

Brestovská Cave

1/ Entrance Hall (Vstupná chodba) I.: Welcome to the Brestovská Cave. The cave is situated close to the Zuberec village in the territory of the Tatra National Park and on the foothills of the Western Tatra Mts. The entrance lies at elevation of 867 m a.s.l.. It is the biggest and only show cave in the Orava Region. The entrance hall is known from time immemorial and its opening to public had been considered more than 130 years ago. The temperature, corresponding to the annual average on the surface, ranges between 4 and 6 °C and is stable all year round.

We must inform you, that it is forbidden to touch and damage karst decoration in the cave and pollute the cave. It is necessary to care for your safety. Don't take off the helmet from your head and don't switch off the headlamp without my notice, please. Use handrails where available and watch the lowered ceiling or terrain barriers. Pay special attention to movement on miller staircases, please.

2/ Zuberec Passage (Zuberecká chodba): The cave is formed in light grey Ramsau Dolomites with unevenly placed intercalations of darker, well soluble Guttenstein Limestone. In the ceiling, we can see the boundary between conglomerates and Mesozoic dolomites. Cave passages are developed mostly along distinct tectonic faults of the Earth's crust. The biggest ones are in the east – west direction. Cave spaces were subsequently widened by surface waters of the Cold Brook (Studený potok) and its tributaries. Underground stream flows on the bottom of the cave and disembogues to surface in nearby karst spring. Water temperature reaches from 4.2 to 6.9 °C.

3/ Bivouac Hall (Bivaková sieň) I.: Calcite decoration that we can see here originates from crystallization of calcium carbonate from solution penetrating through overlaying limestone beds. When this solution of atmospheric water, saturated with dissolved limestone reaches open cave spaces, carbon oxide releases to cave atmosphere and calcium carbonate crystallizes, forming well known cave decoration. Tiny crystals of calcium carbonate slowly grow downwards to make dripstones called stalactites. In this cave we can see mostly thin and hollow soda straw or carrot stalactites. Dripstones growing from the bottom upwards are called stalagmites.

4/ Divers' Hall (Sieň potápačov): There are 7 siphons or sumps in the by now known part of the cave. They can be overcome only by cave divers, who have a fundamental merit in surveying the Brestovská Cave. More than 60 animal species are living in this cave. The highest species diversity is bound to water, which brings also organic material from the surface serving as food for animals. Riverbed is inhabited by worms, crustaceans like *Niphargus tatrensis* or *Bathynella natans*, species of turbellaria or larvae; the drier parts are habitats for springtails, mites or dipterans. Nine bat species hibernate in the cave in winter, with the most common Greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*).

5/ Bivouac Hall (Bivaková sieň) II.: The cave is formed in two levels. The lower one is represented by a passage with riverbed with water stream, the upper one, where we are at present, is dry. You can see ceiling cupolas or other notches in the ceiling or cave walls from the time, when the cave was flooded with water.

6/ Entrance Hall II.: We hope you have enjoyed the feeling of being a little bit as a caver discovering the underground secrets. More than 7,100 caves are known in Slovakia by now and each one is an unrepeatable work of nature. We recommend you to visit also other show caves. The closest are in the Liptov Region: Demänovská Cave of Liberty, Demänovská Ice Cave and Važecká Cave. Thank you for your visit. Have a nice day.