

DEMÄNOVSKÁ ICE CAVE

1 ENTRANCE CORRIDOR (VSTUPNÁ CHODBA)

Welcome to Demänovska Ice Cave, which is a part of the longest cave system in Slovakia that reaches over 48 km in length. We regret to start with the fact that mostly due to climate change, the cave has lost much of its ice fill. Nevertheless, we hope that the cave grabs your attention by mighty spaces and dripstone fill. Some places within the cave are coloured black owing to the fact that soot from ancient wood fires or smoke from tar torches of early visitors were evident; the cave is very rich in history. The tour is 650m long with 670 stairs and takes 45 minutes.

We must inform you that touching and damaging the karst (and ice) area, smoking, littering and handling electrical equipment is strictly forbidden.

2 BEAR'S PASSAGE (MEDVEDIA CHODBA)

You have now descended 26m to the passage named after the findings of cave bear bones, which inhabited the cave during the Ice Age and became extinct around 24,000 years ago. In the past, these bones were considered dragon bones with a healing effect. The cave is now seasonally inhabited by bats, mostly the Northern Bat or Whiskered/Brandt's Bat. There are also small invertebrates such as spiders, moths, mites and centipedes living in the cave.

3 BEL'S DOME (BELOV DÓM)

This dome, with the height of 25m, is named after the Slovak scholar Matej Bel, who brought the cave into literature in 1723 together with its map, which is among the oldest cave maps in Europe. Cave spaces are formed in Mesozoic Gutenstein limestone by erosion and corrosion activity in the Demänovka River's sinking waters, mostly along tectonic faults and interbed surfaces. The caves in the Demänovská Valley were gradually formed more than 3 million years, which are connected to staged deepening of the valley and formation of cave levels. The seeping and dripping of water from the ceiling or flowing on bedrock surfaces caused the creation of cave decoration by precipitation of dissolved calcite.

4 GUEST BOOK (KNIHA NÁVŠTEV)

On the wall in front of you, you can see the signatures of cave visitors mostly from the 18th and 19th century. The oldest ones date back to the 17th century. Several of them belong to personalities of then cultural and social life, including important national figures.

5 JANOSIK'S DOME (JÁNOŠÍKOV DÓM)

It is the tallest dome in this cave, reaching 35m. The dome is named after the legendary heroic outlaw Juraj Jánošík, who was executed in 1713 in Liptovský Mikuláš. The cave lured adventurers from long ago. It was open to the public in the 1880s by the Liptov section of the Ugrian-Carpathian Fellowship and the guides used torches and candles for lighting. The interest in the cave ceased after the discovery of the Demänovská Cave of Liberty and it was reopened to the public in 1952. In the same year a continuation of the cave was discovered through a siphon, which is now called the Demänovská Cave of Peace.

6 BEL'S DOME II (BELOV DÓM II)

You will pass the previously ice-filled part of the cave – Kmet's Dome. It represents the lower part of this cave; colder and heavier air from outside descends in winter and remains trapped here, and in a more favourable season cools the bedrock down below the freezing point. When the seepage of water from precipitation and melting snow enters this space at the end of winter and beginning of spring, it freezes and forms ice fill, which had formerly remained here year-round. Climate change brought weaker winters with limited freezing days; therefore, the increment of ice was lower than the decrement of ice and the cave lost its ice fill. The annual average temperature here reaches + 0,12°C, with a rise of 1°C since 2012. In May 2006, ice volume reached 1,260 m³ on an area of 1,450 m², however dropped to 80 m³ in 2021. During the 19th century, the ice was excavated and used in icehouses for food chill maintenance.

7 GREAT DOME (VEL'KÝ DÓM)

The original dripstone and flowstone fill of the dome was destroyed by frost weathering. You can notice various erosional shapes and hollows formed by past whirling movement of the underground river. You will continue to the 'Debris Dome' where the tour ends.

Thank you for visiting the cave and we recommend visiting other show caves in Slovakia. The closest one, which is only 2 km away, is Demänovská Cave of Liberty with its remarkable dripstone and flowstone decorations. We wish you a pleasant stay in the Low Tatras. Good bye!

