

Nature's Path to Wellness: Hikes for Relaxation During Finals

Finals are tough, but taking a moment to reconnect with nature can help ease the tension. This guide highlights serene local hikes that provide a perfect balance of physical exercise and mental relaxation to help you recharge during this stressful time. The name of the park, the neighborhood it is located in, and the amount of time it takes to reach the park from campus via MUNI transit is provided. More specific information regarding each park is also provided, including trail suggestions and directions!

Corona Heights Park | Haight Ashbury | 25 min

This park has some of the best views in San Francisco, but don't overlook the wonderful wildflower display that carpets the grasslands each spring. Among the flowers you may see here are checkerbloom, California poppy, footsteps of spring, Douglas iris, mule's ears, and Johnny jump-up, a sensitive species that is the only host plant for the callippe silverspot butterfly. Also look for anise swallowtail, a big yellow butterfly with black shoulders that frequents San Francisco's hilltops. - [SF Recreation & Parks](#)

Features/amenities of the park: Iconic View, Trails, Basketball Court, Tennis Court, Playground, Community Garden, Dog Park, Parking Lot, Restrooms

A one-mile trail network winds around the hill and leads up to the summit for a 360° degree view of the San Francisco Bay Area. Trails that lead around the hilltop consist of fairly stable and sometimes steep, dirt paths with a series of box step staircases scattered around. The trail leading down to the 15th street tennis courts is the most challenging section with steep terrain with loose gravel. This section is about 0.2 of a mile in length.

Directions: Take the 43 bus and get off at Haight St & Clayton St. Then, take the 37, get off at Roosevelt Way & Museum Way. Walk 4 minutes east toward New Corona Heights Trail until you have arrived at your destination!

16th Ave Tiled Steps | Golden Gate Heights | 36 min

The first tiled stairway in the city and by far the most popular and well-known. It has transformed this corner of Golden Gate Heights into a major tourist attraction. The tiles were installed in 2005. The steps are covered with tile mosaics showing a sea to sky scene, with sea creatures at the very bottom, followed by land animals and then birds, rising up to the Moon and Sun at the very top. Many of the individual animal tiles are sponsored by neighbors and supporters. The mosaic was designed by artists Aileen Barr and Colette Crutcher, who also designed the nearby Hidden Garden Steps, as well as many of the other tiled stairways in the city. Despite the name, the stairs are part of Moraga Street. They were originally built around 1927, when all of the streets in Golden Gate Heights were graded and all of the stairways were built. - [SF Stairways](#)

Directions: Take the 31 bus and get off at Balboa St & Park Presidio Blvd. Then, take the 28, get off at 19th Avenue & Lawton St. Walk 8 minutes by heading south on 19th Ave toward Moraga St, then turn left onto Moraga St and right onto 16th Ave and you have arrived!

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Grandview Park | Inner Sunset | 34 min

This aptly-named hilltop park in the Sunset District has stunning views stretching from downtown San Francisco and Golden Gate Park to Pt. Reyes and around Lake Merced. The park features a dune plant community atop 140-million-year-old rock called Franciscan chert, which was first formed when the region was part of the ancient sea floor. Most carbonate shells dissolve in ocean waters before they reach the seafloor, but radiolarian shells are silica-based and do not readily dissolve. Millions of years ago, countless radiolaria combined with mineral dust blown from inland deserts to form layers of chert, which were later uplifted to land.

- [SF Recreation & Parks](#)

Features/amenities of the park: Iconic View, Bench, Trails

Grandview has a small trail network, consisting of 0.2 miles ascending to the top of the park hill. The majority of the climb is made up of wooden stairs. The short trail around the hill top is made up of soft sand like soil. Since the supply of wind-blown sand from the ocean has been cut off by urban development, sand eroded from Grandview does not replenish itself. The hill's fragile plant community and animal habitat depend on stopping erosion. When visiting Grandview Park, please stay on stairways and established paths.

Directions: Take the 23 bus to (th Ave & Lawton St. Then walk 12 minutes south on 9th Ave before taking a right onto Moraga St to arrive at your destination!

Mount Davidson | Forest Hill | 50 min

At 938 feet, Mt. Davidson is the highest point in SF. Its most noticeable feature, aside from its height, is the 103-foot concrete cross at its peak. Seen from above, there is a clear division between the mountain's eucalyptus forest on the west and coastal scrub and grassland on the east. Mt. Davidson has significant natural and recreational resources. The diversity of vegetation provides habitat for a wide range of migratory and resident birds. Myriad trails traverse the western slopes, where the densely overgrown vegetation and fog drip give a hiker the feeling of being in a rainforest. - [SF Recreation & Parks](#)

Features/amenities of the park: Iconic View, Trails, Restrooms

Discover this 0.9-mile loop trail near San Francisco, California. Generally considered a moderately challenging route, it takes an average of 30 min to complete. This is a very popular area for running and walking, so you'll likely encounter other people while exploring. The trail is open year-round and is beautiful to visit anytime. Dogs are welcome, but must be on a leash. - [AllTrails](#)

Directions: Take the 43 bus, and get off at Laguna Honda Blvd & Portola Dr. Then walk 13 minutes southeast on Laguna Honda Blvd toward Portola Dr, turn right onto Portola Dr, turn left onto Del Sur Ave, take a right onto Chaves Ave, continue onto Rockdale Dr, Turn left onto Myra Way, turn right and turn left. You've arrived!

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Glen Canyon Park | Glen Park | 40 min

Beyond Glen Canyon Park's recreation center, ball field, and tennis courts lies a large urban canyon that has incredible spring wildflower displays, dramatic rock formations, and Islais Creek, one of the few remaining free-flowing creeks in San Francisco. This 60 acres of wilderness, formerly referred to as the San Miguel Hills, not only provides critical habitat for a wide array of wildlife but serves as a relaxing sanctuary from the city's urban bustle. An extensive network of hiking trails leads through a variety of habitats. - [SF Recreation & Parks](#)

Features/amenities of the park: Iconic Views, Trails, Picnic Area, Playground, Gymnasium, Community Room(s), Athletic Field, Baseball Diamond, Tennis, Restrooms

An extensive 3.7 mile trail network leads through a variety of habitats, from the lush creekside vegetation to the rocky grass- and scrublands of the canyon's steep eastern slope, where a profusion of wildflowers blooms each spring. The 1.2 mile Creek to Peaks trail starts along Islais Creek and rises up towards Twin Peaks, where sweeping views of San Francisco and the Bay can be enjoyed.

Directions: Take the 5 bus until Cabrillo St & 7th Ave. Then take the 44 bus to Bosworth St & Elk St. Walk 2 minutes northeast to Chenery St & Elk St. and you have arrived!

Tank Hill | Inner Sunset, Twin Peaks | 20 min

What Tank Hill might lack in size, it more than makes up for in sweeping views. Take a short hike up to the peak and you'll be rewarded with beautiful views of the bay, downtown San Francisco, and even Oakland and Berkeley! Perfect for those seeking peace and quiet, this park is notable for its lack of heavy foot traffic even on warmer days. - [SF Parks Alliance](#)

Features/amenities of the park: Iconic View, Bench, Trails

This route takes you to what many locals consider one of the best viewpoints in all of San Francisco! From the top, you can see everything from Bernal Heights in the South to Hawkes Hill (in Marin) to the North. It is one of the best places to check out the city from a perch up high. - [AllTrails](#)

Directions: Directions: Take the 33 to Clayton St. & Twin Peaks Blvd. Then walk 2 minutes north on Clayton St., before taking a left on Twin Peaks Blvd and you have arrived!

Take a break, step outside, and let nature help you recharge. These local hikes offer a great way to relax and reset, so you can return to your studies feeling refreshed and ready to tackle finals.