

From Solitude to Shattuck Avenue

Length: 8.1 miles

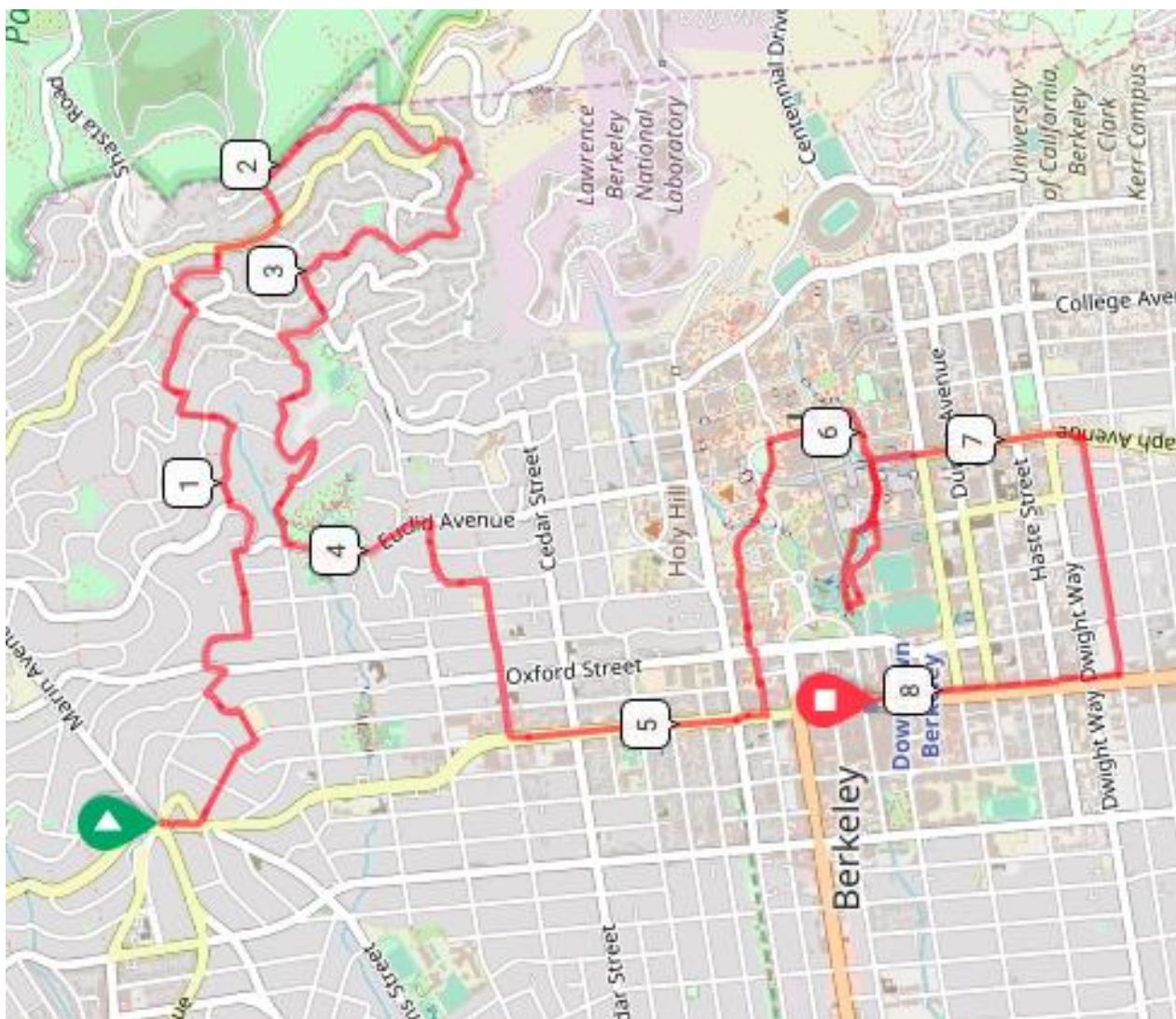
Time: A bit over three hours, excluding probable stops at restaurants and/or bakeries.

Difficulty: 4

Elevation Gain/Loss: 1,155/1,272

Starting Point: The Marin Circle

Ending Point: Downtown Berkeley BART



Step It Up: An Adventurer's Guide to Forty Walks on the Paths, Trails, and Streets of Berkeley and Beyond© 2020 by Jacob Lehmann Duke and Zeke Gerwein. All rights reserved.

Transportation:

AC buses 7, G, FS, H, and 18 at the beginning and BART or buses 51B, 7, 18, FS, 52, 12 at the end. Limited parking is available at the start on Los Angeles Ave, and the 18 bus will also return you to one block below the start point if you have a car there.

Overview:

This walk explores an astounding cross section of Berkeley. From quiet groves of redwood and Monterey cypress up in the hills to the bustle of Shattuck Avenue and Telegraph to the subtle energy of the University, this walk provides startling contrasts within a relatively short amount of time. It explores some of our favorite paths, excellent bakeries and restaurants, the eccentric chaos of Downtown, and the commanding architecture of the University.

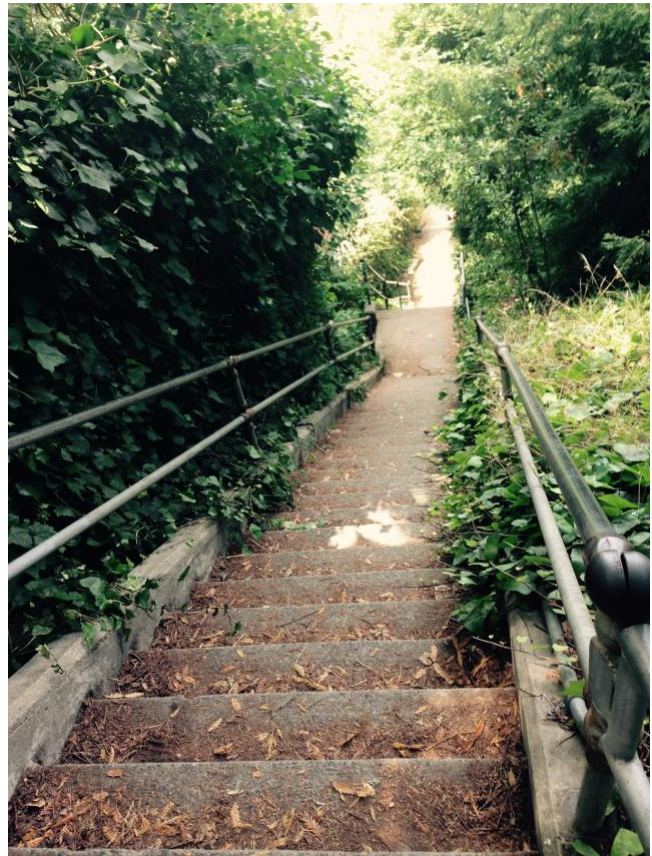
Directions and pictures:

Starting from the Marin Circle, descend Fountain Walk, observing the ivy-covered entrance to the Solano Tunnel on top of which the Circle is built. From here, cross Del Norte Avenue and turn left to head up the concrete grade of Terrace Walk. On a clear day, you can get a good view of San Francisco about midway up the first block, and regardless of the weather you can admire the gardens that adorn this path. Crossing Mariposa, reach the top of this path at the intersection of Shattuck and Walnut and continue straight, heading up Walnut. You'll crest a small hill near Oxford Elementary School, then turn left and uphill along The Oxford School Path. On your left, you may hear the crowing of chickens in a resident's yard. On reaching the top of the path, head right and downhill on Oxford, then make your first left at the intersection with Eunice. Two blocks later, make another left on the quiet Arch St, which will bring you right next to a stately though small pagoda, oddly out of place near the intersection with Eunice. From the pagoda, Arch goes uphill; follow it to Oak Street, where deer can often be spotted on quiet mornings, gracefully demolishing neighbors' yards. Oak Street ends at the lovely two-block Oak Street Path. The first block begins by meandering into a small grove of trees, where street plums abound in early summer. An overgrown set of concrete stairs, set next to a large palm tree, bring you up to a continuation of Oak Street. Oak Street Path continues soon after, slightly to the right after the intersection with Laurel. After descending another flight of stairs, you'll emerge at Euclid Avenue. Turn left, making sure to stop and admire an amazing mural of the Mayan Creation. The mural is extensive, with an explanatory plaque on the south side. Right after the mural, carefully cross Euclid and continue uphill to Redwood Terrace. Redwood Terrace is one of the steepest paths in Berkeley, with uneven and overgrown concrete steps. A large redwood tree, the path's namesake perhaps, lies about halfway up. When you finally reach Keith Avenue, turn right, where you will probably enjoy the flat, easy stretch. Continue to Covert Path, detouring slightly past it if you want to spot a waterfall that roars right after a rainfall but continues running year-round. Turn left up Covert, one of our favorite paths, which climbs a small hill through the redwoods, then descends to a tiny stream. The stream is dry most of the year, but it can flow up to a week after a storm.

After crossing, climb steeply up through a grove of bamboo and English Ivy, and emerge at Cragmont Avenue. Cross Cragmont and continue up Covert to a meadow, which offers a nice view down on the San Francisco Bay. At the top of Covert, turn right onto Keeler Avenue and take your first left at Whitaker Path. Before reaching the tree a quarter of the way up, turn around and admire a commanding view of the East Bay, one of the nicest on this walk. On a clear day, it's possible to see all the way to the Farallon Islands, thirty miles out in the Pacific Ocean! Turn right once you reach the top of the path (at Sterling Avenue), and walk until the intersection with Shasta Rd. Turn left to climb Shasta Path, then make a right at the top down Shasta Rd. Pretty soon, you'll reach Tilden Path, Berkeley's second-newest path as of 2018.

Tilden Path takes you up a steep flight of wooden stairs to Grizzly Peak Boulevard. Turn right and then cross at the first opportunity, making a left up Atlas Path, which bears a nice vertical wood sign and starts just after the intersection with Arcade. About halfway up, a bench allows you to look out at a spectacular view of the Bay. Once you reach the top, continue straight onto Atlas Place, then turn right on Summit Rd. On foggy days, Summit Rd. is enveloped in fog, and the Monterey Cypress groves to your left are given an air of mystique. Summit Rd. tops out at 1,300 feet, the highest point in Berkeley, before heading down to Grizzly Peak Boulevard. Jog to the left at Grizzly Peak, then continue down Summit and soon turn right down the wood steps of Wilson Walk. Descend the steps, then make another right at Olympus Avenue then a few blocks later where the street ends, a right on Avenida and just after a left on Queens. Queens takes you to Fairlawn, where you should make a slight right to head uphill to Glendale Path, then turn left to descend two blocks, passing the headwaters of Codornices Creek. Turn right onto Campus Rd. at the bottom of the path, then left onto Quail Avenue. Stay left at the intersection with Northgate to continue downhill. A pocket view of the San Francisco Bay is visible from the end of the road. After admiring it, descend Northgate Path, which has the most steps of any path in Berkeley (we think, but you could try counting all the steps on all the paths if you don't believe us!). Two hundred and twelve steps later, you will find yourself on Shasta Rd. Make a left, then your first right onto the shady Tamalpais Avenue, which brings you to the 173 concrete steps of Tamalpais Path. Here, make a right.

Right: Tamalpais Path



You'll soon arrive at Codornices Park, crossing a bridge and climbing a brief hill to Euclid, where you should turn left. After two blocks, make a right on Hawthorne Terrace, then another right to descend the concrete Hawthorne Steps, which leads to Scenic Avenue. Turn left on this one-lane road, then make a right onto Vine Street. Vine Street is where you'll make the sharp transition from the quiet tree-lined streets of the Berkeley Hills to the energetic chaos of Shattuck Avenue. The solitude section of the walk is coming to a close.

The street fills with people around Walnut, where you'll pass the original Peet's Coffee and Tea. One block later you'll reach Shattuck Avenue itself. If you prefer the solitude section of the walk, you can turn right to complete a shorter loop, returning to the start by turning left once you reach Los Angeles Ave. Otherwise, turn left here and you'll come to The Cheeseboard Pizzeria and Bakery Collective (closed Sundays and Mondays). The northern location, 1508 Shattuck Avenue sells an assortment of amazing cheeses, spectacular pastries, and excellent breads. Sample from the cheese counter, or just glance in at the excited crowds as you pass. Two doors south, the Cheeseboard's pizzeria will beckon you with live music, delicious smells, and a line that often reaches Vine St. The pizza flavor changes every day, but one thing that never changes is the overall quality and taste: superb. Across the street is Epicurious Gardens, a collection of pocket cafes in one building. Kirala, a high end sushi bistro is the first thing you'll see when you enter, but if you've already eaten lunch at the Cheeseboard, continue straight, to

Lush Gelato. Lush Gelato has umpteen excellent flavors, and the courtyard outside makes an excellent spot to sit and savor your gelato next to the waterfall running through the garden part of Epicurious.

Shattuck Avenue has a great vibe of chaotic energy, which is easily discernible as you walk south. The amount of conversation that happens around you as you walk, often in languages other than English, is astounding. Return to quieter streets by turning left onto Berkeley Way, then after one block, turn left on Oxford and immediately turn right again to ascend a flight of concrete stairs into the University Campus. There is no one right direction here; just continue southeast toward the looming clock tower (the Campanile), on one of the University's many paths until you reach the sloping green lawn below it.

Left: The Campanile strikes an impressive figure above UC Berkeley



Besides being an impressive tower, the Campanile is Berkeley's highest building, and is visible from virtually every high point around San Francisco Bay proper. If you buy a ticket on one of the guided tours, you can ride an elevator all the way to the top of the Campanile. The view there is magnificent, with a novel perspective on the hills and the Bay.

From the Campanile, head south along the road just west of the tower, then turn right, descending to busy Dwinelle Plaza. A left turn here brings you through the famous Sather Gate into Sproul Plaza, site of the sit-in which began the Free Speech Movement. Exiting the campus, cross the busy Bancroft Way and continue south on Telegraph, which has a great vibe very similar to Shattuck's. The mapped route (above) turns right at Blake, but if you are still hungry, there is a great Ethiopian restaurant, Fin Finé, located a half block south. To follow our route, continue down Blake until you reach Shattuck again. Turn right and end the loop after several blocks at the Downtown Berkeley BART station. Right next to the BART entrance, on the western side of the street just south of Center is the excellent Almaré Hot Chocolate and Gelato. With over twenty different flavors of one of the best gelatos in Berkeley and fantastic hot chocolate, it could give Lush a run for its money, and is a great way to end the walk. To return to the start, either walk along Shattuck and turn right on Los Angeles (just over a mile), or hop on the 18 bus toward Albany Village and off-board at Hopkins and Sutter, then walk the block up Fountain Walk to reach the Marin Circle.