

## **Holy Monastery of Agia Varvara Roussanou in Meteora**



The Monastery of Agia Varvara Roussanou is one of the six active monasteries in Meteora and it is dedicated to Agia Varvara, who is commemorated by the Greek Orthodox Church on December 4th.

Its building complex covers the entire terrace of the long rock situated in a beautiful place within the green forest. The monastery was founded in 1529 A.D. by the brothers Ioasaph and Maximos from Ioannina.

The katholikon is dedicated to the Transfiguration of Christ (Metamorphosis tou Sotiros) and was built around 1530 A.D. above the ruins of an old Catholic monastery. The frescoes of the temple date back to 1560 A.D. decorated by an unknown artist of the Cretan painting school. The beautiful wall-paintings of the Katholikon were executed when the priest-monk Arsenios was the abbot of the monastery.

The monastery was a refuge for the poor people and families during the troubled

days. In the 19th century, the monastery declined and today it is inhabited only by a few monks.

The monastery consists of a three-storey building. On the ground level, there is the Church of the Transfiguration of Christ with several cells. The second and third levels are occupied with reception halls and an exhibition room. It is located towards the road from Kastraki to Meteora between the monastery of Anapafsa and Varlaam. It is accessed by several steps and a long bridge constructed in 1930.

The Holy Monastery of Roussanou may have received the name of the first probable hermit who settled on the rock.

Compared to other rocks where monasteries were built, one of Roussanou has a lower elevation, which makes it more accessible. The monastery was initially founded by monks and it suffered severe damage during World War II.

From time to time the monastery was used as refuge and shelter for the persecuted people during times of war. In 1757 a lot of people from Trikala took refuge in the monastery in order to survive from the pursuit by the Turkish pasha of the region. But also after the Greek-Turkish war in 1897, a lot of families from Kalampaka and Kastraki took refuge in the hospitable monastery where they could be safe.

It is perched on high rock located on the road from Kastraki to Meteora. The rock is lower than the rocks on which the rest of the monasteries are built but yet you have to climb some steps in order to reach it. It is also accessible from the road which goes to the Monastery of Agios Stefanos, through a short path.

The monastery today is inhabited by nuns and hosts a small ancient church and a museum with hand-made ecclesiastic pieces. The monastery has a round platform from which you can see many of the monasteries and the rocks.

— Source: [greekcitytimes.com](http://greekcitytimes.com)