

All the Paths North of Marin

Length: 7.3 miles

Time: About 3 hours

Difficulty: 5

Elevation Gain: 1,200 feet

**Starting Point: Solano Ave. and
The Alameda**

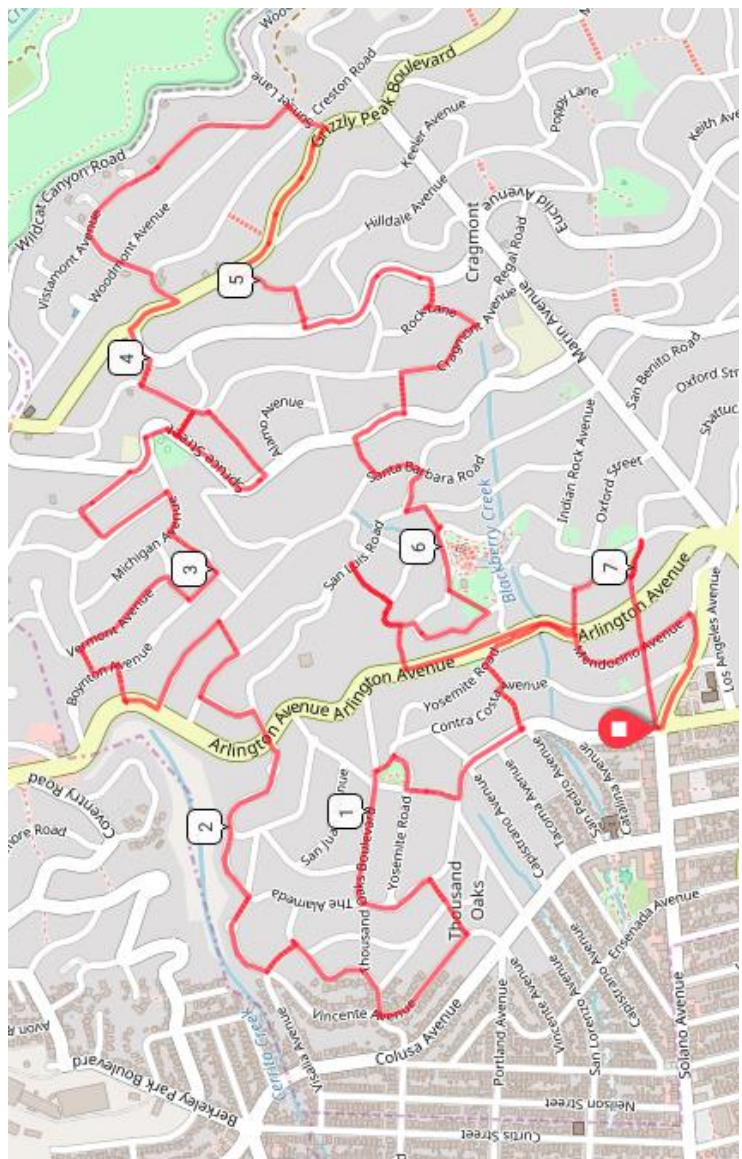
**Transportation: AC transit buses
7, 18, and 25 all stop on
Alameda or Solano near the
intersection. Parking is available
North on The Alameda.**

Overview:

This difficult, step-filled walk takes you on the multitude of fabulous paths in northern Berkeley. You'll explore the Thousand Oaks neighborhood, climb nearly to Tilden, and finally descend to return to your starting point, all in the most inefficient, looping, path-filled way possible, of course.

Directions and pictures:

Start at the intersection of Solano Ave. and The Alameda and head east (uphill) on the northern side of Solano. After one block, the sidewalk curves left and becomes Black Path, taking you up a slope to Mendocino Ave. Having completed your first path of many, turn left here, then left again where the quiet street ends at the busy Arlington Ave. After one block, make a slight left onto Yosemite Rd. Hopefully you are not yet tired of staying to the left—this is Berkeley, after all—so make another left turn almost immediately down Yosemite Steps. Jog right after one block to continue down a second block of concrete stairs, which returns you to Alameda. Turn right, then right again up Indian Trail, a bit after Capistrano Ave. This uneven path, marked by a historic concrete urn at the bottom, ascends granite steps, made from the plentiful rock in this area. You'll pass a small cave and climb some more steps, then emerge opposite Contra Costa Avenue. Turn right, then left at the sign for Great Stoneface Path, which runs through the eastern

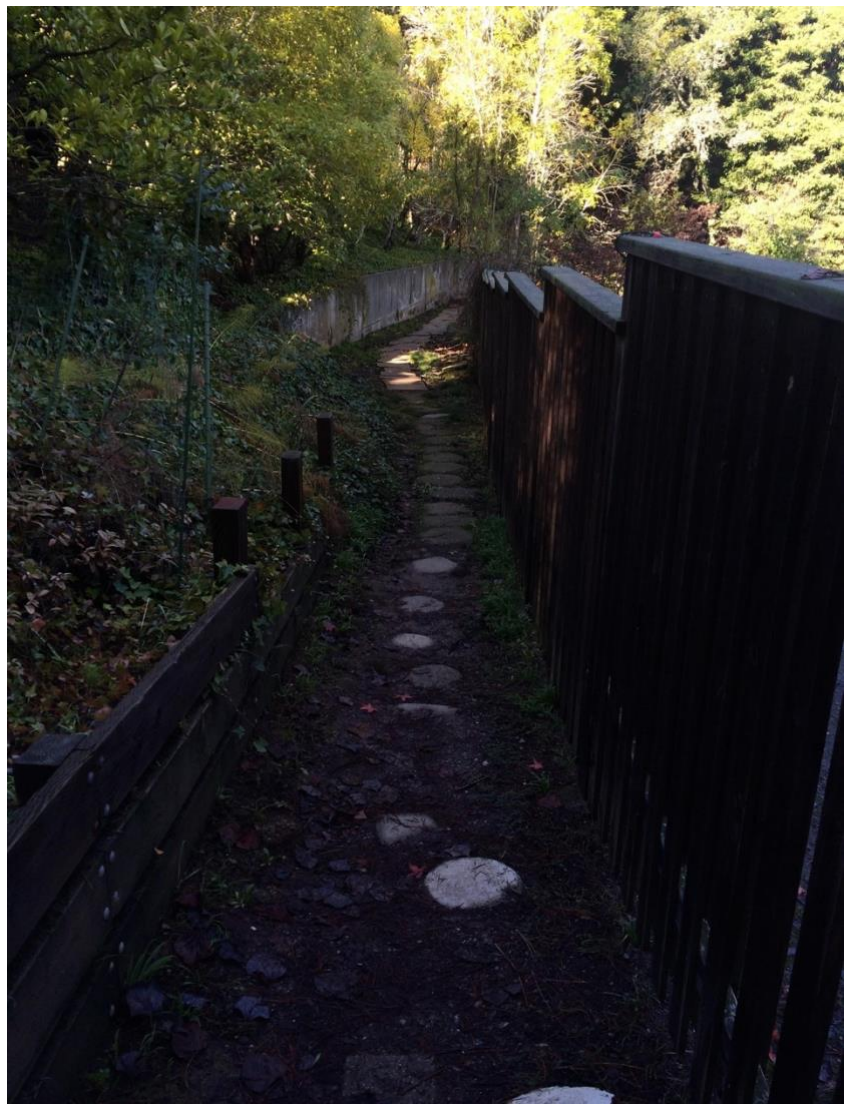


side of the park. At the end of the short path, turn left down Thousand Oaks Blvd. After one very short and then one very long block, make another left onto Alameda. Two short blocks later, turn right down El Paseo Path, which descends two blocks of granite steps to Vincente Ave. Turn right, and you will soon reach the westernmost point of the walk. Here, turn right again up Thousand Oaks Blvd, then left onto Menlo Pl. Just past the intersection with Santa Rosa, turn left down the steep Visalia Steps. Many concrete stairs later, make a right onto Vincente Ave. When the street dead ends, continue slightly right up the concrete steps of Vincente Walk. At the top, turn left onto Alameda, an undoubtedly familiar name by now, and follow it as it curves and becomes San Antonio. The gentle climb to Arlington should give you a chance to regain energy after all the steep paths.

When you do reach Arlington, cross and continue up San Antonio, then make your next left on Avis Rd. One block brings you to San Luis; turn right, then left soon after up Santa Barbara Path, a paved slope and steps up to its namesake, Santa Barbara Rd. Make a left here to descend back to Arlington, and turn right.

Right: The stepping stones of Vistamont Trail, on which you will soon step

A short block later, say goodbye to Arlington (it will be four miles and 600 feet of elevation gain before you walk on it again), and turn right up Boynton Walk, another concrete path. At the top, turn left and cross the street, then turn right and continue up the concrete steps of Maryland Walk. Make a right onto Vermont Ave, then another on Colorado Ave. After one short block, turn left on Santa Barbara Rd, then left again on Florida Ave. When the street ends, continue straight up the steep and, shockingly, concrete, steps of Florida Walk, then make a slight right up the “famously” steep Michigan Ave. Before reaching the top of the hill, look back at the exceptional view, then make a left onto Kentucky Ave. (walking through this part of Berkeley is like a trip around the country!) About a tenth of a mile later, turn right up Holmes Path, which is



surprisingly similar to some of the other paths in the area, that is to say comprised of concrete steps. At the top of this final path in the area, turn right onto Vassar Ave, which soon hits Spruce St. Make a slight right and cross the street at the stop sign, then continue down Spruce opposite Dorothy Bolte Park (a good water stop if you are thirsty), to Acacia Steps.

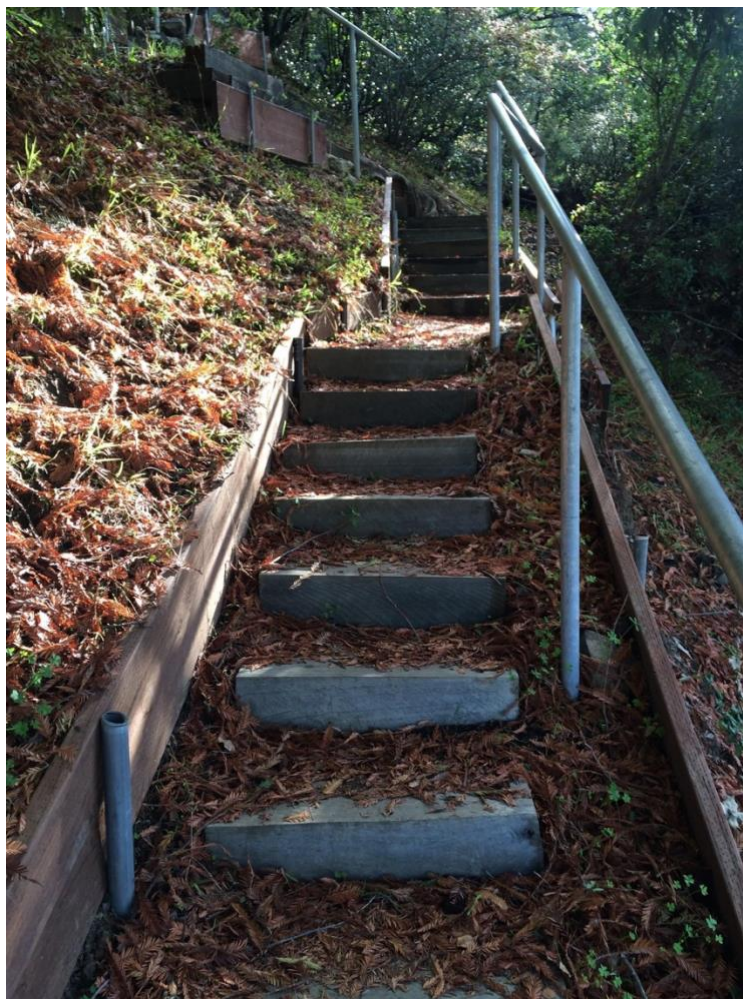
Here, make a left up the wooden stairs of this short path. Make a right onto Cragmont Ave, then another down Acacia Walk, through trees on soft ground and down some concrete stairs back to Spruce. From here, you can either turn around and go back up Acacia Walk, or can make a right up Spruce, then ascend Acacia Steps again. Sorry for what we refer to as a “jshoop-jshoop” (going down and then back up the same path), but it takes some commitment to walk every path in a large region. Regardless of whether you chose to repeat Acacia Walk or Acacia Steps, make a left at the top, then your first right (not counting Acacia Ave, which is between the two paths) up the concrete steps of North Path, which is not Berkeley’s northernmost path (Maryland Walk is) but is nonetheless a useful cut-through.

Nearly at the top of the hill now, turn left on Euclid Ave, then right on Grizzly Peak Blvd, then left up Creston Rd, and finally left again on Rosemont Ave. After two blocks, make a right onto the quiet Vistamont Ave, which soon dead-ends. Stay right and continue onto Vistamont Trail (pictured above), a mostly flat path under redwoods on small stepping-stones. Continue straight at the end of the path onto Vistamont Ave, which restarts. When you reach the intersection with Woodmont Ave, make a slight left, then your first right onto Sunset Ln. After two extremely short blocks, turn right on Grizzly Peak, then make your second left sharply onto Hilldale Ave. You will soon reach Halkin Walk, Berkeley’s third-newest path as of 2018.

Right: The switchbacks of Halkin Walk

Turn right to climb a few wood stairs, then descend many more, down steep switchbacks to Euclid. This path is in fact built on the steepest hillside of any path in Berkeley.

Make a left on Euclid, and two blocks later a right down Rock Walk, a short, steep-ish path descending to Rock Ln. Make a left, then a sharp right onto Cragmont Ave. After a block you will reach Poplar Path, which is slightly hidden behind a hedge. Descend this to Spruce and turn right, then left down Alta Vista Path, pausing to admire the spectacular view of the Bay for which



the path is named. Make a left on Santa Barbara at the bottom of the path, then a sharp right on Montrose, then a sharp left on San Luis, and very soon after a right down Upton Lane, whose name suggests it should be taken in the other direction. This short, step-filled path brings you to San Diego, opposite John Hinkel Park. Make a right, then turn left to descend one of the many trails through the park. The Berkeley Path Wanderers' map marks this as Devon Lane, but which trail this path really is somewhat unclear. You should find yourself emerging from the park near the intersection of Southampton Ave. and Somerset Pl. Turn right here, to head up Southampton.

Just after the road curves sharply right, turn left up Chester Ln, a path connecting up to San Luis. At the top of the many stairs, turn around and descend the path. It doesn't fit in to where the walk needs to take you, but we couldn't leave it out of this tour, or else we would have to call it All-the-Paths-North-of-Marin-Except-Chester-Lane, which is a bit of a mouthful. Back at the bottom of this lovely "jshoop-jshooped" path, make a right down Southampton, then another right down the steep concrete steps of Tunbridge Ln, the antepenultimate path of the walk. Make a left when you reach Arlington, then another one block past Southampton up Mendocino Path (opposite the intersection with Mendocino Ave.)

At the top of this paved path, turn right onto San Mateo Rd, then make another right down Indian Rock Path, which begins at the intersection of San Mateo with Indian Rock Ave. Make a sharp left when you come to a fork in the path, to ascend past the southern side of the looming Indian Rock. When you reach the road again, turn around and descend the entirety of Berkeley's longest path, four blocks from Indian Rock down to Solano and The Alameda, your starting point. You should be proud at having walked every path north of Marin, including a great many concrete steps!