

Overview:

This walk begins on South Park Dr, a road closed to cars in winter to allow newts to safely cross. From here, you'll ascend the shaded Arroyo trail out of a deep canyon to the ridge



overlooking Tilden on one side and Orinda on the other. The route descends the Seaview trail with panoramic views, then returns you to South Park via the gentle scenic Quarry or Lower Big Springs trails, or, for a shorter walk, the steeper, rocky Upper Big Springs. This loop is especially great in winter when you can spot newts and there is no traffic.

Left: the wide and rocky Upper Big Springs Trail

Directions and pictures:

Begin the walk at the bottom of South Park Dr. If the road is open to cars (April-October) and you prefer a trail-only walk and come by car, you can drive up South Park a third of a mile and park at the bottom of the Big Springs Trail instead. On foot, walk up South Park until you reach the rock tower marking the Arroyo Trail (0.4 miles up, just after Big Springs). Make a left to begin the big ascent, a steep

0.8 miles to where the trail forks. Turning left, the scenery opens up and Arroyo ends at the Seaview Trail. Turn left here and follow the trail gently down to where it hits Upper Big Springs. If you want the shorter loop, turn left here to return to South Park.

For the full loop, continue on Seaview, which climbs gradually for about a half mile to a bench and lookout marked by a rock labyrinth. As you climb, you'll see view to your right of Orinda and the Briones and San Pablo Reservoirs, and at the top get a sweeping view of Berkeley and Tilden to the left. Continue on Seaview for about another mile, with steep descents and gentler climbs, then turn sharply left down Lower Big Springs. After a quarter mile, you'll reach a fork with the Quarry Trail. You can either continue straight onto Quarry or bear left to remain on Big Springs. The latter is slightly hillier and farther from the road. The trails rejoin $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile later. A few feet after that, turn sharply right onto South Park Dr, to descend the final third of a mile back to the start.