



PHOTOS: QUAMRUL HAIDER

Fall season in America

A gallery of flaming colours

QUAMRUL HAIDER

In America's Northeast, including New York, the dramatic explosion of colour during fall season starts typically in late September. It peaks in mid-October when leaves on the trees are emblazoned in gorgeous shades of red, orange, yellow and gold. After that, a gradual decline would ensue as the locust and maple leaves fall to the ground first, followed by the golden brown oak hanging on until late November, while the beech trees might let their leaves go sometimes in the middle of winter.

This year, all the precursor conditions—chilly nights and sunny, warm days—were in place for a fabulous fall foliage season. The display of bold colours confirmed that fall has finally taken over from the dog days of summer. But the days are also growing shorter which means the frosty days and nights of winter are around the corner. So, at this time every year, we throw the thought of winter out of our mind and venture into the wilderness to look at the transformation of the leaves. It gives us the feeling of “walking into fire without the heat.”

Some of the best places to see fall foliage are right in our backyard—the Catskills, Adirondacks and Bear Mountain, all within a short driving distance from our home in the lower Hudson Valley. In the Northeast, New England reigns supreme for fall foliage viewing. Though the entire region is renowned for its vivid display of eye-catching colours, there is perhaps no other place more



picturesque than the White Mountains in New Hampshire. Hence, it is one of our favourite places to gawk at the many trees—maple, beech, birch, elm and hemlock—burst into brilliant colours.

The nearest place where we can watch the fall fiesta is the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York. One of the greatest attractions in the Catskill is the Hunter Mountain, where leaves change into a



multicolour canopy in mid-October. For a glimpse of the delicate brushstrokes of Mother Nature on a larger landscape below and around us, we took the scenic skyride to the 3,200-foot summit of the mountain. The colours on the nearby Kaaterskill Mountain, as seen from the Hunter Mountain, were simply awesome. The mountain also offered incredible 360-degree views that reach out to and beyond the Catskill Mountains.

Few places in New York rival the Adirondacks for viewing fall foliage.

The Adirondacks offer a different sort of autumnal splendour—lakes, mountains and forests combine to create a canvas upon which nature paints her annual pièce de résistance. During our visit to Lake Placid, Adirondack was an unbelievable kaleidoscope of colours. The roads through the mountains of Adirondacks also afforded us one of the finest views of fall season's palette—a photomontage of colors one finds in rainbows. The banks of the Ausable River were decked out in shades of crimson, orange and yellow.

While driving along the 35-mile stretch of the scenic Kancamagus Highway that cuts through the White Mountains of New Hampshire, we were treated to sceneries of majestic alpine mountains, quaint covered bridges, crashing waterfalls and colorful foliage. The splendid transition of colours throughout the mountains created a wonderful morphing beauty that accentuated our experience of viewing fall foliage.

As they say, “Fall is our jam here in the Northeast—when the colours switch from green to vibrant oranges, reds, yellows and gold.” For us, it is the time of the year to relax and enjoy the ravishing display of nature's seasonal gift—the gallery of flaming colours, the “year's last, loveliest smile” before the trees retire for the long winter slumber.

Quamrul Haider is a Professor of Physics at Fordham University, New York.