Shore Trail/Long Path Loop via Carpenters Trail from Fort Lee Historic Park

**Length:**2.5 miles **Difficulty:**Moderate **Time:**2.0 hours

Directions to trailhead

Follow I-80/95 or Route 4 East to Fort Lee, take Exit 73 (Lemoine Avenue, Fort Lee), and continue ahead on the service road (Bruce Reynolds Boulevard). At the bottom of the hill, cross Hudson Terrace and proceed ahead into the Fort Lee Historic Park. At the top of the ramp, turn left and park in the parking area.

Hike Description

Follow a macadam path that leads into the woods on the west side of the parking area, bearing left at the fork. After descending steps, continue along a concrete sidewalk parallel to the park entrance road. At the entrance to the park, turn left and head south (downhill) on the wide macadam path along the east side of Hudson Terrace. Bicycles are allowed on this “multi-use path,” and hikers should be alert for bicyclists proceeding downhill at high speeds.

At the end of the “multi-use path,” marked by two green posts, cross Henry Hudson Drive (the paved road leading into the Palisades Interstate Park) and immediately turn left onto a dirt footpath that parallels the road (do not continue ahead into the private Edgewater Colony). You are now following the white-blazed Shore Trail. Soon, the trail descends a series of stone steps and moves away from the road. It continues to descend more steeply on switchbacks (be sure to bear left at a T-intersection, as indicated by the double blaze).

At the base of the descent, you’ll reach a panoramic viewpoint over the Hudson River. The skyscrapers of lower Manhattan may be seen to the right, and the George Washington Bridge is to the left. Several benches installed here by the Edgewater Colony, which owns the land over which the trail passes, invite you to pause and enjoy the view.

Continue along the Shore Trail, heading north along the river on a wide dirt path. As you approach the George Washington Bridge, you’ll come to a large paved area, with a boat ramp on the right. Proceed ahead, crossing under the bridge, and continue north on a paved road.

About 0.4 mile north of the bridge (after passing the Carpenter’s Grove picnic area on the right, and before reaching the Ross Dock area), you’ll notice a sign for the Carpenter’s Trail (the trailhead is also marked by a triple-blue blaze on a boulder). Turn left onto this blue-blazed trail and climb the stone steps.

You’ll soon reach the imposing stone wall which supports the approach road leading into Ross Dock. Here, the trail turns left and ascends a wide stone staircase to two stone-arch tunnels – first, under the approach road, then under the Henry Hudson Drive. The trail now turns right and proceeds north, soon reaching a switchback turn. Just beyond, there is a panoramic view across the river. The trail continues to ascend on switchbacks, following broad rock-lined steps. After a short but steep ascent on rather uneven rock steps, it reaches the top of the cliffs, where it joins the aqua-blazed Long Path.

Turn left here, leaving the Carpenter’s Trail, and you’ll immediately come out on a panoramic viewpoint from a rock ledge at the edge of the Palisades cliffs, with Ross Dock below to the left. Continue to head south along the aqua-blazed Long Path, which follows a wide dirt path, and bear left at an intersection with a wider gravel road.

Approaching the George Washington Bridge, the Long Path veers to the right, away from the cliffs, and it bears right again at a Y-intersection. Cross a footbridge over the approach road to the Palisades Interstate Parkway, descend several flights of steps, and reach Hudson Terrace in Fort Lee. Turn left and follow the sidewalk under the George Washington Bridge to the entrance to the Fort Lee Historic Park, then turn left and proceed uphill to the parking area where the hike began.