

DIG THE FALLS

Chasing Waterfalls of the Finger Lakes

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by Donna McCabe @bookgirl911 on Instagram

My family & I are back on the road and this time we're heading to the Finger Lakes. I have three left to visit to finish the region as listed in Waterfalls of New York State. Fall colors are starting to pop and the weather is looking good so this should be a fun trip!

We started out by heading to find Twin Falls aka Templar Falls in the town of Dix. This hidden gem is located in the Sugar Hill State Forest and the Finger Lakes Trail passes right by it. If you visit, you'll be driving on some dirt roads but thankfully, they aren't overly rough. Only one other car was pulled over to the side of the road so we knew we'd pretty much have the falls to ourselves.



Once you park, you'll hear the falls right away. Head down the short path and the upper portion of Twin Falls will come into view. If the creek is under low flow (which we had), you can easily walk across the top of the falls to a small picnic area. We chose to walk downstream along the creek to find our way to the creek bed. This was a bit of a scramble

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and I'm glad I had my hiking pole with me. Once we made it down, my first view of both falls at once was amazing. The fall colors just added to the beauty and made this a special place.



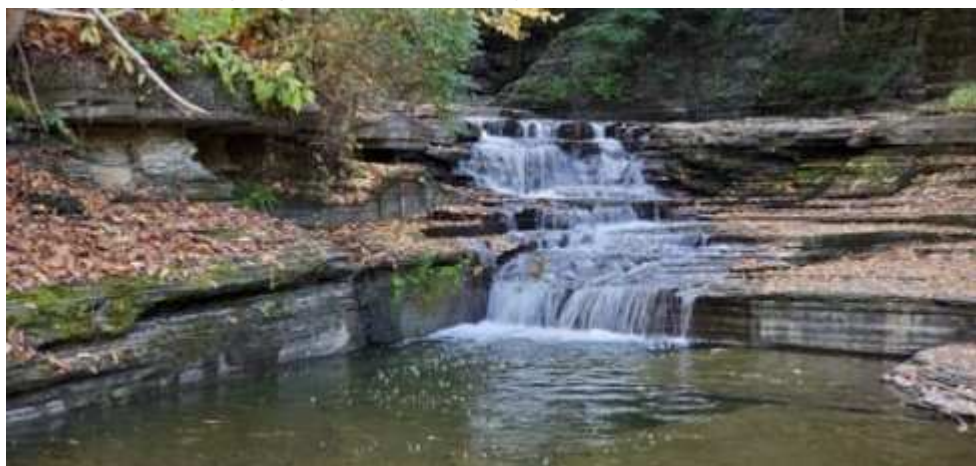
We played around the bottom portion of the falls for a bit and my son even tried to scale the tree you see leaning over. There was a bit of a scramble up the sides of this small gorge to the upper portion of the falls. This was another great place to linger and play around. My son had a lot of fun and was definitely wet by this point.



Twin Falls is a short distance from Watkins Glen but without all the crowds. This will make a great side trip when you're in the area.

Traveling south from Watkins Glen, you'll find the village of Montour Falls which is home to several waterfalls. Our destination was Havana Glen Park to see Eagle Cliff Falls. It needs to be noted that Havana Glen Park closes for the season mid-October and opens again in the spring. Also, there is a \$2/car fee. I can't say enough about this little park! It's such a treasure with shelters, plenty of picnic tables & grills, a playground, baseball diamonds and

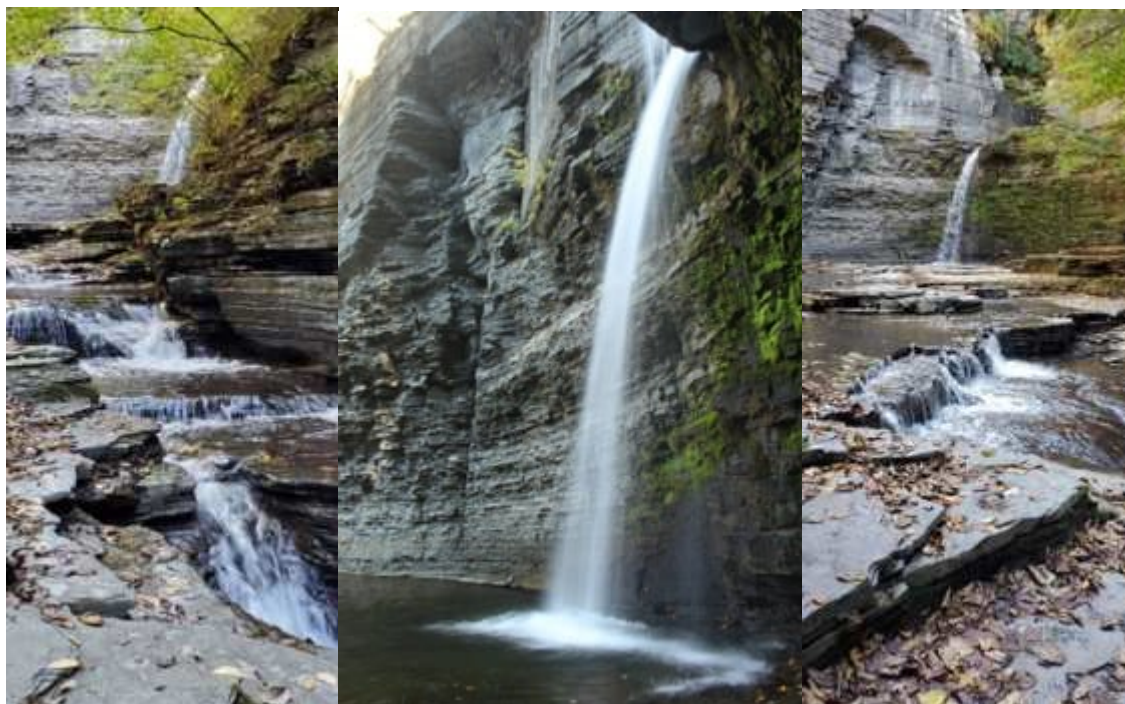
they even have camp sites. Most people come for the waterfall though. We chose to make the most of our visit and had a grilled lunch here. While our charcoal was getting hot, we went to see the falls. This is not a long trail but there are some stairs to climb. The trade-off is views of the gorge the entire way.



The amphitheater of Eagle Cliff Falls is nothing short of spectacular! Every view of this falls is stunning. The main flow drops straight down about 40 feet and there are several smaller waterfalls throughout the gorge.

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Visitors are able to enjoy the water on their visit as well so don't be afraid to wade in or walk behind the falls - my son did!



On our way to our third planned stop, we saw a sign for Newfield Covered Bridge and decided to make a slight detour to see this bridge that was built in 1853. In fact, it's the oldest covered bridge in New York State that still has vehicular traffic crossing it daily. This was a great side trip and learning about the history of New York State is always fascinating. Be sure to stop when you're in the area.



The third waterfall we planned to visit is Ludlowville Falls which is north of Ithaca on the east side of Seneca Lake. The town of Lansing has a small park for visitors to enjoy when they come to see the falls. There's a playground along with a picnic shelter with quite a few tables. A fence marks off the viewing area along the back of the park but if you follow the fence to the right, you'll see where regular visitors have worn a trail down to the creek bed. We spotted some fishermen on their way back up while we were there, too.



The distinguishing feature of Ludlowville Falls is the overhang and shallow cave below the falls. Although the waterflow was a bit low during our visit, I can see why visitors might venture down and explore behind the falls on a hot summer day. This would be a great spot to cool off.

We have visited the spots I planned on but since we were only 15 minutes or so north of Ithaca, we made one more stop and walked through Cascadilla Gorge. The trail through the gorge is approximately a half-mile long stone path and with a lot of stone staircases. The trail connects downtown Ithaca to Cornell University and is used regularly by the students. Overall, there are nine waterfalls covering the roughly 400-foot elevation change of the gorge.





I have wanted to visit Cascadilla Gorge for a long time and it did not disappoint! I'll definitely be planning another visit. The trail is closed during the winter so plan your visit from spring to fall.

The Finger Lakes region has so much to offer visitors and the glimpse of these waterfalls is only the beginning! By visiting these locations, I am now officially done with the Finger Lakes region as listed in my copy of Waterfalls of New York State. I'm off to plan my trips to finish the other regions ... only 24 more to go until I reach 100!

Until the next trip Donna aka bookgirl911 on Instagram

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