

Raccoon Mountain Caverns Wild Cave Expedition Checklist

What to Wear:

- Full length, sturdy pants (such as jeans or cargo pants) with buttons or zippers are recommended. Elastic waistbands (sweatpants, leggings, etc.) tend to rip or be pulled down or off when belly crawling. **Shorts are not permitted.**
- Long-sleeved t-shirt or button-down flannel-style shirts work best. Sweatshirts and jackets are too hot even with the cave temperature at 58 degrees. Keep in mind that low cut shirts may be revealing when crawling. **Short sleeved shirts are not permitted.**
- Sturdy, lace-up, close-toed shoes such as boots or athletic shoes with good traction **are a requirement.** You will not be able to participate in the tour if you are not wearing proper footwear. This includes any slip-on or open-toed shoes. Worn out, slick shoes, cleats, and barefoot/five-toe shoes are not permitted, as these are dangerous on the rocks. Note: your feet will go through water.
- Raccoon Mountain provides helmets, lights, gloves and knee pads that must be worn at all times during the tour. In order to help prevent the spread of White Nose Syndrome, **no personal caving equipment is permitted on tours.**

Important Information:

- With the exception of the Canyon Crawl tour, all tours have a minimum height requirement of 56". A maximum chest and hip size of 56" applies to all tours. No exceptions can be made to these requirements for the safety of participants.
- The Canyon Crawl tour is a moderate tour; the minimum age for this tour is 6. The Fossil Crawl, Echo Room, and Waterfall Dome tours are strenuous tours; the minimum age for these tours is 8. The Gypsum Flower tour is a very strenuous tour; the minimum age for this tour is 10. No exceptions can be made to these requirements.
- The tour is physically challenging and not recommended for pregnant individuals, or those with heart conditions or recent surgery. Alert the staff before your tour about any medical conditions that could affect the tour: asthma, diabetes, bad knees or back, autism, claustrophobia, fear of heights, required medications etc. Guides must be aware of these before entering the cave.
- The tour features significant amounts of crawling (hands-and-knees and belly crawling), climbing (with and without ropes), and sliding. The cave is muddy, wet, and slippery at many locations. Raccoon Mountain gear must be worn at all times.
- Do not eat a large meal before your tour. Think of preparing for a 5K run. The crawling and climbing portion will tax you, especially if you are not used to extreme physical exertion.
- Hands need to be free for crawling. Anything you bring into the cave should be in a waist pack or small back pack to keep your hands free. Water bottles are permitted but must fit into your bag. Food is not permitted in the cave.
- Please note that any items brought into the cave are at risk of damage or loss. Cameras are permitted, but tours are fast paced and allow minimal stopping for photos. Recording of the tour in its entirety is not permitted. Avoid bringing any expensive items such as jewelry.
- Adult chaperones must actively supervise their group throughout the entirety of the tour. Horseplay, pushing, shoving, jumping, name carving and mud throwing are not permitted, as they can lead to injury or damage to the cave.
- The entire group stays together. No solo exploration is permitted.
- The cave environment and ecosystem is fragile. Do not touch or disturb any cave animal. Stay on the trail and do not damage the formations or water drops on the formations, as the cave is still actively growing.
- Caving is a team building event and individuals must help each other. Message passing is important. Please listen to and abide by all instructions from the guide throughout the tour.

After the Tour:

- A complete change of clothes is recommended. Follow guide instructions on de-gearing and post-caving procedure. You may use the bathroom showers on the campground, but please be courteous of others sharing the space.
- Leaders must maintain supervision of their group while at the bathroom and leave it in a clean state.

Financial Liability:

- **You will be charged an additional fee of \$300 if your group damages or leaves the bathroom in an exceptionally dirty state.**
- **Under Tennessee state law, there is up to a \$1,000 fine for damage to the formations or cave in any manner.**
- **A fee of \$50 will be charged for use of any emergency toilet in the cave. Any damage to the cave surface from bodily fluids (including saliva) will result in a \$250 clean-up fee. 99% of the time the accidents can be avoided by proper preparation.**

Cancellation Policy:

Payment is due in full when reserving a tour (or a deposit for large groups). There are no cancellations or refunds. If you fail to arrive for your tour, we incur all the same expenses and may have turned others away; therefore, guests who fail to show for a tour or fail to arrive at the scheduled time will not be refunded the tour price (or will forfeit their deposit). With at least 48 hours notice, you have the option to reschedule your tour.