



2024

TrailLink Unlimited



Guides



**Great Gorge
Railway Trail**
New York



Great Gorge Railway Trail

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The Great Gorge Railway Trail is truly a gem. Nestled between the Niagara River and the Niagara Scenic Parkway, this short but stunning rail-trail offers unparalleled access and views of one of North America's greatest and most famous natural wonders. Located in a well-populated area and heavily frequented tourist destination, the trail offers a fun outing for families and vacationers hoping to find spectacular views while venturing away from the larger crowds buzzing around Niagara Falls.

The best starting point is located adjacent to the Niagara Gorge Discovery Center, on the northeast end of Niagara Falls State Park. A number of intersecting footpaths and park trails are in the vicinity, so be sure to stop by the Niagara Gorge Trailhead Center across from the

Discovery Center and grab a map, which includes useful information about all the available trails surrounding the park and waterfalls. Hiking tours are offered through the Discovery Center mid-May–October.

Note that this will be an out-and-back experience of 1.2 miles each way. The crushed-stone trail begins by crossing under a footbridge that leads guests to the Aquarium of Niagara. Hikers are quickly removed from the hustle and bustle of the attractions nearby as they travel the smooth and easy-to-follow pathway that parallels the Niagara River and slopes gently down from the canyon edge to the riverbank.

Along the hike, trail users will find multiple lookout points that deliver stunning vistas of the river, the falls, and impressive bridges connecting the United States to Canada and the city of Niagara Falls, Ontario. Other highlights of the journey include remnants of the mills, factories, and infrastructure that relied on the power of the falls during the height of the Industrial Revolution in America.

As the trail continues down toward the river, a few spurs offer hikers a slightly more adventurous and challenging route to the river's edge; to stay on the Great Gorge Railway Trail, follow signs with that name and marked #4. The trail hugs the cliff face for its duration.

The trail hits a dead end directly beneath the aptly named Whirlpool Rapids Bridge. Travelers will want to take a few moments to absorb the view of the immense rapids at this point in the river before returning to the trailhead.

Just before the end of the trail, a large staircase leads back up to the top of the cliff. If hikers want a slightly easier route back to the trail center, the [Niagara Scenic Parkway Trail](#) (marked as trail #1) and the [Niagara Gorge Rim Trail](#) (trail #2) provide a less strenuous alternative to the Great Gorge Railway Trail, which is uphill in its entirety for the return trip. A parking lot is also accessible at the top of this staircase.



Great Gorge Railway Trail

New York

States: New York

Counties: Niagara

Length: 1.2miles

Trail end points: Niagara Gorge Discovery Center to Whirlpool Rapids Bridge at Bridge Ave. and Whirlpool St.

Trail surfaces: Crushed Stone

Trail category: Rail-Trail

Trail activities: Walking

Parking & Trail Access

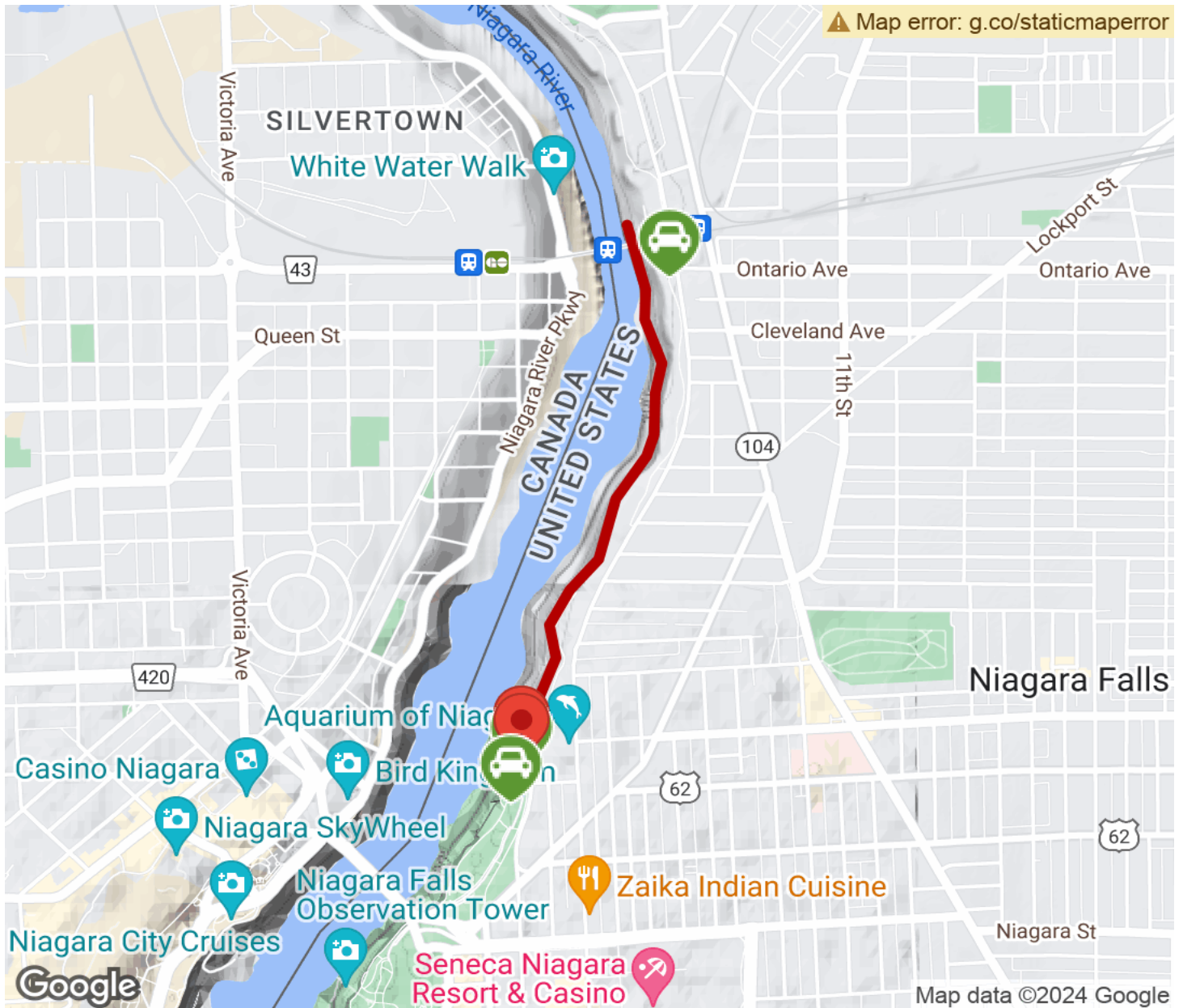
To reach the parking lot adjacent to the Niagara Gorge Trailhead Center from Buffalo, take I-190 N to Exit 21, and merge onto Niagara Scenic Pkwy. Go 3.2 miles. At the traffic circle, exit right onto John Daly Blvd. and continue 0.4 mile. Turn left onto Niagara St., and continue 0.5 mile. Turn right onto First St., which becomes Niagara Scenic Pkwy. The parking lot for the Niagara Gorge Trailhead Center will be on your left in 0.3 mile. From I-190 S, take Exit 22. Follow the service road 0.2 mile, and turn right onto US 62/Niagara Falls Blvd. Go 3.4 miles, and turn left onto NY 104/Main St. Go 0.2 mile, and turn right onto Niagara Scenic Pkwy. The Niagara Gorge Trailhead Center will be on your left in 0.2 mile.

To reach the parking lot near the north end of the trail from I-190, take Exit 24 for NY 31 W. Head west on NY 31, which becomes College Ave. after 1.2 miles. Follow College Ave. 1.0 mile. Take a left onto NY 104/Lewiston Road, and follow it 0.4 mile to a right turn onto Findlay Drive. Take your next left onto Whirlpool St., and continue 0.5 mile to the parking lot, which will be on your left.



Great Gorge Railway Trail

New York



Trailhead



Restroom



Parking



Water Fountain



Tunnel



TrailLink
by Rails-to-Trails Conservancy

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