FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN
FROM DIONYSIOU TO SIMONOPETRA VIA
GRIGORIOU

Distance: 5.9 km  Journey Time: 3½ hours

Warning: The path from Grigoriou to Dionysiou is challenging. Pilgrims need to be careful, especially if not physically fit.

This magnificent route connects the three monasteries of the rocks. It has special importance as it completes the SW route from Megisti Lavra which goes up to the ‘desert’ (eremos in Greek), and thence on to Mount Athos Summit, Ag. Anna and Ag. Pavlou, ending up at Simonopetra. This route is one of the most beautiful on all Athos, offering spectacular views down the western coast of the Athonite peninsula, Mount Athos summit and nearby Sithonia.

The first half, from Dionysiou to Grigoriou, is almost entirely on footpath. The views from the path are stunning, but the walk is much more difficult than the short distance between the monasteries might suggest. Pilgrims should be very careful. The second half, from Grigoriou to Simonopetra, starts with a stretch on an unattractive track, but then a nice path continues into the olive groves of the Monastery and parallel to the shore. Finally, ascending broad traditional kalderimi (stone paved path) leads from sea level to Simonopetra at over 200m.

Note: All distances given (in metres) should be taken as approximate. The numbers shown in the form 1 are Waypoints to be found in associated GPS tracking. 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)

Transliterations: ΔΙΟΝΥΣΙΟΥ = Dionysiou; ΓΡΗΓΟΡΙΟΥ = Grigoriou ; ΣΙΜΟΝΟΣ ΠΕΤΡΑΣ = Simonos Petras; ΑΡΣΑΝΑΣ = Arsanas

Description of Route:
Walk (m) And then . . .

23 Turn L out of Dionysiou Monastery main gate on descending paved (K) track, under archway.

80 At fork 20m after former fountain, turn hard L onto fine K descending towards the Arsanas of the Monastery.

210 The K ends at concrete road beside outlying buildings (worker's houses). Turn L towards sea and, after 30m, turn R at junction onto concrete track (signed Grigoriou and Simonopetra) which continues parallel to the shore, past jetty and modern harbour.

200 At fork, bear R up concrete and cross small bridge to take ascending FP (signed Grigoriou and Simonopetra).

410 Arrive at place where many rocks have fallen onto the FP. Take care. KSO uphill on FP, passing outcrop with wooden cross on L.

500 Pass close to distinctive vertical rock (on L). FP starts to descend and then ascends again.

420 Arrive at local summit with excellent views of Simonopetra Monastery and back to Mount Athos Summit. FP starts to descend again.

180 Cross streambed (which runs down from Athos' largest waterfall, Gravanistis – look upwards). KSO (signed).

Note: Depending on the weather, the streambed may be dry or a raging torrent, when use the concrete bridge.

14 Pass through metal gate (not forgetting to close the gate properly behind you).

370 Cross another stream. KSO.

220 Go through gate and KSO/L, descending (signed).

70 Close to small building (water tank) on R side of the FP, turn hard R onto descending FP (signed in opposite direction).

50 Another FP joins from L. KSO on FP (partly K) which continues to descend (steeply in places), reaches Monastery walls and continues parallel to them.
9 After descending concrete staircase, turn L through a vineyard tunnel and arrive at Grigoriou Monastery entrance.

(Approx time to this point: 2 hours15 mins.)

To proceed from Grigoriou Monastery to Simonopetra Monastery:

9 Leaving Grigoriou main gate, KSO through a vineyard tunnel, pass on L a beautiful pine tree on a small platform with benches, offering a superb view of Grigoriou bay and continue towards Arsanas, passing shrine with fountain dedicated to Saint Nicolas. At sea level, KSO/L to cross small bridge and continue parallel to shore.

8 Cross second small bridge and turn R, uphill, on unattractive broad track.

7 Turn L off track onto descending footpath (signed) which zigzags into olive grove (watch for orange tapes and sign).

6 Olive grove ends at bend in FP. Continue on FP (signed).

5 Ignore gated FP to Kelli from back L. KSO/R on FP which continues parallel to the shore.

4 Pass working fountain on L and gate of Kelli on R. KSO to cross stream-bed.

3 After crossing stream-bed take FP (signed) which ascends very steeply in places. Pass beach on L.

2 Arrive at fork of paths at shrine and fountain. KSO/R (signed) on ascending broad K.

Note: Turning L on the K here leads to Simonopetra Monastery Arsanas (signed) in 500m.

The ascending K zigzags past the gardens of the Monastery with spectacular views of the shore and of the famous façade of the Monastery. A long vineyard tunnel leads to a small square surrounded by beautifully crafted buildings. Ascend a stone staircase on L, pass the Archondariki (on R) and continue through the high wall of the former aqueduct to reach . . .

1 Simonopetra Monastery main gate.
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.