

Get down and dirty!

ICE CAVE and NATURAL BRIDGES, MT. ADAMS RANGER DISTRICT

The "Ice Cave" was discovered at least 100 years ago and provided ice for the towns of Hood River and The Dalles in pioneer years. This well-known cave has four sections, separated by three collapsed sink about 15 feet in diameter and 14 feet deep.

A wooden stairway leads to the neve cone beneath the main entrance of this lava tube glaciere. Most visitors are aware only of the 120-foot glaciere section that slopes southeastward from the ladder, but some penetrate the more constricted, sinuous 200-foot passage leading west to another collapsed sink. The other three sections of the tube, sloping downward from the west, are generally overlooked. The total length of the cavern passages is about 650 feet.

The western, uppermost section of the cave is a low, rather unremarkable passage about 150 feet long. It is the widest part of the cave system, and is floored with smooth lava. On the north side of the sink, at its lower end, is a short, broad, low passage from which another lava flow entered the tube.

The next section, to the east, is about 100 feet long and 15 feet wide. It is the only section of the cave where one may stroll from one sink to the next, despite the irregular breakdown on the floor.

Between the sink at the lower end of this section and that at the upper end of the "main" section, the tube divides into two smaller tubes about 60 feet long and five feet high. The straight southern branch is an almost perfect tube. After becoming lower in interior height, the tubes rejoin beneath the debris-blocked upper western entrance sink of the "main" section.

Near the base of the ladder, at the east end of the "main" section, a small opening in lava talus leads to the low, arched, oval Crack Room. Its floor is a flat lava surface interrupted only by small contraction fissures. In a tapering recess farther up this main section of tube is a fine lava span or natural bridge.

The lower, eastern end of this cave acts as a trap, retaining heavy cold air that settles into the cave in winter. There is no active circulation of air in this part of the cave. Much seasonal melting occurs, but an ice floor, a few stalagmites, and large drip masses of ice apparently persist throughout the year and refreeze in October or November.

Visitors should WEAR WARM CLOTHES, BOOTS, HEAD PROTECTION, and CARRY a DEPENDABLE SOURCE OF LIGHT while exploring the cave.

****CAVE TERMS**

Natural Bridges: A lava cave (tube) that has partially collapsed leaving two bridges and a small canyon that is about a mile long.

Cave (Tube): A natural under-chamber open to the surface. Lava tubes form in flows of ropy ~hoe basalt when the flow crusts over with cooling lava. At the end of the eruption, lava drains from the tube leaving an open tunnel. Lava is an excellent insulator, so once the lava stream is roofed over it is possible for the lava to flow through the tube for many miles with little loss of heat.

Collapse Sink: The weakened portion of a cave that caved in causing a lower level.

Glaciere: Nomenclature of caves in various rocks that trap cold air and form ice.

Neve: The upper part of *the* glaciere where the snow turns into ice.

Pahoehoe: A type of basalt (rock) flow characterized by marked fluidity, and subsequent smoothness.

Sink: The lower level of a cave.

Caves are delicate and must be used wisely to avoid damage. Rock collecting acts of vandalism, and littering are strictly forbidden. Your cooperation in protecting *the* cave will ensure a quality experience for generations to come. Remember *the* cave explorers' motto: "Take nothing but pictures, leave nothing but footprints, kill nothing but time."

For more information, see: <http://www.a2zgorge.info/area/GulerIceCaves.htm>

Or search for Guler Ice Caves.

