

Minni Ha Ha Falls

Location: Start at the picnic area at the end of Minni-Ha-Ha Rd, Katoomba.

Duration: 1 hour

Grade: Medium

Features: waterfalls, creeks, hanging swamp

Trip Notes:

After a very wet summer the walk to Minni Ha Ha Falls was lush and renewed. The creeks were flowing rapidly, the thick undergrowth of ferns sparkled in the sunlight and of course Minni Ha Ha Falls gushed rapidly over the cliff face creating a large pool beneath.

The track to the falls begins to the left of the notice board at the picnic area, where it leads to a ford which we crossed using some planks already laid there. This main creek is Yosemite Creek and the track follows it along to the falls. The damp sandy path led us by a hanging swamp where long white arms of the eucalyptus trees reached up out of the ferns. The swamp became more expansive and the trees more dense and we marvelled at the silver and brown hues and markings of the eucalyptus.

Soon a side track to the left leads down some steps to a pretty spot by the creek where the running water surrounded by ferns tips over a small waterfall and flows by. This is a picturesque place for a short break and an interesting spot to explore before returning to the main path. The track then starts to narrow (follow the brown markers) and gets quite muddy in some sections, however there are some short side tracks through the long grass which can be taken to avoid the mud. Soon you will notice another smaller creek on your right also running by swiftly, while the larger Yosemite Creek cascades and tumbles over the rock bed on the left. Crossing over a short boardwalk, the two creeks join and red mountain devils and yellow bottle brush are scattered over the landscape.

Soon we get to a small sandy beach on the left – a beautiful spot to enter the sparkling water if you feel like a cool dip. On the other side of the creek, the hanging swamp continues with the orange-brown cliff walls above. This is a great place for a picnic, and as we returned to the main track a party of bushwalkers were happily carrying their picnic baskets and rugs there.

The track soon opens out and we realised how high up we actually were when we saw the view of the valley beneath. The distinct ferns of the hanging swamp carpeted the hillside and the track became more open and rocky with sets of carved steps, the water still cascading by on our right and scribbly gums beside us. A rusty star picket fence along the path led us down some more steps to a junction where turning left provides a short detour to a lookout with an amazing view of the valley below. The roar of Minni Ha Ha Falls can now be heard and looking between the cliff walls, the creek down below can be seen. After drinking in this view continue back along the main track following the cliff edge and soon Minni Ha Ha Falls is in view. An old wooden bench embedded into a rock overlooks the falls and here we spent some time listening to the falls and watching the New Holland Honeyeaters darting about.

Around the corner a steep set of metal steps takes us to the valley below. At the bottom we turned left and scrambled over some large rocks following the base of the cliff passing an old long wooden bench under an overhang. As we went down a few more steps and through the hanging swamp the vegetation got more damp and the narrow wet path soon led us to the base of the falls.

Clambering onto the slippery rocks surrounded by ferns with logs balancing amid the water gave us a wonderful view of the thundering Minni Ha Ha Falls. We were here some years ago when there was a period of drought - then the falls were little more than a trickle and we could walk right up to them. Now after all the rain, the falls have sprung back to life with water covering what once was a sandy beach creating a large pool making it impossible to reach the falls (unless you want to swim).

After enjoying this scenic spot we made our way back the way we came, stopping at the old benches for a break and eventually getting back to the picnic area where a team of bush regeneration volunteers were looking after this special place.

By Dilshara Hill