

Bear's Cave

Tags: natural wonders, caves, by car, Bear's Cave, Peștera Urșilor, Cave of the Bear

Helpful information

- ◆ From Raven's Nest option A: 3 hour drive / about 150 km - fastest route (this route contains restricted usage or private roads)
- ◆ From Raven's Nest option B: 3 hour and 50 min drive / about 188 km - this route has restricted usage or private roads)
- ◆ Access inside is allowed only in groups, with a guide. Each group can enter at a 20 min time difference.
- ◆ Taking photos and filming inside the cave is allowed only with previously paid fees.
- ◆ The visitation tour of the cave lasts for about 45 minutes.
- ◆ Open hours: Tuesday to Sunday, between 10am to 5pm. The last entrance is at 4.30 pm.
- ◆ Visiting tax: adults – 20 lei; children – 10 lei; photographing fee – 15 lei;
- ◆ Temperature inside the cave +10C, humidity 97%.
- ◆ Warm clothes recommended

Description

The great Cave of the Bear, an all natural masterpiece, is unique in Romania and Europe. This fascinating cave was discovered by accident, inside the limestone quarries from Chișcău village. While many caves have particular features, few can compete with the complete cave bear skeleton embedded in the floor of Romania's Bears' Cave.

"*Peștera Urșilor*", its Romanian name, is found in Chișcău village, at the foot of Bihorului Mountains, and the border of Apuseni Natural Park. The underground void expands inside the left versant of Crăiasa valley, in the Măgurii hill. At an altitude of 482 meters, it is very popular due to the alluring archeological findings inside.

It's name is drawn from the 140 Cave-bear skeletons that were discovered on the site during the first explorations, in 1983. This species became extinct over 17,000 years ago.

The cave was discovered only recently, in 1975, when Traian Curta dared to enter the unknown cavity. He was minding his day-to-day business when a controlled explosion used in mining works disclosed a small crack in the rock, about 30 centimeters wide. Curious as he was, he climbed down to see what's down there. He was really amazed to discover a huge skull with big sharp teeth. He had never seen such an animal. What he found was the skull of an extinct type of bear, the Caverna Bear (*Ursus spelaeus*). It is thought that, at one point in time, a large group of bears were living inside this cave and an earthquake closed the only exit. All the bears died trapped inside.

The cave has a total length of 1500 m. Available to tourists are about 800 meters, divided into three galleries. The first one, "The Bone Gallery" is located right at the entrance of the cave. Here, the tourists can see many bones that belonged to the extinct bears. You can also spot the crack that led to the discovery of this cave. The ceiling on this gallery is thinner than anywhere else in the cave.

The "Emil Racoviță Gallery" is the second gallery in the Bear's Cave and the most impressive one. The stalagmites and stalactites formed over thousands of years offer a great show for tourists. "The Candle Gallery" is near the exit and it's the last gallery. Here you can find hundreds of beautiful stalagmites that

look like candles, ergo the name of the gallery. With the lighting in the cave, it almost looks like a huge shrine.