

Kaaterskill Falls



Spectacular 260-foot Kaaterskill Falls is located in the northeastern Catskills, just 1/2 mile from NY 23A. 30-foot (est.) Bastion Falls, visible from the road, is also in this area.

Directions to Trailhead :

The trail to Kaaterskill Falls is located on NYS route 23A, near Palenville and Haines Falls (NY 23A is most easily reached from Thruway - I-87 - exit 21). Traveling from east to west, 3.4 miles from the intersection of NY 23A and NY 32A in Palenville, is Bastion Falls and the start of the Kaaterskill Falls Trail at a bridge. Parking is 0.2 miles further ahead, on the left (south) side of the road. This point is 1.3 miles from the intersection of NY 23A and North Lake Rd. (Greene County Rt. 18).

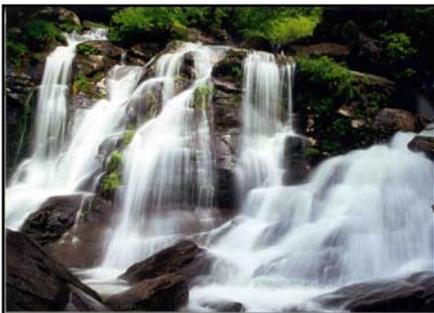
From the parking area, walk back to the trailhead at Bastion Falls. This takes less than five minutes; be careful for cars.

The trail starts somewhat steeply along the stream. Small waterfalls are passed at the start, and are definitely worth checking out for pictures. Then, the grade eases, with the trail mostly staying near the stream. Some areas along Kaaterskill Creek are indeed very beautiful. The way is fairly rocky and eroded. Soon, the water is not as close for a distance, but when the trail returns to it, you are at Kaaterskill Falls. The trail officially ends at this point.

This is the highest two-tiered waterfall in New York State. Its upper tier measures an impressive 175 feet, while its lower tier is 85 feet tall. The falls are truly spectacular, explaining the fact that this is a very popular area - one of the best visited locations in the Catskills. Don't expect to be alone here, unless perhaps you go on a weekday when it's raining. Water level varies significantly at Kaaterskill Falls. This photo was taken in early June, when the water was at a fairly high level. In late summer, the water flow can reduce to a trickle, or even virtually dry up completely.



The falls are best appreciated from a distance, where the entire scene can be taken in. There used to be a trail that climbed to the top of the falls, but it is now officially closed and un-maintained. However, with great difficulty and care, it is possible to climb to the base of the upper tier. This is a particularly nice area, as the overhanging rock of the upper falls creates a large amphitheater like area behind the falls. Also, there is a beautiful pool before the water continues its course over the lower tier of Kaaterskill Falls.



Be careful: remember the falls look the best from the very bottom.

Right at the trailhead, and visible from NY 23A, is Bastion Falls. This falls, in my estimation about 30 feet high, makes a trip to the area worthwhile itself (at least when the water isn't a trickle). To some, this falls, though much less spectacular, is better than Kaaterskill Falls itself. The smaller falls above Bastion Falls also deserve exploration.

Ashley Falls

Ashley Falls is reached by an easy 1/4 mile walk. It is located in the northeastern Catskills, near Kaaterskill Falls.



Directions to Trailhead :

The trailhead for the Mary's Glen Trail (the trail which is used to reach Ashley Falls) is located in the North-South Lake State Campground. Turn onto North Lake Road (Greene County Rt. 18) from NY 23A near Haines Falls. This point is 1.3 miles further west of the parking area for the Kaaterskill Falls trail. From this intersection, drive 3.2 miles to the trailhead for the Mary's Glen Trail, on the left. Parking is just ahead on the left.

The trail goes north from the trailhead, following the west side of Ashley Creek on the level for 0.2 miles, about five minutes, to a junction. Go right on the spur trail to the base of Ashley Falls.

Description

Ashley Falls is an interesting waterfall. There are three distinct parts to it. The uppermost is the highest and most vertical drop. Then, the water travels over another ledge, before sliding down a slab of rock at a sharp angle. From the left side, it is possible to climb first to the top of the first part of the falls, and get an interesting perspective of the falls. From here, less easily and much more carefully, the stream can be crossed to the base of the uppermost section of the falls. The very top of the falls can also be reached. Overall, Ashley Falls is a very worthwhile destination, made all the more so by the fact that it is easy to reach.



Additional Waterfall Hikes

Diamond Notch Falls

Among the most pleasant spots in the eastern US, this 15-foot fall is a hidden gem. Matched with a cascade that will one day rob the falls of their water, the beautiful scene results from the West Kill's effort to erode the mountainside. High mountains loom around the stream valley, creating a cooler climate and remote atmosphere.

Directions from Hunter : Take Rt 23A west to RT 42. Rt 42 South to County Rd 6, Turn left and drive to the eastern end of Spruceton Valley along County Rt 6. An old roadbed continues east of the parking area, heading for Diamond Notch, which separates Hunter and Westkill Mountains. Diamond Notch Falls are located about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile from the trailhead. The walk to Diamond Notch is about another 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles round trip and is very scenic as well.



Shinglekill Falls

These falls lie on the Catskill's eastern fringe. As glaciers plowed down the Hudson Valley, they left many small ledges and cliffs along the mountains, including the shelf holding these quaint falls. The falls continue to work up the valley, eating their way into Devonian red beds. The rock's red color is due to the presence of iron oxide (rust). Around the falls, potholes form when loose rock gets stuck in one place in the bedrock, and moving water turns it like a drill bit. The loose rocks spins and eats into the bedrock creating the pothole. The falls, located only a few hundred feet from the road are easy to access.

Directions From Hunter : Take Rt 23A West to Rt 296 North to Rt 23 East to Cairo, From Cairo, head southwest on County Route 24. After passing South Road, the falls are about 1/10 of a mile farther on the right-hand side. Shinglekill Grist Mill, a small store once an old mill, provides access to the falls.



Plattekill Falls

The 0.25 mile hike to the beautiful Plattekill Falls is followed by the option to continue to Huckleberry Point, one of the most dramatic outlooks in the Catskill Mountains.

Directions From Hunter : Take Rt 23A East to Tannersville, then County Rd 16 South, which turns into Platte Cove rd to the NYSDEC parking area on right.

