

AFISSOS WALKING GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

Our guide has been written for the enjoyment of our fellow visitors to the Afissos area. We have described eleven walks of between about 45 minutes and 2 hours around Afissos, Lefokastro and Kala Nera. We hope you find the guide useful and enjoy the walks.

We make no charge for our guide, however you may feel able to help with animal welfare in the area by making a small donation. Please see Sandy, your Sunvil representative for details.

You will be able to follow all walks from the narrative text, however you might consider buying the "Road Edition map 33" covering the Pilion, which shows most of the walks.

Whilst the map is much better than any previously available for the area it is not as comprehensive as an OS map of a similar scale as many useful landmarks, small roads, and other features are not shown. The footpaths shown on the map indicate the general direction of the route only.

THE WALKS:

AFISSOS to AFETES

We have described two walks up to the village of Afetes, about 230 metres (700ft) altitude above Afissos. The short walk (1) which is mainly on a quiet tarmac surfaced road takes about 50 minutes. The longer walk (2) is mostly through woodland and olive grove, although there is a section on a quiet road towards the end of the route, and takes about 1hr 20 minutes. The starting point for both walks is the square in Afissos. If you make a round-trip, combining walks 1 and 2, remember that we have described both from Afissos, so you will have to look for landmarks in reverse order on one leg of the journey. If you do make a round-trip, we suggest the woodland walk up (2) and shorter walk down (1).



Afissos, a view of the village

1. AFISSOS to AFETES - Short route Duration about 50 minutes.

Start at the square in Afissos, walk up past the hotel Katia and the church with the cypress trees, at the top of the street turn right. After 50 metres, opposite a house with a black painted gate and vines over the courtyard, turn sharp left up a narrow concrete paved road. This zigzags very steeply up past the old school and a number of new houses. After passing the last two newly built houses, look diagonally to the right and you will see a narrow footpath entering the olive grove. Take this and follow for about 150 metres and you reach a tarmac road. Join the road and continue uphill. A road joins from the right, (this is an alternative route back down to the southern end of Afissos). The road climbs less steeply and you are now walking along a ridge with olive groves dropping away on either side. Pass a small building with a hydrant beside it then past a pylon. Pass the Madalina Studios on your left, and then take the track to your right, alongside the cemetery wall. This track is part of an old mule path (kalderimi). Continue, ignoring track joining from the right and shortly you reach a small paved lane. Turn left, walk just a few metres, cross a bridge and climb up the newly restored mule track to a taverna. Passing the taverna take the right hand lane which leads to the church (look at the nicely restored marble carvings on the wall) and on to the main square. Here there is a small general store and a couple more tavernas. If you have the chance to go into the taverna, behind the fountain, have a look at the superb black and white marble floor.

2. AFISSOS to AFETES – Woodland walk. Duration about 1 hr 20 minutes.

From the Afissos village square, walk south along the sea-front towards Abovos beach, passing the O Faros restaurant and the Maistrali Hotel. At the Marabu restaurant turn left along the small concrete paved lane. After about 400 metres the lane turns sharp right. Leave the lane here and go straight ahead on a cart track. After 10 metres the track forks, go right, passing some farm buildings on the left and climb steadily. In about 10 minutes

you pass a pylon, then after another 5 minutes a track joins from the left. After a further 15 minutes a track joins from the right and looking left you see Afetes on the hillside. A steady 10 minute climb brings you to the road. (Note: there is an electricity meter set on a concrete post here – a good landmark for the return journey). Turn left and an easy 15 minute walk brings you to the village. As you approach Afetes, you will see a concrete paved road to the left. This goes down to the lower part of the village. Keep on the upper road and carry on, a road joins from the right. Continue past a nicely restored stone house with a new stone roof, then after the next house with the wire panel fence, take the narrow lane sharp left. Go right, down hill past a ruined mansion, right again past the old olive oil factory and right again along a newly surfaced section of the lane, then climb up the cobbled mule path to the square.

3. AFISSOS to LEFOKASTRO Duration about 40 minutes.

From Afissos village square, walk south along the sea-front, passing the O Faros restaurant and the Maistrali Hotel. Go onto Abovos beach and walk along as far as the ‘Tropic Beach Club’ (yellow sunshades). Take the small lane on the left and then join the road, walk uphill to the telegraph pole with the mirror. Follow the road to Lefokastro. On the way you pass two lovely beaches which have plenty of tamarisk trees for shade. These beaches are a lot quieter than Abovos, but there are no facilities or tavernas. There are a couple of tavernas in Lefokastro and in the high season a mini market is open. At the southern end of the waterfront you will usually find a local man selling olives and other produce from his garden.

An alternative route into Lefokastro: Add extra 5-10 minutes

As you approach Lefokastro just about 50 metres before the ‘SLOW / ΑΡΤΑ’ sign you will see a large new house on the left. Just before the house take the cart track left and follow until it abruptly ends after only about 25 metres. Look left and you should see a very narrow, rocky footpath descending steeply into the olive grove. Once in the olive grove, the path is very indistinct but climb to the left and keep the small low wall to your right. Keep going along with a wire fence now to the right, pass a small house and you reach a cart track. Turn right and after 50 metres turn left, cross a small bridge over a (usually dry) stream. Go down to the bed of the stream, which doubles as a road and walk on to the sea front alongside the Olympia restaurant. (NOTE: This path has become overgrown and is very difficult now.)

3a. LEFOKASTRO to AFISSOS Duration about 40 minutes.

This is walk 3 in reverse for guests at Lefokastro. Take the lane at the northern end of the village, sign-posted Afissos. Walk uphill passing the church on the right and continue on the road as it passes the two beaches. After 20 minutes start a steady climb. Just past the house at the top of the hill, Sofias House, turn left up a narrow lane and you reach the chapel of Prof Ilas. Continue on the track, past a security post and along to a gate. Look right and you will see a narrow path towards a small bungalow. Take this and when you reach the bungalow follow the narrow concrete path with steps downhill, passing a small stone built house left. At the point where the concrete path turns sharp left, look to your right and see a footpath descending through the olives. Follow this, down to a wire fence, go right and continue on the path, up a couple of stone steps and continue through the olive grove. Presently you reach a wider track beside a large house with a high wall, continue for a few minutes and you reach a road. Follow the road steeply down hill, walk past the beachside tavernas, then uphill passing the Maistrali Hotel. Five minutes walk along the waterfront brings you to the small shady square at the centre of Afissos.

4. AFISSOS to KRITHARIES Duration about 1 hour 20 minutes

This walk takes you to the almost deserted hamlet of Kritharies. There are some lovely coastal and mountain views and most of the walk is through olive groves and lightly wooded country.

A pleasant walk would be up to Kritharies, then return, taking the fork (*) to Lefokastro, then return to Afissos by Walk 3a.

Start off as walk 3 above, joining the Lefokastro road after the chapel of Prof. Ilas. At the end of the first beach the road rises, look for a narrow concrete paved lane to your left. A good landmark is the overhead power line, which follows the lane up hill. Climb steeply up the lane (see the initials MN 1998 marked in the concrete) and after five minutes or so you will pass a house on the right. The concrete surface gives way to unmade cart track, but is easy going. Keep climbing gently, you will see a large white house with a stone roof, below and to your right. The track now swings left, inland, and another track joins from the right (* this is the route to Lefokastro). After a few metres you reach a ‘T’ junction, turn right and continue uphill, there is a simple post and wire fence to your right. A track joins from the left and the olive groves give way to rough scrub for a while. Pass a pylon and re-enter the olive groves. Presently you reach a few houses and a small vineyard on the right, this is the hamlet of Kritharies. Return as you came or take the alternative track (*) and go on to Lefokastro.

[You can make a long round trip via the Argalasti road and then on a small lane to Lefokastro. It is about 6 km and will take around 1.1/2 hours. It involves walking most of the way on roads and there is little shade. From Kritharies, continue on the track, past a large white house, bear right between a corrugated sheet shed and a small bungalow. Continue on the track, passing a water cistern. The track goes around the head of the valley, after about 20 minutes you pass a jumble of farm buildings and reach the main Argalasti road. Turn right and walk along the main road for about 20 minutes (This road can be very busy) then take the lane right, sign-posted to Lefokastro. This is a quiet narrow road mainly through open country, taking you down to the waterfront at Lefokastro.]



On the water front at Lefokastro

4a The above walk starting from Lefokastro.

Duration about 35 minutes.

Start from the waterfront at Lefokastro, walk along the road sign-posted Afissos, passing the taverna on the corner and the church to your right. After about 200 metres you come to an impressive new house on the left with a buff coloured stone wall. Take the narrow concrete track to the right opposite and climb for about 3-4 minutes. At the fork take the right hand, unmade track steeply up through the olive grove. After 5 minutes you reach a junction (* see Walk 4) turn right and follow the walk as above.

5. LEFOKASTRO to KALAMOS

Duration 1 hour 15 minutes

This is a coastal walk through olive groves to Kalamos, an attractive and very quiet seaside village. From the southern end of the sea-front at Lefokastro, walk up the paved road, signposted Argalasti. After 5 minutes you will see a telephone box, take the small lane to the right, pass a fountain and join the kalderimi down to the beach. Walk along the beach, (averting your eyes - or not - as this is an unofficial naturist beach!). At the end of the beach, about 25 metres in from the telegraph pole and in line with the first olive tree you will see a very narrow path through some bushes on your right - this is sometimes rather difficult to locate (hence the detailed instructions!). Take this path which climbs steeply for a couple of minutes then levels out a little and meanders along through olive groves and bushy scrub. After 5 minutes or so the path begins to descend, you pass a small cove below, with brilliant turquoise water. Continue for a few minutes into more open olive groves, there are nice views of Lefokastro from here. Pass another small cove and after about 15 minutes you come to a cart track. Turn left, walk uphill on a narrow concrete path, join a cart track and continue for about 200 metres to a junction. Turn right and follow this track for about 15 minutes and you pass a group of houses behind a small beach. Go uphill, passing a partially built house on the right, there is a short stretch of concrete surface which soon reverts back to dirt road. Pass a couple of houses on the left and at a fork junction go right. After about 200 metres the track narrows to a footpath and passing between a small group of houses you reach a tiny fishing harbour. Walk along the seafront and onto the small beach, pass a few cottages, then onto the beach again. At the end of the beach bear left onto a paved lane, walk past the Hotel Kalama and the Gallini taverna and mini-market. Cross over a small bridge and you reach the waterfront at Kalamos.

6. KALA NERA to AG. ATHANASIOS, PINAKATES STATION and on to MILIES on the old railway track.

Duration about 1 hour and 45 minutes.

This walk is a mix of old mule track (kalderimi) and an easy stroll along the railway line up to Milies station and on to Milies village centre. It is best not to do this walk on Saturday or Sunday, when the trains run. Start the walk from the Jet Oil petrol station on the main road behind Kala Nera. About 10 metres south from the petrol station you will see a mule track, sign-posted to Pinakates. Follow this well shaded kalderimi up through the olive groves passing a couple of goat enclosures. The path now narrows, cross over a dirt road and join the recently restored mule track. Shortly you come to a large concrete water cistern, go straight ahead on the dirt road, keeping the outcrop of rock to your right. After 50 metres, just opposite a small building you will see the mule track continuing up, to your right. Keep climbing and shortly you will come to a group of houses. The kalderimi crosses the railway line over a small bridge. Just before the bridge go left onto the railway line. Here

you will see the station for Pinakates on the left. You should go right, under the bridge and follow the railway line along to Milies station. (from this point about an hour). Along the way you will see some fine, nineteenth century railway engineering including a couple of interesting bridges, and have good views over Koropi and Kala Nera. At Milies station you will have to walk up into the village. Leave the station walk up hill for about 100 metre to a phone kiosk. Here you will see a mule track left, sign-posted ΠΙΡΟΣ ΠΛΑΤΙΑ (To the square) After a steady 10 minute climb you reach the centre of Milies. There are several shops, bakery, kafeneon and tavernas and the magnificent church of Aghios Taxiarchis. (You can return to Kala Nera by a different route – see Walk 9)

If you don't want to go all the way along to Milies, you can make a short round-trip, back to Kala Nera: After joining the railway at Pinakates station, go right, under the bridge towards Milies and walk along the track, crossing a splendid viaduct, to the next bridge (about 10 minutes). Here leave the railway and you will see the mule track to your right, follow this downhill and you will reach the main road about 200 metres south of where you started out. Any of the small lanes on the opposite side of the main road will take you to the waterfront at Kala Nera.

7. KALA NERA to VIZITSA Duration about 2 hours.

This walk takes you up to the delightful mountain village of Vizitsa. Here there are many fine eighteenth century merchants' houses, some of which have been carefully restored, and converted into guest houses or hotels. Start the walk from the main road at Kala Nera. Approximately half way between the Jet Oil and Shell petrol stations, and opposite a small Estate Agent office there are two lanes leading up into the olive groves. Take the right-hand, unmade track, keeping close to the goat pen on your right. At the end of the goat pen look for a large flat rock with a yellow arrow pointing to a narrow footpath alongside a wire fence. After 100 metres you come to the paved kalderimi, follow this up, after 10 minutes, pass between a group of houses and across a dirt road. Continue on the kalderimi, and when you reach a grey house with lattice bars across the windows, go left and uphill (don't go along the inviting path straight ahead). After about 10 minutes steady climb you come to a drinking fountain and the bridge across the railway. Look back for some nice views of Kala Nera and Koropi. From here the kalderimi is a little overgrown but still easy to follow. The olive trees thin out a little, offering some lovely coastal views. Cross the dirt road and see the kalderimi continuing opposite. Shortly you pass a disused water-mill, the 20ft diameter wheel still in place. The mill-house itself has been restored, as has a short section of the kalderimi, which runs alongside. Cross a dirt road, the path continues to the left of a low wall. The mule path has been restored recently but is quite overgrown in places. After about 200 metres you come to a dirt road, cross over and walk to the right of a huge concrete water cistern.. Look for the kalderimi continuing on the right alongside the wire fence.



A restored mansion at Vizitsa

After about 10 minutes walking the track starts to descend, look over to Milies to your right and Vizitsa ahead (This section of kalderimi is now very overgrown in places). Walk down to a road, turn left, past a small chapel and water fountain on the right. Continue on the road and after 5 minutes you will see way-marks to the left, at the apex of a sharp bend, follow this track and shortly you come to a restored mule path. Keep to the higher path with the low wall to your right, presently you come to a small bridge over a ravine. Cross the bridge and begin to climb up through chestnut and oak woods. About 15 minutes after crossing the bridge you come to a point where the path has been lost in a land-slip, look up to you left to see the continuation of the track. (A bit of scrambling is required here). After a further 10 minutes, pass alongside the church and reach the lower square of Vizitsa, there is a village plan here showing places of interest. Walk straight up 20 metres to the main square where there are a couple of tavernas. Do spend some time looking at the beautifully restored houses.

7a. VIZITSA to KALA NERA Duration 2 hours

If you don't want to return wholly by the same route you can take this alternative for part of the way:

From the lower square of Vizitsa, walk down in the

direction of Milies, after about 200 metres, next to the Georgios Taverna take the small paved road on the right. The road descends steadily meandering down the hillside. There are some fine views across to Milies and towards the coast. See the small house built into the vertical cliff opposite. 25 minutes from the start of the walk you come to the bottom of the valley and start the climb up. Soon you reach a small chapel and drinking fountain. Here you have a choice of routes, rejoin the mule track (signpost to the right) or stay on the road. Staying on the road, continue along the side of the valley, through the olive groves and open scrub. After 10 minutes you pass a junction to the left, keep straight on and shortly you come to the disused water-mill on your left. Rejoin the mule path here and continue down, crossing the railway line and continuing on to the main road at Kala Nera. (As narrative to walk 7 in reverse). The lane by the Estate Agents office will take you down to the sea-front at Kala Nera.

8. KALA NERA to KOROPHI (Boufa) Duration about 1 hour.

This is an easy stroll through shaded olive groves to Koropi, although you do have to walk along the main road for about 500 metres. Start off on the sea front at Kala Nera, walk south passing the Army camp and on past the Okinalis accommodation. Take the narrow lane left and follow this as it meanders through shaded olive groves. Stay on the main track, don't be tempted off either side as all these tracks lead to houses or just peter out in the olive grove. After about 40 minutes you reach the main road. There is a general store and mini market here for refreshments. Turn right, walk along the main road for about 10 minutes and you reach the sign-posted lane to Koropi beach. There are several tavernas on the beach.

9. MILIES STATION TO KALA NERA Duration about 1 hr 30 minutes

This is one of the best walks, almost entirely on very well preserved kalderimi with some short sections of cart track or narrow footpath. Start from Milies station, walk uphill for about 200 metres and, just past the café TO PEMA you will see the mule path to your right. Follow this down hill passing a drinking fountain on the left. There is an irrigation channel left, this crosses the path and continues on the right. Walk past a group of houses and emerge into the olive grove. The path swings right, then zigzags steeply down hill and shortly you cross a small bridge over a ravine. Continue on the path as it climbs gently along the hillside. After 20 minutes a cart track crosses, carry on straight ahead and after 5 minutes the path divides. Go right on the paved mule path, continue for a few metres and rejoin the cart track. Continue for 200 metres and the track forks again, go left and shortly the mule path reappears. After another 200 metres the path forks again, stay on the mule path to the right and descend through the olive groves. After about 20 minutes steady descent you meet a cart track, cross over, continue straight ahead and after 250 metres or so pass the cemetery and on to a concrete paved lane. Continue for about 200 metres and you reach the main road. Turn right, cross over and walk along to a turning to the left, this will take you to the centre of Kala Nera.

10. LEFOKASTRO to ARGALASTI Duration about 1 hr 50 minutes.

This walk takes you to the market town of Argalasti. Market day is Saturday. It is mostly on kalderimi, footpath or cart track, but you start off walking on a quiet paved road. Start from the seafront at Lefokastro, walk south and follow the sign-posted road to Argalasti. After 5 minutes you see a phone kiosk on the right, look left and you will see a paved mule path. Follow this uphill passing a large house left. After the house the path becomes a bit overgrown, but still easy to follow. When you reach the road, turn left and follow the road steeply uphill, around the double bend, then continue for about 15-20 minutes to the point where the road bends sharp left. There is a sign-posted unmade road right (Kalamos 3.5km). Look straight ahead and you should see the start of the mule path. Follow this well-preserved kalderimi as it descends gently and presently you come to a deeply shaded glade. Continue, passing a wood-yard to the left, then after about 10 minutes you reach a small bridge. Cross over and continue on the mule path towards a pylon. After 5 minutes the mule path stops abruptly, or rather is so overgrown as to be impassable. Look right and you see a cart track. Take this and follow through the olive grove. Shortly the mule path emerges from the scrub on your left. Continue to a fork junction by a large single olive tree. Look straight ahead and you will see a narrow footpath. Follow this climbing steadily and presently you see the houses of Argalasti ahead. After 10 minutes a cart track crosses, continue to a bridge, cross over and climb the mule path to the right. After 5 minutes you reach an open area, take the path to the left (There is another path right – careful on the way back to take correct path). Climb up a rocky gully then at the top, turn right. Continue for about 5 minutes and you pass a couple of houses right. A lane joins left, there is a group of cypress trees here. Take the lane left and follow for about 200 metres and you reach the town square. There are several tavernas, kafeneon and shops here as well as the main post office.



A typical section of kalderimi

11. ARGALASTI to KALAMOS Duration about 1 hour 20 minutes.

This walk takes you down to the sea at the tiny, quiet village of Kalamos. It is almost entirely on good footpath and kalderimi and is well shaded. Leave the square at Argalasti by the pharmacy and pass the post office on your left and after 200 metres you reach a junction. Go straight ahead, the house at the junction to your right. Follow the cart track down hill and after about 100 metres see the mule path off to the right. Follow this, and after a few minutes there is a fork by a wire fence. Go left, downhill along a rather overgrown path, but this soon clears a little and you cross a small stream. Bear right and follow the path as it meanders through shady woods and shrub. About 15 minutes after passing a pylon, cross another small stream (take a look at the ancient bridge). The path now climbs gently and widens to a very well preserved stretch of kalderimi. 10 minutes after crossing the stream you reach a cart track. Go left, walk a dozen paces and see the footpath continuing to the right (red paint mark on tree). The path is a bit overgrown but easy to follow. Presently you reach another cart track, turn right and follow this. At a junction go left, walk under power lines and after 100 metres reach a tarmac road. Walk down the road for about 5 minutes and after gentle right hand bend, look left and you should see a mule path.

Follow this, crossing the road and continuing on the mule path, which is concrete paved for a short distance, leading towards a house. The path continues to the left of the house, narrows a little and after 5 minutes pass some chicken pens, then a house and you reach the sea front at Kalamos. Turn right, walk across a small bridge and you reach a taverna and mini-market.

A very nice, long, round trip can be made by combining walks 10, 11 and 5 (in reverse). In all this would involve about 4 and a half hours walking, so best on a cool day.

NOTES:

1. Do not attempt any of these walks in beach shoes or sandals. Strong trainers are the minimum standard of footwear required. (Possible exceptions, walks 3 and 8). Take some water or other light refreshment with you. There are water fountains / taps on most routes where you can refill your bottles.
2. The duration times are based on our experience walking at a leisurely pace.
3. Time and distance references are from the previously mentioned reference point
4. The walks have been described and timed in one direction only. Remember where the small paths join cart tracks or roads, as on the return journey it is easy to miss your turning.
5. All the walks are suitable for reasonably fit people, however, they are not suitable for younger children or anyone with walking difficulties, due to poor surfaces, overgrown vegetation and steep climbs (descents) in a few places. The kalderimi can be quite slippery when wet, especially where there are fallen leaves.

WILDLIFE: You will encounter a variety of wildlife along the walks. Look out for buzzards in the mountains, jays and hooded crows as well as a number of smaller birds in woodland, wagtails and dippers are frequently seen near the streams. There are lots of tortoises in the area, avoid handling them as they carry the salmonella bacteria. Lizards of various sizes and colours will scuttle across your path and there are snakes, but most are harmless and will steer well clear of you. There are foxes, a little greyer in colour than the English fox there are pine martens and the similar rock (or stone) marten, a cat sized member of the weasel family and wild boar still roam the more remote woodland.

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FEEDBACK: We hope you enjoyed the walks and if you have any comments or suggestions, please contact us at: afissoswalking@btinternet.com