

Bergeron Falls Hiking Trail (#13)

This very rewarding hike leads to Bergeron Falls, one of the highest waterfalls in northern B.C. The falls plunge 100 m over a sandstone lip into a spectacular horseshoe shaped bowl. Hiking to the top of the falls and back is 8.8 km return, takes 3 to 4 hours, and is rated moderate. The challenging circular route, constructed in 2010, is more challenging and longer (11.5 km including the side-trail to the base of the falls). It is highly recommended, as it has much more varied scenery, leads to both the bottom and the top of the falls, and includes impressive riverside and canyon sections. There are signs marking each kilometer.

Warning: This trail has huge unfenced dropoffs. Children and pets should be closely supervised. Four creek crossings (impassable during floods) are required to reach the base of the falls.

Time/Distance: 5-7 hours/9-11.5 km
Elevation Gain: 365 m (1200 ft) for Circular Route
Rating: Moderate - top of falls ■
Challenging - Circular Route ◆

Directions to the Trailhead

From Tumbler Ridge, drive north towards Chetwynd on Hwy 29 for 6.5 km to a right turn onto the signed gravel road. Follow this road for 8 km to its end beside a large gravel pit. There is a sign at the trailhead.

Trail Directions

From the parking lot, the trail climbs gently through mixed aspen and spruce forests. At 0.6 km there is a fork. For Bergeron Falls, take the right fork (the left fork leads to the Bergeron Cliffs). The trail climbs steadily until it levels out on a bench. Just before 1 km, Vomer Creek is reached. This stream has a small waterfall, which can be seen by heading 20 m off the main trail. Shortly after passing the falls, the trail follows a long cutline through the forest.

At 2.2 km the junction for the Circular Route is reached. Keeping left leads to the top of the falls and viewpoints 2 km further on. First it passes through an interesting forest of small pine trees in an old burn area. This is mostly level hiking except where the trail descends to cross Bergeron Creek via an aluminum footbridge. Be aware that there is a large waterfall downstream. The trail then ascends and approaches the edge of the cliff, leading to spectacular viewpoints of Bergeron Falls. A barrier has been placed at the old first viewpoint to keep hikers away from the unstable cliff edge. For hikers wishing just to see the falls from the top, continue to the last viewpoint bench, but do not descend further.

Keeping right at the km 2.2 junction is the recommended direction of travel for the challenging Circular Route (see map). After a level section this trail descends steadily until it crosses a clear, spring-fed creek before coming out on a cliff bank overlooking the Murray River. Close by is a historic pack trail that leads down to the river. The trail then edges along the top of bluffs (stay away from the cliff edge), with great views of the river below, before passing along and then descending a spectacular knife-edge ridge (km 4), which leads to river level. Painted stakes, flagging tape and rock cairns mark the way across a gravel bar at the mouth of Bergeron Creek. The creek crossing here may be impassable during high water levels. The trail then re-enters the forest.

Soon there is an important junction. Keeping left leads along a dramatic, rough route beside the creek through a scenic slot canyon. This involves rock scrambling and ledges, and is only feasible during times of low water.

To avoid the canyon section, keep right at the junction, ascend on the trail for 200 m, and take the signed trail to the left that leads to the base of the falls. There are three creek crossings. The spectacular view at the base of the falls is reached at 5.5 km. Look for mountain goats on the canyon walls. After returning along this trail onto the Circular Route, there is a steady climb until the upper viewpoints of the falls are reached.

There are a number of other fascinating features in the area just above the falls. A favourite is the side-trail to Hidden Valley, a dry, cool, mossy, steep-sided, linear cleft that parallels the main cliff edge. An offshoot from the Hidden Valley trail leads to the bottom of Dipper Falls, a small waterfall in attractive rocky surroundings on Bergeron Creek. Scalpel Ridge is another side-trail from the main trail: it follows a narrow knife-edge ridge before descending to a bench in the forest beside the creek.

Bergeron Creek is one of the many tributaries of the Murray River that enter the river valley with waterfalls. These creeks cut their channels after the ice retreated from the Murray River following the last glaciation.

On the return trip back to the trailhead, you can extend the hike by visiting Bergeron Cliffs: continue along the cutline at km 10.5, and follow this connector trail to meet up with the trail to the cliffs. The trail climbs steadily, coming out on top of the cliffs and following along them, with five great viewpoints. The Bergeron Cliffs hike has its own separate brochure.

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Rating: Moderate/Challenging ■ ◆

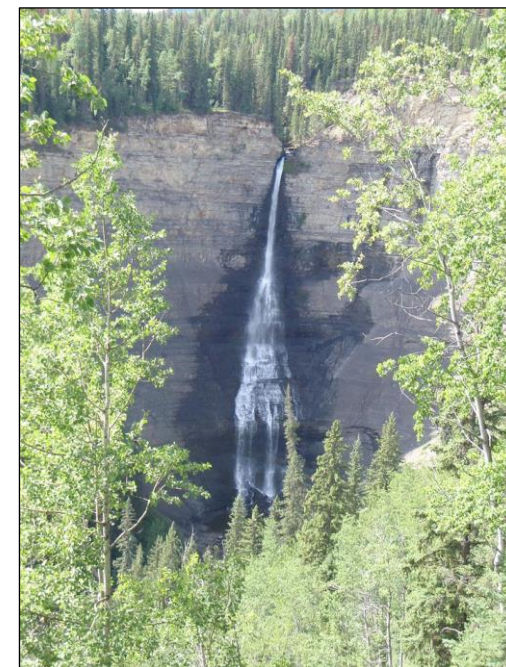
Time: 4 - 5 hours





Bergeron Falls Trail

- ***Use extreme caution near cliff edges***
- ***Do not throw rocks over cliff edges, as hikers may be below***
- ***Maximum 2 people at a time on bridge above falls***
- ***This trail is in bear country; travel in groups and make noise***
- ***Please pack out what you packed in***
- ***Don't wait until it's too late, 911 rescues are free in BC***



Top Viewpoint of Falls

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Tourism website: www.TumblerRidge.ca

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