



Delving Into the Stories of Some of America's Greatest Caves

National Caves and Karst Day Is June 6 ... and Here's Where to Celebrate

In a country that has a day for everything, of course there's one set aside to pay tribute to caves. June 6 denotes **National Caves and Karst Day**, a celebration of those mysterious pits that humans have been exploring for generations ... though not always with great success.

This year seems like a particularly good one to acknowledge America's caves, considering that the story of what happened to one cave explorer has made it all the way to a Broadway stage in 2025. "Floyd Collins: The Musical" shares the story of the man who got trapped in a Kentucky cave in 1925 and created a media frenzy, and the show has been nominated for six Tony awards. Though things didn't work out so well for Floyd, what happened to him prompted the National Park Service to take control of the country's biggest cave. But more on that later ...

Though today we're fully focused on caves, it helps to understand what "karst" is, too. That's the type of topography that's created when rocks dissolve, and it results in features like natural bridges and sinkholes ... and, of course, caves.

MBPR proudly represents destinations in two of the most "karst-y" places in the entire country, western Kentucky and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Each location is home to a variety of caves, and we're proud to work with three that are especially fascinating. We encourage you to visit them and learn what's going on under the earth, then emerge to discover some incredible attributes outside the caves, too.

[Shenandoah County, Virginia](#)

[Shenandoah Caverns](#)

261 Caverns Road, Quicksburg

These caverns are located within the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, a region that's incredibly rich in limestone. There are plenty of caves to explore up and down the valley, but we're particularly fond of Shenandoah Caverns. For starters, it's the only cave in the state of Virginia to offer elevator service, which means it provides a chance for more people to get inside a cavern and look around. The paths are very wide and most of the ceilings are quite tall. This makes it much more "user-friendly" than caves that feature lots of steps or winding paths.

Something else that sets Shenandoah Caverns apart from most other caves in this region and around the country is the fact that it was formed by both underground rivers and seismic activity. Caves are usually formed by one of those elements or the other, not by both. And a little surprise that's probably the caverns' most popular feature is the presence of "cave bacon," unique formations that look like everyone's favorite breakfast meat.

The caverns also just added a new display on June 1. Two years ago, researchers found skulls belonging to a prehistoric animal called the *Mylohyus fossilis*, or long-nosed peccary (a type of wild pig), in a remote passage in the caverns. They were able to excavate the skulls, which are now being studied, but models have been created so visitors can see what sort of creatures used to live here.

The same limestone that forms the caves also makes the Shenandoah Valley an incredible agricultural region. This part of the United States was once covered by an ancient ocean, and the remains of marine life formed the limestone. The rich soil here is perfect for growing hay, apples and grapes. And you know what comes with grapes ... wine! Shenandoah County is home to [eight wineries](#). Of these, Third Hill at DeMello Winery is closest to the caverns, but the others are located anywhere from 10 to 45 minutes away.



"Cave Bacon" at Shenandoah Caverns

Photo Credit: MBPR

[Bowling Green, Kentucky](#)

[Lost River Cave](#)

2818 Nashville Road, Bowling Green

Lost River Cave is the only natural underground boat tour in all of Kentucky, which is a big bragging right in a state that's home to at least 5,000 documented caves. That means that to see inside this cave, you board a boat and take a 25-minute ride through a natural wonder. The boat is equipped for riders of all types of mobility, so even babes in arms can get their first-ever peek at the interior of a cave.

Besides the cool boat ride and the fact that Lost River runs underneath the third largest city in Kentucky, this cave is known for its famous blue hole, which gets its color from – you guessed it – all the limestone in the area. The cave also has plenty of folklore around it ... some stories true, some not so much. It has served as a hunting ground for Native Americans (true), a Civil War camp for both Union and Confederate soldiers (yep), a hideout for the outlaw Jesse James (hmmm... has it?), and the area's most unusual nightclub (fun fact). The singers from back in the 1930s can attest to the cave's dramatic acoustics.

The boat tour is only a portion of what your admission ticket gets you. There's also a complete above-ground experience that shows off the beauty of the land. There's an array of trails and a geocaching adventure, and from Memorial Day through Labor Day, the cave's staff also operates a butterfly habitat.



Lost River Cave
Photo Credit: Visit BGKY

[Mammoth Cave National Park](#)

Town of Mammoth Cave

This isn't just an example of good marketing ... the cave earned its "Mammoth" name because it's the longest cave system in the entire world. So far more than 400 miles have been explored, and there's no telling what lies beyond that. Back in the early 1900s, people popped in and out of this area's caves with reckless abandon. But an accident in the winter of 1925 at a neighboring cave – a news event referred to as the "entrapment of Floyd Collins" – led to the National Park Service taking over Mammoth Cave and putting incredible safety measures into place. That set the tone for new ways of exploring Kentucky's "Cave Country."

These days, Mammoth offers a variety of guided tours, ranging those that are pretty mild (you can travel in a wheelchair) to some that are kind of wild ... perhaps exploring by lantern-light or squeezing through on your hands or knees. Mammoth is an incredibly popular cave, so making a plan and booking your tour early is essential, especially in the summer months. It's important to note that these days, everyone who enters the cave comes back out again safely, so there's no fear of someone's adventure turning into a Broadway musical 100 years from now.

A fun part of any cave tour is experiencing a natural wonder in the dark ... but the bonus here is that you don't have to be underground at Mammoth to do that. This national park is also an official "Dark Sky" park, meaning that the absence of city light results in some incredible stargazing.



Mammoth Cave
Photo Credit: NPS Photo

In honor of National Caves and Karst Day, make plans to get out there – and get UNDER there – and do some exploring!

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