

L48F Rockway Falls-Balls Falls Trail Guide - TorontoHiking

WAYPOINT INTERVAL	DISTANCE km	WAYPOINT-TO-WAYPOINT TRAIL DESCRIPTION
001 - 002		Walk to the back of the Rockway Community Centre parking lot and enter the Bruce Trail beside the fence and head right. The trail passes some good lookout spots for Rockway Falls as it passes right along the cliff edge. Further down the creek you can see the Middle Falls. The trail veers away from the cliff edge and drops down over a rocky descent into a wooded area where it curves right and meets the Rockway Falls ST (002) .
002 - 003	1.1	The side trail heads left and continues down to a creek crossing (003). Continue a bit further down before crossing the creek to see the Rockway Lower Falls . NOTE: This creek is not passable when water levels are high so you will need to return to the Rockway Community Centre parking lot.
003 - 004	2.8	1) If you can cross the creek, the trail comes out to Ninth Ave where it turns left and heads uphill to meet the Bruce Trail and end at (004) . 2) If the water level is too high, return to the parking lot, cross Rockway Road and continue on the right to the bridge over Fifteen Mile Creek . Looking upstream you can see Martin's Falls . Continue on Rockway Road to Ninth Ave where the trail turns right and follows Ninth Ave to the intersection with the Rockway Falls ST (004) .
004 - 005	4.5	The trail heads uphill on a steep narrow path and wanders through a hardwood forest and then through an overgrown bush passing an open farmer's field on the left. The trail follows the field edge. The trail descends a dry gully to cross a creek and curve around the ravine edge. Following close to the edge of the ravine, the trail passes through an area of heavy undergrowth and becomes rocky in places. The trail descends a mother-of-a-ravine slope that can be slippery when wet but has a few small trees to help you from falling. Once down, the creek can be passed by walking over rocks on the creek bed. The trail then climbs a very steep high mother-of-a-slope where you may need to use your hands to grab onto roots and rocks to get up to the top on the other side of the ravine. The trail soon arrives at a second ravine to cross -this one a baby in comparison. Before you know it, there is a third ravine a bit bigger than the second. The trail comes to a cliff edge overlooking a steep descent (005) .
005 - 006	5.1	Just at the cliff edge, the trail passes through a narrow crevice

between two rocks and then makes a very long descent down a very slippery mud trail with some switchbacks but little for you to hold onto save for some wiry little plants with tenacious roots near the bottom to keep you from sliding down the rest of the way and landing on your butt -or worse. This was very slippery 40 h after a rainfall so I would not recommend tackling this descent in wet weather.

At the bottom of the hill, the trail arrives at a farm road and turns right along this road allowance. The trail crosses a creek with some stepping stones and continues along the farm before climbing a grassy lane which leads to a large cornfield and vineyard **(006)**.

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| 006 -
Louth
Falls | 6.6 | The trail continues straight ahead past the vineyard and between two fields of corn before re-entering the woods. The trail Passes the Louth Side Trail and comes to a T-intersection at a ravine edge and heads to the left along the ravine to arrive at Louth Falls . There is an easy path down to the crest of the falls to view the rock formations up close. |
| Falls -007 | 6.9 | The trail turns right and begins to climb, reaches a farm lane and turns right to climb up to the hilltop. Here a blue sign (T) marks the termination of the Louth ST (007) . |
| 007 - 008 | 7.4 | Continue straight ahead on the main Bruce Trail. The main trail become very rocky requiring much attention to the trail as you step from one rock to another separated by deep crevices. The main trail comes out to Staff Avenue just 150 m west of the Louth Parking Lot on Staff Ave (008) . |
| 008 - 009 | 9.2 | From (008) on Staff Avenue just west of the parking lot, head right (west) to Seventeenth St. and walk 1.3 km north to where the Bruce Trail enters the woods to the left past a chain link between posts. NOTE: There is no parking here (tow-away signs are posted.) Traffic is light on Seventeenth St (009) . |
| 009 - 010 | 10.6 | The trail follows a wide mowed grassy path past the swing and soon heads off to the right on a narrow path into more dense bush. At a Y-intersection, take the path to the left which heads downhill, curves around and crosses a wooden bridge over a tributary of Eighteen Mile Creek. At the intersection with the Jordan Trail keep to the left on the Bruce Trail. The trail wanders through the bush and comes to a wide rock strewn creek bed about 4 m across. This is Eighteen Mile Creek . It was dry in late August but in early Spring it would be more challenging to cross requiring stepping from rock to rock. Just past the creek and around the bend, another Y-intersection has the main trail heads off to the left up a slight slope. At still another Y-intersection, head to the left on the main trail that climbs steeply up to the top of the scarp. The trail rounds a corner and come to the edge of a very deep gully and ahead you can see Eighteen Mile Creek Falls which was almost dry in late August but you could hear a trickle of water dropping. You can clearly see the different layers of rock in |

the waterfalls. The top overhang and the ledge further down are hard dolostone while the layers of shale underneath them have eroded more quickly. **(010)**.

- 010 - 011 11.1 The trail soon arrives at a T-intersection with the main trail heading off to the right. The trail now follows alongside Eighteen Mile Creek for a bit before. There was no visible flow of water but the creek bed had many puddles of water. The trail descends and arrives at Nineteenth Avenue **(011)**.
- 011 - 012 11.6 The trail jogs a bit to the right and enters back into the woods with very little underbrush and heads uphill. The trail makes a long gradual climb to the top of the scarp and follows the edge of the escarpment above a subdivision and some enticing swimming pools below. The rock becomes more fractured due to weathering with cracks between adjacent slabs before it reaches **Glen Road (012)**.
- 012 - 013 13.0 The trail crosses the road and jogs to the left uphill to meet the “**Twenty Trail**” leading to **Balls Falls** along the gorge. Down below is the rushing water of **Twenty Mile Creek** -in Spring that is, not now in August. The wide trail narrows down and becomes very narrow as it undulates along the edge over some tricky and sometimes slippery areas. Be careful and plant your feet carefully and watch where you are going. The trail comes to a section where there are huge boulders in the creekbed which make for an incredible set of rapids when water flow is high and literally smashing against the rocks. There are a few easy paths down to get closer to the action. Just before the wooden staircase going up the cliff edge, you can descend a trail close to the creek that heads towards the base of Balls Falls. Now you have a long steep climb up a set of wooden reinforced berms and wooden steps with a side cable covered in garden hose to aid your ascent. At the top is a well-placed rest bench in loving memory of John Gregory Moyer after the long climb up **(013)**. I can't think of a bench on the Bruce Trail that is better placed.
- 013 - Falls 13.4 You are now in the arboretum and the trail heads to the right and comes to a set of wooden steps leading down to the Balls Falls Conservation Area. Follow the gravel path past some exhibition buildings to cross a small bridge over to the falls viewing area. Here there is a large information display board and a long stone wall along the gorge edge for safe viewing of the falls. Unfortunately, the angle is less than ideal for falls viewing. You can continue along the Bruce Trail crossing the bridge over Twenty Mile Creek and along the other side of the gorge but the view is not too much better.
- 007 - 008 15.1 After viewing **Balls Lower Falls** and displays, head down to 6th Ave and either cross the bridge to your right or descend to the river bank and cross the small footbridge there. Across the river, turn left and follow the path on the west bank of Twenty Mile Creek. Stop to examine the ruins of the old woolen mill. It was built

by George Ball in 1824 and used water diverted 100 m from the Upper Falls to power machinery that ran in the mill to manufacture fabrics. Continuing along the path will bring you to a flat stone viewing area with a metre high stone wall to keep the public back from the dangerous edge of **Balls Upper Falls**. Many people climb over this wall for a closer view. If you decide to do so, exercise extreme caution. In the summer when there is only a trickle of water you can walk out onto the crest of the falls for a great view down the gorge. I find the Upper Falls more interesting than the more viewed lower falls. In summer it is not uncommon to see young people near the foot of the falls navigating the (slippery) rocks. At the far edge of the gorge a large volume of water has found its way under the caprock creating an almost separate waterfall. The caprock in this area is quite unstable.

Leaving the falls try the alternate route back to your left which travels through the woods high above the original path and gradually descends down to the road and the bridge. Retrace your path back to the parking lot.

Enjoy the hike and the day!