

The Devil's Kettle

MINNESOTA'S MOST MYSTERIOUS WATERFALL

Everyone who makes the one-mile hike through Minnesota's Judge C.R. Magney State Park to the Devil's Kettle on the Brule River asks the same question: Where does the water go? Above the falls, the river splits in two at an outcropping of rhyolite—volcanic rock as hard as granite. The east side of the river plunges 50 feet into a pool, in typical waterfall fashion. But on the west side, the water plunges into a cavernous hole in the rock and vanishes.

Past attempts to determine if the water re-enters the river downstream were inconclusive. Scientists hope to solve the mystery in the fall of 2017 by pouring a fluorescent, vegetable-based dye into the Devil's Kettle, which they believe will be visible where the water enters the river downstream.

VISIT DEVIL'S KETTLE AND THE BRULE RIVER FALLS

TRAILHEAD: The Brule River is located in Judge C. R. Magney State Park 14 miles northeast of Grand Marais, MN on Highway 61 near milepost 124. Approaching from the west, turn left into the park, pass the ranger station and proceed 0.2 mile to the parking lot. On the lot's east end is a sign informing you that it is 1 mile to the Devil's Kettle. Follow this trail to Upper Falls, Devil's Kettle, and more.

The trail begins with well-groomed gravel and easy walking. You cross a footbridge over a small stream, and then soon come to another footbridge crossing the river over a small, unnamed waterfall. On the east bank the trail turns upstream and begins to rise, offering a beautiful view of the big river below (now on your left). About 17 minutes into your hike, the trail is still wide and clear. You will see more falls as the mighty Brule meanders through the canyon. Less than 10 minutes later, you will reach a T in the path and a posted map. Take a left at the T, and you'll find a bench with a panoramic view of distant Upper Falls. Take a break and enjoy it. Continue on the main trail, going right. You will encounter steps—lots of steps.

HIKE DIFFICULTY

Strenuous

TRAIL QUALITY

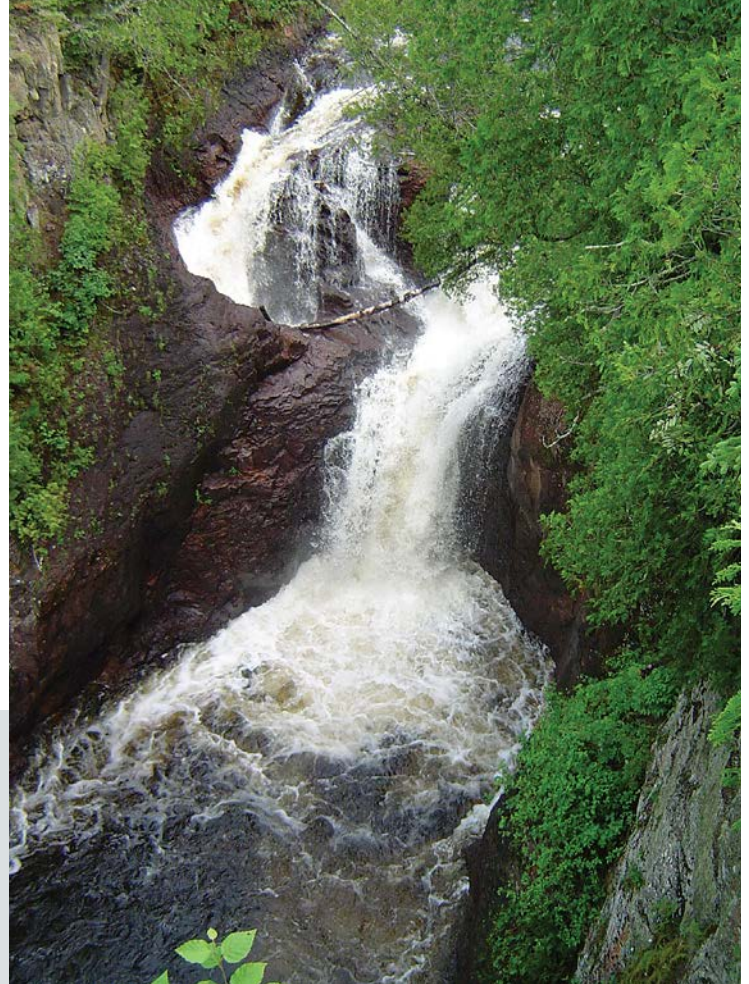
Good to Fair

ROUND TRIP

2 miles to Devil's Kettle Falls

THE EXPERIENCE

Upper Falls★★★★
to★★★★
depending on how high the water is.
Devil's Kettle Falls
★★★★



The North Shore of Minnesota has the some of the top waterfalls in the country. For more waterfall hikes, purchase Waterfalls of Minnesota's North Shore. www.northernwilder.com/waterfalls

We counted 167 leading down to a ramp and then more wooden steps. Gravity is your friend on the way down to the Devil's Kettle. Appreciate it while you can. At the bottom you'll pass an unmarked flight of 21 metal stairs heading left, down to the river and upper falls. After viewing the Kettle, be sure to explore this path. Eight minutes beyond the T, the trail becomes rougher. A sign directs you to overlooks of Devil's Kettle Falls. Two overlooks provide different views of Devil's Kettle. You can look into the Kettle from the second overlook, if you stand in the far left corner of the platform. Note the lush moss upholstering the steep rock walls all the way to the water's edge. The right half of the Devil's Kettle Falls plummets

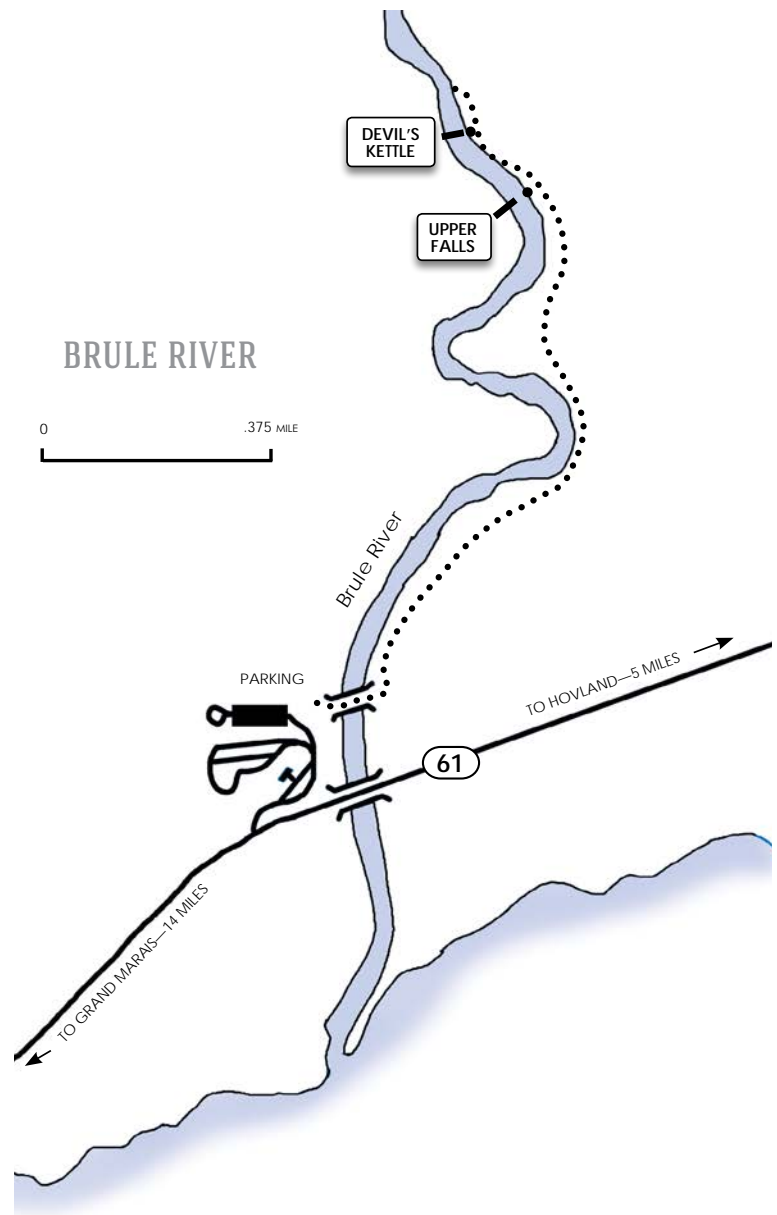


Upper Falls

into a narrow oval basin and runs a short course through the canyon to the Upper Falls. The mysterious left half plunges into a hole and no one really knows where it emerges. There is plenty of Devil's Kettle lore. The strangest tale we've heard is that a car was pushed into the hole and never resurfaced. The part we don't get is how anyone could get a car up there to begin with, let alone push it into the river? We do believe the stories that researchers have dropped ping-pong balls and dye into the hole. But a car... we don't think so. Its a strange tale, but the Devil's Kettle is a strange place.

Now that you've seen the main attraction, head back to the metal stairs. We know you're tired from trudging down all the stairs, and your calf muscles may be in spasm in anticipation of the climb back up, but believe us, the extremely short side trip to Upper Falls is well worth it.

On the last leg of the trail to Devil's Kettle, 22 metal steps lead you to the base of awesome Upper Falls. Narrow on top, the fall broadens in a powerful torrent as it pours water 25 to 30 feet over a series of steep steps, producing billowing clouds of mist and spray that highlight the rusty brown hues of its rocky foundation. Devil's Kettle is impressive, but Upper Falls offers a more intimate, and in some ways more satisfying, waterfall experience. The enchanting falls are close and big, the water is fat (yes, its looks fat), and huge bubbles the size of volleyballs bob by on the turbulent current. Rest here. You have lots of steps to climb on the return trip.



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