

# Waterfallifornia

*Our state has some amazing waterfalls. Here are a few standouts.*

## Mossbrae Falls

Located near Mt. Shasta in the town of Dunsmuir, Mossbrae looks like a scene from a fairy tale. Groundwater seeps out of a mossy cliff and gently cascades down into the Sacramento River. The falls are 150 feet wide, and nearly 50 feet high. (At last report, the trail to the falls was closed, but they're building a new one away from the railroad.)

## McWay Falls

As if Big Sur needed any help to be California's most idyllic coastal getaway, it boasts a beautiful 80-foot waterfall that plunges from the top of a tree-lined cliff onto the beach.

## Lower Yosemite Falls

Yosemite Falls boasts one of nature's most ethereal light shows. Go there in late spring (when the water flow is the strongest) on the night of a full moon. If the sky is clear, you'll be able to witness a rare "moonbow"—all the colors of the spectrum floating in the mist of the waterfall.



*At 2,425 feet, Yosemite Falls is California's highest measured waterfall.*

## Heart Rock Falls

Located in the western San Bernardino Mountains near Crestline, this pretty waterfall sits right next to an amazing geological feature: the perfect shape of a heart that's been carved out of the rock—not by humans, but by water.

## Darwin Falls

The last thing you'd expect to see in arid Death Valley National Park is a lush, wooded waterfall reflecting in a gentle pool, and that's what makes Darwin Falls so special. The three-mile hike begins in the desert and ends up in paradise.

## Crystal Ice Cave

Lava Beds National Monument (just south of the Oregon border) has an impressive frozen waterfall, but it's a bit of a chore to see it. Why? Because it lives deep inside an ancient lava tube where the environment is so fragile that the location is kept secret. You can access it only via a guided tour in the winter. The icy formations, some centuries old, make it worth the hassle.



*Mossbrae Falls in Dunsmuir creates an idyllic landscape.*

## A Lost Waterfall?

It's hard to imagine losing a 400-foot waterfall, possibly the largest in Shasta County, but that's what happened in the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area. In the 1960s, while on a scouting mission to decide whether or not to buy the property, park rangers discovered the falls 15 miles into a vast stretch of wilderness. In order to keep the price low, they didn't tell the owner. But just before the purchase was finalized, there was a staff shake-up at the park, and the men who'd seen the waterfall were let go, causing the waterfall to be forgotten for more than three decades. In 2005 park ranger Russ Weatherbee decided to go searching, using a map he had found in an old cabinet. The map was wrong, but it was enough of a clue to lead him to do more research. Ultimately he found a batch of aerial photographs. On one of those pictures, he saw a glint of a white strip about two-thirds of a mile from where the map had shown the falls. He bushwhacked to the site, and rediscovered the falls.