



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM VATOPEDI TO KONSTAMONITOU VIA CHERA

Distance: 7.6 km Journey Time: 3 hours

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This journey is an attractive alternative to the Vatopedi Konstamonitou footpath (which follows the route to *Dochiarou* as far as the ridge). Initially it climbs steep and rocky paths on the way towards *Zographou*, first through the olive groves above *Vatopedi* and then the wooded hillside, to the crest of the ridge at *Chera* ('The Hand'). At *Chera*, it joins the historic ridge path, the *Way of the Bey* (towards *Karyes*), from which there are fine views down to the East. Finally, a path descends very steeply, with good scenery and a view of *Konstamonitou* towards the end.

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 On leaving the gate of ***Vatopedi Monastery*** turn R to pass kiosk on L, and KSO down paved road which descends steeply to the shore.
Note: Turning R after the kiosk leads down to the *arsanas*. If this route is preferred, leave the *arsanas* with the sea on the R to join the route below in 120 m.
- 150 On reaching the shore, turn L along track beside sea.
- 200 Track crosses stream.
- 30 Follow the track when it turns L, inland.
- 230 Turn R where track bears L with lesser track on R, KSO on small FP steeply uphill through olive grove (signed on trees). Views appear back L to man-made reservoir and ***Vatopedi***.
- 500 At top of olive grove, FP continues more distinctly, through trees.
- 800 Cross forest road and KSO. Track initially continues parallel to FP on L.

- 200 Cross forest road and KSO, uphill. FP is steep and rocky, with remains of *K*.
- 2000 FP flattens out and enters woodland to join ridge FP coming from back L.

If time allows it is recommended to KSO to visit **Chera**, in view 40m ahead, as described below.

Otherwise, turn hard L onto ridge FP, signed *Karyes*, and continue at † below.

To visit **Chera**:

- 40 Arrive at **Chera** ('The Hand') – a brownstone monument with directions marking the crossing of the ridge.

(Approximate time to this point: 1½ hours.)

Then **Retrace steps** (signed *Vatopedi* and *Karyes*) back to ridge/*Vatopedi* FP junction.

Note: Beyond **Chera**, the FP to the L leads to **Zographou** while bearing R is the ridge path towards **Hilandar** and **Esphigmenou**.

- 40 On returning to junction take R fork, signed *Karyes*, onto ridge FP and continue at † below. (L is the FP back to *Vatopedi*.)

Continuing to **Konstamonitou**:

- † 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). Turn R, downhill, starting a steep descent.
- 360 Cross stream-bed. FP now runs on the L side of the stream or in the stream-bed itself.
- 280 Emerge at little-used track. KSO/L on track (signed *Konstamonitou* after 10m).
- 460 Turn L off track onto descending FP (noting but ignoring sign to *Konstamonitou* along the track). FP descends very steeply.
- Note:** Continuing along track also leads to **Konstamonitou** but by a much longer route.
- 250 At fork, turn R.
- 400 Cross stream-bed and climb bank to reach empty area. KSO.
- 20 Take FP (marked with orange tape) uphill at the foot of the cliff (ignoring large track to R).
- 300 Arrive at **Konstamonitou 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.