

Top 10 Walks in 2010

1. St. Mary's City, Maryland This walk is a newcomer to our top ten list. It explores Historic St. Mary's City, an 800-acre outdoor living history museum and the site of Maryland's first capital. Half of the walk is through the woods and on natural paths along the St. Mary's River. See the reconstructed State House of 1676, archaeological excavations and the Godiah Spray Tobacco Plantation. At the waterfront, there is a replica of the square-rigged Maryland Dove, which (along with the Ark), brought the first settlers and supplies from England. The walk is only open April 1 through October 31. [Sanction Y1620]

2. Point Lobos, Carmel, California This walk has been on the top ten list often in the past 10 years. The natural trail around the Point Lobos Reserve offers breathtaking views of Carmel Bay and the Big Sur coastline. You can spot frolicking sea otters, scuba divers, and -- in season -- gray whales spouting. However, be warned that almost every green shrub, sprout and hedge in the park is, in fact, [poison oak](#). If you are sensitive, I suggest using a [poison oak blocking lotion](#) before the walk and a good scrub with a poison oak scrub afterward. [Sanction Y0445]

3. Silver Falls, Oregon This classic Northwest hike is in a canyon with nine waterfalls, including three that you can walk behind. You get the full flavor of the Northwest with tall timber, lush fern and the sparkling stream that creates the waterfalls. This walk is only open mid-April through mid-November. Wear trail shoes or boots, and bring a hiking stick, as the trail can be narrow and slippery. [Sanction Y0171]

4. Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington - Skyline Trail Take a hike in Paradise, or rather, around Paradise Inn at the 7000 foot level of the tallest mountain in the Cascades Range. It is an extreme walk, rated difficult, wear hiking shoes and carry water. Your camera is bound to run out of either film or memory as you take in the glaciers and wildflowers. This walk is only open July 1 through September 30 and you must mail in your registration in advance to receive the map and directions. [Sanction Y0835]

5. San Antonio, Texas - Riverwalk This route is simply fun, and you'll have earned your burrito and margarita by the end of it. The route meanders along Paseo del Rio or Riverwalk, through the King William District, La Villita, HemisFair Park, Institute of Texan Cultures and Menger Hotel. Walkers also pass the San Antonio war memorials and through Mission San Antonio De Valero, better known as "The Alamo." [Sanction Y0055]

6. Annapolis, Maryland Walk This walk is packed with history and history in the making. It includes the State House, the Governor's house, the US Naval Academy, historic downtown Annapolis and its dock area. I remember it as one of the best walks in the area. Bring a photo ID to enter the State House and Naval Academy. [YR0264]

7. Grand Canyon, Arizona The grandest walk in the continental United States takes you along the south rim of the Grand Canyon, through Grand Canyon Village. There is an alternate trail to Yavapai Point for more breathtaking views. Lowlanders should take it easy -- the elevation is 7,000 feet, although the route itself is fairly level. Registration for volkssport credit is in Flagstaff.[Sanction Y1376]

8. Sanibel Island Lighthouse, Florida What could be more relaxing than strolling the beach to a historic lighthouse, searching for sea shells by the seashore? Walkers agreed that this was worth the trip. [Sanction YO521].

9. Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah This stunning walk is open April through October. The 11 kilometers combine the Queens Garden Trail, the Wall Street Trail, and the Peekaboo Loop. It is "all views, all the time" as you hike through the hoodoos and rock formations. The walk is rated most difficult due to hills and altitude. It is at 8000 feet altitude, and weather can be extremely hot or extremely cold. Registration for this walk is three hours away in Ivans, Utah -- or you can register ahead of time with the club. [Sanction Y1626]

10. Chicago, Illinois - Lakefront Get the full flavor of the Chicago Lakefront with this great walk that starts at the Chicago Cultural Center. This trail takes you to the Chicago Loop, Northwestern University, Museum of Natural History, Shedd Aquarium, Buckingham Fountain, Navy Pier, Museum of Contemporary Art, along Michigan Avenue's Magnificent Mile and along beautiful Lake Michigan. [Sanction Y0783]