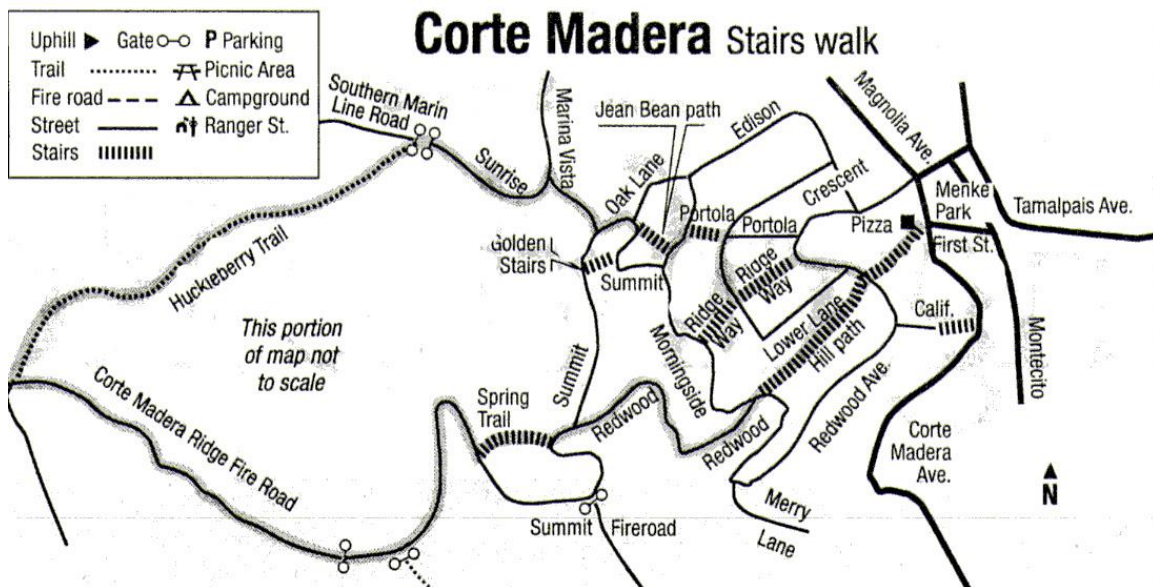


Madeline Schaidler Real Estate
www.LivinginMarin.com

Climb stairs on Christmas Tree Hill for Corte Madera's expansive views

Tracy Dunham for the Marin IJ

06/22/2009



Start to the left of Stefano's Pizza.

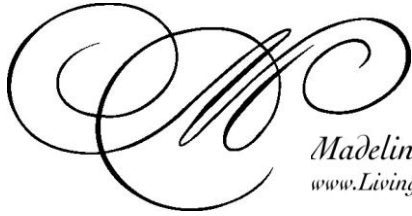
In the early 1900s, stairways were constructed to connect the homes high on the hills of Corte Madera with the train station, schools, and businesses. The stairways are still used today by residents, walkers, and hikers.

The combination of stairways and streets create a moderately strenuous exercise about 1.5 miles in length. The stairways also provide access to other hikes on fire roads and trails on Corte Madera Ridge. Climbing a series of stairways and hiking on the Corte Madera Ridge Fire Road and the Huckieberry Trail create an adventurous five-mile hike.

Start at Menke Park, the site of the old Corte Madera train station. Cross Corte Madera Avenue and head up the sidewalk to the left of Stefano's Pizzeria at 225 Corte Madera Ave. Continue up the Hill Path stairs, and then walk along Redwood Avenue. At the Summit-Redwood Rd. intersection, turn left and walk uphill on Summit. Take the Spring Trail stairs right beside a home. Look for the sign. You can see the stairs angling sharply up the hill.

At the top of the Spring Trail stairs, you'll be puffing for breath and a ready for a break. Take a breather because the next segment of the hike is a steep uphill walk on Summit. At the end of Summit, continue on Corte Madera Ridge Fire Road, which is a welcomed long downhill grade. The oak and madrone trees shade the ridge. Views include Mount Tamalpais' summit, Mill Valley, Richardson Bay, and the Marin Headlands.

At the intersection of fire roads, locate the Huckieberry Trail on the right. This footpath angles downhill through a grove of redwood trees and then descends over rocky terrain lined by



Madeline Schaidler Real Estate
www.LivinginMarin.com

huckleberry bushes. The berries are ripe in autumn. Views include Kentfield, Corte Madera Creek, and Larkspur Landing. Turn right and walk briefly on the fire road before joining Sunrise. Follow Sunrise as it weaves steeply downhill.

Turn right onto Marina Vista and continue downhill. Watch for the sign marking the Jean Bean Path and walk down the stairs.

Turn left and walk down the Portola Way stairs. Walk right on Crescent to locate Ridge Way and the stairway. At the bottom of the steps, turn right and walk on Redwood Avenue to Hill Path, then down Hill Path to Corte Madera Avenue.

Use caution; the narrow residential streets do not have sidewalks. If you have trouble finding a stairway or lose your way, just walk downhill on the streets and you'll come out at the Corte Madera Avenue intersection.