Every Path in Berkeley, Part 4

Length: 6.7 miles

Time: 2 ¹/₂-3 hours

Difficulty: 3+

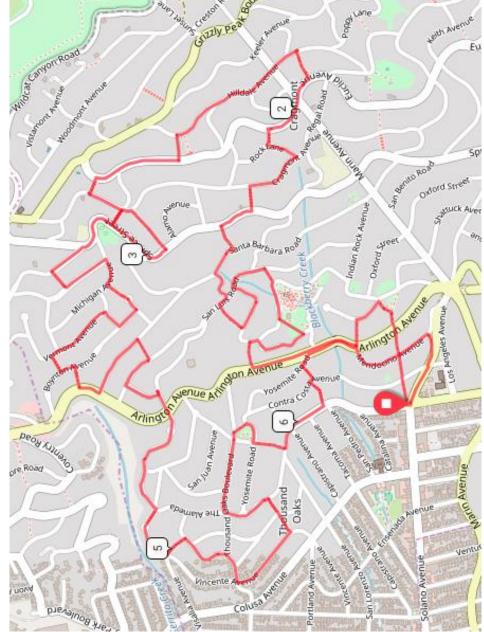
Elevation Gain: 1,050 feet

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 or on side streets.

Overview:

This walk is neither the longest nor the hardest in the series but it is certainly one of the nicest. In under seven miles, you'll take a huge number of Berkeley's northern paths, pass through many parks, and climb nearly to Grizzly Peak. The walk begins with a long climb up paths, split into sections by

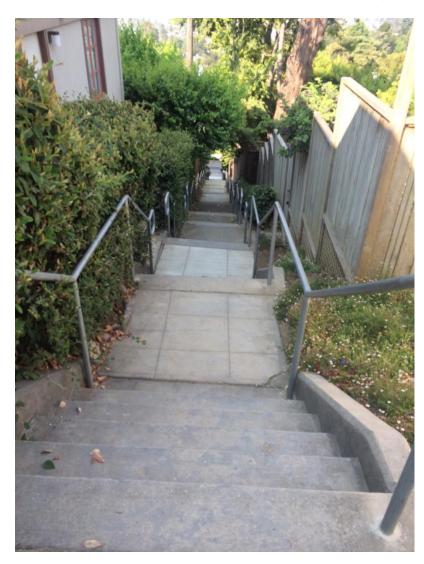


brief descents, ending on Hilldale, the highest point of the walk. A gradual descent through the state streets and into the Thousand Oaks Neighborhood will bring you past small parks and cover several historic granite paths, then will return, inefficiently as usual, to the start.

Directions and pictures:

Start at the bustling intersection of Solano Ave. and The Alameda (the only street around without a suffix), and walk up Indian Rock Path away from the shops and crowds and toward the hills. The path forks at Indian Rock Park; the route takes the left fork, but if you want to walk EVERY path in Berkeley, you must first walk up the right fork as far as the end of the path and then return. You get to decide just how serious you are about the every-path mission. Even if you don't care, it is a worthwhile detour, leading to a stairway up Indian Rock from the top of which you can admire a stunning view of San Francisco Bay.

Turn left on Indian Rock Avenue and then left again on San Mateo. Make a third left after about a tenth of a mile to descend Mendocino Path. The path is easily missable; if you reach the



road's dead end, you've gone a bit too far. Turn right on the Arlington and then right up Tunbridge Lane, a steep path running from just before the intersection with Thousand Oaks Blvd. Turn right on Southampton at the top and then left at the intersection with Somerset Pl. to climb through John Hinkel Path on unsigned and frankly nonexistent Devon Lane, marked on the Berkeley Path Wanderers' map as one of the many wooded trails leading up through the park to San Diego.

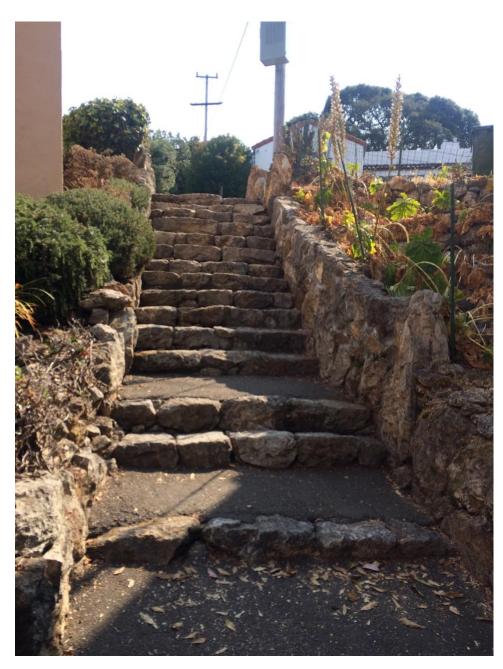
Left: The steps of Maryland Walk, a shining example of how handrails should look

Turn right on San Diego and left up the concrete steps of Upton Ln. (opposite a park cut-up). At the top, make a left on San Luis, then another left down Southampton after one block. Climb Chester Lane, a sharp

right off Southampton, then turn right on San Luis, left up Southampton, and right at the first opportunity onto Santa Barbara. Turn left shortly after to ascend Alta Vista Path to Spruce, making sure to look back at the *alta vista* from the top. Make a right on the busy Spruce, cross, and turn left up Poplar Path, which ascends to Cragmont, bringing you into the heart of the northernmost neighborhood in the hills. Turn right here, left on Rock Lane at the next

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intersection, and then left again up the short Rock Walk, a path leading to Euclid. Turn left on Euclid and then right to ascend steep concrete Billie Jean Walk to Hilldale, where you'll again turn left. After a block, cross Marin Avenue, Berkeley's steepest street. Make sure to glance down it as you cross; you're looking at an impressive 25% gradient, not much less steep than the steepest street in the United States (34%)! Turn left down Halkin Walk, which may at first appear to go upward, but soon begins to plunge down switchbacking wooden steps to Euclid. Turn right, then left down North Path after two blocks, and then left again on Cragmont. If you're set on walking all the paths in Berkeley, head down Acacia Steps to you right and then turn around at the bottom and climb back up to Cragmont.



Left: El Paseo Path: The only paths you are allowed to take for granite are in the Thousand Oaks neighborhood.

It's not a long path, and it can be fun to see a new path anyway, even if you're not doing the whole series of walks. From the top of Acacia Steps (either after walking it two or zero times), continue a bit further down Cragmont to Acacia Walk turn right to amble down this scenic, cypressshaded trail leading to a set of concrete stairs with a superb view of the Bay. Turn right at the bottom on Spruce. Make your second left after passing Dorothy

Bolte Park, an excellent water

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stop, down Vassar Ave. and then make a left down the concrete steps of Holmes Path. At the bottom, turn left on Kentucky Ave. Turn right on Michigan after a block and stay left where the street curves to continue down the steep Florida Walk, taking you on the fastest-ever trip from Michigan to Florida. After one block, make another amazing cross-country venture by turning right onto Colorado, then make a left onto Vermont. Just after the intersection with Maryland Ave, turn left down the concrete steps of Maryland Walk, then make another left at the bottom onto Boynton Ave. Turn right shortly after down Boynton Walk, taking more of this neighborhood's characteristic concrete steps, then turn left onto Arlington and left again on Santa Barbara. Part way up the hill, turn right down Santa Barbara Path. If you reach the intersection with Florida, you've gone too far. At the bottom of the path, turn right on San Luis, then make your first left onto Avis Rd, then a right after one block down San Antonio Ave. Cross Arlington and continue down the guiet San Antonio, staying right at the intersection with San Ramon where San Antonio turns into The Alameda. Make a right opposite the intersection with Vallejo St. to descend the steep Vincente Walk, and continue onto the dead-end Vincente Ave. at the bottom. After one block, turn left up the equally steep Visalia Walk, making a right at the top onto Menlo PI. Continue two blocks to Thousand Oaks Blvd. and make a right, then your second left onto Vincente again. You'll soon find yourself at the bottom of the lovely El Paseo, which literally means 'the path' in Spanish. Turn left to climb this generically-named granite path for two blocks, then turn left on The Alameda, then right up Thousand Oaks. Make a right just after the intersection with San Fernando to descend the singletrack Great Stoneface Path, aptly named, since it passes through Great Stoneface Park, which is in turn named for the large rock by the field, which in theory looks like an enormous face. Make a right at the bottom of the path, then a left soon after down Indian Trail, another scenic path built from the granite the abounds in this area. Passing a small cave, you'll descend many uneven steps to The Alameda. Make a left, then turn left again up Yosemite Steps, which run from opposite the intersection with San Pedro. Jog right after one block to climb a second block of this path, then make another right on Yosemite Rd. at the top. Turn right on Arlington just a few seconds later, then make your next right down Mendocino Avenue. After passing the middle of Indian Rock Path, turn right to head down Black Path, which here resembles an asphalt sidewalk, presumably the source of the path's name. Black Path ends on Solano. Continue west one block to return to your starting point.