

NORTHEAST YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK

The main plan for this day was to check out the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone area, including the Brink of the Upper Falls Trail, Uncle Tom's Trail, Artist's Point, the Brink of the Lower Falls Trail, and Inspiration Point. We also checked out Tower Falls on the way to the canyon area, before it got too crowded later in the day. Unfortunately, however, as it got too crowded in the canyon area quickly, we had some time in the afternoon to check out other areas. Therefore, we also stopped at a turnout near Dunraven Pass to photograph the spectacular wildflowers on the slopes of Observation Peak, as well as at the Petrified Tree (which was jammed with tourists) near Tower-Roosevelt and the "Forces of the Northern Range" boardwalk.

Buffalo rubbing his face on a tree on the side of the road; luckily it was early in the morning, as otherwise there would have been more vehicles than just the one in front of us stopped in the middle of the road blocking traffic:



Tower Falls (height 132 feet) has some interesting rock "minarets" near the edge of the falls:



Informative sign at the falls; the rock at the top of the falls is volcanic breccia, which is harder than the layer of rock beneath it; the glacial debris beneath this volcanic breccia is more easily eroded, creating Tower Falls:



Vertical photograph of Tower Falls, showing that its lower portion is not visible from this overlook:



The trail to the base of the falls is closed:



However, visitors can walk down to near the Yellowstone River:



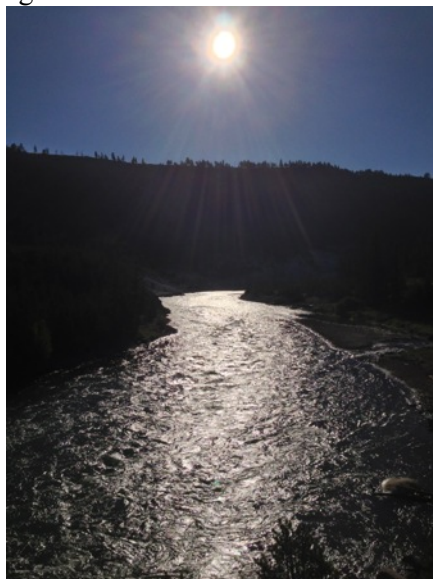
The trail up to the base of the falls is closed off by wooden barricades:



Looking north, down the Yellowstone River:



Looking up-river, with the sunlight reflecting off the water:



Another photo of the Yellowstone River on our way back up the trail:



Panorama from the Tower Falls overlook:



From here, we continued on towards Canyon Village; the wildflowers near Mount Washburn never cease to amaze me:



If you can get to the parking area before the throngs of tourists (and tour buses) arrive, you can pretty much have it all to yourself (and you don't really have to get there particular early—we arrived barely before 10:00!):



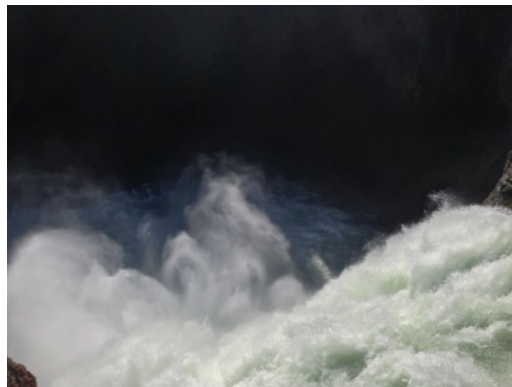
View of the upper falls from a viewpoint before the Brink of the Upper Falls; the upper falls have a height of 109 feet:



Looking up-river from the Brink of the Upper Falls viewpoint, with the Chittenden Bridge on the Artist Point Road just barely visible in the distance:



Two photos looking over the top of the upper falls; the iPhone HDR was very helpful to have in taking photos of this waterfall:



From here, we continued on to our first stop on the Artist Point Road, the parking area for the Uncle Tom's Trail. This is a view of the upper falls, with the Chittenden Bridge just behind it:



Looking over at the trail switchbacking down to the Brink of the Lower Falls:



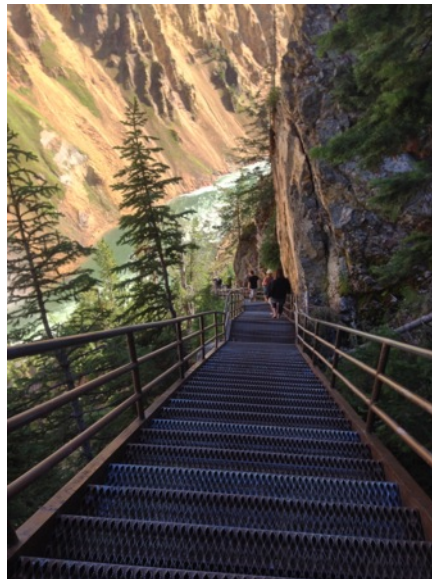
Sign for Uncle Tom's Trail; it appears that this trail originally had rope ladders (which would have made the walk much more interesting for me!):



Panorama of the lower falls (height 308 feet) while descending the metal steps to the viewpoint at the bottom of the trail:



HDR of some of the 328 steps down (with a minimal amount of tourists in the photo; note that when there are large groups of people descending, the stairs do shake noticeably, and there are bent steps where there likely was a substantial amount of weight at one instant):



The lower falls seem to have a perpetual rainbow whenever there is a good sun angle:



A secondary rainbow can just barely be seen in this photo; secondary rainbows have one more reflection of a light ray from the sun within a water droplet than primary rainbows, and therefore they appear dimmer and more difficult to see and photograph (this is also why the order of colors is reversed in a secondary rainbow):



Panorama of the lower falls, its primary rainbow, and part of the lower Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone:



I took many photographs trying to get a good image of the secondary rainbow; this is the best one I got:



I did manage to get some good iPhone HDR photos (which must have substantial color enhancement by the camera software to get such nice colors):



From here, we headed back up the metal steps of Uncle Tom's Trail:



Looking back down a section of trail which currently had nobody on it:



Our next stop was Artist Point, which was just starting to get crowded as the first tour bus had arrived. This point has one of the most impressive views of the lower falls:



Another photo of the lower falls from the main viewpoint at Artist Point:



Looking down-canyon from here; there are very nice colors on the canyon walls in this area:



Although the tour buses don't get out early, once they arrive the crowds can make getting good photographs difficult; and, in addition to the other vehicles, they can make trying to find a parking space nearly unbearable. However, with patience I was able to secure a good spot at the main viewpoint to get this panorama:



I was also able to get some nice HDR photos looking towards the lower canyon from a smaller viewpoint in this area:



Another photo of the lower falls, this one an HDR through some trees:



Our next stop after the Artist Point Road was the Brink of the Lower Falls Trail; from near the top of this trail, we were able to get a few glimpses of the upper falls:



We also got a nice view looking down-canyon:



Looking across at the steps of Uncle Tom's Trail from the Brink of the Lower Falls:



If you inadvertently give the appearance that you have some skill when you are taking lots of photographs, you will be approached by multitudes of foreign tourists asking you to take photographs of them (in general they are typically very polite and appreciative of your time; however, it can be difficult to get your photos quickly and then leave if you are planning on seeing many places and therefore have little time). [For some entertaining reading regarding photographers, which often comes to mind in a situation such as this, see Mark Twain's "Niagara"]. View looking down-canyon:



Vertical panorama looking down-canyon and including the spray from the base of the falls:



View looking over the edge and down the falls from a smaller viewpoint just above the main Brink of the Lower Falls viewpoint:



View up-river:



The very edge of the falls:



Panorama looking down-canyon with the falls in the far right; this viewpoint was, in my opinion, the best one in the Canyon Area:



Two photos looking down-canyon from the main Brink of the Lower Falls viewpoint:

