



Credit: The following information has been condensed and adapted from the PackYourBaguios.com article titled [Tennessee Waterfalls Road Trip](#).

This road trip starts just an hour and a half east of Nashville (9 miles north of Cookeville, Tennessee) at Cummins Falls State Park. The route then heads south to Burgess Falls State Park, Rock Island State Park, and ends at picturesque Fall Creek Falls State Park!

Cummins Falls State Park

Cummins Falls is the first stop in this Tennessee waterfalls road trip. It is the 8th largest waterfall in Tennessee in terms of volume of water. The height of the falls is 75 feet (23m). Cummins Falls State Park is a day-use park with an easy walk to the overlook from the parking lot. The overlook area is fairly small, however you are able to hike down to the waterfall itself.

There are two loop trails to the bottom of the falls (1 mile and 1/2 mile). Both are steep and slippery. Wear good traction shoes that are waterproof. We hiked to the bottom on our trip and it took about 45 minutes total. The water level will vary based on the time of your visit. Our favorite part was in June, when we went, you could hike through the gorge to the swimming hole at the bottom of the falls. This is the only waterfall on this trip that you can swim in. *Due to the slippery rocks, this is not a hike for small children or those with health issues.

Address: 390 Cummins Falls Lane, Cookeville, Tennessee

Hours: 8am-6pm, gorge closes at 5pm

Burgess Falls State Park

From Cummins State Park, you take Highway 56 south for 12 miles. Then travel south about 4 more miles on Highway 135. This leg of the road trip will take around 30 minutes. Cell service can get sketchy once you're south of Interstate 40, so make sure to print driving directions ahead of time!

If you didn't bring food and need a little bite to eat, you can take a detour over to Cookeville, Tennessee. Cookeville has a cute little downtown area with a variety of diners.

Burgess Falls is a day-use park that showcases the water cascade along the Falling Waters River. The trail goes along the river as it falls 250 feet in elevation in a little under a mile. As you walk

along the trail, on the right-hand side there are 4 separate waterfalls, each bigger than the last. The first 3 waterfalls are 20 feet, 30 feet, and 80 feet respectively. On the left-hand side are scenic rock formations and wildflowers depending on the time of year.

The trail ends at the observation deck of the grand daddy waterfall, a full volume cascade falling 136 feet (44m) into the gorge. There is a staircase down to the gorge, but may be closed due to weather damage. This hike is designated as moderately strenuous. If there has been recent rains, parts of the hike may be muddy and slick. You can bring a hiking stick or other tool to assist with walking in these areas. It is recommended to take the service road, which has a gradual incline, back to the parking lot.

Address: 4000 Burgess Falls Drive, Sparta, Tennessee

Hours: 8am-one hour before sunset

Rock Island State Park

- Great Falls & Twin Falls

The next stop on this Tennessee Waterfalls Road Trip is Rock Island State Park. It is home to 2 stunning waterfalls, Great Falls and Twin Falls. To reach Rock Island State Park from Burgess Falls is about a 30 minute drive. Be sure to print the directions out in case your gps signal drops and make sure you start out going south towards Highway 135 N.

Then you will travel 16 miles until turning right onto Highway 287 S. The state park is well marked with a big parking area. If you go down the left side of the river, you can park right next to the Great Falls Overlook, get out and take a hike, or just take a picture and get back in your car. The road to the Twin Falls Overlook is on the other side of the river on Powerhouse Road.

The falls are located at the confluence of the Caney Fork, Collins and Rocky Rivers. Cabins and camping are available at the state park. If hiking, wear shoes with good traction. It's called Rock Island for a reason – lots of beautiful rocks that can get quite slippery, especially after rainfall. There is no swimming or wading downstream of the Powerhouse.

Address: 82 Beach Road, Rock Island, Tennessee

Hours: 7am-10pm, some public areas close earlier

Fall Creek Falls State Park

- Fall Creek Falls & Piney Creek Falls

Fall Creek Falls State Park is Tennessee's largest and most popular state park. It can be reached by taking Highways 287N, 30E, and 284E for a little more than 30 miles. However, it will take about an hour to reach due to the curvy roads. Because it is such a popular park, especially with church youth groups, there are lots of directional signs to keep you going the right way.

The two falls on this Tennessee waterfalls road trip are both easy to access. If you have more time, there are more than 50 miles of hiking trails and additional waterfalls to explore.

At 256 feet in height, Fall Creek Falls is one of the tallest waterfalls east of the Mississippi River.

However, the water flow is controlled by a dam. In dry months, there might not be much water output. The overlook is an easy, short walk from the parking area. To get to the base of the falls is a short, but steep .4-mile hike. Rest at the bottom, because the climb back up out of the gorge is a doozy!

A short, scenic drive from Fall Creek Falls is Piney Creek Falls. These falls drop 90 feet and the view is partially obscured by trees, even in the winter, but you may find that you like these falls even better than Fall Creek Falls.

The observation deck is a short .12 miles from the parking area. Then travel down about another .15 miles to the suspension bridge. The hike to the bridge isn't strenuous or long, but there are some loose rocks and drop offs with no railing. You can't see the falls from the bridge but it is pretty high up.

Address: 10821 Park Road, Spencer, Tennessee

Hours: Open 24 hours, but the roads to the falls close at dusk

FOLLOW THIS GUIDE TO EXPLORE EACH OF THE WATERFALLS ON THIS ONE DAY ROAD TRIP.

We recommend spending at least one day in Nashville, Tennessee, then one day traveling to each waterfall, and lastly at least one day in Chattanooga, Tennessee before heading back home. If you are interested in following this itinerary, please submit an inquiry through RideOrFlyTravel.com and we will gladly assist with:

**Hotel or VRBO accommodations for your time in Nashville and Chattanooga*

**Excursions and other adventures in Tennessee (ATV tours, Food tours, Zip Lining, White Water Rafting, etc)*

**Sight-Seeing Opportunities (Murals, As Seen On Tv, Historical Markers, etc)*

**Car rental reservations*

**Flight research*