

**This alternative to the more usual route to *Vatopedi* avoids the need to climb almost to the top of the ridge and may be closer to the usual historic route, although little is now *kalderimi*. Initially, it follows a track northwards roughly along the coast as far as the shore below *Kolitsou* (or *Kultsum*). From there a combination of path and track leads further up the coast to pick up a historic footpath which traverses the hill to meet the main road above *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 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 ***Pantokrator Monastery*** by main gate (facing the kiosk). Turn immediately R and R again following *K* road.
- 40 Ignore L turn (down to harbour). KSO on level *kalderimi* road.
- 70 Fork R off *K* onto non-*K* road just after building on R.
- 100 Ignore road joining from back R. KSO, now on main road, initially with monastery behind and soon with remains of

aqueduct on R. Road makes a long curve to L until the monastery is on L.

- 270 At junction, turn hard R onto smaller road, signed *Vatopedi*.
- [1500] At junction, fork R off road through pole gate onto track, initially downhill. This track follows the line of the coast. After passing quarry it becomes less used.
- [2500] Track ends. Turn R down steep bank onto rough FP, marked with orange tape. FP zig-zags steeply down through trees.
- Caution: Difficult descent.**
- 150 FP emerges from trees at bay below **Kolitsou** and meets another FP at T junction. Turn R towards sea. (L here leads in about 1200m up to the **Kellion of Agios Georgios** and the grave of **Elder Dionysios** at **Kolitsou**.)
- 30 Pass between buildings to reach shore. Turn L along beach.
- 60 Just before reaching building at far end of beach, turn L and follow level grassy area away from sea.
- 60 Grassy area ends with narrow track ahead and to L. Continue along this track which soon begins to climb up northern side of valley, roughly towards **Kolitsou** tower.
- 1000 Ignore lesser track to R. KSO, now on wider track climbing less steeply.
- 150 At fork with *kellion* gate ahead, bear R, uphill, soon passing above *kellion* with small bell tower on L and then below smaller *kellion* on R.
- 300 Shortly after passing second *kellion*, track ends at road with abandoned *kellion* ahead. Turn R along road, uphill.  
**Note:** L along road leads to the **Kellion of Agios Georgios** and the grave of **Elder Dionysios** at **Kolitsou**.
- 250 At junction where main road bears L, uphill (leading to the main *Karyes – Vatopedi* road), turn R onto track, soon descending and curving L until sea is on R.  
**Note:** To visit the **Kolitsou** tower, turn R about 30m after junction. Then retrace steps.
- 350 At fork, with *kellion* ahead, bear L, uphill. (R is to *kellion*.)
- 350 Track reaches open area with olive trees. KSO with olive trees to R and strange formation of rocks ahead.
- 60 Track bears R, downhill and is blocked. Watch out for and

take FP (marked with waymarks and orange tape) on L into woods.

- 80 FP becomes more obvious and begins to zigzag uphill.
- 120 Top of hill, with dramatic viewpoint to R, over rocks to the sea. Bear L, initially downhill into woods. Due to local earth movement, the path then becomes rocky and uneven in places.
- 90 FP arrives at steep and difficult ascent of about 2m, caused by earth movement. **Take great care.**
- 900 FP ends with steep climb up bank to reach main *Karyes* – *Vatopedi* road. Turn R, downhill along road.
- 700 Pass crossroads with tracks R and back L (signed to *Karyes* and *Pantokrator*). KSO on main road.
- 300 At T-junction bear L. Then KSO, downhill, ignoring two turnings to L.
- 200 At junction beside olive grove, fork R onto *K*.
- 150 At T-junction turn R, following *K*, soon passing covered well on R.
- 200 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](http://www.athosfriends.org) and in a number of places on or associated with the Holy Mountain.