

FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN



FROM PHILOTHEOU TO KARYES and KOUTLOUMOUSIOU

Distance: 9.5 km Journey Time: 2½ - 3 hours

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This route mostly follows the contours of the mountain, although there are one or two steep places. While the initial and final sections are mainly along traditional *kalderimi* paved stone paths, a long middle section follows a road. But there are fine views from the road down to *Iviron* and along the adjacent coast.

In one section the footpath requires a difficult crossing of a stream, so an alternative route by road to avoid it is also described.

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 Turn L out of ***Philotheou Monastery*** entrance, with monastery wall on L. At the end of the wall, bear L on K between buildings ahead.
- 140 Cross track and KSO to far side of open area, passing chapel on R. Then turn R (signed *Koutloumousiou*) and immediately L on FP (signed *Karyes* and *Koutloumousiou*) which descends into valley.
- 250 Cross bridge with waterfall and fountain on L. Continue on K, now climbing steadily up the opposite side of the valley.
- 600 Emerge at broad track and turn L.
- 160 Fork R to join road.
- 650 At next fork, ignore track up L. KSO on road.
- 200 Cross watercourse and bear R (uphill for a short while).
- 500 KSO at crossroads, ignoring tracks to L and R.

- 300 At T-junction, turn L, uphill (R, downhill, signed *Iviron*).
- 1100 Ignore track to *kellia* down R.
- 1000 Ignore FP on R before building signed *Iviron*.
- 400 Ignore track to *kellia* down R.
- 650 At junction with road to R, there is a choice:

To take FP Route with difficult stream crossing.

- Turn R, signed *Prodromos*, and then **immediately** L onto FP (K). Excellent view of **Karyes**.
- 400 With gate ahead, bear L, uphill, ignoring blocked path to R.
- 200 Descend path to join track and turn L along track towards *kellion*, passing *kellion* on R.
- 70 Turn L downhill from the *kellion* gate.
- 100 Pass fountain on L. Cross streams.
Caution: One crossing is difficult – care needed.
- 550 FP emerges at clearing with building to R ahead. Turn L onto track.
- 40 At road, turn R along road.
- Continue at 'Combined Route' below.

To take alternative Road Route avoiding difficult crossing

- Ignore road to R, signed *Prodromos*. Bear L uphill, still on main road, ignoring minor track to L. Excellent view of **Karyes**.
- 450 At top of hill with turning area, ignore track L. KSO on road.
- 50 At road junction, bear R downhill (not ahead/L).
- 200 Pass house on R.
- 250 Ignore track to R to cell. KSO on road.
- 350 At junction, ignore road ahead, uphill. Bear R, downhill.
- 200 FP route joins via track from R (signed *Philotheou*). KSO on road, now following 'Combined Route' below.

Combined Route

- 150 Ignore two adjacent tracks on R. Ignore further tracks up L and down R. KSO along road.
- 1000 Just before road bends to R, take FP (K) to L, cross stream and ascend to buildings.
- 150 In front of building, turn L and bear immediately R, keeping wall of building on R. **Monastery of Koutloumousiou**

becomes visible ahead.

50 Reach monastery wall and turn L to follow wall.

80 At small gate on R of FP:

For Koutloumousiou Monastery

Go through gate and follow monastery wall.

50 Arrive at **Koutloumousiou Monastery** entrance.

For Karyes

Bear L along *K*.

320 FP joins the *Koutloumousiou–Karyes* path, beside gates into **Koutloumousiou** grounds (on R). KSO away from Monastery.

180 Ignore *K* lane that goes up L opposite bakery. Bear R along *K*, with **Protaton** ahead and, keeping it on L, continue along **Karyes** main street, past bar and fountain.

200 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.