

travel



Edited by **Twins That Travel**



Blog name: Twins That Travel
Blogger: Claire & Laura
Age: 31
Started blogging: July 2014
Based (area): Buckinghamshire
Monthly views: 15,000+
All time views: 470,000+
Blogging platform: WordPress
Twitter handle: @TwinsThatTravel
Instagram handle: @twins_that_travel
Camera: Canon 7D and GoPro Hero 6
Contact: hello@twinsthattravel.com

We're Claire & Laura: a pair of photography loving and travel obsessed sisters. We launched our travel blog, *Twins That Travel*, in July 2014, over two cheese sandwiches. Our Dad regularly points out that our name is grammatically incorrect, but sadly for him 'TTT' stuck, and now occupies its own small corner of the internet. Since its uninspiring beginnings in 2014, TTT has gone on to win a few awards. For two people terrified of flying, we're both pleased and surprised by these achievements, but mainly just thrilled to be involved in such an inspiring and fun-loving community.

selected blogs

- 1 **Clutch & Carry-On** For days when we need our sea, sun and mermaid fix, we head to Sabrina's blog and Instagram account. Filled with tropical paradises, underwater adventures and golden beaches, *Clutch & Carry-on* is our favourite travel blog for aspirational, luxury travel. **p87**
- 2 **Stories My Suitcase Could Tell** is run by Katie MacLeod, an expat Scot living in New York City. A journalist by trade, Katie has a beautiful writing style and is one of our favourite travel blogs in terms of quality writing and informative guides. It was Katie's detailed guides to the Outer Hebrides that initially brought us to her blog but we always return for her elegant writing and useful nuggets of information about lesser known destinations. **p88**
- 3 **World of Wanderlust** We'll never forget the day that we discovered *World of Wanderlust's* blog and Instagram account. It was a rainy Monday afternoon in the office and we stumbled across Brooke's blog accidentally through a news article filled with her colourful, solo travels. *World of Wanderlust* was the first ever travel blog that we read and the one that inspired us to set up our own corner of the internet. **p89**
- 4 **Where's Mollie?** When we're in need of fun, colour and inspiration for more active travel and adventures, we head to *Where's Mollie?*. Run by the effortlessly cool - you guessed it - Mollie, *Where's Mollie?* is a true treasure trove of handy travel guides. From Australian back packing guides, through to everything you need to know about visiting your first ever Burning Man Festival, *Where's Mollie?* is perfect for the more adventurous soul looking for some more quirky travel experiences. **p90**
- 5 **Ellie Dyduch** We recently met Ellie on a press trip in Amsterdam and quickly became obsessed with her perfectly curated Instagram feed. Fortunately for us, she also recently launched a travel blog, in order to bring her travels to life through mini guides. Mostly covering European cities, Ellie's blog and Instagram is ideal for those looking for city break inspiration, whilst being wooed by dreamy imagery. **p91**

Stories My Suitcase Could Tell

Blog Name: Stories My Suitcase Could Tell

Blogger: Katie MacLeod

Age: 29

Started blogging: 2011

Based (area): NYC and Scotland

Monthly views: 11,000+

All time views: 310,000+

Blogging platform: WordPress

Twitter handle: @KatieMacL

Instagram handle: @katiecleod

Camera: Nikon 1 J4

Contact: workwithkathryn@gmail.com



A Hike in Watkins Glen State Park

➤ IT WAS THE FIRST DAY OF THE YEAR THAT FELT LIKE AUTUMN.

The sun was bright, and the skies were blue, but there was an edge of a chill in the air that hinted at the coming change in the seasons. It was, in other words, the perfect day for a leisurely hike – a hike through Watkins Glen State Park.

Watkins Glen State Park is famous for its dramatic gorge, a 400ft cleft in the rock that covers two miles and features countless waterfalls. You don't need to go out into the wilderness to find it, though; somewhat surprisingly, the gorge opens right out onto the main street of the town of Watkins Glen.

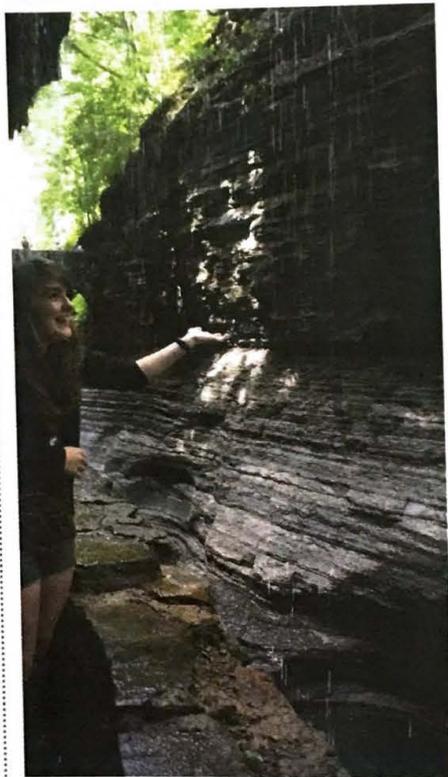
Marie (*One Carry On*), Erin (*10 Miles Behind Me*), and I had spent the previous three days exploring the Finger Lakes region of upstate New York, and Watkins Glen, the town at the southern edge of Seneca Lake, was our final stop before returning to New York City. It was early morning when we met with Brittany, from the local tourism board, and Leah, our tour guide from the Finger Lakes State Park education team, and set off into the cool shadows of the glen.

The trail through the gorge was relatively easy – roughly paved, with stone steps in steeper sections – and rewarded us with beautiful views from the very beginning, just minutes from the car park. New York City and its concrete streets couldn't have felt further away.

WATKINS GLEN IS HOME TO 19 WATERFALLS, AND WE CAME ACROSS THE FIRST ONE, CAVERN CASCADE, QUICKLY.

A thin, steep stream of water fell from above, and the water had undercut the rock, giving hikers space to walk behind it before continuing onto the area of the gorge known as "The Narrows." The paths here hug the walls and the rim of the gorge. These paths – and the others throughout the park – were first built during the Great Depression after a flood destroyed the trails in 1935.

The task of reconstruction was given to the Civilian Conservation Corps, also known as "Roosevelt's Tree Army," who helped improve the country's national and state parks and assisted with disaster relief, in return for employment during difficult economic times. It was a camp of these men that made the gorge paths first from wood, then from local stone.



We walked on along these paths, pausing to stop and take photos, or simply to admire the view. In some places the river was still and placid, while in others it flowed fast and hard. My eyes were drawn to the river and the falls, and the mesmerising curves and ridges they've created in the stone. But looking skywards to the rim of the gorge was rewarding as well, reminding me of the sheer scale of the place I was in.

THE ROCKS IN THE GORGE AT WATKINS GLEN STATE PARK ARE 380 MILLION YEARS OLD.

State Park workers have uncovered all sorts of interesting fossils in the layers of shale and sandstone, some of which Leah showed us – and some of which she dug up herself.

The contrasting layers of stone that create such eye-catching scenes here are created by the river

undercutting the sandstone until there's nothing left to support it, at which point the rocks fall into the gorge below. It's just one of the reasons that the gorge trail is closed in winter, when it's simply too dangerous for people to hike through.

As Leah explained, when the ice melts in spring, a trained scaling team spend two months rappelling down the sides of the gorge, knocking loose rocks off the walls to protect visitors. They shovel the debris into the river below, just as nature would have if allowed to take its course. Looking at the often sheer walls to the side of me, even the thought of the task was impressive (and slightly terrifying).

AFTER NAVIGATING THE NARROWS, THE GORGE OPENED UP INTO A STRETCH NAMED "GLEN CATHEDRAL," HOME TO WHAT IS POSSIBLY WATKINS GLEN'S MOST FAMOUS VIEW.

The iconic Rainbow Falls was our final stop on the trail, so-called because in the right light, rainbows arc across the gorge, their bright colours contrasting with the dark of the stone.

I had seen the falls in photos, but it wasn't preparation for the sensory overload of seeing them cascade over the ridge, feeling the water fall onto my hands, and hearing the roars and drips fill my ears.

We could have stayed longer, or hiked further, but a welcome lakeside lunch and some afternoon wine tasting awaited, and so we turned back – but not before taking a detour skyward and crossing the 147-year-old suspension bridge. The aerial view of the river and the rocks was beautiful, albeit slightly vertigo inducing; I didn't envy whoever built the bridge back in 1870!

ROUGHLY 15 MINUTES LATER WE WERE OUT OF THE GORGE, AND BACK IN THE HEART OF THE TOWN.

It was almost disorientating – as if the shadowed pathways of the gorge were another world altogether – but I could only imagine how welcome that easy switch between town and nature must be for the people who live here.

I smiled when I heard how locals describe the area, as we made our way towards the car. It couldn't be more fitting, because as we'd discovered, Watkins Glen really is a place "where Mother Nature meets Main Street." ◯