



# Trafalgar Falls

Roseau Valley  
DOMINICA

Situated east of the picturesque village of Trafalgar is one of Dominica's most popular natural attractions: the Trafalgar Falls. A 10-minute walk will take the visitor to a viewing platform for a panoramic view of twin waterfalls which plunge about 125 ft and 75 ft respectively. A major rockslide in September 1995 buried the once popular hot springs and pools at the base of the waterfall to the left.

The once taller waterfall, i.e. the one to the left, is popularly referred to as the "Papa Falls" and the shorter, but stronger one is affectionately called the "Mama Falls"; they are both on tributaries of the Roseau River. The "Breakfast" River that hikers cross en route to Boiling Lake is one of those tributaries, and it tumbles into the shorter waterfall. The water that leaves the Freshwater Lake area flows through Ti-Tou Gorge before cascading in the Papa Falls.

As you walk the trail, note the orange coloration in the small spring that flows across the trail. This is caused by iron compounds in the clay and not by sulphur. Sometimes the water may be slightly warm, and this is further evidence of Dominica's volcanic origin. The stream coming from the hot springs at the base of the Papa Falls is much warmer.

## Plants

As you begin your walk, Begonias (locally called "Lozèy-blan") and Wild Anthuriums may grab your attention. On the stems of some trees are large climbing plants with leaves that resemble fly's wings; this is "Zèl-mouch" (Kwéyòl word for fly's wing). Also, look out for the breadfruit tree just past the base of the first set of steps. Breadfruit was first brought to the Caribbean in 1791 by Captain Bligh, as a cheap source of food to feed the African slaves.

The following are some other plants that you may observe along the trail, growing either on the ground or on the trees. Dominica has 188 species of ferns, and along the trail you will find some species growing on the ground as well as on the trees. Note the tall, graceful tree ferns, and the transparent filmy ferns which are only one-cell thick and growing on the tree stems. The plants that you see growing on some of the trees – and even lianas - and resembling pineapple plants are bromeliads. Some of the species that grow in the rain forest are quite large, and when it rains they collect water and support several small creatures.

Heliconia or "Balizyé" is related to the banana plant and there are two native species on Dominica; the one along the trail may have either red or yellow "flowers". The leaves are used mainly for waterproofing large *Lawouman* baskets made by Dominica's Kalinago Indians. *Bwa Kanno* or Trumpet Tree has prominent leaf scars on its hollow trunk. Its large leaves are divided, and when young are reddish to golden in

Other Trees: Near the parking lot is a large *Bwa Riviere*. Note the *Kaklen* plant with its thick, round leaves, and large purple fruits that split open, resembling 5- or 6-point stars. To the right of the viewing platform are *Chatannyé* trees with large buttresses. The tall, graceful Common Bamboo is also present.



colour; when mature the underside is white, making the tree easy to identify from a distance on a windy day. The leaves are used in folk medicine and floral arrangements, while the young stem is used to make a blowing instrument played in traditional Jing-Ping (folk) bands.



## Wild Fauna

The animals that you are likely to encounter along the trail are lizards, crabs, birds and butterflies. However, hundreds of piping calls of a small whistling frog will usually fill the air, especially after a heavy shower. Stick insects, which resemble miniature twigs, may also be found in the area.

The Dominican tree lizard or “*Zanndoli*” is very common, and it can only be found on this island. The male is the more colourful of the sexes, and sometimes puts on a display with its throat-fan as it tries to defend its territory or attract a mate. You may also see some large, blue-and-grey ground lizards near the parking lot and the viewing platform, and if you are lucky you may also spot a Lesser Antillean Iguana in the trees near the Welcome Center. And be sure to look for the brown-and-yellow river crab that Dominicans call “*siwik*” or “*cyrique*”. This is the only crab species that you will find in the island’s interior forests.

Look out for the hummingbirds as they move among the flowers feeding on nectar. Dominica has four different types, including the blue-headed hummingbird that exists only here and on Martinique. The Antillean Crested Hummingbird with its shimmering green crest and the Purple-throated Carib are the other two hummingbirds that may also be observed here.



Some of the other birds that you may see are the Brown Trembler, the House Wren, Broad-winged Hawk as it soars overhead, the Bananaquit, the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, the Lesser Antillean Flycatcher and herons. Also, listen for the melodious song of the Rufous-throated Solitaire (locally called “mountain whistler” and *Siflé Moutany*).

### Producing Electricity from Water from the Roseau Valley

The large steel pipes on the cliffs to the north-east of the Visitor Center and approaching the building are carrying water that comes from the Freshwater Lake and Ti-tou Gorge at Laudat, down to power plants at Trafalgar, where the energy in the fast-flowing water turns turbines and generates hydro-electricity for the island.



### For Your Information and Personal Safety

The trail to the Trafalgar Falls officially ends at the viewing platform, and anyone proceeding beyond this point is doing so at his/her own risk. However, if you do decide to go closer to the falls, for your personal safety it is strongly advised against swimming while it is raining, as flash floods can occur on both rivers that form the waterfalls.

Site Passes can be purchased at the Visitor Centre.

### For further information, contact:

Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division  
Roseau, DOMINICA  
Tel: (767) 266-5852/5856  
Email: [forestry@dominica.gov.dm](mailto:forestry@dominica.gov.dm)  
Website: [agriculture.gov.dm](http://agriculture.gov.dm)



This Edition produced by  
Forestry, Wildlife & Parks Division  
DOMINICA, 2014  
with financial assistance from  
the Tourism Site Enhancement Program  
of the Ministry of Tourism  
Website: [www.tourism.gov.dm](http://www.tourism.gov.dm)



# Trafalgar Falls

ECO-TOURISM SITE  
Roseau Valley  
DOMINICA