

WALK #1

Pasadena—La Loma Road

Duration: 1 hour

Distance: 2.7 miles

Steps: 996

Difficulty: 3

Bus: #81, 180, 181, 780

This is a green, leafy walk through one of Pasadena's westernmost neighborhoods, filled with charming stairways and a virtual arboretum of mixed tree varieties. It's one of the city's shadiest walks, too, and an excellent choice for a hot day.

Begin your walk near the intersection of N. Figueroa Street and Colorado Boulevard, just where the community of Eagle Rock ends and Pasadena begins. One block south of Colorado is La Loma Road. Have a Starbucks at the Vons grocery store, or a bite at the McDonald's, and then head east on La Loma.

You'll pass under some tall, high-tension electrical lines on your left and the nearby Lanark Shelby Park on your right. Continue straight on under big sycamore trees as you enter Pasadena and La Loma begins to rise. The sidewalk will end shortly.

Take a left, after a bit, onto Elmwood Drive. Wander along—there's not much to look at—for a block or so. Just before the house at 420, find your first staircase rising to the right. This is a long series of steps and walkways, nicely shaded and sometimes a little overgrown. Climb 98 steps—up the first “loma” that gives this area its name—and land at about 380 Redwood Drive.

Cross the street and climb the next set of stairs, another series of risers and walkways, that lifts you 100 steps past a very sleek new home with metal siding and a fine vegetable garden. You land in front of this house, at 365 Tamarac Drive. Cross the street and jog a few paces to the left.

Find the next staircase, going down. This again is a lovely, leafy respite from the heat, crossing under a grove of old oak trees, dropping 86 steps and landing you at 360 Glenullen Drive.

Cross the street again, still enjoying the shade, and take the walkway leading to your next flight of stairs. These rise again up a series of staircases and walkways, with some areas a little overgrown and, sometimes, a rather nasty dog behind a fence, up 99 steps. You land at 359 Cherry Drive. Take a right, and enjoy a shady, sloping walk downhill.

I didn't see any cherry trees on Cherry, or any redwood trees on Redwood, but the sheer variety of arboreal options is striking here. There are abundant pine trees, as well as palm, along with all sorts of ficus, laurel, oak, sycamore, juniper, and more. The entire area is bird-ridden and filled with song, and every day I've walked there has been quiet and peaceful. Just after the house at 431, where Cherry meets Sequoia Drive (no, I didn't see any of those, either), notice a staircase going down on your right, passing a charming English cottage and dropping into some fine, heavy foliage.

But don't go there. Instead, carry on straight ahead, sloping down Cherry and turning left onto Juniper Drive. Follow Juniper through a grove of sleek-trunked eucalyptus, then turn left onto Glen Holly Drive, and right just after onto Capinero Drive—passing a handsome Streamline Moderne on the right and a sleek, tall A-frame on your left. Bear right as Capinero passes Anita Drive—noting the huge oak and private vineyard on the corner lot as you go—and follow Capinero a little farther on.

At the lamppost just after 1428, find the next staircase going down on the right. This is a narrow passage, consisting of several sets of stairs and some sloping concrete walkway, of 44 steps in all. (At the top, note the homemade sand trap and AstroTurf putting green on the right.) It drops you off at 1437 Cheviotdale Drive.

Turn right, and follow Cheviotdale, jogging slightly to the left as it crosses Glen Holly, up to a huge gnarled eucalyptus at the corner of Juniper. Turn left, and follow Juniper downhill to the corner of La Loma.

You're back on the boulevard again. You could shorten this walk and head straight back to Figueroa—but why? Instead, walk just past the mailbox at 1587 and turn right and go up the stairs.

This is the set of stairs you saw earlier from above, at the corner of Cherry and Sequoia. Trot up now, 97 steps over multiple landings, crossing an alley-like extension of Cheviotdale halfway up. At the top of the hill, turn left onto Cherry and climb this tree-street a bit. Just past the house at 359, find the top of another staircase you've already climbed. Descend 99 steps to land in the shady nook of Glenullen. Cross the street, and head up the staircase on the other side, climbing 86 steps to Tamarac.

Jog a bit to the left and across Tamarac, continuing up the stairs 19 steps to a walkway over the crest, and dropping down 71 steps to land on Redwood. Cross the street, and head on down the last long flight of stairs, falling a final 98 steps to land at 424 Elmwood. Go straight ahead, onto a downhill block of Laurel Bay Drive. At the first corner, turn left onto Sycamore Glen. After a block more, turn right onto La Loma. After one more block, you'll pass Brixton Road, and find yourself leaving Pasadena and re-entering Los Angeles. A block more, and you're back at Figueroa, and your starting point.

SEE MAP ON NEXT PAGE

MAP 1

