

# Mammoth Cave Tours

## Explore the underworld

Mammoth Cave National Park, KY

### All About Touring Famous Mammoth Cave and Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

**Mammoth Cave National Park** was established to preserve the cave system, including Mammoth Cave, the rivers and scenic river valleys of the Green and Nolin rivers, and a section of hilly country in south central Kentucky. This is the longest recorded cave system in the world with more than 360 miles explored and mapped.

### Underground Tours

Not all tours are available at all times, in all seasons.

Please check at the Visitor Center for a current schedule of tours.

#### Historic Tour

*Meets outside the Visitor Center Doors.*

**Duration:** 2 hours. **Walking distance:**

2 miles. **Sells Out at:** 120 Visitors.

**Restrooms?** Yes, at 1.5 miles. **Emphasis**

**on:** Large trunk passages; oldest tour routes; cultural history. **Landmarks:** Natural

Entrance; Rotunda; Broadway Avenue Methodist Church; Giants Coffin; Sidesaddle

Pit; Bottomless Pit; Fat Man's Misery; River Hall; Mammoth Dome;

Audubon Avenue. **Elevation Change:** 300 feet. **No. of Stairs:** 440, including up 138 at Mammoth Dome. **Steep hill climbs?** Yes, trail to

and from cave entrance. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply.



#### Frozen Niagara Tour

*Meets at Bus Loading Area.*

**Duration:** 2 hours. **Walking distance:** 3/4 miles. **Sells Out at:** 118

Visitors. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** Deep pits; high domes; dry cave passages; dripstone area at exit; dynamic cave being carved by water; animal life. **Landmarks:** New Entrance; Roosevelt's Dome;

Silo Pit; Grand Central Station; Big Break; Fairy Ceiling; Flat Ceiling; Frozen Niagara flowstone formation. Also includes the complete

Travertine Tour Route. **Elevation Change:** 250 feet. **No. of Stairs:** 500, nearly 200 descending inside New Entrance. **Steep hill**

**climbs?** No. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply.

# Mammoth Cave Tours



## Travertine Tour

Meets at Bus Loading Area.

**Duration:** 1-1/2 hours. **Walking distance:** 1/2 mile round trip. **Sells Out at:** 39 Visitors. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** Formation of cave; development of dripstone; animal life. **Landmarks:** Frozen Niagara Entrance; Rainbow Dome; Crystal Lake; Frozen Niagara flowstone formation; Drapery Room. **Elevation Change:** Approximately 50 feet at Drapery Room. **No. of Stairs:** 13, an additional 98 are optional. **Steep hill climbs?** No, short ramp at entrance/exit. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply; best suited for very slow walkers, visitors who use canes for walking support and visitors with small children and infants.

## Grand Avenue Tour

NOT AVAILABLE DURING SUMMER 2006

Meets outside the Visitor Center Doors. Bus ride back to Visitor Center.

**Duration:** 4-1/2 hours. **Walking distance:** 4 miles. **Sells out at:** 118 Visitors. **Restrooms?** Yes, at 1.1 miles and 2.5 miles. **Emphasis on:** Dramatic cave passage changes; dry cave vs. damp cave; bedrock breakdown; gypsum and dripstone formation; early exploration. **Landmarks:** Carmichael Entrance; Cleaveland Avenue; Snowball Room; Boone Avenue; Thorpe's Pit; Mt. McKinley; Grand Canyon; Aerobridge Canyon; Hippodrome; Grand Central Station; Frozen Niagara; Travertine Tour Route. **Elevation Change:** 300 feet. **No. of Stairs:** 670. **Steep hill climbs?** Yes, both up and down! The grade changes abruptly by more than 60 feet at several places between the 1.5-mile point and exit. **Restrictions:** No children under age 6; food allowed only at Snowball Room lunch stop; general restrictions apply.

## Mammoth Cave Discovery Tour

Ranger Stationed Route/ Guided Route.

THIS TOUR IS OFFERED AS EITHER A SELF-GUIDED OR RANGER-GUIDED TOUR, DEPENDING ON VISITATION LEVELS AND STAFF AVAILABILITY.

**Duration:** Allow at least 30 minutes. **Guided:** 1-1/2 hours. **Walking distance:** 1/2 mile, round trip. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** Large trunk passages; variety of topics; resource protection challenges. **Landmarks:** Natural Entrance; Narrows; Rotunda; Salt Petre artifacts; Broadway Avenue (fall/winter); Audubon Avenue (spring/summer). **Elevation Change:** 140 feet. **No. of Stairs:** 120-180. **Steep hill climbs?** One, to and from cave entrance. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply.

Note: Tickets sold at Visitor Center only—not available by reservation.

## Violet City Lantern Tour

Meets outside the Visitor Center Doors.

Bus ride back to Visitor Center.

**Duration:** 3 hours. **Walking distance:** 3 miles. **Sells Out at:** 58 Visitors. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** Lantern-light experience;

prehistoric cave users; 19th-century tours; early cave exploration and commercial uses. **Landmarks:** Natural Entrance; Narrows; Rotunda; Broadway Avenue; Giant's Coffin; Tuberculosis Huts; Star Chamber; Wright's Rotunda; Chief City and Violet City Entrance. **Elevation Change:** 170 feet. **No. of Stairs:** 160. **Steep hill climbs?** Yes, numerous hills, both up and down! **Restrictions:** No children under age 6; only adults may carry lanterns (provided); no flashlights used, please. General restrictions apply.

## Trog Tour

Meet guides at Visitor Center.

▶ PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST REMAIN WITH CHILD THROUGH INTRODUCTION.  
▶ PARENT/GUARDIAN MUST MEET CHILD WHEN TOUR RETURNS.

**Duration:** 2-1/2 hours. **Caving distance:** 1 mile. **Sells Out at:** 12 children, ages 8-12. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** Kids only! Connections between the sunlit world and the cave world; underground environment, animal life, exploring the world around us. **Landmarks:** Natural Entrance; Rotunda; Broadway Avenue; Methodist Church; Giant's Coffin; Wooden Bowl Room; Ganter Avenue. **Elevation Change:** 170 feet. **Physical challenges:** Hiking up and down the trail to cave entrance; some crawling through dust and over rocks. **Restrictions:** Children must be at least 8 years old and no older than 12. Long pants and sturdy athletic shoes or hiking boots required; children's work or gardening gloves recommended. Helmets and lights provided. Child may bring soft athletic kneepads—no plastic. Parents must stay with child for the first fifteen minutes of the program outside; parents should be at return location ten minutes prior to end of tour. Trog Tour is not recommended for children with asthma or severe allergies to dust and molds. Trog Tour is best enjoyed with a friend or sibling.

## Wild Cave Tour

Meet guides at Ticket Office.

**Duration:** 6-6 1/2 hours. **Caving distance:** 5 1/2 miles. **Sells Out at:** 14 Visitors (reservations required). **Restrooms?** Yes, at Snowball Room. **Emphasis on:** Safe caving techniques; environmental concerns; cave exploration (past and present); team building. **Landmarks:** Carmichael Entrance; Cleaveland Avenue; Split Rock; Snowball Room (food available); Boone Avenue; various areas off developed tour trails; Travertine Tour route. **Elevation Change:** 300 feet. **Physical challenges:** Free climbing cave walls; lengthy crawls through areas as tight as 9 inches high; walking in a crouched position; hand and knee crawls over jagged rocks and dirt; crawling through wet areas; twisting into and out of tight crawlway openings. **Restrictions:** Visitors must have had their 16th birthday. An adult must accompany visitors under age 18. High-top, over-the-ankle, lace-up boots, with lug or deeply-tread soles, are required. No low-cut hiking or athletic shoes allowed. Chest or hip measurement should be no more than 42 inches to avoid situations that impact the tour for all participants. Work or climbing gloves and long pants are recommended—do not overdress. Helmets, lights and kneepads are provided. Visitors must pick up reserved tickets 30 minutes prior to tour departure, or tickets may be sold to others.

## River Styx Cave Tour

Meets outside Visitor Center doors.

**Duration:** 2-1/2 hours. **Walking Distance:** 2-1/2 miles. **Sells Out at:** 60 Visitors **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** Geologic development; water

continuing to impact the cave; large trunk passages; animal life; environmental concerns. **Landmarks:** Natural Entrance; Narrows; Rotunda; Broadway Avenue; Methodist Church; Salt Petre artifacts; Giant's Coffin; Sidesaddle Pit; Bottomless Pit; Fat Man's Misery; River Hall; Dead Sea; Lake Lethe; Mammoth Dome; Audubon Avenue. **Elevation Change:** 360 feet. **Number of Stairs:** 560 **Steep Hill Climbs?** Yes, trail to and from entrance. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply.

## Great Onyx Lantern Tour

Meets at Bus Loading area.

**Walking Distance:** 1 mile, round trip. **Sells Out at:** 38 Visitors. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis On:** Mammoth Cave community life from 1841 to 1941; geologic beauty of another cave in the national park; dripstone formations by lantern light; cave animals; park surface features. **Landmarks:** Flint Ridge Road (surface drive); Great Onyx Cave entrance; several rooms of formations, including "The Nativity," large dry passage; gypsum. **Elevation Change:** approximately 30 feet. **Number of Stairs:** 40. **Steep Hill Climbs?** No. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply.

## Introduction to Caving Tour

Meet Guides at Visitor Center.

**Duration:** 3-3 1/2 hours. **Caving**

**Distance:** 1-1/4 miles. **Sells**

**Out at:** 20 Visitors (reservations

recommended). **Restrooms?**

No. **Emphasis on:** Safe caving

techniques for beginners; natural cave

environment; cave exploration; suitable

for family groups (age restriction).

**Landmarks:** New Entrance (280 stairs); Grand Central Station;

Fox Avenue; various areas off developed tour trails; Travertine Tour

route. **Elevation Change:** 250 feet. **Physical Challenges:** Similar

to Wild Cave Tour, but less of it; climbing and descending cave

walls; tight belly crawls; walking in a crouched position; hand

and knee crawls over rough rocks and dirt; crawling over damp

trail; twisting into and out of passageway openings. **Restrictions:**

**Visitors must have had their 10th birthday;** an adult must

accompany visitors under age 18; **high-top, over-the-ankle, lace-**

**up boots, with lug or deeply-treaded soles, are required. No low-**

**cut hiking or athletic shoes allowed;** chest or hip measurement

should not be more than 42 inches to avoid situations that impact

the tour for all participants; work or climbing gloves and long

pants are recommended—do not overdress; helmets, lights and

kneepads are provided; visitors must pick up reserved tickets 30

minutes prior to tour departure, or tickets may be sold to others.

## Star Chamber Tour

Meet Guides at The Visitor Center Breezeway.

**Duration:** 2-1/2 hours. **Walk Distance:** 1-1/2 miles. **Sells Out**

**at:** 40 Visitors. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** See the cave

as it was seen by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Jenny Lind and other

nineteenth-century notables. Leave waning sunshine behind

as you enter Mammoth Cave's Historic Entrance by lantern

light. Follow the passageway taken daily by Dr. John Croghan

as he tended consumptive patients in his "hospital" 160 feet



**PLEASE NOTE: RESERVATIONS ARE STRONGLY RECOMMENDED, ESPECIALLY BETWEEN APRIL AND OCTOBER. CAVE TOURS CAN—AND DO—SELL OUT.** Although this page describes all tours offered at Mammoth Cave during the course of the year, **TOUR OFFERINGS VARY BY DAY and SEASON.** For more information, call the Park at (270) 758-2180. The Park is closed Christmas Day; otherwise, open all year.

# Directions

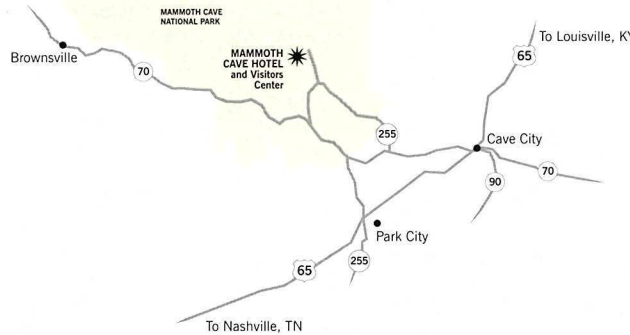
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underground. Gaze upward at rock layers in a room called "Star Chamber." Follow your guide as you retrace along the oldest tour trails and exit the cave into another Star Chamber above the nocturnal Kentucky landscape. **Landmarks:** Historic Entrance; Rotunda; Broadway Avenue; the Church; Booth's Amphitheatre; Giant's Coffin; the Tuberculosis Huts; Star Chamber; Gothic Avenue; Signature Hall; the Bridal Altar. **Elevation Change:** 160 feet. **No. of Stairs:** 200. **Steep Hill Climbs?** Yes, trail to and from entrance. **Restrictions:** No children under age 6; general restrictions apply.

## Focus on Mammoth Cave Photo Tour

Meets at Bus Loading Area. Participants caravan in private vehicles to cave entrance.

**Duration:** 2 hours. **Walk Distance:** 1/2 mile, round trip. **Sells Out at:** 30 Visitors. **Restrooms?** No. **Emphasis on:** A short evening tour for amateur photographers. **Landmarks:** Frozen Niagara Entrance; Rainbow Dome; Crystal Lake; Frozen Niagara flowstone formation; Drapery Room. **Elevation Change:** Approximately 50 feet at Drapery Room. **No. of Stairs:** 13; an additional 98 are optional. **Steep Hill Climbs?** No—short ramp at entrance/exit. **Restrictions:** General restrictions apply; however, camera cases and tripods are allowed on this specialty tour.



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## For Reservations

Please note that Mammoth Cave National Park offers a number of guided tours, both on the surface and underground. Demand is high for these popular activities. Tours can, and do, sell out. You may reserve tickets in advance for CAVE TOURS by calling the National Park Reservation Service at **800-967-2283**. You may also make reservations via the Internet using the address:

reservations.nps.gov.

Phone: 800-967-2283

Fax: 301-722-1174

TDD (Hearing impaired): 888-530-9796

International: 301-722-1257

**Payment** Checks and money order through deferred payment only. Visitors who reserve using deferred payment must do so no less than 20 days in advance of their arrival at the Park. The Park accepts Visa, Master Card and Discover credit cards.

**Cancellation** All changes of reservation will be considered a cancellation and charged \$1.60 per tour ticket. Cancellations made less than 24 hours in advance of the tour will not receive a refund.

**New Security Regulations** The following items are not permitted inside the Cave or Visitor Center area: Backpacks, child/infant backpacks, camera bags or tripods, strollers, luggage, weapons of any kind, sharp instruments (scissors, box cutters, etc.), pepper spray/mace. If you have these items, secure them in your vehicle before entering the Cave or the Visitor Center area.

**For In-Park Accommodation/Reservations** call MAMMOTH CAVE HOTEL directly at 270-758-2225. Information: [www.MammothCaveHotel.com](http://www.MammothCaveHotel.com)

## Plane

Regular flights into Louisville, KY or Nashville, TN, each approx. 1.5 hours from the Park.

## Car

If you travel south from Louisville, KY, the most direct route is I-65 south to Exit 53 at Cave City. Another 15 minutes of driving will bring you to the park Visitor Center. If you travel north from Nashville, TN, the most direct route is I-65 north to Exit 48 at Park City, KY. Another 10 minutes of driving will bring you to the park Visitor Center. Nashville and the park are both in the Central Time Zone. Louisville is in the Eastern Time Zone, one hour ahead of the park.

## Getting Around Mammoth Cave National Park

You may travel by car to most places in the Park. In the backcountry, you may hike, ride horseback and, in limited areas, ride a mountain bicycle. You may also canoe or kayak down 27 miles of the Green and Nolin Rivers.



nps.gov.

For toll-free reservations call:

**800-967-2283**

International:

**301-722-1257**

TDD (Hearing Impaired):

**888-530-9796**

Fax: 301-722-1174

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