

Waterfalls and Creeks of North Berkeley

Length: 7.8 miles

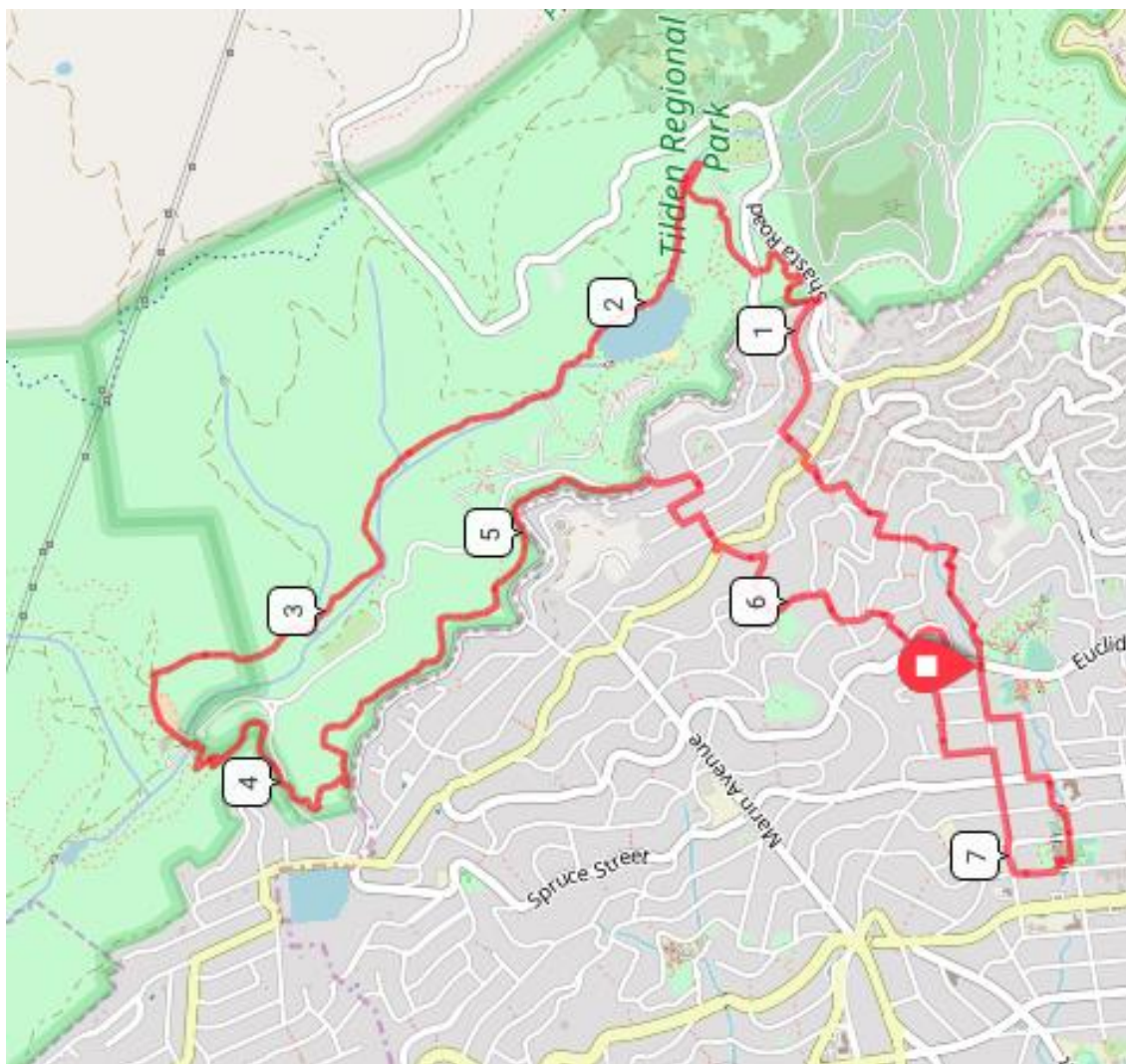
Time: Three hours

Difficulty: 4

Elevation Gain: 1,415 feet

Starting Point: Codornices Park (Euclid and Eunice)

Transportation: AC Transit bus 65. Parking is also available on Euclid or Eunice near the start.



Overview:

This nearly-eight-mile loop is great any time of year, but especially in the rainy season (ideal a



couple days after a rainstorm) when the waterfalls and creeks are flowing. It can get a bit muddy, but makes for a great adventure, exploring picturesque Wildcat Gorge in Tilden, the forested Selby Trail, and many of the lesser known waterfalls hidden in the Berkeley Hills. From the start, you'll climb steeply to Tilden, descend through the park, climb your way back to the ridge on scenic trails, then head down to below your starting point for a finishing climb.

Left: Just off of Tamalpais Path, Codornices Creek roars over a waterfall after a heavy rain.

Directions and pictures:

The walk begins at the corner of Euclid Ave. and Eunice St, near Codornices Park. Directly east from the intersection, follow Tamalpais Path downhill and over a bridge on the first of this walk's many creek crossings. Codornices Creek is usually quite small, but, like most of Berkeley's creeks, it transforms into a torrent after even a small rainfall. After crossing the creek, ascend the spiraling concrete staircase until you reach a gate marked "No Trespassing." This sign is intended (according to the property owners) to ensure that people stay to the established paths. In fact, further up there are signs explicitly saying that hikers are permitted, as long as they stay

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on the paths. Walk through the gate and continue along the ivy covered path, just above Codornices Creek. At all the points where the trail forks, stay on the lower path, bearing left.

Pretty soon, you will be able to hear falling water. At any moment, the waterfall itself will come into view, tumbling forty feet toward Codornices Park. During the summer, this waterfall is only a rock wall, and even in winter it is reduced to a trickle once a dry week passes. But after a rainstorm, this waterfall is a force to be reckoned with, gushing down the sheer rock past ivy covered walls. Across the waterfall, an unmaintained path ascends steeply, and possibly illegally, to Keith Avenue. A much easier and more enjoyable way to climb the hill is to switchback up along the boardwalk without crossing the falls, looking behind you at the waterfall and the mini-gorge of Codornices Creek. Stay left to continue climbing steeply, and the path will spit you out near a garage, in a driveway leading to the southern end of Keith Avenue. Turn left onto Keith, which crosses Codornices Creek again just below Covert Path. Here, Codornices Creek tumbles down another waterfall (on the upper side of the road), and burbles through a backyard on its way to the lower waterfall and the Bay.

Turn right on Covert Path, climbing through ivy and into a wooded glen. A seasonal creek in the middle of the path used to make for long jump practice, but has recently been bridged. Cross, and continue up a concrete staircase through bamboo. The path continues above Cragmont Avenue, so keep climbing! You'll ascend wooden stairs into a meadow and end up on Keeler Ave. Turn right and walk briefly on Keeler to Whitaker Path, which offers a breathtaking view of the Bay once you reach the first tree. Proceed up Whitaker Path, then continue up Whitaker Avenue. At the top of this one-block street, cross Miller and follow the wooden stairs of Anne Brower Path up to Stevenson, where a quick left turn will bring you to Grizzly Peak Blvd, the mighty top of the Berkeley Hills. Turn right here and cross carefully, then



turn left on Muir Way, where you will (finally!) begin to descend. Make another right at Park Hills, pausing to admire the superb view of Wildcat Canyon and the green (or brown, depending on the season) hills above it.

Left: the waterfall below Lake Anza

Continuing on Park Hills, you'll climb a brief hill to reach a junction with Shasta Rd. and the Selby Trail, which marks the walk's highest point: 1,113 feet above sea level.

Make a sharp left on the Selby Trail to begin the much-anticipated descent into Tilden. The woods along the Selby Trail are often wet and enchanted-seeming, particularly after a rainstorm. Cross Wildcat Canyon Rd. and continue down Anza View Rd, past turnoffs for the Selby Trail to the narrow beginning of the Wildcat Gorge Trail. Turn left to head down this lovely trail to Wildcat Creek, which is one of Tilden's few perennial creeks, though it is reduced to near nothing in summer. The Wildcat Gorge Trail is prone to slides, and if a section of a trail is closed, there will be a posted detour around it. Avoid walking in the creek, since the golden trout and California newt, both endemic to the East Bay, are endangered.

Soon, you will reach Lake Anza, where Wildcat Creek has been dammed. Turn right to walk along the eastern shore of the lake. Though artificial, this lake is gorgeous, its placid waters reflection the surrounding hills on calm days. Lake Anza is also a popular beach and walking destination and on weekends is a great place to people watch. After going half way around Lake Anza, turn right on the Wildcat Gorge Trail again to descend through a grove of stately redwoods and continue along the shore of Wildcat Creek. At the bottom of the hill to the left, a large waterfall (pictured above) gushes into the creek after heavy rains and trickles during drier times of year. Continue north on the trail, passing several small pools and short waterfalls before reaching the end of the forest at a meadow, and, shortly thereafter, the trail's end at Lone Oak Rd. The time on Lone Oak Rd. is short lived. A quick right turn brings you to Loop Rd; continue up this dirt road, which officially into a no-cars trail at a gate at the top of the hill. Turn left at the first opportunity after the gate and walk downhill into the Little Farm, passing the sheep and cows. Exiting the farm, continue straight across the dead-end parking road after exiting the farm, starting up the signed Memory Trail, which switchbacks out of Wildcat Canyon. After about a quarter of a mile, you'll cross Canon Drive. Continue straight on the Memory Trail, which soon ends at the signed Selby Trail, running along the rim of Wildcat Canyon. The Selby Trail offers far-reaching views into the canyon and across to San Pablo Ridge. You'll traverse through mainly open meadow until reaching Central Park Drive. Turn right, and you will soon find yourself at Wildcat Canyon Rd. again.

Cross here and continue straight up the steep hill (Park Hills Drive). Upon reaching The Short Cut, turn right, beginning a confusing series of twisting turns through the Park Hills Neighborhood. At the top of The Short Cut, turn right on Middlefield, then left on the Crossways, left again on Overlook, and finally right on Latham Lane. At the end of Latham Lane, continue straight on the path, Latham Walk, which begins the final plunge down to the bottom of the hills. Cross Grizzly Peak Boulevard carefully at the bottom and continue downhill on Latham Lane to Miller, where you turn right. Pretty soon, make a left turn on Poppy Path to plunge down through a redwood grove, emerging into Remillard Park, which makes for a nice rest stop. Turn left onto one of Berkeley's few flat paths, Keeler Path, and at its end turn right on Keeler and immediately right again down Sterling Path, which offers a great panoramic view of the Bay. At the bottom of the path, turn left on Cragmont Ave. and then right down El Mirador Path

El Mirador Path descends completely in the shade of towering redwood trees. Jog right at Keith and continue down the second block of the path to where it ends, at Euclid, where you turn left. Continuing down Euclid will bring you back to Codornices Park, cutting about 1.2 miles off the walk. However, it skips a scenic stretch of Codornices Creek through Live Oak Park

farther down. To continue to Live Oak Park, cross Euclid across from the beautiful mural depicting the Mayan creation, being very careful while crossing, since there is no crosswalk. Continue south and turn right to climb up Oak Street Path, then continue straight on Oak St. and head down the second block of the path, through trees, over soft ground, and down a few steps to Glen Ave. Continue down Oak St. another block to Arch Ave. Here make a left, then your first right down Eunice. After four blocks, make a left on Shattuck Ave, then an immediate left onto a field into Live Oak Park. Head southeast across the field and over a bridge above the final creek of the walk, then turn left, continuing through the park on what is technically Berryman Path. Cross the first street you come to and continue on the path, then jog left at the next street and continue on the third block, up some concrete steps to Spruce St. Make a left, then your first right up Summer St. When the street ends after one long block, turn left onto Glen Ave. You will soon reach Eunice. Make a right and two blocks will return you to your starting point at Euclid.

Right: The steps of El Mirador Path

