Jewish Sights in Berkeley: A Walking Tour

Begin at the Downtown Berkeley BART Station.

To the immediate east, on Allston Way, is the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life. The Magnes, founded in 1961, is the third-largest collection of Jewish historical materials in the United States. It boasts over 15,000 Jewish artifacts from across the world. Initially known as the Judah L. Magnes Museum, after Oakland rabbi, educator, and activist Judah Magnes, the museum became a part of UC Berkeley in 2010, at which point it adopted its current name.

Continue along Allston Way.
600 ft

Make a left onto Oxford Street, and then an immediate right onto Frank Schlessinger Way.
1000 ft

The Haas Pavilion will be on your right. The Walter A. Haas Jr. Pavilion is an indoor arena at UC Berkeley, the home of the university’s basketball, volleyball, and gymnastics teams. Its namesake, the president, CEO, and chairman of Levi Strauss Co., donated $11 million to its renovation between 1997 and 1999.

Turn left on Cross-Sproul Path.

On your right is Zellerbach Hall. Opened in 1968, Zellerbach Hall is a multipurpose event facility, containing both an auditorium and a playhouse. It hosts Cal Performances, a student performing arts group at Berkeley, as well as dance, theater, opera, and music. Its name derives from the donors of the Zellerbach family, paper magnates based in San Francisco who ran Crown-Zellerbach.

Follow Cross-Sproul Path until you reach Sproul Plaza.
400 ft
Bay Area landscape architect Lawrence Halprin designed Sproul Plaza in 1962. Since then, the space has served as one of the central gathering places on UC Berkeley’s campus. During the Free Speech Movement protests of the 1960s and in many demonstrations since, protesters have used Sproul as staging grounds.

Turn right on Sather Road, and follow it as it becomes Telegraph Avenue. 1000 ft

Soon you will see Moe’s Books on your right. Moe and Barbara Moskowitz founded Moe’s in 1959 on Shattuck, moving it to Telegraph a few years later. The bookstore, the Bay Area’s largest, has served as a meeting place for many intellectuals and activists over the years. Moe was well known for his political involvement. In 1945, he faced arrest for picketing with a sign that called federal prisons concentration camps. Later, the store provided a safe space for protesters during Berkeley’s tumultuous 1960s. Barbara and Moe’s daughter, Doris Jo Moskowitz, now operates the store.

Turn left on Dwight Way. ½ mi

Turn right on Piedmont Avenue.
On your right you will see the home of two Jewish institutions. UC Berkeley’s Chabad provides Jewish resources to thousands of students, alumni, and faculty of UC Berkeley of all backgrounds.

Nearby, Sunrise Kosher is a kosher certification agency for restaurants, bakeries, food production, and catering. It serves the entirety of Northern California.

Turn around and follow Piedmont Avenue north. 1000 ft

When you approach Bancroft Way, look to your left. The second house on the south side of the street hosts Berkeley Hillel as well as the educational organization Hamaqom. Historian Fred Rosenbaum started Hamaqom as Lehrhaus Judaica in 1974 as a freshly minted Ph.D. The organization provides Jewish learning to adults of all backgrounds, inspired by Franz Rosenweig’s school in Frankfurt of the same name, seeking open inquiry in a non-denominational context.

Across the street, Boalt Hall is home to the Berkeley Institute for Jewish Law and Israel Studies. This cross-campus institute at UC Berkeley combines faculty from social sciences, humanities, and professional schools. Founded in 2011, it offers courses both on Jewish thought (the only program of its kind in the Western US) and on Israel.

Continue along Piedmont Avenue until it becomes Gayley Road. 500 ft

At the intersection with Optometry Lane, look to your left to see the Haas School of Business. The Haas School of Business began as the College of Commerce in 1868. In 1976, facing budget constraints, the college sought donations from the Haas family. Over the next decade, the Haases, heirs to Levi Strauss, would support the school’s expansion, culminating in its renaming in 1989 after a $23 million donation.

Continue north on Gayley Road. 1200 ft

Turn left on Hearst Avenue.
Immediately to your right is the Richard & Rhoda Goldman School of Public Policy. Upon its inception in 1969, the Goldman School of Public Policy was one of the first such schools in the United States; today, it ranks among the best. Levi Strauss relative Rhoda Goldman and her husband, insurance businessman Richard Goldman, donated $10 million to the school in 1997, lending it its new name.

Turn right on Euclid Avenue.
700 ft

Continue on Euclid Avenue.
800 ft

The Richard S. Dinner Center for Jewish Studies will be on your left, at 2465 Le Conte Avenue. The Dinner Center, a component of the Graduate Theological Union, offers advanced degrees in Jewish studies, courses, and academic programs for the Union and the Bay Area.

Turn left on Cedar Street.
800 ft

Continue along Cedar Street.
½ mi

Turn right on Shattuck Avenue.

Saul’s Restaurant and Delicatessen will be on your right.
800 ft

Since the 1950s, this building has hosted a deli. In 1986, Saul’s Delicatessen opened, named after Saul Lichtenstein. The kosher-style restaurant serves locally and ethically sourced Eastern European, Middle Eastern, and other traditional Jewish cuisines.