

Niagara Falls Not Quite Off the Beaten Path



Niagara Falls isn't exactly off the beaten path, but it is a spectacular place to explore, geocache and letterbox.

Planning Your Trip

There are three things you should be aware of in planning your quest. First, all people 16 and up need a passport to cross the American/Canadian border from either direction. This new requirement has been bad for business on both sides but it isn't going away. Be prepared for some real scrutiny and long lines. The days of being waved across the border are over.

Second, if you are traveling with minor children who have a different last name, have some sort of documentation that they are yours and you have permission to take them into Canada or the US.

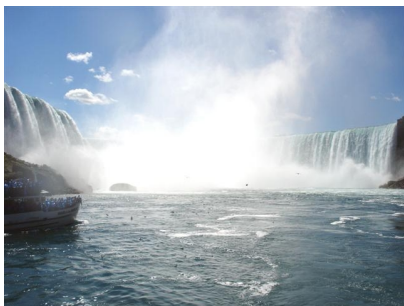


Third, the traffic during peak season is really bad on either side and parking is very scarce. Both sides have very good transportation systems, so you should plan to park somewhere, buy a tourist pass for all the attractions and ride the shuttles. Taxis are reasonable too. We combined shuttle bus, taxi and walking to see everything easily.

For History Buffs

There is a little known but important battlefield on the Canadian side just north of the Floral Gardens and not too far from the Spanish Aerocar attraction. The Battle of Queenston Heights on October 13, 1812 was the first major land battle of the War of 1812.

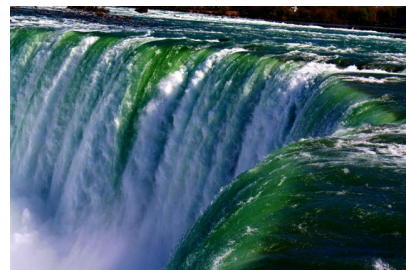
There is an extensive multi-cache called The Battle of Queenston Heights which will take you all over the battlefield. Additionally, there are at least a half dozen traditional geocaches nearby on some great hiking trails along the bluff with views of the Niagara gorge.



Geocaching at Niagara Falls

There are geocaches and letterboxes galore on both sides. They run from above the falls all along the gorge down to the whirlpool and beyond. There are several down in the whirlpool gorge itself and three on Goat Island just above Horseshoe Falls right next to the river. There are virtuals, traditionals of all sizes, urban caches and caches in the wild throughout the area. Ditto for letterboxes. If you do some planning, you can tour the whole area, pick up a couple dozen geo-hides and see things that the regular tourists would miss. Here are a couple of our favorites.

The Green Cascade: This is a virtual geocache that takes you to a geological feature on the far edge of the Three Sisters Islands. Only about 400 yards from the brink of Horseshoe Falls, you have to practically step into the river to get the right camera angle. It looks like there's a 20 foot wall of water bearing down on you, which there is. But then it hits the remains of an ancient canyon left by the glaciers and flows away into the main channel of the river and over the falls. Very cool.



The Other Sister: This is a traditional geocache in the same area as the Green Cascade. It is an ammo box tucked away in the rocks just a few feet away from the river. It's a bit difficult to find and has lots of DNF's but it's there. You do have to be a bit nervy to find it and to retrieve it. If you miscalculate and end up in the river, you're going over the falls. If you like geocaches with a bit of a pucker factor, this one will do nicely.

While doing this cache, you can also pick up the Goat Island letterbox, which is nearby. You'll also need a compass.

<http://www.offthebeatenpath.ws>

Date: 2010-01-25

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-niagara-falls-not-quite-off-the-beaten-path-article1099>