

Cave of Papară

Tags: caves, natural wonders, hiking, biking, walking distance, Zamolxes' cave, Huda lui Papară, Peștera lui Zamolxis

Helpful information

- ◆ From Raven's Nest - 40 min to 1h hike, about 1.5 km. Easy access up to the cave, both by walking as well as by car.
- ◆ Explore outside: basic hiking equipment
- ◆ Explore inside: local guide & special equipment needed
- ◆ The cave can be seen from outside at any time of the year; due to its water crossing, you can get closer to the entrance when water levels are lower, in full summer.
- ◆ You can visit the cave only with a guide and have to book this in advance; the visit can depend on weather conditions.
- ◆ The duration of a visit inside the cave is 3-4 hours.
- ◆ The temperature in the main corridor is between 10–11,5 °C, and it can reach over 20°C in the Wonders Hall.

Description

The first thing you should know about this cave is that you are sitting right on it. The Raven's Nest grounds stand on a former ceiling of the Cave of Papară, that collapsed thousands of years ago, maybe even longer. Positioned in a preserved area of the Trascău Mountains and although it is a very popular attraction, since 2013 it has been closed down for casual visitations and only the most adventurous and experienced climbers can reach the inner depths of this cave.

Huda lui Papară is a speleological reservation found at an altitude of 567 meters. It shelters karst formations, dug in limestone in the Superior Jurassic. The cave stretches for 2022 meters and is entirely crossed by water. The entry is almost 40 meters tall and presents an opening into the chalk wall. You will have to swim across the 50 meters long puddle, to enter and explore the cave. Then, you will have to climb high rock walls, crouch and pass through tunnels and swim across inside pools only to reach the Wonders Hall, a 102 meters tall cavern.

It is impressive due to the many records it holds - the longest cave, the biggest hall, the highest inside the gallery, the highest waterfall in all Romanian caves - it is also renowned for housing the largest and healthiest bat colony in Europe, with almost 100.000 members of 9 different species.

The oldest human traces found inside the cave date back 50.000 years ago, in the Neanderthalian era. It is also believed to be the final hideout of king Decebal, a resting place for the ancient God Zamolxis and a religious site during the middle ages.