

Experience Mystery Passage... Explore The Great Rotunda...

Adventure Tours at Howe Caverns

For the first time in more than a century, visitors on Adventure Tours at Howe Caverns are able to traverse the Mystery Passage to see The Great Rotunda, an incredible 107-foot high silo-shaped dome formed in the cave before the last glacier disappeared.

Access became possible through efforts led by Howe Caverns' Karst* Hydrologist Paul A. Rubin. A noted geologist and hydrologist, Paul directed three teams of cavers who removed more than 23 tons of sediment that, for many decades, had partially plugged the Mystery Passage that leads to The Great Rotunda.

ABOUT THE ADVENTURE TOUR

The Adventure Tour takes about 2 hours and begins with a descent into the Caverns by elevator and then a short walk through the Winding Way to the Silent Chamber. There, tour participants and guides don coveralls, helmets, headlamps, boots, gloves and kneepads – all provided by the Caverns. Once suited up, guests and guides enter Mystery Passage.

The portion of the great cave seen only by Adventure Tour guests begins in Mystery Passage, an easy, hands-and-knees crawl around a sharp bend in the passage. After a little more crawling, guests walk on the cobble floor of a dry stream passage under an arched bedrock ceiling. Interesting cave formations are present along the way to The Great Rotunda.

The Great Rotunda is 107 feet high and 15 feet across its base. The clean, glistening walls of the silo-shaped dome were formed over the millennia by water cascading and dripping down the walls. All of this took place long before the last glaciers left the area, about 14,000 years ago. There are very few domes of this height and pristine beauty known in the northeast.

The Great Rotunda was once the farthest point reached from the original entrance of what was then known as Howe's Cave, discovered by local farmer Lester Howe on May 22, 1842. In the 1800s, – long before the installation of elevators and electric lights in the 1920s – Lester Howe's torch-lit cave tours took up to five hours to reach The Great Rotunda, where he fired Roman candles high up into the circular dome in order to see the top.

** Karst is a type of landscape formed by the dissolution of soluble rocks, including limestone and dolomite. Karst regions contain aquifers capable of providing large supplies of water.*



ADVENTURE TOURS

AT HOWE CAVERNS

The Great Rotunda - Photo by Peter Jones



The Mystery Passage - Photo by Peter Jones

AN EXPERIENCE TO REMEMBER

Book Your Adventure Today! Adventure Tours at Howe Caverns take up to 2 hours and are limited to a maximum of 6 people per tour. They are scheduled throughout the year with ***advance reservation required***. While no previous caving experience is required, persons taking an adventure tour must be 18 years of age or older. Proof of age and signature of supplied waiver will be required.

The cost for the Adventure Tour is \$100 per person and includes the use of special outerwear. Payment in full is required with each reservation. A 7-day cancellation policy applies to avoid being charged the full cost of the tour.

Adventure Tour guests also receive a souvenir helmet and a certificate memorializing their accomplishment, as well as a complimentary pass for the regular cavern tour.

The cave is always 52° F (12°C), so plan to dress warmly according to the list below. Recommended attire includes:

- Tennis-style shoes
- Heavy socks
- Jean-style pants
- Heavy shirt or T-shirt with a sweatshirt

We will supply special outer garments.

ABOUT HOWE CAVERNS

Howe Caverns reopened to the public in 1929, after years of being closed following the decline in fortunes of its discoverer, Lester Howe.

The 80-minute regular guided tour of the caverns includes such highlights as the world-famous boat ride on the underground Lake of Venus and The Winding Way, considered among the best examples of underground water erosion in the world. We also offer special Lantern Tours and Private Tours by reservation only.

Howe Caverns is open daily, from 9 am to 6 pm, except Thanksgiving and Christmas days when it is closed. During July and August, Howe Caverns has extended hours from 8 am to 8 pm daily.

For Adventure Tour reservations and liability waiver forms, click below.

Adventure Tour Reservations

http://www.howecaverns.com/visit_us/advtourform.php

Adventure Tour Liability Waiver Forms

<http://www.howecaverns.com/pdf/05LIABILITYWAIVERKPO.pdf>



255 Discovery Drive, Howes Cave, NY 12092
518-296-8900 • 518-296-8992 fax
www.howecaverns.com