



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM VATOPEDI TO KONSTAMONITOU

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 *Vatopedi Monastery* at near sea level to the ridge at over 500m altitude followed by a similar descent to *Konstamonitou Monastery* at around 200m. 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 waymark arrows. The uphill 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 gate of ***Vatopedi Monastery*** and turn L along paved road, with monastery on L.
- 100 After covered well on L, take R fork downhill on road, initially K.
- 350 Another road joins from back R. KSO, now with orchard on L.
- 240 After orchard ends, cross stream. KSO on road.
- 180 Join larger road from back R. 15m later cross stream at ford.
- 40 Where road makes sharp bend to the left, uphill, bear R along FP signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiariou* which descends and bears L into stream-bed. **Caution: Do not take FP which climbs up ahead.**
- 80 Cross stream and KSO on path. Pass another sign to *Dochiariou* after which FP starts to climb, with stretches of K. Due to forestry, the route here deviates from the K for short waymarked stretches.
- 550 Reach and cross road. KSO on FP (K), uphill.
- 1050 Shortly after passing wooden structure on R, reach road. Turn L along road which follows contour of hill (signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiariou*).
Caution: Do not take FP which continues ahead.
- 700 Shortly before road makes a sharp bend to the L at the head of a valley, turn R at open area marked with rough cairn and follow small path steeply uphill (signed).

Caution: may be difficult to spot.

- 20 Turn L onto FP which becomes *K*, crosses stream-bed and then zig-zags up side of valley. Keep uphill, ignoring possible FPs to L.
- 750 FP reaches flatter, more open scrubby/grassy area and becomes track before reaching road. KSO, uphill on *K* on far side of road (signed).
- 60 At T junction with similar FP, turn R, uphill (not straight on, on level, which may be barred). FP continues uphill, 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 FP reaches logging track. Turn L along track. Ignore any routes branching off track to L or R.
- 180 Track reaches ridge road at T junction. Turn R along road on level (telecommunications mast on hill ahead), soon passing large stone plinth with cross inlay (a *stavros* marking a crossing point of the ridge) on L.
- 90 Where road bears L, downhill (signed *Dochiariou*), KSO/R on ridge FP ahead, signed *Konstamonitou*, *Esphigmenou* and *Hilandar*.
- 200 At T junction, bear L, signed *Konstamonitou* and *Dochiariou*. (To R, signed *Esphigmenou*, *Hilandar* and *Zographou*, is continuation of ridge FP.) FP climbs steadily before levelling out, traversing hill (on R).
- 600 Emerge at road at outside of concreted sharp bend. KSO/L downhill on road, signed *Konstamonitou* (uphill leads to telecommunications mast.)
- 75 Where road bends L, before it passes stone marker on R, KSO/R on FP signed *Konstamonitou*, downhill (*Altitude 520m*).
- 400 FP descends to rocky track. Turn L onto track, downhill, with hillside on L. Track soon becomes overgrown apart from narrow FP.
- 500 Track joins road from back R. Turn L along road, signed *Konstamonitou*, downhill. Monastery soon comes into view below in valley to R.
- 170 Turn hard R onto FP signed *Konstamonitou*, downhill.
- 350 FP joins overgrown track at bend. KSO/L downhill along track (*Karyes* signed back up FP).
- 140 Track joins road at outside of hairpin bend. Turn R down road (*Karyes* signed back up track).
- 135 Road reaches open area and bends L. KSO across open area to pick up FP which bears L, becomes *K* and zig-zags downhill. Monastery soon visible just below.
- 160 FP flattens out and passes to R of building towards Monastery ahead.
- 100 Arrive at gate of ***Konstamonitou 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.