Benham Falls, OR



Vicinity Location:
The trailhead is about 125 miles southeast of Portland, Oregon in the Deschutes National Forest.

Directions:
From Portland, drive to Bend, about 175 miles. From Bend, drive south onto Cascade Lakes National Scenic Byway passing through several traffic circles. After the last traffic circle, continue on Cascade Lakes Highway / SW Century Dr for about 5 miles.

Turn left onto Dillon Falls Rd / NF-41 and continue for 4 miles.

After 4 miles, turn left onto a gravel road following signs for Benham Falls.

Drive for 2.2 miles on FR 400 and park at the end of the road.

There is a restroom at the trailhead.

From May 1 through September 30 $5 daily permit or a Northwest Forest pass is required. No on-site purchase for permits. No permits are needed to park between October 1st and June 30.

Dogs are allowed and have to be on-leash from May 15th to September 15th.

Trail:
Deschutes River Trail.

There is no geocache on this trail, but there is farther up the Deschutes River Trail.

Trail Maps:
Topo Map, Download Garmin .gpx file

Length and Elevation:
0.4 miles roundtrip. Elevation at the trailhead is 4,150 feet. Elevation gain totals 100 feet. Total gain and loss is 200 feet. Highest elevation is 4,150 feet.

Review: April 17, 2014.
The short trail goes down several gentle switchbacks through the pine-scented forest with the ever-present roar of the waterfall. The trail is enclosed by a split-rail fence to keep people from trampling the area around the overlook. Wind down to the overlook high above the churning falls.

The falls are really a series of rapids where the Deschutes River shoots through a 40 to 60 foot wide lava canyon. There was a lava flow about 6,000 years ago when Lave Butte erupted and the water has been squeezed into this narrow canyon. This area was named for J. R. Benham who filed for land in this area in 1885.

Head back to the trailhead and walk along upstream along the Deschutes River trail for a few hundred feet where there are some footpaths leading to unfenced cliff overlooks of the falls and a churning pool just before the narrowing of the canyon.

You can continue along the trail and go upstream and enjoy other views of the Deschutes River or return to your car.

The official trail to the falls is a great introductory hike for small children and pets will enjoy a short break from car travel too. As with any area in Central Oregon, there can be rattlesnakes.

Enjoy the photos!!
Gallery Pics
Switchback Steve

