

FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM KARYES and KOUTLOUMOUSIOU TO PHILOTHEOU



Distance: 9.7 km Journey Time: 3 hours

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WARNING: *Crossing the bridge close to Philotheou **3** may be difficult or/and dangerous. As of May 2017 the wooden structure of the bridge was rotten, slippery and might give way when stepped on. Anyone crossing the bridge (which is not recommended) must use extreme care and step only where metal beams support the wooden structure. Finding an alternative way to cross stream may be difficult.*

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 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: ΚΑΡΥΕΣ = *Karyes*; ΚΟΥΤΛΟΥΜΟΥΣΙΟΥ = *Koutloumousiou*;
ΙΒΗΡΩΝ = *Iviron*; ΦΙΛΟΘΕΟΥ = *Philotheou*; ΚΑΡΑΚΑΛΟΥ =
Karakalou; ΞΗΡΟΠΟΤΑΜΟΥ = *Xeropotamou*; ΣΙΜΩΝΟΣ
ΠΕΤΡΑΣ = *Simonos Petras*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

From *Karyes*

31 From the square in *Karyes* where the buses arrive, follow the main street, passing the fountain, bar, *Epistasia* and *Protaton* on the R. Bear R following main street.

200

30 Ignore lane (K) up R; KSO/L past bakery, down out of town.

180 **29** At the outer gates into **Koutloumousiou Monastery**, take FP on R (signed *Philotheou*), passing above monastery grounds and outbuildings (below on L).

300 **27** Arrive at monastery wall and turn R to follow wall. Path from Monastery joins via gate on L.

Continue at 'Combined Routes' below.

From Koutloumousiou

28 On leaving the monastery entrance, turn L and L again, with the monastery wall on the L.

80 **27** Pass through gate to join FP from **Karyes** coming from R. KSO following monastery wall.

Combined Routes

100 **26** After passing buildings on L ignore first R, uphill. Take second R (signed *Philotheou* and *Karakalou*) and descend to cross stream using footbridge.

150 **25** Reach road and turn R along it, uphill. Ignore small paths/tracks off road to L.

200 **24** Ignore track diagonally down to L.

400 **23** Ignore another track diagonally down to L (signed *I K Megalis Panagias*). KSO uphill on road (signed *Philotheou* and *Xeropotamou*). Ignore track back R 10m later.

450 **22** Ignore two adjacent tracks off L, the second leading to the gate of *Kellion Ag. Strydonos Kerkyreon*. KSO uphill on road.

150 **21** At junction with track to L signed *Philotheou* (straight on signed *Xeropotamou* and *Simonos Petras*) there is a choice:

To take FP Route with difficult stream crossing

Turn L down track signed *Philotheou* which passes between cliffs.

60 **20** At clearing, with building to far L, bear R onto FP (*K*) signed *Philotheou* and *Iviron*. FP continues through trees.

350 **19** Route crosses stream and turns L. FP has been washed away so it is necessary to cross streambed using best route currently available.

Caution: Crossing is difficult and subject to change – great care needed.

80 **18** Pass Fountain on R.

80 **17** At *kellion* gate (on L), turn R and immediately L round building and KSO on paved track, signed *Philotheou*. (Ignore larger track up to R).

Continue at 'Combined Route' below.

To take alternative Road Route avoiding difficult crossing

Ignore track L signed *Philotheou*. KSO uphill on road.

200 **32** At junction with similar road, turn L.

400 **33** Fork L off road (which continues uphill) onto track downhill towards *kellion*.

50 **17** Immediately in front of *kellion*, turn R, signed *Philotheou*, still on track, now following '*Combined Route*'. (FP route joins here from beside *kellion* gate ahead.)

Combined Route

25 **16** Take FP (signed) up steps diagonally R off track. This soon becomes *kalderimi*.

400 **15** KSO, ignoring FP joining from back R.

Note: The FP from the R was being used for logging in May 2014 and is likely to fall into disuse.

250 **14** Emerge at road close to major T junction. Turn R and after 10m turn L onto major road (signed *Philotheou*).

670 **13** Ignore minor road L to *kellia*; KSO on road, crossing watercourse.

250 **12** Pass recently-built (2016) fountain on R.

180 **11** After building on L, ignore FP off L. KSO on road. Ignore minor track L.

1050 **10** Ignore minor road to *kellia* back L.

- 1300 **9** At major junction, take first road up R, signed to *kellia* and *Philotheou*.
Caution: NOT road straight on which bends R, downhill, signed Iviron.
- 250 **8** Ignore track up R and track L; KSO on road (signed *Philotheou*).
- 540 **7** Cross watercourse and bear L, now uphill.
- 200 **6** Ignore track back R, uphill.
- 650 **5** At junction, fork L off road onto track leading gently downhill (signed *Philotheou*).
- 180 **4** Take FP diagonally R off track (signed *Philotheou*). Path contains stretches of *K* and descends into valley.
- 600 **3** Cross bridge with fountain and waterfall, both on R. Path then climbs steeply up other side of valley.
Warning: Crossing bridge may be difficult or/and dangerous. Please read the note on the front page of this path description.
- 290 **2** At top, turn R to arrive at track and buildings with cemetery chapel on L ; KSO on *K* between buildings towards Monastery ahead, ignoring tracks to L and R.
- 160 **1** Arrive at ***Philotheou 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.