

Pal hani kalet: Tahquitz Falls

ABOUT 45 MINUTES into the Tahquitz Canyon hike, after climbing up the rugged stone steps and crossing a bridge made of wood and stone, you arrive at the majestic 60-foot Tahquitz Falls, known as *Pal hani kalet* (“water falling down”) in the Cahuilla language. The canyon and waterfall are named after

the shaman Tahquitz, who according to Cahuilla legend, was banished to this area many generations ago. The mouth of the canyon that leads to this oasis was once the home of the Agua Caliente Fox Clan, also known as *Kak wa wit*.

The waterfall looks much as it did when the ancient Agua Caliente Indians walked these

paths. The water once flowed year-round until an earthquake in 1857 shifted its course. Now it is seasonal, flowing in winter and spring. The best time to view the falls is January through May, with the peak time occurring in March and early April. The average temperature of the waterfall ranges from 51 to 58 degrees,

while the average water flow can vary drastically, depending on the amount of rainfall in any given year.

If you visit, be sure to dip your feet in the pooling water at the base of the waterfall for a refreshingly cool soak that will rejuvenate you for the trek back to the Tahquitz Visitor Center. 🌊