

## BART to BART Berkeley to Richmond Trail Walk

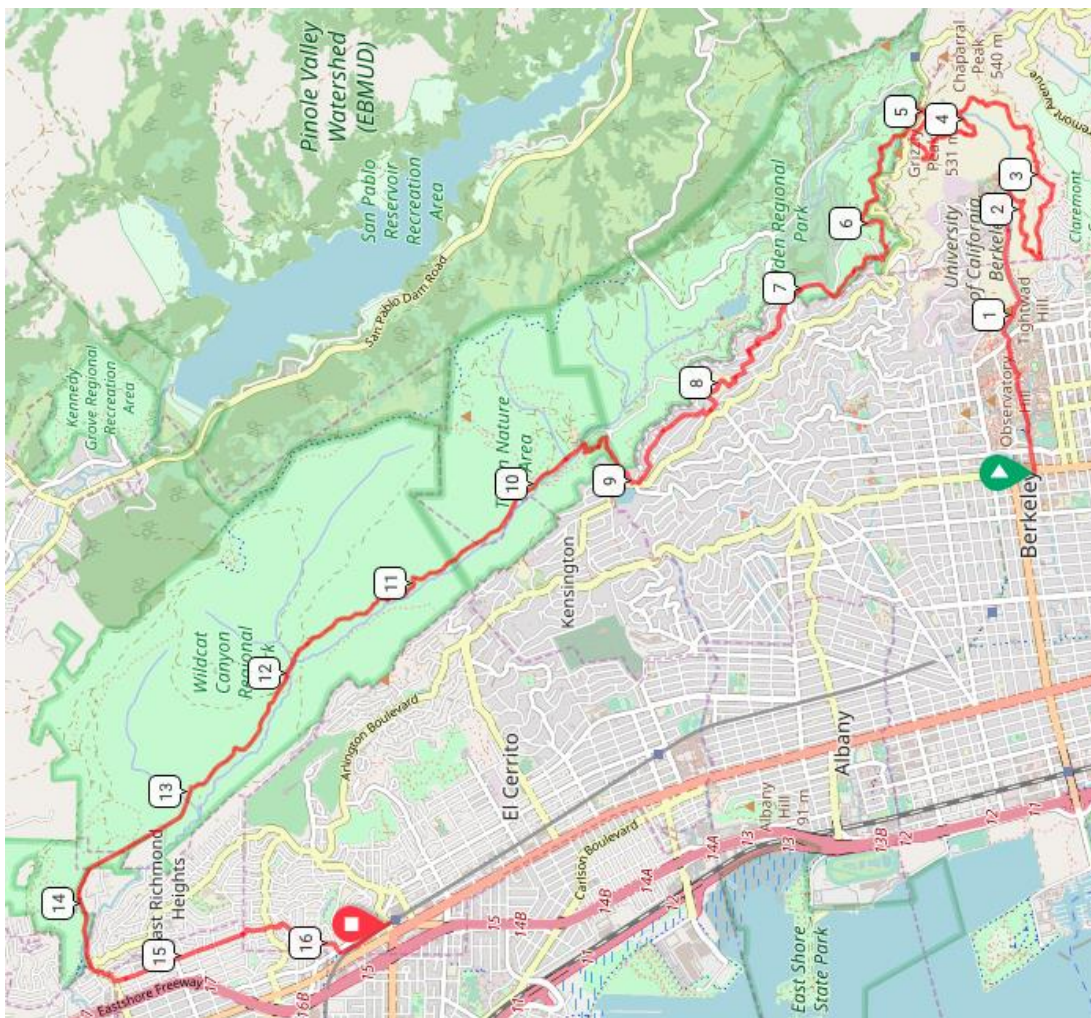
Length: 16.5 miles

Time: 6-7 hours, plus a half hour for BART

Difficulty: 5                  Elevation Gain: +1925 feet, -2050 feet

Starting Point: Downtown Berkeley BART (the intersection of Shattuck Ave. and Center St.)

Ending Point: El Cerrito del Norte BART (near Cutting Blvd. and San Pablo Ave.)



**Transportation:** A great many AC transit buses stop at both ends of the walk, as well as BART, of course. We recommend you take BART back to Berkeley, since it provides door-to-door service. It's hard to park downtown, so if you drive to the start you will have to park in a garage, pay a meter, or park a little ways away.

### **Overview:**

This walk begins in downtown Berkeley, but quickly leaves the busy streets, taking you through the University and up the entirety of the lovely, dirt Strawberry Canyon Fire Trail. From here, you'll follow the descending ridgeline on trails, roads, and paths, then plunge into Tilden to pick up the gentle and scenic Wildcat Creek Trail, which brings you all the way to Richmond. From here, it's two miles back on streets to BART, and an easy direct train ride to return to the starting point. Though this walk is the longest in the book (besides The Great Path Walk), most of it is easy walking and the vast majority of the climbing is done at the very beginning, so don't be to daunted. You can always do the first nine miles and then take the bus back if need be.

### **Directions and pictures:**

Begin at the intersection of Shattuck Ave. and Center St. in the heart of downtown Berkeley. Head up Center (east) one block, cross Oxford, and continue straight into the University. Make a slight right onto the concrete path to take it east, rather than following the curving road. Make a slight left where the path ends onto Campanile Way and continue east past the clock tower itself, for which the small street is named. It is especially fun to come here on the hour, when the bells are chiming. Walk past the southern side of the tower and continue east on the small road just to your right. At the third fork, where you road curves right, turn left, and you should reach Gayley Rd, which runs along the top of the University. Don't worry if you lose the route. Just keep heading east across the campus and you should reach Gayley Rd. Cross the road and continue up Stadium Rim Way, which, true to its name, runs around the rim of Cal's huge football stadium. Make a left at the top of the hill onto Centennial Dr, a busy street with a sidewalk that soon turns into a small dirt trail on the south side, making walking along Centennial a little more pleasant. Luckily, better things are in store. After 0.4 miles, the dirt path ends at the parking lot for the Strawberry Canyon Fire Trail. People often drive here to walk or run the trail, but you of course have arrived here a superior way—on foot. Continue across the parking lot and onto the wide, shaded fire trail, which climbs gradually through the trees. If you want to cut off a half mile, make a left up through the redwoods at the sign for the Woodbridge Memorial Grove. Various narrow trails wind their way steeply up through these lovely trees to rejoin the fire trail above. For the main route, continue up the wide trail, and you'll soon reach the bottom of a huge hill, nicknamed "Agony" by the runners who come here to do hill repeats. Turn left to climb the hill, feeling thankful that you only have to do it once, and continue up the scenic fire trail another 1.9 miles as it winds its way around the canyon. There are mile markers every half mile. Between the 2.5 and the 3 markers, make a slight right up a narrower side trail, marked on the Strawberry Canyon map as the Frowning Ridge Trail. Make sure you have





passed the 2.5 mile mark before doing turning, as there are other possible right turns earlier on the route. This new, unsigned trail climbs more steeply up the hillside, curving to the right. At the only opportunity, turn left to reach Grizzly Peak Blvd, the top of the Berkeley Hills.

*Left: The bottom of the shaded Fire Trail*

Make a left on the busy road, then a right very soon after to return to the peaceful land of trails. This right turn brings you onto the Tower Trail, which runs from a small pull-out on the eastern side of the road. Stay left where the trail forks, then left again onto the Grizzly Peak Trail, which runs gradually downhill paralleling the road at enough of a

distance to be quiet and peaceful. After a mile on this trail, you'll reach the junction with the Redwood Trail. Continue slightly to the right (not sharply right) down a hill to a small parking lot off of Golf Course Dr. Cross the road and continue straight onto the Selby Trail, which climbs a bit, then begins to descend past low plants and then into a grove of redwoods. 0.7 miles after Golf Course Dr, you'll hit Shasta Rd. Cross and continue down Park Hills Rd, then make your first right onto Woodside Rd, which runs from the confusing intersection at the bottom of the hill. Do not take Hillview Rd, which is a sharper right (though if you do accidentally, it does not matter since they rejoin later). Walk the short length of Woodside, to where it ends at The Crescent, then turn left. Halfway to the next street, turn right between a hedge and a fence onto a narrow paved path that leads into the small Crescent Park, a great rest stop and opportunity to refill water bottles. Where you're ready, continue down opposite where you came in, descending some stairs and passing through a gate to return to a road. Make a left, then cross Park Hills and continue up The Short Cut. Make your first right onto Middlefield Rd, then your first left up The Crossways, then the next right up the steep Overlook Rd. At the top of the hill,

the road ends; continue straight into a small car port, then turn left and step up onto a low wall. From here, follow the small trail through a gate into the Islamic College, which used to be a Lutheran Seminary. Cross the pavement and stay right on a path across some wood chips, then follow the road through a series of parking lots to where it turns left and exits this converted property to become Marin Ave.

After one block on Marin, turn right onto Creston, then a block later right again onto Sunset Ln. A very short block later, turn left onto Woodmont Ave, then make a slight right onto Vistamont Ave. Where the road dead-ends, continue slightly to your left down a gravel driveway, then slightly right onto Vistamont Trail, a lovely flat path through trees on stepping stones, then up a few stairs to where Vistamont Ave. restarts. Continue another quarter mile on Vistamont to where it turns left and ends at Woodmont. Make a right down the steep hill, and you will soon reach Wildcat Canyon Rd. Turn left, then right just before the major intersection with Grizzly Peak to descend Cañon Rd. After only a quarter mile on this steep road, a main route for cars to get to Tilden Park, turn left onto the Memory Trail, an excellent route for walkers seeking to do the same. Make a right at the first opportunity to descend steep switchbacks down to the parking lot for the Little Farm, a popular destination for young kids. Make a left as soon as you



hit the road, onto the Wildcat Creek Trail, which is paved for a very short stretch, then turns to dirt. You'll soon pass Jewel Lake, where turtles often sun themselves on logs or small wooden platforms.

*Left: Jewel Lake reflecting the trees above*

Wide and well-travelled, the Wildcat Creek Trail is an easy and scenic way to see Tilden and Wildcat Canyon Regional Parks. Overall, it descends gradually, but it feels mostly flat, with slight rolling hills. Occasionally you'll catch a glimpse of Wildcat Creek off to

your left. To the right, you'll be afforded excellent views up the hills toward San Pablo Ridge. After four miles on the Wildcat Creek Trail, you'll reach the intersection with the Belgum Trail. On the way, you'll descend one steep hill, past the turnoff for Havey Canyon (see "Havey Canyon and Surrounding Trails"), and you'll find that the trail becomes paved for the final stretch. At Belgum, continue straight, and the trail, now called the Wildcat Canyon Parkway, will begin to curve to the left. Stay left at the turnoff for the Bonitas Gate Trail, and 0.4 miles downhill from the Belgum Trail, the Wildcat Canyon Parkway will spit you out at the northern end of Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, at a gate onto a small road which quickly hits Park Ave.

Now entering the final section of the walk, make a slight right onto Park Ave. and follow it west to where it hits McBryde Ave. Stay slightly right to take this street three rather busy blocks to Yuba Street, then make a left. Follow the smaller and more scenic Yuba about a mile to where it hits the busy Barrett Ave. Cross and continue one more block, then make a left onto Hillside Ave. and an immediate right onto Rosalind Ave. A few feet later, turn left to cut through the small Poinsett Park on a paved path next to the grassy square of park. You will quickly hit



Poinsett Ave, where you should make a right. Three blocks later, turn left onto Mono Ave. and after two blocks turn right down Conlon Ave. Cross Key Blvd. and continue straight, down a small paved path to the Ohlone Greenway bike path. Make a left here and one long block will bring you to the Knott Ave. Cross and continue straight, then cross Cutting Blvd. and continue a few more feet into the El Cerrito Del Norte BART station. From here, it's only three short stops on the Fremont or Millbrae bound train to return to your starting point of Downtown Berkeley. It's certainly an easy way to get back after this 16.5 mile walk, unless, of course, you feel like walking back....

*Right: A gravel stretch of the scenic and gentle Wildcat Creek Trail*

