

FALL CREEK FALLS



Distance	119 miles from Vanderbilt
Directions	Take I-40 East to Cookeville, Exit 288. Turn right onto TN 111 South and continue on this road, bypassing the city of Sparta, for 28 miles to the city of Spencer. Continue through Spencer on TN 111 until you reach the Fall Creek Falls sign at Highway 284. Follow the signs from this point on. Although this South Entrance is the quickest, Fall Creek Falls also has a North Entrance. To get to this entrance, take a left off of Highway 111 at Spencer onto Highway 30 East. Continue along this windy road until you get to the North Entrance at the intersection of Highways 30 and 284. Again, follow the signs into the park.
Description	Fall Creek Falls, located between the cities of Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville, is Tennessee's most popular state park. It offers the hiker several natural highlights, including Cane Creek Falls, Piney Creek Falls, several gorge overlooks, and finally, Fall Creek Falls itself, the highest free-falling waterfall east of the Rocky Mountains. Its height is 256 feet, which is 63 feet higher than Niagara Falls. To cover this state park on foot, the hiker can choose from four short trails as well as two long overnight loops—the Cane Creek Overnight Trail Lower Loop (12 miles) and Upper Loop (13 miles). Although the Upper Loop is longer, it is an easier hike. The hiker can also connect the four short trails into a longer hike if desired. The Nature Center, clearly marked on road signs, has trail maps, toilets, and is also the location where hikers must register for the two overnight loops. Although Fall Creek Falls State Park does offer a wide variety to the nature lover, from numerous wildlife to several waterfalls, a general criticism of returning hikers is the amount of tourism in the park and the existence of parking lots and paved roads to any of the major sites within the park. To some, however, this can be advantageous. Other facilities within the park include an inn, a restaurant, cabins, bike trails, a swimming pool, and rock-climbing areas at Copperhead Rock and Millikin Overlook.
Campsites	Fall Creek Falls has two backpacking camps that are both equipped with three camping “nodes” that are placed to assure the privacy of each occupant, a privy, and a pump that produces clear, cold water. Locations are provided at the Nature Center. Also, a large car-camping area with over 100 camping spots is located within the park. Spots here must be reserved in advance and paid for once you reach the park.
For More Information	Consult pages 79-84 of <u>Tennessee Trails: Third Edition</u> by Evan Means and <u>Middle Tennessee on Foot</u> by Robert Brandt, pp. 227-238. Also, for more detailed information, consult pages 64-75 of <u>The South Cumberland and Fall Creek Falls</u> by Russ Manning and Sondra Jamieson. For information about rock-climbing in Fall Creek Falls, consult <u>Southern Rock</u> by Chris Hall, pages 124-127.