

Walk 2 – to Agios Vasilios and Lapathos Beach

Symi

START POINT: Lefteris's Kafenion

GRADE Moderate/difficult TIME: 3hours each way

This walk is from the top of the Kali Strata in Horio up to what is probably the best Viewpoint on the island (Walk 1) and then on old kalderimia and footpaths across the island to the monastery of Agios Vasilios perched on the edge of a cliff overlooking the secluded Lapathos Beach on Symi's West Coast. It takes in some of the most spectacular landscapes on Symi including the Vasilios Gorge. The walk to Ag Vasilios is 'moderate' but the drop down to Lapathos beach is very steep, a mixture of rock scrambling and loose scree path. There is little shade. One option is to do the walk one-way having already arranged for the return to Yialos with the round-the-island boat trip which makes a BBQ stop at Lapathos Beach once a week.



Starting from Lefteris's Kafenion (1) just below the last steps at the top of the Kali Strata, follow the directions for [Walk 1](#) up to the small tree and the trig point at the Viewpoint above Horio (2)^{ref}

N	36°	36'	38.3"
E	27°	50'	00.6"

height: 180 metres



⊕ continue uphill and almost immediately go through a chain-link gate onto the open mountain and within a few metres to a fork in the kalderimi^{ref}. Take the 'straight-ahead' option rather than going up to the left.

N	36°	36'	37.8"
E	27°	49'	59.6"

⊕ Follow the easy upward gradient of the rocky kalderimi (3) to the small church of Ag Paraskevi above to the left (4), with a shady courtyard under a spreading oak tree^{ref}

N	36°	36'	29.9"
E	27°	49'	41.5"

height: 217 metres



⊕ From Ag Paraskevi the kalderimi has been newly rough-paved with stone. Continue on this, passing a newly built house on the left with extensive newly enclosed terraced fields and then passing a dirt path off to the right^{ref}.

N	36°	36'	28.2"
E	27°	49'	35.8"

⊕ continue on the paved kalderimi, more steeply, through a series of hairpin bends up to the tarmac road opposite the monastery enclosure of Mihail Periviotis^{ref}

N	36°	36'	24.1"
E	27°	49'	24.4"

height: 274 metres

⊕ at Mihail Periviotis turn left along the tarmac for a few yards and at the end of the monastery enclosure^{ref} turn RIGHT onto a concrete road.

N	36°	36'	23.7"
E	27°	49'	26.1"

⊕ it reaches the highest point on the walk soon after turning onto the concrete road, marked by a transit van chocked up and used for agricultural storage(5) Continue along the concrete road as it drops down gradually through the small, scattered rural community of 'Lower' Ksissos.

height: 280 metres



⊕ ignore the turning off left and continue along the concrete road as it winds very gradually downwards through the settlement to its end at the gates to the enclosure around a house.

height: 254 metres



⊕ look for the broken, loose path marked by arrows and red dots going steeply down to the left^{ref} between the house enclosure and the chain-link fence of an agricultural enclosure (6).

N	36°	36'	08.1"
E	27°	49'	13.4"

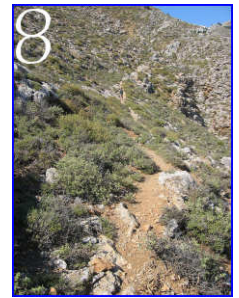
⊕ from here on you are on a proper mountain path marked periodically by red blobs. The path first drops down to the bottom corner of the chain link fence of the enclosure of the house where it turns sharply to the right to follow the fence with a steep drop into the beginnings of the Vasilios Gorge on your left (7).



N	36°	36'	04.0"
E	27°	48'	09.9"

⊕ follow the fence around until the path drops steeply into a dry stream bed^{ref}. *NOTE: much of this short section of path requires sure footedness and confidence. If you have difficulty here you are likely to find the final drop down the cliff to Lapathos Beach a problem.*

⊕ cross the stream bed and climb out on the other side – look for the red blobs to find the correct line of the path going up to the left. The path rises steeply out of the stream bed and then descends gradually across the sage and oregano covered hillside (8) high above the bed of the gorge which drops away steeply to the left.



N	36°	35'	54.4"
E	27°	49'	03.0"

⊕ The hillside is open with little shade and can be very hot, particularly on the way back up in the heat of the late afternoon – photo(8) shows the uphill climb on the way back. However, good shade in a spectacular setting can be found under a solitary tree along the path at:^{ref}

height: 200 metres

⊕ drop into and cross another dry gulley – a waterfall when the stream is flowing in winter ^{ref}

N	36°	35'	47.4"
E	27°	48'	56.1"

⊕ shortly after, reach a point ^{ref} where the path starts to drop down to the right as Lapathos Beach comes into sight for the first time between the steep cliffs of the final section of Vasilios Gorge off to the left (9).

N	36°	35'	44.0"
E	27°	48'	51.3"



⊕ follow the path as it starts to drop down steeply to the right over exposed rock strata, in places over broken, loose ground (10).



⊕ red blobs help to locate the path as it threads increasingly rightwards and drops into the head of another small side-gorge^{ref} before following the rock strata at lower level (11) and entering a short section through juniper woodland.

N	36°	35'	42.4"
E	27°	48'	44.9"



⊕ shortly after going into the trees the path splits(12)^{ref}. The best option in order to find the start of the next section of path is to take the right hand fork, kinking sharply to the right and not very obvious. The 'straight-on' option, initially broader, starts at large rocks on the left of the path with a great viewpoint of the high cliffs of the Vasilios Gorge.

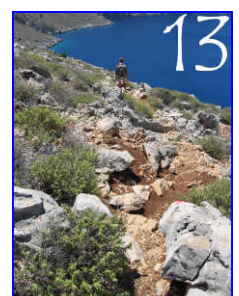
N	36°	35'	39.9"
E	27°	48'	44.9"



⊕ taking the right hand fork, the path very soon comes out of the trees with a derelict settlement on the left (from which the other path emerges).

height: 131 metres

⊕ At this point the path can be difficult to pick up. Walk straight ahead for about 100 metres and look out for small cairns and red spots which pick out the path as it meanders gently downhill through sage and oregano scrub and low karst-like limestone rock, heading towards the sea. Once picked up, the path becomes easy to follow with the help of the markings and stones polished by many feet (13)



- ⊕ continue picking your way gradually downhill on the 'thin', winding, path over rocky ground. As it gets closer to the sea it trends to the left, and becomes slightly steeper, zig-zagging downwards between rocks
- ⊕ As the path reaches the coast there are views over the Ag Vasilios monastery to the beach far below (14).



- ⊕ You then very soon come to the top^{ref} of the steep stone steps (15) down to the right to the pleasantly simple monastery and church perched on the edge of the cliff. This is a worthwhile destination for a walk even if you don't choose to go down the steep descent to the beach.

N	36°	35'	25.6"
E	27°	48'	44.3"
height: 64 metres			

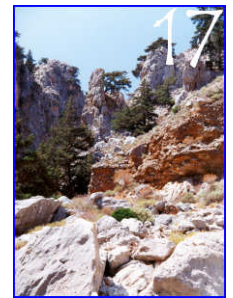


- ⊕ walk back up the steps from Ag Vasilios and, to go down to Lapathos Beach, turn right and continue along the clear but narrow path between large rock slabs parallel to the edge of the cliff.

- ⊕ The way down to the beach is a steep scramble, first down a fairly precipitous rock gully and then on loose scree material(16). It doesn't require any specialist technical skills such as rock climbing but it does require use of hands and feet and a degree of confidence and sure-footedness. As is usually the case with a steep descent like this, the footing is easier coming back up than going down.



- ⊕ While on the beach it's worthwhile taking time out from swimming and relaxing to take a walk up the Vasilios Gorge. The cliffs look even more spectacular from the floor of the gorge than from above(17). Be aware that it is very hot in the gorge - little if any breeze and a lot of heat radiated from rock-faces. As an alternative way back for the more energetic with a reasonable level of rock scrambling skill, go up the gorge until you see the side gorge coming in high above on the left. Climb up the rock-face into the side-gorge and then follow it up until it intersects the path just above the juniper wood(11)



[See the detailed route of this walk in Google Earth](#)



Notes of caution

Though the first part of this walk is fairly easy-going underfoot, parts of it are on broken rocky ground and the final section down to the beach is a steep descent of a gully in the cliff with rock-scrambling and a loose scree path. Most people would therefore choose to wear boots or walking shoes. However, it can be done in walking sandals such as Teva or Merrell. Urban sandals, flip-flops and slip-on shoes are definitely NOT suitable footwear.

It is a long walk, much of it is without shade. In particular the climb back up from the beach can be very hot and energy-sapping in the afternoon sun. So, like all walks in Greece, in the height of summer it can cause dehydration. It is therefore important to set a comfortable pace and to carry plenty of water for your needs to get both there and back.

GPS references are given using the common GPS default datum WGS 84 (World Geodetic System 1984) - degrees, minutes and seconds. The final digit is included for completeness but is shown in grey to indicate that it cannot be relied upon as accurate due to the degrading of the satellite data.



Walks on Symi

By Barry Hankey

Other walks starting from Horio
 Walk 1: Horio to the Viewpoint
 Walk 3: Horio to Agios Emilianos
 Walk 4: Horio to Nanou