

## Surprises of the Berkeley Hills

**Length:** 5 miles

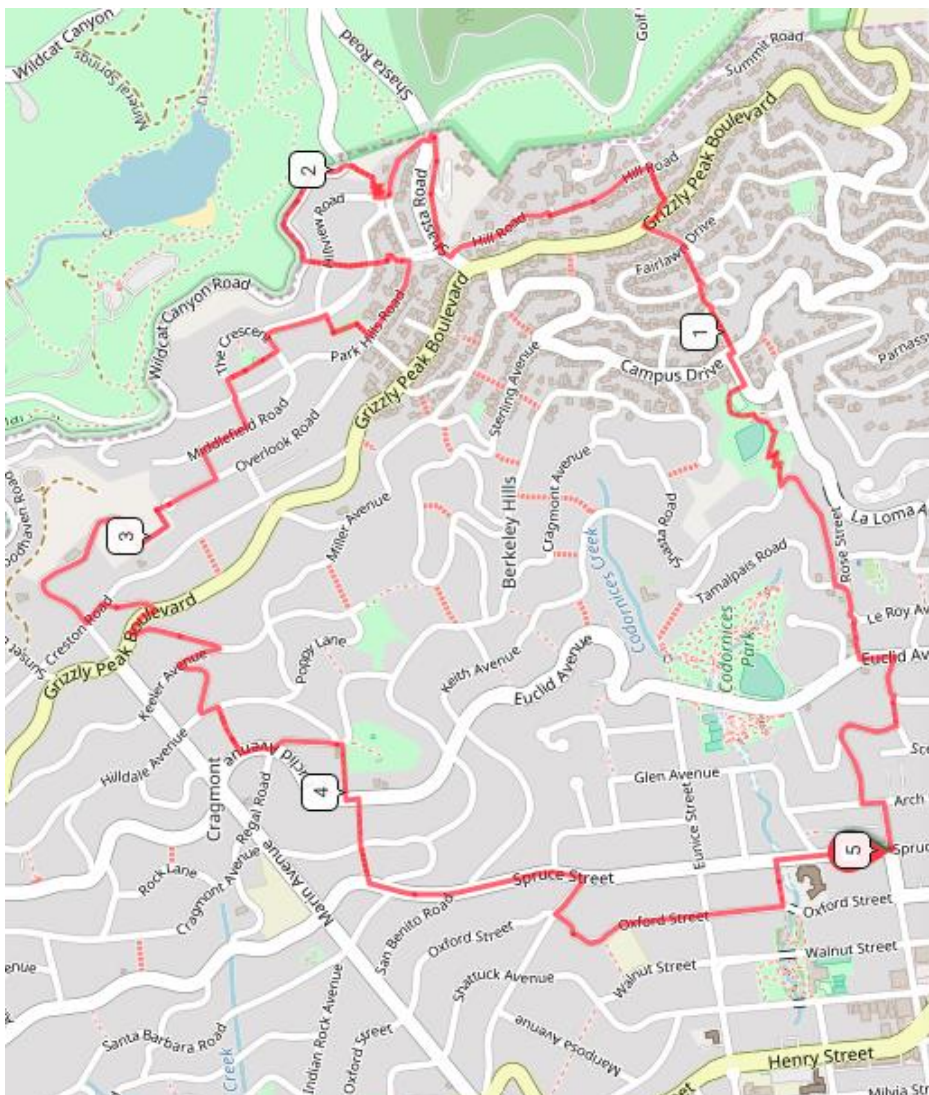
**Time:** Allow 2 ½-3 hours so you have some time to stop to rest and enjoy the parks

**Difficulty:** 4+ for the uneven terrain and steepness of the walk's beginning

**Elevation Gain:** 1,100 feet

**Starting Point:** Spruce St. and Rose St.

**Transportation:** AC Transit bus 67. There is parking available on Spruce.



### **Overview:**

Climb steep paths and cut-throughs to Tilden Park, then wander above Grizzly Peak through small parks and on hard-to-find paths off dead end roads, taking shortcuts that you never knew existed. Descend on gentler paths and small streets to return to the starting point.

### **Directions and pictures:**

Start at the intersection of Spruce St. and Rose St. Walk east on Rose (up towards the hills) one block and make a left on Arch

St, then an immediate right to continue up Rose. After another block, make a right on Scenic Ave, and a bit later a left up the concrete stairs of Hawthorne Steps. At the top, make a left on Hawthorne Terrace, then another left on Euclid Ave. Cross Euclid a short block later and head up the wide, curving staircase of Rose Walk, past flowers and up the slope to where LeRoy becomes Rose. Make a left to continue up Rose, and soon after make another left onto Tamalpais Rd, then an immediate right onto Shasta Rd. Take Shasta as it curves past a huge house with a yard that has bridges and streams, then, after just under a quarter mile, make a right up a wood-staired shortcut to La Loma Park. This path is unsigned and not on many maps but should not be too hard to find, and can be identified by a plaque at the bottom saying it has been improved by the Boy Scouts.



*Left: the first few stairs of the unnamed path off Shasta*

The path is steep and uneven with no handrails, but it gives great views back down the hillside as it switchbacks up. Towards the top, it forks; it does not matter which way you go since both come out in the park, but the right fork is slightly better maintained. If you chose to go left, take the path to where it ends and make a right along the paved park path. Follow it to just before it hits a small road and make a left up some stairs. If you went right, also take the path to its end, then turn right and immediately left up the same flight of steps. There are bathrooms and a water fountain at the top of the stairs, making for a good quick stop.

Continue up the paved path past the playground area, then turn bear right through the parking lot and up the driveway to Glendale. Make a left up Glendale and at the intersection with

Campus, cross and continue up Glendale Path three blocks. The first block has concrete steps at the bottom and wood at the top, as well as historic markers about the geology and creeks of the area. The second block is short and consists of small wooden steps and dirt trail. The third block starts with a staircase, then goes between two houses on a narrow dirt trail and up a few steps to the intersection of Fairlawn Dr. and Arcade Ave. Cross Fairlawn and go up the one-block entirety of Arcade to where it ends at Grizzly Peak Blvd. Cross carefully and make a right, then go left up Atlas Path at the vertical wood street sign. The path cuts between houses up wooden stairs to the top of the Berkeley Hills and a fantastic view down. Turn left here onto Hill Rd, which promptly dead ends.

At the end, continue down the driveway towards the No Trespassing signs, then, before you trespass, make a right onto Scott Newhall Path, which is a public easement, therefore certainly not trespassing. The path is one of Berkeley's few flat, north-to-south paths and its dirt trail connects you to where Hill Rd. restarts. It's lucky the path is there since it is an extra half mile to take the next shortest route around. At the end of the path, descend the aptly named Hill Rd. to the fountain at Shasta. Turn right, then right again up a small dirt trail that takes you past the firehouse. This short, softly padded, little-used trail ends at a small road. Make a slight left here to descend to the "seven way" (counting the trails) intersection of Shasta and Park Hills. Cross Shasta and go down the hill on Park Hills one block. Here, make a slight right onto the small, winding Wildcat Path, a descent towards Tilden Park and Wildcat Canyon Rd. The path is unmarked and a little hard to find, but its wood steps are noticeable from the intersection of Park Hills and Hillview. Watch your footing, as the path has no handrails and goes down a steep hillside to the road. At the bottom, turn left. We recommend crossing here to where there is more of a shoulder to avoid walking blind into oncoming traffic. Cross back at the small, engraved wooden sign for Fred Herbert Path, which you will spot as you enter a small redwood grove. Climb the wood steps three blocks up through the trees and past small clearings back to Park Hills Rd, then turn right.

When you reach the intersection with Muir Way, you will see a yellow, two-pointed arrow on a sign to your right. Turn right, past this and down the unsigned Patty Kates Path. The path seemingly ends in a field between several houses, but if you turn left through the grass you will find it continues down more steps to the right, another small surprise to add to the walk's growing list. At the road below, turn left, then make another left at the first opportunity up The Crescent, a small road leading toward Park Hills. Before you get there, though, make a right on a narrow, unsigned, paved path between a hedge and a wood fence. This path takes you to a surprising place...a little park, complete with a play structure, a picnic table, basketball hoops, and a water fountain! Crescent Park makes a great rest stop. Once you are ready, continue straight ahead from the path you came in on, down a grassy slope, through a gate, and down some steps. At the road, make a left, then cross Park Hills and continue up The Short Cut (a road, not to be confused with The Short Cut the former path nor with Short Cut, an Oakland path). At the top, make a right, then your first left, then your first right, onto Overlook Rd. Climb the hill to where the road seemingly ends. Not to worry, though; you can get through without going back down the hill. Enter the small car port on a driveway, then step up onto the wall to your left and onto a trail. Turning right, passing through a metal gate into a what was a Lutheran Seminary and is, as of 2018, being converted to a College of Islamic Studies. Make a right and walk along the small road or over the wood chips, past the buildings and through the parking lot

to where the road curves and becomes Marin Avenue, one of the biggest streets in the hills. Who would have thought! Go down Marin one block to Creston, then make a left to get off Marin before it gets big. After a very short block, turn right down Forest Lane to Grizzly Peak.

It seems as if Forest Ln. ends here, but don't be fooled. Cross, turn right, and then turn left again onto Forest Ln, which will take you another block down to Keeler. Again, this seems to be the end, and, again, it is not. Turn right on Keeler, then left again onto...Forest Lane!



*Left: Crescent Park, home to one of Berkeley's most hidden playgrounds.*

Take it one more block down to Hilldale Ave. Now you may want to turn right and search for more of Forest Lane, but you would be looking a long time because this truly is the end of it. Instead, turn left, then make an immediate right down Billy Jean Walk. This path descends concrete stairs to Euclid Ave. with an exemplary handrail on both its right and left sides. Make a left, then another after one block up Regal Rd. At the park and the intersection with Hilldale, make a right down the steep slope of Easter Way. After one block, cross Euclid and jog to the left, then continue down Easter Way two more blocks to Spruce St. Make a left on Spruce and, after about a third of a mile, a right on Los Angeles Ave. One block later, make a left onto Oxford St. Follow Oxford a very long block to Eunice, then continue straight and make a left at the crosswalk up the paved Berryman Path. At the top, turn right on Spruce. If you have done other loops from this book, then you know how they end so this last section will not make the list of surprises. After one block, you will find yourself back at the starting point.