

The Crooked Story Of Lombard Street [B1]

Lunga meno di duecento metri, la cosiddetta “strada più tortuosa del mondo” è una delle maggiori attrazioni di San Francisco. Ma merita davvero questo titolo?

Situated in the affluent Russian Hill neighbourhood of San Francisco is one of the city’s biggest attractions: a section of Lombard Street known as “[the crookedest](#) street in the world.” Every year, about two million visitors traverse this six hundred-foot [182.8 metres] section of the street, which has eight [sharp turns](#) and a sign that recommends a maximum speed of just five miles per hour [8 kph].

MAKING IT SAFER

This famous section of Lombard Street is on a [hill](#) with a natural 27 per cent grade. In the early 1900s, this grade was too [steep](#) for most cars. So a property owner called Carl Henry suggested making it easier and safer to navigate by adding the eight turns. The turns were added in 1922, and in the late 1930s, the section was changed [from two- to one-way](#), to make it even safer. Today, it is not only one of the most crooked but also one of the most picturesque streets in the US, surrounded by beautiful homes and gardens.

NOT REALLY THE CROOKEDEST!

Some people are sceptical about the title associated with the street. That’s because Lombard Street is not really [the crookedest](#) street in the world — or even [the crookedest](#) street in San Francisco! A section of Vermont Street, between 20th and 22nd street on Potrero Hill, is technically more crooked. It is also the location of the annual Bring Your Own Big [Wheel](#) race, in which people race down the [hill](#) on tricycles.

PAY TO ENTER?

Regardless of the validity of the title, about 250 cars an hour traverse the famous section of Lombard Street, and sometimes drivers have to wait thirty minutes or more to enter it. The city has proposed asking drivers to reserve a time and pay a fee to enter it in the future. To avoid any such congestion, or possible fees, you can travel to the attraction using public transport and then walk along it instead.

HOW DO YOU SAY...?

Inversione a U. A U-turn.

Glossary

- **steep** = ripido
- **from two- to one-way** = da doppio senso a senso unico
- **Wheel** = veicolo (lett. ruota)
- **Regardless** = a prescindere
- **fee** = tassa
- **the crookedest** = la più tortuosa
- **sharp turns** = curve strette
- **hill** = collina