

Chasing Waterfalls - North Country/Watertown Area Part 1

by Donna McCabe

Earlier this spring, my husband & I began planning our family's summer vacation. We like to visit new places and typically travel down the east coast but this year we opted to stay in New York and head up towards Watertown and the Thousand Islands. In past years we stayed on the Canadian side of the border but this year we wanted to visit the US side. As with most trips I take, I had to see what waterfalls were in the area. I'm already over 50 visits but anything I could potentially add would be fabulous. Color me thrilled when I counted a total of ten waterfalls that were either on our route driving up or within a reasonable drive from where we were staying.

We left home in northern Niagara County and made it to our first stop of Salmon River Falls just before noon. This spot is a very popular one to visit and was pretty easy to find. There's a great parking area with plenty of space. The trail to the falls gives you two options - easy or challenging. The easy route is a flat well-traveled path that offers a couple of overlooks to view the falls and then a set of stairs that takes you to the riverbed above the falls. This option is a good one for just about everyone. We saw visitors playing in the water well back from the brink while others chose to cross the marked line and stand on the edge which I do not recommend. This waterfall is 110-feet tall. Any slip on the wet stones would not end well. For your own safety and those with you, please stay within the designated areas. While you're exploring the riverbed, take the time to look down at the carvings past visitors have made. Some of the dates we could read were back to the 1930's!

DIG THE FALLS

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The challenging option of viewing Salmon River Falls is the gorge trail. This is typically closed in the winter due to the steep grade and ice that covers the trail. I can say from my own experience that this trail is not for everyone. There are some irregular stone steps to begin the descent and then a very narrow path that works its way down to the bottom of the gorge. I lost my confidence about half-way down and opted to head back up to the main

trail. At the point where I decided to stop, the view looking straight at the falls is amazing and was not disappointed at turning around. Safety always has to come first.

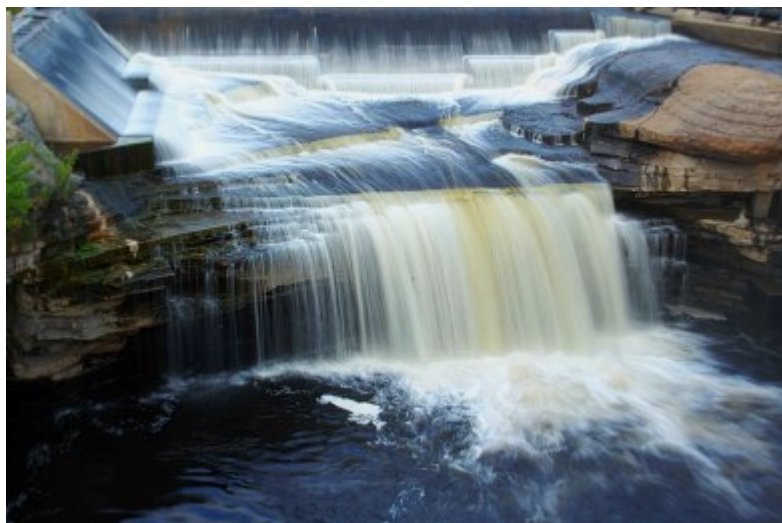


>> It was announced in early August 2019 that the gorge trail is now closed indefinitely due to dangerous conditions. <<

After making it back to our vehicle and grabbing some water, we continued our trip north to our next stop of Talcott Falls. Depending on the season, this one can either be seen easily from the road if there aren't any leaves on the trees or from a path directly to the creek bank. It should be noted that this property has recently been posted so visitors enter at their own risk. Heading north on Rt. 11, there is a sign indicating Talcott Falls. Right near the sign is a pull-off area to safely park your car. If you choose to view this one up close, be aware of traffic as you will need to walk along the road.



On our way to dinner that night, we made our third stop of the day at Black River Falls right in Watertown. You'll have to walk across the bridge on Mill Street to view this one as the sides of the bridge are too high to see it from your car. While not the most scenic, you can't help but be impressed by the force of the water flowing over this one. No doubt its reliable flow makes it perfect for electricity generation.



As we wound down the first night of vacation, my count of waterfall visits stands at 55. The week has just begun and there are more waterfalls to visit. There's some family fun planned for this trip but hopefully I can get a day of waterfalls in. Stay tuned!

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