

# Natural fortress of Ponor

**Tags:** natural wonders, caves, wildlife, by car, hiking, Ponor Fortress, Cetatea Ponorului

## *Helpful information*

- ◆ From Raven's Nest: 3 hour drive / about 170 km / 5-6 hour hike
- ◆ Recommended gear includes: full body neoprene, hoodie, pants, socks, gloves, mountain boots or knee boots, a helmet with a flashlight, survival foil and at least 2 pieces of mountain rope of 25m each as you will have to pass 2 small jumps.
- ◆ Bring with you food rich in calories, water supply, first-aid kit
- ◆ For speleological visits, you'll need approval from the Speleological Patrimonium Committee, the Salvamont (Mountain Human Rescue) Service of Bihor and Apuseni Natural Park.

## *Description*

Named one of Romania's seven natural wonders, the fortress of Ponor morphological complex can only be compared, in a European context, with the karst phenomenon from Scocjan in Slovenia - according to renowned French geographer Emmanuel de Martone.

It is unanimously considered the grandest karst phenomenon in Romania.

The name refers to, first of all, to what can be considered to be the surface sector of a karstic phenomenon - a site consisted of 3 big calcareous circuses named "dolines". The central "dolina" represents the cul-de-sac closing of the Fortress Valley.

The natural fortress of Ponor possesses very attractive sights for adventure seekers. The fortress is actually a reference to the 3 large limestone valleys that form this natural wonder. With over 3500 m in length and its lowest point at 950 meters, it is one of the largest karst complexes in Romania.

Located in Apuseni National Park, there are several hiking trails that lead up to this speleology vision. Also named the Everest because of the high-level differences inside its walls, it is not an easy objective to traverse. You will find yourself exploring the caverns and the subterranean river that flows through the cave, wondering at the giant vertical walls or navigating the fast streams or admire the reverse stalagmites in the Ponor Gorges.

If you wish to visit the Fortress of Ponor, up until Taberei Hall all you need is light gear, lighter and some rubber boots. But if you wish to adventure yourself in its cavern, it is recommended to be done in the way of a well-organized expedition.

Crossing the cavern can be done for tourism purposes when the water flow is small. You'll need more gear and a savvy guide as this is only recommended to experienced tourists.