

Mention the word honeymoon and most folks will start dreaming of a luxury cruise or an all-inclusive Caribbean resort or perhaps a sightseeing trek across continental Europe.

Me? I like to think of my wife carrying a food pack on a rain-drenched four-kilometer portage in the middle of nowhere. With me carrying a canoe and happily humming a goofy tune beside her.

Now that's paradise.

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Yikes. I have to climb up there? At least it was to Aline and I who celebrated our June 10th marriage vows with a Canadian honeymoon in the Temagami wilderness over the August 2005 Civic holiday weekend.

Our plan was to splurge a little and hire a bush plane to drop us off in the middle of Lady Evelyn-Smoothwater Provincial Park and canoe 40KM through the picturesque falls route on the rugged north and south channels of the Lady Evelyn River.

We missed our 2PM Friday liftoff but our Beaver de Havilland float plane was available to pick us up again at 5PM and a short 15 minute flight later we were dumped out at the south end of Sucker Gut Lake.

With only a couple of hours of sunlight left we filled up on blueberries at Frank Falls and made

camp on a rocky slope with Center Falls in full view.

Saturday we made our way through the other four waterfalls en route - Helen, Twin Sisters, Bridal Veils and Fat Man's Falls' - hoping to make up time from our late start the previous day. Many of the online posts I had read about the route indicated the portages could be quite gruelling and I was relieved to discover they weren't quite as bad as they could have been. Steep yes. Awkward sure. But doable. Though the look in the eyes of the camp troop we met on the southern channel indicated they probably thought otherwise.

We camped on a point off Willow Island Lake Saturday night. But misty rain and the occasional thunder roll Sunday morning made us rethink the wisdom of spending lots of time on the water so we decided to take a shortcut to Diamond Lake - through a four kilometer portage. It took us a good two hours but saved us twice that time on the water and allowed us to paddle swiftly all the way back to the sandy beach at Ferguson Bay access point where we spent the night before putting out Monday morning.