



Crabtree Falls - Nelson County, Virginia

Length	Difficulty	Streams	Views	Solitude	Camping
4.4 mls	2	5	2	1	N/A
Hiking Time: Elev. Gain:	3.5 hours with a half hour for lunch 1,380 ft				

Crabtree Falls is arguably the most beautiful set of waterfalls in Virginia. Billed as the tallest waterfalls east of the Mississippi, Crabtree Falls is a must see for anyone who lives in the mid-Atlantic region.

The falls are believed to be named after William Crabtree, who settled in the area in 1777. The Tye River, at the bottom of the falls, is named for Allen Tye, who did extensive exploration in the local Blue Ridge Mountains.

Take note of the footbridge that crosses Tye River, a laminated arch that was shipped from New York state in one piece and installed in 1978. Until the mid 1980's the footbridge was the starting point for the hike up Crabtree Falls. Today the parking area is on the other side of the river, and the bridge now serves primarily as a decorative addition to the hike.

From the end of the parking area, follow the paved trail to the bottom of the lower most falls. At this point the trail becomes dirt, and does the first of nine switchbacks on its way to the top of the highest set of falls. The trail is well maintained, and has wooden guardrails along its steeper portions, as well as railed overlooks at the most scenic points.

At 0.5 miles look for a rock formation that appears to be a small cave. You can pass through the cave and exit on the other side rejoining the trail.

Arrive at the top of the falls in 1.1 miles from the parking area and cross over a wooden bridge to an overlook. From here you can't see Crabtree Falls below as it falls away, but still get a nice view of the valley floor and Blue Ridge Mountains. Don't be tempted to climb over the stone wall onto the uppermost portion of the falls. The rocks are covered with a very slippery algae, and according to the Forestry Service sign, 23 people have fallen to their deaths climbing out onto the rocks.

From this point re-cross the footbridge and either head back down, or continue left up the trail where the hike becomes much flatter and follows Crabtree stream.

If you continue up the trail will split in 70 yards. Take the right fork uphill as it first traverses the ridge, then follows the stream to the upper parking area in 1.1 miles. To return, retrace your steps back down.