

The Batu Caves - Hidden Treasure of Kuala Lumpur



Among the most popular of sites to visit in the Kuala Lumpur region of Malaysia are the old Batu Caves. This place, which has natural significance as well as mythical value, was discovered in the early 1800s. However, the necessary fame and attention came as late as 1878, when the caves were properly explored by an American naturalist, William Hornaday.

The caves lie about 13 km from Kuala Lumpur and are easily reached by bus. They are now a sacred place for Hindus in Malaysia. There are three main caves and a number of smaller ones. These caverns are amazing limestone formations and stretch as long as 400 m, with some of the caves reaching 100 m in height.

The largest and the most phenomenal is the Temple or Cathedral Cave. Here, Hindus created several shrines and still perform their religious rituals. There are 272 steps the tourists

have to climb before reaching the whole system of caves and before setting off, the enthusiasts need to understand that they are facing a physically demanding task. However, it is definitely worth the struggle. At the base of the hill, tourists proceed toward the Art Gallery Cave and Museum Cave, where they find Hindu art and various paintings and statues. The Dark Cave is a two-kilometer network of preserved caverns where access is - due to ecological restrictions - limited.

Most visitors gather here at the beginning of February, when a famous Thaipusam festival dedicated to the celebration of the mythical Lord Murugan (the son of the Hindu god Siva) attracts hundreds of thousands of Hindu worshippers. Recently, a 42.7m high statue of Lord Murugan was unveiled. The Batu Caves are simply a must-see site for anyone visiting Kuala Lumpur. They are both a natural marvel and a mystical purifying place to explore.

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