



Significance: The authors report the total syntheses of (+)-saxitoxin and several structural analogues including saxitoxinethanoic acid. These bis-guanidinium natural products have been of high interest due to their extraordinary activity against voltage-gated sodium ion channels.

Comment: Electrophilic aromatic substitution and rhodium-catalyzed oxidative cyclization yield tricyclic system **E** from simple starting materials. Clever application of an Evans–Mislow rearrangement gives access to advanced intermediate **F** that is used to complete the synthesis of both target structures.