



INTACH

BORRA CAVES, ANDHRA PRADESH



"Borra caves" also known as "Borra Guhalu" - "Borra" meaning hollow and "Guhalu" meaning caves is situated on Ananthagiri Hills in Visakhapatnam District of Andhra Pradesh. Borra caves are located in the Araku

Valley of the Ananthagiri hill range and drained by the Gosthani River. These natural caves have formed at an elevation of about 2,313 ft, and depth of 262 ft. These caves are a million year old stalactite and stalagmite formations. These 300 feet thick roofed Borra Caves are spread over an area of one Square kilometre.

History of the Caves

In 1807, William King, the geologist of the Geological Survey of India discovered the caves.

There are several legends regarding the discovery of the caves which the tribals who inhabit the villages around the caves narrate. The popular legend is that a cow, grazing on the top of the caves, dropped 60m through a hole in the roof. The cowherd, while searching for the cow found the caves. He found a stone inside the cave that resembled a lingam, which he interpreted as Lord Shiva, who protected the cow. The villagers who heard the story believed it and later built a small temple for Lord Shiva outside the cave.

The Cave Formation

Borra caves are the natural caves that are believed to have formed from the Gosthani River, which flows through these caves. The caves were created due to the flow of river over the limestone deposits in that area. The dissolved limestone trickled down drop by drop forming the different shapes in the cave. These Borra caves spread over one square km and have formed over the period of millions of years.

To explore these historic caves one does not have to light anything, as mercury, sodium vapour and halogen lamps already spread their own colourful lights into the caves making it more spectacular. These sixty-three lamps were installed by the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation.

Stalagmites and Stalactites

A stalagmite is a mineral deposit that rises **from the floor** of a limestone cave due to the dripping of mineralized solutions and the deposition of calcium carbonate.

A stalactite is a mineral deposit that **hangs from the ceiling** of a limestone cave. It is a type of dripstone.

The stalactite is above, and hangs downward like an icicle whereas the stalagmite is below and sticks up.



DID YOU KNOW

Different names have been given to the different shapes of the stalagmite and stalactite formations such as Shiv Parvathi, Mother child, Human brain, crocodile, Rushis Beard etc. Some more interesting structures inside the cave include mushroom formation, temple, church and many more.

ACTIVITY

1. Point out the stalagmites and stalactites in the picture shown. Draw a stalagmite and stalactite.
2. What is the difference between a stalagmite and stalactite and how are they formed.



References :

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