

Walk 11: AGIASSOS • ASOMATOS • AG ANARGYRI • SIKOUNDA • IPPIO

See also photographs on pages 66, 72, 82

Distance: 10km/6.25mi; 2h

Grade: moderate, with an ascent of 90m/295ft and descent of 450m/1475ft

Equipment: hiking boots, sunhat, suncream, water, picnic (or have lunch in a taverna)

Transport:  to Ippio, off the Polichnitos road (a short

detour from Car tour 3 or 4); this is where the walk ends. At the entrance to the village catch the bus from Mytilene to Agiassos, to reach the start of the walk. If bus times are inconvenient, take a taxi up to Agiassos. (Check timetables at the island bus station in Mytilene; there are a few buses to Agiassos in the morning.)

This one-way walk is best started in the morning, to make use of the bus. Apart from an initial ascent to escape Agiassos, the rest of the way is generally downhill. This whole area is awash with olive groves, from Agiassos right down to Ippio and beyond to the shores of the Gulf of Gera. In the middle of all this is the delightful shady oasis of Ag Anargyri, a pleasant picnic spot. The only trouble is that it is also very popular with the Greeks themselves, especially at weekends, and they do not always picnic quietly. There is a taverna at Ag Anargyri, too, but it is seasonal. Out of season, the area remains fairly quiet.

Start the walk from the **BUS STATION** in **Agiassos** by following Walk 6 (page 64) to the 10min-point, where the *Sanatorio* road crosses overhead. Stay ahead here and start to descend, ignoring the Walk

6 path off left, and continue downhill on this wide cobbled trail with olive groves up to the left and down to the right. On reaching a crossing road (39min), turn right towards Asomatos, which is reached seven minutes later. Stay ahead to rise into the centre of **Asomatos** and, at the T-junction, go left to the village **CHURCH** (on your left; 49min). (A right turn at the T-junction would soon take you round to the village *platea*.) Turn right to ascend the street opposite the church, keeping right at the fork. Rise to a T-junction and turn left, to reach a **BROWN CHURCH** on the right three minutes later. (Walk 6 goes right uphill here.) Stay ahead to descend the *kalderimi* (old mule trail; also followed in

Asomatos church



Walk 9) and pass the shaded church of **Ag Konstantinos and Eleni** on the right. Meet a track (1h04min) and turn left, then immediately right, continuing along the *kalderimi*. After zigzagging downhill for five minutes, the trail descends more gently. Then the *kalderimi* ends. (The return path of Walk 12 joins sharply from the left here.) Stay ahead on a sometimes-cobbled trail, with a stream and a wall on your left. When the wall ends (1h 15min), take the path forking left towards the stream.* Cross the stream diagonally to the right and continue along the far side. There follows a short section of walking along stones on the left of the stream. Continue ahead on a path

*The less agile can stay ahead on the trail, cross the bridge, and turn left to meet the Ag Anargyri track; then turn left again to the grounds of the complex.

which rises slightly above the stream on the right. Enter the grounds of **Ag Anargyri** (1h23min; photo page 82), and continue past the **CHURCH** to the entrance of the complex. Follow the concrete track out of Ag Anargyri and ignore tracks off right to Mixou and Plati. But eight minutes from Ag Anargyri, turn right down the next track, to **SIKOUNDA**. Descend a pleasant shaded valley, to reach a square with a **FOUNTAIN** at the entrance to **Sikounda**. Swing left, then right, out of this *platea*, to walk through the sleepy village with its pastel-coloured houses and a *kafeneon*. Weave round the **CHURCH** on the left and soon reach **Ippio**. A garden, café and playground fill the left-hand corner at the T-junction with the main village road. Turn left and follow this road towards Agiassos and the **BUS STOP** on the edge of Ippio (2h).

