

Feather River Ranger District
Plumas National Forest
875 Mitchell Avenue
Oroville, CA 95965
530-534-6500
www.fs.fed.us/r5/plumas

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FEATHER FALLS

Length: 8.8 miles round-trip

Hiking time: 5 hours

High point: 2,500 feet

Total elevation gain: 1,100 feet

Difficulty: moderate

Season: year-round

Water: available from Frey Creek and Fall River (purify first)

Maps: USGS 7.5' Forbestown, USGS 7.5' Brush Creek

Information: Feather River Ranger District, Plumas National Forest

This hike offers a smorgasbord of natural delights. You'll walk through tall stands of incense cedar and ponderosa pine, along streams

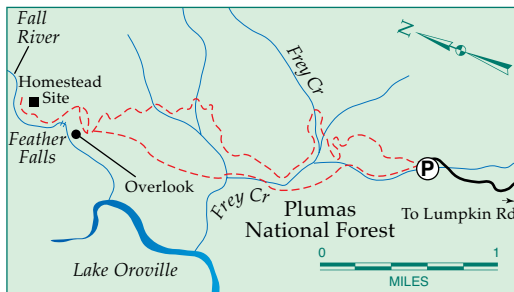
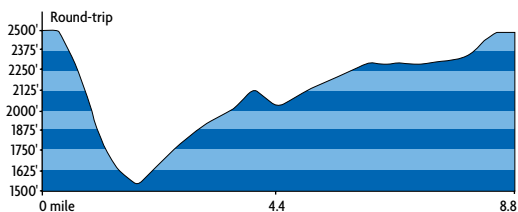
shaded by bigleaf maple and dogwood, and past a multitude of spring and early summer wildflowers to Feather Falls, where the clear



Feather Falls (Photo by John R. Soares)

waters of the Fall River drop 640 feet into a granitic gorge.

Take Highway 70 to Oroville, exit onto Oro Dam Boulevard, head northeast, and turn right after 1.5 miles onto Olive Highway. Go 6 miles and turn right onto Forbestown Road. Go another 6 miles and turn left onto Lumpkin Road. Follow Lumpkin Road 10 miles and turn left at a Feather Falls sign for the final 1.6 miles to the trailhead.



For the first 200 yards, the path travels past dozens of madrone trees, easily recognizable by their large, shiny green leaves and peeling red bark. Bear left at a trail fork, noting that you'll return by the right fork. Near the 0.5-mile marker, look for the scarce California nutmeg tree, which has long, sharp needles.

Reach the cool canyon shade of Frey Creek at 1.1 miles. As you gradually descend near the gurgling water, look for a swimming hole at the bottom of a two-stage waterfall to the left at 1.4 miles.

Views through the trees of the middle fork of the Feather River and its steep canyon walls appear at 1.5 miles; look for the smooth granite head of Bald Rock Dome looming above the river's west bank. From here, you descend for 1 shady mile and then begin a moderate climb to a trail fork at 3.2 miles.

Stay left and follow the safety railings to another trail fork. Go left again to reach the overlook.

From the overlook you have a magnificent view of Feather Falls, where the aptly named Fall River drops 640 vertical feet past sheer granite cliffs to the canyon far below before joining the middle fork of the Feather River and Lake Oroville.

After imbibing this broad view of the sixth-highest waterfall in the United States, go back to the last trail fork, turn left, and walk 0.2 mile to where a small trail leads to granite boulders at the lip of the falls. Those not afraid of heights can lean against a chain-link fence and watch the water plummet all the way to the bottom of the canyon.

Feather Falls' 640-foot drop makes it the sixth highest waterfall in the United States.

This side trail continues another mile upstream along the Fall River. Summer swimmers will find good swimming holes, and overnights will find several campsites. Near the end of the trail, you'll see some old fruit trees and an old water ditch, which are all that remain of an old homestead.

The return portion of the loop is 1.2 miles longer than the route to the falls, but it has very little elevation change. This upper portion leaves from near the overlook and offers excellent views of Frey Creek and Bald Rock Dome. It connects to the bottom portion of the loop near the trailhead.

