



Shedding Light on the Famous Caverns of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley

Shenandoah Valley, Virginia (June 6, 2019) – Proving that we live in a country that offers a holiday for everything, the team at MBPR would like to wish you a happy **National Caves and Karst Day!**

Yes, that's right: June 6 is the day to celebrate all those geologic features that humans have stumbled upon – sometimes quite literally – and enjoyed exploring since our nation's earliest days. We all know what a “cave” is, but here's a fun fact: “karst” is the term used to describe the limestone-rich landscape where you'll find an abundance of springs, sinkholes and caves. [Virginia's Shenandoah Valley](#) is such a landscape, and it's home to several caverns that are open to the public.

If all this talk makes you want to dig deeper into the world of stalactites (they hold “tight” to the ceiling of a cave) and stalagmites (they “might” if they could), we encourage you to visit these five along the Shenandoah Valley, all of which offer family-friendly tours and plenty of educational fun. And don't mistakenly believe that if you've seen one cave, you've seen them all (or haven't seen them, since a memorable experience on any great cave tour is the part when they switch off the lights and leave you in total darkness). Each of these caverns offers totally different experiences and a few “bonuses” to enhance your trip, so we encourage you to visit all of them.



Caverns at Natural Bridge

6313 S. Lee Highway, Natural Bridge, Virginia 24578

www.naturalbridgeva.com/caverns

The community of Natural Bridge is named for the 215-tall limestone arch that was once owned by Thomas Jefferson. But that bridge isn't the only natural wonder in the area: The caverns were discovered in the late 1800s and opened to the public in 1977. Their claim to fame is that they're the deepest caverns on the East Coast; visitors descend more than 34 stories for their tour. Before or after that tour, guests are encouraged to try their hand at gem mining or building a bat house, and they're also welcome to hike the two-mile Buck Hill Trail, which offers a unique opportunity to view surface karst features like sinkholes and ravines. The caverns are open year-round but do adjust hours seasonally. Combination tickets that couple access to the caverns and the state park, where the Natural Bridge is located, are available.

Grand Caverns

5 Grand Caverns Drive, Grottoes, Virginia 24441

www.grandcaverns.com

Grand Caverns bears the distinction of being the oldest continuously operating show cave in the entire United States. The caverns were discovered by a hunter in 1804 and opened for tours just two years later. These days, the caves, a National Natural Landmark, are one of many attractions on the campus. There's also a miniature golf course, swimming pool, hiking and cycling trails, fishing holes, and picnic areas on the property. The caverns are open year-round and are especially charming during the holiday season. Visitors can participate in "Caroling in the Caverns," which combines a tour of the caverns with periodic concerts provided by musical groups stationed throughout the underground chambers. The acoustics are astounding and the caves are lit with candles, making the experience all the more magical.

Luray Caverns

GPS Address: 101 Cave Hill Road, Luray, Virginia 22835

www.luraycaverns.com

Luray Caverns is the most visited caverns in the United States and is perhaps best known for its "Great Stalacpipe Organ," officially deemed the world's largest musical instrument. The organ makes stalactites "sing" by tapping them, to the delight of thousands of visitors each year. It turns out that the most fascinating concert on Earth takes place *under* the earth! Also located on the site – and included in cave admission – are the Car and Carriage Caravan Museum, which features more than 140 transportation-related items; the Luray Valley Museum, which tells the story of this part of the Shenandoah Valley; and Toy Town Junction, a massive collection of toys spanning the generations. For separate entrance fees, visitors can also experience a garden maze, ropes park or gem mine.

Shenandoah Caverns

261 Caverns Road, Quicksburg, Virginia 22847

www.shenandoahcaverns.com

The only caverns in Virginia to offer elevator service are an especially appealing option for kids and guests with limited mobility, though it should be noted that the tour is about a mile long and is not officially deemed "accessible." Visitors of all ages take delight in the caves' collection of

“bacon,” which are formations that look like the breakfast meat. Shenandoah Caverns are also unique in that they were formed by both underground rivers and seismic activity; often caverns are formed by one element or the other, but not both. The caverns’ former owner, Earl Hargrove, ran a company that designed window displays for major retailers, and guests can see several of those displays after completion of their cave tour. Right down the street is American Celebration on Parade, a 40,000-square-foot warehouse full of parade floats that were also designed by Hargrove and his team. They’ve been featured in generations of Rose Bowl parades and presidential inaugurations. The caves are open all year; the parade facility is open seasonally.

[Skyline Caverns](#)

10344 Stonewall Jackson Highway, Front Royal, Virginia 22630

www.skylinecaverns.com

These caverns are the closest natural wonder to Washington, DC, making them an easy day trip during a visit to the nation’s capital. Among the highlights here is the incredible collection of anthodite formations, fascinating crystals that grow in all directions and defy gravity as they spread. “The Chandelier,” which measures 18 feet, is the oldest and longest anthodite in the world. Besides the caverns, visitors to the property can enjoy a miniature train ride, enter a family-friendly mirror maze, or simply embark on a hike around the facility and take in the views of the Shenandoah Valley. The caverns are open year-round and have earned the reputation for having both fascinating tours and friendly and informed guides.

The destinations that are part of the Shenandoah Valley Tourism Partnership look forward to welcoming you to their part of Virginia! For more information and to begin planning your trip, please visit <https://viriniasshenandoahvalley.com/>.

Note: We have PHOTOS of each of the caverns. Please let us know if we can send them to you!

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