

# **Doing the Stanford Dish Trail**

**A great hike to tighten the gluts and see fantastic views of San Francisco and Stanford University.**

The Stanford Dish or the 'Dish' as the locals call it is an old ranch turned hiking/jogging trail. Located between Junipero Serra Boulevard and I-280, the land is owned by Stanford University and is open to the public every day.

I decided to walk the loop one Saturday morning around 9:00 which I thought was early until I noticed that the parking spots were full. I drove down the road and discovered a middle school but had to drive around a couple of times to wait for a free spot.



## **What is the Dish?**

The Dish is a radio telescope located in the Stanford foothills. It's pretty massive with a 46 meter (150-foot diameter). Built in 1961 by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) and funded by the US Air Force, the Dish was originally used to study the chemical composition of the atmosphere. Later it was used to communicate with spacecraft and satellites and even transmitted signals to NASA's Voyager aircraft.

## **How do I get to the Dish?**

You can enter the main entrance from Stanford Avenue but keep in mind, U-turns are prohibited, so you have to slow down and reverse-angle park, if you are lucky enough to find a spot. Alternatively, you can drive down Stanford Avenue to the Lucille M. Nixon Elementary School (1711 Stanford Avenue) and

park there outside of school hours unless you want your vehicle to be towed.

From the middle school, the walk to The Dish is about five minutes past some nice Stanford homes tucked away in the lush greens.



## **The Main Loop Trail**

The main loop trail is about 3.5 miles and takes about an hour and fifteen minutes to walk. I thought it would take me longer because after the main entrance the trail had a steep incline, I would have estimated the percentage, but I was breathing heavily and feeling embarrassing unfit. Apparently it's a 15% incline but gradually levels off thank goodness.

Along the way, you pass by a few reservoirs to a ridgeline and finally the Dish. Yes! You have arrived at your destination.

Along the trail, you'll pass by cows, some curious squirrels,

maybe even some deer, wildflowers, as well as hawks, woodpeckers, and bluebirds. The paved trail is wide and there's plenty of room for strollers, walkers, and runners to share the road.



As you cruise back to your starting point, in my case the main gate, don't forget to say thanks and good-bye to the gate guard.

On a clear day you can see the Santa Cruz Mountains to the west, the San Francisco Bay, and Stanford University.



If you are ready to 'Do the Dish', go early, really early, bring plenty of water and remember the [Dish](#) is open only during daylight hours.