

## ***Walks from Andros Town***

There is a fantastic network of footpaths on Andros, with - unique in my experience of Greece - marked footpaths and a walkers map.

We discovered these walks during a 2 week stay at Karamanalis apartments in Andros Town (Chora), in late May 2004 and Sept/Oct 2005. These notes give you directions to the starting points of the marked routes, and some idea of what it's possible to do and what the terrain is like. They are designed to be used with the walkers map, which is easily available on Andros.

They all start from Chora, and none of them are more than 2 to 3 hours long. It would be possible to extend most of them to make much longer walks.

### ***Start of Route One***

This goes to Ipsilou, Lamira, Menites, Mesaria, Panachrantou monastery.

From Karamanalis apartments, the quickest way to pick up this route is from behind Niborio beach. At the Chora end of Niborio beach there is a small shopping street with a bakers, supermarket, CD shop, Karamanalis cycle hire shop, bookshop and supermarkets in it. On one side of the street is a run of tavernas (which face out on to a terrace and the sea the other side).

1. Go to the end of this street – past the garage – and you'll come to a bridge crossing a (mostly) dried up river bed going up to the left.
2. Keep to the left of the river (don't cross the bridge) and go along a small pavement by the side of some houses. This runs out quite quickly, and you'll have to walk along the river bed (not a good approach to this route if there's been lots of rain!)

3. 10 mins or so along the river bed a lane bisects the river, and you'll see a wooden bridge. To the left of this is a big wooden signpost for this walk (Chora – Lamira – Menites). Turn right at the bridge along the lane (don't continue up the river bed).
4. The lane (running roughly parallel with the beach) goes past house on your right, fields on your left. After a few minutes the lane ends, but immediately opposite the end of the lane is the start of route one. This is marked with a metal plaque with a red square and 1.

Route One can also be started from the centre of Chora, which is the official start of the route.

1. Go to the start of the pedestrianised main street in Chora (i.e. where it joins the road out of town).
2. Just past the bollards that mark the start of the pedestrianised street is the Eleni Hotel. Turn right here. There is a Route One marker on the side of the hotel.
3. Go down this lane for a few minutes, crossing an asphalt road, and continuing down the lane until you see another route one marker on a lane going off to your left.
4. Follow this lane, which runs between houses, for a few minutes. Look out carefully for a R1 marker on a lane going downhill to your right.
5. This takes you steeply down some steps until you come to the wooden bridge as described in point 3 above.

### ***Start of Route Two***

This route also starts behind Niborio beach, close to Route One. It goes to Apikia and Vourkoti, or down to Stenies and Gialia.

1. Start as for Route One, going past the beach tavernas and along the road which runs behind Niborio beach.
2. When you reach the river bed, cross the bridge and turn immediately left, so you are walking down the right river bank. On your left there's a small children's playground, and there are houses and a very local, old fashioned Kafeneion on your right.
3. Keep going for a few minutes until you come to a wall.
4. Turn right here and you are on Route Two. It is marked from this point.

### ***Start of Route Three***

This route starts from the far side of Paraporti Beach. It goes to Sineti and eventually all the way to Ormos Korthi.

1. From the central square in Chora go down the main steps to Paraporti beach.
2. At the bottom of the steps turn right and follow the road that runs by the side of the river.
3. Cross river at the new concrete bridge on your right.
4. Follow the road round to the right until you get to a small stone bridge (which ends in the road and doesn't seem to have any water under it)
5. The road branches here, but keep to the left, following the blue arrow. Follow this around the back of the Sports Stadium.
6. On your right, just before Paraporti Beach Taverna, is the start of route 3. This is marked with a plaque, but the path is easy to miss – it looks a bit as if it just runs between a couple of houses.

***OR*** you can get to it more quickly by following the start of the walk to Lidi Bay.

## **Start of Route Four**

This route starts from the cinema in Chora. It goes to Livadia and on to Panachrantou Monastery.

1. Go to the cinema in Chora (at top end of town, near bus station and health centre).
2. Take the footpath across the road from the cinema, which goes down towards the valley bottom.
3. Continue for 5 minutes or so until you come to a small bridge. Cross this and turn right along the concrete lane which runs alongside the river. In spring this was full of water and frogs, but by Sept it is completely dry.
4. Walk along this for 20 – 30 mins till you reach the main road at Livadia.
5. Turn right across the bridge, then immediately left. A red arrow on the bridge indicates the direction to go in.
6. Keep to the left on a concrete road running alongside a now dried-up river bed. Keep going along this for another 15-20 minutes.
7. Follow the main direction of the road, now becoming more of a path than a road. Cross a dry river bed, keep to the left.
8. You'll come to a river. Cross this, and on your right you will see the first marker for Route 4. It's a red triangle on its side.
9. Turn sharp right immediately by the marker, following the river upstream. (Don't go straight ahead up the more obvious track.) This path was very overgrown and didn't look passable when I did it. I had to negotiate fallen trees, cut branches, general undergrowth – but it *is* the path. There are router markers along it, and it gradually becomes clearer.

## **....Continuing on Route four towards Panachrantou monastery....**

10. The path starts to climb upwards quite quickly, becomes steps.
11. At the top of the first ridge you'll get a lovely view over Falika and up to Panachrantou monastery. Route 1 joins Route 4 at this point.
12. I went back at this point, but you can see the path clearly ahead going up steeply to the monastery. The steepest bit, but looked like you'd get fantastic views.

I walked back from (11) in 1 ½ hours.

This route is flat for the first 45 minutes or so as you go along the river bank and then quite a steep haul up. The initial bit of the river bank is shady and pretty especially in the spring (occasional traffic). The next stage (5, 6, 7) is hot and dusty and not so interesting. Once you're climbing up there isn't much shade, but you get fantastic views back to Chora and up to the Moni and the path becomes very scenic.

## Various short walks around Chora

### To Mesathouri, Ipsilo, Lamira (route one)

**Time:** About 2 ½ hours round trip.

**Terrain:** This is a good, slabbed path. Fairly easy walking, steps to start, then path winds round side of hill, then more steps. It's sheltered from sea winds, there is some shade from trees.

**To see:** very pretty walk. Lots of water, especially in and just after the village. Waterfalls, streams, walled gullies at side of paths (interesting irrigation features), fountains. Feels quite lush with lots of trees – fig, apricots. Lizards, flowers, hawks. Good views back over Chora.

**Facilities:** tavernas in Ipsilou, just off the path. Only open in season.

1. Go to start of Route one
2. Foot path is clearly marked and easy to follow. Continue along this path for about 20 to 30 mins, until you come to a small white church on your left. Turn right here.
3. Continue along the path, following markers which take you up steeply up to the left. As you come into the village the path turns into concrete steps. The village seems to be scattered houses – we didn't find a centre to it. Lots of barking dogs but all safely locked up!
4. Walk along the concrete steps for 5 mins or so, keeping an eye out for a marker taking you sharp left. (If you continue right at this point you can do the round walk which joins up with Route 2, see page 9)
5. The footpath emerges onto a road. There are no clear route markers here. Cross

road and take the path slightly to your left (not the more obvious one which is immediately opposite and goes straight up the hill).

6. Footpath goes across a bridge and past a fountain on your right. Follow this round and you'll see more route markers.
7. About 10 minutes up this path there's another wooden sign, showing continuation of path to Lamira. This little bit of path is very pretty, lots of little waterfalls and springs.
8. The route is now quite well marked, with wooden signs as well as R1 markers. Lots of washing places, streams, wells, trees. You go past a little well on your right with a wooden sign saying (in Greek) 'traditional fountain of Ipsilou' and shortly after that you come to some houses. Turn right here (don't continue straight on down the hill)
9. Follow the R1 marker and go right at the next fork in the road, and you'll come out on to an asphalt road. Turn left down the road (there's a R1 marker on your right)
10. Follow the road for a few minutes until you come to Panagia Church. There are wooden route signs here, and steps down through the wood.
11. You'll come to Plateia 28<sup>th</sup> October, with a large plane tree and some benches around it. It's close to an official looking building, with a large sign outside it.
12. Follow signs through on to another asphalt road. Cross this and pick up path again – it's marked. The footpath comes out close to a road, and on your right is a wooden sign post with 'pros Menites' on it.

I didn't get all the way to Menites, but talked to people who'd done the round trip Chora/Menites/Chora in about 5 hours (they said this was at quite a slow pace)

There are a couple of tavernas at Menites, and the bus from Chora goes there a couple of times a day.

A taxi from Chora to Menites cost 4.5 euros, and it should be possible to pick up R1 at Menites and walk back to Chora. I tried this but got lost, and on to R9 instead – which is very beautiful but not what I was aiming at! I went up much too high, then got lost in the maze of village footpaths, until (with some help from locals) I eventually picked up R1. This took me about 2 ½ hours but would be quicker if you found the right path!

### **To (near) Apikia (route two)**

*Time:* just over 2 hours round trip. Around 1 ¼ hrs to near Apikia (we didn't go right into the village), and 45 mins back.

*Terrain:* Lots of steps and all uphill. Quite rough underfoot, with slabs laid on edge. Need to concentrate on footing on way down. Path slightly overgrown, but easily walkable and not very strenuous. No shade until you get to the approach to Apikia.

*To see:* Great views back to Chora. Flowers, lizards, churches, lots of typical Andros stone walls with large flat stones. Also get good views down the valley to Ghialia. They bottle spring water at Sariza just by Apikia, and there is a major waterfall (at the right time of year) near Sariza.

*Facilities:* there's a taverna in Apikia

1. Go to start of route two.
2. Keep going straight up – the path is marked and easy to follow.
3. When you've gone over the top of the hill the path curves round towards Apikia. You'll have to go down the valley and back up the other side to reach the village – we turned back at this point. The path gets more wooded, shady and with streams near by at this point.

You can go back the way you came. Or you could continue along this route to Vourtoki. It's only about the same distance again, but you have to go right over the mountain to reach it – Vourtoki is on the other side.

Or you could do a round trip back to Chora through Stenies and Ghialia.

### **Walk to Aghia Tridha**

Aghia Tridha is the church on the hill above the far end of Niborio beach.

*Time:* about an hour round trip from Karamanalis apartments

*Terrain:* rough path, steep. No shade.

*To see:* Aghia Tridha and an old tower close by. Great views down to Chora and down into Ghialia Bay

*Facilities:* Café del Mar at start of footpath (but closed in May and Sept!) Taverna in Ghialia if you carry on further (but also not open out of season).

1. Walk along Niborio beach
2. When you reach the far corner of the beach a road goes off to your left to Apikia. Turn up this and almost immediately on your right there's a footpath. The start of the footpath isn't marked and is easy to miss.
3. The footpath basically goes straight up the hill, crossing the road, which zig zags up, at points but always continuing on the other side. It's reasonably easy to find.
4. Once you get to the top you'll see Aghia Tridha and a tower off to your right. A footpath goes up to these, but doesn't continue on anywhere else.
5. If you want to walk down to Gialia – where there is a taverna and a beach – follow the asphalt road round to the bend, and you'll see a rough track leading straight down. It's not a lot further.

From Gialia you can follow the path up to Stenies (see Stenies walk) and if you're really up for it on to Apikia and Voutourki. Or you could go to Apikia and back down route two. Or you could continue on to Pisso Gialia, following short cut below.

### **Continuation to Pisso Gialia beach**

1. Follow route as above. When you get to the taverna at Gialia continue along the road, which goes behind the beach and then turns to the left uphill.
2. After 5 to 10 minutes you'll come to a thin blue metal gate on your right, with some white steps leading up to a little church. There's a sign at the bottom saying 'pros aghia foteinee'
3. Follow these steps up to the church, and coming out of the left side of the church courtyard, you'll see steps going steeply down towards Pisso Gialia.
4. At Pisso Gialia there are two little bays. It's beautiful for swimming, but this beach isn't as quiet and secluded as it once was. In Sept 05 there was loads of building work going on behind it, with half a dozen large villas being built. (Sept 2011 much quieter and villas not so noticeable)

### **Walk from Stenies to Chora**

*Time:* about 2 hours including looking at village.

*Terrain:* quite easy walking. Decent paths, some climb but not a lot. Fair amount of shade in valley

*To see:* Stenies – the 'Captain's village' is very pretty and laid back. There are lots of steps and pathways – no cars or bikes allowed. Also lots of streams, gullies (and a water wheel we didn't manage to find). Not many people about – some women on their way back from church, a man with donkeys doing the

rubbish bin collections, a workman making concrete footpaths into more elegant paved ones (it's that sort of village). We were enough of a novelty as tourists for a woman to rush back indoors to announce that there were tourists going past.

There's also a communal outdoor laundry (still used), an old spaghetti factory and a large ruined tower. Very interesting and pretty village and well worth exploring.

*Facilities:* there is an unsigned very local Kafenion in the car park and an old fashioned, also unsigned, general store in the village itself. It's possible a taverna opens up at night but we didn't spot one.

1. Get a taxi from Chora to Stenies from the rank in the square by the health centre. It cost us 4.30 euros
2. We asked the taxi to stop at the 'plateia' and were dropped at a square/carpark on the lower road, at the entrance to the village. No cars, bikes, scooters can get into Stenies itself.
3. To get to the communal laundry follow the main pathway round and in a few minutes you'll come to a little square with the covered laundry immediately opposite. The general store is next to this. A little further round the same path is a small square (rectangle really) with trees and benches, next to the school playground.
4. If you carry on around this path you'll see the tower at the other end of the village, and the spaghetti factory ruins in the valley beneath you.
5. To find the path down to Ghialia, work your way down to the bottom of the village in the general direction of the spaghetti factory. (Or you could walk out to the tower and pick up the path by there).
6. At the bottom of the valley there's a bridge going over the river. Just before the bridge is a footpath going off to your left, marked

as route eight. (This is confusing as there's no route eight on the maps in this part of Andros, but never mind)

7. Follow this path as it goes up steps. It takes you out of the valley.
8. Path comes out on to the road down to Ghialia. There are some rooms to let scattered along this road. Go right along this road – there are still route eight markers at intermittent points.
9. After 5 minutes or so on this road, keep an eye out for some steps going down on your right. It has route eight markers on it, and goes down to the valley.
10. Follow this path along the river and out on to the beach at Ghialia. It comes out just after the bridge, by the side of the river. (The start of route eight *isn't* marked at this point, but is further along) The taverna is just the other side of the bridge on your right. It took us about 25 minutes to get down from Stenies to Ghialia.
11. Turn right and go past the taverna. As road goes round to the right, look for a steep track going straight up the hill. It's marked with a red arrow. It's roughly a 5-10 minute climb up this to Aghia Triada at the top.
12. Follow foot paths back down to Chora (reverse of Aghia Triada walk). It's around 25 minutes from here back to Niborio beach.

It's possible there is another pathway we didn't discover which runs along the valley bottom – the one we went on didn't look like it follows the route indicated on the map. But it will get you to Stenies!

### **Short walk to a church**

*Time:* This takes about 45 minutes round trip

*Terrain:* easy walk. Shady to begin with, path goes on stepping stones over the stream at points.

*To see:* church, stream, olive terraces

1. Walk along Niborio beach to near the end of the bay. There's a little café with tables out on the beach side of the road. Turn left here down a shady path running alongside a stream.
2. The path is marked by a white arrow and cross on the ground or walls at various points.
3. Follow path to where it splits. Take left (although the right path looks bigger it only goes to a house).
4. Almost immediately go right through a gate, following markers. Go up some steps and across olive terraces. There's a small holding on your left.
5. Follow path to church. It peters out after this.

### **Paraporti beach to Chora via river**

*Time:* around 45 minutes

*Terrain:* this is just a stroll, really, but it's a nice, easy, mainly flat walk along good paths. Quite shady.

1. From the central square in Chora go down the main steps to Paraporti beach.
2. At the bottom of the steps turn right and follow the road that runs by the side of the river.
3. Cross river at the new concrete bridge
4. Follow the road round to the right until you get to a stone bridge. Go right here.
5. Keep going straight on along this lane until you come to a bridge on your right, crossing the river.
6. There's a cobbled footpath leading you back up to Chora. You come out by the cinema (the start of route four).

## **Paraporti beach church**

This is the church you can see on the headland beyond Paraporti beach.

*Time:* 45 minutes round trip from square to church. Great views of Chora from the church.

*Terrain:* rough track through thorn bushes

1. At the far end of Paraporti beach there are some stone steps, leading on to this path. Just follow it along to the church.
2. You can also scramble down to the broad flat rocks along the headland. These are sheltered and popular for swimming and sometimes nude sunbathing.

## **Lidi Beach**

This is a beautiful, secluded cove just round the coast from Paraporti beach. In Oct 05, I never saw anyone else there. It's pebbles rather than sand – beautiful marble and quartz pebbles that look like chipped ice and mint imperials. It can be more sheltered than Paraporti beach if there's a wind.

*Time:* it took me just 30 minutes (quite fast walking) to get from Karamanalis apartments to the beach. Took a bit longer getting back.

*Terrain:* the path down to Lidi beach is tricky to find. It's narrow and steep, and thorn bushes encroach a bit.

1. Go to the far end of Paraporti beach. There are two paths here – *don't* take the most obvious steps going to your left (these just go to the church on the headland)
2. Instead look to the right, for a much fainter path that zig zags up the hill, towards the church on the hill, on the road to the heliport. The path comes out on this asphalt road, to the left of the church.

It's hard to spot the start of this path on the way back, as it is pretty much

indistinguishable from all the other little goat tracks that lead nowhere. Make a note of where it comes out, and take some visual references. I made a little cairn of stones to help me out! It is also just before some rather obscure white road markings.

3. Turn left, towards the heliport. After a few minutes, look out for a break in the low fence on your right. This is at the point where the wall on the left becomes higher and jagged, and just before a curve in the road.
4. Go through the break in the fence, and follow the track along the side of the road for a few minutes. You'll then see the start of a small path zig-zagging down the hill on your right.
5. This is marked by the occasional dot and arrow, and a small cairn of stones. It continues down to the flat rocks above the beach, where it peters out, but by now it's easy to scramble down the rest of the way.

I found it tricky to pick up the start of the path as you come back up from Lidi beach. It's useful to take some visual references as you go down, so you're aware of the route the path is taking. Also, keep an eye out for the little cairn of stones someone has made – this is a really useful guide. If you find you've strayed off the path it's worth back tracking and trying to re-orientate yourself. It's tempting to follow some of the other goat tracks – which look quite reasonable but all peter out into thorn bushes or rocks. And I can say from experience that scrambling through these isn't pleasant!



## **Livadia village**

*Time:* 1 hour round trip

*Terrain:* easy, flat along river, brief climb up to village

*To see:* church in village, village houses, frogs in river...views from village back to Chora.

1. As for start of route four: go to the cinema in Chora (at top end of town, near bus station and health centre).
2. Take the footpath across the road from the cinema, which goes down towards the valley bottom.
3. Continue for 5 minutes or so until you come to a small bridge. Cross this and turn right along the concrete lane which runs alongside the river.
4. Walk along this for 20 – 30 mins till you reach the main road and bridge just before Livadia.
5. Turn left up into the village.
6. Take a left turn down steps into the village at some point along this road (5 mins or so along it). These go down the valley and then up the other side.
7. As steps emerge out of village near a road, go left almost immediately down some other steps. These are quite substantial and major looking, and take you down and back out along the river road.
8. Follow this back to Chora the way you came.

## **Sineti**

This follows route three as far as Sineti.

*Time:* around 2 ¼ hours

*Terrain:* steep, cobbled steps. Exposed mountain side – no shade. Dramatic mountain scenery as you get near to Sineti. It's well route marked and easy to follow

*To see:* river valley, views down to Lidi bay, views over Chora, church, mountain views.

1. Go to the start of route three (or up short cut from end of Paraporti beach, turn right when you're on the heliport road, and pick up R3 on your left, just after church).
2. Cobbled steps go steeply up hillside and come out on the road. You can go along this to see the church and get good views back to Chora.
3. Footpath continues across the road, almost immediately opposite where it comes out. Steps steeply down to valley bottom. Pretty river. Lots of flat stones and bamboo.
4. You get good views here down to Lidi Bay. Footpath continues steeply up the other side until it hits another road. It took me 40 minutes from Karamanalis apartments to this road.
5. The path is clear, wide, comfortable, easy to follow. Climbs up the mountain, beautiful scenery. Follow this round until you meet the asphalt road going towards Sineti. It took me 1 ¼ hours to get this far.
6. The R3 markers disappear at this stage. Go right up the road, and continue until the village of Sineti comes in to view, sloping down the valley side on your left.
7. The village, like lots on Andros, is quite strung out along the valley side. If you go down into the village, then head to your right, roughly in the direction of the church, you will come to a little café.
8. Near the café there are steps that take you on the next stage of this walk, through the Dipotomia Valley (with its old windmills) and eventually on to Korthi.

## ***A couple of circular options:***

### ***Circular one***

This walk does a bit of R1 and R2. It involves walking along the road for some of the way, but it's not very busy. You get great views down to Giallia and across to Stenies, as well as back over Chora.

*Time:* about 1 ½ hours at an easy pace from Karamanalis apartments.

1. Follow R2 up the steps until you come to the first asphalt road.
2. Instead of continuing up the steps, turn right along the road. This is a quiet road, with posh villas along the right. It joins up with the busier road which runs along the top of the hill. Good views from here.
3. Follow the road round past the turn off for Stenies (on your left) to Aghia Triada church on the brow of the hill.
4. From here take the path down the hill above the power station, as described in 'Walk to Aghia Triada' on page 5.

### ***Circular two***

This round trip also combines R1 & R2.

*Time:* around 1 ½ hours easy pace from Karamanalis apartments.

1. Follow R1 as in 'Mesathouri, Ipsilo, Lamira' walk on page 3. At point 4, instead of turning left, continue along the path.
2. You'll come to a small well and washing place on your left. Follow the path round to the right, and it will lead out at a little church with a water spout in its courtyard. To your left is a ruined tower and a dove cot.
3. A wooden sign in the Church courtyard is marked 'to Chora' and points (in a slightly haphazard way) round to the right. Follow this path and keep going until you come out on a gravel road.
4. Follow the gravel road for 5 mins or so, keeping a sharp lookout for R2 steps, which turn off to your right. These are not easy to see and not marked at this point, but are the first path you come to on your right. You can then follow this path back to Chora.