

# California Cavern's Caving Expeditions

## **MAMMOTH CAVE EXPEDITION:**

This 2-3 hour trip takes the beginning explorer through the historic *Mammoth Cave* area as far back as the beautiful *Jungle Room*. Spelunkers will crawl, wiggle and squirm their way through natural passages connecting eight different chambers. This trip is perfect for those desiring more than a walk, but who aren't up to the rigors of the Middle Earth Expedition. All tight squeezes and crawls are optional. Appropriate for ages 8 and up. All minors must be accompanied by an adult; however, those 8 to 12 yrs old must be accompanied by a parent.

## **MIDDLE EARTH EXPEDITION:**

For the more adventurous, this 3-4 hour trip is our most popular. Explore 80% of the known cavern system, starting from the eastern entrance and working your way through to the western exit. The trip covers roughly one mile of underground territory. A good deal of stamina is required as the trip will begin with walking, crawling and squeezing through the historic *Mammoth Cave* area, then pass into *Middle Earth*, discovered in 1980. In this portion, the spelunker will encounter hands and knees crawls, as well as pits of knee-deep mud and clay, making high-top boots a must. In this beautiful section of the cavern, the ceilings abound with pure white calcite formations. Next the trip moves into narrow fissures, bringing cavers to the *Cavern of the Quills* area and *Tom's Lake*, a 70-foot expanse crossed by raft. From here it is on to more gooey passages and highly-crystalline rooms. The final leg involves ascending a series of ladders to find sunshine and showers.

This trip is appropriate for those aged 16 and older, and minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

This trip is available primarily in the summer and fall. Winter and spring trips are dependent on water level conditions inside the cavern. Call for availability.

No experience is necessary for these trips; however participants do need to be in good physical condition. Those with conditions such as heart and lung problems, pregnancy, impaired mobility, or excessive weight should not attempt the adventure. Guides will limit participation to persons they believe to be suitable and fit. Due to the inherent dangers involved in spelunking trips, all participants and parents of participating minor children are required to sign a waiver of liability.

## **INFORMATION:**

**WE PROVIDE** - All necessary caving equipment, including gloves, helmet with light, and knee pads.

## **RECOMMENDED CAVING GEAR PARTICIPANTS NEED TO PROVIDE & TRIP PREPARATION:**

➔ When choosing what to wear, keep in mind that the cavern temperature is 53°F/12°C and you will be crawling through wet & muddy passages. Your clothing may be permanently stained by the mineral-rich clay. Therefore, if you care about it, don't wear it!

Wear warm clothing - long-sleeved shirts, and rugged, loose-fitting pants. 2 layers, such as thermal underwear may be desirable for those sensitive to the cold. Do not wear clothes that tend to absorb water. Wet suits, or polypropylene ski/bike pants are nice during the wetter periods if you have them.

➔ High-top boots, with good traction, that tie tightly above the ankle are required.

**No lowtops or non-lace-up allowed.** (The deep, sticky clay will suck shoes that are not securely tied-on off your feet.)

The boots need to be in good condition – the suction power of the muddy clay will rip the sole off old, worn-out boots. Be aware that the boots will be soaking wet, covered in mud and scraped up, so don't wear boots you care about.



➔ Bring a complete change of clothing, including shoes, and all shower supplies and toiletries you need. The change of clothes and shower items should be kept in a plastic bag to keep them dry while showering and then the bag can be used afterwards to store the muddy clothes in.

➔ If desired, bring something to eat for after the trip. No food is allowed in the cavern, so you'll be hungry when you get out. We sell snacks and drinks in the visitor center.

➔ Be sure to get a good night's sleep since caving requires energy and good judgment.

➔ Eat a good breakfast but avoid excessive liquids and "problem" foods. There are no restrooms inside the cavern!

➔ Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled trip time to allow for checking in, using restrooms, etc.

➔ Be sure to notify us ahead of time if anyone in the group may require special attention or awareness on the part of the guide.

## **RESERVATION AND PAYMENT INFORMATION:**

These trips require reservations and prepayment. Rates are subject to change without notice. For more information or reservations call 209-736-2708 between 9:00 and 5:00.