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Fold and staple; you should now have continuous text,
starting in Skala Sikaminias and ending in Anemotia.

www.lesvoswalks.net

New Walks 2004-2007

by

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(Author of 'On Foot in North Lesvos')

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Continue to climb along this road for a further ten minutes as it emerges from the forest and reaches a ridge. From here it is downhill all the way back to Anemotia, with views to the right over Monastireli and down to the Gulf of Kalloni.

As the road zigzags down to the outskirts of Anemotia it skirts the village cemetery. Immediately after the next left-hand hairpin bend go right and immediately left down a paved street to the church. At the bottom turn right at the junction along the side of the church to return to your car, or half left for the centre of the village, cafenions and the village taxi.

Pass two farms on the left; on the right-hand bend immediately after the second there is the first of several spectacular views over the Gulf of Kalloni. The track continues through an area of pasture and open woodland before returning to pine forest. An hour after the previous junction turn right uphill on a rougher track, and ten minutes later right again at the next T-junction (there is a green metal signpost here Κρυφή Παναγία - Πήγαδος).

In ten minutes at a left-hand bend there is an area of open pasture shaded by trees overlooking the Gulf of Kalloni: this is an ideal spot to stop for a picnic or just a drink.

In another ten minutes you come to a large rock outcrop on the right with a water-trough beside the track in front of it. A sp. points back along the track to ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ - ΖΩΟΔΟΧΟΣ ΠΗΓΗ - ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ - ΖΩΟΔΟΧΟΣ ΠΗΓΗ, and another (with a trekking trail sign) down rough steps under the rock to ΚΡΥΦΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ - ΚΡΙΦΙ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ, the former hermitage of the 'hidden Virgin'.

Continuing along the track, in fifteen minutes, on the right, you will see a plain 2.5 metre tall wooden pole. This marks the head of the Kali Langada gorge. Look carefully to the right of the pole for steps leading down to an inconspicuous notice-board with a description of the plant life to be found in the area (as well as the rhododendron and black pine there are also valerian, a species of paeony, tree heath, and other species that thrive on the acid volcanic soil).

This is the highest point of the walk, and the track now starts to descend, gently at first, then more steeply through a series of zigzags. Pass a farm on the right (with a handmade sign reading ΠΡΟΣ ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ -->) and soon after (fifteen minutes from Kali Langada) come to a junction in the shape of an H (there is a sp. ΚΡΥΦΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ - ΚΡΙΦΙ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ pointing back the way you have come).

Go left and then right on to a wide forest road following the green road sign to Ανεμώτια. The road climbs gently through the pine forest; in ten minutes, where a track turns off left by a water cistern, keep right on the main route.

New Walks 2004 -2007

North East Lesvos

Skala Sikaminias to Sikaminia

Duration 1 hour (one way)

Walking the road from Skala Sikaminias to Sikaminia is hard work and discouraging even to enthusiastic walkers like me. Apparently never-ending hairpin bends seem to bring you no nearer to the village high above you. (Going down is different, of course, and has the bonus of continuous sea views across the strait)

This route, on the other hand, for much of the way follows one of the original cobbled kalderimi which until well into the 20th century were the main thoroughfares between the two villages. Although fragmented by new tracks that have been bulldozed across the sides of the mountain, much of it still survives in good condition.

Unfortunately, nothing can alter the fact that while the two villages are less than 1½km apart as the crow flies, one is 300m higher than the other (ie a climb of 1000' in less than a mile).

Leave the harbour at Skala Sikaminias along the sea-side road leading towards Eftalou. After about two minutes, just before a rocky outcrop surmounted by the restaurant-bar Medusa (ΜΕΔΟΥΣΑ) turn left on to a track leading uphill away from the sea. A green fingerpost points to ΚΟΥΦΟΒΟΥΝΟ & ΠΛΑΤΑΝΙΑ ΓΛΥΝΑΔΟΣ. (The Medusa has closed down, but its sign is still there).

The track bends right by a small radio mast; shortly afterwards (5 minutes), turn left at the next junction and follow up past water-tanks on the left to arrive at a crossing track (5 mins). Cross diagonally to the right and pick up a path leading up through an olive grove, with a river bed on the left. After about 3 minutes the path crosses the river and continues on the other side.

Continue on this path, ignoring the one joining from the left, and come to a relatively level stretch with a wall on the left. At the end of this (6 mins), at

a rocky patch alongside a stream bed, bear left on to a kalderimi. This deteriorates into a loose stony path and leads uphill to join another track (4 mins).

Go straight ahead on to the track and follow it for about 50 metres, to the brow of the hill, then go sharp left up a rocky path, which leads back on to kalderimi. This zigzags right and left uphill, followed by a level stretch along the top of an olive grove (5 mins). It then turns uphill again for about 2 minutes, turning sharp right where it meets the foot of a concrete water channel (this stream should go off to the left here, but in wet weather may use the path you have come up as an alternative route)

Go on uphill on kalderimi for another 3 minutes to meet another track. Turn sharp right on to this and follow it up through three sharp bends until its junction with a wider track.

Go right again, climb for 5 minutes and then, about 100m before the brow of the hill, rejoin the kalderimi on the left. A final 5 minute climb leads up to short stretch of concrete path, which emerges on to the main road running round the foot of Sikaminia village.

A steep paved street almost opposite leads up into the centre of the village, and a short distance along the road to the right there is a roadside taverna.

For a circular walk leading back to the harbour there are two options:-

Either:- Go back along the main road (ie turn left at the top of the path) for about 2 minutes to the junction with the Skala Sikaminias road, and walk back downhill through the many hairpin bends.

Alternatively:- Turn right along the road until you reach a path leading down to the right shortly before the taverna. There is a new and rather confusing map of local footpaths and a fingerpost to ΛΕΠΕΤΥΜΝΟΣ.

Follow the path down - it runs below and more or less parallel with the road until a junction with a path coming in downhill from the left. (There is another fingerpost here) In five minutes turn left at a T-junction, then continue ahead, with a wall on the left.

If you have a hire car, follow the narrow, winding main street through Anemotia until you come to the large village church. There is a small parking area outside, which is usually full. Park here if you can, otherwise continue on the road to your left leading out of the village towards the local olive mill (easily identified by the overhead conveyor across the road). Just before, the road divides around a row of trees, where it is usually possible to park in the shade.

Walk under the olive mill and along the tarmac road for about ten minutes. At a left-hand bend take a track leading ahead on the right (Signposted ΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΕΛΙ - ΜΟΝΑΣΤΙΡΕΛΙ) and follow it uphill for five minutes. Immediately before it ends go right at a yellow trekking trail sign on to a footpath (sp. ΜΟΝΑΣΤΗΡΕΛΙ- ΜΟΝΑΣΤΙΡΕΛΙ).

This winds downhill between olive groves, sometimes on cobbled kalderimi, crosses a footbridge over a stream, swings left and climbs to a gate leading on to a rough track (10 minutes) Follow the track for five minutes until it reaches a forest road at the brow of a hill. Half right, away in the valley, can be seen the monastery of Μορή Βουκόλων (Moni Voukolon aka Monastireli). Originally a Byzantine foundation, it was destroyed by the Ottoman occupiers in 1462, but re-established in 1526 as an outpost of Leimonas Monastery and dedicated to the Presentation of the Virgin Mary. For a closer view turn right, otherwise turn left downhill.

In ten minutes, at the next junction, turn right (sp. ΚΑΛΗ ΛΑΓΚΑΔΑ - ΚΑΛΙ ΛΑΓΚΑΔΑ) and continue down for another twenty minutes, until the road crosses a concrete bridge high above a river and climbs to a T-junction.

Turn right (sp. ΚΑΛΗ ΛΑΓΚΑΔΑ- ΚΑΛΙ ΛΑΓΚΑΔΑ) uphill for twenty minutes (ignore a track branching off downhill to the right after ten minutes) to another T-junction and turn right (sp. ΠΗΓΑΔΟΣ - ΚΡΥΦΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ - ΠΙΓΑΔΟΣ - ΚΡΙΦΙ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ)

In fifteen minutes at the third T follow the track left uphill round the bend (ignore the sp. pointing right to ΚΡΥΦΗ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ- ΚΡΙΦΙ ΠΑΝΑΓΙΑ) The track alternates level sections with (sometimes steep) uphill climbs. After about twenty minutes the first rhododendrons begin to appear on the right.

two km below Skoutaros; a signposted road drops down from the upper part of the village, alternatively a dirt road, also signposted, leads off to the left as you approach the outskirts of Anaxos.

Black Pines & Golden Rhododendrons

Duration 5 hours approx. Distance 17km (10.5 miles) approx

This circular walk begins and ends in the traditional village of Anemotia, which lies on the slopes of the crater of the largest (extinct) volcano on Lesvos, just off the Kalloni - Sigri road a few kilometres beyond Filia towards Skalochoi.

If you have a hire car, the easiest way from the Molivos - Petra area is through Anaxos and Skoutaros, then fork left to Filia and turn right on to the main road at the end of the village. Otherwise take a taxi to Anemotia and ask to be put down at the church.

This is a walk for springtime, when the golden rhododendrons (rhododendron luteum), which in Greece grow wild only in this small area of Lesvos, carpet the hillsides with their blossom in striking contrast with the black trunks of the indigenous local pine trees.

For the most part it follows signposted forest roads and tracks, and although longish, is mostly fairly easy walking, with a few steepish climbs.

With the exception of the section of footpath between Anemotia and Monastireli, all the tracks and forest roads on this walk are marked on the ROAD map of Lesvos, from which I have calculated the distance above. I have culled other information from 'Στα μονοπάτια του Ποδόθενδρον -The footpaths of Rhododendron', a booklet published some years ago by the Municipality of Kalloni.

(Although it is of course possible to do the circuit in either direction, I recommend following the clockwise route described. Go anticlockwise and you will spend most of the final hour on a seemingly unending and spirit-draining uphill drag)

******A stretch of kalderimi climbs briefly, then descends on steps. Go down through woodland with a wall on the right, to the bottom of a valley and a stream, then continue on the level on a soft path, with a view of the sea down on the right (10 mins).

The path leads back into trees and descends again. It bends round to the right and climbs on kalderimi. Go through a gate and bear left, with the entrance to an olive grove straight ahead. Climb steeply over a brow and down again with a wall on the right. In five minutes, continue ahead onto an overgrown path along a terrace wall. After two minutes bear right past a fallen tree and continue along the path with steep terracing down on the right towards the sea.

In another five minutes, by an entrance on the left over a fallen wall into an olive grove, go straight ahead along an overgrown kalderimi running between walls. Bear right and continue slightly uphill. Go along the path as it reverts to kalderimi leading down and across a stream, then bending right under a high stone wall on the other side. It finally bends left and climbs twenty metres to join a dirt road by a small trekking trail sign.**

Turn right on to the road and follow it downhill. It divides after a few hundred metres - both branches lead down to the sea; the left-hand one makes for a longer walk (turn left again at the junction near the bottom of the hill), but comes out on the coast road only a few metres from a tiny beach taverna (turn left on to the coast road) which is worth a visit for a beer or whatever food is available (often fresh fish caught by the owner).

When you reach the sea turn right on to the unsurfaced coast road and follow it back into Skala Sikaminia.

A Circular Walk via Lepetimnos, Chalikas & Sikaminia

Duration about 2½ hours

This is a pleasant walk for a hot day as it is mostly through woodland and if walked in the direction described does not involve too much climbing after the initial steep ascent out of Lepetimnos. It is largely based on Walk 26 in 'On Foot in North Lesvos', with the addition of one of the newly waymarked 'Trails of Lepetimnos'

You will need transport to get to and from Lepetimnos.

Park in the shade near Lepetimos church and walk back towards the main road. A few metres up the hill on the right a new fingerpost marks the path (an old kalderimi) to the ruined village of Chalikas. Take this and follow it uphill for about ten minutes until it emerges on to the main road.

Cross the road to another fingerpost and go up the steps into the village. Go through the village until you come to a track (you should be at a junction with the remains of a water fountain in the wall to your right, overhung by a large Philadelphus (Mock Orange or Syringa) tree, which is covered with fragrant white blossom in the spring. There is also a new signboard with one of the local 'Trails of Lepetimos' maps)

Turn right on to the track and follow it round the back of the village for about five minutes until you come to another junction. Go left here along a narrow path (there is a new waymark after a few metres), and after about five minutes turn left on to a new track and follow it for ten minutes, where it bends left to cross the stream. (There is a sign at this point pointing right up a steep and inconspicuous path to the healing shrine of ΑΓ ANNA. The shrine itself is insignificant and seems little visited, in spite of the effort put into its signposting and the building of the new track).

After crossing the stream the track bends left again. Leave it at this point and go ahead, following a yellow trekking trail sign and red waymarks. (There may also be a fingerpost at this point - it was there early in May 2006 but by later in the month had disappeared under a mound of spoil from continuing work on the track).

The path climbs steeply along a streambed for a few minutes, but then levels out and after twenty minutes starts to descend towards Sikaminea.

In another ten minutes a cobbled kalderimi comes in from the right - carry on on the steep downhill kalderimi ahead. After five minutes the path forks for a few metres before merging again.

In another five minutes the kalderimi ends and the path becomes loose stone zig-zagging steeply downhill to a junction. Turn left here (both paths

a roofless stone hut on the right. Bear left at some large outcrops of white rock, and fifteen minutes after crossing the first river arrive at another (there may or may not be another gate here).

Cross the river bed and follow the track as it climbs up to the right. After fifteen minutes it deteriorates sharply into a steep, loose, rough descent leading down to a stream in a narrow wooded valley.

The track becomes a kalderimi (cobbled) donkey path running alongside the stream, then crossing it and leading up past a new white, blue-shuttered concrete building. In autumn this whole area is covered in wild cyclamen.

A couple of minutes later the path comes out onto a concrete road. Here you can turn right for Anaxos or left for Skoutaros.

a) For Anaxos turn right down the steep hill and cross the concrete bridge at the bottom. (there are massed oleanders and terrapins in the stream below) Follow the track as it undulates its way gently downhill along the side of the valley with the stream below.

After about ten minutes the track ends. Continue ahead along a narrow path alongside a stone wall topped with a wire mesh fence. The path is rocky in parts and towards the end becomes a stream bed. After another ten minutes it turns sharp left and emerges on the Anaxos-Skoutaros road alongside a concrete barn.

Turn right and follow the road for 1 km into Anaxos.

b) For Skoutaros turn left uphill - the concrete soon reverts to a dirt surface and after fifteen minutes comes to a T-junction. If you turn left here the track runs back along the hillside for a kilometre before fanning out into a series of well-preserved kalderimi, none of which, unfortunately, lead anywhere useful.

So instead turn right and in two minutes reach the Anaxos - Skoutaros road. Skoutaros is 1 km up to the left, Anaxos 3 km down to the right.

If you feel that by this stage you deserve a swim at Ambelia the beach is

North Central Lesvos

Lafionas to Anaxos or Skoutaros

Duration about 1½ - 2 hours depending on starting point and destination.

If you are coming to the end of the circular walk above Lafionas around Roudi and past Agios Alexandros (Walk 22 in 'On Foot in North Lesvos') and look to your right down across the valley you will see a track running off into the hills. I'd looked at it several times and thought it should lead to Skoutaros, but would more probably, like so many others I have followed, come to a dead end in an olive grove. I didn't actually come to try it until October 2005.....

*This description starts from Lafionas, so you can make a circular walk from Petra or Anaxos (Walks 19 -21); but if you are coming from Ag Alexandros or Klapados (Walks 22 or 23) skip the first section and start from the **.*

From the square at the entrance to the village, take the left-hand street and follow it round to the wide blue glass-fronted cafenion (Jimmy's: I have yet to find it open, but it's always spotless, and apparently does function in the evenings) Bear left here (there is a sign to Ag Alexandros) uphill to a T-junction. Go left, right at the next T, and where the street forks bear left uphill. All this will take about five minutes.

In two minutes the street starts to lead out of the village. Continue uphill on a concrete road for about five minutes to a T-junction. Turn right up through a parking area and then left, still climbing on concrete. Pass a large water tank on the left - the concrete becomes dirt about here - to yet another T at the top of the hill. A sign points left to Klapados, right to Ag Alexandros.

Go left and climb for another five minutes to another junction and another sign, again Klapados left, Ag Alexandros right.

** Take the Ag Alexandros track past a water fountain (now disconnected) round a left-hand bend. Immediately fork left on to a lesser track dropping away downhill, and follow it down into the valley for about fifteen minutes.

At the bottom it goes through a gate and crosses a stream-bed, then climbs gently along the side of the valley before heading down again past

end in the same place but this is the easier route) and follow down to a T-junction at a chain-link fence. Turn right and in another five minutes reach the main road on the outskirts of the hill village of Sikaminea between a disused olive mill on the right and a chapel with its own shady courtyard and spring on the left.

There is a roadside taverna at the entrance to the village about 200 metres away, but to return to Lepetimnos turn left along the road for five minutes until you come to a large Sikaminea-Kapi Trekking Trail sign on the right.

Take the small footpath running diagonally down to the right just before the sign (there is also a new fingerpost here). In five minutes turn right where another path joins from the left, go down, and almost immediately go left at the next T where there is another fingerpost. In five minutes turn left again at another T. Follow the path along, with a wall on the left.

** Now follow the section of the previous walk between double asterisks**

Turn left on to the road and walk uphill for five minutes (a concrete surface begins after a few metres) until it bends round to the right.

There is a large rock on the left-hand side of the bend: immediately before it turn left up stone steps leading to a path. Follow this for five minutes; it leads along the edge of a valley and then turns left under the wall of the churchyard to come out in Lepetimnos village by the church gate.

Western Lesvos

Mega Lakkos (Μέγα Λάκκος)

Duration 1½ - 2¼ hours depending on route

The walk to Mega Lakkos makes a pleasant respite from the car if you are spending a day in the west of Lesvos, perhaps visiting the Petrified Forest and Skala Eresou.

Thanks to Sylvia Cook of Greek-o-File for telling me about this walk. The descriptions and directions, however, are mine, so if you get lost blame me. Μέγα Λάκκος literally means 'big pit', or 'big hole'. In fact it is a

series of three waterfalls in the mountains between Antissa and Eresos which are reputed never to dry up. These pictures were taken in mid-October 2004, at the end of a dry summer and before the start of the autumn rains, so the claim is probably true.

The beginning of the walk is exactly 4km from the main road junction 2km south-west of Antissa, where the right hand fork leads to the petrified forest and Sigri, and the left to Eresos.

Take the Eresos road, and in 4km park by the road side where a track leads off downhill to the left between concrete gateposts. There is now a brown sign pointing the way on a rock just on the Eresos side of the entrance. (Be careful not to obstruct the entrance - it is used by local farmers visiting their olive groves and flocks)

The track winds down to reach the foot of the valley in about ten minutes: Lesvos's main windfarm, on a ridge behind Antissa, can be seen away on the left. Cross a concrete bridge, follow round left past a nature reserve plan, and climb past a ruined barn with an olive grove down on the left.

At a fork after five minutes keep left and then follow the track round to the right above cattle sheds, until in ten minutes it crosses a ridge and farm buildings appear in the valley down to the right. Walk down the track towards the buildings for about ten minutes to come to a fork. (on the way you may meet a small, very friendly and extremely shaggy white dog in an untidy oil drum 'kennel')

Here you have a choice between two routes:- a) the quick and easy, and b) the longer and rather more difficult.

a) For the shorter route go right, leaving the large animal shed on your left and a large water cistern on the right, and walk down past the small whitewashed farmhouse towards the small cottage beyond it.

Cross the stream (in October 2004 there was a single narrow plank forming a bridge here, and there were fresh-water crabs and frogs in the pool to the left), climb up to the gate, and follow round to the right of the cottage (5 mins).

Walk on along a path above the stream for another five minutes until you arrive at the ruins of a water mill at the foot of the lowest waterfall. There

are a few large tree-stumps here which make useful tables for an informal picnic. (Note that I last did this walk in October 2004 - I am told that the landowner has made improvements to this area since then)

To get to the upper falls go up to the left of the mill, and along a narrow path through a small gate leading to a large pool at the foot of the second fall. Through most of the year it is easy to step across the outflow of the pool to a large flat rocky area where there is a much better view of both the upper and lower falls.

b) NB: I have not tried this longer route in wet weather, and it may not be viable when water levels are high.

Instead of forking right stay on the main track and leave the large animal shed on your right. It drops down to the valley and runs along with a stream on the right.

After ten minutes the track bends right across the stream, through a gate, and continues along the other side. It bends away to the right and winds steeply uphill, with the windfarm coming back into view far away on the left. Go on over a ridge (5 mins) and drop down with more buildings in view ahead.

Ignore a track leading off to the left and continue down to reach another stream in ten minutes (this is the one that feeds the waterfalls). Follow the track across (there are rudimentary stepping stones) and follow it back uphill until it finishes at a group of sheep-pens and sheds.

These are above the falls, and by going to the left of the sheds and working your way diagonally down the sheep paths you soon come to the rocky area by the pool with the main falls on your right.

Cross at the lower end of the pool, pick up the narrow path to the mill, and return by route a) (in reverse!)