

Cathedral Caverns



Cathedral Caverns, one of more than 4,000 caves in Alabama, keeps a cool 60-degree temperature year-round. | Photo courtesy Alabama Tourism Department and Chris Granger

From the moment you pass through the gaping maw of Cathedral Caverns, you're smack in the middle of a subterranean limestone wonderland. Meander through a forest of stalagmites, a darling of Hollywood productions like Disney's *Tom and Huck*. "Usually, you'll see one or two in any cave. In our forest, you have to walk around them, there are so many," says Cathedral Caverns State Park Naturalist Randall Blackwood. There is a frozen limestone "waterfall" and Goliath, a stalagmite whose 243-foot girth ranks it among the planet's largest. (Even the cave entrance, at 126 feet wide and 25 feet tall, is a contender for largest in the world.) Don't miss the "cave bacon," where instead of dripping down into a point, the stalagmite hangs in thin, drapes-like sheets. Guided tours last 90 minutes along a paved 1.5-mile (round-trip) path and must be reserved the day of your visit.