Sol Duc Falls				23
Time Best Good		); <del>V</del> Q	🤅 👝 🌔	Reward 👾 👾 👾 👾
Budget	1-2 hr	Туре	Out & Back	Effort LLLL
RT Distance	-1.6 mi	Δ Elev.	~200 ft	Zoom Wide, Norm

The trail to Sol Duc Falls is my go-to recommendation when asked by others for a memorable and straightforward hike that captures the essence of Olympic National Park. For visiting photographers, I consider it a **must do**. I was overjoyed when one of the falls' compositions fit the necessary "format" of my book covers.

You might not know it, but there's another spectacular subject along the way. (More great news!) Halfway to the falls the trail crosses this unnamed creek with an abundance of moss-covered rocks and logs. This photo (below) is hanging on my wall at my left, as I write.



En Route to Sol Duc Falls

35mm f/16 4s ISO200

One more thing, before diving into the trail and photography details... Sol Duc Falls produces abundant mist in the areas you will be capturing images. Your camera and body will get wet. If your camera is not suitable for wet conditions, seek means to cover the camera and lens with a purpose-made cover or bags or something. As for clothes, I usually bring along a rain jacket just for while I'm at the falls.

The trailhead and its parking lot are at the end of Sol Duc Hot Springs Road. The route begins downhill a bit before returning the favor with some moderate climbing. (It's not much.) My GPS results along this route have been inconsistent over the years (to say the least), so do not consider mileages here to be that reliable. All that said, at about 0.4 mile reach a foot bridge over the aforementioned, unnamed creek. From the bridge's vantage, it looks good, but admittedly not as good as on the prior page. This is because the best of the mossy rocks and logs are upstream a bit. So, on the opposite side of the bridge (or the side if you were to continue to Sol Duc Falls) find an informal route uphill. It is up a ways – about 100 feet or so. You'll know it when you see it. My shot was taken one late November afternoon.

Back on the main trail... As you near the falls, on the left is a log shelter. Have a quick look. Once ready, continue the final descent to the bridge over the Sol Duc River, with Sol Duc Falls in sight. Time to don your wet weather wear and ready your camera for the mist!

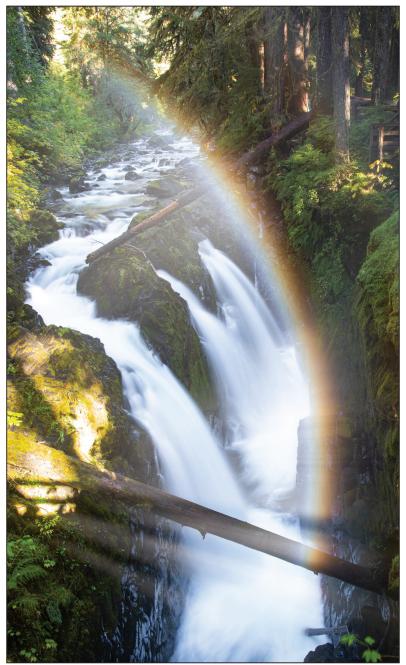
There are two "main" compositions to be made of the falls. The first is from on the bridge. This is the composition at right. The second is from the viewing area in front of the falls. This one is a little more tricky, as camera positioning is perhaps a little more critical. This is the composition on the book cover. As always, try various compositions.

On sunny days in the late afternoon it is possible to capture a rainbow from the bridge area. Where you position yourself will dictate the rainbow's orientation (and of course the relativity to the sun behind you). The gist, though, is that you can relocate your camera to achieve different rainbow results. For the most vivid colors with a rainbow a polarizer helps. But... There is a fine line with rainbows and polarizers. You can over-polarize and the rainbow dims, so do experiment.

Another rainbow option is to begin up the trail to the right once on the other side of the bridge. This trail is known as Lover's Lane. It immediately ascends, and with that change in elevation the rainbow's position and intensity may improve for your composition.

Some "seasonal" commentary... During springtime the prolific Devil's Club (plant) around the falls is dense and a colorful green. It remains into the summer, but it loses some of its deep green. During fall its large leaves drop. Fall adds some usual foliage color, but it is not much. Winter is the most "drab," and while I have not been here with snowfall, it would likely add its own unique twist. Now compare the cover photo with this one at right. The biggest difference (besides the rainbow!) is the presence of Devil's Club on the cover photo. I just want you to be aware of the differences, no matter when you visit. Anytime of the year this site is always great.

Once finished, dry off and prepare for the hike back. If your scheduling and timing is on point, consider a soak in the hot springs at the resort... That's one heck of a grand way to finish a day!



Sol Duc Falls & Rainbow

24mm f/8 1s ISO100