



FOOTPATHS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN

FROM PHILOTHEOU TO KARYES and KOUTLOUMOUSIOU

Distance: 9.7 km Journey Time: 3 hours

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WARNING: *In June 2018 the bridge close to Philotheou **3** which had become dangerous, was under repair. As the ability to cross the bridge during repair is not certain, any pilgrims using this route should check its status with Philotheou Monastery. 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*; ΤΙΜΙΟΣ ΠΡΟΔΡΟΜΟΣ = *Timios Prodromos*

Description of Route:

Walk (m) And then . . .

1 Turn L out of ***Philotheou Monastery*** entrance, with Monastery wall on L. At the end of the wall, bear L on K, passing between buildings ahead.

160

2 Cross track and KSO across open area, passing cemetery chapel on R to reach stone wall ahead. FP starts at gap near R end of the wall, immediately to the R of an inlaid red brick cross.

FP soon bears L (signed *Iviron*, *Koutloumousiou* and *Karyes*), contains increasing amounts of *K* and descends into steep valley.

290

3 Cross bridge with waterfall and fountain on L. Continue on FP (initially *K*), now climbing steadily up the opposite side of the valley.

Warning: Crossing bridge may be difficult or/and dangerous. Please read the note on the front page of this path description.

600

4 Emerge at broad track and turn L (signed).

180

5 Fork R to join road.

650

6 At next fork, ignore track up L. KSO on road.

200

7 Cross watercourse and bear R (uphill for a short while).

540

8 KSO at crossroads (signed *Karyes*, *Iviron* and *Skiti Iviron*), ignoring tracks to L and R.

250

9 At T-junction, turn L, uphill, signed *Karyes* and *Daphni*. (R, downhill, is signed *Iviron*.)

1300

10 Ignore track to *kellia* down R.

1050

11 Ignore FP on R before building.

180

12 Pass recently-built (2016) fountain on L.

250

13 Ignore track to *kellia* down R. Ignore minor track to R.

670

14 At junction with road to R, turn R (signed to *Timios Prodromos* and other cells). Then turn **immediately** L onto FP (*K*) (signed *Karyes* and *Koutloumousiou*).

250

15 At junction of FPs, bear R following waymark. Ignore L fork.

Note: In May 2018, there was a fallen tree c.140m after WP15.

400

16 Descend steps to join track, turning L along track towards *kellion* (on R).

25

17 In front of *kellion* where track turns L there is a choice:

To take FP Route with difficult stream crossing.

Turn R toward *kellion* gate and then L downhill in front of gate on FP.

80

18 Pass fountain on L.

80

19 Route turns R to cross stream. 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.

350

20 FP emerges at clearing with building to R ahead. Turn L onto track passing between cliffs.

60

21 At road, turn R along road.

Continue at 'Combined Route' below.

To take alternative Road Route avoiding difficult crossing

Turn L along track, away from *kellion*.

50

33 At junction where track joins road, turn R onto road.

400

32 At junction, ignore road ahead, uphill. Bear R, downhill.

200

21 FP route joins via track from R (signed *Philotheou*). KSO on road, now following 'Combined Route' below.

Combined Route

150

22 Ignore two adjacent tracks on R. Ignore further tracks up L and down R. KSO along road.

1050

25 Just before road bends to R, take broad FP (*K*) to L, uphill.

150

26 In front of building 20m after crossing bridge, turn L and bear immediately R, keeping wall of building on R. Reach ***Koutloumousiou Monastery*** wall and turn L to follow wall.

100

27 At small gate on R of FP:

For *Koutloumousiou Monastery*

Go through gate and follow monastery wall.

80

28 Arrive at ***Koutloumousiou Monastery*** entrance.

For *Karyes*

Bear L along *K*.

350

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

180

30 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

31 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.